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Mapping the City

A unique exhibition revealing how young people see the world was recently launched by academics from Northumbria.

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Mapping the City was the brainchild of Jon Swords and Mike Jeffries from Northumbria's Geography Department, working with Sebastian Messer from the Department of Architecture and Built Environment. The trio have spent the last year working with young people from across the region and recently held an exhibition at Newcastle's City Library as part of the Juice Festival 2016 to display the visually stunning, imaginative and thought-provoking results.

They asked young people to create their own maps of Newcastle and Gateshead, but instead of using GPS or digital software they simply handed out pens, pencils and paper. The response was a unique atlas of hand-drawn

maps. Gone are the historic monuments and buildings (unless they are useful places to meet friends) and the amenities used by adults are mostly overlooked too. What is revealed, is the importance of friends and families over places or landmarks, and the significance of schools and colleges – past, present and future – as places of memory, friendship, legend, and, of course, dread. The journeys young people take through the city also come through strongly – links between school and home, parents, grandparents and friends, as well as their favourite park, café or corner shop are all significant. Finally, fantasy worlds hidden below the streets, above the buildings and online, pour from felt tips on to paper. These are all worlds occupied by young people, but places traditional maps are unable to represent, and adults struggle to comprehend.

Jon said: “The Mapping the City exhibition was the culmination of over a year of work with young people from around the region. It launched an atlas of maps made by young people, and by us, which illustrate the very different Newcastle-Gatesheads they experience. The year-long project, supported by the Juice Festival, extended from research carried out by Jon, Mike and Sebastian into the positive impact of young skaters on the urban environment.

“Maps are a powerful tool for communicating how cities are and might be, and the maps in this exhibition and atlas are rich with versions of our city missing from authorised cartographies. We hope visitors will better understand what is missing from official maps, and what might be gained by listening more to the city’s young people.”

Northumbria’s Geography and Architecture and Built Environment departments offer a range of courses for anyone interested in these subject areas. Come along to our next Open Day on 26 November to find out more.

Discover More: www.mappingthecity.net

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our

courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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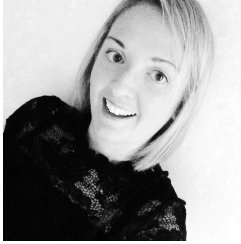


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