

Elle Scena

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The Story of an Address

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An Instagram sensation, the dark façade of a London building in Fitzrovia hides an interesting story, which has been revealed to us by the gallery owner Rebecca Hossack, who lives and works in that renowned location.

The bohemian atmosphere of the London neighbourhood of Fitzrovia has a special, intangible charm, so it's no wonder that many artists, writers and creative people have settled here for a long time. The atmosphere is the complete opposite of that which prevails in the neighbouring districts, in vivacious Soho, orderly Bloomsbury and posh Marylebone. Despite the fact that Fitzrovia may not be at the top of popular must-see lists of London neighbourhoods and sites, this elegant district hides numerous interesting sights, which, of course, could not go unnoticed even on Instagram. Right here, at house number 10 in Warren Street Mews, is one of the most photographed houses in this part of London, with an imposing dark façade, whose image you will find in thousands of photographs in virtual wastelands. In contrast to the flowers placed in the numerous large windows, there is a dark façade, an interesting front door, and a passage leading to another street. Above it stands the imposing Warren Mews W1 sign, an attention-grabbing house address that stands out from the rest of the street. It was built in the 18th century architectural style specific to that district, in which the buildings were called mews (or stables) because in the Victorian and Georgian era they housed the coachmen who transported the social elite living in the nearby aristocratic residences, while the ground floor and courtyards served as stables and parking lots for carriages. It was from these stables that today's buildings, the pride of this London quarter, were created. The house at the aforementioned address, the one that stands out because of its appearance, is owned today by the famous London gallerist Rebecca Hossack, who is known to the public for promoting non-Western art and culture, especially Aboriginal art. Her galleries are also located nearby in

Fitzrovia, on 28 Charlotte Street and Conway Street. Rebecca revealed to the Croatian Elle what life looks like in a peculiar house whose address everyone knows and around which photographic lenses and glowing cell phone screens click all day and night.

Hossack opened her first art gallery in Fitzrovia in the house of the 19th century painter John Constable. At the time, the gallerist herself lived in a small apartment above the gallery, while her current husband, Matthew Sturgis, a writer, and biographer of Oscar Wilde, lived in the next street over. They met right on the streets of Fitzrovia, as Matthew walked past Rebecca's gallery every night. 'When I first came to Fitzrovia in the 80s, almost all of the 18th century building were lived in by poets and writers. You can still find a lot of creative people and artists here. It's also great that my gallery is located not far from the Omega Workshops, founded by the artist and critic Roger Fry way back in 1913. The essence of the project is that artists can sell everything they design and create, which range from painting furniture, murals, ceramics, designer glass, hand-made textiles, clothes, as well as that writers can participate in the process of printing and publishing their works... I often shop there. Virginia Woolf and her sister Vanessa Bell often visited Fitzrovia, so even in the past there was a very bohemian atmosphere,' Rebecca Hossack tells me.

More recently, several well-known filmmakers have moved to Fitzrovia, for example the famous Guy Ritchie opened the now iconic Lore of the Land pub there, and actor Nick Moran also lives in Rebecca's neighbourhood.

Rebecca Hossack moved to London in the early 80s from her birthland Australia to study law, but she was always attracted to art, so she often visited the National Gallery. On one occasion, she happened to sit next to someone who would go on to become a lifelong friend and encouraged her to pursue art. After all, coincidences don't exist! Not long after that, she made a leap into artistic waters and opened her first gallery on a small street in Fitzrovia in 1987, followed by a second gallery on Charlotte Street, while her third gallery is housed in a beautiful Art Deco building on Conway Street. For several years she was the Australian cultural attaché in London. But we are interested in the story that hides behind the walls of her insta-famous house. Although it seems that the

facade is black or dark grey, the gallerist reveals that it is actually a dark green shade. 'It's an amazing colour. I first saw it at my friend Tim D'Offay's place whose tea shop was painted the same colour and I really liked it. When I first came to live in Warren Mews, it was a neglected and lifeless place full of rubbish. First, I planted flowers to elevate the look of the house. For the first five years, I carried water from the kitchen on the first floor to water the flowers on all floors, and now my neighbours have joined me. We're actually starting to green up the whole of Fitzrovia because plants and trees are extremely important to me,' Rebecca emphasizes before continuing: 'I'm very happy when people come to my house or take photos on my doorstep, it doesn't bother me at all. Sometimes they even come here to take photos for their wedding. It is a great way to meet new people from different parts of the world. No one can believe that for years it was a derelict building, and now it is full of art, each of which tells its own story.'

'My friend Ana Stanić, a Croatian film producer, is often my guest and uses the house in Warren Mews as her London home whenever she stays here. I would also like the readers of Croatian Elle to visit Warren Mews and my galleries in Fitzrovia when they find themselves in London,' said Rebecca. The call is open. What are you waiting for?