

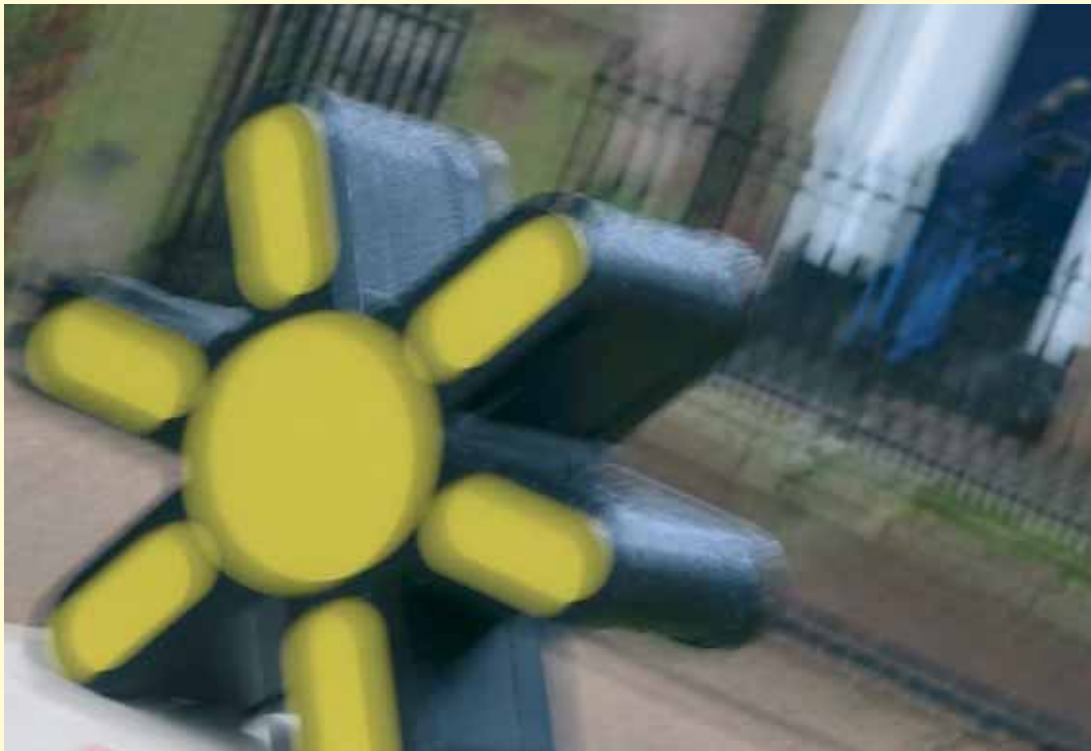
**Cultural Mapping Project: City Centre fact sheet**

# Pedestrian's Friend

- Far Seeing Telescopes
- Waterloo Signs
- The Picnicker's Friend

Three linked artworks along New Walk, Leicester

Installation: February 2004 to August 2005

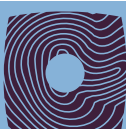


## Artist

**Charles Holland:** FAT (Fashion Art Taste) Art/Architecture Collective

## Biography

**Charles Holland** operates as part of the FAT (Fashion Art Taste) Art/Architecture collective, which has been involved in a number of highly regarded art/architecture and public artwork schemes. The practice is committed to making work that engages with the wider social context. By connecting to wider culture, FAT seek to make art/architecture that is progressive, radical and most of all liked.



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## Statement

**“The intention of this series of works is to celebrate and give expression to the activities that occur along the length of New Walk, suggesting interventions along the route that cut across the visual axis created by the Walk to draw attention to activities, spaces and places along the route.”**

**Charles Holland**

## Project Brief

To commission site-specific contemporary artworks as an integral dimension of the refurbishment of New Walk, an outstanding and unique heritage site and conservation area in Leicester. To enhance New Walk from Welford Place (city centre entrance) to Granville Road (Victoria Park entrance), through a number of distinctive interpretative artworks located and integrated at strategic points along New Walk. The artworks should contribute to the interpretation, enjoyment, visual enhancement and identity of the Walk. Artists could seek out a preferred site or sites from those previously identified by the commissioners, and make a proposal for artwork that ‘contributes to the interpretation either of the site itself, or of the whole area, and offers the user/viewer an exciting and original experience’. Artists had the scope to devise and develop an overall theme and create a series of installations contributing to a journey which offers citizens and visitors the opportunity to experience contemporary art in a historical setting.

## Community Involvement

The artist contributed to and was involved in an extensive community consultation and participation programme that entailed: consultative and visual presentations and artist’s talks, a changing display, on-site in the New Walk Museum and Art Gallery foyer, about the Cultural Mapping project and of the artist’s designs as they developed over time; exhibitions in various community locations around the city about the Cultural Mapping project, the commission and work created in the community workshops; The artist collaborated in devising, production and delivery of a number of moving image workshops for a range of targeted groups, ages and abilities in neighbourhood based venues around the city.

## Purpose/Function

- To celebrate and give expression to the activities, places and spaces that occurs along the length of New Walk. The artist’s interventions along the route cut across the ‘visual axis’ created by the Walk.
- The individual artworks within this series collectively create a ‘journey’ based on different aspects and features of the historical New Walk promenade, from the City Centre, Welford Road to the Granville Road Victoria Park entrance.
- **Far Seeing Telescopes** are interactive, highlighting specific features of of New Walk by means of a moving image depicting a journey starting from the opposite end New Walk.



## Purpose/Function continued

- **Waterloo Signs:** four different designs based on decorative features of traditional Victorian gates, railings, and entrance finials. The signs have reflective vinyl coverings, generally used for and associated with road signs.
- **Picnicker's Friend:** sited within the De Montfort Square grassed area, the four weather predictors respond to the changing weather, providing advance notice of weather conditions to potential picnickers and users of the square.

## Site/Location

New Walk is 1.5km in length, a pedestrian promenade and conservation/heritage site. It is regarded as a special place by the people of Leicester. The key to its character is that it is a park rather than just a collection of buildings. Pedestrians' using the Walk encounter some stretches where they can see far ahead and others where a curve or slope holds back the view of the next part. Trees bring seasonal changes and attract a variety of wildlife. Most of the architecture on New Walk represents variations on the classical style. There are a number of grassed, seating and resting areas and formal squares along New Walk, including De Montfort Square and Museum Square. There are two main entrances into New Walk, located at Welford Place (city centre) and Granville Road (Victoria Park).

## Special Features/Points of Interest

- Far Seeing Telescopes' external appearance is akin to that of the telescopes created by the Victorians for seaside promenades.
- Inside the Telescopes is a video depicting a journey along New Walk starting from the opposite entrance. This can be viewed through the lens and is activated by pushing a button located on the Telescope.
- The Telescopes are of two differing heights, 0.5m and 1.4m
- The symbols on the plinths of the Picnicker's Friend weather predictors represent sunshine, cloudy, rainy and overcast weather. The signs respond to changing weather conditions through barometers housed within the plinths.
- The illuminated signs measure between 0.2 and 0.4m in height and between 0.2 and 0.5m in width and resemble the weather symbols often seen on TV and in other media.
- Waterloo Signs are visible from the vehicular Waterloo Way and the New Walk pathway.
- They are laser-cut out of stainless steel and covered with a reflective material generally used for road signs. The signs are attached to either side of the Waterloo Bridge guard railings.
- The artist worked with many specialists to create the Pedestrian's Friend series of installations, including structural, electrical, and lighting engineers, and fabricators specialising in stonework, steel, plastics and construction of astronomy telescopes.



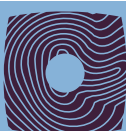
## Possible Focus or Point of Engagement for Learning

- Try to draw and then make a model telescope and kaleidoscope in cardboard. What is the difference between these two 'scopes'?
- Why do you think the artist designed the work as telescopes? Where else are telescopes found and what are they used for?
- What use are the Picnicker's Friend sculptures to picnickers?
- How else could you predict or measure the weather?
- What does 'interactive' mean? Could you design an interactive artwork?
- The Pedestrian's Friend series of artworks are quite different from statues and purely decorative works. Where else might you experience this type of work?
- What do you think some of the maintenance needs for this type of work might be?
- As an individual and group project, try to create serial and interactive work for your school/playground/neighbourhood, your favourite park or a city centre location. What would your priority and starting point be?
- What access and health & safety issues would you need to take into consideration for the different locations?

## For More Information:

[www.leicester.gov.uk/publicart](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/publicart)

Toolkit author Jasia McArdle with input from Steve Cooke. Image © Axis Graphic Design 2005 for Public Art Leicester Cultural Mapping project.



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