

Rail helps artists install Windrush project in Hackney

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A Hackney art project, exploring the life of the area's African and Caribbean communities, has been bringing in visitors since September – thanks to some help from Hackney Council, Network Rail and Transport for London (TfL).

The art is on display under Hackney Central railway bridge.

The exhibition was created by arts organisation Future Hackney as part of a wider Windrush public engagement programme, produced by Create London in partnership with Hackney Council.

In order for the installation to take place, the project needed guidance and approval from Network Rail, who owns and oversees Hackney Central bridge.

Network rail worked with the groups to ensure the project was delivered safely. Its team reviewed, planned and supervised works to protect the people involved in the project, as well as passengers and railway workers.

Meanwhile, TfL stepped in to remove old signage from the bridge wall, giving the artists a blank canvas.

As well as being responsible for commissioning the exhibition with Create London, Hackney Council provided a vital link between Network Rail and Future Hackney to get the necessary permissions in place.

The council also played a role in preparing the site for the installation. Its teams jet washed the area ahead of work starting, made sure that appropriate lighting was in place and kept its local community safety officers up to date with progress on the project.

The exhibition is free to everyone. Just like the wider Hackney Windrush public engagement programme, it has been supported by Freelands Foundation.

Don Travis and Wayne Crichlow from Future Hackney said: “We think it’s really important for as much visual art as possible to be available on the streets for everyone to see and experience. Of course, this depends on the efforts of many different people and organisations, and we’d like to thank Network Rail and Hackney Council for helping us to bring our exhibition to life.”

Bhavik Parmar, station portfolio surveyor at Network Rail Anglia, said: “Our role as a business is not only to get passengers to their destinations on time, but also to serve our lineside neighbours and communities. It’s been very rewarding to work on this project and help to enable a fantastic, important exhibition to go up in the heart of Hackney.”

Cllr Carole Williams, Hackney Council cabinet member for employment, skills and human resources and the first UK Council lead member for Windrush, said: “There has been great collaboration on this project between our own teams, the arts organisations and the rail industry. It’s great to have everyone working together to honour the huge contribution of the Windrush generation and their descendants. I’d encourage everyone to go and see the installation as well as the other elements of our Windrush public engagement programme.”

Image Credit: ‘Ngozi and Rosanna’ by Wayne Crichlow, provided by Network Rail