



Press release 2014

THE FINNISH INSTITUTE IN LONDON AND THE ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE THE LAUNCH OF VIEWPOINT - A FLOATING PLATFORM FOR CAMLEY STREET NATURAL PARK

The Finnish Institute in London and The Architecture Foundation are delighted to announce the launch date for their new floating platform **Viewpoint**, produced for London Wildlife Trust. The joint commission designed by emerging Finnish architects Erkki Aarti, Arto Ollila & Mikki Ristola (AOR) will open to the public on 10 February 2014 at Camley Street Natural Park, located in King's Cross. The permanent structure will bring visitors to Camley Street Natural Park, London Wildlife Trust's most central nature reserve, connecting them with the wildlife of the park and the Regent's Canal. It will also provide the Park with an additional workshop space and learning facility and become an architectural focal point of King's Cross.

The inspiration for *Viewpoint* comes from the rocky islets and islands of the Nordic. For Finns these islands are places of sanctuary, to relax the mind and get away from hectic city life. *Viewpoint* offers Londoners a chance to experience this escape on a secluded islet in the heart of the city.

Paula Karlsson, Head of Programme, The Finnish Institute in London said: "*The Finnish Institute alongside our partners are proud to be offering such an exciting opportunity to three young, talented Finnish architects and bring Finnish design traditions, respect for nature and the profound understanding of the environment to central London and the unique surroundings of Camley Street Natural Park, Regent's Canal and the King's Cross area.*"

For the final design the architects were inspired by the traditional Finnish structures of *Laavus*, traditional shelters intended for temporary residence during fishing and hunting trips. These simple, primitive, triangular constructions are made using available raw materials such as tree branches, moss and leaves. *Viewpoint* offers a contemporary take on the Laavu made from materials that represent the industrial history and robust character of London's King's Cross. Old brick buildings, canal boats and the untamed Natural Park act as a palette of materials for the designers. The exterior surfaces of *Viewpoint* will be clad in dark Corten steel inspired by canal barges, changing in colour and appearance with exposure to the elements. A warm wooden interior will generate soft acoustics and comfortable surfaces to sit on, and graphic concrete with an animal track pattern will form the base of the structure, acting as both a decorative tool and slip prevention.

Viewpoint will be an ideal location for visitors to reconnect with nature in the heart of London. London Wildlife Trust will also utilise the space in their educational programmes for schools as an outdoor classroom, a destination for nature walks around the park and for viewing the rich abundance of wildlife of the Regent's Canal including daubenton's bats, whooper swans and the elusive Kingfisher. To offer a sense of adventure for school children the architects have incorporated

small triangular openings at different heights giving new and unique views of the canal and its wildlife.

Aarti, Ollila & Ristola said: *“We hope that Viewpoint will have resonance beyond its modest footprint and allow the many visitors to Camley Street Natural Park to discover this natural environment - a rarity in a metropolitan city such as London. We hope that visitors to Camley Street Natural Park will enjoy Viewpoint for years to come.”*

The construction of *Viewpoint* has been led by The Architecture Foundation, with strong support from award-winning engineers Price & Myers. The biodiversity of the site has been to a large extent protected with the construction of *Viewpoint* conducted off site by Commercial Systems International Ltd. who are well known for their work on large scale art installations. Many local contractors have also been involved in the project with sponsorship from King’s Cross Central Partnership Ltd and involvement from Balfour Beatty, BAM Construction and Kier Group lending support of the project.

Sarah Ichioka, Director, The Architecture Foundation said: *“The Architecture Foundation is proud to have initiated and delivered Viewpoint, a project that is a tribute to the many hands that have made it possible. We hope that Viewpoint will provide Camley Street with a permanent asset that will inspire visitors and allow the Park to expand upon their existing educational programme for young people. This project results from our long-standing and valued partnership with the Finnish Institute in London and London Wildlife Trust.”*

The Viewpoint commission is the result of the New Architects: Finland_UK Exchange Programme, which brought together new architectural talent from Finland and the UK to explore cities’ ever-changing relationship with water. This programme was delivered by The Architecture Foundation with the Finnish Institute in London and the Museum of Finnish Architecture in Helsinki.

Viewpoint is supported by King’s Cross Central Partnership, Ministry of Education & Culture, Finland, Alfred Kordelin Foundation, Arts Promotion Centre Finland, Graphic Concrete, Price & Myers, Commercial Systems International Ltd, Balfour Beatty, BAM Construction, Cambridge Architectural Precast Ltd and Kier Group.

ENDS

Camley Street Natural Park is located at **12 Camley Street, London, N1C 4PW**

Opening hours: 10am-4pm weekdays and Sundays

For further information on Viewpoint London visit www.viewpointlondon.fi

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THE
FINNISH
INSTITUTE
IN LONDON



The
Architecture
Foundation

NOTES FOR EDITORS

THE ARCHITECTS

Erkko Aarti, Arto Ollila & Mikki Ristola

Viewpoint's architects Erkko Aarti, Arto Ollila & Mikki Ristola were selected in January 2013 from a shortlist of three Finnish architectural teams by a jury comprised of Marcos Cruz (Director, The Bartlett Scholl of Architecture), Owen Prichard (Deputy Editor, Icon) and Ken Trew (Project Director, Argent) alongside representatives of the client group.

The team, Aarti, Ollila & Ristola, strives to add extra value to their projects, with the belief that every design should tell a story. To promote new Finnish architecture in London, they wanted to export an idea that was particularly Finnish to Camley Street Natural Park. Finland is known as the 'The Land of a Thousand Lakes' filled with thousands of islands - and Viewpoint is an island hideaway that adds a new habitat to the park and for its wildlife.

Erkko Aarti, Arto Ollila and Mikki Ristola are emerging young designers from Helsinki. Studying architecture at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture, the team works in all fields of design from product and graphic design to large-scale architecture. Public buildings are their specialty. Aarti, Ollila & Ristola strive to add extra value to their design projects –everything should tell a story. They respect traditional craftsmanship and share an understanding of materials. They have experience of working as carpenters, and using wood is a special expertise area for the team. Aarti, Ollila & Ristola have already gained success in numerous competitions. In addition to projects and competitions in Finland, they have received awards in international competitions in the UK, Germany and Estonia. Aarti won the second prize in the Habit are competition 2012 with a large-scale furniture element the innovative structure of which he produced. Ristola recently won a Finnish design competition focused on future design solutions for rented accommodation. They are experienced in working with multi-national teams. Aarti was team leader in a pavilion project at the Technical University of Munich and Ollila organised and conducted a workshop in European Architecture Student Assembly 2012 in Helsinki.

www.aor.fi/

THE COMMISSIONING AND DELIVERY PARTNERS

The Finnish Institute in London

The Finnish Institute in London is a London-based private trust. Our mission is to identify emerging issues relevant to contemporary society and to act as catalyst for positive social change through partnerships. We work with artists, researchers, experts and policy makers in the United Kingdom, Finland and the Republic of Ireland to promote strong networks in the fields of culture and society. We encourage new and unexpected collaborations and support artistic interventions, research, the creative industries, foresight and social innovation in new, socially central areas.

www.finnish-institute.org.uk

The Architecture Foundation

Established in 1991 as the UK's first independent architecture centre, The Architecture Foundation has organised hundreds of design initiatives, events, exhibitions and education programmes in public venues across Britain and internationally.

The Architecture Foundation is a non-profit agency that advances architecture and urbanism to enrich life now and in future. We are independent, agile and influential. We bring together the public and professionals to cultivate new ideas and talent, stimulate discussion, and improve the quality of the built environment.

www.architecturefoundation.org.uk

THE CLIENT

London Wildlife Trust

London Wildlife Trust is a membership charity dedicated solely to protecting London's nature and wild spaces. It engages the capital's diverse communities through access to over 40 nature reserves and is committed to campaigning, volunteering and education. The Trust was started by a few passionate and forward thinking activists in 1981 declaring that people in the capital had the 'right to share our environment with nature and wildlife.' Since its first beginnings, the Trust has grown significantly as a movement, encouraging Londoners of all ages and backgrounds to love and cherish their natural environment. It has influenced the actions and policies of local government, other organisations, local communities and thousands of individual.

Camley Street Natural Park opened in 1985 and is now designated a Site of Metropolitan Importance and a Local Nature Reserve. This freely accessible wildlife haven in the heart of King's Cross was created from a derelict coal wharf on the edge of the Regent's Canal. The Trust and local activists campaigned to save the site for wildlife and people when it was identified as an ideal spot for a new coach station in 1981.

www.wildlondon.org.uk