

Press Release

6 December 1993

Christmas Tree

10 December 1993 - 4 January 1994

Created by Shirazeh Houshiary

Sculptor Shirazeh Houshiary has been invited to create the 1993 Tate Gallery Christmas Tree. This is the sixth year that a tree has been commissioned from an artist for the Gallery's rotunda. Artists previously involved have been Bill Woodrow (1988), Tim Head (1989), Lisa Milroy (1990), Boyd Webb (1991) and Craigie Aitchison (1992).

Houshiary has decided to move away from the traditional notion of decorating the Christmas tree and instead has chosen to focus on the natural qualities of the tree itself such as texture, colour, smell and shape. She will achieve this by turning the tree upside down and exposing its roots and hanging it from the ceiling of the Gallery, thus creating the impression of the tree floating in air with the roots free from their earthly constraints.

The roots will be covered in gold leaf to reflect the beauty and intricacy of this part of the tree and also as a way of focusing light away from the branches to the roots themselves which usually remain hidden under the soil. She has described her tree for the Tate Gallery as 'taking earth back to heaven' which refers to her interest in astronomy, mysticism and the interplay between light and dark.

Shirazeh Houshiary is currently exhibiting at the University Art Gallery, Massachusetts and will open a new exhibition of her work at the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin on 18 December.

The 1993 Christmas tree is sponsored by the Patrons of New Art and supported by Clifton Nurseries Limited.

**For further information and photographic material, please contact
Adrian Hardwicke at the Tate Gallery Press Office
Tel: 071 887 8732 Fax: 071 887 8729**