

“Passion can create drama out of inert stone”?!

2020

An eternal display
like
white marble gravestones
with right angles
ordered
like
something we've all seen before.

Looping on itself
like
Shirley Eaton in gold.

“Passion can create drama out of inert stone”?! was on display on 23 - 24 September at Peak Gallery inside Elephant and Castle Shopping Mall. The mall has closed permanently on the 24th of September 2020 for demolition, to give way to a new shopping centre, residences and University of the Arts campus. Elephant and Castle Shopping Mall was built in 1965. It had a very comfortable lighting and acoustics and opened up space for soft socialising as Joe would put it. The mall has been home to the Latin American community and many of the shop owners have been there for more than 20 years. Some of the shops will be relocated by the property developers with 2 years of rent reduction but there is no plans for after those 2 years. With the shops being dispersed, the new aesthetics of the neighbourhood and the new clientele, it is highly unlikely that these shops will be around for long. It is no coincidence The Latin Village in Seven Sisters is also getting demolished soon.

The rental contracts of the new shops in the mall in the last few years included a clause that banned the tenants of speaking out about the demolishing of the mall. Ayşe referred to this as “the elephant in the room”.

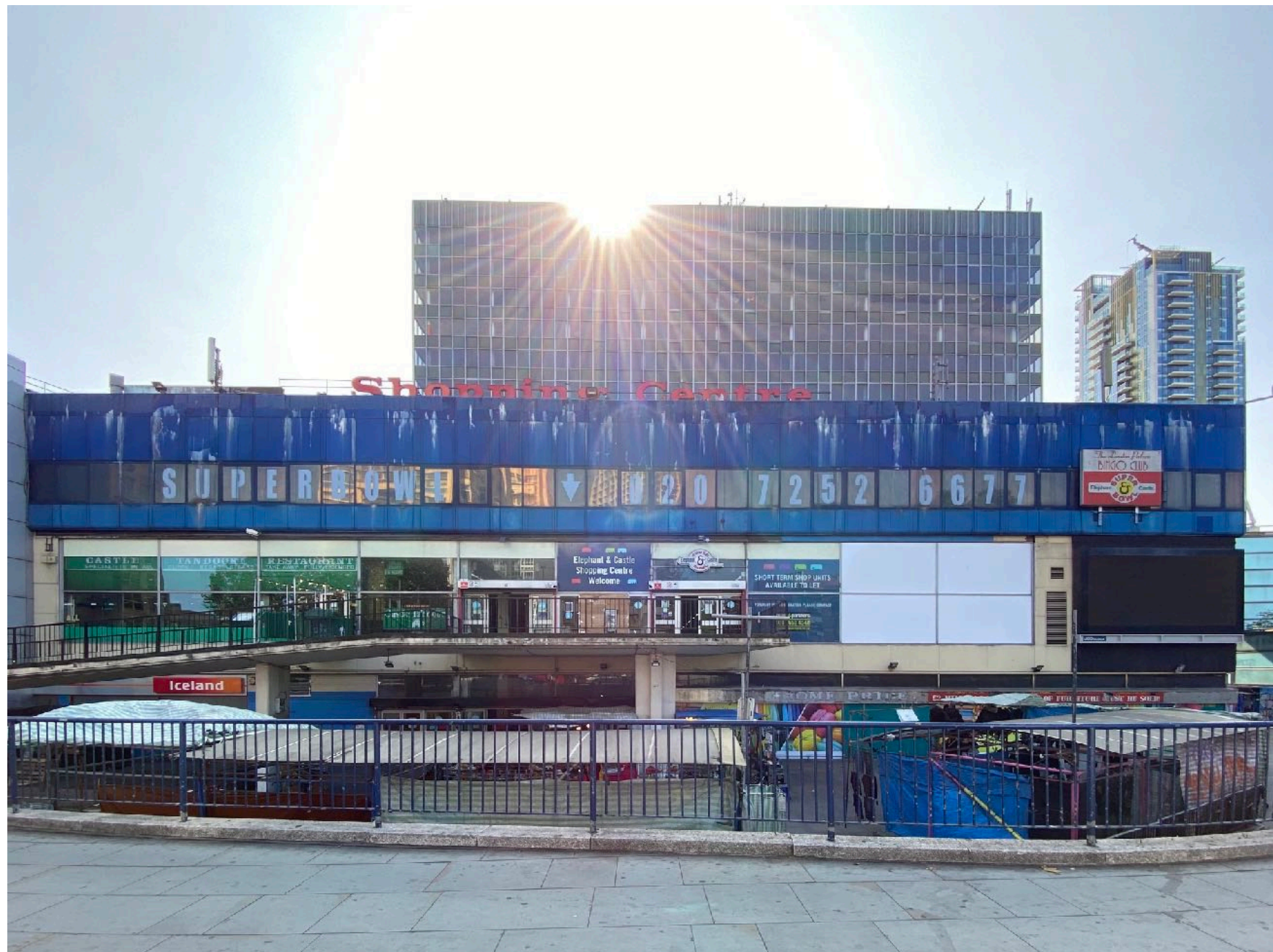
In the last few days of the mall, I refurbished, repainted and cleaned Peak Gallery. I made a perfect white cube that would not allow any context to seep in, like the campus of University of the Arts. I tried to camouflage the space into the slick aesthetics this neighbourhood now demanded. It needed to be white.

Removing all the personal marks from the space was a ritual that would hopefully make it easier to part with it. If it became generic enough, it would become a meta space and not having the physical space anymore would be irrelevant.

I found a tea mug, a vintage souvenir of Elephant and Castle Restaurant on eBay. In the James Bond's Goldfinger movie, Shirley Eaton is killed by Goldfinger by being painted in gold. They believed this would block her pores and raise her body temperature and could be used as a weapon. This reminded me of London's gentrification and Grenfell.

“Passion can create drama out of inert stone” is taken from Le Corbusier's Towards a New Architecture.

This project was developed in conversation with [Ayşe Köklü](#).







Photography by Katarzyna Perlak



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