

What does DIY mean?: collectively written by the members of wharf chambers

Wharf Chambers describes itself as a DIY space. Occasionally we are asked what that means. We used to direct people to a definition of DIY written by the leeds collective cops n robbers.

In the 7 years we have been open we have gained so many members from so many different walks of life so we thought we might end up with a more suitable definition if we asked our members to help us. We got a lot of passionate replies and while everyone has a different way of saying it there were some definite recurring themes :)

I started this thinking I was working towards a new set of bullet points or few paragraphs that would serve as the next wharf chambers 'this is DIY' but ive concluded that DIY can mean slightly different things to different people but there is also a lot of common aims and goals of people that identify with DIY, so maybe it doesn't lend itself to a rigid definition or a set of rules

Thanks to everyone that contributed so far. We aim to keep asking our members this question every year via the members surveys and will keep updating this definition to hopefully reflect how our current active membership feels. If at any point you think this current 'definition' is lacking something and want to add to it please email me danny@wharfchambers.org

Self organisation

"It means events that would otherwise not exist not only exist, but are in the hands of those who need and want them"

"DIY means people putting on shows themselves"

"Having direct, collective democratic control that you're able to exercise over the activities, spaces and resources that are in your life."

Community focus/by the people for the people/self organised/accessible

"It means to me that people who are passionate about something, are able to showcase it without bigger obstacles like not enough funds or not having professional experience etc thanks to local community and support."

“People with potentially little resources, coming together to put on events for like-minded people for enjoyment/benefit of society and local community.”

“Enabling groups or individuals from marginalised communities or who lack access to funding to stage events and organise in the venue”

Non-prioritisation of profitmaking

“un signed and independent, non mainstream/commercial artists with the emphasis of performance rather than profit.”

“Putting events on for the sake of enjoying (and having others enjoy) the event, rather than simply putting it on to try and make money.”

Uniqueness: something outside of the mainstream

“Essentially a community that fosters people to try out/experiment or perform; an important space to develop new creativity in music film and other art forms.”

“It's very important. Increasingly it's the only source of truly interesting music. WC is a vital part of a very vibrant and exciting scene in Leeds.”

“putting on events that would find it difficult to be accepted elsewhere whether due to financial or content barriers”

Space for Experimentation/freedom to explore/opportunity to develop

“It means that you give people the chance to thrive and achieve things and give people the opportunity to develop both as musicians, artists & promoters”

“that we give space for experimentation and take responsibility for all our own actions and a recognition that creating these spaces isn't always perfect and we should give each other leave to be”