

INTERWEAVE – THE NEWSLETTER FOR

INTERWOVEN PRODUCTIONS CIC



Welcome to *Interweave* the newsletter for Interwoven Productions CIC – supporting artists of quality in

participatory, place-led practice.

In this issue: -

- Multi-vocal communities and **Exeter's Place-based Cultural Strategy**
- **Craftspace** – mapping those working with “the commons”
- **Exeter Communities Together** – finding the connecting conversations
- **AWA Knowledge Bank** – a must for those in participatory practice
- **MOATFISH!** – a *Squillometre* update

As a company that has been developing place-led techniques at grassroots in Exeter since early 2015, Interwoven are excited to see the launch of **Exeter's Place-based Cultural Strategy** and look forward to seeing how the City's authorities and creatives respond.

We've learned a lot in the last 5 years. We've stumbled and then we sat back and reflected and improved. We've held our curiosity fast because at grassroots, when you commit to staying put in a place as we do, when there's no project end, then you *have* to get it right. So, we have learned. And, we're happy to share something really important with you now.

Here's one of the fundamentals ...



.... communities *always* have more than one voice. No matter how mono-cultural, non-diverse you might think they are, every place is multi-vocal.

So, if you go into a community and ask them to share their memories of their place, you run the risk of alienating those how are new to it and whose childhood memories lie elsewhere. Think also, how does celebrating the many colonial monuments on our streets sound to those who are immigrants from places once colonised? What should we be celebrating in fact?

Truly effective place-led practice plans ahead for this; knows how it's going to accommodate the indigenous and non-indigenous relationship with place and the potential stresses that implies.

Issue 5 August 2019

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Participatory practitioners need to know where their own voice fits. For instance, if you're new to a place in Exeter, are you ready to hear how native Devonians really feel about it and about you? If you're native, are you sure you're not holding prejudice against "incomers"? Are you more in tune with one voice than another? What are you doing to ensure that you're listening and are fit to hear them all?

Because, here's the thing - when you turn up in a place, potentially everyone in that place will want to talk to you. You can't socially segment them, the group is already defined by location. They are a community, a multi-vocal community, and you need a strategy to hear them all.

Exeter Communities Together is a new project that "represents the coming together of a partnership of seven grass roots organisations, many of which have been run on a voluntary basis by community members, with the **overarching aim of enabling Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) residents in Exeter to have a voice and increased visibility in the wider community**".

Interwoven will be meeting with them soon and are looking forward to learning more about the ECT focus and how our exploration of place-relationships in Exeter may help.

One of the great responses we've had to the recent publication of our article **Without help; without permission** in *Arts Professional* was an invitation to be included in the national mapping of "community based activism taking place around **the theme of the commons and commons-thinking**" being undertaken by **Craftspace** in Birmingham. We've always been proud of the variety of ways we have found to creatively celebrate the sky, trees, rock, water and soil of our place and look forward to learning more about Craftspace and others working in this way.

This is the great challenge and the opportunity of place-based work. Interwoven is currently compiling a Community Animation Course with myriad insights just like this. Things you need to know to do effective, responsible place-based work. If you're interested then you're invited to get in touch.

Have you discovered the **Art Works Alliance Knowledge Bank**? Interwoven Productions CIC is very pleased to be an Art Works Alliance partner meaning that we can take our place at the table for discussions with national bodies who strive for quality in participatory arts. The Knowledge Bank represents an extraordinary resource, open to all, including research, evaluations, reports and toolkits to inform your practice.



Squillometre Update - in Wonford

The Wonford MOATFISH!! Created by over 50 Yr 5 children from Wynstream Primary. Each individual medieval-inspired emblem was designed by them - each child got the chance to spray a part of their emblem. Why? To mark the exact spot where the moat from the Wonford Great House extends into what is now the car park of the Wonford Methodist Church. Huge thanks to school, the church and the wonderful Wonford Pod!

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