

Let there be light!

Something magical is happening to Salisbury Cathedral's cloisters, thanks to artist Bruce Munro, whose light sculpture will react to the sounds of the cathedral choir.

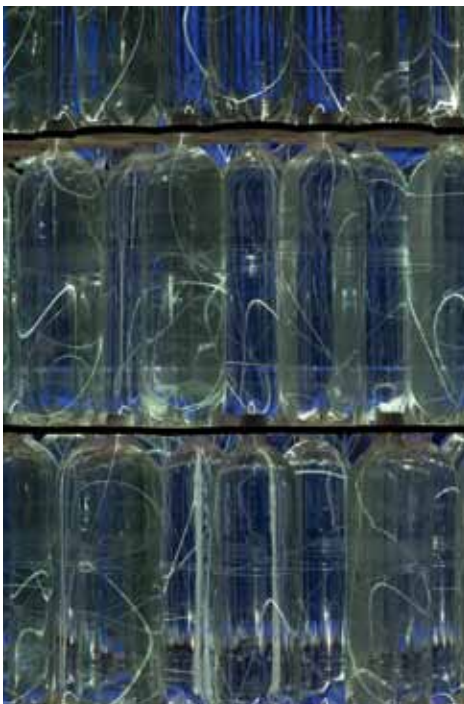
LIGHT SCULPTOR Bruce Munro's latest light and sound installation arrives in Salisbury Cathedral's cloisters in mid-January. The 69 glowing towers made of stacked recyclable water bottles, illuminated with fibre optics and specially commissioned LED projectors, will change colour to the sounds of choral music.

The Water Towers will be located in the south and west cloisters with visitors encouraged to walk through them. The sound reactive projectors are programmed to respond to any soundtrack, but in this instance the sounds of the Cathedral Choir. Visitors will experience sound magically translated into light and colour. And, when viewed from the north and east cloisters, the stone arches of the cloisters become three-dimensional frames for the 'son et lumiere' maze of water towers.

Munro began developing his first prototypes for *Water Towers* in 2003/2004 but says: "The inspiration can be traced back to reading a book called *Gifts of Unknown Things* by Lyall Watson when I was 21. Watson describes Tia, a young girl living on an island in the Indonesian archipelago, who possesses the magical gift of seeing sounds in colour. Years later Tia's gift of synaesthesia inspired me to create a colourful, musical maze.

"Without doubt, the process of creating this installation is almost as important as the end result. It's about involving other people's talents (of which there are many) to create one's ultimate dream."

Munro anticipates that the medieval grandeur and permanence of the cloisters will be an ideal location for the installation. "It's a once in a life-time location, but *Water Towers* is what it is, it has no complicated hidden



meanings; if there is a message, it's simply about magically capturing bursts of sound and light in a bottle...16,000 bottles to be precise!

"That's not to say I do not wish to inspire people, I am hoping that those who promenade through the *Water Towers* installation (dusk is best) will find the experience uplifting and it will bring a smile to their faces!"

Each tower is made of 220 stacked water bottles illuminated by optic fibres arranged in an offset pattern. For Munro: "The installation is an exercise in creating something magical from simple materials, mainly recyclable plastic bottles and laser cut recycled composite wood. It's important to me not to be wasteful and

to be responsible to the environment. *Water Towers* will employ the latest energy-efficient LED lighting technology. One five-watt LED projector lights the optical fibres for each tower. A customised control system will synchronise the illuminated colours with the soundtrack.

David Coulthard, director of marketing at the cathedral, said: "We can't wait to see *Water Towers* in situ. Having seen the computer generated images of them there's no doubt they have the 'wow' factor.

"Thousands of people have already seen Bruce's magical light installation *Light Shower*, which was installed high in the Spire Crossing at the end of November. It is simply incredibly beautiful and has received universal praise. *Water Towers* will be a totally different experience.

"Bruce's high-quality and creative visual works add a further dimension to a visit to this beautiful, ancient yet living 21st century building and we are looking forward to visitors coming to see these two very different installations together."

About Bruce Munro

Bruce Munro, who lives in Kilmington near Stourhead, is a local artist with an international reputation. He recently exhibited at *Contemplating the Void* at the Guggenheim in New York. Versions of his acclaimed *Field of Light* were seen at *Brilliant* at the Victoria & Albert Museum in 2006 and the Eden Project in 2008/2009. He is currently working on a one-man exhibition at Longwood Gardens, Philadelphia, to run from June to October 2012. WL

Above: Some of the 16,000 water bottles in the sculpture; Below: How the cloisters will look

