



PRESS RELEASE
29 August 2008

Inspiration in the sky
South Bank's revitalised FREE open-air art gallery

Ahead of the build up to September's Thames Festival, visitors to the South Bank can look to the skies for vibrant visual stimulation and enjoy a brand new international open-air art gallery, for free, across this scenic destination.

Based along Upper Ground and Belvedere Road, next to iconic venues such as Southbank Centre, BFI Southbank, National Theatre and Oxo Tower Wharf, there are now sixty-six, six metre public art banners flying high with imaginative, inspiring and vibrant designs.

The artwork on show is a selection of the best work from Thames Festival's flagship art project Rivers of the World. The project links schools and children in river cities around the globe as they create artworks which reflect their experience of the river in their community. Brand new work from 2008 is now on display in the.gallery@oxo (21 August – 16 September), but you can also make the most of the summer and step outside for the best al fresco art experience this year.

Pupils from 34 London secondary schools took part in this year's project. The participating students were partnered with their peers in schools from Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Mexico or South Africa.

Shona Watt, Art facilitator of Rivers of the World said, 'The project uses art to interpret the rich history and culture of the Thames and introduces students to the lives of people across the world and, in turn, the complex and diverse relationship

they have to their rivers. The experience enables students to produce work of an incredibly high standard outside the curriculum.'

The project has been delivered by South Bank Employers' Group which maintains the public realm across South Bank. Ted Inman, Chief Executive, said. "We are delighted Upper Ground and Belvedere Road have a colourful, revitalised banner scheme. The artwork is stunning and a welcome addition to the quality and attractiveness of the area, both on the riverside walkway and beyond. We are very proud to be associated with The Mayor's Thames Festival and their work with international and local schools."

The banners are part of The Mayor's Thames Festival (13 – 14 September), a spectacular, free celebration of London and its river. Taking place between Westminster Bridge and Tower Bridge, the festival brings Londoners together in the very heart of the capital to dance, make sculptures, listen to music, watch movies, drink, eat, enjoy performances, sing, play on the beach, sail on the Thames and dance in the streets.

The banners will be in situ for three years, with a long term commitment by all partners to renew the banners with another "best of" selection from the Rivers of the World project to be showcased ready for 2012.

- Ends -

For more information on:

Public Art Banners

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- Rivers of the World is a Thames Festival project delivered in partnership with the British Council with support from HSBC Global Education Trust.
- Rivers of the World is on display at [the.gallery@oxo](#) until 16 September. Free entry 11am – 6pm.
- South Bank Employers' Group is an association of the major organisations in the South Bank, Waterloo and Blackfriars with a long term commitment to improving the experience of the area for employees, visitors and residents. Members include: British Film Institute, Coin Street Community Builders, National Theatre, Southbank Centre, the London Eye Company, Shell and IBM.
- For more technical information on the printing, production and installation of the public art banners please contact Rachel Trayner (details above).