Internationally renowned artists help put the 'art' back into street art

2000 Turner Prize nominee **Tomoko Takahashi** and **James Powderley** are to front **Street Art Dealer** and revolutionise the way we interact with art on the street
As part of Media Sandbox – South West development programme

C6 and **Steal From Work** launch an assault on the art market middle man, taking street art out of the galleries and on to the streets with new innovative QR code technology. **Street Art Dealer** is one of six commissions by **Media Sandbox** which aims to bring a new dynamic into public art, and with the help of renowned artists will bypass galleries and allow a new type of mobile interaction.

This innovative use of QR code technology in the arts will be showcased during an exhibition on the streets of Bristol on July 7th where works from artists including **Takahashi**, **Powderley**, **Sebastian Lowsley-Williams** and **Zeus** will be on display for all to see. The exhibition will have an information hub at a central gallery in Broadmead, Bristol where people will be shown the QR code system and let loose on the streets to discover what Bristol's street art scene has to offer. The gallery will also host a shop front installation featuring the eagerly anticipated project BEAM, by up and coming artists **Joseph Watts** and **Haywood Slucutt**, as well as demonstration of GRL's (Graffiti Research Laboratory) Laser Tag system, as part of the private view evening's fun.

Art on the street has hit the headlines with works by well-known artists commanding large figures at auction. This demand has given birth to an industry in resale and as a result dealers and galleries have become increasingly interested in the profits to be made. Resulting in large percentages and rises in prices - excluding an interested public from buying the art they see everyday and in some cases being unable to see the art at all.

To address this issue **Street Art Dealer** is taking the original concept of 'street art' and combining it with the innovative QR code technology to create a tool which allows an increasingly tech savvy public to use their mobile phones to own, interact and locate art in their community. The project aims to promote engagement with the meaning of street art in the context of the environment alongside creating a dialogue and interaction between artists and their local communities - bridging the gap between both parties.

Calum Lasham, Executive Director at **C6** said: *"This project puts the ball back in the artists' court. From an artist's point of view, this enables a route outside of the gallery system for artists to engage directly with the viewing public."*

Street Art Dealer aims to increase UK awareness of QR code technology which allows camera phones equipped with simple, readily available, reader software to scan QR codes and automatically launch and redirect a user's phone to specific websites. The technology will allow artists to link the street to the web, providing the public with a platform to find out more about the art on view, purchase art, engage with artists and, through a Google Maps application, embark on art trails within local communities.

Introducing this technology into the art world could have considerable implications, the number of middlemen and galleries which have been profiting from the genre could be reduced allowing street artists to sell their work directly to the public from the street. On the flipside galleries could use this technology to host unmanned exhibitions in spaces which normally require at least two three gallery staff.

Lucie Akerman, Director at **Steal From Work** said *"This project has a lot of potential to allow artists to play with the way art is delivered to its audience, particularly exciting for us is the ability to step outside traditional gallery methods, and we're also excited to be able to add audience interactivity to the display of art, in this case with a 'treasure hunt' scenario.*

"QR tags also easily fit into many existing web based tools, for example, the Google Maps application, where it could be used to create tours around places renowned for its street art, like London's East End and Bristol's Stokes Croft. Or Flickr, where it could link in with a history of photos of that location with previous street works there. Or it could simply be used as a link to the artist, allowing them to explain the motivation behind the piece."

Media Sandbox is the innovative commissioning scheme that finances and guides six companies in the South West of England to develop ideas in digital media each year. Projects are selected based on their merits, and their contributions to the sectors they are part of. **Media Sandbox** awarded **C6** and **Steal From Work** £9,000 to develop **Street Art Dealer** and have continued to co-ordinate guidance and advice from top industry experts in order to fully develop the project.

Street Art Dealer has benefited from **Media Sandbox** co-ordinating production mentoring from leading industry advisors such as Mark Watts-Jones from Orange, who have advised them on routes to market from the perspective of a mobile service provider, plus salon dinners, networking events, 'innovative lab' process and regular catch ups.

Clare Reddington, Director of **Media Sandbox** said: *"QR codes have been around for years and are incredibly popular in countries like Japan. The UK suddenly seems to be catching on with everything from street lamps to Pepsi cans displaying them.*

"We are incredibly excited that Street Art Dealer is leading the way in exploring both the commercial and creative potential of the technology, linking leading street artists more directly to audiences and potential buyers."

QR Code Technology

A **QR Code** is a matrix code (or two-dimensional bar code) created in Japan in 1994. The "QR" is derived from "Quick Response", as the creator intended the code to allow its contents to be decoded at high speed. QR codes are common in Japan, where they are currently the most popular type of two dimensional codes.

In the UK QR codes, storing addresses and URLs, now appear in magazines, on signs, buses, business cards or on just about any object that people might need information about. The majority of camera phones are now equipped with QR code reader software and can scan a code and instantly launch, and redirect, a phone's browser to a pre-programmed URL.

This QR code will direct you to the Street Art Dealer website

Artist Biographies

Tomoko Takahashi
Tomoko Takahashi creates art from chaos, inviting viewers to unravel the internal logic of her work. Her work has largely relied on the retrieval and redeployment of pre-existing materials. Each work is triggered by her response to a particular site or personal situations. The use of every day and discarded objects as viable artistic material has recurred throughout the 20th Century and has its roots in the work of pivotal artists such as Kurt Schwitters, particularly his Merzbau, 1923-37. Tomoko Takahashi continues this tradition and through her work challenges the viewer to see the world differently.

She first came to attention when she won the EAST award at EASTinternational in 1997. She exhibited in the 1999 "Neurotic realism" show at the Saatchi Gallery, is represented by the Hales Gallery of London, and she has exhibited broadly worldwide.

Tomoko Takahashi was born in Tokyo. Her work Drawing Room, 1998 is currently being exhibited at Tate Modern as part of its permanent collection. She has had solo shows at The Mead Gallery, Warwickshire (2006), Serpentine Gallery, London (2005), UCLA Hammer Museum, LA (2002) and the Kunsthalle Bern (2002). In 2000 she was nominated for the Turner Prize.

James Powderly
James Powderly is a technologist and artist who founded Graffiti Research Laboratory. James studied music composition at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. After college, he received a Masters Degree from NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Program. James worked at Honeybee Robotics and was part of the team that worked on the Mars Exploration Rovers Rock Abrasion Tool.

In 2005, James became a Research and Development Fellow at the Eyebeam OpenLab where he began collaborating with Evan Roth. Working as the Graffiti Research Lab, Roth and Powderly develop open source tools for graffiti writers and activists, such as LED Throwies and L.A.S.E.R. Tag. Together they also founded FAT (Free Art and Technology) Lab. James lives between Brooklyn, London and Berlin.

On Tuesday, August 19, 2008, Powderly was detained and interrogated by Chinese authorities. He was in Beijing to debut the L.A.S.E.R Stencil in a work called "The Green Chinese Lantern", He intended to project the image on one of the buildings beside Tiananmen Square, without acquiring any kind of permission from the local authority. This work was intended to show opposition to the Chinese government's restrictions on free speech and their occupation of Tibet in the face of the 2008 Summer Olympics, James was released after ten days.

James's work has been exhibited on two planets and five continents including the Tate Modern, the Sundance Film Festival, Mars, Ars Electronica, Chongwen Prison, Art Basel Miami and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Sebastian Lowsley-Williams
Sebastian Lowsley-Williams lives and works in London and Andalucia, Spain. He gained a BA (hons) in Fine Art at Kingston University, London. Hi selected exhibitions include: Charlie's Place, Annely Juda, London (2003); solo exhibitions with Galeria Magda Bellotti; La Otra Orilla, Algeciras, Spain and The Green Man, Seville, Spain. Group shows since 1996 include: Arco, Madrid, Spain; Flecha, Madrid, Spain; Guadacorte Open, Algeciras, Spain; Travellers Tales, Belt Space in Between, London; CSKX, King's Cross, London and To Have and To Hold, Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London.

Zeus
For the past 24 years, London artist Zeus has been drawing inspiration from urban culture to create dynamic, experimental compositions that have re-defined graffiti art. Captivated by the hip-hop scene of the 80s, he began expressing his creative talents on the street when he was just 14, using walls, trains, and open spaces as his galleries.

Since then Zeus has continually pushed the boundaries of graffiti artistry, taking the form out of its traditional setting and into new, exciting and more legitimate places. His latest works represents an innovative fusion of graffiti techniques and typography, fine art and sculpture and reflect both his background on the streets and his formal training at Chelsea College of Art.

Joseph Watts
Watt is part of artist collective RoeJob Construction Ltd. His work includes large scale scaffolding sculptures that operate as a lattice of lines on a three-dimensional drawing; they probe and impose on the space around them. He inverts scaffoldings functional use revealing the materials representational possibilities and uses this to express more abstracted and erratic forms that refer to the growth of nature and the built environment. The works fight with space around them exposing a confrontational violence and austere brutality.

Haywood Slucutt
Slucutt is currently doing a research project that started at Pervasive Media, Bristol. His previous installations have used multiple projections that distort and dissolve digital images, breaking them down into their constituent parts in the form of gushing, oozing liquid. The digital liquid that invades the space seems to represent a brutal, frustrated killing of the digital. He explores three-dimensional digital mapping and scanning of objects and its uses in the combination of kinetic sculptures and projected image.

BEAM
This collaboration between artists Joseph Watts and Haywood Slucutt brings about a monstrous coupling of both their practices. The installation simulates an architectural explosion or even an abnormal growth of the buildings support structure resembling the remains of a mutated 'accident'. The accentuated forms, in the

shape of I beam girders are the three-dimensional backdrop for a two-dimensional image, clearly distinguished from a single point in the room. It is warped architecture meets anamorphosis.

Editor's Notes

About C6

C6 were founded in 1997 to create invasive works of art. C6 produce events focusing on the dynamics between the analogue and digital, process driven interaction between the street gallery and artist internationally. The media are eclectic ranging from software to spray paint. A shifting brand through a project based practice. Fashion ranges, publishing, Vj'ing C6 has a wide range of skills and media. http://c6.org

About Steal From Work

Steal From Work is a 3 strong artist run co-operative, created with the sole aim of putting a much needed fresh injection of life into Bristol's art scene. Doing things with a sense of purpose, a sense of fun, and a sense of need.

Formed in 2007 after returning to Bristol after living in former East Berlin and with that city's DIY ethos and 'just do it' attitude firmly in mind, Steal From Work produced their first exhibition; 12 Days of Xmas. It attracted 4-5000 visitors over its 12 day run and was hailed as the show of the year by people all across the spectrum in Bristol. This led to a more permanent move back to Bristol, with the aim of taking on that city's art establishment and beating them at their own game. www.stealfromwork.org

Media Sandbox carves out a space for research, supporting brilliant people to make time and take risks. Networking creative talent from the South West with leading technology companies and content commissioners, Media Sandbox is a development programme which enables companies to research emerging possibilities in interactive, digital media, create new ideas and deliver innovation to the market.
In 2009, six awards have been made to research projects exploring innovative, interactive multi-platform content.

iShed
Building on over ten years experience of creative technology projects with companies like HP Labs, iShed is a venture by Watershed in Bristol to enable and support innovation and collaboration between computing, communications and the creative industries.
www.ished.net

South West Screen
South West Screen is the development agency for film, television and digital media in the South West of England. With an extensive Business and Skills Development programme, it aims to encourage and improve the growth and competitiveness of media companies in the region.
www.swscreen.co.uk

Watershed
Watershed exists to promote engagement, diversity and participation in film, media arts and the creative economy. With audiences and participation at its heart, Watershed delivers a diverse programme of films, events, festivals, artist commissions and conferences on Bristol's harbourside. Opened in 1982, as the UK's first media centre Watershed exists in two distinct physical spaces. Three cinemas, a Café/Bar and events spaces are complemented by the Pervasive Media Studio, a separate research and development space, opened in 2008, where creativity and technology meet.
www.watershed.co.uk

South West of England Regional Development Agency
The South West Regional Development Agency leads the development of a sustainable economy, investing to unlock the region's business potential. It works in partnership with public and private sector organisations and takes a long term view. It aims to drive up the region's productivity by giving people the skills they need, encouraging enterprise, improving infrastructure, regenerating places and promoting the strengths of the region.
www.southwestrda.org.uk

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