



# PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

June 2017



## The art of Freemasonry to be revealed in new exhibition, as the United Grand Lodge of England appoints its first ever Artist in Residence

- For the first time in its 300-year history, an artist has been given unprecedented access to objects and spaces within Freemasons' Hall to create works that will bring Freemasonry to life to a new audience
- Jacques Viljoen, the officially appointed Artist in Residence, invited nine guest artists to work alongside him, with over 25 artworks to be unveiled at new exhibition opening on official 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of United Grand Lodge of England (Saturday 24 June, 2017)

**19 June 2017:** As part of its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017, the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) is proud to announce it has appointed its first ever Artist in Residence, Jacques Viljoen, who has been tasked with creating a new exhibition of artworks to celebrate Freemasonry and its continued role and relevance in society today.

*'Rough to smooth: Art inspired by Freemasonry – past, present and future'* will open at the iconic Freemasons' Hall in Covent Garden, London on Saturday 24 June, 2017 and will run until 1 July. Jacques Viljoen, 29, who studied Fine Art at the University of Cape Town and classical painting in London and the renowned Florence Academy, has been given unprecedented access to objects and spaces throughout the nine-floor, 2-acre building which is UGLE's headquarters. From a portrait of a new Freemason and paintings on a series of unusual Masonic books, to capturing what goes on in Lodge rooms and regalia, the artist brings Freemasonry to life to engage new audiences via the oldest of media.

Nine guest artists have also been invited to work alongside Jacques. The artists have diverse specialisms, ranging from oil painting to mixed media and photography.



From renowned Norwegian oil painter Henrik Uldalen's contemporary yet classic figurative works and Lithuanian artist Erika Bo's images created by endlessly layering objects, to Nicholas Chaundy's technical homage to the glazing techniques used in the many masterpieces that fill Freemasons' Hall, all artists are brought together by an acknowledgement and appreciation for the language and history of painting.

Significantly, the new works of art will be unveiled on the official date of the organisation's tercentenary (24 June, 2017), and will coincide with an Open Day that will give the wider public a rare opportunity to look around the Grade 2\* listed building in the heart of Covent Garden. Whilst touring one of the finest Art Deco buildings in England, visitors can also witness its revered collection of 150 oil paintings and various sculptures.

**Brigadier Willie Shackell, Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England, commenting on the new Artist in Residence says:**

"During our momentous tercentenary year, we want not only to look back, but forward to our future, and inspire a new audience about Freemasonry. Jacques Viljoen is a hugely talented individual who has been able to capture something very different, embracing our traditions and heritage in paint. Freemasonry has a long tradition in craft and art and we hope this initiative opens up our unique history to the wider world."

**Jacques Viljoen, Artist in Residence at the United Grand Lodge of England, said:**

"This has been an incredible opportunity to explore an organisation with an intricate and ancient history. I am personally intrigued by spaces where traditional figurative art meets the contemporary art world, where old confronts new, and I feel this resonates with Freemasonry as it examines its role and relevance in society today.

"I have chosen oil painting as the medium for this exhibition as both traditions developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had a tumultuous twentieth century and are presented with new opportunities in the twenty-first century."

**The exhibition and residency has been directed by the Director of The Library and Museum of Freemasonry, Diane Clements, who said:**

"It has been a remarkable experience working with these talented artists and they have produced a defining set of works, which we hope the general public will come and view."

Jacques Viljoen will be conducting a life still life painting at Freemasons' Hall on the Open Day on Saturday 24 June, where all the exhibition's works will be on display.

Visitors can tour the impressive and ornate Grand Temple, the Library and Museum and the Three Centuries of English Freemasonry exhibition. Music performances will take place by the Occasional Strings quartet, the Art Deco Orchestra and UGLE's Grand Organist Carl Jackson. The Open Day is free to attend and no booking is required.

The Artist in Residence exhibition will be curated by the renowned Michael Petry and Roberto Ekholm, whose most recent joint project, *Nature Morte* was displayed at the National Gallery in Wroclaw and is coming to Guildhall in September. They have also worked with Pallant House, Sir John Soane's Museum and various contemporary spaces.

**2017 Open Day at Freemasons' Hall**

Date: Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Times: 10.00am – 5.00pm

Venue: Freemasons' Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AZ

Admission: Free, no booking required

