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Disappointment as ambitious city art project is shelved

Emma Knights

emma.knights@archant.co.uk

An ambitious plan for a public work of art celebrating the Norwich School of Artists has been shelved – but the organisation behind the project says it will look at other ways to promote sculpture in the city.

Sculpture for Norwich, which was launched in 2010 as a joint initiative of the Norwich Society and the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society, had for a number of years been working on a major project to put a sculpture on St Martin at Palace Plain.

It was to stand close to the house where Norwich School artist John Sell Cotman had lived.

Following consultations and fundraising, artist Mariele Neudecker was picked and her initial design was for an L-shaped reflective sculpture featuring images of trees.

This was later changed to an idea of glass panels, representing the windows of Cotman's house, being installed flat onto the floor and decorated with tree



■ Above left, the design by artist Mariele Neudecker that Sculpture for Norwich was hoping to install on St Martin at Palace Plain, above right.



Pictures: SUBMITTED & DENISE BRADLEY

images. However, Richard Cocke, Sculpture for Norwich chairman, has said despite everyone's best efforts the project would now not be going ahead for a number of reasons.

He added: "Apart from technical problems with highways and utilities, it became evident after commissioning trial panels that the technology was not sufficiently advanced to achieve the desired visual effect and regrettably the project was cancelled."

He said the organisation felt "intensely disappointed,"

but would now look at moving forward with other ideas.

"The huge amount of work invested into this project has given Sculpture for Norwich valuable knowledge and insight into the commissioning process, and it is hoped that a new project can soon be targeted," he said, explaining one idea was to have a guest plinth where art on loan could be displayed.

He added: "It also became evident that the arts policy of Norwich City Council is not conducive to achieving public sculpture, and Sculpture for

Norwich has been invited to work with them on developing this policy."

A Norwich City Council spokesman said: "Norwich City Council has a very proud history when it comes to supporting culture and art and enjoys good relationships with organisations in this area.

"Any policy for public art in the current climate has to be a balance between enabling beautiful art and ensuring its maintenance and care going forward.

"We have tried very hard to help this group bring its two Palace Plain projects to fruition.

"The leader of the council

met with Sculpture for Norwich recently and had positive discussions and we look forward to continuing to work with them on future projects."

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