



Launch of Benjamin Zephaniah Public Mural

A major new mural celebrating the roots and activism of Benjamin Zephaniah is to be unveiled in Handsworth Park on Sunday 14th April 2024. Commissioned by Black Heritage Walks Network (BHWN) and completed by internationally renowned artist Bunny Bread founder of Create Not Destroy, the work celebrates Zephaniah's stature as 'The People's Champion'

Dawn Carr, local historian of Black History Arts & More (BHAM) worked closely with the artist, the local community and Benjamin's family to make the project happen. Speaking ahead of the unveiling she said "Benjamin Zephaniah was a son of Handsworth grassroots community and resistance. He showed endless love and creativity, courage and humanity. He was always humble and an advocate of the poor & oppressed. Benjamin was more than a poet, he was a true king, a warrior, a prophet and a role model for all men, regardless of background. "

Artist Bunny Bread from Create Not Destroy wanted to mark Benjamin's many forms of expression in the mural, saying "Benjamin really stood for the people; when you listen to his music and his poetry, his causes were always in front of him. In a time where people are about getting followers and likes, he was always about the cause and the people."

Shuranjeet Singh, Lead for the Soho and Handsworth Neighbourhood Planning Forum hopes that this will be "the first of many ways to recognise and uplift the work of Benjamin Zephaniah in the local area".

The work, completed in March and endorsed by the Benjamin Zephaniah Memorial Family Fund, dramatically fills one side of the historic Sons of Rest building, which once stood derelict before a major renovation of Handsworth Park took place in the early 2000s.

Speaking for the Friends of Handsworth Park, chair of trustees Ed Freshwater said "Benjamin - through his works, his words, his activism, and his unstoppable passion - represented all that is great about Handsworth. His poetry had a rhythm and language that's familiar to us all, in our homes and our streets, so influenced by the many cultures in our community. "Handsworth Park is a place where our community comes to breathe, to celebrate, and to be inspired. We are all so proud to celebrate Benjamin's extraordinary legacy with this mural, and look forward to many more commemorations of his legacy".

An unveiling ceremony will take place at the Sons of Rest building in Handsworth Park from 3pm on Sunday 14th April 2024. All are welcome.

For more information or further questions contact blackheritagewalksnetworks@gmail.com

THE FAMILY OF
BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH
Pioneer and Innovator 1958 - 2023
*"We acknowledge and support this event
held in remembrance and celebration of
our dear brother - Thank You"*

