

# Eat, Sleep, Breathe under Creativity's Eaves



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At the moment Leeds seems to be having its Renaissance. There's an atmosphere of something amazing bubbling under the surface and it's starting to burst through. It's easy, when you're amongst it all, to simply take it for granted. But when you take the time to step back, you really have time to appreciate what the city is home to.

Leeds is overrun with creative thinkers and doers. Although transient and fluid in how they work, using the whole city as a canvas, they effect the physical landscape around them, bringing the city alive. As we put a microscope to this creative cosmos, our eye was drawn to the entity East Street Arts, a contemporary arts organisation working across the UK and EU.

At home in Leeds, their mission is 'to support artists to create work that brings lasting change to our everyday lives.' And their most recent, and arguably greatest project to date, is the emergence of the Art Hostel, marrying two great needs within Leeds, supplying cheap city centre accommodation, as well as opening a gateway into the city's cultural underbelly.

The idea has been developed over two years of discussion between directors of East Street Arts, who are inspired by how other European cities host visitors and used their experiences to pull together the best parts of this, all with East Street Arts unique twist.

The Art Hostel will become a resident on Kirkgate, Leeds' oldest street. Housed within a 200 year old building, the hostel looks like it is straight out of a Wes Anderson film.

But although the history and exterior of the building maybe beautiful, the project is a huge undertaking, builders are working fast to bring the characteristic building back from the brink, so that artists can be let loose, giving the hostel a new burst of life. As you would expect from a hostel completely created by artists, each bedroom will be uniquely designed to be contemporary and comfortable, while a project space hosts a programme of artist events and installations, linking back out into the creative scene of the city.

A number of the rooms have been sponsored by local companies who want to support the project. There's also been sponsorship from individuals who've commissioned artists to look at the local history of the area. This research focuses along the riverfront where Leeds Riverside Mission were based, supporting boatmen and their families through the provision of education, clean space, laundries and general needs.

A mass of artwork and design will be housed at the hostel and so far we've heard rumours of alternative tourist offices, pop up food socials and mirrors that reveal David Bowie singing to you as you brush your teeth!

Although much of the plans for the Art Hostel are being kept under wraps, we're excited that the oldest part of the city centre is now home to the most forward thinking idea in Leeds. We can't wait to see what happens when the doors open.

