

Big Art Channel 4

St Helens and Burnley

‘Public art can promote debate about the impact of art on the lives of ordinary people and leave a lasting cultural legacy to inspire communities.’

Channel 4’s Big Art project is the UK’s biggest ever community-led public art commissioning scheme in partnership with Arts Council England, involving the creation of seven new national landmark public artworks with two based in St Helens and Burnley in the North West region.

One public art site is the former Sutton Manor Colliery in St Helens. It is a highly visible location beside junction 7 of the busy M62.

A community focus group, comprising of former miners together with St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council and Liverpool Biennial will create an artwork to symbolise the positive post-industrial and cultural transformation that St Helens has undergone in recent years creating an iconic new gateway to Merseyside.

The artwork on this site, which is due for completion in April / May 2008 and intends to be visible by both day and night, takes as its working title the town’s 19th century motto ‘ex terra lucem’ (out of the earth comes light).



St Helens Big Art Project

Photo: Jason Broadhurst

The St Helens Project was officially launched by Channel 4’s director of Arts and Performance Jan Younghusband who said of the project:

‘Art can help to change people’s lives. We all really hope this major new public artwork will contribute to building a vibrant future for St Helens and the North West, at the same time as celebrating the area’s rich cultural and economic heritage.’

Over £500,000 has already been secured for the St Helens project including £200,000 from the Forestry Commission, £228,000 from the North West Coalfield Communities Regeneration Programme and £100,000 from the St Helens Local Enterprise Growth Initiative.



Participants from Burnley's Big Art Project in front of the 'Singing Ringing Tree'
Photo: courtesy of Burnley Borough Council

The Burnley Big Art project is young-people led. The project will feature a new major commission for the town centre. It will involve the Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) neighbourhoods, four Building Schools for the Future (BSF) schools, Creative Partnerships East Lancashire and Burnley Council.

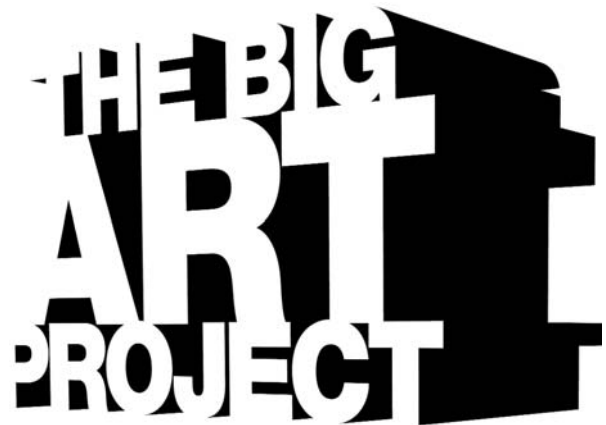
Fifteen young people aged between 12 and 15 years have been involved in developing the project and the artist selected for the commission is the London based company Greyworld.

Past projects undertaken by Greyworld have included tuning a set of railings to play the *Girl from Ipenema* and an interactive foyer for the London stock exchange.

Andrew Shoben, Artistic Director of Greyworld described his work as:

'...to create works that articulate public spaces, allowing some form of self-expression in areas of the city that people see every day but normally exclude and ignore'

The project will build on a successful pilot project Space Lift which engaged young people in working with architects and planners across East Lancashire and which received funding from Arts Council England, North West.



www.visitsthelens.com

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www.channel4.com

www.burnley.gov.uk

www.elevate-eastlancs.co.uk

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