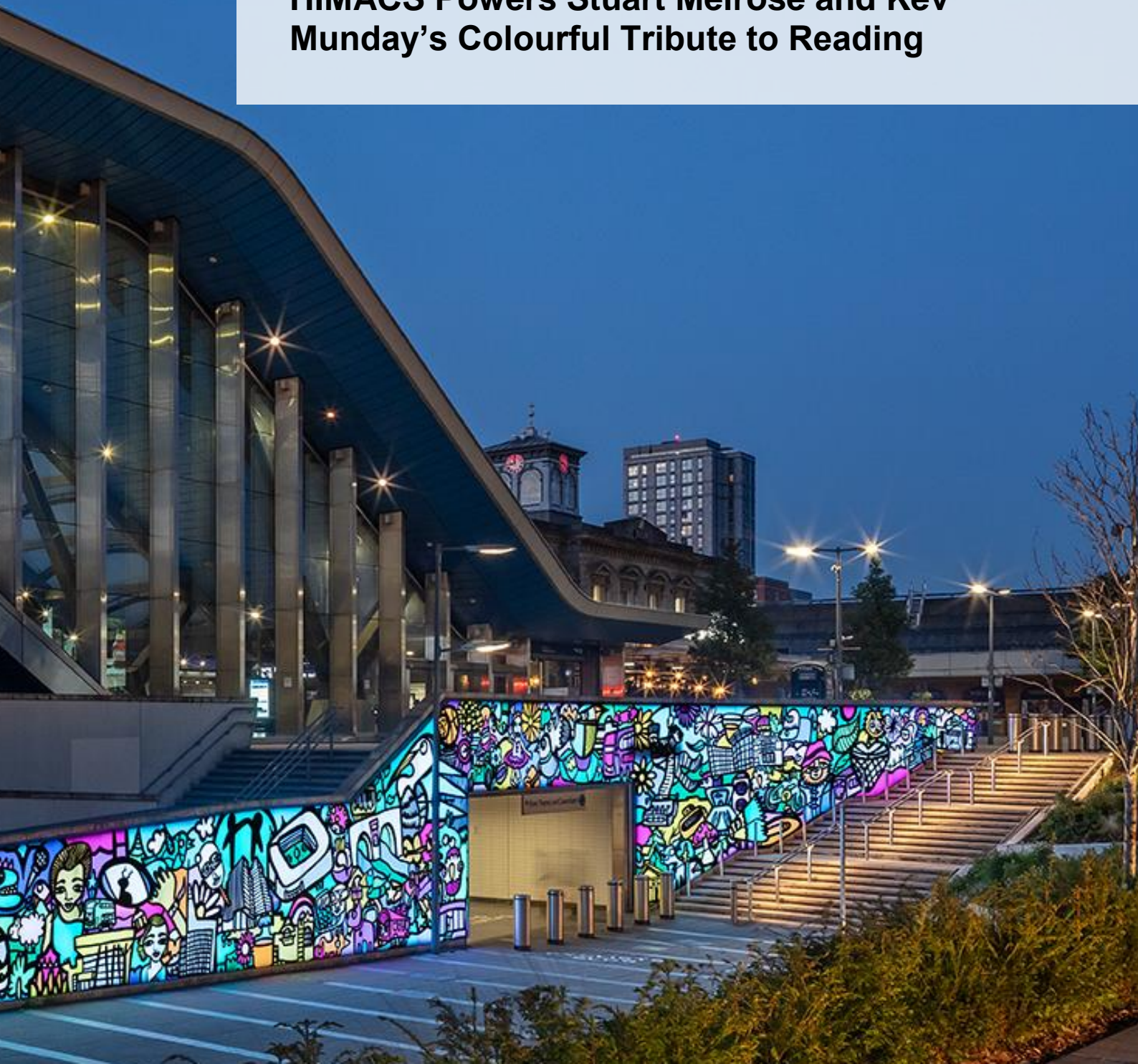


# HI·MACS

The shape of your ideas

PRESS RELEASE

## **Urban Art with Heart: HIMACS Powers Stuart Melrose and Kev Munday's Colourful Tribute to Reading**





## Urban Art with Heart: HIMACS Powers Stuart Melrose and Kev Munday's Colourful Tribute to Reading



How do you celebrate the spirit of a town in a high-profile work of public art? This was the challenge presented to designer **Stuart Melrose** and artist **Kev Munday** when they were commissioned to create a stunning backlit mural made from **HIMACS solid surface** for the new £850million Station Hill development in Reading.

A key feature of a £1.5 million series of artworks, devised by cultural placemaking agency Futurecity, and commissioned and funded by Lincoln MGT JV, the mural is part of a public realm art trail across the two acres linking the station with the town centre, and is intended to both reflect and enhance the area's cultural legacy.

Having local connections, plus experience of the kind of material that could both capture the essence of the design and withstand the demands of an outdoor, high-traffic public installation, Melrose and Munday began the process by working with an advisory committee that included historians, local art groups and school children.

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High resolution images available: <https://www.lxhausys.com/eu-en/case-studies>



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“The experience was both inspiring and highly enjoyable,” says Stuart, “and it soon became clear there was fantastic scope for embodying Reading’s heritage and personality in a really vibrant, fun and distinctive way. Bringing artist Kev Munday on board was a no-brainer, his joyful, graffiti style work is unmistakable and absolutely ideal for this project.”

Welcoming arrivals to Reading from the train station, the mural marks an important pedestrian gateway to the town and frames the new underpass while being visible from a ‘pocket park’ opposite – the perfect vantage point from which to enjoy this spectacular installation. Considering its location, the mural needed to be formed of a material that could go the distance in terms of withstanding weather, a constant stream of passersby, and any damage it might incur.



“HIMACS was the obvious choice of materials from which to fabricate the mural,” confirms Stuart, “It has incredible design flexibility combined with the requisite toughness, it’s compatible with all the complex lighting and electronics, plus it’s non-porous, resistant and easy to clean, but can also be repaired, if necessary. The choice of Opal from the Lucent collection was the ideal way to get the eye-catching yet diffuse translucency we were after.”

## Paying artistic homage to a vibrant town, with help from its children

Aptly named “Royals, Residents & a Rock Festival”, the project acknowledges the area’s cultural heritage including famous faces associated with the town, such as **Kate Winslet**, **Ricky Gervais**, **Kate Middleton** (now HRH The Princess of Wales) and **Marianne Faithfull**, alongside local figures such as businesswoman **Tutu Melaku**, scientist **Dr Ethelwynn Trewavas** and table tennis champion **Matthew Syed**. Reading landmarks such as the Hexagon Theatre, the Oracle and ONE Station Hill – and of course the town’s globally renowned rock festival – are also depicted.

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It's clear by the delighted and fascinated reactions of passersby, day or night, that the installation is a popular and captivating success, which works beautifully as an urban regeneration project to engage townspeople and visitors alike – a worthy landmark for this important transport and economic hub and gateway to the west of England.



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"This hugely impressive public space is now effectively the town's new front door. The creation of an attractive green space and accompanying public square, complete with seating, sculptures and artwork, will quickly become a destination in its own right," says Councillor Liz Terry, leader of Reading Borough Council of the Station Hill project.

Lee Fearnhead, director of construction for UK & Europe at Lincoln Property Company, and on behalf of the Lincoln MGT JV, adds: "This newly landscaped area was previously a derelict, inaccessible site for the best part of 20 years. We have transformed it into a series of attractive open spaces which everyone in Reading can enjoy."

## How the mural was made:

"The installation is a kind of giant, complicated light box," explains Stuart Melrose. "The outer shell and the black lines that stencil the front of the piece and represent Kev's original artwork are made of powder coated aluminium. The real magic in the piece from a design perspective – which also makes it the first of its kind at this scale globally – is the way the rich and even LED colours fill the space between these lines, and glow from pastel tones to deeper shades as it gets darker outside."

To achieve this effect an extensive, programmable system for over 100,000 individually addressable LEDs was devised, together with something Stuart describes as a "cookie-cutter" style channel to guide the light, and crucially, choosing "the best diffuser we could find." This came in the form of HIMACS, a material capable of diffusing the illumination to optimal effect, spreading the light evenly and allowing for clarity of colour.



"What's more," as Stuart explains, "being the front-facing surface to an outdoor, 50m-long mural, it needed to be structurally strong enough and durable enough to withstand life in a public space and an extremely high traffic area. But we also needed something that could be

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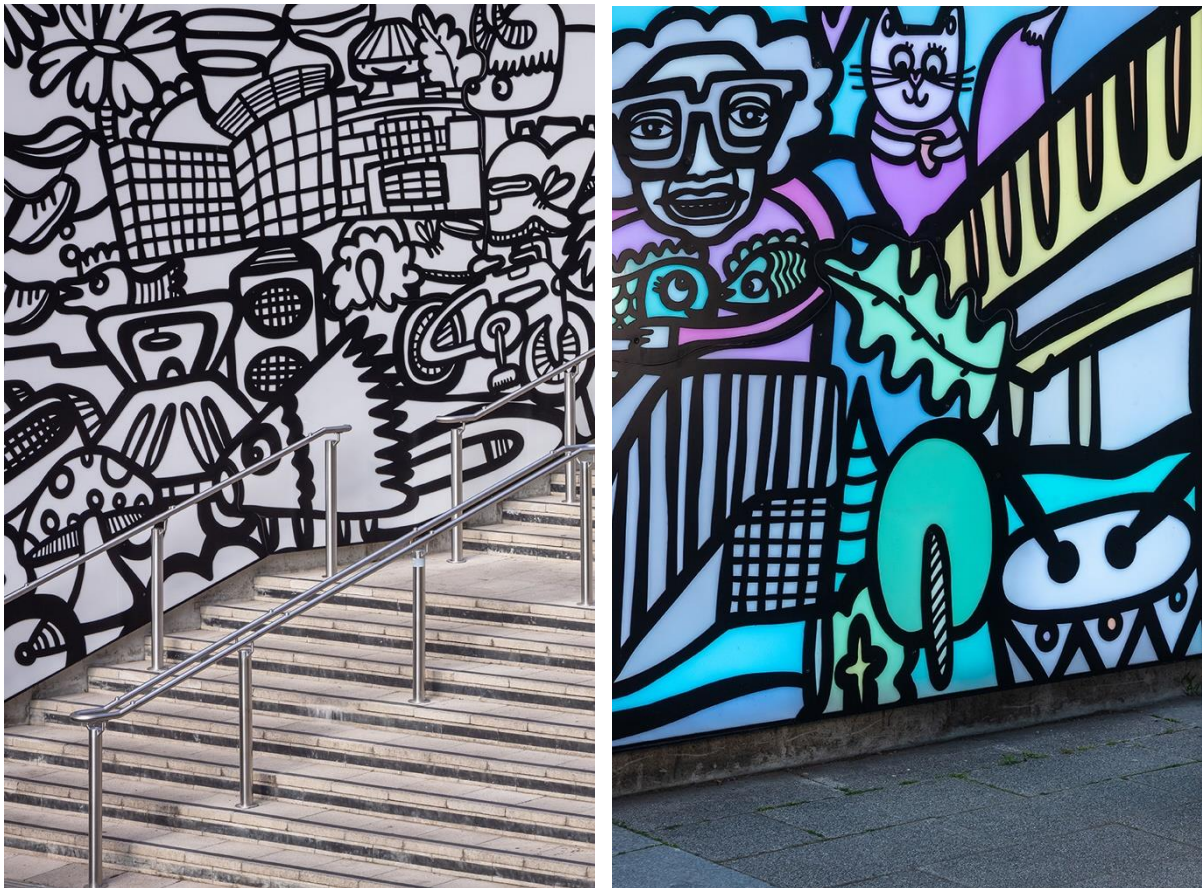
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repaired should any damage, accidental or deliberate, occur. Ultimately, there was only one solution to make our vision possible and that was class-leading, tough, translucent HIMACS.”

To span the extensive wall that frames the new underpass, ramp and steps, 54 sheets of HIMACS and the ‘lightbox’ frame were fabricated and fitted by façade specialists AGS System Ltd, with lighting supplied by Earlsmann and programmed by Lee Savage.

“The design demanded the HIMACS panels to be milled to precise dimensions,” adds Stuart, “So they could be put together like a giant puzzle that follows the aluminium lines at the front.” It was also essential that the panels could be removed for access to the electronics, while having expansion gaps between them.

Kev Munday, described by The Daily Mail as “the new Banksy”, is delighted with the result, and seeing his artwork come alive at such scale and luminosity. The collaboration with the schoolchildren resulted in a series of charming drawings which could then be adapted to his signature style. The black stencil lines needed to be drawn in such a way that every line and curve touches another, so that the “puzzle pieces” of the HIMACS elements could be fitted neatly into each aperture of the interconnected frame.



The Lighting programme also allows for animated effects, from the eyes of the characters often giving a cheeky wink here and there, to full scale colour changes and movements in which special effects such as fireworks or wording can move across the mural. In fact, Stuart even managed to surprise and delight his wife by having the mural declare a “Happy Valentine’s Day” when he gave her a sneak preview of the work!

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## **Stuart Melrose bio:**

Multifaceted design studio Stuart Melrose has worked with major global brands and won several awards, while gaining a large following on social media and the attention of the international design press. Stuart Melrose has been commissioned for special pieces at exhibitions such as Grand Designs Live, The Ideal Home of the Future, the Chelsea Flower show and George Clark's Amazing Spaces.

He has worked with architects Zaha Hadid and Foster + Partners plus clients such as Disney, Microsoft, BAA, The Discovery Chanel, Reading Borough Council, Hampshire County council, and many others. He has designed and produced items from large sculptures and public art through to world record-breaking lighting installations and a widely acclaimed furniture collection. Pushing the boundaries with materials and technology, Stuart enjoys an experimental and cutting-edge approach to design.

## **Kev Munday bio:**

Kev Munday crafts vibrant, utopian worlds and invites viewers to step inside and explore. Inspired by the energy of everyday life and people, his work celebrates the beauty in the ordinary, transforming it into something extraordinary. His art speaks to all ages and his signature style of bold black outlines and vivid block colours creates an electrifying visual impact. Perhaps best known for his iconic crowd paintings, his work is a vibrant tribute to diversity and community.

Munday's journey began in the early 2000s as a teenage graffiti artist and these accessible and engaging roots remain integral to his art today, whether adorning gallery walls or revitalising public spaces. Kev has collaborated with brands including IKEA and Nescafe Azera and his work has been exhibited in The Royal Academy of Arts, The Arnolfini and The Hayward Gallery. His work also extends beyond traditional art spaces and is often studied in schools – reinforcing his belief that art is not just to be observed but to be interacted with, explored and brought to life.

[Watch the video.](#)

## **PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Location:** Reading, UK

**Design:** Stuart Melrose [www.stuartmelrose.com](http://www.stuartmelrose.com) | [x.com/Stuart Melrose](https://x.com/StuartMelrose)

**Art:** Kev Munday [www.kevmunday.co.uk](http://www.kevmunday.co.uk) | [@Kevmunday](https://twitter.com/Kevmunday)

**Client:** Lincoln MGT [www.stationhill.co.uk](http://www.stationhill.co.uk)

**Curated by:** Futurecity [www.futurecity.co.uk](http://www.futurecity.co.uk)

**HIMACS Supplier:** James Latham [www.lathamtimber.co.uk](http://www.lathamtimber.co.uk) | [@lathamsltd](https://twitter.com/lathamsltd)

**Fabricator:** AGS System Ltd [www.agssystem.co.uk](http://www.agssystem.co.uk)

**Material:** HIMACS [Opal S302](#) | [@himacseurope](https://twitter.com/himacseurope)

**Lighting supply and Installation:** Earlsmann Lighting [www.earlsmann.co.uk](http://www.earlsmann.co.uk)

**Lighting programmer:** Lee Savage

**Photo credits:** Marcus Peel Photography | [@marcuspeelphotography](https://twitter.com/marcuspeelphotography)

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## HIMACS

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[www.lxhausys.com/eu/himacs](http://www.lxhausys.com/eu/himacs)

HIMACS is a solid surface material that can be moulded into any shape. It is widely used for architectural and interior applications, such as sculptural and high-performance wall cladding or kitchen, bathroom and furniture surfaces, in commercial, residential and public space projects. It is composed of minerals, acrylic and natural pigments that come together to provide a smooth, non-porous and visually seamless surface which meets the highest standards for quality, aesthetics, fabrication, functionality and hygiene – offering many advantages over conventional materials.

HIMACS provides limitless possibilities for surfacing solutions and inspires creative minds from all over the world. **Zaha Hadid, Jean Nouvel, Rafael Moneo, Karim Rashid, Marcel Wanders** and **David Chipperfield**, among others, have completed fabulous projects using HIMACS.

Proud to be at the forefront of innovation, LX Hausys made Solid Surface history with the introduction of **HIMACS Ultra-Thermoforming**, a pioneering formulation which pushes the boundaries of solid surface shaping to significant new levels with 30% greater thermoplastic capability. Furthermore, **HIMACS Intense Ultra** is a groundbreaking advance that now combines the qualities of both **Intense Colour Technology** and **Ultra-Thermoforming**.

To add to the benefits of working with HIMACS, now the iconic HIMACS Alpine White, plus a wide selection of colours, come with SCS certified pre-consumer recycled content for a more sustainable product offering.

HIMACS uses a simple heating process to give three-dimensional thermoplastic forming capabilities, allows visually seamless designs, offers a virtually limitless range of colours and – for some shades – exhibits a special translucency when exposed to light. Although HIMACS is almost as robust as stone, it can be worked in a similar way as wood: it can be sawn, routed, drilled or sanded.

HIMACS is made using a next-generation technology, the **thermal cure**. The temperature reached during the manufacturing process sets HIMACS apart from other solid surfaces and creates a denser surface that is even sturdier, more homogeneous and more durable, and with better resistance and superior thermoforming results.

HIMACS does not absorb humidity, is highly resistant to stains and is easy to clean, maintain and repair. HIMACS is composed from premium-quality materials, ensuring a surface that is free from harmful substances such as silica, formaldehyde, VOC emissions, and nanoparticles. Prioritising health and safety, HIMACS offers peace of mind for any environment.

Countless internationally recognised certificates attest to the quality of HIMACS in terms of ecological commitment, hygiene and fire resistance – being the first Solid Surface in the market to receive the official **European Technical Approval (ETA) for façades** – for the Alpine White S728 colour.

HIMACS offers a 15-year warranty for products fabricated by a Quality Club Member. For more information and to stay connected, visit our [EU WEBSITE](#), [UK WEBSITE](#) and our [newsroom](#).

*Let's connect!*



**HIMACS** is designed and produced by **LX Hausys (formerly LG Hausys)**, a world leader in the technology sector and a subsidiary of LX Holdings Corp.

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