Wide Open Space: art in the public realm, localism and rural regeneration

A Dorset Design and Heritage Forum conference

26th May 2011, 09-45 to 17-00 @ The Exchange, Sturminster Newton, Dorset

OLD MAMMALS, DINOSAURS’ TREAD, CROCODILES CONGEALED BETWEEN THE CLIFFSTONE’S AMMONITES AND MARBLE’S BURNISHABLE SNAIL-WHORLS. TIME, UNMANNED, IN THE ROCKS’ MIRROR DISTORTS

PAUL HYLAND
Wide Open Space: art in the public realm, localism and rural regeneration

- What does Localism mean for the quality of our environment and enhancement of our public spaces?
- How do we continue to be creative in making places in the light of a major re-orientation of public policy and finances?
- Is there still a role for art and design which addresses key social issues such as housing, transport and other community needs or should the focus return to economics, branding and “iconic” art?

The conference will face up to these issues as a new agenda emerges for the contribution of developers, authorities, planners, artists, architects and designers to public and private places and spaces at a time of radical change for rural counties and their communities. Key themes will be:

- Localism, community planning and rural housing
- Creating new, intergenerational, common spaces in the countryside
- Enhancing sensitive landscapes and relational infrastructure
- Tourism, interpretation and public space

Highlighting Dorset's recent achievements in commissioning art and design for the public realm it will use examples from the Jurassic Coast public art programme, projects at Weymouth for the 2012 Olympics and the new Wide Open Space programme of research on context specific, cross-disciplinary art, design and heritage collaborations. Speakers include Minister of State, The Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP, an architect of Localism, Professor Malcolm Miles (Plymouth University), art and regeneration critic, Stephen Ratcliffe, Director of Planning and Partnerships, Lake District National Park on art, landscape and heritage in Cumbria, artists Michael Pinsky and London Fieldworks, public art specialist Maggie Bolt, curator of Wide Open Space Alex Murdin, Tom Munro (Manager, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), David Lohfink (Land and Planning Manager for developers C G Fry & Son), Kevin Morris (Policy Manager for the Environment, North Dorset District Council). Featuring two participation sessions, “Agora”, by artist co-operative The People Speak

This meeting is an initiative of The Dorset Design and Heritage Forum, whose aim is to promote quality design that respects the county's landscape heritage within community planning, land use planning and arts practice. Wide Open Space is being delivered by Willis Newson, the UK’s leading independent arts consultancy working with health, community and education partners in public spaces. It is funded by Dorset County Council and Arts Council England.

Booking form on the Wide Open Space page at [http://www.dorsetforyou.com/390685](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/390685) – DEADLINE 17–30, 20/05/11
Programme

09–45  Registration, tea and coffee

10–15  Welcome
Hilary Cox, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, Dorset County Council

10–20  Introduction
Kevin Morris, Chair, Dorset Design and Heritage Forum

10–30  The lure of creativity: art, localism and the land
Malcolm Miles, Professor of Cultural Theory, University of Plymouth

11–10  Localism and the environment
The Right Hon. Oliver Letwin, MP, FRSA
Minister of State for the Cabinet Office

11–30  Agora – a participation session by The People Speak

12–30  Buffet lunch by The Peasant Evolution

13–15  Artists in public: projects and practices in Dorset
Maggie Bolt, Maggie Bolt Associates

13–45  Wide Open Space
Alex Murdin, Creative Places Development Manager, Dorset Design and Heritage Forum

14–00  Intergeneration
London Fieldworks / David Lohfink, Land Manager, C.G. Fry & Son

14–25  The Rural Roads Protocol
Michael Pinsky / Tom Munro, Manager, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

14–50  Break

15–20  Enhancing sensitive landscapes in Cumbria
Stephen Ratcliffe, Director of Planning and Partnerships, Lake District National Park

15–50  The future for public design, art and heritage in Dorset...
Kevin Morris, Chair, Dorset Design and Heritage Forum

16–00  Agora – a participation session by The People Speak

16–50  Conclusion

17–00  Close

Please note items on the programme may change without notice.
Speakers

Kevin Morris is Policy Manager for the Environment at North Dorset District Council. Kevin is a qualified chartered town planner, urban designer and building conservation specialist. He is currently responsible for a wide portfolio including building conservation, trees and landscape, climate change and the arts together with contributing to the authority’s community planning work. Kevin regularly works with local communities on the preparation of village and town design statements and parish plans. He is currently chairman of the Dorset Design and Heritage forum, vice–chair of the DSP Culture theme Group and Chairman of the Dorset Design and Conservation Officers’ Group. He has previously worked for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, the London Borough of Croydon and the London Borough of Bromley before moving to Dorset in 2001. http://www.dorsetforyou.com/390645

Malcolm Miles is Professor of Cultural Theory in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Plymouth, UK. He co–chairs the Culture–Theory–Space research group (located in the School of Architecture); supervises doctoral research between critical theory and contemporary culture and urbanism; contributes to doctoral workshops on research methods in the arts; and carries out research for publication. His main research interest is in the development of critical theories of culture and society since the mid twentieth century, in relation to contemporary art and urban change. Within this are questions around the extent to which the utopian content of modernism can be salvaged; the need to develop critical theory in a period of global cultures; and the cross–currents of a post–socialist Eastern Europe. He retains a long–term interest in questions of pictorial space and the insights on art offered by psychoanalytic as well as political approaches. Among recent publications is Urban Utopias: the built and social architectures of alternative settlements, London, Routledge, 2008, Cities & Cultures, London, Routledge, 2007; and Urban Avant–Gardes: art, architecture and change, London, Routledge, 2004. He lives in Totnes, Devon, and supports the Green Party. http://www.malcolmmiles.org.uk/

The Rt Hon Oliver Letwin, FRSA, is the Member of Parliament for West Dorset and Minister of State for the Cabinet Office with responsibility for policy. Oliver has been involved in policy formation and policy thinking for the last 25 years, since he worked for Mrs Thatcher in Downing Street in the 1980s. In a varied career, he has been a philosophy don at Cambridge, a civil servant and a bank director. He has written many books, pamphlets and articles, including Ethics, Emotion and the Unity of the Self, Privatising the World and The Purpose of Politics. Oliver is a passionate champion of progressive social reform, a cause which he advocated strongly as Shadow Home Secretary in his speeches on the ‘neighbourly society’; and he has been involved with Iain Duncan Smith’s Centre for Social Justice since it was first founded. He is committed to environmental causes, leading the Conservative Party into the cross–party talks on the Climate Change Bill, and making speeches on the place of beauty in politics when he was Shadow Secretary for the Environment. He is also a localist, and campaigned from the Conservative Front Bench for Nick Hurd’s Sustainable Communities Act, which began a serious move towards giving local communities and local governments more of the power held by central government. http://www.oliverletwinmp.com/

The People Speak create projects that give people an excuse to enjoy speaking to each other. The formats look familiar at first: a chat show, a game show or even a soccer kick–about, but once people are involved, there’s no limit to where they can take each other. A new format “Agora” tasks the few–to–many communication model of the regular panel discussion formats and opens it up to create a participatory and reciprocal conversation. It turns an auditorium, cinema or theatre into a genuine space for conversation between audience members. It makes the most of the knowledge base and ideas of the collective audience to produce a dynamic recording of the proceedings. Recent commissions for The People Speak have come from NESTA, Futerra, The Prince’s Trust, Islington, Southwark, Camden, Hackney and Sutton Councils, The Tate and the South London Gallery. The People Speak’s most recent endeavour is a 3 year public art project known as ‘Genius Loci’ commissioned by Essex County Council. The aim of the project has been to engage and inspire people to feed ideas into a major Thames Gateway regeneration development, which has resulted in the creation of portable inflatable community space structure called ‘Home Sweet Dome’. thepeoplespeak.org.uk

Maggie Bolt is the Director of Maggie Bolt Associates a multidisciplinary public art consultancy. Founded in 2010 it creates successful strategies for high quality public art activity. Maggie Bolt has over 25 years experience in the contemporary visual art field. She is a creative and strategic thinker, who has specialised in the field of public art and is widely recognised as one of the key players in this sector. Maggie was the founding Director of Public Art South West, (which closed March 2010). Maggie has been Vice Chair of ixia –public art think tank, is currently on the board of the Architecture Centre Devon and Cornwall and the Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company and was previously a board member of AXIS. She is member of the Urban Design Group, a Fellow of the RSA and sits on various design review panels including the South West Design Review Panel. www.maggieboltassociates.com
Alex Murdin is an artist, curator, and producer specialising in artwork in the public realm, particularly for coastal and countryside sites. Recent projects include acting as artist in residence for Lyme Regis, a project on community tourism for Jaywick in Essex and the current role of Creative Places Development Manager for Dorset where he has set up Wide Open Space, a development programme for public art & design on behalf of the Dorset Design and Heritage Forum. Previous experience includes extensive public realm work and high level roles with Willis Newson, Aune Head Arts, Artsmatrix and the Devon Guild of Craftsmen. He currently an Arts Council England Artistic Assessor and is a researcher on rural public art at University College Falmouth. [http://www.ruralrecreation.org.uk/]

Michael Pinsky is a renowned British artist whose international projects have created innovative and challenging works in galleries and public spaces. He has undertaken many residencies that explore issues which shape and influence the use of our public realm. Taking the combined roles of artist, urban planner, activist, researcher, and resident, he starts residencies and commissions without a specified agenda, working with local people and resources, allowing the physical, social and political environment to define his working methodology. He has exhibited extensively in galleries and festivals such as TATE Britain, the Saatchi Gallery, the ICA, London; BALTIC, Gateshead; Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow; Modern Art Oxford. Dr Michael Pinsky graduated from the Royal College of Art. He has given public talks for the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, Institute of Contemporary Art and the Finnish Academy for the Arts. [http://www.michaelpinsky.com/]

London Fieldworks is an art partnership between Bruce Gilchrist and Jo Joelson renowned for the unique model they have offered up for creative research and collaboration and their ambition for imaginatively sited projects at the interface of art, science and technology. London Fieldworks have produced a body of works spanning a decade involving artists, writers, composers, scientists, architects and engineers. These multifaceted, interdisciplinary projects have resulted in surprising partnerships and innovative artworks. Their practice encompasses both gallery projects and works for public spaces. Recent projects have included the acclaimed Superkingdom, Outlandia and Syzergy/Polaria, showing in spaces and places such as the Science Museum, London, Stour Valley Arts, Milan and California. [http://www.londonfieldworks.com/]

Tom Munro is the manager of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (DAONB) Team. The Dorset AONB is the fifth largest of 47 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland covering 40% of the county; it’s probably the most populous too. Designated for its wonderful coastal, downland, heathland and rural vale landscapes, the team works to ensure the area’s protection, enhancement and sustainable management in partnership with landowners, farmers, planners, developers and engineers. Tom is an agriculturalist and ecologist by background with a passion for Dorset’s inspirational landscape and an understanding of the value of creative approaches to design in sensitive environments such as this. [http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/]

David Lohfink BSc(Hons), MA, MRTPI is Land and Planning Manager for C G Fry & Son. David has 20 years experience in all aspects of planning having been previously employed as a Planning Officer for various District Councils, a planning consultant and then a Development Manager for a small house-building company. C G Fry & Son was founded in the 1920s when craftsmen were held in high regard and skills respected. They have held on to this sense of history, but not at the expense of vision, innovation and new technologies – their view is that our past has given us the strongest possible foundations on which to base a forward-looking company. C G Fry & Son build new homes and commissions projects for both commercial and private clients, including bespoke joinery, extensions and renovations. [http://www.cgfry.co.uk/]

Stephen Ratcliffe is Director of Planning and Partnerships at the Lake District National Park and responsible for the Lake District National Park Design Programme which aims to open the National Park for great design – interior and exterior, involving staff and members in discussions with people about any new development and its design. It aims to inspire architects, designers and planning consultants. As Stephen says “We don’t want design guidelines for the Lake District National Park. We want freedom of thinking. We want design intelligence.” Projects have included Art in the Park at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Bretton near Wakefield and a programme of events, seminars and site visits. [http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/index/planning/designprogramme.htm]
Practical Information

Who should attend: Commercial developers, government agencies, local authority members and officers (county, district, town, parish), NGOs, arts organisations, educational establishments, third sector organisations and voluntary groups...Planners, architects, artists, academics, engineers, landscape architects, other design professionals, arts officers and anyone with an interest in creative public realm projects...

Venue: The Exchange, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1QU http://www.stur-exchange.co.uk/

Lunch: A delicious buffet lunch will be provided by The Peasant Evolution, which uses as much of its own local, seasonal produce as possible, including meat, vegetables, eggs, preserves and dairy products produced on its own certified organic smallholding in Wootton Fitzpaine.

Travel: There is no railway station in Sturminster Newton. The nearest station is at Sherborne, which is approximately 2 hours from Bristol, or London and 1 hour from Exeter. If you are coming by train, a free bus will be available from Sherborne Station to the venue.

Accommodation: The closest bed and breakfast accommodation in Sturminster Newton:

- Hazeldene – 01258 472 224
- http://www.4hotels.co.uk/uk/sturminster-newton70432.html

Pub accommodation in Sturminster Newton:

- The Swan Inn,– 01258 472 208 – http://www.4hotels.co.uk/uk/hotels/swaninn.html
- The White Hart, DT10 1AN – 01258 472 593
- The Bull pub – 01258 472 435

Cost: £35 for individuals, £20 concessionary rate and for all those resident in Dorset (includes VAT @ 20%)

Booking form available from http://www.dorsetforyou.com/390685 or www.willisnewson.co.uk

DEADLINE for bookings 17-30, 20/05/2011

Cover images: Michael Pinsky “Quiet Tour” and a work by Gary Breeze for Durlston Country Park
Wide Open Space Project Summaries

Project: Rural Roads Protocol

Partners: Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Artist: Michael Pinsky

This project has flowed from the Rural Roads Protocol, which aims to enhance the visual appearance of rural roads for the benefit of local communities and visitors by reducing signage and encouraging more sustainable, safer transport modes. Artist Michael Pinsky worked on alternatives to typical rural road design, making essential infrastructure a contributor, rather than a detractor, to the particular place it is located in. He has outlined both permanent features that declutter and enhance street furniture and temporary interventions that build up a long term memory of potential risk for drivers. The overall effect is that new interest is created for road users and the need of residents for safer public spaces next to roads (or even as shared spaces) is addressed.

http://www.michaelpinsky.com/

A new open space as part of a housing development on the edge of a Dorset village has been an opportunity for artist and design input that supports both a better understanding of the heritage of the site and the creation of an intergenerational public space. London Fieldworks have designed a permeable meeting place based on the medieval archaeology of the site. They have also contributed to the Management Plan for the landscaping of the area to create a historical wildflower meadow. A good example of an enlightened developer and Town Council working in partnership to bring together a future community from the housing estate with existing groups, particularly young people.

http://www.londonfieldworks.com/
http://www.cgfry.co.uk/
http://www.chickerell-tc.gov.uk/
Project: Road for the future: Maiden Newton to Bridport trailway

**Partners:** Sustrans and The Dorset Wildlife Trust  
**Curator:** Anna Best

Wide Open space has funded lead artist and curator Ann Best to research the feasibility of a programme of commissions to engage local people in the creation of new common spaces along a trailway currently in development. The route will use a shared use path along the route of the former Maiden Newton–Bridport railway which would provide a traffic-free route for commuters and school children in an area with limited public transport. Temporary projects by internationally-known artists have been staged to engage local people with the development process, raise awareness (and funds) and get local landowners on board.

Already the trailway has seen events from Phil Minton's Feral Choir and the itinerant Energy Café by Pilot Publishing.

An ongoing programme of cultural activity – a "Road for the Future" is also planned which has already obtained provisional support from Arts Council England. To support this project or for further information contact Anna Best through the project website:

[http://annabest.info/common-projects/](http://annabest.info/common-projects/)

Watch the Feral Choir perform on the trailway: [http://www.transitionvision.tv/play/Arts_and_Leisure/The_Feral_Choir_at_Maiden_Newton_-_The_Whole_Performance](http://www.transitionvision.tv/play/Arts_and_Leisure/The_Feral_Choir_at_Maiden_Newton_-_The_Whole_Performance)
Project: Commonplaces, Shaftesbury

Partners: Shaftesbury Civic Society, North Dorset District Council

Designers: Simon Pirie and ZMMA architects

Designer–maker Simon Pirie and ZMMA architects have been asked by Shaftesbury Civic Society to research and develop proposals with the local community for a public space, The Commons, in Shaftesbury. The aims are to see how the unique heritage of this market town can be made more accessible to both visitors from outside and incomers from new settlements being created on its eastern edge. In particular the collaborative team have been asked to consider how traditional local materials could be brought up to date and used differently, addressing key sustainability agendas. A key part of the process has been consultation with local people through events on The Commons, the physical heart of Shaftesbury. The design team want to create something the town can be proud of, that will be useful as a focal point, meeting place, trading post, performance area or just a place to sit and people watch.

The Civic Society is looking for further support for the project, contact Jan Scott on 07831 300741 for more information.

http://www.simonthomaspirie.co.uk/

http://www.zmma.com/

http://www.shaftesburydorset.com/content.asp?sid=9&cid=82
Bog standard or beautiful...

**Project: Newtons Cove Bridge, Weymouth**

**Partners:** Dorset Engineering Consortium (DEC); DCC Art Team, AONB, Coastal Rangers and Weymouth and Portland Community Partnership

**Artist:** Christopher Tipping

In special locations such as our World Heritage Site of the Jurassic Coast, why have infrastructure like this when we could have this?

Artists are primarily creative thinkers, who use this skill to create objects and images. They can help create projects that move from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Artists, who are able to un-prescriptively respond to the context of a location, can change a space into a place and give it a special sense of identity, creating ‘pride of place’. We need to create opportunities where we can encourage cross disciplinary team working; building collaborative processes with artists, engineers, architects and others who have a vital impact on shaping public space. This replacement pedestrian bridge at Newton’s Cove, Weymouth was designed by an artist and Dorset Engineering Consultancy (DEC), with valuable input from Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Coastal Rangers and Dorset County Council Art team. The project has been awarded the Olympic 2012 Inspire Mark and Merit from Weymouth Civic Society.

More information on the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme is here [http://www.jurassiccoast.com/393/category/creative-coast-246.html](http://www.jurassiccoast.com/393/category/creative-coast-246.html)
Project: Durlston Country Park


**Partners:** Architect MJ Long, DCC Durlston Rangers, Property Services, Art Team

**Artist:** Lulu Quin

Lulu Quin initially worked as part of the Durlston design team on concept development. This led her to being commissioned for the interpretative work called “Diversity”. The glass piece will also act as the lighting design for the café in the newly renovated castle, due to open in September 2011. The glass panels make up the walls and are laser etched with the names of the 10,000 species found at Durlston. The panel lighting can be made brighter or softer, suiting all occasions. The project has been funded by Arts Council England and the Durlston Project Team.

http://www.luluquinn.com/
http://www.durlston.co.uk/
This collaboration included representatives from DCC Cultural Services, Dorset Engineering Consultancy, Dorset Countryside Coastal Rangers, the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the World Heritage Team. The core team had input into all stages of the appointment process, which finally selected the artists to work on concept design collaboratively with the engineers. The design team also liaised closely with the community, including a series of workshops with Charmouth Primary School. Sessions were facilitated on practical engineering solutions and on infrastructure placed in our environments, looking at aesthetics, scale and site. The project has been awarded the 2012 Olympics Inspire Mark. The project has been funded by Arts Council England, Dorset AONB, Coastal Rangers, Jurassic Coast Arts Programme, Section 106 (West Dorset District Council) and Weymouth Relief Road Improvement Group.

http://www.sansfacon.co.uk/

http://www.dorsetforyou.com/charmouthfootbridge
Project: Durlston Country Park, accessible zig zag path to the Castle

Partners: Fine Foundation, Dorset AONB, Dorset County Council Art Team and Rangers, Jurassic Coast Arts Programme

Artists: Gary Breeze and Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy

Gary Breeze was commissioned to come up with a concept for an accessible path, leading visitors to the castle. The brief expected a geological timeline to be incorporated into this. Part of the journey takes the visitor through a “squeeze” of rocks – where you can touch, smell and see the grandeur of the geology. The path includes scientific quotes and verses of poems to convey the subject matter, and relates to other poetry that is already quirkily dotted around the park. The Poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy is currently being commissioned to write a verse for this timeline. The path will be installed ready for the Castle opening in September 2011.

http://www.garybreeze.co.uk/
http://www.durlston.co.uk/
The Dorset Pride of Place Awards are annual prizes intended to help communities celebrate what is special about their place. Artists who are able to un-prescriptively respond to the context of a location can change a space into a place and give it a special sense of identity. This creates 'pride of place'. This award is promoted by the Dorset Design and Heritage Forum with the aim of championing high quality design and conservation of the built environment.

Winners in 2008 were environmental campaign, Turn Lyme Green who are working with artist Alex Murdin and West Dorset District Council on the design of interactive street lighting that marks the registration of births, deaths and marriages in the area. In 2009 Discover West Bay and Bridport Museum Trust won with a project to highlight the importance of the marine environment and bird migration and promoting cultural links between Bridport and Newfoundland. They are now working with artist Rob Colbourne.

Pride of Place [http://www.dorsetforyou.com/396201](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/396201)

http://www.ruralrecreation.org.uk/limelight.html

http://turnlymegreen.co.uk/

http://www.robcolbourne.co.uk/

http://www.bridportmuseum.co.uk/