

FAT MAN ACQUIRED FOR WELLCOME COLLECTION

Wellcome Trust Announces Major Contemporary Art Purchases For New Public Venue

6 June 2006, London: Three new art works by leading contemporary artists including a mountainous figure of obesity, a sculpture made from HIV drugs and a symbolic representation of the Periodic Table have been purchased by Wellcome Trust for Wellcome Collection, a £30m new public venue that explores medicine, art and life which opens in June 2007.

The works by **Marc Quinn**, **Keith Wilson** and **John Isaacs** all engage in different ways with medical science and captivate the viewer into considering issues of human wellbeing and survival. The works are:

- **John Isaacs** - *I Can't Help the Way I Feel*, 2003
- **Marc Quinn** - *Silvia Petretti - Sustiva Tenofivir, 3TC (HIV)*, 2005
- **Keith Wilson** - *Periodic Table*, 2004

Wellcome Collection (www.wellcomecollection.org) will use contemporary and experimental techniques to challenge and inspire visitors to consider issues of human health and survival through the ages. It is the first venue of its kind in the UK and forms a significant cultural landmark for London and the country. Wellcome Collection is targeted at all those over 14 years and entry will be free.

Contemporary art will be an integral part of Wellcome Collection. The new acquisitions will be displayed alongside existing works in the Wellcome Trust's collection including established artists **Michael Landy**, **Christine Borland**, **Spencer Tunick** and **Mauro Peruchetti** as well as emerging artists such as **Luke Jerram**, **Daryl Waller**, **Alistair Mackie** and **Julie Cockburn**.

The six-storey building at 183 Euston Road will house:

- Two permanent exhibitions: *Medicine Man*, showcasing a mix of 900 fascinating objects from Sir Henry's original collection and *Medicine Now*, a look at contemporary medical topics through the eyes of scientists, artists and popular culture, illustrating developments in aspects of these topics in the era after Sir Henry's death.
- Temporary exhibitions: the largest gallery will host temporary exhibitions and shows, presenting newly commissioned works and thematic exhibitions built around topics of medical, cultural and ethical significance. The first temporary exhibition will be announced in 2007.

Sir Henry Wellcome (1853 – 1936), Wellcome Trust founder, was a pharmacist, entrepreneur, philanthropist and collector. His passionate interest in medicine and its history, as well as ethnography and anthropology, led him to gather more than one million objects from across the world. Amongst the art he acquired is the only known etching by **Van Gogh** of his psychiatrist, Renaissance anatomical drawings and a painting by the Dutch 16th century artist **Adam Elsheimer** of an itinerant drug seller.

Wellcome Trust continues to collect and commission art from a huge range of contemporary artists, not just visual artists, whose work brings new perspectives to issues surrounding medical science. A recording of a poem by **Michael Symonds Roberts** about the Human Genome entitled *To John Donne* will be shown alongside a display about the Human Genome within the permanent collection *Medicine Now*.

Dr. Ken Arnold, Head of Public Programmes, Wellcome Trust, said: "*Sir Henry Wellcome's own collection is incredibly eclectic, eccentric and broad-ranging. Wellcome Collection gives us the opportunity to continue this broad-minded approach so that we can acquire works and commission artists who are united by the insights they give to biomedical science, but fantastically disparate in their approaches to it*".

The new works detailed:

- **John Isaac's** *I Can't Help the Way I Feel*, 2003 is a body of fat that seemingly envelopes its own head which stands at over 2m high. Both huge and gruesomely real, this piece depicts the figure, unable to be a complete body, as both monstrous and pathetic. With public debate over childhood obesity raging and the dietary health of the nation under close scrutiny, John Isaac's work has a shocking potency and timely resonance.
- **Marc Quinn's** *Silvia Petretti - Sustiva Tenofivir, 3TC (HIV)*, 2005 is one of a series of sculptures called 'Chemical Life Support'. Quinn has cast the body of Silvia Petretti who is HIV positive, using the drugs that she depends on to support her life - Sustiva Tenofivir, 3TC – and wax. The resulting figure is a perfect sculpted form reminiscent of Renaissance visions of marble perfection, creating a powerful tension between the relative fragility of the body and its perpetual impending mortality and a physical presence that is hard to ignore.
- **Keith Wilson's** *Periodic Table*, 2004 is large-scale installation, comprising 92 modular cubes, echoing the scientific classification of naturally occurring elements. *Periodic Table* sets up connections between an extensive range of collected objects, from redundant machinery to logs and empty beer cases, each placed in an individual compartment. In some cases there is a clear link between the object and its position in the table. However, it is predominantly a work of allusion and the power of suggestion, implying relationships between assorted materials where none in fact exist, thus subverting the scientific structure of matter and order of everyday life.

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Notes To Editors

Wellcome Collection (www.wellcomecollection.org.uk)

Sir Henry Wellcome (1853 - 1936), founder of the Wellcome Trust, was a pharmacist, entrepreneur, philanthropist and collector. His passionate interest in medicine and its history, as well as ethnography and anthropology, led him to gather more than a million objects from across the globe. In 1932 the Wellcome Building at 183 Euston Road was built to his specification and housed the majority of his collections.

Wellcome Collection is a £30m transformation of this building into a major new visitor destination, the first of its kind in the UK. Wellcome Collection, opening summer 2007, explores the connections between medicine, life and art using a contemporary and experimental approach. Audiences from all backgrounds and interests will be inspired to consider afresh issues of wellbeing and human identity.

Wellcome Collection will comprise three galleries of permanent and temporary exhibitions totaling 1350m², a flexible events space, the Wellcome Library, conference facilities, a café, bookshop and members' club. The building will also house the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine (part of University College London).

There will be two permanent exhibitions: 'Medicine Man', originally held at the British Museum, will showcase a mix of 900 fascinating objects from Sir Henry's original collection. 'Medicine Now' will look at contemporary medical topics through the eyes of scientists, artists and popular culture, illustrating developments in aspects of these topics in the era after Sir Henry's death. The largest gallery (650m²) will host temporary exhibitions and shows, presenting newly commissioned works and thematic exhibitions built around topics of medical, cultural and ethical significance.

A lively programme of public events will expand on exhibition themes, bringing together experts from the worlds of arts, science and medicine to explore the current issues and ancient mysteries of human wellbeing

183 Euston Road is the site of the Wellcome Trust's former headquarters. Hopkins Architects is managing the building's transformation.

Pricing and target age range

Wellcome Collection is free to enter. Most events will be free, although Wellcome Collection reserves the right to charge. Wellcome Collection is principally aimed at adults and young people over 14 years old. Resources for children will be available.

Wellcome Library (<http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/>)

The Wellcome Library is one of the world's major resources for the study of medical history. Over 600,000 books and journals, an extensive range of manuscripts, archives, films, and more than 100,000 pictures are available for study. The Wellcome Library will be housed in Wellcome Collection. It is currently in a temporary location at 210 Euston Road London, NW1 2BE.

Past exhibitions (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/pastexhibitions>)

During the past decade the Wellcome Trust has organised more than 20 exhibitions covering a vast range of biomedical topics, from jellyfish to autism, metamorphosis to pain. In 2003, *Medicine Man* at the British Museum (a showcase of roughly 700 objects from Henry Wellcome's original collection of more than one million) attracted approximately 200,000 visits. Between 2002 and 2005 the Trust presented a series of five major exhibitions at the Science Museum, culminating with *Future Face* in late 2004 which attracted 120,000 visits. The Trust also hosted numerous exhibitions in its TwoTen Gallery and funded major projects such as the Wellcome Trust Gallery (home to the *Living and Dying* exhibition) at the British Museum.

Wellcome Trust (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/>)

The Wellcome Trust, an independent charity, is one of the world's leading biomedical research charities and is the UK's largest non-governmental source of funds for biomedical research. The Wellcome Trust has an asset base of over £11bn, spends over £400 million a year and funds 3,500 researchers in 44 countries. The Wellcome Trust's mission is to foster and promote research with the aim of improving human and animal health. Wellcome Trust funding has supported a number of major successes including:

- Sequencing of the human genome
- Development of the antimalarial drug artemisinin
- Pioneering cognitive behavioural therapies for psychological disorders
- Establishing the UK Biobank
- Building the Wellcome Wing at the Science Museum.

The Wellcome Trust's registered charity number is 210183.

Contacts And Further Information

Wellcome Collection Website: www.wellcomecollection.org.uk.

The website for Wellcome Collection.

Online Press Centre: www.kallaway.co.uk/wellcome.htm.

High-resolution images of ancient and contemporary Wellcome Collection exhibits can be downloaded from this site. All Wellcome Collection press releases and backgrounders are also available.

Kallaway: www.kallaway.co.uk

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