

## Black Country Voyages Summer 2015

- Converted narrow boat tours the Black Country canals
- Project links young people with Black Country arts, heritage and cultural organisations
- Lead artist Jacques Nimki presents *The Black Apotheca*
- Summer events include BCNS summer boat gathering, International Festival of Glass, Stourbridge, and community festivals



*Black Country Voyages* at Brownhills Festival 2014

Ikon's *Black Country Voyages* (2014–2017) is an art programme taking place on board a converted canal boat, generously lent by Sandwell Council. The Ikon Youth Programme (IYP) crew the boat, travelling around the Black Country meeting local people and organising events.

Ikon is delighted to announce London-based artist Jacques Nimki will lead the programme for 2015. Nimki will transform the boat into *The Black Apotheca* – a floating

laboratory of herbal concoctions derived from local plants, fermenting slowly over time, housed in glass, reflecting light and colour. It showcases drawings, recipes and objects, all relating to the business of apothecaries, plus a collection of lozenges, cordials, country wines, sorbets and teas available for consumption at selected events.

During the summer Nimki and IYP host workshops along the canal network for visitors to interact with *Black Country Voyages*. These events include the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society summer boat gathering in Oldbury, the International Festival of Glass in Stourbridge, and community festivals across the Black Country.

For three years *Black Country Voyages* is navigating the Black Country's industrial canal routes, visiting multiple locations including Oldbury, Stourbridge, Walsall, Brownhills, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Wednesbury. The programme includes a series of events and exhibitions inspired by nature and the heritage of the Black Country, organised in collaboration with local arts, heritage and educational organisations.

*Black Country Voyages* is organised in partnership with the Canal & River Trust and is supported by Arts Council Strategic Touring, Canal & River Trust and Sandwell Council. For more information visit [www.blackcountryvoyages.org](http://www.blackcountryvoyages.org) or call Ikon on 0121 248 0708.

Facebook: [blackcountryvoyages](https://www.facebook.com/blackcountryvoyages)

Twitter: [@bcvoyages](https://twitter.com/bcvoyages) [#blackcountryvoyages](https://twitter.com/blackcountryvoyages)

#### Notes to Editors:

##### 1. Birmingham Canal Navigations Society

###### Summer Boat Gathering

**Saturday 16 May, 12–4pm – FREE**

Titford Pump House, Engine Street off Tat Bank Road, Oldbury B69 4NL

The annual BCNS rally takes place at the historic Titford Pump House with stalls, refreshments and boat trips. Join *Black Country Voyages* for creative activities and to celebrate the launch of Jacques Nimki as lead artist for 2015. No need to book, just drop in.

##### 2. International Festival of Glass

**Tuesday 26 and Wednesday 27 May, 10am–5pm – FREE**

Red House Glass Cone, High Street, Stourbridge DY8 4AZ

*Black Country Voyages* joins the International Glass Festival, with Jacques Nimki and members of the IYP leading practical workshops. These sessions are suitable for ages 6 and over. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Places are free but booking is essential. For more information please contact Julie Edmonds on 01384 815571 or The Red House Glass Cone on 01384 811280.

##### 3. Longwood Boat Club Canal Festival

**Saturday 13 June, 11am–5pm – FREE**

Rushall Top Lock, Aldridge Road, Walsall WS4 2JS

Visit *Black Country Voyages* at the Longwood Boat Club for stalls, refreshments and entertainment

##### 4. Brownhills Community Festival

**Sunday 28 June, 10am–4pm – FREE**

Canalside, Silver Street, Brownhills WS8 6DZ

Join *Black Country Voyages* at the Brownhills Canal Festival and enjoy music, crafts and stalls.

### **5. Kings Norton Junction Festival**

**Friday 10 and Saturday 11 July, 10am–4pm – FREE**

Kings Norton playing fields and village green, Pershore Road South, Kings Norton B30 3EJ  
*Black Country Voyages* tours to Birmingham for a one-off event in Kings Norton with boat rides, local walks, food and refreshments. Organised by the Worcester–Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society.

**6. Ikon** is an internationally acclaimed art gallery situated in central Birmingham. Housed in a magnificent neo-gothic school building, it is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world. A variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom.

**7. Ikon Youth Programme (IYP)** is a group of young people, aged 16–21 years old, who share an interest in visual art. Meeting regularly at Ikon, participants are encouraged to devise creative projects, establish links with other youth groups and share their opinions about a range of topics. [www.ikon-gallery.org/iyp](http://www.ikon-gallery.org/iyp)

**8. Jacques Nimki's** practice involves the use of wild plants to communicate ideas about environmental and cultural issues. He adapts archaic processes more commonly associated with the Victorian era of exploration and collection, documenting and analysing urban plant life (or 'weeds') like a botanist, but in a deliberately unscientific way. [www.jacquesnimki.com](http://www.jacquesnimki.com)

**9.** Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free.

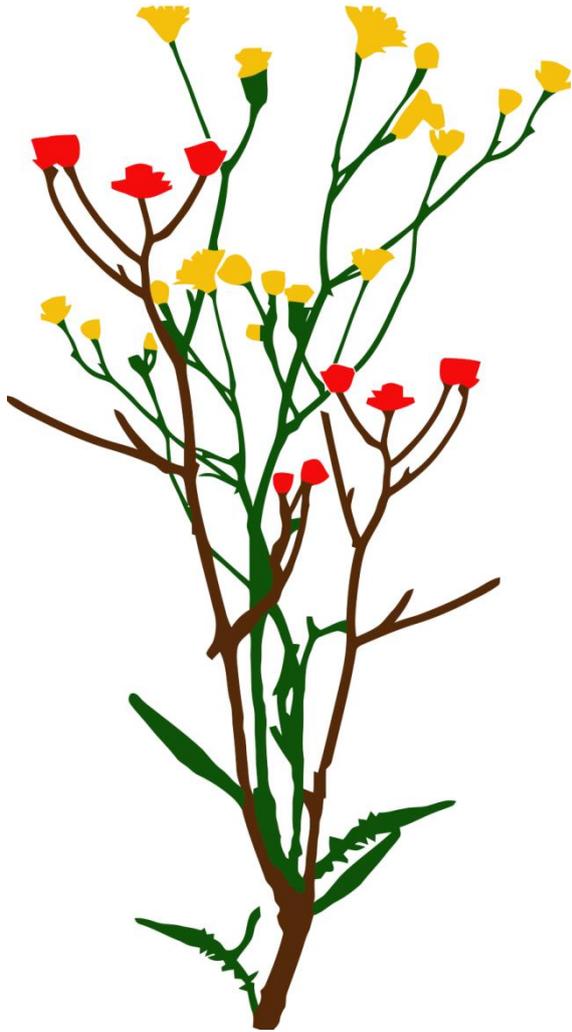
**10.** For the latest news and events follow @ikongallery on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

**11.** Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council.

**12.** For more information, high-res images and to request an interview with the artist please contact Rebecca Small or Emily Luxford at Ikon on 0121 248 0708 or email [r.small@ikon-gallery.org](mailto:r.small@ikon-gallery.org) or [e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org](mailto:e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org)

**Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS**  
**0121 248 0708 / [www.ikon-gallery.org](http://www.ikon-gallery.org)**  
**Open Tuesday-Sunday, 11am-5pm / free entry**  
**Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon. Registered charity no. 528892**

SELECTION OF IMAGES OVERLEAF



Jacques Nimki *Florilegium*, October 2014  
Acrylic on laminated paper  
Courtesy the artist



*Black Country Voyages*, 2014



Members of Ikon Youth Programme on a visit to Arnolfini, Bristol, 2015