

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Explosion of light illustrations to transform York's ancient tower**

A colourful display of stunning creations will paint one of York's most historical structures this autumn, as international artists and visitors alike will compose larger-than-life masterpieces as part of the Illuminating York festival.

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.

The festival transforms York's historic buildings with projections each year, and 2009 brings the most interactive light installations yet – one of which is *Walls of Light* by GaiaNova and OMA International.

Artists from across the globe will be convening in York to create this unique piece of light art which will be projected onto the Multangular Tower in the Museum Gardens. The scope of artists' backgrounds ranges from naive art to calligraphy to traditional oil painting - suiting all tastes. Visitors to the Museum Gardens will also have the opportunity to influence the projections by drawing with light themselves.

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

The 'Tagtool' that makes all of this possible was designed and made by OMA International to allow spontaneous and magnificent visions to be created across a range of art styles and is now used by artists across the globe.

Markus Dorninger from OMA International, based in Vienna said: "The Multangular Tower is a fantastic structure and to have the opportunity to work on such a historical

site is really exciting. The idea for the Tagtool comes from working with children's theatre as we wanted to encourage spontaneous creative expression, and it means that we can have a eclectic range of visions for people to experience as part of Illuminating York.

"We've collected some of the world's best Tagtool artists each with their own technique and unique style to create some amazing masterpieces in York. People will be able to watch as these are created and will have the opportunity to use the Tagtool themselves and design their own light masterpieces."

*Walls of Light* is one of three artworks in Illuminating York this year and the menu promises the most spectacular contemporary mixture of projections seen in the city yet.

Stephen Purcell, Chair of Illuminating York and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at York St John University said: "Illuminating York has consistently demonstrated over the past five years that a carefully crafted artistic intervention can be challenging and awe-inspiring in equal measure. The festival achieves remarkable outcomes and manages to enhance the economic profile of the city through the diversification of the night-time economy.

"Illuminating York captures the public's imagination and confirms York as a city that takes its future prosperity as seriously as it pays homage to its complex past."

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."

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

Walls of Light is just one of three art projections being featured at Illuminating York this year. Details of the final piece will follow in the last few weeks leading up to the festival.

**-Ends-**

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

### **Notes to Editor**

#### Images

Attached a sneak preview of Walls of Light, the preview of the three pieces, 5Circles will follow with more information.

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 month, 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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