

# Recent Work

**Ben Hodson**

# Profile

My business cards say things such as Creative Director, Social Entrepreneur and Artist. But when you get down to it, I'm much more. I am not your average creative: I have set up and run businesses since the age of 16, including Ltd companies, charities and social enterprises. I have garnered awards such as the Future 100 from Ernst & Young and a regional award for Community Business Person of the Year.

I have lived and worked in three countries and led: advertising campaigns, community projects, diverse and talented teams, film sets, an arts festival, book projects, alpine expeditions, a multi-national company and a coffee shop. I have commissioned and delivered artistic programs, projects and creative commercial work. I have travelled extensively and have made strong links with established artists, curators, producers, choreographers, film makers and other creatives across the UK and in Switzerland, Germany, France, Turkey, USA and Iraq.

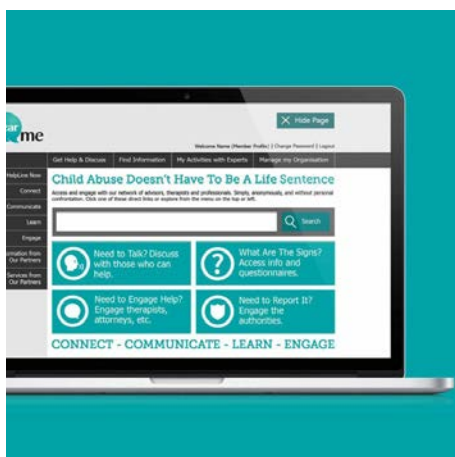
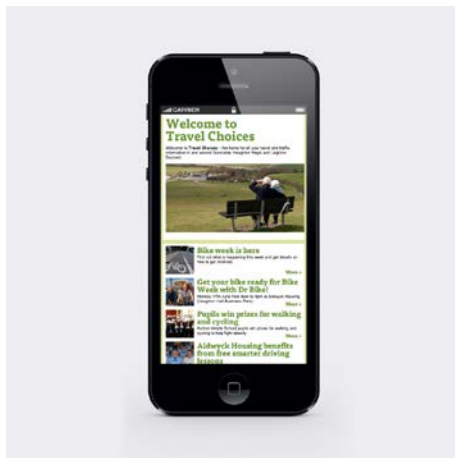
I regularly deliver workshops, lectures and seminars on a range of creative, social and business subjects at Universities, conferences, colleges and business events. Teaching has taught me the most - truly understand my own identity, develop areas of expertise, to communicate clearly and facilitate a hunger for innovation and life-long learning in an engaging way.

I have strengths accross design, art, media and strategy. As a multidicipline creative I have developped strong skills in project management, producing, fund raising, business and networking. I have spent the last ten years dedicating large amounts of my time to furthering Luton's cultural and artistic offering. During this time I have built a wide network of connections and friends across the arts, community and business sectors. I have built communities on websites and social media platforms that are focused around creative events happening in Luton. I have a proven track record of pulling together diverse perspectives to support the delivery of work. I have directly worked with and for most of the main creative organisations in Luton, including Luton Culture, University of Bedfordshire, Luton Borough Council and UKCCA.

I enjoy helping people realise their potential whilst implementing strategic plans towards ambitious goals. I love to collaborate, ideate, innovate and lead. In a nutshell, my passion for creativity is coupled with a love for forming and building great communities.

# Design

Experienced UI/UX designer, senior consultant, brand strategist and creative director of the socially minded creative agency [athinplace.co.uk](http://athinplace.co.uk) Over 12 years experience and references, including working with ARUP, BBC, London Luton Airport, GAME, Randstad, Tesco, Volker Highways and Arriva.





# Media

Experienced photographer, camera operator, director of photography, producer and film director. I have created creative and commercial media projects for a range of national and international clients, including directing music videos, producing commercial promotional videos and DoP on adverts. I maintain social media campaigns and communities for a range of creative and business clients.

Selected films:

## **Persephone (Associate Producer)**

Musical feature film directed by Katherine Freeman, shot in Luton and produced for Century Films.

## **One (Art Director)**

Directed by Brian Hutton.

## **Mystery River (Associate Producer)**

BBC presenter Michael Smith's film for Departure Lounge, Up projects and The Floating Cinema.





# Art

My background as an artist while extensive isn't traditional. I work with photography, montage, collage, video, installation and performance. My work is mainly preoccupied with trying to change the world positively through visual art. I have exhibited widely in both group and solo shows. Including; The Houses of Parliament, PhotoFusion, Departure Lounge, the Ismail Khayat gallery in Iraq and the LPA gallery. I have had art work shown in Berlin, New Dehli and I have work on permanent display in the UN head quarters in New York.

I won the Murry Barford Prize 2013. I have just completed a residency in the French Alps. I was featured on a BBC 1 documentary about Luton, I was interviewed by author and journalist Sarfraz Manzoor



# Iraq the Forgotten Story

This ambitious cross-cultural project involved a large fundraising initiative, including crowd-sourcing and recruiting partners. Life-saving surgery for several Iraqi children was funded through the charitable funds raised.

## The Vision

Use visual art to engage in a cross-cultural arts program which tells untold stories and challenges perceptions, in order to raise awareness and funds for an Iraqi children's charity.

## The Plan

Create an ambitious touring exhibition and education outreach programme in England and Wales from communities in Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkey. Bring together Kurds, Arabs, Turks and Brits.

## The Delivery

Managed fifteen artists across five countries; two personal trips to Iraq, one during the last gulf war; 22 exhibitions, including two in Iraq; six partners; five schools directly engaged; ten galleries & museums; 14,400 people directly interacted with the project; over 100,000+ unique visits to websites. I exhibited in the Ismail Khayat Gallery in Iraq. Being one of the the first British artists to exhibit in this region since the second gulf war. While in Iraq, I orchestrated a dramatic reenactment of a peace project from 2000, by painting the side of a mountain in Iraq with the artist Ismail Khayat.





# Love Luton

Since 2010 I have been the creative lead and core working group member of this town-wide initiative that aims to create confidence, pride and a positive image for Luton.

## The Vision

To use Love Luton (LL) as a platform to engage Luton artists, especially young or emerging talent. Find ways to enable and promote these local artists.

## The Plan

Set up a community awards fund to use some of the LL private sponsorship to empower community and arts activists. Run arts competitions open to all ages, with specific focus on children and youth that would in turn support the LL goal of building civic pride. Engage with educational outreach programmes, schools, colleges and the University.

## The Delivery

Created and ran six Bedfordshire-focused arts competitions over the last four years, including a short film contest; a poster and design competition; a music competition and several photography and visual art competitions. Introduced and led on the community awards fund, which has enabled a range of art and social action projects, including digging a communal vegetable Garden. It also enabled the creation of the new Luton-focused LP "Wonderful Town" by Punk band UK Decay. Set up a large pop-up exhibition, with submissions from 50 visual artists, which involved printing over 300 posters of the submitted work and hanging it outdoors around the town.



# High Town Art For All

I was the creative lead and core working group member of this community arts initiative, which included internationally-renowned visual artists Annette & Erasmus Schöter. It won Luton's Best award in the Culture category.

## The Vision

Use art, artists and pop-up interventions to help stimulate life, arts-engagement and social regeneration in the High Town area of Luton. Bring together key creative partners: Luton Borough Council; Luton Culture; local artists and arts organisations.

## The Plan

Create a range of pop-up spaces which showcase visual art exhibitions, music events, creative workshops, children's events and artist talks.

## The Delivery

Organised and motivated 40+ artists, creating digital resources, strategies and rotas. Originally an external consultant was commissioned to help negotiate with the leaseholders of the empty units, but after this we ran it. It won several community awards and three of the units used were later let / sold, which achieved the social regeneration goals.





# Luton Arts Festival

From 2008 - 2010 I was the arts co-ordinator and core working group member for Luton Arts Festival, previously known as B:Fest. I oversaw the arts programming, budgeting and pop-up events.

## The Vision

A combined arts festival for Luton, showcasing local and international talent to the people of Luton. Its had started as a research project for the University of Bedfordshire, but we quickly helped it become a more centralised Luton wide event.

## The Plan

Create an exceptional and varied month-long festival. Find match funding and increase the budget to bring in large notable arts events.

## The Delivery

A 26 Day Festival with over 30 artistic and creative events of varying genres. This had a strong performance, film and music programme, and also included visual arts and writing. 1620 event attendees plus 23,000\* additional passers-by and Luton FM audience.



# Other Relevant Projects

## A Thin Place

Without any funding, I have co-curated and set up a new coworking and exhibition space in Luton. The space has now successfully hosted three solo shows and five group shows, including work funded by the Arts Council England.

## Guerilla Galleries

Since 2007, I have been using visual art as an intervention through Guerilla Galleries. This normally involves clearing out the furniture from a private home and turning it into an exhibition space for a single evening.

# Contact

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