

Shop Local

Hoxton Street Tours

A project by Bob and Roberta Smith (the alter ego of artist Patrick Brill, who uses signwriting as part of his practice), commissioned by independent arts organisation Peer for this year's Shoreditch Festival, 'Shop Local' strikes a blow against the dreary homogenisation that is increasingly blighting British high streets. Inspired by the ghosts of early twentieth-century painted advertisements that linger evocatively on the walls of several Shoreditch buildings, the artist has designed his own signs for five businesses on Hoxton Street. By celebrating the individuality of local independent enterprises, the large-scale artworks displayed on other buildings in the area shine a critical light on their charmless chain store equivalents elsewhere. The project simultaneously encourages people to explore an area of London that retains a distinctive character and links with its past, and urges them to make the effort to patronise its businesses.

The participants involved are Ron's Eel and Shellfish van (by the Regent's Canal, viewed from Deanne Terrace), Dad's Unisex Hair Salon (on a side wall of Hoxton Works in Hoxton Street), Hoxton



Bag some brownie points

Electrovision (on the side wall of the post office in Hoxton Street), Hoxton Fruit and Veg (on an old tram shed in Evelyn Walk) and Discoveries bric-a-brac shop (along the wall of Burbage Primary School in Ivy Street). If you go to the Peer Gallery, now showing an exhibition of new paintings and sculpture by Bob and Roberta Smith, you can pick up a trail that will direct you to the artist's works and the locations of remaining signs from a bygone era.

Bob and Roberta Smith likes to involve his audience in his work – recent projects have invited gallery-goers to talk about potatoes, paint things orange and suggest slogans for him to paint. On this occasion, if you're prepared to put your money where your shopping is and ditch the supermarket plastic bags in order to promote the cause, you can buy your own 'Shop Local' eco bag designed by the artist. Sara O'Reilly

Peer Gallery, 99 Hoxton St, N1 (020 7739 8080/www.peeruk.org) Old St tueb/rail. Open Wed-Sat 12noon-6pm. 'Shop Local' will be on display from Aug 19 for a year. Saturday's launch is at 5-9pm in the courtyard of Tannery Arts, Brunswick Wharf, 55 Laburnum St, E2. Adm £1, free to Shoreditch residents.