

FOXTROT

Ready, Steady, Go ?

A dialogue on East London's changes

p 1

Index

p 5 — 6

Foreword

p 9

Hackney Wick, 2012

p 10 — 23

People & Places

p 24

The Library

p 27 — 28

A Change of Scene

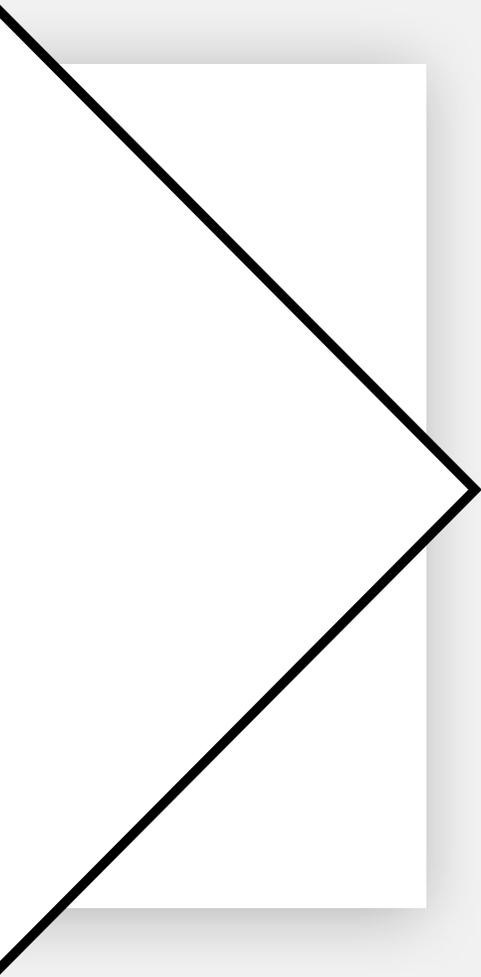
p 31

Captions & Links

p 32

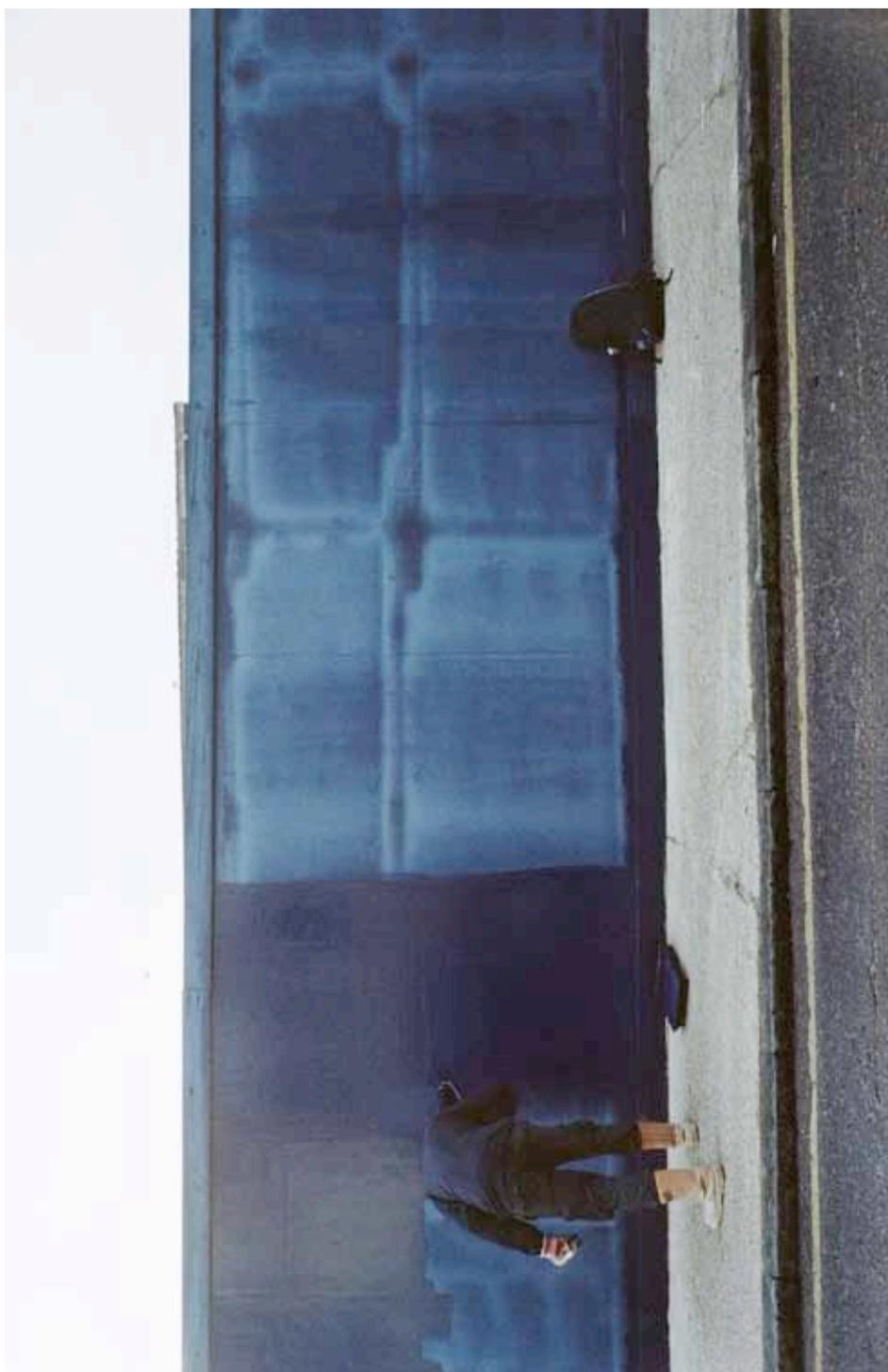
Credits & Thanks





Foreword





Foreword

by Foxtrot

The project came about in an informal and spontaneous manner. After the four of us met and discovered a shared desire to creatively reflect the changes in East London, we decided to collaborate. Dynamic and in perpetual flux, this fascinating part of the city which was once considered undesirable, is now under the spotlight. This attention is of course exaggerated in Hackney Wick and jeopardises its post-industrial programme of affordable workspaces for creative people in central London.

The quiet life of the artists and other residents is disturbed by the arrival of *The Games*. This event juxtaposes markedly different worlds in *The Wick*. As Hackney locals directly affected by these changes, we decided to use the tensions surrounding the developments in the area as a point of departure for a multidisciplinary project, with the aim of entering into communication with as varied and extended a group as possible. Through talking about a national project of international importance in a local way, our aim is to ask : what are the different roles played by creative people in the transformational moments in the area?

Regarding the variety of the stakeholders the transformations of the area can be considered as opportunities or threats. We can guess that the *underground* appeal of Hackney Wick is unlikely to stay the same way. Its demographic may change, though in the meantime it presents rich material for creatives to act upon.



Each of us comes from different disciplines:

Anna Aubry the town planner and architect works on places and people which define Hackney Wick in 2012 by producing a map associated to a series of interviews conducted with individuals playing roles in city making. **Elsa Seignol** is a photographer documenting symbolic and physical boundaries, seeking to capture a portrait of a brief moment in this place's history. The illustrator **Sophie de Bayser** had a less direct approach, illustrating the inhabitants while they passively contemplated the changes unfolding before them. And **Matthieu Becker**, graphic designer has given a coherence to the project, rationalising the different works with a visual identity and making this edition. He and **Anna** had set up a library composed by publications presenting different points of view linked to our topic.

This work has brought our various creative languages together, and it is the interaction between these that the project represents. It is not a full stop nor a definitive end but the first step to a wider reflection; it has been conceived to evolve with its urban context. As people often say in the area "lets wait and see".



Hackney Wick, 2012





Hackney Wick, 2012

by Kamal Yusuf

These photographs were taken in the two months leading up to *the 2012 Olympics*; they explore the oppositions embedded in the space through a focus on the storytelling power of the image and its relationship to the series. Some examples of counterpoint are more obvious like that between the surface being graffitied and the other anesthetised in blue. Others are less immediate, such as the role of natural light in supporting the emotional temperature of the photographs' subject matter. Intense light frames more animated moments such as in the photograph of the bmx boys. Gloomier light accompanies more solemn subject matter. For example the portentous lighting that goes hand in hand with the contemplative mood of the photograph of the man in a yellow coat next to the canal, who has paused on a significant threshold it seems to read: *IMAGINE WAKING TOMORROW AND THIS SHIT HAS DISAPPEARED.*

Another focus of the series that is the eerie atmosphere in and around Hackney Wick created by the emptiness, or near emptiness shown in several images – the empty yard, the men along the canal, the seemingly empty road intersection that on closer inspection reveals several lost figures walking into the distance. There is an *entre nous* feeling here. Despite the aleatory air there is a precise purposefulness to people's presence here, to be part of a community, to explore even to party. The figures eventually end up at an all day rave.

Within this road, the photographs document a vibrant and dynamic community, *ad hoc* street markets, young men on the doorstep of *the Olympics* claiming their right to the city with their bikes, cars as furniture and life being lived. This is the testament of the series. In a few years whatever is here will be less organic, less spontaneous, less decidedly idiosyncratic.

People & Places

Interviews & Map by Anna Aubry

I decided to produce a map of Hackney Wick linked to a series of interviews with creatives and those who work with them. This work is not considered to be a final product, nor a survey of the territory. The map and the interviews are pieces of raw materials taken from the transitional period and space that is Hackney Wick before *the Olympics*. These data have been collected for different reasons.

On a personal level they help me to further reflection on my professional role as an architect and town planner involved in transitional places. On a wider level, it raises the question about traces of local and private initiatives in the story of city making. Public authorities want to integrate local communities in the Olympic Games legacy of regeneration, but where does this leave the creatives? Is it possible to institutionalise an underground expression of the culture? How can master planners integrate action makers into their schemes?

This part of the work produced for the exhibition tries to gather different stakeholders' points of view in the debate about the fabric of the city.



Discount on your land !



People & Places



Discount on your land !

Let's share information about our land...

It is really hard to consult the most recent maps of territories undergoing major change, either because they do not exist or because only professionals have access to them.

Hackney Wick has been subject to constant change for several years. The map is a snapshot of a specific time and space: Hackney Wick before the opening of *the Olympic Games* in London 2012. The first aim of this map is to share information with citizens about their land. This idea also drives the library project available for visitors, which brings together documents about the area. Do we need more local initiatives to explain the changes that are operating in a strategic area such as Hackney Wick? What is the role of this exhibition?

Give yourself a piece of land...

During the exhibition, the map gives you the chance to look at the whole of Hackney Wick. Considered one by one, the pieces of the map are reduced to abstract paintings. By buying your own piece of land you become a landlord, but you lose a sense of the bigger picture of Hackney Wick.

This segmentation of the map is a playful way of illustrating the town planner's dilemma. How to build a city vision with a huge amount of landlords? Is it possible and fair to have only one landowner?

Transitional periods are favourable for creativity and innovation. Hackney Wick is now known for its high concentration of artists. I have tried to understand and identify key figures operating within the territory by utilising their creative skills.

13



5



6

Hackney Wick Map for Sale



The map is therefore associated with a series of interviews conducted with different protagonists involved in the area's transformation. They are just as difficult to arrange as the map itself. It is important to associate them with this aspect of the area because they may not be the same tomorrow. Yet today the territory of Hackney Wick and its transformation belong to them. The broad range of stakeholders and approaches in the territory are revealed by the different types of work and documents produced. These are available in the library.



Interviews

“We are going to continue to encourage people to have more of dialogue.”
BREAD Collective

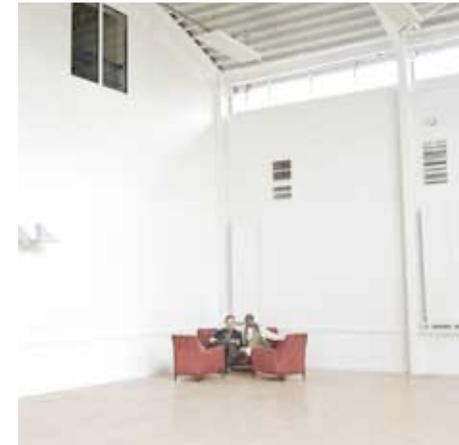
“What we try to do in this centre is to take Hackney Wick to the next step as an artistic community “.



1



2



3



4



5



6

Hackney Wick Map for Sale



Interviews

“We are going to continue to encourage people to have more of dialogue.”

BREAD Collective

“What we try to do in this centre is to take Hackney Wick to the next step as an artistic community “.



Hackney Wick Map for Sale



7



8



9



10



11



12

Interviews

“We are going to continue to encourage people to have more of dialogue.”

BREAD Collective

“There is no guaranty that the students work becomes useful beyond University. What we can then do is show that work to people and raise debates about territories”.

Christoph Hadrys, *University of East London*

“I do temporary events in places of transition or renewal. I design and build experiences that construct an idea of permanent memory in a place.”

Colin Priest, *Chelsea College of Art*

“It is not just about commissioning public spaces. It is about developing a dialogue with public spaces and local people. What is exciting is working on an art project through engaging people.

Jes Fergie, *art curator in collaboration with LLDC*

“I don’t want to work so closely with the Olympics and be associated with them.”

Laura May Lewis, *Hackney Wicked Festival founder*

“We will take an empty site where all the collaborators will hopefully come together to shape the public space.”

Andreas Lang, *Public Works*

“What we try to do in this centre is to take Hackney Wick to the next step as an artistic community “.

Richard Blade, *Cre8 Life Style Centre*

“It is about preserving the artistic community as well as facing changes that are inevitable.”

Daren, *See Studio*

“We have had a role in the transformation of the area but whether or not that role makes any difference that is another question. [...] There is no security for the creative community of Hackney Wick.”

Rebecca, *Stour Space*

“There is a lot of development pressure here. We try to find a way to guide and control this development so the creative industries are not forced to move out.”

Peter, *Tower Hamlets Council*

“Art and Culture can both be an offer in the Park so people can see it as a cultural destination but can also help to deliver community engagement. [...]It becomes crucial that we collaborate with local artists rather than initiating projects ourselves”.

Adriana, *London Legacy Development Corporation*



What Are the Roles of the Creatives in the Transformation of their Territory ?

These interviews have been conducted throughout July 2012, on the verge of the opening of *the Olympic Games*. We have met some artists and protagonists involved in the transformation of Hackney Wick. I asked them to explain their professional activity and to place themselves in this context of sweeping and rapid changes to their territory. We think that it is important to understand how the city is changing and also who is changing it. The agents of these changes are more transient and elusive than the transformation itself.

It is not about promoting or criticising the impact of a big urban regeneration project on local communities. The aim of this work is to show the diversity of the different stakeholders and opinions. They all act within a framework of constraints related to their professional activities. The issue is to report the variety of restrictions they must comply with. This audio editing illustrates the complexity of a town-planning compromise. Can the city's transformation satisfy all of the different stakeholders' criteria?

You can listen to the interviews by scanning the QR codes with your Smartphone or by visiting <http://itw.foxtrotcollective.com>



Who is the Architect ?



What Are the Roles of the Creatives in the Transformation of their Territory ?



Who is the Architect ?

by Anna Aubry

This work is part of an ongoing reflection about the architect's profession. Are architects only builders?

This exhibition has been taken as a great excuse to illustrate that architects can also be considered transformation accompanists. The interviews helped me to understand how creatives can position themselves in this context. I have been really impressed by those who manage to create their own social and professional role in this transitional time and space. Places of work and/or living seem to be a strong inspiration. That could explain why their actions are contextualised and integrated into their environment.

I am wondering how these agents of change could be more recognised and secure in their professional activities without losing their independence and freedom of expression. How can cities develop through places and people?



The Library



From the outset we wanted our exhibition to include a library that could gather together the documents that influenced us and provide the general public with more information.

We wanted this library to be available for consultation during the exhibition so as to create a lively event and show that our subject can inspire a lot of people with different ideas and points of view. There are several documents

in the library, ranging from urban administrative documents to magazines and books written by local artists.

Collecting all these documents has been an integral part of the process of creation and curation. We gradually obtained these documents while researching our art work and meeting people for interviews. We have selected these documents to suit the work presented in this exhibition. In future we will establish a web archive where people will be able to view all of the publications online. This archive will be expanded upon as the evolution of the city unfolds, hopefully inspiring new publications along the way.

This publication was conceived as a part of this library, providing new insight into the evolution of East London and intervening in the ongoing discussion. In producing this work we have joined a wave of local responses to the accelerated changes generated by *the Olympics*. We tried to pay tribute to these local initiatives, many of which are only made possible by individuals investing a lot of their time and money. It is our belief that such initiatives also play a role in shaping the city.



A Change of Scene



The Library



A Change of Scene

by Heloïse Cossic

The most minute of modifications to our environment can have the most profound implications for everyday life within the metropolis. Many things go unnoticed until they are modified or even destroyed. We discover that we have so many unconscious habits — any small changes or resistance to them can prove traumatic.

Neighbourhoods undergoing urban transformation usually react with a variety of emotions: some extreme, some dispassionate and some contradictory. The impact of *the Olympics* is almost beyond measure. The area's inhabitants are forced to adapt to their radically new environment, regardless of individual wants or needs.

For a little shop, building or even an Olympic stadium, a new construction across the street signifies a break with the usual. In every case, such change is not a choice made by the locals, nor is it something that can be got rid of easily. It is a new piece in the established scenery, and one day will become an old piece of that too. Before the inhabitants adapt to or leave their new environment, several stages must be passed through:

First curiosity

Initially, the new architectural element invites itself into the landscape. It is a guest. It must intimately integrate itself into people's lives. In the expectant eyes of a girl sitting barefoot on her doorstep next to *the Olympics*, nothing could disturb the delightful experience of living in Hackney Wick. The new guest is seductive and exotic, someone for people to flirt with. With curiosity comes projection, a desire to imagine what the future could hold.



Then annoyance

The project progresses to a point where the building has its own identity. Imagination is no longer possible. What was acceptable in the beginning now becomes burdensome. Noises, diversions, construction work and dirtiness symbolise all the inconvenience associated with a change in the surrounding environment. What yesterday was an ordinary footpath morphs into a restricted threshold; what was part of a daily route turns into an unreachable place: it is easily seen as a restriction on the freedom of city life.

Then indifference

After some time, indifference overcomes curiosity and resistance. The allure of change and the new has disappeared; the irritation that resulted from the change around you is now but a memory. The catalyst for change, like *the Olympic games*, becomes a non subject - something discussed ad nauseum. Having adapted to the new area, the inhabitants henceforth integrate the new elements into their environment. They barely glance at them any more.

Whether the transformation is perceived as useful or painful, there is always relief when it is over. Eagerly the space is taken over – now is the time for the communities to re-appropriate the space. Action replaces passivity, life goes on and the subject fades.



Captions & Links





Captions & Links

Soft Pastel's caption from pages 3, 16, 17 & 30 :
HW, Red — HW, Yellow — HW, Blue

Photographs' captions from pages 15 & 18 :

01. View of the stadium from **Hackney Wick**
02. Musician **DoubtingThomas** studio interior
03. Richard et Leon from **Cre8 Life Style** Centre
04. Daren from **See Studio**
05. Matilde from **Public Works**
06. The Hackney Pearl in **Oslo house**
07. **The Elevator** Gallery
08. **Hackney Wick Station's** «The Coca Cola wall»
09. **The Yard** theatre
10. Community project by **BREAD Collective**
11. Street view on **Wallis Road**
12. **Hackney Wicked** Festival retrospective

Contact us :

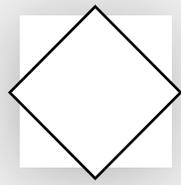
foxtrotcollective@gmail.com
www.foxtrotcollective.com
twitter.com/foxtrotco
facebook.com/foxtrotcollective

You can also check :

aubryajd.wix.com/bookonline
elsaseignol.com
sophiedebayser.com
matthieubecker.com

© 2012, Foxtrot Collective & the authors, *All rights reserved*
All photographs by Elsa Seignol
All drawings by Sophie de Bayser

Credits & Thanks



Foxtrot Collective is

Urban planner — **Anna Aubry**

Photographer — **Elsa Seignol**

Illustrator — **Sophie de Bayser**

Graphic Designer — **Matthieu Becker**

This booklet was published in **August 2012**, during the exhibition **Ready, Steady, Go ? A dialogue on East London's changes** at **The Invisible Line Gallery**, London

Edited by **Foxtrot Publication**

Designed by **Matthieu Becker**

Fonts : **Logisoso / Stempel Schneidler**

Printed in East London by **Quarto Colour**, quartocolour.co.uk

in an edition of **100** copies

We would like to thanks

Kollier Din-Bangura, Sheila Ruiz from the Invisible Line gallery, Gary from Quarto, Isaac Marrero-Guillamón and Hilary Powell from Marshgate Press, Sophie Troppmair from CHK Design, Colin Priest, Frazer Bufton and Steve Ferrar from Coventy University, Adriana Marques and Claire Gevreaux from LLDC, Alan Hesketh from Hackney Council, Roger Taylor and Mary Conneely from the Host Boroughs Unit, Hadrian Garrard from CREATE, Jessie and Hannah from [SPACE], Neil and Rebecca from Stour Space, Denia Kazakou, Lucy Harrisson, Leon Herbertuk and Richard Blades from Cre8 Life Style Centre, Christoph Hadrys from University of East London, Laura May Lewis, Jes Fernie, Daren Ellis, Frances Grahl, Samia Malik, Katherin Böhm, Andreas Lang and Mathilde Martinetti from Public Works, Terry Nixon, Tamara from The Yard, Peter Farnham from Tower Hamlets Council, Katherine Clarke from MUF Architecture, the BREAD Collective

And also

Ben Lewis, Heloïse Cossic, Kamal Yussuf, Shammi, Marcello, Bunmi, Sonia, Marion, Federico, Larissa, Astrid, Tollo, Mayeut, Frank, Laura, Elsa, Marie, David, Benco, Studio K...

