

Press Release

October 2005

Jo Roberts: *Wish Lists for Didcot*

Didcot Orchard Centre, Saturday 22 October 2005 at 12.30pm

Artist Jo Roberts' intriguing new project *Wish Lists for Didcot* engages directly with the residents of Didcot and the new Orchard Centre retail development. Jo has been collecting 'wishes' from the people of Didcot to create *Wish Lists for Didcot*, a list of personal wishes to record the community's hopes, dreams and aspirations. Her collection will be used as the basis for a limited edition artwork, 1000 shopping bags, created, designed and signed by the artist and distributed at the Orchard Centre as part of a special event to celebrate the project at 12.30pm on Saturday 22 October 2005.

Inspired by an historical image of a local woman, Gladys Nobbs on her delivery bike, the artist rode a red bike and wore a red hard-hat and coat throughout the project. The red bike will be decorated and exhibited in a street market stall in the middle of the Orchard Centre, quite haphazard in comparison to the surrounding gleaming new shops. At 12.30pm the bike will be auctioned with the funds going to the Mayor's local charity - Jo will also distribute the bags. From 19 September a series of *Wish Lists for Didcot* posters will be displayed throughout the Orchard Centre.

Jo's collection got underway with visits to local schools and community groups, meeting local people at the Orchard Centre and taking part in the *Didcot Enjoy!* event in September to celebrate Didcot, old and new. Jo also collaborated with The Didcot Herald, with a specially designed coupon for readers to fill in and post back with their wishes, appearing in the paper through September. In addition, the artist invited listeners to phone in and voice their wishes on BBC Radio Oxford.

Wish Lists for Didcot provides a fascinating insight into the heart of a community and a reflection of how that community views itself, both now and in the future.

Since graduating from her MA in 1996, Jo Roberts has developed an intriguing artistic practice. She engages with people and places recording the quirky side of life, creating exquisite and insightful art works. She works nationally with such organizations as Grizedale Arts, The New Art Gallery, Walsall and Angel Row, Nottingham.

For further information about the project contact: Nick Hallam on 07709 887 814 or 0115 9502 283 – email: nick_hallam@hotmail.com

Notes to Editors:-

Wish Lists for Didcot, a project by Jo Roberts, commissioned by Taylor Woodrow in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council and Didcot Orchard Centre, and developed and managed by Artpoint.

We would like to thank The Didcot Herald and BBC Radio Oxford for their invaluable support in helping collect *Wish Lists for Didcot*.

Artpoint is a creative company working with artists to support new thinking and practice for the built environment and public space across the South East region. Operating as a 'not for profit' limited company with charitable status, Artpoint believes that contemporary arts practice has a central role to play in developing our physical, intellectual and social environments. Artpoint's work includes public art commissioning, consultancy, research projects and audience engagement activities.

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