



Press Release

The Trustees of Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) have announced that Founding Director, Peter Murray CBE, will retire in March 2022

Establishing YSP in 1977 with a grant of £1000 and no staff, YSP has evolved into a major international centre for sculpture; a cultural beacon for Yorkshire, attracting artists and visitors from all over the world.

Peter has taught in Primary, Secondary and Higher Education and in 1977, when he was Principal Lecturer in Art Education at Bretton Hall College, he started YSP in the grounds of the college which at that time were not open to the public.

There were many obstacles to overcome, not least the lack of funding and staffing. Over time through tenacity, political acumen, total commitment, and the support of others, YSP emerged as an important cultural venue contributing significantly to the economy. Learning has been fundamental to the organisation, along with the development, understanding and enjoyment of sculpture in this country and beyond.



Support for artists at every stage of their careers has remained at the heart of Peter Murray's vision and he has forged many longstanding and meaningful relationships with artists, including Magdalena Abakanowicz, Anthony Caro, Tony Cragg, Elisabeth Frink, Barbara Hepworth, Phillip King, Henry Moore, David Nash, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Andy Goldsworthy and many more. A continued respect for, and commitment to, the legacies of Wakefield's most well-known twentieth century sculptors – Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore – is evident; Moore chose the old Deer Park as a perfect place to site his monumental bronzes, some of which can be seen there today. This commitment to artists and to making art accessible to everyone has continued through the decades and was acknowledged when YSP was named Museum of the Year in 2014.

As well as establishing strong personal relationships with artists and attracting major international artists to Yorkshire, Peter has established a team of talented staff and perceptive Trustees who, under his leadership, have invested in many capital and building projects, further opening up the estate. Together they have been responsible for the design and construction of several award-winning buildings – interventions which were relatively simple and classical – 'a pencil line in the landscape' – including visitor centres, a building dedicated to learning, and six superb indoor galleries. A major achievement was reuniting the designed landscape of the Bretton estate, providing public access to art and nature, which pre-pandemic welcomed 500,000 visitors and 40,000 participants in YSP's learning programmes each year.



"Although I have been the driving force, the contribution of artists, staff, Trustees and the support of the public have been crucial to the success of YSP" says Peter Murray.

Over the years Peter has travelled extensively, helping to establish YSP's international reputation and has lectured and contributed to conferences in many different countries, including India, China, Japan and the USA. He was for many years Vice Chair of the International Sculpture Centre in the USA and was a founding member of the European Land Art Network. In 1996 he was awarded an OBE for services to the arts and later received a CBE for continued services to the arts. In 2012 he received the National Critics Circle Art and Architecture Award and the Catalan Ramon Llull Award for Creative Arts and contribution to Catalan culture. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Art and an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. He has been awarded Honorary Doctorates from the University of Huddersfield, York University and the University of the Arts, London.

Peter Clegg, YSP Chair of Trustees says,

"As a founding director of the YSP, Peter Murray has been responsible for establishing one of the country's most significant institutions for education and the arts. YSP is a proud regional centre with a unique global reputation. The Trustees are very much aware of the need to preserve and enhance his extraordinary legacy."

The search for a new Director is underway, with an appointment expected to be announced in early 2022.

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Notes for Editors

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Open seven days a week, except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
Booking essential, via ysp.org.uk

Social media

Instagram and Twitter: @YSPsculpture

Facebook: @YorkshireSculpturePark

#ArtWithoutWalls

About Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) is the leading international centre for modern and contemporary sculpture. Welcoming around 500,000 visitors each year, pre-pandemic YSP is an independent charitable trust and registered museum situated in the 500-acre, 18th-century Bretton Hall estate in West Yorkshire.

Founded in 1977 by Executive Director Peter Murray, YSP was the first sculpture park in the UK, and is the largest of its kind in Europe. It is the only place in Europe to see Barbara Hepworth's recently restored *The Family of Man* in its entirety alongside a significant collection of sculpture, including bronzes by Henry Moore and Joan Miró, important pieces by Phyllida Barlow, Roger Hiorns and Ai Weiwei, and site-related works by Katrina Palmer, Andy Goldsworthy, David Nash, Sean Scully and James Turrell.

YSP mounts a year-round temporary exhibitions programme including some of the world's leading artists across six indoor galleries and the open air. Recent highlights include exhibitions by Fiona Banner, Anthony Caro, Tony Cragg, Amar Kanwar, KAWS, Joan Miró, Henry Moore, Annie Morris, Giuseppe Penone, Jaume Plensa, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Sean Scully, Yinka Shonibare CBE, Chiharu Shiota, David Smith and Bill Viola.

Across its 45-year history, YSP has worked with over 1,000 artists from more than 40 countries, on varied projects from short-term residencies to major surveys. YSP supports artists at vital stages in their careers and is rare in having the accommodation, workshops and expertise to enable open-ended and risk-taking practice, giving artists space, time and support to think and to develop new ideas.

Over this time, YSP has sought to ignite, nurture and sustain interest in and debate around contemporary art and sculpture, especially with those for whom art participation is not habitual or familiar. It enables open access to art, situations and ideas, and continues to re-evaluate and expand the approach to considering art's role and relevance in society. Supporting 40,000 people each year pre-pandemic through YSP's learning programme, this innovative work develops ability, confidence and life aspiration in participants.

YSP's core work is made possible by investment from Arts Council England, Wakefield Council, the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation and Sakurako and William Fisher through the Sakana Foundation. YSP was named Art Fund Museum of the Year in 2014.

Creative Case for Diversity

Yorkshire Sculpture Park was founded in 1977 to enable fairer cultural access and opportunity and we are committed to being part of change towards a fairer world. We do not tolerate discrimination in any form and are proactive in our programme, policies and behaviours to address inequalities locally, nationally and internationally. We recognise that economic, social and cultural disadvantage is complex and intersectional and shape our activity accordingly. Diversity and equality are crucial to the arts because they release the true potential of our nation's artistic talent – from every background. At YSP, we support Arts Council England's mission – great art and culture for everyone. We share ACE's commitment to promote and embed diversity in our workforce and cultural programme. This is called the 'Creative Case for Diversity'.



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