

## **Artist statement**

Najia Bagi is a conceptual artist working to tell her own stories and share the stories of others. With an interest in absence, longing, waiting and conversely hope, faith and devotion. Najia has experience of devising and delivering installations and projects nationally, including a recent permanent installation in the gardens of Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool and a current long term participative installation for National Memorial Archive, Lichfield. The Alder Hey installation was inspired by play, togetherness and healing and includes a soundscape made from approximately 50 different recordings of homes across the North of England. Najia has worked as an artist in various projects both small and large scale. In 2015 / 2016 Najia was artist in residence at Nightsafe, a homeless shelter for young people in Blackburn. Through sharing stories, and recording sound, Najia worked with the young people to make Nightsafe an even more friendly and hopeful place to spend time in. Najia has been commissioned by HOME, Manchester and funded by Arts Council England to undertake long term projects focussing on romantic love, loss, and transition. These projects included events to collect stories of heartbreak, live performance, choral music, dance and a short film made with participants. Najia has been commissioned to design and install semi-permanent installations for Tate Liverpool, exploring the concepts of home and belonging. She has also designed and installed many temporary installations for children for Manchester Art Gallery, Tate Liverpool, FACT, The Hepworth Wakefield and Manchester Central Library.

## **Further information about recent projects**

### **Heartfelt Messages**

#### **National Memorial Arboretum**

##### **July 2017 - present (finishing 10th November 2017)**

This six month participatory arts project is inspired by the communication sent to and from the Front Line during World War One and is part of the UK Passchendaele commemorations. The project utilises archives from the Museum of Passchendaele as well as contemporary messages to loved ones by the visitors to the Arboretum, schools and other local groups. 20,000 origami hearts and three sound pieces will be presented in the War Widow's Wood on 10th November. During this project I have achieved:

- Collaboration with a visual artist
- Devising and delivering a long term, large scale project involving thousands of visitors, hundreds of volunteers, and staff at the NMA
- Management of a £40,000 budget
- Liaison with manufacturers and technicians to produce the paper and frame
- Developed skills in AV technology and implementation

### **Move Me**

#### **Arts Council Grants of the Arts**

##### **August 2016 - July 2017**

I delivered a £15,000 project to develop my artistic practice in performance and installation, which focused on the metamorphosis of the self through being single. I began this project by agreeing with three people to receive regular letters from them over a period of 4 months. I then developed this work by visiting places that the participants wanted to "re-gain" after ended relationships and taking photographs, and by writing choral music for the Sacred Sounds Women's Choir (the multi faith choir formed and managed by Manchester International Festival). I presented the choir, along with audio visual pieces as part of a performance installation at HOME on 3 March 2017. Following

this I held a participatory session at Manchester Central Library inviting the general public to reply to the letters. You can see images of this project and listen to music made here: <http://www.najiabagi.com/commissions.html>

### **What Would Billie Do?**

#### **HOME, Manchester**

**January 2016 - August 2016**

This project explored the concept of metamorphosis through heartbreak, loss and gain of self through Love. Through this role I achieved:

- Management of a £5,000 budget, liaising with HOME and other artists
- Design of “prescriptive” music players installed at HOME
- Production of Heartbreak Amnesty, a happening to collect and process objects no longer wanted from previous relationships
- Composition of three choral pieces for three voices
- Production and co-direction of a participatory short film, which has since been shown on cinema screens
- Production of a live performance for three voices, which was shown alongside the short film in an installation

You can see images of this project and listen to music made here: <http://www.najiabagi.com/commissions.html>

### **SHELTER**

#### **Super Slow Way**

**September 2015 - July 2016**

Nightsafe is a charity in Lancashire which offers accommodation and support for young people who are homeless. Through this project we explored our lives using various artistic processes as a tool. Through the role I achieved:

- Management of a £8,000 budget working with other artists
- Engagement of the young people at Nightsafe, staff and other organisations
- Group exploration of music, photography, body painting and soundscapes

You can read a blog post I wrote about this project here: <http://superslowway.org.uk/blog/shelter-a-reflection-by-najia-bagi/>

## **See it! Say it! Do it!**

### **Let's Go, Manchester**

**January - December 2015**

I managed the See it! Say it! Do it! project, working city wide to nurture creativity in people across a variety of communities, connecting the city centre arts offer to these communities. Through this role I achieved:

- Managing a £100,000 budget and finding match funding and in kind support, and managing partnerships to add value to the project budget
- Working with over 5,000 participants to delivery over 30 projects, connecting 10 city centre arts organisations with surrounding communities
- Production of a month long exhibition, employing a Curator and devising and delivering a programme of family and other events to increase accessibility

## **A Familiar Place**

### **Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool**

**2015 - 2016**

I was commissioned by the hospital to produce a permanent installation designed to comfort and inspire families utilising the neonatal unit of the hospital. Through this project I have achieved:

- Management of a £12,000 budget to include devising an idea, design, manufacture, testing and installation of a sculpture which plays a composition made from the sounds of over 30 homes, the sounds being triggered by movement to encourage play.
- Working with the young peoples' art group, the hospital management, a private donor and technical and design support to deliver the project.