



PART OF
**NORTH
SHIELDS**
800 EST. 1225

Mural Trail Resource Pack

For Local Schools



www.elevationcio.com

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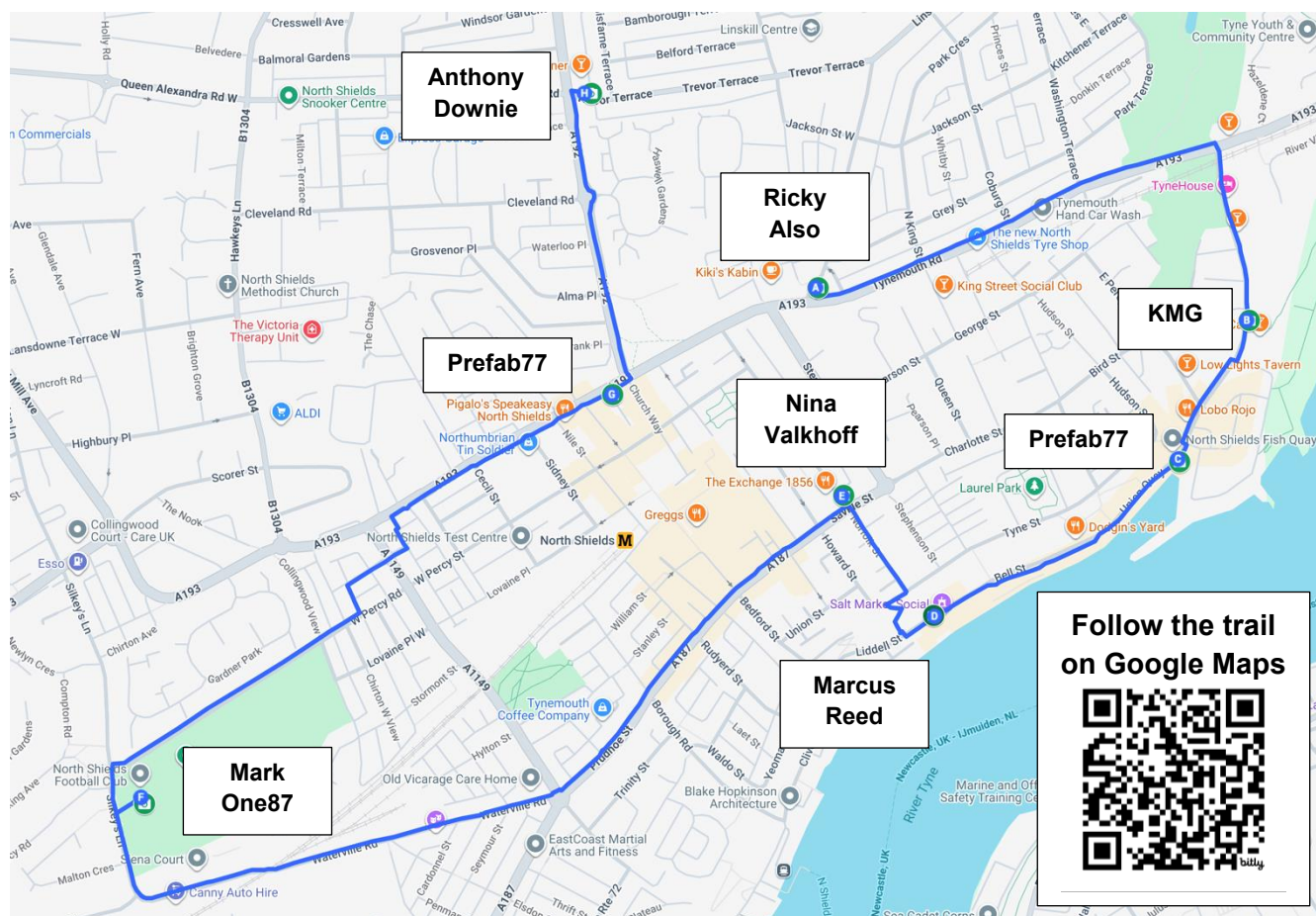
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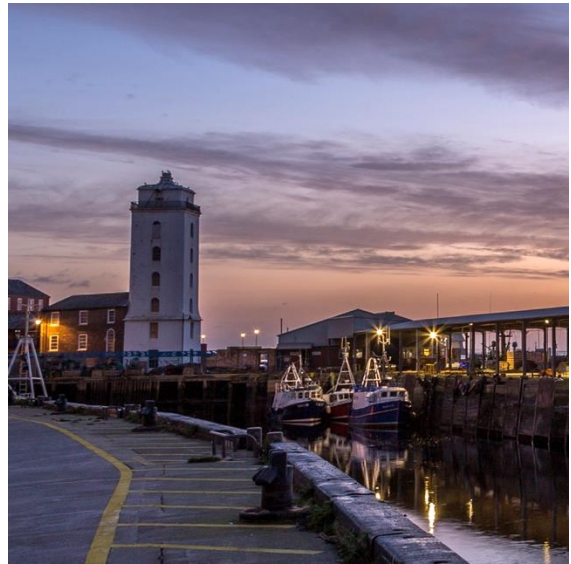


Introduction for Schools

North Shields 800 & the Elevation Mural Festival

In 1225, the town of North Shields began with just a few fishermen's huts, or shields, built to serve the monks of nearby Tynemouth Priory. Eight centuries later, the town is home to over 40,000 people, with a proud fishing heritage, a vibrant arts and music scene, and a community looking confidently to the future.

In 2025, North Shields celebrated its 800th birthday. A year-long programme of events marked this milestone — telling the story of the town's past, celebrating its present, and setting a hopeful tone for the future. Among concerts, exhibitions, and community events, one project stood out as a lasting legacy: the Elevation Mural Festival.



Elevation invited artists from the local area and beyond to create large-scale public artworks on buildings across the town. Each mural was designed to “capture the spirit of North Shields,” bringing colour, creativity, and conversation to everyday streets. They are now part of the town's visual identity — something pupils, residents, and visitors can return to year after year.

Why Elevation matters for schools

This pack is designed to help you use the Elevation mural trail as a learning tool with your pupils. It brings together Art and History, encourages creativity, critical thinking, and fosters a sense of place.

- **Art:** Each mural showcases different techniques — from spray cans and stencils to rollers, brushes, and digital design.
- **History:** The murals tell stories drawn from 800 years of heritage — from Roman mythology and medieval castles to fishing traditions, local music, and community life.
- **Community & Identity:** The project shows how art can celebrate where we come from, encourage pride in place, and even spark debate about belonging and change.

This pack will help you and your pupils to:

- Explore the murals through both Art and History lenses.
- Plan visits using a map and trail to see the works up close.
- Access fact sheets and activity ideas tailored for different age groups.
- Connect classroom learning with the real world environment of North Shields.

Together, North Shields 800 and Elevation offer a unique opportunity: to see how art can keep history alive, and how history can inspire new art.

- You can also download a Powerpoint for lessons from: <https://elevationcio.com/schools>

How to Use This Pack

This pack is flexible: use it for a single lesson or cross-curricular project.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Art & Design:

- Explore materials, techniques, and processes (spray paint, stencils, grids, colour mixing, rollers and brushes).
- Compare different artistic styles (typographic, geometric, realistic, mythological, wildlife-inspired).
- Understand how large scale and public display affect artistic choices.
- Develop pupils' own creative responses inspired by local culture.

**Watch videos
of the artists**



History:

- Discover the story of North Shields from its first origins to its modern role in fishing, industry, and cultural life.
- Make connections between local heritage and wider historical themes.
- Understand how communities use history and culture to shape identity today.

Age Group Differentiation

- Primary (KS2): observation, imagination, colouring sheets, grids, storytelling.
- Lower Secondary (KS3): understanding, comparison, fact files, quizzes.
- Upper Secondary (KS4): analysis, debate, critical essays, mural proposals.

Planning a Visit

- Use the map to plan a walking route
 - The full trail is a circuit of about 4 miles (allow 2 hours).
 - Some murals are quite close together for a shorter walk.
- Stop and have discussions at each site.
 - Take along pencils and pads and sketch a copy.
 - Each mural has a little sign with information about the piece.

Pre- and Post-Visit Activities

- *Before:* Introduce Elevation and public art;
- *After:* Reflect through sketchbooks, writing, or design your own murals. Practise scaling up techniques or using limited palettes.

Elevation Mural Fact Sheets

Anthony Downie – North Shields No.4

Location: Trevor Terrace, North Shields (next to The Gunner Pub)

About the Artist

Anthony is from North Shields. He paints everyday streets and back lanes in striking colours. His murals often make people feel nostalgic, even if they can't explain why. He says art can show the beauty in ordinary places we usually walk past without noticing. He also works as a stage set designer.

Artwork Summary

Depicts an ordinary back lane transformed by dreamlike light and colour. Moves viewers by stirring memories of everyday life. Shows how overlooked places shape identity. Striking palette and stylised detail create emotional impact.

Art Focus

Stylised, strong palette, based on real scenes. Scaled with a 1m grid, rollers and brushes, special masonry paint. Special mood of 'golden hour' light – often used by photographers.

Prompts: Why paint ordinary streets? How do colours change perception?

History / Community Focus

Back lanes as community memory, regeneration, overlooked spaces. Art reveals ordinary as extraordinary.

Prompts: Do you have a hidden special place? How does art change memory?

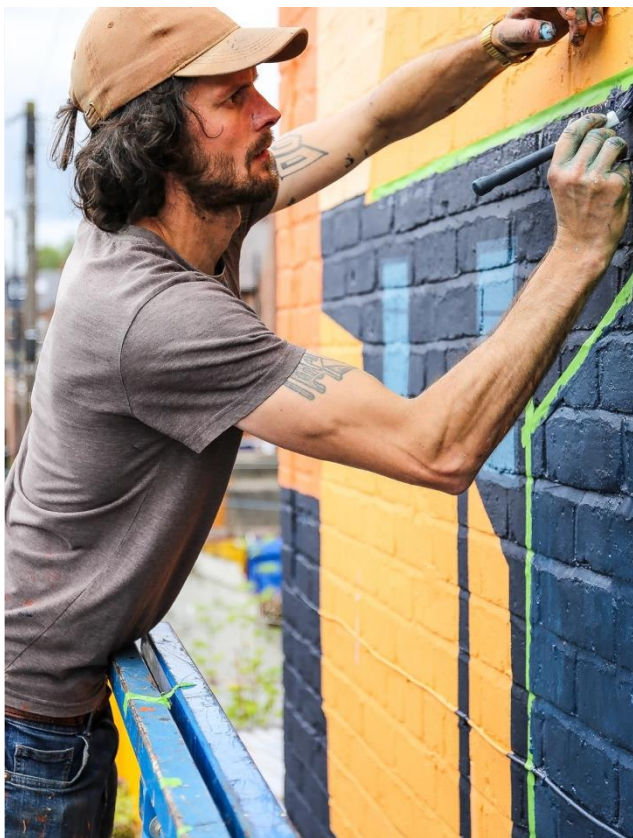
Activities by Age and Stage

- KS2: Draw your street with bright colours. Write a memory story.
- KS3: Compare mural with photos of the lane. Experiment with colour for mood.
- KS4: Analyse colour/light transforming the ordinary. Debate what matters more: big events or everyday places.

Teacher note: Powerful for discussing memory, place and community in art.



Anthony used a grid to scale up the artwork, and a scissor lift to get to the top of the house



Elevation Mural Fact Sheets

KMG – Oceanus

Location: 55° Fisheries, Tanners Bank, North Shields

About the Artist

KMG is from Scotland and grew up hearing old stories and legends. She likes to bring myths to life in a modern, funny way. For North Shields she painted *Oceanus*, the Roman god of the sea, mixing bold colours with cartoon-like shapes. She believes art should be for everyone, which is why she paints on big public walls.

Artwork Summary

This is the biggest of all the Elevation murals. It reimagines the Titan god Oceanus, linking Roman myth with the Tyne. Playful, bold figures make heritage accessible and contemporary-feeling. Shows how myths connect past with present. Draws on artist's Scottish folklore background.

Art Focus

Mythological figures, bold colours. Freehand sketching, loose grids, rollers, spray paint. Perspective trick from a single viewpoint.

Prompts: In what ways do mythical figures express ideas about beliefs?

History / Community Focus

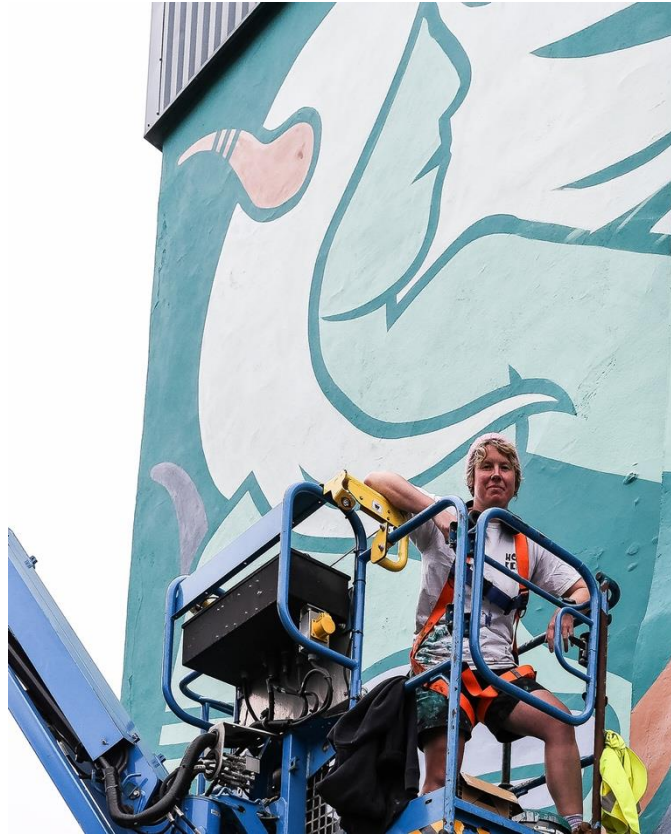
Romans dedicated altars to Oceanus and Neptune nearby. Oceanus ruled saltwater areas like the Tyne. Folklore shows how people explained natural forces.

Prompts: Why gods for rivers? What do myths tell us?

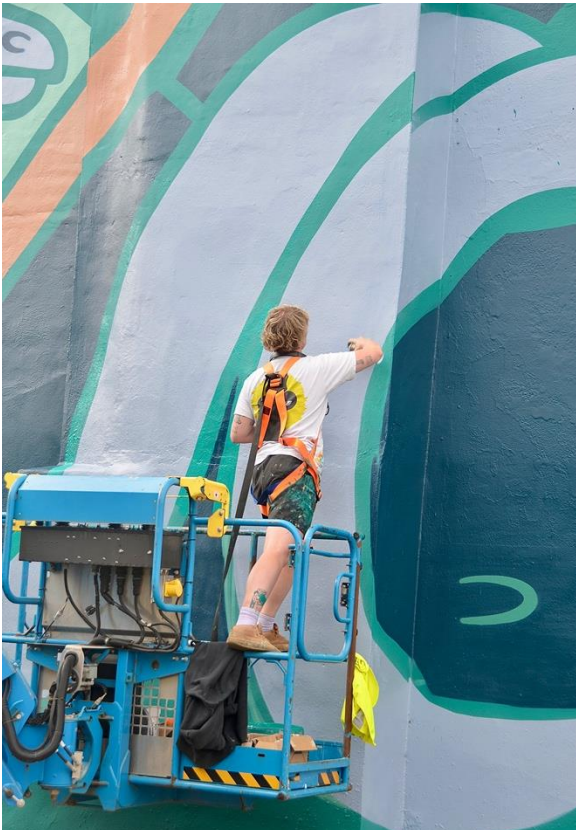
Activities by Age and Stage

- KS2: Invent a river or sea God. Make a story card.
- KS3: Use distortion and humour in myth drawings. Research Romans in Tyneside.
- KS4: Analyse how playful style affects mythology. Debate myths vs facts in understanding the past.

Teacher note: Great for linking Roman history, myth and art style.



KMG sketches freehand using a spraycan. She has to wear a safety harness working up so high.



Elevation Mural Fact Sheets

Marcus Reed – Glory

Location: Saltmarket Social, Fish Quay, North Shields

About the Artist

Marcus is an illustrator who lives in Whitley Bay and has his studio in North Shields. He works on posters and record covers, but for Elevation he created a giant mural called Glory. His style is bold and geometric, using strong colours like the red and yellow of the Northumberland flag. He enjoys making images that are sharp, clear, and full of energy.

Artwork Summary

Glory shows a huge, geometric image of a girl in a yellow raincoat standing against a red sky. She seems to be shouting out joyfully. This raises the question of how artwork can convey human emotions.

Behind her appear two historic landmarks: Tynemouth Castle (@1,000 years old, burial place of three kings) and the Low Light Lighthouse (@300 years old). Flying above the castle is the red and yellow Northumberland flag, sparking debate about local identity (since North Shields is now part of North Tyneside). The mural blends modern graphic style with deep local history, raising questions about emotion, identity, and pride in place.

Art Focus

Geometric typography, puzzle-like letters. Designed digitally, scaled up with grids, painted with spray cans using different nozzles. Bright, rhythmic colours feel like music. Prompts: How do patterns change words? How do colours change mood?

Prompts: Why use so few colours? How does geometry change the feel?

History / Community Focus

Castle and lighthouse show different stages of history. Flag represents Northumberland heritage but sparks discussion about identity since North Shields is now part of North Tyneside.

Prompts: Why include both landmarks? Does the flag still represent North Shields?

Activities by Age and Stage

- KS2: Draw a local building using only two colours. Timeline with 1000 years (castle), 300 years (lighthouse), today (mural).
- KS3: Experiment with limited palettes. Create a face using only straight lines.
- KS4: Analyse Marcus Reed's geometric style. Debate identity: Historic Northumberland vs modern Tyneside.

Teacher note: Excellent for discussing emotions, identity and colour choices.



This mural was created on 10 pieces of aluminium composite which is strong but lightweight.



Left: Marcus creating the outline using a grid system.

This mural was a real team effort, with friends of Marcus helping out, below.



Elevation Mural Fact Sheets

Mark One87 – Spirit of Shields

Location: North Shields Football Club, Silkey's Lane

About the Artist

Mark has been based in North Shields for a long time and has been painting graffiti since he was a teenager. He is known for bright, bold colours and loves working with young people on community projects. His mural Spirit of Shields shows a fishing boat in stormy seas, painted with help from local young people. He also runs street art festivals in the North East.

Artwork Summary

Depicts a fishing boat in wild waves, balanced with an image of the Fish Quay. Combines past and present, celebrating fishing heritage and resilience of Shields' people. Local young people helped paint parts.

Art Focus

Bold graffiti style, spray paint, bright colours, dynamic motion of the waves.

Prompts: How does colour and shape create energy?

History / Community Focus

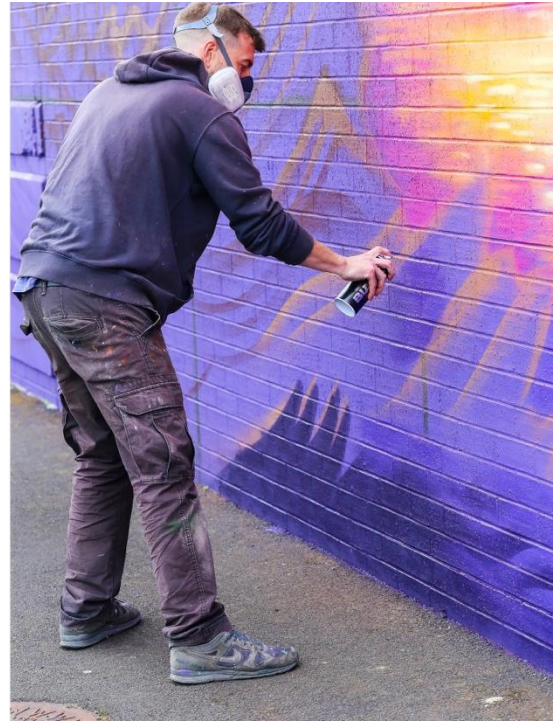
Fishing industry heritage, football club history, community pride. Youth involvement.

Prompts: Why is fishing so central to North Shields' story?

Activities by Age and Stage

- KS2: Draw a fishing boat in stormy seas. Write a fisherman's diary.
- KS3: Research the fishing industry's impact. Compare mural to photos of Fish Quay.
- KS4: Analyse graffiti energy in mural style. Debate: art as history/heritage vs looking forward.

Teacher note: Excellent for linking fishing history, community and youth engagement.



First the background colour is painted, then the outlines are sketched out before the detail is added.



Elevation Mural Fact Sheets

Nina Valkhoff – The Chase

Location: Norfolk Street, North Shields

About the Artist

Nina is from Rotterdam in the Netherlands and has been painting murals for over 20 years. She loves animals and often paints birds, foxes, or sea creatures in bright colours. She once painted a huge mural of a fox that was voted one of the best murals in the world! In North Shields she painted gannets and a cormorant under the sea.

Artwork Summary

A dramatic underwater scene of two gannets diving for a herring, with a cormorant nearby. Seaweed swirls around. Links fishing heritage with marine life and environmental concerns. Runner-up in global Street Art Cities competition, showing how local art gains global recognition.

Art Focus

Flowing colourful style, large-scale wall, brushes, rollers, spray paint. Strong sense of motion.

Prompts: How does she show movement? How has she used colours?

History / Community Focus

Fishing heritage, endangered seabirds, global recognition through street art competitions.

Prompts: How does it connect fishing and environment? What does global recognition mean?

Activities by Age and Stage

- KS2: Draw a sea creature mural. Poster about seabird protection.
- KS3: Sketch animals in motion. Research seabirds and fishing challenges.
- KS4: Analyse colour and motion in composition. Debate murals as environmental activism.

Teacher note: Ideal for art and environment links and global-local connections.



The artwork begins with the outline and then the detail is added.

Nina's took the longest to create. She was working for 10 days with just one day off when it rained!

The lift machine she uses is known as a 'Cherry Picker'.



Elevation Mural Fact Sheets

Prefab77 – Net Worth

Location: Lin's Seafoods, Fish Quay, North Shields

About the Artist

Prefab77 grew up in North Shields but has also lived in New York which is where his career really began. He uses stencils — like cut-out shapes — which he sprays over again and again to build up a picture. This is the same technique used by Banksy, who Prefab knew in the early days of street art. His mural *Net Worth* is black and white with hidden details, like a seagull in a balaclava.

Artwork Summary

Striking black-and-white portrait of a stern-looking fisherman with boats and cheeky details including a seagull in a balaclava. Reflects hardship and resilience of fishing life, with a sense of humour too. Uses stencils — the same technique as Banksy, with whom Prefab77 has connections.

Art Focus

Monochrome stencil portrait. Multiple layered stencils, spray paint. Crisp detail, hidden surprises.

Prompts: Why black and white? Can you spot details?

History / Community Focus

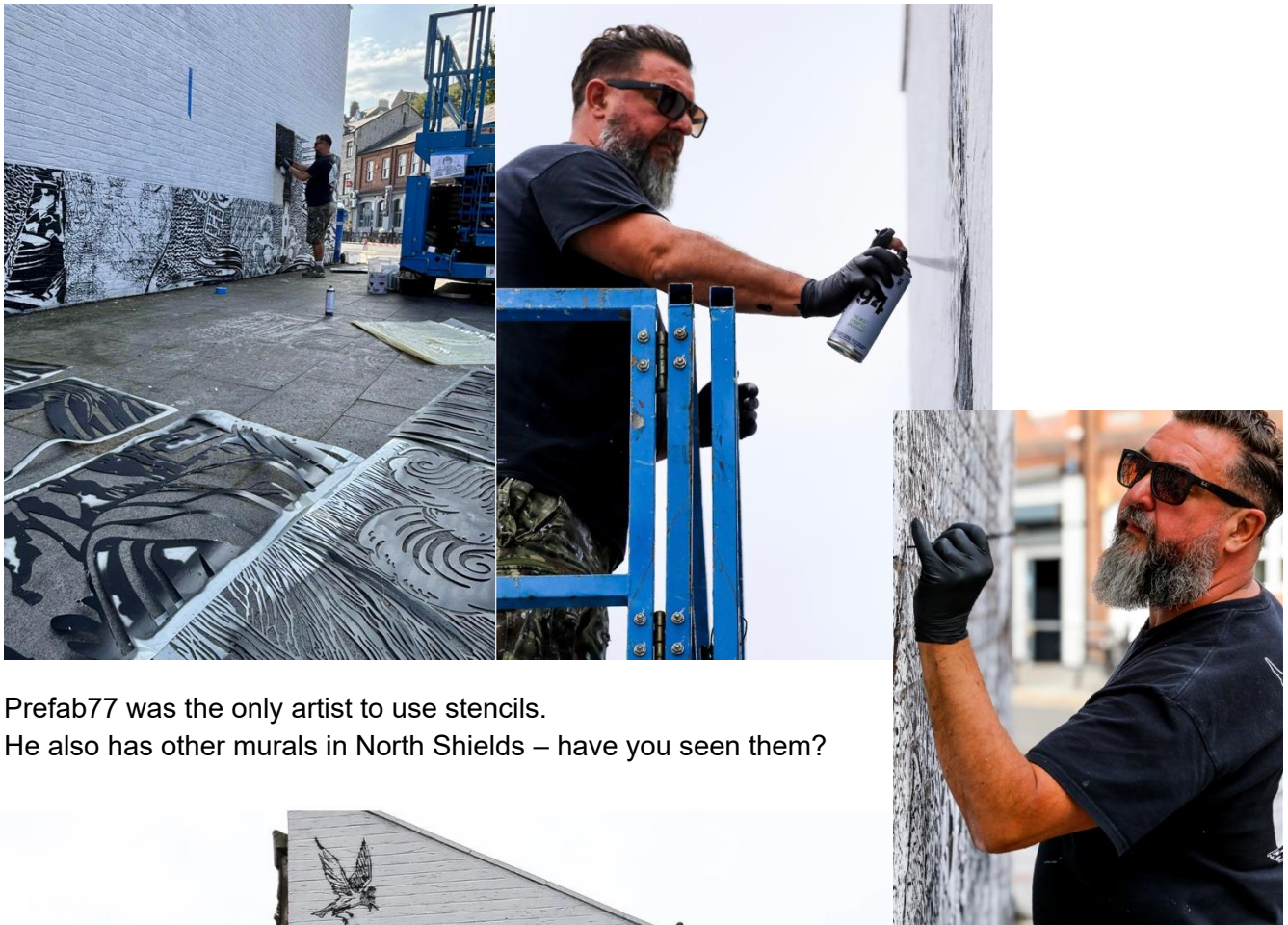
Fishing heritage, working community resilience, political undertones. Links to global street art culture.

Prompts: How does monochrome change mood? Do hidden details matter?

Activities by Age and Stage

- KS2: Make stencils from card. Draw cheeky mural details.
- KS3: Design a monochrome portrait. Compare Prefab77 with Banksy.
- KS4: Analyse stencil depth and monochrome choices. Debate humour vs clear statements in street art.

Teacher note: Good for exploring stencil techniques and hidden meaning in art.



Prefab77 was the only artist to use stencils.
 He also has other murals in North Shields – have you seen them?



Elevation Mural Fact Sheets

Ricky Also – I Beg That Sound

Location: Arbor Seven Café, Brandling Terrace, North Shields

About the Artist

Ricky started making graffiti when he was 11 years old because he wasn't good at breakdancing, so painting was his way into hip hop culture! He now runs a design studio but still loves creating huge, colourful murals. Ricky uses spray paint and grids to scale up his designs, often hiding messages in the letters so people have to look twice.

Artwork Summary

A bold typographic mural featuring a lyric by Sam Fender. Bright, interlocking letters hide and reveal the message. It celebrates North Shields' musical heritage and the power of community creativity.

Art Focus

Geometric typography, puzzle-like letters. Designed digitally, scaled up with grids, painted with spray cans of different nozzles.

Prompts: How do patterns make words feel different? How do colours change mood?

History / Community Focus

Connects to Sam Fender and wider music scene (The Animals, Lindisfarne, open-mic nights). Music as identity. Artist highlights hidden heroes.

Prompts: Why is music important to identity? Can murals celebrate culture like museums?

Activities by Age and Stage

- KS2: Make hidden message art using letters. Listen to a song and draw feelings.
- KS3: Try scaling up with a grid. Research a musician and design a mural for them.
- KS4: Analyse typography as art. Debate: is music the best way to express community identity?

Teacher note: Great for linking art with music and cultural identity.



Sometimes the walls can be difficult to access, and might have tricky features to work around!



Frequently Asked Questions

When school pupils have visited the murals we have found that the following questions often come up.

1. How did you pick the walls?

We wanted the murals to make a real impact, so we chose walls that would create a trail around the town — from the town centre to the Fish Quay and even through some residential areas. The walls had to be big and easy to see, so lots of people could enjoy them. We also checked that each wall was in good condition and that the owners and neighbours were happy to have a mural painted there.

2. Did you need to get permission to paint the murals?

Yes, every mural needed permission before it could be painted — and some were trickier than others. The easiest ones were owner-occupied buildings, where the people who owned and used the building could give a quick “yes” or “no.” For rented buildings, we had to track down the actual owner, which sometimes took a while. A few walls were on listed buildings (meaning they have special historic protection), so those needed extra approval from the council or even heritage organisations before any paint could go on the wall.

3. How did you choose the artists?

We picked the artists through something called an Open Call. That means we wrote an Artist Brief explaining what we were looking for and then invited artists to send in their ideas. A panel of seven local people with different skills and backgrounds looked at all the entries and chose the ones to go forward. It was a tough job because the standard was so high! We wanted a mix of styles and subjects, and also a balance between local artists and some well-known names from the international mural scene.

4. How much did it cost and who paid?

Each mural cost around £5,000 on average. That included the artist’s fee, paint and materials, and the hire of cherry pickers or scissor lifts to reach the top of the walls. The money came from over a year of fundraising — selling special art prints, applying for grants from charities, and getting support from the North East Combined Authority through the North Shields 800 committee. It was a big team effort to make it all happen. Do you think the project was value for money?

5. Who came up with the ideas for the different murals?

Each artist created their own idea in response to the Artist Brief, which asked them to capture “The Spirit of Shields.” To help them get started, we gave them a list of 100 facts about North Shields — full of local history, stories, and interesting details — so they had plenty of inspiration. Most artists then developed their own unique ideas, often combining local themes with their personal style and imagination.

6. How long did it take to paint the murals?

The artists worked extremely hard, often for long days in all kinds of weather! Each mural took between five and ten days to complete, depending on the size of the wall, the level of detail, and how kind the weather was.

7. Did the murals need a special sort of paint?

Yes — the paint is very specialised so the murals can survive wind, rain, and sun for many years. The base layer is the most important part — if that isn't done properly, the paint could start to flake or peel. We used tough masonry paint, which can be mixed into different colours by the supplier. On top of this, artists used either exterior emulsion (for those working with brushes and rollers) or spray paint (for artists with a graffiti or stencil style).

To make sure the colours match perfectly, artists often use international colour systems, such as the RAL system, which gives every shade its own unique code. That way, the colour they choose on paper is exactly the same as the colour that appears on the wall.