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British Artist Andy Goldsworthy Creates Site-Specific Installation for National Gallery of Art's East Building



British artist Andy Goldsworthy, his assistant, and a team of five British wallers installing *Roof* at the National Gallery of Art's East Building

Photograph Lee Ewing © 2004 National Gallery of Art.

Washington, DC - British artist Andy Goldsworthy has been commissioned to create a site-specific sculpture for the National Gallery of Art's East Building. The project, **Roof**, will comprise approximately nine stacked slate, low-profile hollow domes five and a half feet high and 27 feet in diameter, with centered oculi two feet in diameter. The installation will run the length of the ground-level garden area on the north side of the East Building along Pennsylvania Avenue. Goldsworthy selected the domical form, with which he has worked since the late 1970s, as a counterpoint to the many architectural domes in Washington, D.C. The artist, his assistant, and a team of five British wallers will begin installing the work on November 29, 2004, pause for the holidays, and return to finish by the beginning of February 2005.

The installation is the second phase of a two-part project, and the acquisition is made possible by the Patrons' Permanent Fund of the National Gallery of Art. The first phase, made possible by The Nancy Lee and Perry Bass Fund, took place in the fall of 2003 on Government Island, Stafford, Virginia, when Goldsworthy spent nine days making ephemeral work on the site of the Aquia Creek sandstone quarry, the source of the stone with which the U.S. Capitol and the White House were originally built. This historic quarry was an ideal site for the artist, whose temporary works mark the human presence in the environment. Goldsworthy documented his work with a diary and photographs, now owned by the Gallery. They will be on view in the East Building by the end of 2004.

"The dome structure and its rich associations gain new meaning in Andy Goldsworthy's work. This site-specific installation will call attention to the materials and forms that define our nation's capital, underscoring the natural origins of our urban and cultural environment," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art.

THE INSTALLATION

Goldsworthy's installation stems from his interest in the sources of Washington building stones and the geologic beginning of cities. The artist will use Buckingham slate from Arvonnia, Virginia, a long-standing roofing material used locally on the Smithsonian Castle and on Ford's Theater. The domical form and its attendant history and ideology parallel the artist's interest in markers of human passage through time: the dome has enjoyed a long history, from Neolithic burial chambers, Orkney Island's chambered dwelling cairns, Syro-Palestinian martyria churches, ancient Roman and Byzantine architecture, and French Enlightenment architecture to modern public buildings.

The low-profile dome specifically refers to architect John Russell Pope's neoclassical domes of the National Gallery's West Building and the Jefferson Memorial, as well as other domes such as those of the U.S. Capitol and the National Museum of Natural History. It also presents an interesting contrast with the I. M. Pei-designed East Building, which has no dome, and calls attention to Washington's newest dome at the National Museum of the American Indian. By placing the domes on the ground, Goldsworthy returns the architectural device to its geological and primitive roots.

Instead of gazing skyward to overhead domes, the viewer will see the domes at eye level or peer down into their darkened oculi from the mezzanine level of the Gallery.

HISTORY OF THE SITE

The site originally functioned as a reflecting pool with room for the installation of sculpture. The area was then landscaped and has taken the form of various gardens to coincide with special exhibitions. For example, in 1985 an English Garden was created for the **Treasure Houses of Great Britain** exhibition; in 1988 a Japanese Garden was made for the exhibition, **Japan: Shaping of Daimyo Culture 1185-1868**. Significant modern and contemporary sculptures, including works by Jean Dubuffet and Henry Moore, have been installed there on a rotating basis.

GOLDSWORTHY BIOGRAPHY

Andy Goldsworthy was born in Cheshire, England, in 1956 and currently resides in Scotland. He studied at Bradford School of Art and Preston Polytechnic and has been making art in the environment, both rural and urban, since the mid-1970s. He is an Andrew D. White Professor at Cornell University. Over the past 25 years, Goldsworthy has gained a significant reputation for both his ephemeral works and his permanent installations that draw out the endemic character of a place. The artist works with natural materials, such as leaves, sand, ice, and stone that often originate from the local site.

Goldsworthy has produced more than 70 exhibitions and projects all over the world including those in the Canadian Arctic; Digne, France; the streets of London; and Tochigi Prefecture, Japan. In addition, he has made temporary museum installations at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (1997); The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2004), New York; and The Tate, Liverpool (2004), among others. Goldsworthy's other large-scale installations in the United States include *Garden of Stones* (2003), Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York; *Three Cairns*, (2001-2003), Des Moines Art Center, Iowa; *Neuberger Cairn* (2001), Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, NY; *West Coast Cairn* (2002), Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; *Stone River* (2001), Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA; and *Storm King Wall* (1999), Storm King Art Center,

Mountainville, NY. The large-scale commissioned works have their origins in ephemeral works; the precedents for *Roof* include domical structures in snow, tree branches, leaves, and stone. With *Roof*, Goldsworthy will realize the strongest iteration of this form in a new scale, material, and location.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter at twitter.com/ngadc.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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