

# Kith and Kinship: Unheard Voices

*"...after all, we are all the victors, or victims, of life's experience..."*

- Norman Cornish

*Kith & Kinship: Norman Cornish & L.S Lowry* exhibited at The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle in 2024/25 brings together the evocative works of two Northern artists. The vivid realities of Cornish's Spennymoor life and Lowry's industrial views resonate deeply with the unspoken experiences of those living within the walls of HMP Deerbolt today.

*Unheard Voices*, a collaborative project between The Bowes Museum, Novus learners and tutors from HMP Deerbolt, and artist practitioner Jonah York, delves into themes of kith and kinship.

Novus operates in over 50 prisons across England and Wales providing enrichment opportunities for the large proportion of prison learners who have additional needs and/or didn't have a good experience of education when they were younger. Creative partnership projects such as this one are a core part of their provision, engaging learners and encouraging them to participate in education, helping them on their rehabilitative journey.

During this project, through creative workshops, poetry, in-depth exploration and discussion, participants have responded to ideas of community, identity, and place. Guided by the learners' own reflections, *Unheard Voices* allows incarcerated people to reshape the conversation about them through these iconic works, offering new and personal interpretations.

Opportunities like this play a crucial role in fostering a rehabilitative culture. By providing engaging and challenging activities through arts and culture, Novus and The Bowes Museum empower learners to contribute meaningfully to their environment. This experience motivates learners to positively impact their communities, supports personal growth and fosters the confidence needed to make lasting, positive changes in their lives.

Over five weeks, 32 young men from HMP Deerbolt worked alongside Jonah York to create this zine. In their words, it captures *"the voices people choose not to hear"* and offers a positive and constructive platform to engage with their peers, families and the wider community.

Cornish and Lowry had a deep understanding of humanity. Both painted what they saw and what they felt; nothing more, nothing less. This connection to honesty, reality and expression resonates with learners.

*"I've not just seen these paintings but I've lived in them"*  
- HMP Deerbolt Learner

Through this work, we're sharing views and perspectives that audiences might not have heard before. Through it, the voices of today resonate with the art of the past, creating a narrative around place, hope, and aspiration.

*"A picture can speak a thousand words"*

Kith. noun. familiar friends and neighbours or relatives.

# KITH



Kinship. noun. a feeling of being close or similar to other people or things.

# KINSHIP



*"Unheard is something you have missed out on, something you have heard and unheard, something you have dismissed. It's powerful. It has meaning behind it"*

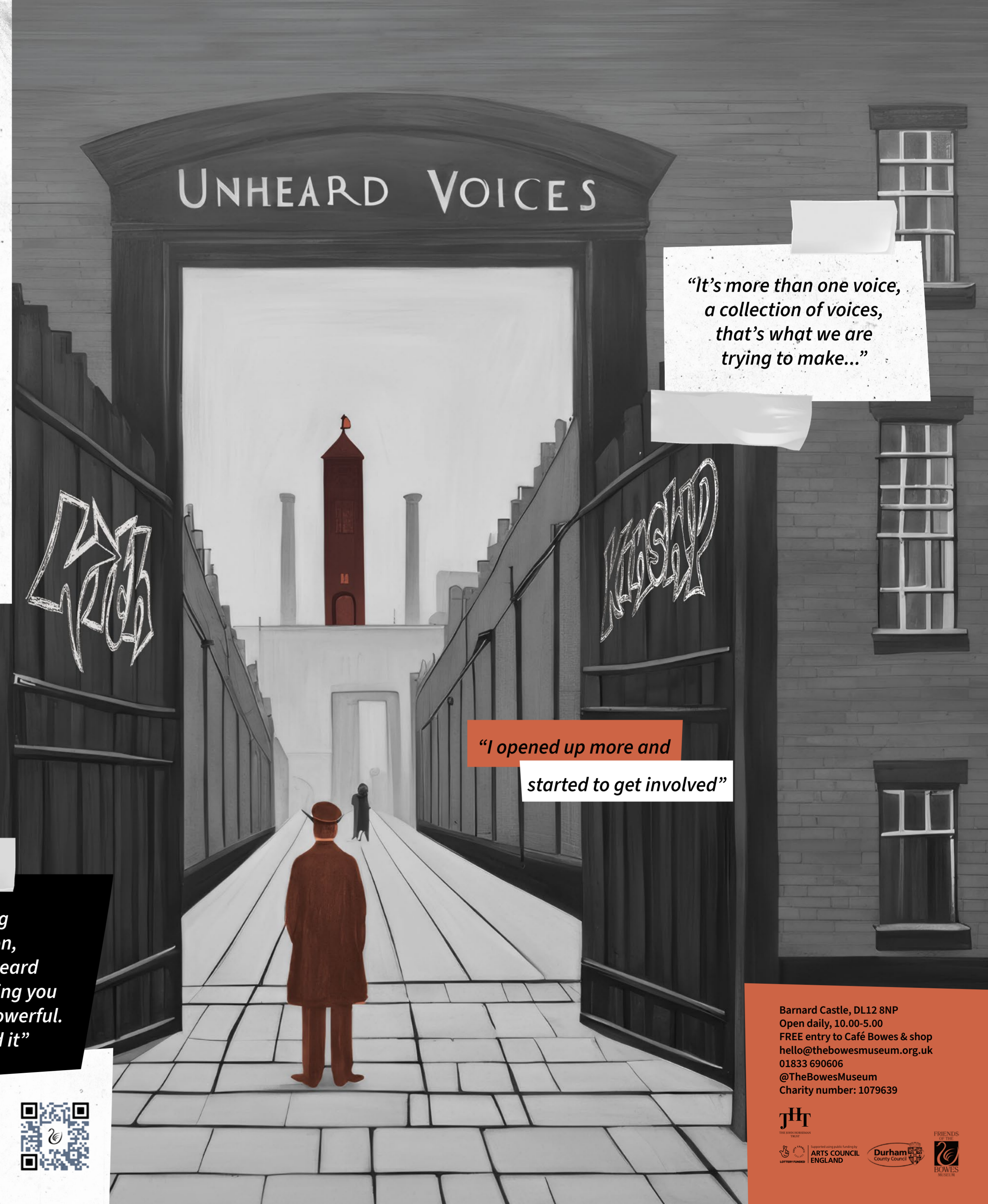
These words included in this zine were written by Learners from HMP Deerbolt as part of The Bowes Museum's *Kith and Kinship: Norman Cornish and L.S. Lowry* exhibition and *The Unheard Voices Project*. This project was made possible by the generous support of the John Horseman Trust. Scan the QR code to hear from the Learners and project facilitators.



## UNHEARD VOICES

*"It's more than one voice, a collection of voices, that's what we are trying to make..."*

*"I opened up more and started to get involved"*



THE BOWES MUSEUM

Barnard Castle, DL12 8NP  
Open daily, 10.00-5.00  
FREE entry to Café Bowes & shop  
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Charity number: 1079639





"Today I saw a picture of a horse and cart. It reminded me of being younger. It was painted by Norman Cornish and I hope you get to see it one day"

"I've had a lot of time to think lately and I've put a lot of things into perspective"

"It's important to show that people can become something even if they had nothing. That 'nothing' isn't nothing when you make it something"

"I was looking at a painting and it brought back memories of you"

"Every day, ordinary life shown in extraordinary ways"

"I haven't been to The Bowes Museum before, but now I will go with my daughter. I'd like her to see the work we've done there"

*d.s dowe*  
"Sorry I let you down, I promise I'll make it up to you"

"I won't let you down again"

you always  
in my



"I see a peaceful, busy, friendly neighbourhood; enjoyment among people, tranquillity in the air"



"It reminded me of good times"

"Just 'cos we are in here doesn't mean we aren't human, you know"

They draw me in, I don't quite know why? But it's almost like I've been there before

Once upon  
in A DAY  
IN DEERBOY

"I want to draw like this, put it up in my pad to remind me of home"

ANYONE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

EVERYBODY'S VOICE IS HEARD

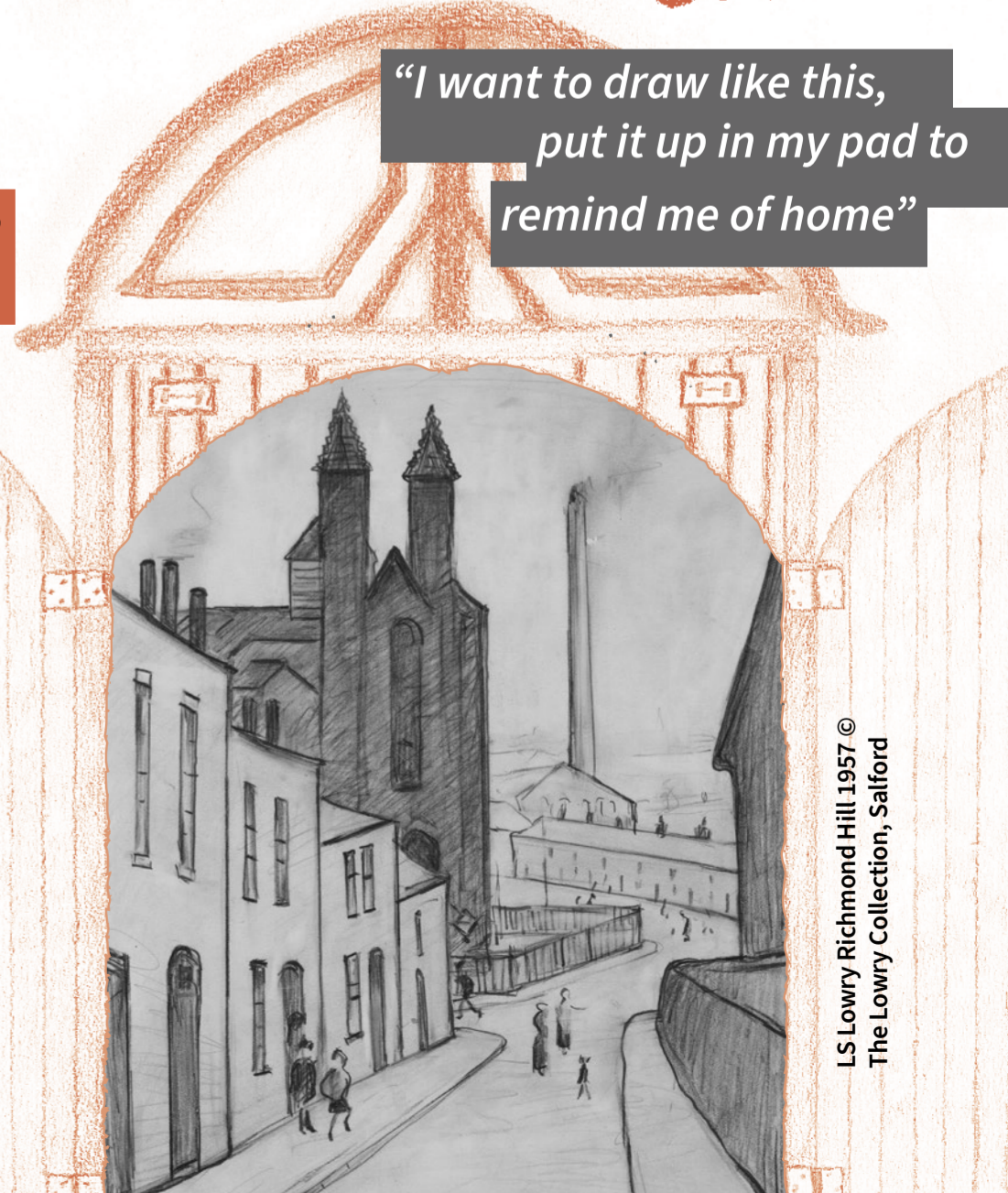
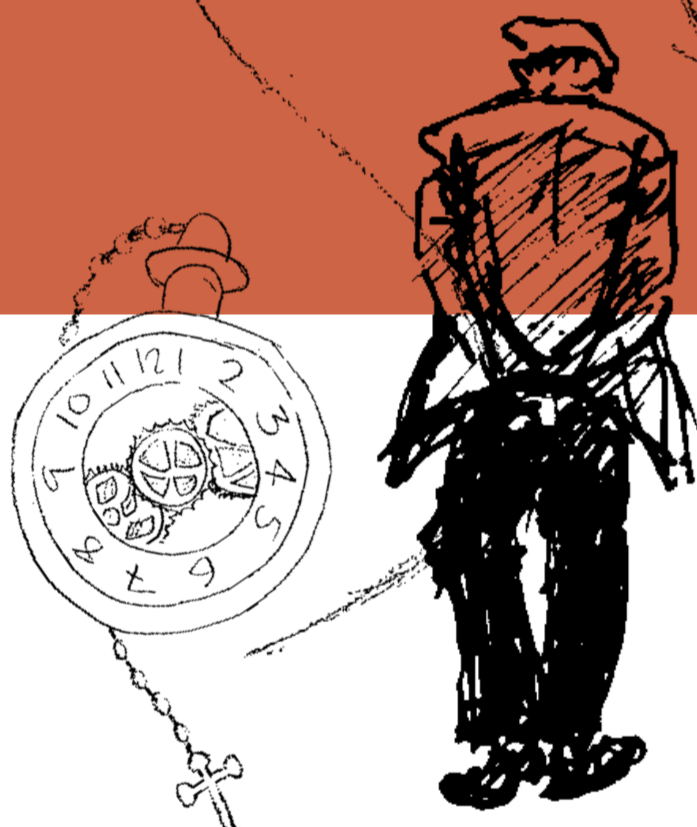
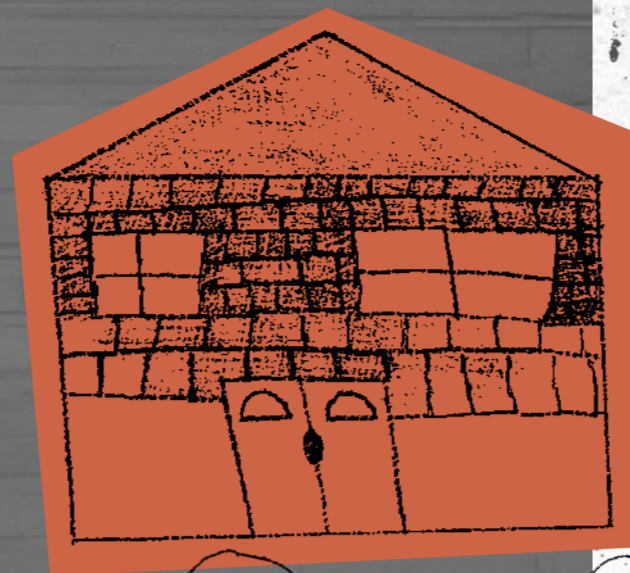
Unheard Voices are the voices we choose not to hear, people don't want to hear about us, they just want to lock us away

We still have voices, you might choose not to hear them, but we do

HERE

I imagine I am at home

"Their works of art make me think of me finally making it back home, after all the struggle... and someone's left the lights on"



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LS Lowry Richmond Hill 1957 © The Lowry Collection, Salford