

Alone together, the social life of benches : how filmmaking can help to tell detailed and nuanced stories about encounters, exclusion and wellbeing in outdoor spaces.

JOHNSON, Esther <<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8884-4192>>

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AHRC Connected Communities Call
Addressing the Challenges of Disconnection, Division and Exclusion
Innovation Grant · January–November 2015

The Un-Sociable Bench,
and other urban micro-territories of encounter and intimidation

Project partners

Esther Johnson · Reader in Media Arts · Sheffield Hallam University
Clare Rishbeth · Lecturer in Landscape Architecture · University of Sheffield
Ben Rogaly · Professor of Human Geography · University of Sussex

Community group leaders and fieldworkers

Radhika Bynon · The Young Foundation
Dr Jasbir Singh · Greenwich Inclusion Project
Diana Coman · Sutton fieldworker
Samprada Mukhia · Woolwich fieldworker



The Bench Project · Research Aims

- *To test how making a film can tell detailed and nuanced stories about encounters, exclusion and wellbeing in outdoor spaces*
- To record the ways in which different people use, and think about how they use, benches and other small places of outdoor gathering,
- To explore how the interactions between users of benches may be sociable or may cause problems,
- To find out how spending time outside is good for people, and,
- To understand ways in which public spaces and seating areas are controlled

**On a day such as this, while roaming around this park,
If you see a thousand faces then it is good for you.
My ancestors used to say that.**

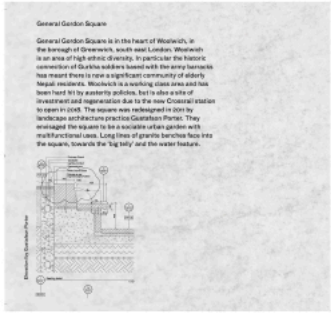
– Chali Kumari, General Gordon Square, Woolwich



Alone Together
the Social Life of Benches

RESEARCH PROCESS
and
FINDINGS

To test how
making a film
can tell detailed
and nuanced
stories about
encounters,
exclusion and
wellbeing in
outdoor spaces



Spread from Alone Together, the Social Life of Benches DVD booklet, BP028 2015



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