



**Artist Polly Morgan, winner of the First Plinth: Public Art Award, unveils first public sculpture, *OPEN! CHANNEL! FLOW!* at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park**

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The [Royal Society of Sculptors](#) unveils British artist [Polly Morgan](#)'s first public sculpture, *OPEN! CHANNEL! FLOW!* on 23 September 2024. Winner of the Society's First Plinth: Public Art Award, Morgan's sculpture - her largest to date - will be on shown at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park from



23rd September 2024 until 30th June 2025.

Taking its title from the name given to any conduit with a free surface, *OPEN! CHANNEL! FLOW!* consists of two triangles of furrowed concrete adorned with painted, iridescent fibreglass casts of snakes that spill from the crevices and connect the two. Through the use of materials commonly used in boatbuilding and nail decoration, Morgan uses modern technology to mimic nature at its most dazzling and obfuscatory. The snakes are moulded into their concrete trenches, with their scales reflecting light as rainbows. The sculpture represents how we are all shaped and constrained by our environment: the refracted light is the energy, ebb and flow of ideas, and the serpentine forms embody all life; at points intertwining, repelling and jostling for position.

*'The spectacle of serpentine bodies pouring from one concrete structure into another in a muscular cascade is disconcerting, certainly in central London. As a public sculpture, Open! Channel! Flow! suggests things out of place – a sinister rus in urbe offering a vision of a hidden animal world writhing within the austere cladding of our built environment. The blocky concrete forms have overtones of Brutalist architecture, with all its associations of rational, ordered urbanity. In this context, the snaking bodies at the core embody chaos roiling within, a spirit of untameable disorder that modern structures of city and state cannot wholly subdue.'*

Hettie Judah

The *First Plinth: Public Art Award* and *OPEN! CHANNEL! FLOW!* have been made possible through generous support of the Mirisch and Lebenheim Charitable Foundation.

## **Notes to Editors**

**Polly Morgan** (b.1980) is a British artist living and working in London. She is self-taught with no formal education in art and rose to attention after learning taxidermy in 2004 when she began to dismantle taxidermy traditions, creating unsettling still lives where the animal was observed in death rather than life. Recent works, making use of her model-making and painting skills, are illusory sculptures that combine taxidermy with cast objects and painted trompe l'oeil veneers and lie somewhere between figuration and abstraction.

Her work has been shown internationally and belongs in many notable collections including the Zabludowicz Collection, Thomas Olbricht, David Roberts Art Foundation and The New Art Gallery Walsall. She was chosen to represent Britain in *Women to Watch 2015* at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington and her work *Departures* was featured in the Thames and Hudson book *100 Works of Art that will Define our Age*.

## **About The Royal Society of Sculptors**

The Royal Society of Sculptors is an artist-led, membership organisation. We support and connect sculptors throughout their careers and lead the conversation about sculpture today through exhibitions and events for all. Created more than 100 years ago to champion contemporary sculpture and the artists who create it, the Society welcomes everyone interested in exploring this art form and its many possibilities. For more information visit <https://sculptors.org.uk/> Instagram (@royal\_sculptors)

## About Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

Spread across 560 acres of stunning parklands, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is home to beautifully landscaped gardens, historic waterways, famous sporting venues, a vibrant arts and events programme and the ArcelorMittal Orbit visitor attraction.

As the new heart of east London, the Park is still transforming, providing homes, jobs and an unrivalled education and cultural district housing Sadler's Wells East, BBC Music Studios, V&A East, UAL's London College of Fashion and UCL East.

The London Legacy Development Corporation promotes and delivers physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the surrounding area by maximising the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

For more information visit our website ([QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk](https://QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk)), sign up to our e-newsletter ([QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk/subscribe](https://QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk/subscribe)), follow us on Twitter ([@noordinarypark](https://twitter.com/noordinarypark)) and like us on Facebook ([facebook.com/QueenElizabethOlympicPark](https://facebook.com/QueenElizabethOlympicPark))

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