

14 October 2009

Interactive light playground to decorate the pavements of York

Members of the public are being invited to be the artists of an interactive public art projection which will flood St Sampson's Square in York with patterns of light for one weekend only.

5Circles by the Pilot Theatre and KMA, a media arts company, will be lighting up the city as part of this year's Illuminating York festival. Visitors to the square from 23 – 25 October, will be able to influence the shape and colour of the projection, creating a large piece of interactive urban public art which will fill around three quarters of the historic square.

5Circles will be projected down onto the people below in St Sampson's Square from a crane suspended high above the buildings. Patterns will connect with the participants' movements through the use of a thermal imaging camera to create unique visions each evening.

Supported by Visit York, Welcome to Yorkshire, The Arts Council and City of York Council, Illuminating York has established itself as a flagship event in Yorkshire's festival calendar. This year it will run from 23 October and 1 November and is expected to attract art fans from across the UK.

Marcus Romer, Artistic Director at York's Pilot Theatre said: "We've created a piece of art which blurs the conventional boundaries of the artist and the participants, as participants play the role of the artist too.

"5Circles is an exciting way to get people interested and involved in creating unconventional artwork, which they'd rarely get the opportunity to do anywhere else. People can simply just observe or participate and whether they're walking, toddling, dancing or skating, they'll have an influence on the spectacular interactive light playground that will fill St Sampson's Square".

5Circles is one of a number of pieces in Illuminating York this year and the menu promises the most spectacular contemporary mixture of projections seen in the city yet.

5Circles is a work in progress and its presence of at Illuminating York is part of 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.

Stephen Purcell, Chair of Illuminating York and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at York St John University said: "Illuminating York is now poised to establish itself over the next five years as a leading international, contemporary art festival which explores the inter-relationship between place, space and technology, drawing on an increasingly ambitious group of city based artists, scientists and cultural historians who wish to collaborate to make Illuminating York an even greater success."

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. Visit York and Welcome to Yorkshire are delighted to have worked with key partners in the city to make this event happen.

"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."

Get the latest news

To find out more about Illuminating York, visit: www.illuminatingyork.org, and make friends with Illuminating York on Facebook, or follow the excitement on Twitter. Visit www.visitork.org or call York Visitor Information 01904 550099 to book your festival break.

5Circles is just one of three art projections being featured at Illuminating York this year.

-Ends-

Media Enquires: For further information, please call Sally Barr or Nina Hands on 01132 200536/532.

Notes to Editor

Images

Attached is a sneak preview of *5Circles*.

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.

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.

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