

Anchor and Magnet Statement of Intent

Anchor and Magnet is a project based in Brixton Market and the immediate surrounding area. Our name reflects our shared interest in place, identity, migration and community. Brixton is a place with a long-established and still evolving tradition of attracting migrant and peripheral communities of all sorts: it is a magnet. It is also a place where incoming communities and individuals have established an often powerful sense of rootedness and ownership in relationship to their locality and have evolved identities, informed by their new home: it has been an anchor.

We will explore these ideas through a 6 week artists residency based in central Brixton and a market stall based in Brixton Street Market. The residency space will function as an open studio and a space of sharing and exchange. The market stall will act as a space of exchange and a signpost for the project and residency space. We plan to use these spaces of interaction to generate a number of artworks in collaboration with people from the area.

THE SPACE

We want to make a physical project space in the area which can have a presence and we can invite people into, with as much of an open door policy as we can. We want this space to be WARM, WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE, INSPIRING, CREATIVE BUT ALSO CONTAINED AND FOCUSED. We also want to potentially intervene into other public spaces- led by our collaborations and engagements.

We are interested in making a space where tensions and 'the unresolved' can also find expression: a space of "durational risk" - that doesn't pre-inscribe, that can respond to changes IN SITUATION, CONTINUALLY BREAK THINGS OPEN OVER DURATION, RE-RELATING AND SHIFTING POSITIONS.

a space for dialogue, experiment with ways of creating constructive/ active dialogue.

ENGAGEMENT - WHO ITS FOR

We want to work with local people, individuals and local groups, providing an opportunity for active, creative participation by local residents in an artistic response to their own area and to evolving debates about how their area's histories are articulated amidst future developments. However to be clear, we want to work with not for local people. ART AS SOCIAL, NOT SOCIAL WORK. WE WANT TO BE CLEAR WHERE THE WORK IS A SOCIAL AND COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE AND WHERE IT IS MAKING, AND HOW IT CAN CONTAIN BOTH. HOW IT CAN RESPOND TO THE CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY BUT ALSO CONTAIN THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL VOICE OF THE PRACTITIONER.

Therefore Its essential for us to broker relationships, create forums for discussion and expression, and work in partnership with people within the parameters of our project; to have relationships with local councilors, activists, community

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What do we want find out?

Some key things we are interested in are:

THE LARGELY UNHEARD PUBLIC CONVERSATION ABOUT BRIXTON'S EVOLUTION/REGENERATIONS
MIGRANT HISTORIES AND THEIR CONNECTION TO A SPECIFIC PLACE, AND HOW THAT PLACE MIGHT HAVE BECOME 'SALTED EARTH' IE. MEMORY AND EMOTION HAVE GIVEN IT A PARTICULAR AND CONTESTED HISTORY AND IDENTITY.

HOW ORAL HISTORIES AND SOCIAL/CULTURAL FORMS OF MEMORY CAN ESCAPE THE VISUAL, AND HOW WE COULD MAKE THESE PHYSICAL

HOW EXTRACTING AND RE-PRESENTING THESE HISTORIES MIGHT BE PRODUCTIVE IN UNDERSTANDING CURRENT TENSIONS AND CONTRIBUTING TO CURRENT DEBATES ABOUT OWNERSHIP OF SPACE

exploring issues of the local through artistic projects, but also consider other issues such as theoretical issues around the local and things like the localism bill.
To explore what community is

Art and Politics

Art and Social Change

Art and Agency

Art and Empowerment

Participation in the arts, community, locality as a (p)olitical act.

regeneration and people's role in shaping their place, locality, homes, shopping space, public spaces, streets.

Reflection on the historical and how that informs the present and possible futures

the way that environmental and sustainability issues inform our project in relation to the market, future of cities, issues of locality, local products, shopping locally, and what do the issues of environment and sustainability mean to a diverse and often migrant community, in particular to economic migrants.

Exploring the role of the market as a central space within a locality

HOW WE WORK – THE METHODS

We work in a way that is embedded and engaged in locality. We plan to carry out our work through:

Researching and sharing, playing together, contributing and exchanging (collaborating with participants, local people, activist, community leaders etc)

ACTIVE DOCUMENTATION: NOTE-TAKING, PHOTOGRAPHY, FILM, SOUND RECORDINGS, DIAGRAMS AND MAPPING WE WILL COLLECT THIS DATA FOR THE NEWSPAPER, FOR OUR RECORDS AND TO USE AS REFLECTIVE MATERIAL.

WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE - ACROSS AGES, WALKS OF LIFE, DIFFERENT SIDES OF THE EXPERIENCE

WE WANT TO TO LISTEN, LEARN, ABSORB - MORE OF LOCAL PEOPLE, HISTORY, STORIES ETC. TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS (BETTER UNDERSTAND THE ENEMIES!)

WE WANT TO VALUE AND ENCOURAGE HUMOUR AND IRREVERENCE AS WELL AS RIGOUR, SERIOUSNESS, DEPTH. LIKEWISE TENSION / HARMONY

WE WANT THE CONVERSATIONS TO BE A COMBINATION OF THE ORGANIC AND SPONTANEOUS WITH THE GUIDED AND FACILITATED

WE INTEND TO BE AWARE OF OUR PROCESSES AND TO EVALUATE THESE AS WE GO ALONG, LOOKING AT OTHER MODELS OF PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT **and collaboration.**

WE INTEND TO BE AWARE AND UNDERSTAND THE AGENCY OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORK.

We intend To be OPEN, RECEPTIVE & RESPONSIVE:
to the context, the people we work with, the places we work in, the current social and political climate;
to changes in my ideas and perception of what projects should be.
to the ideas of others and the possibility of art to be a possible tool for social change.

We intend to have space within the project to be led by what people want to do/ explore/ highlight rather than dictating to them.

Plurality: having a plural rather than a singular vision

Bottom up (as in listening to and responding to the place and the people) and level playing field working (making people feel that their opinions and input is valued, collaboration, is a tricky thing sometimes as far as getting paid is concerned)

Intergenerational working

Using creativity and dialogue as a means to consider what a sense of place is and to find ways for people to express this through collaborative artistic projects.

OUTCOMES

TO TRANSLATE OUR EXPERIENCE OF SPACE, DIALOGUE, LISTENING, INTO ARTWORKS THAT CONNECT DIRECTLY TO THE MARKET/BRIXTON AND ITS PEOPLE, MYTH, PAST, PRESENT.

WHERE POSSIBLE TO HAVE THIS WORK EXIST WITHIN THAT SPACE (THE MARKET) - NEWSPAPERS READ, DOMINOES PLAYED.. AND BECOME PART OF THE STORY, AND TO ENGAGE NEW AUDIENCES, PROMPT NEW JOURNEYS, ENCOUNTERS, THOUGHTS.

TO MAKE WORK THAT WORKS IN CONTEXT, THAT IS INTERESTING/BEAUTIFUL/ PROVOCATIVE. THAT ASKS QUESTIONS, BUT NOT DIRECTLY. THAT IS RICHLY AMBIGUOUS.

TO HAVE OUR PHYSICAL OUTPUTS BE OF THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE STANDARDS IN DESIGN, CRAFTSMANSHIP ETC AND BEAUTIFUL OBJECTS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT - TO ESCAPE PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT ART AND COMMUNITY AND REGULAR ASSUMPTIONS THAT IT IS SUBSTANDARD

TO EMERGE WITH SOME PHYSICAL RECORDS - ORAL HISTORY TAPES, LIBRARY READING LIST ETC.

To make great products, limited editions keepsakes, desirable things as well as making strong performative process based work with no product so to speak (i.e. the performance dinner, domino tournament, dialogues etc)

LONG-TERM POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

To develop a future, larger-scale community-led public arts programme for Brixton market and environs. THAT WE WORK TOWARDS A LONG TERM AND SUSTAINABLE PROJECT AND POTENTIALLY TO STAY IN THE SPACE

TO BUILD OUR GROUP AS A COLLABORATION AND OUR INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

NETWORKS

To connect with other local organisations

To work with a broad, relevant selection of partner organisations from arts, archiving and academia alongside our local and community partners*. To develop these relationships to feed our future practice and networks.

To produce work in dialogue with national arts practice and have an evolving partnership with Gasworks and others that will facilitate mutually beneficial dialogue about this work and more broadly about participatory work of this kind. To make national / international connections and references where we can and take the CONNECT THE CONVERSATION TO THE UNIVERSAL AS WELL AS THE LOCAL

TO PARTNER WHEN NECESSARY TO EXTEND REACH AND OUR OWN LEARNING (UCL, GASWORKS ETC.)

To have a strong relationship to academia so we can have research interest and input into the project so it can have weight and kudos. I'm also thinking about strong relationships with our local councilors to see if we can influence bills, planning and policy

To have a relationship to other socially engaged- participatory collaborative projects, artists, programmers, producers, regionally and internationally, that explore ideas of community, locality, place, migration etc

Cross art form and interdisciplinary working (this also relates to the above point)

Make the project visible and relevant beyond the locality, relates to our connections with academia, other artists and projects, but I also want to think how particular things that we might explore would be relevant internationally, things we can share, where our model might be relevant to other places, how we as artists doing this project fit in an international creative world

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