

# Edinburgh Art Festival 2020 – month long celebration planned

The Edinburgh Art Festival 2020 is going ahead with ten artists from previous festivals.

They include Ruth Ewan, Ellie Harrison, Tam Joseph, Calvin Z Laing, Peter Liversidge, Tamara MacArthur, Rosalind Nashashibi, Rae-Yen Song, Shannon Te Ao and Hanna Tuulikki.

The presentations will be of previous work but it has been chosen for the way that it still has relevance to the current local and global context. There will be online screenings and live performances all available on the festival website for the month.

The aim is to reflect on the profound personal and societal impacts of the global pandemic. Everything is available through the Festival website from 30 July and there will be some art out of doors in public sites too.

## 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'.



Ruth Ewan, 'Worker's Song' card deck routine performed by Billy Reid film still, 2018.

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.



Timelines 2006 Ellie Harrison. Installed at HeK, Basel in 2015. Photo © Marco Frauchiger

**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.



Tam Joseph, *The hand made map of the world*, 2014. Courtesy of the artist

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





Calvin Laing

**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.



Peter Liversidge, *Flags for Edinburgh*, 2013. Photo Stuart Armitt

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.



Tamara MacArthur, *If I Were A Weeping Willow Drowning In My Tears*, The Garment Factory, 2019

**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.



Rosalind Nashashibi, Part One Where there is a joyous mood, there a comrade will appear to share a glass of wine, film stills, 2019. Courtes

**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.





Rae-Yen Song, *Song Dynasty* 2018 film still. Courtesy the artist

**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.



4. Shannon Te Ao, *With the sun aglow*\_still

**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 on-line, 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.



3\_Hanna Tuulikki SING SIGN a close duet\_2015\_image credit

Robin Gillanders

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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 July to 29 August 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.