

Open School East
Year 4
2017



About

Open School East is a space for artistic learning that is free, experimental, collaborative and brings together diverse voices. We provide tuition and studio space to emerging artists, run learning activities for young people and adults, commission artists to develop participatory projects, and produce and host cultural events and social activities for and with everyone.

Open School East is committed to making the arts a more open sector and to fostering cultural and social exchanges between artists and the broader public. We do this by opening our programmes outwards, responding to our locality, and providing an informal environment for the sharing of knowledge and skills across all communities and generations.

Our approach is innovative, versatile and inclusive: we equip artists at an early stage of their career with the tools to become resourceful and self-sufficient, and enable participants to shape their experience and creative voice by becoming active learners and co-producers of OSE's programmes.

Open School East was founded in 2013 in East London and relocated to Margate, Kent in 2017.



The Associates Programme

Now in its fifth year, the Associates Programme is a successful alternative art school model with a focus on inclusion and co-production. **Free to attend and non-accredited**, the programme runs across twelve months – from January to December – and is principally self-directed, creating platforms for the associate artists to develop their practice. Our offer includes:

- Shared studio provision, accessible 24/7;
- Tuition and mentorship from international practitioners and curators;
- Pastoral and practical support;
- Seed-funding to develop, research or initiate a project.

The associates come together two days a week (Thursdays and Fridays) to receive tuition, meet their mentors, work and collaborate on projects, and plan activities. Tuition is delivered through a combination of workshops, seminars, group crits and excursions, a number of which are open to the public.

Term 1 is about immersion and the realisation of a project through collective learning. For this, we invite an artist to design the curriculum. In contrast, Term 2 and 3 are shaped by the associates who self-direct their learning around their practice and shared interests, and formulate a programme of public workshops and events.

In 2017, we invited artist **Matthew Darbyshire** to conceive a curriculum attempting to diffuse the customary specialisms of process, performance, conceptual, installation, critical, community and public art. A series of weekly workshops, whose outcome gradually accumulated into a collectively conceived “total artwork”, were run by leading practitioners including: Melissa Appleton, Yemi Awosile, Lucy Beech, Pablo Bronstein, Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, Nicolas Deshayes, Milo van der Maaden, Eddie Peake, and Jessica Warboys. Through its tongue in cheek appropriation of a theatre production’s constituents, Darbyshire’s curriculum paid particular attention to experimentation, location, identity, environment, economy, technology and materiality.

Mentors in 2017 were: Matthew Darbyshire, Paul Maheke, Sophie Mallett, Tom Morton, Sally O’Reilly, Trish Scott and Maki Suzuki.



The Associates

Associates at OSE are emerging artists from different generations, backgrounds and levels of education, who work in a variety of media. Following a yearly open call sent locally, nationally and internationally, prospective associates are selected according to the following criteria:

- Artistic quality;
- A recognised need to access free learning opportunities outside the formal structures of school, college or university;
- The ability and willingness to work collaboratively and to enter into a meaningful dialogue with local audiences and publics from further afield.

“For me OSE was a critical and supportive context – a community of mentors, peers and friends – in which to challenge/disrupt my practice, collaborate, and fail/learn. I think this helped me unlock more rewarding approaches to research and making, with studio work and public workshops mutually informing one another.”

– Josephine Sweeney, OSE 2017 alumnus

“My time at OSE has completely reactivated my practice and I now feel a renewed energy and ambition. Having been a practicing artist for almost thirty years, I think I had stagnated: the OSE programme not only allowed me to rethink and retune my research and practical outcomes, it also introduced me to a collaborative way of working which I have found tremendously exciting and productive. Already my first project of 2018 is a collaborative piece with fellow OSE alumnus Chloe Ashley.”

– Sara Trillo, OSE 2017 alumnus

“Having moved from the West Midlands to Kent just before the programme began, I feel that Open School East has introduced me to such an amazing network of people and organisations, which has helped enormously with my relocation to the South East.”

– Chloe Ashley, OSE 2017 alumnus

Associates in 2017 were: Chloe Ashley, Roxman Gatt, Emma Gibson, George Harding, Jessica Jordan-Wrench, Kris Lock, Joanna Murray, Lou Lou Sainsbury, Josephine Sweeney, Sara Trillo, Emily Whitebread and Jacob Woods.

Associates Projects: Highlights

While at OSE, **Josephine Sweeney** began investigating Manston Airport in Kent (currently inoperative). This site gave specificity to ongoing research around globalisation, logos, memorial architecture and portals. One resulting iteration of the research was 'A Logo for a Lungfish' – a stagnant boggy water feature which takes its form from the meridian floor design at the airport (pictured on the left).



The work produced by **Kris Lock** for the final show (top right image) was influenced both by the public-facing workshops he co-authored and by a close proximity to the sea. Research into artificial islands, seasteading and aquapelagos manifested as an assemblage of ceramic sculptures, sound and video.



Throughout the year, **Roxman Gatt**'s research looked at cars (specifically BMW E30) and the fetishisation of objects and brands in a consumer capitalist society. This led to a project titled 'Imhabba bl-addocc' which entailed a sound piece, two video works as well as a performance which took place in a car park in Malta.

The Alumni community

Former associates continue to work collaboratively and often set up collective studios at the end of the programme. In early 2018, five of the twelve 2017 associates got together to start a project space immediately next door to OSE and will continue using OSE as a resource.

The alumni maintain tight connections with the organisation and engage in close dialogue with the current associates, forming a growing alumni community. While two out of six mentors are alumni, other former associates are regularly invited to lead workshops with the associates, young former people and members of the public.

Alumni have gone on to exhibit and perform at UK venues such as De La Warr Pavilion, Chisenhale Gallery, Turner Contemporary, Tate Modern and Britain, and internationally at the Venice Biennial, Apex Art in New York and the Baltic Triennial.



OSE alumni 2017



OSE alumni 2016



OSE alumni 2015



OSE alumni 2013-14

“While OSE clearly provides an environment for rigorous thinking around artistic practice and associates develop a specific project or ‘line of enquiry’ during their time at the school, the outside world is never far away. OSE’s vision is of a different kind of art education that is not only free but more open to those largely excluded from the established art school system. It’s this espousal of openness, expressed through its public programme and commitment to its locality, that perhaps most defines the school.”

– Chris Sharratt, writer and editor

Artists Commissions

Every year, we commission two artists, designers or writers to develop participatory projects, which enable participants (associates and members of the public alike) to develop new skills, while giving them a voice – both in the creative and social sense.

- **The Incomers Project** was a 10-week long, collective writing project conceived and led by writer and OSE mentor Sally O'Reilly. The project addressed subjects of migration, embeddedness, local rumours and daydreaming. The 15 participants learnt skills in creative writing, field recording and audio-editing, and worked towards an evening-long presentation of their work on the site of the Lido.

"The Incomers Project was a highly enriching collaborative experience. Participating to produce and exhibit a piece of work inspired me to further explore writing, poetry, sound and apply to OSE as an associate."

– **Dipesh Pandya, Incomers Project participant**

- **Spelunking** was an 8-week project led by artist Benedict Drew with OSE associates, which took the participants on a journey into subterranean space as a metaphor for resistance. The 23 participants staged chapters, made artworks and learned about tunnels, speleology, smuggling, cavities and cryptocurrency. The project resulted in a 33-min film, premiered in November.



Public Programme

Our public programme enables interactions between the artistic community, the local neighbourhood and the broader public. It is conceived by the associates, who work in groups around their shared interests, by OSE alumni and guest collaborators.

- **Me Myself and I**, invited practitioners working with performance and sound to talk about their work as well as give workshops. Guests included: multi-disciplinary artist Andrew Kerton, artist, composer and performer Mira Calix and non-binary research artist and singer Clair le Couteur.
- **Afloat** was a series of workshops led by guest artists and thinkers and OSE associates on the theme of seaside architecture, folly, leisure pursuits and tourism, against the backdrop of radical history in Margate. Guests included: artist Milo van der Maaden and Ruth Potts, Senior Lecturer in Ecological Design Thinking at Schumacher College.
- **Skills-based workshops** around filmmaking, sound recording and video editing were organised by OSE associates throughout the year.



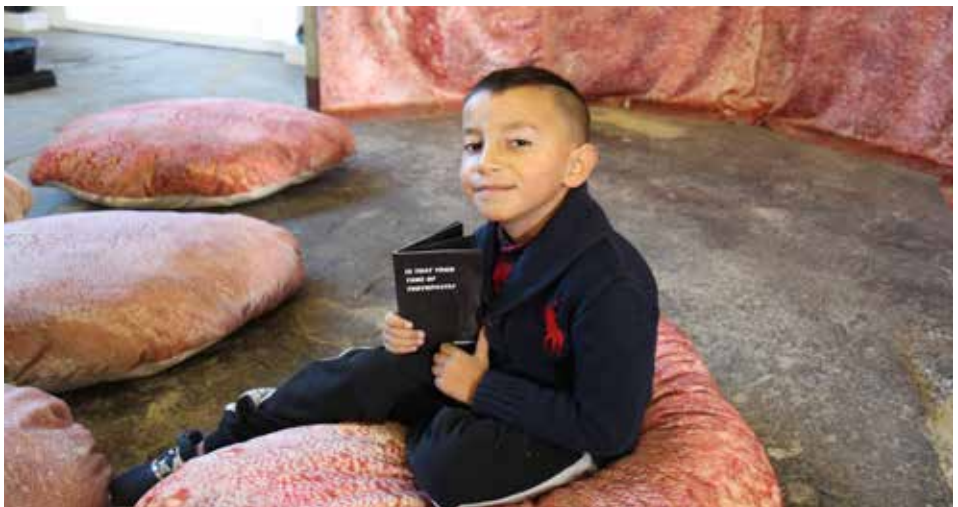
Working with Young People

- In summer 2017, we ran a week-long carnival arts school for young people aged 7 to 12 who live in and around Cliftonville West. Due to popular demand, we resumed art learning activities from October to December, offering weekly art classes on Wednesday afternoons. The children called it the **Despacito Art School** after the 2017 summer hit.

“Open School East is a fun and friendly place, you can bond with new people and make new friends, like I did. All the arts and crafts are fun and we do a variety of different types. The staff are really helpful and kind, and safely watches or walks us home. Once I was late and they gave me the materials to make it at home. It has encouraged me to get out more and do more active things than just sit around.”

– **Solar, Despacito Art School participant, aged 10**

- In 2017, we also started research and planning for the Young Associates Programme (YAP), a new strand of work inspired by our Associates Programme. The YAP is a new, free and accredited 10-month long creative learning programme for people aged 16 to 19. Akin to a foundation course, but more flexible in form, the YAP is the natural continuation of OSE’s commitment to increasing equality of access to education and to making the arts a more open sector. It will be piloted in autumn 2018 and launch in its final form in autumn 2019.



In Numbers

- A total of **2,698** people attended our activities in 2017.
- Open School East supported the artistic and professional development of **12** emerging artists selected out of **83** applications.
- The associates received ongoing mentorship from **7** artists, curators and writers, and teaching from **35** international practitioners, delivered through workshops, lectures, seminars and site visits.
- The associates developed **6** collaborative projects delivered in the locale and our open studios and final exhibition – showcasing the associates' work – attracted **997** visitors.
- Our artists commissions, workshops and youth programmes have enabled **1061** adult Margate residents and **56** young people to learn new skills in screenprinting, filmmaking, costume and instrument-making, and audio/voice recording.
- **584** emerging artists and art students have benefited from OSE's public seminars and talks, and from direct contact with key practitioners.



Organisation

Team

Anna Colin, co-director and co-founder

Laurence Taylor, co-director and co-founder

Ayaan Bulale, communications & events coordinator

Naami Padi, development coordinator

Board

Justin O'Shaughnessy, independent producer (Chair)

Ryan Gander, artist

Hadrian Garrard, director, Create

Sarah Griffin, independent curator of applied arts

Sarah McCrory, director, Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art and OSE co-founder

Zoe McLeod, partner, Counterculture Partnership LLP

Sam Thorne, director, Nottingham Contemporary and OSE co-founder

Owen Watson, associate, 6a architects

Contact information

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Registered Charity No: 1154104

Supporters in 2017

Arts Council England

Kent County Council

Big Lottery

Roger Stirk + Partners

Create London

Margate Festival

Pilar Corrias

Susan May



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



“Open School East was an incredibly life changing experience for me. With the collective power of artists, children, dogs and other critters, it proved the political/social/emotional importance of collectivity and collaboration in art making, which I believe to be a necessity for working and organising as a young artist today. I’m now working in a collective with several of the alumni next door.”

– Lou Lou Sainsbury, OSE 2017 alumnus