press release... press release... press release... press release... press release... press release...

News Release

Millais House
7 Cromwell Place
London SW7 2JN
T 020 7225 4800
F 020 7225 4848
press@artfund.org
www.artfund.org

For release: Thursday 9th February

Art Fund supports first permanent UK public sculpture by Rachel Whiteread for the Whitechapel Gallery

The Art Fund, the UK's leading independent charity helping museums and galleries to buy and show art, and the Whitechapel Gallery in London's east end today announced a major new commission by Rachel Whiteread for the Gallery's façade on Whitechapel High Street. Remarkably, it will be Whiteread's first ever permanent public commission in the UK. The Art Fund has contributed £200,000 to the project which will be unveiled in summer 2012 and is also supported from the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) and will form part of the Cultural Olympiad.

Rachel Whiteread is an internationally-acclaimed artist who has lived in east London for the past 25 years. The work is planned for the facade of the Gallery, an important Grade II* listed Arts and Crafts building dating from 1901 and conceived to have included a frieze embodying the Gallery's public message – to bring great art to the people of London – which was never realised. For this commission, Whiteread draws inspiration from the decorative Tree of Life motif which is part of the terracotta building to create a powerful decorative scheme that celebrates both the qualities of the existing architecture and the life-affirming power of art.

Enabled since its inception by the Art Fund, which is largely funded through sales of the National Art Pass, the commission reflects the organisation's role in supporting contemporary art – a commitment which has included the acquisition of more than 9,000 modern and contemporary works in the last twenty years. The Art Fund has also facilitated the creation of several new works in the last ten years including James Turrell's *Deer Shelter* (2006) for the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, David Batchelor's *Waldella* (2009) for McManus Galleries Dundee and *6 Times* by Antony Gormley (2010) for the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund, commented:

"The Art Fund has long had a reputation for supporting contemporary as well as historic art and we are delighted to be the major funder of this significant commission by one of the world's foremost sculptors. It is an important moment in the history of the Whitechapel Gallery and we greatly look forward to seeing the work in situ later this year."

This ambitious and important commission will enable the Gallery to create an important new work by an internationally recognised artist who is intimately connected to the east end of London. The work will also enhance one of London's most important street arteries, creating a lasting artistic legacy for the enjoyment of all.

The Art Fund was founded in 1903 to help UK museums and galleries to buy, show and share art. Over the past 5 years, the Art Fund has given £24 million to buy art and supported a range of projects and programmes aimed at helping more people enjoy art. It is independently funded by 89,000 supporters who purchase a National Art Pass, costing from just £37.50, which gives free entry to over 200 museums, galleries and historic houses across the country as well as 50% off major exhibitions.

Contact:
Nadine Thompson, nthompson@artfund.org Tel: 020 7225 4820
Rachel Mapplebeck, RachelMapplebeck@whitechapelgallery.org Tel:020 7522 7880

press release... press release... press release... press release... press release... press release...