

# PROJECTS

## Ynot?

[Sunderland] 2003 to 2009

**Ynot?** ran for 7 years as an ongoing programme of arts activities for young people (16 - 21 years old) living in the Sunderland area, particularly focused on the aspirations of young parents and those leaving care.

The broad aims of the project were to provide young people with the opportunity to:

- Develop new skills and interests;
- Experience working alongside professional creative practitioners;
- Identify and explore employment, training and educational possibilities;
- Develop their confidence and self-esteem;
- Interact with others in a creative, dynamic and enjoyable environment.

**Ynot?** also aimed to:

- Create opportunities for positive work with disaffected young people;
- Increase participation in the service (Young People's Services);
- Encourage and develop positive peer education;
- Engage young fathers.

Activities generally took place all day on Friday at The Place in Hendon and included drama, creative writing, film and video production, Djing skills and music production, visual arts, graphic design, animation and street dance. Young people involved with the project since its inception include those accessing the departments responsible for those leaving care, young parents, young offenders and young homeless people.

Some of the work produced during the early years can be seen at [www.ynotproject.com](http://www.ynotproject.com)

Work created through the project included several high-quality spoken-word CDs, a number of short films, a book celebrating the group's work between 2003 and 2005, a combined book and DVD based around street dance and a set of colourful boards for the outside nursery space.

During 2007 the group were commissioned by the Sunderland Empire Theatre and Sunderland City Arts Team to produce a set of graffiti boards that were used during the staging of *We Will Rock You* at the Sunderland Empire.

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## Ynot?

The group also worked with writer Paul Summers, graphic designer Tommy Anderson and illustrator Bethan Laker to create an illustrated children's book called *The Lost Rainbow*. The book has been professionally printed and was launched at Seven Stories, The Centre for the Children's Book, on 27th August 2008. The launch event attracted over 80 attendees who enjoyed a puppet show and the opportunity to buy copies of the book signed by the young people. Copies of the book can still be purchased via the Helix Arts [publications](#) web page.

In the latter part of 2008 the group took part in a series of workshops with artist Kate Sweeney exploring how substance misuse impacts on their lives and their communities which resulted in a series of photographs, texts and poems created by the young people which were brought together in DVD format and entitled *Snowed In*.

This project is now complete and we thank all those who took part.

Funded by City of Sunderland, Arts Council England North East, Connexions Tyne & Wear and Northern Film & Media



Chameleon from the book *The Lost Rainbow*: Bethan Laker

Book illustration: Bethan Laker



Graffiti Board: The Ynot? Group

PIONEERING COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH THE ARTS