

# Blank Wall Assassins 2021

## Blank Wall Assassins Project

### Background

The benefit of using Street art as a catalyst for successful placemaking, transforming public spaces and providing communities with accessible, free art is being increasingly understood around the globe. More and more towns and cities are now investing in street art as a vehicle for attracting tourism and in turn, economic regeneration.

It is through art that we communicate our ideas, express our emotions, and connect with others and access to creativity is now seen as vital to the wellbeing of communities. Street art not only engages art lovers but also challenges any passer by to develop their imagination while they learn to see their surroundings from a different perspective,

Building on the efforts of Landmark Street Art in the City over the last three years, Blank Wall Assassins aim is to tap into the success of other events such as Waterford Walls, Upfest Bristol and NuArt Aberdeen, firmly placing Carlisle on the global map as a street art destination.

### The Vision

We aim to provide the local community with more opportunities to engage with the arts & to show:

- That we, as a city, matter
- That we as a small city in the North West can be part of a worldwide scene
- That global artists are interested in engaging with our wider communities
- That we can offer opportunities for our communities to be creative
- That local talent can sit amongst more established internationally recognised artists
- That art can be accessed outside of the traditional settings & make 'art for all' a genuine proposition
- That our public spaces can be re imagined

This project will open up possibilities to what art can offer our city. Street art is a valuable vehicle to show the empowering presence public art can bring to fill the spaces in our streets. In a city where a significant number of people are traditionally disengaged with the arts, this increased opportunity, which is softly integrated into people's daily lives due to its positioning, could really help bring different communities into contact with cultural experiences. Street art has a uniquely transformative power to engage. People interact differently when they see art in places they do not expect. Street art can also attract people who feel that art is only for the elite. For example, the piece by the artist Smug on West Walls in Carlisle has had an incredible response from the community, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds and was recently voted 3rd in a poll for the world's best street art installation via [www.streetartcities.com](http://www.streetartcities.com), an incredible accolade for the city that has really put Carlisle on the map as an up and coming street art destination.

### The Project

In 2021, Blank Wall Assassins aim was to pull all of the existing pieces together to create an interactive trail around the city. The success of the installation on West Walls and the keenness from the community to see more street art means that now is the right time to push the project forward. Our aim is to secure funding that will allow us to pilot a street art festival within the city that will see at least a further five

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permanent installations between now and May 2022 culminating in a celebration in the city that includes music, art, street theatre, local food and opportunities for people to create.

New installations will begin in 2021 and will add to the current trail which can be found at [www.blankwallassassins.com](http://www.blankwallassassins.com) and by scanning the QR codes on each piece. The installations will be a world class offering from our roster of national, international and local artists that will further cement Our place on the global street art map and make the world look towards Carlisle as a centre for creative art based festivals.

The idea for the future is to make this an annual festival that takes place over a two month period where further art begins to be installed on the city's ever growing street art trail. and temporary installations are erected in one location that could be moved around the city as a vehicle to engage marginalised communities and often overlooked and unloved areas. The festival would close with a weekend city centre celebration.

### **Additional funding streams**

Our motto has always been, "one wall, one victory" and up to this point, we have been reliant on investment from individuals and businesses, however if we are to create a world class offering that gives maximum benefit to the city, we require further funding.

We have already submitted a funding bid to Arts Council England for a project that will help us to add further pieces to the trail as well as allow us to work with partners Prism Arts, Tullie House, MultiCultural Cumbria and several schools. If successful, we will create a public exhibition of community art works that can be displayed as part of the festival in May 2022.

We have also applied to Carlisle City Council's community events grant funding pot for the maximum offering of £5000, a decision on which is pending.

We are committed to seeking further funding streams to continue to grow the trail and increase the impact and legacy for years to come however we believe that the success of this pilot project will put us in a much stronger position in future to attract funding from other sources and ensure that this project continues to go from strength to strength.

### **Legacy**

We believe that street art can create a new purpose for visiting our city in the backdrop of declining retail and COVID recovery. A majority of the investment made will fund permanent installations that can be seen year round making this not just a 'one off' event but a project that adds to the cultural offering in the city. Wellbeing is also a key driver for the project. The trail will engage people with creativity and encourage people to be active and get outside, benefitting not only their physical health but also mental health. Blank Wall Assassins' vision is to continue to develop the interactive trail with more installations and more opportunities for our communities to engage. We aim to create an annual, city wide festival that not only drives footfall but also instills a sense of pride from our communities in a vibrant and colourful city.

### **Costings**

We have attached 2 funding examples. Funding A: is a costing which covers everything stated in this proposal re public art and its related fringe activities. This would rely on working with partner organisations around the city to curate a programme of events in various venues and establishments but with no additional cost to the festival. Funding B: is the same but with a bigger focus on the festival element. This would include stage hire and paid performers along with street food vendors to create a much more 'festival' feel. This would incur further costs but open up revenue streams to offset these.

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We are obviously striving for Funding B and if our Arts Council bid is successful, this would reduce the amount we require to around £32,000 as we have included an element of the festival in our application.