

Tho I Am But Small I Will Be Heard Among You All

Andrew Dodds

Friday 20 May 2011

7 – 9 pm

(bell ringing performed at 8pm)

Holy Trinity Church

Green Porch Close

Milton Regis, Sittingbourne

Kent, ME10 2HA

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Art at the Centre is pleased to announce a major new commission by Andrew Dodds, *Tho I Am But Small I Will Be Heard Among You All*.

The project takes its title from the inscription found on a 17th century church bell by the artist during his research into Kent's social traditions of Change Ringing.

Historically, the civic, non-ecclesiastical uses of bells crossed the boundaries between public and private life, often by adopting a vernacular, coded language of peals. Across a range of cultures and societies, the meanings of church peals have ranged from marking labour time, to warnings of danger and impending natural disaster, to calls to assemble and bear arms.

For the event, Dodds has created a call-and-response between neighbouring bell towers to be performed at 8pm, the traditional time of the Curfew peal. The Curfew was initially introduced as a repressive measure to curb simmering social unrest, however, the peal's meaning evolved over time, at one point being understood as a wayfaring beacon for those lost in the landscape. The site of the event, Milton Creek, is included in the Thames Gateway Regeneration Project, a major re-development impacting communities and landscapes across south east England.

Blurring the boundaries between meanings of the Curfew peal, twelve Change Ringers drawn from the surrounding communities will assemble to revive the craft's intricate social history and powerful links to civic society.

The craft of Change Ringing has resonated across the English landscape for centuries but its popularity has waned dramatically since the mid-20th century. Many attribute its decline to the socio-economic pressures on remote populations, including the fracturing effects of forced economic mobility, and a more general move away from traditional pastimes. Today, the bells' volume and their reach across the landscape is masked by urban noise, surrounding buildings and environmental conditions.

Tho I Am But Small I Will Be Heard Among You All acknowledges the contemporary challenges to and fracturing of, shared mobilisation and civic interaction. And yet, the project simultaneously seeks to examine the historic potential for collective action inherent in Change Ringing.

To accompany the event a range of historical and contemporary material on Change Ringing, including books and instructional pamphlets, will be displayed in Holy Trinity Parish Hall.

Refreshments will be served.

Andrew Dodds is a Northern Irish artist now based in London. He is particularly noted for his contextual works exploring our social and political relationship with 'nature', the voice, and the shared potentialities of public space. He consistently engages and acknowledges others in the imagining, production and reception of his artwork, often questioning received structures and certainties within and beyond the art arena. Dodds' work has been exhibited and commissioned widely at major public galleries, artist-run spaces and non-gallery sites including BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, UK, Azad Art Gallery, Tehran and Gallery 400, Chicago.

www.andrewdodds.com

Art at the Centre is a pioneering scheme funded by Swale Borough Council, Arts Council South East and Kent County Council. It seeks to embed creativity within regeneration practice across the region, engaging artists to develop projects and community events in the heart of key projects across the Borough. Art at the Centre aims to contribute to regeneration teams that cut across Council departments, as well as the public, private and voluntary sectors, with a belief that sustainable regeneration needs to invest in people as much as places. Previous and forthcoming artists include Adam Chodzko, Andrew Dodds, Lucy Harrison, and Heather and Ivan Morrison.

For further information and press images please contact Nicole Mollett:

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