



BYKER LOOKBOOK

**INSPIRED BY THE WORK OF FINNISH PHOTOGRAPHER
SIRKKA-LIISA KONTTINEN, WHO DOCUMENTED THE WORLD
OF THE BYKER WALL ESTATE IN THE 1970'S AND AGAIN IN
2009, THE BYKER LOOKBOOK PROJECT HANDED OUR
COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS DISPOSABLE CAMERAS AND,
FOLLOWING A SERIES OF WRITING AND PHOTOGRAPHY
WORKSHOPS, INVITED THEM TO CAPTURE AND DESCRIBE
THEIR WORLD AS ONLY THEY COULD.**













My life feels a little bit like the forest I love to walk through – full of light, dreams, and quiet magic. When I step into nature, everything becomes soft. I hear the water running, I feel the wind move through the trees, and I feel free – the same kind of freedom I feel when I dance.

I am a ballerina, or at least, I am becoming one! My ballet shoes are more than shoes – they are the wings I wear on my feet. When I dance, something happens inside of me. I don't feel shy, I don't feel scared. I feel alive. I feel like I can finally show my true self – the Lorin who is brave, expressive, and full of emotion.

It is the way I speak without words.

Every moment I make says something about me: 'this is who I am, this is my heart.'

I have many goals – to dance, to act, to perform, to shine.

My mom and dad are my biggest supporters. They love me so much – I can feel it in everything they do. When I am with them, I feel warm, protected and safe. We laugh a lot together, even at the smallest things. Sometimes just being with them makes me smile without trying.

One day, I want to dance on big stages, act in movies or theatre, and share my voice with the world. I know it won't be easy, but I believe in myself, and my parents believe in me even more. That gives me strength.

My life is just beginning like a story that hasn't been fully written yet. But every day, every dance step, every laugh with my mom and dad, every moment in nature becomes part of my journey. This is my life.

This is Lorin's life – a life full of movement, dreams, love and light...







CONYERS ROAD. SEPTEMBER 2025.

8 years ago, I moved into Byker with apprehension and anticipation. Now, I feel apprehensive about my exams that start in 7 months.

My exams make up around a third of the chaos in my life. With the other 2 being my family and my future. There are many important decisions to be made, especially when you're on the cusp of turning into an adult who feels uncertain of what to do.

At times like this, it's important to be still.

Like this picture.

Whether your life is as dismal as the grey tones that paint the pavement or filled with the vibrancy that's echoed by the fallen leaves, it's helpful to see life with an outsider's perspective.

Even when the future isn't visible.

The end of the road isn't shown in the picture, and we don't know what will happen in 8 months. At least my exams will be finished by then.

I guess in some ways, the picture acts as a metaphor to describe our lives. The calmness of the photo displays the positive changes that living in Byker has made for me and my family.

So remember to look back on how far you've come. And appreciate the things you have around you.







•~ **MY LOVE FOR BYKER'S NATURE** ~•

My love for nature shall never die,
From trees to grass to flowers to the sky,
I love it all, it brings a smile to my face,
That's why I love to live in Byker full of these natural tastes.

As a community we all work together to keep Byker's nature safe and clean,
Litter-picking the bushes and grass,
Picking up every bit of rubbish we see,
This makes our community, happy, beautiful and full of glee.

In the autumn I use my wheelbarrow to clear up the fiery, autumnal leaves,
Here comes the winter with the cold, snow and frost we receive,
In the wpring, out comes the daffodils, dandelions and tulips that bloom,
With the summer and sunshine now arriving, the winter blue now disappears with the gloom.

So in summary I love to live in Byker,
Surrounded by love of nature and laughter,
Living in a community where we all help each other out,
Byker boosts my mood, brightens my day and is a place I am very proud to call my HOME!





SCHOOL
ZON





THE BYKER SPIRIT

As my cat trots down the stairs, I can't help but glance at the family photos hanging on the wall of the stairs. It was taken in Christmas 2020 at the Byker Pantry, which has been a source of help and guidance over the years.

When she chases her rat toy across the living room, another family picture lays on top of the shelf. This one was taken in the height of Summer 2021, when some kind people were filming a music video for Byker's Best Summer Ever.

As the song rushes back to my mind, happiness settles in with a mix of fond memories. I remember the fun my children and I had when we were making that video.

I let my cat out and she sprints at once!

Past the trampoline that my neighbour helped me build three years ago and below the light that was installed by my neighbour next door. She scurries through the bushes that council workers spent hours trimming down. All to enhance the vibrancy of Byker.

Oreo decides to venture towards my front garden and out onto the grass where the bands played during the lockdown summer a few years back. Seeing my neighbours out with smiling welcoming faces, reminded me to the community that I have grown to cherish and love so much.

The Byker Wall, the community of inclusivity and accessibility. A community to connect, smile and thrive together. The community famous for happy people, when I walk onto Shields Road, Byker, and beam at the joyous faces. It makes my days more lively and positive than the last.

Once Oreo finally comes inside after a long day of exploring, I stay outside with appreciation and gratitude, for being part of this wonderful community, where we are all one big family and for living in a beautiful place where kindness and love thrive in every part of the Byker Wall.





ARMIN
VAN BUUREN
IMAGINE
THE REMIXES









BLACK PATH

This is a photo of the Black Path in Byker - now, where you can walk or cycle to the coast.

Before, it was part of the Riverside branch line, a railway that served the area until the 1970s.

The Riverside branch line was operational from 1879 until it was closed in 1954, providing a railway service to Byker and the surrounding communities.

The Sun Ray clinic in Brinkburn Street, Byker was established in the 1930s by Sir. James Spence to provide treatment for youngsters with rickets and skin conditions.

The clinic operated over 55 years but closed in the 1980s.

The Sun Ray clinic was used to pick up baby milk and orange vitamins and to get babies weighed.

THE SUN RAY CLINIC









THE LIGHT BETWEEN THE TREES

Ronya – her name means light – a name that seems to carry its own destiny. She is a Kurdish woman, an artist and a fighter. Her story begins with clay, colour, and courage.

She graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts so she decided to walk Heaton Park, near Jesmond Dene. Carrying her pink shoes – the ones she had worn through long days of study, work, and hope. It is common tradition among students to throw their shoes into the trees when they finish university, a way to say goodbye to one chapter and welcome a new one!

Ronya loves nature deeply. She often collects natural textures and transforms them into prints, drawings and ceramic surfaces. One of her most meaningful ceramic works is dedicated to Mahsa Amini, the Kurdish woman who lost her life at the hands of the State. Ronya painted a woman's face, her hair flowing freely, decorated with words, 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadi' – 'Women, Life, Freedom.'

Ronya says, 'The system doesn't stand up for women, so we must stand up for each other.' Although Ronya lives alone, without family or close friends, she never lets loneliness defeat her. Her greatest dream is to open her own art studio – a place filled with clay, brushes, and stories. She wants to teach children and women to share art, and to create safely, freely. She believes it is possible, and her belief keeps her strong.

Ronya is known for her kindness and gentleness. When she feels tired or lost, she walks again through Heaton Park and Jesmond Dene. She visits the peacock that lives there. Her family believes that when the peacock opens its wings, it brings good luck and new beginnings. Also, she loves listening to Nina Simone, getting energy, positive somethings! And she reads Rosa Luxemburg's writings and finds inspiration in her fearless activism. One of her favourite books is 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell, which reminds her of the importance of truth, resistance and freedom.

Ronya's life is not easy but it is full of meaning. She is light walking through the forest, through loneliness, through struggle, always shining.

In the new year, she wishes for her dreams to come true: to hold her own exhibition, to open her art studio, and to continue creating art that speaks of women, life and freedom. As her pink shoes swing gently from the tree branches, Ronya smiles. They remind her that every ending is also a beginning and that light, no matter how small, always finds its way through the leaves. Ronya was happy to throw her shoes on the trees because it is happiness.

Ronya









~• BYKER, SHIELDS ROAD •~

The busy, bustling streets of Byker,
Full of love and laughter,
Different shops selling all types of different
things you can imagine,
From food to tools to shoes to fashion,
Byker has everything to meet different
passions.



Buses and the local metro, here it all roams,
Safely leading the Byker residents back to
their homes,
Easy, accessible and cheap transport for all,
Making Byker the perfect place to call home.





THE OLD LIBRARY

The old Byker library on Brinkburn Street in Newcastle upon Tyne has a rich history, closely tied to the community development in Byker.

Originally constructed as part of Newcastle Public Library, it served as a critical and educational hub for the neighbourhood.

The original library building dates back to a period when Newcastle expanded rapidly in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, establishing Public Libraries and other civic amenities to serve the growing urban populations.

Myself and my children always went to the library and Raby Street School always went there back in the day.





This is a photo of my back garden my son Gary done for me.

It's my half-hour-corner where I can chill and have a cuppa on a sunny day, where the chairs are and plants.

He just used old scraps of wood. He done a fab job. There are lights so if I want to go and chill out on a night time I can do.

BACK GARDEN







I remember the first day Oreo came,
Sweet and gentle on her arrival,
All tightly curled up and nestled warm,
Ready to settle in her new home.

As she begins her adventure around the house,
She desperately wants to explore her surroundings
She runs around like a wild cheetah and is being
mischievous as she knocks down the plant pots.

Having her around has made my days brighter,
With the chaotic energy she brings,
No day is ever the same when she's around,
Whether she's chasing after toys or trailing my steps
from behind to snuggle beside me.

It's crazy how much time has passed,
Now that it's been a whole year
I sit back and look at the memories
The special bond we created together
It will always be cherished in my heart.









You are here



GRAFFITI:
 ZEMYTE (top center)
 AKA (left side)
 BYTER (bottom left)



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NORTH STAR CO-DESIGN was founded in 2022 by theatre maker Louie Ingham and writer Lee Mattinson, who have worked together since 2015 on a series of socially-engaged and place-based projects. We co-create with people in a variety of settings and our process is a person-led approach to making ambitious new ideas happen.

We are powered by a co-led idea and experiment with doing things differently in curious and unmissable new ways. With a combined 40 years working in the cultural sector, we:

- Activate cultural experiences in the most underserved wards
- Co-create with community collaborators and guest specialists
- Make ambitious, daring and bold new work

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BYKER LOOKBOOK

