



The Connect! contemporary artist shortlist is announced & new artist mentoring programme launched

Culture24 is pleased to announce the venue shortlist for the Connect! arts competition. For the last three months museums and galleries from all over the UK have been submitting a range of creative ideas hoping to entice one of five leading contemporary artists to their museum or gallery to create a unique arts event. The events will happen as part of the Museums at Night's October festival, which will take place over October 27-29.

The artists have chosen the shortlist and it is now up to members of the public to vote for which artist goes where. The voting opens at 11 AM on Friday 29 April and you can vote at www.museumsatnight.org.uk

The winning partnerships will be announced on Monday 16 May.

New for 2016, five emerging artists, Hazel Brill, Joseph Doubtfire, Melissa Murray, Faye Spencer, and duo Andrew Caitlin Webb-Ellis will also be given a unique mentorship opportunity which sees them matched to one of the leading contemporary artist participating in Connect! They will get to shadow them through the event process, observing how the artist collaborates with the venue to develop a new participatory experience for Museums at Night in October. The artists have been chosen in partnership with the Contemporary Visual Arts Network.

Connect! is funded by Arts Council England to support venues to try something different to attract new audiences to their Museums at Night event.

The shortlist:

Artist: **Marcus Coates**

Best known for his performances and installations that employ shamanistic rituals to engage with the natural world, including Goshawk (1999) where Coates was suspended in a pine tree in order to view the world as a bird of prey.

Shortlisted Venues: Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle
Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, Sunderland
Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol

Artist: **Susan Hiller**

With a practice extending over 40 years, Susan Hiller is considered one of the most influential artists of her generation. Her groundbreaking installations, multi-screen videos and audio works have achieved international recognition and are widely acknowledged to be a major influence on younger British artists.

Shortlisted Venues: Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham
Arnolfini, Bristol
Nunnery Gallery, London

Artist: **Aowen Jin**

Named by The Times as “one of tomorrow’s great artists”, Chinese-born British artist and social commentator Aowen Jin has a unique position as both an outsider and an insider in Chinese society. Much of her work questions why people live the way they do, and she spends years living within a community or embracing a sub-culture to create new insights into contemporary society.

Shortlisted Venues: Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park, Warwickshire
Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Telford
Rhondda Heritage Park, Wales
Torre Abbey Historic House & Gardens, Torquay
Fulham Palace, London.

Artist: **Peter Liversidge**

Peter Liversidge is a British contemporary artist notable for his diverse artistic practice and use of proposals, written on a manual typewriter. He has exhibited and worked with Tate Liverpool and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art amongst many other galleries across the world.

Shortlisted Venues: Radio Communication Museum, Derby
Royal College of Nursing, London
Clifton Suspension Bridge, Bristol
Castle Drogo, Dartmoor

Artist: **Bedwyr Williams**

Working across a variety of media including performance, video, sculpture and text, Bedwyr Williams investigates the friction between the deadly serious and banal aspects of modern life. He often

satirises the role of the artist and curator against this backdrop, creating cruel and absurd scenarios for them to appear in.

Shortlisted Venues: Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Bristol
Somerset House, London
20-21 Visual Arts Centre, Lincolnshire

Previous participating artists have included **Bob & Roberta Smith, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Gavin Turk, Rankin** and Turner Prize winner **Gillian Wearing**. Previous events have included **Yinka Shonibare MBE** hosting a 24-hour inventive factory at The Novium, a **Grayson Perry** teddy-bear hunt around York Museum, New York artist **Spencer Tunick** photographing 100 nudes on Folkestone beach and **Bompas & Parr** floating the Bristol's ss Great Britain on a sea of lime green jelly. In 2015, the Connect! competition attracted more than 34,000 public votes.

Rosie Clarke, Museums at Night Campaigns Officer says, "The Connect! programme is a fantastic and challenging aspect of the Museums at Night festival: everyone taking part learns a lot about how to foster positive working relationships, realise an artistic vision and inspire new audiences through the power of participatory art. This year we are delighted to be able to involve emerging artists who are keen to expand their practice by learning from a mentor, shadowing them through the creative journey and discovering how their initial idea becomes a successful event for all to enjoy."

Now in its eighth year, Museums at Night offers the chance to experience culture and heritage in a new way. The festival sees hundreds of museums, galleries and historic spaces all over the UK opening their doors in the evening to put on an array of special events. The festival has experienced phenomenal growth over the last few years; the 2015 festivals saw thousands of visitors take part in over 800 events in over 500 venues across the country.

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For press images please visit <http://culture24.mediafiler.net>

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Notes to Editors:

- **Museums at Night** is the biannual after-hours festival of arts, culture and heritage, which sees hundreds of museums, galleries, libraries, archives and heritage sites over the UK open their doors for special evening events. www.museumsatnight.org.uk
- **Culture24** is an independent non-profit company that exists to support the cultural sector to reach and connect with audiences. It is best known for publishing great websites about culture; producing the successful Museums at Night festival of after-hours openings and leading Let's Get Real, the collaborative action research project involving cultural organisations across the UK and Europe. www.WeAreCulture24.org.uk
- **Arts Council England** champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2015 and 2018, we plan to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. www.artscouncil.org.uk