

Helen Graham

How should decisions about heritage be made? Plural Voice, Diverse Tactics

In this active workshop session we will share the thinking of the 'How should decisions about heritage be made?' project and actively engage participants in thinking about how they can intervene in, and change, the politics of heritage. Our workshop will be shaped by two key ideas which have come to underpin our thinking. The first is that what we mean by 'heritage' needs to be undone. We noticed from the first that thinking about heritage as 'forever and for everyone' and something managed 'on behalf of' the public or humanity is a block to active participation. The second is that we need to understand heritage systemically. Not as separate and closed off but part of our lives, social connections, places and democracy. Based on the potential opened by these two ideas we have used our reflective and experimental research to develop some techniques and tactics by which we might create a more social, human and democratic approach to 'heritage' – through all of us creating change from wherever we are. Using focused provocations to generate wider and group discussion, we will build on a critique of how heritage decision making can operate that we developed at an early project workshop and then draw on all of the experience and energy in the room to rework and reimagine 'heritage' and develop plans for diverse but connected actions.

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