

Free information sheet, please take one

## Through Our Lens: Growing up with Covid-19

5 January to 26 March 2022

While many of us are familiar with the impact of school closures and working from home, first hand stories of young peoples' pandemic experience have largely gone unnoticed. *Through Our Lens* features photographs made by a group of diverse young people from across the Bradford District during the first national lockdown in 2020.

With mentoring from artist Carolyn Mendelsohn, who quickly responded to the need for community and collaboration, isolated young people were encouraged to tell their personal stories through photography. Mendelsohn taught them how to use photography as a tool to document their experiences and help make sense of their changing worlds.

*Through Our Lens* offers a vital window into how the young people adapted and grew through an incredibly challenging time. The teenagers represent a spectrum of social and cultural backgrounds, including a number of refugees who moved to Bradford only to be plunged straight into isolation as the pandemic took hold.

Mendelsohn used her skills to help the teenagers make their thoughts, feelings and emotions visible. She has ignited a passion for photography in the young people that will grow going forward, giving us the photographers of the future.

Curated in collaboration with the young artists who made the work, *Through Our Lens* is both a reflection on a period of adversity, as well as a celebration of the resilience, dedication and spirit of a diverse group of young people.

**To find out more** pick up an Exhibition Guide, browse our reading area or watch the 15 minute film in the foyer opposite the Welcome Desk. An accompanying newspaper published to coincide with the exhibition is available from our shop for a suggested donation of £2.

You can hear some of the Through Our Lens group talking about what the experience has meant to them on Saturday 5 March 2022, 2pm to 3pm. This is a free event, though donations are welcome, booking advised at the Welcome Desk.

**Through Our Lens** is a project developed by Bradford based artist Carolyn Mendelsohn. The project is nurturing and mentoring a core group of young people aged between 12 and 20 years old to create new photography, based on their personal experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. The project has also engaged satellite groups, including a younger cohort of 6 to 11 year olds. You can see some of their work in *Our World* displayed on the pink wall outside the gallery.

To date Carolyn has mentored over one hundred young people working via Zoom as well as face-to-face sessions and workshops. In summer 2020, the group exhibited outdoors across the Bradford District as part of the major public art project, *Our Street Gallery*.  
[www.throughourlens.co.uk](http://www.throughourlens.co.uk)



**Carolyn Mendelsohn** is an award-winning photographer and filmmaker whose practice is rooted in telling stories and amplifying the voices of those who are not always heard. In April 2020, when her own practice ground to a halt, she set up Through Our Lens to enable young people to tell their own story of the Covid-19 pandemic through photography. Carolyn has spoken at national events about Through Our Lens and is developing the model to mentor others and enable other people to facilitate their own Through our Lens projects. In 2021 Carolyn was named as a finalist for the National Lottery Awards in the Culture, Arts and Film category for her outstanding work with Through Our Lens.

Carolyn's long-term project *Being Inbetween* has been exhibited internationally, including at Impressions Gallery, and has been published by The Guardian, The Sunday Times, La Monde, BBC and British Journal of Photography. She was awarded the BJP Portrait of Britain in 2017 and 2019 and won Gold in The Royal Photographic Society International Print exhibition 2017/18.  
[www.carolynmendelsohnphoto.com](http://www.carolynmendelsohnphoto.com)

Through Our Lens project has been financially supported by Impressions Gallery, since its inception in April 2020. This exhibition highlights the gallery's investment in the project and its commitment to nurturing new generations of photographic talent.

Through Our Lens project was initially funded by a Response Arts Grant from Bradford Council and now supported by public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England, Impressions Gallery, the National Science and Media Museum, and Bradford College.

Through Our Lens is being archived as part of The Photographic Archive of Bradford Museums and Galleries, making the photographs available in years to come for those who want to see what life was like during the Covid pandemic.

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 @ImpGalleryPhoto @through\_our\_lens\_covid19  
#ThroughOurLens