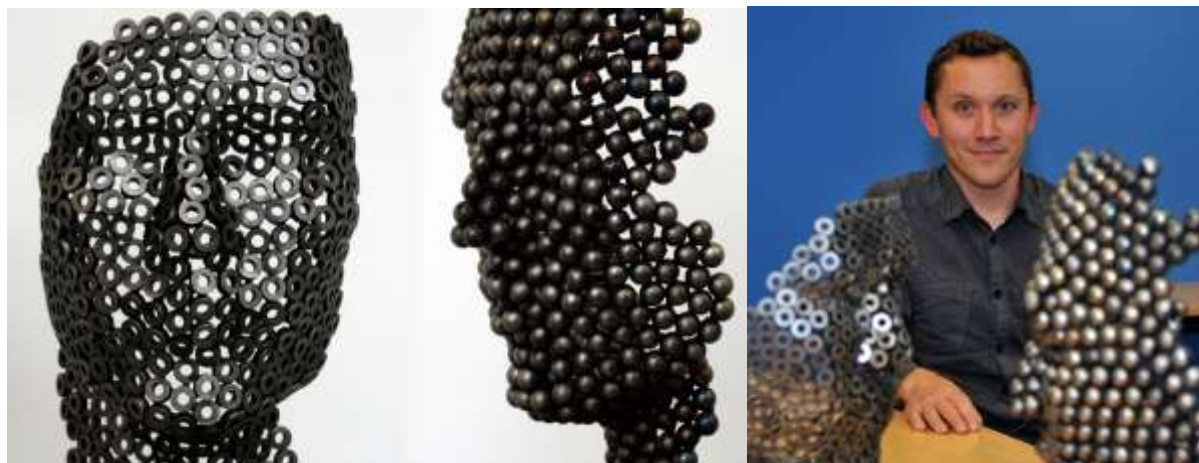


16 September 2011

‘Binary Conversation’ artwork on Willow Close to be talk of the town



The design for an exciting piece of public art which will stand in front of the new housing development in Willow Close, Newbury, has been unveiled by Sovereign South+West and Newbury Town Council.

Artist Joseph Hillier’s design was selected from a field of more than 50 submissions. Measuring 1.5m in height and made from steel, the two sculptures will depict two human heads in conversation.

The completed artwork, which will be unveiled at the official opening of Willow Close early in 2012, will be installed on ‘Old Hospital Green’, alongside the Andover Road. It will sit just across the road from Carnarvon Place, another sheltered scheme run by Sovereign South+West, built on the site of the former Newbury Hospital.

“Joseph beat off strong competition to win this commission. Once short-listing had happened we held an open evening at Fair Close Day Centre in Newbury, inviting all local residents to come along and view the proposals and give their feedback,” Heather Bowman, managing director of Sovereign South+West, said.

“Willow Close is a state-of-the-art development, and this striking, thought-provoking piece of art is really in keeping with it. The green where the artwork will be situated is open to the public and alongside a major thoroughfare, and we are sure that in time this artwork will become a well-known local landmark, and one that is appreciated by our residents and the people of Newbury.”

The artwork, entitled Binary Conversation, depicts two monumental heads turned towards one another. “I want to explore the notion of a human interaction,” Joseph Hillier explained. “I hope this piece may bring a focal point and a great sense of community to Willow Close.”

One of the heads will be formed from hundreds of circular rings, the other from hundreds of round particles – creating the impression that they have been pixelated. “I am interested in the two heads being formed from two opposite particles, like binary, yet having a strong connection and making sense together. The work will express the complexity mankind has created through the digital world,” the artist added.

Joseph’s work is just the latest in a series of public art works in the town, and it will form part of the Newbury Town Trail.

“We are very supportive of public art as we believe it makes the town a more interesting and richer place to live. It was a planning condition of Willow Court that there should be a piece of public art here, and we feel strongly that this piece will really enhance the area,” Councillor David Goff, of Newbury Town Council, said.

Notes for editors:

- *Joseph Hillier was born in Cornwall. He studied at Falmouth College of Art and studied a BA (Hons) at Newcastle University, specialising in sculpture, before working and studying in New Orleans, where he received a Masters degree from Tulane University. Since 2004 he has received 10 major commissions from clients as diverse as the Environment Agency, the University of Hull and the Regional Development Agency in Newcastle. Joseph has exhibited his work from London to New Orleans in the United States. To find out more about Joseph visit: www.josephhillier.com*
- *Willow Close and Malvern Court on the Andover Road replace developments that were built in the 1950s and 1960s as sheltered accommodation for older residents and which were no longer fit for purpose. Planning was approved in February 2009 for 63 residential units, and work started on the site in March 2010. The scheme is due for completion in early 2012.*
- *The Sovereign Housing Group is made up of four charitable associations: The Sovereign Housing Group Ltd; Sovereign Housing Association Ltd (incorporating Sovereign South+West and Sovereign Twynham); Kingfisher HVHS Housing Association; and the Vale Housing Association Ltd – plus their subsidiaries. Sovereign owns and manages over 33,000 homes across the south of England and our aim is to provide high quality homes, services and neighbourhoods where people want to live.*