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SCULPTOR KATIE SURRIDGE BRINGS TOGETHER ART AND SCIENCE, ANCIENT AND MODERN IN QUEST FOR SOLUTION TO ELECTRONIC WASTE

A creative solution to the global problem of electronic waste could begin at home, in that special drawer where yards of mystery cables and chargers, antiquated phones and broken electrical items go to die, says sculptor and winner of the **DARE Art Prize 2022-23 Katie Surridge**.

For her year-long DARE commission, Katie is working with scientists at the **University of Leeds** on ways to give new life to the valuable elements - including gold, silver, copper, platinum, aluminium and cobalt - that are trapped in discarded electronic devices.

On **Wednesday 5 October** she will be installing e-waste amnesty boxes in locations across West Yorkshire and London and asking members of the public to donate their disused electrical items, in particular any containing copper wire, along with the stories behind them. She then plans to break down the objects and, through a biological process using microbes, extract a metal-rich liquid which will be used in the production of new sculptures.

Part of the pioneering **DARE** partnership between the **University of Leeds** and **Opera North**, and in association with the **National Science and Media Museum** and **The Tetley, Leeds**, the £15,000 DARE Art Prize challenges artists and scientists to collaborate on new approaches to the creative process. Katie's commission addresses the mounting problem of e-waste, which grew to 57.4 million metric tonnes in 2021, with annual wastage growing by an average of two

mt per year.

Katie's practice combines her metalworking skills - acquired over three years at the National School of Blacksmithing, studies with masters of the art in Japan, and archaeologists and metallurgists in Ireland - with public engagement.

"Bioleaching, or biomining, is a process that uses microorganisms such as bacteria to extract valuable metals", explains Katie. "I plan to learn more about this method to 'mine' metals from the devices that are submitted by the public. A metal-rich solution is produced as a result of the bacteria's actions, and I hope to be able to transfer these metals to my artwork through electroplating.

"I have an aversion to modern technology and my work is often inspired by folklore, stories and skills from the past. My last major body of work involved making my own iron from ore, but my DARE project has transported me from the Iron Age back to the present, and the problems faced by society today.

"The distant past is always a big influence on me, though, and one of the sculptures that I'm planning to make with the recovered metal is inspired by a 1200 BC 'oxhide' copper ingot that I discovered in the British Museum. I was drawn to the combination of beauty and utility in its form, which resembles an ox's skin stretched out to dry, and which also made it easy to carry by hand, to load onto pack animals or to stack in a ship's hold in the Bronze Age Mediterranean".

There will be further opportunities for the public to get involved during Katie's residency at The Tetley, Leeds, between **Friday 2 and Friday 16 December 2022**. The gallery will host dismantling workshops, where visitors will be able to break up their own items at sculptural workstations that Katie has designed and fabricated: "I'm interested in community action, and people coming together to learn new skills", she says.

Katie is also collaborating with **Dr Girish Kale** in the University of Leeds' School of Chemical and Process Engineering, on producing home electroplating kits for gallery visitors to take

away with them. Each set will feature a miniature oxhide ingot hand-cast by Katie from e-waste, and instructions on how to make an electrolyte 'bath' from vinegar and salt.

Katie's brightly-decorated e-waste donation boxes will be installed on Wednesday 5 October at Opera North's central Leeds headquarters, at the University of Leeds, at The Tetley, Leeds, and at Goldsmiths College, London, where Katie teaches. Donors are asked to drop in their items - cables, chargers, wires, leads, other small appliances like phones, digital cameras, or anything with a motor or a circuit board, and fill out the stories behind the item, how it was used or why it was discarded, in the 'visitor's book'.

In the meantime, having been selected as one of this year's Bloomberg New Contemporaries, Katie is also preparing work for the prestigious annual exhibition, which opened at Ferens Art Gallery and Humber Street Gallery, Hull last week, and tours to South London Gallery in December.

You can follow Katie's progress via her [blog](#), and drop in on her residency at The Tetley, Leeds from Friday 2 - Friday 16 December 2022. She'll be based in the Artists' Studio on the Gallery floor, and using Space3 for dismantling sessions and electroplating workshops. For more information, visit thetetley.org

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DARE

DARE is a unique collaboration between **Opera North** and the **University of Leeds**, the first partnership of its kind in the UK. Celebrating its fifteenth anniversary in 2022, DARE is a world leader in building collaborations between the arts and higher education.

As two of the UK's leading institutions of culture and education Opera North and the University of Leeds fuse the artistic with the academic, combining the very best of both organisations to inspire and stimulate new ways of thinking and working.

Initiatives including the creation of new work, research, conferences, work-based learning programmes, fellowships, scholarships and the sharing of ideas and aspirations are having a positive impact on students, audiences and the wider sector - and making a positive contribution to the business development of our organisations.

Opera North

Opera North is a national opera company based in Leeds, and is a leading UK arts organisation. Rooted in the North of England, international in outlook, we create extraordinary experiences, every day.

Our award-winning work tours to theatre stages and concert halls throughout the North and beyond, including to London and major international festivals, and we curate an eclectic artistic programme of gigs, concerts, spoken word and film in the Howard Assembly Room. Our aim is to make bold, innovative, ambitious work and share it in new ways.

Opera North believes opera and music is for everyone, and champions diversity in artists, repertoire and audiences. Opera North Education connects with communities and inspires each generation, aiming to enhance the health and well-being of people in the communities where we work through arts participation and performance.

Opera North is grateful for the generous support of Arts Council England and Leeds City Council, sponsorship from the private sector, trusts and individuals, the Friends of Opera North, the Opera North Future Fund and the box office income from its audiences, which allows us to continue to mount our award-winning work.

operanorth.co.uk

University of Leeds

The University of Leeds is one of the largest higher education institutions in the UK, with more than 39,000 students from more than 137 different countries. We are renowned globally for the quality of our teaching and research.

We are a values-driven university, and we harness our expertise in research and education to help shape a better future for humanity, working through collaboration to tackle inequalities, achieve societal impact and drive change.

The University is a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities, and is a major partner in the Alan Turing, Rosalind Franklin and Royce Institutes.

www.leeds.ac.uk

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The National Science and Media Museum

The National Science and Media Museum in Bradford, West Yorkshire, opened in 1983, and has since become one of the most visited UK museums outside London. It draws on more than three million objects from its national collection to explore the science and culture of image and sound technologies, and their impact on our lives.

The Museum creates special exhibitions, interactive galleries and activities for families and adults, and is home to three cinemas, including Europe's first IMAX cinema screen and the world's only remaining public Cinerama screen. Entry to the Museum is free.

www.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk

The Tetley

The Tetley is a pioneering centre for contemporary art located in the stunning art deco headquarters of the former Tetley Brewery. From the heart of Leeds' South Bank, The Tetley creates a platform for amazing emerging artists, presents breathtaking free exhibitions and helps communities and young people in Leeds find their creative voices.

The Tetley is supported by Arts Council England, Tetley's Beers, Leeds City Council and Garfield Weston Foundation.

thetetley.org

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