



## **KNOWLE WEST MEDIA CENTRE**

### **Living, Working, Making Together - Artist Residencies**

**January 2018**

#### **(1) Introduction**

How do artists and communities live, work and make together? How might defunct models of re-generation and 'art-washing' be redefined and re-imagined? What could the relationship between artists and communities in edge-city and suburban areas like Knowle West be?

Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) is seeking to commission three artists to explore these questions through a series of residencies in Knowle West between May to September 2018.

KWMC is a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) digital arts charity based in Knowle West, South Bristol. Since it was set up in 1996, KWMC has worked with digital technologies and the arts to support people to imagine and develop ideas about social change, prototype new approaches to addressing needs and aspirations, and share the learning across the UK and beyond.

#### **(2) Context information**

Knowle West is a neighbourhood in South Bristol. When it was first conceived - almost 100 years ago - it was seen by many as the future of housing, founded on Garden City principles. Dubbed "the five thousand island forest" by the workers who built the estate in the 1930s it is built on a hill surrounded by wild green space, and comprises one hundred streets, five thousand homes, and twelve thousand people. Its utopian and geographical inheritance continues to shape the neighbourhood today- creating dislocation and isolation from the rest of the city but also, a sense of escape, a pioneering edge-place spirit, and space to tinker.

At the centre of the new neighbourhood that emerged in the inter-war years was Filwood Broadway. This parade of shops, cinema, community centre and swimming pool was designed to be the social hub of the new neighbourhood. For many years, it proved to be so - with crowds out on a Saturday night enjoying dancing and boxing and bingo, and a bustling high street with shops and services during the day.

The rise of mass car ownership from the 1970s onwards made it harder for Filwood Broadway to compete with shops and attractions in the wider city, and it entered a



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period of decline. It is now re-emerging, with new shops opening, citizen-led homes being made on site, and community groups leading ground-up efforts to green and rejuvenate the place.

All through its rise, decline, and faltering re-invention, Filwood Broadway has bristled with characters and stories. And in 2018 Filwood Broadway and community centre celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is a collective moment for the estate and community to come together, get to know its past a little better, celebrate its character, and reflect on what might come next.

At the same moment city centre arts spaces and venues are under threat and housing / living costs are high. What could an area and community like Knowle West offer the cities arts community? How could spaces in Knowle West be used as new sites of making and living? How might artists form mutually beneficial collaborative relationships with residents in the area?

### **(3) Background information**

In September 2017, KWMC hosted a pop-up *Artist Hotel* in Filwood Community Centre (FCC) raising questions around where artists live, work and make in the city, exploring collaborative approaches to urban planning and how to think and work beyond gentrification. <https://www.a-n.co.uk/news/bristols-artist-hotel-awake-ideas-art-community-regeneration>.

After this event Filwood Community Centre expressed keen interest in exploring new uses for FCC. The centre already runs an active programme of classes including boxing, Slimming world, tap-dance and bingo. However, in light of recent funding cuts there is a need to animate the centre in new ways. There is an appetite for experimentation, a will to collaborate, and practically experiment with different ways to use local spaces and seed new relationships between local people and artists.

### **(4) The Residency**

KWMC are inviting three artists or artist groups to spend time in Knowle West:

- To explore how Filwood Broadway could become a new site for artistic production and exchange with local spaces and people.
- To create outcomes that can be shared in the community and through a culminating exhibition in the KWMC Test-Space in the Autumn (this could be documentation if work is live).

Key themes and questions include:

- How FCC and Filwood Broadway could become a new site for artist production and collaboration
- New uses for FCC



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- How FCC could become a social space for artists and local people of different ages

Artists should create material that can be shared with and in the community – including site specific and outdoor display etc. – as well as generate content that can be included in an exhibition at KWMC Test-Space in the Autumn. (this could be documentation if work is live).

Artists can propose to generate new work through the residency or to explore a specific aspect of existing work in a new context. We welcome proposals from any discipline; outcomes could vary from - book-works, sculpture, sound-works, print works, photography, project documentation, performance, workshop-series etc.

**The structure of the residency will include:**

- Becoming immersed into the local community
- Spending at least two weeks on site.
- Participating in two shared moments with the other commissioned artists and community stake-holders, such as a dinner / event / sharing etc.
- Support from KWMC staff (producer and engagement support) to engage and involve local people where needed.
- The residency will take place between May - Sept 2018. Each artist can structure their time over this period in the way that works best for them: (i.e.: two hours every week or two intense weeks' full time).
- Preparing work to be shown in an exhibition at KWMC Test Space in Autumn 2018.
- Participation in one talk / symposium as part of the Autumn Test Space exhibition.
- Optional attendance at the Filwood Community Centre 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, ahead of the residency official May start.

Each commissioned artist will need to document the evolution of their work in a form that can be shared, for example on web and social media.

A community panel, plus a the KWMC arts team will create the shortlist of artists and those selected for interview will be asked to do a very short presentation outlining their approach and initial ideas to this small selection group.

These residencies are designed to seed and test out new ways of working with the community in Filwood Broadway and have the potential to be scaled up through further commissions in the following two years.

**(5) Fees and support**

The residency fee will be **£1,500** for each participant.

Travel and subsistence are not included.



There is an additional materials budget to be agreed with the arts producer as the project develops.

The fee will be paid in two sums, £500 on signing the contract and £1,000 on completion of the project.

KWMC will provide producer assistance for the project, including project management, community engagement, technical support, access to tech equipment, research assistance, press and communications, access to The Factory (KWMC's digital fabrication space), hot-desking space at KWMC, making space at Filwood Community Centre, connections with community stakeholders, the wider KWMC team, and support in preparing work for the Test Space exhibition and culminating talk / symposium in Autumn.

Residency artists will also have the option to stay in the citizen-led We Can Make house (TAM) as part of their residency.

For full report on We Can Make project: <http://kwmc.org.uk/projects/wecanmake/>

### **(6) To Apply:**

Please send 2 x PDF documents:

One outlining the following:

- Your practice and the way you work
- How you would approach working in this context
- Why you are interested in this project and initial ideas of what you would explore
- Any interests in mentoring or collaboration with other art-forms
- Ideal time-frame for the residency

And another with CV and examples of your work.

If any artists were unable to attend the open lunch and neighbourhood tour we held on Dec 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 and feel you would benefit from understanding the area / context more before applying the arts team can happily offer a tour / visit to share information given on this day.

Please email your proposal to [Martha.King@kwmc.org.uk](mailto:Martha.King@kwmc.org.uk) by **February 21<sup>st</sup> midnight**

Interviews will be held on February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>

We welcome applications from artists of all disciplines and backgrounds. We particularly welcome applications from groups that are underrepresented in the arts.

### **(7) Contact**

If you would like any further information about this project or have any questions, please contact Martha at the above email, or on 0117 903 0444.



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