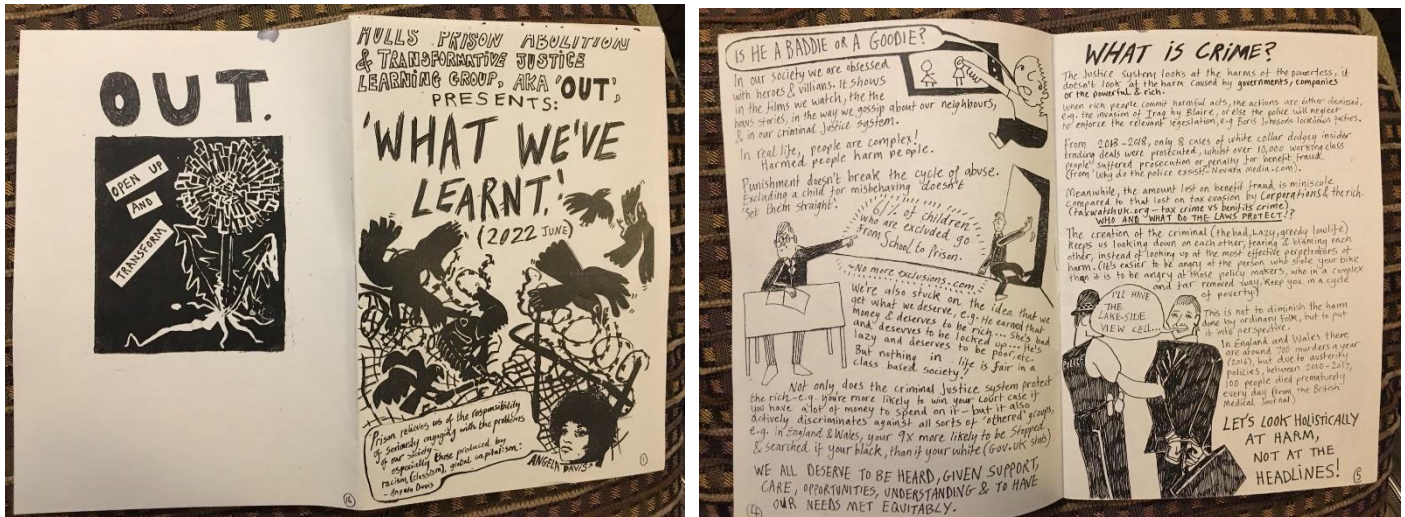


By Ella Dorton

Thank you for the opportunity to work on this project! It was great to have the time and space to get in my studio once a week and to explore a subject I feel really passionate about.

I began my project with a period of research where I learnt about prisons and different ways of thinking about justice and accountability. I created a zine working along-side a group called 'OUT' (Open Up and Transform). I did this by bringing pages I was working on to the group, and asking for feedback; e.g. what needs adding/changing? Do the comics work with the information? etc. This was an educational zine covering subjects such as: who makes up the prison population, is he a baddie or a goodie, prison expansion, the prison industrial complex, abolition (what is it, and the history of it), different justice systems, abolish or reform, & real life examples of abolition.



Next I focused on creating 2 large fabric portraits of people within my community that have experience of the prison system, as well as being in care, YOI's & mental institutions. I met up with Lee and Darren, who were excited to be subjects for the art project, drew them from life in a place of their choice & recorded our conversations which I later transcribed, and edited (not changing their words but shortening, picking bits out and re-ordering it to make them accessible).



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I then made 2 large pieces (2m x 1.5m), out of fabric and paint which I sewed on a machine.



These are currently being exhibited in HARI (Hull Artist Research Initiative) in Hull City Centre for the next two months as part of a project called THIS PLACE, which is about connecting to each other, yourself, and the land.

The fabric pieces themselves are shown alongside the write-up of our conversations, which explores their experiences of growing up, school, YOI's and prison. It focusses on the people throughout their lives that looked out for them, and made life livable.

I used 5 of my studio days on researching and creating the zine, and the other 12 on interviewing subjects and creating 2 large

artworks. I paid myself £150 a day and bought a small amount of materials with the remaining £50.

I am really excited about the project and don't want it to end here. I want to create another zine that is more focused on people's stories rather than facts and figures, and already have more subjects lined up, willing to tell their story. I would like to widen this idea and develop relationships with people in prison, through letter writing; gathering those stories too. I want to make more fabric collages too, and have started to look in to further funding.

The next steps for me are applying for more funding for the OUT project, and finding ways to get my work out there into the world, through exhibitions, zine fairs, making a website and an Etsy shop.

Thank you again for your support!

