\*80s jubilant presentation music plays\*

EMMA: Hi I am Emma, I am Lu, we are social workers, activists, teachers, accountants, sculptors, editors, writers, graphic designers, social media managers, bricklayers, producers, ceramicists, administrators

LU: shopkeepers, fundraisers, curators, exhibition invigilators, tour guides, painters, filmmakers, CEOs, PR and marketing managers, designers, publishers, mentors, fulfillment workers, web designers…

EMMA: Otherwise known as contemporary artists.

LU: This summer we hosted a salty arts pub quiz for local cultural decision makers in Southend-on-sea and asked questions around the value of artists, what they produce and what this means for local culture here in Southend. We’re going to share our feedback from this research which gives you an important insight into cultural decision making and how this effects what we make locally.

EMMA: Many people struggle to understand what artists actually do and can bring to a community. We’re hoping to demystify this, remind you of how exciting arts and culture is, how it’s a reflection of our society as well as having a look at how artists work today and what support they need to thrive.

LU: Question number one, and we’re coming in hard with this buzzword - What does the word regeneration mean to you?

Side note, regeneration means improving a place or a system, especially by making it more active or successful.

So, there people here \*points to a scale with ‘has only had a bad experience of regeneration’ at one end, ‘regen if done well’ in the middle and ‘super into regen’ at the other end\* were into regeneration, they said it makes Southend better, gives it a fresh injection of energy and some funding. \*points to end of scale of bad experiences of regeneration\* These people here think regen means more profit over people, more cranes, steel and glass with [negative] impacts to the community.

As artists, we have some questions.

EMMA: Are we responsible for regenerating places? Is the idea of improving a place share? Can it ever be? Is success universal? Is gentrification different from regeneration?

EMMA: Southend is famed for its murals under the bridge, with their content changing regularly as created by a handful of local artists. We know how much it costs from experience and when we asked how much it costs to make a mural designed in collaboration with community members we were chuffed people knew the realistic value - we have been asked to create murals for both £50 and £300. Think about all the things it takes to make a mural with a group of people; community engagement, materials, cost of labour, design, launch, promotion.

Here’s a mural we made with 20 students over a term in a school in Basildon. \*Image of Emma and Lu in front of a colourful mural of student drawings of LGBTQIA+ artists, their names in colourful wobbly text\*

It cost = £3850 in total.

LU: A little bit more than 50 quid.

LU: This was a good one. What experience do you need to commission local public artworks?

32% said ~ Local residents (which we agree with)

21% said ~ Working within the arts sector

18% said ~ Co-ordinating a local BID (Business Improvement District)

18% said ~ Having an opinion on art

5% said ~ Being a manager of a high street shop

However...

2% said ~ Trained as a curator

2% said ~ Trained as an artist

… Which we’re not too sure about.

EMMA: So another one of our questions and the last one we’re going to talk about here: What makes a good public artwork?

Here, this was a freestyle answer for our quiz participants - and we put the answers into 4 categories; Looks good, Does good, Is useful, and is an art. Mainly people felt that public art should have a use, a function (we agree!), and should also respond to the people, place and space around it.

To read the whole report visit Andtowns.co.uk or follow us via our Instagrams @emerrrhhhh @luwilliamsdotcom

\*Old timey music plays\*

A video from 60s documentary about Southend shows the beach and illuminations which are no longer present on the seafront.

NARRATOR: and as the summer draws to a close, illuminations turn the borough into a veritable fairyland.

A slide show of empty high street shops displays on a black background.

Text reads ‘Bring Creativity Home”

A pleasant tune of children whistling plays, with a child singing:  
*It was such a lovely dream,*

*Its the best i've ever seen,*

*Wells and wells of wonderland,*

*My eyes could not believe,*

*Its a land far far away,*

*Music there is always gay,*

*We have so much fun,*

*Oh I wish you all could come,*

*\*many children join the lone singer\**

*Its a never never land,*

*with an umpty tumpty band,*

*singing Oh La Oh La, Oh La* \*the voices fade out\*

A sound from the end of a Southed-on-sea documentary plays, providing a culminating feeling of significance.

Text reads: ‘Whats In Store? Towns and Cultural Economies of Recovery asked us, as Southend artists, what makes good public art and can we reimagine the high street?’

‘So we held a pub quiz for cultural decision makers.’

TV Static ends the shot.