

## Coming Soon . . . Transformative Art to shape Norfolk's future tourism landscape

This summer has been a great success for the EXPERIENCE project as newly commissioned artists develop their concepts for public artwork - connecting the city to the countryside - with the planned Norfolk Way Art Trail. The trail will provide new adventures which can begin in Norwich and entice visitors to explore Norfolk's natural and cultural assets.

The Norfolk Way Art Trail is a new, long-distance walking and cycling route to enhance and join up existing trails. Public artworks will be situated at five sites along the trail. The 250-mile circuit provides a city gateway to more rural locations off the beaten track and on the water. This landmark trail will have a transformative effect on the visitor economy, give residents a renewed sense of pride and encourage more sustainable and lower impact tourism.

The sites are at Diss Mere, Reedham Ferry Inn, near Honing Station and two locations in Norwich city; EXPERIENCE has worked with the Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) team to commission transformative installations at key city spots on St Benedicts Street and Eastbourne Place, subject to the appropriate planning permissions.

Stefan Gurney, Executive Director, Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) said:

"Following the success of our Love Light Norwich Festival, we are excited to continue our work with light to develop an all-year-round attraction available for free in Norwich as part of the Norfolk Way Art Trail. Our two new light installations have been produced in partnership with local communities and are designed to illuminate and celebrate Norwich's unique history and light up the gateways into our city. We're looking forward to seeing these come to life next year!"

Cllr Dewsbury explained how the installations would be aimed at:

"encouraging people out on the Norfolk trail to enjoy art, nature and to learn about the wildlife and the heritage of the area, offering a more sustainable and low impact form of tourism for visitors to Norfolk."

Not least of all because the trails are ideal terrain for off season visitors who want to enjoy the autumn transformation and revel in the embrace of the cooler temperatures and changing light forms of winter. The EXPERIENCE project promotes tourism in the winter months and the outdoor art commissioned for this new Trail is designed to be enjoyed in the winter season.

In these difficult economic times, it is important to state that the Art Trail does not take any money from local councils or pull on the purse strings of Norfolk County Council. Instead, this vital work is made possible with European Union funding which is specifically set aside for innovative projects promoting nature & culture.

Norfolk County Council's procurement team have been working closely with key local stakeholders to discuss providing a maintenance budget and ensuring that councils are not burdened with costs in years to come

The Norfolk Way Art Trail's four artists are the **Iron Reef** viewing platform by design studio *Maetherea* for the Reedham Ferry Inn site; *toyStudio's* **Flock** sculpture for Diss Mere and their **Flint** installation for St Benedicts Street; the **Interval** design by Limbic Cinema for Eastbourne Place and *Studio Sabine Marcelis's* **Honing Passage** which will be situated near Honing Station.

The **Flock** concept by *toyStudio* for Diss Mere is inspired by the flocking behaviour of birds in flight, schools of fish and the swarms of eels which are synonymous with the Mere and the nearby River Waveney. **Flock** not only mimics the behaviour of local wildlife, but also represents the movement of people. Just as wildlife migrates to **Diss**, many different communities have also arrived and been welcomed into the town. The local community are invited to share their stories which will be showcased as part of the installation. **Flock** is formed from a collection of curved, metallic, tubes of varying lengths, spiralling upwards. Each one of these tubes represent the individual directions we take within a community and how we move forward together as one.

At **Reedham Ferry Inn**, the design agency *Maetherea* modelled the **Iron Reef** as an amphibious structure resilient to and shaped by the ebbs and flows of winter tides. The **Iron Reef** will be planted with appropriate aquatic, oxygenating plants that will grow around and on the structure. *Maetherea* {Matter+Ethereal} is a multidisciplinary creative practice guided by artistic duo Cristina Morbi and Aurora Destro. Working internationally on Environmental Design and Public Art, it aims to create sustainable landscape design and public art. Our work merges renewable resources with technology to create spaces that changes through time, unifying performances of matter with natural and artificial phenomena.

**Interval** is a playful light sculpture that uses layers, repetition and rhythm to reflect

on the passage of time in Norwich. Inspired by the large Sycamore and Beech trees found at Eastbourne Place, the sculpture is an abstraction of tree rings (or annual rings) that visualise the passage of time over the course of a tree's life. Each element in the repetitive design is made from wood and represents a marker in a timeline. QR codes embedded into many of the upright elements enable people to access carefully curated short form audio insights on culture, diversity and creativity of Norwich.

**Flint** is inspired by the rich history of Norwich's beautiful buildings, medieval streets, and vibrant culture. It responds directly to the unique character of the site, whilst simultaneously referencing elements which speak to the local history and heritage of the wider area. **Flint** is formed of a collection of mirrored totems placed around the grounds of the **Norwich Arts Centre**. Their shapes are inspired by the organic forms of the flint walls, which not only form the Church of St Swithin, but are an inescapable and indelible part of the history and landscape of Norfolk.

Dutch designer *Studio Sabine Marcelis* created **Honing Passage** to be a unique place for the community to interact, reflect, and enjoy nature. **Honing Passage** embraces the beauty of the local landscape along the Weaver's Way at Honing Station, near the **North Walsham and Dilham Canal**. The installation will frame its surroundings through a unique lens, inviting people to experience an ever-shifting showcase of colour, light and nature. Offering a new way to look at a natural site, **Honing Passage** will be activated by its surroundings and the seasons; when the sun hits the piece, beautiful light reflections are cast, and when it's raining, beads of water will trickle down the surface in a mesmerising nature. A static piece, yet forever evolving and interacting with the natural world it inhabits.

The Norfolk Way Art Trail initiative is part of the European Union funded EXPERIENCE project – a €23.3 million project to promote off-season experiential tourism and sustainable economic growth. The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Interreg France (Channel) England Programme. It sits under the ERDF's Natural & Cultural Heritage funding category (€16.1 million) and is co-financed and managed by Norfolk County Council (€1.8million).

The wider EXPERIENCE project focuses on six pilot regions in England and France. The aim is to promote off season tourism which is more sustainable for the environment, local businesses, and residents.

The EXPERIENCE project supports local tourism and hospitality businesses across Norfolk in developing new, low-environmental impact, off-season tourism experiences. The project

contributes to Norfolk County Council's plans to cut carbon emissions and support nature recovery.

## **ENDS**

### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

#### **1. About the EXPERIENCE Project**

EXPERIENCE is a €23.3 million project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (€16 million) through the Interreg France (Channel) England Programme and designed to develop the experiential off-season economy in the future in a safe and sustainable way. The project is a 4-year scheme that runs from 1st September 2019 to 30th June 2023, involving 14 partners in France and England. The project is managed by [Norfolk County Council](#) which is piloting new and more sustainable approaches to tourism. EXPERIENCE aims to capitalise on the emerging global trend for local tourism and engagement with the great outdoors, heritage, and culture.

Visit <https://www.tourismexperience.org> or contact [experience@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:experience@norfolk.gov.uk)

#### **About Norwich BID**

Established in November 2012 the Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) is run for local businesses by local businesses. The BID covers a defined area of Norwich where businesses plan how to improve their trading environment, identifying additional projects and services that develop the city centre and trade. Investment in the BID area aims to enhance and promote the local environment for businesses, employees, customers and tourists. The overarching vision is **to make a clear positive impact on the vitality of our city centre and the success of the businesses within it.**

#### **2. More about the Artwork Concepts**

##### **Interval**

This is a playful light sculpture that uses layers, repetition and rhythm to reflect on the passage of time in Norwich. Inspired by the large Sycamore and Beech trees found at Eastbourne Place, the sculpture is an abstraction of tree rings (or annual rings) that visualise the passage of time over the course of a tree's life. Each element in the repetitive design is made from

wood and represents a marker in a timeline, allowing people to move from the past at one end, to the future at the other end. Sound is integrated through the use of QR codes embedded into many of the upright elements, allowing people to access carefully curated short form audio documentaries that give insight into the culture, diversity and creativity of Norwich in relation to the city's past, present and future. These audio miniatures will be placed along the timeline in a linear arrangement, allowing visitors to move through time as they scan the digital content on the sculpture.

### **Flint**

This work is inspired by the rich history of Norwich's beautiful buildings, medieval streets, and vibrant culture. It responds directly to the unique character of the site, whilst simultaneously referencing elements which speak to the local history and heritage of the wider area. **Flint** is formed of a collection of mirrored totems placed around the grounds of the **Norwich Arts Centre**. Their shapes are inspired by the organic forms of the flint walls, which not only form the Church of St Swithin, but are an inescapable and indelible part of the history and landscape of Norfolk. They have been positioned in relation to the multiple churches and other places of the historical significance which contextualise Norwich.

The piece intends to reveal and celebrate the hidden stories which can be found right under our feet. With each totem referencing a monument or place of interest in Norwich, it encourages those to further explore the city and seek out the other landmarks, acting as an abstracted wayfinding map. This connection to the city and these wider places of interest is further cemented through the community engagement process. The community will help explore and design motifs and patterns directly related to the different landmarks, which will be abstracted and applied to the inner side of the mirrored surfaces.

### **Flock**

The concept is inspired by the flocking behaviour of flights of birds, schools of fish and the swarms of eels which are so synonymous with the Mere and the nearby River Waveney. However, **Flock** does not only mimic the behaviour of this wildlife, but it also represents the movement of Diss' own residents. Just as the Mere's wildlife has migrated to Diss over the years, many different communities have arrived in Diss and have been welcomed into the town.

The concept is formed of a collection of curved, metallic, tubes of varying lengths, spiralling upwards. Each one of these tubes represent the individual directions we take within a community and how we move forward together as one. The structure therefore becomes a metaphor for the community of Diss – "flocking" through life. The sculpture's overall form responds directly to the site, intending to evoke the Mere's infamous depth. Originating from a singular point, the artwork grows from a narrow base, spiralling upwards expanding in

radius and the members disperse, intending to evoke a cross-sectional representation of the Mere.

The designers work with the community to share their stories which will be incorporated into **Flock**, giving a place for story-telling and quiet contemplation and reflection. The studio is a London-based art collective which combines the fields of art and architecture. Founded in 2016, the studio is inspired by investigations into natural, mathematical, and scientific systems.

### **Honing Passage**

Dutch designer *Studio Sabine Marcelis* created **Honing Passage** to be a unique place for the community to interact, reflect, and enjoy nature. **Honing Passage** embraces the beauty of the local landscape along the Weaver's Way at Honing Station, near the North Walsham and Dilham Canal. The installation will frame its surroundings through a unique lens, inviting people to experience an ever-shifting showcase of colour, light and nature. Offering a new way to look at a natural site, **Honing Passage** will be activated by its surroundings and the seasons; when the sun hits the piece, beautiful light reflections are cast, and when it's raining, beads of water will trickle down the surface in a mesmerising nature. A static piece, yet forever evolving and interacting with the natural world it inhabits.

Sabine Marcelis is a Dutch designer who runs her practice from the harbour of Rotterdam. Marcelis applies a strong aesthetic point of view to her collaborations with industry specialists. This method of working allows her to intervene in the manufacturing process, using material research and experimentation to achieve new and surprising visual effects for projects both showcased in musea and commissioned by commercial clients and fashion houses. Sabine considers her designs to be true sensorial experiences and not simple static works: the experience becomes the function, with a refined and unique aesthetic.

Sabine recently won the prestigious Wallpaper 'Designer of the Year 2020' award, among others.

### **Iron Reef**

This sculpture, by design duo Cristina Morbi and Aurora Destro for *Maetherea* studio, celebrates the historical and ecological heritage of Reedham Ferry Inn and the Norfolk landscape: a homage to its chalk reef and its industrial and nautical heritage.

The concept is inspired by the anthropized amphibious landscape. As an amphibious structure, it can live above ground and immersed in water. Shaped by the winter tides and emerging as a landmark between the reeds, it connects the sky and sits in the water.

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The tides from the river modify the material, adding patina and oxidation as a performance of colour or a maritime ruin. Plants and microorganisms start to appear on the structure. The **Iron Reef** will be planted with appropriate amphibious and oxygenating plants to improve the unique micro-habitat and biodiversity. Plants can climb the structure through time: submerged or emerging from the water.

Maetherea {Matter+Ethereal} is a multidisciplinary creative practice guided by artistic duo Cristina Morbi and Aurora Destro. Working internationally on Environmental Design and Public Art, it aims to create sustainable landscape design and public art. Our work merges renewable resources with technology to create spaces that changes through time, unifying performances of matter with natural and artificial phenomena.