

The Story of Create King's Cross

In 2003, a report was commissioned to map the levels of creative activity in King's Cross, and the mechanisms needed to nurture and grow this in the light of the forthcoming redevelopment. The review identified a diverse range of creative and cultural companies and related activity in the area and recommended that a leadership network be established to champion the needs of the creative sector and access resources to realise the potential promised by the regeneration.

With financial and logistical support from the London Development Agency and Camden and Islington Councils, Create King's Cross was born.



Our vision was to make King's Cross into London's most vibrant and creative community; a place for living, working and engaging with the energy that makes London one of the world's exhilarating cities. King's Cross is positioned at the vital crossroads of the city – the way into London, and is the gateway for international visitors, a focus for creative business and a magnet for social interaction.

The heart of our work was making **creative connections** between public and private, business and pleasure, local and global, people and place - acting as a catalyst for brilliant ideas and practical solutions.

As a nimble and independent organisation we were able to be flexible and responsive - making it easier to connect to different contexts and cultures.

Over the last six years CreateKX has inspired, motivated and supported the King's Cross creative community and built partnerships to grow King's Cross as a creative destination, and to realise the potential of the cultural institutions and communities in the area.

Creating a Place – we engaged and supported high quality art programmes often in unusual and public spaces, and promoted a vibrant, dynamic and safe urban realm. We sought innovative solutions to affordable workspace for artists and creative businesses, and we supported local cultural venues.

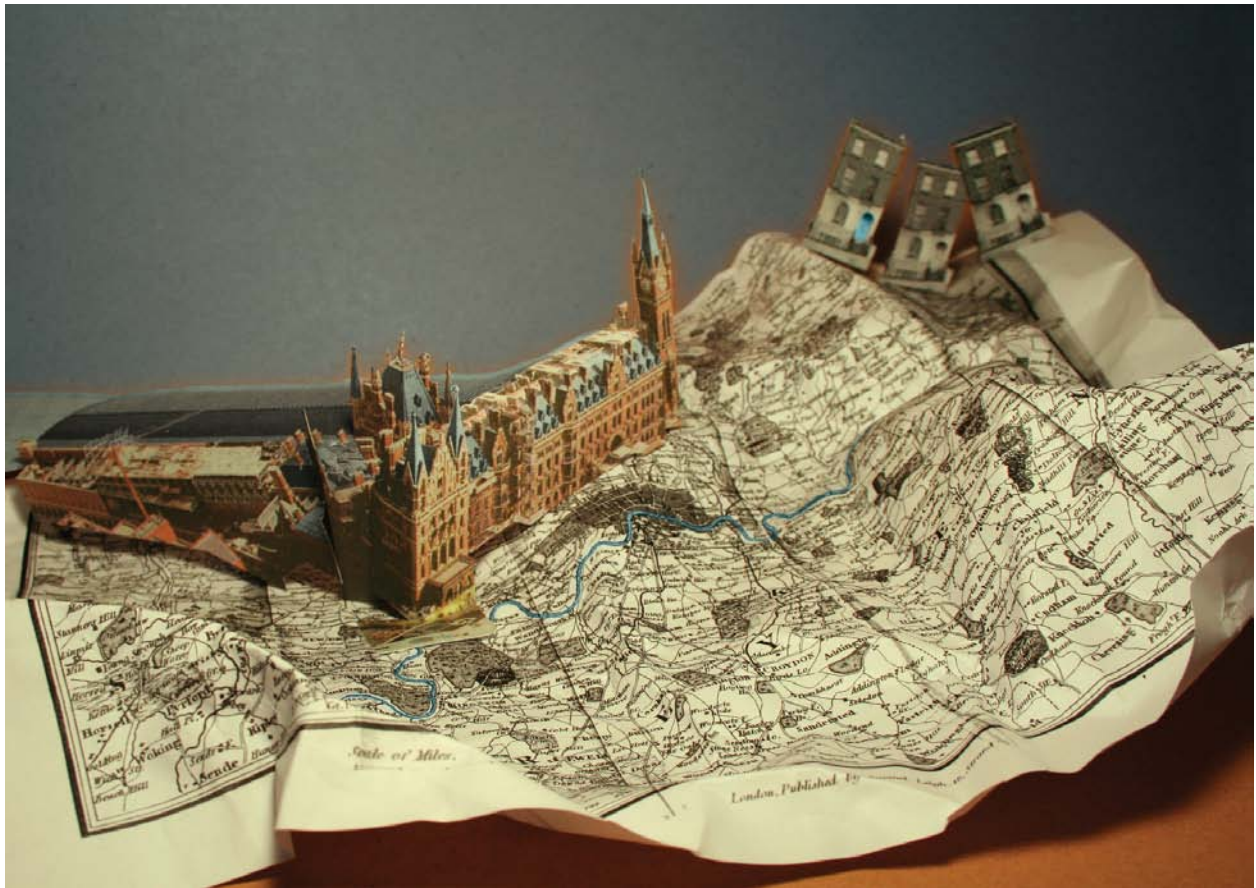
Creating learning connections – we linked schools, colleges, universities and employers with artists and connected businesses with local communities, building upon the strengths of creativity and knowledge in King's Cross.

Creating Enterprise Opportunities – we promoted and supported small and large companies and institutions in the area, offering a business support programme, information and networks.

King's Cross Events – we celebrated local creativity and encouraged stakeholders to support and participate in major events that engaged local communities and promoted King's Cross.

It has been great working with you all and you have been brilliant at helping establish our project, making the right connections and feeling part of the special cultural place that King's Cross is and increasingly will become.

Flora Craig, Director, House of Illustration



create KX provided funding and other support for art work showcasing the rich tapestries of King's Cross life: projects that revealed lost spaces, confronted physical change, explored the stories and people that together make King's Cross a unique and special place.

- Ellie Reid: Arts Council six month Interact artist's placement – responding to the King's Cross Central regeneration site, with Shift, an exhibition of work inspired by the placement
- Pathways King's Cross: a joint commission by Create King's Cross and King's Cross Central for D-Fuse to produce an innovative digital installation at the German Gym reflecting on the area's dynamic environment and history
- The Art of Lost Words: new design and illustration exhibition inspired by language's forgotten words, at the German Gymnasium
- Hats Plus: 15 emerging artists at a new local space during Frieze 2008.
- Diary of a Dairy: A Collaborative cross disciplinary arts event curated by Minnie Weisz in a derelict dairy in Bloomsbury; London Architecture Festival 2008
- King's Cross Mysteries: Aidan Andrew Dunn presented two shows of poetry and music in partnership with the British Library
- Bloomsbury Festival 2010
- Bemerton Festival 2010

Bravo on the fantastic hard work and transforming creative arts initiatives you have delivered

Andrew Burke, Chief Executive, London Sinfonietta



14th - 25th November 2007
Creative Journeys celebrating the opening of St Pancras International

An innovative programme of dance, circus, music, live and digital art commissions and projects presented by international and UK artists in and around St Pancras, it offered a range of exciting participatory opportunities for local communities. CreateKX developed and produced the event on a £300k budget but its strength was the enthusiastic and productive partnership with so many other organisations. Arrivals was financially supported by Arts Council England (Grants for the Arts), Arts & Business, the Wellcome Trust, London Boroughs of Camden & Islington, Jack Petchey Foundation, Institut Francais, Eurostar and with headline sponsorship from St Pancras International. The programme contained over 40 events and projects ranging in scale and art-form.

289 artists, **762** participants and **29,500** audience members took part in Arrivals. All participants were from the King's Cross area: 50% of participants were women, and over 50% were from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background. 80% of participants would like to be involved in a similar project in the future.



ETA was AMAZING. I went on the Friday, and it was absolutely magical. Well done, the whole week was fantastic.

I love the way everything is so different yet comes together to create the KX I know

I really enjoyed performing... the festival... the city

One of the fundamental achievements of Arrivals was the wide range of partnerships and networks built through the process, many of which are continuing to grow and flourish.



22nd April - 2nd May 2010

Surprising events and Creative Journeys around King's Cross

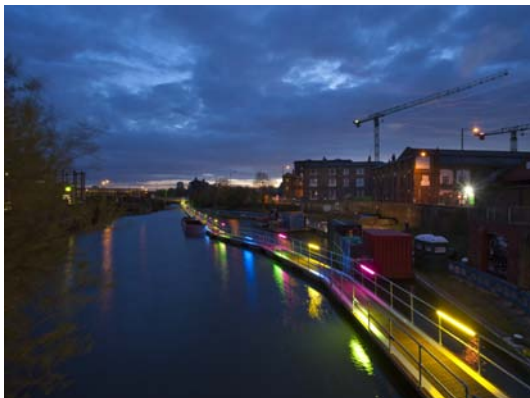
A highlight of *Arrivals* was the chance to experience the many wonderful spaces and places around King's Cross. *Reveal* opened up an opportunity to continue to explore the area, using the past, present, and future landscape as a canvas to explore the unique relationship between the artistic, residential and economic communities of King's Cross, developing and strengthening relationships which will inform the future, whilst making a mark on the changing landscape.

Over **175** artists took part in *Reveal*, with more than **980** participants actively involved in the production, development or performance of the projects. Over **20,000** audience members attended the range of projects involved, but many others "caught a glimpse" as they were passing through King's Cross and St Pancras.

Reveal engaged everyone from elders in Islington, to the corporate sector and those involved in the redevelopment of King's Cross, to the young homeless people at New Horizons and even included a female Mexican mariachi band at St Pancras International. We worked with major institutions like the British Library, arts organisations like Cubitt Gallery, community focused initiatives like New Horizons Youth Centre and a range of artists based locally and nationally. Our participants came from both the Islington and Camden sides of King's Cross, with some projects like Magnificent Maps engaging with groups from right across the area. Food Junctions at Camley Street Natural Park encouraged London-wide participation, with hundreds of families and children taking part.

"Before today, King's Cross had been a transport interchange. A historic one as well as a current one, with the canal included, but it was a facility rather than a community. This event has showed me peaceful streets close to the main thoroughfares; gardens, alleys, semi-derelict buildings and rejuvenated ones. It has shown me (some of) Kings Cross, or revealed it to me - hence, the good resonance of the name of the festival"

Blogger on *Reveal* King's Cross



Networking

We held our events in out-of-the ordinary places, to encourage extraordinary experiences; an opportunity for engaging with new ideas, inspirations and connections. Quarterly networking events brought together people from right across the cultural sector as well as local businesses and stakeholders.



Some of the spaces we used:

- The School of Life
- Camley Street Natural Park
- London Canal Museum
- The Horse Hospital
- The Hub

Over **1000** people attended our networking events and local walkabouts

“Very friendly staff, great venues, I have enjoyed going places that I haven't seen before”

Networks Feedback

The breadth of things that you have been involved with over the recent years and the many successes you have had must make you and your team feel very proud.

John Nugent, CEO Green and Fortune

Business and Skills

Between 2007 and 2010 **nearly 1400 people** working in the cultural and creative industries signed up to participate in the CreateKX business support programme.

With the support of the Business and IP Centre at the British Library and other partners, our activities nurtured local talent by working with existing strengths, developing opportunity and identifying skills and knowledge gaps. Our programmes contributed to growing the businesses of the local creative sector and provided opportunities to share intelligence and ideas.

Support was offered in a range of ways, from one-to-one mentoring to full-day conferences on hot sector topics. We produced a unique mix of practical advice, skills development, trend insight and inspiration.

Practical sessions included: establishing a social enterprise, start-up business planning, recession busting, branding, time-management, methods for finding workspace and optimising digital marketing and comms. More inspirational sessions explored everything from emerging trends in interactive arts to questioning the meaning of creative success.

For example:

- New Compounds: avenues for collaboration in science and art
- Fast Forward: emerging trends in the interface of sound and images
- Intersections in Sustainability: new sustainability concepts in art and technology
- Making a Buck without Selling Out: Balancing creative integrity with financial reward
- The Global Shop Front - how to maximise on-line sales opportunities
- Comms Boot Camps –beef up your marketing and communication skills

As a small practice the subsidised or free rates make it really accessible and we have gained valuable business support and skills in areas that we would not have known could be improved in this way to suit us and would not have paid for speculatively.

I came away from the evening feeling very fired up. You guys obviously put a lot of time and effort into organising your events and choosing inspiring speakers. Encouraging and inspiring to hear case studies and discover my values/ aspirations for my work match those of other participants.

“It is easy to get isolated in creative business and Create KX seems to do a great job of connecting people which does create work for everyone”

The most useful and informative seminar I have been to for years. Rich in information and very useful

Participants feedback

“I am, frankly, envious of creative professionals who live and work in the area covered by CreateKX’s excellent programme of seminars and events. I wish we had a programme that covered entrepreneurial ways of integrating creativity in communities and regeneration, ranging from working with property developers to short, informal surgery sessions. We are going to be in an uncertain economic climate for some years to come, and CreateKX takes a practical approach to skilling us all up, and ensuring we keep up to date”

Sarah Bedell AAP Ltd

We also supported creative sector training:

Examples

Skills development, seminars in beginners and advanced scriptwriting, for the North London Film Fund in 2008; a training programme for budding film-makers across Camden, Islington, Haringey and Enfield.

A session in partnership with the Method programme funded through the Cultural Leadership Programme where 20 professional artists and practitioners explored the role of entrepreneurship as part of leadership development

Support for an all day Theatre Graduate Company Development Workshop run by Centre for Excellence in Training and Hidden Cities.

As a result of working with your network I've really had my eyes opened to the paucity of dynamic and genuinely useful training opportunities for creative business and individuals not to mention the financial barriers which Create KX removed – you provided access to inspiring and talented trainers, created a unique space where people who are often working alone could come together to share ideas and challenges and work out creative ways to overcome them. The work that Create KX delivered and the ethos it stood for was (and remains) vitally important – it lifted people from the everyday and reinvigorated their motivation and drive. It taught them new skills and it connected them. It affirmed their choice of career and belief in their own talent and I for one am hugely proud to have played a very small part in the journey Create KX has taken its network on.

Emma Courtney, Courtney Consulting

VisitKX

VisitKX was a unique forum for cultural venues developed with the help of Audiences London. Initially commissioned by City Fringe Partnership as a strategic approach to supporting cultural tourism and audience development, VisitKX was such a success that it was supported by Camden Council for its second year.

Across two years of operation VisitKX supported **178** cultural venues, the majority sited in Camden and Islington

VisitKX participants came from a mix of new and established, large and small organisations, across all art forms- visual arts, performance, live arts and heritage. As well as the expertise and resources provided by the structured training and support, VisitKX acted as a forum for sharing ideas and collaboration.

Participants included: Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Wellcome Collection, Roundhouse, Y-Touring, Akademi, Camden People's Theatre, Only Connect, Kings Place Music Foundation, Sadlers Wells, The Pleasance Theatre, Shaw Theatre, Camden Arts Centre, the British Museum, the British Library, Freud Museum, RADA, Circus Space, and the National Gallery.

What was said about VisitKX:

- *VisitKX offered realistic best practice – from practitioners in the field*
- *Participants could share ideas and inspiration, with honesty and freshness*
- *The programme reinforced relationships, finding commonality & combating isolation*
- *Participants were introduced to new networks, sources of information & potential partnerships*
- *VisitKX helped to break down perceived hierarchy in the cultural sector*
- *It was a very diverse, excellent programme - thought provoking, affirming and fun*

Consultation and Sign-posting

CreateKX served as a key information point for the creative sector, supplying quality intelligence and specialist guidance. We offered sign-posting and brokering to specialists who we know and can recommend.

Keep up the good work, I wish East London had such a proactive support organisation for artists and cultural organisations

Participant Feedback

CreateKX provided expert advice on creative industry issues, creative clustering and place-making initiatives. As an advocate for King's Cross, we contribute to strategic government and public body consultations, conferences and events.

The Creative Stockholm delegation took so much from what you had to say and the amazing work and best practice that you have established.

Andrew Erskine

Consultant

CreateKX represented King's Cross on a number of strategic groups which pioneer place-making, high-quality art in the public realm and local arts engagement.

London Cultural Quarters group

CreateKX & Wellcome Collection represent the King's Cross/Bloomsbury Quarter for the London Cultural Quarters alongside South Bank and Bankside, East London (Whitechapel and Stratford), Exhibition Road and Central London.

KX Arts Steering Group

CreateKX is a core member of this informal group which meets bi-monthly and advises on King's Cross Central arts and cultural programmes and strategies. Other members: Argent, Camden & Islington councils, Camden Arts Centre, St Pancras International and Central St Martin's.

Interact placement Steering Group

CreateKX worked closely with the Arts Council London, Argent (King's Cross Central), Camden Arts Centre and CATS on the selection and support for the artist's placement funded through the Interact scheme.

CreateKX has done some terrific work which has been of great benefit to the local area.

Arti Nanda, Centre Director One KX,

CreateKX Online

CreateKX.org.uk, a one-stop shop for visitors wanting information about KX in general, the local cultural calendar and business support activity

CreateKX Directory, for local creative practitioners and businesses to encourage local supply chains.

CreateKX Monthly e-newsletter, listing all the cultural activity in King's Cross: 2000 recipients, and growing daily

BlogKX, an informal way of connecting with CreateKX friends through articles and news

I just wanted to say how incredible this mailing list is. I have lived in Kings Cross for 3 years and I never realised how many exciting things were happening right on my doorstep.

PARTNERS

Public Funding

- Arts Council England London
- London Borough of Camden
- London Borough of Islington
- City Fringe Partnership
- London Development Agency

Supporters

- King's Cross Central
- E C Harris
- British Waterways
- Kier Build
- London and Continental Railways
- Eurostar

KX Arts and Cultural venues

- British Library
- The Place
- Cubitt Arts
- Wellcome Collection
- London Canal Museum
- UCL Museums and Galleries
- British Museum
- Sadlers Wells
- School of Life
- Camden Arts Centre (King's Cross projects)
- King's Place Music Trust and gallery
- Pangolin Gallery
- Charles Dickens Museum
- Artangel Interaction
- Lumen Arts
- Foundling Museum

Creative Business Support

- The Hub King's Cross
- Cockpit Arts
- Shape Disability Arts
- Innovation Central: a partnership of UCL Advances, London Bioscience, CSM Innovation Centre, British Library, Birkbeck University of London and CENTA
- King's Cross Business Forum
- City Fringe Partnership
- NMK/ Dynamo London
- Audiences London
- The British Library Business and IP Centre
- Guardian Media Group

Education

- Birkbeck College
- Central St Martin's
- University College London
- Goodenough College
- LCACE
- Westminster Kingsway College

King's Cross Community

- OneKX

- Only Connect
- Copenhagen Youth Project
- Camley Street Natural Park
- Cloth of Gold
- Shake UR Arts
- Urban Words
- King's Cross Voices
- New Horizons Youth Centre

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