

EXTREME VIEWS: THINK TANK

4 – 7 APRIL 2019



Invitation:

Art Gene and Barrow's Coastal Community Team invite applications to join us for the *Extreme Views Think Tank*, three days of discussion and networking focussed on re-visioning social regeneration based in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria.

Provocation:

Barrow 'is a place that few outside the defence, wind power or extractive gas industries are likely to visit. If anyone knows anything about Barrow it's that it was ... judged by the Office for National Statistics to be the most miserable place in Britain... A place that was once dubbed England's Chicago because its economy was growing so fast is now synonymous with heroin'.

[Guardian 28/4/2018]

Barrow is rated #1 borough in England for the number and quality of its natural heritage assets, yet the urban core is ranked fifth nationally for health deprivation and disability. Barrow produces the nation's continuous at-sea deterrence, it faces the world's largest off-shore windfarm and has the highest percentage of skilled workers in the north. Yet it has the second largest collection of highly deprived neighbourhoods in England and there are what seem to be intractable challenges for our housing stock.

Proposition:

Such disparities will ignite *Extreme Views*, and *Think Tank* will generate dialogue to reveal the potential values, policies and strategies to remove the disconnect with our environment. Barrow should be a centre of excellence for landscape and art as well as industry.

We are looking for 40 diverse delegates, from local people to specialists in their fields, to participate in dynamic conversations about the future of this place. Taking the lead from keynote speakers it will be an invaluable opportunity to contribute to real futures-focused planning. Contributors will be keen to participate in honest and open dialogue about the potential futures for the borough. Our place of extremes can provide a framework for place-making and inquiry; working with local people to generate ideas that can be applied to towns and cities everywhere.

Think Tank will build on and learn from three preceding artist-led *Extreme Views Tower* events that will tease out the collisions of industry and nature in the coastal landscape. The events will have drawn out what local people value most about their place and how to make it better. The events will capture full and frank discussions as a mechanism through which to begin building a more vocal, self-determined and ecologically resilient community. One which develops and acts on an imaginative, locally defined approach to forming better futures.

Informing decision-makers from all possible sectors, the *Think Tank* will explore ways that the unique assets of this geographically isolated landscape can be utilised for public benefit. The transformative challenges of climate change and species extinction provide the wider context for Barrow, as a 'glocally' relevant microcosm which may turn the face of disaster into one of opportunity.

In combination with the unveiling of commissioned artworks by artists-in-residence, Louise Adkins and Clara Casian, *Think Tank* will exhibit the imaginings and creative encounters of Art Gene's three *Tower* events at Cavendish Dock, North Scale and Askam, within the borough. As a participant, you will tour these places to walk, talk and stimulate ideas for how we might work better together towards our futures.

We are looking for people who want to listen deeply, eat good food, understand and question interconnections, walk in astonishing landscapes, engage with difficult issues and celebrate the opportunity for change. Findings will be published with the opportunity for delegates to contribute to the *Think Tank* publication, and we will be offering evidence of continuing professional development as part of the *Think Tank*.

Delegate fee: £300

Fee includes accommodation, lunch and evening meals. There are a limited number of bursaries available, however please note the minimum fee will be £100. There are a small number of free places for delegates living in the Barrow Borough who do not require hotel accommodation.

Deadline for applications: 28th February 2019

For more information please contact Ellie at ellie.chaney@art-gene.co.uk.

To learn more about the Extreme Views project visit:
www.art-gene.co.uk/project/extreme-views/



Ormsgill Slag Bank, 2018. Stuart Bastik

Art Gene in partnership with the Islands and Bays of Barrow and Furness Coastal Team

