

ARTS COUNCIL COLLECTION AT  
**SOUTHBANK  
CENTRE**

**Press Release**

Friday 15 January 2016

**ARTS COUNCIL COLLECTION 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATIONS**

- **8 NEW ART COMMISSIONS ACROSS THE UK WITH FIRST OPENING TOMORROW**
- **TWO NEW TOURING EXHIBITIONS: *NIGHT IN THE MUSEUM* CURATED BY RYAN GANDER AND *DRAWN FROM LIFE: PEOPLE ON PAPER***
- **ARTISTS ANTONY GORMLEY, BRIDGET RILEY, JOHN AKOMFRAH, HEATHER PHILLIPSON, RYAN GANDER, ROGER HIORNS, MARK WALLINGER AND RICHARD DEACON SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE COLLECTION**

**@A\_C\_Collection**

**#ACC70**

**[www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk](http://www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk)**

The Arts Council Collection, the UK's most widely seen collection of modern and contemporary art, is pleased to announce plans for marking its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary during 2016. The celebrations will include **8 new commissions** that will go on display across the UK - the first one opening tomorrow - and two new touring exhibitions, *Night at the Museum*, curated by Ryan Gander, and *Drawn from Life: People on Paper*.

The 8 artists who are making new work for the Arts Council Collection's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commissions are: **John Akomfrah, Hurvin Anderson, Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, Ryan Gander, Mark Leckey, Katie Paterson, Heather Phillipson and Keith Piper**. The commissions will open at different venues across the UK throughout 2016 before becoming a permanent part of the Arts Council Collection where they will be available for loan to museums, galleries and other spaces nationally and internationally. Half of the artists selected for the commissions - John Akomfrah, Hurvin Anderson, Katie Paterson and Heather Phillipson - will be joining the Collection for the first time, the others contributing major new works.

**John Akomfrah's *Tropikos*** is the first commission to open tomorrow, Saturday 16 January, at Arnolfini in Bristol (until Sunday 10 April). The work is an experimental costume drama set in the sixteenth century, focusing on the waterways of the South West of England and their relationship

to the slave trade. Though a fictional narrative, the film is placed in an historic period when Britain's position as a global, seafaring power coincided with the enforced displacement of millions of African people across the Atlantic, thus delivering a timely and potent reminder of the current issues around global migration and the refugee crisis.

Full details of all the commissions are listed in Notes to Editors.

The Arts Council Collection will premiere two new touring exhibitions in its anniversary year: ***Night In the Museum*** (16 July – 16 October 2016), curated by artist Ryan Gander, will open at Longside Gallery, Yorkshire Sculpture Park on 16 July (until 16 October 2016). Gander has selected a range of figurative sculptures with an active gaze, positioning them in the gallery so that they can observe major examples of modern and contemporary British art. Gander's selection will provide a fresh perspective of the Arts Council Collection and an alternative view of recent British art, one which offers new narratives and unlikely correspondences. More details of the exhibition will be announced in spring 2016.

***Drawing from Life: People on Paper***, opening at The Collection in Lincoln on 26 February (until 17 April 2016) before touring, will bring together some of the finest drawings in the Arts Council Collection, from the beginning of the early twentieth century to the present. The exhibition will feature surprising examples from very early on in artists' careers, such as a self-portrait by Richard Hamilton from 1939, the carefully drawn *Mrs Ash Asleep* by Howard Hodgkin from 1952, Peter Blake's *Portrait of a Man* from 1950 and Eduardo Paolozzi's *Drawings from Rembrandt*, 1945.

2016 will also see the launch of the **National Partners Programme**, a new scheme to support the artistic ambitions of a new constellation of partner galleries, deepening the Collection's long-standing relationship with key museums and galleries around the country. The Collection will be working with these new partners to present a series of touring exhibitions, significantly increasing audiences for the Collection. The National Partners Programme will be announced on 29 January.

**Jill Constantine, Head of the Arts Council Collection, said:** "The Arts Council Collection may be 70 years old but never has it felt so young, vibrant and exciting. Our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary commissions demonstrate what we do best - putting artists at the heart of the Collection. We are thrilled that the artists, half of whom are joining the Collection for the first time, will all be represented by such significant pieces. Their works will be seen and enjoyed by the broadest possible audience – when they first go on display during 2016, and beyond as they are made available for loan to galleries and museums across the country. A special thanks goes to Ryan Gander who in addition to his commission, has agreed to curate *Night in the Museum*, a new exhibition celebrating the range and quality of the Arts Council Collection's holdings opening in our Longside Gallery at Yorkshire Sculpture Park in July."

**Peter Heslip, Director of Visual Arts, Arts Council England, said:** "2016 promises to be an important year for the Collection as it marks 70 years of getting great art to everyone. The new artist commissions highlight the role it has played supporting the best of British talent. Initial demand for these new pieces has been strong and we look forward to them inspiring the public for years to come."

**John Akomfrah, Arts Council Collection 70th Anniversary Commissions artist, said:** "I've always admired the Arts Council Collection from a distance; it's a collection that reflects the myriad and complex make-up of the nation. It has become an indispensable and first-call collection for many galleries and museums around the UK and beyond, which is so important for all of the artists in the collection. As it reaches this milestone in its history, I feel very honoured to have been chosen to complete a work for this unique anniversary."

**Bridget Riley, Arts Council Collection artist, said:** "The Arts Council Collection purchased 'Movement in Squares' from my first exhibition in 1962. This was a most surprising and encouraging event. It was my first acquisition by a public collection. It made me feel that I had indeed at last found my way."

**Antony Gormley, Arts Council Collection artist, said:** "The Arts Council Collection remains the most important national collection of contemporary art in Britain and it is a resource for a wide ranging set of curated exhibitions that really reach out to the whole of the nation and expose very different publics to the excitingly varied and diverse work of this country's artists. The objects in the Collection present both administrative and practical challenges and none more so than my work FIELD FOR THE BRITISH ISLES. I am humbled and honoured that the Arts Council Collection took it on and that they continue to make it available to communities all over the country. I will never forget seeing FIELD reflected in the mirrored pillars of an old supermarket in Colchester, under the perpendicular vaults of Gloucester Cathedral cloisters, in the haunting environment of the old carriage works in Gateshead, against the verdant landscape of a 19th century park in Wakefield - and most recently in a very fully adapted church in Scunthorpe. I cannot imagine a better collection for FIELD to exist in than the Arts Council Collection and it is a huge privilege to be part of it. I trust and hope that this important reservoir of the fruits of this country's unique creativity continues robustly, well into the 21st century."

**Heather Phillipson, Arts Council Collection 70th Anniversary Commissions artist, said:** "I was delighted to be commissioned to create a new work and am especially honoured to be entering the Arts Council Collection as part of their 70th anniversary celebrations".

**Roger Hiorns, Arts Council Collection artist, said:** "The spine and the backbone of national art is the Arts Council Collection. It collects artists at a young age and supports them at a tender time, usually broke and up against it. In the early stages of establishing who knows what, the Arts Council Collection made it clear that it wanted to talk seriously and collect liberally with a wide and enlightened mind. A rare thing today. My work, 'Seizure' was allowed to carry on by this enlightened ideal of a collection. 'Saved for the nation' was always an epithet that seemed premature for an artist of my age, but they had the foresight to challenge orthodoxy and protect a work now beyond my reach."

**Ryan Gander, Arts Council Collection 70th Anniversary Commissions artist, said:** "It's nice to know that if you sell a work, it goes to a nice home. The Arts Council Collection is based on the ideal that works should be safeguarded and seen. It feels like the perfect home."

**Mark Wallinger, Arts Council Collection artist, said:** "The Arts Council Collection has made a unique and valuable contribution to the lives and careers of artists working in this country. By consistently identifying key early works by the best emerging talents, it gives the encouragement

and kudos so crucial to those struggling to make a start in a precarious profession. And this is merely the beginning. The Collection acquired by work, 'Angel', in 1997, since then it has been exhibited in no less than 22 different galleries the length and breadth of this country. I can't tell you the amount of people I bump into who cite seeing this work."

**Richard Deacon, Arts Council Collection artist, said:** "For young artists, entry into the Arts Council collection has often been a vital early step in their developing careers. In their maturity, further acquisition enriches their representation and fleshes out the collection. The collection itself is a hugely important resource and hard worked trove, accessible and well cared for, the backbone of countless marvellous exhibitions throughout the country."

Established in 1946 to promote and enrich knowledge of modern and contemporary art, the Arts Council Collection supports British artists and artists resident in the UK through the purchase and display of their work. With nearly 8,000 works by over 2,000 artists, it fosters the widest possible access to modern and contemporary art in the UK through long term loans to public institutions, exhibition loans, touring exhibitions and digital and print publications.

In 2015 works from the Collection were seen by over 2 million exhibition visitors across the country, including in Arts Council Collection curated touring exhibitions and others. In addition, an estimated 4 million people encountered an Arts Council Collection work on display in public institutions including hospitals, schools, universities and charitable institutions. The Collection, managed by Southbank Centre, on behalf of Arts Council England, also has an ongoing digitisation programme and at present 90% of the collection is available to view online with the remaining 10%, predominantly sculpture, to be digitised over the next two year.

The new initiatives in the anniversary year will further increase the Arts Council Collection's reach, enabling as many people as possible to encounter works by the most established modern and contemporary artists working in Britain and beyond, as well as future greats.

For more information about the Arts Council Collection, please see below Notes to Editors or visit the website.

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**[www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk](http://www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk)**

**Watch the 70th Anniversary Commissions trailer here: <https://vimeo.com/151454360>**

**Press Images can be downloaded here:**

**<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B9NTjVztX6GQX19SUDN1ZkpnZ28&usp=sharing>**

**For more information, please contact, Helena Zedig, Communications Consultant, Southbank Centre on 020 7921 0847 / 07803596587 or [helena.zedig@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:helena.zedig@southbankcentre.co.uk)**

**Notes to Editors**

**The Arts Council Collection's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commissions**

**JOHN AKOMFRAH****Arnolfini, Bristol, 16 January - 10 April 2016**

*Tropikos* is an experimental costume drama set in the sixteenth century, focusing on the waterways of the South West of England and their relationship to the slave trade. Though a fictional narrative, the film is placed in an historic period when Britain's position as a global, seafaring power coincided with the enforced displacement of millions of African people across the Atlantic. The commission is a partnership with the River Tamar Project and Smoking Dogs Films. It's UK premiere at Arnolfini coincides with the UK premiere of Akomfrah's acclaimed film *Vertigo Sea*.

**KATIE PATERSON****Somerset House, London, 27 April – 22 May 2016**

Paterson's commission will be a mirror ball comprising images of nearly every solar eclipse that's been documented by humankind; through drawings and since photography began, including the oldest solar eclipse drawings from hundreds of years ago, and the earliest 19th century photographs, to images from the most technological advanced telescopes now. The commission is part of Somerset House's Utopia 2016: A Year of Imagination and Possibility - four seasons of events, exhibitions and new commissions celebrating the idea of Utopia to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thomas More's influential text.

**MARK LECKEY****Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool, 15 May – 13 August 2016**

Leckey's commission will be a video and immersive sculpture inspired by a found photograph of a man wearing a Mickey Mouse costume at Disneyland. The film continues Leckey's video making tradition, made famous by works such as *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore*. Leckey won the Turner Prize in 2008.

**HEATHER PHILLIPSON****Plymouth Arts Centre, 24 June – 20 August**

*TRUE TO SIZE* will be a suite of digital-sculptural 'outfits/vignettes' generated through, and augmenting, her video and installation work. Unusually for Phillipson, this commission offers an opportunity to approach her multimedia conglomerations on a more compact scale.

**HURVIN ANDERSON****New Art Exchange, Nottingham, 2 July – 18 September**

Anderson's works are drawn from personal experience. Many of his paintings explore sites of leisure where the mind is free to wander, being in one place whilst thinking of another - often alluding to his Caribbean heritage. He is making a new painting for the Arts Council Collection's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary which will premiere at NAE as part of a major new survey show.

**RYAN GANDER****Longside Gallery, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 16 July – 16 October**

*As old as time itself, slept alone* will be part of Gander's series modelled on Degas' ballerinas. The ballerina will be accompanied by a 1m square blue cube which she will be sheltering beneath. The new work will be part of *Night in the Museum*, the exhibition of figurative sculptures from the Arts Council Collection that Gander is curating as part of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

**KEITH PIPER****Bluecoat, Liverpool, 29 Oct 2016 – 22 Jan 2017**

*Unearthing the Banker's Bones (2016)* will comprise of three synchronised video projections in high definition. Alongside the film, remnants of the film's production will be displayed as physical evidence playing off against the unfolding narrative of the video. The commission is in partnership with the Institute of International of Visual Arts (Iniva) and the Bluecoat.

## **MARVIN GAYE CHETWYND**

### **Venue to be announced**

*Here She Comes* will be a setting for live performances and a stand-alone sculptural installation. Two aluminium box frames – each four metres high – will act as stages, and in front of these will stand parallel folding screens. The panels of the two screens will be embedded with View-Master stereoscopes – self-contained viewing boxes housing miniature *tableaux vivants* relating to the live performances of *Here She Comes*. Narratives including Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, and the lives of Boudicca and Montessori will be mixed together and retold through puppetry and mime. *Here She Comes* will be launched with a live performance.

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**The Arts Council Collection** began when the Arts Council of Great Britain was founded in 1946. It took over a small group of paintings from the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) and its aim was to promote and encourage the appreciation of contemporary art through touring exhibitions. The Collection has continued to grow, acquiring innovative works each year and includes paintings, sculptures, original works on paper, prints, photographs, film and video and installation works.

The Collection includes important, often early, work by many of the most influential British artists from the mid-twentieth century to the present day, including Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, Victor Pasmore, David Hockney, Bridget Riley, Patrick Caulfield, Gilbert & George, Richard Hamilton, Richard Deacon, Antony Gormley, Mark Wallinger, Peter Doig, Damien Hirst, Rachel Whiteread, Chris Ofili, Steve McQueen, Mona Hatoum, Tracey Emin, Sarah Lucas, Grayson Perry, Glenn Brown, Jeremy Deller, Keith Coventry and Wolfgang Tillmans.

Since 1986 the Arts Council Collection has been managed by Southbank Centre, on behalf of Arts Council England. It is now based at Southbank Centre, London and at our Sculpture Centre at Longside in Yorkshire Sculpture Park (the latter used on an alternating basis by the Arts Council Collection and YSP). The base at Longside enables the Arts Council Collection team to extend its sculpture conservation and research programmes and to increase public access to the sculpture collection through increased lending and exhibition initiatives. A diverse and stimulating range of exhibitions from the Collection, including displays of some of the most recent acquisitions, can be seen in the Longside Gallery, a unique space used on an alternating basis by the Arts Council Collection and Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

[www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk](http://www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk)

**Southbank Centre** is the UK's largest arts centre, comprising three iconic buildings (Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Hayward Gallery) and occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Building on this rich heritage, Southbank Centre offers an extensive artistic and cultural programme including annual and one-off themed festivals and classical and contemporary music, performance, dance, visual art, literature and spoken word events throughout the year.

[www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

**Arts Council England** champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2015 and 2018, we plan to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

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