# Pink marble butterflies vandalised days before Bradford City of Culture launch



A beautiful outdoor art installation in Brontë country has met a devastating fate, destroyed mere days before it was set to welcome visitors. Two intricately carved pink marble butterflies, part of the Wild Uplands arts trail in Penistone Hill Country Park, near Haworth, West Yorkshire, were vandalised in an act that police are now investigating. Witnesses reported seeing a group of youths on motorbikes leaving the scene shortly after the destruction occurred, which has prompted authorities to call for any information related to the incident.

The butterflies were among 75 sculptures commissioned as a centrepiece of Bradford's UK City of Culture 2025 celebrations. Creative director Shanaz Gulzar expressed her dismay at the loss, calling it "sad and disappointing." However, she reaffirmed that the trail would still be inaugurated as planned on May 24. The sculptures, once reflecting themes of resilience and migration—crucial aspects of Bradford’s cultural heritage—have already undergone careful restoration to restore their original beauty.

This art installation was not a mere decoration but a significant part of a broader narrative that intertwines Dubai-born artist Meherunnisa Asad’s work with Bradford’s history. Asad collaborated with Studio Lél, a collective known for reviving traditional stone-carving techniques. Each butterfly was sculpted from pink marble sourced from Pakistan, symbolising the connections between global migration and local history. This intricate artistry was designed to draw eyes to the area’s rich landscape and heritage.

The Wild Uplands arts trail represents more than just visual interest; it serves as a conduit for celebrating Bradford's selection as the UK City of Culture 2025, a accolade that promises to transform the region. The award is expected to bring thousands of visitors and significant investment, contributing to economic growth, with projections estimating up to 6,500 new jobs and an influx of £140 million in visitor spending over the year.

Despite concerns raised about the potential for vandalism in the remote location during the planning phase, Bradford Council decided to proceed with the cultural programme, arguing that it was essential for enhancing the city’s cultural landscape. This year is pivotal for Bradford, as it positions itself on a larger cultural stage, including hosting more than 1,000 diverse events from light shows to music festivals, thereby hoping to shift public perceptions of the city, which has a longstanding reputation for its radical cultural contributions, exemplified by the legacy of the Brontë sisters.

The community has rallied in response to this vandalism, with increased security measures being implemented around the site to deter further incidents. In light of such acts, the resilience and creativity of both the artists and the community have been called into action, aiming to ensure that the Wild Uplands trail continues to fulfil its mission: to celebrate and uplift Bradford's diverse cultural heritage, even in the face of adversity.

As the people of Bradford prepare for a year of celebration and reflection, all eyes will be on the trail and broader initiatives to see how they embody the spirit of the city—highlighting its unique history while looking forward to its future.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: Sources (1)
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14710561/Bronte-country-art-installation-smashed-hunt-motorbike-gang.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2022/may/31/bradford-named-as-the-uk-city-of-culture-2025> - Bradford has been named the UK City of Culture 2025, a prestigious accolade that attracts thousands of tourists and guarantees millions of pounds of funding and investment. The city was selected after months of competition, beating Southampton, Wrexham, and County Durham. The judges were impressed by Bradford's ambition, diversity, and strong local engagement with artists and residents. The city's cultural assets include the Brontë Parsonage, Saltaire UNESCO World Heritage site, and the National Science and Media Museum. The win is expected to bring significant opportunities, including employment, inward investment, and economic growth.
3. <https://www.itv.com/news/calendar/2024-12-31/bradford-becomes-uk-city-of-culture> - Bradford has officially become the UK's City of Culture for 2025. Over the next 12 months, the West Yorkshire city will host more than 1,000 events, including light shows, dance performances, music festivals, and film screenings. The celebrations will start with an outdoor show called Rise, created by theatre director Kirsty Housley in collaboration with Bradford-born magician Steven Frayne, formerly known as Dynamo. The government estimates that the city will benefit from 6,500 new jobs, with an extra 3.3 million visitors spending nearly £140 million over the course of the year.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/14/bradford-radical-culture-city-of-culture-bronte> - Bradford's selection as the UK City of Culture 2025 is seen as an opportunity to shift perceptions of the city. Known for its radical culture, Bradford has a rich history of cultural contributions, including the Brontë sisters. The city's cultural institutions, such as the Peace Museum and Cartwright Hall, reflect its diverse heritage. The year-long programme aims to celebrate Bradford's culture, people, and heritage, with events like the opening show 'Rise' and the hosting of the Turner Prize at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/10/bradford-shift-perceptions-as-city-of-culture-opening-rise> - Bradford's selection as the UK City of Culture 2025 is seen as an opportunity to shift perceptions of the city. Known for its radical culture, Bradford has a rich history of cultural contributions, including the Brontë sisters. The city's cultural institutions, such as the Peace Museum and Cartwright Hall, reflect its diverse heritage. The year-long programme aims to celebrate Bradford's culture, people, and heritage, with events like the opening show 'Rise' and the hosting of the Turner Prize at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/10/bradford-city-of-culture-five-events-to-look-out-for-in-2025> - Bradford's year as the UK City of Culture 2025 will feature a variety of events, including the opening show 'Rise' by magician Steven Frayne (Dynamo), a live score of the film 'La Haine' by the Asian Dub Foundation, and the hosting of the Turner Prize at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery. Other events include the 'Bassline Symphony' concert and the 'Bradford Progress' musical journey across the district. These events aim to showcase Bradford's diverse cultural heritage and contemporary artistic talent.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2022/jun/02/ten-reasons-why-bradford-deserves-to-be-2025s-city-of-culture> - Bradford's bid for the UK City of Culture 2025 highlights its rich cultural heritage, including the Brontë Parsonage and Saltaire UNESCO World Heritage site. The city is known for its radical culture, with institutions like the Peace Museum and Cartwright Hall Art Gallery. Bradford's diverse population and vibrant arts scene contribute to its unique cultural identity, making it a deserving candidate for the title.