



## **Leeds Art Gallery will reopen to the public on 13 October 2017 with a newly uncovered exhibition space, a major ARTIST ROOMS Joseph Beuys exhibition and new presentation of the collection featuring recent acquisitions**

**5 April 2017**

Leeds Art Gallery is pleased to announce that it will reopen its galleries to the public on **13 October 2017**, after a period of closure to undergo essential repairs to the original roof and the historic Victorian building.

Reopening programme highlights will include the **ARTIST ROOMS Joseph Beuys** exhibition, and **new acquisitions** by leading contemporary artists such as young American artist **Martine Syms** and renowned British sculptor **Alison Wilding RA**. The gallery will reopen with a **re-presentation of the collection** across the gallery that looks back over 130 years to showcase highlights from the nationally designated collection.

During the renovations, a welcome discovery was made in the form of a beautiful barrel vaulted glazed roof on one of the first floor galleries. This stunning structure had remained hidden above a false ceiling for over 40 years. Upon reopening, this newly refurbished gallery will be revealed to the public for the first time, spilling new light in and transforming the experience for visitors. This new gallery will be celebrated by showing *Arena* (2000), a major sculpture by Alison Wilding, which is a gift to Leeds from the Contemporary Art Society.

The ARTIST ROOMS Joseph Beuys exhibition marks an important return to Leeds for Joseph Beuys (1921 - 1986) who last exhibited at Leeds Art Gallery in 1983, and it will feature important sculptures by this influential German artist whose work and presence left a lasting legacy on Leeds. Taking place across three of the ground floor galleries, the show will present one of the last sculptures made by Beuys, *Scala Napoletana* (1985), along with works on paper from throughout his career. The exhibition is drawn from the ARTIST ROOMS collection of international modern and contemporary art acquired for the public by the National Galleries of Scotland and Tate through the generosity of Anthony d'Offay, and will be accompanied by a public programme of talks and events, aimed at engaging young audiences.

The gallery has always supported the work of living artists. Originally focusing on British art of the time, the collection has in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century become increasingly international with work in a range of media from 1888 to 2017. In addition to Alison Wilding's sculpture *Arena*, another recent acquisition includes *A Pilot For A Show About Nowhere* (2015), a two-channel video by LA-based artist Martine Syms that has been gifted to Leeds Art Gallery through the Valeria Napoleone XX Contemporary Art Society initiative (VNXXCAS). This work will be showcased at Camden Arts Centre, London from 20 April – 14 May 2017, and on arrival in Leeds will form a centrepiece of the collection redisplay. Leeds Art Gallery is the first museum to receive a work through the VNXXCAS scheme that addresses the representation of female artists within public collections.

The roof repairs and refurbishment have provided an opportunity to re-present the collection across the entirety of the gallery. The new collection displays will feature works not seen for a generation – including the first opportunity to see an extensive display of watercolours by John Sell Cotman; the majestic sculpture *Maternity* (1910-11) by Sir Jacob Epstein; and works on paper by Mexican artist Diego Rivera. The gallery's impressive sculptures will also be presented in collection displays across galleries on both floors featuring artists including Alexander Calder, Tony Cragg and Simon Fujiwara.

Leeds Art Gallery is a key cultural hub in Leeds with close to half a million visitors a year. Whilst the gallery has been closed it has maintained an active profile through extensive loans from its art collection to local and international galleries, as well as engaging a diverse range of audiences through external programmes, including taking works from the collection out into schools and offsite activity with communities across the

city. The gallery is a fundamental part of Leeds' artistic heritage, particularly as the city bids to be named European Capital of Culture 2023.

**Sarah Brown, Principal Keeper at Leeds Art Gallery, said:**

"We're delighted to be opening Leeds Art Gallery after much-needed repair work to this beautiful building and are thrilled to present a significant programme bringing together a Joseph Beuys exhibition, new acquisitions and a stunning new commission, alongside a re-presentation of our world-class collection. We look forward to welcoming visitors to see the gallery in a new light."

**Leader of Leeds City Council Councillor Judith Blake, said:**

"Leeds Art Gallery is a wonderful and iconic element of our city's fantastic cultural offer and we cannot wait to see the galleries open their doors to the public once again this October. Now that we are now moving full steam ahead with our 2023 European Capital of Culture bid, it is brilliant to see the return of Leeds Art Gallery which, internationally recognised and celebrated, will offer another timely reminder of why our bid is so varied and strong."

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**Notes to Editors:**

**ABOUT LEEDS ART GALLERY**

Leeds Art Gallery, The Headrow, Leeds, LS1 3AA. [www.leeds.gov.uk/artgallery](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/artgallery) // 0113 247 8256

FREE admission.

Instagram / Twitter / Facebook: LeedsArtGallery

Founded in 1888, Leeds Art Gallery has designated collections of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century British painting and sculpture widely considered to be the best outside the national collections. The collection represents the work of early 20<sup>th</sup> century artists such as Walter Sickert and Stanley Spencer, with the development of English modernism shown through key works by Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Paul Nash, Jacob Epstein and Francis Bacon.

The gallery is a renowned centre for modern and contemporary art with an exhibition programme that has showcased work of celebrated artists such as Damien Hirst from the ARTIST ROOMS collection through strategic partnership projects with the National Galleries of Scotland and Tate, in addition to curating major exhibitions together with Tate (Henry Moore and Terry Frost) and in partnership with the Arts Council Collection. Leeds Art Gallery has established a strong reputation for initiating, commissioning and curating solo exhibitions by significant artists attracting national and international attention.

**ABOUT ARTIST ROOMS**

ARTIST ROOMS is a collection of international modern and contemporary art jointly owned by National Galleries of Scotland and Tate on behalf of the public. It was established by Anthony d'Offay through the d'Offay donation in 2008, with the assistance of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Art Fund, and the Scottish and British Governments.

Since 2009, the collection has been shared with over 40 million visitors to museums and galleries across the UK, including the National Galleries of Scotland, Tate and a network of Associate venues. The current UK programme is a partnership between National Galleries of Scotland, Tate and lead Associate Ferens Art Gallery, supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, Art Fund and the National Lottery through Creative Scotland. [www.artistrooms.org](http://www.artistrooms.org) [www.nationalgalleries.org/artistrooms](http://www.nationalgalleries.org/artistrooms)  
[www.tate.org.uk/artistrooms](http://www.tate.org.uk/artistrooms)

#### **ABOUT CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY**

The Contemporary Art Society champions the collecting of outstanding contemporary art and craft in the UK. Since 1910 the charity has donated thousands of works by living artists to museums, including the first works by Picasso, Matisse, Bacon, Hepworth, Caro, Antony Gormley and Damien Hirst to enter UK public collections. More recent acquisitions have included works by 2016 Turner Prize winner Helen Marten in 2012, Phyllida Barlow in the same year and in 2016 the first works by Glenn Brown and Kader Attia to enter a UK museum collection. Sitting at the heart of cultural life in the UK, the Contemporary Art Society brokers philanthropic support for the benefit of museums and their audiences across the entire country. Their work ensures that the story of art continues to be told now and for future generations. [www.contemporaryartsociety.org](http://www.contemporaryartsociety.org)

#### **ABOUT LEEDS 2023**

- Leeds is bidding for the title of European Capital of Culture 2023. The competition can only be hosted by the UK five times per century and was last hosted in 2008 when Liverpool won the title.
  - The Leeds bid is being led by an Independent Steering Group which has cross party support from Leeds City Council. Leeds City Council is already a minority funder of the bid with commercial partners and sponsorship contributing to the cost of bidding.
  - The bid process takes four years. Leeds started conversations about bidding in 2014 and expects a decision in 2018.
  - The competition is delivered by the European Commission but not specifically for EU Countries. Norway, Iceland and Switzerland are all outside of the EU and have all hosted successful European Capitals of Culture.
  - The competition is administered in the UK by the Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS)
- For more information visit: [www.leeds2023.co.uk](http://www.leeds2023.co.uk)