

25 March 2009

New showcase for contemporary sculpture to launch in the heart of Cambridge

The Fitzwilliam Museum Sculpture Promenade opening 28 April 2009

This spring, the grounds of The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge will be transformed by a unique display of sculpture by some of the most accomplished artists working today.

The 2009 Fitzwilliam Museum Sculpture Promenade, sponsored by the Unex Group, inaugurates an annual exhibition of contemporary sculpture on the Museum lawns fronting Trumpington Street. This outdoor installation, opening to the public on 28 April, will offer an opportunity to experience and enjoy, free of charge, a selection of recent sculpture by members of the prestigious Royal British Society of Sculptors (RBS), creating a dynamic new focus for contemporary art in the heart of Cambridge.



The 2009 Sculpture Promenade has been organised and selected by the Director of The Fitzwilliam Museum, Dr. Timothy Potts, and the Cambridge-based sculptor Helaine Blumenfeld, Vice-President of the RBS.

Dr. Potts said:

“The Sculpture Promenade will be a great enhancement to the public face of the Fitzwilliam, animating its historic facade and bringing the energy and activity that we offer inside the Museum out onto the street. These larger works, designed for an expansive setting, will signal to passers-by that we are a museum as much concerned with the art of today as of the past. It will be an exciting new addition to the Museum’s public programmes in the University of Cambridge’s 800th anniversary year.”

Helaine Blumenfeld said:

“As Vice-President of the RBS I am particularly pleased that the Society will be collaborating with the museum on a project which so closely reflects its ethos: the promotion of the values of beauty, quality and craft in sculptural practice, encouragement of emerging sculptors and a commitment to increasing public understanding of the medium. The museum’s public profile, the visibility of the chosen site and the exciting education programme revolving around the exhibition, will create a suitable platform from which these artworks can inspire, provoke, engage and, ultimately, *reach* visitors of all ages and backgrounds.”

This will be the largest and most significant sculpture installation presented in the grounds of the Fitzwilliam, which receives 300,000 visitors a year. It follows the three-year display of Henry Moore’s *Large Reclining Figure* on the main lawn (2004 – 2007). The annual Sculpture Promenade will showcase not only the work of prominent, well-established artists but also, in some years, introduce visitors to emerging sculptors.

The unique location of the Sculpture Promenade on the Museum’s spacious lawns will make this installation a prominent feature of Trumpington Street, one of Cambridge’s most celebrated thoroughfares, inviting passers-by and visitors to walk amongst the sculptures and experience them ‘up-close’. The

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juxtaposition of contemporary sculpture with the Museum's neoclassical façade will make the Fitzwilliam Museum Sculpture Promenade one of Cambridge's must-see attractions

The eight artists exhibiting in the 2009 installation are David Begbie, Wu Wei-shan, Johannes von Stumm, Richard Fenton, Charles Hadcock, Diane Maclean, Terry New and Andrew Stonyer, all of whom are members of the RBS, which has a membership of over 500 professional sculptors working around the world.

The nine works on display range from figurative to more abstract constructions, diverse in their conception and structure. David Begbie's *Palm I* presents an outsized yet lifelike outstretched hand, moulded from a 'shell' of wiremesh, whose scale and physical presence contrast with its lack of solidity. *Mother and Child* by Johannes von Stumm similarly poses questions about space and 'completeness', making 'negative space' - what is sculpted *out* of this seated figure - the focus. The works featured explore the differing qualities and possibilities of a variety of man-made materials; from Charles Hadcock's cast-iron *Caesura V*, that towers over the viewer, to Diane Maclean's 2.4 metre high *Open Book*, constructed of stainless steel that changes colour as daylight strikes its surface from different directions; from Wu Wei-shan's *Confucious*, a richly textured bronze figure in the artist's distinctive 'freehand' technique, to *Transformation II* by Richard Fenton, which employs an everyday manmade object - ordinary plastic guttering - as a mould to produce an imposing structure. A variety of influences is also visible amongst these works: Andrew Stonyer's *Rotating Circle's* continues the artist's exploration of kinetic imagery, while Terry New's two sculptures *Cleft* and *Nidus II* bear the influence of New's central inspiration - the Australian landscape

The Fitzwilliam Museum Sculpture Promenade 2009 is generously sponsored by the Unex Group.

William J Gredley, Chairman of the Unex Group said:

"I have looked longingly at the wonderful space between the Museum building and Trumpington Street wondering why it was not used for displaying sculpture. Therefore the Fitzwilliam Museum was pushing at an open door when asking my Group to sponsor this exhibition. I believe the closeness of the sculpture to the passers-by will make people aware of the value of artistic works, including those within the Fitzwilliam Museum. I congratulate Dr Timothy Potts and Helaine Blumenfeld and trust that it is the first of many such exhibitions."

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Details for publication:

The Fitzwilliam Museum Sculpture Promenade from 28 April 2009

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB

OPEN: Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00
Sundays and Bank Holidays: 12.00 - 17.00
CLOSED: Mondays and Good Friday

ADMISSION FREE

Press View

The Press View will take place at **10.30 am on Monday 27 April 2009**. For further details please contact the Marketing & Press Office, The Fitzwilliam Museum, email: fitzmuseum-press@lists.cam.ac.uk; Tel: 01223 332941

Further information and images from:

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Fitzwilliam Museum

The Fitzwilliam Museum houses the University of Cambridge's art collection and is a public museum and art gallery with an international reputation. More than half a million objects and works of art are held in five curatorial departments: Antiquities, Applied Arts, Coins and Medals, Manuscripts and Printed Books and Paintings, Drawings and Prints. The Fitzwilliam's treasures range from Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities to the arts of the 21st century and include masterpieces by Titian, Canaletto, Stubbs, Constable, Monet, Renoir and Picasso, one of the world's foremost Rembrandt print collections, Handel music manuscripts and the famous Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, one of the most significant collections of Korean ceramics outside South-East Asia, medieval illuminated manuscripts and outstanding collections of pottery, porcelain and medieval coins. The Fitzwilliam Museum welcomes over 300,000 visitors a year, offers a wide-ranging programme of temporary exhibitions and events, and has an award-winning Education Service. The Museum is open Tuesday – Saturday: 10.00 – 17.00, Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 – 17.00. Free admission. Website: www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

The Royal British Society of Sculptors

Committed to the pursuit of excellence in the art form, the Royal British Society of Sculptors aims to inspire, inform and engage people of all ages and backgrounds with sculpture, to support the development of sculptors' professional and creative practice and to promote good practice. With a worldwide membership of over 500 professional sculptors ranging from those at the peak of their profession to those who are just emerging, the RBS is proud to support diversity and creativity. www.rbs.org.uk

The Unex Group

The Unex Group is a property company having many prominent buildings in Cambridge and elsewhere in the country and is a supporter of the arts, particularly sculpture.

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