



Creative  
Lancashire

**Conversations in Creativity**  
Explorations in inspiration

Bowie • 2016



# Creative Lancashire

Creative Lancashire is a service provided by Lancashire County Council through its economic development company - Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL). They support creative and digital businesses and work with all sectors to realise creative potential.



Hemingway Design



Lemn Sissay



Simon Aldred (Cherry Ghost)

## Conversations in Creativity

In 2011, Creative Lancashire with local design agencies Wash and JP74 launched 'Conversations in Creativity' - a network and series of events where creatives from across the crafts, trades and creative disciplines explore how inspiration from around the world informs process. Previous events have featured Hemingway Design, Gary Aspden (Adidas), Pete Fowler (Animator & Artist), Donna Wilson (Designer), Cherry Ghost, I am Kloot, Nick Park (Aardman), Lemn Sissay (Poet) and Jeanette Winterson (Author) - hosted by Dave Haslam & John Robb.



Donna Wilson

### Who's Involved



[www.wash-design.co.uk](http://www.wash-design.co.uk)



[www.jp74.co.uk](http://www.jp74.co.uk)



[www.sourcecreative.co.uk](http://www.sourcecreative.co.uk)



Made You Look



Pete Fowler

# THE VERY BEST OF BRITANNIA

David Bowie: 1947-2016

A wave of sadness and loss rippled through the creative world after legendary star man David Bowie (David Robert Jones), singer, songwriter and actor died on 10 January 2016.

Bowie's creative process evolved throughout his 40+ year career, drawing inspirations from the obvious to the obscure.

Among the mass of tributes in publications, the web and social media were many from artists, architects, designers - in addition to the global response from the music industry, film, fashion and advertising.

Many wrote about Bowie's influence on their formative years. He made it cool to be young and smart.

The photographer Mick Rock, who was responsible for some of the most iconic images of Bowie, declared "He wasn't any single thing. He was the great synthesizer."

As a muse to many working in the creative industries, Bowie's career was the subject of an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2013. However the exhibition only touched on the major contribution his life and career played in shaping culture today.

The idea of Britain as a creative powerhouse is a by-product of Bowie's impact on the creative-cultural landscape. He dared a generation to challenge the rules and conventions.

That generation now operate in agencies, design houses and studios across the globe, constantly taking risks in shaping how we live, work, play and consume today.

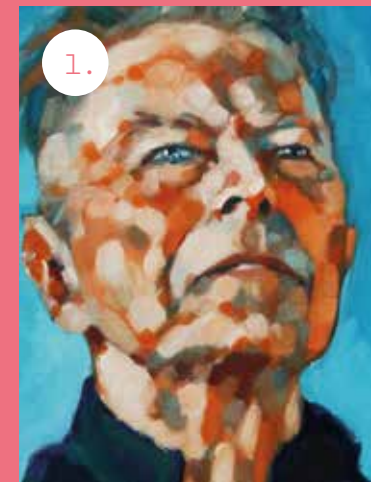
This provides the context for our next Conversations in Creativity talk at Harris Museum as part of the Best of Britannia (BOB) North 2016 programme,

As a companion piece to the event we've collaborated with artists and designers including Stephen Caton & Howard Marsden at Source Creative, and Andy Walmsley at Wash and artists; Nick Rhodes (Switchopen), David Flanagan, Adrian White, David Gaskell, Chris Dorning, Stephen Wilkin and Emmeline Pidgen, to produce original Bowie inspired artwork that reflects how he spoke to them individually as an influence, inspiration or muse.

There's also a deeply personal and insightful response to news of Bowie's death by award-winning writer John Robb.

The results can be discovered over the following pages.

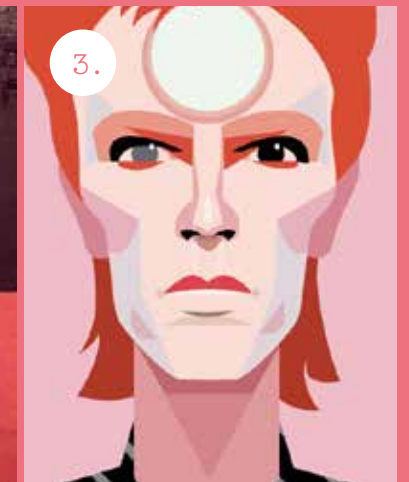
Ed Matthews-Gentle  
Creative Lancashire



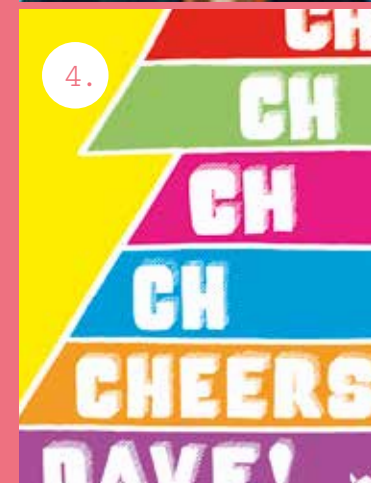
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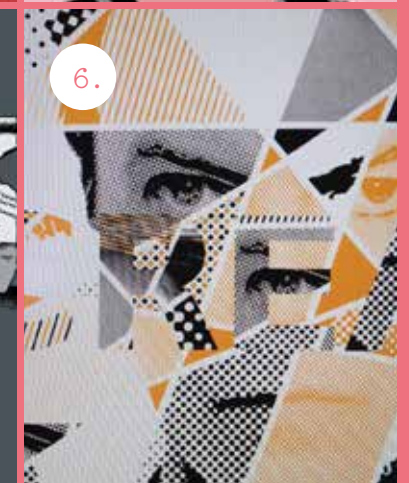
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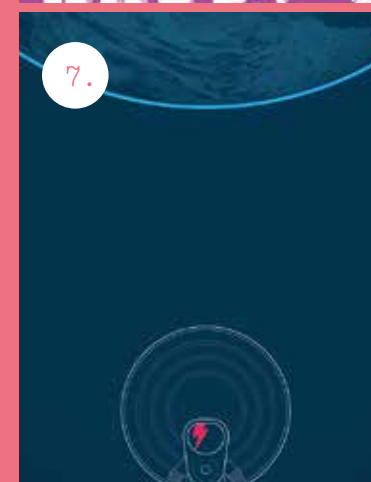
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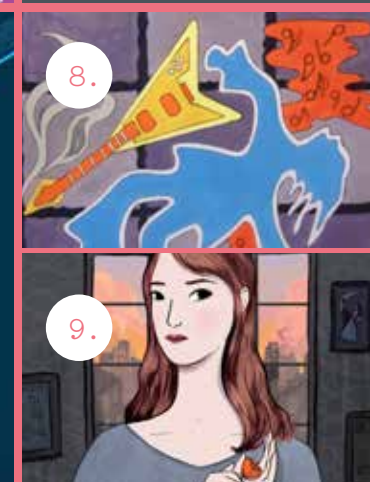
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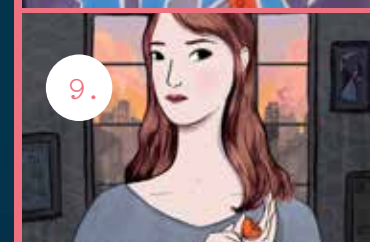
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1. Andy Walmsley

4. David M Gaskell

7. Stephen Caton

2. Chris Dorning

5. Howard Marsden

8. Adrian White

9. Emmeline Pidgen

3. Dave Flanagan

6. Nick Rhodes

10. Stephen Wilkin

# The man who fell to earth and saved our generation from boredom

by John Robb

illustration by Adrian White

Louder Than War boss and frontman from the Membranes John Robb grew up in the seventies and here is his tribute to the man who owned that decade...

Farewell to Bowie.

So cool you can use his second name as shorthand for quixotic, era defining genius and pop perfection.

Farewell to the alien who tore the fabric just enough so we could all get through and cheat the hangman and live the moon-age daydream.

The most dignified death in the history of rock n roll saw Bowie turn his passing into a work of art. His final album dealt with the mystery of death with a poetic and artful brilliance and could arguably be his ultimate statement as he left the ultimate stage.

Blackstar is the final chapter in a decade's long history of innovation and genius. Even the creative low points made sense. Bowie was never boring. Taking chances and creating sparks of magic that even now we are trying to unravel.

Forever young in our minds he will always be the eternal beautiful Ziggy with his freak wardrobe and wonderful music that turned the monochromatic seventies into a Day-Glo wonderland.

Life used to imitate art but now its death imitating art. The Blackstar album, with its dark atmosphere and death stained lyrics, is the poetic departure note of the man who owned the seventies and is one of the key corners of pop culture. This is the man who fell to earth with a back catalogue that is so stunning that it tells the history of a tumultuous decade and is still a golden seam of musical and lyrical inspiration crammed full of exotic ideas and quicksilver melodies.

Even if he hadn't looked so brilliant, dressed so freakishly beautiful and stared out at the world with his hypnotic alien eyes, even if he hadn't opened up a myriad of artful possibilities to skinny nervous kids like me and my friends, even if he hadn't said 'look there's all this amazing stuff out there', even if he hadn't owned a decade and pushed its culture to the extreme he would have still been a godlike presence just for that series of albums and singles.

It was an astonishing world of glowing oddness that hypnotised you. I remember looking at the naked dog sleeve of diamond Dogs intrigued by its twisted strangeness and sci-fi dystopian vision. I remember the micro group of Ziggy kids walking through my home town of Blackpool – proto freaks in a world of squares on a trip led by their zigzag faced hero who turned the future into art. And yet...

And yet for all his beautiful freakishness Bowie was oddly British. This was the true sound of the suburbs. The true pulse of the glowing freak show of the endless houses at the edge of British cities were all the great wonkiness emerges from. The pent up suburban sex behind those twitching curtains.

The man who invented pop androgyny, Bowie dealt in taboo as he tickled the warm underbelly of stuff upper lip Blighty. He said he was gay when rock was still a macho strut. Shocked pre-teens wondered what gay was in those monochromatic, scared, damp English towns of post Victorian England. He dyed his hair like an exploding follicle inevitable bush of vibrant colour that perfectly matched his music. He challenged the cultural, musical and social taboos until they became normal and then he finally dealt with the last great taboo in the forever young world of the West. He dealt with death and even turned that into a poetry and an art form on his final album and it's beautifully unsettling music and videos.

CIC 004 - Bowie

Rock music is now the dust of memories. Death the last taboo. The generation that challenged life are now being embraced by death. They are coming thick and fast and our high decibel tears are burying them. Lemmy and Bowie in a week. Two people who lived opposite lives that were both on fire – one a never flinching unchanging gunslinger and the other the pop chameleon. Both were once challengers to social order whose lives are now being embraced by archbishops and Prime ministers.

Bowie created the modern pop star. He was the artist who built a team around his dreams. His collaborators were top notch – the genius of Mick Ronson, the king of production Tony Visconti, the ruthless brilliance of Mainman management, the curveball dynamics of Eno, the great musicians like Woody Woodmansey, Trevor Boulder, Carlos Alomar, George Murray, Dennis Davis, the quark, strangeness and charm of ex-wife Angie Bowie – they and many others all surrounded the fragile artist and helped realise his dreams that were driven by art and not cash.

Wham! Bam! Thank you glam! Imagine the seventies without Bowie.

He was one of a handful that turned the broken decade into a magical era. Glam rock was our soundtrack that got us through endless school days. The weekly dose of Top of the Pops came to fire when Bowie and fellow conspirators like Marc and a few others dared to dream.

As soon as he had turned the world Day-Glo he was off. Ziggy was dead before we even knew what mascara was. He then went through a stunning array of costume changes that would have made mere mortals look foolish but each one he carried off with a swagger and a cool that made the outfit's future museum pieces.

Bowie was a new kind of cool.

A post rock n roll cool. A cool that recognised William Burroughs as well as Elvis. That embraced mime and jazz and art and books and made this whole new world into perfect pop music. He was always hip. 24 hours a day turned on to what was happening and making it his own.

Like the Beatles owned the sixties – Bowie owned the seventies. His singles tell the story of the decade and if the eighties was his commercial pomp with the shiny pop of Lets Dance then he deserved the big league success even if the music was less interesting but like all the great artists, like Johnny Cash he made his last hurrah another great creation.

So David Bowie has gone.

Another of the founding fathers has departed into the ether.

'You gotta stay a young man – you can never grow old' once sang Ian Hunter in All the way From Memphis and who David Bowie had handed a career break to when he gave the Mott the Hoople 'All the Young Dudes' to cover.

Image that!

Just tossing away the anthem of glam because it was a spare song in your armoury.

That is just another measure of talent.

What was once vibrant is now sorrow

Ziggy eternal. The Egyptian god. The high decibel Pharaoh whose music will live into the afterlife. The songs will last forever.

Cancer is the cruellest of diseases but it gave Bowie the space to seal the myth and finish the perfect work of art – his own life.

The fighting dancehalls settle into the glowing dust of the past.

All we have now is the music but what a gift.

John Robb is an award-winning journalist and boss of Louder Than War. In a 30 year music writing career, John was the first to write about bands such as Stone Roses and Nirvana and has several best selling music books to his name. He constantly tours the world with Goldblade and the Membranes playing gigs or doing spoken word and speaking at music conferences.

The article was first published in January 2016  
[www.louderthanwar.com](http://www.louderthanwar.com)



## Andy Walmsley

Artist & Director

I don't normally paint from an image I haven't taken myself, it's a little bit paint by numbers for me. But I felt compelled to paint David Bowie the moment I heard he'd passed away. The image was inspired and based on the Black Star video directed by Johan Renck. It was the most moving and iconic image I could have chosen to re-create... his last gesture as an artist to the world.

And what an artist he was.

I've always dipped in and out of Bowie's music ever since my first awkward sexual encounter to 'Soul Love' at the tender age of 15. A lasting memory in so many ways... But I've never been an obsessive fan, I've only got a small handful of vinyls and missed out on a big period in the late 80's and 90's. I've also sadly never seen him live! However, for me now turning 50 this year, I've now realised how important he has been as a contributor to the sound track of my life, but not only that - he's been an incredible visual and technical influencer. He was always ahead of the pack.

For him to produce Black Star when he was obviously suffering from this dreadful disease and knowing he was dying is a major achievement. To put so much progressive creativity in it with an intriguing and questioning narrative, simply blew me away. This is an artist still looking ahead when the road is coming to an end. Brilliant and inspirational. For anybody interested in a creative career, David Bowie needs to be a big part of your creative road map if you want to be a Kook!

wash-design.co.uk  
andywalmsley.prosite.com



Image Based on  
"Life on Mars"  
by Chris Dorning  
(The Cunning Craftsman)

Enamel, Acrylic and charcoal  
on 1M square board.

[thecunningcraftsman.co.uk](http://thecunningcraftsman.co.uk)

Dave Flanagan

Freelance illustrator  
and graphic designer

daveflanagan.co.uk



David M Gaskell

Designer  
vikingmonk.com



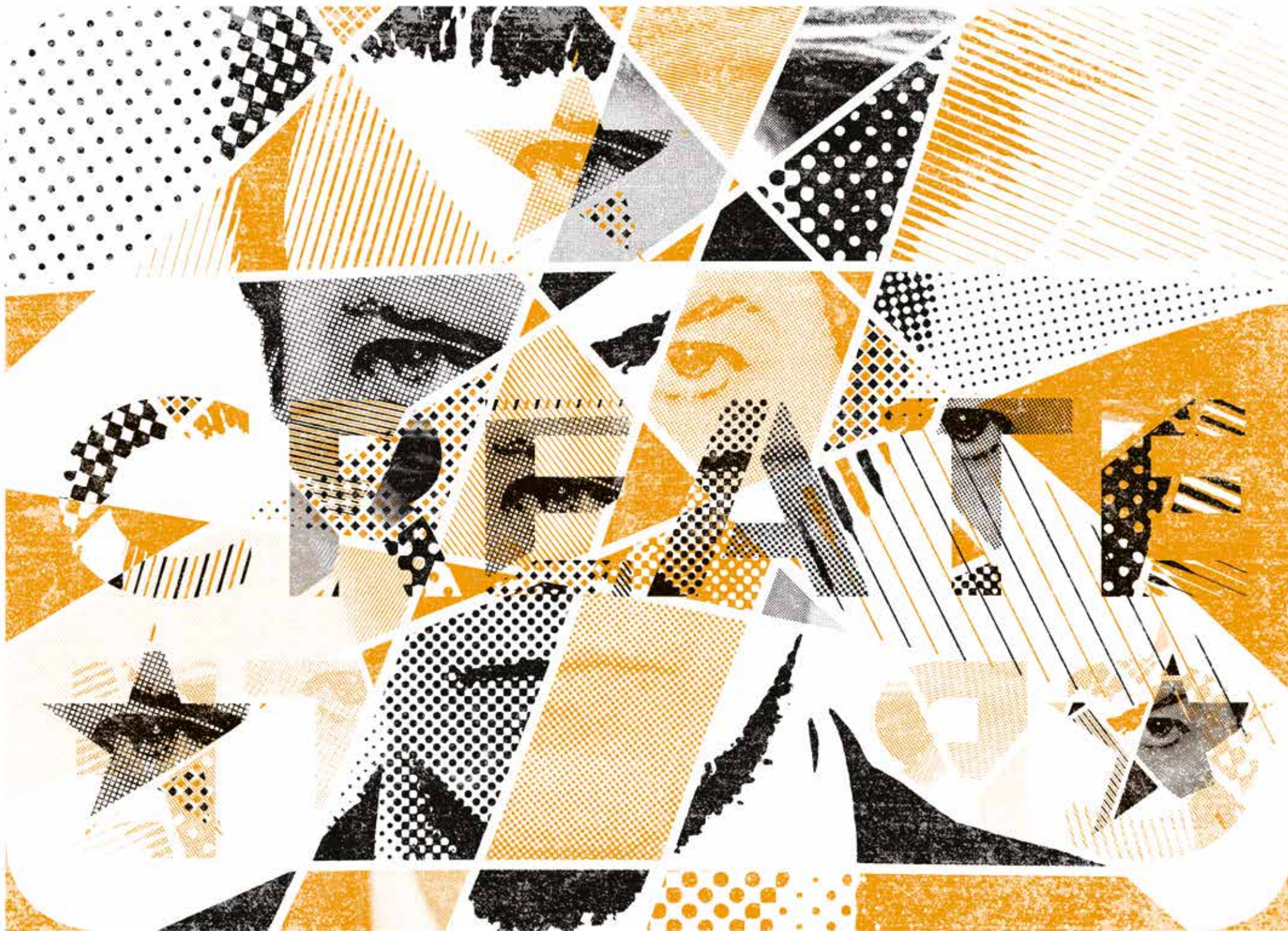


Heroes

by Ben Howard

[soucrecreative.com](http://soucrecreative.com)





NR 16

ART - SWITCHOPEN.COM

## Nick Rhodes

The one thing that sums up David Bowie from his early days until his death is creativity. The man morphed and sidwinded in to his own genre, a huge inspiration for me creatively.

With the illustration I wanted to challenge my own notion of how I create illustrations. A student I teach Graphics to at HND level, passed on an idea that he found whilst researching how manga artists illustrate characters. Certain manga artists produce characters within the confines of 10 lines drawn out randomly on a page. Giving parameters to work within, but at the same time be random of the outcome. A trait I believe Bowie used throughout his creative life.

I wanted to produce an illustration of David Bowie within the confines of 10 random lines. My background is very much screen print based, so I based my illustration upon using bitmapping tones and setting parameters to use only a limited palette of colour to produce the final outcome.

[switchopen.com](http://switchopen.com)



Space Oddity  
by Stephen Caton  
sourcecreative.co.uk



### Rock 'n' Roll Suicide

by Adrian White  
Artist & Musician

“I always loved this tune as it felt it was about age and depression both being our enemies, but yet the fact nobody is ever alone really as we all face these fears. I felt this was the answer to a lot of questions about being a teenager - and even later life. The fact that we all share the human experience... It was fun to think about the song again.”

### Emmeline Pidgen

Illustrator

Illustration inspired by the atmosphere of the track 'Slow Burn' from David Bowie's 2002 album 'Heathen'.

Emmeline Pidgen is an award-winning illustrator creating picture books, comics, advertising and editorial illustration from a cosy studio in the North West of England.

[emmelineillustration.com](http://emmelineillustration.com)



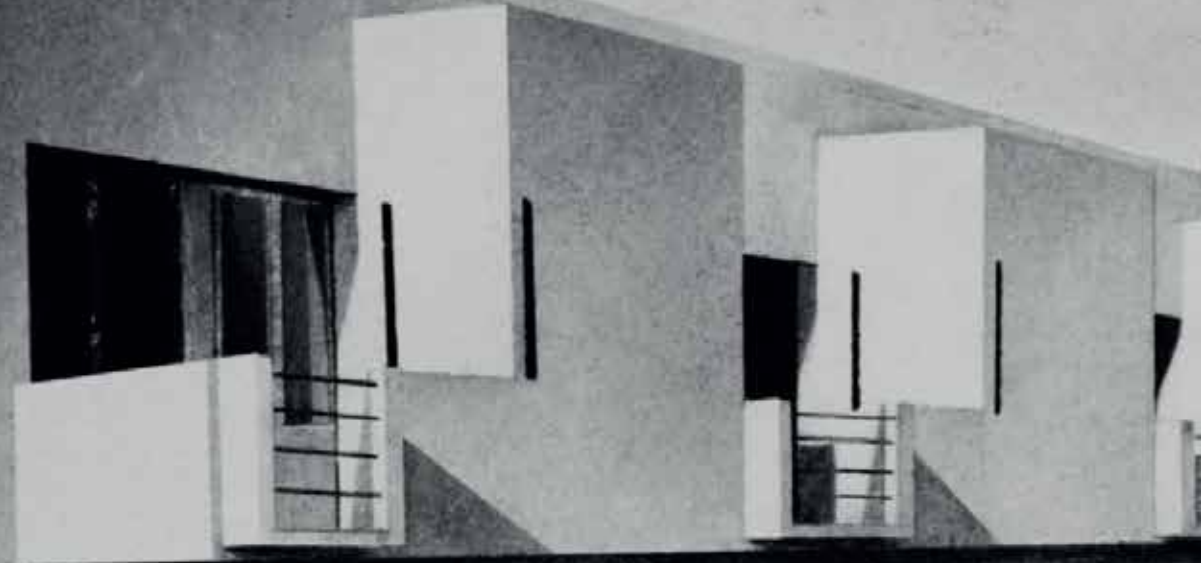
## Stephen Wilkin

Illustration course leader at UCLan.

I'm currently working on a project where I draw people every day in my sketchbook on my commute. When asked to submit a response to Bowie's death I looked back through my drawings to the 10th of January and on the next day, the 11th January the day after David Bowie's death I drew this lady on the train. She was reading a book about Jeremy Corbyn. The drawing is someone I don't know. But I wrote "I can't give everything away" the last line in the last song on David Bowie's last album Black Star.



Katarzyna Wiesiolek



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## Creative Lancashire at Best of Britannia (BOB) North

After a hugely successful debut event in 2015, Best of Britannia (BOB) heads back to Lancashire with a bigger and better BOB North (11-13 March), promoting the best of British design & manufacturing.

[bestofbritannia.com](http://bestofbritannia.com)

Creative Lancashire champions and promotes creative skills in the county. As advocates for creativity & design, it's our mission to realise the economic potential in companies, build collaborations, networking opportunities, and provide creative &

digital business advice. We have helped to develop the careers of some of the best and emerging talent from the region through our work with partners including Crafts Council, Design Council, and are proud partners of Best of Britannia. During BOB North, we're also proud to showcase new creative talent from the region, alongside more established and world-class brands from the UK. We're also delighted to present a special series of talks, exhibits and events alongside the BOB programme:

### Conversations in Creativity

#### Conversations in Creativity: Bowie – The Very Best of Britannia

We bring together a panel of cultural commentators, creatives and designers to examine to what degree creativity defines what Britain represents to the rest of the world and Bowie's legacy for the creative industries today. Hosted by Dave Haslam & introduced by Wayne Hemingway.

**6-8pm, Thursday 10 March, Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston**

A selection of specially created Bowie inspired artwork by Lancashire based artists, illustrators, graphic designers and agencies will be exhibited in the Derwent Gallery at BOB.

#### Conversations in Creativity: BOB North Debate – Collaboration

In association with Made in Britain The second in our series of special Conversation in Creativity events for BOB North explores the benefits and perils of collaborating with other British or overseas designers, manufacturers and institutions with a panel of leading businesses, academics and designers including Charles Hadcock (Artist), John Pearce (Made in Britain), Beverley Lamey (University of Central Lancashire), Stephen Hume (Linn Audio) & Denise Pearson (Deni-Deni).

**4-5pm, Friday 11 March: The BOB Social Club, Historic Post Office Building**

#### POWWOW: Creative Social Networking in association with Linn Lounge

Following the conversation in Creativity debate (Fri 11 March), you are also invited to attend POWWOW (6-8pm) - Drinks reception and social networking event presented by Creative Lancashire in association with Linn Lounge

**6-8pm, Friday 11 March:**

**The BOB Social Club, Historic Post Office Building (bar open until late)**



A selection of current and forthcoming events, exhibitions and activity to provoke further conversations about creativity:

#### Crafts Council - Business Visioning Workshop 16.03.16 Christ The King Chapel, County Hall Preston

Part of a new series of Crafts Council professional development sessions for craft makers. Explore your personal values and recognise how to translate them to business values to form your ideal practice.

[festivalofmaking.co.uk](http://festivalofmaking.co.uk)  
[craftscouncil.org.uk](http://craftscouncil.org.uk)

#### FutureEverything 2016 - 30.03.16 - 02.04.16 Manchester Town Hall Manchester

Split up into four distinct categories, each session of this year's conference will draw a keen focus on the elements that make up the world as we know it, and look towards the world as it should be.

[futureeverything.org](http://futureeverything.org)

#### Creative Hive network - Creative Futures 23.03.16 UCBC Blackburn

No one knows what the future holds, and graduation can be exciting and scary in equal parts. This event has been designed to help you think about the next steps in your creative career.

[blackburnisopen.co.uk](http://blackburnisopen.co.uk)

#### The Caravan Gallery - extra{ordinary} Photographs of Britain 30.01.16 - 31.03.16 Museum of Lancashire

A national touring exhibition of over one hundred colour photographs made over the last fifteen years, that shows the extraordinary in the every day, and is itself an extraordinary record of social change.

[thecaravangallery.photography](http://thecaravangallery.photography)

# Conversations<sup>©</sup> in Creativity

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