

VARIABLE MATTER PRESENT



THE RISING SUN

Experience Romford in a new light

15 JULY – 30 JULY 2022

PRESS INVITED 14 and 15 JULY

This July, award-winning artist **David Shearing**, known for his immersive multimedia environments and spaces takes over the historic marketplace in Romford which celebrates its 775th Anniversary this year, with a unique interactive piece of public art. The ***The Rising Sun*** will be a striking light-responsive installation, a structure designed in the shape of a pub which will stand proudly right in the centre of the square, in sight of the marketplaces' three pubs.

Inside, visitors will be bathed in a haze of light that follows the movements of the sun. The magical and evocative space will be filled with the town's familiar local voices, telling moving stories which map their life journeys of arrival, living, loving, and longing.

Romford-born Shearing, who is also a two-time winner of the **World Stage Design awards for Installation** (2013 and 2017) says: "*The Rising Sun* is a snapshot of everyday people, shining a light on hidden stories of the local community, not the stereotypes that are often portrayed in this unique and changing outer East London town. Pubs are at the heart of our communities and can serve as a place of conversation. I hope this piece of art will encourage debate about what's possible in our town centres by building a sense of destination and pride."

Shearing adds: “Inspiring and unusual art can animate our public spaces and help to bring us together. Like so many town centres, Romford is a different place following Covid, with the loss of many major retailers, and a different night-time economy landscape. I wanted to create accessible art that would inspire a sense of placemaking.”

The installation has also been designed to explore and celebrate the complexities and changing identities of East London and Essex. The borough of Havering has the 4th lowest level of public arts engagement in London, placing it firmly in the bottom third of places nationally, however this installation, which is commissioned in partnership with **Romford Business Improvement District (BID)**, **Queen’s Theatre Hornchurch** and is also supported by **Havering Changing**, a consortium of local organisations, is part of a wider progressive strategy being undertaken in the borough to trial radical new ideas to engage local people in arts and culture in different ways. The research impact of the project is supported by **The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama**.

Mathew Russell, Queen Theatre Hornchurch’s Executive Director comments: “It’s great to see work of this ambition in Havering. As a sub-regional producing theatre, we’re increasingly interested in different forms theatre might take and how this can animate a variety of exciting locations, reaching new audiences. Romford High Street is dear to our heart, and it’s brilliant that an award-winning artist of David Shearing’s stature is creating work for an iconic public space in Havering for the very first time. It’s definitely going to be a highlight of this summer.’

Julie Frost, Romford’s BID director adds: “Town centres can no longer be conceived as merely places of economic exchange. Rather they must be understood as areas which are to provide an ‘experience.’ They are spaces into which the individual person can derive their own unique understanding and sense of fulfilment from what is on offer around them. *The Rising Sun* captures the very essence of this.”

Havering is also embarking on a £1billion regeneration scheme. As one of the fastest changing boroughs in the country it has been identified as having the highest predicted growth in 0-24 year olds in Greater London*. While 25% of the population are from Minority Ethnic groups this jumps to 40% of young people at primary & secondary school age. The recent opening of the Elizabeth Line will further transform its shifting population and fortunes in the future.

The installation can also be experienced by a wider audience online via an interactive digital website in which viewers will be able to click on and ‘ease-drop’ into the many captured voices. The online binaural soundscape has been built in partnership with artist/composer James Bulley and Rabbit Hole, a creative agency known for their leading digital work for Coldplay.

Variable Matter is an artist collective led by David Shearing which aims to bring about change: environmental, political and social by creating intimate, and at times spectacular, art and performance to engage audiences both physically and conceptually using video, sound and organic materials. They believe in the power of design to inspire new forms of connection and experience and to better promote social and environmental justice. David Shearing is Lecturer in Performance at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and is currently researching placemaking, design and performance.

PRAISE FOR PREVIOUS WORK

'David Shearing creates incredible interventions that allow communities to step out of the everyday and into extraordinary contexts. Deeply atmospheric, immersive and reflective - he creates space for connection and contemplation whilst offering a soothing balm for our ever chaotic times' – Amy Letman (Creative Director – Transform Festival)

'a highly emotional and humbling experience' on *Christmas with Us* – Leeds Confidential

'evocative, sublime and sensual' on *The Weather Machine* – Culture Vulture

'Weather becomes a way to understand our transient and fragile feelings in David Shearing's interactive public installation.' - (VICE.com on *The Weather Café*, an immersive, digitally responsive cafe).

PRESS INVITED – 14 and 15 July

Event Details

Friday 15 July – Saturday 30 July 2022

08:00 – 20:00 daily

Romford Market / Online

Free (no booking required)

www.variablematter.com

CREATIVE TEAM:

David Shearing - Artist (www.davidshearing.com)

Laura Ann Price – Art Director (www.lauraannprice.co.uk)

James Bulley – Composer (www.jamesbulley.com)

Ash Bowmott, Laura Sweeney - Executive Producers (www.the-uncultured.com)

Veionella Spaine – Project Manager (www.linktr.ee/veispaine)

Ryszard Lewandowski – Production Manager (www.kitmapper.com)

Ed Borgnis – Technical Manager (www.borgnis.com)

Rabbit Hole - Website & Identity (www.rabbithole.co.uk)

For Press Images please download – [Media Assets Folder](#)

For all media enquiries and press show tickets please contact Diana Whitehead

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Note to editors

The borough of Havering suffered the highest number of Covid-19 deaths in the whole of London between October 2020-February 2021. Source: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

* Findings and statistics: **A New Direction Cultural Education Context Data for Havering report – October 2021**

About Romford

Romford is the Metropolitan Centre in LB Havering with a unique strategic role within northeast London and Essex. It is also a historic Market Town and one of the largest retail and leisure districts in London, with five shopping centres within the town centre itself.

About David Shearing

David Shearing is a multi award-winning artist who creates immersive multimedia environments and spaces. He is interested in how audiences engage both physically and conceptually with design and installation art. He explores audience engagement by creating intimate, and at times spectacular, art and performance installations using video, sound and organic materials. He won World Stage Design awards for Installation in 2013 and 2017. He is Lecturer in Performance at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Recent work includes, *Black Rock* (2017), selected for the UK national exhibition of Performance Design (2019). *The Weather Café* (2016) a weather responsive café in the heart of the city of Leeds. In 2014 David was awarded a Sky Academy Arts Scholarship and produced *The Weather Machine* (2015) in partnership with West Yorkshire Playhouse and stage@leeds which was awarded Silver at the World Stage Design exhibition 2017. In 2013 and it all comes down to this... won the Gold award at World Stage Design for best Installation design.

About Variable Matter

Led by David Shearing, *Variable Matter* is an artist-led collective working across design, art, intervention and performance. Established in 2020 by David Shearing www.davidshearing.com, with the aim to bring about change: environmental, political and social, through high quality and rigorous artistic projects.

About Romford BID

Romford BID is an organisation that seeks to harness the combined power of the public and private sector to improve our town centre and stimulate sustainable prosperity in Romford town centre, all while creating a strong voice for the Romford town centre business community.

About Queen's Theatre Hornchurch

Queen's Theatre Hornchurch (QTH) is a vibrant producing theatre, working in Outer East London, Essex and beyond. As a cultural hub, over 210,000 people enjoy the programme each year. Audiences are guaranteed a warm welcome from a three-year winner of UK Theatre's Most Welcoming Theatre (2016 – 2018) and London Theatre of the Year 2020 (The Stage Awards), the first Outer London theatre to receive this prestigious award.

About Havering Changing

Havering Changing is an Arts Council England funded Creative People and Places Project which supports local people, living and working, in Harold Hill, Orchard Village, Rainham and Romford to choose, create and take part in their own programme of inspiring arts and culture.

About The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama is a higher education conservatoire – a specialist college of the University of London which nurtures creative collaboration. Courses include acting, applied theatre, movement, musical theatre, drama & movement therapy, theatre & live performance, scenography, actor & teacher training, voice, technical arts & production, and writing for stage & broadcast media. With over 60 academic staff, together with visiting artists and lecturers, Central has the largest grouping of drama/theatre/performance specialists in the UK, an active research culture and is a hub of innovation and engagement for the theatre and performance industries.



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