

Kent County Council News Release

Ref No: 350/09

7 December 2009

Young people move to the culture beat

Announcement of artist for Kent Cultural Baton

Artist Nicole Mollett's design has been chosen for the first Kent Cultural Baton, to celebrate culture in the county in the run-up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Kent Cultural Baton will be an original piece of art that will travel around the county visiting festivals, organisations, individuals, schools and businesses who will represent 21 different representations of 'culture' and 'creativity'. These will include those from the worlds of art, science, food, gardens, heritage and historic, carnival and street theatre, music and the environment.

The Cultural Olympiad of the 2012 games celebrates the UK's culture as the host country. Kent will be taking part as each host of the 'baton' will be able to contribute to a special blog that will highlight their cultural activities. When the baton ends its journey in 2012, a map of the baton's journey will be displayed as a reminder of London 2012 for future generations of Kent residents and help build memories for local people about how they took part in the build up to the Games.

KCC Cabinet Member for Community Services Mike Hill said:

"This project is unique and the first of its kind in the country. The Olympic and Paralympic Games are a chance to celebrate culture and will mean we have a lasting memory for future generations to show how we have used this opportunity to recognise our own cultural heritage."

Proposals by the four shortlisted artists' were used by community interest organisation Future Creative who has been working with local schools on how the baton could look. They showed the result of their schools outreach project during a high energy event on Thursday 3 December at the Assembly Hall Theatre,

Tunbridge Wells, including a running race with Paralympic champion Danny Crates, processions, music and audience participation.

Nicole Mollett's idea was chosen by a panel and voted on by the public and consists of a large Airstream caravan which will be adapted and will then travel around Kent, offering workshops to collect stories from local people and help them get involved in drawing, photography, sound and film as well as being a temporary gallery space. The culminating map of the county will help people explore the lost, forgotten and hidden places of Kent.

The baton will aim to inspire people who take part, to be creative. Participants will have the opportunity to contribute to a project, which will in time help build pride across the whole of Kent. It will be for a wide range of people regardless of their interests or hobbies, and they will have the chance to share their knowledge and talents within their community and beyond.

Nicole Mollett (www.nicolemollett.co.uk) said:

"I am delighted. It is such an honour and a fantastic opportunity to be able to make my idea actually happen. I look forward to expanding my work across Kent, inspiring people to rediscover and reflect on what makes their local area unique in the lead up to 2012."

As part of her submission, Nicole explained:

"The Kent Cultural Baton will use the idea of how Google Earth and GPS systems allows travel from world views to an image of someone's back garden within seconds, suggesting that nowhere is uncharted or distant anymore. Yet within this technological age so much knowledge is still lost or hidden. The travelling pod project, intends to reveal the idea, that within every world there is a world, and that within every small village there is a million fascinating stories to be told."

Notes to editors

- The Towards a Kent Cultural Baton project has been granted the Inspire mark - the badge of the London 2012 Inspire Programme. The programme recognises innovative and exceptional projects that are directly inspired by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Inspire programme is run by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is an opportunity for everyone to be a part of the London 2012 Games – a broad participation programme spanning sport participation, education, sustainability, volunteering, and business opportunities & skills. New

opportunities are being created to inspire young people and encourage the whole of the UK to join in.

- The Kent 2012 campaign is led and managed by the Sport, Leisure and Olympics service of Kent County Council. Its purpose is to maximise the opportunities and long term legacy of the 2012 Games for the communities of Kent, across the areas of the arts, economic development, schools, sport, transport, tourism and volunteering. www.kentsport.org/london2012
- For more information about Future Creative, go to www.future-creative.org

...ends...

For further information contact Lisa Whitbread at Kent County Council Media Centre on 01622 694177 or e-mail lisa.whitbread@kent.gov.uk

More news releases are available online at www.kent.gov.uk/news