



The Cannibal Lot

The Cineroleum

Assemble Collective

UK, 2010

Collective Construction

Circular Architecture

Summary

The Cineroleum, an independently initiated project, re-purposing a petrol station on Clerkenwell Road into a cinema, exploring the potential widespread reuse of the UK's abandoned petrol stations (there's around 4000 of them!). Inspired by the golden age of picture palaces, it recreated classic cinematic elements using affordable, industrial, and reclaimed materials. This handcrafted cinema featured flip-up seats made from scaffolding boards, formica-clad school chairs in the foyer, and a hand-sewn curtain surrounding the auditorium.

Constructed on-site by over a hundred volunteers, The Cineroleum highlighted the communal experience of filmgoing, contrasting sharply with remote multiplexes. Shielded from a busy road by a curtain, it offered a sense of collective escapism and public spectacle, with the curtain lifting after films to transition the audience from the imaginative world of cinema back to the everyday street scene.

Lessons

- Creative reuse of spaces shows the potential for creative and unconventional reuse of existing spaces (there are 4,000 vacant petrol stations in the UK) while challenging traditional notions of space and repurposes it for cultural and communal activities
- The involvement of over a hundred volunteers in building The Cineroleum highlights the power of community collaboration. The project brought people together to learn, experiment, and contribute their skills, fostering a sense of shared accomplishment and demonstrating the effectiveness of collective efforts in realizing ambitious ideas
- Celebrating the social experience! The project diverges from the impersonal nature of modern multiplex cinemas by celebrating the social experience of filmgoing - encourages shared enjoyment and interaction, both inside and outside the venue

