



## Press Release

# Laura Ellen Bacon: Into Being

5 April – 7 September 2025

The Chapel



Laura Ellen Bacon. Photo © Alun Callender. Courtesy the artist and Hignell Gallery.

Opening in time for the Easter holidays at Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP), *Into Being* is a new exhibition by Derbyshire-based artist Laura Ellen Bacon. Designed for the 18th-century Chapel in the grounds of YSP, this new sculpture is woven in sustainable Somerset willow and responds to the building's architecture, with its dense and abstract form growing within and around the features of the space.

Seeming to take hold of the room, *Into Being* encroaches six metres into the nave of the Chapel and climbs three metres up the wall. It embodies forms found in the natural world such as cocoons, burrows and seed pods, and visitors can stand within its embracing folds surrounded by the intricate and powerful details of the structure.

Bacon primarily works alone and is constructing the sculpture from scratch at YSP over eight weeks, using willow to “draw” into the surrounding space. She is using branches from fallen beech trees at YSP to form part of the skeleton of the self-supporting structure that, through

its material and form, conjures up a primal instinct to nest and reconnect with the natural world.

The ancient technique of willow weaving can be traced back 10,000 years, and today Bacon employs a non-traditional style of working that she has developed over 20 years to create contemporary, abstract installations. She becomes absorbed in the making process, leaving traces of memory and experience within the work, held within the interwoven and knotted rods. For Bacon, the act of making is a contemplative process, with its repetitive and physical nature providing a welcome sanctuary. Her works celebrate the joy of manipulating raw materials by hand, without the need for complex machinery or large teams of people.

For this YSP display, Bacon will use around 80 bundles of Somerset willow called Dicky Meadows, chosen for its particularly slender and straight stem, which helps her 'draw' strong and smooth lines in the space. Native to the UK, willow is a sustainable material that exists in harmony with the natural world. At the end of the exhibition, the sculpture will be dismantled and the material reused in the

landscape to create wildlife habitats. Alongside her strong affiliation with organic growth, Bacon is also inspired by her father's architectural drawings, introducing the energy and unpredictability of natural environments into interior spaces with careful consideration.

**Bacon explained:** *"Making it on site was a dream. I was able to work with the rising and falling light in the space, both of which inform the flow of the inner folds of weave. Also, I could witness the acoustics of the space change when I'm deep in the woven willow folds."*

*It will be a sensory experience in that there is so much willow, and it has a beautiful aroma and the light from the Chapel windows will affect and change the work throughout the day. The sculpture itself is big! I think that visitors will be able to explore the many varied views of it in the space as it folds, pools and curls its way across the stone floor."*

The exhibition's title refers to the intense and durational process of bringing a new work into existence. Responding to the specific space, Bacon imagines the shape a new work could take and creates preliminary sketches, but the precise form evolves organically and instinctively as it is made. More so than in her previous works, *Into Being* suggests a connection to a living thing – a being. The commanding presence and strange but familiar contours of *Into Being*, along with its subtle aroma will create a stunning and compelling sensory experience.

Shown alongside the new commission will be smaller works in the vestry and on the balcony, including a wall-based sculpture *Contact* (2021), made from stripped willow, and the floor-based *Companion* (2024).

Bacon has exhibited widely in Europe and created many significant installations, including at Chatsworth, The Holburne Museum, University of Warwick, Château-Gaillard and Maubuisson



Laura Ellen Bacon, *The Feeling Remains*, 2022. Photo © Jean-Michel Rousvoal. Production Conseil Départemental du Val d'Oise / Abbaye de Maubuisson.



Abbey in France. 2024 saw her first US exhibit and Denver Art Museum, Colorado and this year Bacon will also exhibit at The Clark Institute in Massachusetts.

The exhibition supported by Hignell Gallery.

-ENDS-



Laura Ellen Bacon, *Rêverie*, 2023. Photo © Laura Ellen Bacon/Château Gaillard – Département Eure.





Laura Ellen Bacon, *Awake* 2021. Photo © Matthew Ling. Courtesy the artist and Hignell Gallery.



Laura Ellen Bacon, *The Shape of First Thoughts* 2017. Photo © Alun Callender. Courtesy the artist and Hignell Gallery.



## Notes for Editors

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### Listings information

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, Wakefield WF4 4LG

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Check online for opening hours.

Book tickets at [ysp.org.uk](http://ysp.org.uk)

### Social media

Instagram: @YSPsculpture

Facebook: @YorkshireSculpturePark

LinkedIn: Yorkshire Sculpture Park

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### About Laura Ellen Bacon

Laura Ellen Bacon is a renowned British artist known for her large-scale work using natural materials in landscape, interior and gallery settings which have included Saatchi Gallery, Chatsworth, New Art Centre, Somerset House, Sudeley Castle (for Sotheby's) and Blackwell – The Arts and Crafts House in Cumbria.

In 2017 she was a finalist within the Woman's Hour Craft Prize at the V&A and she was selected as Jerwood Contemporary Maker in 2010.

In 2018 her work inspired the composer Helen Grime, whose resulting three-part movement, 'Woven Space' was performed at the Barbican by the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.

Bacon's work transforms environments through immersive installations and continues to push the boundaries of materiality and space, inviting viewers to reconsider the connection between nature and the built environment.

### About Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Awarded VisitEngland's gold accolade in 2023-24 for an outstanding visitor attraction, Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) is the leading international centre for modern and contemporary sculpture. Welcoming around 300,000 visitors each year, YSP is a registered charity and accredited museum situated in the 500-acre, 18th-century Bretton Hall estate in West and South Yorkshire.

YSP is led by Clare Lilley, and was founded in 1977 by Sir Peter Murray CBE, it is the largest sculpture park of its kind in Europe. It is the only place in Europe to see Barbara Hepworth's *The Family of Man* in its entirety, alongside a significant collection of sculpture, including bronzes by Henry Moore, important pieces by Hemali Bhuta, Roger Hiorns, Damien Hirst, Suhasini Kejrival, Kimsooja, Marc Quinn, Hank Willis Thomas and Erwin Wurm, and site-specific works by Katrina Palmer, Andy Goldsworthy, Alfredo Jaar, David Nash, Sean Scully and James Turrell.

YSP mounts a year-round temporary exhibitions programme including some of the world's leading artists across six indoor galleries and the outdoors. Highlights include exhibitions by Fiona Banner, Anthony Caro, Tony Cragg, Leonardo Drew, Robert Indiana, Amar Kanwar, KAWS, Joan Miró, Henry Moore, Lindsey Mendick, Annie Morris, Giuseppe Penone, Jaume Plensa, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Sean Scully, Yinka Shonibare CBE, Chiharu Shiota, David Smith, Joana Vasconcelos, Bill Viola and Erwin Wurm.

Across its 48-year history, YSP has worked with over 1,000 artists from more than 40 countries, on varied projects from short-term residencies to major surveys. YSP supports artists at vital stages in their careers and is rare in having the accommodation, workshops and expertise to enable open-ended and risk-taking practice, giving artists space, time and support to think and to develop new ideas.

Over this time, YSP has sought to ignite, nurture and sustain interest in and debate around contemporary art and sculpture, especially with those for whom art participation is not habitual or familiar. It enables open access to art, situations and ideas, and continues to re-evaluate and expand the approach to considering art's role and relevance in society. Supporting 40,000 people each year through YSP's learning programme, this innovative work develops ability, confidence and life aspiration in participants.

YSP's core work is made possible by investment from Arts Council England, Wakefield Council, the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation and Dunard Fund. YSP was named Art Fund Museum of the Year in 2014 and awarded the 2023 Visitor Attraction of the Year and Cultural Award in the Yorkshire Post Tourism Awards.

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