

Liverpool Biennial – City States

'Birmingham The Magic City'

BAZ, Helen Brown, Home of Metal, Napalm Death,
plan b, David Rowan, Bedwyr Williams.

We Are Eastside presents 'Birmingham The Magic City' – welcome to the hidden undergrounds, blushing civic pride and future visions of our second city.

Our title 'The Magic City' is borrowed from a proposed artwork by Birmingham collective BAZ, themselves inspired by the sign that originally welcomed visitors to Birmingham, Alabama, USA.¹ BAZ want to build a new version of the sign next to the planned terminus to HS2, the hi-speed rail station destined for Eastside, Birmingham. BAZ, like Sting, believe everything Birmingham does is magic and want the world to know about it, especially people in Liverpool!

Eastside is the oldest part of Birmingham and the heart of what the city represents. Birmingham's reputation as an industrial city started here, with foundries, metal workshops and tanneries dating back to medieval times. Eastside's factories and warehouses now contain galleries, studios and creative organisations working together to create a visionary cultural programme for the city of Birmingham.

'Birmingham The Magic City' is a snapshot of overlapping perceptions of the city combining – an exploration of the unknown underground sub-infrastructure of the city – a collage of 1980s Grindcore fanzines from the birthplace of heavy metal – a day in the life of walkers of Birmingham – an orgy of civic boosterism, ranging from 1940s to the present day, exploring how Birmingham has sold itself over the years – and a reconstruction of a 'creepy' wooden lath wall.

Welcome to Birmingham.

We Are Eastside is a consortium leading independent arts in Birmingham formed of Capsule, Eastside Projects, Flatpack Festival, Fierce Festival, Grand Union and Ikon Gallery.

www.weareeastside.org

Contact :

beth@eastsideprojects.org

0121-771-1778

¹ Constructed in 1926, the sign became a much loved landmark of the deep south state but by 1952 it had fallen in to disrepair, eventually dismantled and believed to be sold for scrap.

List of Works

Capsule

Home Of Metal, Grindcore: Cut N Paste, 2011-12

Home Of Metal is an ongoing project produced by Capsule celebrating Birmingham and the Black Country as the birthplace of Heavy Metal. Impassioned by the social conditions of the time and inspired by anarcho-punk bands who were taking an anti-capitalist stance through their music, Nicholas Bullen and Miles 'Rat' Ratledge formed Napalm Death. At only 14 years old, they were motivated to play gigs, create fanzines, and swap music via cassette tapes with the wider punk community. This installation will give you an exciting insight into this period of music history – the formation of Grindcore. Pasted paper on walls and floor, original archive material on tables under glass, Nicholas Bullen performance.

Eastside Projects

David Rowan, Pacha Kuti X, 2012.

Single screen film projection with sound, in a dedicated dark room.

"exploring the unknown underground sub-infrastructure of Birmingham. The name Pacha Kuti refers to an Inca apocalypse legend, a time of duality and change and roughly translates as 'the time when the world will turn upside down'. Pacha Kuti X is the 10th End of The Known Universe according to the Inca legend." Rowan is based in Birmingham.

Helen Brown, Novelette, 2011.

Audio work on wireless headphones.

A scripted monologue edited from recorded dialogues at Eastside Projects starting in 2009, with the following people: Novelette, cleaner; Joe, architect; Bella, school pupil; Alex, actor; Kate, gallery assistant; Dennis, factory worker; Nina, office intern; Hana, administrator; Ben, video producer; Becky, philosophy student; Norman, car washer.
(Dependent on having dedicated gallery assistant.)

Fierce Festival

Plan b, A Day in the Life – Walkers of Birmingham, 2012.

Projected animation with ambient sound.

Using GPS traces, plan b made a living portrait of 24 hours in Birmingham with the people who move through its streets, parks, waste grounds and tow paths on foot. A portrait of a city as experienced at ground level.

plan b, (Daniel Belasco Rogers and Sophia New) are a duo who make performance and interdisciplinary artwork, based in Berlin. They are also a couple. They have been recording everywhere they go with GPS since 2007.

In 2010, they invited the population of Birmingham to help them make a living map of the city. People were invited to carry a GPS tracking device with them as they went about their daily routine. The devices provided a chronological record of the places people were present throughout the 24 hours of an average day. The project provided a chance to see Birmingham as a moving, growing network of lines made by the people who move through its streets, parks, tow paths and waste grounds.

Using GPS technology and a specially developed animation (by avp::ptr), the daily movements of people going to work, shopping, picking up their children, walking dogs or coming home from parties, were transformed into traces which delineate and illuminate the ways in which people use the city and show how they define it through their movements. The voices that accompany the animation are people looking at their lives in this way for the first time, telling us what stories lie behind the lines.

A Fierce Festival and mac Birmingham co-commission

A Day in the Life, the Walkers of Birmingham was initiated in 2010 and is scheduled to continue with another phase which will be seen in Birmingham in 2013.

Flatpack Festival

A Better Lifestyle (Promotional films from down the ages) 2012.

Single screen film projection with sound, in a dedicated dark room.

An orgy of civic boosterism ranging from 1940s to the present idea, exploring how Birmingham has sold itself over the years. Looping programme totalling an hour max.

Grand Union

BAZ (Matt Westbrook & Chris Poolman), Birmingham the Magic City 2012.

Billboard poster, 3m x 6m

BAZ, Berliningham Bar, 2012

Launch night drinks bar.

Ikon Gallery

Bedwyr Williams

Lathe Wall 2012

Wooden stud walling with performance & other materials.

Short Text: (68 words)

We Are Eastside presents a snapshot of overlapping perceptions of Birmingham, combining an exploration of unknown underground sub-infrastructures of Eastside, a collage of 1980s Grindcore fanzines from heavy metal's birthplace, a day in the life of tow path walkers, an orgy of 1940s to the present day civic boosterism, and a reconstruction of a 'creepy' wooden lath wall! Welcome to the hidden past, present and future visions of our 'magic' city.