

RUSKIN SQUARE PUBLIC ART

Update May 2016



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The Art Strategy established a process of brief development for the public art for Ruskin Square through action research with both local young people and local creative entrepreneurs, educators and decision makers in Croydon.

Four artists were invited to respond to the resulting brief.

From the four submissions the client commissioned the proposal made by the artist collaboration Cohen and Van Balen.

Cohen and Van Balen are in the process of refining their proposal for final sign off. The location of the art will be confirmed in discussion with CGLP and LBC.

RUSKIN ORE,
The Art Work; Concept and Material Resolution

Cohen and Van Balen will create an art work as an artificial ore made from the different materials 'mined' from the products and parts used in the building of Ruskin Square.



Indicative model of proposed work

ARTISTS STATEMENT

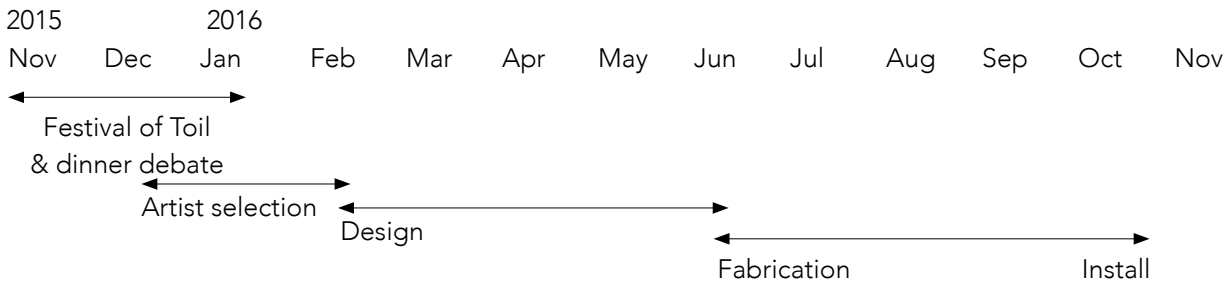
Buildings are increasingly high-tech manufactured objects, assembled from parts produced in a globalised neoliberal economy of hyper-fragmented labour, transforming the worker to a man-machine through scientific management of every single movement. By reversing the supply chains of construction parts towards an interpretation of raw matter, Cohen and Van Balen's work reflects on the energy, people and places through which these material transformations were made.

A selection of objects and parts will be deconstructed, un-made and transformed into artificial minerals: metals and glass will be melted and recast, stones carved, wires.

Where possible the process will involve the factories that manufacture the original parts: asking the labourers to un-make the objects they manufacture. This may be in China, Eastern Europe or Wales, depending on the part and its manufacturer.

The request to revert the object, returns imagination and performance back into the industrial manufacturing site. This process will be documented and exist as part of the legacy of the work.

PROGRAM



RUSKIN ART STRATEGY

Festival of Toil Dinner Debate

Brief Development + Action Research

The brief for the public art was established and refined through an action research process devised by muf architecture art. The two key action research events were the Ruskin Square Festival of Toil and the Dinner Debate.

The Festival and Debate explored what form a contemporary art work for Ruskin Square might take, in response to the propositions of the nineteenth century artist, critic and social entrepreneur John Ruskin.

Ruskin believed in the value of communal endeavour and artisan labour as a model of social and cultural equity.

How this is relevant today was tested by a production process and debated by the dinner guests, who bring local and international expertise from their fields in the public and private sector, from the social, cultural and economic structures of global capitalism to 'not for profit' organisations and individuals.

The cutlery, crockery and food for the dinner was produced working with local social enterprises and with a team of local young care leavers over a period of 3 months. The team constructed bellows and a furnace to smelt aluminium waste from the building site to make cutlery, which was polished on the pedal powered grinders and clay was extracted from soil dug from the site to make drinking vessels and an oven, in which to cook bread.



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