

Meet the Artist – Centenary Memories Window Trail

Meet the early-career artist who supported the Centenary Memories Window Trail alongside the University of Reading team.

Jessica Brauner, Early-Career Artist

I am an emerging artist based in Reading, specialising in video, performance, creative writing, drawing, collaging and multimedia. My body of work encompasses 3 artist residencies and 15 exhibitions, including Reading Museum's 'Reading's DIGITAL Revolution' exhibition, which ran from March 2025 to December 2025. I have been nominated in the Broadway World UK Awards in the category of 'Best Video Design of a New Production of a Play or Musical' for my work as a video designer on *The Inseparables*, directed by Anastasia Bunce. After completing an Art Foundation diploma at Oxford Brookes, I went on to receive a First for my BA in Fine Art at The Arts University Bournemouth and a Distinction for my MA in Fine Art, Computational Arts Pathway at UAL Camberwell College of Arts.

Why did you want to get involved with the project?

In entering this residency, I was excited to continue to work collaboratively in making and developing my artistic portfolio about Reading. My interest in Reading is demonstrated by two projects I have previously created about Reading. My first Reading-based project was a residency in Jelly's studio at Broad St Mall, surrounding the theme of 'Impact'. I used this residency to research the impact of the word 'Oracle' in Reading Town. For my artwork,

Artist Profile – Centenary Memories Project

which was exhibited at Reading Museum, I was tasked to create a video artwork about Reading's digital future.

For this project, I wanted to take a conscientious and thoughtful approach to responding to Memory Cafes and the university's archival material, as the basis for my artwork. I have sought to uphold the memories of others in this work and the significance of the university to those who are deeply connected to their experiences there. I am honoured to be a part of Reading University's 100th birthday, as this is a milestone for the campus in Reading town and for the town's history. This residency was additionally an opportunity to further develop my skills in digital drawing and creating still images, as well as moving images. I enjoyed making the artwork that is designed to be placed on windows, representing and assembling ethereal layers of different times and spaces on a unique canvas.

What was the relationship between you, Jelly and the University of Reading?

I am very grateful to the Jelly and to the University. Jelly has greatly supported me for the last couple of years, selecting me for two residency opportunities and introducing me to a network of artists within Reading alongside the professionals at the university and within Reading Museum, who also granted me the opportunity to make a video artwork for Reading Museum's exhibition: 'Reading's DIGITAL Revolution'.

The centenary team at the university have been very supportive of me throughout a long and intricate process. Ho-Kit especially has advocated for me and supported me during my time as an artist in residence. The commission has been an excellent learning process in working with the interests of those in connection with the university as my clients for the commission, and for embracing flexibility and change. I hope to have made the right decisions for the artwork to find a compromise which combines my ideas and recording of others' memories with the practical requirements for the artwork. I was very moved by those who shared their experiences and their

Artist Profile – Centenary Memories Project

memories of the university in Memory Cafe sessions. The memories shared were all heartfelt and precious, but some of the memories were full of mischief and fun, while others were especially poignant. Attending the Memory Cafe sessions made me realise the importance of my responsibility as an artist for this project.

Anything else

Thank you to Jelly and thank you to the University of Reading. I've really enjoyed creating this artwork and being a part of the centenary celebration. I'm very excited to see the work mounted on the windows, and I feel like this project has helped me to feel more optimistic regarding the future of Reading, the future of the university and my own future.

My website: <https://jessicabrauner.wordpress.com/>

Partnering with Jelly

How has Jelly and the University of Reading worked together on the project?

Jelly is an energetic collaboration of artists supporting each other and the wider community, acting as a catalyst and making space for art in the everyday.

Playing a strategic role in Reading's cultural development, working to improve access to the visual arts for all. We support and develop visual artists, building pathways towards careers in the creative industries and providing freelance opportunities.

We advocate for artists, improving access to the arts and strengthening the opportunities for emerging and established artists, especially those who may face barriers.

Since 1993, Jelly has moulded and shaped to fit different spaces, adapting and changing to inhabit a space (that is not always a building or venue) to work collaboratively with artists, other cultural organisations, partners and the wider community locally and internationally.

Jelly worked with the University of Reading to connect them with potential young emerging artists for the project. This is an amazing opportunity for an early-career artist, and we are really grateful that the university was open to supporting a creative at this important time. Navigating these first commissions can be a daunting new experience, and Jelly is able to offer support and mentoring to artists through each stage of the process.