

Press Release: September 2017

HOUSE OF KOKO TO TAKE OVER
THE HEPWORTH CAFÉ

The Hepworth Wakefield is delighted to announce a new collaboration to transform the gallery's café and catering offer.

Leeds-based House of Koko are partnering with Wakefield-based chef Chris Hale and his wife Sophie, to take over the running of The Hepworth Wakefield Café from October. They will launch with a new menu and redesigned dining space to create a welcoming dining experience for visitors.

House of Koko is an independent coffee and tea house which was opened in Chapel Allerton in 2015 by Shanshan Zhu and Chris Ball, quickly becoming a local favourite. Chris Hale, who was a quarter-finalist on BBC MasterChef 2016 and runs Pop-Up North, will be executive chef for The Hepworth Cafe. He has created a diverse menu for the whole family featuring British classics made from local Yorkshire produce, alongside brunch and lunch options from the existing House of Koko menu.

Hale's experience of creating and delivering one-off event menus will enable The Hepworth Wakefield to further develop its wedding and special events offer within the gallery and adjacent converted mill The Calder. Details about how to hire the space can be found at hepworthwakefield.org.

Chris Ball of House of KoKo, commented: 'The Hepworth Wakefield is an amazing venue and it has transformed the city. We want to embody this success with our wonderful locally sourced food and drink to create memorable menus and events. We've loved growing House of Koko over the past couple of years and we are unbelievably excited about our next step.'

Chef Chris Hale, said: 'We are passionate about promoting Yorkshire food and drink to the world and helping to put Wakefield firmly on the map. The Hepworth Wakefield has achieved so much in its first six years and we want the food and drink offering to be just as creative and exciting.'

Rachel Crewes, Head of Business Development at The Hepworth Wakefield welcomes the new collaboration: 'We can't wait to start working with House of Koko. They have created a very special experience in Chapel Allerton with great coffee, great food and great service underpinning everything they do. We believe that with this fresh approach and refurbishment, The Hepworth Café will soon become a destination in its own right. We are also very excited to be working with local Masterchef finalist, Chris Hale as executive chef, a fantastic addition to our events and wedding offer here at the gallery.'

Opening to coincide with the gallery's exhibition launch party on Friday 20 October, 7 – 10pm, the café will be refitted with furniture designed by Plæy Workshop.

The Hepworth Wakefield's opening party on Friday 20 October, 7 – 10pm, is open to anyone who would like to attend and will launch its new exhibition, Alina Szapocznikow: Human Landscapes. The full café menu will be served from Saturday 21 October, 10am – 5pm. Entry to the gallery is free.

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ABOUT THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD

The Hepworth Wakefield is an award-winning art gallery in the heart of Yorkshire, set within Wakefield's historic waterfront, overlooking the River Calder. Designed by the acclaimed David Chipperfield Architects, the gallery opened in May 2011 and has already welcomed over 1.8 million visitors. The gallery was named Art Fund Museum of the Year in July 2017. Named after Barbara Hepworth, one of the most important artists of the 20th century who was born and brought up in Wakefield, the gallery presents major exhibitions of the best international modern and contemporary art. It also is home to Wakefield's art collection – an impressive compendium of modern British and contemporary art – and has dedicated galleries exploring Hepworth's art and working process.

The Hepworth Wakefield is funded by Wakefield Council and Arts Council, England

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High-resolution images with captions and credits from the Media Centre:

www.hepworthwakefield.org/press

HOUSE OF KOKO - SHANSHAN ZHU AND CHRIS BALL

Situated in Chapel Allerton, Leeds, House of Koko is run by Shanshan Zhu and Chris Ball. The independent tea and coffee house opened in 2015 and offers a seasonal menu, speciality tea and coffee, and home-made cakes.

CHRIS & SOPHIE HALE

MasterChef quarter finalist Chris Hale has experience cheffing in the UK and internationally. His company Pop-Up North provides one-off events, wedding and event catering, private dining, menu consultancy and food demonstrations. Sophie Hale co-runs the PR, marketing and video production company Evoke and is a regular blogger on food and events.

Sophie will be co-ordinating PR for The Hepworth Café alongside the team at The Hepworth Wakefield.