

the Whitworth

The Reno at the Whitworth

Residency: 15 March 2019 – March 2020

Preview Thursday 28 March 6-8 pm

Preview of Remaking the Reno Thursday 12 September

For a period of one year playwright Linda Brogan and a group of local residents, who all went to the Reno nightclub in the 1970s and 80s, will occupy the Whitworth.

The Reno, located in Moss Side, was known as a space for young mixed-race Mancunians. The project stems from Brogan's recordings of Reno Regulars reminiscing about their experiences of the club, and the subsequent archaeological excavation of the site led by Salford University Applied Archaeological unit. This work was celebrated on 23 November 2017 at the Whitworth, when the idea for a sustained relationship between the Reno and the Whitworth was born.

Artefacts, video, works from the Whitworth's collection, music and other materials developed over the residency will be on display in the gallery from March, which will also be used as a space for developing further ideas. In September 2019 a reconstituted Reno will reopen at the Whitworth.

The project aims to examine how institutions, such as the Whitworth, work with local people to co-produce projects that respond to urgencies and create change. As the residency unfolds this collaborative project will explore the current needs of the Reno Regulars and challenge the workings of the gallery, opening up the operations of the art institution to the users, including exhibition design, interpretation, marketing, policy and press.

The Reno @ the Whitworth is led by playwright Linda Brogan, with the Reno Regulars Barrie George, Brian Thorn, Carmen Jones, David Trigg, Dionne Richardson, Jeff Basse, Myra Trigg, Persian, Philip Collins SNR, Steve Cottier, Susie Prouse, Suzy Mousah, and includes the photography of Karen Rangeley, films by John Lloyd, digital support by Sean Clarke, curatorial support by Nikita Gill, and a forthcoming publication by Bound Books.

History From The Mouths Who Lived It, Not A History Book

Hearing the first beat of Reno classics I am awash with internal light that makes my flesh tingle, and creates an opera in my veins. I know other Reno Regulars share that feeling. The Reno was a cellar club in Moss Side MCR. Heyday 1971 to 1981. Soundtrack, imported soul and funk. Predominantly populated by 50s born 'half-caste' stigmatised by the 1930 Fletcher

Report: *'Offspring of interracial alliances suffer inherent physical and mental defects.'* Born in 1950s England of No Black; No Irish; No Dogs. We were special. Elite. In the Reno we were majority not the minority. The nod of acknowledgment was a total thrill.

Demolished 1987. Crossing the poppy filled empty site, I sat to remember our civilisation, black market, social structure, king and queen, all frustrated artists. I am a multi-award winning playwright, but a play couldn't capture the nuances.

Instead, 2016 I filmed Reno memoirs. 'Tell me about your first night down the Reno.' spiralled into: people spat in our prams; our white mums being ostracised from her family; being divided by our mum's roast and dad's yam; finding our family in the Reno of wall-to-wall half-caste. Memoirs are on www.thereno.live.

Word of mouth 45,000 interacted. Since PC the word half-caste was deemed the same as nigger, we had become black. So now not only was our mum ostracised from her family and society now she was also ostracised from us. Like the gradations of slavery, we could never live in the white camp. A strange thought when our mums were our main caregivers and our main reference points were white. Like stardust, we gravitated, reclaiming who we had been, our rightful place within the Reno society. To form a star our project could orbit. Annette Ileke who never went to the Reno commented on Ann Sarge's memoir: 'Made me realise I am not mad and many of my age group experienced the same. Ha I feel to tell my GP I don't need their counseling I get to understand a lot more listening to these stories at least I can relate.'

2017, we actually excavated the Reno with Salford University Archaeology. 2018 we are finalist in 8 awards. 2019 we are resident in the Whitworth as living sculpture, evolving until it transforms into an exhibition. Collecting your clubbing memoirs on www.thereno to contextualise ours. How that ends up looking in our glorious space is the journey. Poetic details on <http://thereno.live/about>

Linda Brogan

Memoirs and excavation are available on <http://thereno.live>

Instagram: [@ExcavatingtheReno](https://www.instagram.com/ExcavatingtheReno)

Twitter: [@Excavatingreno](https://twitter.com/Excavatingreno)

Reno @ the Whitworth is supported by Arts Council England, Manchester Age Friendly Neighbourhood Team, One Manchester Housing Association, Manchester History Festival, Manchester International Festival, Royal Exchange Theatre, Battersea Arts Centre, Contact Theatre, Niamos, Bluemoose Books, Bound Books and Salford University Centre for Applied Archaeology, Sofas & Stuff