

New Public Artwork Unveiled at Nightingale's Corner, Berkeley Square

Grosvenor Britain & Ireland and Modus Operandi have unveiled a new piece of public art in Berkeley Square.

Circling the Square, by Kate Davis and David Moore, is situated in the newly completed Nightingale's Corner in the historic square - named after the famed romantic Vera Lynn song 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square'.

The unveiling comes as part of a £4 million scheme to reclaim the square for Londoners, which is entering its final stretch. Backed by Grosvenor and Astrea Asset Management, one of Mayfair's best known public spaces is benefitting from wider footpaths, safer crossing points, lighting, seating and trees alongside the newly created public art space.

Circling the Square is the first in a three year programme of temporary art commissions for this dedicated arts space. In place until late 2020, it will be followed by a twice-yearly rotation of site-inspired installations that draw from aspects of the locality, its communities, architecture and institutions.

Demonstrating this community spirit and interest, the first commission was the product of collaboration with key local groups including the Residents Society of Mayfair and St James, The Mayfair Neighbourhood Forum and the Construction Liaison Group for Berkeley Square.

The installation forms a place to meet and sit within the new expanse of public realm. Research into the area and dialogue between the artists and community representatives inspired the form and visual imagery of the sculpture. Elegant benches installed on either side of a schematic Georgian window offer places to sit – and engage with the artwork. Two silhouetted nightingale weather vanes perch atop the window frame. Painted a light bronze, the sculpture's framework relates tonally to the metalwork of the surrounding architecture and the bark of the ancient plane trees in the square.

The flanking panels of the sculpture bear richly coloured imagery, text information and an acrostic poem, by Mark Ward, inspired by some of the unique qualities of Mayfair.

Kate Davis comments:

'Our aim was threefold, to create a glamorous rendezvous, a recognisable location in Nightingale's Corner for people to meet; A breathing space to rest, chat and see Berkeley Square and Mayfair in a new light and to anticipate what is coming next.'

'The window panel gives the passer-by a place from which to view the square, maybe really seeing it for the first time, as if they are inside a house on Berkeley Square looking out either onto the extraordinary plane trees or towards the corner of Mount Street, one of the original shopping streets in Mayfair.'

Drew Pinazza, Head of Public Spaces, Grosvenor Britain & Ireland added:

“By making the area safer and the square more accessible, we are reclaiming Berkeley Square as the oasis it once was, helping to protect the very special character of Mayfair. But for us this is not enough. Circling the square will provide people with an opportunity to pause, take a breath and really see the beauty of the space. What a stage and what a showpiece to kick off our multi-year of public art installations!”

NOTES TO EDITORS

ARTISTS

Kate Davis & David Moore are artists who live and work in London & Edinburgh. Davis is a senior tutor at the Royal College of Art, London and Moore is head of programme at Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. As well as distinguished individual careers they have been working collaboratively since 2010 undertaking artist residencies and permanent public commissions. Recent works can be seen at the Dockland Light Railway station, Langdon Park, and at Riverlight Nine Elms, London.

‘As two sculptors who have chosen to work together on public projects such as this our aim is to take the integrity of our studio practice out into public spaces with a sensitivity to the people and the places that become our new audiences. Working under the banner ME/WE, we take an approach that holds onto the values of individual creative expression (ME) whilst seeking to communicate with the communities we are engaged with, working with a collaborative ethos (WE).’

About Grosvenor Britain & Ireland

Grosvenor Britain & Ireland creates and manages high quality neighbourhoods that are great places to live, work and visit. Our diverse property development, management and investment portfolio includes Grosvenor’s London estate of Mayfair and Belgravia and other developments in London, Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

Grosvenor has a [20 year vision](#) to transform its London estate to help tackle the pressures facing the capital and all the communities it supports. With London's rapid growth, this strategy will see Mayfair and Belgravia be more active, more accessible and more integrated, working harder for the city. In the next 10 years Grosvenor will [invest £1 billion in future proofing its estate](#) to help it meet the challenges of population growth and to deliver the vision.

CURATORS

Modus Operandi is a leading independent agency for art in the public realm. It aims to deliver excellent art integral to architecture and the public realm, matching the vision of artists to client, audience and place. Modus Operandi curates and produces permanent and temporary commissions, collaborations and interventions, based on creative strategies and appropriate selection procedures.

Vivien Lovell and Jenni Lomax are co-curators of the Berkeley Square Public Art Programme, assisted by Poppy Heron.

<https://www.modusoperandi-art.com>

Modus Operandi and Public Art in Westminster

Circling the Square by Kate Davis and David Moore is one of many public art commissions in Westminster curated by Modus Operandi, including permanent artworks *World* by Mark Pimlott and *Breathing* by Jaume Plensa for BBC Broadcasting House, *So Our Rivers Flow* by Keith Tyson for One Burlington Place, *Vital Signs* by Spencer Finch for Quadrant 3, Piccadilly Circus, *Timelines* by Daniela Schoenbaechler for Wilder Walk and *Three Views* by Jacqueline Poncelet for The Marq, Duke Street St James's, for The Crown Estate. Temporary commissions include *Rock on Top of Another Rock* by Fischli/Weiss for Kensington Gardens, with the Serpentine Gallery.

FABRICATORS/INSTALLATION TEAM

The White Wall is an art fabrication company. It creates sculptures and exhibitions for some of the world's most renowned contemporary artists, gallery spaces and public realm commissioners.

<https://thewhitewall.co.uk>

Please contact Vivien Lovell (Director), Jenni Lomax (Associate Curator) or Poppy Heron (Projects Co-ordinator) at Modus Operandi for further details on this project:

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