

PRESS RELEASE - Immediate
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MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN DESIGNS MAJOR PUBLIC ARTWORK AT DLR WOOLWICH ARSENAL STATION

Acclaimed artist Michael Craig-Martin has designed a stunning major public artwork on the two-storey staircase of the new state-of-the-art Docklands Light Railway (DLR) Woolwich Arsenal station extension. Commissioned as part of DLR's major public art strategy, this is the first time that Craig-Martin has worked in ceramic and his first public transport project.

Michael Craig-Martin's artwork – *Street Life* – has been developed in response to the function and architecture of Woolwich Arsenal station. Integrated within the mosaic tiling of Greens End, one of the station's two entrances, the ceramic artwork depicts a series of everyday objects against a background of vibrant colour. The artwork encircles the entrance walls and the staircase well welcoming daily users and visitors alike, and inviting the audience to recognise a shared language of objects.

In the artwork, Craig-Martin explores the dialogue art can open between representation and reality, and between artist and viewer. Here a set of everyday objects – such as a mobile phone and bunch of keys, a book and a drinks can – have been drawn against a background of flat, intense colour. Despite the objects' differences in size and function in reality, here each image is the same size and each carries equal importance. In the simplest way, reference is made to music, sport, eating and drinking, home and work. Craig-Martin has always been concerned with a desire to make sense of the world we share, and the expressive power of the ordinary objects. The selection of these objects, their colour, spatial relationships and inexplicable juxtaposition provide the work's tension while providing opportunities for viewers to interpret as they wish.

"A public work of this kind allows an artist to speak directly to an audience that might never go to a gallery or museum." Craig-Martin explains. "A station is not itself a destination but a place to pass through to go somewhere else. But many of the stations' users will pass through it twice a day. I particularly hope this artwork will provide a stimulating note to the start and end of their journey over the years."

In order to achieve a vibrancy and luminosity for each ceramic tile, Michael worked closely with **Mike Hornsby from Manor Architectural Ceramics in Warwick**. Technically it was a challenging and time-consuming process as every tile had to be individually screen printed (there are over 2500 individual tiles!) to achieve the different colours specified and to attain a consistency of colour throughout. Each tile was individually numbered. The artwork was then assembled using the individual numbers according to a large grid system.

DLR Art, the DLR's Public Arts Programme aims to enhance existing and future stations, new lines and public spaces with artworks that are innovative, inspirational and engaging.

Over the next few years, artworks are being installed across the DLR network and trackside, in adjacent public spaces and in stations and trains. Projects that engage communities and cultural organisations underpin the programme. Permanent as well as temporary art will be commissioned, ranging from collaborations, artist-designed spaces, installations and light sound to ecological and planting projects, sculpture, land art, poetry and performance. See below for further information about recent DLR artworks. The DLR's Public Arts Programme is curated and managed by Modus Operandi.

The £180 million Woolwich Arsenal extension to the DLR network will open in mid January 2009 and will link Woolwich Town Centre with North Woolwich to provide easy access to the City and Central London. This flagship new-build project has been designed by Weston Williamson architects, is DLR's 40th station, and has been integrated with the existing rail station operated by South Eastern Railway.

During the 2012 Games, DLR will serve the main Olympic Park at Stratford, as well as competition venues at Woolwich, Greenwich and ExCeL exhibition centre.

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For further information and/or images, please contact Christina Freyberg at Caro Communications on 020 7336 8488 or email christina@carocommunications.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

Michael Craig-Martin

Michael Craig-Martin was born in Dublin in 1941, moving to the USA with his family in 1945 and studied painting at Yale University, CT (1961-3; 1964-6). On completion of his studies in 1966 the offer of a teaching position at the Bath Academy of Art made it possible for him to come to Britain where he has lived ever since. He started teaching at Goldsmiths College in London in 1974 where he remained a powerful influence on emerging British artists through the 1980s and 1990s. His early work made reference to the American artists he most admired such as Donald Judd, Jasper Johns, Robert Morris, and Bruce Nauman. He was particularly affected by Minimalism and used ordinary household materials in his sculptures, playing against the logic of his sources.

Craig Martin continued working in various forms, always maintaining an elegant restraint and conceptual clarity. During the 1990s the focus of his work shifted decisively to painting with the same range of boldly outlined motifs and luridly vivid colour schemes in unexpected (and at times seemingly arbitrary) combinations applied both to works on canvas, and to increasingly complex installations of wall paintings.

Craig-Martin's work is found in many public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Tate Gallery, London among others. He also has been commissioned to make large-scale installations at Regent's Place, London,

the British Council Library in Berlin, and the Laban Centre, Greenwich, in collaboration with architects Herzog and DeMeuron.

DLR Art: the DLR's Public Arts Programme

DLR Art is inspired by the belief that art has the potential to enrich people's experience and their relationship with the environment. The role of art and the benefits that it can bring to transportation systems are long-established and well-proven world-wide. Within this international context, DLR Art presents a distinctive, excellent programme that will engage the imaginations of diverse audiences and will help create a cultural legacy for the benefit of all.

Recent commissions include a permanent artwork by British artist Tania Kovats in the refurbished Shadwell Station. *Root*, a 12 metre long sculpture cast from the root of the buddleia plant, is sited in a disused escalator shaft between the ground and platform levels. Inspired by both the physical site and surrounding environments, Kovats examines our relationship with landscape and place.

Time and Tide is a new commission by artist Alison Turnbull for cycle shelters at stations across the network which is subtly transformed for each location. At each shelter, the front of the panel features black and white images of the moon as it passes through its phases set against evocative coloured grounds, which vary in colour from station to station. The reverse panel features tide charts relating to London and other worldwide port cities with close trading links to London. These cycle shelters can be found at Shadwell and Gallions Reach stations and whenever new cycle parking provision is installed across the DLR network.

At the new station at Langdon Park, designed by Consarc Architects, London-based artist Kate Davis has been commissioned to design a series of artworks. These include a poetic text work applied to the canopy and bridge glazing; a 'drawing' set within the paving encouraging a visual association with location and two sculptural forms visible from the platform. Working closely with members of the local community to develop her ideas, the resulting artworks will enhance and enliven the visually striking architectural elements of the station, complementing and integrating with the overall design.

Other artists currently working on permanent commissions, temporary artworks and community projects include Toby Paterson on the Stratford International Extension; Anthony Lam at Shadwell Station; Alex Haw at Cutty Sark for Maritime Greenwich; and Paul Morrison at City Airport Station.

For further information go to www.dlart.co.uk.

Modus Operandi Art Consultants

Modus Operandi is a leading independent agency for art in the public realm. It aims to deliver excellent art integral to architecture and the public realm, matching the vision of artists to client, audience and place. It produces permanent and temporary commissions, collaborations and interventions, based on creative strategies and appropriate selection procedures. www.modusoperandi-art.com