

# Beneath Our Footsteps

by Compiler

with Brigitte Hart, John Rogers, and Natasha Trotman

Beneath Our Footsteps is an interactive, collaborative web-based artwork about the hidden river, Philley Brook, which runs beneath the streets of Upper Walthamstow, Leytonstone and Leyton in London.

This project was produced by the digital art collective Compiler and involved a series of artist-led digital activities, inviting residents to create a collaborative artwork exploring the Philley Brook river and celebrating local heritage. Looking for ways to more consciously make use of the digital tools that take up much of our time and passive attention, alongside alternative non-digital wayfinding and other techniques, we hope that the activities and their outcomes help us find better ways of understanding our local surroundings.

Activities included:

- A terrain modelling workshop for local families and young people at Coronation Gardens in Leyton, held as part of the Leyton Más carnival in July 2024. Participants imagined, sketched, and 3D-modelled the flow of the river beneath the gardens.
- Digi Photo + Sound Walk in August 2024. A guided walk inviting residents to trace the course of the Philley Brook river in collaboration with psychogeographer John Rogers and sound artist Brigitte Hart. Participants took photos, 3D scanned objects, and recorded sounds using various devices, including a hydrophone (dipped into the river through rain drains and gutters), a geophone (to capture traffic and water vibrations), and an electromagnetic antenna (used to detect signals from the green electric boxes on the streets).
- We Are Philley Brook in September 2024. A multi-sensory workshop at Some Kind of Hack Space for neurodiverse young people aged 14-25, produced in collaboration with equalities designer and researcher Natasha Trotman. Young people explored the sounds, smells and textures of the river and created artworks that combined a variety of senses, natural materials and 3D modelling.

This exhibition showcases the outcomes of this project and celebrates the launch of the web-based artwork, created with contributions from all participants involved.

Scan the QR code below to explore and play with the artwork!



<https://beneathourfootsteps.compiler.zone>

Beneath Our Footsteps project is made possible by the London Borough of Waltham Forest's Make It Happen 2024 grants programme.

## Collaborators:

Compiler is a digital art collective led by Tanya Boyarkina and Oscar Cass-Darweish, based in E17. The group's creative practice explores social and political challenges in digital culture. They aim to create accessible works and events for audiences with different skills, knowledge and abilities to better understand emerging digital technologies. Some of the topics they cover include cybersecurity, surveillance, and environmental issues.

<https://compiler.zone>

Brigitte Hart is a sound artist working across performance and installation. Her practice explores relationships between voice, objects, histories and ecologies, often engaging text, environmental recordings and archives. She is also a member of the Shortwave Collective, an international artist collective interested in the creative use of radio, as well as a licensed mudlark and can regularly be found searching the Thames foreshore at low-tide.

<https://www.brigittehart.com>

John Rogers is a writer and film-maker based in Leytonstone, East London. He is the author of This Other London – adventures in the overlooked city, and Welcome to New London – journeys and encounters in the post-Olympic City. He directed the documentaries London Overground (with Iain Sinclair), The London Perambulator, Make Your Own Damn Art – the world of Bob and Roberta Smith, and In the Shadow of the Shard. He produces a regular series of London walks on YouTube.

<https://thelostbyway.com>

Natasha Trotman is an international Equalities Designer, S/END and therapeutic arts practitioner and Creative in Residence at Somerset House, whose practice explores extending the frontiers of knowledge around mental differences. She has worked with neurodiverse communities and people with varied abilities, including those with dyspraxia, autism and those living with dementia.

<https://natashamtrotman.com>

Some Kind of Hack Space is a space for autonomous creative exploration with technology for neurodiverse young people aged 14-25. Produced by Artillery and hosted at Leytonstone Sixth Form College. It is a space where you can bring your own ideas and projects, join creative workshops with guest artists and scientists, and experiment with games design, electronics and coding.

<https://www.artillery.org.uk/somekindofhackspace>

With thanks to the teams at Filly Brook - Bar, No. 1 Church Lane and Good Shepherd Studios, Artillery, Leyton Más, and Leyton Sixth Form College for hosting and supporting us at various points of the project.