

THE HUFFINGTON POST



Lucy Orta

British-born artist and sculptor

Public Art: A Dual Medium to Express the Aspirations and Problems in Society

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Public art plays an integral role in any big city. Whether it's Paris, Berlin, Rio or in this case London - art created solely for public consumption and enjoyment should express the aspirations of that city's inhabitants, its visitors and its workers. An important injection of joy into the average person's day.

As part of my work collective with my husband - our art collaboration is named Lucy + Jorge Orta - we won a prestigious art competition earlier this year to exhibit



our artwork at St Pancras International for Terrace Wires, London's (new) fourth rotational art space. Suspended from the wonderful architectural structure of London's famous 19th century Barlow Shed rooftop at the station, our piece, Cloud : Meteoros encourages visitors to look up - quite literally! The Terrace Wires brief inspired us as artists to showcase the romance of travel. This station is one my family uses frequently when travelling between my home country (or, the University of the Arts London, where I am professor) and our home, Paris. Basing our sculpture on children's cloud drawings, we wanted to evoke the idea of passengers embarking on an imaginary journey on a magic carpet, floating between heaven and earth - an intermediary with society. Just in the way ceiling frescoes affected Renaissance dwellers many centuries ago, our hope remains that this sculpture will similarly inspire Londoners, making them look up and ultimately feel differently about their surroundings.

With such busy lives, we could all do with a distraction from time to time. But our work has a serious undercurrent to it which is worth exploring. My husband and I have always set out to answer three fundamental questions with our artwork. How can art provide new insight into the problems of society? How can we fuse aesthetics and social function? How can artists contribute to social and environmental sustainability?

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Quite simply, we believe that creative mediums should express the aspirations (and often, the issues) in society. And so our clouds carry a deeper message. We wanted to question water as a natural resource and how as a society will share it in the future. We see clouds as a natural recycling machine. If you look back at some of our previous work, you will see we carry this theme across many of our sculptures.

Conservation and sustainable use of resources are vital issues for us to consider in the developed world.

Cloud : Meteoros is a reminder to us all, that natural resources are not infinite.

Cloud : Meteoros will be exhibited for two more months at St Pancras International, before it is taken down to allow a brand new piece by a completely different artist to hang in its place. In this time, we invite all visitors to 'look up' and take a moment from their busy days, to be inspired by the grandeur of the setting and the art itself. Whichever message you take from the artwork, we have been extremely proud to bring our clouds to the masses.

