

INSTITUTE of KENTISH TOWN





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Certificate of Membership

Name.....

Date.....



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The History of the Institute



The Institute's Founder, Kenneth Isaac Tish

The Institute of Kentish Town was first founded in 1763 by Kenneth Isaac Tish, whose father was a nearby land owner. Kenneth, born in 1721, grew up in the orchards and gardens of Fenton House. In 1742, Kenneth attended Balliol College, Oxford, where he became friends with the economist and philosopher Adam Smith. Both men shared a passion for liberty, reason and free speech and their friendship shaped Kenneth's life, political views and choices.

On his return to Fenton House in 1750, Kenneth decided to move to the nearby town of Kentish Town, where he developed a great interest in the everyday life of the town. He subsequently began collecting random objects that people discarded or gave to him. An avid artist, he also began drawing the town, its church and its people. To this day, his drawings remain an interesting record of the town during the mid 1700's. By 1763, he had amassed a large collection of curiosities which he decided to put on public display under the title of the 'Institute of Kentish Town', arguing it acted as a record of the town's people, their fashions and mores. After Kenneth's untimely death in 1772, the Institute ran in to disrepair and eventually closed down. It is only recently that the Institute has received a grant to reopen and continue documenting the residents of Kentish Town.



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Exhibit A: The Institute

It is not often that one would approach a museum with a sense of caution or scepticism. We enter such institutions with a view to enriching our understanding of the world, to view objects which ordinarily exist outside the parameters of our everyday lives. We trust these institutions to provide accurate information; we put ourselves in their hands. Why would we want to think otherwise? However, as a social construct, the museum is a problematic site. It implies the interaction of personal taste, divided disciplines and objectivity battling with subjectivity. It is based on the hierarchical choice of some objects over others, and places a pedestal like importance on those objects it chooses. In recent years institutional critique has become increasingly popular, as artists wish to challenge the authority of the institution and the manner in which it displays information and thus influences knowledge.

The museum as medium (or in this case, institute as exhibition) highlights the way in which knowledge has traditionally been presented. This manner of framing one institutional practice within another encourages viewers to question this construction of knowledge. The Institute of Kentish Town casts a sideways glance towards the austerity of the traditional museum or archive, allowing those who visit it to directly contribute to the information it holds.

We intend this to be a living archive, pieced together by the local residents. The exhibition will play with the human compulsion to collect and archive the material of the world, whilst questioning the systems involved in the establishment of knowledge.

The Institute is at your mercy – you are invited to play with history, to manipulate the archive.



The Institute's Artists

IN direct reference to Kenneth Tish's own art work and drawings which originally recorded Kentish Town, the Institute has established an artist in residence scheme to those that are interested in the archival nature of artistic practice. The artists included in our current archive all attempt to document Kentish Town as a place and its residents, and acts as the basis for the Institute's archival exploration.

Milka Panayotova

Performance maker and visual artist, Milka Panayotova has been directing and producing her own shows as well as collaborating with theatre directors, choreographers, dancers and curators. She employs movement and media such as lighting, design, video and sound, while her dance formation includes contact improvisation, instant composition, yoga and capoeira.

Her academic qualifications include a BA in Fine Art (2006, Florence, Italy) with a thesis on light and space artists and an MA in Theatre: Visual Language of Performance (2010, London, UK) where her research focused on the role of the senses within performance in relation to audience participation.

For the community based project *The Institute of Kentish Town*, Milka contributes with an audio archive, where the stories of locals are recorded, thus creating the sound backdrop of the show. *Kentish Town Story Tellers* invites visitors to read out someone else's story and write one for the next person to come. All welcome to participate!



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Nic Harper

Often described as an Avant Garde artistic photographer, Nic Harper Studied at Chelsea School of Art and has assisted some of Britain's top photographers, such as John Swannel, David Bailey and Zanna Wilford. With a history in Dance photography which can be clearly seen in his work today, he attempts to include movement and unusual bodily forms in his images, while also trying to capture the personality of the individual.



www.nicharper.co.uk



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Jocelyn Allen

Jocelyn Allen is a recent Photographic Art graduate having studied for a BA at the University of Wales, Newport. Having lived in London for a month - and within walking distance of Kentish Town for just a couple of weeks - her work on show here is taken on her journeys via foot which explore her local environment. Though the photographs are not purely from Kentish Town, the area was passed through in order to get to the other locations.



www.jocelynallen.co.uk



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Credits

Artists-

Nic Harper- www.nicharper.co.uk
Jocelyn Allen - www.jocelynallen.co.uk
Milka Panayotova- www.milkapan.com
Rodrigue Dakouri

Curating and marketing

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Joanna Chard
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Louise Saville
Ines Silva
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Jocelyn Allen
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Diane O'Connor
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