

**Future Forest
Forest of Imagination 2018**

Evaluation report

Future Forest | Forest of Imagination 2018

Friday 28 September to Sunday 30 September 2018, central Bath

Evaluation report sections:

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I. Introduction

a. The 2018 Forest of Imagination 'Future Forest' event: a summary

Forest of Imagination is an outward-facing contemporary arts and design event created by Grant Associates, 5x5x5=creativity and local creative industries that reimagines a familiar space to inspire everyone's creativity and heighten a sense of nature in an urban environment.

The September 2018 event 'Future Forest' transformed Kingsmead Square, the Avon Street corridor and Riverside Park on the River Avon using four 'Forest fragments' – Forest Canopy, Forest Floor, Regeneration Forest and Floating Forest - and highlighted the importance of including nature and art in Bath's regeneration project by the river. Artistic, immersive interventions re-imagined these areas showing how creativity can help deliver social, environmental regeneration by testing how public space is used and engaging the local community.

Forest of Imagination is open to all and actively inclusive. We invited children, families and people of all ages to explore, make and learn in a creative, intuitive and imaginative way. The aim of the Forest was to create an engaging and thought provoking series of experiences for all ages but with an emphasis on children and their connection with the natural environment within the city. It aimed to reinforce a renewed interest in natural worlds within the city, highlighting the importance of engaging people with the experience of nature and outdoor play. This year we also created a pop-up House of Imagination in Bath College as a creative making space for everyone.

Forest of Imagination was located between the river and Kingsmead Square, an historical city square which has a tall plane tree at its heart. The square is connected to the River Avon via Avon Street. The local riverside area has recently been re-landscaped as part of a flood defense scheme, and there are a number of major developments in the process of planning at Bath Quays. Each of the areas provided settings in which ideas about the past and the future use of the spaces could be considered, including how planning might best be approached so that it includes families and children. This site was chosen for the richness of its location within the landscape and cityscape, with access to the river and amenities including both public outdoor space and the indoor facilities of Bath College.

The use of Kingsmead Square, Avon Street and the Riverside areas all required permissions from the Council. We also sought further sole use of Avon Street but this was only gained for the road immediately next to Kingsmead Square. Using commissioned artworks and designed structures to connect these sites, Forest of Imagination changed the immediate sense of place and how it might be lived in. These created an essential element of the Forest experience, encouraging creative participation within public spaces, through acts of making and also through linking each work via the public paths, bringing them together into a continuous sensory experience of the cityscape. Participants moved between workshops, art installations and structures in each of the different locations over the course of the event.

b. Evaluation and future practice

This report is an evaluative overview of Forest of Imagination 2018, including how it worked over the three main days in each of the different spaces. We also consider the nature of the public engagement and the dynamics of the workshops and creative activities. Exploration is at the heart of the Forest of Imagination, and documentation and evaluation are a key part of this.

Each Forest of Imagination throws up new challenges and possibilities. It is inherently surprising and serendipitous, and yet also very purposively planned, allowing for creativity to shine. The value of this report is to reflect on this meeting of the carefully managed and the unexpected, in ways that inform the ongoing development of our learning, teaching and making practices, inspire new ways of working for the next Forest of Imagination.

After five years of Forests of Imagination, we have evolved a complex set of collaborations, responding to new sites, with individuals and organisations becoming more integrated with and involved in our work. Each year reinvigorates our ideas for our future practice and activities and how we work with people and organisations. The temporary festival of the Forest encourages us to look ahead to what we would like to achieve in the future and present more ideas for the longer-term work of 5x5x5=creativity, Grant Associates and creative collaborators.

This evaluative report also begins to anticipate the next Forest of Imagination, looking towards our next Bath residency at Holburne Museum and Sydney Gardens in June 2019 and beyond that, to the future work of 5x5x5=creativity as an organisation that aims to put creativity, inspirational education and nature at the heart of children and young people's and our community's experience of place, creativity and learning within Bath. 5x5x5=creativity is now affiliated with the Centre for Cultural and Creative Industries at Bath Spa University with Forest of Imagination as a flagship project in partnership with Grant Associates.

Collaboration is fundamental to the event. This year we were very pleased to be able to work closely with Bath Spa University, the egg (Theatre Royal Bath), Bath College, Bath Children's Literature Festival, FCB Studios, Canal & River Trust and over 50 individual artists. We worked directly with over 400 school children in workshops, and over 7,500 children, family and other participants over the whole weekend. These various partnerships and the extent of the active public participation indicate the complexity of evaluating the work, and so we need to consider the main questions that inform the Forest of Imagination and how it fits the work and objectives of 5x5x5=creativity and Grant Associates.

2. Key themes and questions for evaluation and future reflection and analysis

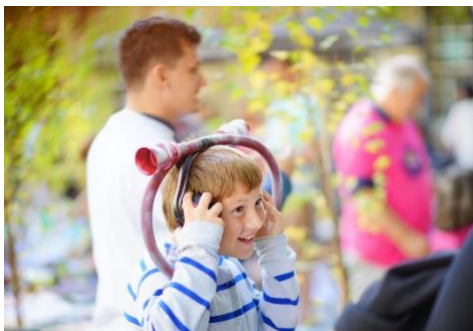
This evaluation of Forest of Imagination 2018 will focus on a number of key themes and questions, emerging as priorities for the organizing team and key partners.

While in recent years we have emphasised three aspects of the work - transformational 'glow' moments, experience of nature in the city and the role of creativity and imagination - we will also to begin to address other aspects of the activities which relate to the organisation's impact on wider practices of creative learning, teaching and making.

Our main questions informing this report – and often reaching beyond the analysis provided here – include:

- How can we show the short and long-term effects of transformational creative experiences?
- How can we rigorously and informatively capture the transformative nature of the Forest of Imagination?
- How can we analyse the Forest of Imagination as a research practice that creates opportunities to question and reimagine ways of learning?
- What are the infrastructural and other obstacles that had to be overcome to achieve Forest of Imagination 2018, and how might the related learning best inform future practice of 5x5x5=creativity and House of Imagination?
- In terms of increasing impact, how can opportunities for children's creative experiences during Forest of Imagination inform their wider learning and making? How do existing local partnerships encourage this?
- How do we address (separately and together) making, learning and teaching in children's and other participants' experiences of Forest of Imagination?
- In what ways does the work of the Forest of Imagination help to inform the work of 5x5x5=creativity and House of Imagination, and vice versa as part of the longer-term development of both?

These questions are concerned with both specific activities of the Forest of Imagination as well as how we understand them as part of the long-term aims of the organisation in its wider context.



3. Methods for collecting and analysing data

Following the approaches to evaluation developed within 5x5x5=creativity's work, data collection will focus primarily on the documentation of visitors' experiences through observing, recording and mapping experience using qualitative methods including narrative observation, field notes, photography and video.

We are interested in how we create special engagement experiences. The concept of 'glow moments', in this context being significant moments of engagement in a creative experience, will inform documentation processes, with the aim of recording where and how some significant and potentially transformative moments emerge in response to creative experiences across the Forest of Imagination.

Capturing dialogue with visitors of all ages, as part of the documentation of the event, informs the evaluation in response to themes and questions identified above. Where appropriate, and within the context of creative experiences, visitors were asked about their experience of different aspects of the Forest. Our questions focused on potentially transformational engagement, for example where visitors are prompted to think, feel or act differently, either in the immediate, short or longer-term transformations. This dialogue is approached in an open and reflective manner, inviting visitors' responses to their experiences through discussion, rather than asking them to address specific feedback questions.

Qualitative data collected through documentation of the event can be used in conjunction with data collected from other sources (both qualitative and quantitative), including social media, visitor numbers, and data collected by partner organisations, to inform evaluation of the Forest of Imagination in response to the themes and questions identified above.

Exploration of each of these themes can be informed and illustrated with 'glow moments' from across the event. Data collected can inform evaluation at different levels, including the evaluation of the event in terms of its overall intentions and organisation, and how these helped (or not) the success of the event in terms of engaging and stimulating participants.

This narrative data sits alongside data from other sources, including social media activity, press responses and documentation from partners working with and in the Forest of Imagination. This shines some light on the potential impact of the event, for participants including artists, teachers and parents/carers, as well as children and young people, who form the majority of those interacting with the Forest of Imagination.

4. Engagement activities within the Forest of Imagination

The summaries below present activities and experiences that can be mapped across the Forest of Imagination. These have been collected from observation, photographs and reflective accounts from collaborators and participants. Following the summaries and comments is a section responding to the key themes and questions that might help us to learn from the event.

The impact of the activities can be seen in how they motivate people to be creative in response to the surroundings, but also in how one activity engages with another one. People moved from one to another, bringing new ideas, thinking in all sort of ways, making new things and developing skills and responses in new directions.

Characterised by both variety and complexity, the Forest of Imagination is an event that people appreciate for all sorts of reasons, but active engagement is at the heart of its appeal, as some of the comments below illustrate:

Comments from children:

I'm looking forward to making the next tree! - Orion age 9 (he stayed for nearly two hours creating his trees for the Giant Miniature Forest)

I think it's really fun because it's all inclusive. - Megan (12)

It's fun and I like the Clay Forest, I made a mouse for the Forest. - Nell (10)

Forest of Imagination is totally amazing! - Sam (8)



Comments from parents:

The Forest of Imagination is a magical event that is hugely inspiring and enjoyable for children and adults alike. We all need more creativity in our lives.

- Sophie, mother of Alex (13), Izzy (10) and Toby (8)

We spent a very stimulating day at the Forest of Imagination in Bath at the end of September. My daughter and her little cousin were captivated by the installations and the activities. - Parent

They particularly enjoyed the clay shaping wall and the story telling in the tent by the river. The hot air balloon made of plastic bags was inspired and allowed a tale to be told of reuse and recycle. The whole event was put together with flair and imagination and allowed the children space to explore and discover.

Congratulations to all involved. - Parent

And now I'm happy! - Suzi (created two trees for Giant Miniature Forest)

There's a real cross section of activities and fun from beginning and end.

- Barry (his family stayed for two hours in the House of Imagination taking part in workshops)

I really enjoyed having the chance to play like a child and to connect with nature in the city through art. - Zosia

It's fantastic to explore usually un-child friendly streets in a fun way. Another tremendous year, thank you FOI! - Sarah (mum of two, living in Bath)



Summaries of Artists, Activities & Installations, with brief detail and comments

The Forest of Imagination activities were a series of creative workshops, including engagement with design, science, writing and art, designed and created by 5x5x5=creativity artists mainly for children and young people. These include workshops conducted with local schools on Friday 28 September.

The event was split into three main locations: the Forest Canopy (in and around Kingsmead Square, including the north end of Avon Street), the Forest Floor (including the south section of Avon Street and Bath College), Regeneration Forest (the riverside area, below Avon Street) and Floating Forest (on the River Avon). In each area there was a different selection of activities. Descriptions and analysis of the sections follow this order below.

a. Forest Canopy

Grant Associates: Forest Inflatables

Grants Associates created and installed a Family of Inflatables in collaboration with Designs in Air and Imagine-Inflatables. These were: Dreamer the Rabbit, 3 Baobabs and the Inflatable Forest. Inflatable structures have an instant attraction to young people – the animated structures invited participation and, when there was an interior, inhabitation. The inflatables form an informal setting, creating an instant spectacle and sense of excitement in the space, with a dreamlike simulation of the natural world. Workshops with Matt Cleary, dance artist from Three Ways School within the inflatable forest.

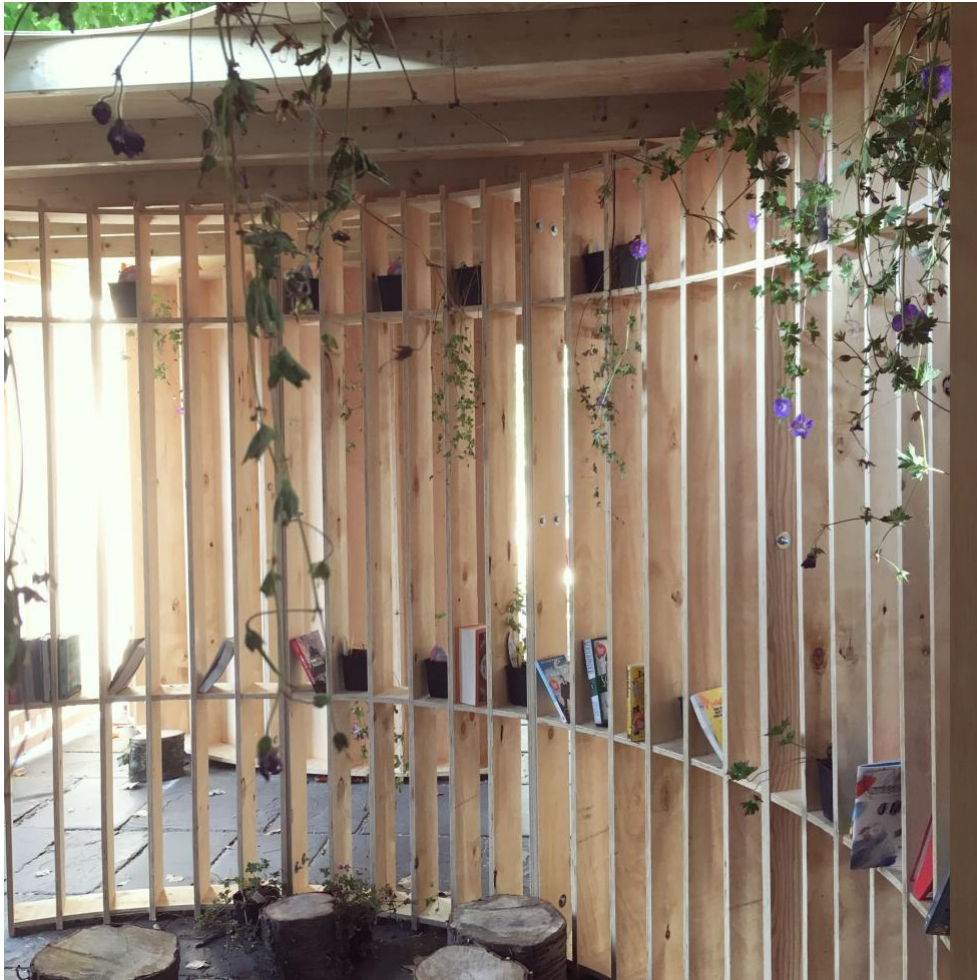


Tomás Saraceno: Aerocene Museo Aero Solar

The Aerocene Foundation, a project founded by artist Tomás Saraceno and collaborators, invited the community to create a Museo Aero Solar to engage visitors and to think about the future of these spaces in the heart of the city. Made of plastic bags, this engaged people with a project that incorporated recycling and re-use within it. This project had a much tighter space to operate in than last year, the Museo Aero Solar anchored in the roadway of Avon Street. The process of collaboration brought in local people to engage with the making process, sharing skills and ideas.



Comment from Joanna Wright (collaborator): Museo Aero Solar is a beautiful object and I am very pleased to have been involved with its creation and can see that it has great potential and many people were very excited by it and the reuse of plastic bags.



Luke Macnab, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios – The Den

It's been an honour contributing to the Forest of Imagination Festival. The ethos and vibrancy of the festival is one which you can't help but be captivated by, want to contribute to and instinctively share with as many people as possible! Having been involved before, it was wonderful this year to engage with the festival through attending the design meetings and developing a more substantial scheme in terms of built form. Reflecting on the process it was definitely an enjoyable experience, developing a concept from sketch to construction, and when I saw people using the space it brought the whole thing to life for me. For example on the opening night I remember someone telling me a parent was reading her child a story in the den, unprompted, which was wonderful. The two largest challenges were, of course, logistics and cost ... the actual build was logistically intense and was only possible through the very generous volunteering of many people, and the help of the festival leaders including Penny, Luke and Andrew, to whom I owe a lot!

Shai Akram: The Bioluminescent Shore

The Bioluminescent Shore was an installation for families designed by Shai Akram and was generously supported by The Leverhulme Trust, the egg theatre, 5x5x5=creativity and Arts Council England. This was her first piece specifically for children and marks a milestone in her research around their commitment to fascinations, and irresistible urge to learn. The installation presented visitors with a pool of seemingly dormant water, secretly powered by an engine of bioluminescent algae. Visitors were invited to instinctively interact with the surface, in whichever way they wished. Their actions were hoped to create splashes of stars, electric blue ripples and glowing edges - gently persuading them over the threshold of learned sensibility, giving into an instinctive urges of curiosity. The installation experienced some technical problems, as described by Shai below.

Comment from Shai: Bioluminescent Shore is a larger proposal that requires tests and pilots to journey from abstract concept to realising the larger ambition. Forest of Imagination was very useful as a milestone during the project's development as it came with a 'hard' deadline to work towards and a key audience to consider. The journey from concept to outcome for the Forest of Imagination was eventful, there were many challenges to overcome - site, time, budget and not least physical proximity - but the biggest heartbreak came from the death of our algae on the opening night. The response from the organisers, parents and children, especially on that first night was amazing. They were totally prepared to ignore the reality and imagine what might have been. The support, trust and very generous understanding in the face of that disaster has been a surprising and extremely positive experience and one that I will remember for a long time. The experience provided a steep learning curve and many valuable lessons in how the project might successfully proceed in the future - I would like to imagine that next year, I can come back and produce the next milestone - this time with sparkles.



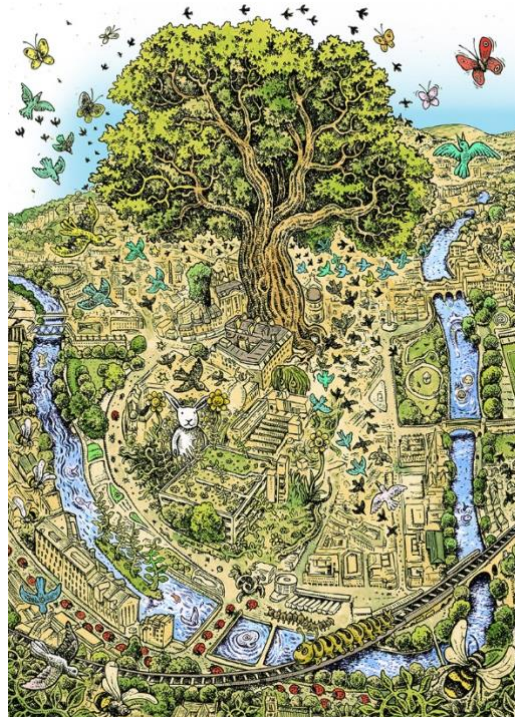
Martyn and Gabriel Ware with Illustrious: ‘The Beauty of Children at Play’

‘The Beauty of Children at Play’ is an hour-long, continuous, immersive 3D soundscape created by the composers Gabriel Ware, Martyn Ware, Duncan Brookfield and Zozo Hedderwick - featuring the sounds of children playing, laughing and singing around the world. The main soundscape emanated from the giant plane tree in Kingsmead Square, and various elements of the composition also played from within the acorn structures located along Avon Street down to the river.

Perry Harris: Perry’s Pop-Up Exhibition

These consisted of the Forest of Imaginations chief illustrator’s exhibition of illustrations around Kingsmead Square.

Comment from Perry: You've been building this event for a few years, adding more elements and installations and I felt this year it had really established itself. The locations were great. Kingsmead Square worked well as a public space as did the newly developed riverside area. I like the idea of the Forest in the city. It is essentially a children's festival and as my children are grown up it's not something I can fully participate in, but the atmosphere was great & the children all seemed to be having a great time. If you carry on building on what you have you can't go wrong. For my part, I'm proud really to have my artwork as part of it.



Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios: Creative Courtyard and Forest Den

FCBS designed a set of street furniture that combined eating, learning and creating, inviting playfulness and making on communal tables for creativity. This changed some of the dynamics of Kingsmead Square, including creating the scene for workshop activities.

The Forest Den installation raised the agenda of how we incorporate the habitats and 'dens' of flora and fauna ecosystems in an ever-urbanising human population, allowing the nature to flourish in the urban realm. How do humans form 'dens' of privacy, safety and comfort amongst the business of urban life? 'The den' is a space of calm amongst the intensity and vibrancy of urban life. The attitudes and spaces formed in the den also resonated with the Children's Literature Festival, which celebrates all kinds of cultural activity – from creation to deep individual engagement with work.



Adrian Snell: Theatre Bus

Adrian Snell is a music therapist at Three Ways School and he created a sensory sound installation. Also a composer and recording artist, he boarded the theatre bus to take to “the forest that never sleeps”. This encouraged everyone to be immersed in the sounds, colors and textures of the forest, joining in music making with him, using a range of instruments that evoked this local landscape.

Comment from Adrian: My theme for the ‘Forest of imagination’ was ‘The Forest Never Sleeps’ - and my invitation to my visitors was ‘come in and let me prove it!’ It was a wonderful day. We were nearly full all day and probably the single most delightful thing about an event / multi-sensory experience like this is to watch the faces and reactions of the children as they discover, sometimes for the very first time, a sound, a way of playing an unusual instrument, a moment of truly interacting with others, with the forest theme. As a composer and music therapist, I know that for many, those moments will be remembered, quite possibly, for a lifetime, such is the power of music and the imagination!

Matt Leece, Ray Clarke and Paul Bynoth: Drawing Machines

This design team created three different drawing machines that represent a different habitat within the Forest - the floor, the understory and the canopy. The different marks created represented some of the animals that live within these habitats, but also how people use the machines. The machines invite the public to interact with each one in different ways.

Comment from Matt: The drawing machines proved engaging for everyone from nursery children dabbing the rolls of paper (as they could not reach high enough) to a retired couple working together to draw a circle on the Understory Machine.

It was interesting to see how everyone wanted their own bit of white paper, but it was even more interesting to see what happened when most of the white paper was covered in marks and the fear of a blank canvas was removed, resulting in the drawing becoming a lot more free, dense and layered.

The limited number of goggles on the Understory and Canopy Machines encouraged people to intuitively work together and negotiate with each other, to create the drawings collaboratively. The Understory Machine unanticipatedly was super wheelchair accessible; it allowed for individuals with only limited movement in the arms or hands the opportunity to create bold marks on a large scale. The overall story we felt was strong and could be understood on multiple levels, from children automatically understanding how to use them to adults interpreting the broader narrative.



Moving forward, we would like to explore how the 180m of drawing could be exhibited, maybe framing sections in colour-coordinated frames alongside the machines running as a second workshop. The drawing could be sold to fund future workshops. We are also looking forward to potentially arranging another workshop with Three Ways School. The drawing machines may develop into a more on-going series of workshop and we look forward to experimenting with different drawing materials and mechanisms.



Rick Hall and Ignite!: Creative and Curious Science Busking

Ignite! returned to the Forest again this year with their family-friendly encounters with art and science. Their objects for exploration included Confuserphones, slinkies and marshmallow hands - science busking activities all designed to surprise and delight and stimulate curiosity and creativity.

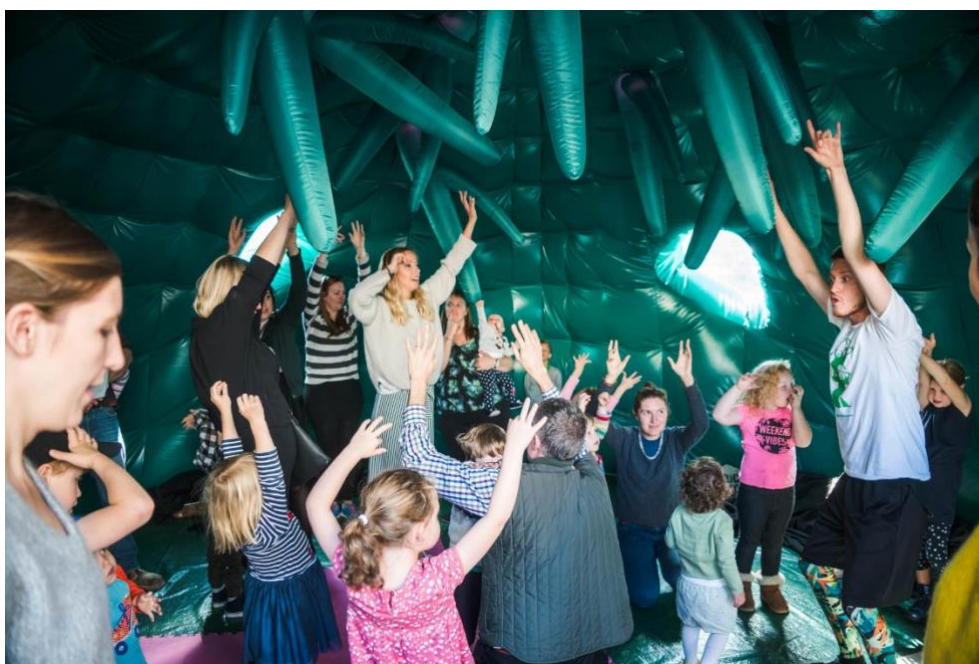


Marc Parrett: Interactive performance

This was a puppet-based interactive walkabout performance, in the Kingsmead, Avon Street and Riverside areas, as well as at The Edge (University of Bath).

Matt Cleary: Sensory workshops

Inclusive dance artist Matt Cleary in association with Three Ways School invited children and associated adults to a very special immersive and interactive dance and movement adventure. Matt Cleary and the dancers put on an imaginative physical and creative exploration of multi-sensory stimuli, moving together to build and create the future forest of our dreams including places to hide and places to play.

**b. Forest Floor (including the House of Imagination)**

This area was marked by an acorn trail, consisting of giant blue acorns linking Kingsmead Square to Bath Quays and the River Avon and offering a trail of playful sounds in collaboration with the group Illustrious. The activities in the House of Imagination, based at Bath College, included:

Alison Harper: Shimmer and Hideaway

Working with students from Bath College and the local community, artist Alison Harper re-imagined old materials to create a veil around the Great Plane Tree in Kingsmead Square and a Den under the Willow Tree outside Bath College. Made from commonly discarded waste materials, these installations reassessed our relationship with the material world and created a quiet, secret place in which to sit, make and imagine.



Comment from Alison: What I love about Forest is the fluidity of its imaginings, it is never the same, and although carefully planned still twists and turns to become something else. Each individual work and event augments and enhances the others by virtue of a collaborative creativity that results in innovative and original happenings. The subtle yet loose web-like structure of its administration allows for it to grow, and also to contract if needs be. An obvious yet understated professionalism belies the passion that is inherent in bringing original and creative art-making activities to all, adults and children alike, in a fun and accessible way. By working at Bath College for several days in order to complete Shimmer and Hideaway, I was interested in bringing my making and practice 'into the open', to reveal the processes that I use, in order to make my work and ideas more accessible. This resulted in interesting conversations and rewarding relationships developing with staff and students at the college. I benefitted from the experience of engaging with an audience, and was challenged by the scale of work I produced, Shimmer being the largest work I have made.



Secret Garden Installation: Multi-Disciplinary Response to Nature

This work was produced by Bath College Art and Design students, taking inspiration from the natural world. The secret garden was an interactive art installation inspired by Matisse's paper cut-out mural, that allowed children and adults to express themselves by making a unique three-dimensional collage exploring the shapes, forms and colours in the natural world such as flowers, leaves and animals. Through the course of the day these evolved and grew into a garden. The idea was to create a fun, happy, safe space where children could explore the relationship between art and nature, and to transform an urban interior location into a wild and colourful experience using spontaneously created designs.



Comment from Bath College: Bath College has been delighted to be involved in this fabulous community collaboration. Our Art and Design and Student Participation teams put their heart and soul into producing an excellent artwork display on the windows of Herschel Building facing Avon Street. The students who volunteered across all the events did Bath College proud. They were enthusiastic, hardworking and a great asset to the Forest of Imagination. It was heart-warming to see children and families leave reality behind and enter a world of creativity, play and magic. We enjoyed seeing their imaginations captured and happy smiling faces. Working with the super-talented Alison Harper was a true joy and we felt pleased to engage in discussions around plastic waste. Everyone involved was lovely and their passion for the project shone through. It was a fantastic team effort involving dedicated staff and students across the college. We feel honoured to be part of this great event and look forward to joining it again for more enjoyment next year.

Sophie Erin Cooper: Miniature Forest

Participants were invited to create a giant miniature forest, designing and creating small trees to add to the growing 3D forest.

Comment from Sophie: Forest of Imagination is such a wonderful event to be a part of - it completely aligns with my own love of nature, creativity and giving ourselves time to let our imaginations run free. I love how it gives all ages that space to play in so many different creative ways. I loved seeing children and adults creating miniature trees in my workshop, sometimes working as a team - other times getting completely absorbed in their project. It was fantastic to see how all the trees in our Giant Miniature Forest were completely different - some with fruit, swings, nests, treehouses or campfires - others like crazy wonderful abstract sculptures, all brilliantly unique. I found the Forest team supportive and Bath College worked well as a space to hold the workshop, I was really happy with how the day went. I tallied everyone who took part and it was 70 people in total, some making one tree, others creating a few to add to the forest. A few trees were taken home to start their own woodland as they couldn't quite part with them! A few families also said they'd go on to make more at home - so lovely to hear the workshop has inspired further creativity beyond the day.

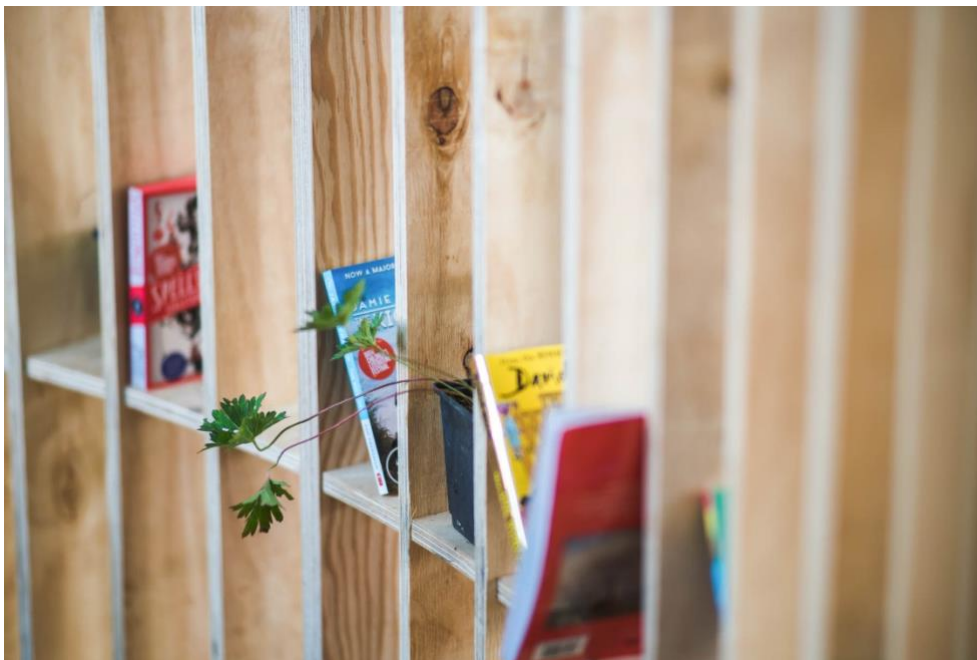


James Randall: Imagine and Write: Your Story in the Forest

This was a guided writing exercise developing individual stories set within, and springing out of, the Forest of Imagination setting, based on imaginary characters living in the forest. The artist installations suggested different possibilities and participants were invited to imagine unusual creatures that might live in the forest, then develop a story from that.

Comment from James: Participants mostly had an age range from 5 up to 12 and also some parents, a grandparent and various other adults. People engaging with the exercise were able to quickly understand what they could do,

turning initial ideas into a piece of writing. Some needed more guidance, as they got stuck with too many ideas, a first line or a title. Some needed help with structure so the story moved on at different stages, taking paths that may first be easier to talk about than to commit to paper. The mix of activities in the foyer worked well together, so that people had time to do different things, allowing children autonomy while parents focused on their youngest children or did other things (like go to the college café). It was possible to see how in a future workshop different age groups could be engaged in different writing activities at the same time, so children and others aren't limited to one style of writing project – particularly useful with writing, where participation can be more age exclusive.



Mark E Smith: Fantasy Garden

This was a drop-in communal collage taking inspiration from the Forest of Imagination, engaging children and adults who cut out, folded and decorated paper shapes to add to the forest structures in the atrium.

Comment from Mark: The workshop was a great success, the materials worked well, and I was delighted by the number of people who participated in creating this fantastical garden. The children especially enjoyed the workshop, which allowed them to think creatively in playful, visual ways.

Shani Ali: Street Freedom For Wildlife: Road Signs

Participants designed and made safety and adventure road signs for all those creatures that might fancy a day trip, a night out on the town or just hanging with their friends. The signs were created to reclaim the streets for our furry, feathered and many-legged friends, letting the car, bus and lorry drivers, cyclists and pedestrians know of the parallel wildlife worlds.

Comment from Shani: As artists we always feel there is a team of people that not only care about what is happening but making sure that the artists are supported from knowing where they are going, to checking in to see if everything is ok. Sarah was a key contact. It also always makes a difference when the organisers (Penny) makes time to say hello and goodbye. This makes the work feel valued and important. A steady stream of people came through. Mainly family units. Some children returning the following day with the other parent. We had people stay for over an hour making.

As one child said “I’m here for the festival” lots of people were aware of the festival however we did have some people that by chance had stumbled across it and were making the most of it. We had children aged 3 to 12 engaging with the work as well as adults/parents/grandparents collaborating with their children or working on their own pieces. All the participants loved the idea of their work being shown collectively. Being outside in a public space made this really work. A little bit of activism in action.

Pippa Pixley: Scribble & Scrunch

This was a Multi-Sensory Interactive Storytelling and Art Workshop aimed at children aged 3-7 years old, involving cutting, sticking, scribbling, scrunching – and having lots of fun designing, making and storytelling. This followed an interactive and participatory play-based storytelling centered on themes of friendship, feelings and the spirit of adventure.

Catharine Naylor: Forest Leaves: Book making & print making (Bath College Garden)

Taking inspiration from the Forest of Imagination, this workshop encouraged participants to make their own little book filled with imagination to take home with them, engaging children with accessible artistic processes.

Alice Maddicott: The City of Trees

A creative writing workshop for children to create an overgrown city inspired by Bath and the Forest of Imagination.

Comment from Alice: I worked with two school groups to create an imaginary overgrown city that could then be used for the creation of stories and poems. Starting with a discussion of what we might want to include and letting our imaginations run wild, we then went outside to collect ideas, writing descriptive sentences, ideas and then creating a map of our city with imaginative labels. I was really impressed with how all the children, with some encouragement to be confident in their ideas, managed to create amazing cities - flying flowers, seed rain that grew buildings, football stadiums floating in the canopy. The combination of maps and writing meant that those who thought very visually could also really get deeply into the task.

Margarita Sidirokastriti: Globary

The globary is a global library. It is mobile and it carries illustrated books from around the world in their original language. This creative writing workshop was inspired by the imagery of a chosen book.

Comment from Margarita: The Forest of Imagination has been a great platform for showcasing the library for the first time. It made me understand a bit better how some children respond to abstract ideas and how they may feel threatened by them. The drop-in format would work better with parent/child engagement rather than groups with a short time/space limit as group work didn't allow for loosening the mind to become receptive to those abstract ideas.

However, most children understood the concept and engaged with it fully and so did the carers. It gave me an insight into the schooling mind frame of results and targets and how to tailor the project to avoid such expectations. All in all a very fruitful day.



Architecture Is...: Design School

This was an interactive design school where children and young people (aged 7+) were asked to design and make their own space for the city, using drawing, collaging and model making.

Gemma Paris Romeira: The House Under the Snow

This was a collaborative drawing of the plant species that are stored in the World Bank of Seeds in Svalbard (Norway) to make visible all this diversity of plant species that are necessary to maintain life on Earth.

Comment from Gemma: I'm so proud of Forest! It's a really beautiful and creative movement! The city was full of happy families sharing quality and funny experiences with their kids. You offer them a huge present! The River was so beautiful this afternoon.



c. Regeneration Forest

Invisible Studio and Charley Brentnall: Forest Pyramids

Piers Taylor and Charley Brentnall designed large timber pyramids with brightly-coloured lanterns to illuminate the night forest. While some of the structure had to be dismantled due to council concerns relating to the engineering detail of the designs, the tall vertical structures remained. Though cordoned off, they signalled the route along Avon Street down to the river, alongside the redevelopment site of Bath Quays.

The House of Fairy Tales: The Swevenaughts Dream Recyclers

An exploratory group adventure activity invited children to travel with the Swevenaughts, the guardians of the faraway underground Dreaming City, to collect the dream fragments around the Bath Quays Riverside Park and (in the Swevenaughts' words) 're-combobulate the daydreams into energy to power their city'. In each timed activity, groups of children were told the story and then invited to participate in this process, engaging in a story to challenge how they think about their imagination and to help them see how they can use it in different ways. The responses below indicate the positive and engaged involvement of the children.



Comments from parents and carers:

- He had lot of fun - was totally engaged in the experience. Inspires imaginative and creative thinking MAGIC! - Parent of an 11 year-old
- He really enjoyed it. He is ASD and can't always access events. It was a really positive experience for him and he is very happy - Parent of an 8 year-old.
- The children were happy and very engaged. Their imaginations went soaring very high, opening up children's minds to evolving stories. It has had a very positive impact on my children - Parent
- They were drawn into a magical world of daydreams and night dreams and went on a fantastic adventure to make the days long. They were captivated and completely engrossed. Helping children understand how magical and powerful the imagination is great for mindfulness, they can go on and make their own imaginative adventures. It was fantastic!! Wonderful storytelling - Parent of a 7 year-old
- They loved it!! They were so focused on listening to the wonderful dream stories. I loved it too! Children do not usually get a lot of time and chances to let their imagination free and this was brilliant - Parent of a 4 and 6-year old
- Fired her imagination. Loved sharing creative ideas with adult. Encourages curiosity, freethinking, creativity, courage and independence - Parent of a 4 year-old



Conor Busuttill: River Life

Conor Busuttill co-designed a mural with St John's Primary School in Bath that celebrated the wildlife in and by the river. This project involved making wildlife drawings in collaboration with primary school children exploring the ecology of the river. This was in collaboration with 5x5x5=creativity and Bath Children's Literature Festival.

Comment from Conor: Having never been to the Forest of Imagination and not knowing what to expect I was extremely surprised at both the scale and yet the unity of the event. Everyone pulling together, bouncing ideas and encouraging one and other. All to showcase Bath and all the amazing wonders its creative minds hold. I think having not been to event before I felt a little lost at points and although I was given a schedule/times these were often thrown out the window - but having now experienced how fluid and nicely things just "happened" I think it is all part and parcel of such an event, much like any good piece of art we never really know what it is going to look like until it's done. I feel extremely privileged to have been part of something so magical and relevant to issues that mean a lot to me, the creative arts and nature.

Jess Palmer and Liberty Wright: Forest Maze: Draw On the Wall

Children of all ages were invited to come and draw or graffiti or write on the walls of the Paper Maze. Modelled on the Bath Maze by Pulteney Bridge, the Paper Maze is a series of curving walls which lead to a central Drawing Spot where children can lie or sit on the ground and draw. We based the Maze on the idea of the Beazer Maze by Pulteney Bridge. We worked hard to come up with a shape and dimensions which would appeal to small children and work for those with physical challenges.

We were helped by the marvellous location and the sensational weather, and the fact that children totally got what it was for and what it was about. A place made for them to draw on, hide in, jump onto, clamber over, write stories on, lie in, race around and feel snug.



Comments from parents and carers:

"My children adored your glorious Maze! What a roaring success! They would have spent hours in there if they could! Well done!" Lucy Knibb

On Instagram, a mum described her two kids "Just casually decorating the cardboard floor at yet another fantastic Forest of Imagination. It never fails to excite the little (and big!) People. Can't wait to see what next year has in store..."

"Did you visit the cool cardboard drawing maze at Forest of Imagination today?! Literally hours and hours of fun!!"

"It was brilliant. Our favourite thing of the day!"

"Thanks - Bath Mums on Instagram - Thanks for your recommendation for this...we went today and had a great time. Wouldn't have known about it otherwise!"



Clare Day: Clay Forest

People were invited to take part in making a collaborative clay forest (trees, dens, animals, treehouses, mini-worlds with characters to tell stories in).



Comment from Clare: Clay Forest grew out of observing visitors to previous workshops, and seeing what works best. The idea was for people to make a tree using just clay and their hands, and place it within a clay forest in the space. It was intended that we reflect (thinking through making) on what trees mean to us individually and collectively. People enjoyed the simplicity and using the clay. The workshop was designed to allow people to stay for ten minutes or a whole day. The forest was on a long wall at the height of a young child, so over the weekend many children came along and rearranged the trees and played with the forest. This was the intended result, that there would be joy in the making and joy in the playing in and with the forest that was made. Many adults loved being invited to play (for many the first time since young childhood that they had used clay). Many commented on the unusual level of involvement and concentration of their children.

d. Floating Forest

A pop-up forest on the Canal and Rivers Trust workboat in collaboration with the Canal and River Trust and Wyevale Nursery



e. Additional summaries: Schools Workshops

The Forest of Imagination also facilitated Schools workshops on Friday 28 September. This was welcomed by the schools and the children, and some of their comments are included below.

Comments from teachers:

Thank you for letting us come! It was a brilliant day and the children really had an excellent time - and I know a few who went back in to Bath on the Saturday with parents. Look forward to next year...

Chris Chorley, Westfield Primary School

Thank you for your help organising this event for Oak Class - they all had a wonderful morning at the Forest.

Louise Didcott, Swainswick Primary School

The children had a great time - thank you for organising our visit. I think that the workshop went well and I have passed on their ideas to their teachers.

Maura Chamberlain, Colerne Church of England Primary School

Thanks for all your help.... The year 4 class that came on Friday had a great time!
Caroline Smailes, St Vigor and St John's Primary School



Comments from schoolchildren:

- I want to live here!
- Can we come every day?
- But I don't want to go. I want to stay.
- I love the Swevenaughts!
- Can I translate more books? It's so much fun!
- Being able to draw in the maze was so much fun.

f. Other educational activities

Forest of Imagination 2018 was aligned with a number of other cultural and educational events within the city during the same period, including Toby Thompson's performance of his play *I Want to be a Mountain* at the egg theatre, the Bath Children's Literature Festival as well as the RIV (river is venue) project, the TEDXBath event at the abbey and the futures event at the Holburne Museum.

i. Three Ways School

Luke Woodbury and Julieann Worrall Hood: Electro Twitcher

This project with artists created imaginary future birds responding to voices with their digital songs. The colourful 'Electro Twitchers' included SEN children in the

design process, creating an engaging, playful and interactive installation that was accessible and fun for people of all abilities and ages. The children worked with artist Julieann Worrall Hood in a workshop where they experimented with materials and built their own bird-inspired sculptures. Julieann then developed large-scale versions of the children's sculptures using brightly-coloured neoprene and metal armatures.

The birds' interactivity was enabled through an electronic 'voice' triggered using a microphone. Luke Woodbury designed and built electronics that analyses incoming audio for frequency and amplitude characteristics, using this information to change the characteristics of a synthesised bird call sound, each bird having a characteristic voice. The 'birds' and voice boxes were mounted in trees on the Bath Quays site, microphones housed in a flexible funnel at the base of the tree, accessible to adults, children and those in wheelchairs.

The project showcased the school's expertise in producing interactive arts for those with SEN, demonstrating how small adjustments can make a massive difference to access to the arts. It also showed the power of arts as a catalyst for learning, sparking interest in topics and engaging young people in communication, resilience and pride through their work. It encouraged play, validating exploration without worrying what others are thinking and what could go wrong.

This project helped develop confidence, life skills, and engagement in the community, enabling pupils' families to engage with the arts in new ways. Often families are quite marginalised and isolated and there was clear ownership and pride in the work the young people had created. The project enabled our young people to interact with the artistic community, demonstrating their capabilities and the possibility of further integration into the community.

Comment from class teacher Stephanie Harper: The interaction and sensory aspect of the sounds was great. The students were wary at first, but watching other children interact with them and the thought that they may be installed in the school at a later date gave it some real meaning. It was accessible to all, even those in a wheelchair could get close and have a go.

ii. The egg (Theatre Royal Bath)

Toby Thompson's performed his play *I Want to Be a Mountain* during the weekend to family audiences in the egg theatre. The performance captured the imaginations of the audiences with a story that encourages an understanding of different perspectives, contrasting human desires with the perspectives of the natural world.

iii. Bath Children's Literature Festival

The Literature Festival had many events with authors plus workshops across the city during the weekend. While separate from the Forest of Imagination, the shared

aims of the two organisations was clear and points to possible future collaborations in the future.

iv. RIV

River is the Venue is a partnership project with 44AD artspace, Art at the Heart of the RUH and research academics at the University of Bath. The focus of the research and project is on historical flooding events in Bath. As the project evolves, audiences will be exposed to fascinating elements of the River's history in the City, and Forest of Imagination helped make new audiences for the project near the riverside.



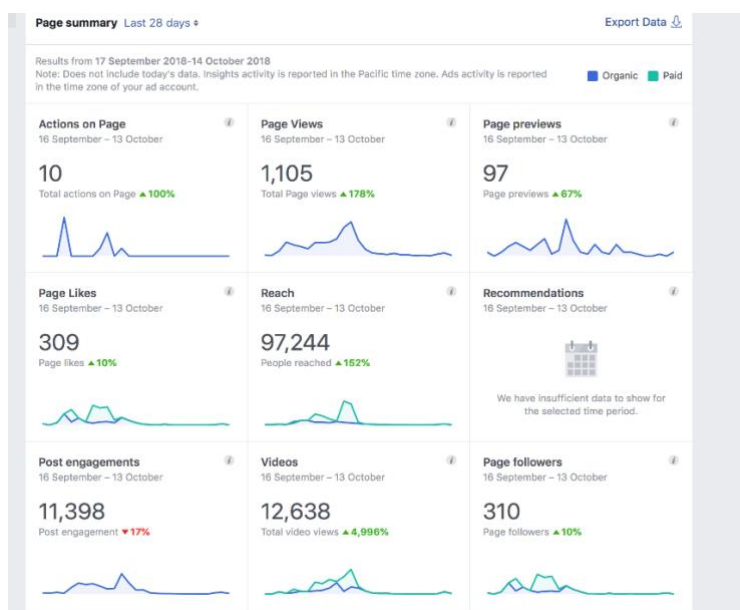
5. Media analysis and evaluation

This section of our evaluation includes what is being reported, feedback, questions raised, including on social media and is based on information provided by Hannah Newton, who is in charge of the majority of our social media, website content and press management.

This year, more artists, organisations and individuals were involved in the social media message, as asked for, which was very powerful and useful for reach and depth. Social media continues to play a fundamental role in communicating, sharing and raising awareness of Forest of Imagination. What follows summarises the engagement from people with the event.

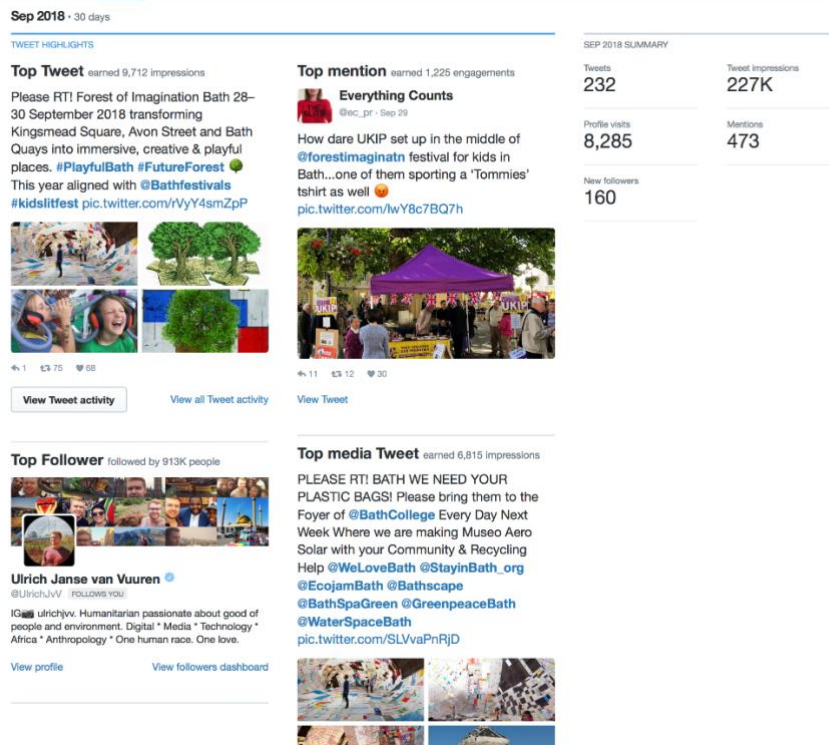
Facebook

Ahead of Forest of Imagination 2018, we doubled our presence in the previous 12 months on Facebook, with organic 'Likes' up 50% on 2017, reaching almost 1,500. With Page Views and Engagement reaching upwards of 10,000. You can see on the chart below that the Organic reach is extremely powerful and that the Paid Reach allows Forest to punch much higher during the event, reaching almost 100,000. Facebook has become essential for targeting families, unique groups and a wider, disparate range of people.



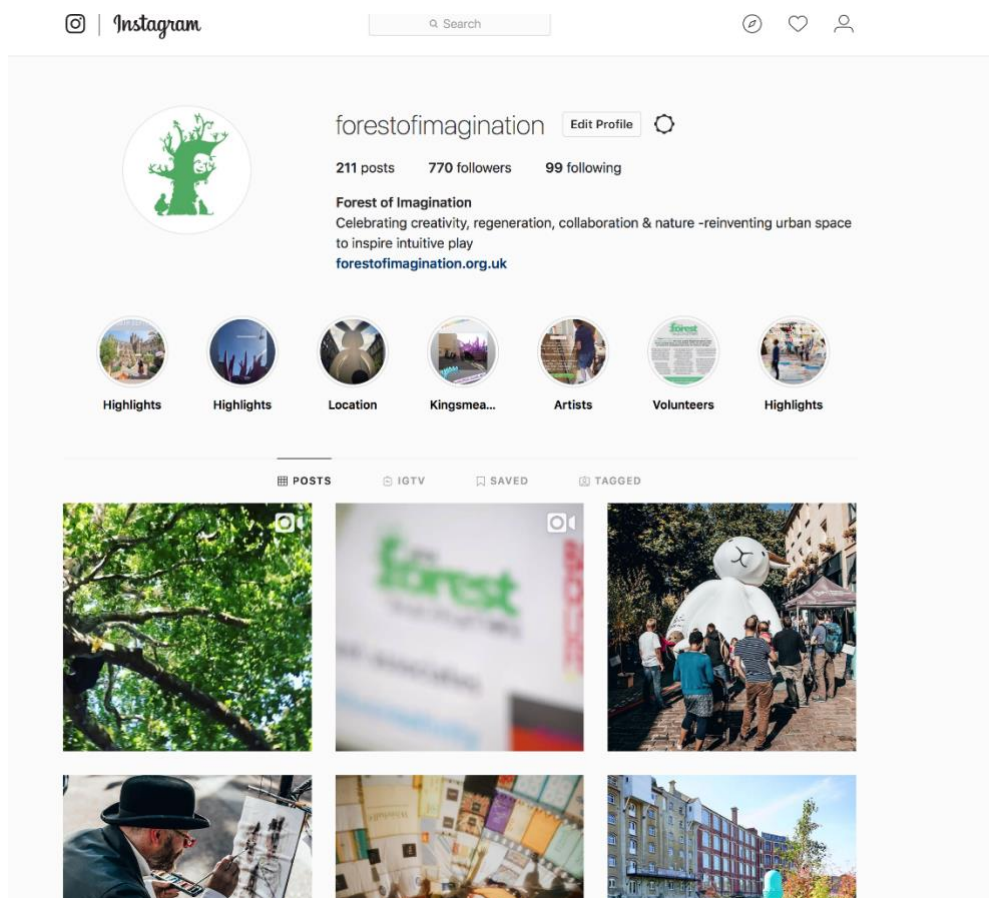
Twitter

Twitter is the platform to connect with and promote business, organisations, call-outs etc. In the last 12 months our organic growth has doubled with followers now reaching over 2,500. Tweet Impressions in September rose to over 225,000, with the majority of tweets focusing on the Forest of Imagination ahead.



Instagram

This year our Instagram account has grown exponentially; as a new platform it is important to reach a very different audience that needs nurturing and growing. We have 770 followers – up from zero last year. An engaging, visually-led medium, it is essential to reach a national and local audience, with visitors sharing their images on their stories and on our pages.



Press

An article by Andrew Grant of Grant Associates in *The Bath Magazine* (see below) provided depth and detail to the thinking behind Forest of Imagination. This added strength and insight ahead of the event and was very well received by the wider city. Supporting fund-raising and brand awareness.

Hannah Newton spent a lot of time pitching the FOI story to the national press and radio this year and was frustrated not to get a response – but this work will continue as issues become more urgent. The event articulates and highlights concerns about education and possible creative responses to these concerns, both locally and nationally.

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Singapore's Gardens by the Bay is an award-winning showcase of horticulture and garden artistry by Grant Associates

GUEST COLUMNIST

AN URBAN FOREST

Andrew Grant, founding director of Bath-based landscape architecture practice Grant Associates, has a fascination with creative ecology in the design of sustainable cities, landscapes and public spaces. He explains his approach ahead of Forest of Imagination in Bath on 28–30 September

Bath is such a beautiful but frustrating place to live. It has a timeless elegance but wants to be contemporary. It has massive extremes of wealth and poverty but wants to be inclusive. It sees itself as international but is pretty parochial in its vision. Despite this there is absolutely nowhere like it in the world and I feel privileged to have called it my home for 30 years. At the same time, I believe serious changes are needed in the governance and attitude of the city leaders towards the community and the physical setting of this World Heritage Site. We are living in one of the most amazing cities on the planet, a jewel of Britain, full of ingenuity and creative ambitions for the future, and yet the city itself fails to project an image of contemporary imagination.

My work as a landscape architect has taken me across the world from Singapore to Sydney to Madrid to Doha to Bangalore and Madagascar. The projects I work on are often pioneering adventures in urban planning and design of which the Gardens by the Bay in Singapore is probably the best known. In each of these projects the challenge is how to find the right balance between built form, landscape and ecology while creating new environments that are joyful, memorable, healthy and fit for the future. I always have Bath in mind when designing as it really is the ultimate landscape city where the marriage of landscape and architecture is in plain sight. However, it is not perfect and there is lot to be done to take this great city into the future, including reimagining the identity of Bath as an artistic, safe, accessible, child-friendly, biodiverse, welcoming and entertaining place.

I started Grant Associates more than 20 years ago to explore a new way of planning and designing sustainable cities, landscapes and public spaces. During that time we have worked on a number of Bath projects including Moses Water Operations Centre, University of Bath and, more recently, the planning and design of Bath Western Riverside. This last project has seen a whole network of green spaces and streets opening up this stretch of the river corridor as part of a wider strategy to reimagine the whole river corridor as a linear park through the city.

A big challenge for Bath is the ongoing battle between limiting change as opposed to opening up opportunities for more radical contemporary interventions. From my perspective I see a need, and real opportunity, for the creation of a truly contemporary landscape setting and public



ABOVE: Celebrating creativity inspired by nature at Forest of Imagination
reality that is entirely complementary to the World Heritage Site built environment. This would include a bold and radical curation of contemporary public art throughout the city and its landscape alongside fewer cars, more walking, more cycling, more green, more water, more trees, more wetlands, more wildlife, more beauty and much more play.

I always have Bath in mind when designing as it really is the ultimate landscape city where the marriage of landscape and architecture is in plain sight

Late last year I was invited to take up the role of chair of the Bathscape Landscape Partnership which brings together a number of influential organisations concerned with conserving the whole landscape setting of Bath, all while making it more accessible and better appreciated by residents and visitors. We are waiting for the final decision from the Heritage Lottery Fund on whether the Bathscape bid for £1.5million is successful. If so, this will trigger a wide range of amazing projects across the whole of the Bathscape landscape over the next few years and we hope this will kickstart a transformation in the way the community of Bath engages with the incredible cultural and natural assets of this landscape city.

These projects fall into four main types: 'Conserving and Restoring' projects will look to improve the physical and ecological conditions of selected valuable grasslands

and woodlands that form much of the setting alongside the management of key vistas and views. 'The Therapeutic Landscape' projects build on the therapeutic heritage of Bath through its hot springs and tranquil landscapes and focus on connecting people with the health and wellbeing potential of our local nature and greenways. 'Access' projects will provide strategic improvements to the routes to and through the Bathscape area including the circular walks around the city and radial routes from the city centre. Last year's Bathscape Walking Festival highlighted the appetite for more walks around Bath and this year it will be taking place again from the 15–23 September. The 'Learning and Training Skills' projects will provide high-quality interpretive media of Bathscape-alongside engagement projects for local people, schools and businesses to discover more about Bathscape or learn new skills to look after this amazing landscape.

I took on this role as I think it is really important for many more people to engage directly with our local environment and not take them for granted. I also believe we have a duty to be more aware of global issues.

BELOW: Grant Associates is working with British Zoo in Madagascar to help design a research camp to study the endangered Blue-Eyed Black Lemur



BELOW: An artist's impression of the new field station planned for Ankazafaha Forest



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6. Review of content, structure and development of the Forest of Imagination

Forest of Imagination 2018 was a success when judged on its immediate impact – in terms of visibly inspiring and motivating people of all ages to get involved in creative activity in their local area, bringing new life to the city and creating new ways of seeing the immediate urbanscape.

This impact is both direct and immediate, and we hope, more long-term too. This impact can be observed in many ways, from how the event develops people's expectations from education to how organisations we work with reconsider the role of education and culture within the public and private spheres. The long-term impact works through experiment, provocation and engagement with our key themes, relating to transformative experience, creativity and imagination, and the experience of nature within the city.

As we evaluate the work of 5x5x5=creativity and its associated work during each year, including Forest of Imagination, we need to learn from the event, raising questions relating to its organisation and future impact. In terms of how our learning can inform future practice, we need to look at a range of the event's aspects that each contribute to its success and possible impact. This can help us (both 5x5x5=creativity and our collaborators) address some of the key areas of learning and development during and after Forest of Imagination 2018. These areas include:

a. Pre-event planning, set-up and issues on the day

This year there were various pragmatic issues of facilitation, including overcoming basic infrastructure obstacles and finding ways to co-operate with the local council. Arts activity is not a high priority for the council, and it's clear that making the social context for such an event more positive is not fully understood – whether it be in terms of minimising traffic within a designated area, or not permitting other activity that may be reasonably thought to be in conflict with a family-based festival (i.e. the council's agreement to locate a UKIP stall in Kingsmead Square). These are substantial concerns which we aim to overcome and also to highlight – the council's decision making can make good use of public space more complex, producing friction which is not always productive socially or culturally. The council made a formal apology for the conflict of use of space in Kingsmead Square, but it remains a concern that they do not appreciate the positive role they can take to help to facilitate events of this kind.

b. Activity synergy

Workshops and activities vary hugely in how they work and how they work best – some are leader-led throughout an event, some are guided exercises, and some are autonomous within a set environment. Some are carefully timed from start to finish, while others are very much drop-in and drop-out.

The dynamics of the Forest of Imagination benefit from this variation, but is the balance between guided activity and autonomous activity the right one? Should there be more autonomy, and more individual exploratory activity? How can this balance of activity be developed further without overwhelming new visitors with too much complexity?

c. Route-making, exploring and navigation

One local visitor commented 'I liked being greeted in the House of Imagination and being informed of what to do - a bit unsure otherwise. Maybe the volunteers could give more info on workshops?' This reflected an area of concern of how we make activity space open and useable but also provide guidance where it may be required or preferred. The Forest of Imagination brochure and map provided vital information, but there are other ways to address this concern.

As the Forest of Imagination has evolved, children and families are becoming more interested in how the activities might be engaged with in more complex ways. The event itself is also becoming more complex in what it offers. This year there was an even wider range of art forms than before, including music, writing, clay modelling and musical interaction.

We can give people more information to find opportunities to participate and navigate between activities and also within the area so they feel more actively engaged. Day-to-day guidance may be offered, to help orientate parents and children so they know what is happening and when. Such guidance might include communication of day-to-day events so that visitors more immediately orientate themselves in relation to what is happening, with an information hub for visitors who are not so familiar with the event. Emphasis can still be placed on discovery, exploration and autonomy, but more pathways may be offered between activities. Good signage is essential.

d. Local knowledge/approaches to science and nature

The local landscape and flora were incorporated well visually and practically within the Future Forest installations, from Kingsmead Square to the Riverside. In future Forests, could there be more information and detail relating to the local natural habitats? Could there be more imaginative engagement with ecological (including botanical) sciences? How can this science perspective be included more?

e. House of Imagination

The House of Imagination was a pop-up installation within and around the atrium of the Bath College building next to Avon Street. This was a success in terms of bringing workshop activities together and giving space for participants to be involved in a relaxed and focused environment.

The future development of Forest and House of Imagination can learn from the experience of how activities can be developed between indoor and outdoor sites, and which ones might work best together.

Outdoor sites create the opportunity for direct engagement with the local landscape and cityscape, while indoor activities can involve more autonomous and reflective activities. This is an area for more thought, particularly for the transfer of the Forest of Imagination to a new site where space and resources may be very different.

f. Research, practice and communication

At the moment, the Forest of Imagination speaks for itself through its activities, use of space and the relationships between artists, installations and participants. Practice and engagement are paramount, but there are other ways to emphasise our values and aims. In future, how do we communicate publicly what we achieved and learnt as part of the Forest of Imagination? How much do we want to engage the public (in whatever way) at this more discursive/philosophical level? Should the communication (and conversations) focus on the pragmatic nature of creativity, nature, educational and artistic development, or should there be more conscious focus on the broader aims of our practice?

g. Evaluation Follow-up

With so many individuals and organisations now engaged in the Forest of Imagination, it might be considered how local people, collaborating organisations and participant artists might be involved in conversations on the future development of the Forest of Imagination, informing the balance and development of activities.

How do we follow up with children, families and participant organisations in terms of developing new activities, events and workshops for the next Forest and House of Imagination and for the work of 5x5x5=creativity at other times during the year?

How do we explore further the impact of the Forest of Imagination and how can we seek to implement what we have learned in the wider activities of 5x5x5=creativity and Grant Associates and their future work?

This post-evaluation work is an important part of increasing the impact of the organisation and its activities. By involving participants, stakeholders and funders further in this process the development of our work will be better understood and engaged with.

Forest of Imagination was the winner of the Landscape Institute Best Temporary Landscape Award 2018.

