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Press release

A robotics expert will bring to life a fascinating future where intuitive machines are deployed to go where humans can't in a free public talk.



Robotics at UKAEA's RACE, Culham Science Centre

Free public talk, 7 September, Examinations School, Oxford

A robotics expert will bring to life a fascinating future where intuitive machines are deployed to go where humans can't in a free public talk in central Oxford next month.

"Essential robotics: a guide to our shared future" will be presented by Professor Rob Buckingham OBE, who leads a team of 300 roboticists at Culham Science Centre's world-leading fusion robotics centre, RACE (Remote Applications in Challenging Environments).

The September 7 (18.00-19.30) public event at the Examinations School in Oxford is part of the UK Atomic Energy Authority's (UKAEA) outreach programme.

Rob Buckingham, Director, UKAEA's RACE, said: "I'm looking forward to sharing our exciting vision of how the world will be supported by robots. They will help make fusion energy – based on the same processes that power the sun and stars – economically viable."

His talk will focus on case studies from record-breaking fusion energy machine JET (Joint European Torus) and will then turn to the future highlighting how autonomous machines will change lives, both at work and play.

Sign-up for the free public talk here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/essential-robotics-a-guide-to-our-shared-futur>

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Russia is violating International Humanitarian Law: UK statement to OSCE Special Permanent Council

Thank you, Mr Chair. We welcome the calling of this Special Permanent Council on Russian aggression against Ukraine.

We are appalled by the killing of Ukrainian Prisoners of War held in the Olenivka penal facility. Our thoughts are with the victims' families and loved ones at this terrible time.

We remind Russia again that it voluntarily signed up to, and helped to create, the elements of International Humanitarian Law under which parties to armed conflict are obliged to safeguard the life, dignity and integrity of persons under their power – including Prisoners of War. Russia's denial of access to humanitarian organisations is in direct contravention of these laws. Indeed, Russia's actions are in contravention of basic humanity – even offers of supplies have gone unanswered.

We are not interested in whatever preposterous narrative Russian officials deploy this week. We are interested in urgent humanitarian assistance for those injured at Olenivka. We are interested in the evidenced findings of independent international institutions, including full, unimpeded access for the recently-launched UN fact-finding mission to Olenivka. And we are interested in justice for the victims. We are determined that justice will prevail.

Denial of access to Olenivka is just the latest example of Russia's contempt for International Humanitarian Law. The second Moscow Mechanism report noted concern over 'clear patterns of serious violations of international humanitarian law attributable mostly to the Russian armed forces', including the magnitude and frequency of the indiscriminate attacks carried out against civilians and civilian objects. Russia willingly entered into agreements on International Humanitarian Law, and it cannot shirk its responsibilities.

The Moscow Mechanism report also highlighted the cases of British nationals, Shaun Pinner and Aiden Aslin, and Moroccan national Brahim Saadoun – sentenced to death by Russian proxies in illegitimate trials. Russia appears to be preparing to take similar action and put Andrew Hill and John Harding, serving members in the Ukrainian Armed Forces on trial – along with Dylan

Healy, a civilian detained while undertaking humanitarian work. All 3 are entitled to protection under International Humanitarian Law, and their trial by an unrecognised court would be another clear violation by Russia. Attempts to use detainees for propaganda and to force engagement to legitimise Russian proxies are disgraceful. The UK does not recognise or engage with so-called DPR or LPR; we are clear that Russia is responsible and accountable for the treatment of detainees.

Each week, as the devastating consequences of Russia's barbaric tactics bring more death and destruction, evidence builds and charges mount. Russian missile attacks continue across Ukraine – on 28 July, while Russian officials reeled off Kremlin-approved lies and disinformation in the Permanent Council, 5 people were killed and 25 injured following a strike on a flight academy in Kropyvnytskyi. Meanwhile, IAEA Director-General Grossi has described the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, where Russian troops are present, as completely out of control. According to Director-General Grossi, "all nuclear security measures" have been violated. This behaviour is irresponsible and reflects cruel indifference to potential impacts on civilian populations. But after more than five months, this is what we have come to expect from Putin's Russia – a state operating outside of the international laws and standards designed to support everyone – including Russia.

The Kremlin has demonstrated again and again that they set no store by international law, including international humanitarian law. Unfortunately for Russia, the rest of the world does. The international community is watching every transgression, and perpetrators will be brought to justice. We have stood with Ukraine from the start. For the sake of European security, we must continue to support Ukraine militarily, economically and with humanitarian aid, until Ukraine's victory is secured. Thank you, Mr Chair.

[England Woodland Creation Offer to transition into Local Nature Recovery scheme in 2025](#)

Press release

The England Woodland Creation Offer will become part of the Local Nature Recovery scheme – one of the new environmental land management (ELM) schemes – from 2025.



£25 million in funding has been made available to support woodland creation and tree planting.

Farmers and landowners were today urged to apply for a share of £25 million in funding to support woodland creation and tree planting.

The money is available in the year ahead after it was announced the England Woodland Creation Offer will become part of the Local Nature Recovery scheme – one of the new environmental land management schemes – from 2025.

Landowners and farmers could get a one-off payment of £8,500 per hectare followed by annual maintenance payments of £300 per hectare for 10 years. Higher payment rates are also available which offers thousands more for schemes that provide additional public benefits.

Going forward, the future design of Local Nature Recovery and the approach to payment rates for planting trees will largely mirror those within the England Woodland Creation Offer – meaning there is no reason to delay tree planting.

Well-designed and managed woodlands can support the foundations of food production. Woodlands on farms can boost productivity through healthy soil and water by reducing erosion and nutrient loss from surface run-off whilst improving drought and flood resilience. Woodlands also support biodiverse ecosystems through habitat creation and can benefit animal welfare by providing shelter in adverse weather and provide additional fodder for livestock, as well as diversification opportunities through firewood and timber.

Richard Stanford, the Forestry Commission's Chief Executive, said:

Farmers and land managers can now have the confidence to grow trees under EWC0, safe in the knowledge that they will be able to easily transition into the Local Nature Recovery scheme in the future, and without the worry that future schemes will be significantly different.

Trees play an important role in providing shade and shelter for livestock, and reducing soil and nutrient loss. Given the recent

hot dry weather it's vital our farmers and land managers plan for the future to build in resilience to climate change and take advantage of the woodland creation incentives available today.

The majority of new applications for woodland creation payments from 2025 will be made through the Local Nature Recovery scheme.

We expect existing England Woodland Creation Offer agreement holders will have the opportunity to transition their maintenance payments into the Local Nature Recovery scheme from 2026. This continues the government's pledge that no one will be made worse off if they start planting now, rather than waiting for future government schemes.

Find out more about [how trees can benefit your farm business](#) and [read our blog](#) for further information.

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[A painting by Il Morazzone worth £2 million at risk of leaving UK](#)

- Export ban is to allow time for a UK gallery or institution to acquire the painting
- Painting is the only known surviving self-portrait by the Lombard baroque painter and shows the artist both as a painter and a knight

Self-Portrait as a Knight, with a horse, an easel with painter's palette and a page' by Pier Francesco Mazzucchelli, also known as 'il Morazzone', is at risk of leaving the country unless a buyer can be found.

The painting is an example of Lombard art, which has its origins in Lombardy in northern Italy during the early 17th century and remains a relatively unexplored field in art history. The style combines natural realism with intense spirituality and piety.

A work by il Morazzone is rare outside of northern Italy and this painting was presumed lost until its appearance on the London art market in 2020. A departure from the UK of this newly discovered self-portrait would amount to a significant loss.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

There are no significant self-portraits by il Morazzone in any public collections in the UK, so this painting is a rare treasure.

I hope that a buyer comes forward so that it can be studied and admired in this country.

The Minister's decision follows the advice of the [Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest](#). The Committee agreed that this is an extraordinary and rare work from an important school of Italian painting notably absent from UK collections and the significance of this being il Morazzone's only known self-portrait. As such, they agreed that the painting held importance for research into the social status of painters in 17th century Lombardy.

Committee Member Professor Mark Hallett said:

This is an unusually complex and fascinating picture that cries out for further research and analysis, both as a self-portrait of an important painter from the period, and as a work that illuminates the wider social and cultural dynamics of the 17th century Lombardy art world.

The painting, which for many years was housed in an English family collection, also has the potential to provide new and important perspectives on the collecting of Italian Baroque art in Britain.

The Committee made its recommendation on the grounds that the departure of the painting from the UK would be a misfortune owing to its outstanding significance for the study of Lombard painting during the baroque period.

The decision on the export licence application for the painting will be deferred for a period ending on 8th November 2022 inclusive. At the end of the first deferral period owners will have a consideration period of 15 Business Days to consider any offer(s) to purchase the painting at the recommended price of £2,000,000. The second deferral period will commence following the signing of an Option Agreement and will last for four months.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the painting should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.
2. Details of the painting are as follows:

Pier Francesco Mazzucchelli, called 'il Morazzone' (1573–1626)

Self-Portrait as a Knight, with a horse, an easel with painter's palette and a page, about 1605–10

Oil on canvas

78.6 x 59.3 cm

The painting has been recently cleaned and restored. The canvas was lined, perhaps in the late 19th or early 20th century. While the original tacking edges have been lost there is evidence of cusping at top and bottom, and although there is a narrow band of damage along the left vertical edge the overall format seems to be well preserved. Although there are no significant damages, there is evidence of wear in some of the darker areas – in the background, the man's hair, in the darker parts of his face and on his grey cloak – which is not unexpected in a painting of this date.

1. Provenance:

Diego Felípez de Guzmán y Dávila, 1st Marqués de Leganés (1580–1655), Madrid, by 1642;

Recorded in the Leganés collection, in Morata de Tajuña (south-east of Madrid), in 1655;

Collection of the counts of Altamira, Morata de Tajuña, by 1753;

[The picture presumably made its way from Spain to England in the late 18th or early 19th century];

Catherine Brooks (1853–1934), Flitwick Manor, Bedfordshire;

By whom left to her cousin, Robert Adolphus Lyall (1876–1948);

Thence by descent until offered for sale, Bonhams, London, 8 July 2020, lot 312 (as Circle of Gian Lorenzo Bernini), estimate £40-60,000 (withdrawn);

Purchased privately by the present owner.

1. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by the Arts Council (ACE), which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.
2. [Arts Council England](#) is the national development agency for creativity and culture. They have set out in their strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 they want England to be a country in which everyone's creativity is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. ACE invest public money from the Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

Following the [Covid-19 crisis](#), the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. They are also one of the bodies responsible for administering the Government's unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund.

Second anniversary of fraudulent presidential election in Belarus: Minister Chishti statement

Press release

Minister Rehman Chishti calls for free and fair elections in Belarus.



On the second anniversary of the fraudulent Presidential election in Belarus, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Rehman Chishti said:

Over the last two years, Lukashenko has led a campaign of repression against his own people. There are now almost 1,300 political prisoners in Belarus. The authorities have tried to silence independent media and civil society.

We support the democratic aspirations and human rights of the people of Belarus. We urge the authorities to abide by international law, release all political prisoners immediately and unconditionally, and permit those in exile to return home without fear of arrest or repression. We also condemn Lukashenko's support for, and complicity in, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. We will hold Belarusian authorities accountable for their actions.

This includes through sanctions. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we have designated over 50 Belarusian individuals and organisations who are aiding Russia's reckless aggression towards Ukraine. Furthermore, the legislation we laid in Parliament on 4 July extends recent Russia sanctions to Belarus by introducing new financial, trade and transport measures. These are in addition to the 117 designations we had already made in response to the fraudulent election and subsequent human rights violations.

There must be free and fair elections; the people of Belarus should be able to enjoy the democratic right to decide their future.

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