

lost O
 urban
 interventions
 july – oct 07
 performative
 works
 7th/8th july 07
 to coincide
 with the
 tour de france
 ashford



ashford
 international

www.losto.org

Lost O

Artworks which include sheep-bell concertos, subverted road signs and an immense paper house are part of Lost O, a dynamic programme of installations, interventions and performances by international artists taking place in Ashford this July as the Tour de France passes through the town.

The identity of Ashford is soon to change radically. At present, the centre of Ashford appears as an island in the midst of fast flowing traffic, which stagnates towards the end of the day as Ashfordians return home from their daily labours. For pedestrians, fording this incessant stream of vehicles can be a stressful experience. Over the next few years, this current will be tamed and the inhabitants of this gentle town will be able to rejoin their suburban neighbours. Lost O is demarcating this critical moment with artworks that acknowledge and celebrate the loss of the ring road as it is transformed into the largest Shared Space scheme in Europe. The Shared Space philosophy, originated in Holland, removes the traditional hierarchy of the road, allowing pedestrians to mingle freely with slow moving traffic in a streetscape without pavements, road markings or signs.

Akay + Peter ^{Sweden}

Akay and Peter explore the creative use of public space, creating installations such as swings hung from bridges, building small houses on ignored pieces of land and creating a “shadow zoo” for commuters alongside a highway. Akay and Peter are young Stockholm artists, and the urban streets are their ever-expanding gallery. Their work as semiotic guerrilla warriors serves no other agenda than the idea that public space belongs to public expression.

Toy House

Akay and Peter are spending two weeks from the 25th of June to the 8th of July covering the historic South Kent College building with off-cuts of white paper donated by Aylesford Paper Mill. A major landmark, observed and loved by local residents and visitors as they make their way to and from the train station, this disused Victorian brick building is being transformed into a one-to-one scale model of itself. Visitors will be encouraged to use the building as a huge three-dimensional post-it board.

Location: Corner of Elwick Road and Station Road
Time: 7th July 2007 – 31st July 2007

Roadsworth aka Peter Gibson ^{Canada}

The grey area between graffiti and vandalism is more than theoretical for Roadsworth: his controversial street images have turned pavement into politics and rekindled debate about the nature of public art. Roadsworth began taking to the streets of Montreal spray-painting cyclist symbols on roads to protest against the lack of bike lanes in the city. Gradually his street images developed into increasingly symbolic displays of civic and environmental critique: pedestrian crossings on the Plateau Mont-Royal turned into giant footprints; orange stencils of barbed wire lined crosswalks; heart monitor peaks and troughs punctuated the centre lines on roadways.

Universal Synchronicity

Traversing the four lanes of Elwick Road, Roadsworth is portraying ‘nature’s peloton’. The peloton is a ‘pack’ of cyclists. The dynamics of a peloton is driven by the need to conserve energy by following tightly behind the leading cyclist to minimise air resistance. This form of cooperation by cyclists, as they manoeuvre within a pack, parallels the movement of schools of fish or flocks of birds which move synchronously, continuously alternating between vulnerable and more secure positions as a means of confusing predators.

Location: Bank Street into Elwick Road.
Time: 7th July 2007 – 7th Oct 2007

Michael Pinsky ^{UK}

Michael explores relationships between architectural spaces and perceptions of time. Taking the combined roles of urban planner, activist, researcher, resident and artist, he uses diverse media such as video, performance, mapping systems and sculpture to explore geopolitical aspects of a site. Through the displacement and conflation of existing objects and activities he critiques the impact of society’s behaviour.

Lost O

As a memorial to Ashford’s lost ring road, Michael is creating two concentric circles of signs made from redundant signage recovered from the Shared Space scheme. As the scheme progressively thins out the signs, street and traffic lights around Ashford, they will find a new home in this sculptural form. The sculpture is not defined through construction, but through dislocation.

Location: The junction of Somerset Road and Wellesley Road
Time: 7th July 2007 – 31st Oct 2007

Simon Faithfull ^{UK}

Simon’s work often takes him on journeys that he maps and relays back, aware that his audience will be once removed from the experience. His practice as an artist has been as varied and unstable as some of his experiments, such as puncturing a gallery wall to pump in water from the unseen canal and attaching a camera to a weather balloon to record a journey from his face to the edge of space. He recently undertook a two-month journey to Antarctica from which he sent back palm pilot drawings each day via email.

Orbital No 1

Orbital No 1 is a first person perspective of three circular journeys completed and recorded as real time videos. These are screened as three concentric rings of continual movement – from the Circle Line, the North and South Circular and the M25. They give a glimpse of the dizzying energy states that define the contemporary urban metropolis spinning outwards in roughly circular zones centrifugally pinned to the epicentre of the city. Suspended horizontally within the tower of St Mary’s Church at the hub of Ashford, Orbital takes the form of a moving Mandela, an image analogous to the concentric circles of Dante’s heaven and hell.

Location: St Mary’s Church
Time: 6th July 2007 – 6th Aug 2007
Monday to Saturday 10.00am-2.00pm
Closed Sundays except Sunday 8th July 11.30-4.30pm

Gary Stevens ^{UK}

Gary Stevens creates performances and video installations, working with a wide range of visual artists and performers. His live work is the result of long, practical and material development. The structure, which often includes an elaborate text, grows out of this process. His work explores modes of thought; a psychology often alien and at odds with the audience and the performers’ states of mind. Whilst the staging of his productions is simple and stark, the structures remain rich and compelling.

Flock

Gary has commandeered a group of participants from Ashford and beyond, to form a cluster that moves as a single living amorphous entity. They can be seen at a distance as they drift around the streets of Ashford or up close as they threaten to envelop and engulf spectators. They move as a group with a strict programme governing their collective behaviour - akin to molecules, a flock of birds or a swarm of bees. The group may suddenly run off in response to the behaviour of spectators or some internal dynamic, like a startled herd of animals, or they may explode in all directions like a firework.

Location: Around the town centre. During the performances phone or text ‘flock’ to 07942 296691 for up to the minute location details
Time: 7th/8th July 2007 11.30am-4.00pm

Dan Griffiths ^{UK}

Dan Griffiths is becoming increasingly known for his humorous and provocative appropriation of billboard design. Subverting the unquestioned authority of both the scale and the location of the billboard, he changes the content to effect a reordering of information that subliminally instructs our daily life. The commodification of dissent and the possibilities of art’s relationship to radical politics are themes that recur in his work.

Regeneration Rebels

For various locations across Ashford, Dan has created four large posters which combine two opposing aesthetics; election campaigning and 1970’s iconic album cover design. These posters promote four individuals who have played an intrinsic role in Ashford’s redevelopment. Given the radical nature of the ideas supporting Ashford ring road’s transformation to a Shared Space scheme, Dan has decided to enshrine these advocates in cult status. Pop music and local politics are fused, creating a situation of equal significance for both.

Locations: Centrepiece Church, Bank St; Elwick Road at the Junction of Gasworks Lane; Elwick Road at the junction of Beaver Road and Wellesley Road
Time: 1st July 2007 – 31st Oct 2007

Mark Prier ^{Canada}

Mark Prier’s eclectic practice ranges from installation and performance to audio art and electronic music, often exploring themes of mapping, wilderness and survival.

Nomadsland

Nomadsland is a border-less, land-less country for people who want to be part of something more than a plot of land. Anyone can become a citizen and get a passport. All you need to do is fill out a form, partake of the ceremonial hug and repeat the oath “Everything is going to be OK”. Mark describes Nomadsland as an independent State of Mind. It has no borders and encompasses the entire world as a network of diverse people and languages. Citizens of *Nomadsland* learn to understand what it means to become a Nomad by studying the history, values, rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Mark’s temporary passport office in Ashford is available for all who are interested in joining up.

Location: High Street and lower High Street
Time: 1st July 2007 – 8th July 2007
11am-1pm & 2pm-5pm each day

Thomson + Craighead ^{UK}

Renowned for their practice at the interface of art and new media, much of Thomson and Craighead’s work explores how technology changes the way we perceive the world around us. Their projects have necessitated an unhealthy amount of international travel as they attempt to transmit segments of light across the globe from The Kingdom of Tonga to San Jose. They hope that their distinctly low-tech contribution to this programme will help to alleviate their carbon footprint.

Diminished 7th

Bells attached to sheep grazing around St Mary’s church in the centre of Ashford chime a diminished seventh chord, frequently the penultimate chord used in a composition’s final cadence to the tonic. This never-quite-resolving random music generator functions as a primitive software. Diminished 7th is a departure from Thomson and Craighead’s better-known networked pieces such as Unprepared Piano, which hijacks MIDI files from the Internet to play an endless concerto of compositional feeds regardless of the instruments for which they were intended. Their consistent interest in John Cage’s various experiments into limited authorship is demonstrated by using sheep rather than the Internet as a way to create aleatoric music.

Location: The grounds of St Mary’s Church
Time: 7th & 8th July 2007 10.30am-4.30pm

Brad Downey ^{USA}

Brad stakes a claim for the individual’s interpretation of signals and systems that govern the urban environment and imperceptibly determine our movements around the city. Because we are so accustomed to these signs, their subtle manipulation or replication can often be overlooked. Brad uses humour to underscore institutional regulation of public behaviour and to provoke awareness of how this control affects the evaluation of art, self and social status. Subtle, comic and often provocative, Brad reinvents public objects and reinserts them into the every-day landscape.

Long Weight & Gµν = (8πG/c⁴)Tµν

Brad has spent several weeks ensconced in Ringway’s road building depot. Befriending staff and commandeering supplies, he has created a series of sculptural interventions to be placed around Ashford’s ring road. For ‘Long Weight’ Brad has mounted functioning Puffin crossing units at the top of four-metre columns. Pedestrians will have to work collectively, standing on each other’s shoulders to achieve their goal of changing the lights, enabling them to cross the road. Gµν = [8πG/c⁴]Tµν is an implosion of signage sucked from the extremities of Ringway’s compound into a black hole located a metre above the site’s reception Portakabin.

Location: Long Weight – The Junction of Elwick Road and Station Road. Gµν = (8πG/c⁴)Tµν – The Ringway Compound, Elwick Road
Time: 1st of July 2007 – 31st of Oct 2007

Bryony Graham ^{UK}

Bryony fuses the unlikely worlds of construction and bric-a-brac, pouring out hybrid objects made from the domestic and the industrial. The resulting combinations set off reactions and create foundations for communication, shaky or firm. Bryony builds strong alliances with the road builders who in dialogue with her creative process suggest methods, share skills, materials and experience. The final objects, almost bi-products, represent a process of assimilation, Bryony as builder and the road builders as artist’s muses. Brought into this equation are trinkets and ornaments, clothes, crockery and other household objects, collected by charity shops. Asphalt and bric-a-brac form an unlikely marriage, not only merging the public and the personal, but the generic and the specific.

The Portakabin of the Found Centre in the Lost O Residency

For *Lost O* Bryony has trawled for trinkets and treasure in Ashford’s town centre for six months taking her findings back to her newly created studio in a Portakabin on the Ringway Construction Site Compound. Working alongside the construction teams, engineers, agents, tarmaccers, white liners, slot cutters, cable layers, setting out engineers and all round road builders she has become immersed in their world and able to take inspiration from their work and building a new body of work from the raw materials that connect and reconnect people and place.

Location: The No Tellings Collection – The Ringway Compound, Elwick Road
Time: 7th of July 2007 – 28th of July 2007
Ring a ring a roses – Ashford Borough Museum, The Church Yard
Time: Sat 7thJuly 2007 10am-1pm, Sun 8th July 10.30am-3pm, 9th-28th of July 2007 Mon – Sat 10am-1pm

Olivier Leroi ^{France}

Olivier Leroi creates poetic objects and whimsical tales to play with the meanings and the visual translations of words. Beyond their obvious aesthetic qualities, his gaze makes us doubt our way of interpreting the word and by extension the world. Leroi’s work continues the long tradition of visual and word puns, using simple elements taken from the natural or everyday world from which he combines elaborate narratives. His artworks materialise a mindset which shifts rather than subverts our relations to the world and enables us to look at it afresh.

Le Lièvre du Parc

Through extensive historical research, Olivier discovered the origin of the unique symbolism that is represented on railings throughout the centre of Ashford. The gold and black motifs carefully painted on the top of the railings commemorate the now little known Ashford Rabbit.

Location: The railings around St Mary’s Church and Memorial Park
Time: 5th July 2007 – 5th Oct 2007

La Brigade de Chambord

In a quasi-military operation, a team of riders will circulate in Ashford mounted on part bicycle, part animal mobile sculptures steering with antlers rather than handlebars. A merging of the hunter and the hunted, this band of guards will maintain order throughout Ashford.

Location: Throughout the centre of Ashford and around the ring road
Time: 11am-1pm and 2-5pm on the 6th, 7th and 8th of July

Related activities on the weekend of the 7th and 8th of July 2007

The Tour de France: Sunday 8 July: Caravan – 1.13 pm, Race – 2.38pm
European Food Fair – Sunday 8 July
Ashford Jazz Festival – Friday 6 July to Sunday 8 July
For more details check: www.ashfordpresents.co.uk

How to get to Ashford

Trains from London to Ashford International take an hour from Charing Cross, Victoria and London Bridge. Train operators offer 4 adult tickets for the price of 2 with Groupsave. Phone 08457 484950 or go to www.daysoutguide.co.uk for details. The Eurostar from Paris takes just two hours. Ashford is readily accessible from both the M20 and M25 by road.

A large number of visitors are expected for the 8th of July and some roads will be closed, so public transport is recommended.

The Lost O information Headquarters are located in the reception of Ashford School of Art and Design on Tufton Street. Open on the 7th and 8th of July. 10.30am-4.30pm. For information phone 01233 629165.

All times and dates correct at time of print. For up-to-date information please check the website www.losto.org



Lost O, curated by Michael Pinsky, is a key component of the Breaking Boundaries art inclusion scheme for the Ashford Ring Road project. Breaking Boundaries was devised by RKL Consultants and is supported by Kent County Council, The Channel Corridor Partnership, Ashford Borough Council and SEEDA. Lost O is the recipient of a major award from the Arts Council England’s Art Plus scheme.

The organizers are grateful to Ringways and Jacobs for their invaluable assistance; to South Kent College and Ashford School of Art and Design for all their help; to Kent College Farm for bringing sheep into the centre of Ashford; St Mary’s Church for hosting several projects and to Ashford Youth Theatre for the loan of their rehearsal space.