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News From Nowhere: Visions of Utopia

a project created by steve wheeler in conjunction with Commercial[too], art-tracks and with support from the London Borough of Waltham Forest

Call for submissions – *you need to act on this straight away!* The size and scope of this project means that there are numerous opportunities for creative people in all fields to produce work to be included in this event. From written text, images and sound, to large scale sculpture, performance and work without category by people who might not consider them self to be an artist. This is your chance to add your name to the list of invited artists and writers, and to help to make this a significant cultural project. Please read the outline information and check out the website for further details.

The deadlines for submission vary according to the nature of the proposed work and the venue – you will be advised upon receipt of an outline proposal.

News From Nowhere: visions of utopia, promises to be one of the largest art events in London this year. A number of public sites in North East London, including The William Morris Gallery, the Changing Room Gallery, Vestry House Museum, The Waltham Forest Theatre situated on an island and surrounded by a moat, Lloyd Park, and a massive building site in the centre of Walthamstow, will be the stage for exhibitions, interventions, installations, audio visual works, music performances and public art activities from 3rd September to 8th October 2005.

Based on the title of the William Morris novel *News From Nowhere*, and set in and around his birth-place, the project aims to re-examine the legacy of utopianism: upheld by the idealists of the 19th and early 20th century, who believed passionately in the possibilities of radical social change, with visions of a future egalitarian world, it is a distant cry from our post-modern, post-ideological times.

An International line-up of artists, designers, musicians, writers, thinkers and performers are invited to present their work in the context of the various spaces.

The events, works in progress and completed pieces will be documented and published on-line in the Visions of Utopia web site. The site will also provide a global forum for open contributions, reports and sightings of utopia.

A newspaper, "News from Nowhere" will be published and distributed, including essays, documentation and interviews with local and global residents, as well as those of the participating artists and organizers.

On the following pages are details of the venues and sites.

visit the **Vision of Utopia** site <http://www.art-tracks.net/projects.html>

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Below is a list of venues with brief descriptions – more detailed information is available and site visits are strongly recommended.

[1]: Arcadia – The Building Site

Throughout the summer of 2005 artists will be exploring the archaeology of utopia on the site of a demolished shopping arcade situated in central Walthamstow. The one remaining feature from its former use, is a strip of tarmac, now literally a road to nowhere. Large enough to accommodate a small town centre, the site will be structured around the ideal of a medieval square or village green, where the “inhabitants” will be able to meet and perform on the bandstand. Patterns of streets will emerge from the surrounding rubble, where artists will be given specific plots on which to make their own personal version of utopia. This will be a massive, cooperative undertaking and a unique opportunity to examine the creative process on a social scale.

Members of the public will not have access to site, either during work in progress or upon completion: there will be three gated viewing points in the perimeter wall, plus a number of strategic “spy-holes” for the micro-utopias that are to be attached to the inside of the wall.

[2]: William Morris Gallery www.lbwf.gov.uk/wmg

William Morris, Designer, Craftsman, Writer and Socialist, was born at Walthamstow on the 24th March 1834 and died – ‘having done more work than most ten men’ – at Hammersmith in 1896.

The 18th-century Water House, Morris’s family home from 1848–1856 is now the William Morris Gallery. It is the only public museum devoted to the country’s best known and most versatile designer with internationally important collections illustrating Morris’s life, achievements and influence.”

For the first time, a selected group of artists and designers will be given a unique opportunity to work within the House and permanent displays. Newly created works will be created in response to the space and artefacts, resulting in a series of juxtapositions and interventions.

‘Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful’

WM The Beauty of Life,

1880

‘...I love art, and I love history; but it is living art and living history that I love. If we have no hope for the future, I do not see how we can look back on the past with pleasure.’

WM The History of Pattern–

Designing, 1882

[3]: Lloyd Park

Formerly the Grounds to the Water House [William Morris Gallery], Lloyd Park offers landscaped lawns, formal gardens and other features, which may also be considered for the siting of outdoor work.

[4]: The Bowling Green

An artificial bowling green set behind the William Morris Gallery, it is hoped will play host to a sound installation by Ivor Cutler.

[5]: The Utopian Independent Island State – Waltham Forest Theatre

Situated in Lloyd Park, to the rear of the William Morris Gallery is an island surrounded by a moat, accessible by two bridges across the water. The Waltham Forest Theatre occupies the main central part of the island, with a considerable amount of outdoor spaces in which work can be sited. Members of the public will have to negotiate their way through border control before they can cross to the Island – an entire site-specific visual and audio installation.

[6]: The Changing Room Gallery

www.lbwf.gov.uk/crg

The familiar white cube gallery space is set within the park to the rear of the William Morris Gallery and Theatre. It will host an 'office based installation in progress' that will act as a temporary hub for the project. The editorial team of News From Nowhere will be taking over the Gallery to receive reports and sightings of Utopia from around the planet via the web and other means. Documentation from Arcadia [The building Site] together with specifically commissioned artworks will be in the mix. Viewers will be able to experience the chaos of a new world order in the making. The work of hundreds of artists, writers, thinkers, musicians, and performers, all crammed into one tiny space.

[7]: The Moat

Home to an array of wildlife, flora and fauna, the moat provides opportunities for work that engages directly with this water based environment.

[8]: The Town Hall

Regarded as the grandest town hall complex in London, designed in the 1930's it's severe classicism has been said to have Stalinist overtones; the adjacent Assembly Halls bedars the William Morris legend "Fellowship is Life and Lack of Fellowship is Death." – it will play host to site specific works by Robert Connolly and Trevor Rundle.