

Yorkshire Sculpture Park

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release



James Turrell Deer Shelter

An Art Fund Commission

From 28 April 2006

Free admission. Press view Thursday 27 April

This April, the National Art Collections Fund (Art Fund), the UK's leading art charity, will unveil one of the most significant projects in its history – a permanent Skyspace at Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) by the internationally renowned artist James Turrell. This is the first commission for the Art Fund and its most significant gift to the nation since The Burghers of Calais by Rodin in 1911. James Turrell Deer Shelter opens to the public on 28 April 2006.

Having discovered YSP's long-term ambition to create a permanent installation with James Turrell, the Art Fund decided to donate the total sum required to create it. The entire cost of the project, in the region of £800,000, will be covered by the money set aside to celebrate the Art Fund's Centenary with a special purchase in 2003. The funds available for normal grant-giving activities will not be affected. The commission inaugurates a new and more active phase in the life of the Art Fund and underlines its commitment to contemporary collecting – especially in the international arena.

Turrell is an artist of international acclaim, renowned as a 'sculptor of light'. For over 40 years he has used light and space to create art installations which extend and enhance perception – from indoor pieces which baffle the senses, creating an illusion of infinite diffused light, to outdoor Skyspaces.

James Turrell is creating one of his Skyspaces at YSP within the Park's 18th-century Grade II Listed building – the deer shelter. His work will not alter the shape of the landscape or disturb the tranquillity of the site, but will create a place of contemplation and revelation, harnessing the changing light of the Yorkshire sky. The Skyspace will consist of a large square chamber with an aperture cut into the roof. Through this aperture the visitor will be offered a heightened vision of the sky, seemingly transformed into a trompe l'oeil painting.

"Look within yourself and welcome the light", was once the advice of James Turrell's Quaker grandmother, scarcely anticipating where it might lead him. Born in Los Angeles in 1943, Turrell was fascinated by flying and aircraft from an early age. He worked as a pilot before studying mathematics and perceptual psychology. His interest in optics and visual phenomena led him to the University of California where he started working with the medium of light to create art installations. Turrell is perhaps best known for his ambitious Roden Crater project in the Arizona desert. He has spent over 30 years transforming an entire extinct volcano into a series of Skyspaces that will harness the light from sun, moon and stars.

James Turrell has long been an admirer of the Yorkshire landscape and first proposed transforming YSP's disused deer shelter into a Skyspace in 1993 following an extended visit. His 'skyspace' will contribute to YSP's growing international reputation for displaying significant contemporary art and sculpture. YSP is also hosting an exhibition of James Turrell's light installations in the Underground Gallery until September 2006.

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For further information please contact Sarah Harrison or Sarah Davies at the Art Fund press office on 020 7225 4822/4820.