

York to be transformed into spectacle of masterpieces – Illuminating York – Discover York in a New Light

A breathtaking collection of light and sound installations will transform York after dark, as the Illuminating York art festival returns to colour the city's historic landmarks this October. Supported by Visit York, The Arts Council and City of York Council, Illuminating York has established itself as a flagship event in Yorkshire's festival calendar.

The eclectic mix of light art installations will use the façades of ancient structures around the city as canvasses; creating huge masterpieces for visitors and residents to enjoy and interact with. The annual art festival this year runs from 23 October and 1 November and is expected to bring art fans from across the UK.

Stephen Purcell, Chair of Illuminating York said, 'This year our artists have risen to the challenge of engaging more than ever with the public. People will be able to quite literally draw with light and this means no two nights will be exactly the same. We hope audiences will come back time and again to see how the artworks change throughout the festival.'

The menu promises the most spectacular contemporary mixture of projections seen in the city yet, each offering a unique and atmospheric experience, from nature inspired light-landscapes to interactive installations, encouraging the audience to influence the look of the art pieces.

In previous years, the festival has seen magnificent projections onto the grandeur of the York Minster and the ruins of St Mary's Abbey, as well as more intimate, atmospheric pieces on the inner walls of the medieval Holy Trinity Church.

Headline pieces at this year's Illuminating York are:

***Vespertine* by Bright White. Kings Manor, Museum Gardens, 23 October – 1 November**

As the darkness creeps in over the Museum Gardens, a breathtaking display will bring the Kings Manor to life. Illustrating the wild nature of the beautiful relationship between predators and their prey, *Vespertine* is a digital sound and video installation

that exposes the magnificence of nocturnal wildlife in the city centre. The visual piece is accompanied by pockets of wildlife sounds, which influence the motion in the projection, creating a powerful and dynamic environment.

The King's Manor is situated in the corner of the beautiful Museum Gardens, behind the ruins of St Mary's Abbey and its Tudor walls will be the backdrop to this spectacular vision.

5Circles, by KMA and Pilot Theatre. St Sampson's Square, 23 October – 25 October

Pilot Theatre and KMA's 5circles project has been shortlisted for 'Artists taking the Lead', one of the major projects of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad and part of the 'imove' project. As one of the five selected groups from the region they are in the running for this major commission from Arts Council England.

5circles will see five large circular stages located in five Yorkshire cities - creating artistic urban playgrounds on a grand scale. Each circle will host a series of interactive games and public art installations, with a projector suspended above the ground which will react to the movement of the people within the space. Through this, people will have a unique interaction with light, sound and other participants.

The presence of 5circles at Illuminating York is part one in the build up to the 2012 programme of Cultural Olympiad activities. It was inspired by the Olympics and it is hoped (subject to funding) that the artwork will tour internationally between now and the London Olympic Games, including a tour to five cities in Yorkshire. For three nights only an interactive feast of colour, light and sound will be projected onto the pavement at St Sampson's Square, right in the heart of York.

Spectators can influence the piece of art by using their own movement to make visual creations with light.

***Walls of Light* by GaiaNova and OMA International. The Multangular Tower, Museum Gardens, 23 October – 1 November.**

Drawing your own masterpiece with light on historical remains in York is the treat that awaits visitors to Illuminating York this year. An interactive drawing board allows visitors to see their own drawings and creations on the Multangular Tower, adding to

the magnificent vision in the beautiful Museum Gardens. Professional artists also will be creating inspirational visions on the tower from across the world, at specific times throughout the festival.

The Multangular Tower is in the gardens of St Mary's Abbey, part of the Museum Gardens, and the outside of this grand, roman structure will be decorated with GaiaNova and OMA International's creation.

Gillian Cruddas, Chief Executive of Visit York said: "Each year art lovers from around the country are drawn in to feast their eyes on the spectacle that the festival creates and last year brought in the largest amount of visitors yet, reaching just under 30,000 people.

illuminating York offers visitors the chance to experience the juxtaposition of York's historic gems with contemporary light installations, creating a very rare and unique atmosphere."

Also part of Illuminating York

The 'Creative York Symposium' held at the York Theatre Royal on 28 October 2009 will explore how 21st Century creative technologies are being successfully applied to enhance the cultural infrastructure. It will be made up of talks, exhibitions and workshops, with the theme of 'The Cultural Evolution'.

It will bring together influential business leaders and policy makers with creative practitioners, to focus on the future needs of the region and how creative industries in York and North Yorkshire can provide innovative solutions.

Get the latest news

From 6th September you can find out more about Illuminating York on a new website: www.illuminatingyork.com, and make friends with Illuminating York on Facebook, or follow the excitement on Twitter. Visit www.visityork.org or call York Visitor Information 01904 550099 to book your festival break.

For more information, visit www.visityork.org.uk or www.illuminatingyork.org.uk.

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Media Enquires: For further information, please call Sally Barr or Charlotte Renwick on 01132 200536/646.

Notes to Editor

Illuminating York is supported by The Arts Council, City of York Council, Visit York and Welcome to Yorkshire and is proud to work with partners which include The York Museums Trust, Creative York, York St. John University, York University and York Theatre Royal.

Illuminating York 2008 – outlined below are some key stats for the festival last year:

- 29,924 visitors to the festival in Oct 08, compared to 11,580 in Oct 07 and 11,319 in Jan 07.
- Good levels of awareness with nearly 80% of visitors knowing about the festival before they attended the event.
- Main methods of finding out about the festival were word of mouth, regional media and TV.
- The economic impact of last year's festival on York's economy was calculated to be £2.8 million pounds.

*imove is Yorkshire's signature cultural programme to celebrate London 2012, funded by The Legacy Trust UK, Yorkshire Forward and Arts Council England. It has a target budget of £3.5m of which £2.7m is already secured. It is a key driver for creating Yorkshire based content for inclusion in the UK Cultural Olympiad.

What is Visit York?

Visit York is the new driving force for the city's tourism industry and the official tourism body for York and the surrounding area. Visit York aims to create a stronger more integrated approach to tourism, working with businesses, Yorkshire Forward and Welcome to Yorkshire. It was formed on 1st April 2008 and brought together the City Council, the York Hospitality Association and the former York Tourism Bureau. The Chairman is John Yeomans and the Chief Executive is Gillian Cruddas.

Its aim is to market York as a must-see world-class destination to the leisure and business visitor, and ensure investment to develop the quality of tourism in York. It is responsible for leisure and conference marketing, visitor services (running the city's Visitor Information Centres), training and developing the tourism product. Visit York aims to increase the value of the visitor economy by at least 5% annually.

Tourism in York already makes a huge contribution to the well-being of the city, however, Visit York aims

to drive this to a higher level. Here are the latest figures:

York Tourism Figures:

- 4.09 million visitors a year (2007/2008) - Figures for 08/09 to available shortly

- £364 million spent in York each year (2007/2008) - Figures for 08/09 to be available shortly
- 10,646 jobs in York created by tourism (2007/2008) - Figures for 08/09 to be available shortly
- Staying visitors generated 2 million bednights (2007/2008) - Figures for 08/09 to be available shortly
- 13% of visitors are from overseas (around a third of these from North America)
- Top overseas markets for York include USA, Germany, Netherlands and Belgium

***Vespertine*, by Bright White**

Formed in 2004, Bright White are based in York and specialise in providing unique concepts and design approaches to visitor experiences created by the public and private sectors. With an international track record spanning Scandinavia, Malta, Germany, Dubai and Hong Kong, Bright White have worked with clients including international museums, fortune 500 corporations, healthcare providers and local authorities.

***5 circles*, by KMA and Pilot Theatre**

5 Circles, a global project, which will tour internationally between now and The London Olympics in 2012. 5 Circles – a radical, imaginative and beautiful artwork - is supported by Yorkshire Gold for the Cultural Olympiad. KMA and Pilot theatre are currently working with school groups in York to devise music for their installation at Illuminating York and encouraging people to log on to their website and take part at [www. 5circles.net](http://www.5circles.net)

***Walls of Light*, by GaiaNova and OMA international**

The arts companies Gaianova and OMA International bring the Tagtool to the City of York, providing an exciting opportunity for visitors to draw on a huge historic canvas.

Professional artists from across the globe will also be using the tagtools at designated times to produce stunning and inspirational works. Each day of the festival there will be scheduled live painting sessions, as well as playback of pre-recorded sessions by the artists which keep the walls alive all night.

During the run-up to the festival, local artists will be showing school and community groups in York how to use the tagtool to create colourful and expressive drawings.

These will be projected during the festival and audience members can also join in on site, and have-a-go.

GaiaNova is an arts and events production company, which specialises in realising artistic visions. Work has taken it all over the world and includes work in the UK with visual artists Brian Eno, flat-e, Sophie Clements, and has have worked with the South Bank Centre, the Royal Opera House, the British Film Institute and a host of Music and Arts Festivals.

OMA International is an independent arts and entertainment production company based in Vienna. A digital family business strongly rooted in live performance, OMA aims to bring creative productions of high quality to both young and adult audiences - on stage, over the internet, and in public spaces. OMA International is the creator and maintainer of the Tagtool project.

Creative York Symposium

Creative York is a specialist technology network for professionals, businesses and organisations working in one of three clusters that are part of the Science City York initiative. Creative York is designed to promote the economic and cultural prosperity of creative businesses and practitioners in York and North Yorkshire bringing individuals and organisations together. The network assists supply chain development and encourages a climate of entrepreneurship, innovation and collaboration.