

PUBLIC REALM IN LONDON: AN OVERVIEW

CONTENTS

1. Statement from Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London
2. The London Context
3. The Public Realm
4. Brief History of Public Art
5. Examples of Public Art in London
6. Structure and Funding
7. The Mayor's Fourth Plinth Commission

KEN LIVINGSTONE, MAYOR OF LONDON

"London — breathtaking, vital, memorable. A city of extraordinary choice, known worldwide for the richness, breadth and diversity of its cultural and creative resources. It is what many of us enjoy most about living and working here. Our theatres, cinemas and sports facilities make the city an exhilarating place to live in. Our museums, galleries, historic and contemporary buildings, parks, the Thames and London's nightlife stimulate our senses and enhance our quality of life. And London is home to more artists, creatives and top-flight teams and sportspeople than any other city in the UK.

London's cultural and creative sector is a major economic force, providing more than 500,000 jobs and second only to financial services in the wealth it creates: it is the UK's central focus for this most dynamic and rapidly growing sector of the economy. The city's cultural attractions are a primary driver of tourism, both from within the UK and from overseas. The majority of overseas tourists make London their first—or even only—port of call.

London is changing rapidly. It is growing fast and becoming more prosperous, but these trends sit side by side with social injustice. Far too many of London's citizens are socially excluded and poorly represented. Culture and creativity have a unique potential to address some of these difficult social issues. They enable people to find a voice, to express themselves, to reach an audience.

Since I was elected Mayor, my guiding vision has been to develop London as an exemplary, sustainable world city and London's cultural life is crucial to that vision"

2. THE LONDON CONTEXT

London has an astonishing range of cultural resources the strength of which lies in the breadth and depth of its institutions, diversity, heritage, creativity and innovation. The juxtaposition of old and new, the traditional and the modern mark it out as a world-class city of culture.

Culture is a powerful force, promoting understanding and a sense of identity. It can bring together people with different backgrounds, transcending barriers and celebrating difference. Culture can inspire, educate, create wealth and give immense pleasure to everyone.

The Mayor of London has developed the Culture Strategy to maintain and enhance London's reputation as an international centre of excellence for creativity and culture. The Culture Strategy has been developed in the context of three factors:

a) Cultural and Creative Force

London is the primary focus of the UK's cultural and creative dynamism. The capital's creative and cultural sector generates a total estimated revenue of £25 to £29 billion per annum, employing more than 500,000 people in the creative industries alone, and attracting just over half of the UK overseas visitors market.

b) Diversity

London is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world. The capital's reputation as a multicultural city has been in the making for centuries. The vibrant mixture of diverse cultures is a major factor in the success of London's creative profile.

c) Growth

London's population is set to grow significantly by 2016. Currently estimated at 7.3 million, it is thought that the population may rise to 8.1 million by 2016 due mainly to natural population growth. A significantly enhanced, and sustainable cultural infrastructure is needed in order to support the needs of this growing population.

3. THE PUBLIC REALM

The Mayor aims to fully realise the cultural value and potential of London's public realm and this is a key strand within his Culture Strategy.

Public spaces provide a platform for culture as a place where people can meet and interact, play games, celebrate festivals or set up stalls. London has a wealth of these spaces, from the large public parks and squares, to small local greens, canals, docks, allotments, cemeteries, playing fields and wide pavements.

More can be done to protect and enhance London's other public spaces. Trafalgar Square has already undergone a transformation with the pedestrianisation of the north side and addition of new facilities: it is already becoming known as exciting space for cultural innovation. A programme to upgrade or create 100 public space in London is underway, called 'Making space for Londoners'.

At the same time, there needs to be more support for activities in the local community. Reclaiming the public realm for temporary events is a good way to make use of the city's streets, although the costs of road closures, stewarding and providing emergency services can be high.

London's architecture is among the most vibrant and innovative of anywhere, and is a cultural attraction in its own right. The city's heritage spans everything from Roman remains to today's most contemporary constructions. Encouraging the enjoyment and understanding of these buildings should be an important element in London's cultural plans.

The green spaces – the lungs of the city – also provide spaces for informal sporting activities, for children to play in and for Londoners to appreciate fresh air and enjoy the peace and quiet.

Mayors Culture Strategy Exec Summary and Full document:
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/culture/docs/highlights.pdf
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/culture/docs/strategy-all.pdf

4. BRIEF HISTORY OF PUBLIC ART

Current policy and practice in public art began to take shape in the mid-1970s, when the Arts Council of England adopted an Art in Public Spaces scheme, which emulated the American National Endowment for the Arts scheme. Since the Second World War there had been a non-formalised adoption of a 'percent for art' policy creating an allocation of funding for the arts from the capital budgets of new public building schemes.

The conference Art & Architecture at the ICA in London in 1982 acted as a catalyst for today's public art movement. It showcased inspirational international as well as national case studies. The value of art in regeneration began to be discussed, and the concept of artist and architect collaborations began to take hold. An interest in appointing 'lead artists' on new development planning and design teams also became fashionable. In 1985 Public Art Forum was formed as a professional networking organisation for directors of new public art agencies that began to emerge during the 1980s.

In 1990 the Arts Council of England formally adopted the principle of Percent for Art. This had a huge impact on the local authorities, although it was a discretionary scheme and could not be enforced by government legislation. The funding route was the Town & Country Planning Act (Section 52; now Section 106), whereby the local authority can agree 'planning gain' with developers. Funds from 'planning gain' could be spent on public art but they must compete with around thirty other options, including improving and rebuilding roads and transport infrastructure, creating leisure and community facilities or building social housing.

To meet the increasing level of public art activity, public art agencies and independent art consultants thrived during the 80's and well into the 90's. The influential commissioning agency, Artangel, was founded in the mid 80's and focused on temporary art installations by renowned international artists. Identifiable trends in public art began to be formed: art in the health sector, art in transport, art in regeneration programmes, artists-in-schools, and artist/architect collaborative practice. The private sector also showed an increasing interest in public art, building corporate art collections for both inside and outside buildings.

Today the quality of the urban environment and building sustainable communities has reached the top of the national government agenda. There is now broad recognition of the role of arts and culture in urban renaissance and that art is a key factor in creating high quality public realm.

5. EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC ART IN LONDON (accompanied by slide presentation)

Open Spaces: The Mayor's Fourth Plinth Commission and Artangel

The **Fourth Plinth Commission** is an ambitious public sculpture project. Located right in the heart of the capital in Trafalgar Square, the Fourth Plinth Project is the UK's most high profile public sculpture commission, and is of great national and international significance. Different British or international artists are awarded the commission to create a site-specific, temporary sculpture to be displayed on the empty plinth for eighteen months in this prominent and celebrated location.

From a shortlist of proposals by invited artists, the Mayor's Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group has recently chosen two sculptures to be realised in autumn 2005 and 2007 respectively: Marc Quinn's *Alison Lapper Pregnant*, to be followed by Thomas Schütte's *Hotel for the Birds*.

Media interest in this project is enormous and the coverage both criticizes and praises the sculptures. At the time of the announcement of the winners, all UK mainstream press and television stations covered the story and it was featured in the US, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. The project stimulated much debate about the role of public art and about the issues raised by each of the sculptures. 10,000 members of the public responded to a consultation on the shortlisted artists.

Artangel, the art commissioning agency, has pioneered a new way of working with artists in unexpected contexts across London since the early 1990s. They have worked with a broad range of internationally respected artists, from Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Gabriel Orozco, Matthew Barney, Francis Alÿs, Tony Oursler, Susan Hiller and Juan Muñoz, working in situations as diverse as a disused railway turning station, the underground Clink Street vaults, soon-to-be-demolished houses and empty office blocks. One of their best known commissions with Rachel Whiteread's *House* (1993-94), the concrete cast of the interior of a now demolished house in the East End of London.

Public Sector: BBC and Home Office Building

The **BBC Broadcasting House Public Art Programme** takes its inspiration from the BBC's role and remit in the 21st century, and, specifically, the unique situation of Broadcasting House as the BBC's international headquarters, the home of Radio and Music and, by 2008, World Service and radio & television News. The principles of founder broadcaster Lord Reith are being brought up to date through art that informs, entertains, educates and communicates to a broad audience. Global and local networks, broadcasting, communication, speech and sound are the starting points for artists' responses; their proposals encompass public space, light, sound, colour, language, data and information dissemination, video, film and photography, and interactive technologies.

The new £311 million headquarters for the government **Home Office** opened in January 2005 in Marsham Street, Westminster. The building was funded through a Private Finance Initiative team project led by Bouygues Construction. The building was designed by Sir Terry Farrell, architect of the M16 HQ and Charing Cross Station, to have a positive impact on those living and working in the area. Farrell set out to integrate a very large existing building into its surroundings.

In 2002 British artist Liam Gillick was appointed to act as Lead Artist for the new building. Gillick created a series of brilliantly integrated interventions to the overall structure of the building: the screen over the main entrance; snatches of graphics on the elevations; hurdle-like clusters of art in front of the building; coloured glass vitrines along the base of the building; and a coloured glass central canopy that bathes the building and street in colour on a sunny day. The artist's work is not a bolted-on addition but integral to the building.

Private Development: Art at Regents Place and More London

Regents Place is a 10 acre estate on the Euston Road, a busy thoroughfare in North London. The owners, British Land have used the site as a setting for a diverse range of newly commissioned works of art by acclaimed contemporary artists. The artists represent a small but key cross-section of the most prominent contemporary British artists. These include figures such as Antony Gormley, Michael Craig Martin, Langlands and Bell, Fiona Rae, Liam Gillick and Sarah Morris.

More London is a 13 acre site on the South Bank by Tower Bridge. Over half this site is landscaped publicly accessible space. A number of public art commissions were specifically created for the site by artists Fiona Banner, Stephan Balkenhol and David Batchelor. The artworks are an integral part of a visual and tactile environment. The success of the More London commissions demonstrates the vision of a committed developer, who supported the art programme from the outset, a supportive architecture practice, Foster and Partners, and active art advisory team.

Regeneration: A13 Artscape

The **A13 Artscape** is an ambitious public art project. The project received the largest ever public art lottery grant from the Arts Council, £3.895 million, as well as investment from Transport for London and other regeneration budgets. It aimed to improve the environment of a large trunk road, the A13, in Barking and Dagenham, East London, by introducing artist designed landscapes, including green space, cycle ways and footpaths, lighting schemes, refurbished subways and landmark features, punctuating the route and animating the public space. As a result, A13 Artscape is realised on and off the road - at junctions, roundabouts, subways and community areas affected by the road; including parks and local estates.

Healthcare: St Bartholomew's Hospital and the London Breast Care Centre

Vital Arts, an arts and health charity, funded by Britain's National Health Service, has managed an arts programme in the new Breast Care Centre in the West Wing at St Bartholomew's hospital in central London. The programme created an environment that addresses the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the staff and patients. It takes as a starting point the feedback that visitors would rather be "anywhere, but here". The art programme was entirely funded by a private donor and was completed in October 2004. St Bartholomew's and the London new Breast Care Centre have won the patient environment award in this year's Building Better Health Care Awards.

Education: City and Islington College, London, 2004

The new Centre for Lifelong Learning at the state-funded City and Islington College in North London has excellent study and recreational areas, it combines the old Victorian building within a modern wraparound new building, creating a truly dynamic and environmentally sustainable building. A bold façade and an entrance atrium gives views deep into the site where the old and new are brought together. The whole space is visually stimulating and full of surprises, including a neon light installation by artist partnership Vong Phaophanit & Claire Oboussier.

Transport: Platform for Art

Platform for Art is a London Underground project whose objective is to showcase contemporary artistic talent on the tube network. The benefits this project delivers span a range of goals and reach the widest possible audience making it a Capital wide initiative. The results directly and indiscriminately affect people's everyday lives, enhancing and stimulating the 3 million passenger journeys that transpire through the tube network every day.

Inspired by poster campaigns in the 1920's and 30's, ideas have diversified and since 2000, Platform for Art has staged some 70 exhibitions and performances engaging the travelling public. To take one example of the 275 tube stations and multifarious forms of expression: Gloucester Road Underground station began a billboard commission in collaboration with the nearby Serpentine Gallery featuring a new body of work by internationally renowned American artist, Cindy Sherman. Ten large-scale photographs of Sherman were on display from June – September 2003. Since then, David Shrigley, Mark Titchner, Lars Arrenhius and Paola Pivi have featured in the series of billboard commissions and customer research has proven positive and created the opportunity to expand the possibilities of the space.

www.tube.tfl.gov.uk/content/platformforart/index.asp

6. STRUCTURE AND FUNDING

The structures and funding for culture in London make up a complex web, and a range of partnerships are necessary to realise public art projects. There are a number of key agencies and organisations that promote design excellence in the public realm in London, embracing art and artists as a crucial part of creating and sustaining high quality urban environments. These include:

Mayor of London/Greater London Authority

The Greater London Authority, headed by the Mayor of London, manages the capital's core services, including transport, environment, regeneration and arts and culture. Under the umbrella of the Mayor's office is the Culture Team, the Architecture and Urbanism Unit, Transport for London and the London Development Agency.

Architecture and Urbanism Unit

Architect Richard Rogers is chief advisor to the Mayor on architecture and urbanism and heads the Architecture and Urbanism Unit (AUU). Lord Rogers is also chairman of the Government's Urban Task Force. The AUU is championing good design across the Mayor's family (transport, police, economic regeneration agencies). The unit contributes design guidance on key developments across London and have published guidance and strategy documents such as 'The London Urban Riverside Strategy' and 'Living Roofs'.

The AUU launched the **Mayor's 100 Public Spaces programme**, which aims to improve the redevelopment of key open spaces in London such as Brixton Central Square and Exhibition Road in South Kensington. Some of these schemes include artists as part of design teams, or have built new artist commissions into the plans for the new development.

www.london.gov.uk/mayor/auu/docs/making_space.pdf

Arts Council England

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development agency for the arts. It is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and was established by Royal Charter in 1945. In 2004-05 the total grant to the Arts Council from the Treasury and from the National Lottery is £560 million. Between 2003 and 2006 Arts Council England is investing £2 billion of public funds in the arts across England. Its three core objectives are:

- to develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts
- to increase accessibility of the arts to the public in England
- to advise and cooperate with government departments, local authorities, the Arts Councils for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and other bodies on any matter related to the objects above

Arts Council England supporting Art in the Public Realm

Arts Council England recognises and supports the enormous value brought by artists who work in the public realm. Excellent architecture and urban design, distinguishing examples of public art, as well as high-quality public space, all contribute to creating local distinctiveness and a sense of place. The arts bring people together, they help develop a sense of shared pride and identity which is vital to thriving and integrated communities.

In 1990, learning lessons from pioneers in the Europe and the US, ACE adopted a Percent for Art Policy, recognising that this mechanism is the key to creative funding. It is a formula rooted in the belief that artists and craftspeople have a distinctive role to play in the design of public space; a formula that reserves a percentage of the estimated cost of any capital work for art and craft. Percent for Art usually results in a commission for an artist or crafts person to make a work for a public place, but this is not the only option. Percent for Art budgets employ artists to work with design teams; to commission work to be sited inside or out; to buy existing pieces; and to fund commissions away from the site where the capital development is taking place.

ACE is currently reviewing their policy related to the arts in the public realm. While continuing to endorse and promote Percent for Art, it recognises that the landscape is changing and there are a number of opportunities for artists to engage with the public realm. ACE is looking for new ways of supporting artists and arts professionals in this sector, and aims to establish partnerships with key public agencies and organisations to ensure that art and culture are integrated at a strategic level in the shaping of our physical environment, and artists continue to play a vital and influential role in animating the space around us.

London Centre for Regeneration Excellence

In 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister set up a programme of regional centres for excellence in regeneration as part of report called *Towards an Urban Renaissance* in 1999. Although still in their infancy, these centres represent an opportunity for the arts to play a greater role in the renaissance of the urban environment on a strategic regional level.

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

CABE is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body. It champions design excellence in the built environment. It funds initiatives to encourage communities to learn about architecture and urban design, and to participate in enhancing their local environment. CABE Space, a subsidiary of CABE, aims to bring excellence to the design of parks and public space in cities.

CABE and Arts and Business (A&B) recently launched PROJECT, which aims to engage artists in the built environment. The scheme provides financial assistance to promote the development of high quality built environment by supporting artists to work within design, planning or construction sectors, bringing creative influence to architecture, public space and urban design.

London Authorities Urban Design Forum (LAUDF)

LAUDF was launched in October 2004, recognising the need to encourage and inform planning or arts officers in local government offices about high quality design in the urban environment. It will provide training, strengthen existing networks between design and built environment organisations and promote the creation of design champions within London Boroughs.

Other key funding sources include:

- **Percent for Art:** a percentage of the budget for a new building may be allocated for the arts; it must be negotiated between local authorities and the property developer through planning legislation clause called Section 106.
- **Private investment:** the allocation of funds for an arts programme by a private property developer or investor; usually linked to a private site but also includes philanthropic investment in culture, urban regeneration, environment or education.
- **Public Agency Funding:** Funding for the arts can come from a variety of different public budgets including the Arts Council England, Sports Council, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (the government department overseeing new housing and development), CABE, English Partnerships, English Heritage.
- **Public funding for economic regeneration:** there are also a number of urban regeneration schemes that provide funding which can encompass the arts, such as Neighbourhood Renewal Funds, Single Regeneration Budgets, New Deal for Communities, the European Social Fund, among others. These are an essential source of funding for arts in the public realm in Britain.
- **Trusts and Foundations:** there are a wide variety of charitable trusts and foundations in Britain which support arts and culture causes, as well as education, health, or social and economic regeneration projects.
- **Local authorities:** London has 32 different local authorities which provide local services, including the support of culture. Local authorities provide the greatest investment in the arts across the country, with funding through arts as well as through the creative use of other budgets such as housing, education, community services, environment, regeneration, leisure and recreation, and parks and landscapes.
- **Individual Donors**

Case Study

The Mayor's Fourth Plinth Commission

The Fourth Plinth Commission is an ambitious sculpture project under the auspices of the Mayor of London. Located right in the heart of the capital in Trafalgar Square, the Fourth Plinth Project is the UK's most high profile public sculpture commission, and is of great national and international significance. Different British or international artists are awarded the commission to create a site-specific, temporary sculpture to be displayed for eighteen months in this prominent and celebrated location.

Media Attention and Public Consultation

Media interest in this project is enormous and the coverage both criticizes and praises the sculptures. At the time of the announcement of the winners, all UK mainstream press and television stations covered the story and it was featured in the US, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. The project stimulated much debate about the role of public art and about the issues raised by each of the sculptures. 10,000 members of the public responded to a consultation on the shortlisted artists.

BBC London is the official media partner for the first commission and media interest continues to gather momentum. BBC London has a dedicated Fourth Plinth project micro-page on its website:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/yourlondon/fourth_plinth/index.shtml

A poster campaign was launched on the London Underground encouraging the public to 'Join the Debate' and Fourth Plinth feedback postcards were distributed across the capital.

Although the decision on the artists who were eventually commissioned was not put to a public vote, the comments of the public informed the Mayor's decision. Public consultation is therefore an extremely important element to the Fourth Plinth project.

Winning Artists

From a shortlist of proposals by invited artists, the Mayor's Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group chose two sculptures to be realised in autumn 2005 and 2007 respectively: Marc Quinn's *Alison Lapper Pregnant*, to be followed by Thomas Schütte's *Hotel for the Birds*.



Marc Quinn, *Alison Lapper*



Thomas Schutte, *Hotel for the Birds*



Mark Wallinger, *Ecce Homo*



Bill Woodrow, *Regardless of History*



Rachel Whiteread, *Monument*



Marc Quinn, *Alison Lapper*



Thomas Schütte, *Hotel for the Birds*



Mark Wallinger, *Ecce Homo*



Bill Woodrow, *Regardless of History*



Rachel Whiteread, *Monument*

Marc Quinn

Marc Quinn's sculpture is a faithful but over life-size representation (4.7m high) in white marble of the Alison Lapper, a friend of the artist, born without arms and with shortened legs. She is portrayed naked and heavily pregnant. *Alison Lapper Pregnant* addresses an unconventional subject matter through traditional means (marble, figurative portraiture) to create a startling and thought-provoking piece. Its monumental size is closely related to the scale of the surrounding statuary. The work explores questions of beauty and heroism, femininity, prejudice and identity, celebrating the human spirit in the face of adversity. It is made in close collaboration with the subject herself and will provoke powerful responses from everyone who sees it.

Thomas Schütte

Thomas Schütte's proposal, a utopian architectural model made of brightly coloured red and yellow transparent material promises to be a new departure for his work. The structure will be 5m high and composed of three distinct parts. Each part is made of horizontal layers of translucent glass or plastic, held together by a steel armature. Light will travel through the sculpture and illuminate it from within, turning it into a glowing beacon. Schütte's sculpture promises to introduce not only a much-needed element of chromatic brilliance but also a sense of awe and wonder to Trafalgar Square.

Following the exhibition of the maquette at the National Gallery, Adrian Searle, art critic of the *'Guardian'* praised the work: "Relating to Schütte's earlier sculptures based on architectural models, but in completely new ways and materials, this airy, sculpturally active and formally complex work counterpoints the pomp of the square and its architecture, and makes us think of the open space above."

History

The Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square was originally designed by Sir Charles Barry in the 1840s and was intended to display an equestrian statue. Due to insufficient funds the plinth was left empty and remained so until 1998 when The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) commissioned a series of three works to be temporarily displayed on the plinth. The sculptures commissioned by the RSA were 'Ecce Homo' by Mark Wallinger, 'Regardless of History' by Bill Woodrow and 'Monument' by Rachel Whiteread.



Marc Quinn, *Alison Lapper*



Thomas Schutte, *Hotel for the Birds*



Mark Wallinger, *Ecce Homo*



Bill Woodrow, *Regardless of History*



Rachel Whiteread, *Monument*

To take advantage of this renewed interest the Government set up an independent committee to consider the long-term future of the plinth. Having examined the public response to the RSA programme and consulted with a wide range of people, the committee unanimously recommended that the plinth should continue to be used for an ongoing series of temporary works of art commissioned from leading national and international artists.

The Mayor of London endorsed this recommendation when he took responsibility for Trafalgar Square in 1999 and the Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group was appointed to guide and monitor a programme of contemporary art commissions.

Fourth Plinth Public Participation & Education Work

One of the key aims of the project is to stimulate public interest and provoke debate. Trafalgar Square is a public space and it is vital that the public feel involved and informed. In order for this to happen the Mayor is building partnerships with schools and organisations such as the National Gallery and Arts Council England to encourage participation in the selection of the sculpture for the Fourth Plinth. Initiatives include an interactive website, public exhibition, school visits, public comment and live debates.

As well as direct public participation in the debate around the choice of artwork, other elements to engage the public's imagination include: an interactive day for c.300 school children held on Trafalgar Square; work with London schools and colleges to instigate a student competition themed around public space and contemporary art; and grass-roots level community work in various London boroughs.

National Gallery Exhibition

The National Gallery hosted an exhibition dedicated to the Fourth Plinth project. The exhibition allowed the public to view each artist's proposal at close-quarters and visitors could record their views on each of the designs and to participate in the dialogue about the commission. A dedicated computer terminal within the exhibition gave access to the official Fourth Plinth website.

www.fourthplinth.co.uk

Justine Simons, Mayor's Office – Culture

The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

Justine.simons@london.gov.uk
+44 202 7983 5753