**M5 Mile - Commission for Artists**

**Background**

**MADE**

MADE is a built-environment charity based in the West Midlands. We champion good design and deliver programmes and projects relating to place making. See [www.made.org.uk](http://www.made.org.uk)

**Black Country Garden City (BCGC)**

MADE developed a concept for a Black Country Garden City as an entry to the Wolfson Economics prize. See [http://made.cherrytest.com/media/files/Albion-A_Garden_City-Wolfson_Prize_2014_entry_Copyright_MADE.pdf](http://made.cherrytest.com/media/files/Albion-A_Garden_City-Wolfson_Prize_2014_entry_Copyright_MADE.pdf)

MADE are now working with the Black Country LEP to deliver elements of this proposal. See [http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/upload/LEP%20Downloads/bcgc_brochure_FINAL.pdf](http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/upload/LEP%20Downloads/bcgc_brochure_FINAL.pdf)

**M5 Mile**

The M5 mile is a concept. It was part of MADE’s vision for a Black Country Garden City. This is a section of land, under the raised section of the M5 motorway between junctions 1 and 2. At present this strip of land is ignored, neglected, unused.

In our BCGC proposal we envisaged the M5 Mile could be an ‘edgy canal-side happening of shops, cafes and bars in shipping containers, performance areas, boat trips, skate-parks and other attractions, in the unique and stunning canal-side environment under the motorway’
The Commission

The commission aim

This commission is not to create the M5 Mile as described above.

It is instead to give the smallest of flavour of what a place which is ‘taken-over’ by creative communities may look like.

This day-long commission will provide a snapshot of potential of forgotten, neglected and unused spaces.

It will temporarily enliven and animate the space.

It will be an exemplar, and inspiration, a curiosity.

It will demonstrate the (early) potential of the M5 Mile concept.

The commission and brief

There are 5 artists commissions.

The commissions are open to artists from Birmingham and the Black Country.

All commissions will be asked to temporarily enliven a specific area of the site on Saturday 16th July 2016. The brief is simply to respond to the site. The M5 mile background is provided as context but there is no requirement for you to address this particularly, although you may if you wish.

Because of the site-specific nature of the brief we strongly recommend a site visit in advance of developing your proposal.

Because of the location there are some restrictions (see section below) and things you need to consider.

Artform

This is an open commission and the commissioning team would welcome proposals from not just visual artists but those working in sculpture, spoken word, sound, performance and more.

Days and Fee

The commission is a fixed fee for £500
This fee covers:
Planning
Delivery (inc materials)
De-brief/evaluation
Any necessary insurance
Commissioning timescale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 June</td>
<td>Commission is open</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 June</td>
<td>Deadline for proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>w/c 20 June</td>
<td>M5 Mile team shortlist the proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>w/c 20 June</td>
<td>Shortlisted artist visits site with M5 mile team</td>
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<tr>
<td>w/c 27 June</td>
<td>M5 mile team commission 5 artists</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 July</td>
<td>The event</td>
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<td>(13 August</td>
<td>The event if does not happen on 16 July)</td>
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How to apply

To apply you need to complete a proposal form. This form can be obtained by emailing sally@made.org.uk or calling 0121 348 7980.

Commission Details

Location

The area to the west of the gates (locked) on Spon Lane, Smethwick. The area between these gates and the aqueduct. Centered around the stretch to the west of the Spon Lane Locks. Close to the gates of the Chance Glass works building (to which we have access if needed)

Date and timings

The planned date for the event is July 16 so you need to be free that day. (There is a second back up date of August 13 so you also need to be free that day if we have to go to plan B)

Timings for that day are: Site open from 9am for set up. The Activity will be live from 10-5. Site clearing will begin at 5.30pm.

Restrictions

We have had to seek permission from the Highways Agency to be in this space. We have had to give them strict reassurances that nothing that is done to damage the pillars or area around them in any way.

This means that anything you plan to do must be temporary, removable and not damage any of the pillars, pathway or other elements of the site.

There is no power.

There are no toilets.
Under no circumstances can any vehicles will be parked underneath.

There will be gate access to the site for moving materials/equipment.

There is a public pathway alongside the site (tow path) which we cannot control.

Everything you bring to the site you will need to bring yourselves and clear yourselves afterwards on the same day.

You will be outdoors. The overhead road provides some shelter but is not 100% weather proof so you should plan for how to deliver incase of rain.

You are alongside a canal with no barrier so all activity should consider this potential hazard when planning.

A full risk assessment will be provided.

Documenting and Legacy

This ‘enlivenment’ of the space will be photographed/documentated. We hope this will have an exhibition at the West Brom Arts cafe (supported by Sandwell Council) alternatively this will be at the MADE space.

People involved

Management and delivery by
  • MADE [www.made.org.uk](http://www.made.org.uk)
  • Blue and White Creative
  • Infamous Community Arts [www.infamousarts.co.uk](http://www.infamousarts.co.uk)

On the day this above team will support the event alongside a commission who will document the activity (likely photography).

Funding

This activity is funded by Creative Black Country. [www.creativeblackcountry.co.uk](http://www.creativeblackcountry.co.uk)

Audience

There will be no formal audience.

We will publicise that this activity is taking place however due to lack of facilities and space it would not be appropriate to encourage a large static audience.
The event will instead be documented (separate commission) leading to the production of an exhibition which will be held in Birmingham and/or the Black Country which will provide a more public facing opportunity to showcase the events of the day.

Appendix

Site Map
Site images
Louise Guest – fashion student at Sandwell College The M5 Mile? Well, the party generally happens every Saturday night. We always have a good laugh there, and there’s always something unexpected happening. It goes on along the canal under the motorway. Last night we met up for a drink in the Summit, then we walked down to the canal at Spon Lane. The canal goes under the motorway for quite a distance. If it rains you can stay dry! My uncle Steve lived in Oldbury before the garden city, and he says it used to be like empty space there when he was a kid twenty years ago. It was just a place where kids used to like go and smoke weed, and a few old geezers fishing. Now it’s a buzzing place, like Camden Market. They started it with a few containers selling vintage clothing, and takeaways, and it got bigger and more permanent. There’s a big indoor sports hall under the viaduct too, and an artificial snowboarding slope. On Saturdays they have stages with live music, three different bands last night. One of them was 1000 Watts, who started out in Smethwick, but it’s not all rock’n’roll and stuff, there was a gospel choir as well. There’s lots of food stalls, Asa and me had falafels and all the works from that Syrian place in Brasshouse Lane. There’s lots of stuff to choose from. And there’s bars selling drinks too, and bonfires on the water burning nicesmelling wood. They have light shows projected on to underneath the motorway, like really huge. They light up Galton Bridge too, different colours every time. Did you know that was once the biggest bridge in the world? And there was a woman walking a tightrope between the canal embankments. You can just stroll along the canal and take it all in, there’s masses of people. Or if you’ve got money you can go on a narrowboat, lie on your back and look up at the show. We meet up with lots of our mates from college at M5 Mile, it’s a regular thing. But it’s for all kinds of people - my mum and grandma always go. Near the Seven Stars there’s a big skateboarding place on the canal, and on Saturdays it’s always busy, they have a burger stall there and coloured spotlights on the ramps and things. Becky took her skateboard last night, I had a go but I fell off. My bum’s still sore! At M5 Mile in the winter, they’ve got a canal arm which they can freeze, and we go skating. At New Year we were still skating at two in the morning. We’re really lucky in Albion to have the M5 Mile – I don’t think there’s anything quite like it anywhere else. It’s like one of the things that makes the place really special.