

This is how you get places

Leaflet: Large print version

Introduction:

If you're holding this leaflet, we already have something in common.

Over 30 million of us traipse across the tiled floors of Brixton Station every year – each with our own purpose. This place is our one connection, where the bored commuter, the amazed tourist, the exhausted worker and the excited clubber converge.

We, the students of the Royal College of Art's Writing MA, were invited by Art on the Underground to create audio pieces in response to Brixton and the murals, past and present, in the tube station, the neighbourhood, and further afield. These pieces of public art were created for locals in consultation with locals. Some address the

political issues of the day. Some brighten the place with positivity. Others show us who lives and works nearby. As a group of writers, we come from far and wide, bringing with us a variety of experiences, beliefs, and aims. We are pleased to serve you this tasting menu of impressions, excerpts, and summaries. We hope they will spur you to feast on our audio pieces too. You will encounter among them an eclectic cast of characters, just as you would on the tube. Find a cat padding past lovers reflected in a window; archaeological treasures clattering around those trying to meditate or fill in a survey. Follow the fashionable into record shops, Japan and smudged memories. Catch the eye of someone yearning, just like you, while a saxophone shrills and noodles in your ear.

Typographic poem:

where rhyming anchovies are lucky lucky and strange
intimacies which shoves dust that dislocates memory if

significant or relevant with wool accent under ill-lit
lingering in relationship survey thanks to heavy feet in a
fastback ballad on the oily spectrum of the writing blades
that are crush absent but which nonetheless spark
hollyhocks if they've met distant and vivid tapestry that's
crooning faraway to breathe and reframe the blue blue
of everyone else in a pleasure way not a revolutionary
garden but attempt capture by nervous lungs with a
searching pull

Individual contributors' texts:

Late for the train or the love of your life?

It will probably be alright.

Carriage the rhyming cat says anchovies

Are the only fish of short supply in the seas.

Carriage the Cat

In the absence of a view, our eyes meet.
Locked in ill-lit windows
lingering,
leaving the last of the sky behind,
no longer troubled by the disappearance of
tall trees
and widening shrubs
unfurling elsewhere,
in front of some other railway earthworks,
where the branch-tips brush
against some other curved rooftop,
pruned by some other train speeding ahead.

Dominika Jarečná

Nothing packs a flavour punch like a small tin stuffed
with oily people. These metal cans are

filled to the brim with a host of experiences, not including Vitamin D, to feed the heart and overwhelm the senses. We offer a delicious range of canned commuters marinated in the full spectrum of human emotion.

Emma Clarkson

When we walked, we walked with what felt like a purpose, even when we had none. He would spark within me a passion for the possible, a dream of becoming something else beyond everything we'd ever known. We'd make our way over to the park by one of the housing estates. In the winter everything would freeze over, even the mud, and he'd tell me I should see it in the spring when everything had bloomed. But secretly I liked the frozen parkland more, the hollyhocks around the broken fence by the railway track looking out towards a leafless field.

Eve Kunna

Take five minutes to breathe and recentre. Whether this is your daily commute or your first time on the tube, give yourself a moment to reframe your experience. This guided meditation will help you relax, and lead you on a journey through bodily sensations and to psychological depths. Listen to Uprising to stop and search for your very own pleasures and biases.

Francesca Considine

I take pleasure in the small, interstitial moments of each day. To be on your way is more thrilling than the finality of an arrival.

Maria Mba

lucky luckyyyy

Gwyneth Tambe-Green

Leroy. Leroy. A play.

character list:

Narrator

Ulrich

Leroy

Basil

Chorus

Subway Preacher

Protestors

Boyfriends

Leroy's Wife

Ten Schoolchildren

Necromancer

Narrator: The performance was to take place. The performance was to take place in a place during a day. The performance was to take place in a place during a day in a month on a year and was commissioned by a body. The performance was to take place in a specific place during a certain significant day in a month with appropriate weather on a landmark year and was commissioned by a generous and relevant body.

Hugo Hagger

Freddie's writing a novel. The newsagent once referred to him as a radical intellectual. Deckchairs on his tower block roof: hopeful white and complacent blue volant pennants caught in late spring. Helicopters fleck the skyline of a changing Brixton. Freddie ponders. Will summer bring the clarity he desires?

Geoff Dyer's 1989 novel, *The Colour of Memory*, is set in Brixton during the closing years of Thatcher's Britain.

A circumvented historical moment, told through a constellation of smaller instances. Memories are withheld from oblivion, sliced and dispersed by rotary blades leaving the skyline.

Hugo Lucian Bou-Assaf

I've met you in distant times.

Indra Țincoca

We are the blue remains: an ivory bracelet, a jet bangle, a bracelet of blue glass beads, a silver pendant, a bronze pendant, two large blue glass beads, a small round glass mirror, a dark blue glass flagon, an inscription on open bone: ave soror, in deo vivas, 'Hail, sister, may you live in God'. We are the same lingering blue as the pea flower found in Tutankhamun's tomb,

the sheaf of blue flax waiting to be woven, the cornflower spilled on the perimeter of a field, the shale seam running through a cliff. We are the contents of a grave that are still capable of living.

Inez Reeves

A ballad for the Fiat 600 two-door fastback sedan

Cowboy Jane

In his last book, *Confabulations*, the critic, novelist, and poet John Berger wrote:

We tend to associate intimacy with closeness and closeness with a certain sum of shared experiences. Yet every day total strangers, who will never say a single word to one another, can share an intimacy.

I think about this often on the tube, swaying between people in the thrum of the evening commute. What intimacies I might be sharing with the passengers around me, the other bodies being ferried to and from known and strange locations. How we momentarily inhabit public space together.

Julia Merican

Congratulations! You have been invited to participate in an audio survey.

But who is really being surveyed? And for what purpose?

What is your relationship to place and change?

Whose memories are these?

Did you go on a date to Brixton Market?

Do you stand on the right?

How certain are you?

All responses will be treated confidentially.

Lauren Briggs

How do I begin?

Streets are heavy with history, created by their stories,
their narratives, the feet that pass along them daily.

Consciously, unconsciously:
the pedestrian beat.

Liz Kirk-Channing

I remember the train in New York in the summer
the sun setting over the bridge into
the city skyline aglow with orange light with
beads of sweat running down my brow

now here in Brixton it's cold bundled but
the tube is warm from our bodies and breath and

the familiar old comfort of the touch of a stranger's
wool coat as they stand to exit

the accent is different but the sense the same
the thrum of the track and the gentle sway of the
carriage

Mary Bond

Brixton is testimony to how fashion is not only attire but also a vivid dialogue between culture and personal expression. The styles on the street are a living tapestry of individual expression shaped by heritage, community and personal creativity, and a celebration of the historical and cultural richness of the place.

Mathilde von Rosen

The carriers of oxygen from centripetal nervous system

We soar along tubes to all parts of the body

from Central Lungs

Spinal Cord

Northbound

branch off

peripheral to Peckham

sciatic to

Southwark

Naomi Delorme

‘Brixton revisited’

Change doesn't always slap or kick,
even when rapid, it pushes, shoves, nudges
then you wake up one morning to discover
that you, a long-standing resident,
feel alienated as your neighbourhood
is transformed into something less recognizable

You and your comfort zone fluctuate,
become fragmented
You soon realize that you don't remember Brixton
as it was back then

It's been ten years since you have set foot there
yet remembering soon shakes away the dust of the past

You have had to be selective with your memories
Any gaps will fill themselves in when you return

Nicole Moore

May every day be revolutionary in a way that is
meaningful to you. Build your own garden.

Renée Eshel

I close my eyes on the tube

fall asleep to Radiohead and the screeching of the
Victoria line

counting stops at places I cannot name

then I tear through the city to get home faster than
everyone else, just like everyone else, my body pressed
against everyone else, alone like everyone else, drawing
lines from A to B like everyone else, my shoulder against
the shoulder of everyone else, standing too close like
everyone else, craving to be closer like everyone else

Salomé Mercier

The underground dislocates your time.

One minute lasts seventeen seconds or several years.

One train makes you absurdly early, the next impossibly late.

Measures stretch and swirl, shrink, spread and balloon until you resurface, where meaning pops back into unavoidable existence.

History? Memory? Facets of an unknown. There is no time on the tube.

Let me take you someplace, while we're so out of step. Somewhere that layers of understanding clash, over and over, covered and uncovered. Oh, and there's a saxophone.

Skye Fitzgerald McShane

London Underground as the setting for an adventurous story in an attempt to capture the experience of a foreigner.

Vava Lotareva

‘Ramen, Okame, ひよひよ’

Brixton Station, I have a story to tell you. You might already know everything.

But I need to ask questions.

These days, I am constantly searching for ‘Japan’. No, not because I’m homesick. I somehow feel it calling me, like the pull of a magnet.

This afternoon, I was wandering around Brixton because someone told me they’d seen a piece of ‘Japan’ in the market. It was an Okame painted in a mural. Interesting, because my ‘Japan’ is the ひよひよ in the train station. And Okame, to me, is natto.

Yuna Goda

‘Sounds on the Streets’

If you would listen for just a moment,
You'd hear steel drum buskers
Trading the sounds of their homelands
For the copper coins in their cases.
You'd hear Bowie blasting from a vintage vinyl,
Crooning over a glam rock guitar
That soundtracks a walk through the market row,
The calls of merchants,
And the breeze in flags of faraway places.

You'd hear brogues and lilts.
You'd hear twangs and drawls.
You'd hear voices of people at market stalls.
You'd hear melodies, rhythm.
You'd hear treble and bass.
You'd find culture and memories
You'd never replace.

Zen Mendonça-Collins

Murals are reflections of a place and time; they are sited, sometimes historical and often political visual representations. On transportation systems, where crowds crush, merge and meet in public space, the visual landscape is at once backdrop and cultural language. The 1960s to the end of the 1980s became a poised and pointed moment of cultural production in Britain, with many murals commissioned for interior and exterior walls around the country, but particularly in London. And yet this is largely unrecorded and absent from art-historical narratives.

Isaac Benigson