



PRESS RELEASE

SERP Reactivated

15 March – 22 April 2018

- new project led by Peckham Platform meaningfully addresses the erosion of arts in education today
- public programmes at Tate Exchange and Flat Time House draw on significant archives of the radical and influential Southwark Education Research Project (1989-95)
- artists Barby Asante and Barbara Steveni collaborate on new work in schools and with the archive

Between 1989 and 1995 the Southwark Education Research Project engaged over 1,500 children and teachers by placing artists in fifteen schools across the London borough of Southwark. SERP created interventions in the schools it worked with, encouraging participants to question the education process and providing new ways for them to engage with the arts. The project created a model for replication across the country by involving the local authority, the inspectorate, teachers and pupils – and in doing so gained recognition nationally and internationally.

In 2018 Peckham Platform revisits SERP's significance, at a time when education policy focuses overwhelmingly on measuring attainment through exam results and league tables, and increased bureaucracy coupled with reduced budgets has seen a reduction in the opportunities for young people to engage with culture and the creative process in-school.

Peckham Platform's project has two main strands – securing and reactivating the archive of the original SERP; and public programmes at Tate Exchange and Flat Time House, which present highlights from the archive alongside new material created through collaboration between artists Barbara Steveni and Barby Asante.

Barbara Steveni was one of SERP's original co-founders and the archive of material that she personally collated includes documents, photographs, correspondence, audio, video and artworks. For the first time this archive will be fully catalogued and made available online to the wider public.

Barby Asante will undertake a placement in Charter School, Dulwich – one of the original SERP schools (then known as William Penn), working with young people there to question the role that art and the artistic process could have in the whole curriculum, rather than focusing on art as a standalone subject.

Emily Druiff, Peckham Platform's CEO said *"As well as reactivating SERP's hugely significant archive we are bringing its ground breaking approach to 2018. Art is not just important as a subject in and of itself, but as SERP demonstrates there is huge value to be found in applying an artistic mindset across the whole curriculum. Young people are being let down by an education system that places so little value in creative thinking - SERP Reactivated will explore multiple ways we can explore this urgent problem."*

Alongside highlights from the archive, the exhibitions will feature original artworks, oral history testimonies from original SERP participants, new work created in collaboration with the young people from Charter School, and testimonies from original SERP members. Artworks on show include the original *Southwark Puzzle* by Rita Keegan and the recreation of *Recycle & Discuss* by John Latham through which visitors can consider 'reusing' and 're-seeing' in order to creatively engage with discarded material.

The first exhibition takes place at Flat Time House in Peckham, where SERP co-founder John Latham lived and worked. Visitors to both exhibitions will be invited to record their own opinions through 'vox pops' which will be added to the archive, reasserting the project's original ambitions for art to be central to not only the curricula but to our lives.

Tate Exchange is an ambitious 'open experiment' which allows other organisations and members of the public to participate in Tate's creative process, running events and projects on site and using art as a way of addressing wider issues in the world around us. Peckham Platform is a Tate Exchange Associate.

Alongside the exhibitions a series of free talks and events include critical voices from arts and education exploring the need for this project to take place right now.

NOTES TO EDITORS

SERP Reactivated at Flat Time House: 15 March 2018 – 8 April 2018

SERP Reactivated at Tate Exchange: 17 April 2018 – 22 April 2018

SERP Reactivated is generously supported by Heritage Lottery Fund.

Tate Exchange: Blavatnik Building, Level 5, Tate Modern, Bankside, London SE1 9TG

<http://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern/tate-exchange>

A space for everyone to collaborate, test ideas and discover new perspectives on life, through art.

To find out more about Tate Exchange please visit tate.org.uk/tateexchange. For press information about Tate please email pressoffice@tate.org.uk or call 0207 887 8730 (for Tate Liverpool call 0151 702 7444). For high-resolution images visit tate.org.uk/press.

Flat Time House: 210 Bellenden Rd, London, SE15 4BW

<http://flattimeho.org.uk/apg/>

Flat Time House (FTHo) was the studio home of John Latham (1921-2006), Flat Time House opened in 2008 as a gallery with a programme of exhibitions and events exploring the artist's practice, his theoretical ideas and their continued relevance.

For full programme details visit <http://www.peckhamplatform.com/> #SERPreactivated

Barbara Steveni

Born in Iran, Barbara Steveni is a London based Artist. Steveni conceived and co-founded the 'Artist Placement Group' (APG) in the UK in 1966, described as "one of the most radical social experiments of the 1960s". The original concept was to expand the reach of art and artists into organisations of all kinds (commercial, industrial, and governmental), and at all levels, including decision-making, and on a basis equivalent to any other engaged specialist.

Continuing on its methodology, in 1989 APG morphed into 'Organisation and Imagination' (O+I), and between 1989–95, Steveni negotiated O+I's Southwark Education Research Project (SERP) with Southwark Education Department. Operating across all sectors responsible for delivering education - from the children, teachers, heads, and governing bodies, in fourteen local schools.

Current interest in the relevance of APG and O+I's methodology and legacy has led to the first APG retrospective - The Individual and the Organisation: Artist Placement Group 1966-79 at Raven Row Gallery, London, 2012, followed by Context is Half the Work – A Partial History of the Artist Placement Group at Kunstraum Kreuzberg / Bethanien, Berlin in 2015, touring to Summerhall, Edinburgh in 2016.

Steveni's current work I Am An Archive gathers artists and professionals across three generations in a series of participatory and documentary walks, taking place on sites of the original APG placements, exploring the potential to reactivate APG methodology today. Continuing this theme, Conversations Between Ourselves is an ongoing series of filmed conversations with women who have shared Steveni's Art-life journey.

Barby Asante

Barby Asante is a London based artist, curator and educator who's work explores place and identity through creating situations and spaces for dialogue, collective thinking, ritual and reenactment. Using archival material in the broadest sense, she is interested in breaking down the language of archive, not to insert or present alternatives to dominant narratives but to interrupt, interrogate and explore the effects and possibilities of the unheard and the missing.

Asante's recent projects include; The South London Black Music Archive (2012) Peckham Platform/ Tate Morden, Baldwin's Nigger RELOADED (2014-) Iniva, Nottingham Contemporary, Framed Framed (Art Rotterdam), International James Baldwin Conference (American University of Paris) with the London based collective sorryyoufeeluncomfortable and As Always A Painful Declaration of Independence: For Ama. For Aba. For Charlotte and Adjoa. (2017-) Diaspora Pavilion, Venice. She is also Associate Curator at 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning in Brixton and PhD Candidate at CREAM at the University of Westminster.

Tate Exchange Associates

Organisations from a wide range of fields well beyond the gallery's normal reach have become Associates of Tate Exchange. This group programme the dedicated spaces at Tate Modern and Tate Liverpool. Working in a spirit of generosity, openness and trust, the Associates collaborate with one

another around an annual theme inspired by the art on display. Now in its second year, Tate Exchange has expanded its group of Associates to 60 partners, while consistently seeking to engage audiences which are new to the museum. For the full list of Associates and more information please visit tate.org.uk/tateexchange.

Peckham Platform

Peckham Platform is a creative and educational charity based in Peckham, South London. As an organisation it believes that communities can inform and shape their engagement with their locality by working with contemporary visual artists. Its programme of commissions creates meaningful and accessible social arts practice for Peckham and beyond, providing an expansive platform for different voices and debate, bringing contemporary social practice alive. Peckham Platform will take over the new gallery space in the redeveloped Peckham Square, set to open in 2020. The organisation's new permanent home will have more space, better facilities and a greatly expanded programme of free cultural events.

History of SERP

SERP grew out of the pivotal organisation, the Artist Placement Group (APG), established in 1965 by internationally renowned artists, co-founded by Barbara Steveni and John Latham. The group set up placements within industry, (often large corporations such as British Steel and ICI) and later within UK government departments such as the Departments of Health and Social Security (DHSS) and Environment (DOE) and the Scottish Office. APG has been celebrated through numerous retrospective exhibitions, including at the Whitechapel Gallery (1997), and Raven Row Gallery (2012). In 2006, shortly before the death of John Latham, the APG archive was acquired for the national collection by Tate Britain.

After 1989 APG became known as Organisation and Imagination (O+I), and their practice underwent an important evolution – from exploring their creativity and reflection in strategic contexts central government and public industry; to harnessing their ability to activate the creativity of others, in this case, pupils, teachers and the inspectorate, through direct interventions in the delivery of frontline public services - education. SERP became their main output between 1989 and 1995, where they made a valuable and critical contribution to methods of co-production with learners and community groups.

SERP took place at a time of creativity and pluralisation in London schools, when the region-wide Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) passed responsibilities to the borough-level Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Over a 6-year period, SERP engaged fifteen Southwark schools; each hosted a placement with the aim of universalizing and embedding access to creativity and culture. The wider historical, social and cultural significance of SERP is substantial and far-reaching, providing a model that has been replicated internationally, including through the landmark DCMS Creative Partnerships programme.