

Value Beyond Capital

Capitalist logic pervades all aspects of contemporary life. Every plane of existence is territorialised, broken down, and transformed into units of value. Personal worth is converted into currencies of utility and exchange. Time, health, relationships — lives — are managed with business rationality. Our senses perceive this, and our hearts tell us we should reject it, but we have been induced from a young age to see it as advancement, of progress and efficiency.

Margaret Thatcher pronounced: “there is no alternative”. The market economy was the pinnacle of human ingenuity, and its commandments were enshrined forever more. But this is because capitalism colonises our horizons: past, present, and future. It encompasses us and limits our vision, foreclosing the possibility of something different: something more just, equitable, and sustainable.

The arts have long sought to establish zones of rebellion, ways to revolt against exploitation and oppression. It excels in radical thought, creativity, and fearless expression. Yet history — and modern society — shows us that capitalism feeds off this innovation. The more groundbreaking the work or idea, the more eager it is to subsume and consume it. This calculating reach drains sacred values from the social and cultural and substitutes them with monetary and transactional merit: a perfect resource for the arts *industry*.

We want to interrogate our position within these political-economic systems, particularly as an organisation who began life in a building owned by two of the richest men in the UK and explore Value Beyond Capital. The NewBridge Project has relocated several times, but our roots remain the same. We are committed to our artists, collaborators, members and local communities and want to help them prosper. Our new building in Shieldfield offers exciting potential for the future, and we are creating an open call for artists and creators to assist us in imagining what this could be.

Building upon our work on solidarity, we want to place cooperation, shared interest, and mutual benefit at the heart of what we do. We want to envisage how these socio-ethical beliefs could be enacted, where they could lead us, and how they could help reclaim the sanctity of our endeavours. How can we work with our communities, so we are stronger together? And how can we ensure each community has a fair stake?

Capitalist logic belittles and depreciates. Its maps of meaning warn of dragons in unexplored waters. But these are marks of ignorance and fear. Subversion starts as a feeling of unease, disquiet, that all is not well. It sprouts into a desire for change, to create something better.

There can be alternatives. And we want to start, here, right now.

Help us make The NewBridge Project in Shieldfield a place where values and wealth beyond capital will flourish.