

We are
Commoners

Day of Commoning at The Civic, Barnsley Online Film Guide

The short films being shared this weekend are linked to Craftspace's national touring exhibition We are Commoners, Days of Commoning event with The Civic in Barnsley.

Featuring UK and international artists, the projects in the exhibition represent ideas and resources to inspire acts of commoning. Craft and making skills are often passed down and shared in all cultures of the world. They are also portable, including across borders. Artists have used skills and materials as a means to common or to give insight into examples of commoning. Activating the verb 'to common' is a way to renew public life. Acts of commoning can be woven into every aspect of life and become a way of living. A life in which we can connect to produce shared rituals and resources that we look after together. Getting involved through co-operation, mutual care and exchange can heal and make change in our communities.

"The commons means: Things we share/ Places we share/ Systems we share/ Ideas we share/ Culture we share." Peter Barnes, On the Commons co-founder

The films in this selection feature artists' and community acts of commoning in or linked to nature, or how nature supports and holds us.



You can also visit We are Commoners exhibition later, on its national tour or virtually at craftspace.co.uk/wearecommoners



We evaluate all our activities to report to our funders Arts Council England. **Please complete our visitor survey** either on paper, scan the QR code or use the link bit.ly/wac-ace

Running Order

Commoning Action #14: How to stand your ground generously Common Agency Projects

2 minutes

This video contains instructions to be re-enacted by visitors. Each time the works are remade, new knowledge is created amongst a growing community of performers. We ask ourselves how does this material feel? How does it behave? How do I connect with it and others? What can I do with it? How can it support me? How can I nurture it?

During COVID-19 restrictions, visual artist Shane Waltener and dance artist Laura Glaser met weekly in parks and commons. Public spaces developed a new function, more than safe spaces to socialise in, they became cultural centres where people went to be entertained, share ideas and experiences. Witnessing this, the artists chose to work in green urban spaces and with nature: the weather, seasons, the site and all that grows in it. Through observation and play, they developed and rehearsed making and performance scores, exploring the idea of nature as a commons. They created work through movement improvisation, recording and discussing it with each other and interested park goers.

A Room Between the Rooms Lise Bjørne Linnert & Gelawesh Waledkhani

13 minutes

Since March 2020 groups of undocumented migrants have met around “drawing tables” in workshops arranged by Lise and Gelawesh. Tables with digital screens were set up simultaneously in Oslo, Trondheim and Bergen.

Participants connected to share memories and stories. They drew memories of a room, exploring and expressing emotions through lines, self-portraits, embroidered words and symbols, with both personal and universal meaning. A well-known Norwegian writer led workshops, sharing how to use words poetically to tell their stories.

Participants connected to share memories and stories. They worked outside using natural materials each season had to offer. In spring brushes were made from twigs and leaves. In autumn they stitched on fallen leaves, mending them as an act of care and protest. Their treatment of leaves symbolised how they wished for undocumented migrants living in limbo to be seen and treated.

The film is footage taken during the workshops by the artists.

Acts of Care

Finbar Marcel

2 minutes

Digital artist Finbar Marcel created a film in response to the themes of Linda Brothwell's, 'Acts of Care: Bench Repair' project. Linda considers 'Acts of Care' as the anchor of her creative practice; "bringing me home, using my hands, to the very centre of myself." Since 2009 this ongoing project has had international editions, each created for a new place, using varied skills and techniques. All placed the intention of 'care' of public spaces at the core.

The first 'Bench Repair Project' edition was in Lisbon. Linda replaced broken wooden bench slats with new ones city-wide, inlaid with traditional Portuguese designs. She carefully created each tool to play a specific part in the act of care, to fit her hands and be portable for working on street benches.

For We are Commoners, Linda revisited the project at a park in Bristol. Each new panel has been inlaid by hand using handmade tools. Imagery of patches and stitches are used to decorate, highlighting the potential for beauty in everyday care and repair.

The film invites us into a new world of tools and action in public spaces.

Common Ground, Walsall Road Allotments

Alice McLean and Justine Boussard

7 minutes

This film is an ITV Central News report, featuring the campaign to save Walsall Road Allotments. The campaign was the focus of Alice and Justine's commission for the We are Commoners exhibition.

Alice and Justine's Common Ground projects examine how making can open the process of recording and sharing local commoning history. During 2020, they ran online creative workshops with ploholders to design commemorative tokens. They believe this campaign and other 'acts of commoning' the ploholders undertake daily, looking after the land and their community, will have a positive impact on future generations. Faced with an uncertain future, the commons remind us there are other, mutually enriching, ways to own.

'An Oasis in the City', report broadcast 6 May 2021.

Credit: ITV Central, produced by Lucy Kapasi.

Map Your Local Commons

Craftspace

4 minutes

This film follows Rosanna as she maps the commons in her local area, using We are Commoners exhibitor, Deirdre Nelson's instructable. Rosanna takes you through the process of documenting the spaces and resources near where she lives, that anyone can use. She creates a beautiful map with her findings.

You can use Rosanna's film as inspiration for your own mapping activity, using Deirdre's instructions too: craftspace.co.uk/wac-deirdrenelson/#dnmake