

Serpentine Gallery

Press Release
**Edgware Road Project presents
RE:ASSEMBLY
Ultra-red and St Marylebone
Church Of England School
18-21 April 2013**

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Ultra-red

RE:ASSEMBLY : Civis Sum - Songs for Edgware Road 2012

Five-channel video stills

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Courtesy Bevis Bowen

The **Serpentine Gallery's Edgware Road Project** presents **RE:ASSEMBLY**, a four-day exhibition that opens a window on to a unique, partnership between the central London **St Marylebone Church of England School** and international sound collective **Ultra-red**.

While the place of culture in the curriculum is a hot topic of debate, **RE:ASSEMBLY** demonstrates the important role that art can play in schools. Rated as outstanding by Ofsted and among the country's first 100 National Teaching Schools, the St Marylebone Church of England School has been transformed over the past twenty years. Citing the presence of the performing arts throughout its curriculum as central to its resurgence and a key driver for its achievements, the school places a high premium on arts education.

Initiated and guided by the Serpentine Gallery's Edgware Road Project, the residency has placed Ultra-red in the heart of the school since 2009, embedding the artists into the curriculum. Ultra-red worked with students and teachers to devise projects that explored questions ranging from citizenship and migration to dealing with the pressure of exams. During a Year 8 'Citizenship Day', as well as inviting police officers, nurses and solicitors as guest speakers, Ultra-red invited trade unionists and housing

activists to be interviewed by the students. From a student's impassioned critique of widening economic and social divides to Headmistress Elizabeth Phillips account of how the performing arts have helped to turn the school around, RE:ASSEMBLY provides a revealing snapshot of their work together.

- *This Orientation* - a downloadable audio guide around Marylebone – including the famous Baker Street Lost Property Office, the former Planetarium building and the Ragged and Industrial School – visitors experience the school and its environment as the students do.
- In *Hymnal*, religious texts are replaced with the students' observations on politics and power and bound in the style of a church hymn book.
- *Songs For Edgware Road* – the collaboration with the late choreographer Gill Clarke – combines spoken word and movement inspired by the local area into a mesmerising video installation.
- In *Songs for Getting Through*, concrete plaques are marked with the lyrics and song titles that helped students survive the pressure of exams.
- In *Possible Conversations* – filmed on rooftops against the backdrop of the London skyline – students, teachers and local activists air subjects close to their hearts.
- In *Untitled*, teachers' own anxieties are inscribed into six framed textiles.

Ultra-red artist Robert Sember explains: 'While the works exhibited in RE:ASSEMBLY represent an outcome of our collaboration, they are starting points for the next phase of the investigation. They are not only a response to the question "What is the sound of citizenship?" but they are also an invitation to others to come together and explore the question within the context of this city.'

One student said: 'I had an unforgettable experience. It not only boosted my self confidence but also broadened my horizons... I took part in filmings and discussions, sharing my thoughts and ideas, something I've not done before.' Another said: 'Interacting with the community was a really big thing for me, stopping people in the street and hearing stories from different eras and from different areas of London that I haven't visited before. For all this wild stuff to be going on practically on my doorstep was quite amazing.'

Head of Art at St Marylebone Church of England School, Stephanie Cubbin, says: 'What makes this project innovative is that the school, the Serpentine Gallery and the artists collectively planned and developed ideas together. The project has reached many of the students in the school, crossing subject areas and year groups.'

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Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, London, W2 3XA
Gallery open 10am to 6pm daily. Admission free

Notes to editors:

The Serpentine Gallery's **Edgware Road Project** links local and international artists with people living and working in this London neighbourhood. It is based at the Centre for Possible Studies, its itinerant home. In the five years since its inception, the Edgware Road Project has developed over 15 projects in which artists have worked with local café workers, students, tourists, older people's groups, sex workers, precariously housed people and recent migrants. Projects are brought together through an on-line archive of research and exhibitions at the Serpentine Gallery in addition to pamphlets and tablemats distributed in the local area.

Ultra-red is a sound art and political collective that includes artists, researchers and organisers from a range of social movements. The group has produced radio broadcasts, performances, recordings, installations, texts and public space actions. Ultra-red's residency on the Edgware Road Project was undertaken in collaboration with the St Marylebone Church of England School and Raven Row.

RE:ASSEMBLY in collaboration with



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