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YORKSHIRE SAYS HAPPY BIRTHDAY SHILPA

Shilpa Shetty, the most recognised star of Indian Cinema in the UK was presented with a special birthday present from the Yorkshire & Humber region. Shilpa, who earlier this year won the UK version of Celebrity Big Brother, was presented with a unique opaque lavender and transparent pink glass piece in an ornate petal pattern which was produced by Yorkshire glass makers Gillies-Jones.

Ms Shetty, whose birthday coincided with the Indian International Film Academy (IIFA) awards weekend coming to Yorkshire, was presented the glass piece by Gary Topp, Chief Executive of Yorkshire Culture, at a party held in her honour at Leeds' Victoria Arcade.

The piece is a unique piece of glass art called a ubiquitous bowl and is made from overlay sand-carved glass. Gillies-Jones are one of the finest studio glass makers in Europe, each piece they produce is entirely individual and a true one off.

Mr Topp commented "it is fantastic for us to have a truly global star like Ms Shetty celebrate her birthday here in Yorkshire, the IIFAs are a great showcase for this region and on behalf of Yorkshire I'd like to say it has been a pleasure to treat all of the stars to some real Yorkshire hospitality"

David Andrews, Chief Executive of Yorkshire Tourist Board, the company whose inspiration brought IIFA to Yorkshire, said: "Ms Shetty is a globally recognised figure these days and to have her celebrate her birthday in Yorkshire was quite a coup. Yorkshire's famous for its arts and crafts so to give her such a beautiful gift was very appropriate. We're looking forward to more Bollywood films being shot in Yorkshire and should Shilpa return on location, she will be assured a great welcome.

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Notes to editors:

1. The Yorkshire bid for IIFA Yorkshire Weekend 2007 was undertaken by YTB, with the support of Yorkshire Forward and key partners including Yorkshire Culture, Screen Yorkshire, the business communities and local authorities of the cities of Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield, York and Hull. IIFA is expected to bring 28,000 visitors to Yorkshire in June 2007 and generate £10 million of direct tourism spend.

2. The IIFA Fringe weekend has been managed by Yorkshire Culture in partnership with Local Authorities from Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield, York, Beverly, Rotherham and Scarborough. The festival demonstrates Yorkshire's unique and vibrant cultural offer and the willingness of Major Partners to collaborate for the overall success of the region. The Fringe is a testament to the strength of the region's cultural sector and example of the added value that the sector brings to Major Events in Yorkshire and Humber.
3. Gillies Jones is a dynamic creative alliance between glassblower Stephen Gillies and artist Kate Jones. Their work celebrates the unique elements of glass. It is their ambition that every piece is considered beautiful, technically accomplished and represents their specialist skills with the material. Skills which concentrate on Scandinavian glass making techniques, acquired over an extended international apprenticeship and 12 years of studio practice in Rosedale Abbey, North Yorkshire.

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Further media information about the IIFA Weekend Yorkshire 2007 is available at www.yorkshiretouristboard.net/iifa