

PRESS RELEASE

Free, Family Art Workshops in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter Drawing with colour: Discovering the creation of colour from our natural environment

Taking inspiration from the 'Alchemical Tree' (a new work by Simon Periton that will be installed in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter in 2015), free, family, drop-in workshops will take place in the ROQ's Mathematical Institute led by artists Nabil Ali and Vicky Vergou on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 October from noon until 4pm.

The workshops will provide members of the public with an introduction to the concepts underpinning Simon Periton's commission, the opportunity to make and draw with colours of their own creation, and contribute to the making of a larger than life ash tree! Periton comments,

"I am delighted with this programme of free workshops being offered in the Mathematical Institute this October. The special magic that can be art should be available for everyone to enjoy. These exciting workshops will offer the participants an insight into some of the creative processes and mysteries enjoyed by artists for centuries and will help create a greater awareness of and engagement with my commission for the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter."

The workshops are organised by Modus Operandi in association with The Big Draw and Family Arts Festival, with some materials donated by Faber-Castell. Michael Morpurgo, Author and Patron of Family Arts Festival 2014, comments:

"I am delighted to be Patron of the 2014 Family Arts Festival. The enormous range of events presented across the UK means there will be something to delight, and share with, all members of the family across the generations. I encourage you to make a day - or a week -of exploring the fun, interesting and entertaining events in your area this autumn half term."

Nabil Ali will demonstrate how to make natural paint colours and then lead workshops enabling people to have a go mixing, and then using, their own alchemical colours. There will also be free 'bookable' sessions available with local artist Vicky Vergou. Vergou will lead participants in an exploration of the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter and then invite them to draw on the windows and tables in the prestigious Mathematical Institute Common Room whilst enjoying floor to ceiling views of the Radcliffe Observatory building.

This event is great for families looking for an interesting and fun activity that everyone from the age of six can take part in. All materials and activities will be age appropriate. The workshops offer a great opportunity for participants to work alongside artists creating imagery and artwork together in a safe and stimulating environment.

Artist Simon Periton has been appointed as site-wide artist for the University of Oxford's Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ). Periton has been tasked with creating a unique, distinctive and memorable cultural identity for the Quarter, one of the biggest development projects the University has undertaken for more than a century.

Periton's proposal, *The Alchemical Tree*, is rooted in the ROQ's history, the physical navigation of the site and the quest for a concept that relates to the site as a whole and evolves with it in the future. The re-housing of several academic departments

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within the ROQ suggested to him a re-interpretation of a more historical, classical, university model where interaction between different disciplines is actively encouraged, reflecting the development of contemporary ideas within the realms of science as well as art.

Periton has decided to create a central sculpture of a silver Alchemical Tree with a golden crown around its trunk, a symbol connected with growth and transformation, and with a quest for knowledge. This sculpture will be complemented by smaller works placed across the site, which relate to the central tree both visually and materially.

The workshops are supported by:



with the generous support of the Mathematical Institute, University of Oxford and the Pye Charitable Settlement.

Sponsor:



ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- **FURTHER INFORMATION:** www.modusoperandi-art.com/projects/family_art_workshops_at_the_radcliffe_observatory_quarter
- **What:** Free, family, drop-in art workshops
- **Suitable for ages:** 6 years and over
- **Cost:** This is a free event
- **When:** Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 October. From noon until 4pm
- **Where:** Mathematical Institute, University of Oxford, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, OX2 6GG
- **Led by Artist Facilitators:** Nabil Ali (www.nabilali.co.uk) and Vicky Vergou (www.vickyvergou.co.uk)
- **Organised by:** Modus Operandi - www.modusoperandi-art.com
- **Organised in association with:** Family Arts Festival 2014 www.familyartsfestival.com, The Big Draw thebigdraw.org and the University of Oxford.
- **Support:** Supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England
- **Support:** Supported by the Pye Charitable Settlement
- **Sponsorship Support:** Faber-Castell and sponsoring partner Stone Marketing: www.stonegift.com. Faber-Castell is an especially appropriate

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sponsor of the 2014 Big Draw. Faber-Castell is proud to be the world's largest and oldest manufacturer of wooden-cased pencils, and of its reputation as an environmentally sound, socially responsible and economically sustainable company. Faber-Castell's Playing and Learning range offers a huge variety of art materials specially designed to encourage children to spend their leisure time in a creative and meaningful way, enabling them to enthusiastically play and learn at the same time.

- **Simon Periton, ROQ Site-wide Artist:** Simon Periton's appointment is the first ROQ Artist's Fellowship awarded under *Tracing Venus*, the public art programme for the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, curated by Modus Operandi.
- Simon Periton said:
'The discovery of the artwork and the physical experience of traversing/navigating the site should mirror an educational model that promotes cross-fertilisation. The tree symbolises the process of growth and transformation experienced by students as they develop their ideas through focused study at the University; the crown represents the successful attainment of a higher state, a realisation of perfection'.
- http://www.modusoperandi-art.com/projects/roq_oxford_site_wide_project/
- **The Alchemical Tree sculpture installation** is part of the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter Public Art Programme commissioned by the University of Oxford and curated by Modus Operandi. It has been funded by the University of Oxford and supported using Culture funding from Oxford City Council.
- For further information visit - www.ox.ac.uk/roq
- **Radcliffe Observatory Quarter Public Art Programme** - The Public Art Strategy and programme is commissioned by the University of Oxford. The Radcliffe Observatory Quarter is a 10-acre site in central Oxford, bound by the Woodstock Road, Somerville College, Walton Street, Observatory Street, and Green Templeton College, and will accommodate new teaching and learning space for the University over the next 20 years.