



Title and brief description: The Portland Inn Project: The Portland Pigeon at Manchester Contemporary

The Portland Inn Project is a creative arts project for a community in Stoke-on-Trent that aims to achieve community cohesion, economic, social and cultural development by involving the community in the development of a pioneering community space, cultural hub and social enterprise. This is a collaborative delivery led by artists Anna Francis (Community Maker) and Rebecca Davies (The Oasis Social Club) and is supported by AirSpace Gallery, Appetite, My Community Matters, Arts Council England, Aziz Foundation and Stoke City Council.

Type Exhibition

Venue(s) Manchester Contemporary (Art Fair)

Additional information:

The Portland inn project is a collaborative creative arts project led by artists Anna Francis and Rebecca Davies which builds on work created in the area of Portland street from 2014 onwards.

The project draws on theory around artist led regeneration projects, from Richard Florida (2002) onwards – considering what happens when artists work where they live, adopting an asset based approach to artist led community development. The process has been to test articulated needs and wants of a community going through a moment of change, first via a temporary arts council funded programme in 2016 (acting as a pilot for the long term project), which led to the writing of a solid business plan, based on findings of the pilot. This has then led to the establishing of an artist led community interest company, to move to the next stage of the project, which involves securing the

asset transfer of a community building to the CIC, and then continuing to explore the role of the artist and the arts project in community development.

Questions have included exploring the power and role of the artist as neighbour, in order to raise questions about the value of the artist in society, and the role of an artist project in raising the aspirations of a community, as well as in challenging media portrayal of a community and a city.

The project aims to develop a Community Ceramics Studio and workshop within the pub building, making wares which can be used to ensure the long term sustainability of the project. In 2018, artists Anna Francis and Rebecca Davies worked with community members of the Portland St Area, to prototype the first product to be developed within the project:

The Portland Pigeon a decorative ridge tile.

On display at Manchester Contemporary were prototypes for the pigeon created by artists Anna Francis, Rebecca Davies and residents with the aim of developing a product that will be created and fired in the workshop on Portland Street as part of The Portland Inn Project.

The ridge tile will be installed on the newly renovated pound houses in the area - and will soon be available to buy so that people can install on their homes across the UK, demonstrating their support for the project.

