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PORTRAITS BY SAM DALBY

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Local artist Sam Dalby (38) is steadily gaining national recognition as a portrait painter, having exhibited at the 2003 BP Portrait Award in London and with the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 2010 and 2011. His work is now highly collectable, so the Museum of North Craven Life is particularly excited to be hosting this major exhibition of his drawings and paintings.

Sam says, "Portraits have been the main focus of my art for the last ten years. This exhibition is effectively a retrospective of that period, as seen through my drawings and paintings of members of the local community.

"The work breaks down into three groups. The first features work from 2003–2005 which was based on a single sitting when I made a sketch and took photographs. I then worked on the portrait from the photograph, with no reference to the drawing.

"From 2005–2010, I attended life drawing sessions in a bid to build a solid artistic practice based on traditional techniques. Portraits from this period are typically large charcoal drawings, often with an 'unfinished' look, usually completed in one or two sittings.

"From 2010, the work has shrunk in scale but not in ambition. I switched to working in pencil and using as many sittings as I needed. As the drawings are preliminary studies for paintings, they've become more precise and closely observed. As a result, the paintings are much more focused and carefully constructed. I try to treat all my sitters with honesty and depict them truthfully and fairly."

Many of the works in the current exhibition are from the last two years and portray a cross-section of members of the local community. The beauty, integrity and technical expertise of the finished works reflect the huge investment of time, energy and skill that Sam puts into his art.

Sam continues, "I have been fortunate in being able to draw the playwright Alan Bennett specially for this show. Alan very generously agreed to sit for a portrait, a privilege not afforded to many artists, and the resulting preliminary drawing will be on show, followed by the finished painting."

As well as the portraits, there will be displays showing how Sam develops his work from the first rough sketches, through preliminary drawings to the finished painting, together with the materials he uses. He will also be leading two workshops in portrait drawing at The Folly on 13 and 20 June 2012.

[Ends]

To view examples of Sam's work, go to www.ncbpt.org.uk or to his website at www.samdalby.co.uk

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