

# CATALYST

Creative residencies in Cumbria  
10 Examples of Previous work from  
ARTFLY - Chris and Jennie Dennett

## #1 - Relax into 2050

A solo exhibition commissioned by Signal Film & Media, Barrow. Dec - Feb 2023/4

<https://artfly.io/projects/relax-into-2050>



This major artwork invited viewers to imagine a positive future for Barrow inspired by work already underway to get there, like the planting of super carbon-soaking seagrass on Cumbria's coast and the rewilding of Hardknott Forest. At its heart was a geodesic dome constructed by ourselves with coding to project an interactive kaleidoscope across its curved surface. We collaborated with another Cumbrian artist to create a unique uplifting soundscape featuring sounds contributed by members of the public. The project involved school workshops and connecting with Cumbria's creative community, supporting sessions with local writers to create Solarpunk-inspired poetry and a talk to upcoming artists with the Signal Art Lab.

Alongside Signal we promoted the exhibition including undertaking media interviews with a fabulous [Corridor 8 review](#) and podcast feature with the [Cumbria Arts & Culture Network](#).

## #2 - A People's Museum of Barrow

*Part of Place - Re:discover Barrow, Lost Shops - Duke Street, Barrow. Mar- Apr 2023.*

*Collaborating with Full of Noises (Barrow), Artist John Hall (Ulverston), Charlotte Hawley of the Barrow Dock Museum and property owner Tim Clarke (Kendal).*

<https://artfly.io/projects/duke-street-popup-museum>



This exhibition started with recording people's memories of Duke Street's old shops & institutions, then transforming an empty shop into an installation inspired by their stories.

We presented a holographic Mummy's Hand, an interactive photo portal, a hacked sewing machine to make video dresses, moose video link up, a Curious Cabinet and an assemblage of nostalgic objects.

The week-long installation had over 1,000 visitors and the stories and artefacts uncovered from a week of intensive chat, generated new content for the museum and follow-up press coverage including a national feature on BBC Breakfast.

The hugely-positive response to the installation demonstrated to us the enthusiasm for and the enjoyment derived from interactive artworks outside of a gallery context.



### #3 - In Her Own Words, celebrating Dorothy

Kirkgate Arts, Cockermouth & Fairfield Primary School. Dec 2022

<https://artfly.io/projects/dorothy-wordsworth-light-sculpture>  
<https://artfly.io/projects/dorothy-wordsworth-school-pixel-portrait>



This brief was to create a light sculpture helping pull Dorothy Wordsworth out of her famous brother's limelight to celebrate her life & writing.

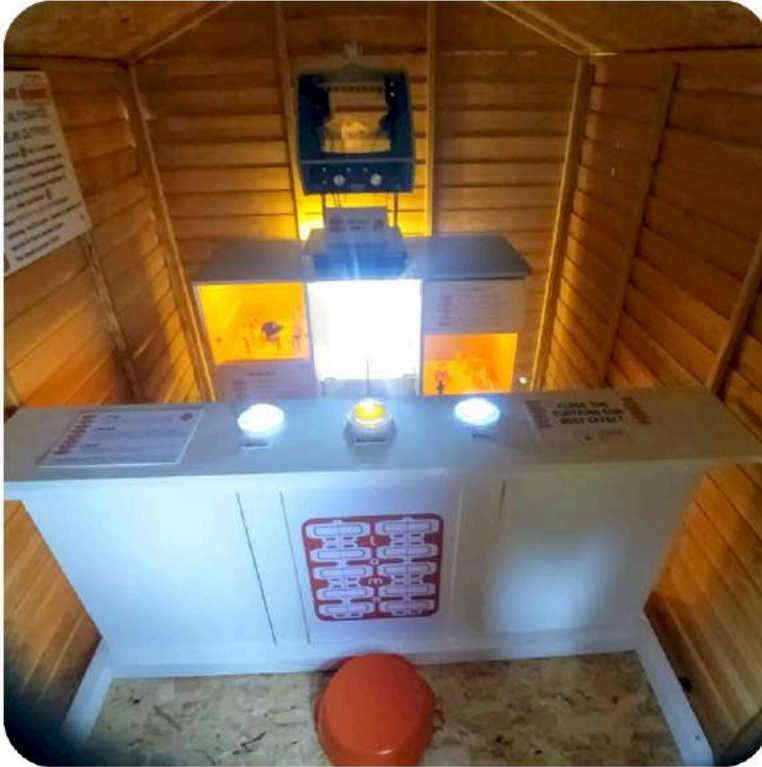
We delivered a large, impactful, technically-challenging artwork combining a piece generated from her writing with creative coding alongside craft - using local wood for its plinth and planting indicative of the nature beloved of Dorothy.

This project gave us confidence that our work can be robust-enough to last even in challenging public locations - a freezing winter outside in the middle of the main road! And that we can respond quickly to fix any issues (condensation and a rodent chewing through the wires!).

## #4 - Last Human

Part of The Coro's Shed Installation 'Our Earth' project, Ulverston. Aug 2021

<https://artfly.io/projects/last-human-coro-shed>



This was literally a stand alone project - in a shed at the end of Ulverston Canal. It involved developing a playful alternate reality as a setting.

For this we overcame considerable logistical challenges to negotiate a power supply & install an interactive digital artwork, outside, without stewarding.

The piece survived unsupervised public play for 4 weeks with the buttons taking quite a battering from some younger visitors!



# #5 - Poppy Plaques

Up for Arts Cumbria & Dalton Town Council. Nov 2018

<https://artfly.io/projects/dalton-poppy-plaques>



Working with four Dalton-in-Furness schools and Age UK, we organised intergenerational pottery sessions to create Poppy Plaques, one for every house from which a WW1 soldier left but did not return.

This popular, socially-engaged project has had lasting impact with the plaques still proudly on display throughout the town. The [website](#) we created endures as a heritage resource, with a map marking all the poppies alongside biographical details for each soldier.

Pulling-off Poppy Plaques required strong communication skills and tenacious door-knocking to secure support from over 100 residents to display a tile on their property. It also supported new writing with BBC commissions for three Cumbrian poets.

## #6 - Barrow Dock Museum's Victorian Parlour

*Double commission for The Dock Museum - Barrow. May 2023 - present*

<https://artfly.io/projects/dock-museum-photo-portal>

<https://artfly.io/projects/dock-museum-listening-post>



This exhibit emerged from the People's Museum project after the Dock Museum's curator saw our listening post and photo portals being enjoyed by the public.

We worked with the venue to create something that suited their set-up, using an original gramophone to amplify audio and adapting our live greenscreen code to use machine learning to operate without actually having a green screen and made it super simple for staff to turn on and off every day.

## #7 - Lasting Diaries

*Up for Arts Cumbria & Barrow Library. Jun - Dec 2019*

<https://artfly.io/projects/nella-last-pixel-portrait>





This Heritage Lottery project celebrated Barrow's Nella Last - the wartime diarist whose writing inspired the film *Housewife, 49* by Victoria Wood.

A generation of new Cumbrian diarists were nurtured whose work documenting the tumultuous 2019 General Election was dramatised for radio and the Mass Observation Archive, contributing to Cumbria's creative community and historical record.

A Listening post in a 1940s radio and a Pixel portrait of Nella out of ration stamps was created involving local schools as part of their WW2 studies. It was wonderful to see the exhilaration in all the participants as they saw their contributions building such a huge and striking artwork.

## #8 - Minnie's Scrapbook

*The Dock Museum - Barrow. Nov 2022*

<https://artfly.io/projects/minnies-scrapbook>



This was another digital commission to help audiences engage in a novel way with the work of an overlooked Cumbrian artist whose work was salvaged from a skip after her death.

We devised a photo portal using a webcam and green screen to place people as watercolour figures in Minnie's projected artworks. We constructed a miniature classroom inhabited by a hologram-effect Mini-Minnie to add intrigue and animation to an audio clip. Finally we brought a blackboard exhibit to life with an animated chalk drawn geometry lesson from Minnie's dad.

This project advanced our capabilities for using low powered mini-computers, components and controllers.



## #9 - Candlelit Walk

*The Gill - Ulverston. Oct 2010 - present.*

<https://artfly.io/projects/the-gill-witch>

<https://artfly.io/projects/mutilated-selfie-booth>

<https://artfly.io/projects/the-door-of-perception>



This is an annual Halloween event we've organised and developed over 13 years, from a small neighbourhood gathering to a sell-out fixture of Ulverston's festival calendar, with a capacity crowd of 1,000.

We run it with a happy band of volunteers, running workshops for free every year, developing innovative light and fire installations.

We are committed to sustaining events like this even though it fills our house with muddy kit, because it bonds and builds the creative community of Ulverston and beyond.

# #10 - Squid Squad & The Deep Sea Oddity Explorer

The Coronation Hall - Ulverston. Aug 2022

<https://artfly.io/projects/squid-squad-coro>



This involved producing a cohesive set of interactive digital cabinets to a tight deadline. Originally commissioned to create a single exhibit for a shed, half way through they needed us to fill a room. This involved incorporating machine learning code to use real-time facial recognition within the space.

Creating the code, controls, and structures enabling onlookers to generate their own artworks and seeing the creative joy sparked at exhibitions like this has become the driving inspiration behind our work.