

# Arts centre founder awarded honorary doctorate by Edinburgh Napier

The co-founder of world-renowned contemporary art attraction Jupiter Artland has spoken of her pride after being awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Edinburgh Napier University.

Nicky Wilson was given the honour during the University's graduation ceremony at Edinburgh's Usher Hall, in recognition of her work to inspire the next generation of artists.

An accomplished artist in her own right, Nicky set up Jupiter Artland on the outskirts of Edinburgh in 2009, with the park's distinctive sculptured grass landscape and permanent works quickly establishing it as one of Scotland's most significant artistic projects.

Nicky said: "It means so much to me to have the work of Jupiter Artland and the team over the last 20 years recognised by the University.

"It's a wonderful thing to be given a graduation, when I didn't have one right at the beginning. I did get my degree, but I didn't go to it.

"It's with regret that I didn't go because I now know how much it feels like you're at the beginning of another chapter of your life. And funnily enough, this feels like the beginning

of another chapter of my life.

“The recognition from the work that’s been done so far is just spurring me on to do more.”

Born in Edinburgh, Nicky graduated with a BA, then an MA in sculpture – continuing to practice it alongside a career in marketing and PR.

Since the creation of Jupiter Artland, it was nominated for ArtFund’s Museum of the Year in 2016. It has also become a powerful learning space for young people, offering free school visits throughout the year.

In 2017, Nicky founded Jupiter Rising, a festival of avant-garde music, art and film for young artists and performers from diverse backgrounds, and in 2018 she set up the ORBIT Youth Council, a creative collective for 16 to 18-year-olds from all over Scotland. Most recently, Jupiter+ was established as an offsite commissioning programme designed to inspire the next generation of artists.

There have also been several examples of collaboration between Jupiter Artland and Edinburgh Napier University. One project involved replicating the [entire park in Minecraft](#) – which was used to connect with young people across the world during lockdown – while a recent [immersive installation to a formerly vacant shop on Ayr’s high street](#) included a learning experience put together with the help of ENU.

Giving the laureation speech to award Nicky with an Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University, Dr Tom Flint, Associate Professor in Edinburgh Napier’s School of Arts & Creative Industries, said: “It is hard to imagine anyone with more passion for art, artists and the opportunities creative practice affords than Nicky.

“Working with Nicky and her team has opened a world of radical engagement and inclusivity. The resulting knowledge generated

from our collaborations has been presented at conferences around the world.

“Nicky’s generosity and outlook have augmented my own practice as well that of as numerous colleagues and students. As a university we have immense gratitude for all she has achieved.”

