



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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For Immediate Release**

### **THE HELIX COMMISSIONS SCOTTISH ARTIST TO LEAD DESIGN OF MAJOR PUBLIC ARTWORK**

Scottish artist Jephson Robb has been commissioned to lead the design and construction of a major public artwork for Falkirk's innovative Helix project.

The artwork, currently known as the Abbotshaugh Sentinel, will take the form of a significant earthwork and will be located in the Abbotshaugh Woodland near Langlees in Falkirk.

The woodland lies in the northern part of the Helix which is set to transform over 300 hectares of land between Falkirk and Grangemouth into an exciting new greenspace and visitor attraction (see Notes to Editors for further information).

Twenty-three expressions of interest in designing the Abbotshaugh Sentinel were submitted by artists from seven countries.

The Helix project brought together a community client panel comprised of local residents to review the applications and whittle them down to a shortlist of five. Jephson was finally selected following a two-day interview process which involved working with community members in a series of activity sessions known as charettes.

Said Jephson: "I am delighted to have won the appointment to work with the Abbotshaugh and Langlees/Bainsford community on developing an artwork for their woodland site. The artwork will be developed through community engagement and consultation, building upon the great work and relationships already established with the community by Vista Projects and the Helix Trust. My aim will be to deliver an art work which will help regenerate the area and lay the foundations for a more positive future."

Colin Armstrong, chief executive of the Helix Trust, said: "Everyone involved with the Helix is delighted to have Jephson on board. His artistic creativity, along with his obvious enthusiasm for the project, stood out from day one."

Christian Barnes from VistaProjects, who facilitated the community client panel along with John Kennedy of Landlab, praised the panel's efforts and commitment. "I've been overwhelmed by the panel's commitment to the project and the intelligence and diligence with which they've approached the project," he said. "It far surpasses anything we have seen in the professional sector."

He added: "When we started work on the Helix project, we had the luxury of imagining an ideal scenario where a community would take responsibility and control of an aspect of its own cultural regeneration. What we've seen so far has filled us with fresh optimism and hopefully established a new approach to the public commissioning of artists that can be adopted elsewhere."

Falkirk artist Helen Coffey, who is a member of the community client panel, said: "Jephson's appointment is exciting for me personally, as I have a strong interest in community involvement and have already produced a piece of work for the Abbotshaugh Community Woodland (a sun clock). Throughout the interview process it was clear Jephson would have no problem engaging with the community. He was comfortable working with the youngest to the oldest members of the Dawson community. I feel Jephson will listen to our ideas and create something unique that people will want to use. The whole process will bring the community closer together."

Jephson will begin working with the local community from the first week of October. The first conceptual design is expected to be ready by spring 2011.

#### Notes to Editors

##### 1) Jephson Robb bio:

Jephson Robb, born Glasgow, Scotland, read Political Economics at Glasgow University before graduating in Design from The Royal College of Art, London, 2003.

He received his first commission "Temple" from Tord Boontje for "Eight Rooms" the British Council touring exhibition of China, 2004. "Temple" was described by Icon magazine as "a lovely thing with a serene quality"

In 2005 Paola Antonelli the Senior Curator in the Department of Architecture and Design at the New York Museum of Modern Art commissioned "Cries & Whispers" for SAFE, the first major design exhibition at the museum since it reopened in Nov 2004. "Cries & Whispers" is now in the museums permanent collection.

Since then Jephson has worked with Liberty of London, Frankfurt Messe, Atkins, The Environment Agency, Page/Park Architects and Austin-Smith:Lord on interior installations and permanent public sculptures.

Jephson also works as Art Director for the Bernhardt Design exhibitions at the Salone Del Mobile in Milan and has created the new Bernhardt Design website as well as the current advertising campaign for Bernhardt Textiles.

[www.jephsonrobb.com](http://www.jephsonrobb.com)

##### 2) Helix project:

The £40 million Helix development will create a new, high quality greenspace for Falkirk and Grangemouth centred on landmark public art and an extension of the Forth & Clyde Canal.

The Helix will deliver:

- the Kelpies™ - two Landmark sculptures in the shape of horse's heads
- a central park with a lagoon
- pathways and cycle networks
- a blend of new and existing woodland areas
- a new canal link connecting Grangemouth into Scotland's canal network
- public artworks
- new allotments

The Helix is being driven by a partnership of Falkirk Council, British Waterways Scotland and Central Scotland Forest Trust through the Helix Trust.

The project has been awarded a £25 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund as part of its Living Landmarks Programme, while significant funding and land has also been committed by Falkirk Council and British Waterways Scotland.

For more details about the Helix, visit [www.thehelix.co.uk](http://www.thehelix.co.uk)

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