



Edinburgh Art Festival opens first programme under new Director Kim McAleese

Edinburgh Art Festival (EAF) opens on **Friday 11 August**, the first under the direction of Kim McAleese and a programme that connects the people and city of Edinburgh with a global dialogue through a range of exhibitions, commissions, performances and events.

The 2023 festival is set to be one of the largest yet, with 55 ambitious projects and exhibitions across more than 35 venues, with the most innovative and renowned partners, museums and galleries working in visual art in this city all set to take part, including many who will work with EAF for the first time. The new format festival is a call to action to explore the Scottish capital, looking at the city a-new through the lens of visual art and across a diverse range of the EAF partner galleries, museum presentations, and newly commissioned works.

The new format festival also foregrounds reasons to come together, and will see collaborations with many gallery partners in the city for parties, performances, and one-off events, as well as partnerships with Edinburgh International Book Festival, Forma, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Forma, TULCA Festival of Visual Arts, Lavender Menace Queer Books Archive, Horizon Showcase, and The Common Guild.

The new dates this year for the UK's biggest visual art festival are **11–27 August 2023**, allowing for three full weeks, including a trio of weekends of talks, performances, and one off events, aligning in date and in collaboration with other festivals in the city. From queer histories in brutalist tower blocks; to tracing peace lines and borders through sound, moving image and music; and the festival's continuing commitment to support structures, the 2023 festival-led programme features artists, thinkers, writer and performers who move through this world deeply connected to feminist and queer practice. This may take various forms: an opera; a poem; the sound of a ricochet along a peace wall; a newspaper excerpt; a bodily gesture; a warming meal.

Kim McAleese, Festival Director, says, *"I am delighted to share this programme, my first for Edinburgh Art Festival and to welcome everyone to our opening week. The programme asks how we can connect with and find mutual support internationally, platforming artists, individuals and communities who can find alternative ways to resist. By punctuating the festival with a series of special weekend events, we will open up the festival to new audiences, and in dialogue with other art forms and other festivals across the city in a spirit of collaboration. This year's programme guides you through our core galleries across the city, to parliament buildings for live performances, to Leith for public artworks, and Sculpture Gardens outside of Edinburgh for queer parties."*

Edinburgh Art Festival 2023 commissions are announced for the first time today, as follows:

Sean Burns' *Dorothy Towers* is the story of the legendary Clydesdale and Cleveland Towers, two residential blocks in the centre of Birmingham, UK. Completed in 1971 as a social housing development and located adjacent to the city's Gay Village, the towers' proximity to the community means they have long been a haven for LGBTQ+ people. The 16mm film and installation opens a space to reflect on the complex relationship between architecture, community and memory. Shown at the French Institute, it features testimonials from current and past residents and explores ideas of queer kinship and inheritance alongside experiences of HIV in the 1980s and '90s. In Edinburgh, the work will catalyze a series of discussions and events tracing the themes present in the work to concurrent histories and realities in the city. This will coincide with workshops and discussions on Edinburgh's queer histories throughout the festival with partners, including the Lothian Health Services Archives and Lavender Menace Queer Books Archive. The film is screened across the festival dates.

The opening performance on 11 August at the Queen's Hall, *History of the Present*, will see Northern Irish writer Maria Fusco collaborate with Scottish artist film-maker Margaret Salmon and composer Annea Lockwood on a hybrid opera on stage and screen that will be performed live. It is a new experimental opera-film forefronting working-class women's voices to ask: who has the right to speak and in what way? Layering sociological, cultural, and political themes from the recent history of Northern Ireland, the work exercises voice, breath and field-recording composition through a range of film techniques and operatic articulations, amplifying marginalised stories. Made on 35mm and SD video in the streets of Belfast, the Royal Opera House and the Ulster Museum, *History of the Present* observes how defensive architecture defines movement to enforce intersectional histories and identities within daily experiences in conflict and post-conflict zones. Written and co-directed by Maria Fusco, who grew up beside a peaceline in Belfast during The Troubles, the work commemorates the 25th anniversary of The Good Friday Agreement. **This will be the world performance premiere of the work featuring live improvisation from percussionist Angela Wai Nok Hui.**

For an opening party at Edinburgh's Biscuit Factory also on 11 August, there will also be the launch of Belfield Brewery's no-alcohol beer, *Fire Island IPA* (0.5% ABV) in collaboration with EAF and Waverley Care. An American Red IPA, it's been brewed to be both alcohol (0.5%) and gluten free. It's been named in memory of the celebrated, pioneering gay nightclub that opened its doors on Edinburgh's Princes Street in the late 70s. Fire Island holds a significant place in the history of Scottish nightlife and the LGBTQ+ community and its impact continues to be celebrated and remembered fondly.

Also on opening weekend is **Alberta Whittle: The Last Born – making room for ancestral transmissions**, a newly-commissioned performance, presented by EAF, National Galleries of Scotland and Forma, takes Alberta Whittle's most recent moving image work, *Lagareh – The Last Born* as inspiration. Anchored around theories of abolition, rebellion, ancestral knowledge and love, the film melds a collection of scenes that give focus to the strength of contemporary Black womxn, whose individual acts of resistance are bound together through the artist's conceptual storytelling. In this new performance, at Parliament Hall, the buildings housing the Supreme Courts of Scotland, scenes and moments from *Lagareh – The Last Born* will be re-enacted and reconfigured, encouraging the audience to continue to think about the poetics of abolition and how love and grief can become healing forms of release. This will coincide with the Scotland + Venice selected artist's major solo exhibition, *create dangerously*, at National Galleries of Scotland: National. This performance takes place on **13 August**.

Jupiter Artland and Edinburgh Art Festival are delighted to reveal the line-up for JUPITER RISING x EAF 2023 which takes place on Saturday 19 August from 6pm until 1am. Curated by artist Lindsey Mendick, whose solo commission *SH*TFACED* is currently presented across Jupiter Artland's galleries, and queer workers' co-op Bonjour, this year's JUPITER RISING x EAF features artist-performance, live music, talks, workshops and DJ sets from An(dre)a Spisto and Joana Nastari, Guy Oliver, Honey Revlon, Pink Suits, Sgàire Woods, STASIS, Ziah Ziah and a new commissioned performance by Lindsey Mendick and guest appearances. Bonjour's Late Night Stage brings together two of Scotland's favourite QTIPOC (and ally) cabaret and club nights MOJXMMMA and Q'IWA with sets from Halal Kitty and Jam Eye and performance by Lala Munan, Malaikah, Thea Transformo, Kiki Rivera and Caramella Coins.

Haven for Artists is a cultural feminist organisation based in Beirut, Lebanon, a community of many people, working together to organise, support, campaign, nurture and create in a country in a multi-dimensional crisis, through cultural programming. EAF have invited Haven for Artists, to spend time **in-residence** during the festival with a programme of activities, connecting with local organisations and initiatives, as well as launching our festival with an 'Opening Provocation', in conversation with Turner Prize winners **Array Collective**. Haven will also collaborate with the Wester Hailes **Community Wellbeing Collective**, for a day of conversation, food and an open mic – exploring what urgencies, desires and offerings can be shared across borders, and how to care collectively and create spaces of safety and respite in a world of precarity. The Opening Provocation will be on **12 August**, at the National Galleries of Scotland, and the event with Community Wellbeing Collective on **20 August** in Wester Hailes.

Now in its 9th edition, **Platform: Early Career Artist Award** celebrates early-career artists working in Scotland, with the opportunity to make and exhibit new work. This year's artists selected from an open call are **Aqsa Arif, Crystal Bennes, Rudy Kanhye, and Richard Maguire**. The artists have come together to address a diverse set of concerns spanning race, climate change, and food justice, to cultural identity in Scotland. Selectors for the exhibition are **Zoé Whitley**, Director of Chisenhale Gallery, London and **Iarlaith Ní Fheorais**, curator and writer based between Ireland and the UK, alongside EAF Director **Kim McAleese**. The exhibition runs across the full festival dates at Trinity Apse, an old Gothic church off the Royal Mile. The exhibition has been curated by EAF Curator Eleanor Edmonson.

On **26 August**, at the French Institute, **EAF and Collective present BEAST!** a performance work by the French artist and poet **Tarek Lakhriissi**, exploring bestiality as a philosophical and political concept by drawing on the stigma that historically frames queer people and people who belong to the global majority as

monstrous. Through the reading of recent romantic and critical poems, accompanied by the lyrical vocals of Makeda Monnet and the electronic music of Victor da Silva (Fatma Pneumonia), the show will be interspersed with utopian queer passions, dark corners to protect oneself, erotic dreams and free moments of improvisation. All the poems are from Lakhrissi's last poetry book *LE SANG! (BLOOD!)* published by Lafayette Anticipations. Lakhrissi is also presenting a solo show *I wear my wounds on my tongue (II)* at Collective to coincide with EAF.

Nat Raha presents the first iteration of a performance work commissioned for EAF 2023 x TULCA Festival of Visual Arts, addressing the history and development of island prisons across the globe through the colonial project of the British Empire. The work travels from Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth, to outposts of 'empyre' such as Spike Island, Ireland, and to the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal. The performance will take the form of a sonically expansive, trans-historical poem-letter addressed to ancestors incarcerated for anti-colonial revolt. Raha considers what the rise and fall of these carceral islands can teach us about contemporary abolitionist struggles, addressing international connections and strategies in anti-colonial revolt from a transfeminist perspective. After the performance Nat will be joined for an in-conversation with **Lola Olufemi**, a black feminist writer and researcher from London. Lola is co-author of 'A FLY Girl's Guide to University' (Verve Poetry Press, 2019), author of 'Feminism Interrupted: Disrupting Power' (Pluto Press, 2020) and 'Experiments in Imagining Otherwise' (Hajar Press, 2021). The conversation will situate the conversation beyond the work, institutional interest in poetry and the role of poetics in relation to abolitionism. **The event takes place on 18 August at 50 George Square, generously supported by the University of Edinburgh.**

Initiated by **The Common Guild**, EAF will co-present an illuminated artwork by **Rabiya Choudhry at Leith Library**. The design is based on a painting by Choudhry, part of the artist's ongoing project *Lost Lighting* – a series of lighting artworks for public places intended to 'act like a vigil in the dark' Taking shape as illuminated signs, they repurpose Andrew Carnegie's flaming torch motif; a feature found on many Carnegie library buildings In Choudhry's work, the torch is encircled with the words of African-American civil rights activist Ella Baker (1903–1986) who worked to instigate societal change. Baker's words 'give light and people will find the way', are a manifestation of power for ordinary people. The public artwork runs across the full festival dates, visible 24 hours a day.

Rachel Mars invites you to a performance of *FORGE* at Lyceum Workshop. In 2014 the 100kg iron "welcome" gate was stolen from Dachau concentration camp. A local blacksmith forged a replica. Exactly like the original. Almost. Over three days, Rachel Mars asks you to bear witness as she welds together another copy. Presented by **Horizon Showcase**, this impactful durational performance installation with live welding and atmospheric sound-world by Dinah Mullen explores who memorials are for and who decides. We will also bring together the artist and a panel of speakers for a conversation about memorial, public space and architecture in Edinburgh on **21 August**.

Festivals love dialogue, and EAF have joined with the **Edinburgh International Book Festival** and the **Edinburgh International Film Festival** for a new Sunday Salon series. Each Sunday afternoon, the festivals will host a lineup of artists working across literature, film and art to talk about the finer details of their work and practice in an intimate setting.

Partner galleries will present a range of exhibitions, the majority of which will be open to the public for free for the festival. Explore a new part of the city through the EAF commissions and the partner

exhibitions including:

Old Town and Southside

In the Old Town, Talbot Rice Gallery present **Lawrence Abu Hamdan's** film ***45th Parallel***, which considers structural divides in the Haskell Free Library and Opera House – a unique municipal site that straddles the jurisdictions of Canada and the United States, dividing the library collections and creating the only cross-border theatre in the world, where the audience and actors are in different countries. This is shown alongside a solo show by **Jesse Jones**. Jones' ***The Tower*** calls us back to a moment of feminist possibility before the European Witch trials by channelling 13th century mystics in a monumental, durational performed installation. Meanwhile, a display at the National Library of Scotland will be ***Blood Sweat and Tears: Scotland's HIV Story***. Co-curated by the National Library of Scotland and Waverley Care, the display looks back at the earliest stages of the HIV outbreak in Scotland in the 1980s. It shows the fear, stigma and heartbreak that followed, as well as the emergence of effective treatments that shifted the focus to living well with HIV.

Delving into the ideas of space and architecture at Fruitmarket will be Portuguese born, Berlin based artist **Leonor Antunes** (born Lisbon, 1972). Antunes makes space for the contemplation of modernist art, architecture and design through sculpture made and displayed with the specifics of a given place in mind. The forms and materials of her sculptures reference a history of modernism embedded in the work of its less visible protagonists; overlooked, often female, artists and designers, many of whom were immigrants in the countries in which they lived and worked. Stills will display a significant solo presentation of Prague-born photographer, **Markéta Luskačová** (b.1944). Considered one of the most critically acclaimed Czech social photographers to date, she has photographed children in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and also Poland since the 1960s and this aspect of her practice will be a focus in this show, her first ever solo show in Scotland. Meanwhile, a major retrospective of one of the UK's leading figurative painters, **Peter Howson**, takes place at City Art Centre. In 1993 he was appointed British War Artist for Bosnia. The exhibition brings together around 100 works spanning the artist's career, many never seen before in Scotland. A new exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland will deconstruct the little black dress, examining the radical power of the colour black in fashion. From design classics to cutting-edge catwalk creations, ***Beyond the Little Black Dress*** will bring together more than 60 striking looks from collections and designers around the world. Also at the National Museum of Scotland, ***Rising Tide*** will showcase artistic responses to climate change in Oceania.

Yet more on the Southside of the city, a showcase of work by graduating students takes place at the Edinburgh College of Art. The show combines new work from the schools of Art, Design and Architecture & Landscape Architecture. Also at ECA ***The Sounds of Deep Fake***, curated by the Institute for Design Informatics, brings together exciting experimental artists including **Martin Disley** and **Theodore Koterwas** who are working with sound and emerging technologies to explore deep fake audio. Dovecot Studios presents their major exhibition ***Scottish Women Artists: 250 Years of Challenging Perception*** with The Fleming Collection, with works by over 45 pioneering women artists including **Rachel Maclean**, **Sekai Machache**, **Joan Eardley** and **Alberta Whittle**.

East to Leith

At Collective, on Calton Hill, and coinciding with their EAF performance, **Tarek Lakhri** presents ***I wear my wounds on my tongue (II)***, exploring desire, language and queerness. Inspired by the work of the late poet, essayist and performance artist Justin Chin, the installation features newly commissioned sculptures and sound work. Also at Collective, **Rabindranath X Bhose**'s installation work, ***DANCE IN THE SACRED DOMAIN***, is a bog made up of sculpture, poetry, performance and drawing, emerging from time spent meditating on bogland in Scotland.

Further into Leith, at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, a new presentation, ***tense***, by Glasgow based **Adam Lewis Jacob** will be displayed alongside ***A New Face in Hell***, in which **Sebastian Thomas** draws inspiration from the mythological fable of the Golem, a being constructed of inanimate material that often ends up becoming uncontrollable. Travelling Gallery, a contemporary art gallery in a bus, presents a new exhibition by **Gabecare**, a collaborative art project between **Rachel Adams and Tessa Lynch** investigating the domestic mess of 21st century living, which will travel across the city for the duration of the festival. Sierra Metro presents an exhibition of new work by award winning Australia-based artist, illustrator and animator, **Haein Kim**. For Kim's first solo show ***PAIN2POWER*** the artist presents a series of prints exploring the modern woman's psyche, materialism and puppies for a show that captures her unique use of colour, humour and honesty

To The West

To the West of the capital, Jupiter Artland will host **Lindsey Mendick** as the artist for their 2023 season in ***SH*TFACED***. Characterised by their hyperreal appearance and intense attention to detail, everyday scenes are crafted in ceramic as larger-than-life tableaux. Mendick creates a diptych of nightlife; one that draws inspiration from the gothic novella *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Like an anxiety dream come to life, there is a sobering mirroring of contemporary binge drinking culture and gender-based shaming presented in the work.

Near Haymarket in Fountainbridge, Edinburgh Printmakers presents artist **Christian Noelle Charles**' solo exhibition ***WHAT A FEELING! | Act I***. Transforming the gallery space into a beauty salon, this unique presentation of new screen prints by Charles is the first part of an exploration project discussing the topics of racial identity, inequality and care through the Black Female Lens. Christian Noelle Charles will also host an American-style block party on Friday 25 August in the Courtyard at Edinburgh Printmakers.

In Wester Hailes, **Community Wellbeing Collective (CWC)** began in 2021, as a collaboration between EAF and WHALE Arts, after being brought together by social-practice artist Jeanne van Heeswijk. They are a growing group of 30+ people from, and connected to, Wester Hailes – practicing mutual care, responsibility and solidarity. Together they created the **Community Wellbeing Space** building belonging and creating access to wellbeing as a radical act. Expect a warm welcome, free wellbeing activities run by members, and find your own way of participating. This is an ongoing collaborative process imagining and cultivating a more just and caring world. Join CWC alongside the festival's collective-in-residence **Haven for Artists** for a day of conversation, food and an open mic – exploring what urgencies, desires and offerings can be shared across borders, and how to care collectively and create spaces of safety and respite in a world of precarity.

New Town

Back over in the New Town, visit the largest yet show of work by **Grayson Perry** covering his 40-year career, taking place at the Royal Scottish Academy, organised by National Galleries of Scotland. Perry has gone from taking pottery evening classes to winning the Turner Prize, presenting television programmes on Channel 4 and writing acclaimed books. Pottery allowed him the opportunity to indulge his fascination with sex, Punk, and counterculture, amongst other things, in the most unlikely and polite of artforms. Today he is one of Britain's most celebrated artists and cultural figures. Photography can be seen in the **Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize**, one of the most prestigious photography awards in the world, celebrating the very best in contemporary portrait photography and will take place at National Galleries of Scotland: Portrait.

Wonder Women comprises three exhibitions of internationally acclaimed artists who are all closely associated with The Scottish Gallery. **Dame Elizabeth Blackadder (1931-2021) | A Celebration** is the gallery's headline exhibition and a major memorial celebration of the late artist. Running alongside the Blackadder retrospective is **Wendy Ramshaw | The Early Years (1939-2018)**; a rare opportunity to see the archive work of the international champion of modern jewellery. Additionally, **Bodil Manz at 80** will celebrate the internationally recognised Danish ceramist. Arusha Gallery will present new work by three emerging artists - **Plum Cloutman, Georg Wilson and Zayn Qahtani** - in celebration of the festival, and **Andrew Cranston's** solo exhibition at Ingleby will be on view, which will include a selection of small scale paintings on hardback book covers, and a number of new and highly seductive large scale paintings. Considering geographies and environment, **Keg de Souza** will present the work of a year's residency as part of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's Creative Programmes. **Shipping Roots** is a striking exploration of colonial legacies through the movement of plant types between the UK, India and Australia transforming Inverleith House into a series of installations immersing visitors in sound, plants and play. A series of events will also take place to coincide this summer.

Head of Visual Arts at Creative Scotland, Amanda Catto, said: *"We're delighted to be a supporter of the Edinburgh Art Festival, the UK's largest annual festival of visual art. The spirit of collaboration at the heart of the festival creates exciting opportunities for artists and for audiences. If you're living in or visiting Edinburgh in August the Art Festival is the place to find some of the best exhibitions, events and performances this summer. Taking place in established and less well-known spaces in the city, and with work from world leading artists as well as those at much earlier stages in their career, there's so much to look forward to. Congratulations to the Festival, its partners and all the artists involved."*

Culture Minister Christina McKelvie said: *"The Edinburgh Art Festival is a great opportunity to showcase the work of Scottish-based artists, especially previously under-represented artists who we're proud to support with £130,000 through the Scottish Government's Expo Fund. In partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council we also support new artists and curators at the wellbeing arts space at Wester Hailes and Platform with £215,000 through our PLACE Fund to support community engagement."*

ENDS

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Edinburgh Art Festival is the UK's largest annual festival of visual art. Founded in 2004, we work with local and international partners to present an ambitious and meaningful programme of exhibitions, events and projects across the city.

Since its beginnings, the festival has featured exhibitions including international and UK artists at a pivotal point in their career alongside the best emerging talent, major survey exhibitions of historic figures, and a programme of newly commissioned artworks that respond to historic sites in the city.

The festival's year-round community engagement programme has long-term relationships and partnerships across the city, creating relevant and memorable experiences with artists. We invite local people to explore culture, community, the city and self-expression, and value, with many festival projects reflecting this unique creative relationship.

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Our public funders are: **Creative Scotland**, the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland distributing funding provided by the Scottish Government and The National Lottery. Further information at creativescotland.com. We are also supported by **City of Edinburgh Council**.

Our major programme supporters are: the **PLACE** Programme, a partnership between Edinburgh Festivals, Scottish Government, City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland; and Event Scotland.

Edinburgh Art festival is delighted to partner with Edinburgh World Heritage, British Council, Arts Council England & Horizon Showcase, Cruden Foundation, Forma, GCAS, National Galleries of Scotland, National Lottery Awards for All Scotland, and Bloomberg Connects for their 2023 programme.