

Press Release
15/02/2021

**ARKWRIGHT
SOCIETY**

AT SIR RICHARD ARKWRIGHT'S CROMFORD MILLS

Leading British artist comes to Cromford Mills and you can get involved!

A new artwork by award winning British Artist, Hetain Patel, will be unveiled at Cromford Mills in Derbyshire later this summer commemorating forgotten workers from the UK and global cotton industry.

Cotton Labour, a large-scale sculpture of symbolic portraits woven from yarn, will remember workers that were crucial to the success of Sir Richard Arkwright's cotton spinning mills during the industrial revolution, and depict the local women and children that formed the majority of Cromford Mills' labour force.

The artwork, which is part of the Arts&Heritage Meeting Point programme, will also honour the enslaved labour of the wider cotton industry and members of Hetain's own family who picked cotton in Kenya and India.

Hetain Patel works in multiple media, and often asks big questions in his work around culture, identity and freedom. He is the winner of the Film London Jarman Award 2019 and has been selected to take part in *British Art Show 9*, touring the country in 2022.

The Cotton Labour artwork will be constructed from a series of large-scale symbolic portraits woven into a mesh structure using yarn from donated clothing, textiles and materials. Hetain wants to work with members of the local community to create the yarn and inspire the portraits in the artwork. We are looking for people to get involved in a variety of ways.

We are searching for residents of Cromford who would be interested in featuring in the final artwork through the depiction of their portraits. If you live in Cromford and would like to be considered, please email the Learning and Engagement Co-ordinator at Cromford Mills, Eleanor Gunn, at egunn@arkwrightsociety.org.uk by 4th April to find out more.

To create the artwork, we are asking for donations of unwanted clothes to be turned into the yarn that will be used to weave the form of the pictures depicted in the sculpture. We are looking for large items of clothing or samples of cloth, clean and ideally in bright colours. Please donate your unwanted items to Cromford Mills by dropping them off at the Mill Shop, labelling them 'FAO: Eleanor Gunn' before 15th May.

During June and July Cromford Mills will be hosting two workshops led by Hetain to create the artwork. We are inviting the local community to register an interest in taking part in these workshops on Saturday 25th June and Saturday 2nd July by emailing Eleanor at egunn@arkwrightsociety.org.uk by 30th April.

On Thursday 31st March at 7pm the Arkwright Society is hosting an online Meet the Artist talk. Hetain will be talking about his work as an artist and sharing more about the project at Cromford Mills. The talk is free, and you can book your ticket here: www.wegotickets.com/event/540718.

Artist, Hetain Patel, said: "Sir Richard Arkwright is remembered today as one of Britain's great industrialists, and his legacy is celebrated at Cromford Mills.

"Cotton Labour is about shining a light on the hundreds of forgotten workers that helped build the cotton industry, many of them women and children. It's also a poignant reminder of the enslaved labour involved in the wider cotton industry.

"Like all my work, I want Cotton Labour to make a human connection, and show how the cotton industry connected people of all ages, races, genders and backgrounds."

Hannah Steggles, Head of Heritage at Cromford Mills, said: "Hetain's work gives us the opportunity to remember the people behind the success of Britain's cotton industry and reflect on an important part of Cromford Mills' history.

"We hope that working with the local community to create the artwork will start new connections between the mills and those who live here."

Cotton Labour is presented as part of Meeting Point, a national programme led by contemporary arts agency Arts&Heritage (www.artsandheritage.org.uk) that partners leading UK and international artists with museums and heritage sites to produce new artworks inspired by the museums and their collections.

Cotton Labour will be on display at Cromford Mills in Derbyshire from Saturday 16 July until Sunday 18 September 2022.

For more information, visit www.cromfordmills.org.uk.

For more information about Hetain Patel, visit www.hetainpatel.com.

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For further details or high res. image of artists, please email Tricia Trice, Marketing Coordinator, ttrice@arkwrightsociety.org.uk or phone 078336 14942.

Notes to editor

About Arts&Heritage

Arts&Heritage is an agency that supports heritage organisations and museums to place contemporary art at the heart of their programming to bring alive narratives, atmosphere, architecture and history and provide new perspectives to heritage contexts. This approach challenges audience expectations and preconceptions of heritage sites by producing projects that present history in unexpected, imaginative and unusual ways. Arts&Heritage is

an Arts Council England Sector Support Organisations (SSO), a category within its National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding which awards funding to organisations which play a vital role in supporting the cultural sector.

Organisations which are awarded SSO funding offer access to expertise and innovation for the cultural sector, driving progress and change. Meeting Point is funded through this ACE funding in order to support the development of skills and expertise in the museum and heritage sector.

About Hetain Patel

Hetain Patel (www.hetainpatel.com) is a Bolton born, London based visual artist and performance maker. His live performances, films, sculptures, and photographs have been shown worldwide from the Venice Biennale, Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art, Beijing, and Tate Modern, London to Sadler's Wells, where he is a New Wave Associate. His work exploring identity and freedom, employing popular culture, choreography and text appears in multiple formats and media, intended to reach the widest possible audience. His video and performance work online have been watched over 50 million times, which includes his TED talk of 2013 titled, 'Who Am I? Think Again'.

Patel is the winner of the Film London Jarman Award 2019, Kino Der Kunst Festival's Best International Film 2020, and was selected for the British Art Show 9, a Hayward Touring exhibition for 2021/22.

About Cromford Mills

Built in 1771 to house the first water-powered cotton spinning mill, the site became the birthplace of the modern factory system. Cromford Mills is internationally recognised as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, due to the ground-breaking ingenuity that was quickly replicated in mills across the world, transforming the global textile industry.

About the Arkwright Society

The Arkwright Society owns and manages Cromford Mills. It is an educational charity devoted to the rescue of industrial heritage buildings and helping to preserve the precious built and natural landscape in and around Cromford. www.cromformills.org.uk
@CromfordMills

Sir Richard Arkwright's Cromford Mills, Mill Lane, Cromford, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3RQ
The Arkwright Society is a registered charity no. 515526
Cromford Mills are part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

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