

**UNREAL CITY:** High Rise, a city scene reminiscent of the tragedy of 9/11, by Lesley Birch**STROKE OF GENIUS:** Lesley at work in her studio in Clifton

Picture: Frank Dwyer

Capital creations

YORK artist Lesley Birch has been chosen to exhibit with artists from all over the world in **Cities: All Dimensions**, at the Tokarska Gallery in London.

The gallery's call for entries invited regional and international artists to "showcase their deeply personal perceptions of modern city life in a celebration of urban living and virtual architecture".

"Hundreds of entries came from across the globe, so I'm delighted and excited at the opportunity to network with a wider audience," said Lesley, whose studio is in Clifton Place, York.

"The artworks I submitted are all about creation and destruction of the landscape by nature or by humankind. This is a body of work I've been exploring for some time."

The exhibition will run at the Tokarska Gallery, in Forest Road, Walthamstow, London, until March 17. Later this year, Lesley's paintings can be seen in Yorkshire at the Leeds Craft & Design Gallery in April; the Harrogate Art Show, at St Peter's, Cambridge Street, Harrogate from July 6 to 27; and a solo show of figurative and landscape paintings at The Dutch House, Crayke, from July 31 to September 8.

**COAST STORY:** Detail from A Dream Of The Sea

Tourist attractions see fall in visitor numbers

by **MIKE LAYCOCK**

Chief reporter

SOME of York and North Yorkshire's biggest tourist attractions saw a drop in visitor numbers last year in the wake of the wet weather.

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA), announcing its members' annual visitor figures, said the poor weather was a major factor in falls in numbers across the country, particularly with gardens and outdoor attractions.

A spokeswoman said: "It

was the weather rather than the Olympic and Paralympic Games that took its toll on full-year visitor numbers, and of the 30 attractions (nationwide) that saw a double-digit decline - 27 of these were either gardens or outdoor attractions."

It said the rising cost of petrol and diesel was another factor, which had particularly affected attractions away from urban areas which needed to be visited by car.

The association said Clifford's Tower in York experienced an 11.7 per cent fall to 103,000 visitors,

Castle Howard, near Malton, saw a 9.4 per cent drop to 222,000 and visitor numbers at Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, near Ripon, fell by 6.2 per cent to 330,000.

Meanwhile, Whitby Abbey saw a drop of 5.6 per cent to 112,000 and Harewood House, near Wetherby experienced a 25.6 per cent decrease to 186,000.

There were some brighter notes, with the National Railway Museum in York up by 0.6 per cent to 716,000 and RHS Garden Harlow Carr at Harrogate up by 7.9 per cent to 320,000.

THE ACTUAL FIGURES

Harewood House....186,000 visitors (-25.6%)

Clifford's Tower (pictured)....103,000 visitors (-11.7 per cent)

Castle Howard....222,000 visitors (-9.4 per cent)

Fountains Abbey....330,000 visitors (-6.2 per cent)

Whitby Abbey....112,000 visitors (-5.6 per cent)

National Railway Museum....

716,000 visitors (+0.6 per cent)

RHS Harlow Carr.... 320,000 visitors (+7.9 per cent)



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