



Press release

October 2023

Experience the air quality of five major cities this autumn with St John's College and the Oxford Cultural Programme

St John's College, Oxford is inviting Oxford residents to travel the world and experience the air quality of four different cities.

Michael Pinsky's *Pollution Pods* will contrast the College's historic architecture with five geodesic domes which aim to raise public awareness of the impact of air pollution on human health. Connected in a circle, each dome recreates the air quality of a different global city through a carefully curated recipe emulating the relative presence of ozone, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide. Starting with the clean air of Tautra in Norway, audiences continue through the high levels of pollution found in London, New Delhi, Beijing and São Paulo.

Located in the Front Quad of St John's College, the Pollution Pods will be open to the public from 21st October to 05th November. This is the first time that the installation has been brought to Oxford or showcased in a higher education setting.

The Pods will run alongside two bespoke exhibitions in Canterbury Quad. The first has been established to demonstrate the College's own sustainability programme and how it is making listed buildings work for future generations. The other, 'Balance', is a travelling photography exhibition featuring images from the Sustainable Photographer of the Year Awards and the Wildlife Photography and Film-making Society. The exhibition has been established to emphasise the value of the environment. It will also showcase a sample of quotes from University community members to showcase the collaboration involved in the ongoing sustainability journey. , reminding us that we are on a joint journey to sustainability.

Supported by St John's College and Oxford University's Environmental Sustainability Team, the art installation is produced by the Cultural Programme at University of Oxford as part of Everything is Connected. The 'Everything is Connected' series will run throughout October and November and will see a series of pop-up events, both live and online, hosted across the city.

The Pollution Pods were developed as part of Climart, an interdisciplinary and international research project, which has brought together environmental psychologists, natural scientists and artists in order to investigate how environmental art functions as a tool for climate change communication.

Commenting on the Pollution Pods, Professor Dame Sue Black, Baroness Black of Strome DBE OBE FRS, President of St John's College, said: "St John's College is committed to supporting our local community. We are proud to work in partnership with many local organisations, including the Oxford Playhouse, Oxford Preservation Trust, and local primary schools. St John's is delighted to be supporting the Pollution Pods as part of the 'Everything is Connected' programme this autumn. We look forward to welcoming visitors to experience



Michael Pinsky's Pollution Pods in our front quad and to raising awareness of the impact of air pollution on health.”

John Fulljames, Director of the Cultural Programme at Oxford University, added: “Through a rich and varied series of conversations and creative events taking place across Oxford, Everything is Connected takes inspiration from the idea that everything is connected in the human and natural world. The Pollution Pods raise important questions about our climate, exploring the ways in which art can change people's perception of climate. We are delighted to be working with St John's and the Environmental Sustainability team to bring Michael Pinsky's innovative installation to Oxford. John Fulljames, Director, The Cultural Programme”.

Michael Pinsky, the artist behind the Pollution Pods, commented: “For many cities, air pollution remains a pressing concern, yet it is only a select few that are taking proactive measures to combat this critical issue, and Oxford stands proudly among them. Transforming transportation habits and advocating against car usage can be a contentious endeavour, but history shows us that courageous cities ultimately reap the rewards, as evidenced by thriving urban centres like Amsterdam and most recently Paris. Through my installation, I aim to draw attention to the significant detrimental effects of air pollution on our health, urging a collective reconsideration of our urban mobility patterns”.

The Pollution Pods and sustainability exhibition are open to the public seven days a week, from 13.00–17.00 on Monday to Friday and from 10.00–17.00 on Saturday and Sunday in Front Quad and Canterbury Quad at St John's College. This is a free event (there may be queues at busy times).

The Pollution Pods are open to all ages, although it is recommended for children ages 5+, and are wheelchair accessible. The Pods were created to allow visitors to safely experience pollution levels from cities around the world and therefore do not carry any health risks.

To find out more about St John's College's sustainability programme and initiatives, please visit www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/discover/environmental-sustainability/.

To find out more about Oxford University's 'Everything is Connected' series, please visit <https://oxfordculturalprogramme.org.uk/everything-is-connected/>.

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Notes to Editors



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All enquiries should be directed to Jenny Marston PR (07957 630 688;
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St John's College

Established in 1555 as a constituent college of the University of Oxford, St John's College fosters excellence in education and research and is committed to equality and diversity. It is one of the largest among Oxford Colleges and offers tuition in nearly every subject studied at the University. Today, St John's is home to approximately 390 undergraduates, 250 graduate students, 100 fellows and 25 College lecturers. A vibrant international community, it fosters intellectual rigour, creativity, and independence in its students, teachers, and researchers. The College supports a range of research activities including discussions, seminars, workshops, public lectures and visiting scholar schemes. While scholarly publication is naturally at the heart of the College's research endeavours, the Fellowship is also committed to informing policy and public debate, and to teaching that is informed by research findings.

Through the College's work on access to all aspects of its day-to-day activities, the College has due regard for its legal commitments under the Equality Act to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.