



Peckham Platform – a poem about Creative Civic Change

This feels like a family christening.

(I'm not crying, you're crying).

This is a love letter to my mother.

A space held at the table for my father.

Our aunties, our uncles, our elders.

The children we were and those who we hope to be.

We've collected stories and songs.

Memories of home.

Recipes and reveries.

Glints of eyes and expectations raised high.

We've collected ideas.

Sang in harmony and daydreams of three little birds.

We've danced together, planted together and torn roti together.

We have reclaimed something when much has been lost.

Memories of home.

These homes that we have left and been bound to.

The homes and spaces that we work to create are rooted in places which we have left or become misaligned from.

Home is a bittersweet fruit for many of us, especially those of a diaspora.

For those unfamiliar with the term diaspora, consider a dandelion and the

diaspora

as

seeds

scattered

across continents.

They buried us, but they didn't know we were seeds

The idea of home has recurred throughout our project. Home – which is probably the place where one started – and then, the place many of us have worked to make our own. This is a thread that has spanned across generations, ever-unfurling and connected by the knots of shared experiences.

A whisper in your shell-like. Apparently knowledge can be lost after two generations.

Imagine all of the things that your grandparents knew (and know) which haven't made it to you. Imagine the things that you could share with their parents about the world you exist in now.

Would we all recognise the perfume of fried ginger and cocoa buttered brows?

For three years, we have worked to share knowledge and forge the shape of home.

We have celebrated in and with culture, music and food.

A shelter made fallen trees that hosted songs, poems and movement.

A mural made by local residents with colours that grew in brightness with each passing day.

The taste of ackee, salt and thyme; the sway of Lovers Rock, enquiry and laughter.

Tours, soundscapes and windphones for those of us seen and unseen.

Deep breaths, missteps and the sideswipe of a pandemic. The first taste of samphire for boys growing into their ambition. A story from Uncle James and his eye that has spanned nine decades.

Our aunties, our uncles, our elders.

The children we were and those who we hope to be.

Each moment a gentle reclamation. An offer to heal social bonds and dislocations caused by sharp demographic shifts and economic precarity. Creative interventions across diminished skylines and expanding realms of the shared imaginary.

Stings of grief and peals of laughter from stories that made it across the Atlantic and back.

Nephertiti Obosie Schandorf, director of Peckham Platform, partner of Tilting the Mirror