PLAY SOUTHEND

A game to draw and play your future town!
www.localplay.org.uk

A drawing by Liz, of Southend-(literally)-On Sea,
the Venice of South East England.

This Summer, artists **Ruth Catlow** and **Mary Flanagan** are inviting Southenders to create and participate in **Play Southend** – an online game to imagine the future of Southend.

During workshops and events, local residents of all ages and experiences will make the drawings for the backgrounds, obstacles and rewards that make up the game. They will devise the rules of the game inspired by their town; deciding how the different elements relate and shape the future.

Play Southend is planned as the first in a series of *Play Your Place* games. Catlow lives in Southend and the town has been chosen as the first town to create its own collaborative game building adventure, selected for the associations with public fun and popular entertainment attached to its arcades, long seafront and historic pleasure pier.

In **Play Southend**, anyone can start a new game level by taking a drawing challenge, and uploading it to the game. These drawings can then be used by anyone in their own levels. Game levels are given goals and difficulty ratings by their creators. Levels can be dynamically and infinitely stitched together, level after level, for an epic play session!

The game will be accessible online in **mid-June** and fully launched at **Village Green** on **13 July 2013**. From that time **Play Southend** will be permanently accessible to all players with an Internet connection, online, on tablets and smart phones.

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MAKING PLAY SOUTHEND - Additional Information

Before the game is launched to the public, a small team of local artists and game-builders will work with a number of local schools and other community groups to generate the themes, stories and narratives for drawings that make up the game.

Local artists will also be commissioned to 'seed' the game with drawings, sounds and play ideas. These will act as inspiration for other players.

THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT ARE TO:

- Co-create a **popular and empowering open participatory game artwork**;

- Enable **fuller participation by people** (especially young people) in the formation of their communities-shaping and making the world together.

- Explore how young/local people might provide **usable and persuasive ideas** for planners and so impact on the thoughts and decisions around planning the places where they live?

- Create an artistic process and platform that is **usable and portable** – for use by other socially engaged arts organisations.

- Develop this as the **first in a series of wide scale civic engagement works** that explore human agency in natural and constructed environments.

A SUCCESSFUL REALISATION OF THE PLAY SOUTHEND PROJECT:

- is **created and played by local folks** (Southenders)
- is **empowering and participatory**, promoting future health and prosperity for all
- makes drawing and game-making **fun for different local groups and individuals**
- oozes **local identity** and multiple perspectives
- is **fun to play**
- incorporates (literal) **world-changing elements** – physical and temporal
- builds **community** in game and in the locale (through social elements and real-world rewards)

WHO IS BEHIND PLAY SOUTHEND?
This project grew from conversations between artists, writers and Southend residents about how people could get involved in planning decisions about their own town. This formed the foundation for an artists' residency for **Ruth Catlow** (UK) and **Mary Flanagan** (USA) and author **Rachel Lichtenstein** (UK) hosted by Metal in 2010. **SODA**, the play and learning software development company are working with Ruth and Mary to create an Open Software platform upon which the *Play Your Place* series of games will be built.

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