

News release

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Art U Need: An Outdoor Revolution September 2006 - March 2007

How much do any of us really NEED art? Renegade artist Bob & Roberta Smith poses the question by curating a series of artworks for neglected open spaces.

The artist known as Bob & Roberta Smith brings his curatorial skills to bear on South Essex's neglected open spaces this autumn with the launch of 'Art U Need: An Outdoor Revolution'. Five contemporary artists are being invited to create work that will regenerate these public spaces, working in close collaboration with local communities.

The districts involved are Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. The sites, which include Canvey Heights, Rochford Reservoir and The Garrison Estate in Purfleet, have been chosen by community representatives, local authority arts officers and Bob & Roberta Smith. Lucy Harrison, Hayley Newman and Jane Wilbraham are the first three artists to be selected to work on the project and are all known for their work in the public realm.

The Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership, through the Investing in Communities (IiC) programme has initiated the £300k project, which is funded by the East of England Development Agency and Arts Council England, East and managed by visual art agency Commissions East. The IiC programme is based on an understanding of the importance of cultural activities in transforming and enhancing a sense of place, community identity and long-term liveability. A number of initiatives have already been undertaken and it is hoped that 'Art U Need' will build on these projects.

Cont/...

Commissions East

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Bob & Roberta Smith is an internationally acclaimed artist based in London, whose work is both deadly serious and extremely playful. He often creates campaigns that provoke a reaction from the public, asking them questions about the world they live in and the relevance of art within it. This September he is also launching projects at the Hayward Gallery, the Serpentine Gallery, Peier in London and the new Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, following a month long residency in China working with migrant communities on a project that also looks at shared public space and family interaction. Whilst his painted signs and billboards often poke fun at the art world, Bob & Roberta Smith shows that he is clearly committed to the belief that art can empower the individual and make the world a more humane place.

Bob & Roberta Smith and representatives from TGSEP and Commissions East are available for interview.

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Editors notes:

1. **The Thames Gateway** is the UK Government's major regeneration programme that will result in the creation of new homes, jobs, transport infrastructure and improvements to green space across an area that stretches along both sides of the Thames from Central London to Southend in the north and the Isle of Sheppey in the south.
2. **Commissions East** is the visual arts development agency for the East of England, providing an advisory and management service for commissioners, a programme of special projects addressing new areas of visual arts practice and a range of services for artists.
3. **Lucy Harrison** uses collections of texts which have been forgotten or ignored - the hesitations in a lecture or the notes made in the margins of a library book - language ephemera which, in the normal course of events we barely notice. Harrison gained an MA in Fine Art Printmaking at Royal College of Art, London. Currently she lectures in Fine Art (Print & Digital Media) at University for the Creative Arts, Canterbury and is a regular visiting lecturer at various other academic institutions including Camberwell College of Art, London and Sheffield Hallam University. Harrison has exhibited widely and her shows include 'Tres Riches Heures' Lokaal 01, Breda, Le Blac, Brussels and Keith Talent Gallery, London (2006); 'Carpet Slippers No Protection', George Rodger Gallery, Kent (2005); 'Family Sagas', Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland (2004); 'A Reader' Domobaal Contemporary Art, London (2003). Harrison has also produced many publications including 'Entrata' (self published), part of a residency of San Servolo, Venice; 'Carpet Slippers No Protection', part of the 'Greenhouse' series, with essay by Forbes Morlock and interview by Joanna Lowry (both 2005); 'Fantastic Cities' published by KIAD (2004); 'A Reader', published by DomoBaal Editions (2003). Harrison lives and works in London.
4. **Hayley Newman** is an artist with a diverse practise and has worked with performance, sound, video, text and photography. Newman received a BA at Middlesex University before gaining a Higher Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Art at the Slade School of Art. In 1995 she took up a DAAD scholarship in the class of Marina Abramović at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Hamburg after which she was awarded the Stanley Burton Practice-based Research Scholarship at the University of Leeds, where she completed her PhD. She is currently Senior Research Fellow and Graduate Tutor in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art. In 2004/5, she was the recipient of the Helen Chadwick Arts Council of England Fellowship at the British School at Rome and the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford. She has performed and exhibited widely and recent exhibitions include 'Her Noise', South London Gallery, London; 'Documentary Creations', Kunstmuseum, Lucern; 'Resonance', Montevideo, Amsterdam (all 2005); 'The Daily Hayley' Matt's Gallery, London; 'Hayley Newman', The Ikon Gallery, Birmingham and the Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (2001-2003). Recent performances include;

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'MKVH (Milton Keynes Vertical Horizontal)', Milton Keynes Gallery, (2006); 'Their feet should not touch anything solid', Camden Arts Centre, London; 'ffffashion', South London Gallery, London; 'Karaoke Record Cutting', Barbican Art Gallery, London (all 2005). Newman lives and works in London, and is represented by Matt's Gallery.

5. **Bob & Roberta Smith** is an artist of international repute who has exhibited extensively despite his anarchic and anti-establishment approach to creating art. Since graduating from Goldsmiths College, London with a MA in Fine Art his exhibitions have included 'Hearing Voices and Seeing Things', The Leytonstone Centre for Contemporary Art, Serpentine Galleries, London (2006); 'The Beautiful Poetry of Bob & Roberta Smith', Hales Gallery, London; 'Make your Own Damn Art', Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston; 'Master Blaster' curated by Tracey Allen, New Jersey (all 2005). 'Art is my Airplane', International 3, Manchester; 'Help Build the Ruins of Democracy', The Baltic, Gateshead (both 2004); 'The Mobile Reality Creator', Compton Verney, Warwickshire; 'Chocker Fucking Blocked', Jeffery Charles Gallery, London (both 2003). 'Its not easy being a famous Artist', Galerie Praz Devallade, Paris; 'The New York Art Amnesty', Pierogi 2000, New York (both 2002). 'Make Me a Sandwich' Richard Heller Gallery, Los Angeles; 'Suburbs Are the New Center – Create Your Own Reality', Carbone.to, Torino, Italy (both 2001); '26 Instructions', Turnaround at the Hayward, Hayward Gallery, London (2000). Recent projects and publications include 'Me Generation', a Channel 4 television programme presented by Matthew Collings (2005) and 'Make your own damn art' published by Black Dog Press (2004). Bob & Roberta Smith lives and works in London and is represented by Hales Gallery.

6. **Jane Wilbraham** is predominately known for her collage works but her practice also encompasses painting, drawing and sculptural events, to explore her main theme which is the changing nature of consumerism and the politics of the food industry. After gaining a Postgraduate Higher Diploma in Fine Art from the Slade School of Art, Wilbraham went on to a Postgraduate Residency in Fine Art at Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam. Wilbraham has exhibited widely nationally and internationally and recent shows include 'Photo-Muto', Hales Gallery, London; 'Drawing 200', The Drawing Room, London (both 2005); 'Willkommen', The Metropole Galleries, Folkestone; 'Collage', Bloomberg Space, London (both 2004); 'ACME', Los Angeles, Nicole Klagsbrun, New York, (both 2002). Wilbraham's public commissions include 'Rare Brew' - a beer tent with McMullens Brewery, Hertfordshire; a public commission for the BBC Media Village, London (2003); 'Small Shop within a Big Shop', commissioned by Milton Keynes Council, funded by Safeway Supermarkets plc (2003). Wilbraham lives and works in London and is represented by Hales Gallery.

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