

Ai Weiwei among five world-renowned artists announced for *Lumiere* 2023, the UK's light art biennial

The UK premiere of an artwork by Ai Weiwei incorporating 61 chandeliers to exhibit in Durham Cathedral as part of this year's light art biennial



Illuminated Bottle Rack. Ai Weiwei. Courtesy of Ai Weiwei



In Our Hearts Blind Hope, Palma Studio. Lumiere 2021, produced by Artichoke. Photo - Matthew Andrews

Thursday 20 July 2023. *Lumiere*, the UK's light art biennial, has announced five world-renowned artists who will exhibit their work at this year's event in Durham from the 16th – 19th November 2023.

For four nights only, the city will be transformed into a nocturnal art experience with spectacular light installations by artists including **Ai Weiwei**, **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**, **Chila Burman**, **Yinka Ilori** and **Daniel Canogar**.

Fourteen years after *Lumiere* debuted in Durham, and more than one million visitors later, it is now the UK's first light art biennial, a global event with major artists from all over the world exhibiting their artwork completely free for the public. Produced by leading arts producers Artichoke, and commissioned by Durham County Council, with additional support from Arts Council England and Durham University and a raft of further supporters, this beautiful medieval city will undergo an incredible re-imagining, with more than 35 artworks made with light exhibited on its buildings, streets and waterways.

Ai Weiwei's extraordinary work incorporating 61 antique chandeliers, *Illuminated Bottle Rack*, will be installed in Durham Cathedral's stunning Chapter House. First created by the acclaimed Chinese artist in 2018, it will be the first time this intricate piece will have been shown in the UK. The immense structure was inspired by Marcel Duchamp's readymade, *Bottle Rack*, and uses the ordinary object of an enormous, upside-down bottle rack as its chandelier branches.



Another UK first will be **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's** *Pulse Topology*. First shown in New York, Basel and San Francisco, this colossal immersive artwork by the Quebec-based Mexican artist will transform the nave of Durham Cathedral into the pulsating heart of *Lumiere*. Composed of thousands of light bulbs, each will be activated by the recorded heartbeat of visitors, contributing to a glimmering, connective array through which audiences will walk.

One of the UK's leading visual artists, **Chila Burman MBE**, will be exhibiting a joyful, new commission at *Lumiere* this year. *Hurts So Good* will take over Durham Market Place with a selection of new and existing signature neon-light artworks that celebrates her rich Hindu-Punjabi heritage and speaks to the pressing theme of climate change. The interruption of daily life with art that stops you in your tracks is a key component of *Lumiere*.

November may be a time when the natural light starts to fade, but this won't be a problem where the gleaming artwork by **Yinka Ilori MBE** is installed. The British artist is known for his use of bright colours. Originally produced to reflect his native London, *In Plants We Trust* is the artist's shrine to plants that thrive in urban settings.

Spanish artist **Daniel Canogar** will illuminate the façade of Durham University's Liebeskind-designed Ogden Centre, home to the Institute for Computational Cosmology. This new commission, *Universal Loom*, will be a textile-like animated projection inspired by string theory, interpreting the woven nature of space and time. It will be created with astronomical data provided by the ground-breaking work conducted by the University's physicists led by Professor Carlos Frenk from the Institute for Computational Cosmology, Department of Physics.

These light artworks will join many more by international and UK artists as part of the new, thought-provoking programme that will transform the city's buildings, bridges and waterways. The full *Lumiere* programme will be announced in autumn and peak-time tickets will be released on **Wednesday 4 October**.

To be the first to know what's happening, sign up to the newsletter at the event website, Lumiere-festival.com.

Artistic Director of Artichoke, Helen Marriage says: "*Lumiere – the UK's first light art biennial – takes to the streets this November, transforming the stunning medieval city of Durham into a magnificent outdoor art exhibition. Eagerly anticipated and free to attend as always, Artichoke is always determined to reimagine and reinvent something familiar into something new. We've worked with the people of Durham for fifteen years and constantly marvel at the city's willingness to facilitate the wildest imaginings of our cohort of artists. This year, the programme is even more ambitious with the work of some of the world's greatest contemporary artists finding its place amongst the beautiful architecture of Lumiere's home city.*"

"*As always, artists sit at the heart of our work. Their ability to transform the everyday, to make us look with wonder at the truth that lies just below the surface of our complicated lives, their messages of hope for a different future and reflections on past lives – this is the important core of this year's Lumiere programme and the centre of Artichoke's work.*"



Cllr Amanda Hoggood, Leader of Durham County Council, says: *“Lumiere has led the way in light art since 2009, becoming the biggest and most prestigious light art event in the country. The biennial brings artists of the highest calibre to the North East, and is a source of inspiration for countless other light art events.*

“As the UK’s light art biennial, Lumiere has put County Durham on the map and is a shining example of how culture enhances the vibrancy of our communities. The programme reflects the spirit of creativity and innovation on which we pride ourselves here in County Durham and the North East and I can’t wait to share this unforgettable experience with our residents and visitors.”

Sir Nicholas Serota, CH, Chair of Arts Council England says: *“For over a decade Lumiere has taken over Durham Cathedral and the city’s buildings and bridges and turned them into light installations that captivate both local people and visitors. The calibre of artists is unmatched and this year’s programme includes some major British and international artists with more than 35 artworks, including the first opportunity to see some of them in the UK. I’m delighted that the Arts Council supports this ambitious and ground-breaking free event and I’m sure this year’s Lumiere, the UK’s light art biennial, will not disappoint.”*

Professor Karen O’Brien, Vice-Chancellor and Warden of Durham University says: *“We are excited that Lumiere will once again return to the City in November, and pleased to be supporting this as a major partner. It is great to see that world-class research taking place here at Durham University is inspiring the art that will be exhibited at Lumiere 2023 – in particular Daniel Canogar and his piece Universal Loom.*

We are also glad to be able to host several installations on our buildings and land, enabling visitors to explore the city of Durham and enjoy Lumiere. We very much look forward to welcoming visitors in November and being part of this tremendous event.”

Lumiere Durham is a central pillar of The Culture County, the long-term creative regeneration strategy born out of the Durham 2025 UK City of Culture campaign.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

IMAGES – High resolution images for press can be downloaded [here](#).

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES

Tracy Jones, Brera PR – tracy@brera-london.com
01702 216658 / 07887 514984
www.brera-london.com

[About Lumiere](#)



Lumiere is the UK's light art biennial produced by leading arts producers, Artichoke and commissioned by Durham County Council with funding from Arts Council England. In 2023, *Lumiere* will return to Durham from 16-19 November. Since 2009, *Lumiere* has presented 270 bold installations enjoyed by over one million attendees across Durham, *Lumiere* London 2016 and 2018 and *Lumiere* in Derry~Londonderry, Northern Ireland as part of the celebrations for City of Culture 2013. Past highlights include French artist-architect Jacques Rival's playful snowdome, *I Love Durham* (2011), Fujiko Nakaya's *Fogscape #03238* (2015), Catherine Garret's extraordinary 3D whale in the river, *Mysticète* (2015), Jim Campbell's *Scattered Light* and Berlin-based artist, Mader Wiermann's mesmerising artwork on the Brutalist building, Apollo Pavilion, *Apollo 50* (both 2021). Past *Lumiere* highlight videos [here](#).

[About Artichoke](#)

Leading UK arts producers, Artichoke, works with artists to create extraordinary and ambitious public art in cities, the countryside and on coastlines around the UK. Artichoke believes in the transformative power of art to undermine the mundane and disrupt the everyday to create a new kind of world that we'd all like to live in.

Over the last 16 years Artichoke has produced more than 25 ground-breaking productions including the inaugural Artichoke project, Royal de Luxe's *The Sultan's Elephant* (London in 2006); *La Machine's* 50-foot high mechanical spider for Liverpool's Capital of Culture celebrations (2008); Antony Gormley's *One & Other* commission for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square (2009); *Lumiere*, the landmark light art biennial events produced in Durham, Derry-Londonderry and London; Deborah Warner's *Peace Camp* commission for the London 2012 Festival with Fiona Shaw and *London's Burning*, a festival commissioned by the City of London Corporation to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire of London (2016). Recent projects include *Sanctuary* (2022), the 65ft Covid memorial, designed by American artist David Best and built by 500 community members, set alight in a moment of catharsis for the nation and *The Gallery* (2022 and 2023), a new public art initiative taking over billboards and digital screens with art, sparking national conversation.

[About Durham County Council](#)

Durham County Council is one of the largest unitary authorities in the country. The council is committed to culture-led regeneration and is proud to commission *Lumiere*, the UK's light art biennial, cementing Durham's position as the 'culture county'. Alongside *Lumiere* the authority supports a year-round culture, heritage and tourism programme and delivers major capital cultural projects. This helps to bring economic, community and creative benefits to the county, raising its profile as a great place to live, work, study, visit and invest.

[About Arts Council England](#)

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in *Let's Create* that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £440million of public money from Government and an estimated £93 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

[About Durham University](#)



Durham University is a globally outstanding centre of teaching and research based in historic Durham City in the UK. We are a collegiate university committed to inspiring our people to do outstanding things at Durham and in the world.

We conduct boundary-breaking research that improves lives globally and we are ranked as a world top 100 university with an international reputation in research and education (QS World University Rankings 2024).

We are a member of the Russell Group of leading research-intensive UK universities and we are consistently ranked as a top 10 university in national league tables (Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, Guardian University Guide and The Complete University Guide).

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