

The What If? Hotline

Liz Clarke & Company



Hello Caller, you
have reached the
What If? Hotline.

You can now
chooses a series of
options.



Relax to a **What If?**
Fable of our times

Record your own **What
If?** imaginings or press
* for a conversation
with a **What If?** expert

What If we were allowed space to grieve what we have lost due to the pandemic?

What If I invented a new flavour icecream?

What If?...

The hotline is a live encounter through a traditional phone line, a chance to ask some big (and small) **What If?** questions and take the answers playfully into our lives. **The What If? Hotline** is an opportunity to think, reflect and have real-time conversations with our **What If?** Specialists.

The What If? Hotline is a radical yet tender experiment in kindness, connections and community imagining. It will be a physical piece for people to interact with or, if necessary, due to covid, a purely digital experience. **The What If? Hotline** is borne out of the changing landscape we find ourselves in due to Covid-19. The work has an audio legacy of radio broadcasts/podcasts.

Societally, the hotline gently holds and encourages us as we venture into asking these very large and small, frivolous and profound **What If?** questions.



What If our society valued care and nurture?

If you are looking for new ways to stay engaged and to co-create safely with your communities, Liz brings 15 years of socially engaged live art practice to this project. The project will deliver on wellbeing outcomes as well as high quality art work.

How it works

The What If? Hotline will use the familiar format of the telephone, making this work accessible for an intergenerational audience.

The work will be sited at a partner venue (for example museum, library, empty shop space, theatre or arts festival). We will work with the venue and their communities to crowdsource and develop the Top 10 **What If?** Questions that are concerning them. This exercise forms an important part of the artwork.

Socially engaged practice that is meaningful, radical and inclusive is central to how we work. In a series of workshops or events we will collaborate with the venue and a group on developing the hotline.

A caller to **The What If? Hotline** will hear a menu of options, developed and scripted during R&D. These playful prompts include voice activated cues, a menu of anecdotes, fables and stories read over the phone, or the option of **What If?** conversation with one of our **What If?** specialists. The specialists range from artists, key workers, philosophers and writers; all concerned with the **What If?** Questions of our times. There will be a performative element to the hotline inviting the



caller to playfully take **What If?** into their daily lives, inspired by contemporary and historical live art practices from artists such as Lygia Clark, Ai Weiwei, Louise Bourgeois and Roger Pol Droit. For example:

What If....

I replaced my mobile phone in my pocket with a note book and a pen for 48 hours?

I made a meal with the first 5 ingredients found in my cupboard?

I called a friend at random?

The impact of this element of the hotline is to ignite playfulness and questioning, to colour everyday life with potentially new questions and new perspectives, and to sow wellbeing, hope and a little fun in the uncertain landscape we are navigating.

Broadcast

Transcripts of the calls will be fictionalised and woven into a scripted narrative, documenting peoples' journeys through the work. This will be broadcast as a podcast/radio piece.

'A valid and intelligent artist who brings everyone along for the ride.'
(Chisenhale Dance)

The Process

The piece will be developed during an R&D phase with technical support from Pervasive Media Studios, Bristol who will advise on digital platforms to support, produce and transmit the work. Using our unique blend of socially engaged live art practice we will crowdsource the questions and format of **The What If? Hotline** from the communities we work with, and develop the hotline initially with a group of participants involved in the process.

What Do We Need?

We are looking for a producing partner/s who share our ethos of embedded socially engaged practice, who are looking for new ways to engage with groups who are excluded. We are looking for a partner who wants to stay radically connected to communities and adapt to supporting people take up space in this new phase of our lives.

The partner/s would:

- Host the making of the work
- Co-produce the R&D process
- Commission the prototype **What If? Hotline** for a fair fee. This could be part of a festival, or as a standalone piece. We are thinking telephone kiosk, theatre foyer, community centre, museums, but are open to your **What If?** suggestions
- Contribute to production, marketing and technical support
- Actively connect us with specific groups and work with us to make **The What If? Hotline** happen

After the prototype, we envisage creating a blueprint and manifesto for **The What If? Hotline**, enabling a network of UK venues to then host the artwork. The guidelines would offer instructions for operation, but flexibility to work with individual audiences; tailoring the artwork to meet their community's specific needs.

'Liz is a performance alchemist'
(Participant)



We are right at the start of the **What If?** Journey and so are looking for a partner to dive into this project with us.

Contact

We'd love to hear back from you if you like the sound of **The What If? Hotline**. Drop us a line or Give us a ring!!

Contact Details

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'Talented, dedicated, and fabulously unique.'
(Audience Member)