



*"The launch of the Regent's Park Estate Story Trail marks four years since the reinvention of Old Diorama Arts Centre began. It encapsulates everything that ODAC is about: deeply and ambitiously community-led, collaborative and participatory. By enabling risk-taking new artist commissions, we're making real change in our shared urban environment.*

*This public art trail is equally artistically and socially ambitious. Each of the commissions offer a radical vision of what public art can do, inviting local residents into the heart of the creative process and deeply embedding artists into the community. Thank you to the residents of Regent's Park Estate for having such visionary ideas for our community, believing in the power of art, and working with us to make this possible. It's been an honour and I can't wait to see what we can achieve together next."*

– Daniel Pitt, creative director and chief executive, ODAC

## Resident-led transformation: "We are like a family"



Alternative street nameplates commemorating lost spaces, *You Are Here* by Ocean Stefan, Regent's Park Estate, Camden. Image by Nick Turpin.

The Story Trail aims to be a celebration of the past, present and future of Regent's Park Estate, promoting a sense of local pride, safety and connection through public art works created for residents and visitors alike. "We are lucky to live here, it really is like a family" stated Neighbourhood Curator Rukshana Begum, reflecting the tight-knit sense of community in the area.

One of the earliest ideas for the Story Trail came from resident Marie who used to walk by an aged tree at Clarence Gardens while out with her children, asking them "If that tree could talk, what stories do you think it would tell?" She proposed a collective project to discover more about the area to the lockdown-initiated Regent's Park Community Champions (managed by Fitzrovia Youth in Action).

Bolstered by a shared enthusiasm across the group, the Story Trail gathered momentum and was further developed in collaboration with Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London and Camden Council through Europe-wide 'participatory meanwhile use' research project T-Factor, and then produced by Old Diorama Arts Centre, always with community collaboration at its heart.

The Story Trail enhances the neighbourhood, celebrating the diverse cultures of the estate, while creating safe and accessible routes that connect green spaces. The circular trail encourages participants to explore beyond their typical routes, discovering more about the area.

The sustained input from the Community Champions Regent's Park solicited feedback from thousands of residents at events over three years, with more than 1600 residents informing the artists' work through workshops and events through 2024-25.

Over more than 18 months, three Neighbourhood Curators, Rukshana Begum, Bahja Mohammed and Christiana Pietzsch, joined ODAC's staff team to work alongside project producer Sarah Nicholl, navigating decision-making and community engagement throughout the process.

"It feels amazing to be a part of a project transforming the area I grew up and work in."

– Christiana Pietzsch

"This project is spreading joy and happiness into the community."

– Bahja Mohammed

"I believe the Story Project is an opportunity for all of us to give our neighbourhood a beam of light and possibility amidst the many difficulties across the world."

– Rukshana Begum

## Diverse locality with a proud history: Regent's Park Estate



Sculptural installation, *Unwritten* by Rafał Zajko, pictured in Regent's Park Estate, Camden. Image by Nick Turpin.

Regent's Park Estate is the London Borough of Camden's largest social housing community, with a diverse population of over 2,000 households. The neighbourhood is undergoing major changes linked to the development of HS2 and the wider Euston area. Due to the impact of the ongoing construction works there has been a significant increase in traffic and pollution, along with a loss of green spaces, local amenities and hundreds of homes.



Each of the chosen locations offer distinctive architectural, historical and social contexts to respond to, such as Everton Mews, the gateway into the estate which has experienced anti-social behaviour including fly tipping; Munster Square, an area with a fascinating history such as the LGBTQ+ bar that was sited beneath St Mary Magdalene Church; and areas with links to the poet Charlotte Mew, painter Robert Polhill Bevan and suffragette Mary Neal who founded the inspiring Esperance Club and its women's Morris dancing club.

*"The Story Trail is a fantastic example of what we can achieve when we empower our communities to shape where they live. It has tapped into the wealth of creativity, imagination and pride on the Regent's Park Estate, and rightly celebrates the estate as a place where creativity, culture and community continue to thrive."*

*"We are proud to support this resident-led project that goes hand-in-hand with our ambitions for the estate. We are working hard to create safer streets, new green spaces, and an improved public realm – investing in the estate to bring new benefits to the people who live and work there as the HS2 construction site continues to impact day-to-day life in the local area."*

– Cllr Adam Harrison, deputy leader of Camden Council and cabinet member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden

## Artists and artworks

From an interdisciplinary artist sharing ecological joy to a former resident of Regent's Park Estate, photographers, collectives and architectural designers, the 10 artists and collectives have been meaningfully embedded with residents and community groups, using art as a tool to capture local stories, reveal hidden histories and mark the changing urban landscape.

The public art trail features poetic sculptures based on gum chewed by the LGBTQ+ community, a joyous mural inspired by a recently rewilded meadow area, the use of AI to help trees speak, a ceramic bookshelf commemorating a beloved library, 'woman whole' covers that celebrate women's resilience, resistance and the spirit of joy.

### **Wonderscope by Alisa Ruzavina (funded by British Land)**

Alisa Ruzavina is an interdisciplinary artist, designer and facilitator who is interested in exploring collective experience in the public realm.

For Wonderscope, Alisa Ruzavina has created two installations, one at British Land's Regent's Place campus the other in Cumberland Market. Each draws on insights and experiences gathered during workshops with residents, campus workers and local groups including Third Age Project, Christ Church Primary School, the Bengali Workers' Association. The public is invited to view the location through an eyepiece, immersing themselves in a whirlwind of local folklore and seasonal memories.

"Being part of the Regent's Park Estate Story Trail reinforces our commitment to the local community. For over 40 years, British Land has partnered with local charities and community partners to ensure we are fully integrated with the local area and that Regent's Place is an inclusive space which benefits everyone. The story trail invites local people to enjoy our space and encourage campus workers to engage with the area – connecting customers with the community, offering insights into the area's history, local organisations and unlocking opportunities."

– Nicola Roberts, senior social impact manager at Regent's Place, British Land

#### **Unwritten by Rafał Zajko**

A Polish artist based in London, Rafał Zajko's sculptural practice incorporates diverse materials and processes as a means to examine folklore, science fiction and queer technoscience.

Rafał's project excavates the history of a clandestine LGBTQ+ bar located underneath the St Mary Magdalene Church during the 1970s, and creates pigmented bio-concrete sculptures modelled on chewed gum donated by members of the local LGBTQ+ community, capturing their unique yet invisible DNA.

#### **In the Shade of Streetlight by Jack Wates**

Jack Wates is a London-based artist, designer and educator who creates site-specific installations that use light in playful, dynamic ways. His project, inspired by post-war memories of the Blitz and textile workshops with the Bengali Workers' Association and Netley Primary School, features a projected tapestry of shadow and pattern that appears stitched into the brick fabric of the estate.

#### **Growing Together by Shiraaz Ali**

Shiraaz Ali is a visual artist and architectural designer focused on making communities more joyful. Moved by the warm welcome of the local community, Shiraaz has created a joyful mural reflecting the cultures, wildlife and residents to

enhance the walls of the rewilded Pangbourne Wildflower Meadow area. Many of the characters in the mural are inspired by real locals, both animal and human.

#### **T(h)ree by HAQUE TAN**

HAQUE TAN is the design studio of Ling Tan and Usman Haque, both award-winning designers and artists trained as architects. They worked with residents to give a more-than-human 'voice' to an old much-loved local plane tree, using AI to model its personality, character and history, and expose the underground networks that connect the garden's three genetically identical plane trees.

#### **Untitled by Dustin Ericksen**

Using sculpture, performances, and images, Dustin Ericksen is a former resident of Regent's Park Estate who explores the boundaries of perception and how we think about our surroundings. His sculpture invites everyone to submit a message which will then be displayed on a rotating LED screen, imagined as a small-scale BT Tower.

#### **Clay Chronicles by Clayground Collective**

Formed in 2007, Clayground Collective is a charity that works nationally and internationally with the education, heritage and third sector. Their project is a ceramic bookshelf made with and by residents, including from the Bengali Workers' Association, Esther Randall Court, Community Champions and Regent's Roots Festival. Participants were guided in hand modelling and a variety of 'surface relief' techniques to create the artwork. It reflects the vibrancy and diversity of the community while referencing the much-loved and missed library that was previously situated here.

#### **You Are Here by Ocean Stefan**

A queer, trans and non-binary artist based in Margate, Ocean Stefan (they/them) makes performance work, installations and texts that are often playful, low-key and interventionist. For the project, Ocean conducted a series of workshops with Community Champions, Mosaic LGBT+ Young Persons' Trust and Cumberland Youth Club to consider what has been 'lost' and 'found' as the area changes. This resulted in a series of 13 alternative street nameplates commemorating lost spaces while also celebrating a sense of home and the area's history.

#### **Woman Whole by YARA + DAVINA**

YARA + DAVINA are a British social practice duo who make social practice artwork, creating ambitious public artworks that respond to site, context and audience. For their contribution, Yara and Davina playfully subverted traditional manhole covers by making an alternative collection of 'woman whole' covers. Inspired by historic

resident Mary Neal's approach to creativity, they ran workshops with local mothers through ODAC's Remix Dance, asking them to reflect on what makes a woman 'whole' in relation to self-empowerment, resistance, resilience and the spirit of joy. From these conversations, they have created three cast artworks embedded in the paving of Everton Mews.

### **Regent's Park Portrait by Brendan Barry**

Brendan Barry is a photographer, educator and camera builder. Brendan has created a portrait of the community that reflects and celebrates the vibrancy and diversity of people, both past and present, who live and work on Regent's Park Estate. Aiming to engage residents in the magic of photographic processes, the project involved the creation of a camera obscura – a room-sized camera with a built-in darkroom – at Bow Arts' studios in Langdale, Stanhope Street.

### **Graphic design by Europa**

To develop an accessible yet locally rooted graphic design for the public art trail, Europa worked with Community Champions Regent's Park and Young Guardians to develop a unique identity that reflected existing signage and colours of the estate. A series of collaborative workshops helped them create interpretation plaques that guide wayfinding through the estate, taking a playful approach to the core motif of the Clarence Gardens' Story Tree.

## **Notes to editors**

For further information, please contact Tori Dance via [odac@zetteler.co.uk](mailto:odac@zetteler.co.uk).

### **Production and funding credits**

Regent's Park Estate Story Trail is produced by Old Diorama Arts Centre in partnership with Camden Council, Fitzrovia Youth in Action and Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts Central London. Wonderscope is produced in partnership with Regent's Place.

Made possible thanks to funding from Camden Council, T-Factor (which received EU funding via the Horizon 2020 research & innovation programme) and British Land.

### **Old Diorama Arts Centre**

Old Diorama Arts Centre (ODAC) is a centre for arts creation and communities, with the neighbourhood and cityscape of Euston as our inspiration, collaborator and stage.



Its vision is to catalyse artistic creation and collaboration to transform society and the city. Founded by artists in 1981 and in permanent premises since 2013, since 2021 ODAC has reinvented itself, with arts-led civic and social action at its core.

Dedicated to making, its programmes burst through glass walls into the streets, spaces, organisations, economies, and fabric of the surrounding communities. With the arts as a tool, it works towards the cohesion of communities who live and work in the Euston area, particularly the Regent's Park ward of Camden.

[olddiorama.com](http://olddiorama.com)

### **Community Champions Regent's Park**

Community Champions is a Camden public health initiative focusing on increasing resident led action to improve wellbeing and health outcomes in particular geographical locations. FYA is the lead organisation for Community Champions in the Regent's Park Estate, and the project has a home at Old Diorama Arts Centre.

In the last year we have had 46 Lead Champions and 20 Support Champions organise or co-produce activities, engaging over 3000 fellow residents.

Apart from the Story Trail, other examples of work include regular social events and festivals for the neighbourhood, community clean ups, community kitchens which have served over 12,500 meals, food cooperatives, youth safety campaigns, youth-led urban planning and consultation projects, and supporting young people in designing/ building a new open space.

### **Fitzrovia Youth In Action**

FYA is a youth social-action charity which supports young people in Camden and Westminster to plan and deliver programmes and activities which benefit their peers and the wider community.

Last year, FYA engaged 721 young people in youth social-action programmes, across 52 cohorts, each volunteering for six weeks or more. Young people delivered peer mentoring programmes, ran awareness workshops and campaigns, organised community dinners and festivals, and worked with planners and decision makers to improve services and the local environment.

[fya.org.uk](http://fya.org.uk)

### **Central Saint Martins, UAL**

At Central Saint Martins, creativity is being regenerated by rethinking what an art and design college should focus on and how this might work. Throughout its history,

it has had a reputation for change-making through creative practice. Today, across art, design and performance, the students and staff of Central Saint Martins create and practise ideas, materials and actions for a better future in a more-than-human world.

Among its alumni shaping the world through creative action are Ashton Attzs, Grace Wales Bonner, Osei Bonsu, Matty Bovan, Isamaya Ffrench, Craig Green, Isaac Julien, Kim Jones, Ib Kamara, Rene Matić, Stella McCartney, Morag Myerscough, Saul Nash, Sandy Powell, Heather Phillipson, Simone Rocha, Zineb Sedira and Yinka Shonibare. [arts.ac.uk/csm](https://arts.ac.uk/csm)

### **T-Factor**

T-Factor is a collective effort of many organisations across Europe and beyond, including cities, universities, businesses and grassroots communities. Together, they are committed to creating new knowledge and tools for temporary use that can contribute to realising inclusive and thriving futures in cities.

The programme ultimately aspires to foster sustainable and resilient communities, empower local stakeholders and inspire global dialogue on the role of temporary use in shaping vibrant, equitable and adaptable urban environments for generations to come. It has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under grant agreement No. 8668887.

### **British Land**

British Land is a UK commercial property company focused on real estate sectors with the strongest operational fundamentals: London campuses, retail parks, and London urban logistics. It owns or manages a portfolio valued at £13.6bn (British Land share: £8.9bn) as at 30 September 2024.

Its purpose is to create and manage Places People Prefer – outstanding places that deliver positive outcomes for all stakeholders on a long term, sustainable basis. It does this by leveraging its best in class platform and proven expertise in development, repositioning and active asset management.

British Land has both a responsibility and an opportunity to manage its business in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. Its approach to sustainability is focused on three pillars: Greener Spaces, Thriving Places and Responsible Choices. [britishland.com](https://britishland.com)