

### ***The Faraway Nearby*** **Whitstable Biennale 2016** **4 – 12 June 2016**



Whitstable Biennale is delighted to announce *The Faraway Nearby*, the theme for the eighth edition of the coastal contemporary art festival featuring fifteen new commissions from artists including **Alice Butler, Louisa Fairclough, Matthew Herbert, Mikhail Karikis, Tessa Lynch, Louisa Martin, Lucy Pawlak, Trish Scott** and others.

*The Faraway Nearby* is Georgia O’Keefe’s evocative description measuring physical and psychic geography, and which also inspired Rebecca Solnit’s recent book of the same name. Whitstable Biennale 2016 interprets the words both literally and figuratively in performances, multimedia installations, artists’ moving image, feature film premieres, readings, walks and talks. The programme reflects on real and imagined journeys, and concepts of time, place, culture and identity to make the distant local, and transform the known and seemingly familiar. It unfolds across the seaside town in established arts venues and found spaces including a working boatshed, a sea cadets’ hall, a library, a roller rink, ice cream parlour, the harbour, tennis courts and high street shops.

**Mikhail Karikis** spent almost a year with teenage boys from the militarised industrial marshland of the Isle of Grain in North Kent for his installation, *Ain’t Got No Fear* (2016), a co-commission by Whitstable Biennale and Ideas Test for Out of the Ordinary Places. Using the persistent crushing noises of the demolition of a neighbouring power plant as their beat, the boys of Grain rap about their lives, from their memories of being younger to their visions of the future. Reminiscent of a music video, the new work glimpses into teenage diaries, secret underground hideaways, and a local site where youth raves were recently banned.

In South Quay Boatshed, **Tessa Lynch’s** *Green Belt* (2016) is a spoken word performance and large-scale floor piece developed over the 90-minute duration of the train commute between Whitstable and London. Drawing on the sacred qualities of UK planning law using simple building techniques familiar in the Kent landscape Lynch - like other worker-commuters – will suffer from unscheduled delays, leaves on the line, PPI sales calls and industrial action.

**Alice Butler’s** *Fan Letters of Love* (2016), explores adolescence, plagiarism and kleptomania in illustrated miniature chapbooks addressed to writers such as Cookie Mueller, Kathy Acker and Dodie Bellamy. Inspired by the tiny Hanuman Books edited by Raymond Foye and Francesco Clemente, the work is installed in four shops on Whitstable’s high street, the postscript of each publication encouraging the reader to take it and discover the next book in a loving chain of fantasy correspondence.

*Medium* (2016), is an audio installation of an artwork not yet made, inspired by conversations between **Trish Scott** and a number of psychics, each of whom Scott asked to predict what she would produce for the Biennale. Supported by Canterbury Christ Church University, the installation forms part of broader research examining the extent

to which artistic outcomes can be foretold and the extent to which it's possible for one's creativity to be articulated by another.

A special dinner including performances and readings on the final Sunday of the festival celebrates the launch of the first chapter of *The Music*, a new 'album' by pioneering contemporary composer **Matthew Herbert**. Published by Unbound books in partnership with Whitstable Biennale, the album takes the form of a written book rather than a sound recording, and is a deep consideration of music through writing *as* music, rather than *about* the art form.

A three-hour concert brings together **Grasscut**'s audio-visual work responding to a deep sense of place inspired by W G Sebald, Hilaire Belloc, T S Eliot, Gazelle Twin and others, and **Oliver Coate**'s performance of a piece by twentieth century conceptual artist Hanne Darboven.

In *Lost Beat Officer*, **Lucy Pawlak**'s participative performance, a beat officer-turned-artist inaugurates an independent police academy that fuses advanced digital forensics with the situationist practice of *détournement*. Inviting the audience to model with London Clay - a local material used for making bricks and pottery - Pawlak attempts to materialise missing evidence from disappeared activity and unexplained events.

Following research into the neuroscience of embodiment, and subcultural and scientific discourses around autism, *Lossy Ecology* (2016) is **Louisa Martin**'s new film installation, imagining what might be necessary for the technical formation of a particular type of body or experiences of embodiment, supported by a Wellcome Trust Arts Award.

Drawing on a popular guide to learning tricks, conjuring and ventriloquism, in *Modern Conjuring for Amateurs* (2016), **Leslie Deere** combines dance and sound for the first time. Her new performance explores the confluence between scientific and esoteric knowledge, and contemporary theoretical physics and 19<sup>th</sup> century inventions to create a shared altered state.

**Louisa Fairclough**'s *CLOSED EYE VISION* unfolds as three quiet happenings for one or two singers in three un-named locations close to the sea exploring the ameliorating and affective potential of the use of voice and mental image within performance.

Taking as its starting point Britain's history as a seafaring nation, and exploring ideas of human movement, Open Submission winner **Sarah Wood**'s *Boat People* is an essay film about how the near and far are mediated and transformed by the digital image in the twenty-first century.

**Evan Ifekoya**'s expanded song *A Score, A Grove, A Phantom: The Extended Play*, is a performance inspired by ideas of the nightclub as archive, the mouth as site of experience and West African mourning traditions acted out in an environment of pink fur, Juicy Fruit chewing gum, a disco ball and highlights from the artist's family album.

Made up of documentary, performance and online videos, *Parlor Walls* by artist-duo **Webb-Ellis** is an installation exploring alienation in the digital age, inspired by Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451*. Oscillating between the mythological and the everyday, white clowns, the pseudo intimacy of YouTube, metal detecting and the atavistic journey of the eel combine in an experimental inquiry into the real.

Recalling Mr Punch's cry, *Rooty Tooty* is a new red and white striped ice cream created for the Biennale by **Marcia Farquhar** in a three-part work drawing on the darker side of ice cream's history. *The iScreamers* combines song, dance and live music in a semi-autobiographical, socio-psycho-geographical lecture accompanied by action painting in Whitstable's roller rink.

As in previous editions, the Biennale continues with an expansive presentation of short and feature length artists' moving image works and other specialist films. Highlights of the programme include **Sarah Beddington**'s *The Logic of the Birds*, 2015 (18') inspired by early 20th century photographs of Palestinian processions of people moving freely across the land and a 12<sup>th</sup> century Sufi poem about a flock of birds; **Ellie Kyungran**

**Heo's Island**, 2015 (28') about a geographically and psychologically isolated and empty island off South Korea, which takes less than an hour to cross; **Jessica Sarah Rinland's The Blind Labourer**, 2016 (27') comparing and contrasting the whaling and lumber industries; **Becca Voelcker's Island**, 2015 (28') which traces the rhythms and routines of everyday life on a sub-tropical island thousands of miles southwest of mainland Japan; **Xiaowen Zhu's Oriental Silk**, 2016 (30') exploring the worldview of the owner of the first silk importing company in Los Angeles; and **Simon Barker and Jason Wood's Always (crashing)**, 2016 (14') in which a Saab 900 makes a meandering journey through a (possibly) abandoned multi storey car park.

In a dedicated cinema space in the Horsebridge Arts Centre, for the first time the Biennale shows feature length artists' film including *Gifts*, 2016 (UK, 70') by **Nichola Bruce**. Made with no financial support over a period of ten years in collaboration with many artists and filmmakers, *Gifts* is based on eight public performances by Clare Whistler about the eight gifts traditionally given to a new child.

In parallel to the main festival, Whitstable Biennale also hosts the Satellite Programme, presenting new work by creative practitioners from across Kent and beyond.

Whitstable Biennale is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Also supported by Canterbury City Council, University of Kent, Culture Kent, and Kent County Council.

This Is Tomorrow is the Media Partner for Whitstable Biennale 2016.

**For images, interview requests and further information please contact Janette Scott Arts PR on [press@whitstablebiennale.com](mailto:press@whitstablebiennale.com) or [janettescottartspr@gmail.com](mailto:janettescottartspr@gmail.com), or +44(0)7966 486156.**

## Notes To Editors

Whitstable Biennale, 4–12 June 2016. Various locations across Whitstable. For further details see [www.whitstablebiennale.com](http://www.whitstablebiennale.com)

**Whitstable Biennale** is a festival of performance, film and sound, taking place every two years on the Kent coast. The festival re-imagines Whitstable, with multi-disciplinary performances and events woven into the town – into the idiosyncratic halls and huts, the galleries and bars, the alleyways and oyster beds, the working harbour and the steep shingle shoreline. The event has grown out of Whitstable's extensive artistic community, and has developed an international reputation for showcasing the most exciting up-and-coming artists and filmmakers, and engaging audiences in a rich programme. Artists are commissioned to create ambitious and experimental new works, and stage live performances, film screenings, talks, digital works, events and workshops, engaging audiences with the most compelling new work from across the UK and beyond.



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Mikhail Karikis, *Ain't Got No Fear* (2016) supported by