

Press Release

NEW GEOGRAPHIES ANNOUNCES THE ARTISTS COMMISSIONED TO CREATE TEN SITE-RESPONSIVE ART WORKS ACROSS THE EAST OF ENGLAND



Concrete Pyramid off Great Yarmouth coast, nominated site for a commission

New Geographies and the East Contemporary Visual Arts Network (ECVAN) are delighted to announce the artists selected to create ten major site-responsive visual arts commissions across the East of England.

New Geographies is a three-year project, funded by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, to create a new map of the East of England based on personal thoughts, reflections and stories of unexplored or overlooked places, rather than on historic or economical centres. The first phase of the project invited members of the public to nominate locations for the map in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, over a three-month period in the Summer of 2017.

This resulted in over 270 nominations, including the Petrified Forest of Mundon (Essex), the Concrete Pyramid off Great Yarmouth's coast (Norfolk), an abandoned Tesco supermarket in Chatteris (Cambridgeshire) and Cardington Airship Hangar Site in Bedford (Bedfordshire).

Via an international open call, artists were then invited to submit proposals for artworks inspired by the nominated locations. The final commissions were selected by a panel made up of ECVAN's partner organisations.

www.newgeographies.uk

Follow #Newgeog for social media updates on the project.

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The artists selected are: Maria Anastassiou, David Blandy, Cooking Sections, Ian Giles, Krijn de Koning, Taylor Le Melle & Zadie Xa, susan pui san lok, Studio Morison, Stuart Whipps and Laura Wilson. Each artist will work closely on the realisation of their work with one of the New Geographies partner institutions.

Maria Anastassiou is an artist and filmmaker working with Art Exchange on a film in response to the Tilbury Station site, historically a point of entry for migrants coming into the UK. Set against the transient landscape of the Thames Estuary, which is laden with the traces of ever-shifting industrial, environmental and global narratives, Anastassiou intends to connect with local refugee and migrant groups to explore what 'Life in the UK' (the title of the booklet required to be studied by those seeking UK citizenship) means to them.

David Blandy, working with Focal Point Gallery, has proposed to make a work inspired by the insects and wildlife of Canvey Island. Blandy plans to create a new world within the game 'Dungeons and Dragons', working with local gaming communities to create monsters and characters and using roleplay to create a collective story that imagines new ways of living together.

Daniel Fernández Pascual & Alon Schwabe, who together form **Cooking Sections**, will work with East Gallery^{NUA} on a research-based project that investigates the flash flood risk zone of the East of England, and looks at coastal erosion, climate change and how this impacts food production and diet. Initially focusing on Great Yarmouth, the project will extend to a wider network of coastal towns facing similar environmental, social and economic challenges and will take the form of events, objects and public discussions.

Ian Giles, working with originalprojects; has proposed to establish Queer Rambling clubs around Colchester, Great Yarmouth, Cambridge and Norwich, as a way to connect with LGBTQI+ individuals and groups across the region. Giles is interested in what it means to be queer in a regional setting and the changing status of queer people within society. The project will create rambling walks that span from urban centres out to more rural areas and enable participants to socialise and share both disparate and mutual histories. This will culminate in a film-based work documenting the walks and stories that emerge.

Working with UH Arts, Dutch artist **Krijn de Koning's** work interrupts the environment by adding sculptural and architectural constructions to a given location. They are site-specific and work to emphasise the environment by reframing or reinterpreting the place they respond to. He will undertake site visits throughout Hertfordshire to determine the best place for his commission, starting with the nominated site of the tree stump in Verulamium Park, St. Albans. Containing classical references as well as absurdist expressions, de Konings's structure will become a platform for other events and activities.

Taylor Le Melle & Zadie Xa, working with Kettle's Yard, will produce a collaborative, multifaceted and site-specific performance that aims to transform and activate dormant beachside spaces that were nominated along the North Norfolk coast. Incorporating costumes, written scripts, music and dance, their proposed work is an opera, with a script written by Le Melle and costumes and sets designed by Xa and collaborator Benito Mayor Vallejo. The work will draw on the artists' research into their own ancestry, considering how spiritual formations of Korean and African-American shamanistic traditions relate to notions of self across both diasporas.

susan pui san lok will work with Firstsite on a series of works encompassing moving image, sound and sculpture to commemorate the hundreds of individuals (often single and elderly women) persecuted as 'witches' in the seventeenth century by the self-styled 'Witchfinder General', Matthew Hopkins, who is buried in nearby Mistley Heath at the Church of St Mary. lok's project will 'explore the continuum between the folkloric and [the] historic... [and] how narratives of the magical, mystical and murderous converge – and where wonder and fantasy turn to fear and violence.'

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Studio Morison (Heather Peak and Ivan Morison), working with Wysing Arts Centre, plan to build a sculptural structure that can be used by members of the public to sit, contemplate and read or write. The project is inspired by Peak's childhood memories of visiting the Fens and the Wash, as well as Richard Maybe's book *Nature Cure* – in which he recovers from severe depression through walking, watching and writing about the region's beautiful and unexplored landscapes. The structure will reference local building traditions, materials and architectural vernacular to root the structure in the very landscape it will be a part of. Studio Morison plan to work with local writing, walking and community groups to activate the space, set within the nominated sites of the Fens.

Photographer and filmmaker **Stuart Whipps** will work with UH Arts on a new film that extends his interest in the design and development of post war New Towns such as Stevenage, Harlow and Basildon – potentially reaching more towns across Hertfordshire. The film will be a 'chapter' within a larger body of works that Whipps has been developing in response to the architectural and social histories of these places, and will include a physical intervention in the chosen location.

Laura Wilson, working with Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, will focus on ancient forms of craft through research with archaeologists working on Must Farm, a 3000 year-old Bronze Age settlement near Peterborough. Wilson's project investigates how the body learns, adapts, responds to and performs manual work, and will take the form of a series of events, a film and objects that connect with the region's historical collections.

The 10 commissions will be accompanied by an extensive community engagement programme.

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

'The selection process for the New Geographies commissions was an amazing process; seeing how artists responded to the nominated locations with their own personal histories and narratives. We are pleased to have selected a number of artists with family connections to the East of England, as well as those who can bring new insights and ways of thinking. We have a cohesive group of artists who make a strong statement about valuing people as the starting point for art commissioning, with many different approaches and potential outcomes. All of us at ECVAN are looking forward to getting started.'



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

'Arts Council's strategy is about great art and culture for everyone. This project is therefore particularly exciting in seeing so many people from across the East get involved, nominating places that are special to them for one reason or another. It has put people who live in and around these places right at the heart of the work. The artists selected are all of the highest quality and I am very excited to see what they will create and how the landscapes and communities of the East of England are revealed through their works.'

For more information, please contact Albany Arts Communications:

www.newgeographies.uk

Follow #Newgeog for social media updates on the project.

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Mark Inglefield
mark@albanyartscommunications.com
t: + 44 (0) 20 73 88 09 97
m: + 44 (0) 75 84 19 95 00

Carla von der Becke
carla@albanyartscommunications.com
t: + 44 (0) 20 73 88 09 97
m: + 44 (0) 79 74 25 29 94

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Artists

Maria Anastassiou

Maria Anastassiou (b. 1982, Cyprus) is an artist/filmmaker based in Essex. She uses analogue and digital media in moving image, social practice and curatorial projects. Her work is informed by experimental ethnographic approaches to documentary and structuralist film traditions. She uses the form and application of the filmmaking process as an entry point into responding to place, historical narrative, communities, individuals and other artists. Recent commissions: Bedford Creative Arts (2016, 2017), Creative Europe Program (2015-2017), and Europe for Citizens (2014). Selected shows include: *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art*, curated by Chrissie Iles, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016); *The Equilibrists*, Benaki Museum, Athens (2016); *Contact Artist's Film Festival*, Apiary Studios, London (2016); *Movement in Light: A contemporary expression*, National Portrait Gallery, London (2013); and *Cyprus Dossier 05: Collaborate-Nation!* launched at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013.

David Blandy

David Blandy (b. 1976, UK) lives and works in Brighton and London. He has established his terrain through a series of investigations into the cultural forces that inform and influence him, in recent works examining human consciousness within the digital world. His works slip between performance and video, reality and construct, using references sampled from the wide, disparate sources that provide his (and our own) individualist sense of self. He has exhibited at venues nationally and worldwide such as Bloomberg Space, London; Art Tower Mito, Tokyo, Japan; Kiasma Contemporary Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland; Tate Modern, London; The Baltic, Gateshead; Turner Contemporary, Margate; Spike Island, Bristol; Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Germany; MoMA PS1, New York; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai, China.

Cooking Sections

Cooking Sections (Daniel Fernández Pascual and Alon Schwabe) is a London-based duo of spatial practitioners. They explore the systems that organise the world through food. Using installation, performance and mapping, their research-based practice operates within the overlapping spheres of visual arts, architecture, and geopolitics. They were part of the United States Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2014; residents of The Politics of Food programme at Delfina Foundation, London; and have shown their work at venues including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel; the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; the Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam; and the Centre for Contemporary Architecture, Montreal. They were part of the

2016 Oslo Architecture Triennale and 2016 Brussels ParckDesign and are part of Manifesta12 in Palermo. They lecture internationally and lead an architecture studio at the Royal College of Art in London that investigates the financialisation of the environment.

Ian Giles

Ian Giles (b. 1985, UK) completed his MFA in 2012 at the Slade School of Fine Art, London. He was a LUX Associate Artist for 2012/13. Recent exhibitions, screenings and performances include: *After BUTT*, Chelsea Space, London (2018); *Multiplexing II*, Cineworld Cinema, Glasgow with LUX Scotland (2017); *AsToAsIsTo*, a collaboration with the Youth Forum, Whitechapel Gallery, London (2016); *Connected Works*, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA (2016); *m-Health*, Cell Project Space, London (2015); *Videoclub*, selected UK national tour venues including Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2014); *The In Between*, Carroll/Fletcher, London (2013); 21st Century Screening, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2012) and Whitstable Biennale (2010). He was a resident at Hospitalfield, Scotland in 2017 and awarded a Production Bursary by Spike Island and the Centre for Moving Image Research in 2016.

Krijn de Koning

Krijn de Koning (b. 1963, Amsterdam) creates site-specific sculptures and installations for exhibitions, museums, galleries and public spaces. He constructs his work from floors, walls, rooms and corridors, sometimes in vivid colours, sometimes in natural colours or just in the colour of the space itself. Many of the works can be used: you can enter them, sit on them or stay in them. His interventions raise questions about how architecture conditions us and how certain constructions generate specific meaning. De Koning transforms an existing situation, sometimes literally breaks it down, in order to reveal a different reality. Large projects have been accomplished for the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2010); the Musée de Beaux Arts de Nantes, France (2011) and the Edinburgh Art Festival (2013). Large public works have been created in the cities of Utrecht, the Netherlands (2013), Hasselt, Belgium (2014) and Rennes, France (2018).

Taylor Le Melle & Zadie Xa

Zadie Xa (b. 1983, Vancouver, Canada) studied at the Royal College of Art, London (MA Painting, 2014) and the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Vancouver, Canada (2007). Taylor Le Melle (b. 1988, New York, USA) studied at the University of Glasgow, Scotland (MLitt Art History, 2014) and Cornell University, New York, USA (2009).

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susan pui san lok

susan pui san lok is an artist and writer based in London. Her work ranges across moving image, installation, sound, performance and text, engaging with notions of nostalgia and aspiration, place and migration, translation and diaspora. Projects include solo exhibitions at CFCCA (2016), QUAD (2015), MAI/Montreal Arts Interculturels (2014), and commissions for Film and Video Umbrella, De La Warr Pavilion, BFI Southbank and Cornerhouse/BBC Big Screen. International group exhibitions include Diaspora Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale (2017) and the 1st Asia Biennial / 5th Guangzhou Triennial (2015-2016). Her artist books and multiples include *RoCH Fans and Legends* (2017), *Faster, Higher* (2009), *Golden (Notes)* (2007) and *NEWS* (2005).

Studio Morison

Heather Peak Morison (b. 1973, UK) and Ivan Morison (b. 1974) have established an ambitious collaborative practice over the past fifteen years that transcends the divisions between art, architecture and theatre. Heather and Ivan Morison have exhibited widely across the UK, Europe, Australia, Canada and the USA. Key projects include: *Sleepers Awake*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2014); *All's Well That Ends*, Schauspielhaus Bochum, Germany (2014); *Smile All the While*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2014); *Shadow Curriculum*, South London Gallery, London (2014); *Skirt of the Black Mouth*, Tate Modern, London (2012-15); *Nuclear Family*, National Theatre of Wales (2013); *Black Pleasure*, Eastside Projects, Birmingham (2013); *Anna*, the Hepworth, Wakefield (2012); *Cave*, MK Gallery, Milton Keynes (2012); *Black Pig Lodge*, Southbank Centre, London (2011); *Mr. Clevver*, Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania, Australia (2011); *Plaza*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2010); *The Black Line Void*, Derry, Northern Ireland (2009); *Black Cloud*, Situations, Bristol (2009); *Journée des Barricades*, One Day Sculpture, Wellington, New Zealand (2008); and *And So it Goes*, representing Wales at the 52nd Venice Biennial (2007). Their book, *Falling into Place*, a fictionalised account of their large architectural shelter works, was published by Bookworks in 2009 and made into an audio book by Palaver Press, New York in 2014. A new anthology of their work will be published in 2016 and is edited by Claire Doherty and Gavin Wade.

Stuart Whipps

Stuart Whipps is an artist based in Birmingham, UK. He often makes work about things he doesn't understand and doesn't know how to do. Currently this includes restoring a 1979 Mini with the assistance of former British Leyland workers, training to make geological thin sections at the University of Birmingham and working with a seventeenth century sign language devised by Sir Christopher Wren. He has exhibited his work across the UK and internationally and is the recipient of a number of awards. Selected solo exhibitions include: *Isle of Slingers*, Spike Island, Bristol (2016); *Photo Colour Services*, Ithuba Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa (2015); *Birth Springs*, Death Falls, Flat Time House, London (2013). *Why Contribute to The Spread of Ugliness?*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (2011); and *New Wooabbeleri*, Focal Point Gallery, Southend-On-Sea (2010). Selected group exhibitions include: *British Art Show 8*, UK, 2015 – 2017; *Reference Works: Guangzhou*, Guangzhou, China (2014); *Relatively Absolute*, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridgeshire (2013); *Community Without Propinquity*, MK Gallery, Milton Keynes (2011); and East International, Norwich (2009).

Laura Wilson

Laura Wilson (b. Belfast, UK) is an artist based in London. She is interested in how history is carried and evolves through everyday materials, trades and craftsmanship. She works with specialists to develop sculptural and performative works that amplify the relationship between materiality, memory and tacit knowledge. Wilson's interdisciplinary and research-based works have been exhibited widely including at: The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL, London, UK (2018); SPACE, London; V&A, London; Guest Projects, London and with Invisible Dust and the Humber Museums Partnership for Hull 2017 City of Culture (all 2017); RIBA, London; Site Gallery, Sheffield; and SPACE, London (2016); Whitstable Biennial (2014); Camden Arts Centre, London and Turner Contemporary, Margate (2013); and W139, Amsterdam and De Warande, Turnhout, Belgium (2012). She is a Syllabus II artist (2016/17), was the UK Associate Artist in residence at Delfina Foundation, London in 2016; and the recipient of the Winston Churchill Memorial Travel Fellowship in 2011. She is currently developing new commissions in 2018 with Kettles Yard and the Gurdon Institute, Cambridge and with Block Universe at the British Museum, London.

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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 for New Geographies of the East currently includes: Art Exchange, University of Essex, Colchester; Bedford Creative Arts; Black Barn Project Space, Norfolk; Deborah Smith Projects; East GalleryNUA, Norwich University of the Arts; Firstsite, Colchester; Focal Point Gallery, Southend; Kettle's Yard, Cambridge; Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery; Outpost, Norwich; originalprojects;, Great Yarmouth; The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich; Smiths Row, Bury St Edmunds UH Arts, University of Hertfordshire, 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 GalleryNUA, 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 Arts, University of Hertfordshire; and Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge.

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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.

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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 Arts

UH Arts 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 Arts 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, a ceramics studio and recording studio, project spaces, a 17th century farmhouse, outdoor sculptures and an on-site cafe. Wysing is a member of the prestigious Plus Tate network, and deliver the project The Syllabus alongside five other UK arts organisations, and is chair and coordinator of the East Contemporary Visual Arts Network.

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