



Cantus Arcticus: an arctic landscape imagined through light and sound

Bruce Munro brings the Northern Lights to Waddesdon Manor

Celebrating a year of light in spectacular fashion, Waddesdon Manor will unveil *Cantus Arcticus*, an extraordinary artwork by international artist Bruce Munro, to be seen for the first time this spring in the Coach House as part of Waddesdon's contemporary programme. This new work follows two installations, *Blue Moon on a Platter* and *Angel of Light*, displayed at the Manor during the Christmas Season 2012.

Munro's inspiration for the artwork is the haunting orchestral composition 'Cantus Arcticus' by Finnish composer Einohujani Rautavaara (b.1928), which Munro heard for the first time quite by chance, as he returned from a visit to Waddesdon. The sounds of Arctic birdsong interwoven with Rautavaara's orchestral score created a visual soundscape, which crystallised as shimmering curtains of light suggesting the Aurora Borealis interspersed with the silhouettes of circling birds. Back in the studio, the vision was realised through fibre-optic cable and mirrors, creating the sense of the infinite landscape of the arctic tundra and its bird life, illuminated by the shifting colours choreographed to Rautavaara's music. Visitors will be transported into a different world of light and sound via the pinks, greens and blues of the Northern Lights.

Munro is a Wiltshire-based artist who has long been fascinated by the emotional impact of light and the responses it creates, particularly in relation to landscapes. He has exhibited at the Eden Project, the V&A, the Holburne Museum in Bath, Kensington Palace, and most recently at Longwood Garden outside Philadelphia in the USA. *Cantus Arcticus* is part of Munro's ongoing residency at Waddesdon and will be followed by a series of 6 installations especially created for the gardens from 13 November to 1 January 2014.

Pippa Shirley, Head of Collections at Waddesdon, says "We are absolutely delighted to be collaborating with Bruce Munro, an artist of international standing, who is at the forefront of this rapidly evolving field. Both *Cantus Arcticus* and this winter's installations are site-specific - Bruce has used Waddesdon as his canvas to create a series of extraordinary responses to the place in colour, light and sound which are witty, challenging and moving. He harnesses the emotional power and magic of light in a way which our visitors will love. We intend over the coming years to develop light art as a distinct strand of our contemporary programme, taking advantage of the wonderful buildings and landscape at Waddesdon to create an art experience which is at once immediate, immersive, enchanting and at the cutting-edge, which everyone, from young to old, can enjoy."

Editors Notes

Location: Coach House

27 March - 27 October 2013

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Visitor information and opening times: www.waddesdon.org.uk

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Bruce Munro:

British artist Bruce Munro is best known for immersive large-scale mixed-media installations based on his interest in the medium of light. Munro was born in London in 1959 and studied fine art at Bristol Polytechnic. He moved to Australia in the 1980s where he worked within the lighting design industry. On his return to the UK in 1992 he settled in West Wiltshire and has designed contemporary residential light art pieces and very large walk-through outdoor light –based installations. He often works with reclaimed or re-used materials with reflective qualities, such as cds and fluorescent tubes. Aside from his work at Waddesdon, his most recent piece in the UK was the critically-acclaimed *Field of Light* at the Holburne Museum, Bath, in 2011, which combined 5 thousand slender fibre-optic stems bearing glass bulbs which shifted colour and moved with the wind.

www.brucemunro.co.uk

Bruce Munro's future schedule 2013:

May 24 - November 10, 2013

Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art, Nashville, TN

September 25, 2013 – February 8, 2014

Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Columbus, OH

November 2013 - January 2014

Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, England

1. Waddesdon Manor was built in 1877 by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild to display his outstanding collection of art treasures and to entertain the fashionable world. It combines the highest quality 18th century French decorative arts, magnificent English portraits and Dutch Old Master paintings with one of the finest Victorian gardens in Britain, famous for its parterre and ornate working Aviary. The house was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1957 and is now managed by a family charitable trust, the Rothschild Foundation, under the chairmanship of Lord Rothschild.
2. Waddesdon is pleased to support Trust New Art, a collaboration between Arts Council England and the National Trust aimed at promoting contemporary arts and crafts in historic properties. Arts Council England and the National Trust believe that placing high quality and innovative contemporary art within historic settings can inspire artists and audiences and encourage new ways of looking at the work and the world.
3. Waddesdon is the most visited historic house among England's National Trust properties. The collections are a reflection of the passions of the Rothschilds who created and have cared for Waddesdon, from Ferdinand de Rothschild, who built the Manor in the late 19th-century to Jacob, the present Lord Rothschild, through whom contemporary collecting has been revived. The Coach House opened as a new venue for contemporary art exhibitions in the grounds of the Manor in April 2009 with a retrospective exhibition on the work of **Angus Fairhurst**, a collaboration with Arnolfini, Bristol and in 2010 showed "Glass Experiences", an exhibition of contemporary chandeliers by Brazilian designers, the **Campana brothers** and the installation of **Jeff Koons' Cracked Egg (Blue)** in the Conservatory. Two of the Campana's light works, "Broken Dreams" are permanently installed at Windmill Hill. In 2011 the Coach House showed **Andy Warhol's Ten Portraits of Jews of the Twentieth Century**.
4. Visitors can also see sculpture in the grounds of the house by **Stephen Cox** and **Xavier Veilhan**, the latest acquisition by the Rothschild Foundation. Veilhan (b. 1963) is a French artist who lives and works in Paris. His work includes photography, sculpture, film, painting and installation art. There is also a growing collection of contemporary art at Windmill Hill, the home of the Archive and the offices of the Rothschild Foundation on the Waddesdon Estate which includes work by **Anish Kapoor**, **Richard Long**, **Sarah Lucas**, **Angus Fairhurst** and **Michael Craig-Martin**.
5. Contemporary works in the house include paintings by **Lucian Freud** and **David Hockney**, as well as a specially commissioned contemporary chandelier by the German lighting designer **Ingo Maurer**.



WADDESDON
THE ROTHSCHILD COLLECTION

6. 2012 was a landmark year for Waddesdon's contemporary programme. Celebrated ceramic artist **Edmund de Waal** created a series of site-specific installations throughout the ground floor of the Manor, while a collaboration with **Christie's** resulted in a major exhibition of contemporary sculpture in the Gardens and Coach House inspired by the theme of the House of Cards. Bruce Munro's light installations, *Blue Moon on a Platter* and *Angel of Light* gave the year a suitably dramatic finale.
7. Waddesdon also works with design students from the **Royal College of Art** and art students from the **Ruskin School of Art** to develop innovative product for Waddesdon's shop.