

# ELEVATE

Report  
2021



**Stretford  
Public Hall**



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Voice of BME Trafford**  
Having a voice to influence change



# ELEVATE

ELEVATE is an artist residency and community art project based at Stretford Public Hall, Trafford, that aims to amplify the creative voices and artistic talents of underrepresented people through art workshops, creative opportunities, and exhibitions. ELEVATE was a direct response to the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020; we identified that we must do more to embed diversity within our creative offer in an authentic and responsive way by supporting people from diverse backgrounds to influence artistic decision-making and use creativity as a platform for change.





# Artist in residence: Venessa Scott

Venessa Scott is a prolific public artist and muralist who loves bright colours, bold patterns, and working with communities; during the residency she had time to be playful with new artistic ideas and explore topics that were meaningful to her. Venessa was based in our artist studios and spent the time contemplating, drawing, designing and making new art works.



Credit: @vanicevictoriauk  
Jacket made by: Bibini

"The residency allowed me to make connections between the things that I enjoy and I'm passionate about. So bringing all those things together I have developed a voice which I can say is uniquely mine."

- Venessa Scott

"That's the real privilege of this residency: you get to reconnect with your roots and in your roots, you find yourself."

- Venessa Scott



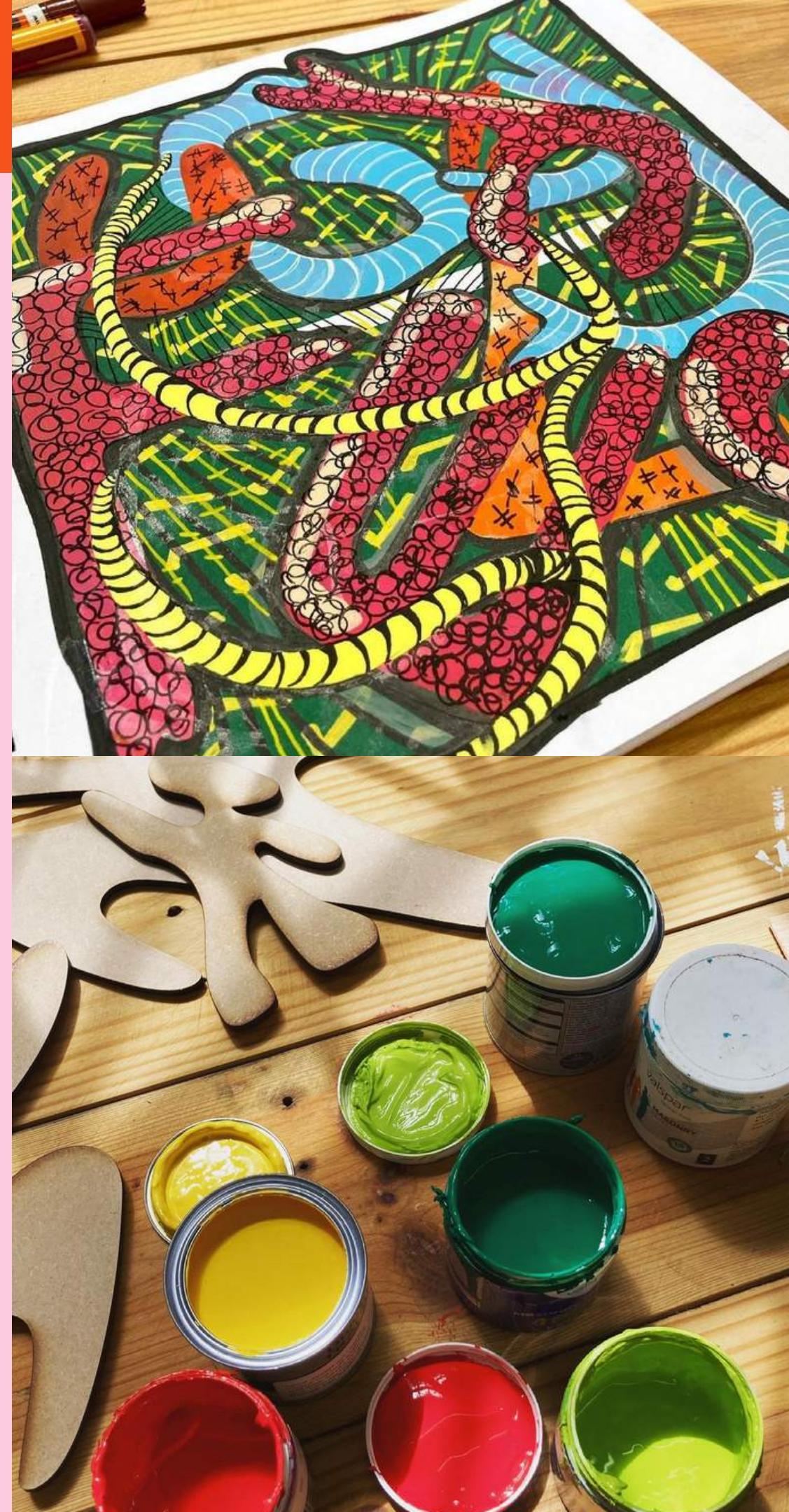
# The residency

Throughout the residency Venessa explored the language of Ankara fabric to communicate personal stories of racism and in particular her experience of the Black Lives Matter uprising.

Venessa created collages and a sculpture to depict these experiences through layers of complex pattern combined with the visualisation of words, such as resilience, exposure, and vulnerability, that reflected Venessa's own journey.

Read Venessa's blog post here:  
[www.venessascott.co.uk/post/elevate-residency-in-stretford](http://www.venessascott.co.uk/post/elevate-residency-in-stretford)

**@venessascott\_uk**



"It wasn't like the residency was just happening to me. I was fully immersed in it and I felt an ownership and a connection to every aspect of it, which was just wonderfully enriching."

- Venessa Scott

Credit: @venessascott\_uk





**12 local people  
attended the creative  
workshops, and most  
of them had never  
been to Stretford  
Public Hall before.**



**Community  
workshops**



**Everyone  
created an artwork  
that was shown  
in the public  
exhibition.**





# PATTERNS: Art Exhibition

17th & 18th July 2021

ELEVATE culminated in a two-day exhibition which featured participatory arts activities, live poetry and art performances, and a series of outdoor artworks.

The exhibition was visited by over 80 people during the opening weekend event, with around two thirds of visitors being from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. And nearly all of the workshop participants came to see their artworks.







## Princess Arinola Adegbite or "P. A. Bitez"

@pabitez

# Open call artists

Two artists were selected from the ELEVATE Open Call for underrepresented artists.

Princess Arinola Adegbite or "P. A. Bitez" is a writer, poet, filmmaker, and artist. Her commission was a poem exploring patterns in human behaviour and activism.

Xhi Ndubisi is an artist who creates narratives across three mediums: writing, painting, and storytelling. Her commission was a participatory live art performance which explored identity through conversations and body printing with visitors.

## Xhi Ndubisi

@another  
diasporan



Credit: @anotherdiasporan



Credit: @otcreativespace



"My son was super proud to see his work, and I am so happy we could both participate, it was great!"

- Natasha

"Xhi's workshop was a wonderful experience. It was a lovely mixture of art and fun but it also included a beautiful opportunity to really share and connect with other participants. I came away with some lovely art but also some fabulous memories."

- Susan

"It was really an enjoyable and learning experience for us, especially the children. It's been fantastic. It really makes people feel part of the community" "

- Annete

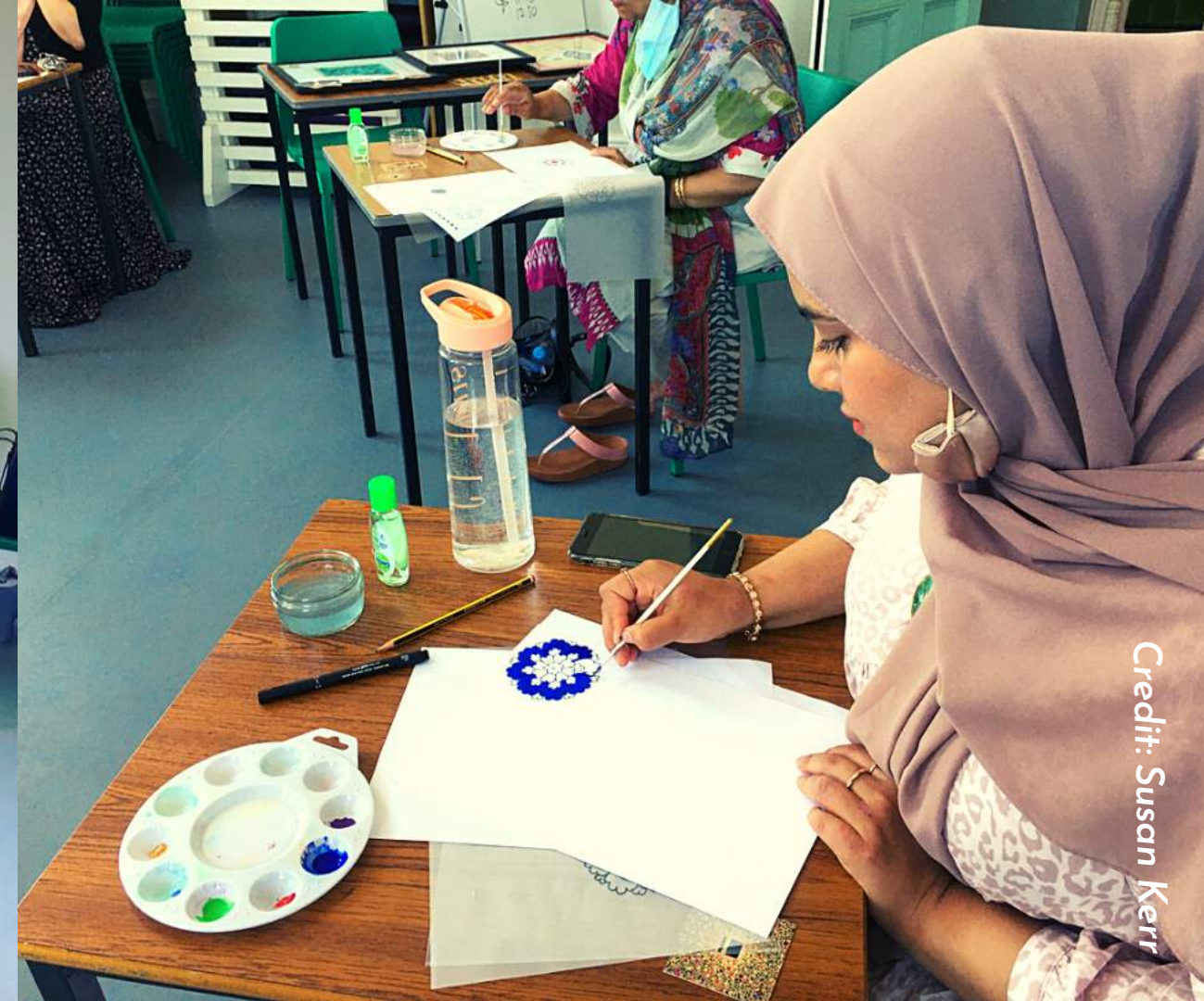


Credit: @anotherdiasporan



# Collage with Venessa Scott

@venessascott\_uk



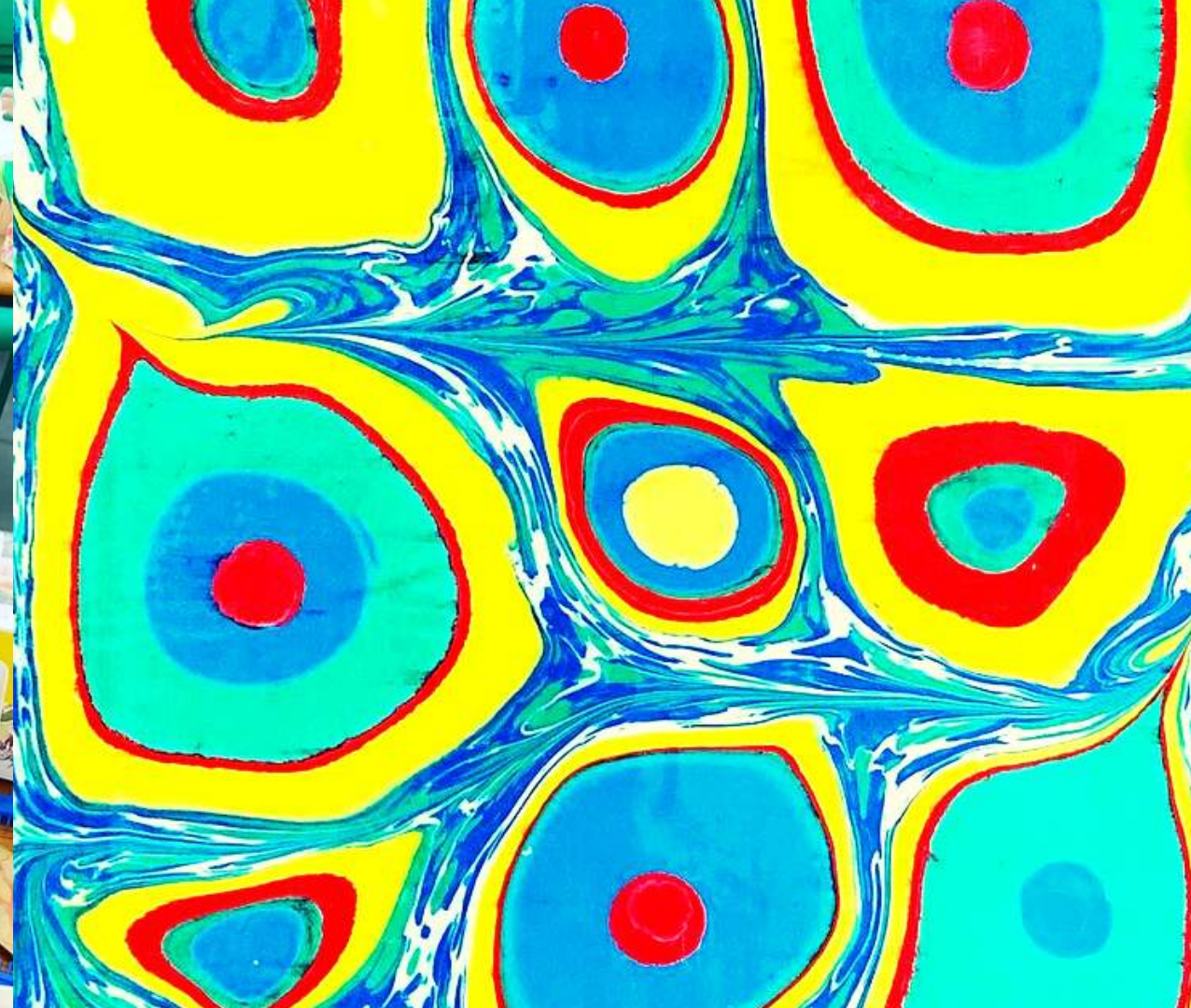
Credit: Susan Kerr

# Islamic floral art with Ashfia Ashrif

@ashfia\_ashrif







Printmaking  
with  
Michelle  
Griffith  
@iprint\_donmigri



Marbling  
with Rabia  
Avci  
@apricity\_creative





# PATTERNS: Outdoor Art Exhibition

We wanted to take some of the artwork outdoors for everyone to see; we produced a series of large-scale prints for our pocket park and bright flags that were hoisted up in front of Stretford Public Hall.

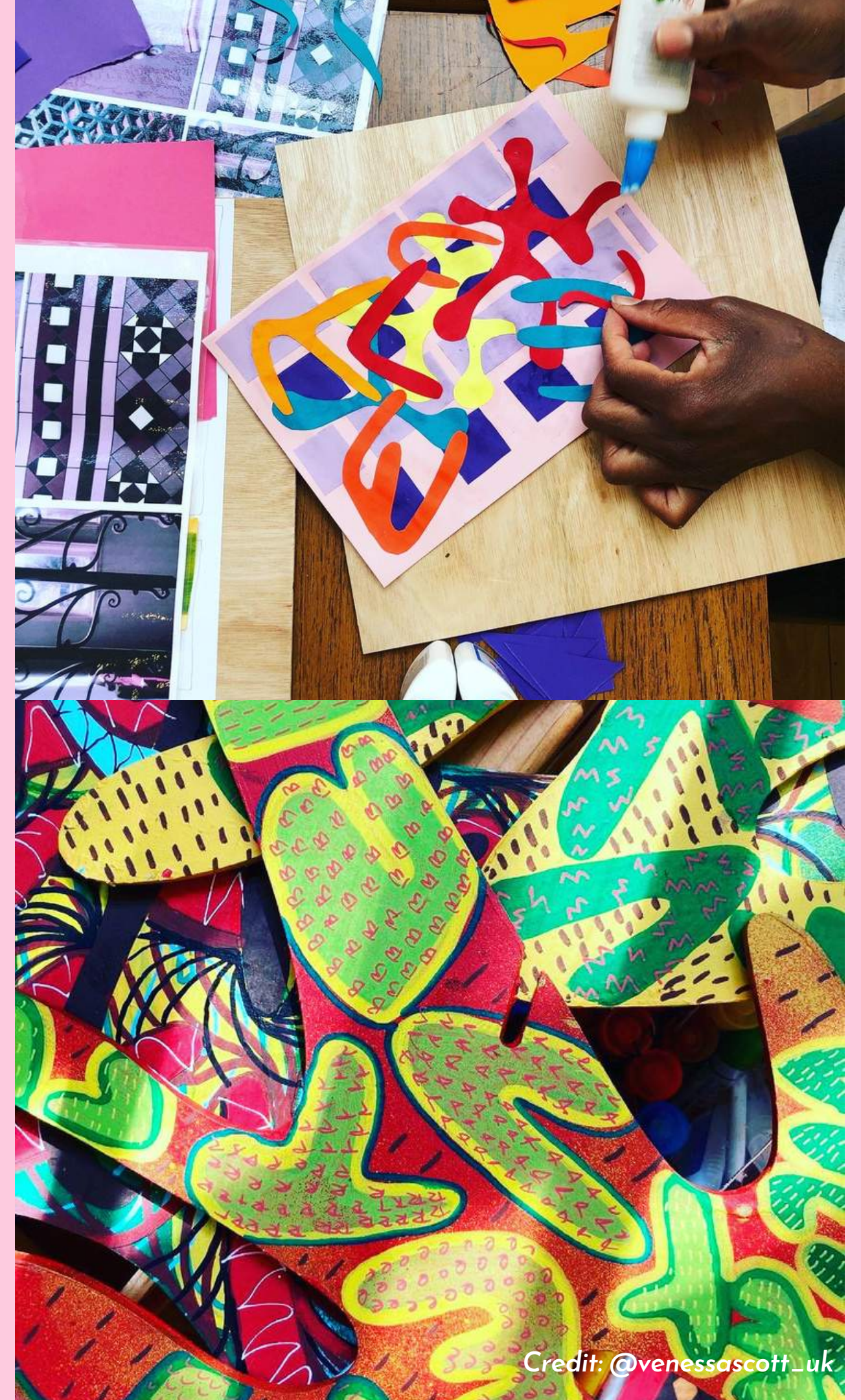
The posters were enlarged versions of the collage artworks made during the community workshops with Venessa and the flags were designed by local young people who attend Project Inc, a college for creative education for young people with special educational needs. The outdoor artworks were enjoyed by the community for six weeks.





"ELEVATE engaged new audiences through the workshops, the exhibition and through me being there as a black female artist; it opened the doors, it started the conversation but it can't just be a one off... You must continue to ask questions, to listen, to learn, to understand and to keep doing it..."

-Venessa Scott



Credit: @venessascott\_uk



# Thank you ...

Artist in residence and community workshop  
facilitator: Venessa Scott

Open call artists:  
Princess Arinola Adegbite  
Xhi Ndubisi

Exhibition workshops facilitators:  
Ashfia Ashrif  
Michelle Griffith  
Rabia Avci

The wonderful participants:  
Abdul, Beatrice, Elijah, Hosea, John  
Maryum & baby Mohamed, Molly, Mudasar  
Natasha, Rafia, Ruben.

Project concept: Jessica Loveday  
Project producer: Jessica Loveday  
Stretford Public Hall Manager: Kate McGeevor  
Marketing & admin support: Vic Payne

Project partner: Voice of BME Trafford  
Project advisor & diversity consultant: Shirley May

Videographer: Susan Kerr

Translators:  
Noor Hussain  
Mohamed Ghalaieny

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