



## PRESS RELEASE

22 MAY 2017

### **HOUSE Biennial: Brighton & Hove's new contemporary visual arts festival announces Laura Ford as lead artist.**

The first edition of HOUSE Biennial will take place from 30 September – 5 November 2017. The Invited Artist will be Laura Ford, who will present new work at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery around the Biennial's theme of *Excess*.

Laura Ford is an established British artist who works across a range of media, from bronze sculpture through painting, drawing, ceramics, sewing and modelling in wax and clay. Her work is intensely crafted and is consistently curious about the human condition and wider social and political issues. She often mixes the bitter sweet with wit, and is inspired by imagery generated from writing, film and objects.

For HOUSE Biennial, Ford is producing a new commission in the form of a series of new works for presentation at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery. Large-scale sculptural works will be made for one of the main exhibition spaces, while smaller works will be placed amongst the Museum's collection and at associated HOUSE Biennial 2017 venues across the city. For this, Ford has chosen to take her inspiration from the Royal Pavilion & Museums satirical cartoons from the Regency period, as well as imagery and figures found in the Willett's ceramic Collection of Popular Pottery at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery.

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HOUSE, Brighton & Hove's contemporary visual arts festival, is delighted to also announce major Arts Council England support for its new festival, extending its programme and moving to October, where it becomes a biennial. HOUSE has been known since inception as a yearly May arts festival, bringing world-class visual artists to Brighton and have previously developed commissions and exhibitions for the city with artists including **David Batchelor**, **Yinka Shonibare MBE**, **Nathan Coley** and **Gillian Wearing**.

In its new slot in the arts calendar, HOUSE Biennial will continue to work with a range of partners throughout the city and the region to commission new work from established and emerging artists that will be shown across Brighton & Hove. HOUSE Biennial will strengthen an already established partnership with **Outside In**, offering a co-commissioning opportunity to an artist currently excluded from the art-world mainstream and will continue to work with **Photoworks** on a lens-based co-commission with a mid-career artist. For 2017, HOUSE will also introduce a new co-commissioning partnership with the University of Brighton, offering an opportunity to a recent graduate.

HOUSE Biennial will include a community arts project with local young people, led by **Photoworks**, working with **Brighton Table Tennis Club** – a sports club welcoming young refugees and asylum seekers and the UK's first "club of sanctuary".

Alongside the thematically curated elements, the new Biennial will include associate projects

produced by other visual arts partners in the city: **Fabrica, ONCA, Lighthouse, Ditchling Museum and Carousel.**

**Laura Ford said,** *“It’s a great honour to be invited to participate in this year’s HOUSE Biennial, a dynamic event that brings together so many interesting artists and ideas. I am excited to have the opportunity to develop new work in response to The Royal Pavilion which offers me, as a sculptor, such a rich diversity of visual, cultural and sociological stimulation. Lavishness, absurdity, hubris and humanity are all on show in dizzying proportions. In response, I plan to make a group of large sculptures which will take as their starting point the savage political cartoons and caricatures which were aimed at George IV during his lifetime.”*

**Celia Davies, HOUSE Biennial curator, said,** *“In the move to a biennial festival, HOUSE retains its distinctiveness; bringing artists and communities together around a single stimulating and timely theme, opening up opportunities to understand different artist’s perspectives and engage in new experiences. The HOUSE Biennial 2017 theme Excess promises to reveal a range of responses.”*

**Judy Stevens, co-director, HOUSE Biennial, said,** *“We are delighted that Laura Ford is our Invited Artist for the new Biennial and are pleased be able to announce our plans for October in more detail. The changes for our festival mark a new stage in the development of HOUSE and we hope to build on past successes to produce an even better event for the city. We are thrilled that this year we will be able to show Laura’s work in the iconic setting of Brighton Museum & Art Gallery. We also look forward to continuing to work with our partners across the city to develop a strong visual arts moment in Brighton & Hove and feel the October HOUSE Biennial will add a new dimension to the city’s Autumn cultural calendar.”*

**Janita Bagshawe, Head of Royal Pavilion & Museums, which manages Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, said:** *“Royal Pavilion & Museums is very excited to be working in collaboration with HOUSE to showcase work by Laura Ford at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery this October. Our new partnership with them will give our visitors the chance to see some incredible contemporary art, alongside the city’s renowned and eclectic collections.”*

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

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A press preview will take place on September 29. More details to be announced.

#### **HOUSE Biennial**

Conceived in 2008 by Directors Judy Stevens and Chris Lord, HOUSE is a contemporary visual arts festival that began in part as a response to the limited space in the city for presenting contemporary art. HOUSE is curated by Celia Davies and commissions an internationally regarded Invited Artist and selects for commission a range of artists at varying career stages. Inherent to HOUSE is a potential to experience new ideas and different ways of thinking within the artistic process. Previous years’ Invited Artists have been Gillian Wearing (2016), Nathan Coley (2015), Yinka Shonibare MBE (2014), Mariele Neudecker (2013) and David Batchelor (2012). In 2017 HOUSE will move to October as HOUSE Biennial and the lead artist is Laura Ford. [www.housebiennial.art](http://www.housebiennial.art)

#### **Laura Ford**

Born in Cardiff 1961, **Laura Ford** studied at Bath Academy of Art from 1978-82 and at Chelsea School of Art from 1982-83. At 21 she was the youngest participant in ‘The Sculpture Show’ at the Hayward and Serpentine galleries. She was included in the British Art Show 5 in 2000, and represented Wales in the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005. Selected solo shows include Camden Arts Centre, Arnolfini, Bristol, The Royal Scottish Academy and Turner Contemporary, Margate, touring

to the Economist Plaza in 2007. She has permanent public works of sculpture installed outside the Chancellor's office in Stockholm, at the Bundesbank in Frankfurt, in the grounds of hospitals in Heidelberg and Southmeads Bristol and outside the British Consulate in Ottawa.

Laura Ford's work is represented in a number of public collections including; Tate, The Victoria and Albert Museum, Government Art Collection, Potteries Museum, National Museums and Gallery of Wales, Museum of Modern Art, University of Iowa, Arts Council of Great Britain, Contemporary Art Society, Unilever plc, Penguin Books, Oldham Art Gallery, The New Art Gallery Walsall, The Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, The Meijier Gardens, Grand Rapids USA and The Gateway Foundation, St. Louis, as well as numerous private collections.

### **Celia Davies**

**Celia Davies** is Director of Photoworks, a national development agency for photography and visual culture based in Brighton UK, producing major cultural projects including the Jerwood/Photoworks Awards, Brighton Photo Biennial and Photoworks Annual. Experienced in developing artist's commissions for nearly two decades, Celia has been Curator for HOUSE since 2008 and was previously Head of Exhibitions at De La Warr Pavilion, 2002-9.

### **Brighton Museum & Art Gallery:**

Brighton Museum & Art Gallery is one of Britain's oldest public museums. Located in the Royal Pavilion Estate at the heart of the city's cultural quarter, its collections showcase arts and crafts from across the world and history from Ancient Egypt to modern Brighton.

**[brightonmuseums.org.uk/brighton](http://brightonmuseums.org.uk/brighton)**

### **Outside In:**

The HOUSE & Outside In co-commission is supported by Chichester Decorative Fine Arts Society.

Outside In provides a platform for artists who see themselves as facing barriers to the art world for reasons including health, disability, social circumstance or isolation. The goal of the charity is to create a fairer art world which challenges traditional values and institutional judgements about whose work can and should be displayed. To date, through its dedicated website, exhibitions and accompanying events programme, Outside In has engaged more than 5,000 artists and over a quarter of a million audience members and has held over 50 exhibitions nationally and internationally.

Starting as part of the respected Learning and Community Programme at Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, Outside In is now an independent charity. Outside In's prolific expansion has been made possible through funding from numerous trusts and foundations including; the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, The Roddick Foundation, The George Dannatt Trust and private donors. As a mark of its success, Outside In won the prestigious Charity Award for Arts, Culture and Heritage in 2013.

**[Outsidein.org.uk](http://Outsidein.org.uk)**

### **Photoworks**

Photoworks is a national development agency for photography. The programme includes commissions, new writing, participation and exceptional projects including the national Jerwood/Photoworks Awards, Photoworks Annual and Brighton Photo Biennial. Our aim is to connect outstanding artists with audiences and to champion talent and ambition. Photoworks is based at the University of Brighton, UK and is a National Portfolio Organisation supported by Arts Council England.

**[photoworks.org.uk](http://photoworks.org.uk)**

### **Stay in touch:**

**[www.housebiennial.art](http://www.housebiennial.art)**

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