

Royal  
Academy  
of Arts

GSK  
Contemporary

EARTH  
*Art of a changing world*

## Press Release

**GSK CONTEMPORARY**

***EARTH: ART OF A CHANGING WORLD***

**3 December 2009 – 31 January 2010**

**ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS**

**6 BURLINGTON GARDENS**

Supported by



**MAJOR CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ART COMMISSION TO GO ON DISPLAY IN BURLINGTON ARCADE AS PART OF ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION *GSK CONTEMPORARY: EARTH***

The Royal Academy of Arts and Burlington Arcade are delighted to announce a new commission by British-based practice United Visual Artists. *Onward* heralds the first collaboration between two of the West End's most famous institutions and will provide a temporary link between the Royal Academy's Burlington House and 6 Burlington Gardens site, where the exhibition *GSK Contemporary, Earth: Art of a changing world* will be held this winter. *Onward* will be on display from 20 November 2009, throughout Christmas, until the exhibition closes on 31 January 2010. The installation will also celebrate the recently completed multi-million pound renovation project in honour of the Arcade's 190th birthday.

Set within the beautifully ornate and classic architecture of Britain's first ever shopping arcade, *Onward* will present a sequential series of light sculptures hung centrally through the Burlington Arcade and on the portico of 6 Burlington Gardens. Taking the form of tessellated polyhedra, they present us with a simple allegory of evolution through mutation. As our understanding of the development and evolution of the natural world has been led by philosophers' and scientific discovery, today the rate of change is hugely accelerated. What we understand to be the elemental bricks in our existence are profoundly altered day by day; this complexity and disintegration is echoed in the work.

Founded by Matt Clark, Chris Bird and Ash Nehru in 2003, United Visual Artists (UVA) is a London based art and design practice. Their work spans permanent architectural installations, live performance and public art. UVA's work is about social experience, turning the audience into active participants and the relationship between space, the performer and the audience is at the heart of their practice. Research and development is core to their process, enabling them to constantly explore new fields as well as re-examine more established ones. In 2008 they were shortlisted for the Darwin bicentenary commission at

the Natural History Museum, London and, in the same year, they were part of Meltdown curated by Massive Attack. UVA has also been selected to create two major new public art commissions for Maple Leaf Square in Toronto, Canada.

*GSK Contemporary 2009* is the second annual contemporary art season at 6 Burlington Gardens. Opening in December, *Earth: Art of a changing world* will present new and recent work from more than 30 leading international contemporary artists, including commissions and new works from the best emerging talent. Co-curated by Kathleen Soriano, Director of Exhibitions at the Royal Academy, David Buckland, Director of Cape Farewell, and, Edith Devaney, Royal Academy, this exhibition will reflect the impact of the climate change debate on the practice of a broad range of contemporary artists across a wide variety of media including Tracey Emin, Spencer Finch, Mona Hatoum, Darren Almond, Cornelia Parker, and the writer Ian McEwan.

#### Notes to Editors:

1. Burlington Arcade is Britain's oldest shopping arcade and opened in 1819. The longest covered shopping street in Britain, this oasis of calm is one of London's hidden treasures packed with luxurious accessories – renowned throughout the world for its individuality and craftsmanship. It has recently completed a multi-million pound renovation, returning to its original splendour in time to celebrate its 190<sup>th</sup> birthday.
2. As part of its support of the Royal Academy of Arts, and its work with contemporary artists, GlaxoSmithKline are sponsoring a three-year programme of three individual exhibitions at the Royal Academy's galleries in 6 Burlington Gardens – *GSK Contemporary*.
3. GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is one of the world's leading pharmaceutical and healthcare companies and is committed to improving the quality of human life by enabling people to do more, feel better and live longer. In 2008, GlaxoSmithKline's community investment was £124 million and targeted health and education programmes in almost 100 countries. GlaxoSmithKline is one of the largest charitable givers in the FTSE 100 and has a long history of supporting art initiatives that encourage creative thinking.

For more information please visit: [www.gsk.com/community](http://www.gsk.com/community)

#### OPENING HOURS

**GSK Contemporary: Earth** 3 December 2009 – 31 January 2010

Closed 24 and 25 December

Saturday – Thursday: 10am – 6pm

Friday: 10am – 10pm

**Burlington Arcade** 20 November 2009 – 31 January 2010

Closed 25, 26, 27 December and 1 January

Monday – Wednesday: 8am – 6:30pm

Thursday: 8am – 7pm

Friday: 8am – 10pm

Saturday: 9am – 6:30pm

Sunday: 11am – 5pm

### **ADMISSION TO *GSK CONTEMPORARY: EARTH***

£7 full price; £6 Registered Disabled and 60 + years; £5 NUS / ISIC cardholders; £4 12–18 years and Income Support; £3 8–11 years; 7 and under free. Family Ticket: £16

### **TICKETS**

Tickets are available daily at the RA. To book tickets in advance please visit [www.royalacademy.org.uk/earth](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/earth). Groups of 10 or more are asked to book in advance; please tel: 020 7300 8027, fax: 020 7300 8084 or email: [groupbookings@royalacademy.org.uk](mailto:groupbookings@royalacademy.org.uk)

### **ADMISSION TO BURLINGTON ARCADE: Free**

### **IMAGES**

Publicity images for **GSK Contemporary: Earth** can be obtained from Calum Sutton PR. Please contact [info@suttonpr.com](mailto:info@suttonpr.com) / +44 (0) 207 183 3577

#### **GSK Contemporary Press Enquiries**

David Field

Calum Sutton PR

E: [david@suttonpr.com](mailto:david@suttonpr.com)

T: +44 (0)207 183 3577

#### **Burlington Arcade Press Enquiries**

Caroline Parrish

The Communication Group

E: [CParrish@TheCommunicationGroup.co.uk](mailto:CParrish@TheCommunicationGroup.co.uk)

T: +44 (0) 20 7630 1411

For advanced tickets please print [www.royalacademy.org.uk/earth](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/earth)