



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Leeds Arts University celebrates graduation day

Leeds Arts University students have celebrated the institution's first graduation ceremony as a university.

More than 1,000 students, family and staff attended the Leeds Town Hall ceremony, which included the awarding of the University's first honorary Master of Arts degree, presented to acclaimed writer and director Clio Barnard.

After the ceremony, graduates headed off to the German market in nearby Millennium Square to enjoy their traditional ride on the carousel.

Professor Simone Wonnacott, Vice-Chancellor, said: "Our first graduation ceremony as a university was a wonderful occasion. It was great to see all the graduates once more as they embark on what I'm sure will be interesting and rewarding careers.

"And it was a privilege to award our first honorary degree to Clio Barnard, who has contributed so much to the filmmaking industry, particularly here in Yorkshire."

Accepting the award, Clio told the packed hall that her year as a student on the Foundation Diploma in Art & Design at the University - then known as Jacob Kramer College - had been "the best year of my entire education".

Clio, who grew up in Otley, has completed three feature-length films, all set in Yorkshire housing estates or countryside. They include the award-winning *The Arbor* and *The Selfish Giant* - both set in Bradford - and *Dark River*, which will be released in the UK in February 2018 and stars Ruth Wilson (*The Affair*) Mark Stanley (*Broken*, *Game of Thrones*) and Sean Bean (*The Lord of the Rings*).

Leeds Arts University - formerly known as Leeds College of Art, is the only specialist arts university in the North of England.

Next summer, the University will open a new £22m expansion which is currently being built on Blenheim Walk and will include state-of-the-art facilities for new courses including BA (Hons) Filmmaking and BA (Hons) Popular Music Performance.

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For more information, interview opportunities and images, contact: Ian Rosser, PR and Communications Officer, at ian.rosser@leeds-art.ac.uk or on 0790 5055 163/ 0113 202 8044.

Notes to editors

- The graduation ceremony took place on Thursday, 23 November in Leeds Town Hall.
- Clio Barnard completed a Foundation Diploma in Art & Design in 1984 at Jacob Kramer College - a former name of Leeds Arts University.
- Founded in 1846 as the Leeds Government School of Art and Design, Leeds Arts University has contributed significantly to the development of art education in Britain and across the world. In 2016 the University was granted Taught Degree Awarding Powers, and in 2017 was awarded full university status.

Leeds Arts University has an impressive history of notable past students, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth were students in 1919 and 1920. In later years Damien Hirst, Marcus Harvey, Eric Bainbridge, Clio Barnard and Georgina Starr all studied at the University, known then as the Jacob Kramer College. The University's recent graduates continue to win prestigious international awards year on year and enjoy successful careers in the creative industries.

Leeds Arts University has been recognised for its industry standard facilities at the Whatuni awards (winners in 2014 and 2016, runner up 2017) and has recently been ranked the highest arts university in the UK, and the highest ranked university in Yorkshire for student satisfaction in the National Student Survey 2017.

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