Dovecot appoints new Director

Dovecot Studios in Edinburgh announces the appointment of Celia Joicey as its new Director, succeeding David Weir after his 17-year leadership.

This announcement follows the recent completion of a significant tapestry collaboration between Dovecot and artist Chris Ofili, culminating in a major exhibition at the National Gallery and a BBC documentary.

Alastair Salvesen CBE, Chair of The Dovecot Foundation, says; “I am delighted with the appointment of Celia Joicey, who brings a wealth of experience and expertise in the organisation and leadership of galleries and their activities, particularly in an area of direct relevance to tapestry and the other interests of Dovecot. She will be in an excellent position to maintain and enhance Dovecot’s position as a leading light in tapestry weaving and as an exhibition centre.”

Celia Joicey comments; “I am delighted to have been appointed to succeed David Weir as Director of Dovecot from September. This is an enormous privilege, given the 105-year history of the Studio and I look forward to working with colleagues to ensure Dovecot is recognised as a world centre of excellence for tapestry art and design.”

Celia Joicey is currently Head of the Fashion and Textile Museum in London, having joined in 2011. During this time she has raised the Museum’s profile with a series of critically acclaimed exhibitions including Artist Textiles: Picasso to Warhol and Liberty in Fashion. In addition, she has transformed the Museum’s income and overseen a trajectory of growth with visitor numbers increasing from 21,000 to 57,000 in 2016/17. Joicey has also developed a number of international partnerships to showcase Mexican, Canadian and Swedish textile design in the UK. Prior to joining the Fashion and Textile Museum, she was Head of Publications at the National Portrait Gallery, and also worked for the Victoria and Albert Museum, University for the Creative Arts Farnham and the Royal Society of Arts, as Editor of the RSA Journal. She is a graduate of Cambridge University and the Royal College of Art.

Celia Joicey succeeds David Weir, who will be leaving Dovecot following 17 years’ very successful Directorship of Dovecot. With the financial support and backing of Alastair and Elizabeth Salvesen, Weir helped negotiate the acquisition and subsequent redevelopment of Infirmary Street Baths, a derelict former Victorian Baths in the Centre of Edinburgh. By 2008 this public building was established as a leading cross discipline art, exhibition and event space for craft and design with Dovecot Tapestry Studio as a dynamic and active working studio at its centre. He went on to lead the
artistic vision and collaborative commissions of Dovecot; a specialist contemporary tapestry studio originally established in 1912.

David Weir says; “After 17 years of developing Dovecot to the place it occupies today, it feels the right moment to hand over the reins to a new director to help bring Dovecot into the next phase of its history. It has been an exciting journey since 2000 to work with founder funders Alastair and Elizabeth Salvesen and The Dovecot Foundation to save and revitalise this very special tapestry studio and to position Dovecot in the national and international cultural landscape. I feel privileged to have been able to work with a team of extremely talented colleagues to develop the role of Dovecot as a centre for contemporary tapestry working with leading artists and as a gallery space in which the highest quality exhibitions celebrating craft and making have been able to flourish.

Dovecot is very fortunate to have enjoyed the continued philanthropic commitment of The Dovecot Foundation and to have benefitted most recently from Creative Scotland’s regular funding. I am delighted at Celia Joicey’s appointment and look forward to following Dovecot’s progress as it enters its next stage of development under her leadership”.

-ENDS-

Notes to editor:

Recent Dovecot milestones:

- 2000: Dovecot Studios revived with financial backing of Alastair and Elizabeth Salvesen. David Weir appointed as Director.
- 2005-2008: Acquisition and redevelopment of Infirmary Street Baths into landmark centre for contemporary tapestry, gallery and home for Dovecot Tapestry Studio.
- 2000 to date: Commissions and collaborations with artists include Alan Davie, Barbara Rae, Patrick Caulfield, Alison Watt, Victoria Crowe, Linder, John Byrne, Magne Furuholmen, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, David Poston, Garry Fabian Miller, Peter Blake, Peter Saville, Claire Barclay, Victoria Morton, Jim Lambie, Nicolas Party, Chris Ofili.
- Public and private collections including British Library, Leathersellers’ new hall designed by architect Eric Parry, Theatre Royal Glasgow, Clothworkers’ Hall, Nottingham Castle Arts Centre, Bucelleuch Collection at Boughton House, Barns-Graham Charitable Trust, National Museums Scotland, Arts Council Collection.
- Centenary Exhibition 1912-2012 touring exhibition and accompanying publication with Lund Humphries.
- 2015: Dovecot becomes Regularly Funded Organisation with Creative Scotland.
- A Tapestry of Many Threads operetta by Alexander McCall Smith and Tom Cunningham performed at Dovecot.
- Children of the Mantic Stain, contemporary ballet, Linder Sterling, Northern Ballet, Kenneth Tindall, Maxwell Sterling, Dovecot Tapestry Studio, performed at Dovecot, Southbank, Leeds, Southampton, Norwich as part of British Art Show 8.
• 2017 April - August: *Weaving Magic*: exhibition at the National Gallery, London focuses on the tapestry created by Dovecot Tapestry Studio with Chris Ofili.

• 2017 July – BBC2 *Imagine* programme with Alan Yentob documents the project to create Chris Ofili’s *The Caged Bird’s Song* tapestry.

**Biographies:**

**Celia Joicey** is a graduate of Cambridge University and the Royal College of Art. Prior to her appointment as Director of Dovecot Studios, she was Head of the Fashion and Textile Museum, and before that, Head of Publications at the National Portrait Gallery in London and Editor of the RSA *Journal* and Head of Publications at the Royal Society of Arts.

**Alastair Salvesen** is Chair of The Dovecot Foundation. He was awarded the CBE for services to the arts and charity in Scotland. Salvesen is a Chartered Accountant and a Director of Archangel Investors Ltd. He is Chairman of Dawnfresh Seafoods Ltd, and a Director of several other companies. He has been Deputy Chairman of the Fettes Trust and is a past president of the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society and the British Frozen Foods Federation. He is a farmer and forester and enjoys the countryside and developing young businesses in Scotland.

**David Weir** is a graduate of Aberdeen University, trained and practiced as a lawyer in Glasgow and then London. From 2000 to 2017, as Director of Dovecot Studios, he has devoted his time to re-energizing and developing the artistic vision and activity of Dovecot Studios, a specialist contemporary tapestry studio originally established in 1912. He is a past Board member of Asia Scotland Institute, Creative Edinburgh and the RSA Scotland and is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Weavers.

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**About Dovecot Studios:**

**Dovecot Tapestry Studio**
Dovecot Tapestry Studio is a world-renowned producer of hand-woven tapestry and gun-tufted rugs. Continuing a century-long heritage of making and collaboration with leading international contemporary artists, the Studio weavers are dedicated to producing extraordinary and engaging works of art by commission from private and public collectors from across the globe.

**Dovecot Gallery**
Dovecot Gallery is a landmark centre for contemporary art, craft and design built around a leading international tapestry studio. Occupying an extraordinary building in the heart of Edinburgh, the Gallery works to programme, commission and produce exhibitions and events for audiences and clients who share Dovecot’s passion for making and the creative arts.
Dovecot Foundation

Dovecot Foundation exists to champion Dovecot Tapestry Studio and its place in the world of contemporary art, design and making. The Foundation puts the Studio at the heart of this mission in supporting the Dovecot Apprenticeship Programme, collaborations with leading artists from around the world and development of cultural and educational partnerships. Ultimately, the Foundation seeks to bring the innovative work of contemporary artists and makers to a wider audience.

History

Dovecot Studios was founded in 1912 by the Marquess of Bute, a patron of the arts. The first weavers at Dovecot, Gordon Berry and John Glassbrook, came from the renowned William Morris Studios at Merton Abbey in Wimbledon. Dovecot’s first commission was for a series of monumental tapestries for the Marquess’ own home at Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute.

In 1946, the Studios were incorporated as The Edinburgh Tapestry Company. Dovecot soon became established as a leading contemporary fine art tapestry studio, with works commissioned for major public, corporate and academic institutions worldwide. As a key player in the renaissance of tapestry in the 20th century, Dovecot’s Master Weavers worked with many leading contemporary artists including David Hockney, Henry Moore, Frank Stella and RB Kitaj.

Dovecot’s Master Weavers continue to work to commission, producing tapestry and tufted rugs for private and public collectors. Major tapestry projects include Alison Watt’s Butterfly for Scottish Opera’s new Theatre Royal, Peter Saville’s Monarch of the Glen and Chris Ofili’s The Caged Bird’s Song. Working with artists such as Linder, Than Clark and Garry Fabian Miller on recent rug commissions have further tested the boundaries of creativity.