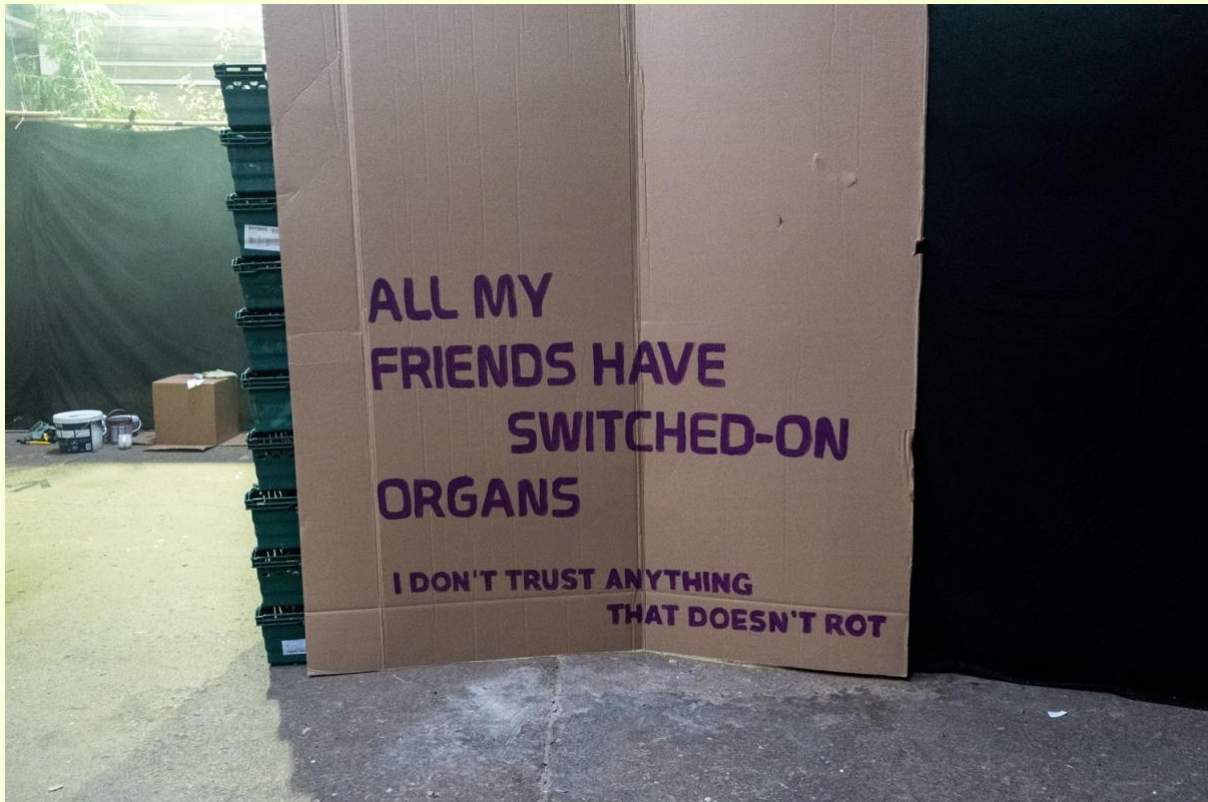


Oliver Meachem—A space to be listened to as an artist



This project has helped to improve my self-esteem and even encouraged me to design more ideas. (Oliver, Little Utopias R and D Artist)

The change in him is massive, he has a confidence he never had.

I'm still so overwhelmed at how you managed to unveil this Oliver, that I didn't know existed. I am forever in your debt. (Sharon, Oliver's mum)

When Oliver first arrived at the B arts Summer School, he wasn't sure about the people or the environment and lacked confidence. He soon joined in, relaying that he thought "if I'm here I might as well have fun". Oliver also observed that he "clicked

with Toby White” [a sound artist who led found sound workshops with Summer school participants] and in making the Little Utopias dioramas (an open devising activity to create a utopia viewed as a diorama).

The team noticed how engaged Oliver was during summer school and how exciting and fresh his ideas were. After the Summer School, Kath suggested that Oliver come in to work on the Little Utopias walk through R and D, to further develop some of those ideas.

Over 5 weeks leading to the showcase Richard and Oliver worked together to explore ideas through costume, character, film making, directing and editing. Oliver wrote a script in his spare time, Richard organised a set in the middle space for Oliver to experiment with his ideas that would then become part of the show. An entire section of the Little Utopias walkthrough was curated by Oliver.

Oliver’s mum and sister said that he had “taken a leadership role” and is “mixing with people in his college group”, where he has “never done that before”. He has more confidence in other areas of his life. Sharon Meachem, Oliver’s mum, observed that “when he came here, it was like somebody turned a key”. Coming to B arts has “made such a vast difference in him, especially after lockdown, suffering with his anxiety and panic attacks, not going out or mixing or anything”.

Sharon says that this process has “made him an artist...before all of the ideas were inside his head...he struggled to express anything or get his ideas across to other people”. This has “given him a platform” and enabled “someone to take him seriously, and listen to him

as an artist”. Sharon also observed that “he has so much more enthusiasm.. he is so talkative now...whereas he did not talk before”.

Oliver has written a blogpost reflecting on his experience which can be found here: <https://www.b-arts.org.uk/littleutopias-syntheticisland>

Little Utopias - Synthetic Island and Transhumanism



Wennie Lin—a trigger for deeper thinking



“I really, really like to see my work in the public. My neighbour recognised my work when [Kath] posted [it] onto the Facebook group. She said I can tell that’s your work!” (Wennie- Space to Connect Advisory group reflecting on her Tomorrow’s Garden experience)

Wennie gave what time she could to the project around her family responsibilities. Taking the shoe-box utopia she’d created in the family workshop as a starting point Richard worked with her to explore how the ideas could form part of the experience. She reflected on how the ideas were drawn from childhood, and the way she was brought up; Wennie related how she is raising her children in a different country and environment.

Wennie went on to create a space within the walkthrough experience, bringing to life her memories of playing in the

wilderness of childhood, translated as a forest with lots of greenery. The blue shutter, with the words 'dinner time' written in traditional Chinese characters came from a clear memory of growing up in Tawain, of being called in to dinner from the freedom, naivety and the wilderness of youth.

Wennie said "it was so exciting seeing your idea being presented over there!". I am teaching my children Chinese, so I could say, "look that's what I've written in Chinese!"

Wennie has written a blogpost about her experience that can be found here: <https://www.b-arts.org.uk/littleutopias-wennieswilderness>