

UK'S TALLEST MURAL SOARS ABOVE LEEDS CITY SKYLINE ATHENA RISING



The finishing touches have been put to the UK's tallest piece of street art.

The giant artwork entitled "Athena Rising" soars a monumental 46.8 metres (153 feet) from the ground, making it several metres taller than the statue of Christ which looms over Rio de Janeiro, and only just shorter than the Statue of Liberty!

Using the full length of Bruntwood's Platform building as its canvas, which can be viewed from Leeds train station's platforms far below, the striking 11 metre-wide design centres on an owl in flight, alongside the moon and a crown, as a nod to the artists involved.

It has taken internationally-acclaimed street art muralist pair **Nomad Clan**, dubbed 'one of street art's finest female duos', just over two weeks and hundreds of cans of spray paint to complete the work. The duo - Cbloxx and AYLO (aka Joy Gilleard and Hayley Garner) - have worked up to eight hours a day harnessed in a cradle suspended down the side of the building, through the last few weeks' heat, wind and rain.

The huge statement piece is part of the citywide street art project 'A City Less Grey', initiated by East Street Arts and fully funded by LeedsBID (Leeds Business Improvement District). The project aims to animate the city and incorporate works of art onto and into Leeds' buildings and streets.

Cbloxx of Nomad Clan, said:

"It has been a challenge but one we have taken into our stride, finishing sooner than we had expected. We have had great feedback and are receiving endless heart-warming emails from the public in Leeds. We hope we have done you proud!"

This ambitious and bold mural is the result of crucial collaboration between the artists, East Street Arts, LeedsBID, building owners Bruntwood and Network Rail.

Nicola Greenan, External Relations Director at East Street Arts, said:

"East Street Arts' vision to create the UK's tallest mural here in Leeds has been a challenge, but an astonishing achievement."

Andrew Cooper, Chief Executive of LeedsBID:

"This striking piece of art is testament to how artists and businesses can work together to produce something spectacular, which celebrates and strengthens Leeds' cultural offering while showcasing the city nationally and internationally."

"A key ambition of the Business Improvement District is to work collaboratively to enhance the place shaping agenda - the look and feel of the city centre for those who live, work and visit here. A City Less Grey is a fantastic example of what can be achieved."

Craig Burrow, Bruntwood's Leeds Director, said:

"The completed Athena Rising artwork is fantastic. We're so happy to be involved in this project and to support creativity in the city. We're delighted that Platform has been able to act as the canvas for this great piece of artwork, with Athena Rising providing an excellent welcome to the city at Leeds station. Bruntwood firmly believes that the strength of our cities is directly impacted by social and cultural vibrancy, so it's great to see citywide projects like 'A City Less Grey' bringing organisations from across the region together to create powerful art."

'A City Less Grey' sees both local and national artists creating art installations and events across five sites across Leeds city centre. The project aims to inject colour into key areas to enhance the look and feel of areas for residents, commuters and visitors alike.

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Key facts and Figures:

- 'Athena Rising' is the height of 10 double-decker buses stacked on top of one another.
- 'Athena Rising' will require approximately 600 cans of Kobra Spray-paint.

- Design & concept:

Owls historically signify Intelligence, knowledge, wealth, learning and transition. Most of these ideas are derived from ancient meanings/practices and have been used symbolically by many cultures. Some Native American communities believe owls to be the secret keepers of knowledge due in part to their ability to foretell weather. The owl is

sacred to the Greek goddess of learning, Athena, and is even depicted on some Greco-Roman currency as a symbol of status.

Gold Symbols - These design-centric motifs are inspired loosely by studying mathematics in nature. Geometric symbols are often used in ancient architectural designs as well as being repeated in natural forms; they are a common denominator in humanity that connects us all in a fundamental way.

Moon - Echoing nature's thematics and cycles, the moon also classically symbolises enlightenment, which ties in with the 'knowledgeable owl'.

Crown - One of the affiliated Nomad Clan symbols, the crown is widely used in street art, symbolising being the master of your craft, or having 'paid your dues'. It is highly respected within that arena.

Notes to Editors:

About Nomad Clan

Nomad Clan is the collective of Cbloxx and AYLO, an internationally-acclaimed street art muralist duo based in Manchester.

Cbloxx is a street artist and former Leeds resident. She lived and worked in the city as a professional artist, and was recently commended as one of the world's top 10 female street artists by The Guardian. Aylo is a Manchester-born and bred street artist and paint enthusiast with a solid background in graffiti.

When the pair collaborate, the fusion delivers an unmistakeable style. Each of their murals has a strong significance to the environment it sits in, injecting playful scenes, often from local heritage.

Nomad Clan have been noted as 'one of street art's finest female duos' by Widewalls magazine, the world's largest street art online publication, as well as 'Street art's hottest UK talent' by Global Street Art. They were also pegged as one of the top 5 female street artists in the world by The Guardian.

Nomad Clan secured sponsorship with Kobra Spray Paint, making them the first female street artists in the UK to be sponsored by a global paint company.

Previous clients include Vans shoes, the BBC, St Paul's Cathedral, London's Southbank Centre, York Minster, West Yorkshire Playhouse, West Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Coors Beer, and Doc Martins.

About LeedsBID:

- LeedsBID is a business-led, not for profit organisation, focused on delivering an ambitious business plan to transform Leeds city centre – improving experiences, raising profile and adding value for all city users.
- A multi sector BID, LeedsBID represents 1,000 businesses and organisations in the city centre (LS1 and LS2 postcodes) and works collaboratively across the city on a range of bold projects with initiative.

- LeedsBID is the third largest in the UK and largest outside London, and is funded by a 1.25 per cent levy on business rates based on properties above £60,000 rateable value.
- The annual fund is set against a business plan to bring numerous improvements including public realm, business investment and increased footfall into the city centre.
- Business Improvement Districts have proved to be highly successful around the UK. There are more than 200 BIDs across the country serving more than 75,000 businesses investing over £200 million in their areas each year.

About East Street Arts:

East Street Arts is a pioneering national arts organisation with international reach. Established in 1993 in Leeds, it supports artists, collectives and emerging arts organisations. This is facilitated through a diverse programme of public activities, working with and in communities, professional support and learning sessions, studio and facility developments and a Temporary Space Programme.

About Bruntwood:

Bruntwood Group is a family-owned and managed property development company with more than £1bn of assets under ownership across 117 properties in Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham and a development pipeline of £1.4bn.

Founded more than 40 years ago, the company employs more than 650 people. It is the majority shareholder in the UK's leading science and technology park operator Manchester Science Partnerships and in 2014 purchased Alderley Park in Cheshire.

'Platform' is Bruntwood's latest development in Leeds and sees the building above Leeds train station, formerly known as City House, being transformed into high quality workspace that meets the needs of modern businesses. Centred around a shared communal lounge and rooftop terrace, 'Platform' will create a new business community with a programme of business, social and wellbeing events.

A thought-leader and a strategic long-term investor, Bruntwood and its people are passionate about supporting communities and the arts. The company donates around 10% of annual profits to local good causes through the Oglesby Charitable Trust and is also the headline sponsor of the Manchester International Festival and RHS Tatton.