Interview with Jaheed Hussain, Founder of Fuse

Jaheed Hussain is a graphic designer and founder of Fuse, a Manchester-based creative platform that aims to elevate the work and voices of creatives of colour—dedicated to making change within the design industry. Since its Manchester inception in 2019, Fuse has hosted events, featured and supported numerous creatives and opened further chapters around the UK and the world—from Birmingham to Barcelona and Cambridge to Chicago. After Fuse featured some of our fantastic Shillington Manchester graduates, it was obvious that there was a natural partnership between us. So, we're excited to be able to partner up with Jaheed and Fuse to offer our Shillumni the chance to join one of the Fuse chapter's creative directories as soon as they graduate. This will offer them a place to showcase themselves and their work—all part of our promise to offer our graduates the best possible chance of employment.

We caught up with Jaheed before announcing our partnership to chat about Fuse's foundation, first few years and future. Read on to find out more.

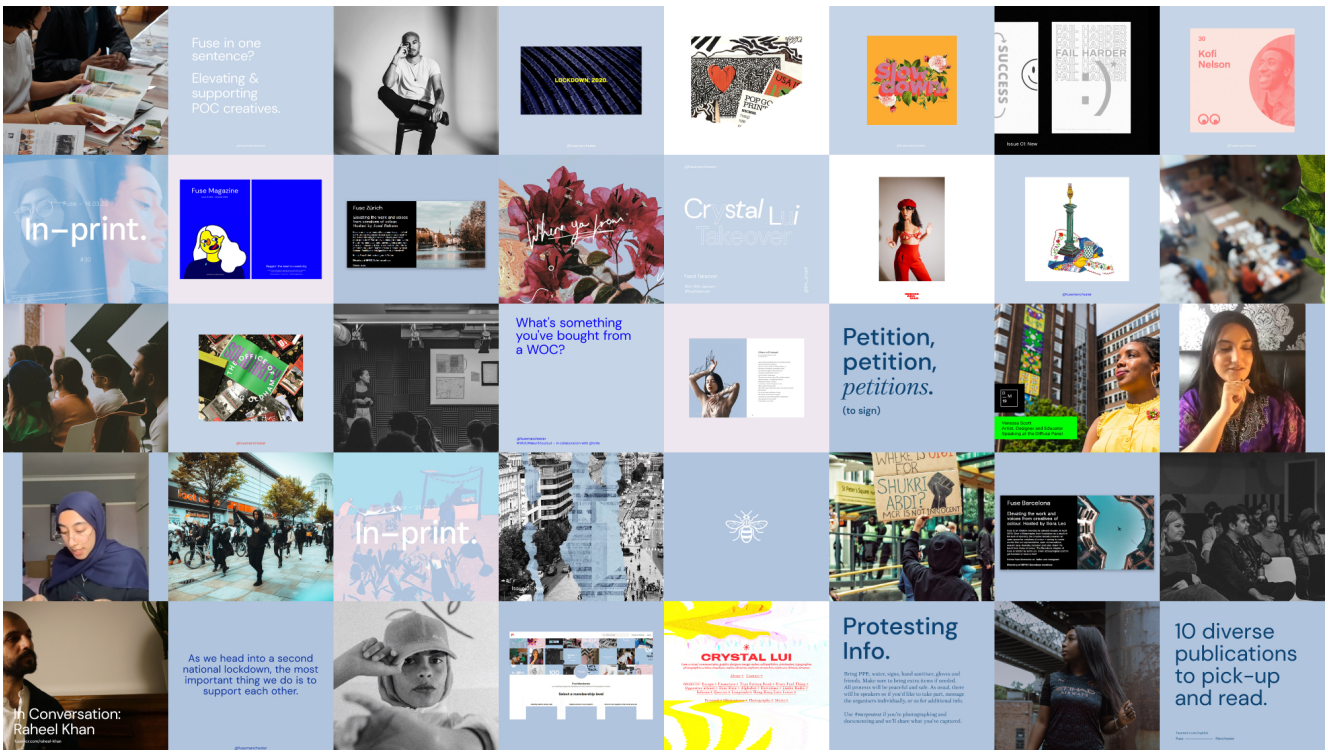
Tell us all about Fuse. How did it come about? Why did you start it? And, what are your aims with the organisation?

Fuse is a creative platform elevating and supporting creatives of colour within Greater Manchester and beyond. At the moment, we've got chapters in cities like Barcelona, Leeds, Birmingham, hosted by the extended Fuse team, all working to create inclusive and representative communities. Since then, it's evolved and grown. Due to the issues we all confronted in 2020, our networks have grown and have since been featured on the likes of Creative Review and Creative Boom.

It began as my final-year student project, which continued after graduation with the aim of creating some change in Manchester's creative scene at the time, which felt heavily whitewashed from the events, exhibitions and talks that rarely featured people of colour. We value all types of diversity in the creative scene, wherever it may be, and we're always striving to create change when we can.

You've been running Fuse for two years now. Can you give us a brief rundown of what's happened in those two years? How have Shillington graduates been getting involved?

Fuse has hosted three events in Manchester, in the previous event Shillington graduate Louise Ruiz and now teacher at Shillington Manchester Lovish Saini featured as guest speakers talking about their journeys, facing rejections and their own sense of identity within our community. Fuse also has a features feed, hosting blog and interview posts, a jobs and opportunities page and directories of creatives from all of our chapters—along with general social media content. Just recently, Shillington grad Hajra Mubashar helped us in writing a feature about her project Shades.



Why do you think organisations like Fuse are important in the design industry?

> *I think it's important because it shows emerging creatives—regardless of where they come from—that there are people out there who look like you, that are doing great things.*

It's important for that to be authentic and to fight against the typical confidence issues that overwhelm creatives of colour. It's a safe space that tries to emphasise the importance of topics like BLM, diversity, representation and there aren't many who do that within the industry.

Who can get involved with their local Fuse chapter—what do they stand to gain? And, if they don't have a local chapter, what can they do?

Anyone who identifies as a creative within their professions, and also identifies as being from any racialised/minority background!

> *They can build their own communities and help spend their time giving back to others, with the creative freedom to create within the Fuse brand.*

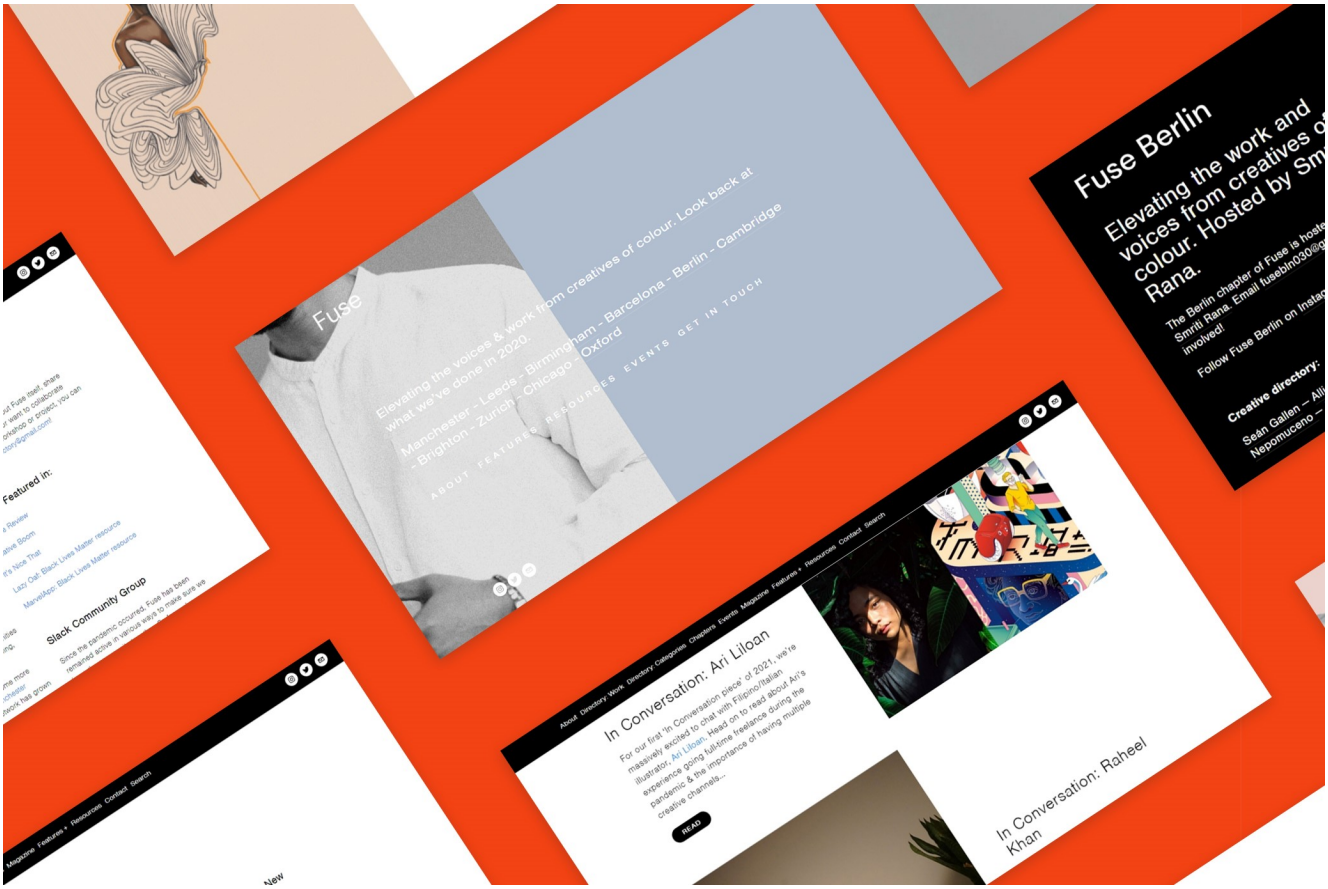
It's a big ask to do, for sure, but it will ultimately elevate your own practice.

We'd love to see more of our Shillumni get involved with Fuse. How can they go about doing this?

Email or DM any of our chapters, or the main Fuse contact email.

> *Get in touch with your local chapter to see if you can join the team, get your work featured or get in touch with Fuse to submit any writing or showcase your portfolios.*

All the info can be found on our website—along with our chapters and their respective emails/socials.



Tell us about your own design background! You're working for Margie Studio, can you tell us about the studio? What kind of things have you been working on?

Yeah! I'm a Manchester-based graphic designer and copywriter. I'm a huge fan of typography and love working with words. I'm currently working for Margie Studio, who are a multi-disciplinary, independently-owned art & design studio based in London & Stockholm. It's a small team with just three of us spread out and working remotely. We work with brands like Spotify, Google, Sidewalk Labs, Pentagram and more. At the moment, I've been working on a branding project that revolves around the community we're working for. Can't say too much right now though haha!

Can you tell us about some of the creatives who have been inspiring you? Have you seen any work out there recently that

you've really enjoyed?

Usually it's always the people who I've collaborated with through Fuse! In recent times, the work by Hawwa Alam, Lissi Simpson, Farah Ahmad Khan, Balraj Singh Samrai, Vikaash Sankadecha and Taaryn Brench are just a couple who have all been featured on our Instagram. I just saw Kate Moross' recent collaboration with Adobe Photoshop and loved that too.



What's the future for Fuse? Where would you like to see the organisation you've set up in five years' time?

Hopefully, more of the same! Nothing too long term is in the works at the moment, but hosting more events would be brill. Hopefully, the site becomes a hub of resources and it continues to grow with things that may be missing right now? Information about funding/grants would be cool to have somewhere by then!

Big thanks to Jaheed for talking to us—we can't wait to see what the future holds for Fuse! Make sure you reach out if you

want to get involved or start a new chapter in your own city.

https://www.shillingtoneducation.com/blog/fuse-interview/