

The Gift

A City Without Seams

by Keith Khan

The Gift

Created by Keith Khan

Leeds woven together with communities. A city without seams.

If your community was an artwork what would it look like? In 2023 Artist Keith Khan was invited to create unique artworks to celebrate our communities and each of the 33 wards of Leeds. From Keith's visits to wards, he was inspired by local landmarks, by historical facts, by geography and stories revealed to him by the Neighbourhood Hosts of My LEEDS 2023. These artworks were created into both textile and animated form.

Celebrating the fabric of community

Inspired by our region's textile heritage, the 33 artworks were transformed by Keith into a textile design, which was then generously woven by British luxury brand Burberry, on jacquard looms at Burberry's mill in Keighley. With this beautiful fabric a unique collection of garments was created by local designers, makers and fashion students at Leeds Arts University. During Summer 2023, this garment collection visited communities inviting people to wear their city with pride and building a photographic portrait of the city across the Summer.

The Gift

As a final gift to each of the wards, 33 textile artworks were designed by Keith and woven by Burberry, featuring each individual ward motif. These artworks were framed and gifted to each ward, going on permanent display in town halls, village halls and community spaces across the city.

Find the 33 motifs and the inspiration behind them in this booklet.
Discover The Gift digital at leeds2023.co.uk/the-gift

"I have had such a long creative connection with Leeds. I performed in the late 80's at the Leeds City Arts Gallery with one of my seminal performances; worked on major projects with Opera North and the Leeds West Indian Carnival.

It is so exciting, in a digital age, to be creating such a rich community project with the values and integrity of the past projects, for and with the 33 wards of Leeds"

Keith Khan, Artist

"Leeds is not just about buildings and places but about a collection of people and their complex identities, woven into the fabric of the city that makes and creates the culture - a community, a neighbourhood. Leeds has no singular identity, nor do we want it have only one story. It is made up of multiple histories and stories - our ambition with this project was to look beyond the immediate to capture the differences and similarities to show the depth, colour and vibrancy of Leeds"

Kully Thiarai, Creative Director and CEO of LEEDS 2023

'Meeting Keith and talking about my community was wonderful. The beautiful motif designed by him captures a sense of community and is really meaningful for the Moortown ward.'

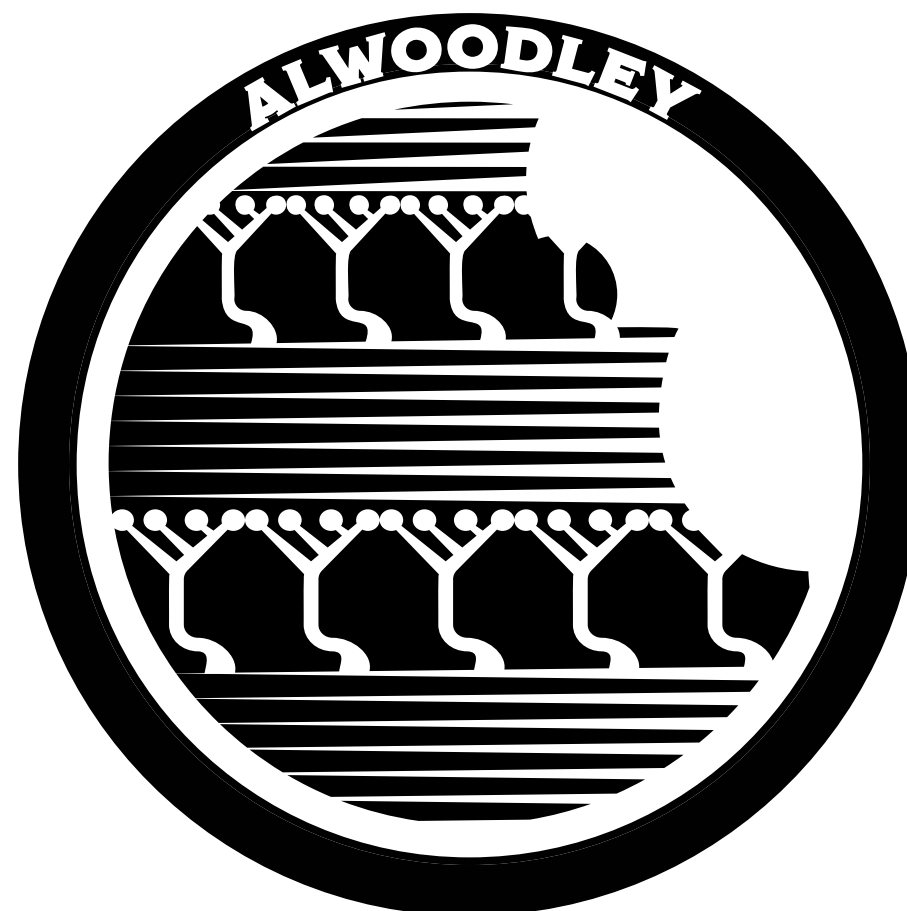
Zhora Mohammad, Moortown Neighbourhood Host

"It has been such a privilege to support LEEDS 2023 and to come together with Keith Khan to celebrate the city with a project that honours the region's unique textile heritage. We were thrilled to create something so special and lasting for the local community, and we hope that the textile artworks will instil a sense of pride and joy for the wards, both now and for generations to come."

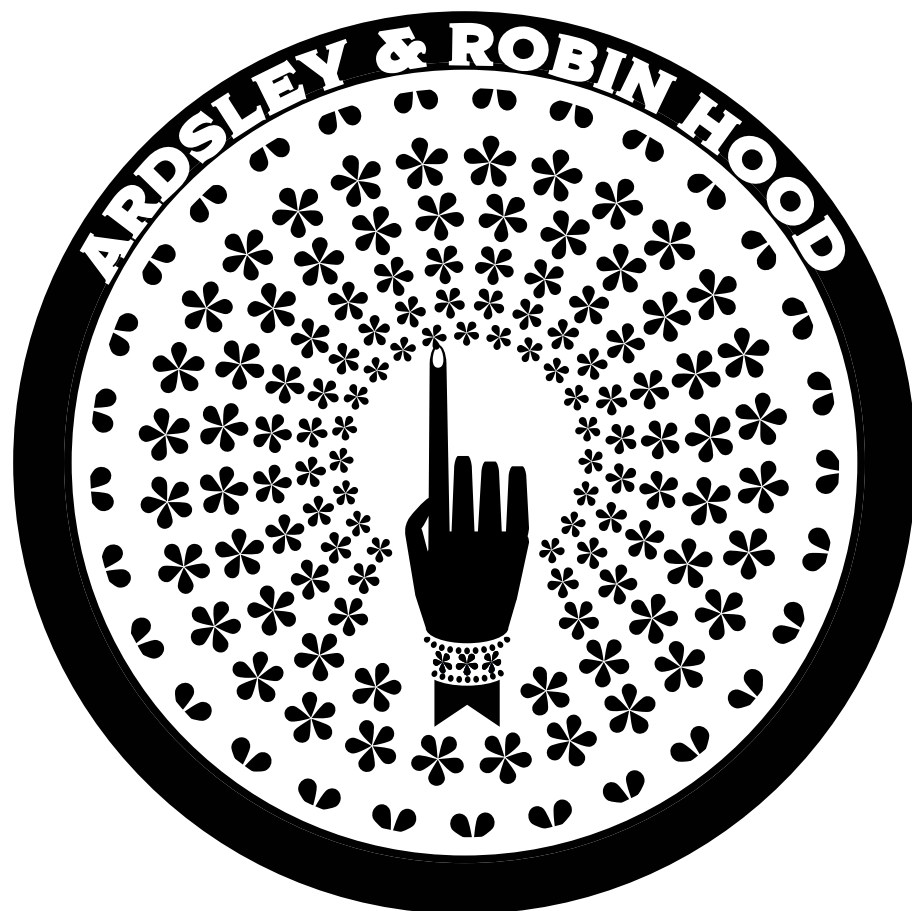
Rob Blomfield, Vice President of Burberry's Business Services, Leeds



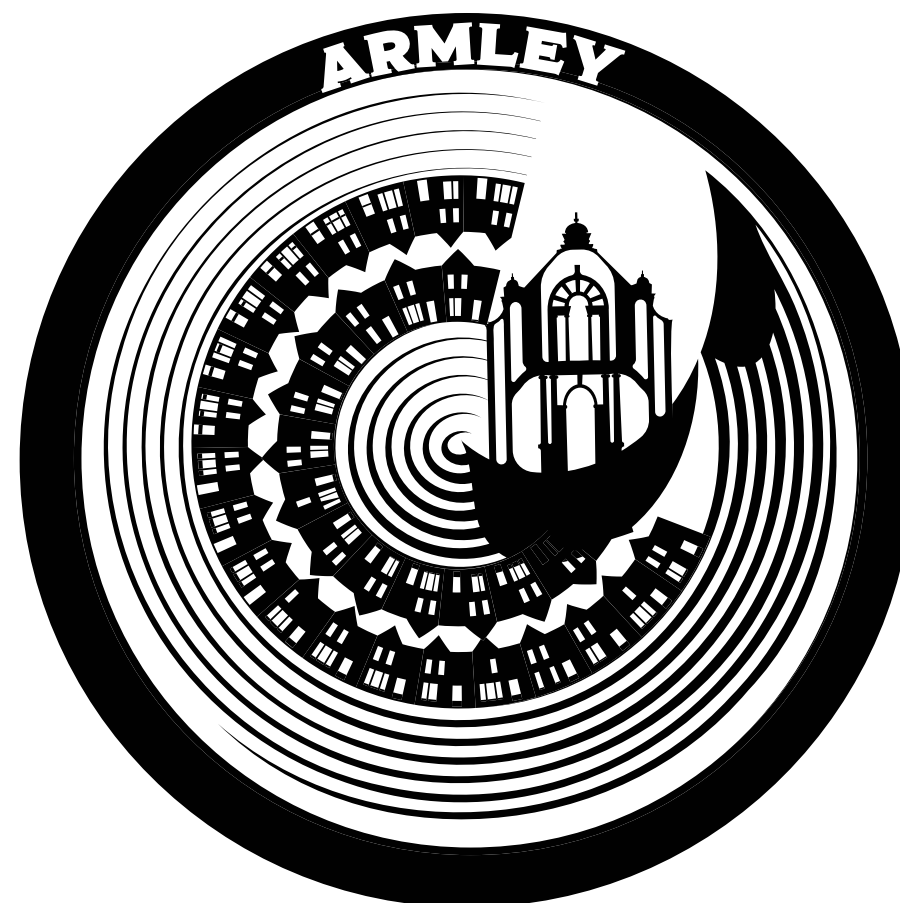
“ These abstract shapes were inspired by each of the five villages that make up Adel and Wharfedale - including Adel, Bramhope, Cookridge, Holt Park and Pool-in-Wharfedale. ”



“ For Alwoodley, I wanted to create a motif that represented a woosh of movement to reflect the energetic community and reference the range of local sports that the ward’s Host is celebrating this Summer. ”



“ I noticed this hand motif hand-carved into stone near a local food bank and church. Although this was made in the last century, the motif gave me hope and almost points from the past to the future. This symbol evokes human touch and felt like the right representation for community and unity. ”



“ Mike’s Carpets is a famous carpet shop set in a former Methodist Church. As a local icon, I felt that everyone in the community would have a personal connection to it. ”



“ I was inspired by the columns of Temple Works – a place that once housed the biggest single space in Europe. The former flax mill is treasured by locals for its Egyptian-style architecture. ”



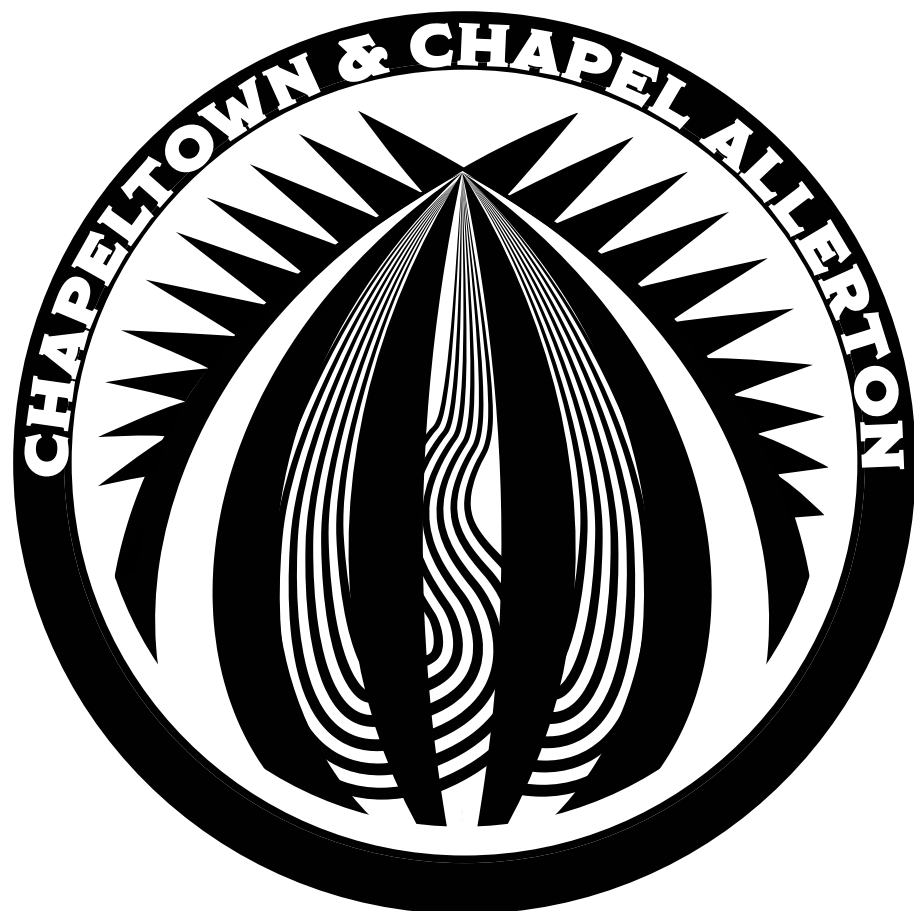
“ These shapes were inspired by the art nouveau-style glass windows of the community’s much-loved Bramley Baths. ”



“ These are the classic silhouettes of Burmantofts Pottery – once the largest producer of tiles and architectural ceramics in Yorkshire. ”



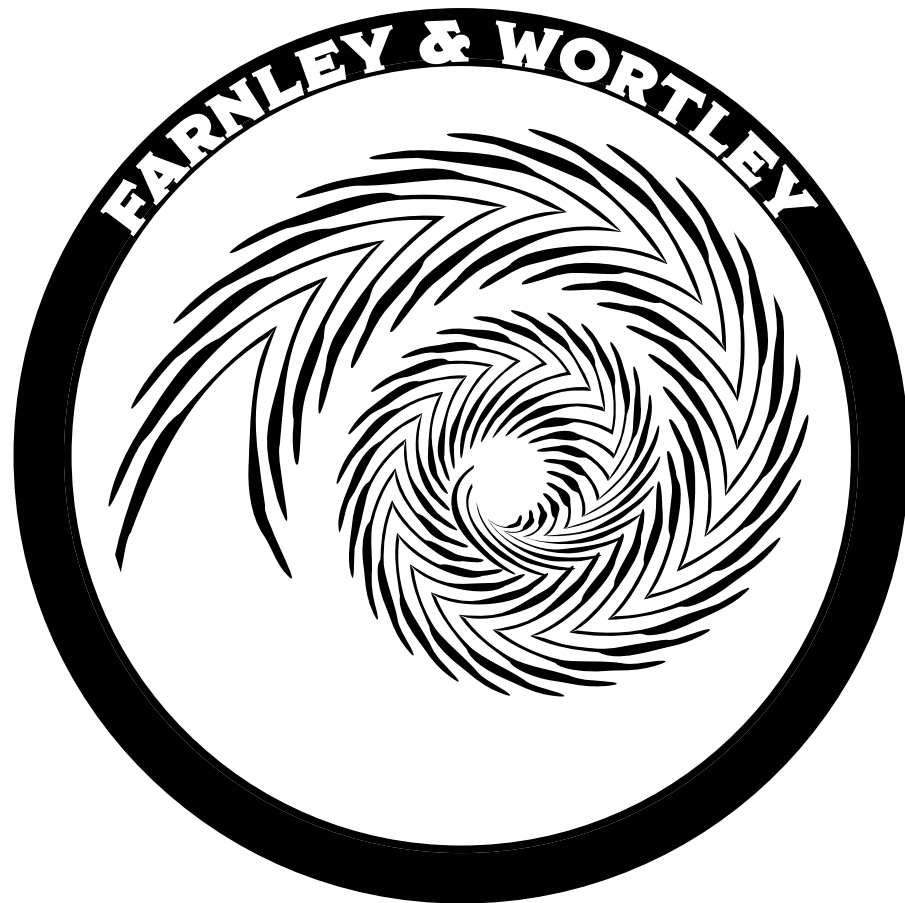
“ The interwoven marks are the warp and weft of a loom, referencing the area’s historic connection to the textile industry. ”



“ Here I pay homage to Chapeltown’s West Indian Carnival. It was the first festival of its kind to showcase all three authentic elements of the celebration – costumes, music and a masquerade procession. It’s also a reference to my own practice as I started as a Carnival designer. ”



“ The design references the original signage of the Arndale Centre in Crossgates - one of the first American-style shopping malls in England and with its shining art deco ceiling, which is such an important hub of activity for the community. ”



“ This design is a fern leaf, as the name ‘Farnel’ comes from the Old English word for fern. It’s where the name Farnley originally came from. ”



“ A visit to the unique St Aidan’s RSPB centre with Garforth’s Host influenced the design of this piece. ”



“ This design is a playful take on the ward’s name with friendly hares bounding across rolling hills. ”



“ Guiseley Theatre is an important hub for the community. On this building there is a carving of a hand reaping wheat and huge buttons referencing the history of the area. ”



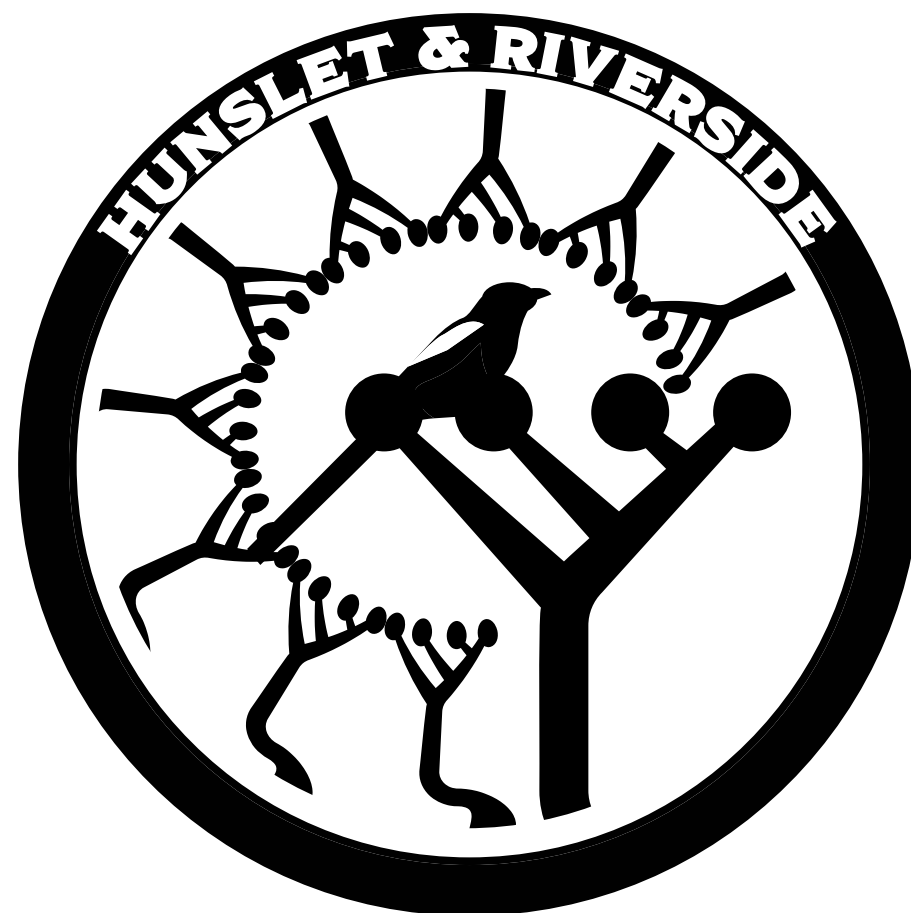
“ This design references the connecting fields of this huge, rural ward, a maypole or pylon, and the Harewood Stupa, the only Buddhist monument of its kind in the UK. ”



“ In amongst student and family houses the huge green space and skatepark buzzes with the energy and creativity that young people bring to Headingley and Hyde Park. ”



“ Horsforth is home to a really creative community, so I designed a variety of patterns and shapes that all fit harmoniously together. It is almost a mask, or something created by guerilla knitters. ”



“ It might be urban but there is always nature here. This design is in homage to ‘the bird in the window’ – an anecdote that Hunslet’s Host shared with me on my visit. ”



“ The buildings in this design are inspired by the flats on the Killingbeck and Seacroft skyline. One of the amazing panoramas in Leeds. ”



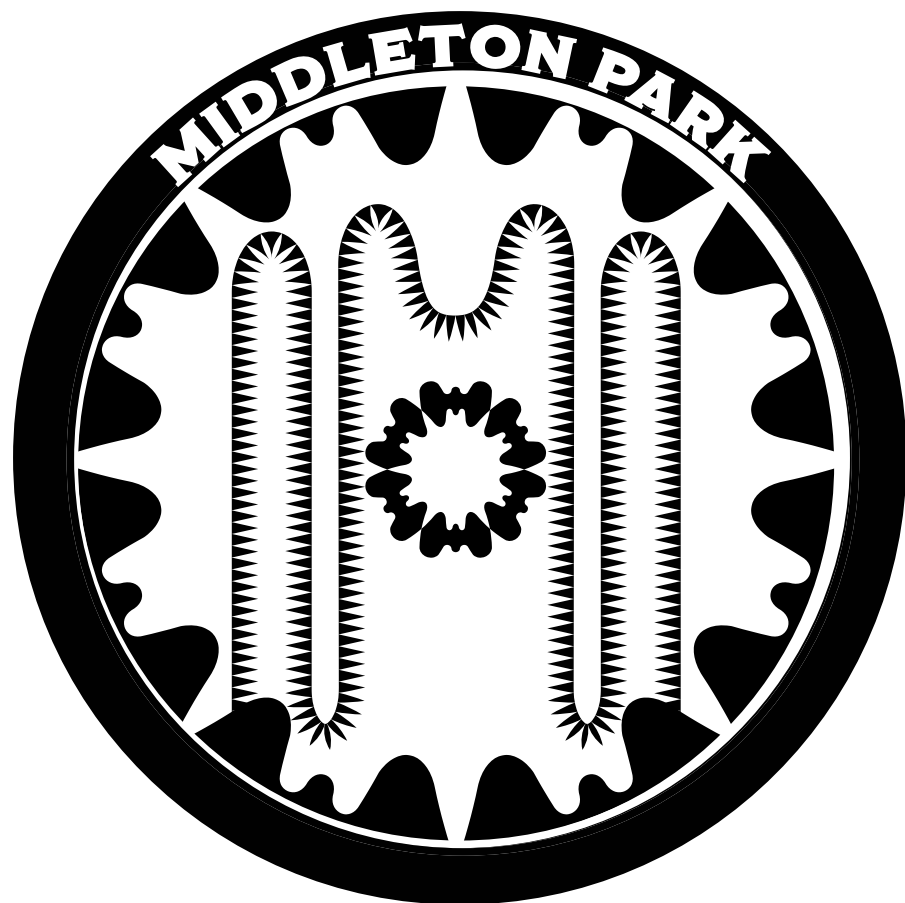
“ There are five parishes that make up Kippax and Methley. Each one is represented in the shape of a spire and a wheat stalk. ”



“ Kirkstall is famous for its Abbey, which I visited with the Host during twilight. Hearing the history of the ward inspired these spinning gothic cogs, which could be a part of the monastery or refer to the ward’s ironwork past. ”



“ From sturdy trucks to delicate stems, connecting lines and leaf shapes reflect the flourishing and diverse community at Little London and Woodhouse. ”



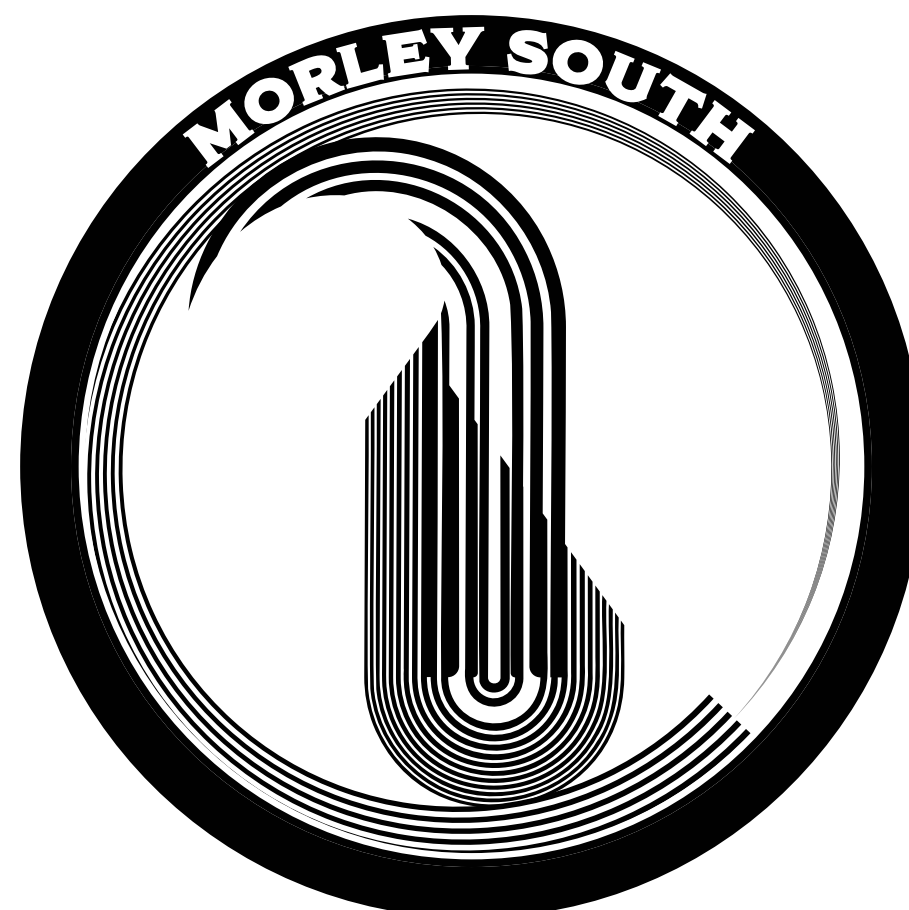
“ Coal mining is a huge part of the community’s history, and as home to the oldest working railway in the world, the design features stylised coal and a railway track. ”



“ The first thing I felt when visiting Moortown was a sense of welcome, which is why I chose to depict this circle of houses hugging the outer ring of the design. The hand-like leaves at the centre are a symbol of celebration and a community in bloom. ”



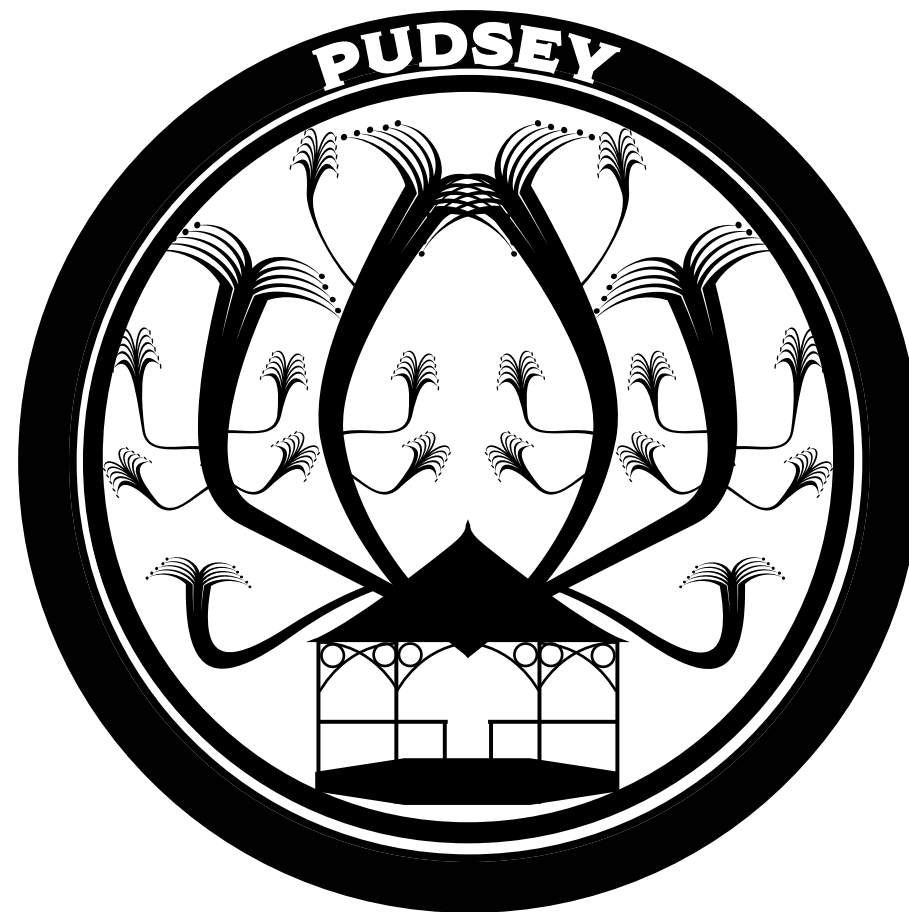
“ Morley is famous for its historic connection to the textile industry – particularly for the production of shoddy – a recycled cloth made from tailors’ clippings, rags and offcuts. ”



“ The threads represent the connection between Morley South and Morley North, and are symbolic of the area’s history in the textile industry. ”



“ I brought two incredible local achievements together using the shape of a wheel to reference both Otley’s award-winning use of hydrotechnology and the huge charity bike ride one Yeadon resident just completed. ”



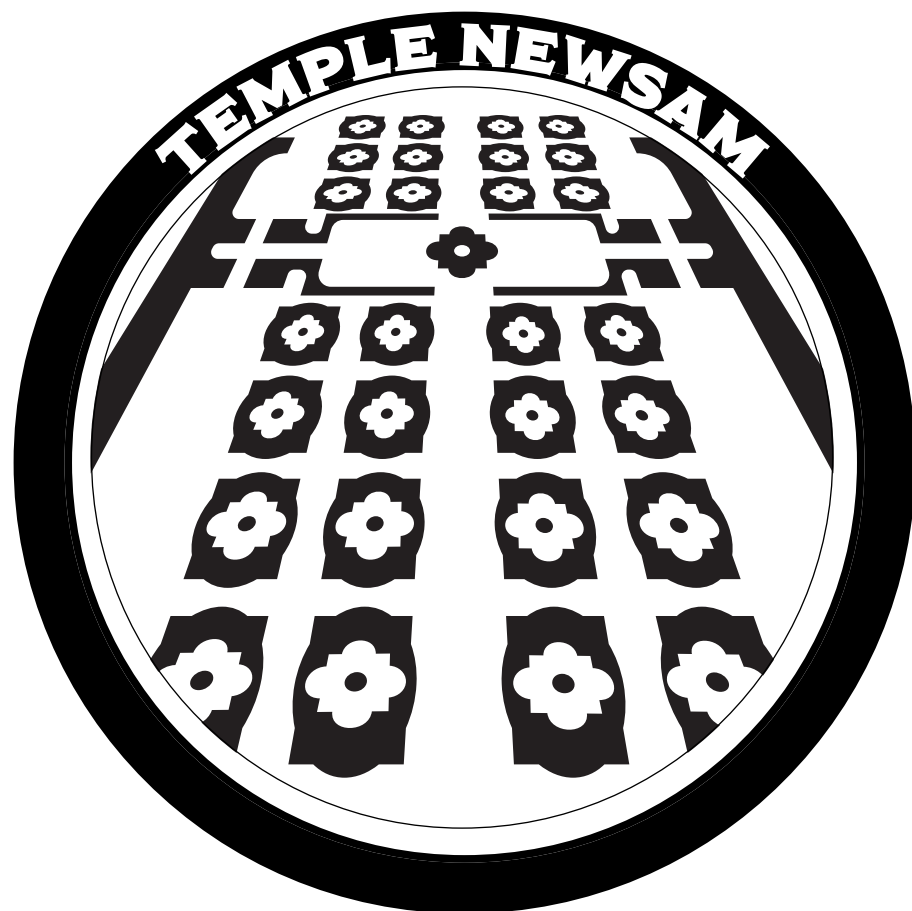
“ My visit to Pudsey was soundtracked by performances by some amazing local musicians. I reimagined their band stand surrounded by music notes as a symbol of the thriving musical community. ”



“ Rothwell is famous for rhubarb – it was traditionally grown and picked by candlelight for maximum sweetness. ”



“ Roundhay is home to such an important green space in Leeds. The circular and plant-like shapes reference both the area’s name and its iconic park. ”



“ The shapes mirror the beautifully manicured italian gardens of Temple Newsam, which I had the honour of seeing from the roof on our very special tour. ”



“ The curving lines reference Otley Road, the busy 10-mile road which winds through the ward. ”



“ The interweaving lines are designed to capture the gentle ebb and flow of the River Wharf, which I visited with the Host of Wetherby. The weirs and water bind and bring together this beautiful community. ”

The Gift credits

Created by:

Keith Khan

Researcher:

Rosaleen Williams and Vita Shaw

Textile Design by:

Keith Khan

Production of Textile Artworks and Wearable Gift Fabric:

Burberry

Wearable Gift Garments by:

MK Noor Collections - Dress makers

Brightbart's Tailors - Suit Tailor

Nicole Colbert - Costume Maker

Alison Turton - Milliner

Masato Jones - Designer and creator

Iké Choice Couture - Fashion designer

Clara Dou (MA Digital Fashion at Leeds Arts University) - Designer

Amy Fisher - (MA Digital Fashion at Leeds Arts University) - Designer

Portraits of the People of Leeds:

Photo by Laurelle and Lizzie Coombes

A special thank you to the LEEDS 2023 Neighbourhood Hosts

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Commissioned and produced by:



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About LEEDS 2023

LEEDS 2023's ambition is to deliver a transformational year of creative experiences connecting and benefiting people now and into the future.

The planned programme is seeking to celebrate and transform the City's identity locally, nationally and internationally – creating a lasting legacy of economic and social impact.

LEEDS 2023 is run by the Leeds Culture Trust, an independent charity set up in 2019 by Leeds City Council as part of its Culture Strategy and as a response to the cancellation of the UK's participation in the European Capital of Culture competition.

Leeds City Council recognises in a number of its key strategies the difference culture and creativity can make to a city and its citizens, and is the principal funder of LEEDS 2023. [www.LEEDS 2023.co.uk](http://www.LEEDS2023.co.uk)

LEEDS 2023 is supported by Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players for making this possible.

