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Cultural capital: a mayor's vision for London

Speaking at the opening of a new era for Tate Modern, Sadiq Khan explained why he will be putting culture at the centre of his term as London's mayor and what it will mean for the city.

I want to begin by recognising that Tate Modern is a pioneer. Where most of us saw a derelict power station, Nick Serota saw an art gallery. More than that, he saw that bringing culture to this neighbourhood would transform it forever. And that is what the Tate Modern pioneered on the South Bank. I want to pioneer that across our city. For too long culture has been a "nice to have". We've got to change that. So I've made culture one of the big things I want to define my time as mayor. I'm putting it at the heart of my administration, a core priority right up there with housing, the environment and transport in a way that no world city has ever seen before.

So what will this mean in practice? First, it will mean embedding culture in our planning system. We're creating London's first cultural infrastructure plan so we can make sure culture is integral to the city's development in the future. Just as we plan for the future of housing and transport, we must also plan for culture. But it's not just about bricks and mortar, as wonderful as our surroundings are today. It's about realising the potential of people. The Tate Modern brings art to generations of new audiences. It nurtures and inspires new talent. It celebrates the achievements of artists and to be a world city London needs to support creative places and creative Londoners too.

We have to think about the next generation and that's why we are also setting up creative enterprise zones which will provide dedicated places for artists to live and work across our city. We're exploring a range of packages that will make living and working in London affordable because I want to make sure that everyone can realise their potential. That means being able to work in a creative field or access our city's cultural assets.

That is why the Tate Modern is such a success story. You have continually found new ways of supporting artists and reaching new audiences. When you visit Tate Modern at weekends it is full of families taking part in workshops, wandering around the galleries or just scootering around the Turbine Hall. Tate Modern has led the way in reimagining the museum, responding to the new ways people are interacting with art, pioneering new approaches, seeing the potential in change, thinking big, making people a part of what they do.

That is what has made Tate Modern the success it is and our job is to apply that kind of thinking to how we approach culture in London. That's what I see as the new Tate Modern opens: a modern museum for the 21st century. Integrated learning – and by the way Tate Exchange on the fifth floor is quite amazing – displays a social function in a new way with harnessing ability at the heart of the design. And there is a record number of female artists. And do you know what else? Half of the solo displays are female artists. Tate Modern is once again leading the world. That is exactly what we need.

I want to end by thanking everybody involved in London's most important new cultural building for 20 years. You should all feel

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Khan: "With your help I want to create the most far-reaching vision for culture ever."

incredibly proud. Culture is a priority for me and it will be a priority for me as we create a cultural strategy for London. With your help I want to create the most far-reaching vision for culture ever. We want to see a London where culture is leading the way and every single member of our great city can join in.

Sadiq Khan was elected as mayor of London in May 2016.

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