

## **Press Release**

11 December 2000

### **Christmas Tree 2000 by Catherine Yass**

12 December 2000 – 5 January 2001

Tate Britain has commissioned Catherine Yass to design its Christmas Tree for 2000.

In the middle of the Rotunda under the gallery's glass dome, Yass will suspend a traditional, undecorated, fir tree which appears to float about nine feet from the floor. A thin blue beam of neon light bisects the tree, running from the very top of the dome. The intensity of this glowing light appears to increase as it passes through the tree and hits the marble floor below.

Catherine Yass was born in 1963 in London. She studied at the Slade School of Art, London (1982-86) and then at Hochschule der Künste, Berlin (1984-85). After securing a Boise travelling scholarship (1986-87) she graduated with an MA from Goldsmiths College, London (1988-90). Yass is best known for her lightbox works in which her transparencies are brightly illuminated from behind to create images with bright, acidic colours, both beautiful and strangely unsettling. She achieves her effects by overlaying a positive transparency with a negative one, which has an inherent blue tone, of the same scene, shot just a moment later. Her work explores and uses light to enable one to see objects and spaces in unfamiliar ways. Her portraits of people, and her pictures of the places they inhabit, are inextricably linked to each other and to the locations in which they are photographed and often also displayed, revealing complex relationships between humans and site.

Yass also works with video and her outdoor projections were presented in the pre-opening programme for Tate Modern in 1998. In 1999, Yass was awarded the Glen Dimplex prize at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. Recent solo exhibitions include New Art Gallery, Walsall (2000) and the British Council Exhibition Space, Prague (1999). Yass's forthcoming solo shows are at the Jerwood Gallery, London, as British representative in the tenth Indian Triennial and at Asprey Jacques, London.

This is the thirteenth year that Tate has commissioned a tree from an artist. The artists involved in previous years were: Mat Collishaw (1999), Richard Wilson (1998) Michael Landy (1997), 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).

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