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ANTONY GORMLEY PRESENTS NATIONAL LOTTERY AWARD TO BALTIC CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

Renowned 'Angel of the North' artist, Antony Gormley, today made a surprise visit to BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead to present the gallery with a National Lottery Award for Best Arts Project.

BALTIC won the public vote to be crowned the UK's favourite arts project in this year's Awards - the annual search to find the nation's favourite Lottery-funded projects.

One of the UK's most loved artists, Mr Gormley was delighted to highlight the nation's appreciation for the popular gallery which has welcomed over 4.5million visitors since it first opened ten years ago.

Mr Gormley said: "Winning this National Lottery Award is fantastic recognition for all those involved in running BALTIC. National Lottery players should feel proud that they have funded such a vibrant cultural venue. BALTIC has played a major part in the regeneration of the north east, boosting tourism and positively shaping local identity".

BALTIC started life as a derelict flour mill on the banks of the River Tyne in Gateshead. Thanks to National Lottery funding it was transformed into one of the world's largest contemporary art spaces. Mr Gormley's Angel of the North was also funded by National Lottery money.

The public has been voting for their favourite projects in seven categories in the National Lottery Awards, reflecting the main areas of Lottery funding: arts, education, environment, health, heritage, sport, and voluntary/charity.

Emma Thomas, Head of Learning and Engagement at BALTIC said: "We're absolutely thrilled to be named Best Arts Project in this year's National Lottery Awards. What makes it more special is that it's an award voted for by the public. It's a great honour to be shown that kind of appreciation we'd like to thank everyone that voted for us."

The National Lottery has been changing people's lives for 18 years. Every week National Lottery players raise over £30 million for good causes. The National Lottery Awards recognise the outstanding contribution that Lottery-funded projects make to their local community.

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and the six other winners will be celebrated at a special star-studded BBC One programme later in the year. Winners receive a £2,000 cash prize to spend on their project as well as a coveted National Lottery Awards trophy.

Ends

Photography and B-roll film is available. For more information contact Claire Fleming on 0141 242 1414 / 07907 932 504 or claire.fleming@lotterygoodcauses.org.uk

Notes to Editors

- BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art received £43,797,870 Lottery funding from Arts Council England