

PRESS RELEASE – 19 March 2012

HRH THE COUNTESS OF WESSEX TO OFFICIALLY OPEN THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD

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HRH The Countess of Wessex will be officially opening Yorkshire's award-winning new art gallery, The Hepworth Wakefield, on Tuesday 27 March.

The visit is a wonderful honour for the gallery, which has proved to be an overwhelming success since it opened 10 months ago, welcoming over 435,000 visitors, far exceeding the initial first year target of 150,000 visitors, to make The Hepworth Wakefield one of the most visited galleries in England.

Her Royal Highness will be met by several dignitaries from across Wakefield District, before joining Cllr Peter Box, Leader of Wakefield Council; Simon Wallis, Director of The Hepworth Wakefield and for a tour of the award-winning building by David Chipperfield Architects, the collection displays and the recently opened contemporary exhibitions by Heather & Ivan Morison, Ben Rivers and David Thorpe.

Her Royal Highness will also tour the gallery's Learning Studios and meet local school children who have been participating in creative projects and activities with the gallery, joining David Liddiment, Chair of The Hepworth Wakefield Trust and architect David Chipperfield for afternoon tea, which offers the chance to meet supporters and staff from the gallery. The visit will conclude with HRH The Countess of Wessex unveiling a plaque in the gallery to officially commemorate the opening of The Hepworth Wakefield.

Members of the public are invited to join in the celebrations and greet Her Royal Highness when she arrives at the gallery at 3.30pm. The galleries will be open to the public as usual and visitors will be able to observe proceedings with Her Royal Highness' during her visit. Please note that the usual photography permissions within the galleries will apply. The official unveiling of the commemorative plaque will take place at 4.30pm in the gallery foyer.

Cllr Peter Box, Leader of Wakefield Council, said: "I am very pleased to welcome Her Royal Highness to the Hepworth Wakefield which has achieved so much in such a short space of time. This journey started with a visit from Prince Charles a decade ago and it is fitting that the official opening ceremony has a royal seal of approval."

Simon Wallis, Director of The Hepworth Wakefield said: "We're very much looking forward to welcoming HRH Countess of Wessex and to officially celebrate and commemorate the opening of this world-class gallery in Yorkshire. The visit offers a wonderful opportunity for us to showcase our world-class collection and gallery spaces, the recently opened exhibitions by Heather & Ivan Morison and reaffirm The Hepworth Wakefield's campaign to become the art museum of the year for the Art Fund Prize 2012."

Artist Anthony Gormley said: "The Hepworth Wakefield will become a place of pilgrimage for all lovers of sculpture and, with the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds and Yorkshire Sculpture Park in West Bretton, Yorkshire will be a place of inspiration for all."

Actress Katherine Kelly (formerly Becky in ITV's Coronation Street) said: "It is tremendous that Wakefield is home to such a major new gallery. Wakefield is a city I hold dear to my heart as I was schooled there in my teenage years. I only wish THW had been around when I was studying A-level art!"

Director of Tate, Sir Nicholas Serota said: "The Hepworth Wakefield is one of the most exciting and beautiful galleries in the United Kingdom. I think The Hepworth is a wonderful building and it offers a wonderful day out for people to come and experience Wakefield in a new way."

The gallery is the only nomination in the North of England to be longlisted for the coveted Art Fund Prize 2012, which celebrates the best museums and art galleries in the country. Members of the public are encouraged to support the gallery by voting online and 'Have Their Say' about why The Hepworth Wakefield should win the Art Fund Prize. Although the winner is not decided on the public vote alone, the more public support, the stronger the case to be shortlisted. For more details and to support the gallery visit www.artfundprize.org.uk

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RUNNING ORDER, FILMING & PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES:

- 3-3.20pm **Guests arrive**
- 3.30pm **Welcome HRH to The Hepworth Wakefield**
Photo Opportunity: HRH arrives at The Hepworth Wakefield entering via the main entrance and greeted in the foyer by a receiving line, consisting of:
- The Mayor of Wakefield, Cllr Ros Lund (and Consort Robert Appleyard)
The High Sheriff of West Yorkshire, Anthony E Grant, Esq, OBE
Leader of Wakefield Council, Cllr Peter Box, CBE
Deputy Leader of Wakefield Council, Cllr Denise Jeffery (representing Chief Executive of Wakefield Council, Joanne Roney, OBE)
Chair, The Hepworth Wakefield, Mr David Liddiment
Director, The Hepworth Wakefield, Mr Simon Wallis
- 4pm **HRH tour the gallery's Learning Studios with the Leader of Wakefield Council, Cllr Peter Box and Director of The Hepworth Wakefield, Simon Wallis**
HRH will be meeting teachers and a group of 25-30 Year 4 (ages 8-9) pupils from Greenhill Primary School in Wakefield who will taking part in a Direct Carving workshop.
- Photo Opportunity: Four pupils will be available for a photo opportunity with HRH.
Girls: Aaliya Khan (aged 8); Jamie-Lou Clark (aged 8)
Boys: Simon Bourne (aged 9); Numan Ali (aged 9)
- 4.35pm **Commemorative plaque unveiling in the gallery foyer, followed by the presentation of a floral bouquet**
Photo Opportunity: HRH unveiling commemorative plaque with key hosts and guests, including architect, David Chipperfield.
- Photo Opportunity: Presentation of a floral bouquet by Safiya Alyas (aged 8), Year 4 pupil from Greenhill Primary School, Wakefield.
- 4.40pm **HRH Departs**

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

HRH Countess of Wessex will not be available to interview during her visit to the gallery. Interview opportunities with guests and hosts must be arranged in advance.

To arrange an interview or to request images, please contact:

Naomi Roberts 01924 247392 / naomiroberts@hepworthwakefield.org
Hollie Latham 01924 247391 / hollielatham@hepworthwakefield.org

EDITOR'S NOTES:

THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD

The gallery is at the heart of Wakefield's regeneration. Designed by the internationally acclaimed practice, David Chipperfield Architects, it is funded by Wakefield Council and Arts Council England with additional funding from a number of charitable trusts and private individuals. The spring exhibition series is supported by the Audrey & Stanley Burton Charitable Trust. Over 435,000 visitors have come through the doors since the gallery opened on 21 May 2011.

The Hepworth Wakefield has been nominated for the The Art Fund Prize 2012 which rewards excellence and innovation in museums and galleries in the UK for a project completed or undertaken in 2011. From the long-list of ten museums and galleries, The Hepworth Wakefield is the only nomination from the North of England.

The Hepworth Wakefield is now inviting supporters from across the UK and abroad to back their bid to reach the shortlist stage and become one of just four finalists with a chance of becoming the 'Museum of the Year'.

Members of the public can log on to www.artfundprize.org.uk and leave their comments, a selection of which will be presented to the judges to consider when they come to decide the shortlist. Anyone who posts a comment will automatically be entered into a prize draw to win an iPad 2. The forum and prize draw close at 11.59pm on Sunday 22 April 2012. The shortlist will be announced on 14 May, with the winning finalist to be announced at a ceremony at the British Museum on 19 June.

The Hepworth Wakefield, Gallery Walk, West Yorkshire, WF1 5AW

Free admission

Open Tuesday – Sunday, 10am – 5pm and 10am – 9pm Third Thursday of every month

Closed Mondays (except for Bank Holidays and school holidays)

www.hepworthwakefield.org

01924 247360

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