

Bloomberg Philanthropies Expands Asphalt Art Initiative in Europe, Supporting Cities to Transform Streets and Public Spaces with Art

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Bloomberg Philanthropies will award up to 20 European cities Asphalt Art Initiative grants for arts-driven street redesigns that improve safety, revitalize public spaces, and engage local communities

New study of dozens of previous asphalt art projects shows dramatic reduction in traffic crashes and unsafe driving



Bloomberg Philanthropies Asphalt Art Installations in London, UK; Glasgow, Scotland; and Amsterdam, Netherlands

New York, NY – Bloomberg Philanthropies today announced an expansion of its Asphalt Art Initiative in Europe and opened applications for Asphalt Art Initiative grants which will provide as many as 20 cities with \$25,000 for projects that use art and design to improve street safety, revitalize public spaces, and engage community residents. The European expansion builds upon two rounds of previous Asphalt Art Initiative grants made in 2020-2021, supporting a total of 45 projects spanning 41 U.S. cities and pilot projects in three European cities. This program is inspired by work done to improve pedestrian safety and revitalize New York City streets during Michael R. Bloomberg’s tenure as Mayor from 2002-2013 and the work of Bloomberg Philanthropies’ pro bono consulting arm Bloomberg Associates in cities around the world. Bloomberg Philanthropies also announced the release of the *Asphalt Art Safety Study*, which reviewed 22 recent asphalt art projects installed in the United States and found they had spurred a reduction in traffic crashes, particularly those involving pedestrians and bikers, and encouraged safer driver behavior.

“Over 40 cities have proved the power of the Asphalt Art Initiative, using creativity to rally residents around making their public spaces brighter and safer,” **said Michael R. Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and 108th mayor of New York City.** “With this new round of grants, we’re ready to help cities across Europe foster community spirit by uniting artists and residents – and empowering them to bring new life to their streets.”

Asphalt art projects not only create vibrant new public spaces but also build city capacity for working with artists and community groups on projects involving transportation infrastructure. Bloomberg Philanthropies' Asphalt Art Initiative responds to the growing number of cities around the world embracing art as an effective and relatively low-cost strategy to enhance their streets, with installations on plazas and sidewalks, crosswalks and intersections, and other transportation infrastructure. Of the 42 Asphalt Art projects in U.S. cities and three pilot projects in European cities awarded grants, 18 of the projects have been completed to date, collectively transforming a combined 103,930 square feet of streetscape with artwork while engaging nearly 6,000 residents and 189 artists in the design and installation process.

The expansion of the initiative invites all European cities with a population of 100,000 or greater to apply by July 11, 2022. Winning cities will be announced in fall 2022 with selected projects planned for installation throughout 2023. In addition to grants, the selected cities will receive technical consulting provided by Bloomberg Associates and the City of Milan's Agency for Mobility, Environment, and Territory (AMAT). The application and city selection guidelines are available at AsphaltArt.bloomberg.org.

The expansion of the Asphalt Art Initiative follows the completion of three European pilot projects in Glasgow and London in the UK, and in Amsterdam, Netherlands:

- In Glasgow, to coincide with the COP26 Summit in November 2021, the city installed "Water Works," which includes a large-scale ground mural and accompanying rain gardens at the entrance to a busy commuter rail station below a highway underpass. Designed by Glasgow-based artist Gabriella Marcella and inspired by the environmental challenges the city faces with excessive rain and water runoff, the project aims to improve pedestrian and cyclist navigation.
- In London, artist Yinka Ilori worked with art students from the University of Arts London to produce "Bring London Together," which created colorful designs on 12 crosswalks and a pedestrian plaza in central London. The project was part of Mayor Sadiq Khan's "Let's Do London" tourism campaign for pandemic recovery.
- In Amsterdam, a monumental artwork comprised of painted asphalt, planters, and benches was completed in April 2022 by the Street Art Museum Amsterdam (SAMA) and Spanish artist Kenor. Spanning 90,000 square feet of paint, "Surround Sound" is the largest artwork ever created in Amsterdam by SAMA, and transforms a well-used open-air marketplace, changing perceptions of the Plein 40-45 neighborhood, and engaging local residents.

The new *Asphalt Art Safety Study* released by Bloomberg Philanthropies in collaboration with Sam Schwartz Consulting found traffic safety to be demonstrably improved across a cohort of 22 asphalt art projects in the U.S. The study results included a dramatic reduction in motor

vehicle crash rates after the projects were installed, including a 50% drop in crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists and a 37% drop in crashes with injuries. The study also found a 25% drop in the rate of conflicts between drivers and pedestrians, as well as a 27% increase in drivers yielding to pedestrians with the right-of-way. The results of the study will help cities and engineers make the case for arts-driven transportation projects and encourage similar efforts in the U.S. and across the globe. The research and more information on each of the projects can be found on the Asphalt Art Initiative [website](#).

“With projects on the ground in 44 cities, we have seen that streets designed with art, color, and creativity can have an immediate impact on the safety and quality of life in communities,” **said Janette Sadik-Khan, Principal for Transportation at Bloomberg Associates and former commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation.** “By expanding the Asphalt Art Initiative further in Europe, we can help cities across the continent rapidly reimagine their public realm and prove once again that the desire for safer, more welcoming, and more beautiful streetscapes is universal.”

“Through the Asphalt Art Initiative, uninviting pieces of infrastructure have been transformed into highlights of the urban environment. In London, Glasgow, and Amsterdam, art interventions reflected community desires for social cohesion, environmental sustainability, and pandemic recovery, giving residents a chance to actively participate in shaping their streets and public spaces for all to enjoy,” **said Kate D. Levin, who leads the Arts Program at Bloomberg Philanthropies as well as the Cultural Assets Management practice at Bloomberg Associates, and is the former commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.**

The first round of Asphalt Art Initiative grants in the U.S. in 2019 coincided with the publication of the *Asphalt Art Guide*, with case studies and best practices from cities around the world. The guide, which has been accessed over 7,000 times by governments and other practitioners in all 50 U.S. states and 90 countries, is free for download at AsphaltArt.bloomberg.org. It was produced by the Bloomberg Associates Transportation and Cultural Assets Management teams in collaboration with urban planning and architecture firm Street Plans Collaborative and public art consultant Renee Piechocki.

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Videos and photos for media use

Videos and photos along with credits and descriptions can be downloaded [here](#).
Translations: For translations of this press release in other languages including German, French, Italian, Spanish, Czech, Slovak and Greek click [here](#).

About Bloomberg Philanthropies:

Bloomberg Philanthropies invests in 941 cities and 173 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: the Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg’s giving, including his foundation, corporate, and personal philanthropy as well as Bloomberg

Associates, a pro bono consultancy that works in cities around the world. In 2021, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed \$1.66 billion. For more information, please visit [bloomberg.org](https://www.bloomberg.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [Twitter](#).

About Bloomberg Associates:

Bloomberg Associates is the philanthropic consulting arm of Michael R. Bloomberg's charitable organization, Bloomberg Philanthropies. Founded in 2014, we work side by side with client cities to improve the quality of life for residents, taking a strategic, collaborative and results-oriented approach to making cities stronger, safer, more equitable and efficient. Our team of globally recognized experts and industry leaders has worked with cities across the globe on hundreds of projects in order to ignite change and transform dynamic vision into reality. For more information on the consultancy, please visit www.bloombergassociates.org or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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