

Design Writing by Cassy Walsh

How Bristolian Culture Is Linked With The Nails

culture *noun*

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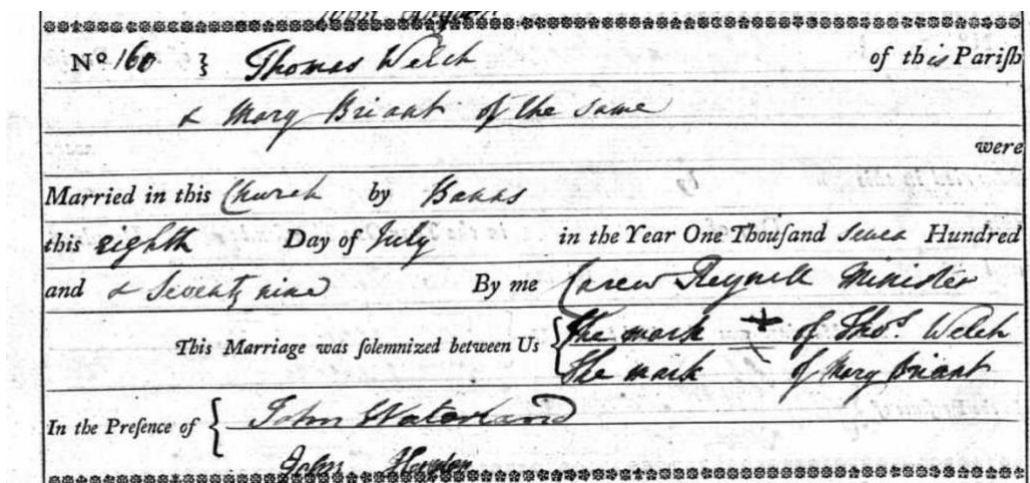
way of life

1  [uncountable] the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group

- African/American/European/Islamic culture
- working-class culture
- the study of Japanese language and culture
- Cooking is a hugely important part of French culture.
- He is no longer in touch with youth culture.
- The film examines the culture clash between the generations.



I have traced my family tree back to the 18th Century inside the City of Bristol, this evokes feelings of a deep connection with objects and streets that my ancestors would have touched and walked upon. (Image below is a wedding entry in a local church of my six times great grandfather)



The four Bronze pedestals that sit outside the Corn Exchange in Bristol are a symbol of Bristol's merchant past and affectionately known as The Nails. They were all made at different times, donated to the City by different individuals, each one is unique. The oldest is undated but is Elizabethan. The second oldest, also from the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, was donated by Robert Kitchen who was an Alderman and died in 1594. The dates of the other two are listed in the historic England database as 1625 and 1631. One of them has the name John Barker

inscribed on the top, he was a rich merchant from the 17th century, also a wine merchant and a member of Parliament for Bristol during the reign of Charles I. They all have the highest protection under British conservation legislation.

The Nails were used by merchants to negotiate prices and payment for their goods, they have a raised rim around the edge to stop money from falling off.



I feel that these are beautiful objects that drive their roots from our modern, vibrant, multicultural city down deep into Bristol's less beautiful mercantile past. Bristol's main trade in the 1800's were in tobacco, coffee, sugar and chocolate which were all produced in the Caribbean by the slaves on the plantations. The metal work used to subjugate the slaves were made in the city. The goods produced by them and the metal work would have been bought and sold on the tops of the Nails.

To quote the Discovering Bristol website "The involvement of Bristol in the Africa trade boosted industry in and around the city. Gunpowder, glass, pottery, woollen cloth, iron and brass pans went to Africa and all were produced locally. Without the transatlantic slave trade, local industry would not have had such a big market and been so profitable." Bristol's wealth at the time and some of what was built and still stands today was funded by money made in the acquisition and sale of the African people. Bristol is currently undergoing a transition of renaming a lot of buildings and schools which bare the name *Colston* named after Edward Colston who made most of his wealth in the slave trade. I am in agreement with this transition however, I believe that we should not hide all of Bristol's past as it is part of our history. It is all (good, bad and awful) part of Bristol's journey to where it is today. If you hide the past then you lose extra opportunities to learn from it, out of sight is out of mind.

The grand longevity of the Nails and imagining all what they have seen through history, my ancestry and the changing culture of Bristol, I find extremely creatively inspiring. After reading about the history of them I feel that the romance I felt has a darker side too and that must be acknowledged, remembered and also included in how I represent them in my art.

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/immig_emig/england/bristol/article_5.shtml

Old Bristol City Website available at: <https://bristololdcity.co.uk/where-to-go/nails>

Discovering Bristol Website available at: <http://www.discoveringbristol.org.uk/slavery/routes/bristol-to-africa/trade-goods/slave-trade-goods/>

The websites had no year of publication or authors listed?

My Manifesto

- 1) **Colour is the inspiration, metamorphosis is the result.**
- 2) **The birth of a visualisation constitutes happiness personified.**
- 3) **No future creates freedom in the present.**
- 4) **Multi-sensory engagement forges inclusivity.**
- 5) **Colour represents our need for expression.**
- 6) **A response and responsibility to kindness.**
- 7) **Using colour purposefully manipulates our environment into a safe space.**
- 8) **Learning is a journey not a destination.**

No future creates freedom in the present –

This statements has two meanings for me

1. In 1977 with the rise of the Sex Pistols and their song *God Save The Queen*, the end lyric was 'No Future'. As Pier Vitrorio Aureli (Author, Architect and Teacher) pointed out In the BBC sounds documentary about manifestoes, this was the death of the Art Manifesto as we knew it. Malcolm McLaren was their promoter, he was inspired by the avant-garde group the *Situationists* who were intern inspired by *Dada* and *Surrealism*.

To quote Aureli "In a way McLaren and the Sex Pistols *God save the Queen* was a clear attempt to end this kind of messianic expectation from the future and in fact from that moment on, from 1977 onwards manifestoes about the arts and architecture have been sometimes produced but never had the clear impact and conviction of manifestoes written before".

2. If we live like there is no future I believe this would give us total freedom in the present as we would not have to consider our actions or worry about how we are perceived or validated. We would be free to live in a happy mindful bubble of the now.

Multi-sensory engagement forged inclusivity-

As a parent of an Autistic child and having a blind Aunt I am extremely aware that art could be something to be enjoyed in more ways than just visually.

Arts Integration (AI) is a technique forging connections between teaching children arts (music, drama, visual arts, dance) and the standard curriculum. It is used to teach all children and is especially helpful to those with leaning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. It uses art to help the children engage with learning language, math, history and science subjects. Using this technique enabled the children to focus for longer and retain the information taught through exploration and confirmation. The children also enjoyed their classes much more.

Art can be enjoyed in many ways if care is taken to include people with different sensory abilities. There have been many inclusive art exhibitions focused on these marginalised groups such as *Please Touch the Art*, *Sensorium* and *Multi-Sensory Met*. These exhibits included replicas of famous sculptures that could be explored with touch, scratch and sniff painting, 3D pictures paired with sound and maps of the exhibit in brail. These use all five senses to trigger a more intense response.

Using colour purposefully manipulates our environment into a safe space

Karen Haller (Author) believes that colour is light and light is energy. She says “When light strikes the eye, it is converted into electrical impulses, and those electrical impulses pass through the same part of our brain that processes our emotions. What scientific research has shown us is that every colour, and every tint, tone and shade of colour, has specific psychological effects”.

(Haller, 2019 pp66)

Freud believed that the most important part of our brain is our unconscious mind because that drives our behaviour. Colour has the power to calm or agitate us. When colour is used sympathetically in our environment it will create a sense of well-being for us.

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This Killer Queen Perfume by Katy Perry Advert denotes a beautiful woman sat on in a very grand room sat on the side of a throne that has fallen over. It also denotes her holding a golden sceptre with a jewel studded crown on her head and a crown on the floor.

The Connotation shows she has killed the King (The perfume is called Killer Queen) so she is now the most important person in the room. Her patent leather boots and stockings has cultural links with bondage which in turn indicates dominance and control.

Perry is the icon as she is a very famous musician and personality.

The underlying Myth constructed relies on knowledge of Kings and Royalty then can imply If you own this perfume you can be the most important, powerful, beautiful, wealthy, dangerous person in the room.

The cultural assumptions (Myth) we can jump to is that she is now the leader and the most important person in the country as she has over thown the King (we'll forget that she would be arrested for murder for the purposes of the connotation).

The three main colours used are red, black and gold. Perry's Short red dress shows wealth and sexiness. The red of the perfume bottle at the top of the sceptre is the same colour as her lips and her dress creating a triangulation to again pull your focus towards the icon, her painted lips and perfume bottle. The fur around the neck shows wealth and symbolises colours worn by Kings and Queens. The gold in the room denotes wealth. The lack of colour on the floor pulls your attention straight to the Icon. The black curtain pulled across the portrait in the background relies on our knowledge that this colour is used in our culture to signify death and mourning, it also means that Perry's face is now the only one we can see. I wonder if the perfume being the slightly brighter red and the highest object in the foreground is a clever way to make the perfume the most important thing in the room. The perfume bottle is made up of the three main colours I have highlighted and also has a crown so really, the perfume could be Perry's and our new head Monarch.

The slogan for this advert is 'Own The Throne' which is used as a anchorage between the perfume and what is being shown to us. We too can be powerful, important, dominant and sexy if we buy Killer Queen perfume. We want to be like her, without this cultural envy adverts like this wouldn't work. If we could just own this perfume then our lives would be better. Our culture has shifted over time from the having to appearing to have. We want what we see and we want others to know that we have it. In this culture it promotes fear of inadequacies if we don't own what we are presented with. Sadly, as a society we feel consumption makes us desirable.

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