

## ***Staking Claims on the Distance*** – Commissioning Brief

As part of *Overmorrow*, The NewBridge Project are commissioning a piece of public furniture to be installed in an outdoor environment, that invites social relationships and acts as a permanent monument to the present.

The recent toppling of the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol following 2020's Black Lives Matter demonstrations in the wake of the killing of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis police and countless others, has given greater visibility to the debate around public monuments.

This debate is not new, and is too often focused on the individuals memorialised, failing to address the more important questions of why we build monuments, who and what we choose to memorialise, and what our changing attitudes and attachments to these monuments reveal about our own values as a society.

Both in the UK and across the world, monuments are built to those who have accrued great wealth or power, or as a demonstration of the might and reach of the state. Installed in our public spaces, they often become symbols of nationalism and fail to reflect the society they stand to.

### **Public Space**

Our public spaces are increasingly privatised: manipulated by wealth, power, and the state. From 'hostile architecture' that restricts our movement within public spaces; to the contested monuments standing over our public squares; to the invisible lines traced across our towns and cities that restrict our rights and speech: our public spaces are no longer a common.

Increasingly, public spaces are less places for meeting, exchange and dialogue, and more assets to exploit and generate profit for the private sector and ultimately financial and cultural capital for the state. Though not often inclusive by design, people reshape these spaces and structures through their interactions – gathering on steps, benches, playgrounds and squares for meeting and conversation, play and protest.

### **Overmorrow Monument**

As part of *Overmorrow*, The NewBridge Project is commissioning a permanent monument to the present. Rather than memorialising an individual, we want to commission a monument that memorialises society here and now by enabling

people to encounter each other – a bench, forum, platform, playground. It will serve as a piece of infrastructure that is a direct invitation to stay and enjoy, a welcome without hostility.

The monument will be designed to be interacted with and activated by the public and will be installed in an outdoor environment. We would like the monument to be enjoyed by different communities, so it can activate new environments. Its' ambition is to reflect the values of *Overmorrow* – one that imagines a better, more equitable and more open world; that promotes solidarity, mutual support and nurturing social relationships – to disrupt the idea of what a monument can be.

### **Monument audio works and public events**

The Overmorrow Monument is a live object that is designed to be activated and continually added to. The NewBridge Project will work alongside the selected artist to help support and deliver a series of public events throughout the summer of 2021 centred around the monument.

### ***Staking Claims on the Distance***

*'Some years ago I was talking to Le Corbusier about Peter Yates with whose work he was familiar, this boy can see things said he, but to me it seemed more relevant that Peter could do things. In his paintings he prodded the depths rather than depicting the surface. Simmering passions behind the stony immobility. Cathedrals like rocks and rocks like cathedrals. From the vision of his beloved Durham locked in the mist of time to the Ultramarine rhapsody of Cyclopic islands. By staking claims on the distance he excites the imagination. Simplicity, directness and purity give his work the power. That was Peter Yates my friend the poet architect. The song is over but the chords go on vibrating'.*

*Staking Claims on the Distance* has been cited from the origins and legacy of Gordon Ryder and Peter Yates's Kenton Bar Estate, Newcastle upon Tyne.

For further reading: [https://www.ryderarchitecture.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ARQ\\_Ryder\\_and\\_Yates\\_Paper.pdf](https://www.ryderarchitecture.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ARQ_Ryder_and_Yates_Paper.pdf).