

# City Art Centre reopens this weekend

Art lovers will have another venue to cater to their cultural appetite when the City Art Centre reopens its doors this weekend.

Following a fifteen month refurbishment, the ever popular Market Street gallery will resume its prominent place in Edinburgh's visual art scene just in time for its summer shows to feature in this year's Edinburgh Art Festival.

The City Art Centre will reopen to the public on Saturday 31 July with two major exhibitions featuring works by two quite different, world-renowned American photographers, Edward Weston and William Wegman.

Edward Weston (1886-1958) is one of the masters of 20th century photography and one of the most innovative and influential American photographers of all time.

William Wegman (b. 1943) is best known for his series of photographic compositions involving dogs, primarily his own Weimaraners, in various costumes and poses.

The gallery will also display an exhibition of works from the City's own nationally recognised collection of Scottish art. In Our Own Image will feature work on the broad theme of the human form, including both conventional portraiture and more challenging portrayals of the clothed and naked human body, both historic and contemporary.

As part of its £1.2m refurbishment, visitor facilities have been improved and brought together on the ground floor. This includes the City Art Centre's very popular shop, which has been relocated from the first to the ground floor, making it more visible and accessible.

The reception area has also been transformed, with visitor facilities further enhanced by the inclusion of a new cloakroom and improved toilets. The refurbishment's first phase saw the entire building's air conditioning and ventilation upgraded, improving atmospheric conditions for gallery goers and for the artworks themselves.

The renovated City Art Centre was formally opened last night at a reception for the summer exhibitions by Councillor Deidre Brock, the City of Edinburgh Council's Culture and Leisure Convenor.

She said: "It gives me enormous pleasure to welcome people back to Edinburgh's own City Art Centre, which is looking superb after its refurbishment. As a major exhibition venue and home to the city's nationally important art collection, we were determined to ensure the gallery was in top condition ready for a packed calendar of fabulous exhibitions from now on, and I'm confident visitors will agree that we've done just that.

"Art lovers, photography fans and all those too who only rarely if ever visit art galleries are in for a real treat with the exhibitions we're putting on this summer. William Wegman and Edward Weston are both legendary names in the photography world and I'm sure their shows will generate extraordinary interest, while In Our Own Image will present engaging works from our own nationally recognised collection of Scottish art."

The City Art Centre's reopening comes just months after the gallery celebrated the receipt of a very welcome grant for £80,628 from Museums Galleries Scotland. This funding will allow the Council to devote a whole floor of the City Art Centre to the permanent display of artworks from its nationally-recognised collection.

Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop commented: "I am delighted the

City Art Centre is re-opening. Our museums and galleries provide pleasure and inspiration to visitors as well as a showcase for Scotland's great collections. It is fantastic that the Recognition Scheme funding I announced in March for the gallery has been put to such good use. As well as the opening exhibition on photography, art lovers can now enjoy more from the city's Scottish Art collection which will now have its own dedicated exhibition space."

Joanne S. Brown, EAF Director, said: "The City Art Centre is one of Edinburgh's most popular venues. We are delighted that the newly refurbished space will reopen as part of the 2010 Edinburgh Art Festival and offer festival goers the only UK opportunity to see exhibitions of work by two acclaimed American photographers."

The City Art Centre summer exhibitions will be on show from 31 July to 24 October 2010. Joint admission to Edward Weston and William Wegman = Adult £8, Concession £5, Children £2.50, Family £15. In Our Own Image is free of charge.

The exhibitions will be complemented by a packed programme of events and activities for families, schools and adults, such as art and crafts workshops, talks and lectures. For details, visit <http://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/> or call 0131 529 3993.