



Press Release

19 January 2017

ECVAN successful in ACE Ambition for Excellence bid for New Geographies of the East project

The East Contemporary Visual Arts Network (ECVAN) is pleased to announce an application to Arts Council England's Ambition for Excellence strategic fund has been successful. Receiving a grant of £600,000 over three years will enable ECVAN to deliver a new project: **New Geographies of the East**.

New Geographies of the East is an ambitious programme that will deliver 10 major site-specific visual arts commissions, developed with and for communities in the East of England and with international partners from the Netherlands. The programme will be accompanied by an extensive community engagement programme and an artist and curator development initiative.

The project will develop new audiences for contemporary visual art whilst strengthening and deepening relationships between artists and curators in the East of England and the Netherlands. Nine lead partners from ECVAN will collaborate with three partners in the Netherlands; The Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Casco: Office for Art, Design and Theory and If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want to be Part of Your Revolution. They will work alongside a host of additional local partners including Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Vivacity Peterborough and CPP Marketplace, Fenlands & Forest Heath to name a few.

Hedley Swain, Area Director, South East, Arts Council England, said: *"New Geographies of the East' 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. The international collaboration with the Netherlands is a great testament to the hard work of the East Contemporary Visual Art Network and the talent development opportunities it offers for artists and curators. I know that the community engagement at the heart of this project will encourage more people of all ages and backgrounds to go out and see contemporary visual art, and inspire them as artists in their own right."*

Donna Lynas, Director, Wysing Arts Centre and Chair, ECVAN, said: *"The Contemporary Visual Arts Network in the East of England have been working together since 2009, and together with new community and international partners, we are thrilled that Ambition for Excellence funding will enable our work to move onto a whole new level of ambition. It will allow*

us to support some of the most exciting contemporary art and artists in reaching unexpected spaces and places across the region. We can't wait to get started!"

ECVAN is chaired and coordinated by Wysing Arts Centre. **New Geographies of the East** will be jointly delivered by Art Exchange, University of Essex Colchester; East Gallery, 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; Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge. Support also comes from the full ECVAN steering committee, eight community partners and three Dutch partners. More details will be announced as the project progresses.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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ECVAN delivers collaborative projects with visual arts organisations, artists and curators from across the eastern region. We explore 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.

The **ECVAN** network has recently been exploring opportunities to develop collaborations with artists and institutions in the Netherlands – our closest European neighbour and home to some of the most radical and influential arts organisations in the world. Our aim is to establish long-term partnerships and develop collaboration and co-commissioning opportunities. Our first public event in this new endeavour took place on 2 April 2016 at Focal Point Gallery, Southend in the form of a symposium entitled *Working Together*.

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 called Eastern Pavilions in 2011 supported by a network of patrons and region wide events.

The *EAST Contemporary Visual Arts Network* (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 Minorities, 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).

DELIVERY PARTNERS' BIOGRAPHIES

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've 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} 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 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 developed and held the influential show, East International from 1991 onwards.

Founded in 1994, **Firstsite's** original home was Colchester's eighteenth-century Minories building. In 2011, Firstsite opened an innovative space designed by Rafael Viñoly. The new gallery forms the key part of a masterplan to transform the east of Colchester's historic centre into a cultural quarter and offers Firstsite increased opportunities for both the presentation of exhibitions and the delivery of learning and participation projects. Most recently Firstsite has presented the work of Andy Warhol (as part of the Tate Rooms programme) and Martin Parr. Firstsite is part of the Tate Plus Network and is currently delivering the Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded Circuit Programme designed to engage young people in the gallery programming.

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 is an internationally renowned house and gallery at the University of Cambridge. The house, with its beautiful display of 20th 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 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.

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, 6 months' research supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, Norfolk County, with additional support from Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, exploring locating itself in Great Yarmouth and building relationships with local stakeholders. They 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 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 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 (ECVAN).



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KETTLE'S YARD

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