



# OVER 10 CREATIVITY IS IN ALL OF US

Aver Insight

The evolution of art as a placemaking initiative

November 2022



# Overview

- This insight looks at the evolution of artwork as a placemaking initiative in urban spaces
- Focusing specifically on examples within London, it demonstrates how artwork has infiltrated high street spaces and how destinations are utilising art as a placemaking tactic
- Examples of high street art galleries and free, interactive exhibitions around the city highlight the increased use of accessible art in destinations



# Background



*Heather Phillipson's "THE END" for the Fourth Plinth Commission, photo by David Parry / PA Wire, The National Portrait Gallery*

- Art has always played a significant role within major cities, through traditional galleries, architecture, and sculpture
- More recently, regeneration projects and new developments are being used to drive economic growth and to modernise function, meeting new expectations for what places to live, work or enjoy should offer
- Artwork and exhibitions are being incorporated into these projects and, as a result, are becoming more accessible and integrated into people's everyday routine
- Communities can be seen to be deploying arts, culture and design as a strategy to advance local economic, physical, and/or social change
- Creative placemaking integrates art, culture and design into efforts to strengthen communities

# Traditional art galleries

**RA** Royal  
Academy  
of Arts



**SAATCHI  
GALLERY**



**TATE**



- Traditional art galleries are still fundamental and accessible attractions across London
- With conventional exhibitions in locations such as the Royal Academy, the Tate and the Saatchi Gallery, art lovers can pay for exclusive access to short-term showcases as well as visit the free exhibitions on offer



# Art infiltrating high street space

- With hundreds of high street stores closing-down in the past two years, shop spaces across London have been left empty
- Organisations such as Hypha Studios have surfaced to matchmake creatives with empty locations
- Both long-term and pop-up galleries are becoming more prominent in retail areas of London
- This use of shops for gallery space coincides with the increased recognition that arts-based placemaking is beneficial to residential communities as well as increasing tourist footfall – it has value above a temporary solution to fill an empty space



*Livingston St. Ives, King's Road, Chelsea*

# Art infiltrating high street space, continued



- Additionally, positioning art galleries as pop-ups or in shop spaces allows the art to be more accessible
- Those who have less time, or knowledge, can experience and enjoy art that is located on their high street rather than having to visit traditional galleries

**“An investment in culture is an investment in our high streets”**

*Dr Darren Henley, Chief Executive of the Arts Council England*

# Chelsea Art Society, King's Road



*Chelsea Art Society, 340 Kings Road, Chelsea – appear [here]*

- The Chelsea Art Society is a key example of an art gallery infiltrating high street space in a popular London destination, Chelsea
- With various exhibitions on offer throughout the year, the gallery brings the work of established and upcoming artists to the community on the King's Road

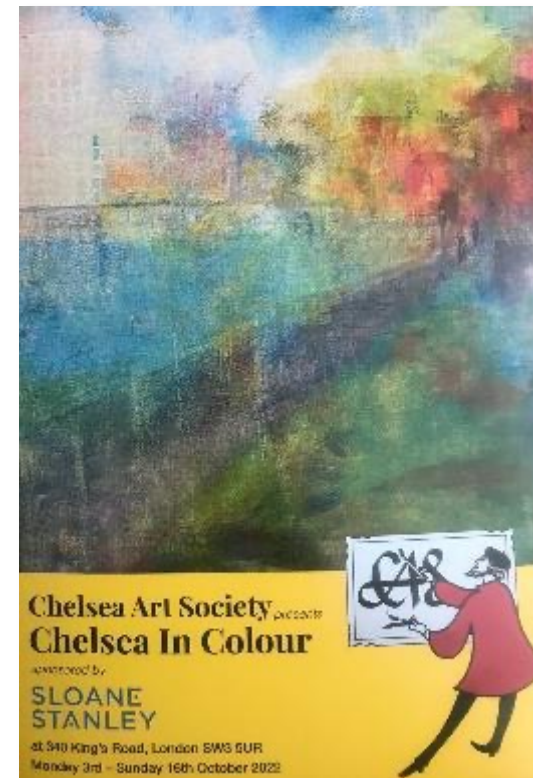


# Chelsea Art Society, King's Road

*"Culture and creativity are integral parts of communities, and galleries infiltrating high street space are making art more accessible to both residents and visitors. In recognition of this evolving trend, we actively encourage galleries to take space on the King's Road and / or Fulham Road, and recently sponsored an art show at the Chelsea Art Society - Chelsea in Colour – at 340 King's Road. We are proud to be welcoming an increasingly wide variety of art brands as pop-up and permanent tenants of the Sloane Stanley Estate."*

**Hannah Grievson**

**Property Director at Sloane Stanley**





# The Hook, Seven Dials



- The Hook in Seven Dials is another example of an art gallery infiltrating high street areas
- Located in the heart of one of London's West End, the success of The Hook demonstrates the role of art, culture and creativity in these environments
- The Hook has an ethos that prioritises the customer's experience and is designed to make art collections approachable and fun



# Creative placemaking

- The importance of culture and creativity in everyday life is becoming more recognised
- Making art more accessible benefits both the public and the artist
- For the public, art becomes more accessible within everyday life and urban areas see physical, aesthetic benefits
- Additionally, artists can promote their work and build relationships with communities
- There are multiple examples of creative placemaking initiatives across London



*Brimelow McSweeney Architects, Slingsby Place,  
The Yards, Covent Garden*



# History of creative placemaking



- The correlation between the quality of our surroundings and quality of life was championed by the Chief Executive of London Transport during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Frank Pick
- He commissioned the best architects, artists and designers of the day to generate an experience that combined functionality with imagination, for passengers across public transport
- Pick used art to improve the everyday experience, and his visions can be seen to impact curators and artists to this day
- For example, curator Rebecca Heald was inspired by Pick's beliefs when working on Art on the Underground – TFL's contemporary art programme



# Art on the Underground



- Inspired by Pick's views, Art on the Underground works with artists to change the way people experience London
- Incorporating a range of artistic media from painting, installation, sculpture, digital and performance, to prints and custom tube map covers
- This project produces critically acclaimed designs that are accessible, and can draw together London's diverse communities





# King's Cross – The Outside Art Project

## THE OUTSIDE ART PROJECT



- The Outside Art Project turns King's Cross into one of the largest outdoor gallery spaces in London
- The year-round programme of “always-on, always-free and always-open” art is made up of 24 seating benches, each displaying 2 lots of artwork
- The project allows national and international artists to promote their work whilst providing the public with a free art exhibition for dedicated visits or to capture the attention of a passer-by

# King's Cross – permanent and temporary installations



## **Pipette in the King's Cross Tunnel**

The 90m long tunnel features an LED light wall and is designed to improve the journey of commuters.

This is a permanent installation and a prime example of creative placemaking and its everyday benefits – an above and beyond approach that creates a true point of difference.



## **Tschabalala Self, Seated**

This sits just up from King's Cross within Coal Drops Yard, part of the organisation, Avante Arte.

A nearby pop-up gives the piece context and is available to all.



# What's on!

## KINGS CROSS

There are various creative events happening at Kings Cross over the next few months

05 NOV  
**FREE CREATIVE  
WORKSHOP DAY FOR  
KIDS AND TEENS**



28 SEP - 31 JAN  
**EXTRAORDINARY  
STYLE EXHIBITION**

21 JUL - 31 OCT  
**RADICAL  
IMAGINATION  
EXHIBITION**



30 MAR - 01 JAN  
**SORTING BRITAIN  
EXHIBITION**

### The Line – London's Public Art Walk

- The route runs between Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and The O2
- The programme illuminates an inspiring landscape where everyone can explore art, nature and heritage for free

# Conclusion

- Overall, the role of creativity and culture in urban areas is growing
- Through exhibitions infiltrating high street space and having a place in outdoor locations across London, art is becoming more accessible to both residents and visitors
- Not only does this have positive impacts on the lives of those experiencing the art, but also those creating it



*Free mini-golf, Montgomery Square, Canary Wharf, designed by Craige&Karl – [spherelife.com](http://spherelife.com)*



# Conclusion

- In a report by the Local Government Association - People, culture, place – The role of culture in placemaking – it was found that: “placemaking capitalises on a community’s unique assets, inspiration and potential with the intention of creating public spaces, places, events and activities that promote people’s health, happiness, and wellbeing”\*
- Cities are investing in placemaking since the pandemic to entice people back into public spaces
- Creative placemaking aesthetically improves urban space, this can be seen to cause more people to want to walk / cycle through these areas – leading to mental and physical health improvement
- Successful creative placemaking highlights communities' characteristics and can also lead to economic benefits. Bringing visitors and residents into the area is beneficial to the local businesses



*Woven Wonders, Sheila Hicks, Coal Drops Yard, Kings Cross –  
gasholder.london*

\* [https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/12.3%20-%20culture%20and%20place\\_v4\\_1\\_1.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/12.3%20-%20culture%20and%20place_v4_1_1.pdf)

# Sources

- National Endowment for the Arts
- The New Statesman
- Kings Cross
- Sculpture in the City
- Culture Whisper
- Time Out
- Country & Town House
- Maxwell Museums
- Avant Art
- Local Government Association
- Art on the Underground
- Hypha Studios



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