



Marion Coutts New Works for Chatham Place, Reading

**to be unveiled on Wednesday 9 July at 12.30 pm
at 78 Oxford Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7LJ**

*In her laconic sculpture and video installations, Marion Coutts mythologizes the mundane. With the insouciance and economy of a professional magician, she makes the one-dimensional multidimensional and transforms stale habit into compelling ritual. **Artforum***

Following a partnership between Muse Developments and Artists in the City, and with some initial funding from a CABE initiative, the artist Marion Coutts was appointed to work with the design teams and to make proposals for all phases of the Chatham Place Development. Under the broad title 'Mirror Mirror', the artist considered ideas in relation to doubling, reflectivity, and mirroring and looked at ways in which other parts of Reading and its history might be reflected within the new scheme. Two, illuminated columns are the first of a number of works that the artist will create for the Chatham Place Development.

- The artwork consists of two bespoke, stainless steel and glass columns in Phase 1, with the option of others in Phase 2. The pieces are based on Morris Columns, an urban feature of many major European cities, which first appeared in the mid 19th C and are especially characteristic of Paris and Berlin.
- The image on the columns represents an imaginary and impossible collection of archive posters, flyers and other ephemera specific to Reading. It is a digital collage on a transparency - no paper posters are used. The piece plays on the nature of ephemera, solidifying the way the historical record of a place is very fluid, built up through layers and memories of events.
- Particular attention was given to original and eye-catching imagery or graphics, important events in the life of the town, posters highlighting the agricultural heritage of the Oxford Road area and unusual or more unofficial types of printed material. The piece uses as its medium the typography, colour, graphics, ingenuity and idiosyncrasy of the

existing material. It collapses all these styles and modes into one work. The columns are designed to stop at, look at and be read.

- All the images are sourced with the support and cooperation of various archives in Reading. Thanks in particular go to the Museum of Reading, the Museum of English Rural Life, the Typography Department at Reading University, and the Local History Department of Reading Library.
- The piece has been developed in consultation with Woodhouse plc, leading manufacturers of bespoke street furniture.

Notes to Editors

Marion Coutts

www.marioncoutts.com

Marion Coutts works in sculpture, film and video. She uses a minimal language to transform readymade material. Her work explores the formal and functional life of objects, the routines and repetitions of behaviour. Her film and video works are composed in sculptural terms. *Twenty Six Things*, a film installation, commissioned by the Wellcome Trust, has just been shown at The Wellcome Collection, London. Previous exhibitions include, *To be continued...* at Helsinki Kunsthalle, Finland, Chisenhale Gallery, London (solo), *Troubleshooting*, Arnolfini, Bristol, Yorkshire Sculpture Park (solo) and *Tablet*, London (solo). In 2003-04 she was the Kettle's Yard Artist Fellow at St John's College, Cambridge and previous artist in residence at Tate Liverpool (2001). She lives in London, is a lecturer at Goldsmiths College and a Research Fellow attached to Norwich School of Art and Design.

Muse Developments

www.musedevelopments.com

Chatham Place is a £250m privately funded development in partnership with landowner Reading Borough Council. It is one of Reading's largest mixed use regeneration projects with a mixture of residential, commercial and community phases together with new areas of public open space. Construction started in May 2006 and final completion of Phase one is scheduled May 2009.

Artists in the City

www.artistsinthecity.org.uk

Artists in the City is Reading Borough Council's public art programme. A significant player in the city's fast-changing environment, Artists in the City works with developers, architects and landscape architects at an early stage in the regenerative planning process, unlocking opportunities for contemporary artists to explore the changing landscape of the town and to influence the spirit of the place.

For more information and images please contact Jeni Walwin, Project Director, Artists in the City jeni@walwin.co.uk or 07961 160 630