**MEDIA CONTACT**

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**MEDIA INFORMATION**

**Call out to Bradfordians across the district to ‘share a smile’ for street gallery project**

A powerful project which in July transformed the experiences of Bradford teenagers during the first lockdown into a district-wide street gallery is returning for a second ‘episode’ in early 2021. As Covid continues to spread and impact the Bradford community, making communication more difficult than ever due to lockdown and mask wearing, the team aims to offer some hope and togetherness by creating a ‘district wide smile’ for the second series of ‘Our Street Gallery’. Launching on 15th January, with the photos set to be seen in public in Spring, ‘Bradford Smile’ will invite local people from every corner of the Bradford district to ‘share their smile’ via an online camera. The ambitious project takes place as Bradford kicks off the year it will bid for UK City of Culture 2025, with the district building on its cultural activity.

Working alongside a steering group of grassroots artists from Bradford, the team behind ‘Our Street Gallery’ are turning their attention to Bradford’s rich tapestry of people to share more joy around the city in a safe and comforting way. Those who wish to take part will head to the ‘Our Street Gallery’ website where they will pose for a smiley selfie before being asked “what makes you smile about Bradford?”. Users can use their unique code to share their photo with loved ones as well as on social media, to spread their smile around the city.

Once out of lockdown, local communities can host their own street gallery, whether on billboards or street level posters, and bring some much-needed joy to their communities. Anyone interested in hosting can visit ourstreetgallery.org to register their interest and receive an email pack of information on how to host.

Nabeelah Haffez, Project Manager of the Bradford Stories Festival, local poet and photographer, and part of the ‘Our Street Gallery’ steering group comments,

"The ability to bring art and photography to a street level is not only accessible but essential in building representation, participation and true impact through the communities of Bradford. It's not only important to my work, and the ‘Our Street Gallery’ team, but I think its brilliantly creative and I cannot wait to see how communities respond. I know I'll be encouraging everyone around me to submit their stories and smiles!”

The project was funded by [‘RESPONSE’](https://www.bradford.gov.uk/arts-and-culture/funding/community-arts-and-culture-grants-response/), a grant programme from Bradford Council which aims to support the arts and culture sector in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic. It is a 12-month collaborative project involving Bradford Council, Impressions Gallery, Bradford based design studios and artists Lee Goater, Oli Bentley at Split Design and Aimee Grundell, in partnership with the Bradford 2025 bid for UK City of Culture.

Nicola Greenan, Lead for Cultural Partnerships at Bradford Council adds, “With the talent shown in ‘Through Our Lens’ and Bradford being the home of internationally recognised Impressions Gallery, I can’t think of a better way for Bradford to kick off its bidding year than with a grassroots photography project that reflects the diversity and power of our local people. As we continue to grow our cultural activity into the all-important year of 2021 when we will submit the bid for UK City of Culture, visual arts are set to play a huge role, with many more exciting projects in the pipeline. I can’t wait to see the smiles of our beautiful Bradfordians and hope the project brings a little bit of joy.”

To find out more information, visit [www.ourstreetgallery.org](http://www.ourstreetgallery.org) and follow the project on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter via the hashtag #OurStreetGallery.

**ENDS**

For further information please contact Olivia Rhodes at Anita Morris Associates / [**Olivia@anitamorrisassociates.co.uk**](mailto:Olivia@anitamorrisassociates.co.uk)/ **01943 603311** / **07970591426**

**Notes to Editors**

**Bradford 2025**

Bradford 2025 is the district’s bid to be UK City of Culture 2025. The bid will be submitted in 2021. Awarded every four years by Government, the UK City of Culture title has had a transformational impact on previous host cities, securing millions of pounds of investment and acting as a catalyst for creative place-making and culture-led regeneration. Bradford joins a number of cities and areas competing for the title, with Lancashire, Medway, Gloucester and Southampton also having announced their intentions to bid. <https://bradford2025.co.uk/>

**Our Street Gallery**

Our Street Gallery is a district wide cultural project capturing images, moments and feelings of the people of the Bradford district and bringing these iconic images to life on our streets, creating the opportunity for people to experience the incredible talent we have in Bradford. This is a 12-month collaborative project involving Bradford Council, Impressions Gallery, Bradford 2025 and Bradford based design studios and artists Lee Goater, Oli at Split Design and Aimee Grundell. Our Street Gallery will see billboards, sides of houses, pavements, lamp posts, windows and school railings are transformed into a canvas of work by the people of the Bradford district. Our Street Gallery will be a series of episodes and images collated from different groups and projects happening across the district. In July, episode one saw more than 50 photographs taken by 13 – 18-year olds in isolation for the ‘Through Our Lens’ project illustrated billboards, sides of houses, pavements and lamp posts

[www.ourstreetgallery.org](http://www.ourstreetgallery.org)

**Through Our Lens**

Through Our Lens is an artist led self-isolation project developed by Bradford based artist Carolyn Mendelsohn and funded by a Bradford Council Response Grant. The project is nurturing and mentoring young people from 13-18yrs.

Carolyn felt that the voice of young people, in particular teenagers, hadn't been heard during the Covid Lockdown. For them, their lives have been turned upside down; all major exams cancelled, rites of passage cancelled; the structure of their lives has been fundamentally changed and many are isolated completely. She felt passionately that their story is very important, a story that should be made visible. Carolyn works with the participants via a video platform, running workshops and mentoring sessions with them, as well as curating an online gallery. The project is now in its second stage.

Carolyn is working with 40 teenagers in two groups. Stage two is being funded by Impressions Gallery and Bradford Council and supported by Bradford College.

**Impressions Gallery** is a charity that helps people understand the world through photography. The Gallery collaborates with photographers and organisations nationally and internationally to commission, exhibit and publish photography. Our work with new emerging photographers and often-overlooked artists cements and builds their careers. Established in 1972 as one of the first specialist photographic galleries in Europe, Impressions has grown to become one of the UK’s leading independent venues for contemporary photography. We are located in the heart of Bradford, UNESCO City of Film. We work with local communities and young people to make photography accessible to all through our formal and informal education. Impressions is funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation and supported by Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

[www.impressions-gallery.com](http://www.impressions-gallery.com)