

For immediate release

South London's The Community Brain Launches Virtual 'Museum of Now' In Response To Lockdown



- Public invited to submit items of personal significance
- Museum will be housed online at themuseumofnow.org
- Local artists to create digital 'Cabinet of Wonders'
- Plans for physical exhibition once lockdown is lifted

The Community Brain, a not for profit organisation based in Surbiton, South London, is creating an innovative virtual museum in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Officially launching on Monday 15 June 2020, The Museum of Now will give people an opportunity to contribute their own exhibit and become part of a collective project during this time of extensive isolation. Items can comprise anything that has particular resonance for someone now.

Pick a single item in your home (or wherever you have found yourself in isolation) which means something to you. This item will be known as your 'wonder' in the exhibition. It can be something with historic resonance or something which has come to mean something to you during more recent times. There are no rules on what item you want to pick – it doesn't even have to be a physical object, it might be a piece of music, a memory, a smell...

The Museum, which has been created with support from Arts Council England, aims to become home to an unprecedented archive of items telling the story of a historic few months during which we have all be confined to our homes and our communities.

Anyone keen to get involved is invited to submit their item in the form of a photograph and a minute-long video explaining the story behind it. Entries will be curated and displayed in a digital 'Cabinet of Wonders', designed by local artists.

Submissions should be sent to wonder@themuseumofnow.org and are open until 5 July.

Robin Hutchinson, founder of The Community Brain, said: "We are witnessing people reevaluating what is important to them. Things that had fallen out of focus have become sharply defined as holding emotional meaning and resonance.

"As people have responded to the value of local, of kindness, care and compassion so we want to record their feelings and stories in the Museum of Now. Perhaps it will be an object that acts as a reminder of those you are missing, or something that has become a vital part of life today. We want these important stories to last as a touchstone to a time and importantly to play a part in the new futures that are built."

Once the Museum has been created The Community Brain will commission four local artists, from a variety of performing and visual arts backgrounds, to make new work responding to the collection. Their responses will be presented online and in a physical exhibition when restrictions on public gatherings have been lifted.

About The Community Brain

Founded in 2010, The Community Brain is an organisation that exists to develop community cohesion using the widest range of the arts, education and local history in order to give people and place renewed importance and pride.

Recent projects include SHEDx, which brought the idea behind TEDx to the humble allotment shed, and The Museum of Futures, a sustainable community space established in a vacant shop in Surbiton to enable more people to engage with and respond to community activity.

The Community Brain is about utilising people's natural talents and energies to develop stronger communities and relationships. It is about strengthening the natural networking and support that can happen in healthy societies creating more resilient communities. It is about believing everyone is brilliant.

At the heart of all of our work are stories. Who tells the story of your life? How can we create the stories that celebrate our communities? How do you re-imagine and curate your own future story?

We also have a never-ending passion for laughter and play. Many of our community projects start in a place of discovery through smiling, feeling like you are back in the playground, learning about ourselves and others through enjoying our lives and the time and space we share.

We believe that the attitude with which we approach our projects will be reflected in the communities in which we work and the future we hope to help them create.

The work we do in communities involves no formal joining or membership. This is not about clubs or cliques. All we strive for is giving people the permission they don't really need to be as brilliant as they already can be. In this way we're told we have helped change the lives of people who may not have found the usual and 'ordinary' routes to engaging in their community suitable for them. They have begun to command their own story instead of following the one written for them by others.

For more information, visit www.thecommunitybrain.org

For press queries about The Museum of Now, including interview requests and images, email info@thecommunitybrain.org, or call Theo Bosanquet on 07968828904.



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