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CASE STUDY: Collective, a pop-up gallery in Camden Town

A vacant retail unit in Camden, which was formerly home to a clothes shop, has today been transformed into a pop-up gallery and creative space.

The Collective Pop-Up on Crowndale Road is currently hosting an exhibition of new work by the artist Andrew Curtis, curated by the Shoreditch-based gallery PayneShurvell.

Curtis' *The Leisure Circle* installation is the latest of nine individual shows that have been exhibited in the space since the former retail unit was re-purposed as a Collective Pop-Up in December 2012.

Under the Collective Pop-Up scheme, artists, theatre groups, designers and photographers can use the flexible exhibition space for two weeks at a time rent free and with business rates paid for by the Collective project, an initiative funded by Camden Town Unlimited, Camden's Business Improvement District organisation^[1], LB Camden and the Mayor's Regeneration fund.

The Collective Pop-Up scheme aims to regenerate the local area and boost the regional economy by increasing visitor numbers and attracting a long-term leaseholder. It is just one aspect of the wider Collective project whose specific goal is to establish the area as a hub for the creative and cultural sectors.

As well as the unit in Crowndale Road, Collective has successfully managed two other Pop-Up spaces, which have between them hosted a total of 25 exhibitions and over 40 private views that have included environmental and graduate fashion brands, art collectives and high profile PR launches. It has been working with local landlords to make use of empty retail space since June 2009, when the first Collective Pop-Up opened on Chalk Farm Road.

Simon Pitkeathley, chief executive of Camden Town Unlimited said:

'The Collective's unique Pop-Up programme forms part of a wider initiative that provides meaningful support to the UK's creative and cultural sector. Through developing these street-level retail units into flexible, vibrant exhibition spaces and making them available to artists and creatives, Camden is able to both showcase the work of our most exciting creative talents and provide grassroots support to the UK's cultural economy.'

Jo Shurvell, Director of PayneShurvell said:

"PayneShurvell opened in June 2010 in Shoreditch so as a relatively young business we are always on the lookout for new opportunities to show our artists' work and spread the word about our gallery. We were thrilled when curator Annabel Cary suggested that we show our artist Andrew Curtis's new photographic work as an offsite project at Camden's Collective gallery. It's been such a positive experience and we would welcome the chance to work with

Jude Bennett and her team on future exhibitions. Using disused shops and other spaces to showcase art is an excellent idea and we hope that other London boroughs follow suit in helping to bring art to their local communities."

Camden Town has 600 retail units, of which five per cent are currently vacant. The Crowndale Road unit is owned by the local council and currently leased by Camden Town Unlimited on a short term basis.

Under the next phase of the scheme, Camden Town Unlimited will take on leases for up to 18 units, offer them as pop-up spaces for free and later assign the leases at to a quality tenant.

More about Camden Town Unlimited

As part of its Business Improvement District, Camden Town Unlimited (CTU) was appointed by the business community to improve Camden Town as a place to work, live and visit. Many of the BID members are drawn from the wider business community, such as large firms with offices in the area, rather than just those located on the high street.

CTU has been awarded Mayor's Regeneration Fund money, to fund several projects such as streetscape work, another incubator space and more pop-up shops. The BID has provided about 10 per cent of the funding for the projects directly.

As well as running the pop up gallery spaces, Collective also provides the Collective Hub which offers affordable work space for new creative businesses,

More about the artist and his works

Andrew Curtis (b. 1979, London) graduated with an MA in Fine Art Printmaking from the Royal College of Art in 2009. He was chosen for Bloomberg New Contemporaries (2009) and the Catlin Guide (2009). His work is held in various collections: the Royal College of Art, V&A, Oregon State University, Queen's University, Belfast, University of Wales and private collections in the UK, Italy and the USA.

In *The Leisure Circle*, Curtis presents two bodies of work that address the nature of taste and judgment, exploring images that once informed the habits and methods that middle-class Britons used to shape their environment. In the first group of prints, Curtis adapts photographs of domestic settings that feature house plants. He also presents an entirely new body of work based on large-format monochrome photographs of a colonialist's exotic winter garden, built in the 1880s which aimed to bring 'taste' to the masses of South London.

Notes to Editors

- A Business Improvement District is a geographical area within which the businesses have voted to invest collectively in local improvements to improve their trading environment. London currently has 25 formal Business Improvement Districts.
- For more information about Camden Town Unlimited visit <http://www.camdentownunlimited.com/>
- Collective pop up gallery is at 4 Crowndale Road, London NW1 1TT; Nearest tube: Mornington Crescent. Tel: +44 (0) 2000 114 115; Opening hours: Wed–Fri 2pm–6pm; Sat 12–6pm; Sun 3 Mar 12–6pm; and by appointment
- For more information about PayneShurvell, visit www.payneshurvell.com