

LOOK AGAIN

VISUAL ART & DESIGN FESTIVAL

Tuesday, 28 February 2017

Media Invitation

What: Look Again Visual Art and Design festival will officially announce the internationally acclaimed artists exhibiting at this year's celebration which takes place from April 27 April – 1 May.

Scottish artist, Jason Nelson who has been commissioned to create an installation which will listen, record and playback the sounds and stories of the city, will be joined by festival associate director, Hilary Nicol and Head of Gray's School of Art, Professor Chris O'Neil.

A life-size prototype of Jason's listening machine will also be available with pupils at Quarryhill Primary School helping put the final pieces together.

When: Wednesday, 1 March at 1pm

Where: Quarryhill Primary School, Northfield, Aberdeen

Pres release

Embargoed until 1300hrs on 01.03.2017

Acclaimed Artists To Reflect Aberdeen's Rich Heritage

Look Again visual art and design festival announces impressive programme

Aberdeen's **Look Again festival**, one of Scotland's premier visual art and design festivals, has unveiled the artists who will take part in the 10-day celebration at the end of April.

The festival, which showcases the very best in visual art and design, has commissioned eight internationally recognised artists to spend time in the city and create specially commissioned work that reflects the North-east's culture – past and present.

The works, which will be on show throughout the city centre, will encourage people to take a fresh look at their Aberdeen surroundings and gain a deeper understanding of the Granite City.

Artists include London-based **Thomson and Craighead**, who have strong links to the North-east. The pair have had their work exhibited around the globe including New York, Miami, Paris, China and London; Stockholm designer **Nick Ross**, who trained at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen, and has had his work shown in major arts centres including: Milan, Paris, Stockholm and London; and Dundee-based **Jason Nelson**, who has exhibited work as far afield as Australia and also in the prestigious Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh.

A further four artists who have links to the North-east have been commissioned as part of the festival's Seed Fund programme to retain and attract creative talent to the region.

Festival director, Sally Reaper said: "We are really excited by the projects that will be showcased this year. Some of the most exciting artists in the UK are getting behind the festival, which is a huge endorsement of how far it has come in such a short time. The North-east has such a great story to tell that is much more than being the oil capital of Europe. Look Again aims to shine the light on some of these stories and reinvigorate our sense of pride in the region.

As part of 2017 being the Scottish year of history, heritage and archaeology, several of the artists have been delving into the city's archives as the basis for their work, including Aberdeen's UNESCO recognised Burgh records.

Highlights of this year's Look Again include:

- **'Record Store' - AKA Obstacle Soup** - is a project curated by visual artists Janie Nicoll and Chirs Biddlecombe in collaboration with 36 artists from across Scotland. Part exhibition, part fantasy record shop, the project explores and celebrates the crossover between visual arts and music. Set to include new works by 12 invited artists from the north-east, 'Record Store' will be shown at Seventeen - the creative hub and exhibition space in Belmont Street that was formerly the much loved One Up Records.
- Visual artists **Jon Thomson and Alison Craighead**, who are based in London and the Scottish Highlands – will present a new generative moving image work, inspired by Aberdeen Harbour, called **Control Room**, alongside two existing artworks, Aberdeen Wall and Here
- **The Listener** led by Scottish artist Jason Nelson includes a set of follies which tell the story of Aberdeen. The project is both an object to be viewed and a space to be used by people, from which to hear the histories and the urban myths that form the collective consciousness and identity of Aberdeen.
- **Look Inside**, a design collective of Aberdeen-based makers - Anne Marquiss, Gabi Reith, Mags Gray and Aubin Stewart - will showcase a new collaborative 'Aberdeen Collection' which explores and celebrates the architectural characteristics and history of Aberdeen. The collection offers a contemporary emblem, souvenir or keepsake that Aberdonians and visitors to the city will treasure in the future. Included in the collection will be jewellery, ceramics, illustration, apparel and more.
- Swedish-based designer **Nick Ross** will showcase new work inspired by Aberdeen's Seven Incorporated Trades. The project known as 'The Doric Boule' connects ideas of local power and influence to a wider view of the world. A public meeting point will be created in the city's Marischal quad made not just from local stone but from varieties of granite from across the world.
- Ruby Pester and Nadia Rossi are set to launch Look Again @ Garthdee Campus this year with their project '**Inflato – Optical Image Intensifier**'. The exhibition by the Glasgow duo includes a series of large scale, site specific inflatable and wearable

sculptures which were inspired by some of the curious measuring and optical instruments from the early pharmacy, engineering and domestic science schools.

- Working with Gray's School of Art painting collection, **Stephanie Smith and Eddie Stewart** will curate an exhibition that reinterprets the tradition of the nude in a potentially provocative installation. The pair who have worked together for 24 years will engage the viewer with ideas about the nature of relationships, the body and its context, separation, unity and ultimately mortality.

Hilary Nicoll, associate director of Look Again added: "The festival isn't about parachuting a festival into the city and leaving again. Creating a lasting legacy and vibrant arts and design community in the north-east is our driving purpose. Giving artists in the region the opportunity to showcase their work alongside these established national artists is huge and we support this with a far-reaching mentoring and support programme."

Look Again is delivered through a partnership between Robert Gordon University (RGU) and Aberdeen-based art curators SMART. Now in its third year, the 2016 festival attracted more than 23,000 visitors in just four days.

In addition to the four-day city centre programme, which takes place between 27 April and 1 May 2017, an extensive campus showcase will be held at Robert Gordon University's Garthdee Campus between 20 April and 24 April 2017. It will be the largest campus exhibition the university has held.

Professor Chris O'Neil, Head of Gray's School of Art at Robert Gordon University, said: "It should be of no surprise to anybody that Aberdeen, one of the most unique, internationalist and majestic of all Scottish cities, is attracting artists of this standing and calibre.

"Look Again is an invitation to the world to consider and reflect upon our city. Look Again is also an invitation to US, the people of Aberdeen. Our city is amazing and the third Look Again Festival will help us to see it anew."

This year's festival secured record funding, attracting a combined £93k through grants from the National Lottery through Creative Scotland's Open Project Fund and Aberdeen City Council. The public body which supports the arts, screen and creative industries across Scotland contributed £73k to the annual festival – more than double its funding package in 2016. Robert Gordon University has also provided substantial support to the event.

Amanda Catto, head of visual arts at Creative Scotland added: "Look Again is a young festival that has achieved a lot in its first two years. The festival has demonstrated both its curatorial ambition and also a clear appetite for visual art and design programming in the North East. We look forward with much excitement to this year's programme."

More than 25,000 snapshot programmes have been distributed across the city this week. To keep up to speed with the festival, follow Look Again across its social media channels or visit www.lookagainfestival.co.uk.

Ends

Media Contact:

For further information, or to arrange an interview with the festival organisers, please contact: Alison Ellis, Director of Korero: 07988050980 or alison@korero.co.uk or Claire McCabe: 07789 902255 or claire@korero.co.uk

Notes to editors:

Look Again Visual Art & Design Festival is spearheaded by a collaboration between Robert Gordon University and local art agency SMART, the festival is now in its second year. It aims to establish Aberdeen as a centre of excellence for contemporary visual art and design while leaving a lasting legacy for the region. It encourages people to become tourists in their own city and have a fresh appreciation and understanding of their surroundings

SMART is one of the north-east's leading art agencies. They run art projects and support established and emerging artists/designers by providing platforms for them to exhibit and sell their work to the wider community of Aberdeen and beyond; this is achieved through gallery programmes and pop-up events. For more visit

www.wearesmart.co.uk

<http://www.wearesmart.co.uk>

Robert Gordon University (RGU) provides industry led undergraduate and postgraduate courses leading to highly relevant awards and degrees. Situated on one of the most beautiful campuses in the UK, the university is investing £120m in a master plan development project aimed at providing all staff and students with state-of-the-art facilities. Teaching staff have an outstanding reputation for quality and academic research and our track record in graduate employment is the best in Scotland. The range of degree courses include online degrees as well as traditionally taught courses in subjects as diverse as art and design, management and engineering.

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. For further information about Creative Scotland please visit www.creativescotland.com. Follow us @creativescots and

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