

Press release under embargo until 09:30am Wednesday 15th July 2020

Edinburgh Art Festival to mark intended 2020 edition dates with a series of artist responses, online and around the city

30 July – 30 August 2020

IMAGES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

It was with great sadness that, in April this year, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 edition of Edinburgh Art Festival was cancelled. Now, as Edinburgh begins to emerge from lockdown and we reflect on a period of unprecedented global change and upheaval, Edinburgh Art Festival have invited ten artists from previous festival editions, to mark the dates of what would have been their 2020 festival (30 July – 30 August).

Ruth Ewan; Ellie Harrison; Tam Joseph; Calvin Z Laing; Peter Liversidge; Tamara MacArthur; Rosalind Nashashibi; Rae-Yen Song; Shannon Te Ao; and Hanna Tuulikki will each present work as part of this August offering. Combining archival presentations chosen for their resonance in relation to the current context (local and global), alongside specially conceived responses, the selection includes online screenings and live performances, available via the [festival website](#) from the 30th July as well as a small number of projects appearing in public sites around the city.

The selection is informed by and seeks to reflect on the profound personal and societal impacts of this global pandemic – as we look to find new ways of communicating and being together; to confront the urgent inequalities in our society; and to imagine new futures.

Above all, the festival is guided by a desire to connect with artists and audiences, as we look forward with optimism to returning next year: **29 Jul to 29 Aug 2021**.

Online and Around the City

Ruth Ewan revisits her *Sympathetic Magick* (2018) project, where she invited magicians to consider how they might use their magic to change the world; with an online presentation of her short film, *Worker's Song Storydeck* (devised with magician Billy Reid), and a special poster series devised with magician Ian Saville, calling upon all of us to join together in a 'mass action for the radical transformation of society'.

Artist and activist **Ellie Harrison** (2012 and 2014 festival programmes) presents an up-to-date version of her graph showing the ***Tonnes of carbon produced by the personal transportation of a 'professional artist'*** at a city centre poster site. Created through the meticulous analysis of the 3,988 journeys she has made over the last 17 years, Harrison makes connections between literal and social mobility and highlights the consequences of our travel choices for our climate, which have come into focus in all our lives during lockdown.

Tam Joseph re-presents *The hand made map of the world*, first presented as a billboard in the 2014 festival. Transforming and subverting the 'World Political Map', Joseph playfully renames familiar landmasses (America becomes China; United Kingdom becomes Cuba) to lay bare the destructive quest for territorial control which has dominated geopolitics over the centuries, and critique the supposed ideological neutrality of maps. Sited on The Meadows, Joseph is drawn to the history of this green space, which in 1886 hosted the International Exhibition of Art, Industry and Science.

Calvin Z. Laing (whose film *Calvin & Metro*, featured in our 2012 programme) revisits the neighbourhood of his childhood in the suburbs of Edinburgh to present a new online performance *Calvin & Jogging*. Reflecting on how lockdown for many has resulted in a return to the family home and memories, as well as taking up new reactive activities, the artist uses humour and the tools of stand up to explore nostalgia, and the disintegration of public and private space.

Peter Liversidge revisits his 2013 festival commission *Flags for Edinburgh* which invited buildings across the city to fly a white flag that reads HELLO. As we emerge from an extended period of isolation, and look to find new ways to be together, Liversidge invites organisations and communities across Edinburgh, alongside partner August Edinburgh festivals to send a collective greeting to each other and the wider world; with HELLOs flying from rooftops across the city, including libraries, hotels, galleries, museums, consulates, schools and community parks.

Flags for Edinburgh coincides with the launch of Liversidge's *Sign Painting Studio* at [Jupiter Artland](#), where members of the public can order a placard to be painted and take away for free, created with Jupiter's ORBIT Youth Council, a group of 16 to 18 year olds recruited from every corner of Scotland.

Following on from her 2019 *Art Late* performance at Dovecot Studios, **Tamara MacArthur** creates a new online performance investigating our desire for closeness and contemporary methods devised to simulate human contact in a time of social distancing. For *It's All Over But the Dreaming*, the artist will perform live from an elaborate theatrical set built in her studio, holding close a hand-made life-size doll, to explore themes of loneliness, yearning and futility in relation to the enforced isolation we have experienced since Coronavirus.

Rosalind Nashashibi shares an online presentation of her two-part film commissioned for the 2019 edition of the festival, following a group of individuals coming together in preparation for an experimental journey into space, to explore the importance of storytelling and love in the building and sustaining of community.

Rae-Yen Song expands on a project for the 2018 festival, to add to an ongoing familial collaboration, *Song Dynasty*. Presented both online and as a poster at a site in the city chosen for its special connection to the artist's family, the work draws on autobiography and fantasy to speak broadly and politically about foreignness and the position of the Other, archiving a modern myth that settles and lives through virtual, imagined and public spaces.

Shannon Te Ao's two screen video installation ***With the sun aglow, I have my pensive moods***, commissioned for the 2017 festival edition, is a poetic meditation on themes of love, grief, sickness and healing. Taking its title from a tribal lament composed by Te Rohu (daughter of Tūwharetoa chief, Mananui Te Heu Heu), Te Ao counterposes cinematic references, using footage shot at a number of locations within Te Ao's tribal lands including some of the farm lands which directly encircle the urupa (familial burial grounds) of Te Ao's family.

Hanna Tuulikki's ***Sing Sign: a close duet***, commissioned for the 2015 edition, reflects on that innate human desire to communicate and connect, a vocal and gestural suite devised for the historic 'closes' of Edinburgh – the small alleyways that lead off either side of the Royal Mile. Tuulikki also presents a special live performance of an extract from the work online, with her collaborator Daniel Padden – looking to the performative possibilities of the digital technology which has become such a critical tool for us all in recent months.

This series of responses has been made possible thanks to the support of the Scottish Government Expo Fund and EventScotland, part of VisitScotland's Events Directorate.

The festival's online offering also includes a free art activity series **DIY Art** - specially designed by artists, inviting children and their parent/carer to get creative at home.

Support for artists in the early stages of their career

Despite the cancellation of the festival this year, we are delighted to confirm that **Platform**, the festival's annual showcase supporting artists in the early stages of their careers to make and present new work, returns with a physical exhibition in the Autumn.

Selected from an open call by artist Ruth Ewan, and curator Sophia Hao, (Cooper Gallery, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design), four artists based in Scotland –

Rabindranath Bhose, Mark Bleakley, Rhona Jack and Susannah Stark have been selected to take part, with further details being released later in the coming weeks.

Platform: 2020 is made possible thanks to the PLACE Programme, a partnership between Edinburgh Festivals, Scottish Government, City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland.

Black Lives Matter Mural Trail

Edinburgh Art Festival are pleased to also support the [Black Lives Matter Mural Trail](#) – a new public trail of artworks by Scottish BAME artists in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, led by creative producer Wezi Mhura. More details will be announced on the festival website shortly.

Galleries start to reopen

As we emerge from lockdown, festival partners are busy making plans to reopen their galleries, studios and production spaces across the city. For further details, [click here](#).

Sorcha Carey, Director, Edinburgh Art Festival said: *“It is hard to imagine an Edinburgh without festivals this Summer. We, along with our colleagues in the August festivals, will miss welcoming artists to the city this year and the opportunity to engage with audiences from Edinburgh and around the world - not least because, at a time of such significant global change, art offers a vitally important space for collective reflection, and to imagine new possibilities.*

I would like to thank all the artists who have so generously agreed to contribute a response to our August offering, and have risen creatively to the challenges of presenting work despite the ongoing restrictions. We very much look forward to being back next year, and in the meantime we are sending a hello from Edinburgh to friends across the city and around the world.”

Edinburgh Art Festival returns next year from 29 Jul to 29 Aug 2021 - as always working closely with the festival’s partner galleries, and alongside the extended network of August festivals, to celebrate the work of artists with audiences and communities across the city.

ENDS/

Edinburgh Art Festival digital work is presented from 30th July via

www.edinburghartfestival.com and via social channels:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EdArtFest

Twitter: [@EdArtFest](https://twitter.com/EdArtFest)

Instagram: [@EdArtFest](https://www.instagram.com/EdArtFest)

Press Enquiries

For any press enquiries on Edinburgh Art Festival, please contact Kate Bouchier-Hayes – kate@thecornershoppr.com or 07825 335489.

IMAGES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

ARTIST BIOS AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

Notes to Editors

At the beginning of April, Edinburgh Art Festival and its partner August festivals, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Edinburgh International Festival and the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, announced that they would not be happening as planned in 2020.

Edinburgh Art Festival 2020 was due to take place from 30 July – 30 August.

About Edinburgh Art Festival

Founded in 2004, Edinburgh Art Festival is the platform for the visual arts at the heart of Edinburgh’s August festivals, bringing together the capital’s leading galleries, museums, production facilities and artist-run spaces in a city-wide celebration of the very best in visual art. Each year, the festival features leading international and UK artists alongside the best

emerging talent, major survey exhibitions of historic figures, and a special programme of newly commissioned artworks that respond to public and historic sites in the city. Edinburgh Art Festival is a registered charity supported by Creative Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council.

www.edinburghartfestival.com

Creative Scotland

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 www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland

The City of Edinburgh Council

The City of Edinburgh Council is a funding partner for Edinburgh Art Festival. The Council aims to maintain and build on Edinburgh's reputation as the ideal location for major events and festivals. Working with the city's cultural sector, the Council's arts development team ensures that arts play a vital and lasting role in Edinburgh by developing strategic policy, offering advice on cultural projects and awarding cultural grants.

The Scottish Government Expo Fund

The Expo Fund aims to build innovation across Scotland's leading festivals, helping to promote Scottish artists overseas and showcasing Scottish creativity through ambitious projects. Since 2008 the fund has awarded more than £25 million to Edinburgh's festivals, leaving a lasting legacy of new works and tourism opportunities.

EventScotland

EventScotland is working to make Scotland the perfect stage for events. By developing an exciting portfolio of sporting and cultural events EventScotland is helping to raise Scotland's international profile and boost the economy by attracting more visitors. For further information about EventScotland, its funding programmes and latest event news visit www.EventScotland.org. Follow EventScotland on Twitter @EventScotNews.

EventScotland is a team within VisitScotland's Events Directorate, the national tourism organisation which markets Scotland as a tourism destination across the world, gives support to the tourism industry and brings sustainable tourism growth to Scotland. For more information about VisitScotland see www.visitscotland.org or for consumer information on Scotland as a visitor destination see www.visitscotland.com.