

THE
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PROJECT

PRESS RELEASE

The Atlantic Project: *After the Future*

- Pilot for a new international biennial festival of contemporary art in the South West of England
- Artists from 12 different countries, include Hito Steyerl, Ryoji Ikeda and SUPERFLEX
- Locations in Plymouth, previously inaccessible to the public for some years, include the empty Civic Centre, Drakes Island and the former Millennium nightclub on Union Street
- Part of Horizon, a two-year programme led by Plymouth Culture, with Arts Council England, in the lead-up to the Mayflower 400 anniversary in 2020

Dates: 28 September – 21 October 2018

Press preview: 27 September 2018

The Atlantic Project is pleased to announce details of its pilot for a new biennial festival of contemporary art in Plymouth (UK) from 28 September - 21 October 2018. Across the city international artists, including Hito Steyerl, Ryoji Ikeda and SUPERFLEX, will present new site-specific commissions in unconventional contexts and outdoor locations, whilst an open platform for artist-led activities will offer opportunities for emerging artists.

Hosted by The Arts Institute at University of Plymouth, The Atlantic Project is part of Horizon, a two-year visual arts development programme (2016-18) led by Plymouth Culture with the financial support of Arts Council England's Ambition for Excellence fund and Plymouth City Council. Curated by Tom Trevor, the project has been developed as a core partnership between The Box (the multi-million pound redevelopment of Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery) and the University of Plymouth, with the ambition to become a regular biennial festival in the South West of England, to be launched as part of the Mayflower 400 programme in 2020.

Artists: **Nilbar Güreş** (Turkey), **Tommy Støckel** (Denmark), **Liu Chuang** (China), **Yan Wang Preston** (UK), **Hito Steyerl** (Germany), **Vermeir & Heiremans** (Belgium), **Kiluanji Kia Henda** (Angola), **Donald Rodney** (UK), **Postcommodity** (USA), **Ryoji Ikeda** (Japan), **Carl Slater** (UK), **SUPERFLEX** (Denmark), **Uriel Orlow** (Switzerland), **Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll** (Australia), **Chang Jia** (South Korea), **Jane Grant & John Matthias** (UK), **Ursula Biemann** (Switzerland), **Bryony Gillard** (UK), **Kranemann + Emmett** (Germany/UK).

Tom Trevor, Artistic Director and curator of The Atlantic Project says: "The visual arts in Plymouth are undergoing an exciting period of change, in the lead-up to the Mayflower 400 anniversary in 2020. Building on a decade of collaboration between exhibition venues, Horizon is a two-year city-wide development programme which aims to grow the whole of the visual arts ecology. The culmination of this process is The Atlantic Project, launching in close collaboration with the Plymouth Art Weekender, as a pilot for a new international festival of contemporary art in the public realm, which sets out to raise the critical profile of visual arts in the region and to be a highly engaging experience for a wide range of audiences that is relevant and distinctive to the locality."

Drawing inspiration from Plymouth's past and present, artworks will be located across the city, encouraging exploration of the historic coastal city, and the discovery of contemporary art in unexpected locations.

On **Armada Way**, the main post-war pedestrian thoroughfare, works by **Nilbar Güreş** and **Tommy Støckel** will be exhibited. In a series of photo-billboards made with local participants, Kurdish artist Güreş will playfully explore the experience of being a displaced person in Plymouth (one of five 'dispersal centres' for asylum seekers in the UK), along with everyday 'exoticism' and the media image of Muslim women in Europe. Linking to the trans-Atlantic history of Plymouth, Støckel will exhibit a concrete sculpture based upon a 3D-scan he has made of the Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts. Alongside the sculpture a mobile app will allow members of the public to imagine the possible future erosion of the rock, that has become an American icon of freedom.

In **House of Fraser** (formerly Dingles) - the first department store to open in the UK after WWII – an 'Atlantic take-over' will include six display windows and a large area on the top floor. This will include **Liu Chuang's** project, *Buying Everything On You*, presenting all of an individual's personal possessions purchased in a single

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transaction on the street, and then exhibited as a 'museum of everyday life'. Only previously performed in China, Liu will attempt a new version in Plymouth, reflecting on the personal experience of globalisation today.

In the modernist-style, Grade II-listed **Civic Centre**, the former administrative centre for Plymouth City Council, **Hito Steyerl** will present a video-work exploring how the contemporary status of citizenship, and the civic, have been affected by the rapid development of global communication technologies, with a dramatic impact on our conception of culture, economics and subjectivity. A new installation by **Kiluanji Kia Henda**, whose work often engages with the colonial past of his home country Angola in a humorous and ironic way, will relate the experience of Soviet-style modernist buildings in Luanda to the post-war civic architecture in Plymouth.

In the **Council House**, the seat of local government, the late **Donald Rodney** (May 1961–March 1998) will be present *in absentia* in the form of an autonomus wheelchair he developed as an artwork *Psalms* (1997), to attend exhibition openings when he was unable to due to Sickle Cell Anaemia. This will mark the artist's return to Plymouth following his participation in the seminal public art project TSWA Four Cities in 1990.

Drakes Island, situated in Plymouth Sound, has been out of bounds to the public since 1995. It is where Francis Drake set sail in 1577 to circumnavigate the globe and a site of military fortifications since Tudor times. The 6.5-acre island, visible from The Hoe, will be the location for a site-specific work by the US-based artists collective, **Postcommodity**. Entitled *Repellent Eye*, the work connects 'Old Europe' to indigenous narratives of cultural self-determination in North America. The 6-metre tethered balloon is an enlarged replica of an agricultural 'scare eye' which the artists noticed use indigenous medicine colours and iconography - the same graphic used by indigenous peoples from South America to Canada for thousands of years.

In the disused **Millennium Building** (formerly The Warehouse nightclub) on Union Street, a pilgrimage destination for clubbers across the UK in the 1980s and 90s, **Ryoji Ikeda** will present his first major site-specific installation in the UK outside of London. *The Radar* uses sound, electronic media and digital data to map the cosmos, creating a sense of sublime abstraction in this vast empty dancehall. Referencing the history of Union Street during the early 1990s, Plymouth-based artist, **Carl Slater** combines site-specific video archives and new moving image as witness to the mass euphoria of collective and embodied club culture.

SUPERFLEX have been working in collaboration with the Plymouth-based **Real Ideas Organisation** (RIO), Plymouth City College and local brewers Summerskills, to develop a community-owned brewery in Devonport, one of the city's most deprived areas. Titled *FREE BEER version 6.0 (the Atlantic brew)*, an 'open-source' brew will be available at venues across the city, including **The Clipper**, a former 24-hour pub on Union Street, now being renovated by the local community as a social enterprise led by Nudge Community Builders.

Four artists' projects will be shown in the **Royal William Yard**, the Royal Navy's victualling yard for 150 years and the largest collection of Grade 1-listed former military buildings in Europe, currently being redeveloped by Urban Splash. **Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll** will create *Cook's New Clothes*, 250 years after James Cook's first voyage to the Pacific, marking the occasion when Joseph Banks boarded HMS Endeavour from Plymouth in 1768. University of Plymouth-based artists, **Jane Grant and John Matthias** will present *Fathom (Atlantic)*, a large-scale sound installation which mixes underwater recordings with live acoustic transmissions from the River Tamar, enabling the audience to 'climb through the fathom' 6ft above the ground.

The **National Marine Aquarium**, the largest aquarium in the UK, will exhibit works by **Ursula Biemann** and **Bryony Gillard**. Biemann's commission *Acoustic Ocean*, filmed on the Lofoten Islands in Northern Norway, sets out to explore the sonic ecology of marine life in the cold North Atlantic. Its central figure is a Sami biologist-diver whose task is to sense the submarine space for acoustic forms of expression in a quest for a future amphibian life world. Cornish artist, Gillard's video *A cap like water, fluid yet with definite body*, takes the work of female modernist poet, Hilda "H.D." Doolittle, and her retreat to the Isles of Scilly in 1919, as a starting point to explore relationships between seascape, women's writing, jellyfish and subjectivity.

The Atlantic Project will launch in close collaboration with the **Plymouth Art Weekender** (28-30 September 2018). A number of associated projects will include **Shezad Dawood's** *Leviathan* at The Dome, produced by **Plymouth Arts Centre**, and the group exhibition, *I AM MY OWN PRIMAL PARENT*, at **KARST**. An opening weekend of events and performances will take place across the city.

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For more information, images or interviews please contact Charlotte at Sutton, charlottes@suttonpr.com | 0207 138 3577

Keep up to date with **The Atlantic Project** on the website www.theatlantic.org

Or follow on: **Facebook** www.facebook.com/AtlanticPlym/

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Instagram www.instagram.com/atlanticplym/

Notes to Editors:

About The Atlantic Project

The Atlantic Project is a pilot for a new international festival of contemporary art in the South West of England, taking place in public contexts across Plymouth from 28 September 2018. In the lead-up to Mayflower 400 in 2020, marking the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' voyage from Plymouth to the 'New World', the aim is to test out the elements that will make up a potential new 'biennial' in the UK. The Atlantic Project has been developed as a core partnership between The Box (formerly Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery) and the University of Plymouth. Hosted by The Arts Institute, The Atlantic Project in 2018 is part of Horizon, a two-year visual arts development programme (2016-18) across the city, led by Plymouth Culture, with funding from Arts Council England's 'Ambition for Excellence' fund and Plymouth City Council. www.theatlantic.org

About the 2018 theme, *After the Future*

Plymouth is a city built upon visions of the future. As a deep-water port, facing the Atlantic Ocean, its history is bound up with maritime exploration in pursuit of the unknown worlds that lie over the horizon. From Francis Drake to Charles Darwin, James Cook to the Mayflower Pilgrims, the legacies of such utopian imaginaries have come to define our contemporary world. Just as the barbaric inhumanity of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the inequities of British colonialism have shaped the precarious conditions of globalization today.

As the largest naval base in Western Europe, Plymouth suffered extensive bombing in WWII and the subsequent city architecture reflects a series of post-war visions of the future, from Soviet-style social housing to European 'Brutalism' to American-style free enterprise. With the acceleration of globalisation and the prolonged impact of austerity, however, the century-long obsession with the concept of progress that informed this modernist reconstruction has seemingly ground to a halt. Without a clear vision of the future, the question arises, how will the role of the artist change - drifting in the wake of utopian imaginaries - *after the future*?

About Tom Trevor, Artistic Director of The Atlantic Project

Tom Trevor was previously Guest Curator at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2015-16), Artistic Director of the 4th Dojima River Biennale in Osaka, Japan (2014-15), curatorial consultant to the 1st AROs Triennial in Aarhus, Denmark (2014-15), Guest Curator at the Devi Art Foundation in Delhi, India (2013-14), Director of Arnolfini, Bristol (2005-13) and Director of Spacex, Exeter (1999-2005). His recent curated projects include *Music for Museums*, a series of performances and sound interventions throughout the Whitechapel (2015-16); the 4th Dojima River Biennale (2015), entitled *Take Me To The River*, with artists from eight countries showing alongside emerging and established practitioners from Japan; and *Black Sun* at the Devi Art Foundation in Delhi (2013-14), including leading artists from the South Asian diaspora. Major commissions he has worked on in recent times include John Akomfrah's *Vertigo Sea* for the 56th Venice Biennale (Associate Producer) and *New York City Apartment / Bristol* by Do Ho Suh for the Art Fund International collection (Associate Curator).

About University of Plymouth

The University of Plymouth is renowned for high quality, internationally-leading education, research and innovation. With a mission to Advance Knowledge and Transform Lives, Plymouth is a top 50 research university with clusters of world class research across a wide range of disciplines including marine science and engineering, medicine, robotics and psychology. A twice winner of the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher Education, the University of Plymouth continues to grow in stature and reputation. It has a strong track record for teaching and learning excellence, and has one of the highest numbers of National Teaching Fellows of any UK university. With 21,000 students, and a further 17,000 studying for a Plymouth degree at partner institutions in the UK and around the world, and over 100,000 alumni pursuing their chosen careers globally, it has a growing global presence. <http://www.plymouth.ac.uk>

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About The Box, Plymouth

The Box, Plymouth is a major redevelopment scheme and a symbol for Plymouth's current regeneration and future. Set to open in 2020 as part of the city's commemorations for the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower to the New World, it will bring together the collections of Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, the South West Film and Television Archive and the South West Image Bank under one roof. The Box will feature a series of permanent galleries alongside spaces for high profile exhibitions, artistic commissions, events, education and research. www.theboxplymouth.com

About Plymouth Culture

Plymouth Culture exists to help develop the cultural scene of Plymouth in four key areas: nurturing talent, community engagement, major projects and international projects. It empowers the city's cultural organisations, community groups and individual practitioners by offering expert resources and advice. Plymouth Culture will play a major strategic role in the city's cultural offering in the build up to the Mayflower 400 anniversary in 2020 and beyond. Plymouth Culture is an independent and neutral organisation funded by Arts Council England (73%) and Plymouth City Council (27%), hosted by University of Plymouth. www.plymouthculture.co.uk

About Plymouth Art Weekender and Horizon

Plymouth Art Weekender is an ambitious three day event that takes place annually across the city. The fourth Weekender will be held on 28th – 30th September 2018. The Weekender confidently celebrates Plymouth, its people and the visual arts, promoting the city as an exciting contemporary art destination. The Weekender showcases a wide and diverse range of activity for all ages including a large array of events and exhibitions throughout the city by local, national, and international artists. Plymouth Art Weekender is coordinated by Visual Arts Plymouth and funded through the city wide Horizon project, a collaborative programme developed between Visual Arts Plymouth, KARST, Plymouth Arts Centre, Plymouth College of Art, Plymouth City Council, University of Plymouth; funded through Arts Council England's Ambition for Excellence fund and supported by Plymouth Culture. www.plymouthartweekender.com

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