

HOMELSS



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Ziyi Chen

"HOMELESS" embodies the convergence of public space and contemporary art to narrate displacement and resilience stories. Displayed across Edinburgh's bus stops, the exhibition strives to leverage the ubiquitous nature of public transit spaces to immerse everyday commuters in the lives of individuals rendered homeless by disasters. It draws from the poignant artistry of Linda Combi's "52 Postcards" and the collective exploration displayed within in "When Home Won't Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art", aiming to nurture city-wide dialogue on the human conditions of loss, search, and hope in the context of displacement.

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"HOMELESS" transforms bus stops into galleries and, in doing so, the public domain embodies both a space for art exhibition and a platform for social commentary and community engagement, echoing Miwon Kwon's (2004) perspectives on the political and social engagement derived from the use of the public as a space for art.

At the exhibition's core is a commitment to making the invisible visible and providing an echo for the silent whispers of the displaced. It draws upon Nicolas Bourriaud's (2002) concept of relational aesthetics, wherein true artwork constitutes both the object and the human relations it engenders. The art displayed through "HOMELESS" incites public engagement with stories of displacement, fostering reflection on the interplay between identity, belonging, and community within the contemporary urban experience.

In light of logistical obstacles and the goal of diverse audience engagement, "HOMELESS" strives to nurture empathy and action. It is situated within Claire Bishop's (2012) critique of participatory art, aiming to both disrupt daily routines with reflective moments and encourage the public to consider their perceptions and roles in relation to homelessness and displacement.

"HOMELESS" stands as a testament to contemporary art's power in navigating the intersection of personal narratives and global challenges. It incites a deeper, empathetic engagement with our surroundings and urges us to consider shared humanity in the context of global displacement crises. The exhibition enables contemporary art to surpass the boundaries of traditional galleries to catalyse public discourse, reflection, and, ultimately, social change.

The exhibition not only showcases art but also provides a bridge to connect the personal plight of the homeless with collective societal responsibility, thus underscoring the crucial role contemporary art plays in fostering societal empathy and understanding.

Artists



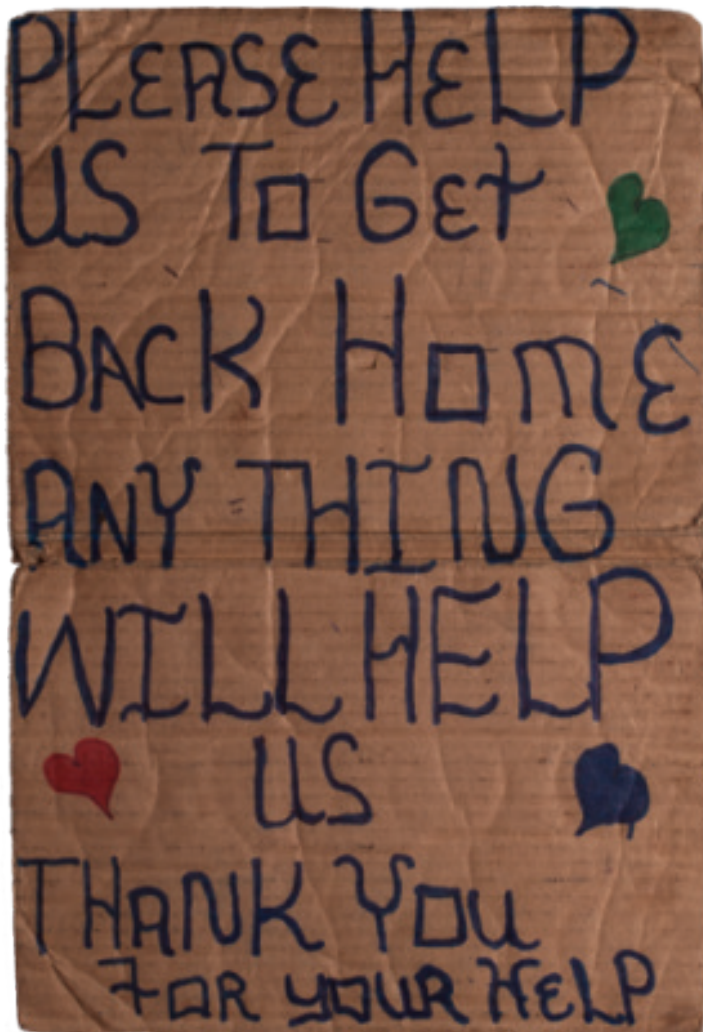
Andres Serrano



(Andres Serrano, 2014 — West 4th Street Subway Station, LaGuardia Place, and throughout the East and West Village, NYC.)

Serrano's work shifts the act of viewing art into a moment of connection and reflection on social realities, embodying relational aesthetics. His portrayal of homelessness invites the viewer to assume a personal approach to engaging with subjects, nurturing empathy and a deeper public understanding of the issue.

Artists



(Willie Baronet, 2016, Philadelphia)

Willie Baronet

Baronet's approach is aligned with relational aesthetics, crafting art that bridges the public with the personal experiences of homeless individuals. Displaying this artwork at bus stops could serve as a stimulus for public engagement and discourse, shifting everyday spaces into forums for social awareness and change.

Artists

SOLD Private Collection
UK
Mother
Original
Oil On Canvas
76cm X 100cm
2019



James Earley

Earley is recognised for his hyper-realistic portraits, through which he highlights social issues, particularly homelessness, mental health, and war. His emotionally charged paintings of homeless individuals accentuate their plight, encouraging societal reflection and empathy.

Artists



SOLD Private Collection
UK
"A Cardboard Crown"
2023
Original
Oil on Canvas
100cm x 70cm

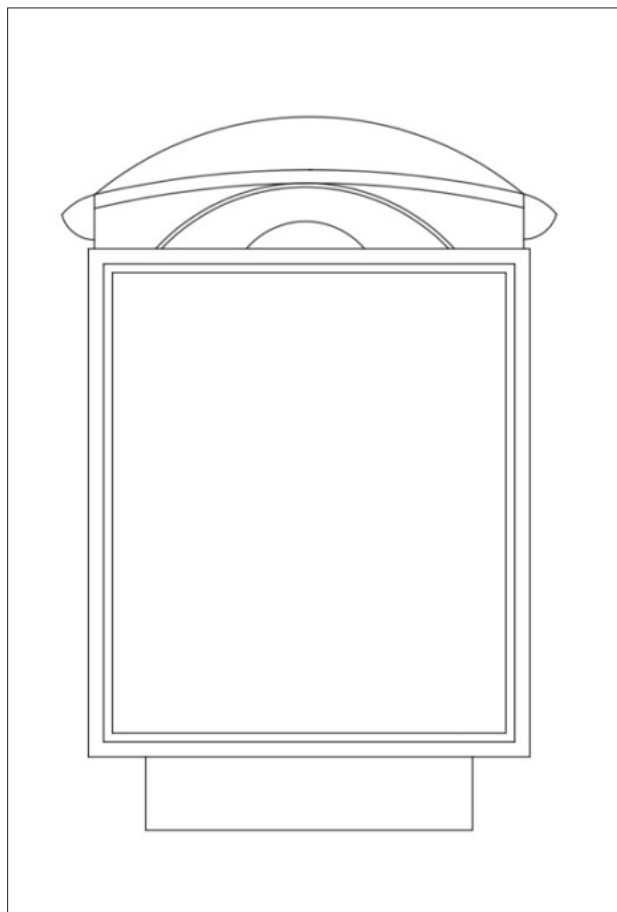


SOLD Private Collection
UK
Robert And Jane
Original
Oil On Canvas
76cm X 100cm
2019

These artists' works provide insight into the issue of homelessness in several ways, aligning with the role of contemporary art to trigger dialogue and raise social awareness. Their works contribute to the exhibition's goal of humanising homelessness through accessible public spaces like bus stops, ultimately motivating community engagement and empathy.

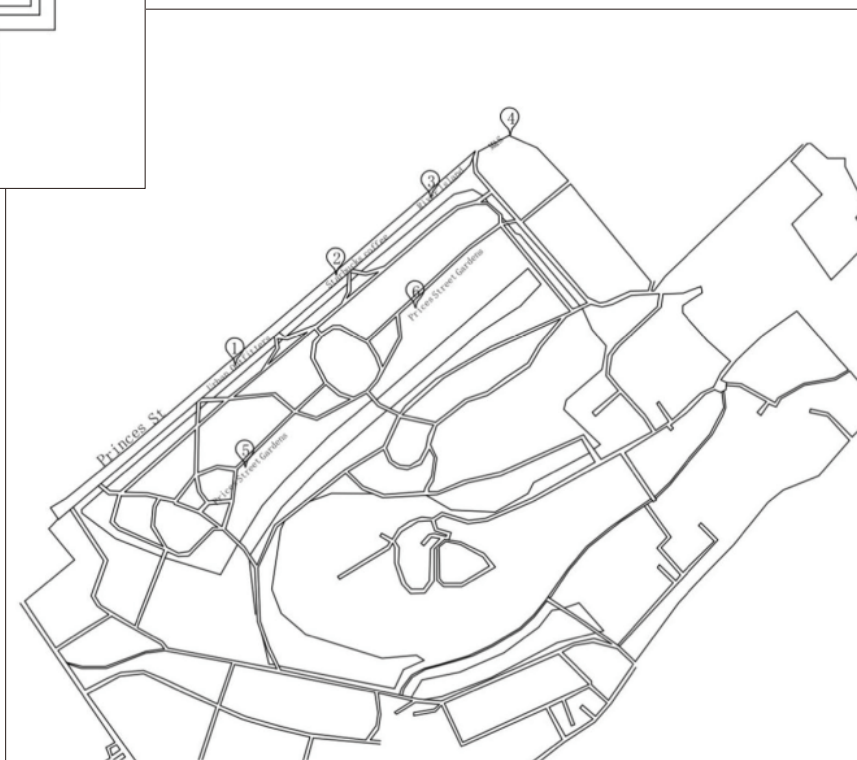
Using Edinburgh's bus stops as exclusive gallery spaces, the exhibition boldly intervenes in everyday life, shifting these spaces into effectual vehicles for advocacy and dialogue around the complexities of homelessness. Such a unique curatorial approach eschews the digital realm to favour deeply local, tangible means of artistic and social discourse engagement, directly integrating dialogue into everyday life.

Exhibition Format and Collaborations



Bus stops constitute unique canvases for demonstrating the delicate experiences of homelessness, producing an immersive, city-wide gallery to incite public participation and discussion. The exhibition showcases artworks delving into displacement, resilience, and the human condition.

The choice of venue democratises contemporary art, ensuring that stories are accessible to a broad, diverse audience. To accomplish this vision, “HOMELESS” collaborates with several Edinburgh-based organisations.



Streetwork Collaboration

"HOMELESS" showcases photographic stories captured by Streetwork's team, demonstrating the daily realities encountered by Edinburgh's homeless community. These narratives will be displayed at selected bus

stops, accompanied by QR codes providing links to resources and information on how the public can support Streetwork's mission.

Four Square Collaboration

Assisted by close collaboration with Four Square, "HOMELESS" will incorporate artworks produced in their shelters and support services, providing a platform for the voices and creativity of those experiencing homelessness. Four Square's involvement ensures the authenticity of the exhibition's stories and experiences, garnering deeper public understanding and empathy. (While researching Edinburgh's bus stop signs, I found that they only support 1.2m by 1.8m images, but the few artist photographs I selected were horizontal, and so would be an incorrect size. To mitigate this, I plan to collaborate with Four Square to conduct street interviews with the local homeless

community to capture photos and life experiences, which will be placed on bus stops with undersized horizontal works through typography.)

"HOMELESS" seeks to connect with a broad public including daily commuters, local residents, community leaders, and social sector stakeholders. The exhibition strives for total accessibility, employing the inherently public nature of bus stops to reach people from all walks of life. By showcasing artworks in such high-traffic public spaces, the exhibition elicits unexpected encounters with artworks prompting reflection, dialogue, and perhaps action.

Ethical Considerations and Community Impact

At its core, "HOMELESS" constitutes a commitment to ethical representation and inclusivity. The chosen artworks and artists reflect a staunchness to diversity, authenticity, and sensitivity to subject matter. The exhibition's methodology draws heavily from the emphasis on relational aesthetics and social practice within contemporary art theory, seeking to establish connections and foster community solidarity through shared experiences and dialogue around the arts. In short, "HOMELESS" is more than just an exhibition.

Instead, it can be perceived as a community-based initiative striving to harness the power of contemporary art to illuminate the issue of homelessness, occupy the public in meaningful discussion, and foster collective reflection and action. Through its contemplative incorporation of Edinburgh's structures, strategic collaborations, and ethical approaches, "HOMELESS" seeks to tangibly impact the local community and the broader dialogue surrounding homelessness and social responsibility.

1-15 April: Artwork selection to be completed, agreements to be reached with Andres Serrano, Willie Baronet, and James Earley, and production to begin of bus stop display materials.

16-30 April: Coordination with Streetwork and Four Square to be undertaken, interviews with Four Square completed, contributions consolidated, and QR code content finalised.

1-15 May: Permission obtained and logistical arrangements made with Edinburgh's local transport authority and City Council per the use of the bus stops.

16-31 May: Social media and local press promotions launched to generate anticipation. Information leaflets distributed to local businesses and community centres.

end of May
to early June

25-31 May: Physical artworks to be assembled and installed at designated bus stops, and QR code links tested for accessibility and functionality.

1 June: Final inspection of all installations to be conducted. Prepare for opening day.

June 1: Launch of “HOMELESS”
June - August: Weekly workshops
or performances in collaboration
with Streetwork and Four Square;
may be located in larger bus stops
or nearby community spaces.

September

1-15 September: Installation to be dismantled and a thorough evaluation of the exhibition's impact conducted using feedback from partners, participants and the public.

16-30 September: Report to be published on the results of the exhibition and shared with all stakeholders. Closing meeting held with partners to discuss successes, challenges, and potential future collaborations.

Ongoing

Exhibition website to be maintained as a permanent digital archive, featuring photos, videos, public feedback, and summaries of impacts and outcomes. (This timeline is flexible and should be adjusted according to the project's specific needs, resource availability, and any unforeseen circumstances.)

Budget Overview

Category	Cost (£)	Note
Artwork production and installation		
Artwork Printing and Materials	1500	
Installation Costs	500	Using volunteer support to minimise labour costs
Collaborations and workshops		
Partner Organisation Contributions	750	Increasing reliance on in-kind contributions for workshops and speaking engagements
Artist and Speaker Fees	800	Engaging local artists and academics through Edinburgh College of Art's community outreach programme, providing discounts for public education projects
Promotional activities		
Marketing Materials	375	
Digital Marketing Campaign	500	Using social media and email marketing to minimise paid advertising costs
Operating costs		
Transport and Logistics	375	
Maintenance and Monitoring	300	Relying on volunteer support for regular maintenance
Post-show activities		
Demolition and Clean-up	300	Volunteering and negotiated service rates for demolition
Impact Report Production	400	Using digital formats to reduce printing and distribution costs
Princes Street Bus Stop Advertising (x6)	1770	Based on quote from JCDecaux
Contingency Fund	750	Reduced funding to cover necessary contingencies
Total Budget	**8,320**	

References :

- Bourriaud, N. (2002). Relational Aesthetics. Les Presses du Réel.
- Kwon, M. (2004). One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity. MIT Press.
- Bishop, C. (2012). Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship. Verso Books.

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