



CONNAUGHT



THE CONNAUGHT CHRISTMAS TREE 2015 IS UNVEILED TODAY WITH DECORATIONS BY DAMIEN HIRST

London – The Connaught, London’s legendary Mayfair hotel, is pleased to announce that the inaugural Connaught Christmas tree has been designed by one of the world’s leading artists and long-time friend of the hotel, Damien Hirst. Unveiled today, Thursday 19 November 2015, this will mark the first time that the hotel has displayed a tree on Mount Street to be enjoyed by hotel guests as well as the Mayfair neighbourhood.

Standing at over 30ft tall, the Norway Spruce, decorated by Hirst, has drawn inspiration from the sense of hope derived from the power of science and medicine, one of the artist’s most enduring themes. The Connaught Christmas tree will be dressed with over 300 decorations, including a series of festively reimagined medical instruments, snowmen formed of giant pills, as well as traditional white doves – a symbol of hope, beauty and fragility – and garlands of pink sausages, playfully reflecting the idea of Christmas being a time of plenty.

Commenting on the tree, Damien Hirst said: ‘The Christmas tree is a celebration of togetherness, a joyful symbol of hope and love. For the decorations, I wanted to reference some of the amazing things that give us hope in the world today.’

Paddy McKillen, co-owner of the Connaught, said: ‘We were thrilled that Damien jumped to the challenge to create our first Connaught Christmas Tree. We have a longstanding friendship since he created his amazing butterfly Kaleidoscope paintings for the Connaught’s *Hélène Darroze* restaurant. I really hope this tree will be enjoyed by our guests, our Mayfair neighbours and the whole of London.’

Mayfair has long-since established itself as the epicentre of the contemporary art scene in London, playing host to some of the most prestigious international galleries, and therefore it is particularly fitting that the Connaught should have invited one of Britain’s most significant living artists to create their first Christmas tree, in the heart of this historical neighbourhood.

Art also plays a key role at the Connaught, with the hotel having amassed a considerable collection over its 168-year history, from Sir Peter Lely and William Wyld to Julian Opie, and of course, Damien Hirst. Guests of the Connaught have long enjoyed the hotel’s relationship with Hirst, with two site-specific butterfly ‘Kaleidoscope’ paintings by the artist taking pride of place in the two-Michelin-starred *Hélène Darroze* at the Connaught since 2009.

High resolution images may be downloaded from the following links:

The Connaught Christmas Tree 2015:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/udosgl1rayscr05/AAD3_-N6YmzlaQzvERO54GAXa?dl=0

The Connaught:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gfbi9l8clh2cvbl/AAAfZDyh5yH85bRAJEbvxrCua?dl=0>

ABOUT THE CONNAUGHT

In the heart of London’s Mayfair, the Connaught, part of [Maybourne Hotel Group](#), blends contemporary style, classic English character and impeccable service to create the ultimate in sophistication. Rooms and suites to suit every mood, exquisite cuisine from *Hélène Darroze*, the charm of the Connaught and Coburg Bars, and Europe’s first Aman Spa make this the perfect place to rest, relax and dine in style.

ABOUT DAMIEN HIRST

Damien Hirst was born in 1965 in Bristol and grew up in Leeds. He studied Fine Art at Goldsmiths college from 1986 to 1989, and whilst in his second year, he conceived and curated a group exhibition entitled 'Freeze'. The show is commonly acknowledged to have been the launching point not only for Hirst, but for a generation of British artists. Since the late 1980s, Hirst has used a varied practice of installation, sculpture, painting and drawing to explore the complex relationships between art, beauty, religion, science, life and death. His works include the iconic shark in formaldehyde, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* (1991) and *For the Love of God* (2007), a platinum cast of a skull set with 8,601 flawless pavé-set diamonds.

Since 1987, over 80 solo Damien Hirst exhibitions have taken place worldwide, and his work has been included in over 300 group shows. In 2012, Tate Modern presented a major retrospective of his work as part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. He was awarded the Turner Prize in 1995. Hirst lives and works in London, Devon and Gloucester.

For further information, please contact our Press Office:

Paula Fitzherbert or Elle Blakeman
Phone: +44 (0) 207 201 1607 / 207 201 1664
07768 933 456 / 07825 441 228
pfitzherbert@claridges.co.uk
eblakeman@maybourne.com