

[ space ]

## Legacy? What Legacy?

**Legacy Now 4: 22nd January 2009 - 2pm - 6pm**

At SPACE, 129-131 Mare Street, E8 3RH

### **Anna Harding:**

It's good to see you all here, thank you for coming to our fourth annual Legacy Now event. We set this programme up in response to winning the Olympic bid and knowing that it had major implications for the creative sector of East London. The Legacy of the Olympics started on the day that London won the Olympic Bid and we have since needed to monitor and contribute to ensure that the games deliver the promises made. We must ensure that the creative sector isn't going to be a victim of its own success, which has happened before in other cases.

This event is our kind of annual barometer to check where things are, and at the moment there is the credit crunch and economic crisis to deal with. We also have the new political scenario, with Boris as the mayor of London, and further afield, Obama has been elected president of the US. The world has changed. The Olympics will proceed, and it will change East London in a dramatic way. Let's make sure we use this opportunity to bring artists and policy makers together to exchange views and inform the decision-making process.

We have a film crew from Future TV, SPACE's young people's training programme which promotes skills in media and broadcasting for potential future work in the media centre. It's great to have you here, I hope it's a useful experience for you.

This (SPACE Triangle) is a working studio building, and we're currently in our commissioning studio. The last artist in here was Mike Nelson who was creating a piece for the Tate. As you walk along there we have studios all along this ground floor corridor; and if you're curious most people will be happy to show you around.

I'm going to hand over to Fiona now. I'd like to thank Hackney Council again for generously supporting this event.

### **Fiona Fletcher Smith:**

Good Afternoon everybody. I love these events, because it gets us boring old suits - there are at least 2 or 3 of us here - together with people from the creative sector in Hackney and the creative industries in Hackney really matter to us. However we have a tough job in working against the operation of the market in a lot of places.

The Olympics is a given, the Olympics are going to happen. Now from Hackney Council's point of view, we are absolutely delighted that the legacy is now starting to be pinned down and secured. One example is the media centre in Hackney Wick. It's going to be built, it's going to be built in Hackney and it's not going to be a tent, it's going to be a real building that's going to have some sort of use afterwards.

However, there's a lot for us to do. What today is about is looking at what kind of legacy the Olympics is going to leave. You have an amazing opportunity this afternoon, through your questions and the sessions we'll have after tea, to feed back what your thoughts are about the legacy. The council is working with the Olympic Development Agency, the London Development Agency, and lots of others, about planning for the legacy and we want to hear from as many people as possible what matters to you, whether it's affordable art space, whether it's the public realm - and what you would like to see the bit of the Olympic park left in Hackney used for afterwards.

We're going to have a very interesting afternoon, kicking off with a talk by a colleague of mine, Anthony Franklin from our regeneration and planning team. He's going to tell us a little bit more about plans for the Olympic fringe. What we're keen not to do not just in Hackney but in all of the Olympic boroughs, is end up with a situation like in Canary Wharf, frankly Canary Wharf could have been beamed down from another planet for all the effect it's had on the surrounding area. There's a cliff edge when you walk away from those very posh offices; nothing has changed around it for the better. Things in fact have changed for the worse for many residents.

We are determined that we keep an eye on the fringe of the Olympic park as well so that we deliver a legacy that isn't just about what's inside the blue fence. Anthony, would you like to kick off with some discussions about planning the fringe areas.

**Anthony Franklin:**

Thank you Fiona. Firstly, I'd just like to reiterate the point that Fiona made about the cliff edge effect of Canary Wharf. Our colleagues in Tower Hamlets will tell you that it has had a very negative impact on a lot of those communities that surround Canary Wharf. So what we have with the Olympics is a fantastic opportunity to regenerate this part of London and provide some great services and infrastructure. In the surrounding boroughs they have been careful not just to have the Olympics by itself as a park over part of East London but to have it integrate into all of the surrounding boroughs properly, so that's why there's a whole range of planning documents being considered, not just from within the Olympic Park but around what we call the Olympic Park fringe.

What you see here on the map is that the Olympic area is shaded in yellow. We know for certain, more or less, what's going to be in that area come 2012 for the games, and what we're now trying to pin down for certain as far as possible on that Olympic site is what will be in legacy. That's why the announcement last night was great news to those of us who were looking at Hackney Wick because previously there was a very real threat that there would be no legacy in terms of media centre and the building was going to be in Stratford City which would probably be used for residential retail, nothing useful or meaningful, certainly not to people in Hackney.

So with Hackney Wick we currently have a draft masterplan, and we will be taking that to our Cabinet in April which will be out for consultation April/May/June so I'd like to hear feedback for that area. We'd love to hear views on affordable artist

space, I know you've (SPACE) got a studio on Eastway and I think you've got one down in Tower Hamlets.

**Interjector:**

Quite a few!

**Anthony:**

Sorry, quite a few. It's the planning policy which will be used to assess developments in that area so we'll be keen to have feedback from there.

**Fiona:**

If I could just add something in terms of the feedback we'll be looking for from the consultation on the masterplan. When something big happens, like the Olympics, it's often the existing uses that go on in that area that gets pushed out. Now, Hackney Wick is an interesting mix of car breakers yards and small live/work units, and from the last time I walked round there, there are quite a few artists in the area. The danger in any planning policy, with any media centre, for example, is that the smaller uses can get pushed out by the market.

What planning is about is land use, it's about setting a framework to say you can use that bit of land for that, that other bit of land for something else. We need to gather evidence about Hackney Wick which is about trying to maintain some of the good stuff there. I'm not saying that car breakers are all bad, we need car breakers I'm sure, but there are lots of uses in Hackney Wick that we want to protect. We need evidence about the need in the area so that we can feed it into the council's policy decisions.

What will also happen, when any big development happens – and bear in mind that we will get out of the recession eventually - developers come in, they want to build, and they have section 106 agreements with the council which are about mitigating the worst impact of their developments.

What the council needs to do - I won't call it a shopping list, because that would probably get me sued by developers - but something similar in terms of what we negotiate. For example if someone wants to come in and build a giant office block somehow we need to make it clear that by doing that they could be pushing out small businesses. To mitigate against that we want you to provide some affordable work space in that area. That's why we would want to work with an organisation like SPACE, and with individual artists, so we can talk about how you protect these rights of land use. We need to hear from you, because we are the bureaucrats and if we're left to our own devices and don't have the feedback and evidence from people who understand the needs of the creative community, goodness knows what we might end up with.

So we have 2 or 3 minutes for questions or comments at this stage. Does anybody want to break the ice?

**Question :**

You mentioned there was a consultation process; what other ways will artists and residents be feeding into that?

**Fiona:**

Certainly this event is one way to feed in. The way we consult in planning terms is sometimes quite set down, and we have to publish a policy that has to be available on the internet, and even in hard copy, things like that. But we would be very interested in working with SPACE and anyone else to find how we can get to the people we want to hear from. As with any council consultation, it's a bit dull to be honest. You don't want to turn up in the middle of January in the freezing cold to some meeting in the middle of Hackney Wick, to sit and listen to some more suits!

So I'm sure in working with Anna we can set up emailing people on the SPACE database, and trying to gather information. Certainly if you have any ideas about events we should run or events we should just turn up at, Anthony particularly would like to hear about it. Any other questions from the audience?

**Question:**

I'm Naomi Dines from the National Federation of Artists Studio Providers. I'm just conscious of the fact that a lot of things that are potentially under threat at the moment are the sort of things that slip into an area despite regeneration. They are things that we value but they have sometimes been programmed in peculiar ways and I'm just wondering how it might be possible to seek to preserve some of that kind of provision; there's a kind of gap there.

**Fiona:**

It is, well, there is always a kind of tension for us when something has developed organically, and, as you say, it's a vacuum really – and what is going to come in that's going to fill it? It's essentially big business. That is precisely what Anthony is going to do through this planning, is work out what are we going to keep.

Are we desperately committed to the car breakers or are we desperately committed to the artists? We need to achieve a balance – and I'm not going to try and predict the outcome of any council decision but I think it's more likely that we're going to keep the vibrancy of the art set to there. However it's very difficult because you're often trying to preserve things that aren't quite right either and there are lots of people occupying buildings in Hackney Wick that, strictly speaking - and with my council hat on - shouldn't really be used for what they're being used for.

I did manage to walk round Hackney Wick and not issue a single fine to anybody or take any graffiti off the wall. Yet there is a tension for any government and we're going to try and do it with this Hackney Wick masterplan. We're trying to link it in with our delivery framework as well, so that we recognise keeping affordable spaces in Hackney Wick matters to the council. But it's not going to be easy, by any shape or form. It's going to be a difficult thing to do. Lady at the front.

**Fiona Fieber:**

I'd just like to suggest that it's not just either artists or business or the garages– it's the kind of symbiosis, and that is the relationship that makes the area so vibrant. The artists aren't there just because they fancied going there, there's something

going on already that people can fit in together. I think that's perhaps worth considering.

**Fiona:**

That mixture of environments is certainly important. We don't want specified areas that are exclusively residential or exclusively business. We also recognise that that mixture ensures a safety as well, as you get somebody using the area around the clock, and things like that.

Now, we're going to have some presentations from three artists. Can I first of all introduce Laura Oldfield Ford, now Laura should be an artist well known around people in the room, as she came here on a bursary to work with SPACE. So, Laura, over to you.

**Laura Oldfield Ford:**

I've come here today to talk about a project I've been working on called London and 2013, which is essentially work I've been doing as I've walked around Hackney Wick, Stratford and the East End.

I've lived in this area for about 14 years, and I've been very concerned about the changes that have been happening. I don't see the changes that have been brought about by the Olympics as in any way progressive, I see the regeneration as basically a corporate land grab, an attempt to privatise public space, and public housing. Privatised a lot of areas, and use public money to do it.

I've been walking around the area making drawings about the things that I've found – (displays drawings). A lot of the areas that I've been looking at seem to have been earmarked for demolition and change. Right across London, not just in the East End, are brutalist estates which have been much maligned. I don't feel though that it's the architecture to blame or the people that live in them but that they're being starved of money and left to rot in a dilapidated condition.

I agree with the comments that were made earlier on Canary Wharf and Docklands, that this masterplan, although it wasn't called that at the time, ended up as a ribbon development around the Thames of expensive homes. The area around the Isle of Dogs was left to fall into a dilapidated condition and people who lived on those estates were expected to get cleaning jobs at best, but that was the most access that they were going to get to the privileges on offer in the actual Canary Wharf complex.

I've been walking around documenting ruins and thinking about these areas as they are now. Dalston is where I live, and this – (shows drawing) is what was the Marshgate Trading estate, that's now been demolished to make way for the Olympics.

It's just interesting this idea of what we should keep and who decides what's good and what's bad. I think a lot of these regeneration schemes are actually attempts to sanitise liminal spaces around the cities which are often put to subversive use, more interesting use. Then there's this colonial idea about taking space that's empty.

Hackney Wick, Stratford, those were not empty spaces – people lived in those spaces, worked there. Many people have been evicted so what was genuinely a vibrant area – these buzzwords that developers like to use ‘vibrant’ or ‘multi-cultural’ all this what was genuinely that – has been attempted to be eradicated and imposed instead a bland yuppie monoculture, which I don’t really want to see there. A lot of these buildings are about the ghosts of people that have been moved out, and this is another drawing of the Marshgate trading estate. These are details of quite a large drawing. It was talking about the disciplinary line taken with a lot of these people; working class people particularly seem to be targeted, and the Olympic values imposed, despite the fact that McDonalds is a major sponsor of the Olympics, and that the whole spectacle is about two weeks of people sitting around watching TV.

This is my zine that I do, Savage Messiah, which attempts to bring together these drawings that I do around London, and often tries to bring in a kind of radical critique and as you’ll see from this cover it’s not exactly subtle. So every zine I do is about a different area of London. Lee Valley here, it’s an area I’ve spent a lot of time walking around chronicling the changes.

These drawings are again, displaced people and, and then the pages of these zines often become flyposters that are pasted around the places that we go on our walks and have been working in as part of the collective as well. Some posters mysteriously went missing from my studio and ended up on the blue fence. Don’t know how that happened. They were quickly moved anyway, I noticed.

I think we’ll just leave it there, thank you very much.

Thank you Laura. Now, John Frankland is going to speak.

**John Frankland:**

I’ve been asked to talk about a project that came to fruition last year in September, ‘Boulder’ (2008). The idea was initially to bring one huge boulder, I didn’t know at the time where it was going to come from, bring it into Hackney.

Initially it was going to be Shoreditch Park, between Hackney and Islington. Then as things progressed, and as the project got bigger and found more money, we got a second site, which is Mabley Green on the edge of the Olympic site. As you can see here, the project consisted of two large boulders from a quarry in Cornwall of about a hundred tonnes each. That’s the kind of size we wanted for two reasons: one was that the whole process would be filmed, and it was a very dramatic, theatrical event, and secondly, because the other part of the project is that they are boulders for climbing.

There’s a little off shoot of climbing which is called Bouldering, so these boulders are actually for that purpose, and they’re a little higher than 4 and a half metres. Both boulders were created from the same blast. They tend to blast small pieces normally so it took a while to find these boulders, it wasn’t easy.

From finding the boulders to this point, it took about 4 or 5 months, coordinating themes. One thing that happened that could be significant for this discussion was that, at the outset I was working with a gallery, based in Hoxton, called the Peer gallery. They raised the funds, it was all privately funded at first, we got money from DeutscheBank to do the initial boulder, then the second one happened and I found that there was more money available. At that point I was basically working within the gallery, with a project manager, another artist.

Things were going quite smoothly until about March when we found out that because both of the sites where the boulder would be situated were owned by Hackney, we actually had to use Hackney's building contractors. At this point costs rocketed and it got difficult. Anyway, things progressed in the end, and we got to the stage of putting the frames on the boulders and to be moved, to be stood. It was a really big operation. To get the boulders installed actually took just four days I think, so it was a lot of preparation for that. Lots of people involved, as I say we made a film, which was shown in the gallery later. Then, when they were installed, there was a Shoreditch Festival, and we'd planned to have the boulders installed to be climbed on – to be in place for climbing conditions.

The festival happened, and then it was completely used by people the whole time. Health and Safety problems were par the course. Now there are no signs there, nothing telling you what it is, which I'm quite happy about. A few weeks later we had a climbing competition. These two guys were really good climbers and the people who won the competitions, unsurprisingly the British Bouldering Champions.

(Shows photos) This is a Richard Serra sculpture, at Liverpool st. I think it is a great piece of work, I mean - I like Serra's work anyway. One of the things I really like about it, it is pretty easy to work out, you can walk inside the piece and it's also used as a urinal. Now it's used as a smoking den as well.

I think that's really interesting, in a perverse kind of way that's really good that it's used, not something that art is always. The other thing is, I've spent quite a bit of time walking around Hackney Wick, and was also quite dismayed when I found out the plans for the areas. Pretty much bulldozing it, flattening it and rebuilding. I think it's a fascinating area, like nowhere else in London. In the name of improvement some things will be lost and never recovered. It's just an incredible place, there's a buzz to the place. Again it's a strange kind of beauty, although it can't really be described as a beautiful place. I think it's fantastic.

I share the concerns that some people have already said, and I think there's a real chance that we just lose too much in the name of regeneration. Lose something that works. I've been living and working in Hackney for 25 years. And actually these places that artists might be working in, old sweatshops, warehouses, garages and that sort of thing, they really form part of the work. The idea that you can impose strategy that will promote the creative industries is just really unworkable. I trawled through the website and I didn't actually find anything about the creative industries but some of the statements about the intentions about physical activity are just so lovely and unattainable, exercise targets and so on. I don't know, I'm sceptical, but all the best anyway.

**Fiona:**

We're going to hand over now to Optimistic Productions.

**Hilary Powell:**

I'm part of Optimistic Productions. We're a Hackney based film company with an interdisciplinary practice, as our work crosses over different areas but mainly it's film. Most of our work is concerning the smaller stories at ground level of the Olympic story. Our own story based in Hackney Wick, well, just up the road in Homerton. Living right on the edge of where the blue fence is.

Hackney Wick was our adventure playground, wandering around and taking photos like lots of people have been doing. We were keen to do some work that would capture the changes going on. Inspired by the 1948 games, and that make do and mend ethos; quite separated from what's happening now with all the corporate bulldozing. We wanted to have our own Olympic games, so we made a film in 2007. We staged the full Olympics within the Olympic park, called 'the games' from start to finish - from discus on scrapheaps to working with communities, we were very active on that front and tried to help people to withstand eviction, unsuccessfully in the end.

Our sporting activities illuminate that this area isn't empty. There's this rhetoric of dirt, like Boris Johnson and these other commentators saying 'it's empty, it's dirty, there's nothing there' when obviously there's quite a rich and diverse environment. Marshgate lane was one of the more pertinent evictions seeing as these professional athletes are being trained and they will be used in all of these grand centres yet they've lost their training spaces. Yet there were still all of these more informal places, ad-hoc churches popping up here and there. The film wanted to show that at that point it was really on the brink. It shows a slightly surreal Olympic games, just using these spaces.

What we're now doing on Hackney Marshes, using things like the pylons which are now like in memory, just recently these power lines have gone underground. Just recently a picture of these pylons has been taken by the Museum of London's archaeology department for their archive. They are industrial icons on the landscape, which is kind of funny but it still forms our history. You can see the new apartment blocks here behind rising up, where Amy Winehouse apparently came to hide from the cameras. Most of the flats are empty, waiting for higher rents when the Olympics come.

Once the fences were there up in July, we were keen to carry on our work looking at the changes in the area. We wanted to continue our work there, charting the delineation of the space. This new project, for Pudding Mill River: Purveyors of Sporting Spirits and Foodstuffs shows that around the area, around the greenway is abundant food for foraging in the hedgerows. Sloe Gin will be the ultimate Olympic Spirit! It also plays on the radioactive claims about the area. A lot of the spaces, the different demographics, for lots of people it's not an area that's very inviting to go and walk around. There's the idea that it's a vintage of a time that's passing through.

As we've been so engaged with this area we've just come across so many other people working on the same thing. SPACE initially had the Olympic Artist Forum taken on to carry on these kind of the debate because of the displacement of practitioners working in the area, but had to rename it because of branding reasons – the word Olympic.

**Dan Edelstyn:**

Just in terms of that, we're not really dealing with the cultural legacy of the future but the legacy of the present. We were looking for things less grandiose and utopian, things that we can do now or which other people are doing now. It's rooted in working in the moment rather than the dream of the future.

It's also placing significance on what is there now in that area, and attributing value to an area that we've always loved. It's slightly antagonistic that this area is going to be bulldozed and then improved.

**Hilary:**

We're working at a grass roots level, like at the recent SPACE Hackney Wick festival, which was great and a good chance to connect to those communities. Then there is the other Hackney Wick festival.

**Dan:**

Both come from different communities really, there are two different festivals. Hilary: We worked on the Wick Curiosity Shop, working with people collecting stories and things like that, chatting to elderly people. That's now continuing online. Dan: It's going on today in Hackney Wick too. Here's our calendar, a limited edition artist's edition of only thirty. The last page is most relevant to legacy, looking at planning ahead. You see it's built around the Mayan calendar which ends in 2012, sort of a Alice in Wonderland idea that by the time you get there is it going to be what it's built up to be. We're hoping for the best and planning for the worst.

**Fiona:**

That told me! Fascinating stuff and I think it shows the difficulty we have with our job. David Powell, from David Powell Associates is going to speak next. We're hoping for our next session to be quite gritty and to get lots of thoughts from you. David's going to tell us a little more about the impact of the Olympics on studios.

**David Powell:**

Thanks. My images have no pretty pictures, no food, and no promise of food. Instead, a promise of rapture. Because what happens at the end of the world, the modern Mayan prophecy which sees the end of the world happening at any moment? We've just passed a president of the United States, who thought a rapture was imminent, and was walking around the world thinking that it could happen at any moment. All that's left of the saved is the smoking shoes and the sense that they were in heaven.

One of the conundrums that you talked about was what is it that we do with these places which are very wrecked, very polluted and how they are no longer what they used to be. Is the best place in London some layby off the A13 where you can get really awful food? Do we preserve them in aspic?

We have a big challenge here, there's no easy answer. There's a conflict between the masterplanners, who will present, because that's what they're asked to do – a smooth, slick view of the future which gets over all of these intermediate steps. And then we have the reality of Hackney Wick and how it really stands.

It's not a million miles away from the piece of work that we've been doing for the National Federation of Artists Studio Providers, which is the national network supporting the more formalised artists studio organizations and provides them with technical and practical support. It also gives some sense of collegiality and collaborative effort. Within that movement, all that I'd say as a bit part observer is that it's not homogenous. Artists and artists studios have very different views about their studio needs.

This was clearly underlined in this piece of work that was commissioned at the beginning of the year. All of the research and thinking was done by July. The issues that are confronting us financially, well, we're in a place that none of us really imagined we would be in 6 months or even 12 months ago. Even now, some of the stuff that we have planned for NFASP and Arts Council feels really dated. It's become much more difficult to talk about an energetic East London regeneration sector. There are more difficulties there, but also more possibilities.

We looked into what seemed to be the most major impact of the Olympics on artist studios in the five boroughs. What might be learned from that and what practical steps might be taken from that. Local Authorities, the Olympic Team, Team Olympic London, have all built on some really solid research which I did 3 or 4 years ago looking at the national picture.

For these purposes we're talking about, we counted buildings in which more than half of the occupants are visual artists. It raises questions regarding the wider workspace economy, which we'll come back to. At some point it's difficult for the Local Authority to differentiate between new media and theatre. So we need to think of arguments that work in the round and also apply specifically.

Just to summarize, the bigger picture. Broadly, two thirds of the UK's artists live and work in London, and two thirds of their studios are in these five boroughs, two thirds, 80% of those are in Tower Hamlets or Hackney. So it's very concentrated, even seen from a national perspective. But it's under recognised and undervalued. We're still finding people who don't quite understand the importance of that critical massing.

There are just under a thousand studios in these areas. We identified something like 25 to 30 artists studio providers in the five boroughs, all very different organizations. Something like 950 and 1000 studio spaces are under all of their reach. Bearing in mind that some artists share with others, there would likely be more artists than that. Even to say in round terms, there are something like 1000 plus artists under their rooves, and something like 3000 more artists on their waiting lists. This is a significant body of employment contribution, invigoration, and inspiration. It's a pretty substantial part of London's reputation as a funky place – it's actually critical to the city being what it is.

The reputation of Hackney would be much impoverished without the acknowledgement that it currently has worldwide as a brilliant place for art and artists. What's behind these statistics too is a huge deal of informal activity that is uncountable. People finding light industrial buildings that are affordable, accessible, cheap; that's going to continue to grow and it says something about the history of this that we're 40 or 50 years into artist's studio activity. The big model thus far is that regeneration cleans up those types of areas and puts them to different uses.

We are starting to find more organizations and buildings this time around than three years back when Jonathan Harvey and colleagues did his research. The total square footage is down by approximately 15 or 20 %. Very many of the new projects which are coming on are cleverly put together by Housing Associations, tending to be smaller and secure. They are all longer and more complicated to put together.

One of the implications of the Olympic zone being cleaned up completely within the blue fence is that there are a huge number of buildings that have just gone. Nobody's building consciously for people like you in 40 years time, apart from one or two exceptions. There weren't many artists studios within the blue ring. But there were quite a lot of fabricators, printers, and paper suppliers amongst the people who were pushed out further East. There's a really integral part of the economy which has kept the area going so far which has been dispersed, and this has had a real effect on the great number of artist studio providers who have buildings in this area.

It's not broadly a terribly pretty picture. The informal arrangements may actually be encouraged in some ways by the kind of whooshing around with property now being empty for a few years. The other thing we define and you all know well, is that there are many artist studios, informal spaces within commercial use buildings, although they aren't necessarily configured for the type of work that artists want to do. There are all sorts of people who are currently not happy with the choices they have, too expensive and not exactly what they need.

So, as I said; broadly there are 1000 studio spaces. The waiting list as far as we can see has been pretty solid for a long period of time. In 10, 15 years there have been the same people on the lists. There is constant demand. Well organized studio providers run buildings which are full, where there's hardly ever a vacancy, look after themselves, make immediate significant contributions in terms of local benefits. So you'd think it would be a no-brainer to be able to find ways in which Local Authorities, Development Agencies, The Olympics, and Commercial developers at large, would embrace better, longer term deals with the sector than they're doing at the moment. Let me run over some misconceptions:

Proposition A, that east London is over supplied with artist studios: Wrong.

B, that there is no persistent demand there: Wrong.

C, that there aren't proper financial models to make buildings work over a 20 or 30 year period: Wrong, provided you're not wanting to gamble on the top end of the property market.

All of which are not quite how commercial developers and regenerators see this sector: pretty temporary, fragile, transient, able to use stuff, - but bugger off. We need to find a way forward, which is where the research sits in the lap of NFASP, and with colleagues like Anna at SPACE and so on. It needs to be better trumpeted in and around the Olympic zone. Clearly, it's a call for different and better forms of funding, that's a call to the Arts Council. It's also a challenge to us working in the sector to think hard about how the broader zone of social enterprise, social capital, things like the London Rebuilding fund, and a raft of others, might play into the kind of mix of activity we're looking at here.

Because, to finish, what's clear is that there's some really sharp development and management expertise in this room. Those 20 or 30 studio organizations have been doing this work in the teeth of big market pressures, weathering several recessions. Buildings are always full, whilst London's reputation as a centre for the visual arts is second to none. Whose fault is that? There are a lot of things where we need to make the argument work, we have to play it back into colleagues working in local authorities and development corporations to take the kind of practical notice that they need to. It's actually about the spirit of the city, and showing it's not just about big business, that isn't the only show in town.

**Fiona:**

Now we have our host, Anna Harding, CEO of SPACE, who's going to continue the theme of artists studios and the impact of the Olympics.

**Anna:**

I haven't spoken at our three previous annual Legacy Now events but I thought surely it must be my turn by now. The bottom line is that SPACE has been in east London supporting the arts for 40 years and we have every intention to be here for another 40 years and beyond. Our priority is that the children of SPACE, the people who've grown up with us, will also have the opportunities to have affordable workspace in this area in the future.

SPACE has a broader remit than just purely traditional visual arts studios. We run festivals, training and media programmes, working on the innovative edge of media and technology. We'd like to think that we have a very broad range of contributions to offer. Artists are ahead of the game in terms of innovation, and in terms of the artists that have spoken today we should realise that.

There's a creative edge to Hackney and Tower Hamlets which is about the mix of people who are here. That diversity is essential to its creativity, and if we lose that it's going to be rather dull. At SPACE we currently have 600 artist tenants in 18 buildings. At Dace Road in Hackney Wick Fish Island we currently have 100 artists. The reality we face right now is that all of our buildings are leasehold, they may have 2 or 20 years left to run. Despite everyone thinking within the recession there's loads of property on the market', those types of 20 year leases are never going to come again. The future is gloomy in terms of studios for young people on

training at the moment. We need to make sure that we can offer studios to people who are going to start out in 10 years.

(Shows image) Here's Dace Road and Britannia Works, Bridget Riley Studios, a site where the masterplanners are digging away. We occupy some of the finest buildings there, and we are pleased to hear we have a lot of support for Hackney Wick's Fish Island as a creative industries zone. Yet we have new landlords. The impact of the decision to host the Olympics means that a lot of buildings have been bought up by investors and big development companies. We have a new type of landlord which pushes us very hard.

Luckily we have 40 years of expertise to tackle this, but we know very well that come next autumn we're going to have a real problem with our rent review. Last time the rent review came up there was demand for a 200% rent increase. We knocked it down to 30% but it's going up again. We do our best to spread rent increases across our portfolio so we don't have to pass on rent hikes in one go as they come in. We do our very best to keep these buildings affordable but this is very challenging.

We have some very fine buildings. You know the developers will think 'wow, they'd make beautiful loft apartments', and of course they would, but they make even better studios. What about this vibrant economy? A lot of research to supports this. Nesta have just published a report about fine artists and innovation which demonstrated that fine artists contribute to London's economy in many ways (Nesta, 'The Art of Innovation', 2008). This piece of research with UAL showed that Fine Artists are fantastic at problem solving, at being resourceful; great at thinking outside the box and doing all those things that are really valuable for a vibrant economy. It's not just about sitting in a studio painting. All of these artists do other jobs, support local schools, live in the area they are an essential part of our neighbourhood.

(Shows image) Some artist of the tenants down at Fish Island, are taking up temporary studios on short term leases. It looks like the masterplan may formalise these things. They can't afford council tax and business rates, so it's very fragile. The happy symbiosis, as Fiona said, glass merchant's studios there, a micro economy of framers, art shippers and so on, and there are lots of informal stuff going on. It works.

There are great buildings, great facilities, yet under-funded and under-resourced. There's so much potential in and around Hackney Wick. The artists are an essential ingredient in this mix.

SPACE started off here at St Katharine's Dock. That was a 2 year let from the GLC. We wangled it as a short, first opportunity. This building Richmond house we had for 25 years, and we shared with Flowers East and MOMART. That's now a demolition site and could collapse any day. You can see those huge windows, it had great light. This is the kind of building where the developers have spent too much money on it and can't afford to do anything with it so it sits there. It's just stuck.

(Shows image) This is Berlin. There are some fantastic artists there, and it's dead cheap. This is an artist's project, a listed building; they've set up social enterprises and a local community project. This is what we've done informally in Hackney. We set up the Hackney Wick festival, Future TV, and the rest, but it needs proper acknowledgement by the development teams, by the LDA, the policy makers, the planners. Artists are doing these things, it needs to be taken seriously, be written in, resourced and supported long term. Not stop - start bits of project funding.

(Shows image) These are all the flats sitting empty, just built on Fish Island. Tons and tons of them still to be built. There are a lot of things not connected up properly.

(Shows image of Timber Wharf) We're doing some new build partnerships; this is a new development with funding from Shoreditch Trust for the fit out. When we take on a new building we can't possibly spend a million pounds on the fit out. Like running any business, it's challenging. There is no capital funding and it's increasingly difficult to make things stack up.

The developers who are stalling with the buildings sitting empty are only going to stall for 2 to 5 years, so it's hardly worth our while to take advantage of those. SPACE try and do things properly and long term. Though some artists will go in there, and think it's great. This is one of our beautiful new studios at Timber Wharf, but there are only 12 of them. We aren't seeing enough opportunities coming forward.

That's my little whinge, but on the positive side we've been working very hard over the past two years so that the Olympic regeneration teams and legacy teams are aware of the value of creative led innovation for Hackney. What we're doing here is making sure that that offer is made essential to the masterplanning in that we have some long term opportunities there for continuing activity, allowing artists to get on with their stuff. We're hopeful, I'm an optimist. We do this event every year because we have a lot of interests in common and conversations to have, the future for our boroughs, the future for everybody here, and that art is an important ingredient in that.

We've got one other speaker before our discussion time. John McGill represents upper Lea Valley North London, because there are these other trajectories for artists – will they go north? It's an interesting counter point.

**Fiona:**

John McGill is from the North London Strategic Alliance, and is hopefully going to show you that it's not all doom and gloom in London. John is probably going to try and lure you up the Lea Valley and prove that there is life outside Hackney, when we need to find a way for the artists to stay here. So, John, over to you.

**John:**

What I'm going to present to you is our vision for the upper Lea Valley which has been in place for about two years or so and we're in an interesting position where we're now challenged by changing a vision into a reality. I'm still very much at that stage and happy to share that with you.

The Upper Lea some of you may need some definition about. Fundamentally we're talking about boroughs and the eastern parts of Enfield and Haringey, the western side of Waltham Forest. Technically I think in GLA terms, part of Hackney is officially Upper Lea Valley although Hackney likes to call itself a Lower Lea Valley borough.

First I'll just run through the thinking about why we felt we needed a new approach in the Upper Lea Valley. Enfield has always thought of itself as a leafy middle class borough. Over ten years or so from the late nineties to the current time, the awareness of deprivation in some areas has been quite strong for them, whilst boroughs like Haringey and Waltham Forest would have been more familiar with it. Bear in mind that we're talking about the so called boom years of the last economic cycle, whilst these areas were experiencing an increase in deprivation, mainly signified by an increase in incapacity benefit claimants.

The environmental quality of the Upper Lea Valley area is wonderful. This is Brimsdown Industrial Estate, the second biggest industrial estate in London, only behind Park Royal. This illustrates the cheek by jowl nature of the area, people living right next to industrial estates with all of their environmental trappings. (Shows image) You can see here the waterway and Lea Valley Park, potentially quite an attractive selling point for the area.

The upper Lea Valley is an area of need and opportunity. In GLA terms it is London's largest opportunity area. Firstly it's part of the London Stansted Cambridge growth corridor, and all that the government policy brings to bear there. It's close to the Olympics, Thames Gateway. The growth projections for Stansted also make that more important.

If you're thinking of development opportunities on a London scale, we don't really have anything like that in the Upper Lea Valley – or let's say we didn't, before we started working on this vision. And the opportunity there is a place called Upper Leaside, it's where the north circular crosses over meets the valley, and there's a place called IKEA, don't know if you've heard of it. That is the opportunity there which is of a significant scale. We're talking about 5000plus community developments. Three times the size of Kings Cross.

That's the essence of the perception changes. Most people perceive it as industrial grime, it's yet looking at it you would think that it's somewhere very rural, not even London.

There's a big opportunity there for Lea Valley to become a centre for sporting excellence. Fundamentally you need things going on in order to bring people in. We're in discussion to do a Lea Valley Festival this year and link that into CREATE09, to make the Upper Lea Valley project a legacy for 2012.

One of our projects is to link the Olympic masterplan to the development. Sometimes what's going on immediately next to regenerated areas it can seem like it's a different world so we need that to be synthesised. We're planning the whole vision for Lea Valley Park. In terms of what we're doing, we just can't give up, despite the financial downturn, we have to ensure that we will be in a better

position, especially the festival, which involves the community and puts us in a better position, and allowing us to gauge their reaction to those things and help us shape it.

**Fiona:**

We're going to take a couple of questions. Lady at the back?

**Question:**

I'm curious to know how much of this planning would have happened anyway without the Olympics – are the Olympics taking the credit for that? It feels like, for those who've lived here for some time this would have happened anyway.

**John:**

I wouldn't put it quite like that. In terms of the Lower Lea Valley the phraseology I'm always quite attracted to is that in the Lower Lea Valley you have 30 years of regeneration crammed into about 7 years because of the primacy and drive of the Olympics. The Upper Lea Valley is different, no question. Projects like Tottenham Hale have been planned, and there have been various attempts, the GLC advised it but it has still effectively been derelict for about 20 years.

So these things were happening, but I wouldn't particularly argue that the Olympics is behind it. In fact, we've always been quite comforted by the fact that however bad the upper Lea Valley has been, the Lower Lea Valley has always been worse, but that's just not going to be the case in five or ten years' time.

Part of our discussions with senior officers and politicians is 'get your act together or we're going to look absolutely terrible', and the chances of investment coming back to London post Games is questionable. I guess in that sense, this is partly driven by the Olympics, a chain of Lower Lea Valley areas coming together and developing their vision and bringing their vision forward. So it's a kind of yes and no, Tottenham Hale, Blackhorse Lane, were put in place before. There was a road to Damascus moment for Enfield, which had only been planned industrial land for industrial use. What we're trying to do in conversations with the GLA is say if you're looking for legacy opportunity, the Upper Lea Valley is ready to go.

**Question:**

I can see that you're engaging with artists in terms of economic involvement of artists in this area. But are you at this stage involving the cultural community in helping to develop areas, by linking with your own teams or the Arts Council and commissioning artists who might have an input for its development in the visioning process?

**John:**

The simple answer is no. The vehicle we used to start those conversations was the Lea Valley Festival. The LDA gave each sub region a sum of money to promote the buzz of the games. We have a cultural group in North London, called Four Greens, which includes Barnet. Our conversation was brokered through them, and the idea to link it to the Lea Valley. What it's given us is a post – someone funded to develop this festival. The LDA money allowed us to have a small grants programme that we could deliver. So it has helped, although I guess the longer

answer is that we are not resourced for that, we are a coordinating group. The delivery of these developments lies with the boroughs. Hopefully what the festival has shown is it's a very good engagement for community.

**Question:**

There are some good examples of how involving the arts and the idea of the arts in regeneration programmes, let's take Liverpool or Newcastle for example. It would be nice to see some of these London regeneration programmes involving the arts from the outset, involving the arts in a big way, not just as a community engagement vehicle. This has a fantastic record of success. Sometimes it does feel in London people aren't looking to the North as an example. It's got such a good track record.

**Fiona:**

From my knowledge, creative partnerships was working in that area. But we're talking about real identity issues and a lack of cultural identity in the Upper Lea and Enfield. Your plan's great, but there isn't yet an excitement and buzz that looks like it's going to draw people to it.

**John:**

To be honest, I wouldn't disagree with you. The incidence of youth stabbings and the urgency for young people in Edmonton, it's making them look at that anew. I think it's a fairly difficult area on the eastern side of Enfield; there are classic indicators of disengagement.

**Fiona:**

Now we're out of time, you've all signed up to your groups: young people and communities, creative communities and economics and ideas for the provision of affordable space. Please come back with your thoughts and suggestions.

After the break >

**Fiona:**

Can we ask the first group to tell us what you were talking about and bring your comments back.

**Group 1 (Mat Jenner):**

We were thinking about affordable workspace, and it's something we talk about a lot, as affordable workspace providers. We came up with 4 main recommendations which we would like to see in the vision of the legacy.

- Affordable, cheap and sustainable – so to remain affordable
- Ideas that replicate successful models elsewhere. Not just in other boroughs, but in other parts of the country
- Recommend that this sector should be involved in all stages of planning development
- Recognition of the sophisticated understanding of the cultural outcomes of regeneration. It's not just about artists in their studios but there are economic benefits and social benefits intrinsically associated to affordable workspaces, and that Hackney has benefited from that.

**Question:**

Can I ask a question as a non visual artist? If an artist was starting out and not able to sell their work and you have a studio, it costs one price. Then say when you become really successful and you're selling loads of work, is it just the same price?

**Mat:**

Can I try and answer that? There are successful artists, but even the most successful of those don't often make a lot of money.

**Question:**

No I know, but when you're just starting out, you don't necessarily pay less for your space?

**Anna Harding:**

There's flexibility in our portfolio, although unfortunately at the moment people who have just graduated can't even get a look in. People start out by sharing, and if they can manage they then take on a whole studio. If they have a big project they can book out this space (the commissioning studio). There's flexibility intrinsic to what we do.

**Group 2 (Zubia Masood):**

We were looking at economic wellbeing, which is actually a really broad area so we tried to keep it as focused as possible.

Mainly: Investment in Hackney, general infrastructure and development.

**Group 3 (Fiona Fieber):**

We haven't drawn up specific points but what came up quite strongly was that people are part of a community. They are not a separate entity. We were also thinking in an intergenerational and racial way, with exchange of knowledge, experience, mentoring, and ongoing projects. Something that came up clearly too was continuity and coherence. A lot of small projects are going on, all fantastic in their own way, but what would be really great would be to have this linked up, become much more of a strategy, where different partners – and there is a big emphasis on partnership - are really aware of what everybody else is doing, and who is delivering. So who are the other arts organizations, what are they doing and who are they working with? With young people of course we're thinking about the Olympics and beyond – because life goes beyond 2012. The training into creating histories, learning skills that we can apply to support the creative industries – event management, marketing, certainly in terms of visibility, this is important.

**Fiona Fletcher Smith:**

Great, lots of useful feedback.

**Anna:**

Thank you Fiona. We're hoping that having this gathering will give feedback to government bodies, the GLA, LDA, Local Hackney, all sorts of people, and I'm very

thankful that they've sent representatives to come and visit today. It's been useful, many thanks.