

Forth Road Bridge appoint artist in residence



Following the launch earlier this year of a programme of events to mark the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Forth Road Bridge on 4 September 1964, today an artist in residence was appointed who will play an important role in next year's festivities. Renowned Scottish landscape artist, Kate Downie, has been appointed to record the structure in a variety of ways.

Fresh from a successful summer exhibition at the Royal Scottish Academy, Kate has been appointed as artist-in-residence by the Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA). She brings longstanding expertise of creating bridge-inspired artworks, including a previous residency at the Forth Bridge and capturing the Yangtze River Bridge in ink on a recent visit to China.




As well as producing a commemorative print which will be on sale to the public, Kate's commission includes a series of artworks in different mediums and the project will culminate in an exhibition at Hopetoun House near South Queensferry in August and September 2014. The exhibition will form part of the official programme for the Forth Bridges Festival 2014.

Commenting on her residency, Kate said: “I am thrilled to be installed as artist-in-residence at the Forth Road Bridge. I have always been fascinated by places where our natural landscape and man-made structures converge, and the Forth Estuary is a prime example of where these two worlds meet.

“Over 24 million vehicles cross the bridge each year, along with thousands of walkers and cyclists, making everyone’s experience of the bridge a very different and personal one. I will reflect this in my work by producing numerous pieces, created to a central theme and each with a differing approach in terms of size, scale and the perspective taken.”



Lesley Hinds, convenor of FETA, said: “2014 is a big year  for the Forth Road Bridge – one of Scotland’s most iconic structures – and I am delighted that we have secured an artist of Kate Downie’s standing to record its history. The construction of the new Queensferry Crossing will change the face of the Forth forever, lending even greater prominence to the part Kate’s pieces will play in the bridge’s history.”

A native of Aberdeen, Kate’s work has been exhibited throughout the world and she has recently returned from a residency programme in Beijing. With a career in painting, drawing, printmaking, performance and film spanning almost 35 years, she became a member of the Royal Scottish Academy in 2008. The position of artist in residence is being funded by FETA and a grant from the Hope Scott Trust. The majority of the cost to the bridge authority is expected to be covered by sales of the commemorative print and publication.

The Forth Bridges Festival will take place from 4-13 September 2014, with a range of activities taking on both shores of the Firth of Forth, as well as on the bridge itself. More details can be found at www.forthbridgesfestival.com

