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## UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER PRESS RELEASE

### A CELEBRATION OF BRITISH SCULPTURE

*For images from the exhibition, e-mail [pt91@le.ac.uk](mailto:pt91@le.ac.uk)*

For the eighth year of its highly successful annual outdoor sculpture show, the University of Leicester is celebrating British sculpture in its exquisitely landscaped Harold Martin Botanic Garden.

*A Celebration of British Sculpture* includes 50 works of art in varying media, scale and design, much of it by artists of international acclaim. The grand opening of the exhibition will be at the Botanic Garden's Open Day on Sunday 28th June, 11.00am to 5.00pm. The Open Day includes, not only the sculpture exhibition, but also a plant sale and lots of displays and activities of interest to all the family. Entrance is £3 per adult, children free. The sculpture exhibition closes on Sunday 27th September and, apart from Open Days, is free of charge.

Among the highlights of the show will be two works of welded stainless steel by one of the 'giants' of 20th century sculpture, the late Lynn Chadwick – *Rising Beast* and *Duttan's Beast*. Chadwick was one of the twelve semi-finalists for the Unknown Political Prisoner International Sculpture Competition in 1953 and three years later won the International Prize for Sculpture at the 1956 Venice Biennale. His work is represented in all major international art collections and was featured in a retrospective exhibition of his work at Tate Britain in London, in 2003, the year he died.

The exhibition also includes bronzes, *Dove* and *Longdog* by Jon Buck, *Sea Circle* by Charlotte Mayer, and *Clochard* and *Vernal Figure* by Ralph Brown, all of whom are widely exhibited in the UK and internationally in both public and private collections.

Another attraction will be the Yoruba-inspired steel and water feature, *Asoebi – Lace, Sweat and Tears*, by Sokari Douglas Camp, CBE, who has been shortlisted for the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square. *Asoebi* was created as a water feature for the Garden for Africa at the British Museum in collaboration with Ground Force 2005.

Curator of *A Celebration of British Sculpture* is John Sydney Carter. He is, himself, an internationally acclaimed sculptor and Honorary Graduate of the University of Leicester. Four of his painted steel sculptures are exhibited in the show: *Great Circle*, *Navigator*, *Falling Man* and *Le Poisson*.

He commented: "There is a great power in sculpture, particularly when placed adjacent to contemporary architecture or in a public place. It enhances and, in some ways, makes a place complete.

"The Harold Martin Botanic Garden is a special place, because here we can live with both art and nature, each complementing the other. Viewing artwork outdoors is different to the often confined space of an art gallery. The large green spaces, rockeries, trees, flower beds and pool area all provide unique environments to excite both sculptor and the visitor."

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bob Burgess, commented: "This is the eighth year of the University's Sculpture Show and this year's exhibition offers a wide variety of exhibits by a number of distinguished artists. The Harold Martin Botanic Garden provides the artists with a creative and inspiring environment in which to work and I am delighted to welcome Dr John Sydney Carter, FRBS (Fellow of the Royal British Society of Sculptors) in his role as Exhibition Curator for the first time. I am confident that this year's exhibition will provide many hours of enjoyment and the opportunity to engage with a range of diverse sculpture in Leicester's well tended Botanic garden."

Stella Couloutbanis, Acting Visual Arts Manager at the University's Richard Attenborough Centre, added: "*The Celebration of British Sculpture* has something for everyone. It mixes the traditional with the innovative, right across the span of sculpture and includes site specific work. There's a great mixture of styles and materials – it's a sculptor's and visitor's delight.

"The works will look very much in sympathy with the environment of the gardens, whether they're hanging from trees, made from a tree or standing on the lawn.

"It's very different from the University's past exhibitions. The landscape of the gardens acts as a perfect canvas to exhibit representational and abstract work."

Special events planned will include the opportunity to see a sculptor at work in the summerhouse, on Sunday 28th June from 11.00am to 4.00pm.

#### **Artists Exhibiting:**

Tom Allan, Michael Dan Archer, Mary Anstee-Parry, Richard Baronio, Rosemary Barnett, David Begbie ARBS, John Sydney Carter FRBS, Kate Denton ARBS, Sokari Douglas Camp CBE, Ken Ford, Miles Halpin, Derek Howarth

ARBS, Polly Ionides, Christopher Marvell, Diana Maclean, John W Mills PPRBS ARCA FRSA, Gudrun Nielsen, Rita Phillips, Irene Rogan, Jilly Sutton ARBS, Deborah van der Beek, Jacek Wankowski, Marjan Woude, Sheila Vollmer, Olive Wootton.

On loan from Pangolin's Gallery – Ralph Brown RA, Jon Buck, Lynn Chadwick, Charlotte Mayer.

The entrance to the Harold Martin Botanic Garden is in Glebe Road, Oadby, Leicester. The garden is open free of charge on most days, between the hours of 10.00-4.00 Monday – Friday all year (except Christmas - New Year period) and on Saturday & Sunday from 3rd weekend in March to 2nd weekend in November.

**Notes to Editors:** The official opening of *The Celebration of British Sculpture* will take place on Saturday 27th June from 1.00-2.30pm in The Wedgwood Room, Beaumont Hall, in the Harold Martin Botanic Garden, Glebe road, Oadby, Leicester.

For photo and interview opportunities please contact Stella Couloutbanis, Acting Visual Arts Manager, Richard Attenborough Centre, University of Leicester, tel 0116 252 2455, email [ratemp1@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:ratemp1@leicester.ac.uk) OR The University of Leicester Press Office, 0116 252 3335, email [pressoffice@le.ac.uk](mailto:pressoffice@le.ac.uk)

**Some information follows. For more details** please contact Stella Couloutbanis, Acting Visual Arts Manager, Richard Attenborough Centre, University of Leicester, tel 0116 252 2455, email [ratemp1@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:ratemp1@leicester.ac.uk)

### **University of Leicester Botanic Garden**

The Botanic Garden and its satellite Attenborough Arboretum play an important role in education. Schools, colleges and youth groups are the main audience for the wide variety of programmes, and the focus is on environmental and development issues, aiming to bring a global perspective to the National Curriculum in an innovative and inspiring way. INSET days for teachers and youth leaders are also organised. In addition, there is a small but developing range of courses for adults. Contact the Garden ([botanicgarden@le.ac.uk](mailto:botanicgarden@le.ac.uk)) if you are interested in booking an activity or want to know more.

The Celebration of British Sculptors will act as a catalyst to inspire groups in thinking how they view the made object set in a natural environment. Participants will study texture, colour and shape in plants, in tandem with the sculptures, and produce their own artwork; this will be displayed in the Botanic Garden whilst the main exhibition is on.

### **The Richard Attenborough Centre**

As the University of Leicester's arts centre, The RACentre offers opportunities to everyone to participate without barriers in ways that challenge and inspire.

Its 180-seater performance area, art studios, extensive exhibition gallery and bright foyer space enable people to engage with the arts as audiences, performers and learners.

The RACentre offers an extensive range of creative learning opportunities in the arts which are ideal for anyone looking to develop their skills in an enjoyable way but without too much commitment.

Its short courses, lasting up to ten weeks, cover a wide variety of subjects, from painting, drawing and sculpture, to guitar playing, literature, singing, jazz and dance, and there is also a range of evening talks and one-off workshops.

Alongside its many learning opportunities, The RACentre also presents a varied programme of quality classical music concerts, comedy and drama performances, jazz and world music sessions, a vibrant art exhibition programme, and special events for children.

### **John Sydney Carter – Curator**

**Biography:** The University of Leicester's £22.5m Henry Wellcome Building is the home for two major sculptures by the national artist John Sydney Carter, FRBS. Standing 18ft high, *Vortex* is one of the artist's first pieces of public sculpture on a large scale. The same building also houses *Atomica*, a 30ft high sculpture of welded stainless steel, commissioned by Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester Professor Robert Burgess in 2004.

John Sydney Carter has exhibited regularly in the University's annual summer exhibition of sculpture in the Harold Martin Botanic Garden in Oadby.

Born in Leicester, he attended the Gateway Technical Grammar School, where art was his main subject. At 16 he was apprenticed as an industrial designer for five years and attended the Leicester College of Art, where he won the best student award for drawing and painting. He was also awarded the Imperial Typewriters' Prize for painting.

John Sydney Carter set up Carter Design Group Ltd at Foxton and was Chairman from 1958 to date. Other Leicester connections include the Leicester Society of Artists, from whom he has won both the Henton and Society Prizes for painting. He was a Governor of Loughborough College of Art and Design and Assessor to Graphics there from 1984-1997.