

PRESS RELEASE

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Visit Britain's Coolest Art Gallery This Summer - The Hepworth Wakefield

The Hepworth Wakefield has been celebrated as *Britain's Coolest Art Gallery* in MSN Travel's Top 10 British hotspots and hip hangouts to visit this summer.

Even before the doors opened in May, the critically acclaimed architecture and cutting-edge construction by David Chipperfield Architects secured its first accolade by winning the award for Culture at the prestigious Condé Nast Traveller Innovation & Design Awards 2011. But crucially the public are voting with their feet with The Hepworth Wakefield welcoming over 137,000 visitors since it opened just eight weeks ago.

This summer there's plenty to keep visitors of all ages inspired and entertained, from the gallery displays, guided tours and talks to the inaugural temporary exhibition, Eva Rothschild: *Hot Touch*. Outside, visitors can enjoy a picnic in the gallery gardens, ride the zip-wire in the riverside Play Area or explore outdoor art commission *The Black Cloud*, by artists Heather and Ivan Morison. Inside, the Learning Studio will be a hive of activity, with free drop-in sessions and pre-bookable workshops, where families can create giant sculptures, landscape-inspired collages and sketches, or discover how to carve like Barbara Hepworth.

Simon Wallis, Director of the gallery said: "We've been overwhelmed by the amount of positive support and number of visitors we've received since opening. It's been a superb start for us and it's great to see The Hepworth really putting Wakefield and Yorkshire on the cultural map. However, we are still totally focused on continuing to develop and enrich our offer, ensuring visitors have a wonderful experience and return regularly. We look forward to welcoming many more local, national and international visitors this summer."

Cllr Peter Box Leader of Wakefield Council said: "The Hepworth Wakefield has put the City on centre stage and this endorsement is yet another acknowledgement of its success in giving visitors - from home or abroad - a world class attraction in Wakefield."

The Hepworth Wakefield is the UK's largest purpose-built art gallery since The Hayward in London was opened in 1968. At the heart of Wakefield's regeneration, The Hepworth celebrates the city's heritage as the birthplace of modern British sculpture through the achievements of Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore – two of the most important artists of the 20th century, who were both born and grew up in the Wakefield district. Together with the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Henry Moore Institute and Leeds Art Gallery, The Hepworth Wakefield is putting the spotlight on Yorkshire as a new world centre for sculpture. For more information about the gallery and details about our events and families summer programme please visit www.hepworthwakefield.org or ring 01924 247360.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Hepworth Wakefield is funded by Founding Partners: Wakefield Council and The Hepworth Estate. Major Funders are Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund with additional funding from European Regional Development Fund, Homes and Communities Agency and Yorkshire Forward.

Current exhibitions include Eva Rothschild's *Hot Touch* (until 9 October) and the outdoor artist commission in the gallery grounds, *The Black Cloud* by Heather & Ivan Morison.

The MSN Travel Top 10 list of *Britain's Coolest Places* includes:

- *Art Gallery* – The Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire
- *Street* - South Shore Road in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear
- *Snack Stop* - Chin Chin Laboratorists.
- *Beach Resort* – Margate, Kent
- *Coastline* - The English Riviera
- *Campsite* - Thistledown Campsite, Gloucestershire
- *Hotel* - St Moritz Hotel, Trebetherick, Cornwall
- *Pier of the Year* - Boscombe Pier, Bournemouth
- *Hotel Room* - Ecclestone Square Hotel, Pimlico, London
- *Restaurant* - Dinner by Heston Blumenthal, Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park Hotel, London