



LEARNING INGREDIENTS: SUPPORTING REFLECTIVE

A resource for place-based artists, organisations and cultural producers informed by the learning from this year's festival.

folkestone
fringe

FLINT+
CLAY

At the close of the *Flint & Clay* festival, artists and cultural producers and creative facilitators were invited to a Feast of Learning, to help inform the next iterations of the Fringe and co-design learning to support socially engaged practice.

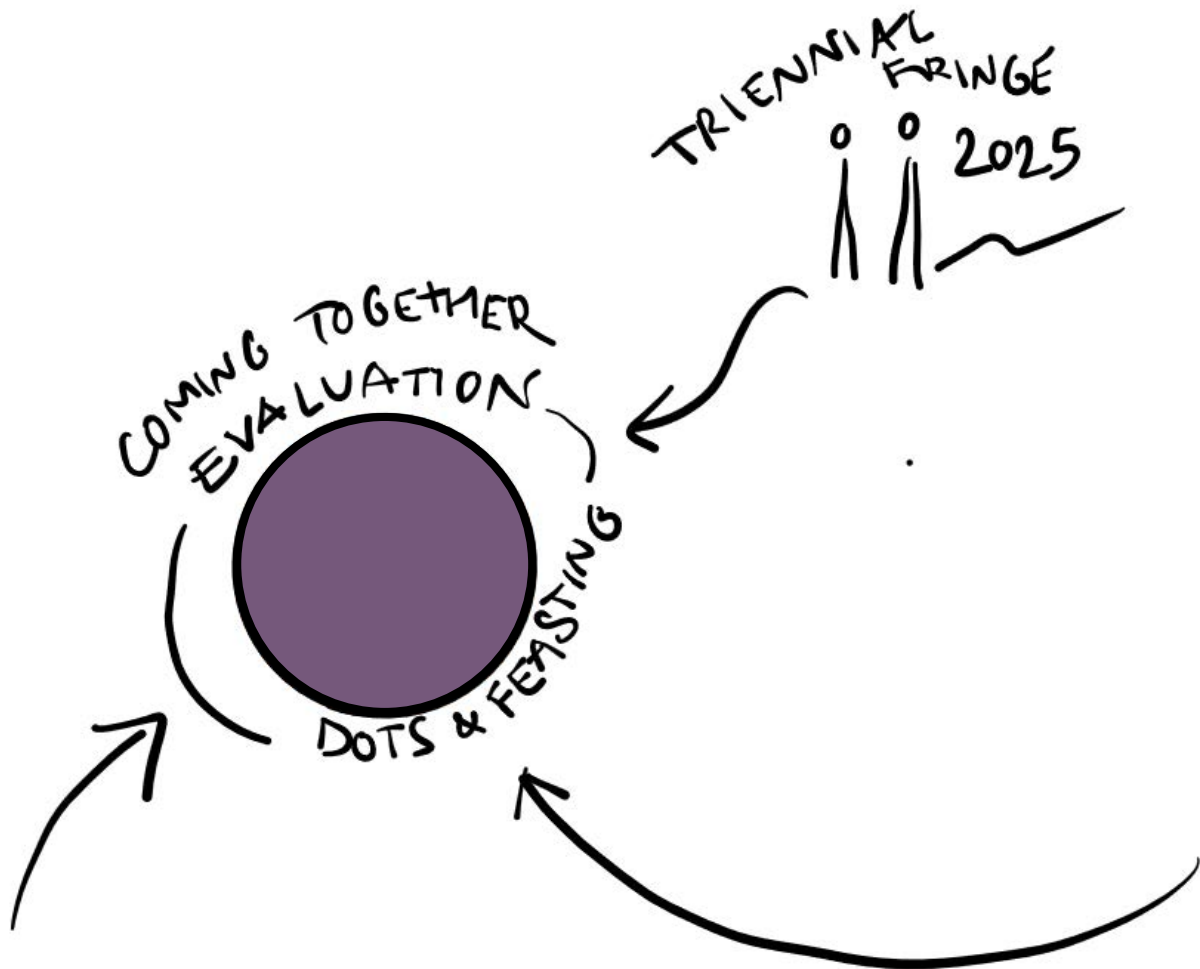
A menu of reflection activities and discussion prompts was developed alongside a menu of light bites, hearty soup and drinks.

Over 30 people developed a map of their journey during the festival. Visual elements from these maps are presented throughout this section.

Five 'learning ingredients' were identified as specific to Fringe's place-based, participatory approach, and provided the discussion focus during the Feast.

- Place / Space
- Audience / Participation
- Community / Local context
- Collaboration / Partnerships
- Artistic process / Creative practice

These are presented in this section as important areas of learning for Folkestone's wider creative ecology.



Artist Alison Neighbour illustrated the coming together of those involved in Flint & Clay for collective reflection and feasting.

Key words and phrases

Place The specific geography, histories, communities and spatial politics within which creative work is made and experienced. In this report, Folkestone is introduced and understood as a place in these terms.

Local Context The local political, economic and social aspects that shape how a place is experienced, who has power within it, and what is possible there.

Politics of Space and Place The recognition that spaces are shaped by power, access, history and perception. The politics of place encompasses the dynamics between residents, local government, the economy, education and access to services.

Local Creative Ecology / Ecology The interconnected network of artists, organisations, spaces, communities and systems across Folkestone that enable creative practice to emerge.

Meaningful Engagement / Participation / Meaningful Opportunities Experiences that enable agency, contribution, connection and growth — rather than passive consumption. Opportunities that are meaningful both personally (supporting development of practice, skills or experience) and civically (contributing to the life of the town).

Place-Based Practice / Place-Based Art Rooted in a specific geography, responding to its histories, assets and communities. In this report, projects are inextricably linked to Folkestone and its past, present and future.

Relational Practice Describing artistic approaches that are built on relationships — between artists, communities, places and ideas — rather than on individual production or passive consumption.

Socially Engaged Art Practice Creative work that centres participation, relationship and social context as both method and material, where the process of working with people is as significant as any outcome.

Artists / Fringe Artists In this report, ‘artist’ refers to anyone who contributed artistic content to the programme. This includes visual artists, performers, curators and others whose work may not fit traditional definitions. Their works in the programme are referred to as projects.

Creative Facilitators Those working on projects who invite audience participation and translate artworks into accessible experiences, creating opportunities for making and exchange.

Cultural Production The systems, infrastructures and labour that enable art to exist and circulate, and the people or activity that results in artwork being made, shown or discussed.

Creative Practice The artistic processes and methods used by individual artists, consciously developed and grounded in criticality. Practice implies active engagement with one’s own learning and with the world — it is more than making art.

Creative Producers Those who programme and produce creative work — managing the relationships, logistics and infrastructures that allow a project to happen.

Curating Used in three distinct ways in this report: curating an exhibition (selecting and arranging works around a theme or question); curating a trail (designing a sequence of encounters across Folkestone); and curating an ecology (the broader act of considering who is invited in and how a creative ecology is nurtured).

Collaboration Working together towards a shared aim. As a principle, collaboration reflects a belief that working across different perspectives produces richer, more representative outcomes. As a methodology, it raises questions of power, reciprocity and equity — ensuring participation is genuine rather than extractive

Place / Space

Flint & Clay Learning

Place and space emerged as one of the most powerful ingredients for how the festival worked. Place carried its own histories and behaviours.

Space, by contrast, was something artists actively shaped, negotiated and opened for others to enter. Artists reflected with clarity on how indoor, outdoor, public and private environments influenced both their confidence and the way people connected with their work.

The strength of Flint & Clay lay in treating these dynamics as central rather than incidental.

Rich learning came from inhabiting place and recognising that how people move through place and share space directly shapes conversation and connection.

When artists, who are themselves local residents, shift into artistic roles within community-held or public spaces, they cross invisible boundaries into zones that are already used, owned or culturally coded.

Across Folkestone, different spatial conditions fundamentally altered how people connect with the projects. Outdoor sites largely engaged passers by enabling incidental encounters and moments of surprise, but also exposed artists to vulnerability and occasional hostility.

Indoor spaces offered warmth, clarity and safety, but often required clearer invitations and introduced thresholds that made some people hesitate.

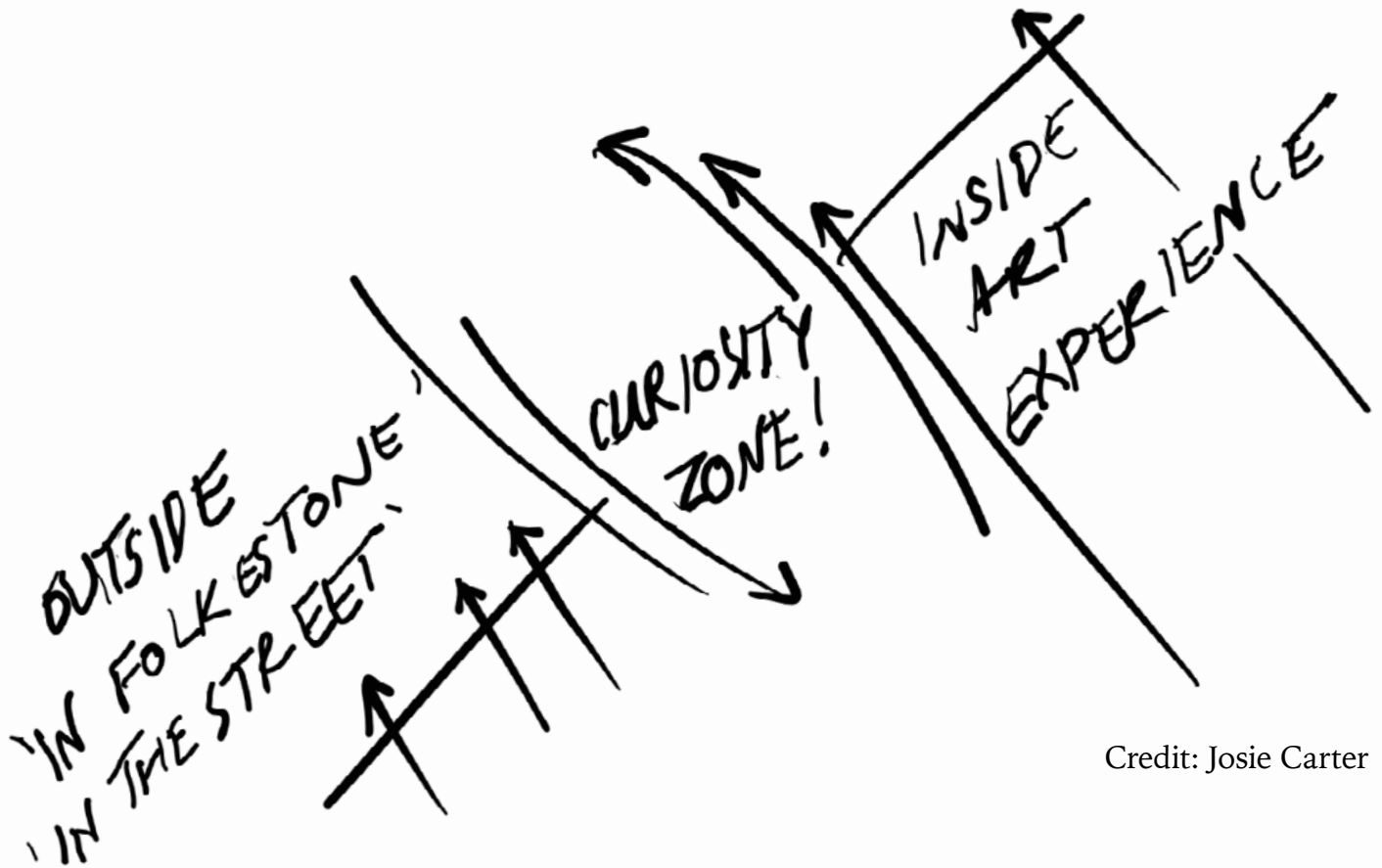
Mobile projects and porous approaches softened these barriers, allowing people to drift in and out without committing to entry.

“Are you
coming in?”

You coming
in?

Coming
in?”

(The Waiting Gym)



Credit: Josie Carter

Artist Josie Carter has drawn a picture demonstrating a type of exchange across the zones that a public artwork inhabits - between place and space, the art and the visitor.

Place and space emerged as one learning for the ecology of practice

“How can we be thoughtful about oppressions, identities and intersections in the grapple we often find ourselves in to take up, use, shape and share public space? How to claim space for arts in public space...

and privately-owned public space?”

(Edge States: Cutaway II)

Folkestone’s socially engaged artists are acutely aware of the ethics of sharing space. Ultimately, place and space are not backdrops but active materials.

Working in public brings vulnerability—weather, exposure, being watched—but also brings powerful moments for conversation and relationship-building. These practices raise questions of guardianship and belonging: whose space is this, and who feels entitled to speak or intervene? Local partners such as bookshops, independent retailers and empty units prove vital as spatial translators, lending trust, context and permission that larger corporate spaces, or traditional art spaces, cannot.

Is there a clear distinction between place as a located identity, carrying history, norms and power, and space as something more flexible: a container that can be made, negotiated or moved? As one working definition proposes, “a place must have a space, but space doesn’t have to be a place.” (Artist)

Place / Space

Practice-shaping questions

1. How will the specific place I'm working in shape the experience?

- What histories, rhythms, communities, memories, or cultural codes already live here?
- How do people currently use this place, and how do I want my work to sit within or disrupt those patterns?

2. What kind of space am I creating within that place?

- Am I building a space of openness, curiosity, pause, play, or dialogue?
- What are the thresholds people must cross—literally or socially—to participate?

3. What does invitation look and feel like in this context?

- How will people know they are invited into it?
- How will I reduce the friction someone might feel when approaching?

4. How does my design of space support conversation—between me and others, or with the work itself?

- What questions am I prompting (implicitly or explicitly)?
- Am I offering accessibility and depth in equal measure?

5. How am I inhabiting the space, and how do I want others to inhabit it?

- What is my role—host, guide, catalyst, co-inhabitant, observer?
- What do I need to carry, negotiate, or surrender in order to make the space work?

Community / Local Context

Flint & Clay learning

Across the programme, projects revealed how deeply local dynamics shape engagement. Belonging, pride of place, protection and territorial feelings were not abstract ideas but live influences that artists encountered daily—sometimes in the form of a welcome, sometimes in the form of resistance. Work that embedded itself within existing local rhythms and community networks was more likely to generate trust and sustained engagement.



Faces of Folkestone by Oliver Onwonwu, participants drawing their portraits on the shared canvas at Fete of FS, cc Dylan Komaromi and OAF25

Projects benefited significantly from local knowledge and community relationships, e.g. with schools, shopkeepers and community organisers, who enabled access to communities who might otherwise remain distant. In several cases, participants expressed pride, signalling how work connected to local narratives.

At the same time, tensions surfaced between locals, newcomers, tourists and the “art-world”. Rather than resolving these differences, projects often held them through questions and exchange, allowing conversation without forcing consensus. Visitors created moments of cultural exchange that may have been temporary but remained meaningful.

Learning for the ecology of practice

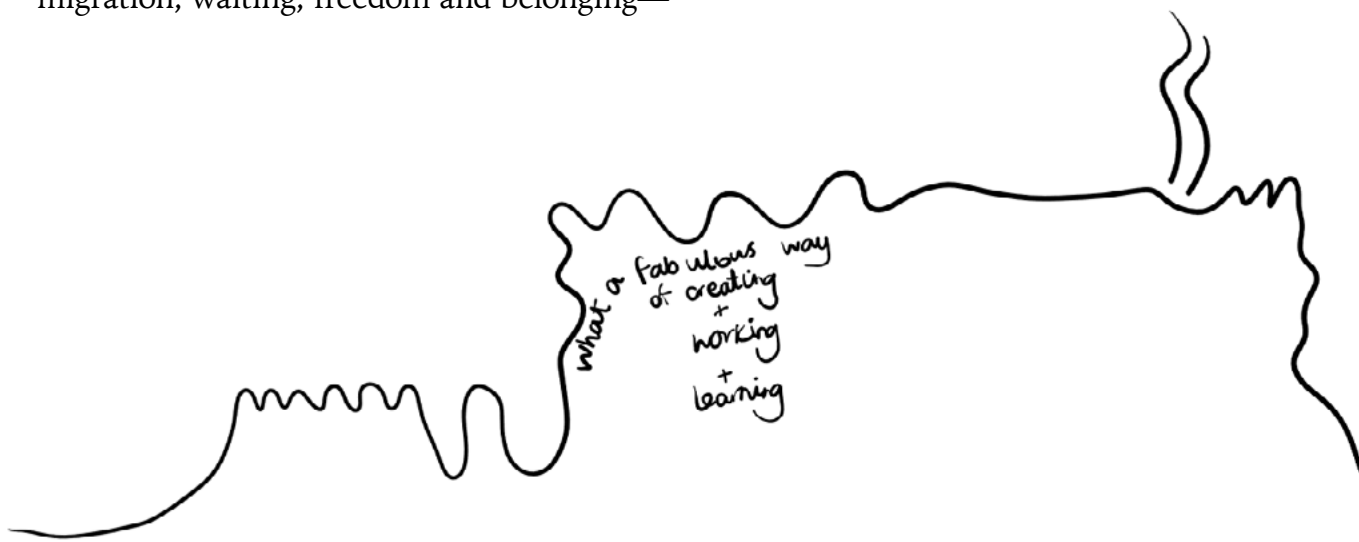
Community spaces such as shops, bookshops, schools, markets and coastal paths proved vital not simply as venues, but as trusted social infrastructure. Their everyday familiarity softened barriers, enabling art projects to exist alongside daily routines rather than apart from them. This helped reach people who may not otherwise enter traditional cultural spaces, strengthening connections between creative practice and the wider community.

Artists' presence in these settings allows conversations to emerge—about work, stress, migration, waiting, freedom and belonging—

demonstrating that art can act as a social bridge, not just a cultural offering. This highlights the importance of continuity, visibility and trust in embedding creative practice locally.

Meaningful engagement grows from working with existing community rhythms, networks and spaces, rather than overlaying new structures.

Community is not a static audience but something living, shaped by relationships, histories and shared environments. Listening carefully, investing time locally, and collaborating with community partners will help strengthen a cultural ecology with social practice at its core—supporting a more connected, confident and inclusive cultural life for the town.



Artist Rhiana Bonterre illustrates their experience of Flint & Clay, demonstrating the varied patterns of creating, working and learning in the local context. Key moments and decisions show up as bumps and paths in the terrain to journey along.

Community / Local context

Practice-shaping questions

**1. Invitation or intervention? How will the community interact with my work?
Will communities feel welcome and invited to participate?**

Or will my work act as an intervention providing a commentary on local context?

2. How can my work actively create opportunities for connection between people who might not otherwise meet?

What kinds of shared activity could help people relate to each other rather than observe the work from the edges?

How can I help build relationships of trust?

3. How am I responding to the specific social, cultural and environmental context of Folkestone?

What local histories, landscapes, tensions or everyday realities could meaningfully shape the form or content of the work?

4. How can partnerships be formed as equitable exchanges, where community and non-arts partners are not just contributors but co-shapers?

Which communities are currently underserved or invisible in past projects, and what structural gaps prevent them from taking part?

Am I rooted in and relevant to local context, or am I looking in from outside?

5. How will I recognise and build on the impact of the work within the community?
What will help me understand whether the work is important and relevant?
How might I give something back to the community?



Collaboration / Partnerships

Flint & Clay learning

Collaboration emerged as both a practical strategy and an ethical position across the programme: a way of working that recognised interdependence, difference and exchange as essential conditions for meaningful place-based practice.

For many artists, partnerships were not add-ons but foundational.



Community Spinning Workshops by Fearless Threads, cc Katy Casey

Artists repeatedly highlighted the value of working beyond the arts sector. These partnerships expanded not only what could be made, but how it could be talked about—introducing new languages, perspectives and entry points that helped reach audiences who might not identify as “arts audiences”. Several reflections pointed to the importance of time. Building relationships, particularly across sectors, cannot be rushed. Where partnerships felt less beneficial, this was often linked to limited time or unclear expectations. At the same time, individuals played crucial connective roles: Diane was described as a “keystone”, holding relationships together and enabling links between the Fringe, the Triennial and wider networks.

Artists also spoke about collaboration as part of an ecology of practice. There was a sense of being “in it together”—supporting one another, exchanging ideas and allowing individuals to prioritise their strengths while others filled gaps in experience.

Learning for the ecology of practice

Collaboration is the connective tissue of relational practice: a means of reaching non-arts audiences, sharing responsibility, and sustaining a local creative ecology.

When rooted in generosity, time and reciprocity, seeing audiences as partners facilitates a way of holding complex ideas—allowing diverse knowledge, skills and communities to meet and shape work collectively.

Collaboration has to be an exchange. The most productive partnerships are characterised by mutual curiosity, openness and respect for different forms of expertise.

Working with organisations and communities requires and enables artists to translate ideas across disciplines, finding multiple ways to speak about the same concerns without diluting complexity. This open-mindedness—on all sides—is a key ingredient of successful collaboration.



Toby Melville Brown. The close dots represents the interconnection of Folkestone Fringe, Open Art Folke and Folkestone Triennial - Demonstrating the coming together of local partners.

Collaboration / Partnerships

Practice-shaping questions

1. Where are relationships already strong, and where is trust still being negotiated?

- Which existing community networks, spaces or individuals already hold trust in our project?

- Where might slowing down, listening or showing up without an agenda be necessary before making work?

2. How reciprocal are our partnerships in practice?

- Who benefits most from this collaboration, and who carries the labour, risk or exposure?

- What would change if partners helped shape the project from the outset rather than being invited in later?

3. Who else could act as a co-host or connector into the community?

- Which non-arts partners (shops, schools, faith groups, social spaces, businesses) already gather the people we want to reach?

- How might working through familiar, everyday settings lower barriers to participation and build confidence?

4. How can we better integrate place as a partner, not merely as a location?

- What local histories, tensions, rhythms or shared experiences are shaping how people meet the work?

- How can the physical environment, social habits and emotional atmosphere of Folkestone actively inform the form of the project?

5. What knowledge, voices or lived experiences are missing from our current ecology?

- Whose perspectives might help us better navigate belonging, pride of place, protection or division?

- How can we create conditions where those voices are not just present, but influential and valued?

Artistic Process / Creative Practice *Flint & Clay* learning

A relational approach sat at the heart of how projects generated meaningful invitations—how they signalled welcome, shaped access, and held space for conversation across Folkestone.



TappedIn, Community Studio Residency, collecting children's honest reviews on Triennial 2025 artworks at Fete of Folkestone, cc Sangmin Cha

This approach created the umbrella over the range of artforms and creative processes included in the festival programme.

Artists worked with performance, mobile and pop-up structures, participatory workshops, and wearable forms that blurred art and everyday life. These choices were not neutral: each artform actively shaped how people encountered the festival's core questions of connection, division and unimagined futures.

Invitation emerged as a creative practice in its own right. Artists adjusted language, signage, materials and posture; used embodied prompts, mobile formats and simplified templates; and learned when a direct, friendly verbal invitation was essential. Many participants expressed delight at being able to “make something,” “try,” or “explore,” highlighting how hands-on processes lowered barriers and built confidence.

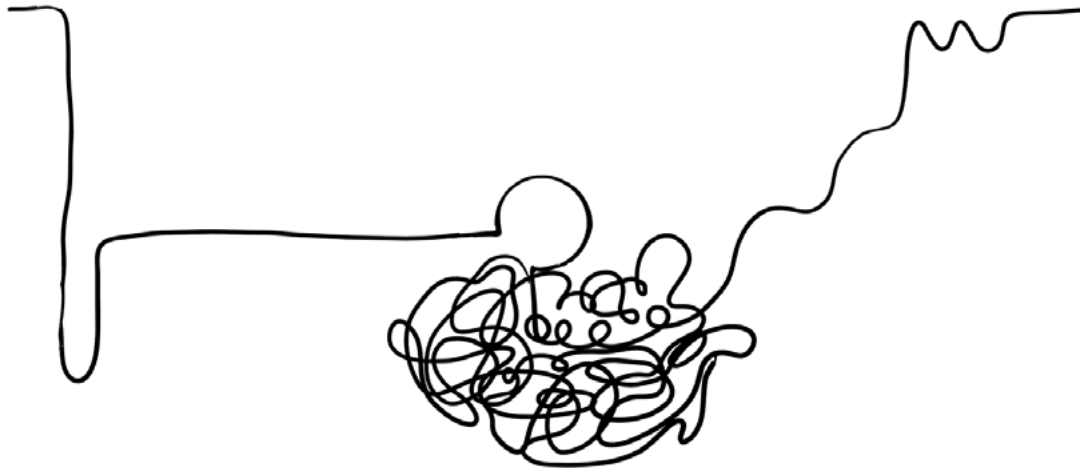
Learning for the ecology of practice

In public space, artforms often are the relational invitation. Visibility, material presence and conceptual tone of the project determined whether something felt playful, intriguing or intimidating.

Unexpected performances or objects sometimes triggered guardedness, while clearly framed indoor or semi-defined spaces tended to invite deeper, more permissive engagement. Time of day matters too: Friday evening audiences behaved differently from Sunday walkers or school groups, reminding artists that context is a collaborator.

Across projects, the artform functioned as a shared language—one that allowed people to talk about belonging, difference, work, stress, freedom and hope without needing the “right” words. Artists were visibly valued as hosts and facilitators, translating ideas, listening carefully and responding in the moment.

Surprise and unpredictability were constant: who engaged, how deeply, and why often defied expectation. This live responsiveness—rooted in material choices, human invitation and local rhythms—remains one of Folkestone’s strongest assets for developing future practice.



In this illustration of the journey of Flint & Clay, by Artists Erin and Sammy of *TAPPEDIN* they indicate the productive messiness of creative practice and the tug of not knowing with needing to make decisions.

Artistic Process /Creative Practice

Practice-shaping questions

1. What core artistic principles, materials or gestures define my practice — and how will they meet this specific place and situation?

- How might these materials or methods feel to someone encountering them unexpectedly in public or shared space?

- What needs translating, softening, or amplifying for this context without losing integrity?

2. What creative prompts, actions or invitations will help participants feel capable, curious and part of the process?

- How will people know what to do — or that there is no wrong way to begin?

- How can prompts support confidence and play rather than performance or expertise?

3. How will I balance structure with improvisation as people arrive, respond, or resist?

- What elements must remain fixed to hold the work together?

- Where is there space to adapt in response to audience behaviour, timing, or mood?

4. How does my chosen artform act as a language for conversation, reflection or meaning-making across difference?

- What does this form allow people to express that might be harder to say directly?

- How might different audiences (children, passers-by, artists, locals) read or use it differently?

5. How will I notice, capture and reflect on what emerges so learning feeds into future work?

- What moments of surprise, depth or friction feel significant to carry forward?

- How will insights be shared — with collaborators, peers, or the wider local ecology?