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firstsite



To interrupt and enhance retail footfall with art and performance: To fill the slack spaces in our town with colour, art and laughter and to help keep our social, cultural and economic life warm in the the chill of recession.

The goal is to take over one or more empty retail units and several window spaces in Colchester for the purpose of engaging the public with work from local artists within the main shopping district of the town centre. The initial aim in this pilot scheme is to program exhibitions, galleries, screenings, workshops and performances across the widest range of art forms for a three month period. We will also offer meeting and rehearsal space and provide where possible information on a wide range of arts activities by others in the town. The project will then be assessed for the potential to run again on a larger scale.

Normally a busy, compact retail and commercial centre, Colchester has fallen victim to the world-wide economic recession. At present there are over forty empty retail units in the main retail area, which is described by the original footprint of the ancient town walls, centreing on High St, Queens Street, St Johns Street and Head Street together with North Hill and Crouch Street. The current economic climate has had an effect on the town centre and has caused damaging effects to the social, economic and cultural life of the town in which we live and work and play.

Slack Space Colchester was formed for the specific purpose of ameliorating some of these effects, by bringing some of our empty retail units to life with a wide range of visual and graphic arts, sculpture, film and multimedia screenings and open access arts workshops for all sections of the community. We will explore a range of art forms on a temporary basis, through galleries, discussions and viewings, Slack Space Colchester sees this activity as an opportunity to raise the publics awareness of quality local art, as well as offer greater exposure to local artists. The group has been formed by self actualised local artists with the intent that the vast majority of the art and performance shown should be represented by the creator/ performer. Each exhibition or performance, will be attended by the artist themselves, who will be available for lively and informative discussion at the exhibition/performance opening. the free workshops and the special seminar/discussion sessions which will be open to all.

We will officially lease these buildings from their owners and using simple means and techniques transform them into exciting, interactive and safe places where people can come and enjoy a wide range of activities. An important part of what we do will be to spread information about the enormous range of other things that there are to see and do in Colchester, and taking another step towards putting Colchester firmly where it belongs - as an exciting and important place to live and work.

Hopefully, the recession will not last long, and then the buildings can be returned to their original use, and we will look perhaps for some more permanent places to use. The current projected schedule is three months, followed by a period of one month for reflection, feedback and assessment.

Objectives

To make one unit a main site for gallery, performance, workshops and discussions.

This space will also act a a base of operations for Slack Space Colchester. This site will be open to the public with the aim of attracting a mixed audience of those new to or experienced with such a space. Thanks to the great support from the East of England Co-op, and Firstsite, this will be no. 17/33 Long Wyre Street (Rosebys).

- To place 2D, 3D moving image projections and installations into several shop window fronts of empty units. We are currently looking at 3 East of England Co-op units in Eld lane.
- To curate street art on the hoarding around the building site of the Visual Arts Facility, working with firstsite and with the permission of CBC.
- To place original art posters with occupied retail shop windows, to increase the saturation of art within the retail district and promote awareness of Slack Space activity.
- We aim to access funding, sponsorship and in kind support to be able to offer all this for no fee to artists or audience, through supporting organisations and businesses.

We wish to offer as wide a spread of art in its many diverse forms through the various activities. These varied disciplines are represented through the core members of Slack Space Colchester.

To achieve these objectives Slack Space Colchester will be run as a collective drawing upon the skills and experiences of the members to effectively organise and run the project. Each person volunteers their time and energy, with the knowledge that they are able to contribute and gain from the activities and outcomes.

The core members (see bios.) will head up the various disciplines and contribute to the creation, organisation and policies of Slack Space Colchester. Additional members will aid the practical running of activities.



How to Exhibit

The Submission criteria varies slightly for each form of art. Full details will be supplied following your expression of interest but the general principles are as follows.

We can provide you with a space to show your work at Slack Space HQ or in an allocated window space within Colchester Town Centre.

Submission Criteria

- Majority of artists must live in or have strong connection with Colchester. e.g CO postcode.
- You will be responsible for installing, dismantling and making good.
- submit an application. Work must be suitable for Slackspace and a family audience.
- Artist can leave/distribute contact details but no direct sales to be made from the venue.
- Be prepared to work as in give hours of their time to Slackspace. It would be desirable if Artist could run a workshop or give a talk or provide admin time.

Selection Process

Stage 1: Interest in using the space should in the first instance be preferably by email to: colchesterslackers@ googlemail.com.If hardcopy is preferred please send to: Slack Space Suite 218, Communications House, 9 St. Johns St. Colchester CO2 7NN.

- Submissions should include a selection of the type of work you wish to show and a brief statement about the artist/work and CV if relevant.
- Applicants should include information about any special considerations e.g. size of work, equipment or special requirements.
- Applicants should state how they intend to work within Slackspace.

Stage 2: Slack Space will review submissions and a meeting/informal interview with the artist may be requested.

Stage 3: Space allocation and time to be agreed.



colchesterslackers@googlemail.com

Firstsite Fostering

Slack Space Colchester is fostered by firstsite, Colchesters visual arts organisation. Core to firstsite's work is support for the artist and it is able to give this artists initiative initial momentum providing financial assistance, in-kind support, professional advice and additional contacts.

Slack Space Colchester maintains a separate identity and is self organising with regards the activities that it undertakes and work that it curates.

As a charity firstsite are able to sign and approve licenses and agreements that enable the occupation and realisation of Slack Space Colchester's objectives. They are also able to offer services and assistance with marketing and promotion and to utilise their charitable status to reduce business rates liability during the occupancy of a retail unit.

Slack Space Colchester currently also has support from East of England Co-op, Colchester Borough Council, Mail Boxes Etc., Signals Media Arts, Colchester Arts Centre, Lakeside Theatre, Headgate Theatre, Destination Colchester and members of Colchester 20/20



Slack Space Founding Members

Will Wright is a professional director, music producer and freelance tutor, currently making music promos, developing a multi-platform drama series and taking a lead role in Slack Space Colchester. For over two decades, Will has initiated a local arts fanzine, Hardcopy, organised many successful forward thinking clubnights, Majestic 12, worked with local and international artists and run Cineclub Essex Ltd. a business specialising in video production clubs for school children.

Will brings professional media experience and training, project management and other business skills, as well as knowledge and expertise within the arts. He is keen to bring and develop the digital possibilities and potentials of Slack Space

Malachi Cheverst is a classically trained musician versed in a variety of instruments Piano (grade 7), Cello (grade 5), Alto Saxophone, Bass Guitar and Double Bass. He plays for several groups ranging from classical to contemporary and is a keen lamateur photographer.

Malachi also brings a young persons perspective to the group, at his age of 13. He has created and developed several social networking marketing tools for Slack Space Colchester using his knowledge of the new media platform and photography.

Niki Reid Is a a fine artist, her practice includes 2 and 3-D work, print, performance and community projects. She is currently studying for an MA in Fine Art at NUCA and is a permanent Artist in Residence at Acorn Village. Mistley.

Niki has worked for Firstsite at the Minories for 9 years and has considerable experience in many aspects of running a contemporary art gallery. She has also run a variety of community projects and workshops lover the last 10 years.

Vicki Weitz has been a live artist since 2006, in which time she has created both solo and collaborational work, including (but not limited to) Blue Screen Concealing Two Artists (1937), a girl in a dress (dress me) and a girl in a box.

She has performed at Colchester Arts Centre, The Lakeside Theatre, Colchester Institute, as part of The Pulse Festival, at various pubs in Chelmsford and on the streets of Halstead

Vicki has spent the past year working on a New Work Network project organising networking and performing opportunities for artists from the East of England. Events include: Picnic in the Church (Live Art Platform), A Working Weekend (an intensive weekend workshop), The Live Art Club (discussion, networking and performance club for live artists) and The Live Art Platform at Colchester Arts Centre.

She intends to bring her experience with organising events and her list of contacts to curate the live art within Colchester Slack Space.

Abigail Cheverst is professionally qualified in Health and Safety at Work (NEBOSH Diploma) and will be able to bring Health and Safety advice and expertise to the group. She is a self employed trainer and consultant offering Health and Safety services to arts organisations but will be working with Slack Space Colchester in a voluntary capacity.

She also has a long history in community arts including working as a project officer for Sound Sense, the National development agency for community music, running Colchester Free Festival and project managing Colchester Battle of the Bands on behalf of Colchester Borough Council.

Other relevant experience includes running an amateur dramatic company, live music showcase nights and sitting on the steering group for the residency of the orchestra of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields in Colchester.

Dorian Kelly is a professional festival and events director, community projects leader, theatre actor/ director, as well as stage lighting designer, theatre consultant, stage and architectural lighting designer, scenic designer, pyrotechnician, water effects designer scriptwriter lecturer on theatre technology and performance art at drama schools and general-purpose arts fixer. Co-founder of Colchester festival and the Overground Project, loves arts, theatre and show business. and accepts no substitutes for quality and innovation. Member of the Association of Event Organisers. Professional grade member of: The Association of Lighting Designers. Association of Theatre Technicians. serving on the association council for a term of office . Director of Illuminati and Theatre Despatch.

Tracey Johnson is a local artist working in more traditional mediums painting mainly in oils and watercolours. She has a BA Hon in Fine Art and runs various art workshops for adults, she also teaches at the local Adult Community College. Last year her work was shown in several National and Regional exhibitions including Eastern Open, 21st Century Watercolour, Womens Work and The Womens Art Show. She is represented by several galleries including Doric Arts, Holt

and Cambridge Contemporary Art Gallery and has recently been elected to the selection panel for Colchester Art Society.

Tracey has previously experienced various avenues of work including setting up and running her own business as a hair salon owner. She would bring her contacts, practical skills, and exhibiting experience to Colchester Slackspace.

Shaun Dipper is a freelance graphic designer/illustrator, he graduated with a class degree from Colchester School of Art.

He has worked in London and Colchester, as art director, for various weekly and monthly magazine publications titles he has worked on include PRweek, Marketing, Management Today, Campaign and Period House.

Shaun intends to use his expertise in corporate branding and experience in publishing, to help create a strong identity and successful advertising campaign for Colchester slack space. He is also a keen supporter of street/guerilla art movements.

John Worland is a trained theatre manager and runs his own video production company. In addition to making documentaries and historical dramas, he also runs video production workshops for adults and young people. John assists with the technical operation of the Headgate Theatre and is also a Trustee and Company Secretary of a national charity. John ran the highly successful Colchester International Film Festival in 2007 while temporarily heading up Signals Media Arts. In 2008 he won a regional BAFTA competition. He is also a past winner of the JVC National Award for Most Creative Documentary and a winner in the technology category of the Colchester Business Awards

In addition to his creative ability, John brings business and organisational skills to the group.

John Livingstone studied at The Arts institute at Bournemouth in traditional 2D animation and now works as a Graphic Designer in Colchester. Aside this he loves being involved in outside projects to fire up his creativity, working in various medias and with different materials to create short films, paintings, and music. He is also a DJ and a VJ (Visual Jockey), entertaining people at music festivals and nightclubs.

He also likes to draw from life, using this as a basis for cartoon and animation characters. I want to help provide that, by being involved and assisting in anyway with this innovative art project, bringing Colchester back to life.