

I had never been to Birmingham before and knew very little about it, the extent of my Birmingham knowledge existed only in the smoky episodes of *Peaky Blinders* and stories of Eastside Projects from friends.

My first thought when entering the city was surprise at the sheer size of the station, I was expecting a Sheffieldesque city vibe, but I was hit by busy Birmingham. In the station I spotted barriers emblazoned in rainbow colours, for a second I considered if this was a subtle hint at supporting queerness or perhaps it's just a rainbow?

After finding our exit from the station we were greeted by pleasant warmth, it was indeed a nice day for a city visit. I hoped to use this day to test the possibilities of the camera on my new phone, for before my phone was rather poor quality. As I walked the streets of Birmingham phone in hand, snapping photos as if I was a tourist in some quaint European city I was struck by the city's busyness, everyone seemed determined to get from A to B and this was a task to be done with some speed. Perhaps because I haven't walked these roads the busyness seemed foreign, am I slow? Are Sheffielders slow? Or is this simply how Birmingham functions.

The art is always around us, but we were here to view the art in the art spaces, but before we do, a little exploring was in order. Perhaps my favourite shop we visited during our visit was a "zero waste supermarket" and although I had heard of such things before I was yet to visit one until now. It was an interesting shop and of course I agree with its message, however I am unsure of the practicality of it all. Although I do feel practicality has become more of a secondary thought with these things. More importantly though I bought a delightful vegan cream egg, there was the lovely moment as the cashier gently placed the egg in the palm of my hand. Apart from vegan cream eggs, I did take many photos of a shop called: "fancy fabrics" precisely because I enjoyed its name.

Now we are about to enter the space I have heard stories about, the space where the art happens, but before we do we spend a minute or so gazing at the permanent work on the side of the gallery by Hardeep Pandhal. The work features a genie with the words: "Become or Becoming" in a speech bubble emerging from the genies mouth. The quote had a slight nostalgic feel to it - it reminded me of something I would write within my own practice during my art school years. We walk up to the door but before we enter we admire the door handle, it's made of various pieces of wood and is rather pleasing to look at, it's also familiar to me, this artist has spoken in a previous lecture series at my university. We open the door and enter the space...

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