



## The Black Cloud FAQs

### What is The Black Cloud?

*The Black Cloud* is a temporary pavilion-like structure in Victoria Park, Bedminster, Bristol, designed by artists Heather and Ivan Morison. It was raised by the artists and a group of 60 local volunteers and artists on Saturday 25 July and completed on Monday 27 July. It will be in the park until Sunday 6 December 2009.

### Who is it for?

Anyone is welcome to use the structure. For larger events and to avoid disappointment, we ask that you contact us at [blackcloud@situations.org.uk](mailto:blackcloud@situations.org.uk) to check the date on the programme calendar. There are a few guidelines for larger groups which we can also suggest, as well as help with publicising your event if you'd like to spread the word. These can also be downloaded from our home page at [www.situations.org.uk](http://www.situations.org.uk).

### Who commissioned it?

Situations is a public art commissioning programme at the University of the West of England. We commission temporary and permanent artworks outside conventional art or museum contexts. We are committed to developing work of international importance for the South West region, working hard to develop artists' proposals collaboratively that are sensitive to their location and context. We have no ongoing arts revenue income and raise all the funding for our projects from scratch.

### Who are the artists?

Heather and Ivan Morison live in Arthog in Wales and have worked in a variety of locations across the world. Their first work for Bristol was commissioned for the British Art Show in 2006 (see [http://www.situations.org.uk/archive\\_commissions\\_ivanandheathermorison.html](http://www.situations.org.uk/archive_commissions_ivanandheathermorison.html)). This project has been two years in development and is the largest project realised by the artists to date.

### How did it begin?

Two years in development, the project was first imagined by the artists during an Arts and Ecology residency undertaken by the artists in Bristol in 2007 supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the RSA (London). The artists took an alternative view on their research into climatic forecasting and sustainability, inspired by the post-apocalyptic visions of

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J.G. Ballard and Poul Anderson, to propose a shelter structure for an imagined future Bristol, baked dry by a relentless heat. The project relates to a series of structures and vehicles developed by the artists since 2006. *Tales of Space and Time* (2008), for example, was an ex-military Green Goddess fire engine was converted into a survivalist house truck and equipped with a comprehensive library of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction.

## **How was it designed and built?**

The structure was designed by the artists and Sash Reading ([www.asarch.co.uk](http://www.asarch.co.uk)), advised by engineers Structural Solutions. It's design is based on vernacular architecture from across the world which has been built to withstand extreme environmental conditions. *The Black Cloud* is not intended to be a carbon neutral structure. It is built from timber harvested from an area of woodland in Wales owned by the artists, and this timber has been treated using a Japanese technique that involves scorching the surface of the wood with blow-torches which forms a protective layer. The installation of the structure involved inserting concrete foundations and the use of fuel-powered machinery, due to the 5m height of the structure. The community barn-raising of the structure involved over 60 volunteers who came together on Saturday 25 July to help raise the prefabricated frames into place.

## **How was it funded?**

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation contributed half of the funding for this project, a charitable foundation which is dedicated to supporting innovative arts projects which have a particular involvement with local communities. The project was also supported by three departments of Bristol City Council - the Sustainability Unit, Bristol Parks and the Urban Design Unit. The University of the West of England also granted support for the programme of events. Spike Island offered their support through the discounted use of their facilities for the work's fabrication.

## **What will happen to the structure after 6<sup>th</sup> December?**

At present, the plan is to take down the structure on Sunday 6 December and it will be returned to the artists. As part of our commissioning policy, we always try to secure a long-term legacy for our projects for Bristol, and therefore the artists and Bristol City Council will discuss a possible option to have the structure on a long-term loan or to purchase the structure for another open space in Bristol.

## **Is photography allowed?**

Yes, of course. If you have any photos from the day that you would be willing to share, please upload them to Flickr ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)) with the tag 'Black Cloud Bristol'.