

a r C s

Impact Report August 2023

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A Note From Our Founder

Applied Research Creative Studio (or a-r-c-s for short) was founded to realise the connections we see between people and placemaking, working creatively towards a model for inclusive and sustainable places.

We are incredibly excited to have certified as a B Corp in August 2022 and look forward to supporting others in our industry to do the same - it is vital that the places that we live, work and play in not only reflect our local communities but also address the global crises we are living through.

In what has been a challenging year globally we have been fortunate to continue our work with King's Cross Estate in London, developing and refining our approach to placemaking on Lower Stable Street, N1C. We are a

small team and I am immensely proud of what we have been able to achieve through Kiosk N1C, our platform for managing Lower Stable Street and the Lower Stable Street Market. We have been able to support creatives and micro businesses in a challenging global context and we have remained focussed on broadening representation in these areas.

As we go into our second year as a B Corp, we are looking forward to continuing our work creating a reproducible model for placemaking that puts people and planet first.



Better Places for People and Planet

Our mission is to make inclusive and sustainable places. We take a new approach to placemaking, working with clients and communities to effect positive social and environmental change.



Our Journey to B Corp Certification

We decided to become B Corp Certified to put a structure around the work we had done to date and to have a framework for improvement going forward.

We certified in August 2022 with a score of 98.6 and were excited to join a global community committed to using business as a force for good.

Since then, we have continued to embed B Corp values into a-r-c-s, ensuring they inform all key decisions we make.

We have also found having an internationally recognised certification has enabled us to open up dialogue within our industry around social and environmental impact and encourage other businesses to consider B Corp certification.



Our B Corp Verified Score August 2022

Governance	13.2
Workers	25.3
Community	39.5
Environment	12.4
Customers	8.0



- 50.9
Median Score for Ordinary Businesss
- 80
Qualifies for B Corp Certification
- 98.6
a-r-c-s B Impact Score

Governance



Impact Area: Governance

Score: 13.2

What we said we'd do

Following our B Corp certification in August 2022, in this first year we wanted to continue to embed our B Corp values and responsibilities within a-r-c-s, ensuring they inform all aspects of employee and company decision making.

What we did

- We provided specialist, unconscious bias training to all employees.
- We updated our approach to selecting community market curators and stallholders. We did this by communicating our B Corp values to potential curators and stallholders and developing an internal decision making matrix to help us identify future partners.

- We held monthly meetings with community stakeholders Mentivity and FishTank. These community groups have an in depth understanding of the needs of local young people and their valuable input informs and guides our work.
- We declined a substantial new contract with a property developer because the delivery of this project would not have been aligned to our B Corp values.

Plans for the next 12 months

Our B Corp mission and values are already part of our monthly team meetings. Going forward, we plan to implement a quarterly more in depth assessment of our B Corp progress, taking on board stakeholder feedback on how we can further embed B Corp values into the company.

Workers



Impact Area: Workers

Score: 25.3

What we said we'd do

For our first year as a certified B Corp we set ourselves two main objectives:

- Review our existing HR policies and identify areas for improvement.
- Provide our employees with greater opportunities for personal and professional development.

What we did

- We contracted the services of a local and independent HR consultancy to help us review all our HR policies.
- As a result, we significantly improved the paid maternity and paternity leave available to employees.
- The HR consultancy is now also available to all employees to provide confidential advice and support on a range of HR topics.

- We introduced an education budget for each team member to support their personal and professional development.
- a-r-c-s Founder and Director is also providing 1-2-1 coaching for two team members.
- Additionally, we were able to offer one of our freelancers a permanent, part-time role with a-r-c-s in order to provide additional benefits and job security.

Plans for the next 12 months

In consultation with our employees and our contracted HR consultancy, we aim to identify and deliver further ways in which we can support employee wellbeing through enhancing our employee benefits.

Community



Impact Area: Community

Score: 39.5

What we said we'd do

Increase engagement with hyper local community stakeholders whilst continuing to deliver positive benefits to the wider local community.

What we did

- We curated and produced The Wild Escape, a free, outdoor exhibition in King's Cross. As part of this project we partnered with The British Library and Art Fund - both are located less than one mile from our head office location.
- We worked with The WOW Foundation (Women of the World) who are based in King's Cross to produce The Hope Brigade exhibition. This free, outdoor exhibition spotlighted more than 50 women from across the globe working at the forefront of their fields, from conflict to climate justice.

- Our outdoor lightbox exhibitions provide free, public access to content from award-winning photographers and some of the best independent magazines in the UK. We commission creative work from underrepresented groups and artists and highlight the work of community groups. In the last year we installed six lightbox exhibitions and four further outdoor exhibitions. Partners included Intoart, Studio Pi and Mentivity.
- We hosted 69 free community events in the last year.
- We provided our events space free of charge to local community groups and local independent businesses 71 times in the last year, the equivalent value of this space is £25k. Partners included: FishTank, STORE Store, Small Green Shoots and Voices Radio.

Impact Area: Community

Score: 39.5

What we did (continued)

- In the last year, two Lower Stable Street occupiers have now taken larger, permanent units at King's Cross as part of our incubator programme to support local economic growth.
- Additionally three community market stallholders have also expanded their operations significantly by taking additional premises in London, increasing stockists across London and participation in guest residencies.

Plans for the next 12 months

Set up an educational charitable trust that will award grants and other funding to individuals from underrepresented groups who are experiencing financial hardship in order to support study in higher education.

Environment



Nissam Fassi-Fahri, *Look Up*

"Today I thought about the unlimited number of monumental buildings that surround us, forbidding us to see the sunlight anymore. I thought about how I feel in London, when I spend too many days without my eyes running over a field of grass. And then I thought, the cities are resembling forest of buildings. Now, we need to look up to see the sky."

SUSTAINABLE PLANET
Works created for EARTH DAY by students from the University of Westminster.
Project supported by King's Cross.

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER

Impact Area: Environment

Score: 12.4

What we said we'd do

Relaunch our consumer retail offer - working with businesses (many of which are sole traders) that work to the guiding principles of creating products that are sustainable both in terms of environment and community to provide them with income, access to new markets and the ability to test different, more sustainable processes and materials.

What we did

We relaunched our consumer retail offer with a Bethany Williams limited-edition series of unique textile artworks. These artworks were created from repurposed flags from the Bethany Williams All Our Stories flag exhibition in King's Cross. The original flags were created from an organic hemp slub that is 100% recyclable. All proceeds from these textile artworks go to The Magpie Project. The Magpie

Project provides a safe and fun place for mums and under-fives who are in temporary or insecure accommodation.

Plans for the next 12 months

We have two main objectives:

- Following our relaunch this year, continue to grow our consumer retail offer and test different, more sustainable processes and materials.
- We will move to a new office in Autumn 2023 so we plan to achieve B Corp environmental standards in this new space.

Customers



Impact Area: Customers

Score: 8.0

What we said we'd do

Our priorities for the Customer Impact Area were:

- Broaden and deepen the understanding of B Corp values among our existing client base.
- Raise awareness of the B Corp movement within our industry.
- Increase the positive impact for our clients and our clients' beneficiaries from our products and services.

What we did

- We supported our existing clients by assisting them in identifying B Corp or value led business partners.
- a-r-c-s were shortlisted for The Pineapples - a prestigious award that celebrates excellence in placemaking. As part of the judging process we presented our work to the judging panel and a large online audience. This was an important opportunity

to talk about B Corp certification and encourage others in the industry to find out more about B Corp and join the community.

- We relaunched the a-r-c-s website increasing the visibility of our B Corp aligned mission and values.
- We increased the annual audience for creative content from underrepresented groups that we have commissioned and curated by 42% to 1.7 million.
- We significantly increased access to a local audience for community market stallholders which resulted in an increase in community market stallholder income of 170%.

Impact Area: Customers

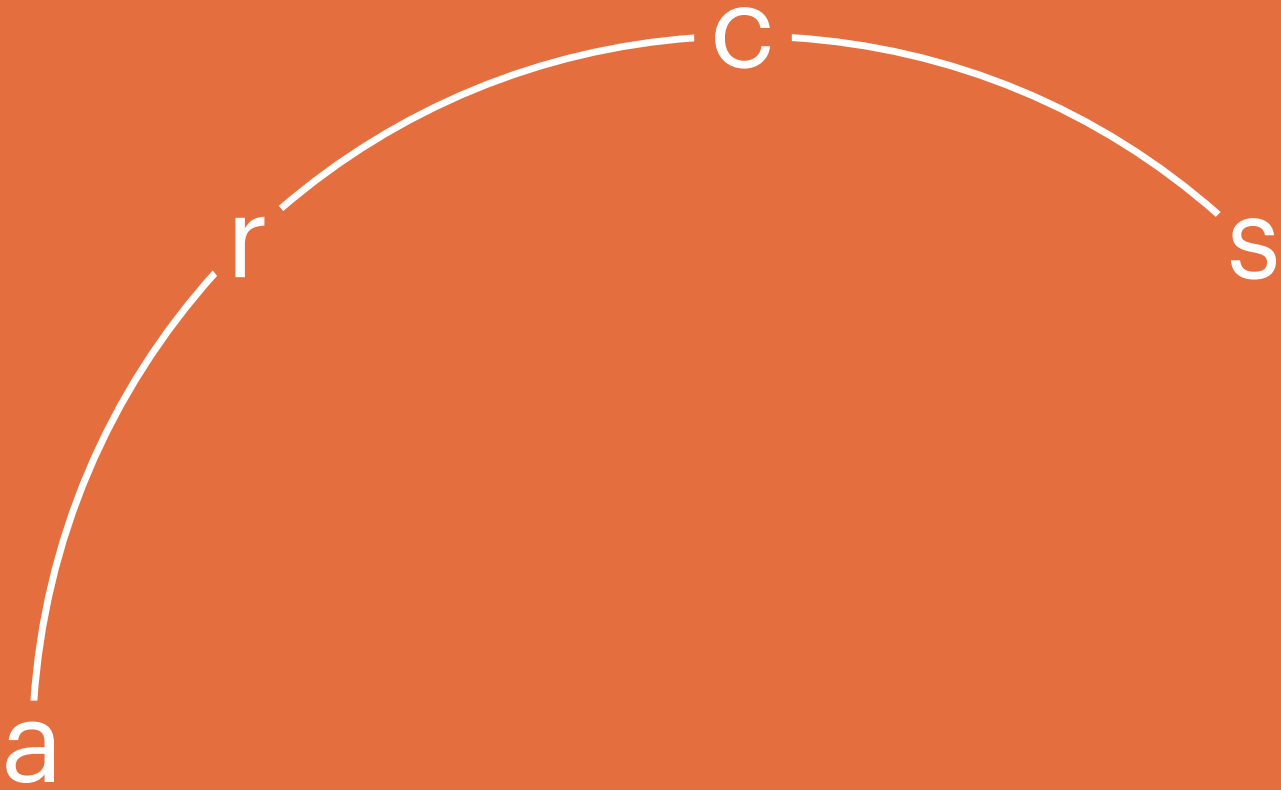
Score: 8.0

Plans for the next 12 months

a-r-c-s has developed and tested a new approach to placemaking that puts community and the environment at the centre of our work. Our focus for the next 12 months is to finalise the replicable placemaking model currently in development based on our approach and attract additional clients to work with us to apply B Corp values to other locations.

Stories

Introducing some of our community partners.



Mentivity

Award-winning mentoring organisation and alternative educational provision Mentivity, launched their latest portrait exhibition, Past, Present, Future on the Lower Stable Street Lightboxes. The Past, Present, Future free outdoor exhibition was a testimony to community, family, and exponential impact. It hoped to inspire conversation around what it means to foster intergenerational mentoring within all communities.

‘It is so important to detail the stories of our communities. It is vital that we humanise our youth, highlight their struggles and their subsequent achievements, no matter how big or small they may seem to others. These stories need to be told, our young people and the wider community must be heard.’

Sayce Holmes-Lewis, Founder, Mentivity



Roseur

Roseur is a local, independent florist focussing on seasonal fresh blooms and dried flowers for a more sustainable approach to floristry. Roseur opened on Lower Stable Street in December 2020 as part of our incubator approach to retail and we have worked with it's founder Sophie, to grow their workshop programme where small groups learn traditional and modern floristry techniques. In the last year Roseur have continued to host monthly workshops in our events space.

'Kiosk N1C helped me get the space on Lower Stable Street as I was a newly started florist. They saw my vision and helped me a lot to get off the ground with the amazing retail unit in Coal Drops Yard. They are always available to run ideas past and help me run larger workshops every month by using their extra event space on the street which has been a major boost to my program of classes.'

Sophie Kim, Founder



Longboys

This local, independent business on Lower Stable Street opened in 2020 as part of our incubator approach to retail. Specialising in long doughnuts and patisserie with surprising flavour twists, as their popularity grew we found them larger premises just around the corner. They opened their new store in Coal Drops Yard in October 2022.

‘Our time on Lower Stable Street was immense and pivotal for the growth of Longboys. It allowed us to have a face in one of London’s primary hubs, and proved to be the perfect platform for an emerging brand that has enabled us to move into a larger unit in Coal Drops Yard.’

Graham Hornigold, Founder



Intoart

Intoart is a pioneering visual arts organisation championing its founding vision for people with learning disabilities to be visible, equal and established artists and designers. We partnered with Intoart in Spring 2023 on a free, outdoor exhibition on Lower Stable Street to celebrate the breadth and vibrancy of the London-based organisation's 23-year practice.

'Being an artist means moving forward and not being invisible with our disability. I want people to know that people with a disability can be artists. Not an outsider. Being an independent artist means getting work out there, to show that there are artists with a disability.'

Intoart artist, Nancy Clayton



Voices Radio

Voices Radio, a radio station for the King's Cross community and beyond, opened on Lower Stable Street in 2021. They broadcast from the street and also bring their music on to the street DJing at events. Committed to inclusivity and diversity in all its forms, the radio features a mix of interesting discussion and music genres. 30% of the regular hosts on Voices Radio had their first ever opportunity on radio through Voices. The station actively supports artists from underrepresented groups.

In the last year Voices held a series of free DJ workshops in our events space to support DJs from underrepresented groups. Participants were subsequently offered their first paid DJ opportunity to showcase their new skills.



FishTank

FishTank offers locally based young entrepreneurs aged 18-30, desk space, a training programme, guidance, coaching, mentoring and opportunities they need to turn their big ideas into success stories.

In the last year FishTank returned to Lower Stable Street to hold a series of free activities in our events space including a live podcast, table talk events and a pop up store.

‘Over the last couple years Kiosk N1C has become an important partner to FishTank by providing a space for both events to showcase the work of young entrepreneurs but also as a space where young people can connect, network and collaborate. The Kiosk team has been able to communicate with the community through their partnerships and collaboration with a number of innovative and progressive community projects. Kiosk has also shown an ability to connect businesses and opportunities to the wider community by using creativity, events and community engagement.’

Stephen Griffith, Founder and Director



Please get in touch if you would like to find out more about our B Corp journey:

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Thank you.

