

## ***The Empty Space of the Invitation***

Parts 1, 2 & 3

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### **The Empty Space of the Invitation 1: Some Questions**

SERIES: 1 THE INVITE

Institution invites artist to work on project with participants the institution has gathered.

Institution invites artist to work on project. Participants will be gathered together by the artist.

Is there a question, need or demand for participation?

0:

1:

1:1 What is the relationship between the institution and the participants?

1:2 What is the relationship between the institution and the site of the project?

1:3 What is the relationship between the institution and the history of the site of the project?

1:4 What is the relationship between the institution and the future of the site of the project?

1:5 What is the relationship between the artist and the participants?

1:6 What is the relationship between the artist and the site of the project?

1:7 What is the relationship between the artist and the history of the site of the project?

1:8 What is the relationship between the artist and the future of the site of the project?

1:9 What is the relationship between the participants and the site of the project?

1:10 What is the relationship between the participants and the history of the site of the project?

1:11 What is the relationship between the participants and the future of the site of the project?

1:12 What is the relationship between the institution and the history of the project?

1:13 What is the relationship between the artist and the history of the project?

1:14 What is the relationship between the participants and the history of the project?  
1:15 What is the relationship between the participants and the artist and the history of the project?

1:16 What is the relationship between the institution and the future of the project?  
1:17 What is the relationship between the artist and the future of the project?  
1:18 What is the relationship between the participants and the future of the project?  
1:19 What is the relationship between the participants and the artist and the future of the project?  
1:20 What is the relationship between the participants and the institution and the future of the project?

2:

2:1 What are the investments of the institution in the project?  
2:2 What are the investments of the artist in the project?  
2:3 What are the investments of the participants in the project?

3:

3:1 What are the desires of the institution for the project?  
3:2 What are the desires of the artist for the project?  
3:3 What are the desires of the participants for the project?

4:

4:1 What are the accountabilities of the institution to the artist?  
4:2 What are the accountabilities of the institution to the participants?  
4:3 What are the accountabilities of the artist to the institution?  
4:4 What are the accountabilities of the artist to the participants?  
4:5 What are the accountabilities of the participants to the institution?  
4:6 What are the accountabilities of the participants to the artist?

5:

5:1 What are the needs of the artist?  
5:2 What are the needs of the participants?

These are some of the conditions of the project.

6:

6:1 What freedoms are derived for the artist from the process of the institution?

6:2 What freedoms are derived for the participants from the process of the institution?

6:3 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the process of the artist?

6:4 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the process of the participants?

6:5 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the process of the institution?

6:6 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the process of the institution?

6:7 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the process of the artist?

6:8 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the process of the participants?

6:9 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the methodologies of the institution?

6:10 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the methodologies of the institution?

6:11 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the methodologies of the artist?

6:12 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the methodologies of the participants?

6:13 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the methodologies of the institution?

6:14 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the methodologies of the institution?

6:15 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the methodologies of the artist?

6:16 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the methodologies of the participants?

6:17 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the desires of the institution?

6:18 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the desires of the institution?

6:19 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the desires of the artist?

6:20 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the desires of the participants?

6:21 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the desires of the institution?

6:22 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the desires of the institution?

6:23 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the desires of the artist?

6:24 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the desires of the participants?

6:25 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the time scales of the institution?

6:26 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the time scales of the institution?

6:27 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the time scales of the artist?

6:28 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the time scales of the participants?

6:29 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the time scales of the institution?

6:30 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the time scales of the institution?

6:31 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the time scales of the artist?

- 6:32 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the time scales of the participants?
- 6:33 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the funding from the institution?
- 6:34 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the funding from the institution?
- 6:35 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the income of the artist?
- 6:36 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the income of the participants?
- 6:37 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the funding from the institution?
- 6:38 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the funding from the institution?
- 6:39 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the income of the artist?
- 6:40 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the income of the participants?
- 6:41 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the location of the institution?
- 6:42 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the location of the institution?
- 6:43 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the location of the artist?
- 6:44 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the location of the participants?
- 6:45 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the location of the institution?
- 6:46 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the location of the institution?
- 6:47 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the location of the artist?
- 6:48 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the location of the participants?
- 6:49 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the positions of the institution?
- 6:50 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the positions of the institution?
- 6:51 What freedoms are derived for the participants by the positions of the artist?
- 6:52 What freedoms are derived for the artist by the positions of the participants?
- 6:53 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the positions of the institution?
- 6:54 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the positions of the institution?
- 6:55 What are the constraints put upon the participants by the positions of the artist?
- 6:56 What are the constraints put upon the artist by the positions of the participants?
- 6:67 What freedoms are derived for the artist by what is at stake for the institution?
- 6:68 What freedoms are derived for the participants by what is at stake for the institution?
- 6:69 What freedoms are derived for the participants by what is at stake for the artist?
- 6:70 What freedoms are derived for the artist by what is at stake for the participants?
- 6:71 What are the constraints put upon the artist by what is at stake for the institution?
- 6:72 What are the constraints put upon the participants by what is at stake for the institution?
- 6:73 What are the constraints put upon the participants by what is at stake for the artist?

6:74 What are the constraints put upon the artist by what is at stake for the participants?

These are some of the conditions of the participation.

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SERIES: 2 THE INVITE (VERSION)

Artist invites participants to work on project.

Participants invite artist to work on project.

*Is there a question, need or demand for participation?*

0:

1: What is the relationship between the artist and the participants etc.

\* \* \*

## The Empty Space of the Invitation 2: Terms of Conditions

Accommodating	Generous	Petit Bourgeois
Accountable	Governmental	Philanthropic
Adaptable	Guilty	Phony
Attentive	Heel dragging	Political Differences
Box ticking exercise	Hidden agenda	Poor
Brilliant	Hierarchical	Positioned
Cautious	Improvised	Professional
Changeable	In solidarity	Pugilistic
Class conscious	Independent	Purely Aesthetic
Collective	Informal	Racist
Colonial	Inspiring	Radical
Complicit	Instrumentalising	Recuperating
Confused	Invested	Responsible
Contradicted	Lacking confidence	Scared
Control freaks	Local	Sexist
Cosmopolitan	Managerial	Showing Off
Crisis-prone	Mean	Silencing
Cultural Capital	Monetary	Sincere
Cynical	Name Dropping	Snobbish
Desperate	Neo-liberal	Status
Didactic	Nit-picking	Subdued
Dignified	Open	Submerged
Disciplining	Oppositional	Sympathetic
Dynamic	Oppressive	Tactful
Embedded	Optimistic	Tense
Engaged	Out of control	Therapeutic
Entrenched	Out of town	Thoughtful
Expensive	Over-determined	Transparent
Eye to eye	Over-theorised	Transversal
Familiar	Overstretched	Trusting
Fantastical	Over-worked	Uncertain
Flaky	Passive	Warm
Flowing	Passive Aggressive	Willing
Formal	Patrimonial	
Free Labour	Pedagogical	
Friends	Performative	
Gatekeeping	Personal	

### The Empty Space of the Invitation 3: Footnotes

1:1

Working on a short-term project in 2011, Ultra-red found out that the institution was hoping that Ultra-red would have brought more migrants into the workshops. 'Where are the migrants?' Ultra-red was asked during one of the sessions. Ultra-red had done a lot of advance fieldwork at the site but this had not secured the participation of many of the numerous migrant groups Ultra-red had contacted for many and varied and obvious reasons. Ultra-red had an understanding of why this is often the case but it was not certain that the institution really understood this.

1:5

Working over 20 years on many projects, Ultra-red often asks the question – what does it mean in terms of these simple binaries contained in these questions, when, for example, in this instance, there is little distinction between artist and participant per se?

1:6

Working on a weeklong project in 2011, Ultra-red ran a series of workshops in an institutional setting that was a large house in the grounds of a well-founded art space. The space itself was far out of the main city centre and took some commitment for participants to make their way there. Ultra-red had no easy way to come and go from the city centre where the urban day to day was more likely to produce some commonality, investments and maybe chance encounters. The audience who came to participate in the last public session were

(mainly) also made up of those who were used to coming to such a space and being able to travel the distance to the institution.

1:7 & 1:10

Working on constituency work over a number of years, Ultra-red methodologies were instrumental in facilitating a change in the political relationship between the site and the artist and the participant group. Migrant and anti-racist struggles collided with anti-regeneration struggles when the group, applied its analysis of poverty and class relations in struggle against a local regeneration scheme. A desire to continue ongoing investigation processes brought new understandings of history and power relations into conversation with migrant struggles and a sense of place. This transformed and opened up a space for migrants in politics otherwise dominated by white, middle-class campaigners.

1:14

Having worked together on several iterations of sound investigation projects the Rural Racism Project (RRP) in South West England (which includes one member of Ultra-red) built its collectivity around listening processes. When invited in 2009 by an arts institution in East England, Ultra-red and RRP took up the invitation together and travelled as a group of six to share their experiences of constructing a site (their own anti-racist practice) with an audience gathered by the inviting institution.

1:16

Invited to work on a project for an Arts Centre in 2013, Ultra-red were tasked with producing

a stand alone workshop for a much longer project of which the institution was in no way certain what it actually was.

1:20

Working on many short-term projects with participants who have initially been assembled by an institution, Ultra-red has frequently encountered the following dynamic: At the end of all the work when the question 'What next?' comes up from participants, there is often a well-intentioned desire to continue the work beyond the involvement of Ultra-red members. It is at this point that participants sometimes look to the institution to make a gesture of facilitating continued work by providing a space, some resources and some investment in what they had initiated. Ultra-red would say that in the main that this is not offered by institutions to participants.

2:1

Working on a long-term project in 2012 that saw a range of different participants, processes and practices, Ultra-red was constantly given space and support to really engage with participants. Significant in this support was the understanding that such work requires time and the creation of an autonomous space where the artist and the participants could escape the structures and disciplines of both the gallery and the school where the participants were from.

6:11

Working on a long term project in 2011, Ultra-red found out that the participants were nervous to undertake working purely with sound and process-based investigation but it was precisely this nervousness when

translated into energy that let them take a risk to participate

6:22

Working on a long-term project in 2013, participants at the final event were asked to wait outside their own event whilst V.I.P's were invited into the event for a preview and special presentation.

6:24

Working on establishing a long-term project in 2011, Ultra-red faced the continuous problem of trying to find an answer to this question: When is a constituency constituted? Despite repeated assurances from the host organisation that working with Ultra-red would benefit their own understanding of their work and their own frustrated internal dynamics, almost zero commitment to the project over many months left Ultra-red in the position of trying to find at the very last minute another constituency to work with just to finish the project.

6:29

Working on a yearlong project in 2010, Ultra-red spent a lot of time on trains and living far from home. In these moments of absence, very little political work could be done at home in the constituencies that Ultra-red members work in.

6:31

Working on a long term project in 2010, Ultra-red constantly ran into the problem that much work was produced when Ultra-red were able to be in the city where the project was based and that little or no work would happen in the time when Ultra-red were not able to be there despite assurances and procedures set in



place to try and ensure that work was produced in the interim gaps.

6:37

Working on a long-term project in 2010, Ultra-red found out that participants had been offered money to attend the workshops. Ultra-red had not been consulted on this matter. The attention span and attendance of many participants decreased the closer they got to the securing the money for 'participation'.

6:45

Working on a long project, Ultra-red worked briefly with a group of working-class young mothers. When asked if the name of the hosting institution (a visible public arts centre) meant anything to any of the mums, the name was unfamiliar with all but one who said she had been there "to use the toilet"

6:49

Working on a short-length project for an artist-curator in 2013, Ultra-red were given maximum freedom to develop an interesting and challenging (to Ultra-red) work. Ultra-red were also given total autonomy to develop and use their own budgets with the total budget available to them.

6:52

Working on a short-length project in 2011, Ultra-red remained silent during the final Questions and Answers session and participants talked about the work they had created with the participation of Ultra-red. When the curator demanded that the audience hear from the artists (in their mind, Ultra-red), a participant replied 'Why would you think that the participants are any less

artists than Ultra-red?' The institution here had its own investments on show, these investments mirrored clearly to itself.

6:67

Commissioned by a public arts institution, Ultra-red conducted four separate investigations in different localities over a month. The culmination of this work was a public encounter between many of the participants at the host institution. The inviting curator announced that she would not be present for this event as she was traveling to "visit some exhibitions". When meeting with curators at these galleries, they enquired about the "amazing project" that was happening at her gallery (i.e. Ultra-red's project). Having missed the event but now realising the potential "cultural capital" for the institution, the curator returned the following week and announced that, instead of the project finishing as it was supposed to, further funding would be made available to continue the work.

6:70

Working on a long-term project in 2010, Ultra-red were constantly pushed into new and fruitful areas and concepts within the work through the understanding, reference and history of the participants themselves in relation to their own sense of importance of and difficulty in working within the wider collective project.

6:71

During a weeklong project at an arts institution, the curator came to one mid-week workshop and said to Ultra-red and the participants "I know the work of Ultra-red. This isn't the work of Ultra-red". Ultra-red were

certain that this was their work as they were working on it. The curator had another idea of what parameters, narratives and myths contained Ultra-red for them as curator, as someone who must know.

6:74

*Working on a yearlong project in 2010, Ultra-red experienced numerous constraints put upon their participation with participants in the work placed there by the participants themselves. These constraints were a happy and necessary condition to ensure safety, confidence and trust could be a constituent part of the relationship between Ultra-red and those people they were working with.*

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