

THIS PLACE
HAS A
STORY

Annual Review 2025





Cover image: 'This Place has a Story to Tell' by Emmeline North © Nicholas Singleton.
Top: 'Kaleidoscope' © Lucie Maycock. Bottom: Unbound Evaluation Event © Nicholas Singleton.



We are delighted to share Beam's Annual Review of 2025 with you, celebrating a year filled with creativity, collaboration and community.

2025 was an inspiring and exceptionally busy year for Beam - from our home-town of Wakefield to Chesterfield, Barnsley, Catterick North Yorkshire, the Tees Valley and beyond, we enjoyed working with brilliant artists and local people who brought energy and enthusiasm to every project.

Together we delivered ambitious public art - 15 permanent commissions, 9 temporary projects and 2 artist development programmes - reaching thousands of participants and engaging more than 69,500 people. It was a standout year for murals, with vibrant new artworks created in towns across the region, each rooted in the voices and stories of local communities.

We are proud to support the next generation of artists through development programmes and mentoring opportunities, and we will strengthen this work in the years ahead.

As we look forward to Beam's 40th anniversary in 2026 and the launch of our business plan 2026-2030, I thank our staff team, associates and Board members for their invaluable contribution. Next year will see exciting new commissions come to life across Wakefield, North Yorkshire and Chesterfield - and we can't wait to share them with you.

Gordon Watson, Chair of Beam Board of Trustees



Introduction

2025 was a year defined by creative collaborations, support for emerging talent and art that responded sensitively to place and community.

We worked alongside an extraordinary mix of creatives, clients, communities and emerging artists, delivering work that delivered impact across towns, neighbourhoods and public spaces.

This year, Beam delivered 15 permanent public realm commissions, 9 temporary projects, and 2 artist development programmes involving 18 artists, alongside 3 public art strategies.

In total, we commissioned 28 artists and creative practitioners, engaging 3,520 participants through 110 workshops, and reaching a wider audience of more than 69,500 people.

2025 was the year of the mural. Major artworks enhanced towns across the region, including:

- The Normanton Junction by Harriet Colours and Ashfall and Bloom by Peachzz for Wakefield Council's Our Year programme
- Audacter et Sincere (Boldly & Frankly) by Cbloxx and This Place Has a Story to Tell by Emmeline North for the First and Last Mile programme
- Local by Peachzz for Animate Chesterfield
- The Stories by STATIC in Goldthorpe, Barnsley

Each piece was shaped by conversations with local people, rooting the art firmly in place.

For Animate Chesterfield, we secured over £77,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for A Sense of Chesterfield, a new heritage arts trail celebrating the town's lesser-known stories, launching in 2026.

Image: 'Cuckoo Boat' work in progress © Coralie Turpin.





This year also marked the completion of our artist development programme, UNBOUND in Wakefield (with YVAN) and Engage Create in Barnsley, alongside mentoring for Ailish Treanor and Nat Hues, strengthening our commitment to supporting emerging talent.

We broadened our reach with new partnerships across the country, including collaborations with Disability Arts in Shropshire (DASH), the Contemporary Visual Arts Network (West Midlands), Down to Earth (Wigan), East Riding of Yorkshire Council, and the FORGED partnership in the Tees Valley.

Closer to home, we supported Barnsley Council with a new sound and light commission for The Yorkshire Roses (launching 2026) and continued our work with Wakefield Council on the City Fields public art programme. We remain an active member of the Wakefield Public Art Framework Steering Group, championing and supporting ambitious public art.

Our team grew stronger through the expertise of Associates and collaborators Helen Moore, Hazel Colquhoun, and Richard King, who made key contributions to several major projects.

And looking ahead, 2026 marks Beam's 40th anniversary. We're excited to celebrate four decades of creative impact - and to reconnect with the many people who have shaped our journey.



Image Top: 'The Stories' by STATIC, mural Launch © Barnsley Council.
Bottom: Community workshop © Dan Jones.



Art in the public realm

Animate Chesterfield

Beam continued to 'Animate' Chesterfield and Staveley through public art, connected to the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield and Staveley 21 regeneration schemes.

Kaleidoscope by **Lucie Maycock** turned local memories into playful vinyl installations, accompanied by a temporary community mural created during the Derbyshire Makes festival. In Staveley, **Coralie Turpin's Cuckoo Boat Sail** mosaic drew on the town's historic boats, with pupils contributing mini mosaics to the final design.

Peachzz created an ambitious new mural at the Pavements Shopping Centre, celebrating Chesterfield Market and local stories, while **Sally Anderson's Merry Baubles window trail** engaged 12 town-centre businesses and visitors.

The National Lottery Heritage Funded A Sense of Chesterfield trail is gathering local stories and developing public artworks, while Animate Chesterfield artists inspired over 140 students at **Chesterfield College's Creative Industries careers week**. Plans are underway for a spring 2026 pop-up exhibition and a projection-mapped spectacle by Illuminos to celebrate Chesterfield Market's refurbishment.

[Read more](#) →



Image: Top: 'Kaleidoscope community mural by Lucie Maycock © Beam.
Bottom: Artist talk at Chesterfield College © Chesterfield Borough Council.
Image overleaf: 'Local' by Peachzz @ steelcitydronepilot





Public Art Catterick Garrison

Beam appointed artists **Katayoun Dowlatshahi, Steve Anwar (Sapien) and Hazel Oakes (Nocciola the Drawer)** to create new public artworks as part of the Catterick Garrison Town Centre redevelopment. The artists worked closely with local residents to shape ideas inspired by both the military and civilian life of the town.

As part of the engagement, Katayoun collaborated with the Veterans Community Working Party, Veterans Woodcraft, and community volunteers to restore the Royal British Legion Labyrinth Memorial in Coronation Park. Artists also connected with local groups and individuals, ensuring the artworks reflect the stories and spirit of Catterick Garrison.

Public Art Catterick Garrison forms part of a major regeneration project funded by the UK Government, North Yorkshire Council, and Ministry of Defence, reimagining the town centre for the future. Beam is producing the artworks, which are scheduled for installation in 2026, with the ambition to embed creativity, heritage, and community pride at the heart of the town.

[Read more](#) →





Crossings and Gateways

As producer of Wakefield's Our Year Crossings & Gateways programme, Beam delivered murals in Normanton and South Elmsall that celebrate local heritage while looking to the future. The final mural in Ossett by Shiraaz Ali is scheduled for completion in Spring 2026.

'**The Normanton Junction**' by **Harriet Colours** pays tribute to the town's rail history, local colliery, and its place as home to the North's first postal office, enabled by the station's key link between Scotland and London. Harriet collaborated with local schoolchildren and community groups to bring the mural to life.

[Read more →](#)

In South Elmsall, **Peachzz's 'Ashfall and Bloom'**, reflects the area's heritage and future, depicting a young deer alongside coal mining structures, with nature emerging from coal at the base, honouring the town's deep-rooted mining history.

[Read more →](#)

Image: Top: 'The Normanton Junction' by Harriet Colours © Nicholas Singleton.
Bottom: 'Ashfall and Bloom' by Peachzz © Wakefield Council.





First and Last Mile

Beam produced two new murals in Castleford as part of the First & Last Mile programme, funded by Network Rail through the Transpennine Route Upgrade and delivered in partnership with Wakefield Council. The project transforms key routes between the train station and town centre celebrating Castleford's past while creating vibrant, accessible spaces for residents and visitors.

'This Place has a Story to Tell', by Emmeline North located at Tickle Cock Bridge, brings colour to the pedestrian route and seating areas, drawing inspiration from the town's heritage, natural environment, and community stories, including a new poem embedded within the tunnel.

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'Audacter et Sincere' (Boldly & Frankly), by international muralist **Cbloxx** was created at Welbeck Street with input from local students, community groups, and residents. The three panels celebrate Castleford's heritage, from Celtic Queen Cartimandua to Roman and modern times, featuring landmarks such as the River Aire, tugboats, Castleford glass, and a miner's lamp. Cbloxx was supported by assistant artist Nat Hues and UNBOUND mentee Rebecca Feneley.

[Read more →](#)

Image: Top: 'This Place has a Story to Tell' by Emmeline North © Nicholas Singleton.

Image overleaf: 'Audacter et Sincere' by Cbloxx © Nicholas Singleton.



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Art in Goldthorpe

Beam worked with Barnsley Council on two creative commissions in Goldthorpe, South Yorkshire, bringing art to key public spaces through community engagement.

The Stories by STATIC (Tom Jackson and Craig Evans) transformed Horse and Groom Square with a mural celebrating the area's heritage while looking to a bright future. The design was shaped through extensive consultation with residents of all ages across the Dearne area.

[Read more](#) →

Dan Jones developed a sculptural artwork for a prominent gateway to the town, celebrating the heritage, culture, and landscape of the Dearne. The design process involved detailed community engagement, and emerging Barnsley artist Ailish Treanor was mentored by Dan during the engagement phase. The permanent sculpture is scheduled for installation in 2026.

[Read more](#) →

Both projects were funded through the Goldthorpe Town Deal.



The Leap, Public Art Consultancy Support, Bradford

Beam supported The Leap, Bradford, in the preparatory stages of a new environmentally themed sculptural artwork at a key gateway to Bradford at Leeds Road, Laisterdyke. The Big Hug, created by artist John Merrill, was co-designed with input from around 400 local adults and children and forms the centrepiece of a new pocket eco-park featuring over 300 shrubs and pollinator-friendly plants.

Beam's role was to develop a robust and ambitious artist brief in collaboration with The Leap and stakeholders, providing a clear roadmap for the commission. We managed the open call for artists, led longlisting and shortlisting with a selection panel, and conducted artist interviews, resulting in John Merrill's appointment.

The project then progressed into delivery led by The Leap, John Merrill, and partners, culminating in the final artwork. We are proud that the original ambitions outlined in the brief have been fully realised, creating an inspiring artwork that celebrates community, creativity, and environmental awareness.

[Read more](#) →

Made You Look with Down to Earth, Wigan.

We're excited to be working with new collaborator Down To Earth, Wigan, the Creative People and Places programme for Wigan & Leigh.

'Made You Look' will support community groups to develop a programme of four new public artworks for neighbourhoods in the Wigan borough. Place specific artworks, developed through a socially engaged approach, will be developed and delivered in 2026.

[Read more](#) →



Image: Top: 'The Big Hug' by John Merrill © The Leap.

Bottom: Creative Workshop with STATIC © Barnsley Council.

Supporting Creative Development

We're proud to share overviews of two artist development programmes which we completed with partners in Wakefield and Barnsley in 2025.

UNBOUND, delivered in partnership with YVAN as part of Wakefield Council's Our Year programme is summarised with a newly launched evaluation report.

[Read more](#) →

A case study about **Engage/ Create**, delivered in partnership with Barnsley Council as part of their Storying Barnsley project is also now online.

[Read more](#) →

Looking forward we are excited to be working with new partners **Disability Arts in Shropshire & CVAN West Midlands**, to scope public artist development opportunities in the West Midlands, and to be supporting a number of 121 emerging artist shadowing opportunities embedded within our live commissions.



The UNBOUND programme has been a game-changer for me. It's opened my eyes to what's possible with public art and mural painting, how you can create work that people don't just see, but experience. It's also pushed me to think more about how my art interacts with the environment and the people who engage with it.



Ruth Agbolade

Public Art Strategy - Consultancy

At the start of the year, Beam celebrated the public launch of **Hull's new Public Art Policy**, which we developed in consultation with stakeholders. Working with Rhubarb Design House, we produced a designed version of the policy, launched alongside Hull's Cultural and Heritage Strategy.

[Read more](#) →

Throughout 2025, Beam has also been working with the **FORGED** partnership in the Tees Valley. Led by Middlesbrough Art Week and Navigator North, and supported by the Tees Valley Combined Authority, FORGED aims to establish the region as a national hub for public art. Beam has led the development of practical public art guidance and supporting resources for commissioners, artists, developers, and communities, focusing on how to bring public art to life in public spaces. The guidance is due for formal launch in 2026.

In the **East Riding of Yorkshire**, Beam has been appointed to guide the development of a new place-based Public Art Strategy, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The Strategy will provide a practical framework for commissioning and delivering public art across the region, identifying opportunities, challenges, and investment potential for the next 10 years.



About us



Beam Arts for People and Places

Beam is a cultural development organisation working across the North of England. Our inclusive approach champions, celebrates and engages artists and communities to shape and animate thriving places.

Our work supports positive community wellbeing and economic benefit.

We act locally and impact strategically.

Our Definition of Art in Public Spaces

Beam's definition of 'public art' is broad ranging and encompasses a multitude of ways in which artists creatively work in and respond to public spaces that engage in a meaningful way with people.

Why work with us?

We're an experienced and multi-skilled team working efficiently to maximise the impact of the investment that clients and funders make in our services and always seek to make strategic connections to amplify and streamline all projects that we deliver.

We're experienced in working with a wide range of funders including Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund, developing projects and applications, project delivery, evaluation and reporting.

Bespoke services

- Creative Producers of public art programmes and commissions
- Place-based cultural strategies
- Public art strategies, action plans and feasibility studies
- Artist-led community engagement
- Artist development and mentoring
- Fundraising and bid writing

Clients

Current and recent Local Authority clients include: Barnsley Borough, Bolsover District; Chesterfield Borough; Derbyshire County; Durham County; East Riding Yorkshire; Hull; Kirklees; North East Lincolnshire; North Yorkshire; North Lincolnshire; Scarborough Borough; Selby District; Wakefield District.

Other clients include: Buxton Crescent Heritage Trust; Featherstone Town Council; FORGED partnership (Tees Valley); ixia, public art think tank; North Pennines AONB/ Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority; South Pennines Park; The Leap, Bradford; 'Down to Earth', Wigan; DASH & CVAN West Midlands; and University of Leicester.

Board of Trustees



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Kate Watson
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Associate



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Our Team

Our **Board of Trustees** has continued to be a strong source of support and guidance throughout 2025, with skills ranging from Museums & Galleries, Architecture & Landscape Architecture, Finance, Marketing, Higher Education, Business Development and Placemaking. We thank them for their continued commitment to Beam. We're delighted to announce the appointment of four new trustees - Professor Rina Arya, Dr Claire Booth-Kurpnieks, Abbie Miladinovic and James Stephenson.

Our **Consultants and Associates** have a wealth of experience in developing arts, heritage and cultural strategies, action plans and evaluation frameworks. We are expert creative producers for temporary and permanent commission programmes working in contexts from the urban to the rural with a range of commissioners.

[Read more](#) →

Get in Touch

We're always happy to have a conversation to discuss your specific requirements. All our projects and programmes are bespoke, recognising the unique identities, qualities and challenges of our towns, cities, and communities.

Contact our Principal Consultants to arrange an informal chat:

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Memberships

We are proud group members of the Academy of Urbanism, Wakefield Civic Society, and the Wakefield District Public Art Framework Steering Group.



Image: Gordon Watson, Kate Watson and Frances Smith at the launch of Hope and Heritage

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