

AR@K 2026: Reclaiming art! Creative expression as a building block in our social foundations

Proposal

- **Title**

Underline: Creating a Site of Co-Presence

- **Abstract**

This presentation examines Underline, a series of open-air public film performance events and related activities, such as audio-visual workshops for local young people. This initiative began in 2022, is situated in Beck Road, east London, and co-curated by the authors. It explores how artist led participatory engagement can activate public space, enhancing sense-of-community.

This project is a form of participatory and artistic research, facilitating creative co-presence and co-experimentation. For each Underline event the street is turned into a cinema/stage, re-imagining and 'activating' the location. Furthermore, its inclusive ethos encompasses first-time, emerging and established makers, presenting them all in the same programme. This approach also explores the role of embodied research, how participation can produce a sense-of-agency, positively influencing locational and relational being.

Underline's conception challenges traditional economic, social and cultural hierarchies and modes of presentation, encouraging different voices and ways of working to come to the fore in a common site of co-presence. As artist curators our method is informed by local knowledge, and a process of reflective 'making' and development. We propose this project shows how a threshold space for a community-in-the-making can be created through aware artist intervention, and that this way of working has broader potential.

- **Keywords**

Artist research, performativity, urban intervention, participatory practice

- **Disciplinary field(s)**

Artistic research, experimental film and performance, curating, participatory arts

- **Format of presentation**

Presentation with Jenny Baines and Andrew Vallance.

We would also like to propose a screening that would feature a collection of the work from Underline's events, from their open calls and invited participants, emphasising the unique inclusivity of the project, featuring both young first-time and internationally renowned makers, all of whom are connected to this area of London. The screening could take place at any time during the symposium.

- **CVs**

Jenny Baines studied her Masters at The Slade School of Fine Art and her practice-led PhD at Manchester School of Art, where she is currently a Senior Lecturer, as well as Visiting Lecturer at Central Saint Martins. Her practice explores the relationship between the body, screen and space and is informed by performative methods from fine art, film and dance. International shows include, New Art Projects (London), Film Talks Touring Programme, Prisme #6 (Nantes), Kunstraum Bethanien (Berlin), Istanbul Biennial. She currently has a research grant to explore the archives of Karla Grosch, dancer and teacher to women of the Bauhaus.

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Andrew Vallance studied a Masters and PhD at the Royal College of Art and currently is Associate Professor at Arts University Bournemouth. His practice explores the connections between memory and persona, place and presence, through moving and still images, video and installed work, shown most recently in a two-part inter-disciplinary exhibition, *Contact* (New Art Projects, London), which he also curated. As well as initiating Underline, he co-curates Contact, an artist-run organisation that has been presenting film, sonic and expanded events since 2013. He has also written and presented on reflective pedagogy and reflexive practice.

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