

PRESS RELEASE: 7 February 2017

Embargo: For Immediate Use

Butterflies swarm Bath Abbey

Last summer saw Bath Abbey filled temporarily with hundreds of colourful paper butterflies as part of the city-wide Forest of the Imagination Festival. The Abbey will see the return of these exotic creations on Wednesday 8th February in a year-long installation by Bath-based artist, Anthony Head.

iMigration 2 by Anthony Head is a large-scale sculpture, a swarm of colourful paper butterflies, spanning five metres and suspended ten metres up in the air in the Abbey's South Transept.

The first impression for visitors is of a single group, a swarm of creatures that appear to be the same. However, on closer inspection, the viewer will discover that each butterfly is unique, with its own digital genetic code and individual wing pattern influenced by random mutations.

The artist, Anthony Head, explains: "*iMigration 2* explores the themes of migration, diversity and individuality. In the swarm, each butterfly is unique, created with a variety of technologies and featuring colour and patterns designed using computer coding, influenced by the mathematics of nature. The butterflies will move gently in the air currents that fill the Abbey as if travelling on a migration.

"In today's world of human migration and its reporting, it's easy to forget how unique each person is, to reduce people to anonymous groups, stereotypes, or just numbers. My hope is that once the viewer has had a chance to enjoy looking at the swarm of butterflies as a whole, they will be drawn to look closer at each one. The artwork is a provocation to not be satisfied by our world saturated by 'mass' media reporting, statistics and the digital consumption of news. It asks you to seek and listen to individual stories by human beings who are affected by migration. Hence *iMigration*."

Stephen Girling, one of the Abbey's vicars, said: "The sculpture made such an impact on us and our visitors last summer that we invited the artist, Anthony Head, to recreate this wonderful experience in our South Transept. Not only is it a visually stunning piece, it provokes us to think about the worth of every individual caught up in human migration and to wrestle with issues of justice around both forced and economic migration".

The sculpture of colourful paper butterflies will remain in the Abbey for a year, from February 2017 to February 2018, so visitors and local residents will have plenty of opportunities to examine the artwork for themselves.



Bath Abbey is open seven days a week for visiting (Mondays 9.30-5.30pm, Tuesdays 9am-5.30pm, Saturdays 9am-6pm and Sundays 1-2.30pm and 4.30-5.30pm) with regular services on weekdays and Sundays. For more information please visit www.bathabbey.org

- End -

Notes to editors:

For further information please contact Elaine Teh, Communications Officer, on 01225 303320 or eteh@bathabbey.org.

About Bath Abbey

Bath Abbey is a flourishing Church of England parish church which technically serves a small city centre parish (Bath Abbey with St James). This parish has a small residential population and primarily consists of commercial properties; and most of the regular congregation and the 692 people on the electoral roll live in other parishes or come from outside the city of Bath. The Abbey holds daily services of morning or evening prayer or Holy Communion; and the standard pattern of Sunday worship is for five daily services attended on average by 630 people. Special services at Advent, Christmas and Easter are well attended; and many local organisations hold annual services in the Abbey. The Abbey has four choirs: Men's, Boys' and Girls' choirs support worship in services; whilst Melody Makers is a choir for younger children which performs in concerts in the Abbey once a term and at other events in and around Bath. The Abbey runs a successful Schools Singing Programme, an outreach activity which supports singing within local schools and holds regular workshops and concerts in the Abbey. The Abbey welcomes approximately 400,000 visitors annually and is open daily all year round; many of these visitors being families and school parties. Apart from being a place of prayer, worship, weddings and funerals, the Abbey has an important role as a visitor destination, a performance space (for audiences anywhere between 10 and 1,000), a general civic space and an exhibition space. www.bathabbey.org

About Bath Abbey's Footprint

The £19.3 million Footprint project aims to carry out essential repairs to the Abbey's collapsing floor, install a new eco-friendly heating system using Bath's unique hot springs as a source of energy and enlarge capacity by creating 200sq metres of new facilities to fulfil the Abbey as a place of congregation, equal access and hospitality. A programme is also planned to record and interpret the Abbey's 1,200 years of history and this iconic church for millions of visitors including educational visits.

www.bathabbey.org/footprint

The Footprint project is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund www.hlf.org.uk