

Identity and our Common Culture

Not Necessarily in the Right Order is an audio-video installation that responds to Nottingham's diverse multicultural demographic, exploring the social significance of 'carnival' and 'festival' as one of the few public opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity. Using these observations as a starting point, the work has evolved to become an exploration of what it means to be British in the 21st century.

The work, a New Art Exchange (NAE) commission by artist collective Common Culture - David Campbell, Mark Durden and Ian Brown - is the result of more than a year's research into the diverse communities and vibrant festivals taking place in NAE's local area, Hyson Green, home to the largest ethnic minority population in the county and vibrant diaspora communities from Pakistan, India, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and the Middle East.

Common Culture artist David Campbell said that during research for the piece - which brings together a number of locally based folk musicians, singers and dancers, suggesting the rehearsal for an enigmatic festival of the future - it became evident that place was inextricably linked to the issue of identity.

"It seemed to us that what underpins all of the manifestation of Carnival, Mela or Goose Fair is a desire to reiterate a sense of place, belonging, social and cultural binding through displays of identification," he said.

Conscious of their own lack of intimacy with the local area, Common Culture made the strategic decision to find ways of engaging with Nottingham's traditions of carnival by working with local musicians and performers to explore the wider meaning and function of carnival in contemporary Britain. To this end the work explores the relationship between identity and a sense of place, borrowing conventions from science-fiction (and science-fiction based musical alter-egos) to foreground issues of belonging and exclusion. The work plays with different narrative voices, musical styles and subject positions in order to disrupt familiar assumptions of identification. For example, the piece features a young actor who adopts different voices and subject positions to forge identifications with the viewer in a series of monologues that build up to an argument orchestrated between the same actor, but delivered through three distinct characters and accents.

The work is an important and poignant reflection on the area and its diverse festivals that include: Caribbean Carnival, The Goose Fair, Nottingham Pride, Nottingham Mela and Ishraqah (a festival of Middle Eastern culture). These are all important events, according to Director of Programme's at NAE Melanie Kidd, to preserve cultural identity.

"Dismantling the imperial view that cultural identity is singular and not fixed, *Not Necessarily in the Right Order* explores the perspective that Britishness, like all cultures, has always been hybrid and our identity will continue to shift," she said.

***Not Necessarily in the Right Order* by Common Culture will be at New Art Exchange from Friday 27 September and run until 12 January. For more information, or to organise interviews please contact Communications and Marketing Manager, Emma O'Neill, on emma@nae.org.uk or 01159248630**

Launch event details

WHAT: Launch of *Not Necessarily in the Right Order* by Common Culture

WHERE: New Art Exchange, 39-41 Gregory Boulevard, Nottingham. NG7 6BE

WHEN: Thursday 26 September, 6pm – 9pm (The launch will include an in-conversation with Common Culture from 7pm-8pm)

Admission: FREE

RSVP: Please contact Communications and Marketing Manager, Emma O'Neill, on emma@nae.org.uk or call 01159248630.

- Editors notes –

- Image credit – *Still from Not Necessarily in the Right Order (2013)* Image courtesy of Common Culture. Click here for image: <http://goo.gl/9Ya50s>

Common Culture

- For more information about Common Culture go to: www.commonculture.co.uk or contact members, David Campbell, Mark Durden, Ian Brown, via email on: info@commonculture.co.uk

New Art Exchange

- New Art Exchange is a contemporary art gallery committed to stimulating new perspectives on the value of diversity within art and society. A RIBA award winning building, New Art Exchange is the largest space in the UK outside of London dedicated to culturally diverse contemporary visual arts, and is rooted in the community with a strong history of working with minority communities. NAE presents major international exhibitions, launching the British Art Show in 2010, and every season presents work from the highest quality, world-renowned artists. NAE partners locally, nationally and internationally, connecting audiences and artists from all over the world with new and innovative collaborations and opportunities.

NAE's mission is to raise the impact, profile and development of culturally diverse contemporary visual arts and artists in a global context by:

- Nurturing and promoting creative talent locally and world-wide
- Creating thriving creative businesses
- Engaging minority ethnic communities as audiences and patrons of art