

**THEASTER
GATES**

SANCTUM

PROGRAMME NOTES

date: *time:*

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GATES

SANCTUM



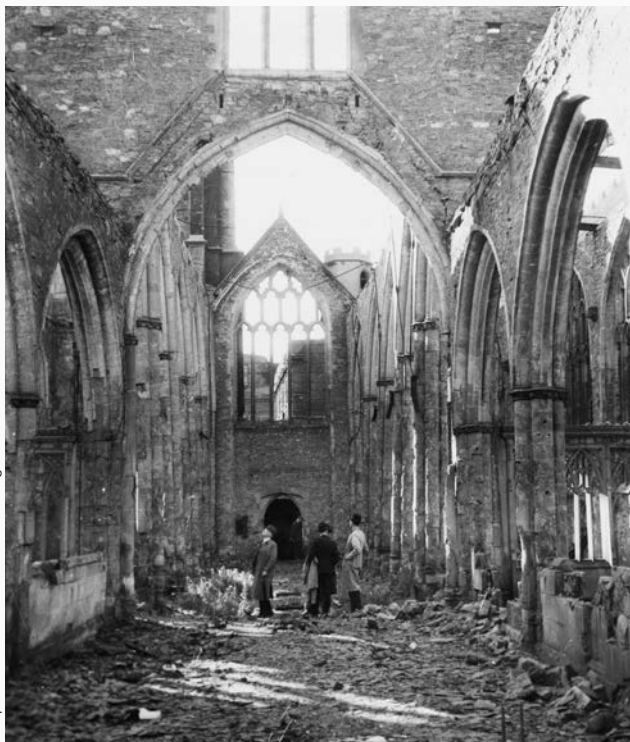
“I’m engaged in an open dialogue concerning the challenges of people’s right to the city – our total right to live fully, govern thoughtfully and have our desires fulfilled as much as our needs met.”

— THEASTER GATES

Sanctum is Theaster Gates’ first public project in England – a gathering place in the ruin of Temple Church in which a continuous programme of sound is sustained day and night over 24 days. Hundreds of performers, spoken word artists, musicians, choirs, bands and speakers resident in, and visiting, Bristol during these three and a half weeks, contribute to the sound of *Sanctum* over 552 hours.

Commissioned by arts producers Situations and developed in partnership with English Heritage and MAYK, *Sanctum* is one of six projects funded by Arts Council England Exceptional Fund as part of Bristol 2015 European Green Capital. *Sanctum* reflects Situations’ ongoing belief in the arts’ capacity to change and enrich how we see and act in the world and the great potential of spaces outside conventional arts venues to open up opportunities to engage directly in people’s lives.

Follow the story of *Sanctum* at:
www.sanctumbristol.com
[#sanctumbristol](https://twitter.com/sanctumbristol)



Temple Church is not dead.
It has just been sleeping.

On 24th November 1940, Bristol was subject to 10,000 incendiary bombs and 160 tons of high explosive in the

second night blitz of WWII. As the Lord Mayor of Bristol described at the time, “the City of Churches had in one night become the city of ruins.”



A fire raged through Temple Church, close to the primary target of the railway station, burning pews, shattering stained glass windows and destroying its internal fabric. Some weeks later, its ultimate destruction was saved by a passer-by who prevented two ministry officials from setting off explosive charges under the leaning tower, informing them that the tower was not a recent casualty. It had leaned, in fact, since 1390. The first English parish church to be taken into the ownership of the Ministry of Works, Temple Church has been protected under the care of English Heritage ever since – but not primarily because of its 14th century shell, but due to the remains of the original 12th century circular church of the Knights Templar, which lie hidden under its foundations. To the Dobunni Celtic tribe, Temple Church was, and remains

in contemporary Celtic tradition, a sacred place due to ley line alignment. And to the thousands who will gather in small groups here over the 24 days of *Sanctum*, it is a new gathering place to hear the city as never before. It is a site, then, that refutes one history, one story.

On the invitation to create his first public project in the UK, artist Theaster Gates was drawn to Temple Church as a once sacred site, now silent.

“I imagine that materials and spaces have life in them”, Gates suggests, “that they have something extremely sacred inside them, that might be sleeping or may have been put into a coma, but which is living. We have to find ways to activate the living.”

The artist’s *Dorchester Projects* in Chicago has become the touchstone for cultural regeneration in the international art field over the past few years. The project began in 2006, when Gates made a former sweet shop his home on South Dorchester Avenue and subsequently renovated the adjacent buildings using repurposed materials from across the city to rehouse retired collections of objects, such as 14,000 books from the former Prairie Avenue Bookstore, 60,000 glass slides from the University of Chicago’s department of art history, and 8,000 records from the now-closed Dr Wax record store. *Dorchester Projects* became a vibrant gathering point for film screenings, soul food dinners, research and listening, and a place of work for many individuals from the neighbourhood.

The Archive House and the Listening House,
Dorchester Projects, Chicago



It also led subsequently to establishment of the Rebuild Foundation and to the opening of Stony Island Arts Bank on Chicago’s South Side in 2015, Gates’ radically restored community savings and loan bank which will serve as a library, archive, exhibition space, scholar and artist resource.

Gates’ international projects and exhibitions radiate out from his studio’s base in Chicago. Most notably of recent years, *12 Ballads for Huguenot House* (his ambitious project involving the renovation of an abandoned house in Kassel, Germany for the exhibition dOCUMENTA (13) in 2012), *The Black Monastic* (his residency with the Black Monks of Mississippi at the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Portugal in 2014), *Freedom of Assembly* (his solo exhibition at White Cube, London in spring 2015) and *Three or Four*

Shades of Blues (his two-storey installation for the 14th Istanbul Biennial in autumn 2015). The latter's title is a nod to jazz musician Charles Mingus, whose style of collective improvisation and his free jazz contemporaries, have influenced Gates' on-going interest in combining and conflating styles, histories and collaborative endeavours.

"If we were to think about the way Ornette Coleman plays saxophone," Gates suggests, "there is a melodic structure that represents time, maybe even form. Coleman is making decisions to accumulate ideas, over and over again, so that even though time is moving forward, because the melody is playing itself over and over, time is also standing still, and as time stands still, Ornette Coleman can accumulate ideas, musical ideas. That's the way I think of materials. Histories conflate, because we keep reliving the same things over and over. It feels like in some ways there was a 1920s moment that turned into a 1960s moment that turned into a Ferguson moment. The fact that we have to keep living civil rights means that I can make a thing and it will seem like time has stood still. That's not always a good thing when you think about certain politics, but the work is asking questions about how materials accumulate, how a place accumulates; how time is not as linear as we imagine."

Gates does not indulge in the nostalgia of the salvaged object or the derelict site, but rather employs their historical significance to address contemporary realities of social injustice, inequality and exclusion. Temple Church, therefore,

offered a treasured, but overlooked site at the centre of the city – a place in which to gather multiple desires, histories and aspirations.

Into this charged site, which has remained locked to public access for some years due to the fragile nature of the building, enter now a series of materials which themselves speak of the city's complex stories – roof joists from an 18th century warehouse, bricks from the Salvation Army's citadel in the east of the city, and ten sets of wooden doors from a now defunct chocolate factory. The city's histories collide – the slave trader and sugar merchant Thomas Farr gave his name to the harbourfront location on which the warehouse stood; the Salvation Army's bricks were fired from local clay in the Cattybrook brickworks which supplied bricks for the building of the city's tobacco factories; the chocolate factory at Greenbank, once the employer of hundreds, is a now site over which opposing visions of the city's social and economic future battle. Aspiration, exploitation, labour, faith, wealth and poverty – they course through this newly built structure at Temple Church, resistant to being silenced.

Within the frame of Bristol 2015 European Green Capital, the city has been asking itself what we might need to sustain our future cities. The valuing of local resources has been at the heart of city-wide campaigns throughout the year. Commentators on Bristol 2015's cultural programme have endeavoured to tie these artistic endeavours directly to a set of awareness-raising objectives – recycling, conservation

Warehouse on Farris Lane, Narrow Quay circa 1960



Salvation Army Citadel, St. Pauls



of energy, the implications of climate change. And yet, the arts are not merely a mechanism of explanation or illustration of such issues. *Sanctum* is not a history lesson, nor simply a representation of the benefits of reuse. Rather, as Gates' previous projects have shown, artists give us the opportunity to see the world as if it were different. Works such as *Sanctum* are both a visually compelling symbolic act and a real life intervention.

Gates observed on his first visit to Bristol that this was a city of makers – a cultural crucible – but he also noted that it was an economically divided city. 16% of Bristol's residents live in the most deprived areas in England and though this statistic is less than in many English core cities, deprivation in Bristol has increased more than in those core cities in the last five years, despite the dominant story of economic growth here.

So what are the needs and desires of this city? "Could," Gates has asked, "concerned artist citizens play a hand at thinking about what the needs of a place are, so that it's culturally rich, and take that on not necessarily as an art-project, but as a kind of human desire?"

For certain, Gates' Bristol project begins with restoring life and sound to Temple Church, but as he suggests, "we have to do more than simply restore buildings. If it stops there, then I'm just a handy man. What shifts it to a territory that is more vigorous and less known? I think it has something to do with how we regard the use of space, what happens

whilst the space is being restored and who accesses the space once they're done."

Sanctum is a symbolic act rather than the creation of another performance venue. Bristol, after all, is the city of performance – brimming with theatre from the grandeur of Bristol Old Vic to The Wardrobe above the White Bear pub and energised by experimental performance from Mayfest to Inbetween Time. The city's pulse is sustained by the hundreds of gigs which fill pubs, boats, bars and backrooms across the city on a weekly basis – from the Louisiana to The Fleece, Thekla to The Canteen, Trinity Centre to Start the Bus.

A stone's throw from the construction site of Bristol's new 12,000 seater arena, Gates set about fashioning a temporary, intimate gathering space for just 50 people at a time. It was then the decision to sustain the sound of *Sanctum*, as a continuous, unending series of performances, readings, notes, chords, spoken words, protests and talks day and night from the evening of 29th October to the evening of 21st November, which then gave the project its primary organising principle.

Sanctum unfolds over time – minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, 24 by 24. It begins as British summertime ends – the dusk encroaching faster like the tide as we move towards the final minute – 17.59 on Saturday 21st November 2015. The programme has been curated through invitation and open submission from performers across the city and visiting during the three-week period of the project.

The conventional rhythm of working weekdays and weekends at leisure are certainly present: the morning chorus, the call to prayer, the young voices babbling through the afternoon, the cheekiness of an early evening samba, the drum and bass of night, the grime of the early hours, and then the quiet patience of the early hours – what writer Jon McGregor refers to as "the still point."

*"And the silence drops down from out of the night,
into this city, the briefest of silences, like a falter
between heartbeats, like a darkness between blinks.
Secretly, there is always this moment, an unexpected
pause, a hesitation as one day is left behind and
a new one begins."*¹

But the programme also serves to subvert the expectations of what the day might bring. Experimental performance breaks through the quiet of a Sunday morning; flash fiction spoken word lights up 3AM; sacred harp gives way to dubstep, R&B to stone percussion. Cellos, trumpets and pipes are joined by cement mixers, a potter's wheel and a tuning fork. The schedule itself remains secret, allowing *Sanctum* to function in its own right as a total work of art, rather than simply a gig venue, and exposing visitors through the day and night to unexpected encounters. In this way, *Sanctum* acts as a platform for Bristol's collective and individual aspirations to be heard.

The programme is 552 hours long which connects *Sanctum*



directly to the genre of long-term durational performances known for testing the limits of an audience's attention span, for example Forced Entertainment's renowned 24-hour performances such as *Quizoola*, a 24-hour continuous performance of 2,000 questions, or *Who Can Sing A Song to Unfrighten Me?* and Marina Abramović's 512-hour-long performance last year at the Serpentine Gallery.

The experience of such durational projects is usually partial for all but the artist, but in this case the experience for the artists and performers is also partial. It is impossible to hear *Sanctum* in its entirety, not only because this would induce profound sleep deprivation, but also because the size of the structure restricts capacity to just 50 people including performers at any one time. *Sanctum* is immense and small in scale.

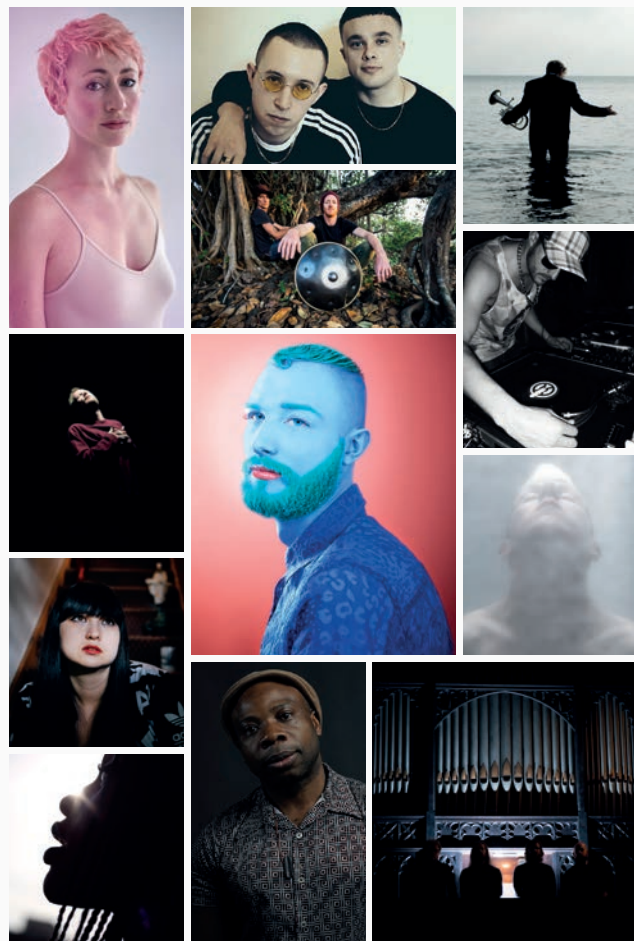
In this sense, *Sanctum* emerges out of Situations' commitment to exploring public time as well as public space in its projects of recent years. *One Day Sculpture*, for example was a year-long series of 24-hour public sculptures across five regions in New Zealand in 2008–9, which sought to expand conventional ideas about the lifespan of public artworks. Through the dispersal of the works, by artists such as Thomas Hirschhorn, Javier Tellez and Paola Pivi, across time and space, *One Day Sculpture* denied the standard art tourist's view in one easy bite-sized consumption. The organising principle of 24 hours gave each artist a frame within which to work, and against which to kick, whilst also operating as a connecting device between each of the diverse artistic responses.

Another Situations' project to take time as the medium by which to structure the form of the artwork is Katie Paterson's *Future Library*, which involves the commissioning of a new writer every year for 100 years to produce a text to be held unread, whilst a forest of trees is grown to produce the paper on which the edition of texts will ultimately be printed in 2114.

Future Library operates primarily as a promise. It bears similarities in this respect to Jem Finer's *Longplayer*, a thousand-year-long musical composition that began playing at midnight on 31 December 1999, and will continue without repetition until the last moment of 2999. Both works act on the collective consciousness as counterpoints to today's accelerating culture.

Breaking away from the conventional frames through which we experience the arts (whether that be the white walls of a gallery or the opening hours or times of a performance), allows an artist's vision to bleed out into the world, directly connecting with life as it is lived over time. There is, without doubt, value in those special contexts for the experience and study of the arts, as Gates' Stony Island Arts Bank testifies, but alongside the reinvention of those institutions, the practice of reimagining the sites which have been overlooked and allowing new spaces and times for the under-heard remains a vital part of sustaining the future of our cities through the arts.

Claire Doherty
Director, Situations



THE SOUND OF SANCTUM

Theatre
Cement Mixer
Acid House
Potter's Wheel
Jamaican Folk
Psychedelic Rock
Rap
R&B/Soul
Noise
Tuning Fork
Sea Shanties
Jungle/Drum 'n' Bass
Experimental Rock
Koshi Chimes
Hang Drums
Gospel
Buddhist Mantra
Gypsy
Americana
Ancient
Ambient Electronic
Celtic Folk
Rummaging

Opera
Flash Fiction
Sound Healing
Beatbox
Orchestral
Instrumental Rock
D.I.Y.
A Cappella
Immersive Sound Design
Ancient Music
Prog-Rock/Art Rock
Hip-Hop
Barbershop
Blues
Mobile Technology
Dubstep
Soul
Standup
Spiritual
Indie Rock
DJs
Post Punk
Rave

Lo-Fi Beach Goth
Percussion
Ceilidh
Stone Percussion
Storytelling
Political Oratory
Meditation
Jazz
Chamber Music
Live Art
Samba
Fiddle
Electro Soul
Trip Hop
Ska
Industrial Ambient
Broadcast
Traditional
Electronic Rock
Devotional
Grime
Rock 'n' Roll
Gongs

New Age
Protest
Funk
Copper Percussion
Pipe & Drums
Reggae
Looping
Grunge
Harmonium
Kids Jungle Rave
Spoken Word
Indie Folk
Roots Dance Music
Ragga
Choral
Acoustic Guitar
Gregorian Chant
Electronic Noise
Chant
Poetry
MCs
Brass Band
Call to Prayer

FURTHER READING

- Carol Becker, Lisa Yun Lee, Achim Borchardt-Hume, *Theaster Gates*, Phaidon, 2015
- Bill Brown, Fred Moten, Jacqueline Terrassa and Honey Luard (ed.), *Theaster Gates: My Labor is My Protest*, White Cube, London, 2013
- Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (ed.), *Saltwater: a Theory of Thought Forms*, Istanbul Biennial, 2015
- Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Madeleine Grynsztejn, Michael Darling, Matthew Jesse Jackson and John Preus, *Theaster Gates: 12 Ballads for Huguenot House*, Walther König, Cologne, and Documenta, Kassel, 2012
- Claire Doherty (ed.), *Out of Time, Out of Place: Public Art (Now)*, Art Books, London, 2015
- Tom Finkelpearl, *What We Made: Conversations on Art and Social Cooperation*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2013
- Kristin Korolowicz, *Theaster Gates: 13th Ballad and The Accumulative Affects of Migration 1–3*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2013
- *Temple Church, Bristol* (Wessex Archaeology, Salisbury, 2000)

www.situations.org.uk
www.whitecube.com
www.sanctumbristol.com
www.english-heritage.org.uk

The first Salvation Army band in Bristol, circa 1910



Performers p. 20:

Celestine Walcott-Gordon, Sara Zaltash, The Fantasy Orchestra, Gurt Lush Choir, Sleepdogs, Ralph Hoyte, Hannah Sullivan, Eleanor VS., Nick Terrific, Proserpine, Bristol Samba, Verity Standen

Performers p. 21:

Toyface, Slaves, Richard Hughes, Rowan James, Hang Massive, DJ Guevara, Makala Cheung, Luke Nickel, Isadora Vibes, Faith Bekoe, Edson Burton, ANTA

NOTES

- Quotations on pages 8 and 10, taken from interview with Claire Doherty, April 2015, published on film at www.situations.org.uk
- Quotations on pages 2 and 13 taken from interview in Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, 2012.
- 1. Jon McGregor, *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things*, Bloomsbury, 2003.

IMAGES

- Temple Church, 2015, Photo: Max McClure
Courtesy Situations
- Temple Church after the WWII bombing
Courtesy Bristol Records Office
- Postcard of Temple Church prior to WWII bombing
- The Archive House and the Listening House,
Dorchester Projects, Chicago
Photo: Sara Pooley
Courtesy the artist
- Narrow Quay, Bristol circa 1960. Courtesy Arnolfini
(photographer unknown)
- Salvation Army citadel, Ashley Road, Bristol.
Courtesy Salvation Army
- Theaster Gates
Black Monks, St. Lawrence Church, Performance, 2014
Photo: Sara Pooley
Courtesy the artist

WITH THANKS

Sanctum began back in 2013 over a cup of coffee in Theaster Gates' kitchen on the South Side of Chicago. We started with a conversation about Situations' home city – Bristol – its multi-layered histories, its aspirations, its challenges and its particularities as a place through which sound, music, protest, spoken word and theatre has, and continues to, reverberate like the city's heartbeat – the Bristol Sound.

The frame of Bristol 2015 European Green Capital and the funding support of the Arts Council England Exceptional Fund and the Henry Moore Foundation gave Theaster and Situations the opportunity to dream something of scale and ambition together, and, with the support of English Heritage, who trusted us with the city's treasured Temple Church, work began to build *Sanctum*.

This project has required the gathering of exceptional talent and the generosity of hundreds of people over many months. To work with Theaster has been a joy and inspiration from start to finish, and we are so very proud that Bristol is host to the artist's first UK public project. Our heartfelt thanks go to Theaster and the tireless and generous work of his studio and to White Cube for their advice and support. All performers are fully listed at sanctumbristol.com, but in short, this project simply wouldn't exist without you – thank you for breathing life into *Sanctum*.

We are enormously grateful to Arts Council England for their support and vision and to Bristol Cultural Development Partnership for their brilliant management of the Exceptional Fund projects for Bristol 2015. Through the generosity and support of the Salvation Army Bristol, Generator South West and Bristol City Council, and the architectural talent of Andrew Cross, we have built a very special space to gather the 300 or so performers over 24 days.

The herculean task of programming 552 hours of continuous sound was achieved by MAYK, who have shown immense ingenuity, sensitivity and wit throughout. It has always been our intention to open up *Sanctum* to truly reflect the city's voices and in doing so, we are indebted to Edson Burton, our programme advisor, Bristol Plays Music, Drake Music, LARA (Lorraine Ayensu Refugee Arts), St. George's Bristol and Ujima Radio in helping us achieve this.

Thanks also must go to Babbasa Youth Empowerment Projects who have also helped us to involve ten talented young individuals as hosts in *Sanctum*, and to Kamina Walton who has led Situations Rising, our team of young digital reporters to reflect upon and amplify different perspectives and thoughts on *Sanctum* as it unfolds.

Sanctum will rise again in the City of Essen as part of the Ruhr Triennale 2016 in partnership with Urbane Künste Ruhr. This partnership has emerged out of the European

Network of Public Art Producers, which continues to be an inspiration and support for Situations.

As ever, Situations continues to dream extraordinary visions inspired by our artists and due to the dedication and resilience of our incredible staff team, our Board of Trustees and through the support of our core funders, Arts Council England, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the University of the West of England, who continue to put faith in the possibilities of seeing the world anew.



MAYK



ENGLISH
HERITAGE



Bristol
Plays
Music



SITUATIONS TEAM

Rachael Baskeyfield, Digital Reporter
Georgina Bolton, Assistant Producer
Maria Carter, Company Manager
Rachel Cartwright, Administrative Assistant
Claire Doherty, Director
Eloise Dunwell, UWE MA Curating intern
Luke Emery, Producer
Sarah James, Deputy Director
Laura Jeffery, Communications Manager
Rowan Lear, Communications Manager
Michael Prior, Associate Producer (Engagement)

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Bethany West, Arts Administration Assistant, MAYK
Edson Burton (Programme Advisor)

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Andrew T. Cross, ANArchitecture

BUILD TEAM

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Charlie Eccleston
Dan Halhead
Jeff Ive
Jackson James
Sean Kerr

Elliott Mills
Matt Pike
Brody Stevens

LIGHTING

Anna Barrett

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Christina Ashmole
Emma Morsi
Laura Gabe

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Sam Talbot and Olivia Cerio, Sutton PR

FILM-MAKERS

Sam Irving and Tom Booth, LightTrap Films
Benjamin Croce

INNER SANCTUM ONLINE PARTNER

Canvas powered by Rightster

DESIGN AND WEB DEVELOPMENT

Extra Strong

OUTDOOR FURNITURE DESIGN

Knowle West Factory

WITH THANKS TO

Andrew Kelly, Bristol Cultural Development Partnership;
Jo Baxendale, Adam Gent, Phil Gibby, Peter Heslip and
Simon Jutton, Arts Council England; Zoe Sear and the team
at Bristol 2015; George Ferguson, Mayor of Bristol; Helen
Allen, Melanie Barge, Amy Hulyer, Jennifer McCracken,
Niall Morrissey, Michael Murray-Fennell, Alex Page and
Win Scutt, English Heritage; Claire Feeley; Nathan Taylor;
Alexandra Small and Theaster Gates studio, Chicago;
La Keisha Leek and the University of Chicago; Will Davies,
Nicola Jeffs and the team at White Cube; Rob Harding;
Mary Jane Jacob and the School of the Art Institute of
Chicago; Kevin Byrnes and Amy Newman and Mario Laaf,
Hilton Garden Inn; Katja Assman, Urbane Künste Ruhr;
Major Ian Mountford, Salvation Army; Victoria Holden,
Melissa Inman, Aldo Rinaldi and Clare Teasdale, Bristol City
Council; Michael Beek, Louise Orchard and Suzanne Rolt,
St. George's Bristol; Poku Osei, Amy Gallivan and Aishah
Shakoor, Babbasa Youth Empowerment Projects; Luke
Turner and Marcus Campbell, Drake Music; Phil Castang
and Laurie Stewart, Bristol Plays Music; Qerim Nuredini
and Danny Vincent, Bristol Refugee Rights; Roger Griffith,
Ujima Radio; Kathryn Davis, Destination Bristol; Paul Isaacs,
Generator South West, Rhiannon Jones, Trinity, Stephanie
Kempson; Graham Hodge, Sarah Hamilton and Susannah
Simons, Canvas; Melissa Mean, Knowle West Media Centre.

PROGRAMME NOTES

date:

time:

SITUATIONS
