

Close And Personal

by Rachel Anderson

In a world that values the large, freestanding, immediate spectacle of art AIR deals a different currency. This project studio at CSM commissions and nurtures site responsive working practice as a living archive of research, experimentation, reflection and progress.

They are a training camp for artists and designers drawn to site, to work that manifests and resides beyond the gallery walls. Working with the inexperienced and the most experienced, the local and the international, the cleaners, carers, vendors and business tycoons, all have something to learn when they forget what they know.

AIR invest in the co-dependence of relationships, the quiet uncountable moments of exchange, a slight adjustment to a daily trodden route that sends unquantifiable ripples into the future. AIR are the tortoise of the race, seemingly understated yet absolutely sure of their purpose and direction.

AIR started in 2007 in Archway, this is where they began. Their decision nine years ago to stay there is felt today. I invite you to buy a newspaper and speak to the newsagent, approach a property developer, the local woman sitting in her wheel chair in the afternoon with a can at the Archway Mall, the councilors, local GP's, they will all respond with recognition if you request something unusual, invite them to join you or elicit their help. They may well challenge you with a confidence that only grows over time – pushing you to listen deeper, think broader or leave your own comfortable position. In one of the most impoverished corners of north London there is a wealth of thinking, both the mental and physical kind that critical art can help generate. It's hopeful, unique and essential.

And what of the AIR 'artists' who are deconstructed on the streets and emerge a more honest version of themselves, things cannot be unseen and reconfigured bodies cannot climb into old armor. Time spent with AIR is a turning point, a coming of

age. Artists join AIR to consolidate all they have learnt and then forget it because only the necessary works here, outward looking, hands open, ready.

Artists who are given an opportunity to breathe grow in ways we cannot predict, AIR understand this.

And now AIR has come to Kings Cross, nursing the post surgery bruises of its reconstruction, local people emerge with questions that need caring for, businesses without foundations try to grow roots, corporate facades overshadow community centers which still house lunchtime bingo and now food banks, there is a lot to be done here... not from offices or behind clipboards but on the streets, close and personal, no agendas no solutions, (just this. Just.)

→ airstudio.org

Rachel Anderson

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→ idlewomen.org