

# City

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EXCLUSIVE LOOK AT  
COACH STATION ART



## Exclusive look at 'fencescape' artwork for new coach station

**T**his is an exclusive first look at the public art which will help transform Birmingham's much-maligned coach station into a new city landmark.

Artists Rob Colbourne and Stuart Mugridge will create a stunning 190 metre long perimeter for the coach station (the third busiest in the country) – a 'fencescape' which is a nod to the site's past as both HQ for Midland Red coaches and former home to scales manufacturer Avery.

The 320 steel haunches' form and curve are designed to give notions of balance, flow and transition, while the colour is a reference to both Avery's weighing apparatus and the famous Midland 'Red'.

The boundary is designed to allow glimpses both into and out of the station, rather than being a solid 'fence'.

Artist Stuart Mugridge says the structure is not only a nod to the site's history but an attempt to replicate how the station itself has been turned inside out.

"It had to be something that was responsive to the history of the site



but was also contemporary looking; it's about continuing references," he said. The £300,000 art project, which National Express are funding with 'sizeable' contributions from Birmingham City Council and arts organisations, will also include a video installation inside the station building itself, where passengers/visitors can watch footage showing the site's rebirth and development.

A Spanish artist will also create a new sculpture for the office reception, in the shape of an old-fashioned bus conductor.

The film, along with a visual installation on the side of architect Glen Howells' offices in Bradford Street, adjacent to the new building, have both been developed with the involvement of a group of local schoolchildren as part of their Arts Awards studies.

Claire Farrell from EC Arts, who was commissioned by National Express to appoint the artists and implement the project, told CityLiving: "National Express have invested a huge amount of money in the coach station and public art strategy. By engaging within the arts, rather than installing irrelevant off the shelf art, the coach station and Birmingham will be getting public art that has a sense of place."

Clive Dutton, director of Planning and Regeneration at Birmingham City Council, said: "This is an early and brilliant visual project that relates to what the Big City Plan is all about. It's great that we can polish the design for the new coach station and complement the £1 million environmental enhancement scheme; all that demonstrates our contribution to Digbeth, one of the real jewels in the crown of the city."

The new £15 million station is scheduled to be completed in August.

■ To see a video on this story, go to [www.birminghampost.net](http://www.birminghampost.net)