

Press Release

4 December 1997

Christmas Tree 1997 by Michael Landy

Supported by the Patrons of New Art

11 December 1997– 4 January 1998

This year Michael Landy has been invited to create the annual Christmas Tree for the Tate Gallery. However, he has chosen not to make a tree at all, but instead has concentrated on the aftermath of Christmas. His work will be on show from **11 December 1997**.

Landy has decided to focus on the physical residue of Christmas and seasonal gift-giving and festivities. A large bin filled with empty bottles, drink cans, used Christmas paper, broken decorations, the packaging from toys, gifts or food products and dead or broken Christmas trees will draw attention to the conspicuous consumption which so often surrounds the festive season.

Michael Landy was born in London in 1963. He studied at Goldsmith's College, London from 1985 to 1988 and was one of the group of young British artists in the 1988 exhibition *Freeze*, curated by Damien Hirst. Landy's work has also been shown in a large number of exhibitions including *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection*, currently at the Royal Academy, London; *Ace! Arts Council Collection New Purchases 1996* (toured by the Arts Council); *Here and Now*, Serpentine Gallery, London 1995; and *Brilliant! New Art from London* organised by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis in 1995.

Much of Landy's work examines the relationship between everyday objects and art, and between the culture of the art market and that of the street market. He has used a variety of objects such as bread crates, market stalls and shopping trolleys to make sculptural installations. In 1993 Landy invented a fictitious cleaning company, called Scrapheap Services. Its hypothetical function was 'to rid society of all its ills, so giving you a better quality of life'. The project culminated in a multi-media installation, also called *Scrapheap Services* (1995). The installation was accompanied by a video which parodied the promotional videos made by large companies, entitled *We leave the Scum with No Place to Hide*. The work is a comment on continuing issues such as homelessness, unemployment and the contract culture.

This is the tenth year that a tree has been commissioned by the Gallery from an artist. Artists involved in previous years are: Julian Opie (1996), Cornelia Parker (1995), Cathy de Monchaux (1994), Shirazeh Houshiary (1993), Craigie Aitchison (1992), Boyd Webb (1991), Lisa Milroy (1990), Tim Head (1989) and Bill Woodrow (1988).

Michael Landy's installation and the 1997 Christmas card are supported by the Patrons of New Art. Established in 1982, the Patrons of New Art provide financial support towards acquisitions for the Tate Gallery's collection of contemporary art.

**For further information please contact Kate Burvill or Tiffany Vignoles at the
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