



# ARTISTIC LANDSCAPE

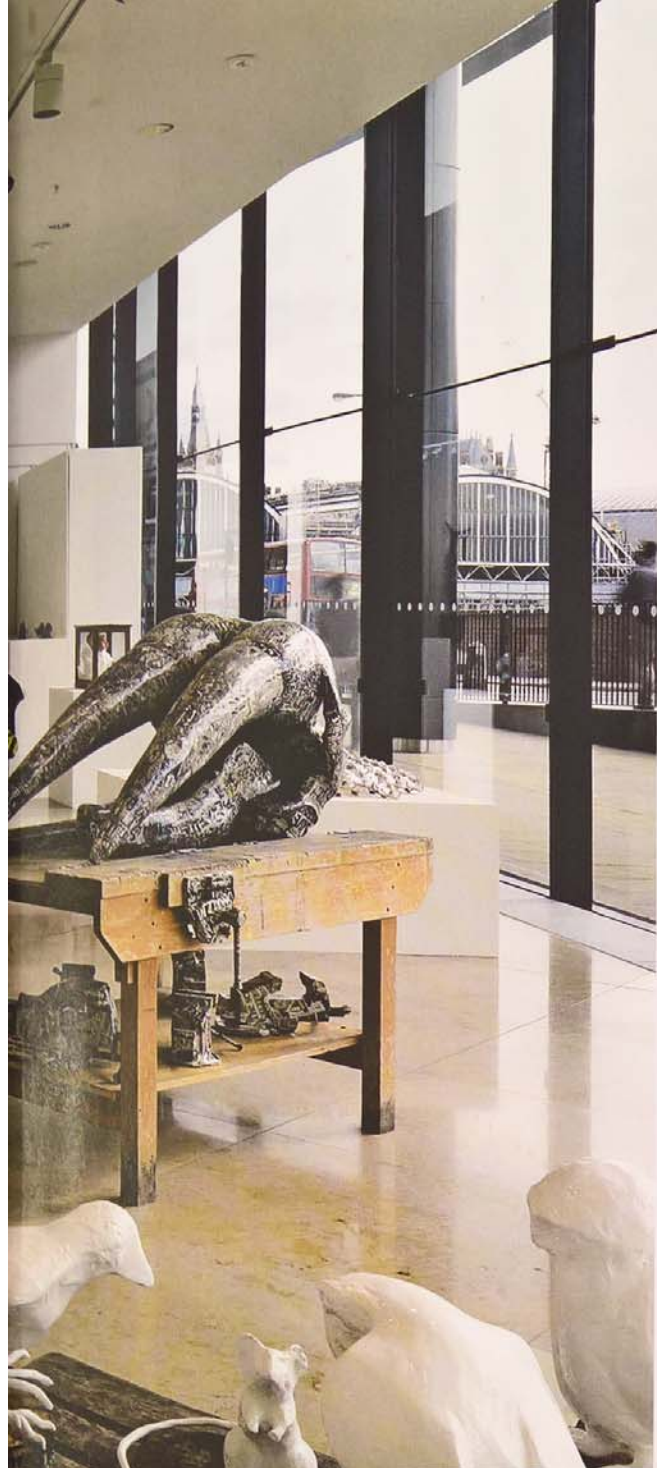
*Two leading galleries tell us why north London will always display great artistic talent, despite the rapid regeneration of the area*

Words RACHEL MANTOCK

Islington and King's Cross are changing, from the new Google Headquarters to innovative, modern residential dwellings that are popping up everywhere. While this is great for bringing the area into the 21st century, the revival of Islington has raised concerns over its art and design heritage and whether that can be sustained as the cost of living skyrockets. Pangolin London and the James Freeman Gallery offer their take on the situation, both of them having faith in the Islington arts community...



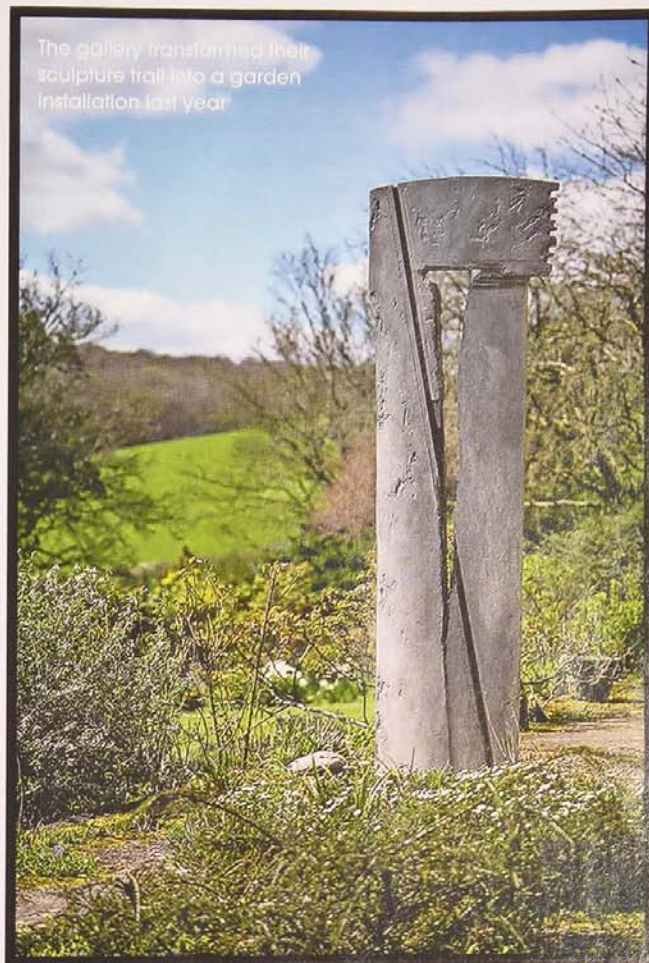
Carolein Smit's ceramics, exhibiting as part of the Primordial Soup show at the James Freeman Gallery, draw inspiration from mythology and folklore



### SCULPTURAL APPRECIATION

Developer of King's Place, Peter Millican, believes that sculpture should be seen both inside and outside of a gallery. This is how the number of sculpture spots dotted around the public spaces of King's Cross and the canal side, all part of the Pangolin London Sculpture Trail, came to be. Director of the Pangolin Sculpture Gallery, Polly Bielecka, explains: 'The sculpture trail is one of the most diverse and dynamic in London and includes around 30 regularly changing works from both established and emerging sculptors.'

She 'absolutely' doesn't believe that the regeneration of Islington spells the end for artists, stating: 'Artistic talent will be born regardless of "regeneration" and London is well placed to nurture any talent. Good regeneration can be inspirational, so I think it's a bit dated to think that artistic talent can only be borne out of the old.'



Always on the look out for new and emerging talent at degree shows and art fairs, Pangolin Sculpture Gallery shows immense support for those just stepping into the professional artistic sphere. Bielecka explains: 'We run a bi-annual sculpture residency in conjunction with the PJLF arts fund. The residency lasts a year and includes a stipend towards studio costs and a casting budget.'

She adds that Pangolin are one of only a few galleries in London dedicated to exhibiting sculpture and so they are 'somewhat unusual in that respect'.

'We like to take a boldly creative approach to our exhibition programme,' she adds. 'Whether that be taking a fresh look at the history of sculpture, examining making processes or, as we did in May, turning the gallery into a full scale garden complete with trees and water sculptures!'

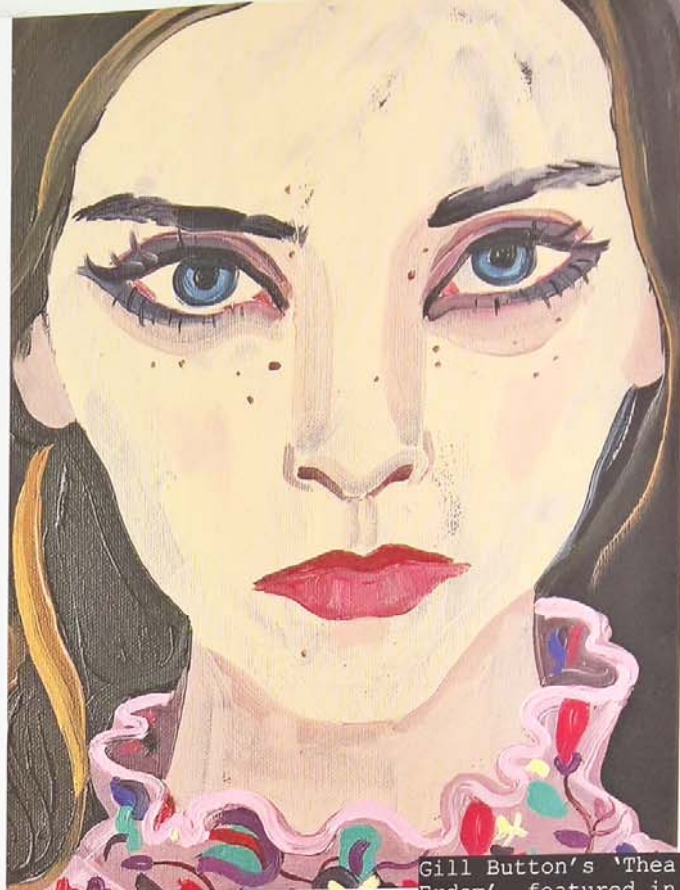
Coming up in November, the gallery will host a beautiful body of work by the Royal Academician, Ann Christopher, who makes 'powerful yet delicate works' in bronze, steel and silver. With their open and friendly approach, and space that holds an 'air of excitement' at all times, Pangolin are perfectly equipped to nurture new art talent. They are also rolling out various initiatives to keep nurturing talent well into the future too.

Kings Place, 90 York Way N1 9AG: 020 7520 1480;  
pangolinlondon.com

## WORLDWIDE CONNECTIONS

Opened in 2003, the James Freeman Gallery are contemporary art dealers based on Upper Street. They focus on procuring pieces by artists that have strong art history elements woven in with an exploration of how these relate to the modern day, often using digital forms. They showcase a mixture of solo exhibitions and specially curated group displays.

For founder James Freeman, the suggestion that the regeneration of Islington spells the end for new artistic talent is an 'overdramatic' one. 'There is still a wealth of artistic talent and creative outlets in Islington, so even if an artist isn't living here, they will still find ways to get exposure and to get involved,' Freeman explains. 'One of the area's advantages is that it's very cosmopolitan. Yet, it is off the tourist trail and so retains a sense of local character,



Gill Button's 'Thea Love Erdem', featured in the Decadents exhibit at the James Freeman Gallery



Rebecca Stevenson's 'Little Fugue', which showed as part of the Decadents exhibit

which is very attractive to creative people in the capital of London.'

Freeman has always been keen to help develop emerging talent, often working closely with them to help them develop a professional framework and secure exposure.

He says: 'Claire Partington is one of the best examples of this. We first started working together in 2008 when she had only produced a few works. Now, she has invitations for museum exhibitions worldwide and has an international collector base.'

Freeman takes advantage of London being a very connected city when it comes to the rest of the world. The Decadents exhibition that showed at his gallery recently was a great example of this. 'I like to find art that has a sense of aesthetic punch and exuberance,' he says, 'and decadence is one approach through which artists arrive at that kind of work.'

The show was put together after Freeman spoke with Toronto-based artist, Ray Caesar,

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'one of the most respected digital artists around' and through his gallery in Canada met Troy Brooks, whose paintings carry a very louche feel. Back in London, he had also been in contact with highly regarded sculptor, Rebecca Stevenson, and fashion portrait artist, Gill Button. Tying all these artists together produced a show that 'fell together beautifully, almost effortlessly. It was decadent in the extreme'.

Currently, the 'Primordial Soup' exhibition is on show at the James Freeman Gallery, an abstract body of ceramic art linked to magical thinking. Go along and discover something new. 354 Upper Street N1 0PD; 020 7226 3300; jamesfreemangallery.com



The other worldly 'Sakura' oil painting by Troy Brooks; below, Lagoon by James Mortimer

