

Gavin Turk brick worth £3,000 is stolen and replaced by 40 pence equivalent

A brick valued at £3,000 was stolen from an art gallery and replaced by a 40 pence equivalent.



£3,000 Gavin Turk brick stolen and replaced by 40 pence equivalent Photo: EDDIE MULHOLLAND



By [Caroline Gammell \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/caroline-gammell/\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/caroline-gammell/)

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The piece, signed by the artist Gavin Turk, was entitled “Revolting Brick” and stood in pride of place on a plinth at the “Bricks” exhibition in south London.

The day before the two week show at Area 10 Project Space in Peckham was due to close, its organisers noticed the prize work of art had been stolen.

In its place lay a blackened brick, with the words “Thank You Have a Nice Day, Next” printed on it in capital letters.

The replacement brick was plucked from a pile of 500 bricks in another part of the gallery, which visitors were encouraged to take away.

Turk, 42, is one of the conceptual Young British Artists alongside Damien Hirst, and his involvement in the exhibition helped draw around 1,000 visitors.

His work can sell for thousands of pounds and has been collected by Charles Saatchi.

Dimitri Launder, co-founder of Area 10, said the exhibition had featured work from students to established artists.

“It is very disappointing, but it does raise questions about value and worth,” he said.

“To sign a brick and put it on a plinth in Peckham, it is very much related to development in this area.

“There is a lot of interest in fashion and pop art. It is disappointing, but there was something funny about it - we are now waiting for the ransom letter.”

Mr Launder, 35, said Turk had alerted all the galleries and auction houses in case the thief tried to sell the brick on.

“I might have to put a call out to all artists so we can get 2,000 bricks and build a new gallery in Peckham.”

The stolen brick is number eight in a series of 10 created by the artist and featured among 30 exhibits in the Area 10 show.

Jack Burton, who organised the exhibition, said there would be a reward for information.

“The artist is upset, but flattered by the theft,” he said.

“I had just left the space to get a Chinese takeaway for lunch when I got a call from an attendant asking me where Gavin's artwork was.

“It turned out a group that had just left the gallery had swapped Gavin's brick with a fake version.

“We just really want to get the brick back - it's such a shame for the show to end this way, with a police investigation.”

A police spokesman said: “We can confirm we had a report of a stolen brick from a gallery and we are investigating it.”