

RHYZOM Culture 2007 project / **public works** /
26th and 27th March 2010

WORKSHOP action 10a

Organised by **public works**, **Somewhere** and **Friends of Abbey Gardens**

International Village Shop Production **Workshop**

At Abbey Gardens / What Will the Harvest Be ?
Stratford, London, UK

Report by Kathrin Böhm/**public works**

Attending :

PUBLIC WORKS (London UK) : Kathrin BÖHM, Andreas LANG, Celine CONDORELLI

AAA (Paris FR) : Nolwenn MARCHAND

AGENCY (Sheffield UK) : Cristina CERULLI

PS2 (Belfast – IE/UK): Sarah MURRAY, Anne Marie DILLON

CULTURAL AGENCIES (Istanbul TR) : -

Co-organisers

SOMEWHERE (London and Cumbria, UK) : Nina POPE, Karen GUTHRIE

FRIENDS OF ABBEY GARDENS (London, UK) : Lydia THORNLEY, designer, Ashley MC CORMICK, Architect

Guests :

Dorian MOORE, web technician and programmer, London UK

Elliot MONTGOMMERY, Design Interactions, Royal College of Art

Ben FAGA, Design Interactions, Royal College of Art

Ilona GAYNOR, Design Interactions, Royal College of Art

James GILPIN, Design Interactions, Royal College of Art

Lucy GILLIAN, environmentalist/activist

Piotr POLESKI, gardener, London

Kathrin BOHN, architect, London



Abbey Gardens in context

public works and Somewhere are involved in a long-term project called the *International Village Shop*, a platform for the production and distribution of locally informed goods across a network of urban and rural communities. As part of the International Village Shop we are generating new products which directly refer to specific situations and are developed collaboratively with local hosts.

The site

Abbey Gardens is the site of “*What will the Harvest Be?*” an ambitious artist’s commission initiated by the Friends of Abbey Gardens (FOAG) to revive a neglected piece of land in Newham, East London. The artists – Karen Guthrie & Nina Pope - led the development of a ‘harvest garden’ that will run for a minimum of 3 seasons at the site. The 80m x 20m garden was launched in spring 2009 as a social and horticultural experiment: its 30 large-scale raised beds are freely accessible for anyone who wants to grow flowers, fruit and vegetables. In 2009 it attracted over 30 regular users as well as many more occasional volunteers and groups of all ages. Members of the public also visit the garden, which is ordinarily open daily, and there are regular events and activities. The 2010 planting scheme has been designed by the artists, and plans for the coming season include the planting of an experimental trained fruit wall, the instigation of an ‘honesty stall’ to offer produce to the public and wider public engagement in the community.

See: www.whatwilltheharvestbe.com and www.abbeygardens.org for more details.

Production Workshop

The idea for the workshop is to brainstorm and develop new objects/items/goods that derive from the context of Abbey Gardens a collective urban food growing site. The brief is open and will be developed collectively and in reference to specific aspects of Abbey Gardens, such as collective gardening and harvesting, urban food production, social and historical aspects of the site, etc. The aim for the two day workshop is to develop a brief for one or a number of new products, and if possible, to assemble first prototypes. The new items can be anything: from food or tools to plants or processes and of a real or digital nature.

The products may later be used at Abbey Gardens and distributed locally through the Abbey Gardens’ new honesty box and mobile stall. The honesty box is part of a wider network of cultural trading activities called the International Village Shop, where the new products for Abbey Gardens can become part of a growing collection of locally informed and produced goods.

Friday 26th March

10.00 – 12.00

Introduction and local mapping session



After everyone briefly introducing themselves and the reason for attending, Andreas and Nina give an introduction to Abbey Gardens, its location and context and the development of What Will the Harvest Be?. The site is on the so-called cliff-edge of the Olympic Park and therefore within the neighbourhood of large scale commercial development and speculation. At the same time the area has historically and recently seen numerous self-initiated community and community gardening projects.

Everyone was invited to visit, trace and record some of the local aspects which relate to Abbey Gardens and might be used as a resource or reference for the new product.

WHO	WHERE	WHAT
		LOCAL RESOURCES / OPPORTUNITIES
Karen and Nina	Industrial estate next door	Skills and manufacturing resources to produce window frames. Waste produce (timber, cardboard). Used tea bags and food waste.
Andreas	Food shops near-by	NO local fresh veg on offer. Possible users of locally grown veg : Kebab place. People eating their lunch in their car in front of their garden. Wild asparagus growing.
Dorian	What Will the Harvest Be Website	Plant Data Base for Abbey Gardens, to keep track of garden production, but also to share knowledge and to create a collective data base. To publish receipts which are reflecting on the cultural mix of the area. Communality through stories of food.
Ben	Busy Bee's Cafe	Big view of sky from the site : satelite – spotting possible
Ashley and Lydia	Play Sow Grow Scheme	To build links with them. They will have two beehives. Need for contracting out the actual gardening activities. Need for signs that point to the different local initiatives and their programme.
Elliot	Three Mills	History of food processing, mainly Gin. Traditional measuring instruments. Tidal movement of the Lea river as energy resource
Cristina		To link local gardening projects. Generate Tools to negotiate the use of empty sites. Sharing Gardening resources and Tools. Land-share.
Sarah, Ann Marie	Local Pub, The Greyhound	Involve older generation in oral histor about growing food.

		« One Pot Pledge » To bring separate communities together through food. Community Notice Board.
Nolwenn	Leathergarden	TO DO things signs, rather than what not to do. Collect seeds locally. To harvest material for compost. To include private gardens in gardening the local network.
Illona	Channel Sea House	Try cultural exchange with corporate Neighbours, e.g use empty offices for seedling growing, exchange knowledge
Piotr		Communal garden furniture. Reintroduce wildlife. Communal composting scheme.

OVERLAPPING THEMES

Local Histories

Compost

Tools/Food processing

Promotion/Linking of Communities and Initiatives

Knowledge Share, Food and recipes, « Fusion »

FIRST PRODUCT IDEAS

Bags for transporting waste to Abbey Gardens

Plant signs and tags

Recipe Book

Local Fusion Food

Gardening services

Map of local gardening schemes

Growing Kit for home

Food Processing Tool

Car Greenhouse

Manual for Land Share

Stories-collector for the different voices of the local history

Label free garden

No Olympics stamp

Planting pots/ swap pots

13.00 Lunch at Abbey Gardens

14.00 Break-out groups

The group organised itself into smaller workshop teams to follow up certain themes, and to use the information and ideas gathered so far in order to develop a brief for a new product. Feedback was to the whole group :

Compost

- Generate Methane to power something, example Methane Street Lamp, also for cooking, light etc.
- Bio-gas generator
- Wind turbine building workshop
- « wormey » juice
- Collect food waste locally, using a trolley, or individual household collection
- An archeology of compost
- Swap food waste for bottled liquid compost

Methane Lamp
Compost Collection Bag
Compost Collection Mechanism
Compost Swap Scheme

Knowledge Exchange

- Cloth wrapping for food to take home from garden
- As a reward scheme : larger cloth for more work in garden
- Telling local stories on the bags/cloths/sheets
- Linking local gardening projects
- Find out Council collection and intercept it

Reward Scheme
Printed food wrapping sheets, « Wrapping with Knowledge »
DIY Signposts/Seasonal Signs

Tool

- a tool that also makes the process visible
- demonstrating the mechanism in public/public interactive event
- to adapt to different seasons
- to involve, engage many people
- examples : food mill, a still, cow manure still, press, spoon and candle tree popcorn machine
- could do : packaging, measuring/sorting (Mill), smoking, drying (tea), fermenting, extruding (pasta), distilling, compressing
- why process ? to make it last, mobile,
- to process edible and non-edible material
- use bacteria cultures to bind material/ fermentation process
- time as part of process/ to be processed over time
- to be accessible by many
- should be spectacular
- to be used for off-site events

Compressor with multiple molds (cube, ball, etc),
to process garden and off site material,
using action/involvement by many,
and produce multiple outcomes to eat, play with,
plant, etc

Histories of Abbey Gardens

- to re-tell the history by picking random bits of the history collected so far
- circulating misinformation about the garden, e.g about the ruin on site
- use packaging to tell stories
- the garden is without roots, the new soil doesn't hold much history
- telling the stories with images, text, audio, signs, etc
- layered cakes or making up a new cake

Packaging with info
Information/Signage System
Abbey Gardens Cake
Cake Mold/Tin
Abbey Gardens Dinner Service (plates, etc)
Timeline

19.00

Friday Session_39 COMMUNAL/COLLECTIVE/COMMON GARDENS/LAND/INITIATIVES

at public works studio
1-5 Vyner Street
London E2 9DG



With presentations by
Nina Pope from Somewhere on What Will the Harvest Be? at Abbey Gardens in Stratford
Celine Condorelli talking about commons and things in common
Cristina Cerulli, University of Sheffield and Studio Polpo, about the Crockes-Walkley Transition group in Sheffield
Nolwenn Marchand from aaa on Le 56 ECOintersice in Paris

Followed by discussion and food and drinks.

Saturday 27 March

10.30

A conversation about values and trade in regards to the new product becoming part of the Abbey Gardens Honesty Box stock and the associated International Village Shop network. The question was raised what the Friends of Abbey Gardens and those who provide the product would want to get in return.

Engagement ?

Money ?

Skills ?

Knowledge ?

Nothing ?

Extended representation of the garden ?

The exchange/purchase of the product should contribute to communicating the story/stories of Abbey Gardens further.

Introducing an Abbey Gardens Loyalty Card

Issue of the garden actually raising house prices in the street and increasing property values and possibly speculations.

11.30 – 14.00

Prototype workshops and presentation

The groups remained divided by theme, aiming towards a first prototype for new products. Feedback was to the whole group after lunch.



FINAL PRODUCT IDEAS

Compost

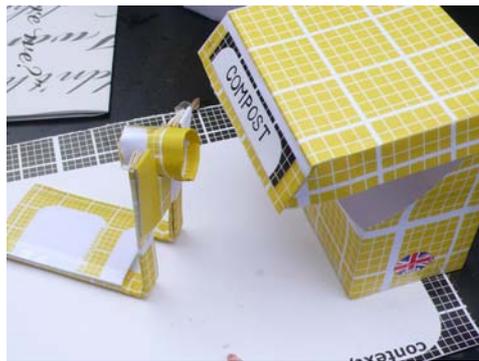
COMPOST BUCKET

- for domestic collection in the neighbourhood
- including a tag with information about composting and the garden
- with a small container to distribute seasonal produce in return
- using recycled buckets and tins



COMPOST CATAPULT

- to catapult the content from the bucket into the compost bins



Knowledge Exchange

CLOTH WRAPPING (FUROKISHI)

- with information printed on
- using food related fabrics



PRINTED TAPE

- with extracts from the timeline printed on (partial history)

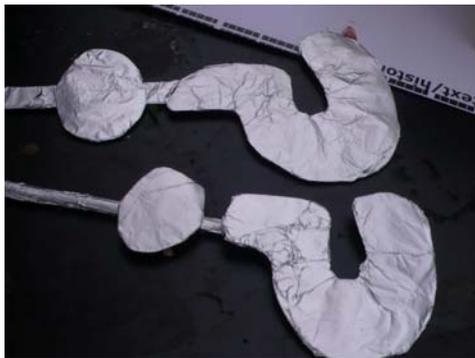


PLANT LABELS

- using waste wooden spoons and stamp

HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THIS IS PLANT LABEL

- to kick start conversations amongst users of the garden
- to contribute to the plant data base



SIGN POST

- to show a local network of related initiatives
- a changing sign
- possible as guerilla sign posting using existing poles



HISTORICAL GARDEN FIGURES

- dressing up used spoons as individuals who have been involved in the making of Abbey Gardens



Tool

CARNIVAL COMPRESSO



Histories

CAKE SCENES

- made from cake
- images to provoke a story
- making new stories
- story telling as making history



RUIN CAKE MOLD



14.00

Presentation Ballykinlar Community Centre

By Ann Marie and Sarah, who have set up a caravan as an informal and mobile community centre for their home village of Ballykinlar in Northern Ireland.

Discussing the possibility to run a International Village Shop Production Workshop there.

