URBAN WILDERNESS

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CREATIVE COMMUNITIES SUSTAINABLE SPACES

Pioneering arts organisation Urban Wilderness CIC create artistic opportunities, commission artworks and produce thought-provoking projects and events in overlooked public spaces. Their vision is that public spaces should be democratic extensions of the community – valued by, and representative of, the people who live, work and spend time there.

Founded in 2018 in Stoke-on-Trent, Urban Wilderness is run by Laurel Gallagher, Jenny Harper and Isla Telford who bring complementary skills and experience in the arts. In just three years, they have delivered an impressive range of programmes which showcase their expertise in working creatively in complicated spaces, with a focus on post-industrial places.

Always doing something new and challenging, Urban Wilderness are on a mission to instigate meaningful social change through arts and culture. They work intensively with artists interested in public spaces and marginalised community groups to co-create open and accessible opportunities and experiences. Urban Wilderness are committed to commissioning new work from under-represented artists and providing visibility for artists from diverse backgrounds in public spaces.

Current projects include *Wastelands*, an artist development programme creating new works in under-valued outdoor public spaces in Stoke-on-Trent; *The Happenings,* a festival of new public art in hyper-local spaces, *Decommissioning the 20th Century*, working with artists to capture public responses to the decommissioning of power plants in Southampton, Gainsborough and

Stoke-on-Trent; and *Tomorrowland*, a bursary programme offering creative opportunities for young people in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire.

Embracing a collaborative approach, Urban Wilderness build and share knowledge and learnings across their expanding network of artists, arts and heritage organisations, academics and community groups. They hosted their first symposium, Public Art Now, exploring what public art can be during a pandemic, in June 2021.

Urban Wilderness is supported by funding from Arts Council England, The National Lottery Community Fund and Canal and River Trust.

Find out more about Urban Wilderness at urbanwildernesscic.com

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