

Press Release

**Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon 2019 with Swarovski:
Rachel Whiteread to be honoured on 29 January 2019**

London, 10 December 2018 – The Whitechapel Gallery is pleased to announce that **Rachel Whiteread** (b. 1963, UK) is the sixth artist to receive the prestigious annual Art Icon award in partnership with Swarovski. Art Icon 2019 will be presented at Whitechapel Gallery on Tuesday 29 January 2019, during a gala dinner hosted by **Iwona Blazwick OBE** (Director, Whitechapel Gallery) and **Jakhya Rahman** (Acting Director of the Swarovski Foundation).

Iwona Blazwick said: “This award celebrates the work of an artist who has made a profound contribution to contemporary art, influencing their own and subsequent generations of artists. Rachel Whiteread is being recognised for her transformation of everyday habitats and domestic objects into formally beautiful and richly metaphorical sculptures; and for her remarkable public monuments. From her Holocaust Memorial in Vienna to the gilded leaves she scattered across the Whitechapel Gallery’s façade, to the First World War Nissen hut she cast in a Yorkshire forest, she subtly transforms urban and rural contexts with her quiet yet psychically resonant sculptures.”

Nadja Swarovski commented: “We are delighted to continue our support of the Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon award, and to celebrate Rachel Whiteread’s inspirational body of work. Swarovski is also proud to support the Whitechapel Gallery’s brilliant Youth Programme for the fifth successive year through the Swarovski Foundation.”

The Whitechapel Gallery’s annual Art Icon event is organised with generous support from Swarovski, which has a longstanding commitment to the Gallery and its programme. The event committee includes Dilyara Allakhverdova, Erin Bell, Maryam Eisler, Larry Gagorian, Ann Gallagher, Rebecca King Lassman, Luigi Maramotti, Farshid Moussavi, Jasmin Pelham, Catherine Petitgas, Sue Prevezer, Alice Rawsthorn, Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Darius Sanai, Maria Sukkar, Nadja Swarovski and Cheyenne Westphal.

An auction, led by Rebecca Tooby-Desmond of Phillips Auction House, of works donated by leading artists including **Jodie Carey, Helen Chadwick (Estate), Alice Channer, Nicolas Deshayes, France-Lise McGurn, Fiona Rae, Conrad Shawcross, Luc Tuymans, Jessica Warboys** and **Alison Wilding** will also take place. A silent auction offering exclusive events and tours will also take place. All funds raised support the Whitechapel Gallery’s programme, in particular its work with thousands of children and young people each year.

Rachel Whiteread is internationally renowned for her evocative sculptures which translate negative space into solid form. Casting from everyday objects, oftentimes using spaces around or within furniture and architecture, she uses materials such as rubber, dental plaster, and resin to capture every nuance. In recent large-scale works, she has replicated the empty interiors of wooden garden sheds in concrete and steel, recalling the earlier architectural works *Ghost* (1990) and *House* (1993).

Whiteread studied painting at Brighton Polytechnic and sculpture at the Slade School of Fine Art in the 1980s and in 1993 she became the first woman to win the Turner Prize. Her work *The Tree of Life* (2012), a frieze of golden leaves, is situated above the entrance to the Whitechapel Gallery and was the artist's first permanent public commission in the UK. Recently a major exhibition bringing together well-known and new works never previously exhibited was on display at Tate Britain, London (2017) and the National Gallery of Art, Washington (2017) and the Saint Louis Art Museum (2017).

Notes for Editors

- **Whitechapel Gallery** - For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world-class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Frida Kahlo to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Mark Wallinger. With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, café/bar and bookshop, the Gallery is open all year round, so there is always something free to see. The Gallery is a touchstone for contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter. The Gallery believes that art has the power to transform the lives of children and young people, and pioneered gallery education and community outreach. Working with thousands of children and young people annually, leading artists collaborate with those who have the greatest need for opportunity, and their art is celebrated through exhibitions in galleries 5&6, which are dedicated to education projects. www.whitechapelgallery.org/learn

- Past winners of the Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon are: **Sir Howard Hodgkin** (2014), **Richard Long** (2015) **Joan Jonas** (2016), **Peter Doig** (2017) and **Mona Hatoum** (2018).

- Swarovski delivers a diverse portfolio of unmatched quality, craftsmanship, and creativity. Founded in 1895 in Austria, the company designs, manufactures and markets high-quality crystals, genuine gemstones and created stones as well as finished products such as jewellery, accessories and lighting. The Swarovski Crystal Business is run by the fifth generation of family members and has a global reach with approximately 2,800 stores in around 170 countries, more than 27,000 employees, and revenue of about 2.6 billion euros in 2016. Together with its sister companies Swarovski Optik (optical devices) and Tyrolit (abrasives), Swarovski Crystal Business forms the Swarovski Group. In 2016, the Group generated revenue of about 3.37 billion euros and employed more than 32,000 people. A responsible relationship with people and the planet is an integral part of Swarovski's heritage. The global Swarovski Waterschool education program has reached 461,000 children on the world's greatest rivers, and the Swarovski Foundation, set up in 2013, works to support culture and creativity, promote wellbeing, and conserve natural resources to achieve positive social impact. www.swarovskigroup.com

- **The Swarovski Foundation** generously supports the Swarovski Foundation Curator: Youth & Community Programmes post at the Whitechapel Gallery. Open to people aged 15 – 21 the youth programme gives young adults the chance to explore contemporary art, meet creative professionals, and open up career paths into the sector. The programme is formed around collaborative artist-led projects, events and a dedicated peer-led youth forum. www.swarovskifoundation.org

- To mark the occasion, LUX magazine runs an eight-page feature interview with Rachel Whiteread in their Winter issue, and has published a special cover, dedicated to Whiteread, as a limited edition for the event.

Tickets

£395 per person or £3,950 for a table for 10

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whitechapelgallery.org/whitechapel-gallery-art-icon-2018 – new web address to be inserted

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