

MADE[•]

The Public

location:
West Bromwich

The Public is a cultural hub for the West Midlands which evolved from a desire to take art into the community.



Introduction

The Public began as Jubilee Arts founded by Sylvia King in the early 70s. Jubilee Arts operated from a bus and travelled around the area working with community groups on creative projects with an aim to provide different learning.

The Jubilee team realised that small projects changed very little and to create a larger forum for engagement and community showcasing led to the development of the C-Plex project. (The original name of The Public project)

The Public hosts a range of cultural and community activities and includes a full international and local exhibition art programme touring photographic exhibitions to music, film and dance. Individual education projects are worked out for schools on a visit by visit basis.

There are a wide variety of interactive spaces where the visitor can get involved in the exhibitions including creating animation, recording sounds and voices and using magnetic words to leave comments and messages for other visitors.

The bright pink colour used throughout the building is a reference to the pink dress worn by Sylvia King when out and about with Jubilee Arts.

Design process

The building comprises a rectangular box with 'jelly-ban' shaped windows outlined in pink, sitting on a glazed 'skirt'. The building is clad with aluminium to reduce maintenance costs.

At ground level the glazed 'skirt' to allow people passing outside to see what is going on inside. The glass gallery also allows people to view exhibitions from outside.

Built over five levels, the building provides a dynamic space which can be used in a number of ways to present exhibitions. Each level is linked by a large ramp along which interactive opportunities are situated. The interior spaces are designed to appear as rugged, multi-faceted or curved forms that appear to balloon into the space at random, sitting on or suspended from a table structure.

At the top of the building suspended from the roof a series of brightly coloured, dish-shaped spaces or 'lily-pads' contain small team workspaces. Windows frame strategic views over the surrounding city and countryside.

The lighting system is designed to be an integral part of the experience of the building. Both the colour and dynamics are employed to create a remarkable series of events within the multiform interior.

The space around the outside of the building is designed to provide external exhibition space. Seating is strategically placed to allow people to also view exhibitions in the glass gallery.

Evaluation

The Public project was taken over by The Sandwell Arts trust in 2009 and has recruited a full team of professional educators, programmers and conference coordinators to develop a thriving international and local community arts hub that is at the heart of regional regeneration, economic growth and cultural learning.



The Public has been well received in the local community, and now firmly on the map as a location for touring exhibitions. Its lighting scheme won the Lighting Design Awards in the public building category in 2009.

Key design features to look out for

- Glazed ground floor which allows people approaching the building to glimpse the activities inside.
- Interior forms which appear to be suspended from or sitting on a table structure.
- Low maintenance aluminium cladding.
- External exhibition space.
- 'Jelly-bean' shaped windows framing iconic views of the area.

Link and downloads

- www.thepublic.com
- www.alsoparchitects.com
- www.kevan-shaw.com

- Site map: http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?rlz=1T4ADBR_enGB323GB323&um=1&ie=UTF-8&q=the+public+west+bromwich&fb=1&gl=uk&hq=the+public&hnear=west+bromwich&cid=0,0,12855687222757501686&ei=isqsS8iZEab60wTzxdSWDg&sa=X&oi=local_result&ct=image&resnum=1&ved=0CAcQnwlwAA

Contact for further information

Contact for further information

Info_thepublic@sandwell.gov.uk for the attention of learning and programme department

Tel 0121 533 7161