

Edinburgh Art Festival launches today

It is the Festival season. Today it's the time for Edinburgh Art Festival (EAF) to announce its 2015 programme which combines ambitious presentations of Scottish and international contemporary art alongside major solo and survey shows of artists from the 20th century and historic movements.

As the UK's largest annual festival of visual arts, attracting nearly 300,000 attendances in 2014, EAF will this year present over 40 exhibitions across more than 30 of Edinburgh's leading museums, galleries and institutions, as well as artist-run spaces and unexpected pop-up locations. Continuing its support for the next generation of Scottish artists, for the first time this year the festival will issue an open call for proposals by early career artists to be selected by a panel led by Director Sorcha Carey, alongside critically-acclaimed artist Christine Borland and emerging Scottish artist Craig Coulthard.

Highlights include:

- Internationally-renowned artists introduced to UK audiences for the first time, including the first solo exhibitions in Scotland by Phyllida Barlow, Hanne Darboven, Kwang Young Chun and Beatrice Gibson; the first solo exhibition in a public gallery by American artist John Chamberlain and the first large-scale solo show in the UK by New York-based Tara Donovan.
- New work by Scotland's leading contemporary practitioners, including Toby Paterson at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop and Sara Barker at Jupiter Artland; alongside two comprehensive surveys of Scottish art through the centuries at City Art Centre and The Queen's Gallery.

- □ Major art historical surveys including Lee Miller and Picasso, Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher, 18th century portraiture by Jean-Étienne Liotard and the pioneer of Pop Art Roy Lichtenstein presented across the National Galleries of Scotland, in addition to much-loved Scottish artists John Bellany at Open Eye Gallery and Joan Eardley at The Scottish Gallery.
- □ A strong focus on photography, contemporary and historic, including David Bailey at Scottish National Gallery, a major survey of the invention and development of photography in the Victorian period at the National Museum of Scotland, new work by political duo kennardphillips at Stills and Canadian artist Derek Michael Besant at Edinburgh Printmakers.
- □ New work commissioned as part of the EAF 2015 commissions programme, presented across the city in unexpected and forgotten locations by emerging and established artists, including Charles Avery, in partnership with Ingleby Gallery where the artist is the subject of a new solo exhibition, and Marvin Gaye Chetwynd.
- □ A newly-launched open call to early career artists which will provide a platform for a minimum of three Scotland-based artists, selected in close collaboration with Christine Borland and Craig Coulthard, both who have been commissioned to create a new work for EAF's programme.
- □ Exhibitions by the next generation of talent in Scotland and beyond, including Samara Scott and Lauren Gault at Jupiter Artland, France-Lise McGurn and Beatrice Gibson at Collective and a group show at one of Edinburgh's newest venues, The Number Shop.

Sorcha Carey, Director of Edinburgh Art Festival, said:

“As the only major annual festival dedicated to visual arts within Scotland and the UK, Edinburgh Art Festival occupies a uniquely important place in the cultural

calendar. The youngest of Edinburgh's summer festivals, the breadth and quality of our exhibitions programme is unrivalled, and this year we are particularly pleased to be introducing so much international work to UK audiences for the first time. We are also delighted to continue our support of early career artists through a newly launched open call, which will provide support and an international platform for artists based in Scotland who are at the beginning stages of their careers."

Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs, said:

"Today's launch shows once again why the Edinburgh Art Festival is such an important platform for visual art in Scotland and internationally. The programme is both ambitious and inventive, demonstrating Scotland's reputation as a creative nation to audiences across the world.

Through the Scottish Government Expo Fund, we are proud to support the Edinburgh Art Festival and their work with leading and emerging Scottish artists. Each summer, Edinburgh truly becomes 'The Improbable City' awash with artists and cultural events. The commissioned public displays are important to introducing visual art to a wider audience. They have now become an iconic part of the festivals and for many of the works – such as the Scotsman Steps – the city of Edinburgh itself."

Amanda Catto, Portfolio Manager for Visual Arts at Creative Scotland, said:

"Edinburgh Art Festival makes a significant contribution to the city's summer festivals, providing a vital platform for the visual arts, from the emerging to the internationally significant. There is a quality and diversity in this year's programme that will engage people, spark debate and inspire and we are very proud to support the festival's continued

development through our Regular Funding portfolio.”

Councillor Richard Lewis, the city’s new Festivals and Events Champion, said:

“Edinburgh Art Festival has delivered another fantastic and diverse programme for 2015, which includes exciting new artworks for public galleries and spaces in the capital. As the largest visual arts festival in the UK, it brings the very best in this field from across the globe to Edinburgh, greatly enhancing the city’s excellent reputation as home to the world’s greatest festivals. This year it is especially exciting to hear that new artists who are just starting out in their careers will be able to apply to work in close collaboration with Christine Borland and the Festival, in a move that could help to boost these artists’ careers.”