

**fun
palaces**

**ACTIVIST
TOOLKIT**

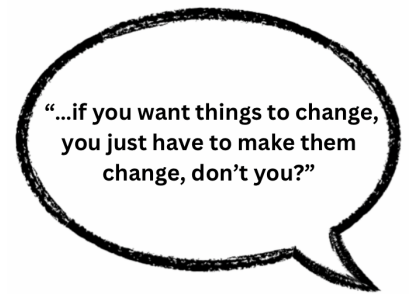
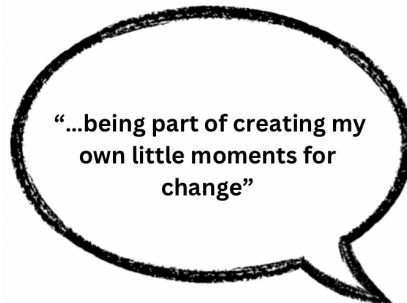

Aston University
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**CENTRE
FOR
CULTURAL
VALUE**

This toolkit is about creative activism and includes tips and tools designed to help you get creative with your community...and find or continue to use your activist voice! It is based upon the stories of Fun Palace Makers who took part in a research project with Fun Palaces and Dr Katy Pilcher - 'Creative Voices, Activist Voices: Sensory Stories of Creative Communities' (2023-4).

Creative Activism and Activities

Many of our research participants spoke about their activist journeys, while others did not overtly identify as an 'activist'. This begs the question of: who is seen as a 'typical' person doing community and activist work?



Getting Started:

1. Is there a specific issue or problem you want to address? Or something you want to see changed?

- ▶ Is it local or national?
- ▶ Is anyone else (individuals or organisations) addressing it?
- ▶ Why is it a problem?
- ▶ And why does it bother you?
- ▶ Does it affect you personally? If so, how?
- ▶ Who else might be impacted, and are their experiences similar or different to yours?

2. Focus on small steps to implement change...

- ▶ What do you love doing – can this be part of your activism?
- ▶ Who else might be keen to support this activism – and how do you reach others?
- ▶ How can you readdress the power imbalance and get attention for your cause?

Barriers and inequalities that you may encounter:

As gathered from Fun Palace Makers' direct experiences.



Practical examples of things you could do to make your event more inclusive:

These are ideas generated from Fun Palace Makers who took part in the toolkit, they are suggestions rather than prescriptive - and raise ideas and questions.

Handing over your space to the community and asking them what they want to use it for.

Trusting people and giving them ownership.

Allowing space for impromptu experiences/creations.

Embracing messiness!

Intergenerational activities.

Process is as important as the 'product'.

Providing a quiet space.

Collective silence can be community-building, not just conversation.

Large fonts.

Audio descriptions of text and objects.

Being flexible with the activity on offer and allowing people to participate in ways meaningful to them.

Examples of cultural activism beyond Fun Palaces

There are many ways for activism to emerge as part of an activity you enjoy doing, either individually or with others. We have selected a few examples where simple acts of doing have left a mark or grown into deeper or ongoing movements.

Rebel Botanists grew as a movement to raise awareness and knowledge of the wild plants growing all around us. It began in March 2020 by teacher Liz Richmond, who had a desire to find ways to reconnect with nature. She began by learning the names of native plants and chalking these on the pavement in the cracks and crevices where they appeared. These small acts of rebellion challenge the idea of wild plants as weeds and increase their visibility to others. She was soon joined by a friend on a chalk and walk and the movement has been growing ever since. For more information <https://rebelbotanists.org>



Photographer Rachel Attfield

Invisible Food began when writer and artist Ceri Buck began picking nettles with her neighbours on the Loughborough Estate, South London lead to regular walks around the estate gathering edible plants. Slowly the group increased their knowledge of wild plants, exchanged recipes and discovered different ways to engage with their local surroundings. The group created a map with a selection of plant identification cards and recipes which was distributed to everyone living on the estate. The project continued for many years.



Photographer Rachel Attfield

For more information

<http://www.rachelanderson.info/invisible-food-ceri-buck.html>

Creative activities that you could try with your community...

Placard making!

This placard making activity is inspired by discussions with many research participants about experiences of making protest banners/placards.

You will need:

- ▶ Paint and Brushes (you could use bold felt pens / markers for less mess.)
- ▶ Panels of cardboard (ideally recycled)
- ▶ A bin liner or something to protect tables /

Directions: Invite people to paint or draw their own protest banner for something they would like to see change or for something their community needs right now.



Credit: CHERY NGUYEN.// CREATIVE CREATOR

Bubbles!

Bubbles activity inspired by bubble-making recipes shared by Leo Smith.

Small mix with glycerine

You will need:

- ▶ 6 cups water
- ▶ 1/2 bottle of green fairy liquid
- ▶ Corn Starch
- ▶ 1x tablespoon of glycerine
- ▶ 1x tablespoon of baking powder

Directions:

- ▶ Dissolve cornstarch in water, add baking powder, glycerine and fairy liquid. Try not to froth too much.
- ▶ Allow to stand for at least an hour or even over night.
- ▶ Give a good stir when ready to use.

Equipment: For a tri string Use cotton cord = check the middle of the cord if it has a plastic middle then open up cord end and pull out.

How to Make Giant Bubbles by NightHawkinLight:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXsPqUFsArM>

Cheap and easy wands for children: Get 2 drinking straws for the "handles" and make a tri sting/web - light and easy, great for toddlers.

This toolkit was produced by Dr Katy Pilcher (Aston University), Amie Taylor (Fun Palaces) and Rachel Attfield (Fun Palaces), incorporating many amazing ideas from Fun Palaces Makers who took part in our research project.

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Join our movement, make a Fun Palace: www.funpalaces.co.uk