



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

Issued: 5 August 2014

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### **PRESS CALL**

**9.30AM, THURSDAY 7 AUGUST 2014**  
**LITTLE SPARTA,**  
**STONYPATH, DUNSYRE,**  
**SOUTH LANARKSHIRE ML11 8NG**

### **Ministerial visit marks venture to preserve legacy of Little Sparta**

Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs is to pay a visit to a spectacular garden created by one of the country's best-loved artists, Ian Hamilton Finlay.

Fiona Hyslop will visit Little Sparta to mark a partnership between the University of Edinburgh, the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) and the Little Sparta Trust.

The visit comes on the 20th anniversary of the artist's gift of the garden and its artworks to the Trust, which maintains the estate. The new partnership will aim to celebrate and preserve the landscape and encourage research into Hamilton Finlay's work.

Little Sparta is recognised as one of Scotland's cultural jewels and the artist's greatest work. It contains more than 275 artworks, and has been heralded as the most original garden created in Britain since World War Two.

As part of the partnership, the University has already recreated Hamilton Finlay's library and installed a study centre in his home. It will seek to develop new courses and encourage more research into Finlay's works.

A Masters degree programme, Cultural Landscapes, has been launched which examines the relationships between people and the landscapes they inhabit. Students will have access to Little Sparta to study how Finlay incorporated the landscape in his art.

NGS holds significant items from Hamilton Finlay's work, including important archive material. The artist is also represented in the Artist Rooms collection, jointly owned by NGS and Tate. NGS hopes to work with the University, Little Sparta Trust and others to create an internationally significant study resource.

Finlay, who was a poet, artist and revolutionary, lived at Little Sparta until his death in 2006 aged 81. He and his wife Sue had developed the garden over the previous 40 years.

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*Ranked among the top universities in the world*

Magnus Linklater, Chairman of the Little Sparta Trust, said: “This partnership with two of Scotland’s most important cultural institutions places Little Sparta where it belongs – at the heart of Scotland’s cultural heritage.

Professor Chris Breward, Principal of Edinburgh College of Art, said: “We are delighted at the prospect of strengthening our relationship with Little Sparta through these exciting research and teaching collaborations. Ian Hamilton Finlay’s legacy is profound and wide reaching, with relevance for future scholars and students across the fields of art history, contemporary art practice, landscape architecture, politics, literature, classics and history.”

Sir John Leighton, Director General of the National Galleries of Scotland, said: “Little Sparta is one of the most important modern artworks in Scotland and by far the best place to experience Finlay’s work and ideas. The National Galleries are delighted to be working with the Little Sparta Trust and the University of Edinburgh to create new opportunities for the study of Finlay and his legacy.”

For further information, please contact: Kathryn Dunlop, 0131 651 5587;  
[Kathryn.Dunlop@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Kathryn.Dunlop@ed.ac.uk)

*From Edinburgh, follow the A702 to Dolphinton, and turn right for Dunsyre. About a mile after Dunsyre, Little Sparta’s car park is on the right.*

*From Glasgow, leave the M8 at junction 6 for the A73, then the A721 at Carluke. Continue to Newbiggins and turn left for Dunsyre. After about three miles, before reaching Dunsyre, Little Sparta’s car park is on the left.*