

New Geographies, a new three-year project, invites the public to nominate locations for ten site-specific art works across the East of England



Clockwise from top left: abandoned Tesco store, Cambridgeshire; Dead oak trees in Mundon, Essex. © Rwenland. 2010; Chapel of St Peter-On-The-Wall, Bradwell-on-Sea; Pontins Holiday Park, Norfolk

The East Contemporary Visual Arts Network (ECVAN) is delighted to announce the launch of New Geographies, a three-year Arts Council England-funded project that invites members of the public to nominate locations for 10 major site-specific visual arts commissions across the East of England.

ECVAN is seeking 'overlooked or unexpected places' in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Nominations submitted thus far include the Petrified Forest of Mundon, Essex; the Concrete Pyramid off Great Yarmouth's coast; The Chapel of St Peter-On-The-Wall in Bradwell-on-Sea; the abandoned Tesco site in Chatteris, Cambridgeshire; and Pontins Holiday Park, Hemsby.

New Geographies officially starts on 18th July 2017, with nominations submitted via a dedicated website (www.newgeographies.uk) until **22nd October 2017**. Following further consultation, ten leading UK and international artists will be commissioned, with the first announcement made in January 2018. The commissions will be unveiled in Summer 2018, Autumn 2018, Spring 2019, Summer 2019 and Autumn 2019. The commissions will be accompanied by an extensive community engagement programme and an artist and curator development initiative.

www.newgeographies.uk

Follow #Newgeog for social media updates on the project.

  @newgeog

Donna Lynas, Director, Wysing Arts Centre and Chair, ECVAN, says:

‘The idea is for us to create a new map of the East of England, one based on personal thoughts and reflections rather than historical or economic centres. Any location will be considered, whether poetic or prosaic, and if selected artists will respond to these places by making work that will be sited in each of the locations. We hope these new commissions will be enjoyed not only by the people and communities that nominated them, but also bring visitors who will be able to explore the East of England through this new map of ideas and reflections; these New Geographies.’

Hedley Swain, Area Director, South East, Arts Council England, said:

‘New Geographies is an exciting project that will explore the unique landscapes and rich heritage of the East of England and then immortalise them through the creation of new contemporary art works. Community engagement really sits at the heart of this project and I look forward to seeing many more people of all ages and backgrounds getting out to see contemporary visual art, and perhaps being inspired as artists themselves.’

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the East Contemporary Visual Arts Network (ECVAN):

ECVAN delivers collaborative projects with visual arts organisations, artists and curators from across the eastern region. It explores new ways of working together to build on the region's diverse and exciting range of activity, delivering projects that support artists and the arts infrastructure.

To date, ECVAN has achieved a successful programme of exhibitions, events, public talks, training workshops, staff development opportunities, knowledge sharing events, and the production of a print portfolio, Eastern Pavilions, in 2011 supported by a network of patrons and region wide events.

The ECVAN steering committee currently includes; Art Exchange, University of Essex, Colchester; Bedford Creative Arts; Black Barn Project Space, Norfolk; Deborah Smith Projects; Departure Lounge, Luton; East Gallery^{NUA}, Norwich University of the Arts; Focal Point Gallery, Southend; Kettle's Yard, Cambridge; Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery; Outpost, Norwich; The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich; Smiths Row, Bury St Edmunds; The Minories, Colchester School of Art; University of Hertfordshire Galleries, Hatfield & St Albans; Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge; freelance curators Lynda Morris and Kath Wood; and artists Sarah Evans and David Kefford (Aid & Abet).

The ECVAN network has recently been exploring opportunities to develop collaborations with artists and institutions in the Netherlands. Its aim is to establish long-term partnerships and develop collaboration and co-commissioning opportunities.

About the New Geographies and its partner organisations:

New Geographies is financed by a £600,000 grant from Arts Council England's Ambition for Excellence fund, which was established to stimulate and support ambition, talent and excellence across the arts sector in England. It is administered by ECVAN and is being developed with nine galleries, museums and academic institutions in the region: Art Exchange, University of Essex Colchester; East Gallery^{NUA}, Norwich University of the Arts; Firstsite, Colchester; Focal Point Gallery, Southend; Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge; Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery; originalprojects;, Great Yarmouth; UH Galleries, University of Hertfordshire; and Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge. ECVAN will also work alongside a host of additional local partners including Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Vivacity Peterborough and CPP Marketplace, Fenlands & Forest Heath. More partners will be announced in the coming months.

For more information, please contact Albany Arts Communications:

www.newgeographies.uk

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Art Exchange

Placing the artist at its core, Art Exchange is a space where art, artists and audiences can meet. Their programme of exhibitions, talks and events creates a platform for ideas to be exchanged and connections to be made. Since 1989 they have been showing international contemporary art by established and emerging artists, historic figures who continue to inspire, and group shows relevant to current debate. Sited at the University of Essex in Colchester, Art Exchange are inspired by an intellectually curious audience, while the research and study around them feeds into the programme of talks, films and debate. Combined with family days, workshops with schools and outreach activity, they offer ways for everyone to get involved and enjoy great art.

East Gallery^{NUA}

East Gallery^{NUA} is an exciting contemporary exhibition space in Norwich city centre, funded by Norwich University of the Arts. The gallery hosts a range of exhibitions with a focus on contemporary art, design, architecture and media practice that broadly reflect the taught specialisms of the University. Shows range from major national touring exhibitions such as the *British Art Show 8*, to shows originated by the University. The gallery has a wide range of national and international partners including commercial galleries, trusts and foundations. Norwich University of the Arts has developed and held the influential show, *East International* from 1991 onwards.

Firstsite

Founded in 1994, Firstsite is a public contemporary art gallery in Colchester, Essex. Over the last fifteen years it has gained a strong reputation, presenting ambitious work to new audiences in the East of England and beyond. Situated in Colchester's 'cultural quarter,' the present building was designed by Uruguayan architect Rafael Viñoly, and opened in 2011. Firstsite is a partner of Plus Tate, which uses Tate's resources to contribute to a network of arts organisations across the country, and to increase public access to the national collection of British and international modern and contemporary art.

Focal Point Gallery

Focal Point Gallery is south Essex's gallery for contemporary visual art, promoting and commissioning major solo exhibitions, group and thematic shows, a programme of events including performances, film screenings and talks, as well as offsite projects and temporary public artworks. The organisation currently produces up to seven gallery exhibitions each year, in which artists and curators are given a platform to make new work in response to the gallery's unique location on the ground floor of the town's new library and learning facility, The Forum.

Kettle's Yard

Kettle's Yard is an internationally renowned house and gallery at the University of Cambridge. The house, with its beautiful display of twentieth century art, furniture and found objects, opened in 1957. It was the home of Jim Ede (1895 – 1990), a former curator at the Tate Gallery. Since 1970, Kettle's Yard has presented a dynamic programme of exhibitions, music, events and activities, often inspired by the house and collection. Kettle's Yard is currently closed at Castle Street for a major building project. The closure has been an opportunity to display art from the collection in new places and spaces in Cambridge and across the UK, as well as instigate innovative creative programmes with schools, young people and local communities.

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery was built by the Normans as a Royal Palace over 900 years ago. It is now a museum and art gallery and home to some of the most outstanding collections of fine and decorative arts, archaeology and natural history, not only in the region but the country. Norwich Castle has an established reputation for staging innovative and engaging contemporary art exhibitions of national significance that have enabled regional audiences access to art of the highest quality. Artists based regionally, nationally and internationally have been showcased via partnership exhibitions, ambitious new commissions, international residencies as well as smaller scale events and discussions. Over the next few years, major investment from the Heritage Lottery Fund is set to transform the Castle's iconic Keep into a world-class visitor experience.

www.newgeographies.uk

originalprojects;

originalprojects; began work in Norwich in 2002 as an amorphous group of artists working to deliver a range of projects that provided opportunities for artists and the public to present and share ideas. The organisation has just undertaken *Eastern Prospects*, a 6-month research project supported by public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England, Norfolk County, with additional support from Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust. Building relationships with local stakeholders, originalprojects; are currently formalising their organisation and obtaining premises in Great Yarmouth that will act as a social space for hosting and presentation, and a base to deliver their work, collaborating with artists, local communities, industries and heritage in order to produce extraordinary outcomes.

UH Galleries

UH Galleries is a department of the University of Hertfordshire and operates as a de facto independent contemporary art gallery delivering a programme led by the most innovative developments in contemporary visual arts, design and the crafts across two public gallery spaces in St Albans (currently under construction as the New Museum and Art Gallery) and Hatfield. Having operated for over 20 years, UH Galleries is also a major contributor to the landscape of touring exhibitions in the English regions and has successfully collaborated with numerous nationally significant galleries in the realisation of major projects and accompanying publications with emerging British and international artists.

Wysing Arts Centre

Wysing Arts Centre is a registered charity that provides a range of programmes for artistic research, experimentation, discovery and production, out of which emerges an ongoing programme of exhibitions, public events, activity for young people, families and schools. Our large rural site near Cambridge includes a gallery, educational facilities, artists' studios, project spaces, a 17th century farmhouse, a growing collection of outdoor sculpture and an on-site cafe. Wysing is a member of the prestigious Plus Tate network, the Exchange Values network of national galleries which deliver The Syllabus, and is chair and coordinator of the East Contemporary Visual Arts Network.