



Can contemporary art really make a difference in the real world?

When millionaire art world collides

with west London suburbia it's...



**Drew** - Has done well as an artist - he's never hit the headlines or made mega-bucks from his art - but he's enjoying the good life. He has a great life, a gorgeous wife, a lovely five bed house in Docklands and a new collection nearing completion.



His ex-model wife **Angie** supports his art career and manages his business affairs. She's invested all of their savings in a very lucrative commercial property deal in a west London business development hot spot through Mr Singh.



**Edward** - Is a savvy and ambitious art dealer who owns a very respected gallery in Mayfair. He has worked hard to establish a good reputation in the international art world - but in an unregulated market he's willing to use all of the tricks of his trade to get the best prices - by direct sales to collectors and also by advising clients on auction sales strategies.

Edward has represented Drew for many successful years but at the same time is on the lookout for the next big money deal to get him into the billionaire art market.

Edward is waiting to present Drew's new collection and has just received an extraordinary call from an American heiress with a multi-million \$ art collection.



**Eleanor** - Is a New York socialite who has recently inherited her father's art collection. She's visiting London to manage the Christie's auction of 75 major works. For personal - and sentimental reasons - she has approached Edward's gallery to place six very special pieces with carefully selected new owners.



**Mr Singh** - Is an honest and hard-nosed property dealer. He's made a personal fortune from lettings in the domestic market and has recently made a move to invest in commercial property at what he judges to be the bottom of the cycle. He sees himself as the perfect middle man, bringing people together.



**Jay** - Singh's youngest son is a free spirit and enjoys a bit of wheeling and dealing. He does not enjoy the tedious diligence his father demands. Jay is ambitious to make his own way in the world - loves flash cars and good music - but all with his dad's cash.



**Toto** - After leaving art college he made a good career designing album covers. Then a bizarre accident left him colour blind. Now he only sees the world in shades of grey. This brought him to the brink of suicide and then Gwyneth a medical specialist helped him adjust.



**Cat** - Is a fiery Irish earth-mother who scrapes by as a painter in St. Ives.

She went to art school with Drew but after getting married she left the London scene and never returned. She eventually split from her abusive husband but has never recovered emotionally - and it shows in her work.



**Tim** - Is a hard living, fast-talking art director in advertising and occasionally for film.

He's a libertarian and has problems with authority - having been black-listed by a couple of agencies for his professional - or rather unprofessional - and highly vocal outbursts. He hates TV and loves movies.



**Stu** - Is a talented and lovable romantic. He tried to make a career in art but slid into buying and selling objets d'art - anything from furniture to vintage cars. His interior design clients trust his impeccable good taste.

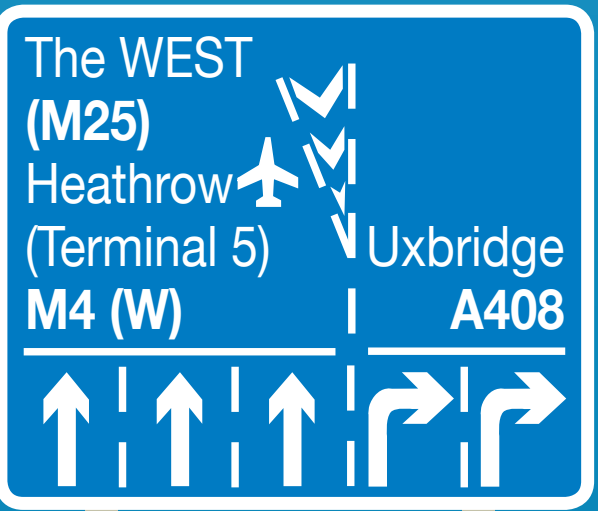
He loves women (several), his three boys, graphic novels and science fiction.



What happens when an established contemporary artist is parted from the prestige and glamour of his Mayfair gallery and is pushed to the end of the line?

His crazy scheme to survive in suburbia could save him...

...but only if contemporary art really can make a difference - in the real world!



**Gwyneth** - Is a talented - and incredibly intelligent - neurologist. She specialises in helping patients with difficult conditions. She has taken a special interest in Toto's case and is using his case for a further doctoral thesis related to how the brain interprets colour and images.



# The shark-infested waters of the London art world - will the nostalgic heiress sink or swim?

The Young British Art (YBA) movement of the 1990s marked a sea change in the art world.

New money from hedge funds and emerging markets fuelled wild speculation.

Old masters are rarely for sale. Collectors had to buy contemporary, shocking art. Artists, dealers, auction houses, critics, and curators were eager to please - artists became big brands.



The art market remains unregulated, allowing the players to cut whatever deals they see fit.

A New York collector said: *"Within the decade I predict we will see the first billion dollar artwork."*

## A multi-million £ art sell-off

American heiress **Eleanor Graham** is selling the bulk of her late father's art collection at auction. The estimated value of the sale is \$400m. She has asked high profile London art dealer **Edward Gilchrist** to place selected pieces with carefully chosen collectors and galleries.

She plans to use the proceeds to set up an art foundation and hopes



to follow in her father's footsteps by creating a contemporary collection that will grow in value over the long term to leave a significant cultural

and financial legacy.

Eleanor instructs Edward: "I don't just want them sold, I want them sold to the right hearts and minds".

## Bidding smart and bidding up

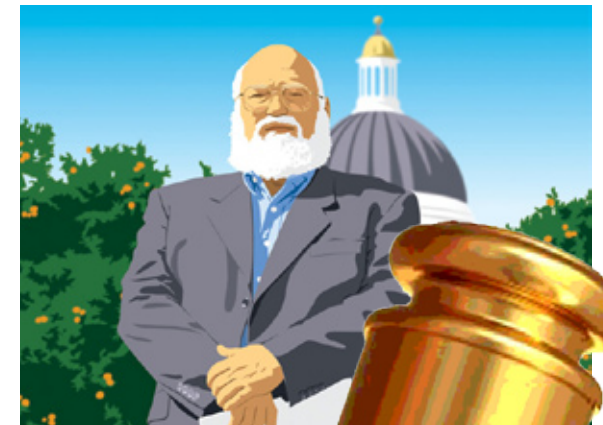
Edward ensures that Eleanor gets the best prices by, if necessary, bidding up the price over the telephone. As Edward explains *"Even Rembrandt did it"*.

The auction is a success and Edward has six further valuable paintings in his gallery. *"This one hung above my parents' bed"*, Eleanor laments.

## Collector

**Randall Graham** - Eleanor's father was always passionate about art and since the early 1940's had created a significant collection of over 400 masterpieces.

Having made his fortune young he preferred to keep his power in the shadows and always thought of himself as a philanthropist.



## Brand

## Dealer

## Auction

Gone were the days when art needed a tortuous rationale. Artists, art, even dealers and collectors became global brands for consumption by a new breed of billionaires. Auction houses guaranteed huge prices.

## Artist

## Gallery

### A new collection - to lift a modest career

**Drew** is an established artist, who is successful but hasn't hit the big time - he isn't yet a brand.

He's just produced a series of paintings representing a radical departure from his established style. It's based on nature, rather than science, his normal subject matter.

He's hoping that his dealer and collectors will accept this new work.



PRICELESS

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Edward's gallery, The Gilchrist in Mayfair, has developed a reputation for contemporary art since the 1980s. He had bought out the previous owner, his uncle Charley, who was successful in selling postwar paintings during the 1960s.

Edward has a growing circle of European and American collectors and curators.

He has sponsored Drew's career but now it's time to part company. This is because Edward is entering the big league while Drew's career is likely to remain modestly successful.

Drew recognises that Edward is now a player.

Edward invites Drew to the studio to meet Eleanor to look at six postwar masterpieces - Jasper Johns, Pollock, Rothko, deKoning, Warhol and a Lichtenstein.

Eleanor talks to, and inspires Drew with her passion for art and her nostalgia for her father's style of benign patronage.

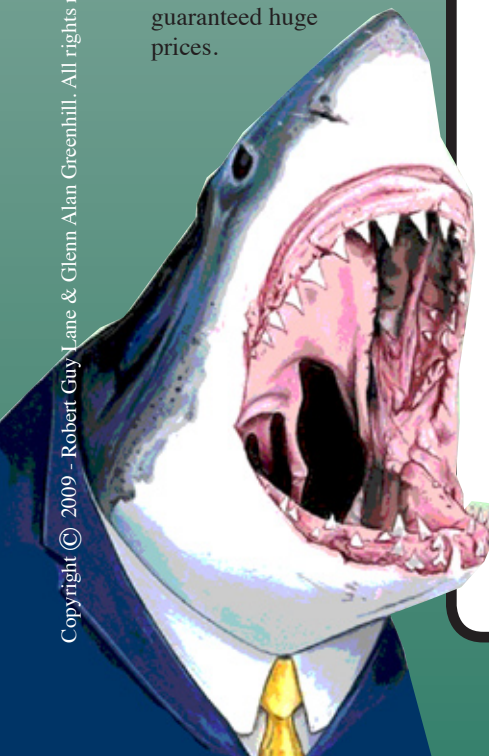
*"Daddy would never buy a piece without meeting the artist - he had to be convinced by the man before he was convinced by the work."*

CHRISTIE'S

OLD MASTERS & 19TH CENTURY ART

### Eleanor's auction experience

*"I'd never been to an art auction before. To see Daddy's painting, the one that used to be above his desk, on the stage, with all the lights and the people and everything, made me feel strange. Edward had helped me deal with the auction house but he wasn't there so I was on my own. The bidding started and the whole thing made me feel sick with nerves - I had to go to the bathroom. The paintings were all sold for way more than I thought possible. When I was a kid I didn't realise they were valuable. I can't go through that again and asked Edward to sell my six remaining paintings privately."*





# Caught on the tusks of a dilemma - in the form of an art deco-style white elephant



Drew's wife, Angie, his business manager, has mistakenly invested a large amount of their capital in an office development in Uxbridge.

## A capital mistake

It was a done deal - but now it's unravelling rapidly. The new business tenant may not be taking the space after all, amidst rumours of going into liquidation in the wake of the financial crisis.

Mr Singh Senior brokered the deal - he gave his warnings - now whether the tenant moves in or not - he wants his money.

## Mr Singh bids for but doesn't win a personalised number plate for his Bentley - it goes for over £250,000

Mr and Mrs Singh have five children - Jay is the youngest. Mr Singh is a first generation immigrant whose family came to England in 1956 - after India won independence - and his family chose to take British citizenship.

## A big break - but not for Drew and Angie

At this time of crisis, Drew presents the first pieces from his new collection to Edward. Edward rejects them. He recommends that Drew find a new dealer because he will be fully absorbed in handling the sale of Eleanor's selected pieces and advising on the New York auction. He expects to be out of the country for a while establishing a new gallery there.

Drew has to make a very big decision. Does he continue to try to let the office to a corporate tenant... or should he use the space himself for some commercial venture?

Drew decides to grasp his own destiny and pledges to put on his own gallery show - and to do it in the almost complete office block.



His reputation as an artist, his future, his security and that of his family are all now on the line...

Angie quips: *"It's not exactly the Venice Biennale, is it, Drew?"*

## It's the end of a lifestyle - not the end of life!

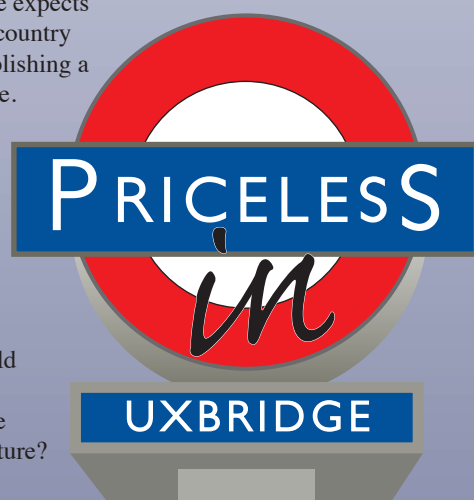
Drew and Angie sell their house in Docklands and move into the office building. They use the money to convert the offices into a gallery space, equip an artists' workshop, create a cafe, boardroom - and move into a houseboat on the Grand Union Canal. For Drew and Angie's son Ben - it's all a great adventure.



All the furniture and personal possessions that won't fit into the houseboat are stored at the office. It looks like an installation.

Ben, Drew's kid, loves playing in the great open spaces.

He hires a team of production assistants - but after a very short time he realises he cannot possibly fill the vast space with his work. He's productive but getting close to despair.



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# A grand re-union on the Union Canal - can this lifeline from the past rescue all their futures?

One day whilst frantically looking for something Drew finds a college photograph album. Out of the album fall small paintings and a random collection of show invitations and memorabilia.

The possibility that Drew's college colleagues may be able to help forms in his mind – he discusses this with Angie and they agree to ask his college buddies to help fill the gallery with work.

Angie cautions that they might not be interested or even available as they have all made lives for themselves - but they resolve to invite them for dinner and to show them the office, the town and then pitch them the idea.



### Toto's condition:

A while ago he had a car accident and woke up in hospital completely blind. After a while he started seeing again - but only in black-and-white and is diagnosed as having achromatopsia, a neurological disorder.

Following the accident, Toto couldn't appreciate food, music, and couldn't even touch his girlfriend, who became alarmed, upset and alienated. To him, her body looked like a corpse - sadly they split.

Toto had often considered suicide but has now adjusted to his condition, thanks to the help of his consultant, Gwyneth.

Gwyneth had given Toto him some 'Mondrian testing' and fitted him with special green glasses.

He has recently started feeling more confident has been going out, mainly at night.

### Toto's reaction:

I'm starting to feel more positive now. This new project of Drew's is quite interesting and I reckon I could produce some quite interesting images for the show.

### Dr Gwyneth Sax comes to dinner too...

Toto invites Gwyneth to the dinner. She's highly intelligent, interested in Toto's case, and increasingly attracted to him. She's also quite interested in art because it's a different world from academia.



### Dining with destiny:

Drew's old art school friends arrive:

Cat, a fiery Irish redhead who eeks out a life as a painter in Cornwall;

Tim, a rather cold art director who has a problem with society;

Stu, freelance trader, the guy that's always done things his way;

Toto, a graphic designer who suffers from periods of acute depression.



### Cat's reaction:

Cat thinks it's pretty barmy but she's no stranger to strange ideas.

*"I think it's a crazy idea - Uxbridge is a long way from St Ives - where the community cares about art.."*

As for the art, she says, *"I'm not really good enough and never was."*

She knows she can at least keep them all clean and fed - and can certainly knock up a good spag-bol.



### Tim's reaction:

*"It's all photocopiers and software here, isn't it?"*

I've been there a few times to present ad concepts to clients.

*"The last time I came here I got three points on my licence for speeding, thanks to all the speed cameras - but I fancy giving art a go again."*

Tim knows it's near Pinewood, so he might be able to pick up a bit of work there too"



### Stu's reaction:

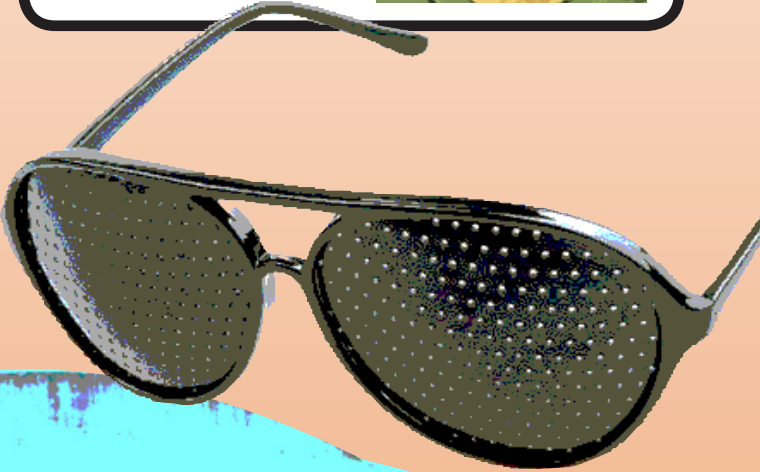
*"The only genuine antique in Uxbridge is the retro office building you bought."*

Stu genuinely thinks that Drew and Angie might have bitten off more than they can chew, but says,

*"Count me in because I could always do with a bit more storage space near London."*



Stu: *"Drew, it's not the Guggenheim museum - it's just a car park ramp to a shopping mall!"*





# Getting out on the town - getting inspired by all the things they see and the people they meet



## ...their take of the town

**Drew** meets them at The Swan and Bottle, where their canal boat home is moored - just on the other side of the canal from his office building.

The group split off and go on a 'recce' of the area along the canal tow paths and through the High Street, often stopping to chat to people and collect opinions. They think it's okay - for a suburb!

Later that evening, they have a proper reunion

dinner - set up in the boardroom of the empty office building - created from their furniture over flow, it's like a virtual room. They order a huge take-away and enjoy an Indian banquet.

They get some music going and Drew projects the photos each have taken of the neighbourhood onto the drop-down, remote controlled projector screen.

Seeing the images in turn - we see that each has a different take on the town.

Uxbridge is all about transport and stuff - the old Grand Union canal, the railways, M4, M40 and M25 motorways, and Heathrow within spitting distance.

Stu responds, "*The weird thing is that you don't hear the planes here - the flight paths go over the refined areas of west London like Richmond - my clients are always complaining about it.*"

Tim says "*There's no contemporary art round here. It's all about shopping and stuff. Then there's Denham, where*

*TV celebs live... and Pinewood Studios, where they make the James Bond films."*

The locals are into the usual things - commuting, football, shopping, and television. The kids get totally fucked up at the weekend on alcohol and drugs. There's a large Asian community that's spread here from Hounslow and Southall.

Drew presents his financial problem and

his proposal - which is to convert the empty office building into a gallery space - and to then fill it with art pieces... the consensus is that it could be a great opportunity to do something different - art that's relevant in the real world - for local people.

The group agree that if Drew is willing to take the gamble - then they are all willing to have a go at helping him pull it off.



# Five artists come alive in Uxbridge - producing real art that has real meaning to real people.

The group sign up to Drew's plan to turn the office into an art gallery - and to fill it with new work. The opening is scheduled to be in less than two months' time.

The group use the name '**The Grand Reunion**' and agree to create and show work that has a real relevance to the local community, and society in general.

They don't want to moralise - but they do want to produce art that will appeal to the whole community - and then persuade them to visit the gallery and buy.

Drew is under big financial pressure. He needs to make the show a commercial success, otherwise he and Angie will lose everything "*I need this plan to make money too...*"

**Tim** gets started first - being motivated by a bad experience with the local traffic police - who catch him speeding on a radar gun.

**Stu** comes back from a pub crawl - stone cold sober - creates multi-media experiences featuring a range of 'boozier' paraphernalia.

Cat tries to paint Uxbridge urban scenes, but lacks confidence, until she's encouraged by **Toto**, who's into black-and-white imagery of the local disenfranchised.

**Cat** then moves into doing artwork relating to teenage pregnancy and domestic violence.

Everyone appears to be

doing well when to their consternation, **Drew** announces to the group that he's going to take a back seat and be the gallery manager and curator, rather than show his new work.

"Angie pleads - "*Now that's really is crazy Drew, you are the only one with a name that's known.*"

Drew replies - "*Not round here - my name and reputation means nothing round here - but this guy's does...*"

So they're joined by Jay Singh, who gives the group a local, ethnic influence. Jay creates installations of brightly coloured Asian consumer products.

The pressure builds as the deadline looms.

The group work longer and longer hours and gradually the gallery takes shape.

There are however, worries along the way:

**Tim** gets yet more speeding points

The local **planning officer** challenges the change of use from office to public space

They get a visit from the **health & safety** inspector, who miraculously gives them a green light, as long as they provide wheelchair access

They get a visit from the **community police**, who

are concerned about the seditious nature of the speed camera art

**Stu** gets moody because he fancies **Gwyneth**, who has fallen for **Tim**; and he can't have **Cat** because she's fallen for **Toto**, who's a softy

**Angie** threatens to leave **Drew** and go to her mother's with **Ben** (their son) because of the financial pressure

**Stu's** wife in Nottingham is exasperated because he's been away so long; she turns up with their three kids..

The four kids survey the work and give us a child's perspective on several finished pieces - they consult on where they should be hung in the gallery space....

## Tim and Gwyneth get emotionally involved

At the dinner Tim and Gwyneth are attracted to each other. It's physical. And as they converse, Tim's also amazed by her brains, while Gwyneth warms to his brand of cynical wit.

They go for a walk together along the tow path after the dinner and agree to see each again. The next evening they meet at an Uxbridge hotel for a cocktail and end up taking a room overlooking the 'Guggenheim car park'.





# New work is hung for the first time - The Grand Reunion Gallery starts to become a reality...

The office building is now transformed into a real art gallery.

The group desperately try to promote the show but there's no budget and they're not plugged into the artocracy.

Mayfair seems a million miles away - and the art critics aren't interested in

Uxbridge even if Drew had any pull.

Drew decides to get local people involved.

He persuades the group to talk to local residents, shoppers and pubgoers about art. He says *"It's art for you, for the locals - come and give it a try..."*

Drew gets on the local



Asian radio station, in the local papers and on websites to draw everyday people to the show.

Jay starts producing work and it looks like he's got his crew onto the task of 'persuading' the local hoodies to pass the word - or rather - text the word around the local area. It all depends on opening night now...

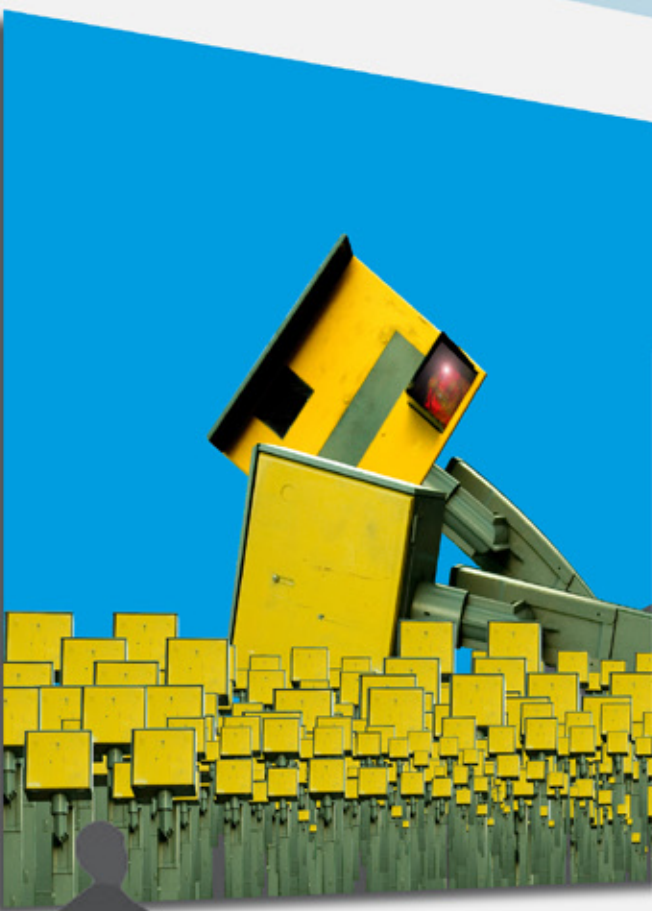


## Jay's story

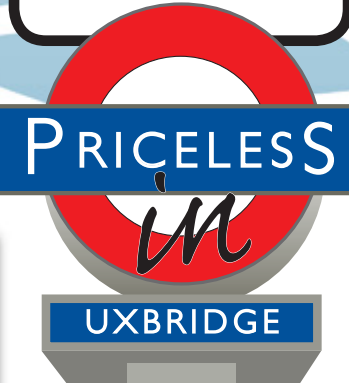
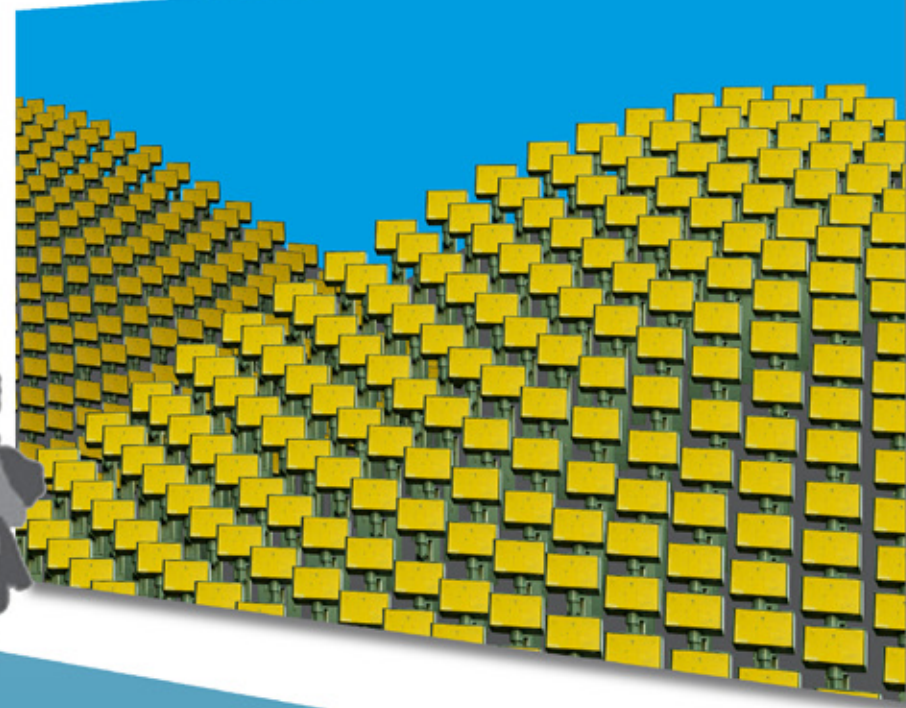
Drew invites him to join the group. *"We really need some local spice"*, he explains.

Jay Singh Junior wanted to go to art college but his father wouldn't allow it. Jay convinces his father that art can mean more, and be worth more, than a personalised number plate.

...but are the artists going to get lynched or loved by the local community?



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# It's the night of the opening - the heiress is flying from T5 - will the gallery crash and burn?



## The airport run

Edward and Eleanor are in the hired black Bentley, driving along the M4 motorway on their way to Heathrow Terminal 5.

They are flying to New York to oversee the auction sale at Christie's.

The traffic is horrendously jammed up - Edward is anxious to not miss the plane - he asks the driver, *"Do you know a better way?"*

The driver is Jay and he swings the Bentley off the motorway - which turns out to be the way to the show.

Jay sneaks along back streets until they arrive at a building that's brightly lit up with a crowd of people outside. *"What's that?"* he asks the driver - *"Dunno (Jay lies) some ponsey art gallery I think"*



Edward tells the driver to speed past, but Eleanor insists on stopping

*"There's always a plane to New York - this looks neat".* Turning to Edward, she says *"You can take care of things in New York for me - I'm sure that staying to see this is what my daddy would have done."*

Eleanor goes into the show and likes what she sees.

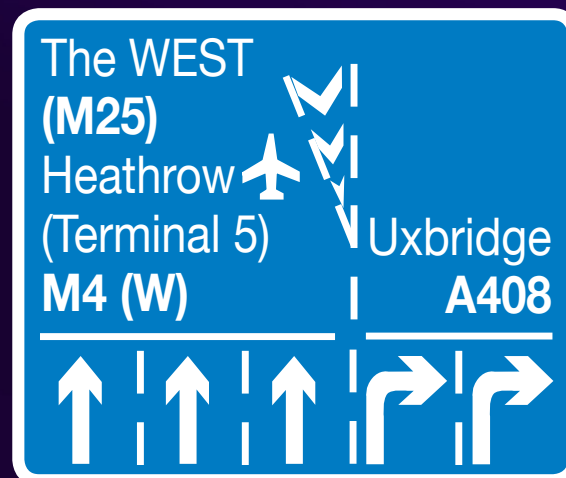
There are a lot of local people there but noone from the London art scene.

Eleanor feels she's made a real discovery.

An auction is heard in the background. *"Am I bid four pounds for this item? Six pounds? Do I hear eight?"*

This turns out to be just a sideshow auction for merchandise relating to the artwork on display - items such as T-shirts and beer mats - rather than an auction for the art itself.

Meanwhile, Jay drops Edward off at Terminal 5.



Edward hands Jay £5,000 in cash as payment for Jay's art piece at the show.

He also tells Jay *"If you want, call Felicity at my gallery and she'll fix the press and critics to attend. Somehow, I don't think you'll need to."*

Meanwhile, back at the



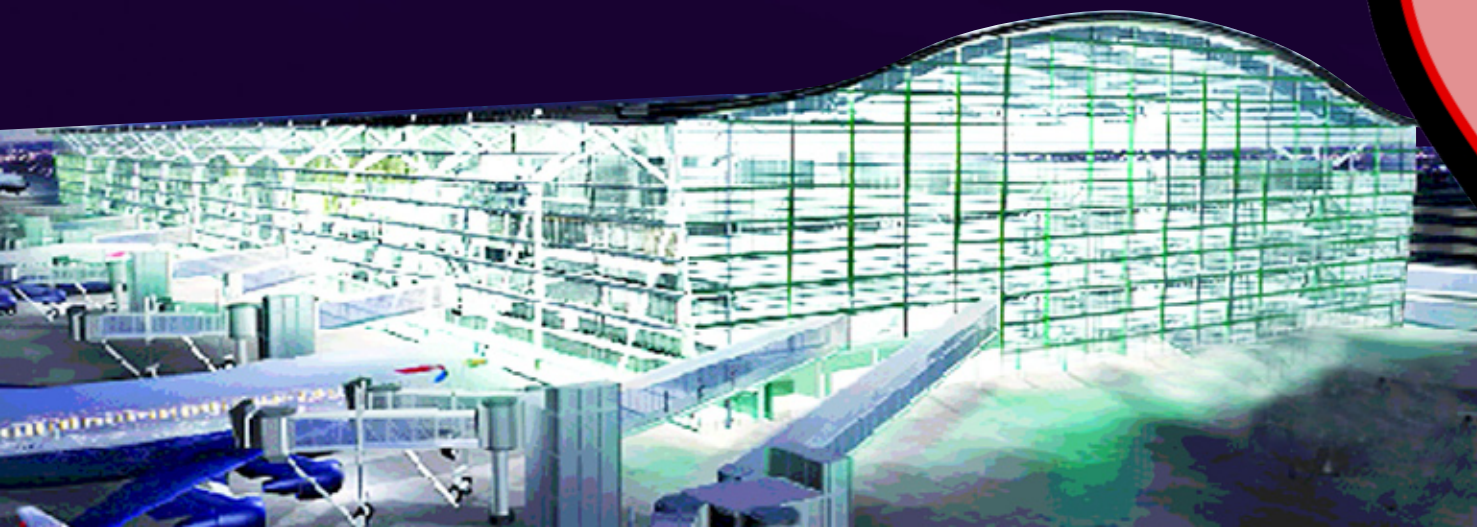
gallery, in the boardroom, Eleanor writes out a cheque for all of the work.

The cheque is passed around the group and we see their reactions in turn. It's obviously a very large number.



## Cat and Toto and get emotionally involved

Cat, earth mother, cares for Toto in his black-and-white world and they rekindle a relationship they had while at art school years before.





It's the dawn of a new chapter in the lives of everyone involved - which makes it absolutely...



PRICELESS

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UXBRIDGE



### Francis Bacon (and eggs)

Drew and Angie are bailed out - the locals are drawn to the gallery and eventually, Mayfair is drawn to Uxbridge.

This story has a happy ending. Why not? After

all, Eleanor came up with the monster cheque, Drew's finances are sorted out and the **Grand Reunion Gallery** is making a mark on the local community - and the art world.

So for Drew and Angie the M40 turned out to be the Yellow Brick Road.

And to cap it all, the talk in Frank's Coffee Shop has changed from The X-Factor and the Premier League to art analysis.

It's gone from Beckham to Basquiat... from celebrity gossip to theories of form and colour. Uxbridge has given something new to art - and art has returned the favour.

