

Art project to improve Roxburgh's Court



The council have already published their Royal Mile Action Plan in which they noted that within the closes and hinterland of the Royal Mile there are often people sleeping rough and there is evidence of anti-social behaviour in some. It is the council's stated aim to improve these backstreets to improve them for residents and visitors alike.

Working with Edinburgh College of Art and The City of Edinburgh Council, an Edinburgh property development company has now challenged students to make changes to an Old Town close which was once neglected. They have asked the students to create a destination that would appeal to both tourists and local residents, and one which is practical and dynamic.

Three teams of students are now battling it out to win the competition to turn Roxburgh's Court in Edinburgh's Old Town into a 'destination' for local residents and tourists.

The teams were among 30 students from the Edinburgh College of Art who submitted ideas to the Roxburgh's Court Art Project to draw people through this historic part of the city.

With all entries now on display at The Devil's Advocate on Advocate's Close and at Zizzi in Roxburgh's Court itself until the end of the month, three have now been shortlisted for the final judging and a poll is being carried out [online](#) to find the people's favourite.

In the final are Night Guide by Sebastian Sticzay and Charlie Wetheril, Paper Trail by Octavia Coutts, Isobel Williams, Ke Shin Lim and Katherine Snow and What Goes Up by Sarah Bushell, Darren Shek, Jessica Gregory and Catrinel Sabaciag

The Roxburgh's Court Art Project was the brainchild of The Chris Stewart Group, which has been responsible for the transformation of the area. The once neglected closes are now home to the Old Town Chambers luxury serviced apartments, new restaurants, bars and three offices.

The winner will be chosen by a panel of judges comprising of Chris Stewart, CEO of The Chris Stewart Group, Guy Morgan of Morgan McDonnell Architecture Ltd and David Hicks of Edinburgh World Heritage. The winning design will then be assessed for funding and its potential installation.

Chris Stewart said:

"The range of ideas was impressive and it was interesting to see how they tackled the brief. We have our favourites, but we are also keen to get the views of others and so have exhibited the entries and put them online for people to see.

"The Old Town closes and lanes evoke so much of the city's history and character, the project is intended to involve more people in their modern regeneration and usage. The area between Advocate's Close and Warriston's Close is now very much a vibrant part of the city's tourist and business life, it is important that more people get to enjoy them."

Douglas Bryden of ECA added:

"The design brief set by The Chris Stewart Group provided a great opportunity for Product Design students to learn more about one-off site-specific design. We challenged the students to research, design, and finalise an installation design concept for the site at Roxburgh's Court within a day. The students responded incredibly well, working intensively to explore a variety of creative approaches to change Roxburgh's Court and the adjacent closes into an interesting destination for both tourists and local residents. The students are very excited about the potential for the winning design concept to be evaluated and developed for fabrication and installation at

Roxburgh's Court."

Councillor Ian Perry Convener of the Planning Committee, said:

"This is an exciting project and I look forward to seeing the designs on display. Creating spaces for both residents and visitors to enjoy is one of the strands of the Royal Mile Project and is particularly important in helping to make best use of all the historic closes.

The project is an excellent example of the private sector taking a collaborative and creative approach to develop proposals that will benefit everyone using this area of the city."

The entries are:

- Night Guide by Sebastian Sticzay and Charlie Wetheril
- SkyWalker by Emily Annand, Sophie Butchart, Ziyuan Xia and James Amour,
- AquaVitae by James Ciclitira, Jake Simpson, Tereza Astilean and Zoe Grant
- Selfie Sculpture by Dimitri Hadjichristou, Nicola Saunders, Kirsty Simpson and Katy Lobban
- Pinpressions by Alice Kettle, Tom Macfarlane, Shelley Lucas and Sarah Mcleod
- Paper Trail by Octavia Coutts, Isobel Williams, Ke Shin Lim and Katherine Snow
- Wave Light by Hai Yan Fu, Sorcha Sutherland, Mo Airnes and Lawrence Gearty
- Tree of Light by Toby Starr, David Mahoney and Glenn Masterton
- What Goes Up by Sarah Bushell, Darren Shek, Jessica Gregory and Catrinel Sabaciag

The entries can be viewed at: The Devil's Advocate and online [here](#).

#roxcourtartproject