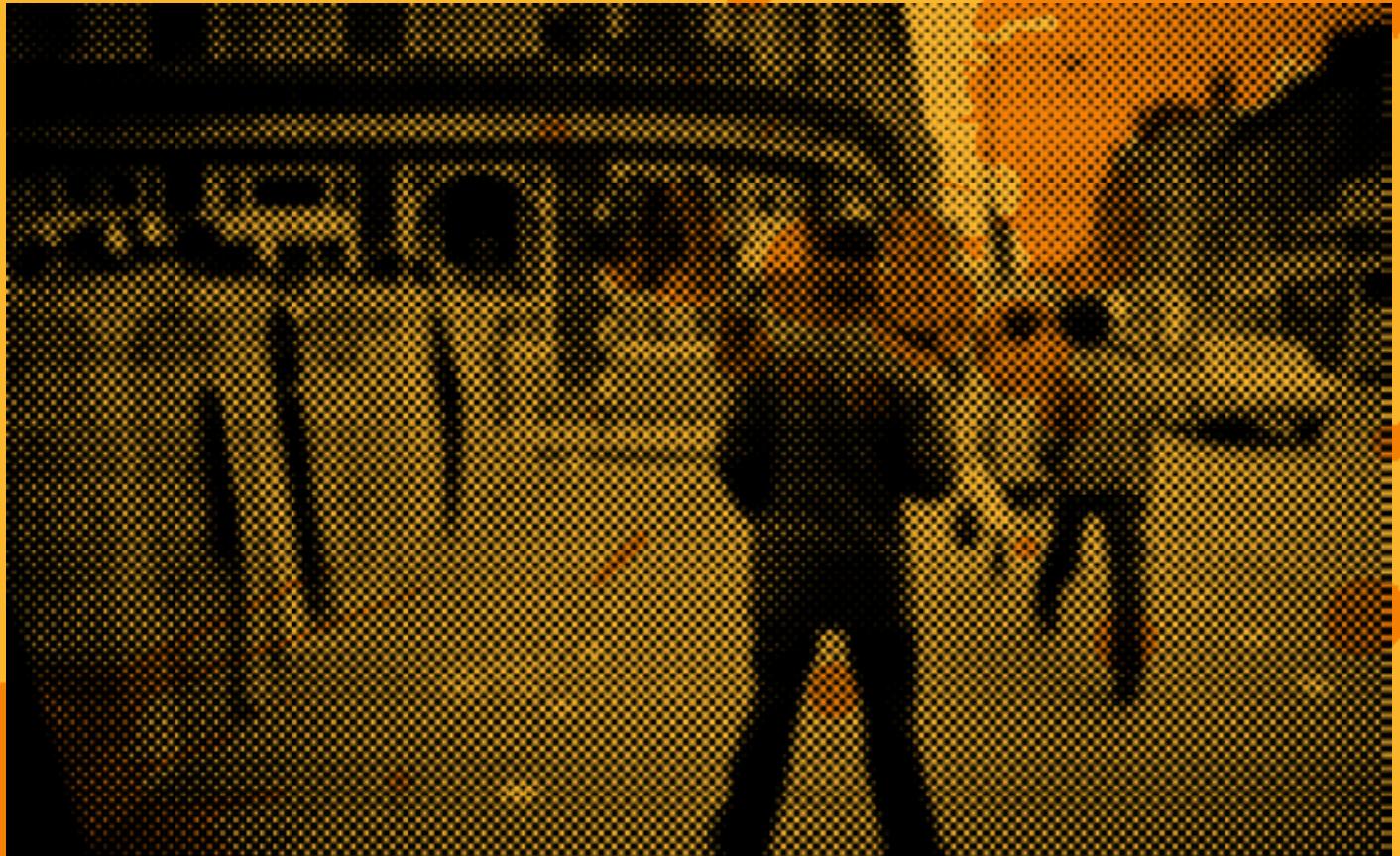


# CONCEPT



# NOTE

A radical reclaiming of heritage – to imagine,  
experiment and create new futures



# IN PRO

**In 1981 Black communities in Brixton first rose up in a bloody confrontation with the Metropolitan Police against a backdrop of racism, severe economic recession and high unemployment. The impact of these uprisings was extensive and shaped the subsequent development of Brixton on multiple levels and over subsequent decades. It fundamentally shaped the way that Brixton residents experienced their locality as well as the way it was perceived by politicians and policy makers.**

Forty years later, Brixton is in the grip of massive and rapid change as a result of extensive gentrification. Divisions and inequities remain prevalent, however. 81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance will mark the fortieth anniversary of the uprisings with an ambitiously comprehensive cultural programme of community engaged activities and events. In unprecedented, community-led action, Brixton will come together to create 81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance that ask, ‘Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?’ We need to do this now before eye-witness accounts of the period are lost to mortality, repatriation, or memory.

81 Acts will support and develop a programme of cultural events that will tell the stories of this heritage from the

ground-up, and will also examine the ways in which community ownership and activism can shape what happens next. It will do this through the creative ‘acts’ themselves, as well as the collective, ground-up structures that will facilitate them to take place.

This is a socially innovative initiative – giving civil society the means to imagine, experiment and create its own futures. Harnessing the current interest and debate in finding new ways forward post Covid-19 crisis, it will build on local mutual aid activism to steer ground-up participation in this process. Already since its inception by Chloe Osborne and Tony Cealy, 76 local civil society organisations and 300+ individuals have catalysed 81 Acts and its co-produced delivery model.

# THEORY

Harnessing radical heritage to find  
a new model for cultural democracy

## 81 Acts seeks to

Tell new and important stories about Brixton's past, in new ways, and within new frameworks that will up-end institution-led approaches to cultural heritage and in particular, Black community heritage and how it is positioned within the UK landscape.

Build a new model for social innovation that will support citizen participation and empower agency across diverse voices - strengthening community cohesion and resilience in Brixton and providing an exemplary case-study further afield.

## It will do this by

- Developing a collective and collaborative delivery structure - an open access, fluid and self-organising platform for people to get involved.
- Enabling and inspiring creative expression and deploying new media/civic tech to support citizen participation.
- Curating memories and artefacts of people who were actually present at the time of the uprisings.
- Creating a diverse cohort of cultural and heritage leaders and community change-makers including: 40 Heritage Fellows; 20 Governance Fellows, 21 Enterprise Fellows (see appendix 1 for more information)
- Connecting with international perspectives and comparisons to

facilitate clearer understanding of local contexts.

## Outcomes

- Brixton's present is understood through a relationship with its radical and defiant past, with new continuities of heritage revealed.
- Storytelling draws on intergenerational collaborations, with new connections and channels of communication opened as a result.
- People, organisations and politics are brought together across difference.
- Unheard voices and those with powerful but hidden forms of lived experience are celebrated and commemorated.
- Shared and inclusive spaces are created to nurture and hold difficult conversations.
- New strategies of community collaboration and collective advocacy are established.
- New frameworks for the preservation and management of cultural heritage are created and executed.
- The anniversary of the 1981 Brixton Uprising is celebrated and commemorated annually beyond 202.
- There is a paradigm shift in how Black community heritage is positioned within the UK heritage landscape.

**81 Acts seeks to understand what has caused division and what has enabled unity in 1981 and now. It will explore how conflict can build grounds for consensus; how justice has been served, and how healing from violent trauma occurs. It is guided by a set of shared values and ambitions. These are articulated by six underpinning themes, a collaboratively written Humanifesto (appendix 2), and an evolving Theory of Change.**

# CORE VALUES AND AMBITIONS

81 Acts' Themes are: Resist, exploring strategies of resistance; Insight / Incite, gaining Insight into the events of 81 and exploring the action that this incites; Respect, a tribute to fallen and future activists; Reform, calls to Action; Regroup & Renew, exploring collective agency and the subversive act of togetherness; Revolution, effecting change for ourselves and our own communities.

#### **81 Acts are:**

- Creatively bold and daring, risk-taking and resourceful in pushing at the boundaries of 'official' narratives and disrupting complacent systems.
- Connecting with one of the six themes and responding to the Humanifesto
- Driven by inclusivity and authenticity, working with people to bring people together in raised consciousness and connection,

providing safe spaces for dialogue and reflection

- Belonging to or growing out of Brixton
- Giving voice to the voiceless and the marginalised, accommodating a diversity of expression
- Looking to the future in creation of positive social change

#### **81 Acts do not:**

- Risk tangible or intangible damage to persons or property either in making the act itself or repercussions afterwards e.g. legal
- Exclude and divide individuals, groups or communities or silence difficult stories, accounts or points of view or champion any single narrative
- Play it safe or apologise
- Be part of any single standard repertoire

**81 Acts** is a growing group of people who are coming together on a collective basis to facilitate a genuinely ground-up campaign. Brixton- and Lambeth-based organisations, artists, businesses, and community members, are sharing infrastructure, capacity and expertise in open decision-making processes that enable citizens to steer action. (See appendix 3: Process Model Diagram)

It is led by a **community steering group** made up of individuals, organisations and community group representatives comprising 76 people who have guided the development process to date (including local residents, activists, artists and educators alongside community members with lived experience of the 81 Uprisings).

The Steering Group is supported by a **consortium of partners** (including cultural and civic organisations and specific heritage partners) and Advisors (with specific experience, knowledge and insights needed to ensure that the programme is a success). Within the consortium there are lead partners for specific areas of the process and programme.

Within the Steering Group there is a **Core Action Group of people called 'Builders'** who all have different lived experience of Brixton's historical and current community ecology and different areas of expertise - including but not limited to Service Design, Participatory placemaking, Youth Engagement, Social Justice Activism, Politics, Documentary Filmmaking, Creative Producing and Public Art.

The Steering group is supported by a **Network of Advisors** who bring expertise, insights and multi-sector perspectives.

'Acts' will come through the following four categories and be accountable to the

Exuberant Defiance Citizen Forum, and facilitated by a central team of six staff:

#### **COMMISSIONED ACTS**

10 Acts - designed and led by the Forum to facilitate and scale central conversations and scaffold / inform / disseminate the programme / underscore social impact ambitions

#### **CO-DESIGNED ACTS**

31 Acts - co-designed with partners, individual artists, community groups, schools, activists etc. to reach audiences in a variety of scales, mediums and locations

#### **EMERGING ACTS**

Providing the conditions for 40 Acts to emerge - in response to criteria set out in an open Call to Action, generated by the Exuberant Defiance Forum, who will collectively select acts at a 2-day deliberative event

#### **LEGACY ACTS**

Embedding the spirit of exuberant defiance - a skilled cohort of citizen-fellows will offer challenge and support for a heritage sector seeking more diverse leadership, in addition to a programme of documentation, evaluation, learning tools, and sector specific dissemination events.

**Of the people,  
by the people,  
for the people**

**+ DELIVERY  
STRUCTURE**

**Creative Livelihoods** (artists, producers, production, technical engineers, heritage specialists, coders, designers, photographers, film makers, archivists, curators + Core team of 6) **£500,000**

**Artistic Expenditure** (materials, equipment, production, documentation) **£400,000**

**Interventions in Education** (provocations for playgrounds - schools programme) **£40,000**

**Community Partnership Development** /consortia capacity building **£75,000**

**Builders and Weavers** (Community Steering group support costs to ensure equity of opportunities for all who have put energy into catalysing 81 Acts) **£25,000**

**Aficionados** (a network of Community catalysts with responsibility for connecting civic, arts, community organisations) **£25,000**

**Deliberative Assembly** (intergenerational, art programming collective) **£30,000**

**Upskilling** - Partner, Artist, Aficionados, Community Volunteers (Creative Advocacy, Heritage specific skills, audience development, social justice campaigning skills, community organising, event management, collaborative making, marketing and documentation processes, dynamic evaluation) **£50,000**

**Uplifters** (training, networking and sector learning opportunities led by a network of emerging BAME cultural producers support by London International Film and Theatre Festival) **£45,000**

**Fuse Lighting** (Experiential Marketing - Street Art, Subvertising, Art Interruptions, Local and National media hijacks/ partnerships) **£40,000**

**The UnMuseum** – democratically curated uprising museum in public space **£50,000**

**Uprising Legacy Acts** (81 Social Change Fellowships) - see appendix one **£150,000**

**Bivouac \* Labs** (Sharing insights from the process – reflecting on the strength of collective action, new business modelling, tools for erudite organising and learning around adaptive community practices) **£50,000**

**Capture** - videography, photography, radical citizenship zine, commissioning of think pieces throughout **£60,000**

**Digi-riot** - digital interactive interface - part provocation, part tool-kit for a cultural democracy/reform, part radical re-mapping of Brixton's Black community heritage, part digital collaboration platform for community & civic organisations **£80,000**

**Sparks Research** (measuring impact & resonance /advice for future commissioning, investment policy and practice) **£50,000**

**Equity Support** (supporting any access /child-care/subsistence needs to level the playing field for steering group, Act Makers, partners) **£30,000**

**£1,700,000**

**BUDGET**  
Estimated budget c. £1.7 million

\* Bivouac – reclaimed from military use – these are temporary camps erected far away from ‘home’ territory – to train for new/emergent campaigns. Bivouac Labs will allow us to temporarily create a safe space in uncomfortable, unknown territory.

**Development phase**  
May – December 2020

↓

**81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance**  
January – Nov 2021  
(Focus April – Oct 2021)

↓

**Legacy Acts**  
Nov 2021- Nov 2022

↓

**Evaluation**  
(ongoing)

↓

**Review, Analysis and Dissemination**  
Dec 2021 – Jan 2023



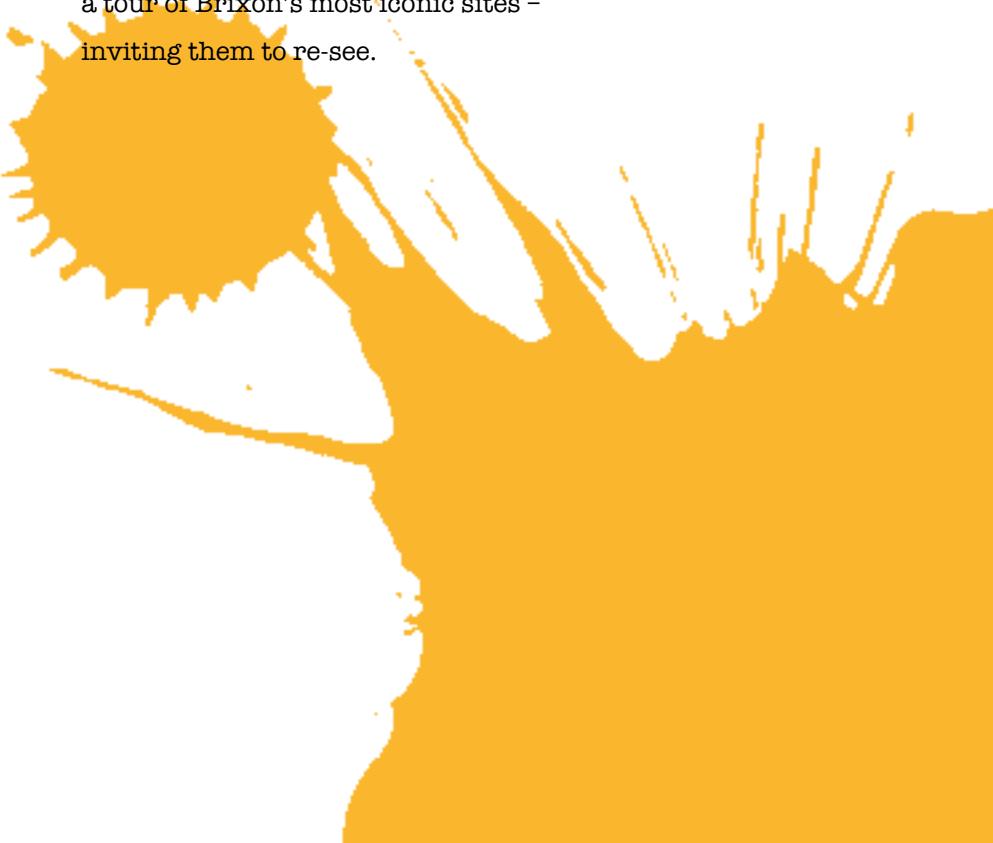
# EXAMPLES OF ACTS IN DEVELOPMENT

## RESIST

**In partnership with LIFT (London International Film and Theatre Festival), The Nest Collective, Brixton based Social Justice Activists and Art Night.**

The Nest Collective bring their cameras abroad to London and Cape Town from their home in Nairobi to create brief, evocative documentaries. Their focus? migration activists in each of these cities. They'll create profiles of those who push back against the forces that try to sequester and incapacitate minority communities. But it's not cinema verité, they'll depict these

activists' lives in a style that evokes memories, injustice, intimacy and solidarity through vibrant and fantasy-filled sounds and visuals. Performed as a screening of short films with interviews and interventions from The Nest and a series of special guests, this work will take the audience on a tour of Brixton's most iconic sites – inviting them to re-see.



## RENEW & REGROUP

"Take a deep breath & speak to someone you would normally walk past."

**UnJudge Brixton** [UJB] is a Human Library designed to bring historic & new residents of the area together, creating a safe space where difficult questions are expected, appreciated & answered. In the fallout of the Windrush scandal & recent community-led campaigns against "Social cleansing" (e.g. Reclaim Brixton, Save Brixton Arches), UJB will challenge stereotypes & prejudices through dialogue between different waves of residents. It will catalyse new connections across difference & challenge the growing

**In Partnership with BCA (Black Cultural Archives), Lambeth Age Concern, Brixton Society & Iconic Steps (supporting young, South London based film makers)**

narratives of division & resentment & the feeling that race, & socio-economic divides are growing. The main theme for UJB will be community regrouping, exploring different approaches to community action and, more importantly, what issues matter to who and how different life situations mean what is good for one person is not good for another. Bringing people together to create greater understanding and inspire a more integrated future for Brixton.

## RESPECT

**In Partnership with Border Crossings' Origins Festival, Raw Materials, Brixton Musicians, International Songlines Artist(s)**

Addressing the heritage of 1981 through the Indigenous Australian concept of the Songline: a way of navigating the physical landscape and its historical and cultural significance through music. We want to set up a residency for one or two Indigenous

Australian artists to work with young and established Brixton musicians in the weeks prior to the festival, enabling the creation of a living musical map of the locality and exploring alternative models of community leadership.

# ARTS

# REFORM

**In partnership with Brixton House Theatre, Resolve Collective and Brixton based artist Chloe Osborne in collaboration with an intergenerational community co-design team**

**G(r)ift** is an experiment in how we might hijack public mediums of messaging to create new dynamic ways of talking to one another within the community. Catalysing conversations between strangers and harnessing the scope of shared space to begin difficult conversations across difference.

Offering an alternative to the influx of corporate, brand recognition-based capitalist messaging that is dominating more and more public space in Brixton. It is a series of experiments designed to empower local residents & workers & occupiers of Brixton's public space.

**In partnership with Apples and Snakes, Advocacy Academy, Emergency Exit Arts in collaboration with emerging and established poets and activists and Brixton based Street Artists**

**In partnership with Brixton House Theatre, Brixton Dominoes Club; Older Men's Theatre Group; Windrush Theatre Group; Angell Town Drama Group and led by Brixton based, theatre maker Tony Cealy in collaboration with Brixton Bard Alex Wheatle, Designer Godfried Donkor and Brixton intergenerational community**

# REVOLUTION

**Without Planning Permission (WPP)** is an interactive performance event that mixes film, sound system, civic planning, interactivity and live public engagement. Performed throughout public spaces and inside Brixton House Theatre, local residents, businesses and occupiers are invited to imagine themselves as living in fictional geographical areas of Brixton. These audiences observe performatory current problems & dilemmas and are invited to resolve the issues. WPP aims to empower, explore and build strategies for citizen action.

**Rallying Cry, Brixton edition,** will see live poetry performance(s) from Brixton's Iconographic sites. A call to remember our fallen heroes and to take the mantle on in new conditions. Bringing together different generations of poets and activists, fuelled by insights and ready to incite actions for change, voices are amplified through a larger-than life framing of the poets with live-streaming and animation on the buildings that act as their stages.

# LEGACY ACTS



**40 Heritage Fellows** will develop heritage skills, as connectors between 81 Acts and local/national/international heritage, arts, and communications organisations. They will have access to activation funding for partnership working.

**21 Enterprise Fellows** will be supported to develop social enterprises that offer disruptive, sustainable and innovative approaches to the challenges and opportunities derived from their understanding of Brixton 1981's heritage

**20 Governance Fellows**, peer mentored and matched with governance roles at local/national organisations; they will improve connections between 'exuberantly defiant' community members and heritage sector trustee boards.

# SOCIAL JUSTICE FELLOWSHIPS

# HUMAN RIOTS

**When the black community rose up in Brixton in 1981 they didn't simply throw petrol bombs at the police – they threw them into the very heart of a British society indifferent to the cries for justice and equality.**

During three days in April 1981, South London exploded. The consequences would resonate across the country, around the world, and down through successive generations. Forty years later and the drivers of the Brixton 'riots' have still not properly been understood by society at large, let alone dealt with.

For the first time in since the uprisings in 1981, we will tell the unheard stories of this exuberantly defiant act of rebellion that fundamentally changed Britain.

In 2021 we have an opportunity to gather, bravely and across difference, against a backdrop of the most bitter and divisive politics and austerity in modern British history. To recall, reflect and learn from the past and forge new understandings about how we secure our futures together.

There will be **81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance** to mark our way forward.

We will stand on the shoulders of giants and, fed by the need for hope, we will create new opportunities to both connect and collaborate.

**We will interrupt.**

**We will surprise.**

**We will invite people to pause, reflect** and see long term, entrenched problems with new eyes.

**We will shine a light** on the injustices that gave rise to the 81 protests - the inequalities, oppressions and injustices that continue to this day.

**We will highlight issues around race, poverty, policing and criminal justice** in an attempt to explore what has changed over the last 40 years.

**We will harness the power, creativity and imagination** of Brixton's exuberant diaspora.

**We will catalyse and facilitate difficult conversations** and host spaces to safely hold constructive conflict.

**We will resist cold**

compromise and uniformity to embrace difference and encourage empathy.

**We will shout the names of our fallen and forgotten heroes** so that they can be heard by all.

**We will render audible the stories** of those who have been forgotten - lost in a swirl of voices who have shouted louder for longer.

**We will make visible, that which has been suppressed** or masked by newness.

**We will reveal age old tropes** dressed up as innovation or modernity.

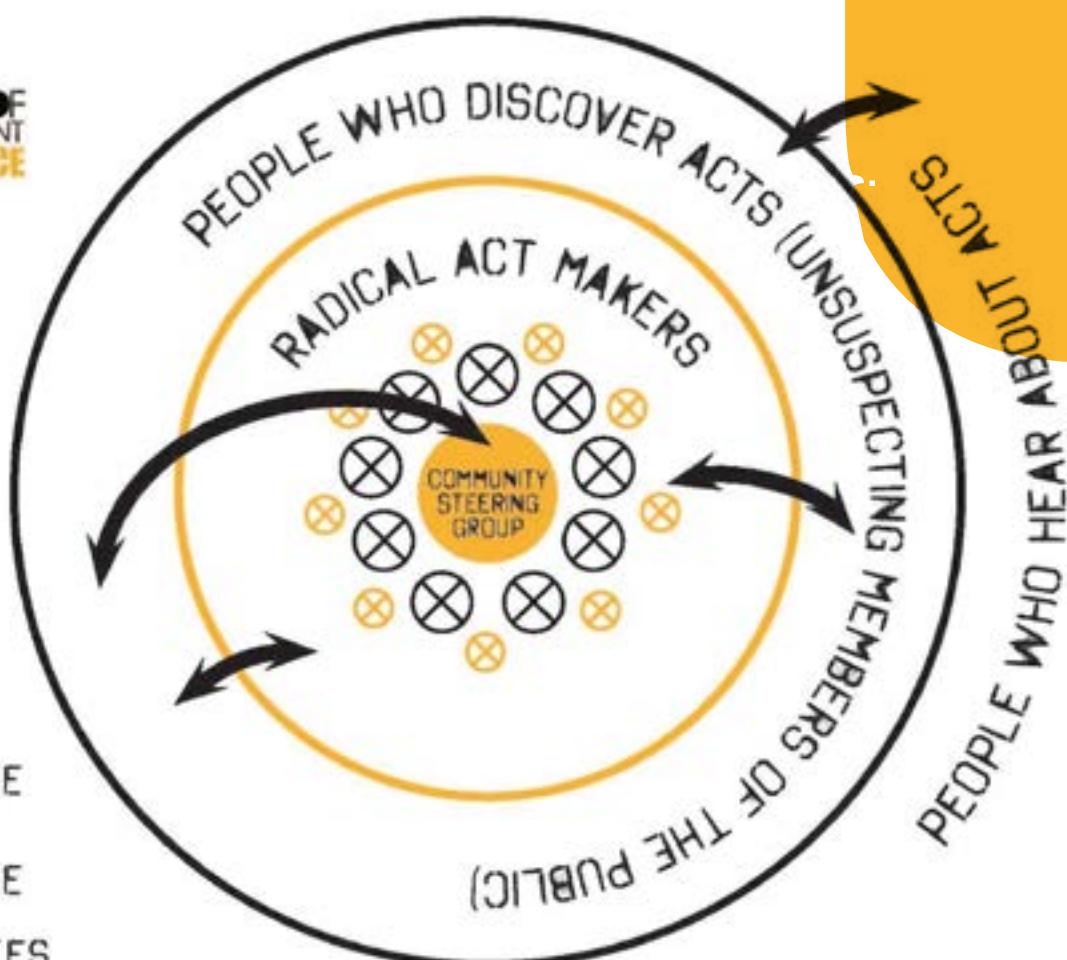
Led by the community, it is an invitation to rethink, regroup and refresh.

To re-think our **strategies of resistance and resilience.**

**To critically question** how much has changed.

**To learn the lessons of the past.**

**To incite actions** that make the future of Brixton as defiant and brave as its past.



# IMPACT PROCESS

# KEY STAKEHOLDERS

**HERITAGE****Lead Partners:**

Black Cultural Archives, Bishopsgate Institute, London Metropolitan Archives

**Supporting Partners:**

LB Lambeth Libraries and Archives, Brixton Society

**FELLOWSHIP AND LEGACY****Lead Partners:**

Advocacy Academy, 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning, Ubele Initiative,

**Supporting Partners:**

Sour Lemons- Transforming Leadership, Brixton Inclusive, Brixton's Creative Enterprise Zone (The Brixton Project)

**PRODUCING****Lead Partners:**

Brixton House Theatre, LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre)

**Supporting Partners:**

Bureau of Silly Ideas, Brixton Pound, Longfield Hall, Raw Materials, Brixton Community Hub, LB Lambeth Arts and Events, Rapport Festival, Border Crossing Festival, Brixton Impact Hub

**MARKETING AND COMMS****Lead Partners:**

Iconic Steps, Livity (tbc)

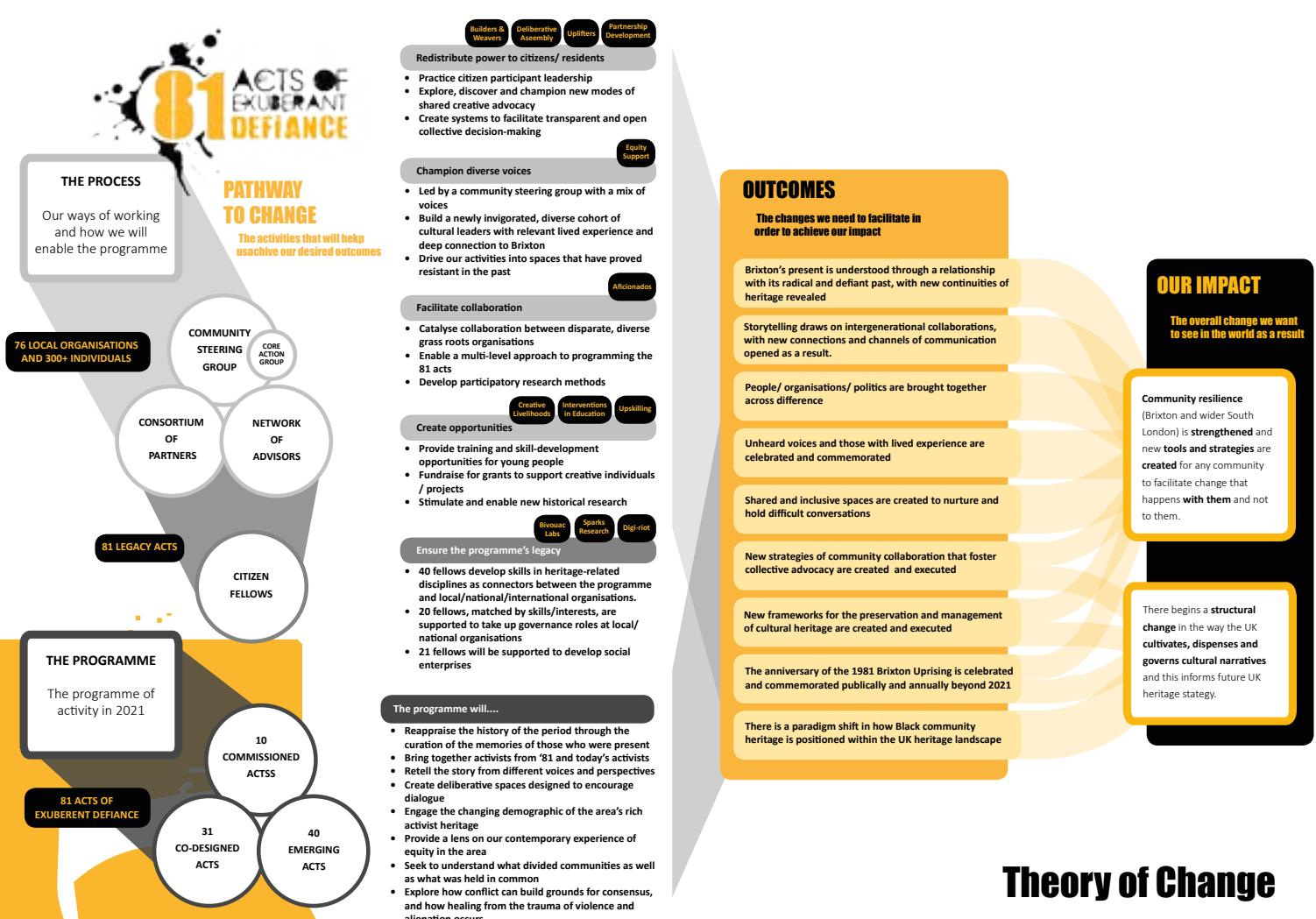
**Supporting Partners:**

This Ain't Rock and Roll

**RESEARCH**

Working with Network: Queen Mary University London's Centre for the Creative and Cultural Economy, to develop research around key themes and goals of 81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance.

# THEORY OF CHANGE



**Theory of Change**

[Download pdf](#)