



Deckchair Dreams

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Not for publication before 20 May 2008

ROYAL PARKS DECKCHAIRS GET A CELEBRITY MAKEOVER

London's Royal Parks will burst into colour this June when the prosaic green and white striped deckchair is transformed into 23 specially-commissioned designs.

Tracey Emin, Marc Quinn, Joanna Lumley, Matthew Williamson, Keith Tyson and Raymond Briggs are amongst the talented artists and celebrities who have created breathtaking canvases for visitors to sit on as part of The Royal Parks Foundation's public art initiative, Deckchair Dreams, generously sponsored by Bloomberg.

This year, the theme given to the artists was 'The Rare and Wonderful Things of London's Royal Parks' and each artist approached the challenge in their own special way.

In the words of **Joanna Lumley**: *"I love lettering and calligraphy: by arranging the eight great London Parks in alphabetical order I noticed that only Kensington was 'Gardens' not 'Park'. By highlighting the word 'Gardens' in reddish orange I wanted to celebrate flowers: the green wording is the trees and grass, and the pale blue background the skies and lakes."*

Turner Prize short-listed artist, **Catherine Yass**, drew her inspiration from the flowers in the Royal Parks. *“London Parks have festoons of blooming colour arrangements which are all carefully designed and tended by armies of gardeners reminiscent of Alice Through the Looking Glass. Like orchids, the Parks are a wonder of human endeavour.”*

Children from six schools, plus soldiers from the Household Cavalry, were also invited to enter designs. Participating schools included Grove Road Primary (near Bushy Park) and Linden Bridge Special Needs School (near Richmond Park). The groups visited their local Park with artist, Gayna Pelham, to sketch ideas and learn about the wildlife. They then finished their designs in their classrooms. A winner from each group has been chosen and will have their design displayed alongside the celebrity deckchairs in The Royal Parks this summer.

Demand for the chairs has been enormous (last summer, a limited-edition Damien Hirst butterfly chair sold out in just 48 hours) so this is the third year that the Royal Parks Foundation has initiated Deckchair Dreams to raise vital funds for London’s treasured green spaces.

Sara Lom, Chief Executive of the Foundation explains: *“Last summer we raised over £100,000 and helped support various projects in the Parks – from a new horse box for Jed and Forte, the Richmond shire horses, to a new greenhouse with wheelchair access at Holly Lodge, meaning that community gardening activities can continue in all weathers and everyone can get involved. Buying a deckchair, is a great way to help the Parks and to add some colour and relaxation to your garden, patio or balcony at the same time”.*

The deckchairs can be hired in the Parks from mid June to late September. Limited edition deckchairs will be available to buy online from The Royal Parks Foundation for £86 + £20p&p. (Visit www.deckchairdreams.org)

Sponsors Bloomberg commented today: "We are proud to support the environment and education through a wide range of cultural initiatives worldwide, and are delighted to have extended our support of the Royal Parks Foundation and Deckchair Dreams to include a specially created schools' programme that will encourage a new generation of London's park users to appreciate their natural environment."

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Notes to Editors

- For further information please contact Helen Pike on 07952 573 315, or email helenpike@btinternet.com or cbowen@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk
- The Royal Parks Foundation is the charity for London's eight Royal Parks. Innovative and creative, it welcomes creative partnerships, as well as corporate friendships, such as the one with Bloomberg
- The Royal Parks are: Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Regent's Park, Bushy Park, Richmond Park, Greenwich Park, St James's Park and The Green Park
- It costs £2 to snooze in a deckchair for 4 hours in a Royal Park. The designer chairs will be available to enjoy in Hyde Park, Green Park, St James's Park and Regent's Park. Also in Finsbury Square.