

Time to walk The Line, London's groundbreaking art trail

by Andrew Jones

Tracing the Greenwich Meridian is an 8km waterside route that takes in an Antony Gormley 'cloud', Tracey Emin birds and an upside-down pylon

To walk The Line, a public sculpture trail in east London, is to experience contemporary art, but also to explore areas of the city that had, until recently, been largely abandoned and closed. Here you will witness new neighbourhoods springing up in historic settings, observe wildlife you may not have expected to see in the capital and spot Londoners slow down and connect with each other.



Connecting the London boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets, Helen Cammock's text-based 'On WindTides' is the latest addition to The Line

This constantly evolving 7.7km public art trail, now in its ninth year, now comprises around 25 works by a mix of established and emerging artists, including Gary Hume, Yinka Ilori, Eva Rothschild and Madge Gill. With a major new installation by Helen Cammock just unveiled, and the vegetation of the remarkable urban wilderness of the River Lea erupting into summer, now is the time to visit or revisit The Line.

Helen Cammock's new text-based piece "On WindTides", specifically designed for the next bridge and linking the boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets, is a metaphor for the connections between natural and urban landscapes and between the communities in this part of London. This is a complicated mix of neighbourhoods in previously industrial settings, a range of cultures and ethnicities (more than 100 languages are spoken in Newham alone) and a transient population. Cammock spent time with different local groups to co-create pieces to show alongside her own. (On a recent visit, we met her on her way to a "Knit and Natter" session with Somali families.) Her work encapsulates how The Line brings a sense of place to the areas it crosses, of belonging and cohesion to its populations.

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