

# The Ashmolean

## PHOTOCALL NOTICE

**10.30 am, Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2004**  
**The Forecourt at the Ashmolean Museum**

**The Ashmolean presents a unique photo opportunity with Sir Anthony Caro, Britain's greatest living sculptor, to launch the installation of *Toronto Flats* upon the Museum's forecourt.**

This event marks the year of Caro's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, which has been celebrated worldwide with exhibitions and concludes in London with a major retrospective at Tate Britain, opening in January 2005. It will be the first time the Ashmolean has exhibited sculpture on the forecourt.

Dr Christopher Brown, Director of the Ashmolean says 'We are delighted to take part in the events to commemorate Sir Anthony's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. This sculpture is a declaration of our commitment to modern art'.

Born in 1924, Anthony Caro had a crucial affect on the development of twentieth century sculpture. Having studied at the Royal Academy Schools, London, he worked as an assistant to Henry Moore for several years. He came to the public's attention with an exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery, 1963, which presented large brightly coloured abstract sculptures arranged on the floor. Known as his 'Breakthrough Period', Caro rejected the traditional technique of modelling and carving, and the use of the pedestal. By placing sculptures made from welded metal directly on the ground he introduced a revolutionary approach to the progression of three-dimensional art. As a teacher at St. Martin's School of Art, London, 1953-1981, he influenced younger generations of sculptors by challenging the potential of form and subject matter.

During his career, Caro has had major retrospectives in New York, Rome, Tokyo, and at the Tate and National Gallery, London. Awarded with prizes, and honorary degrees from universities in the UK, USA and Europe, he was knighted in 1987 and received the Order of Merit in May 2000.

*Toronto Flats* 1974, comes from a series of 37 'Flats' that Caro made upon an invitation from York University, Toronto. Caro spent three months working at Toronto's York Steel Company factory, using thick, flat, heavy sheets of steel to make the series, which explore flatness in its various dimensions. In his book *Anthony Caro and Painting: Working with the Masters*, John Golding wrote of the 'Flats' series, 'We are made aware most strongly of the supreme importance played by the narrowed, trapped spaces contained between the monolithic vertical and gently reclining upright elements that first catch and hold the eye.'

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## Notes to Editors

- The Ashmolean is the oldest museum in Britain, founded in 1683. It is the most important museum of art and archaeology outside London. It is designated as a collection of national importance. Its collections cover a wide range of cultures from early Egyptian to Italian Renaissance and European 20<sup>th</sup> C.
- In 1996 the forecourt's re-development was completed. Developed by Stanton Williams and funded by the Headley Trust, the forecourt was renovated at a cost of £5.5 million.
- On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2004, the Ashmolean was awarded £15 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards a crucial re-development of the Museum, which will provide 100 per cent more display space as well as a dedicated Education Centre and Conservation Studios; the integration of all the Greek and Roman collections now split between two separate sites; and the development of teaching rooms, study galleries and discovery areas.
- The sculpture *Toronto Flats* weighs almost 5,500lbs. It's construction required skilful handling with specialist equipment. To make this and each of the other 'Flats', Caro directed enormous cranes to lift and hold the pieces of steel into place.
- John Golding, author of 'Anthony Caro and Painting: Working with the Masters', Caro at the National Gallery, 1998, p.13.