

Media Release, May 2008

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[www.bathingbeauties.org.uk](http://www.bathingbeauties.org.uk)

**Hub: National Centre for Craft & Design presents**

## **Bathing Beauties®: Re-imagining the Beach Hut for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'**

**An international exhibition of over one hundred models designed by artists and architects, which re-imagine the British beach hut for the first time in three hundred years.**

### **A Hub Touring Exhibition.**

*Bathing Beauties™* is an innovative and engaging exhibition of architectural design, which seeks to re-imagine the form of the humble Beach Hut for the first time in nearly 300 years. During its phenomenally successful premiere in summer 2007 at the Hub: National Centre for Craft & Design, the exhibition received over 10,000 visitors from across the UK and beyond and generated international media coverage. Based on this success, the Hub is pleased to announce that, through the generous support of Arts Council England, the exhibition will now embark on a national and international tour which commences at the beautiful Midland Hotel, Morecambe Bay, Lancashire from 21<sup>st</sup> June – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2008 and takes in the Biennale de Montreal, Canada in May 2009.

The Midland Hotel is a unique and magnificent Grade 2\* listed Art Deco building, located in the seaside resort of Morecambe Bay. Originally designed by Oliver Hill in the 1930's, the property developers, Urban Splash have recently completed the restoration of this iconic structure. Saving this building and bringing it back to use, is a key signal of Morecambe's ambitious regeneration plans. The *Bathing Beauties™* exhibition celebrates the British seaside and highlights the role good design can play in social and economic regeneration. It is therefore fitting that the *Bathing Beauties™* exhibition tour should open in such a prominent venue, within one of Britain's best loved coastal towns.

The mission statement for the Hub: National Centre for Craft & Design is to exhibit, celebrate and promote the very best of national and international craft and design. Although a relatively young gallery, at under 5 years old, (opened October 2003), the Hub's Head of Exhibitions, Melanie Kidd said she is very pleased the venue is now fulfilling one of our long term ambitions, of generating touring exhibitions:

*'The Hub is thrilled to have received this generous funding of £78,000 from the Arts Council England to enable this tour to happen. Through the international tour of Bathing Beauties, the Hub will now have the opportunity to reach broader and new audiences across the UK and beyond. The Midland Hotel is a very fitting venue at which to launch the exhibition tour and we look forward to taking the show to the the Biennale de Montreal, Canada in May 2009.'*

Michelle Bowen, Craft and Design Officer with Arts Council England, East Midlands, said the Bathing Beauties project has great potential for the regeneration of our seaside towns.

*'It is a terrific example of how to develop our seaside towns into exciting new places - using the traditional British vernacular of beach huts, and turning them into modern contemporary landmarks.*

*'This exhibition has given contemporary architects from around the world the opportunity to imagine, play and invent. This resulting exhibition tour of the models acts like a review of architectural styles with a myriad of materials being employed.'*

The *Bathing Beauties™* exhibition evolved from the *Bathing Beauties™* project [www.bathingbeauties.org.uk](http://www.bathingbeauties.org.uk) which inspired 240 architects, artists and designers from 15 countries to compete for commissions to build their designs on the stunning Lincolnshire coast. The competition, organised by artist Michael Trainor, elicited one of the most exciting responses to any architectural competition this century. A selection of models (scale 1:15), showing the incredible virtuosity of approach will be on show in the exhibition.

***'The Beach Hut is one of the few building forms which has been seriously overlooked by contemporary architects the world over. They are perceived as a treasured feature of our coastal landscape, as quintessentially British as fish and chips and the knotted hanky, but in reality are usually little more than a painted shed'***. Michael Trainor, Lead Artist & Project Curator

The brief to re-imagine the simple beach hut produced an amazing array of design solutions which catapult our ideas of seaside micro-architecture into a new aesthetic rather than an endless pastiche of imaginary heritage. Traditional seaside references are gone, replaced by structures incorporating wind turbines, saunas, camera obscura, viewing platforms and space-age materials with only the most oblique of witty nods to sandcastles and stripy windbreaks. Striking, unconventional and surprising many of the models celebrate the idea of happening upon something by chance when strolling along the beach, whilst others are bold creative exercises in space, light and line.

Examples on show include the scale model which won 'Best Model' prize for outstanding craftsmanship, **Lazy Susan** by *Thurgood Hobson Design, London, UK*; partly inspired by the American Airstream caravan, the beautifully crafted **Lazy Susan** is designed to rotate to follow the sun. Mark Thurgood is a designer, model maker, 3-D illustrator and skilled carpenter with a strong media background having designed for both television and magazines. Kevin Hobson is a designer/maker and silversmith jeweler with a variety of craft skills. Other scale models in the hundred on show include: **Jabba** by *i-am associates Ltd, London, UK* is a 21<sup>st</sup> century cave of laminated wood and glass whose organic form wouldn't look out of place in one of the desert scenes of starwars; **The Wizard of Oz** by *Lionel T Dean, Future Factories, Lincolnshire UK*, a 'twister' of a beach-hut which plays with the idea of being boarded up out-of-season; **Cheese 42** by *Christian Uhl, Germany*, literally a giant cheese block with surprisingly practical features; **Alien Drum Sensorium** by *Alasdair Tooze, Gareth Hoskins, UK*, inspired by beach detritus such as washed-up containers and features a sound-amplifying horn for deeper enjoyment of the crashing waves.

The diversity of design approaches demonstrated in the exhibition are reflective of not only the infinite number of possible solutions to a simple design brief, but also to the seemingly universal appeal of the beach-hut with models from artists, designers and architects from the UK, USA, Germany, Italy, France, Portugal, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Canada, Singapore, India, China, Russia, Japan and Israel.

The exhibition is also a testimony to the recent resurgence of interest in our coastal economies. This bold approach is indicative of the need for small towns to make big statements in the attempt to reverse the declining coastal economy in the UK.

Alongside the architectural models, the exhibition features an extraordinary full-scale beach hut, **Oyster Pleasance**, designed by *The Beach Hut Salon, London, UK*, which visitors can sit inside and dream.

The *Bathing Beauties™* exhibition will be accompanied by educational resource material and a series of talks by *Bathing Beauties™* Lead Artist & Project Curator Michael Trainor and a selection of the exhibitors.

Four of the models on display have already been built as full scale beach huts along a 10mile stretch of Lincolnshire coast between Mablethorpe and Sutton-on-Sea UK. Already available to view by visitors, some of these innovative new beach huts will soon be available to the public for daily hire from East Lindsey District Council. Please contact East Lindsey District Council Pre-Season Tel. 01754897435 – Skegness Foreshore Office. Season (17 May-26 Sep) Tel 01507 473641 Chalet Offices Mablethorpe or 01507 443765 Sutton on Sea Chalet Offices.

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## EXHIBITION TOUR INFORMATION

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**DATES:** Open to the public 21<sup>st</sup> June – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2008

**OPENING TIMES:** 10.00 – 17.00 7 days per week

**ADDRESS:** Midland Hotel, Marine Road West, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA4 4BU

**ACCESS:** the exhibition is accessible for all

**PARKING:** free parking is available at the hotel subject to availability

**CONTACT DETAILS:** hello@midlandmorecambe.co.uk 01524 424 000

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** TBC

**LOCATION:** *Biennale de Montreal*, Montreal, Canada

**PROPOSED DATES :** 1<sup>st</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**WEB:** www.ciac.ca

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

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**Bathing Beauties:** [www.bathingbeauties.org.uk](http://www.bathingbeauties.org.uk)

The *Bathing Beauties™* exhibition has developed out of the *Bathing Beauties* international competition, a project conceived by Lead Artist Michael Trainor to create a series of dramatic and beautiful new seaside architecture for a superb but partly forgotten 10 mile stretch of Lincolnshire coastline, UK, from Mablethorpe to Anderby Creek.

Michael was appointed by Lincolnshire County Council in 2005 and his big idea *Bathing Beauties™*, put the Lincolnshire coast on the world-wide map with the launch of an international competition which took place in 2006 for artists, architects and designers to re-imagine the beach hut for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with entries by scale model.

The aim of *Bathing Beauties™* project is to create a linear gallery of bold new beach huts and other seaside structures with innovative architecture as the linking theme. Seven of the designs entered have been selected for full-scale construction in 2007 and some of these innovative new beach huts will be available for daily hire from the East Lindsey District Council. The Lincolnshire coast will be the first area in the UK to see significant re-imagining of traditional seaside architecture – this innovative linear gallery will unfold over a period of two to three years. The Lincolnshire Coastal Art Project is part financed by European Regional Development Fund.

Partners are Lincolnshire County Council, East Lindsey District Council and the local parish councils.

**Michael Trainor:** Lead Artist and Project Curator is a professional artist based in Manchester, UK. Michael has been involved in over 60 temporary and permanent works of art in public spaces including ***They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*** – the world's shiniest artwork and largest mirrorball for Blackpool seafront. His beach hut design ***'Come Up and See Me'*** will be installed on the Lincolnshire Coast in Summer 2007.

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**Hub: National Centre for Craft & Design:** [www.thehubcentre.info](http://www.thehubcentre.info)

*Bathing Beauties*<sup>™</sup> is a Hub touring exhibition. Initiated and organised by the Hub: National Centre for Craft & Design with direct support from Arts Council England.

Opened in October 2003, the Hub: National Centre for Craft & Design is the largest gallery in the UK specifically dedicated to the exhibition, celebration and promotion of the very best of national and international craft and design. Located in Sleaford, Lincolnshire, UK, the Hub houses two gallery spaces which offer a continuously changing and challenging programme of international and national craft and design. The building also contains a craft and design shop; a cafe bar; an extensive learning programme; and workshop facilities.

Hosting over 12 different shows a year within the building, the Hub has also recently initiated an international touring exhibitions programme which includes the exhibitions *Bathing Beauties*<sup>™</sup> and *Denim – the fabric of our lives*. For more information on hiring Hub exhibitions, please contact [melanie.kidd@thehubcentre.info](mailto:melanie.kidd@thehubcentre.info)

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### **The Midland Hotel**

The stunning Art Deco Midland Hotel in Morecambe Bay will open its doors to guests in June 2008 following its complete refurbishment by award winning property developer Urban Splash.

Originally built in the 1930's, the amazing Grade II\* Listed building was once a favourite haunt of icons like Coco Chanel, Wallace Simpson and Lawrence Olivier but its heyday was a distant memory when the hotel finally closed in almost ruin in 1998.

Working with architectural experts and drawing from its own experience of transforming other Listed and historically important buildings across the UK, Urban Splash has faithfully restored many of the original Art Deco features and added striking contemporary design. They have created a beautiful 44 bedroom hotel, which overlooks the uninterrupted coastline of Morecambe Bay, offering great views to the Lake District.

For reservations and to keep updated on the latest developments at the Midland Hotel, visit [www.midlandmorecambe.co.uk](http://www.midlandmorecambe.co.uk).

For further information please contact Linda Kelly, Catherine Breckwoldt or Julie Wilson at Staniforth\ on 0161 919 8495 or e-mail, [firstname.surname@staniforth.co.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@staniforth.co.uk)

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### **Urban Splash**

Property developer Urban Splash was founded in 1993 by Tom Bloxham MBE and Jonathan Falkingham. The company has an established reputation as a pioneer in urban regeneration and advocate of modern design.

From a standing start and financed entirely through the re-investment of profits, the company has created over 3,000 new jobs, 1,000 new homes and half million square feet of commercial space.

Urban Splash is currently investing over £1 billion in regeneration projects across the country including: Castlefield, Manchester; New Islington, the third Millennium Community at east Manchester; Altrincham, Cheshire; Ropewalks, Liverpool City Centre; Royal William Yard, Plymouth; Fort Dunlop, Birmingham; Lister Mills, Bradford; Park Hill, Sheffield; Saxton, Leeds; Lake Shore, Bristol; and the Midland Hotel, Morecambe.

The company has received 242 awards to date for its commitment to architecture, design, regeneration and enterprise. Its award winning projects include: Timber Wharf, Box Works and Moho, Castlefield, Manchester; Vanilla Factory and Matchworks, Liverpool; Silk Warehouse, Lister Mills, Bradford and Rotunda, Birmingham. Urban Splash has received 32 prestigious RIBA Awards for Architecture – the most received by a private property developer.

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### **East Lindsey District Council**

East Lindsey District Council is responsible for the management and public hire of the full scale Bathing Beauties Beach Huts. Four of the models from the show (*Halcyon, Jabba, Come Up and See Me and Camera Obscura*) are now full scale huts. Located along the coast between Mablethorpe and Sutton-on-Sea, Lincolnshire UK these four huts are available to be viewed by the public and most will soon be available for daily hire. . Please contact East Lindsey District Council Pre-Season Tel. 01754897435 – Skegness Foreshore Office. Season (17 May-26 Sep) Tel 01507 473641 Chalet Offices Mablethorpe or 01507 443765 Sutton on Sea Chalet Offices.

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### **CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

#### **Hub: National Centre for Craft & Design**

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[www.thehubcentre.info](http://www.thehubcentre.info)

Contact Melanie Kidd (Head of Exhibitions) for further information  
[melanie.kidd@thehubcentre.info](mailto:melanie.kidd@thehubcentre.info)

#### **Bathing Beauties**

For information and background to Bathing Beauties project [www.bathingbeauties.org.uk](http://www.bathingbeauties.org.uk) and [www.thehubcentre.info](http://www.thehubcentre.info)

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