

The Byker Gallery, Hosted by MILK <https://milkartcollective.weebly.com/about.html>

Based in Newcastle upon Tyne, M I L K are an artist collective committed to providing a platform for artists, curators and collaborators to explore and showcase their work. From the 23rd of November 2015 to 19th December 2015, M I L K hosted four successful, one-week exhibitions, a residency programme and free local workshops in The Byker Gallery, Newcastle. As there were few opportunities for recent graduates in Newcastle we wanted to create our own opportunities and create a platform for others as well. Our aim was to deliver workspace, exhibitions and community-engaged workshops in the North East region. We were able to do this in the centre of Byker with the help of a Student Initiative Fund Project grant, which enabled us to reach local people easily.

We had a total of thirty-eight artists exhibit in the gallery, graduates from both Newcastle and Northumbria; something that does not generally happen. Over the 4 weeks the Gallery drew in over 700 visitors to the exhibitions and workshops. Visitors all seemed to receive the gallery and its chosen art works very well. We received a lot of positive and encouraging feedback. Visitors also said they would like to see more of MILK and other artistic events like ours where they lived. From this project I have learned that asking for advice early on from more established and experienced art set-ups is invaluable. Another top tip, “shy bairns get nowt!” Negotiation skills are a great thing to possess when discussing prices of rent and business rates.

This project has been paramount to the MILK art collective. The project gave us a chance to learn the logistics of setting up a gallery space and curating the creative sector. The main outcome from this project has been establishing us in Newcastle’s art community. From this we have had offers to work with other artists and collectives alike, which will be invaluable to our future plans. From setting up this gallery space for a month we have learned about dealing with artists, organising transport, dealing with other businesses including landlords, marketing and the Council. This project has meant that the art collective has the foundation to go on to arts council funding.



