



Media release

Yorkshire Sculpture Park

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Fifth exhibition space at YSP

James Lee Byars

St Bartholomew's Chapel and Bothy Gallery – now extended until 3 January 2010

In September Yorkshire Sculpture Park launched St Bartholomew's Chapel as a unique exhibition space with *The Angel*, a spellbinding work by the late American artist James Lee Byars (1932-1997). Built in 1744, YSP is opening the chapel to the public for the first time since its deconsecration to showcase *The Angel* (1989), which comprises 125 Murano glass spheres, each one hand-blown using just a single breath, and arranged in curves based on the Japanese Kanji character for 'angel'. Byars visited YSP in 1996 and was beguiled by the place and its atmosphere: it is fitting then that his work will create a graceful statement in a place that already contains a meditative presence. The exhibition opened on 19 September and will now be extended until 3 January 2010.

A further selection of sculpture, incorporating themes and motifs explored by Byars throughout his career, is shown in the Bothy Gallery at YSP. The sphere, with associations of perfection and wholeness, is pivotal in Byars' work, and the use of gold, believed to be a divine metal representing immortality, is also a recurring element. This project will contribute to Byars' canon of posthumous works, giving YSP visitors the opportunity to experience a significant installation by this intriguing artist known for profound and challenging performance and sculpture.

The Grade II* listed chapel, set in the eighteenth-century landscape, is a sandstone Georgian church built to serve the Bretton Estate and designed by Sir William Wentworth whose family owned the estate until 1792. It continued to be used for services for the local village until the early 1990s when it was deconsecrated and a new church was built in the village. YSP is seeking funds to fully restore this elegant chapel and this inaugural project provides a welcome chance to breathe new life into a building that is part of the rich heritage of Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Notes to editors:

James Lee Byars was born in Detroit in 1932 and died in Egypt in 1997. He spent ten years living sporadically in Japan where he taught English to Buddhist monks and nuns. Byars was constantly travelling and spent much of his time in Europe, most notably in Bern, where he developed an important relationship with gallery owner Toni Gerber – many of his performances took place at Gerber's apartment. Byars' early career reflects the development of live art in the mid-twentieth century and he 'is increasingly recognized as a major 20th century artist who provides the third point between Beuys and Warhol, between shaman and showman' (Power, Kevin, 'James Lee Byars', *Third Text*, 1475-5297, Volume 11, Issue 39, 1997). Byars' work is included in the collections of The Whitney Museum of American Art, Kunstmuseum Bern, the Museum of Modern Art, New York and in many private collections.

The Angel was shown by Milton Keynes Gallery for the 2009 Venice Biennale, in collaboration with Michael Werner Gallery.

Supported by the Henry Moore Foundation.

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, near Wakefield, is an independent art gallery, accredited museum and registered charity, number 1067908. Yorkshire Sculpture Park receives funding from: Arts Council England, Wakefield MDC, The Henry Moore Foundation, West Yorkshire Grants (a joint committee of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield Councils). www.yosp.co.uk

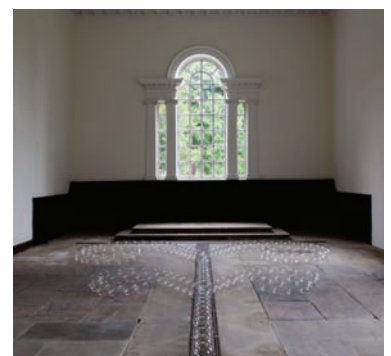


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