

News release

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Sculpture for Watton in Norfolk

Artists Charlotte Howarth and Carole Reich, founders of partnership Making Marks, have created a new sculpture for the historic market town of Watton in Norfolk.

Commissioned by the Wayland Partnership Development Trust and managed by Commissions East, the artists worked with the local community to develop the project, which is inspired by the town's rich history. The sculpture is made of a large piece of stone and two steel pieces (made by Arts Fabrication in Nuneaton), and is based on the concept of cylinder seals – an artistic tradition used from antiquity to celebrate the lives of respected individuals or act as a permanent record of events.

The sculpture serves as seating, a meeting point, a local landmark and a means of documenting aspects of life in the Wayland area. This reflects the desire of the artists to respond to requests from the community to create something functional as well as aesthetically pleasing. Local people have been involved with the project since its inception through a public consultation process led by the artists. Workshops with schools, presentations to the Town Council, liaison with local press, an exhibition of preliminary designs and regular contact with a diverse range of community groups has informed the development of the project at every stage. Far from hampering the creative process, the artists have been impressed by the vision, ambition and spirit of the people of Watton.

Howarth and Reich say of the work:

“When we began our journey we talked of creating a record of this community which in time will have historical importance, and we hope we have achieved this. It is a privilege to create artwork for a community. We have enjoyed meeting, debating and witnessing the creativity of the Wayland populace. We made this artwork to reflect this interesting and diverse community.”

Commissions East

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Registered charity number 1045657. Company registration number 2802661. VAT registration number 636778589.

The sculpture is situated at the entrance of Wayland House, High Street, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk, IP25 6AR. A celebration and formal launch will be held on 9 February 2006.

For more information contact:

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Editors notes:

1. Making Marks: Charlotte Howarth & Carole Reich

Charlotte Howarth is a sculptor, stone carver and letterer. Working in a variety of materials, her sculptures show sensitivity to line, pattern and texture. After studying lettering, she worked as an assistant to Richard Kindersley at his workshop in London. She then went to work in Ireland for six years as an assistant to Ken Thompson, returning to Norfolk in 2000. She has completed several art commissions with an emphasis on public engagement and consultation including carvings for Downham Market in Norfolk, Spilsby in Lincolnshire and in Fiddlewood, Norfolk.

Carole Reich trained as an art teacher and has worked extensively in education and community development. After re-locating to the United States, she worked as an artist in residence in a school in San Francisco – going on to lead numerous visual and performing arts projects with children. In 2001, she moved back to the UK and lives near Downham Market in Norfolk. She has worked with Howarth on a number of large public projects and together they co-founded Making Marks.

2. Watton and the Wayland Partnership Development Trust

Watton is a small market town in Wayland, which is part of Norfolk's Breckland countryside. The town's origins go back to the Domesday Book, and it was granted its market charter by King John in 1204. Wayland Wood – just south of Watton - is reputed to be where the story of 'The Babes in the Wood' took place.

The Wayland Partnership Development Trust is a community partnership representing Watton and thirteen village parishes. It aims to rejuvenate the local economy by investing in heritage, culture and the environment to the benefit of all who live, work or visit Watton and its locale. In 2000, community consultation highlighted town enhancement as a priority for the area, resulting in a commission which was funded by Breckland Council, Norfolk County Council and the European Regional Development Fund.

3. Commissions East

Commissions East is the visual arts development agency for the East of England, providing an advisory and management service for commissioners, a programme of special projects addressing new areas of visual arts practice and a range of services for artists.