



CHRISTOPHER LE BRUN TO STEP DOWN AS PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

The Royal Academy of Arts announced today that Christopher Le Brun will step down as President of the Royal Academy of Arts in December 2019 after serving for eight years.

Le Brun became President of the Royal Academy in 2011. He is widely acknowledged as having presided over a period of unprecedented success for the Royal Academy in which it has been energised and its reputation enhanced, transforming it into one of the world's leading arts organisations. He is the 26th President since Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first painter to be elected since 1984, and the youngest to hold the post since Lord Leighton in 1878.

Highlights during Le Brun's Presidency include the 250th Anniversary celebrations in 2018 which were marked by the completion of the RA's transformative redevelopment linking Burlington House with Burlington Gardens. Le Brun was closely involved with this project from inception to completion and was instrumental in creating the new Collection Gallery, The Benjamin West Lecture Theatre and The Gabrielle Jungels-Winkler Galleries. Le Brun has also built on the strength of the RA's world class membership, admitting Artist Collaborations such as Gilbert & George to the Academy for the first time. As the RA is an independent charity without government funding, fundraising has been a priority, and throughout his tenure the RA has received some of the largest donations in its history.

As a painter, sculptor and printmaker, Le Brun has maintained his studio practice throughout his eight-year Presidency. Following his departure from the RA, he will return to his studio to devote time to his forthcoming solo exhibitions in Shanghai and New York.

A new President of the Royal Academy of Arts will be elected by Royal Academicians in December 2019.

Christopher Le Brun, President of the Royal Academy of Arts said: "I leave confident that today's Royal Academy is bigger, brighter and better. Its prestige has never been higher, with professional staff of enviable quality, an art school and exhibition programme of world class, and Academicians who represent the very best of contemporary art and architecture. The Academy is now taking up the role in national life for which it was originally designed."

Axel Rüger, Secretary and Chief Executive of the Royal Academy of Arts said: "In his time as President, Christopher Le Brun has overseen a period of incredible change and development at the Royal Academy. We are deeply grateful for his inspiration and leadership which has given the Royal Academy unprecedented success and manifested it further as one of the world's leading arts organisations. Personally, I am grateful to him for his trust and continued support following my recent appointment."

Rebecca Salter, Keeper of the Royal Academy said: “Christopher Le Brun, as President, has been the driving force behind the visionary redevelopment in our 250th anniversary year. This has given the Royal Academy the opportunity to expand its programme in many new ways and his legacy will shape the RA for many years to come. It has been an honour and pleasure to work with him.”

Notes to Editors:

Biography: Christopher Le Brun PRA

Born in Portsmouth in 1951, Le Brun studied at the Slade School of Fine Art (DFA) London from 1970-74 and at Chelsea School of Art (MA) from 1974-75.

His reputation as a painter was established in several international group exhibitions, such as the highly influential Zeitgeist exhibition at the Martin-Gropius Bau, Berlin, and from 1980 onwards, in many solo exhibitions in the UK, Europe and America. He was a prize-winner at the John Moores Liverpool exhibitions in 1978 and 1980 and worked in Berlin during 1987-88 as guest of the DAAD artist’s programme.

Between 1990 and 1995 he served as a trustee of the Tate in the early years of the directorship of Sir Nicholas Serota, a period which saw the radical developments of Tate Liverpool and St. Ives and key decisions made regarding the design and establishment of Tate Modern at Bankside. From 1996-2003 he was the Artist Trustee of the National Gallery where he served on the Buildings Committee responsible for the appointment of masterplan architects and the re-development of the east wing. From 2000-2005 he was a Trustee of the Dulwich Picture Gallery. He was a Trustee of the Royal Drawing School until 2017, which he helped to establish in 2000. He is currently a Trustee of the National Portrait Gallery.

He was elected to the Royal Academy in 1996, becoming the inaugural Eranda Professor of Drawing at the Royal Academy in 2000. In 2011, Le Brun was elected President of the Royal Academy, following the architect Sir Nicholas Grimshaw PRA.

Highlights during Le Brun’s Presidency include the 250th Anniversary celebrations in 2018 which were marked by the completion of the RA’s transformative redevelopment, creating new spaces for exhibitions, learning and debate. The redesign by Sir David Chipperfield CBE RA and supported by the National Lottery, is the largest in the RA’s history and gives the RA 70% more public space than the original Burlington House footprint. A key feature is the new Weston Bridge which links Burlington House to Burlington Gardens, unifying the two-acre campus. Le Brun was closely involved in this project since 2000, working with Sir Colin St John Wilson RA on the initial plans, and subsequently with Sir David Chipperfield CBE RA following his appointment as masterplan architect.

The new RA was opened by Her Majesty The Queen in March 2018. The redevelopment has revealed more of the RA to the public. The extensive new Gabrielle Jungels-Winkler Galleries were created, the 260 seat Benjamin West Lecture Theatre in recognition of the importance of debate, and the Clore Learning Centre which provides vital facilities for education. Le Brun also helped to establish a new emphasis on architecture with The Architecture Studio in The Dorfman Senate Rooms and The Dorfman Architecture Court.

Le Brun was instrumental in creating a new Collections Gallery for the treasures of the Royal Academy, working closely with renowned museographer Adrien Gardère to provide a new setting

for Michelangelo's *Taddei Tondo*. He curated the first Collections display and initiated the return of many long loans to the Academy, such as the important Giampietrino copy of Leonardo's *Last Supper* and the Thornhill copies of the Raphael Cartoons.

Le Brun actively campaigned to strengthen the Membership. New Academicians elected during his Presidency include Sir David Adjaye, John Akomfrah, Ron Arad, Fiona Banner, Sonia Boyce, Thomas Heatherwick, Lubaina Himid, Louisa Hutton, Chantal Joffe, Isaac Julien, Farshid Moussavi, Cathie Pilkington, Dame Paula Rego, Sean Scully, Conrad Shawcross, Yinka Shonibare, Bob and Roberta Smith, Wolfgang Tillmans and Rose Wylie. Artistic Collaborations were also eligible for election for the first time in the Academy's history with Gilbert & George, Jane and Louise Wilson, Adam Caruso and Peter St John being elected.

As the RA is an independent charity without government funding, Le Brun made fundraising a priority. During his tenure, the RA has received some of the largest donations in its history.

On the 250th anniversary of the Royal Academy Schools in 2019, along with the Keeper Rebecca Salter RA, Le Brun launched a fundraising campaign for the restoration and renewal of the RA Schools with a major donation from Julia and Hans Rausing.

Outstanding exhibitions since 2011 include the critically acclaimed *Bronze* (2012); *Ai Weiwei* (2015); *Abstract Expressionism* (2017), the first major exhibition of the movement since 1959; the award-winning *Charles I: King and Collector* (2018) and *Oceania* (2018), the first ever major survey of Oceanic art to be held in the UK. The annual *Summer Exhibition* has returned to being one of the major events of the summer art calendar. The 250th Summer Exhibition co-ordinated by Grayson Perry RA received the highest attendance for a Summer Exhibition in over 100 years. Jock McFadyen RA, coordinator for 2019, has built on that success with the highest sales figure in its history.

Despite committing three days a week to the RA throughout his Presidency, Le Brun has maintained his studio practice as an artist with critically praised commercial exhibitions in New York, Singapore, London, Berlin, Florida and Chicago, and a museum show in Southampton. At the same time, he has published books and catalogues, and has written extensively, contributed to numerous talks and panel discussions, and given formal lectures on subjects ranging from painting and poetry to how artists have contributed to public service.

He is represented by the Lisson Gallery, London and in New York by Albertz Benda, his prints are published by Paragon Contemporary | Editions. His forthcoming solo exhibitions include Shanghai in November 2019 and New York in May 2020.

The Royal Academy of Arts

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate. royalacademy.org.uk/

The Royal Academy of Arts is governed by 80 Royal Academicians who are all practising artists or architects. On reaching the age of 75 they become Senior Academicians thus initiating vacancies

for new Members. Elections are held at regular meetings of the General Assembly, when new Members are voted in by existing RAs. The President of the Royal Academy is elected by fellow Royal Academicians. The President must be under 75 and cannot be in office for more than 10 consecutive years.

For press enquiries, please contact: Johanna Bennett at the Royal Academy Press Office on 0207 300 5615 or johanna.bennett@royalacademy.org.uk 26.09.2019