

HOMECOMING

by **Estabrak** / إستبرق

Co-produced by Crawley's Creative Playground
and Marlborough Productions.

Supported by Arts Council England, Crawley Borough Council's
Pop-Up Culture programme and Crawley Town Centre BID.



Estabrak / إستبرق collaborated with two community groups in Crawley; Wyld Mothers and the Jumma Group.

The resulting installation took place in a shipping container on Queensway **from 22–25 February 2024** as part of the Pop Up Culture programme funded by Crawley Borough Council via the Town's Fund.

HOMECOMING is a multi layered project which asks *'What does home mean to you?'*

The public were able to contribute ideas of what home means to them by either contributing to the soundtrack in advance or writing or drawing with invisible ink in any language directly onto the walls in the installation.

The global context of the war in Gaza (and other conflicts around the world) had a big impact on the artist, producing teams and general public and how the work was created in Crawley.

It was the **first time** the work had been presented in an outdoor public space.

The overwhelming response was a series of **joyous, beautiful and moving responses**, but the work also received challenging responses including racist, homophobic, transphobic and islamaphobic comments in reaction to the content.

There were moments of joy in very complex circumstances.

443

different people visited the exhibition or participated in the project from displaced people in Crawley to other residents including teenagers and elders

41

members of the Jumma Group (for muslim women) and **Wyld Mothers** (for women with young children led by Murmuration Arts) contributed to the installation alongside Estabrak / إستبرق

Conversations around **censorship, kindness, collaboration** and how to produce this work in these circumstances were undertaken by both producing teams. It was a learning experience.

The weather was not kind to us in February; it rained a lot and was very windy.

The creative and producing teams showed resilience, care and attention to enable this work to take place



Click to listen to feedback from participants and audiences here.

"It kind of feels like your safe space or home despite all the wars, violence and everything that's been going on. I think it shows that home can be a place, but also the people you are with."

"It's a really really new and novel experience with it being dark and feeling your way around, and then you're finding something. It's like finding home."

I listened to one of the tapes, which was both in Arabic and in Hebrew and in English. So it is quite a powerful way of passing on a message to people that we need peace."

"I thought it was actually really moving."

I've been reading a book at the moment about refugees escaping, so it's really sinking in what that was like.

I felt really moved by it. I felt more about the disconnectedness of everyone and actually that it should be more about unity and seeing us all as one. So that's what I wrote about."

"It is something really unusual that we've not seen in Crawley before. People are really intrigued."

"I'm really excited finally for Crawley to have something quite deep and personal and political"

"I like the fact this is here in a shipping container. It gives everyone the accessibility to be able to just come and have a look. Even if you're just walking by, you think 'I wonder what's going on in there?'"

What people told us about culture in Crawley...

"To be honest, the arts and culture in Crawley has not been that brilliant. I think in the last few years, Crawley is definitely up and coming. I think Brighton needs to watch out..."

The things I would like to see happening in Crawley in the future in terms of creativity are definitely more pop up art events, a lot more music, but different sorts of music, jazz, and maybe more theatre.

Make people want to participate, so give people choices."

"This kind of pop up activity and things that seem a bit different to the norm.

"It's good to be in the Town Centre as we were literally just passing by.

Things that are just more inclusive for everybody, where you feel like you don't necessarily need to know that they're here, but you can just kind of walk along and go, I'll just pop in and give it a go."

It gets you to just give it a go. It's just nice to have something like that"

"More for young people and 18+. They need to go somewhere to help get into music."

"We just came off the street. It's a good idea to have this here. Especially in Crawley and it's quite family friendly as well. Crawley lacks these sort of initiatives. We came to Memorial Gardens to see the lights so we came here by chance." Homecoming participant."