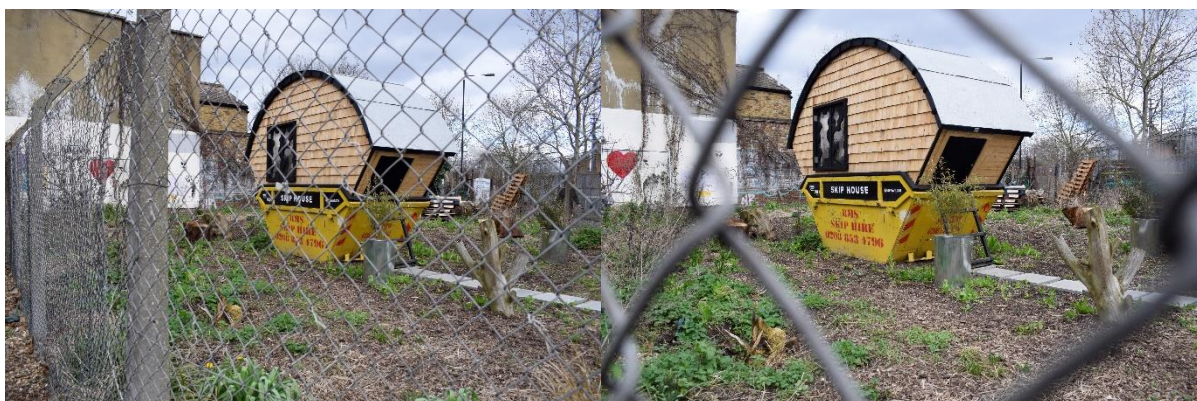


'Skip' Soaring Rent

Kritika Gogte



With rent costs in Central London at an all-time high due to the cost-of-living crisis, many Londoners have been forced to make certain alterations to their lifestyles. According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), rental costs paid by private tenants saw a 4.2 per cent increase over the last year. For Harrison Marshall, this meant more than just a cutback on expenses.



Earlier this year, Marshall decided to make a public statement by putting his design and architecture skills to the test. Moving out of his Central London flat, Marshall converted a garbage skip into a home for himself in South East London – painted, furnished and complete with fitted windows and a door with a padlock on it. "I just needed to make a change and thought I'd do it this way – put my job to good use!"



Marshall has also collaborated with Lee Baker and Catherine Borowski, artists who create 'art installations in unusual places', which include art made out of skips across various locations in London, such as Finsbury Park, Selfridges and Hoxton Square. The Skip House sits in a fenced public space, and has captured the attention of news media and the internet; making its way into Instagram reels and art gallery webpages, as well as featuring prominently on Baker and Borowski's Skip Gallery website. His company, CAUKIN studio, was founded on the basis of 'changing the face of the built environment to balance profit and purpose'. With the Skip House project, Marshall admits that his projected one-year stay is a challenge as well as a social critique on the cost of living crisis and its impact on rent costs.



Despite being surrounded by residential buildings in rather close proximity, Marshall describes his new accommodation as 'fairly private', claiming that he has access to basic amenities including a portable toilet, a bed and a kitchenette, along with garbage disposal.



With no signs in sight of the crisis easing, Harrison has settled into his new living situation, welcoming the challenges it poses as well as the thought processes it has generated amongst others. "I mean, yeah, I live here now and it is quite unusual," says Marshall. "I get a lot of people walking past, wanting to talk...could be a lot worse!"