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Sinta Tantra and Nick Hornby: Collaborative Artists

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Busy employees shove through the bustling throng in the lobby of [One Canada Square](#), one of the tallest buildings in Canary Wharf, London. Amidst the crazed crowd one man stops, turns around and cocks his head. He approaches a sculpture of a head – or is it a bird? – overlaid with blue and pink paints. He inches closer, mesmerized by the sculpture's color and complexity. Other agitated workers pause to glance at their watches, but notice out of the corner of their eye a large, sharp archway painted like a pink horizon. On the other side of the room, a father crouches next to a child in a stroller, pointing at a mural on the wall. Nick Hornby and Sinta Tantra's collaborative exhibit has such an effect on the busy work environment: it literally stops people in their tracks.



"The Broken Man in Cornforth, Hague Blue, Arsenic, Lush Pink, Incarnadine and Downpipe"

"Cityscapes are filled with objects which serve purposes and help you 'do'," said [Nick Hornby](#), a native Londoner who usually produces sculptures in white. "These objects offer a slightly different perspective on what work a work of art does."

[Sinta Tantra](#), a muralist and colorist, agreed. "We wanted to play on the busy, corporate setting," she said. "The exhibit adds a lot of humour to the stern atmosphere and its intervention with the space has proven popular with many people who work there."

Indeed, receptionist Isabelle Fenton noticed the change in the atmosphere since the exhibit's installment on Jan. 14. "People look around a lot more. They take in their surroundings."

The combination of the sculpture and the color mediums affect viewers; the exhibit is contemporary and modern, while playing on the environment surrounding it. Nick Hornby and Sinta Tantra, friends from the Slade School of Fine Art, worked together to create these works of art. The collaborative practice was both a challenge and extremely rewarding.

"We've been friends for over 10 years and it always seemed like a fun idea to do in the back of our heads," said Tantra.

Through the process, the artists worked together by voicing opinions, negotiating outcomes and providing objective critique.

"Working out each decision and the final designs was extremely difficult," said Hornby. "At times we set up logics; at times we contradicted them."

"Production was very physical and time-consuming," said Tantra.

The general stereotype of an artist is a brooding, egotistical type who answers only to the self. Tantra and Hornby, however, succeeded in breaking that stereotype, as they enjoyed collaborating with each other.

"Although our subject matters and mediums are polars apart, I think we share an aesthetic sensibility," said Hornby.

"Collaborating made things easier as you were able to take risks with that another person," said Tantra. She even went further to dispel the myth that artists are solitary workers. "Both of us work with assistants and sometimes with whole teams of people, so the idea of working closely with others is actually inherent in our existing practices already."

Obviously, the collaboration was a success, and both Tantra and Hornby expressed their happiness with the results. They created sculptures

such as "The Horizon Comes in Chinese Blue,

Hague Blue, Archive, Railings, Cornforth, Bubblicious and Firefly Red," a two-tiered sculpture as big as an archway and "The Broken Man in Cornforth, Hague Blue, Arsenic, Lush Pink, Incarnadine and Downpipe," a tall sculpture that seems to twist around itself because of Tantra's colorings. Each already intriguing sculpture was changed by Tantra's blocks of color, which animated the three-dimensional forms into something dynamic.



The Horizon Comes in Chinese Blue, Hague Blue, Archive, Railings, Cornforth, Bubblicious and Firefly Red

About "The Broken Man," Tantra said, "A lot of people are drawn to that one." It stands in the corner of One Canada Square, right beside the stairs that lead to the wall. "I think it's the figurative element and the vertical stance which makes it powerful."

They agree that their artwork may unsettle or destabilize the viewer.

"It's about creating tensions, creating dialogues... It's about making you look at things twice, giving it a twist or different meaning altogether. As a viewer, you need to be open to this."

When assessing the amount of instability in his work, Hornby said, "I prefer to keep my own interpretations out of the equation. But I would agree that often my sculptures have weak points and moments of insbaility."

The exhibit also included one of each artist's non-collaborative works to show their individuality and transformation through collaboration. Tantra's "Le Bonheur II," a vinyl mural on one of the Lobby windows which resembles a two-dimensional cube, was inspired by the Canary Wharf environment, including the towering business buildings and ever-changing sunlight. Hornby's video "An Arch Never Sleeps" shows a line drawing for several sculptural pavilions, undergoing deconstruction and reconstruction and highlighting Hornby's transformative process.

Both artists respect each other's work ethic and medium. These towering sculptures overlaid with blocks of color symbolize not only their hard work as individual artists, but their hard work together.

Nick Hornby and Sinta Tantra also have their own exhibits and fixtures around the city of London and elsewhere. Sinta Tantra's work features at Canterbury Christ Church University, Create KX London, Camden Borough, Canary Wharf and Liverpool Biennial. Nick Hornby's work features in the collections of Andaz 5th Avenue New York, Clifford Chance, Richard Greer, David Roberts and Selfridges and Sony BMG.



Sinta Tantra's mural in Canary Wharf.

When asked if they would work together again, both Hornby and Tantra fervently agreed:

"I think this first project... rather than answering our questions opened up a huge box of worms which I'd like to investigate with Sinta... It's a case of making time for this new collaborative practice."

Tantra seemed excited about the prospect. "Nick and I are in fact thinking about doing a few projects abroad already!"

The two became artists for several reasons, and do not regret their choices.

"I think I sort of fell into it," said Tantra. "Like anything, being an artist has its highs and lows, but generally speaking it's wonderful being a creative."

Hornby said he decided to become an artist "to enter into a dialogue" and that it was a "very" rewarding practice.

Nick Hornby and Sinta Tantra: Collaborative Works features in the lobby of One Canada Square in Canary Wharf. It will be open until March 15. Follow Nick Hornby at nickhornby.com or on Twitter at [@nickhornbyart](https://twitter.com/nickhornbyart) and Sinta Tantra at sintatantra.com on Twitter at [@sintatantra](https://twitter.com/sintatantra).

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