



**a sense of place**  
arts, enterprise & placemaking  
an interdisciplinary conference



University of  
Bedfordshire

## **A Sense of Place: Arts, enterprise and placemaking, an interdisciplinary conference**

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

**University of Bedfordshire Luton Campus, Cultural Quarter, Luton and other participating locations in the town.**

*A Sense of Place: Arts, enterprise and placemaking*, is an interdisciplinary conference that will bring together arts funders, policymakers in local and regional government, artists and academics through a discussion of the impact of art practice on 'a sense of place'. Artists engaged in a range of art forms, artistic and cultural practices are exploring our new concepts of home, community, and location. Our sense of place has been challenged by societal and technological change leading to concerns over location mapping, population movement, suburban development and the dislocation of community. Creative practice allows us to explore these changes and test new scenarios which in turn have important benefits for social cohesion, rural and urban identity and public impact. Therefore place making as a concept is receiving considerable interest and is deployed across a range of professional, policy and academic domains as a means of both intervention and knowledge production in relation to public space, cultural policy, participatory practices, identity and community engagement. In the light of significant challenges to notions of globalisation and international mobility, placemaking becomes a further contested and challenging locus for debate. It is an inherently multidisciplinary endeavour which relies on collaboration and partnership working.

This conference is a part of the Arts Council England-funded TestBeds project based at the University of Bedfordshire in Luton. TestBeds is part of the unique Arts Council England Luton Investment Programme, a £1.5m investment over three years into the development of arts and culture in Luton that will ensure that this super-diverse town has 'a cultural offer with something for everyone'. TestBeds brings local, early-career creative practitioners together with internationally-renowned artists and immerses them in a hothouse for creative innovation. The project focuses on developing artists from diverse backgrounds as placemakers - enhancing their capacity to make a lasting difference to Luton and spearheading innovative, cross-disciplinary research into the employment of arts and culture as catalysts for change.

The Luton Investment Programme also includes *As You Change So Do I*, a public realm arts programme which explores creative ideas, projects, projections and art in public spaces with visitors to, and users of central Luton. The project is led by Luton Culture in association with lead artist and Turner Prize nominee Mark Titchner. The Programme also supports the new Ten-Year Strategic Vision for the arts, cultural and creative industries in Luton which has a focus on placemaking and links to the wider strategic vision and ambitions for the town which are set out in the Luton Investment Framework 2015-2025.



## CALL FOR PAPERS

The University of Bedfordshire welcomes proposals for: talks, papers, presentations, case studies, performance events, policy interventions, workshops and exhibitions of practice. *A Sense of Place* encourages a variety of topic contributions including but not restricted to: public arts, site-specific and sited creative practice, cultural entrepreneurship, theories of placemaking as process and philosophy, artists and regeneration/gentrification, cultural policy, ecology of place, inter- and multi-collaborative practices, community/inclusive practices and identity, architecture and public space, urban studies and urban informatics. The Strategic Vision for Luton includes an ambition to seek City of Culture status in 2025 and papers that reflect on the placemaking impact of achieving City of Culture, or of the impact from progressing an application, will be particularly welcomed.

Please submit 200-300 word contribution proposal via the website by midnight Sunday 24th September 2017. [www.testbeds.beds.ac.uk/a-sense-of-place](http://www.testbeds.beds.ac.uk/a-sense-of-place)

All proposals will be reviewed and you will be notified of the outcome by the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017.

For enquiries please contact Michaela Nutt, Arts & Culture Projects Manager at [michaela.nutt@beds.ac.uk](mailto:michaela.nutt@beds.ac.uk)

Press enquiries please contact Ulrika Meegolla, Media Relations Manager on [ulrika.meegolla@beds.ac.uk](mailto:ulrika.meegolla@beds.ac.uk)