

EAF 2021 brings month long celebration of Scottish, UK and International visual art

Edinburgh Art Festival Officially getting underway from 29th July, and going through to 29th August 2021, the 17th edition of Edinburgh Art Festival brings together over 35 exhibitions and new commissions in visual art spaces across the city, complemented by an online programme of events and digital presentations.

Following last year's cancellation and an exceptionally challenging period for the creative sector, this year, more than any, we are proud to cast a spotlight on the uniquely ambitious, inventive and thoughtful programming produced each year by Edinburgh's visual art community.



Isaac Julien, CBE, RA – Lessons of Hour at the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art

This year's programme continues to place collaboration at its heart, with a series of festival-led commissions and premieres devised and presented in close partnership with leading visual arts organisations and a specially invited programme of new commissions curated in partnership with an Associate Artist.

All our festival venues will be following the latest Scottish

Government Covid guidelines to ensure visitor safety, and we will be keeping our website regularly updated on what audiences can expect during their visit.

Highlights from the 2021 Festival Programme –

Our festival-led programming features major new commissions and presentations by leading international artists, including the UK & European premiere of Lessons of the Hour by Isaac Julien in partnership with National Galleries of Scotland; and two new festival co-commissions, with work by Sean Lynch in collaboration with Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop; and a sound installation by Emeka Ogboh with Talbot Rice Gallery.





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"I will not back the blood-stained money."
Frederick Douglass, January 29, 1846, Dundee

"I am here to speak for those who
cannot speak for themselves, to plead
the cause of the perishing slave..."
Frederick Douglass, Arbroath, February 12, 1848

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Isaac Julien, CBE, RA – Lessons of Hour at the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art

In a new approach for the festival, we are delighted to collaborate with Glasgow based artist, film-maker and programmer, Tako Taal as Associate Artist. Responding to the festival's invitation to reflect on themes and ideas emerging from Isaac Julien's Lessons of the Hour, Taal has invited new commissions for public and digital spaces, by a new generation of artists living and working in Scotland: Chizu Anucha, Sequoia Barnes, Francis Dosoo, Thulani Rachia, Camara Taylor and Matthew Arthur Williams.

We will also see the return of Platform, the festival's annual showcase supporting artists in the early stages of their careers to make and present new work – with Jessica Higgins, Danny Pagarani, Kirsty Russell and Isabella Widger invited to create new work for Platform: 2021 at Institut français d'Ecosse.

There will also be chance to discover new generation artists at some of our partner galleries across Edinburgh, including the work of Satellite participant Alison Scott at Collective, Sekai Machache at Stills, Andrew Gannon at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop and gobscore at Edinburgh Printmakers.

Solo presentations across the capital include Christine Borland at Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Alberta Whittle and Rachel Maclean at Jupiter Artland, Frank Walter at Ingleby Gallery, Ian Hamilton Finlay at The City Art Centre, Sonia Mehra Chawla at Edinburgh Printmakers, Jock McFadyen at Dovecot Studios and a major exhibition by the artist Karla Black for the newly developed and reopened Fruitmarket and Alison Watt at The Scottish Portrait Gallery.



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Platform: 2021 at Institut français d'Ecosse.

This year's edition will also feature important retrospectives and major survey shows including The Galloway Hoard: Viking-age Treasure at National Museum of Scotland, Victoria & Albert: Our Lives in Watercolour at The Queen's Gallery and Archie Brennan at Dovecot Studios.

Edinburgh's commercial galleries present a richly diverse offering including; a new group show from Arusha Gallery and Ella Walker, Shaun Fraser and Will Maclean at The Fine Art Society, Leon Morrocco at Open Eye Gallery and the centenary of the birth of Joan Eardley is marked with an extensive new show at The Scottish Gallery.

The festival is also planning a series of digital events, to include artist and curator conversations, bespoke tours through the programme, events and activities for families and community groups, as well as newly commissioned work for digital space.







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Sorcha Carey, Director, Edinburgh Art Festival said: “Festivals have always offered a space for gathering, and this year more than any, we are proud to come together with partners across the city to showcase the work of artists from Scotland, the UK and around the world. Some exhibitions are newly made in response to the seismic shifts of the past year; others are the result of many years of planning and careful research; but all are the unique, authentic, and thoughtful products of our city’s extraordinarily rich visual art scene.

The past year has revealed how precarious things can be for artists and creative freelancers, as well as for the institutions and organisations that support the production and presentation of their work. As our summer festival season gets underway, and we look forward to welcoming audiences safely back to the festival and our city, now more than ever we need the space for community and reflection that art and artists can provide.”

Culture Minister Jenny Gilruth said: “Edinburgh Art Festival shines a spotlight on the ambitious, inventive and thoughtful work being produced by Scotland’s visual arts community.

“I am pleased to see that the 17th edition of the Edinburgh Art Festival has brought together over 35 live exhibitions and new commissions, including a series of creative new works by six Scottish artists supported by £135,000 from the Scottish Government’s Festivals Expo Fund.





Platform: 2021 at Institut français d'Ecosse.

“A further £215,000 has been awarded through our PLACE programme to provide greater opportunities for artists at the beginning of their careers. I look forward to seeing the results of the Festival’s work during this challenging time.”

For more information, please visit www.edinburghartfestival.com or follow the festival on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @EdArtFest #EdArtFest #ArtUnlocks

Edinburgh Art Festival runs from 29 July – 29 August 2021.