

# PRESS RELEASE

Leeds City Council in partnership with Historic England and the Diocese of Leeds, is thrilled to announce the launch of an uplifting public art project by acclaimed British Artist Fiona Grady.



## ***Patterns Through Time***

St John's Churchyard, New Briggate, Leeds, LS2 8JD

Free to visit - open daily during daylight hours

July 2024 - Spring 2026

***Patterns Through Time*** explores the architectural design details found in the windows of buildings in the New Briggate area, resulting in a contemporary take on stained glass windows. The series of digitally printed aluminium panels presents vibrant, colourful shapes that reference the stained glass windows of St John's Church, its carved stone sundial, and other key sites in New Briggate including the Grand Theatre and Grand

Arcade. The colourful geometric motifs are open to interpretation; allowing the viewers to find their own associations within the patterns. The artworks add significant energy and animation to the green space at St John's Churchyard, marking a significant addition to Leeds' vibrant place making landscape.

The project is supported by Leeds City Council in partnership with Historic England and the Diocese of Leeds. The commission celebrates the New Briggate High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) regeneration project, a partnership between the Council and Historic England. This has delivered improvements to the public realm and historic properties in New Briggate and a series of activities and events in St John's churchyard during the past three years.



### **About the Installation:**

Grady's installation, titled "**Patterns Through Time**", features a series of transparent coloured artworks arranged to create a mesmerizing interplay of light and shadow throughout the churchyard. As light passes through the panels, it will cast vibrant hues and shifting patterns on the surrounding surfaces, offering a continually changing visual experience.

"I am inspired by the history and architecture of St John's Churchyard, and I wanted to create an installation that enhances its beauty while encouraging people to see it in a new light," said Fiona Grady. "Patterns Through Time' is designed to interact with the natural environment, creating a serene yet dynamic space for contemplation and community gatherings."

**Leeds' Mayor Abigail Marshall Katung, ward member for Little London and Woodhouse** emphasized the significance of this project: "We are incredibly proud to host Fiona Grady's stunning installation in St John's Churchyard. Her work not only enriches our city's artistic heritage but through engagement the project truly achieves a deeper connection between the local communities and our green spaces."

### **Community Engagement:**

In addition to the main installation, the project included a series of workshops led by Grady, with the pupils at Blenheim Primary School and local community groups to explore the themes of light, colour, and space. These workshops aim to inspire the next generation of artists and encourage active participation in the arts.

Leeds City Council invites everyone to visit the artwork and experience the importance of art in place making. The installation although a temporary feature of St John's Churchyard will be in place for the foreseeable future, offering an enduring source of inspiration and beauty for residents and visitors alike.



### **About Fiona Grady:**

Fiona Grady is a site-responsive artist. Her practice recognizes the relationship between architecture, installation art and decoration; through lighting gel window installations, wall drawings, projected animations, printmaking and watercolour studies. Her architectural interventions transform their setting by utilising light, colour, shape, surface and scale with transformational and impactful outcomes. Her works metamorphise with the light of day, reflecting the passing of time, memory and experience to create ambient environments.

Fiona has had solo exhibitions at Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool (2022-2024); Foundry Gallery, London (2022); The Art Station, Saxmundham (2021); University of Brighton (2019); Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff (2018); and The Eye Sees, Arles, France (2019). She has been commissioned worldwide by organisations and institutions including: Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, Canary Wharf Group, Guy's and St Thomas's Foundation NHS Trust, ITV, Heals London, Walthamstow Wetlands Visitor Centre, British Land, Watts Gallery Artists' Village, and Kensington and Chelsea Council. She was awarded the Mark Rothko Memorial Trust Bursary (2019) and she has received grants from Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grant (2021) and Developing Your Creative Practice (2023), amongst other organisations.

Her works are held in public and private collections across Europe, North America, and as far as New Zealand. Including Bagri Collection, Linklaters, Paul Smith Ltd, and the Tim Sayer Collection bequeathed to Hepworth, Wakefield.

She was born in Leeds (1984). She lives and works in London and Leeds.

### **About St John's Church:**

The redundant church of St John the Evangelist was founded by John Harrison, a wealthy wool merchant in 1634, rare as only a few churches were built during the Carolian period (the reign of Charles I - Carolus being the Latin form of Charles). It is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade I listed building, and is under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

St John's is the oldest church in Leeds city centre. It was built in 1632-34, a turbulent time in England when very few new churches were constructed.

The glory of the church lies in its magnificent Jacobean (Carolean) fittings, particularly the superb carved wooden screen. Every part of the screen is richly decorated with flowers (including tulips), hearts, twisting vines, and grotesque heads of humans and animals. There is more lovely carving on the wall panels, pews and pulpit. Brightly painted angels play instruments in the roof and look down on wonderful carved pews below.

The church building was entirely funded by wealthy merchant and Royalist John Harrison who also paid for the grammar school and almshouses nearby. Harrison's benevolent spirit still pervades the church - he is buried near the altar, and a series of stained-glass windows depicts his good works. One of the windows shows an apocryphal tale in which Harrison presents King Charles, imprisoned in Leeds, with a tankard of gold coins disguised as a draught of ale.

Other monuments around the church commemorate the citizens of Leeds throughout the centuries, and emphasise the importance of the wool industry to the city's prosperity. In the mid-nineteenth century, the parish wanted to demolish the building and rebuild a more convenient modern church. The young architect Norman Shaw led an outcry against this, joined by the eminent architect Sir George Gilbert Scott. Happily they prevailed and Shaw was responsible for the ensuing restoration, very much in the original style of the building.

**Artwork description:**

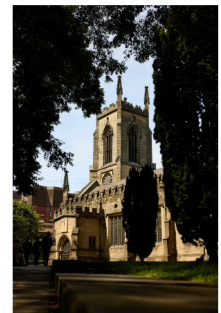
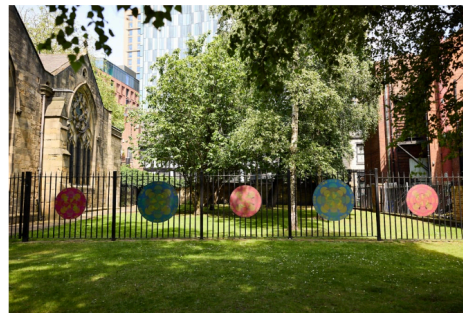
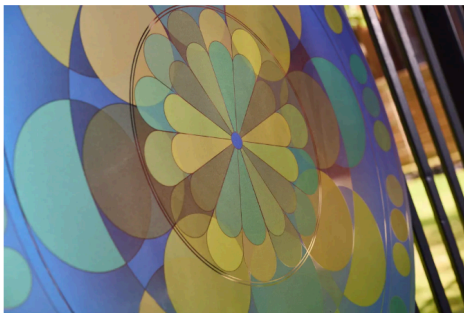
*Patterns Through Time, 2024*

A series of laser cut aluminium composite panels with UV cured digitally printed ink

Overall dimensions: 120cm diameter (blue circles), 90cm diameter (red circles) and 30 x 60 cm each (semi-circles)

Created for St John's Churchyard, Leeds City Centre (UK)

All photos © Fiona Grady photography by David Lindsay

**Further information:**

<https://fionagrady.co.uk/exhibitions/52-patterns-through-time-public-artwork-for-st-john-s-churchyard-leeds/>

<https://fionagrady.co.uk/>

**Additional photos:**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-p7xBobVbaNk60cvBwb8Hoj0Fd7BN4aE?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-p7xBobVbaNk60cvBwb8Hoj0Fd7BN4aE?usp=drive_link)