



## Project Acknowledgements: **Recognising Our Partners and Contributors**

This new public artwork stands as a powerful symbol of the Belgrave community's rich history and shared stories, honouring the resilience and contributions of Leicester's migrating families. The installation is not just an artwork, but a lasting reminder of the strength that comes from diversity, and the importance of community.

A special thank you goes to Anu Patel, Mtec, BNCHA, and the Documentary Media Centre, whose hard work and dedication brought this project to life. We also extend our deepest gratitude to all the generous sponsors. Finally, we would like to thank everyone who shared their stories and ideas, and to all those who supported this project in so many ways. This collaborative effort has created a lasting landmark that celebrates the spirit and unity of the Belgrave community.



Leicester  
City Council

# SCULPTURAL gateway



## **A Community Collaboration**

**Celebrating 50 Years of Ugandan Asian Migration to Leicester**

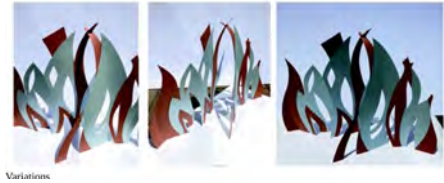


## Laying the Foundations: Community-Led Consultation and Artist Selection

Leicester Museum & Galleries began the process of commissioning Sculptural Gateway with an in-depth consultation involving local community leads and stakeholders. This early engagement was crucial in capturing the community's wishes, values, and cultural priorities. By gathering these insights, this ensured that the artist brief reflected the collective identity and memory of Leicester's Ugandan Asian diaspora, establishing a foundation for the artwork to be meaningful and representative.

The open call for artists in April 2022 attracted 19 submissions. From these, five artists were shortlisted to present their proposals to the commissioning panel. Following this, two artists were chosen for further detailed consideration, with technical advice on logistics and engineering provided to ensure the feasibility of the designs.

After thoughtful evaluation and discussion, Anuradha Patel's design for Sculptural Gateway was selected, marking the start of an artist-led collaborative process to bring the vision to life.



Variations

## A Symbol of Community and Connection

Anuradha's vision for Sculptural Gateway is rooted in the idea of unity and shared experience. The steel uprights of the artwork represent two distinct communities coming together, with the apex symbolising the point at which their stories and lives interlock. These differences between the uprights become the anchors and connections that give the sculpture its strength.

The arc formed overhead creates a sanctuary-like space beneath it, offering a sense of safety and belonging. Anuradha's intricate laser-cut designs capture the fauna and flora of Uganda, as well as poignant images of family life, migration, and hope. The words "Culture", "Hope", "Family," and "Peace", are inscribed within the steel, serving as a lasting testament to resilience and unity. Through this collaborative process with the community, Anuradha has created a work that speaks to shared memories, cultural heritage, and the journey towards a new life.



## Foreword by Lord Mayor

Uganda, Britain, Leicester! A journey made by many through confusion, despair, uncertainty, worries, hope, ambition, fulfilment, achievements and eventually ending up contributing to the rich culture and prosperity of the City we are now proud to call our Home, our Leicester.

Leicester is a city with a huge number of diverse communities and beliefs and a place that has a long history of welcoming and accepting people from all over the world. Both I and the lady Mayoress are Ugandan Asians and arrived in Leicester in 1972. Over the last fifty-two years, we have seen Leicester change in many different ways. What has, however, not changed is the desire of different communities to stay united and live peacefully together.

To symbolise this Unity and shared experience, Leicester City Council, together with the support of the communities, commissioned the public artwork, known as the 'Sculptural Gateway' which was 'brought to life' by Anuradha Patel who also came to Britain in 1972 from Uganda.

The sculpture reflects the fauna and flora of East Africa as well as family life, migration and hope. Anuradha, through this artwork, has also captured the essence of Leicester's spirit, Leicester's resilience, and Leicester's rich cultural heritage.

This is a joint effort that recognises the local people who inspired a new public artwork, and the donors who contributed to creating a new public open space.

Finally, a special thanks and recognition to the City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby who has encouraged and supported this initiative.

As a Ugandan Asian and now a Leicesterian, I feel honoured and privileged to open this Sculptural Gateway and launch the Commemorative Booklet celebrating 50 years of Ugandan Asian Migration to Leicester.

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Councillor **Bhupen Dave**

## History of Ugandan Asians in Leicester: Migration and Resettlement

In the early 1960s the population of Uganda included about 76,000 Asians, originating from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, many of whom had built successful businesses. In 1971 the head of the army, General Idi Amin, seized power in a military coup. On the 4th August 1972, Amin ordered all Asians to leave the country within the next 90 days, or face the violent consequences.

Many Ugandan Asians were British citizens. A total of 27,200 sought sanctuary in the United Kingdom, arriving penniless, and having been forced to leave their possessions behind. Over 10,000 settled in Leicester and nearby Loughborough. Despite the hardships, this new community rebuilt their lives, made new homes, and created new businesses.

# Community Engagement



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## Behind Sculptural Gateway

The creation of Sculptural Gateway was a true community effort, embodying the spirit of collaboration between the artist, Anuradha Patel, and the residents of the Belgrave Neighbourhood Cooperative Housing Association (BNCHA).

Public consultation was recognised as essential from the very beginning of the project, with the aim of ensuring that the artwork reflected the most important memories and messages from Leicester's Ugandan Asian community and others who have migrated to the city.

The artist brief was carefully crafted to highlight the importance of collaboration, with the community playing a key role in influencing the themes and design of the final piece. Throughout the design and development process, Anuradha Patel led a series of artist-led engagement sessions, including visits to the UA50 Rebuilding Lives Exhibition with local residents, "Meet the Artist" events at the Belgrave

Mela, and participatory arts activities held at locations such as Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, Belgrave Library, and public art pop-ups at Highcross.

Workshops allowed community members to contribute their memories, stories, and ideas, which were incorporated into the intricate details of the sculpture's design. Anuradha used these shared experiences to shape the final artwork, translating them into the detailed laser cuts that define the sculpture.

This collaborative approach ensured that Sculptural Gateway became not just an artwork, but a reflection of Leicester's Ugandan Asian migration history and the wider community's journey. The process not only influenced the final piece, but also created an enriching experience for residents, offering them a chance to connect, share, and see their stories immortalised in a public artwork that will stand as a lasting testament to their heritage.



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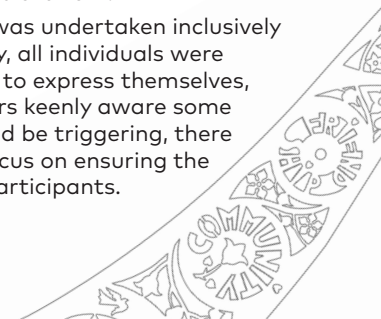
## Voices Unheard: Sharing Memories and Building Connections

A poignant feature throughout the consultation was the willingness of participants to talk about their experiences. Whilst contributing voices were primarily Ugandan Asian, others came from diverse backgrounds, including Kenyan, Indian, Polish, and Sri Lankan.

There was a desire for their stories to be heard, with a number of participants stating they had never spoken about some of their experiences before. The sessions identified commonalities amongst individuals who arrived in

Leicester in the second half of the 20th Century. The activity was described as nostalgic, inclusive and sometimes traumatic. It was critical to consider these emotions when progressing the artwork.

Engagement was undertaken inclusively with sensitivity, all individuals were allowed space to express themselves, with facilitators keenly aware some memories could be triggering, there was always focus on ensuring the wellbeing of participants.





## Creating a Shared Space for the Community

The ongoing consultation demonstrated the importance of recognising myriad migrating families and individuals that have journeyed to Leicester over the last 70+ years. There was also recognition of a public demand for continued involvement in the project.

Discussions explored the potential to make Belgrave Circle a shared space that was relevant to the whole community. This led to the idea of using the UA50 public sculpture as a key feature of a designated shared

green space: an inclusive area for contemplation and reflection, for all communities, to come and celebrate their different journeys to Leicester. The proposal was for a community space that would cement a sense of shared ownership of the project. The introduction of landscaped elements also provided opportunities for individuals to donate and contribute to this landmark public artwork and green space.

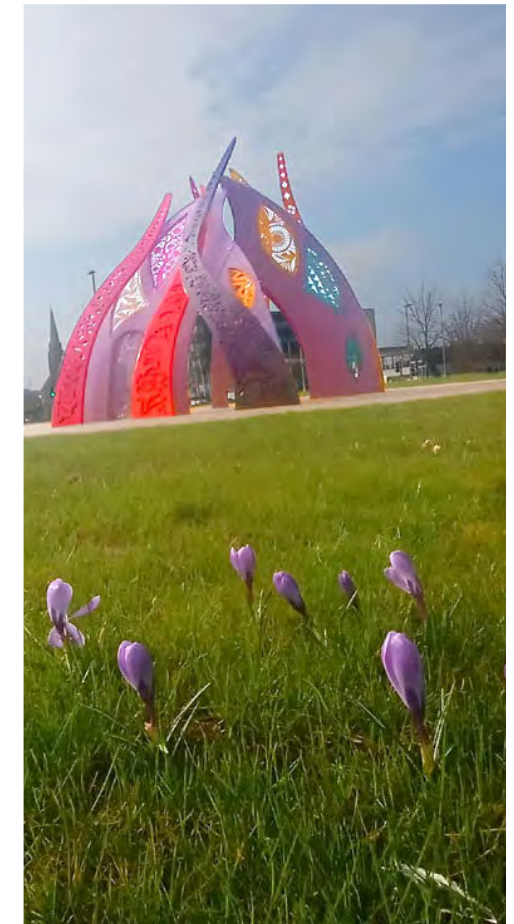


## A Space Made Possible by Generous Sponsors

Thanks to the generous donations from sponsors, engraved granite paving was introduced as a key feature of the shared space at Belgrave Circle. These contributions helped bring additional landscaping enhancements to life, completing the transformation in Spring 2024.

The site now includes a sloped, accessible sweeping path that curves around the base of the Sculptural Gateway, allowing visitors to walk through the steel uprights and appreciate the artwork from multiple angles. The surrounding grassed area has been enriched with year-round colour through bulb planting, while new benches and trees have been thoughtfully placed to create a welcoming, peaceful space for the community.

Community Space works at the Belgrave Circle site were managed by the City Highways team with support from colleagues in Landscaping.







### Recognising the Contributions of the Sculptural Gateway Sponsors

We sincerely thank all the donors who supported "Sculptural Gateway" by engraving their family names in the granite paving. Your generosity honours the legacy of our community and ensures its stories endure for future generations. Your contributions have become a lasting part of this shared space, and we are deeply grateful for your support.

#### Donor Thanks:

**Name:** Aslam Manji  
**Hometown:** Otuboi Near Soroti (Teso District)

**Name:** Akberali Allibhai & Rubabbai Kapasi Butiabawalla  
**Hometown:** Masindi in the Kingdom of Bunyoro Kitara

**Name:** Sheikh Jafferhusein Kapasi OBE NDI Consul General Uganda and Yasmin  
**Hometown:** Masindi in the Kingdom of Bunyoro Kitara

**Name:** Bhagu Lalita Bharkhada  
**Hometown:** Jinja

**Name:** Madhavji Naranji Dave  
**Hometown:** Busembatia

**Name:** Maniben M. Dave  
**Hometown:** Busembatia

**Name:** Harshavadan M. Dave  
**Hometown:** Busembatia

**Name:** Rashmi H. Dave  
**Hometown:** Busembatia & Pakwach

**Name:** Manjula M. Dave  
**Hometown:** Busembatia

**Name:** Surendra M. Dave  
**Hometown:** Busembatia

**Name:** Subhash M. Dave  
**Hometown:** Busembatia

**Name:** Bharti & Atul K. Sharma  
**Hometown:** Pakwach & Kisumu

**Name:** Harjivan M. Modha  
**Hometown:** Pakwach & Arua

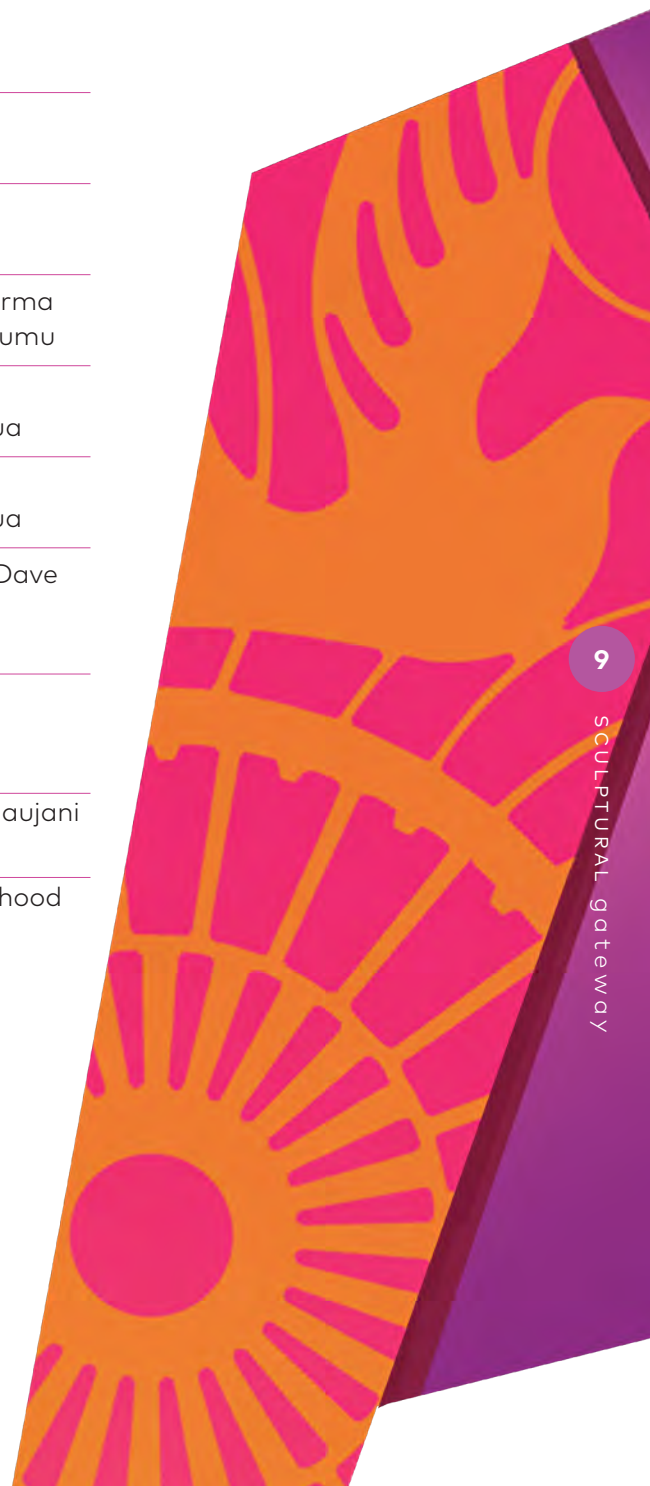
**Name:** Dayaben H. Modha  
**Hometown:** Pakwach & Arua

**Name:** Bhupendra & Usha Dave  
**Hometown:** Busembatia & Pakwach

**Name:** Dilip & Sarojni Dave  
**Hometown:** Busembatia & Nairobi

**Name:** Harshad & Ranjan Saujani  
**Hometown:** Mbale

**Name:** Belgrave Neighbourhood Co-Op Residents  
**Hometown:** N/A





### [1] Card Maquette from Engagement Sessions

A card maquette used during public engagement sessions, showcasing the intricate laser-cut details that would later be transformed into the final design of the artwork.



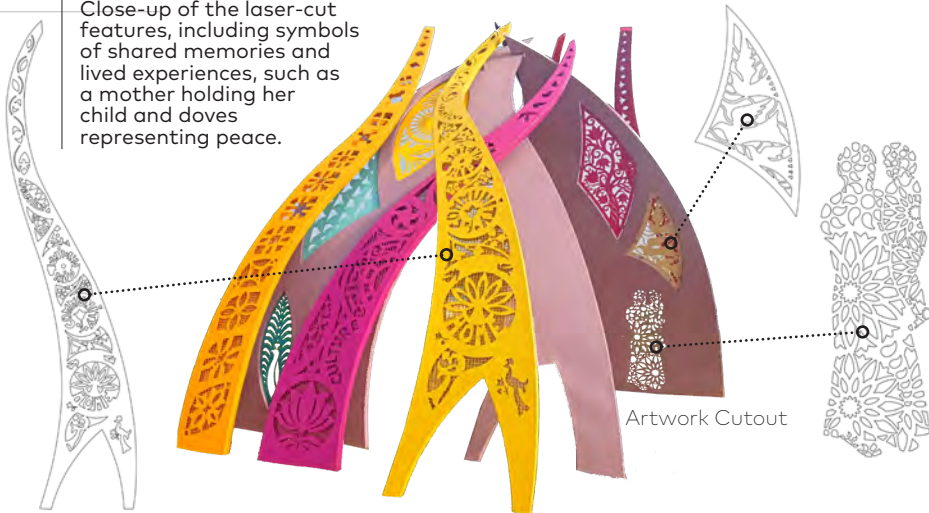
### [2] Engineering Drawing of the Final Structure

An image from the engineering plans illustrating the final structural elements of the "Sculptural Gateway", ensuring its durability and stability.



### [3] Laser-Cut Details Highlighting Shared Memories

Close-up of the laser-cut features, including symbols of shared memories and lived experiences, such as a mother holding her child and doves representing peace.



### [4] Colour Choices for the Steel Uprights

A display of colour swatches showing the bright, bold shades chosen for the steel uprights, adding vibrancy to the artwork.



### [5] Artwork in the Manufacturing Stages

An inside look at the artwork during its manufacturing process, where the steel uprights are being crafted and assembled to bring the design to life.



## Anuradha Patel - Artist Biography

Anuradha Patel is an Indian artist born in Gujarat, India, who spent her formative years in Uganda, East Africa. Her childhood was marked by exploring the natural world in an outdoor environment with a near-perfect climate, instilling in her a deep appreciation for plant forms and the intricate details of nature.

In 1972, as a young child, Anuradha and her family were forced into exile from Uganda by Idi Amin's regime, relocating to England. This significant upheaval profoundly impacted her perspective and artistic journey. In the early 1980s, she began her formal education in Fine Art, developing a diverse practice across various media.

Anuradha's work is deeply influenced by her life in transit, which has both challenged and inspired her creative process. She often creates public artworks in metal, utilising industrial processes such as laser cutting. This technique allows her to transfer her studio practice of paper cutting into intricately cut designs in metal. Much of her work is made by steel fabricators based on detailed designs, either as computer-generated drawings or maquettes. Methods include laser cutting, rolling, and welding steel plates and sections.

Her public art commissions frequently involve collaboration with local communities, including residents, schools, and other design professionals. These commissions often take the form of sculptures or functional designs and are usually site-specific. The choice of materials is often determined by the concept and the nature of the location or site. Anuradha's art reflects her awe for the natural order, the defiance of nature, and the silent intelligence with which it continues to survive and grow. This unique perspective infuses her work with a deep sense of connection to the environment and the enduring resilience of the natural world.

