

PAINTING THE SCENE

International art dealer and ebullient gallerist Rebecca Hossack is best known for putting aboriginal art back on the cultural map – and it all started from her spur-of-the-moment Fitzrovia gallery. Now with a worldwide gallery presence, we speak to the curator, campaigner and W1 local about her ever-expanding creative empire.



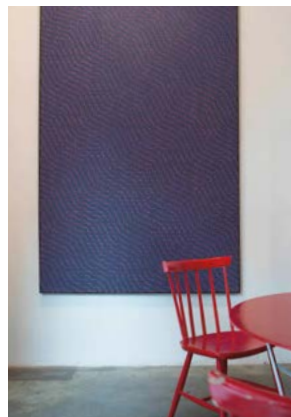
Why did you start the Rebecca Hossack Gallery in Fitzrovia?

I came over to London from Melbourne in 1988, originally to study law. I remember cycling past Fitzrovia's bustling cafés and restaurants and feeling like I was back in Australia, it still has a very Antipodean atmosphere. On somewhat of a whim, I signed a 25-year lease to my first gallery at 35 Windmill Street, and after five years we expanded to a second site at 28 Charlotte Street, which is a beautiful eighteenth-century building that we now use mainly as a shop. Eight years ago we moved the three-storey flagship here on Conway Street. It wasn't long ago that there were no galleries here, and now there are dozens coming in from the East and West End, which is great. For some reason we have a huge number of comedians buying art from us – Lee Evans, Alan Carr, Graham Norton and Jack Dee have all bought works from the gallery.

What does the area mean to you?

When we opened the first gallery, I wanted to plant a beautiful Eucalyptus tree outside on the pavement. But I encountered a lot of trouble with Camden Council at the time who wanted to remove it, and so I started petitions, raised money and gathered signatures to try and keep it. It worked so well that I was elected as the first Conservative councillor in Camden for 35 years! Now almost every silver birch you see around Charlotte Street and Windmill Street are to do with me. It's nice having a living connection to this area.

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What's your morning routine like?

The first thing I do when I get up is go run around Regent's Park, back through Fitzroy Square, then come to the gallery. I live nearby on Warren Mews with my husband, the biographer Matthew Sturgis, which is one street parallel to the gallery. Guy Ritchie and Griff Rhys Jones also live nearby and I'll often see them wandering around. During the day I'll go see my friend who runs the Little Greene paint shop on New Cavendish Street - he painted the gallery walls here in the different colours. Or I'll visit the Margaret Dabbs spa next door, who we run an art partnership with in her salon. I very seldom leave Fitzrovia – you've got everything you need here, Marylebone High Street is as far as I venture!

rebeccahossack.com

MY FITZROVIA

Rebecca Hossack's pick of the area

Best place for a snack...

Brazilian Gourmet – make the best cheese pastries.

braziliangourmet.co.uk

To buy hand-made shoes...

Brodies.

brodiesshoesandkeys.co.uk

Best deli...

In Parma – all food from Parma in northern Italy.

in-parma.com

For a cultural discovery...

Soane Museum.

soane.org



Rebecca Hossack's artists to watch:

Rose Blake iamroseblake.com
Rob Tucker rob-tucker.com
Laura Jordan laurajordan.com

