

## **Press Release**

13 December 1999

### **Christmas Tree 1999 by Mat Collishaw**

Supported by the Patrons of New Art  
15 December 1999 – 6 January 2000

The Tate Gallery has commissioned Mat Collishaw to create the Christmas Tree for 1999.

Collishaw has taken a conventional pine tree and dressed it with traditional Christmas decorations. An angel adorns the top and wrapped presents surround the base of the tree. However, a video at the foot of the tree shows rats running around and nibbling mince pies in their own festive celebration. The rats appear to be scurrying amongst the presents and provide a stark contrast to the idyllic image of the Christmas tree. The rats are reminders of what lies beneath the surface glitter of Christmas.

Mat Collishaw was born in 1966 in Nottingham. He studied at Trent Polytechnic (1985–86) and then at Goldsmiths College, University of London (1986–89). He is known for his diverse work in video and photography, in which he explores a wide range of themes taken from cultural history, art history, and the scientific and natural worlds. In his work, Collishaw often combines antique apparatus or furniture with new technology or contemporary subject matter. An example is *Hollow Oak*, currently on display at the Tate in Room 11. Collishaw has had solo exhibitions at the Camden Art Centre, London, the Lisson Gallery, London and the Bloom Gallery in Amsterdam. He has also participated in numerous group exhibitions.

This is the twelfth year that the Tate Gallery has commissioned a tree from an artist. The artists involved in previous years were: Richard Wilson (1998) Michael Landy (1997), Julian Opie (1996), Cornelia Parker (1995), Cathy de Monchaux (1994), Shirazeh Houshiary (1993), Craigie Aitchison (1992), Boyd Webb (1991), Lisa Milroy (1990), Tim Head (1989) and Bill Woodrow (1988).

Mat Collishaw's installation and the 1999 Christmas card are supported by the Patrons of New Art. Established in 1982, the Patrons of New Art provide financial support towards acquisitions for the Tate Gallery's collection of contemporary art.

**For further information please contact Nadine Thompson or Angela Dias  
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