

A Light Shines in the Darkness

Press Release: Monday 15 September 2014

www.fvu.co.uk/projects/a-light-shines-in-the-darkness #LightDark

Film and Video Umbrella showcases recent works by acclaimed film and video artists at historic church sites across England.

A Light Shines in the Darkness is a new touring exhibition in which six artists' films will travel to churches and cathedrals around the country, re-illuminating inspiring public spaces and prompting viewers to see the locations in which the works are sited in a different light.

Churches for a long time occupied a central place in most people's lives. In recent years, however they have shifted to a more peripheral position with many people never having had a firsthand experience of entering a church building. Overlooked and often undervalued, many have fallen out of religious use. Their powerful architectural presence nevertheless remains and often in the central parts of a town. Film and Video Umbrella have partnered with the Churches Conservation Trust to shine a new light on these fascinating, historical spaces, asking to consider them afresh. Reminders of churches' longstanding role as sites of congregation and contemplation, the artists' works speculate also as to whether their importance as points of collective assembly has been rivaled by other arenas – an art museum, a floodlit sports field, a natural amphitheatre.

Selected by Film and Video Umbrella and independent curator Paul Bayley, the programme takes ideas of light and darkness as its starting point. The shafts of celestial light that once shone in these churches is replaced by the beam of a projector, providing new kinds of illumination. The programme will tour to seven venues: including churches in Bridgnorth, Rochdale, Blackburn, Derby and Sunderland. The tour begins and ends with keynote stagings in Winchester and Norwich Cathedrals. Still very much places of worship, and places of wonder, these cathedrals have arguably acquired a new face as major tourist attractions. Despite the difference in scale of visitor numbers, the churches too are considered valued heritage sites; the five chosen to host Film and Video Umbrella's programme each offering their own architectural personality and social histories.

There are six films within the programme, of which a selection has been curated for each location. The artists include: **Suki Chan, Alexander & Susan Maris, Melanie Manchot, Graham Ellard & Stephen Johnstone, Kathleen Herbert and Nick Crowe & Ian Rawlinson.**

Notes to editors:

Project Credit

A project by Film and Video Umbrella in partnership with The Churches Conservation Trust and curator, Paul Bayley. Supported by Arts Council England.

Artworks

The programme across the entire tour includes:

Suki Chan, *Still Point*

Alexander and Susan Maris, *Uriel*

Melanie Manchot, *LEAP after the Great Ecstasy*

Graham Ellard and Stephen Johnstone, *Everything Made Bronze*

Kathleen Herbert, *Stable*

Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson, *The Carrier's Prayer*

Touring Schedule:

Winchester Cathedral: 22 October - 25 November 2014

St Leonard's Church, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 4EJ: 12 November – 29 November 2014

Church of St Edmund, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL12 6QF: 14 Feb – 28 February 2015

Holy Trinity Church, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 5DQ: 5 March 2015

St Werburgh's Church, Derby, Derbyshire, DE1 1UZ: 12 March – 12 April 2015

Holy Trinity Church, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, SR1 2BB: 19 Mar – 21 March 2015

Norwich Cathedral: May 2015

Film and Video Umbrella commissions, curates, produces and presents film, video and other moving-image works by artists that are staged in collaboration with galleries and other cultural partners. Since the late 1980s, Film and Video Umbrella has been at the forefront of this vibrant and expanding area of practice, promoting innovation through its support of some of the most exciting figures on the contemporary scene. During this time, the organisation has commissioned and produced over 100 different artists' projects, ranging from ambitious multi-screen installations to shorter film and video pieces, as well as numerous online commissions. www.fvu.co.uk

Paul Bayley is Director of the Florence Trust and has worked for the past twenty years in contemporary visual arts. From the mid 1980's at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and then in the Exhibitions Department at the Tate Gallery through to becoming Director of Visual Arts at Cornerhouse, Manchester. During his time in Manchester, he curated over fifty exhibitions working with many well-known international artists and project managing important off site installations. Since moving to London in 2002 he has also worked on freelance publications projects and as a visual arts officer for Arts Council England.

The Churches Conservation Trust have 345 Grade I & II* buildings in their estate which attract almost 2 million visitors a year. This unique collection of English parish churches includes irreplaceable examples of architecture, archaeology and art from 1,000 years of history. The Churches Conservation Trust works with local communities to bring historic churches back into the heart of the community as a cultural resource, and conserve them for future generations to enjoy. Many of the Trust's churches are located in socially disadvantaged or poorly resourced settings, where access to the Arts is limited.

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