

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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FROM ISRAEL... TO THE RVI... WITH LOVE!

Love was in the air today at the Great North Children's Hospital at Newcastle's RVI when it was revealed that Israeli sculptor Katya Izabel Filmus would only agree to marry her fiancé Chris Blade, Senior Manager at the National Glass Centre in Sunderland, once she had finished work on some new glass sculptures to be installed at the hospital.

The National Glass Centre was commissioned by the Newcastle Healthcare Charity to produce a series of twenty seven cast glass panels to form Phase 2 in the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's vision of creating a welcoming and unthreatening environment at the hospital for children, teenagers, their families and carers.

The new glass sculptures will eventually be displayed over three floors in the hospital and use handprints from twenty-two young patients aged between 3 and 15, together with those of consultants, nurses, other hospital staff and Katya and Chris themselves. Also immortalised into the glass are messages of love and support from friends and families of young patients at the hospital. Each of the three sets of nine panels has been cast in a different colour glass. The first is a beautiful copper blue, whilst the second and third will be made using glass which changes colour under different types of light.

One of Israel's foremost glass artists, Katya Izabel Filmus moved to the UK in 2009 and her studio is based at the National Glass Centre at the University of Sunderland where she runs her business and undertakes specialist commissions. Her fiancé Chris Blade is the senior manager for enterprise at the National Glass Centre. Chris could only persuade Katya to set the date for their wedding after she had completed the handprint commission from the Newcastle Healthcare Charity. The couple are now due to marry on 14 August in Cheltenham.

For the Great North Children's Hospital project, Katya used lead crystal melted in a kiln and poured into heat-resistant moulds containing the impressions of the hands of children and staff at the hospital. The hands were juxtaposed against three-dimensional text cast into the rear surface of the glass panels taken from 'get well' messages sent to young patients at the hospital. The whole process has taken Katya seven months to complete.

Commenting today, Mr Chris Blade said:

"I was delighted to accept the commission from the Newcastle Healthcare Charity for the Great North Children's Hospital artwork and even more delighted when Katya completed her work on the commission as it means we can now get married!"

Sir Leonard Fenwick CBE, Chief Executive of the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust described his vision for using artwork to create a more welcoming and unthreatening environment for children and their families when they come to the Great North Children's Hospital:

"The old traditional image of a hospital is often one of an intimidating, frightening, sometimes boring place, particularly for younger patients. It has long been my ambition to change that image by striving to create a modern hospital environment which is bright and welcoming.

"The Great North Children's Hospital is designed to feel as different from a traditional hospital as possible, allowing children and their families to feel more at ease at what can often be an emotionally stressful and tiring time.

"The wonderful glass artwork conceived and made for the hospital by the exceptional artist Katya Izabel Filmus at the National Glass Centre is part of this vision to create a colourful environment to enhance the experience of all our patients and visitors. It is a collaboration between patients, staff, the Newcastle Healthcare Charity and the National Glass Centre. I wish Chris and Katya both health and happiness in their forthcoming marriage and look forward to the complete installation of the artwork later this year."

-ENDS-

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Photo attached, caption:

Glass artist Katya Izabel Filmus and her fiancé Chris Blade, Senior Manager at the National Glass Centre, Sunderland pictured with one of the finished glass panels which will form a new installation featuring the handprints of patients, consultants and staff at the RVI's Great North Children's Hospital. The couple delayed their wedding plans to complete their work on the project.

- 2.** When the £100m Great North Children's Hospital at the RVI fully opened in 2010, it brought together all children's services under one roof, providing an unparalleled breadth of services – more than any other hospital outside of London. The hospital receives referrals from many other hospitals locally and nationally who do not have the necessary expertise to treat complex conditions.

The hospital now houses an emergency department and trauma centre just for children, a special 'penthouse' for teenage cancer patients and stimulating, colourful furnishings and 3D interactive floor and wall projection systems that create fantasy landscapes all aimed at distracting children from uncomfortable procedures. Over 1,000 staff dedicated to children's services work together in an environment specially designed to meet the needs of modern medicine.

3. The Newcastle Healthcare Charity (Reg No 502473) is one of two officially appointed charities supporting the work of the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (the other charity being the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Charity Reg No 1057213). Both charities administer the many generous donations made by the general public to Newcastle's two main hospitals, the Freeman and the RVI, and to other services offered by the Foundation Trust. In 2010/11 the charities provided nearly £3 million in equipment, amenities, training, education and research.
4. The National Glass Centre in Sunderland is a centre of national excellence supporting the production, education, presentation and enjoyment of contemporary glass. The Centre is happy to undertake commissions from local, national and international organisations and individuals. Please contact Mr Chris Blade MA (RCA), Senior Manager Enterprise, National Glass Centre, Liberty Way, Sunderland SR6 0GL Tel: 0191 515 5555
www.nationalglasscentre.com
5. Katya Izabel Filmus is originally from Isreal and now works in the UK. She studied for 2 years at the Tel-Aviv Art Centre and for 4 years at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. After graduating in 2002 she was offered a job in one of the biggest glass studios in Israel: a non-profit organisation dedicated to the rehabilitation of youth at risk, selling glass products made in the factory throughout Israel and the USA. In September 2008 she was offered one of only six 2-month EAiR (Emerging Artists' in Residence) scholarships for Pilchuck (the Seattle glass school founded by the world-famous glassmaker and sculptor, Dale Chihuly). Katya moved to the UK in 2009 to undertake an MA course at the University of Sunderland. Her major project 'Pain Killers' was purchased in 2010 for the contemporary Glass Collection at Tyne & Wear Museums. Her studio is now based at the National Glass Centre, Sunderland University where she runs her own business and undertakes specialist commissions for the Glass Centre Studio www.katyafilmus.com
6. Christopher Blade is a graduate from the Royal College of Art, London. He has a Masters Degree and BA (Hons) Degree in glass making and design. He is Senior Manager, Enterprise at the National Glass Centre, University of Sunderland. As well as managing the National Glass Centre Glass Studio, Chris designs and produces his own bespoke art glass, often inspired from his incredible adventures as a travel photographer. His work is exhibited in many private collections worldwide www.chrisblade.com