

# Case Study #6

HS2 INDEPENDENT  
DESIGN PANEL

HS2 Ltd has produced an Art Approach document - providing detailed guidance for delivery of its Art Strategy, which sets out high level principles to steer incorporation of art into HS2. The Art Approach document aims to deliver HS2 Ltd's ambition to create a wide-ranging, exemplary art programme, developing detailed plans for arts projects and to enable the early engagement of artists across the HS2 project.

The HS2 Independent Design Panel held two review meetings, in September 2016 and August 2017, to discuss the Art Strategy and the Art Approach document.

**Process:** the panel provides support in a number of ways, from a full formal review to individual mentoring. In this case, workshop review meetings were held with three panel members. The panel members attending these meetings included experts in: architecture; art; and landscape design. HS2 Ltd representatives from the built environment, landscape and corporate identity teams attended these meetings, along with a consultant commissioned to produce an initial scoping study. Art consultant Sarah Wier, presented the Art Strategy at the first meeting and HS2 Ltd together with consultants David Kester & Associates presented the Art Approach document at the second meeting, as a basis for discussion with the panel.



## HS2 Art Approach

This is the sixth in a series of case studies about the work of the HS2 Independent Design Panel

### Project headlines

- HS2 Ltd has produced an Art Approach document, setting out its plans for art as part of the HS2 project
- The principles behind the Art Approach are explained in a separate Art Strategy
- The overall aim is to integrate art into HS2, shaping both the way it is experienced and perceived
- The HS2 Independent Design Panel advised on the development of both documents, and offered strong support as work continues to implement the art programme

# Panel comments

The panel congratulated HS2 Ltd on producing what it described as an excellent final document. Art in all its forms should be seen as integral to the HS2 project, including design, engineering, architecture and landscape. As a high profile, national project, HS2 offers a unique opportunity to celebrate UK culture. The panel supported the ambition to deliver a comprehensive art programme as an integral part of HS2. It encouraged HS2 Ltd to seize this opportunity by approaching potential partners and pressing ahead with implementation of the art programme, to ensure that the ambitions set out in the Art Approach are realised.

Some of the comments made by the panel, which have informed the Art Approach document, are outlined below.

## 1. Integrating art in HS2

Art has the potential to shape the way that HS2 is experienced and perceived, both by passengers and local communities. The panel therefore encouraged HS2 Ltd to understand art as integral to achieving the ambitions of the HS2 programme. Art should not be an add-on, and rather than seeing art as separate works created by individual artists, it should be integrated into the design and construction

process in imaginative ways. For example, the excavated material generated by construction could be used to create land art, new spaces created can be incorporated into the public realm, and locations identified for projects such as a sculpture park. The opportunity for a grand gesture, such as an Angel of the North-style intervention, should not be discounted but the success of the project will depend just as much on a succession of more modest initiatives.

## 2. Making the case for art

The panel strongly endorsed the need for art to play a central role in HS2. The project provides a unique opportunity to celebrate the UK's strengths in culture and art in all its forms. Many initiatives could be incorporated into HS2, and at comparatively little cost. An ambitious art programme would provide an excellent public profile for HS2. The panel therefore urged HS2 Ltd to explore every opportunity to make the case for the HS2 Art Programme.

The panel strongly supported HS2 Ltd's aim to integrate art projects into briefs for the entire supply chain. The panel was also keen to support the strategy of strong, positive engagement with local communities along the HS2 route, and suggested involving residents in temporary projects such as hoarding design, as well as permanent work.

## 3. Securing high level commitment

The Art Approach needs unambiguous, high level support, from government ministers to the HS2 Ltd board and senior staff. High profile artists could also be enlisted to give a public voice to the art programme. This commitment is needed not only to make a compelling case for the Art Approach, but also to convince contractors and suppliers of the benefits of an integrated art programme. High level support is also needed to secure the funding required to make the impressive ambitions set out by HS2 Ltd a reality.



Elephant sculpture for Waterloo Station by sculptor Kendra Haste © David Haste / Wikimedia Commons