(In)security - Call for Artist-Researchers

We are delighted to invite three artists to work alongside academics from Humanities, Engineering and Social Sciences to develop projects that critically examine counter-terrorism security measures in Birmingham and experiment with alternative notions of safety.

Background

Terrorist violence is ubiquitous, we hear and read about it daily in the media and so are encouraged to think about it constantly, some of us have been directly affected and in urban environments we are all potential targets. How are we to respond to this 'substantial'[1] threat?

Often the solution offered is more surveillance, more concrete bollards and barriers, more counter terrorism measures. Like many cities Birmingham has responded to the terrorist threat with a range of urban counter-terrorism architectures and preventive security measures. Some of these are highly visible, for example steel and concrete barriers in the city centre, others less so, for example community engagement that seeks to 'prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

However, research has shown that security features designed to make people feel secure can have a paradoxical effect: rather than making people feel safer, they may arouse feelings of fear and terror.

Artist Researchers

Art can enable us to expand the field of imagination in ways that go beyond the forms of narrating, planning, and playing that characterise catastrophe scenarios, exercises, and the academic literature on this subject. As Marsha Meskimmon notes, it allows 'us to encounter difference, imagine change that has yet to come, and make possible the new' by 'materialising concepts and meanings beyond the limits of a narrow individualism'.2

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[1] According to MI5, the current national threat level is seen as "SUBSTANTIAL", meaning that a terrorist attack is seen as likely.

[2] Meskimmon, Marsha (2010) *Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination*, London and New York: Routledge, 8.

We are looking for three artist researchers to work alongside academics to develop ideas for individual or collaborative projects dealing with the theme.

There is no fixed format, and artists will join an interdisciplinary team of researchers. Artists, writers and performers working in any area including sculpture, performance, drawing, installation, writing, photography, poetry, moving image and sound are invited to apply.

Artists will work towards a public presentation in September 2020. The form this takes will be identified in conversation with selected practitioners.

This project is funded by a grant from The University of Birmingham's Institute of Global Innovation and Institute of Advance Studies.

What's on offer:

* £1,750 artists fee
* £500 material costs to develop artworks as research.
* Curatorial support from Eastside Projects.
* The opportunity to discuss and develop projects with academic lead Dr Katharina Karcher (University of Birmingham) and other academics

Key dates:

* Deadline: Tuesday 25 February 2020, 8pm
* Interviews: March 2020
* Project Starts: April 2020
* Public Presentation: September 2020

How to apply

Applications do not need to include details of specific outcomes but should respond to the theme and describe a potential approach or working methodology as well as giving details of the applicant's practice in general.

* Application is by email only
* Proposals and statements may be made via video or audio, rather than written form
* Email attachments must not be larger than 5MB.

Please send the following material to submissions@eastsideprojects.org and write '(In)security' in the email subject line.

Proposal and Information

Please submit a single pdf or word doc that includes all of the following:

1. Your name, contact details (address, e-mail and phone number) and website address (if you have one).
2. A general statement on your work - 200 words max (or 2 min equivalent video/audio).
3. An up to date CV
4. A proposal.
   This can be submitted in writing – up to 500 words - or audio-visually, ie as film or sound, up to 5 minutes long. If you choose this option please upload to Youtube, Vimeo, Soundcloud or similar and send a link.

   It should outline:
   * Why you are interested in this opportunity.
   * How you would approach this opportunity, what your starting points might be, any initial ideas and how you would like to engage with academic research.
   * What you hope to gain by working on this theme and in this context
5. Evidence of your work
   * A selection of 10 images
     or
   * a vimeo/youtube/soundcloud link to a 5-minute showreel of AV material.
6. Please also complete our equal opportunities survey that you will find at:
   https://eastsideprojects.typeform.com/to/whlel0

If you have any additional questions about the project and application process please contact Katharina Karcher on K.Karcher@bham.ac.uk