

## **Report on Legacy Now event 1 February 2008**

This was the third in a series of events on the need to address Olympic legacy issues now to ensure that creative communities of East London are included rather than priced out by the Games. The aim was to bring together policy makers and creative practitioners engaged in the cultural future of East London to ensure that cultural space is sustained and not lost in regeneration, and that the Olympics are considered an opportunity rather than a threat.

Legacy Now has become a highly regarded forum aimed at generating high quality topical discussion to inform policy and practice. The invited audience included policy makers, East London cultural organisations, local authorities, creative practitioners. SPACE facilities in East London are ideally situated to support Olympic delivery, including training, media resources and creation facilities. We advocate for policy to ensure that we continue to serve East London for and beyond the Olympics and in particular awareness of the impact on studio artists is raised.

Legacy Now 1 in 2005 looked at impact of the Olympics on affordable creative workspace and was supported by Thames Gateway London Partnership; Legacy Now 2 focused on Visioning the Future of the Olympic Broadcast Media Centre, considering a cultural vision for its legacy use and was supported by Hackney Council. Legacy Now 2008 was generously supported by London Borough of Hackney and Arts Council England, London.

Culture moving East was the subject for this year's SPACE annual symposium about the Olympic legacy for culture in East London. We focused on the meeting point between the international world stage and the wealth of local culture which makes East London a vibrant creative centre.

### **Session themes were:**

#### **Cultural legacy and the Olympic Park**

What factors will ensure that a cultural legacy is achieved in the park from 2014?

How can cultural provision be retained and built on in a regenerative legacy in Olympic and Olympic Edge planning? What role can culture and cultural practitioners play in masterplanning the future of this area?

Speakers were John Hopkins and Selina Mason from ODA Design Team, Jean-Francois Prost, Canada Council for the Arts international artist in residence at SPACE, chaired by Hadrian Garrard from the Hackney Olympics office

#### **Raising the game - embracing the dynamic of global meets local.**

This session looked at the creative meeting points between East London culture and the international stage presented by the London Olympics and asked how will the Cultural Olympiad and Olympic park harness and engage with the internationalism of East London, rather than imposing a corporate global culture; or West End moving East?

Speakers were Jude Woodward, Senior Policy Advisor, Mayor's Office, GLA, Keith Khan, Head of Culture at London 2012 and Godfried Donkor, Artist, chaired by Councillor Guy Nicholson, London Borough of Hackney

**New kinds of local** asked how could the Olympic park engender new creative localities? Will the Olympic park, Olympic edge and Thames Gateway regeneration extend London's cultural tourism East; or what will its impact be on London's cultural provision?

How are local people viewed by the Cultural Olympiad, and is their contribution already plotted?

Speakers were Micheal Pyner Chief Executive, Shoreditch Trust and Clive Lyttle, Combined Arts Officer, Arts Council England, London, chaired by Charlie Forman, Hackney Council Olympic Office

The symposium concluded with a panel discussion chaired by Hadrian Garrard. This was followed by drinks and viewing of the exhibition *The Not Quite Yet : On The Margins of Technology* in SPACE's gallery.

Specific observations about this year's event, from which we can improve, are:

Both artists made excellent presentations, which has led to follow-up discussion with the ODA about their further involvement. They were extremely articulate and excellent representatives of their profession.

Our front space is not a purpose built conference venue, rather a multi-purpose studio space. Whilst we regularly use this studio space for AGMs, teaching, training and for artist to artist seminars with no objections, it is not a formal conference venue, which throws some of our visitors as traffic noise on a Friday afternoon caused some disturbance. In future we will move the event back to our rear commissioning studio, which has hosted successful conferences in the past. The logistical problem we have here is that if we take the commissioning studio out of circulation we compromise this income stream (we had a 3 month booking for an Alexander McQueen commission which had to take priority over a one day event).

The event was fully booked but a number of people did not attend and their seats were wasted, which was frustrating as we had turned people away. The date coincided with a major ERDF funding deadline affecting our catchment group. As this is a free event, a standard at SPACE to make it accessible to artists and voluntary groups, people who have not made a financial commitment are more likely to drop out. We will specify in future publicity that there is limited capacity and if you are not able to attend to contact us at least 24 hours in advance so we can pass on the seat. We will also consider charging for admission, while keeping it free for artists.

Fiona Fletcher-Smith, Head of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration, unfortunately pulled out of chairing at the last minute due to a broken wrist. Her replacement chair was less effective, which meant that some of the discussion went off track or was inconclusive, which was frustrating. Two key speakers Judy Kelly and Keith Khan left early much to our surprise, missing the final discussion panel, which was disappointing as there was no space to follow up on their presentations.

The proceedings were documented by a photographer and a sound recording, which has been transcribed and edited, and is available on the SPACE website. We hope to continue to run this annual event with a specific theme each year until 2012 or 2013. We originally planned to make a publication this year, but would rather put the grant into a final publication in 2012 charting how the conversation about the Olympic Legacy actually panned out.