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### ELEY KISHIMOTO LEADS THE BRIXTON DESIGN TRAIL

Victoria Purcell August 17, 2015  
Celebrity Interviews



on why Brixton Design Trail is so close to his heart

Words: Victoria Purcell

The hugely popular [London Design Festival](#) returns this month, showcasing the capital's creativity with some 350 events and exhibitions running from 19-27 September. Last year, Brixton became an LDF design hub for the first time, and this year the area's creatives are coming together again to launch the inaugural [Brixton Design Trail](#). The event aims to demonstrate the wealth of local talent and highlight its potential to develop social, cultural and economic capital within the area – something that SW9's latest social enterprise, [Pop Brixton](#), is currently demonstrating very well.

'We've been based in Brixton for over 10 years and felt it was time to make some noise about how vibrant and talented the design community is here,' says Leila Touwen of [2MZ](#), a Brixton-based design company that is one of the driving forces behind Brixton Design Trail. 'Eley Kishimoto's Flash print outside Brixton tube station summed up the spirit of [last year's event] – daring design for everyone. And we hope to keep that sentiment going this year.'



Brixtonites might recall heading for the tube station one morning, bleary-eyed, to discover an original [Eley Kishimoto](#) installation right beneath their lucky feet. Known as the 'patron saints of print' for their bold, playful graphic designs, the world-renowned design duo that is Mark Eley and his wife Wakako Kishimoto emerged in the 90s on the catwalks of Louis Vuitton and Alexander McQueen. The couple, who have lived and worked in Brixton for nearly 30 years, went on to launch their own womenswear collection, and their mission to 'print the world' had begun in earnest, leading to collaborations with everyone from BMW to Vans.

'It was only a bit of chalk!' laughs Mark, as I confess feeling guilty about traipsing all over his Flash Carpet. He'd had to get up at 3.30am with his two [children](#) and a friend to get it done.

*We've always been proud of where we are, so we wanted to get involved locally*

This year 2MZ, Eley Kishimoto, [Squire Architects](#) (a King's Cross-based practice that is moving to Brixton) and Clapham's [Studio DB](#) will come together to create an outdoor Street Gallery. It will feature a curated series of 10 large-scale canvases by local artists in collaboration with the likes of The Brixton Pound, Photofusion and the Evelyn Grace Academy, displayed on the facades of the former Bon Marche department store on Ferndale Road. The outdoor [exhibition](#) will also feature a new, bespoke Brixton print by Eley Kishimoto.





It seems the duo are more than happy to work a little closer to home these days: 'Before we opened our first studio [the duo set up in Loughborough Junction in the early 90s, before moving to their current Lyham Road premises], we started the CoolTan Gallery at the old Cooltan suntan lotion factory on Effra Road and had exhibitions in Brighton Terrace where Vox Club used to be,' says Mark. 'So we got integrated into the community more before we started. Then, when we set up the business, we were heads down in the studio, selling internationally, and now it's come full circle and we're becoming more integrated into the local community again. The Flash Carpet last year was a big highlight because people realised that there was a creative studio in the area.'

'We travelled so extensively in the past that now I just want to get on my bike and go down the road and do stuff,' he continues. 'It's so much easier! We've always been proud of where we are, so we wanted to get involved locally.'

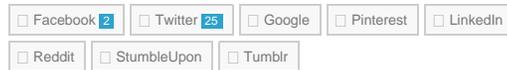


Other key events in this year's Brixton Design Trail include a collaboration between 2MZ and the Black Cultural Archives to transform the heritage centre's courtyard space with a new installation that challenges views of modernity and history. Then there's Passage Tells: Brixton, an immersive, app-based soundscape that conveys the stories of traders in Reliance Arcade, a narrow market off Brixton Road. Pop Brixton – which, incidentally, is also adorned with an Eley Kishimoto print – will also play host to a series of events and workshops.

'It's an opportunity to celebrate Brixton,' says Mark of the event. 'To bring people here and for them to think, "ok, yes, this is going on". It's an opportunity to support local businesses.'



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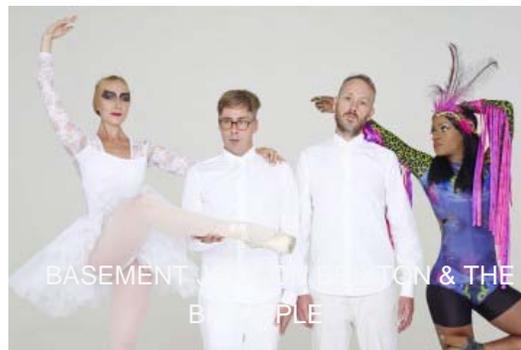
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