

UP
PROJECTS

**PLACESHAPING
THROUGH
PUBLIC ART**



PLACESHAPING THROUGH PUBLIC ART

UP Projects believes passionately in the role that artists and art can play in activating public space, telling stories by revealing local history and heritage narratives or reimagining new and contemporary visions for neighbourhoods by working closely with communities.

We take a rigorous site-specific approach to developing public art strategies and embedding public artworks in the places we work. We believe that only by getting to know the unique character of an area, can artists create projects that speak to existing communities, attract new audiences to a place, and support community cohesion.

We work collaboratively as part of wider design teams to seamlessly integrate public art and artists into projects and align with wider strategic placeshaping objectives.

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Custom House is Our House, Jessie Brennan, 2019. Image: Thierry Bal



MAKING SPACE BY JESSIE BRENNAN

The Royal Docks, Newham, London

2019 - Ongoing

Making Space is a multi-sited commission by artist Jessie Brennan, curated by UP Projects and commissioned by the GLA Royal Docks team, for the Royal Docks in Newham, East London, in 2019. Over the course of one year, the artist worked with local individuals and organisations to explore the past, present, and future of the area as it prepared for London's largest regeneration project to date.

The artworks included *Go The Distance*, which saw Brennan transform images from the archive of a local historic boxing gym into a collaged text. *Custom House is Our House* was a life-sized group portrait bringing together individuals living on Freemasons road that was closely developed with members of the People's Empowerment Alliance for Custom House.

Brennan also consulted the area's LGBTQI-friendly rowing club, the London Otters, to create *Take Your Place*, a large-scale artwork that referred to taking one's position in a rowing shell, as well as inviting local people to engage in local redevelopment.

Sculpture Garden, Matthew Darbyshire, 2018. Image: Thierry Bal



A SENSE OF PLACE - INTEGRATED PUBLIC ART IN NINE ELMS

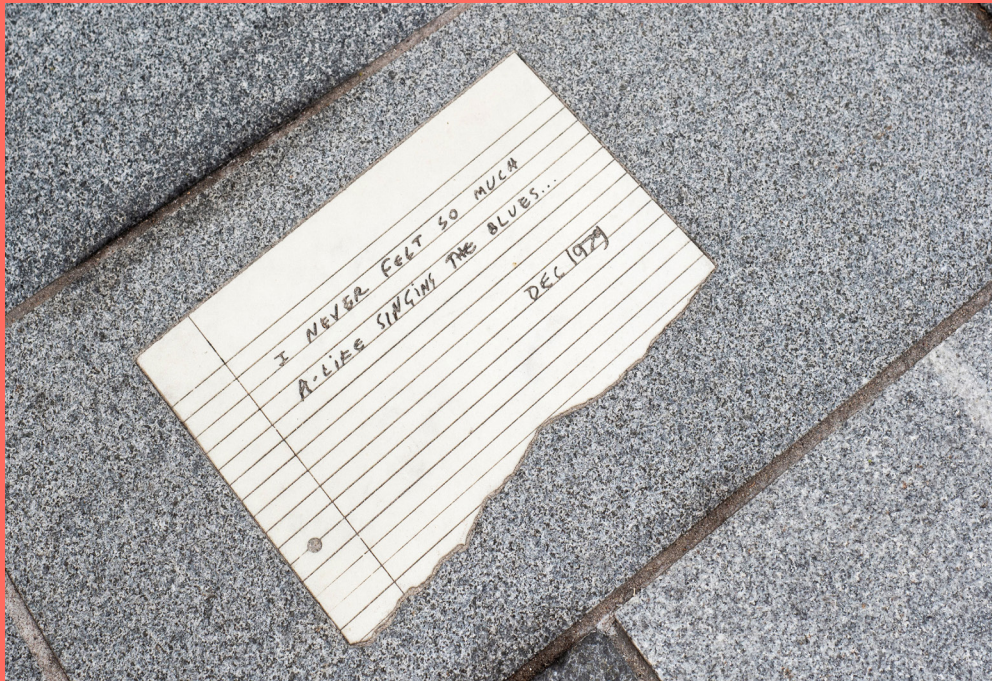
Nine Elms, Battersea, London

2015 - Ongoing

UP Projects were appointed by Berkeley Homes to create a public art strategy and a portfolio of site-specific commissions for their new Vista development in Nine Elms, Battersea, London.

Wassail is a collection of sculptural markers by artist S. Mark Gubb that supported wayfinding and represented local histories uncovered alongside local elders. Gubb also created *Lavender*, a neon artwork that acknowledges the area's agricultural history. Matthew Darbyshire's *Sculpture Garden* transformed the municipal children's playpark into an interactive artwork and referenced the historic Battersea Open Air Sculpture show.

Nicky Hurst's commission *Platanus* for the Vista facade referenced the London Plane Trees planted in the area in the 1850's, evoking their bark pattern and the surface of the nearby Thames. *Nine Songs for Nine Elms* was a film and performance commission by Lucy Cash, who worked with the local community to write a series of songs that captured local memory and heritage narratives.



↓ Singing the Blues, S. Mark Gubb, 2018. Image: Thierry Bal



↓ Laid to Rest, Serena Korda, 2011. Image: Dave Sayer

LAID TO REST BY SERENA KORDA

Wellcome Collection, Camden, London

2010 - 2011

Curated by UP Projects on behalf of the Wellcome Trust, *Laid to Rest* by Serena Korda transformed dust collected from the public into 500 commemorative bricks. The project was inspired by the commercialisation of waste in Victorian London, whose dust heaps in Kings Cross (adjacent to the Wellcome Trust's building), created the brick making industry.

To create the bricks, Serena Korda invited a broad range of people to donate a sample of dust to the project, labelled with the location, date and significance of the dust. Each brick contained specific dust from the contributing household, business or institution and was imprinted with information cataloguing its transformation. A growing stack of the publicly sourced bricks was exhibited at the Wellcome Collection. Whilst on display, a series of community events ritualized the stack, and the project culminated in a public horse drawn procession of the bricks through London and a ceremonial burial of bricks in Brunswick Square Gardens, Camden, returning them to the earth. A permanent plaque marks the spot where the bricks were interred.

BEST PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS

1 Be site specific

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The key to building a unique sense of place is understanding what is unique about the neighbourhood you are working in. Embrace and reveal these narratives to build an inspiring future vision for culture and creativity. And don't forget to engage the people who live and work in an area - they are your experts!

2 Embed a vision for art & culture from the start

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If art and culture is seen as an afterthought it will not be able to align seamlessly with your wider strategic placeshaping priorities. Bring curators and artists in from the start, embedding them within your wider design teams to ensure creativity is properly integrated from the outset.

3 Public art doesn't always look like public art

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Embrace various forms of public art from ephemeral temporary events and meanwhile activity to permanent public artworks. There are many ways to activate the public realm through working with artists. Don't limit yourselves to sculptures in a park!

4 Reveal narratives new and old

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What are the stories that you wish to tell? What are the historical narratives that resonate with local people and build a sense of pride? Are there local issues that may need to be resolved? Public art and artists can play a role in sensitively addressing and revealing stories whilst engaging communities in the process.

5 Embrace the power of artists

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Artists work best when they are given the freedom to research and respond to a place. Ensure briefs to artists enable this freedom and that you are open to embedding new and innovative ways of integrating public art as risks are often rewarded!

WORK WITH UP PROJECTS

UP Projects is the UK's leading public art organisation specialising in socially engaged public art commissioning. We bring world class artists out of the gallery and into public spaces to create new work with communities across the UK and beyond. We develop arts and cultural strategies, commission artists and activate public places through creative projects, programmes and events.

Should you wish to find out more about how UP Projects can help you commission ambitious and impactful public art projects that empower communities and bring about social change please get in touch.

OUR EXPERTISE

Collaborating with Communities

We have over 20 years experience of working with communities and understand how to build trusting and empowering relationships.

Placeshaping Through Public Art

We can help harness the power of artists and art to tell stories and reveal narratives about a place.

Reflecting Diversity in the Public Realm

Our public realm should reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. We can help create projects that make public spaces more inclusive.

Working with Children & Young People

We can curate bespoke projects and programmes that empower and involve young people.

Addressing the Climate Emergency

Considering the environment and working against climate change is central to all of the work that we do. We champion the role artists and art can play in advocating for action.

Contact Us

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