



Press release for immediate use

## **Look Again Festival 2019 programme revealed as established artists join next generation talent to animate the Granite City**

- **‘New Narratives’ explored as Scotland’s innovative platform of visual art and design Look Again Festival announces 2019 programme**
- **Celebrated contemporary artists John Walter and Morag Myerscough to create major new site-specific commissions breathing new life into Aberdeen’s city centre**
- **Emergent creatives with strong ties to the North East supported to create and show new work through the festival’s Seed Fund strand**
- **Work presented from acclaimed Scottish artists Jacqueline Donachie, Craig Barrowman and curator Jon Blackwood**
- **Look Again Festival takes place in Aberdeen from 7<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2019 further information available via [lookagainaberdeen.co.uk](http://lookagainaberdeen.co.uk)**

IMAGES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

Look Again Festival is a celebration of the very best contemporary visual art and design, showcasing both local and internationally acclaimed talent in Aberdeen. Today, organisers announced details of the **5<sup>th</sup> Look Again Festival** programme, extending an open invitation to residents and visitors to rediscover Aberdeen through fresh eyes and the most exciting, creative and innovative visual arts and design.

Through the prism of **‘New Narratives’** the 2019 programme seeks to re-activate vacant or underused areas of the city, supporting creative activity and discourse through ambitious, thought-provoking visual art and design installations and events. Born in 2015 out of a need to celebrate, showcase and support the incredible visual art and artists in the region, Look Again is now part of Gray’s School of Art at Robert Gordon University (RGU) and is firmly established as a year-round presence. Look Again works with the sector and city partners to cultivate the creative industries in Aberdeen, proving the value of creativity and culture to the city, spotlighting and supporting creative talent emerging from the region, and harnessing national and international connections.

Highlights of the 2019 programme include a series of newly commissioned major site-specific installations from two of the of the UK’s most exciting contemporary artists **John Walter** and **Morag Myerscough**. Each artist has their own personal connection to the

North East of Scotland, connections which are explored in their work whilst responding to historic sites in Aberdeen's city centre to reanimate and transform.

### **Marischal Quad Commission: John Walter - *The Fourth Wall***

Acclaimed British multimedia artist, John Walter has been commissioned to engage with Marischal Quad. This is an extraordinary architectural jewel in central Aberdeen, the second largest granite building in the world. The quad is a public space, yet underused.

Walter will animate the space with *The Fourth Wall*, a new Virtual Reality experience that tears up the rulebook about immersive space by applying techniques from collage and painting onto gaming and animation. Walter takes his Maximalist aesthetic to new levels of complexity and compression in a new work commissioned for the quad of Marischal College.

Participants will become performers as they don customised headsets for the augmented reality experience, their reaction to the VR creating an unwitting spectacle in real space for the waiting audience.

### **Castlegate Commission: Morag Myerscough - *Love at First Sight***

One of the UK's most prolific designers **Morag Myerscough** will be working around the city's historic Mercat Cross, thought to be the best example of its type in Scotland. For ***Love at First Sight***, the artist bridges design and art, using her signature graphic style to create a free-standing structure that will reference the history of the space as a meeting point. Myerscough draws from her family history, and the moment that her parents fell in love at first sight in Aberdeen. She will be working with poet Jo Gilbert, who will produce text for the project through workshops with local groups. The completed structure will be animated throughout the festival with performance, poetry and music.

In a poignant personal connection, the artist's mother, Betty Fraser, taught embroidery and textiles at Gray's School of Art in the 50's. An exhibition of Betty Fraser's work will be exhibited at Aberdeen Music Hall, joining the Look Again Festival programme alongside her daughter.

The 2019 programme also features a major new commission from Aberdeen based writer **Shane Strachan**. ***The Bill Gibb Line*** is a spoken-word film and exhibition of new narratives across poetry and fashion inspired by the life and work of the Northeast-born world-renowned fashion designer. Strachan is also developing a novel about Gibb, who is from Fraserburgh, in the North East, as he is.

It will centre around six new poems by writer-performer Shane Strachan, each inspired by a different fashion show across Gibb's illustrious and tumultuous career from the late 60s to the mid-80s. The exhibition will also feature the poems digitally printed on textiles in the space, alongside a new dress designed by Gray's students Beth Coventry and Catherine Macdonald inspired by sketches and pattern cuttings held at RGU's Art & Heritage Collections for Gibb's swansong 1985 'Bronze Age' collection. A single screen installation at Look Again's Project Space on St Andrew's Street will feature will feature spoken word poetry and imagery inspired by Gibb, including new pieces by students.

### **Look Again Festival Seed Fund**

The central ethos of Look Again is to embolden and nurture the next generation of creative talent in the North East, providing a strong platform not only to exhibit work but also providing a year-round structure of support and development. Every year, Look Again awards funding to a selection of emerging creatives with strong connections to Aberdeen through its Seed Fund. This year's Seed Fund artists are;

Visual artist **Zloto (Karolina Bachanek)** presents, *Caro&Karo Taxi* a multimedia project of a socially engaged nature, which consists of three main elements: an iconic classic car, video-works and interaction. The project's main character, a Polonez Caro, presented under a nickname *Caro*, is a legendary icon of east European moto-nostalgia, irrational romanticism and unfulfilled promises of prosperity. For this project it will become a pretext to discuss new perspectives on Scotland's shifting relationships with Europe.

Sneaked to the UK right before Brexit especially for Look Again Festival, *Caro* will be turned into a mobile video gallery. Having obtained an interesting revamp, *Caro* will become a colourful intervention in the streets of the Grey Granite City, taxi-ing the public from one festival location to another. The video-works presented in the car's interior will explore travelling and migration, as well as possible future narratives for the diverse communities of Aberdeen. The third and most important part of the project is interaction. *Caro&Karo Taxi* is a celebration of unity and friendship and there is probably nothing as bonding as travelling in one car.

Specialising in urban art, commercial illustration and design, collective duo **Studio N\_Name** transmute Aberdeen into Aberdabeedoo, a city whose young people have risen up and seized power. *The Rebel Caterpillars* imagines a world taken over by children, who have formed a new political party, the 'Radical Caterpillars'. With propaganda popping up across the city, participatory workshops and its own border checkpoint, this will be a seriously playful look at politics, borders and Westminster rule from a child's perspective.

Presented by Gray's School of Art alumni **David McDiarmid, Jon Nicolson, Stuart Noble, Emma Rogers and Rachel Rogers**, *The Artists' Tuck Shop* is a mobile tuck shop trolley serving up snacks and handy artworks made by artists. It provides a platform for emerging artists to experiment with creating functional and edible artworks with which to engage more directly with the general public and increase opportunity to generate income from their practice. The tuck shop seeks to not only open up questions around the sustainability of artistic careers and the financial vulnerability of artists, but to provide potential answers and solutions.

For Look Again 2019, seven artists will be commissioned to make new artworks and snacks to be stocked and sold on *The Artists' Tuck Shop* trolley, popping up at multiple venues throughout the Look Again Weekender. The project will help the artists involved to sustain their practices going forward while keeping audiences fuelled to explore the rest of the festival.

**Artist Kirsty Russell** work *Threshold(s)*, is a response to the hard-edged built environment of Aberdeen and the implied gender specificity of the hard, grey walls. Russell, will produce a rug to be installed in the city centre, acting as a threshold, welcoming visitors in to public space. It is an invitation to spend time, and rest during the festival.

Further information on each project available in Notes to Editors.

Look Again Festival 2019 takes place across the historic city of Aberdeen, showing works from the finest established artists, alongside emerging talent from major gallery spaces to underused and neglected city centre sites. **Additional 2019 programme highlights include:**

**Jacqueline Donachie**, one of Scotland's most prominent artists brings *Temple of Jackie* to Aberdeen. A mobile unit that will pop up in the city centre it will function as a DJ booth/soup kitchen/gathering space.

Scottish artist **Craig Barrowman** presents *Mobile 'Ploposal' Unit*, a huge head of architect Archibald Simpson, on wheels, housing a unit for the production of public art proposals. Through conversations with members of the public, Craig will produce public art proposals to be displayed, as 2D images across the city.

*New Art from Macedonia* curated by **Jon Blackwood**, at Peacock Visual Arts. *Aberdeen Follies*, a project developed with final year students at **Scott Sutherland School of Architecture**, responding to a brief to produce a digitally fabricated, demountable architectural intervention for the city – a 'Folly'. The development process included road testing of the initial concept designs by children from two Aberdeen schools. *Etsy Aberdeen Summer Showcase* bringing together up to 50 local designers and makers selling locally produced high quality craft and design in a pop-up market at The Anatomy Rooms. **Belmont Filmhouse** features a *Film Programme* with films selected by Look Again featured artists. *Trading Faces*, an exhibition by photographer **Steve Smith and writer Ian Grosz**, featuring documentary photos and oral histories of traders from the historic Aberdeen Market. **Tendency Towards**, Aberdeen based art collective will work on a new collaborative exhibition.

**Sally Reaper and Hilary Nicoll, Look Again Co-Directors said:** "Look Again really comes of age this year as we launch our 5th annual festival. We're thrilled to be showcasing amazing artists and designers in Aberdeen's most iconic spaces, animating the city with vibrant, experimental, humorous and sometimes provocative new work. Some of the most exciting artists working in the UK right now are showing alongside others who are just starting out, and we love how Look Again brings the creative community together, connecting and emboldening it, while inviting the public to see the city through fresh eyes."

**Morag Myerscough commented:** "Events, such as the Look Again Festival, are absolutely critical. Creativity is crucial to our lives and through these festivals we are able to show people that you can be involved in the arts, they are accessible and sociable, and they provide a platform to make connections."

"Hopefully, through my commission, the people of Aberdeen and visitors to the festival will see something they have never seen before at a very familiar landmark in the city centre."

**John Walter said:** "I'm really excited to be back in Aberdeen again working with this time with Virtual Reality technology, which is new to me, in order to take my moving image work and thinking about Maximalism to a new level in Marischal College Quad as part of this year's Look Again festival"

**Shane Strachan said:** "Being part of Look Again has allowed me to be far more collaborative in my approach as a writer through working closely with filmmakers, fashion designers and art collections. The opportunity to work with fashion students at Gray's has particularly strengthened my research for my wider Bill Gibb novel project and has led to the students creating exciting new Gibb-inspired garments which will be showcased in the spoken word film and exhibition space.'

**Andrew Leitch, Creative Industries Officer, Creative Scotland** commented: "Creative Scotland is pleased to continue our support for Look Again Festival – a celebration of the very best contemporary visual art and design and showcase of local and internationally acclaimed talent.

"Through its year-round programme which activates underused spaces, delivers ongoing support for creative practitioners and offers a focus for the creative community in Aberdeen and the shire, the impact of Look Again goes far beyond the festival, as a leader in the ongoing development of the creative industries in the city."

**Libby Curtis, Head of Gray's Art School at RGU said:** “So much more than a festival, Look Again plays a pivotal year-round role in supporting the creative community in the city, providing training, exhibition space and exposure that create the conditions for culture and creativity to thrive in the north east. The festival is a highlight of the national visual art and design calendar, and is not to be missed.”

Look Again is a year-round programme that is part of Gray's School of Art, at Robert Gordon University (RGU). It is supported by Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen City Council and Creative Scotland.

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**ENDS**

**For more information on Look Again Festival, images, interview and review requests please contact Kate Bouchier-Hayes – [kate@thecornershoppr.com](mailto:kate@thecornershoppr.com) or 07825 335489**

Download images [here](#)

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Look Again Festival**

Look Again is leading on developing the creative industries in Aberdeen, not only delivering the festival, but opening up and animating vacant spaces in the city, delivering support for creative practitioners and running a variety of events such as creative Pecha Kucha nights. We are interested in how we can retain creative talent in the city and attract creatives to live and work here.

**Morag Myerscough**

Morag Myerscough's mantra is 'make happy those who are near and those who are far will come'. Look Again are delighted that she will be working in Aberdeen over the next few months, producing one of the major public commissions for the Look Again Art Weekender 2019.

Obsessed with 'Belonging', Morag is fascinated by how colour, pattern and words can change urban environments and people's perceptions of spaces into places. Her strong visual approach is instantly recognisable and elevates every context in which it is placed. Her work is rooted in creating a sense of joy and belonging for all those who encounter it. She often draws on shared cultural history and heritage, creating specific local responses for each distinct audience that will see and experience the work; creating community and building identity.

Morag's contribution to educational environments was recognised in 2015, when her work with Allford Hall Monaghan Morris on Burntwood School won the Stirling Prize for Architecture. In 2017 Morag was made an RSA RDI (Royal Designer for Industry).

[@moragmyerscough](#)

**John Walter**

John Walter is visual artist, curator and academic based in London. He won the 2016 Hayward Touring Curatorial Open for *Shonky: The Aesthetics of Awkwardness*, which travelled from The MAC in Belfast to DCA Dundee and Bury Art Museum. His project *Alien Sex Club* (2015) was featured as part of *Somewhere in Between* at The Wellcome Collection, London (2018) and as part of *Coming Out: Sexuality, Gender and Identity* at Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (2017). His diverse artistic practice includes collaborating with scientists including Prof Greg Towers (UCL) on *CAPSID* (2018), which looked at the molecular workings of HIV to address broader social and cultural questions.

<http://www.johnwalter.net>

## **Seed Fund Projects**

### **Zloto (Karolina Bachanek) - Caro&Karo Taxi**

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The project's main character, a Polonez Caro, presented under a nickname *Caro*, is a legendary icon of east European moto-nostalgia, irrational romanticism and unfulfilled promises of prosperity. For this project it will become a pretext to discuss new perspectives on Scotland's shifting relationships with Europe.

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The video-works presented in the car's interior will explore travelling and migration, as well as possible future narratives for the diverse communities of Aberdeen. The subject will be approached in both very direct and more symbolic way - through interviews with locals and people, whose directions and reasons for their travels may appear surprising.

The third and most important part of the project is interaction. Caro&Karo Taxi is a celebration of unity and friendship and there is probably nothing as bonding as travelling in one car.

Zloto is an audio-visual artist based in Aberdeen, working mainly in installation, moving image and performance. Leader of a one-woman electro punk project operating under the same name.

Graduated in Contemporary Art Practice in 2018 at Gray's School of Art, in 2019 representing Gray's at New Contemporaries exhibition at Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh.

## **Studio N\_Name**

### **The Rebel Caterpillars**

The year is 2019, in the city formerly known as Aberdeen, now recognised as Aberdabeedoo. Frustrated with a string of bad decisions with great consequences for their futures, the youth of the district have finally seized power of the city from the Adults as part of a nationwide uprising that has seen the majority of the United Kingdom, including Westminster, fall into the control of our new Government, the Radical Caterpillars, aged 3-16. Due to the R.C's core belief that borders create wars, the United Kingdom as we formally know it no longer exists and is instead referred to as Small Island. Freedom of movement is encouraged and humans are openly invited to visit each district to explore and interact in a peaceful and

respectful manner however due to the danger posed by the Adult Resistance, it is politely requested that all visitors please report to the appointed checkpoint to have their passports issued & stamped in the unlikely event you are stopped for questioning. The checkpoints of each district are also the allocated pick up points for the new Government Manifesto, which doubles as a colouring book, and visitors of all ages are encouraged to read and enjoy.

Studio N\_NAME a collective duo who specialise in urban art, commercial illustration, design and art direction. They have worked with a diverse mix of clients, ranging from galleries to high street brands to community groups, delivering hands-on art based solutions - often incorporating these works into final commissioned art works.

### **Artists' Tuck Shop**

#### **David McDiarmid, Jon Nicolson, Stuart Noble, Emma Rogers and Rachel Rogers**

The Artists' Tuck Shop is a mobile tuck shop trolley serving up yummy snacks and handy artworks made by artists. It provides a platform for emerging/early career artists to experiment with creating functional and edible artworks with which to engage more directly with the general public and increase opportunity to generate income from their practice. The tuck shop seeks to not only open up questions around the sustainability of artistic careers and the financial vulnerability of artists, but to provide potential answers and solutions.

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The Artists' Tuck Shop is brought to you by a group of artists currently based in Glasgow. David, Jon, Stuart and Emma hail from the Painting department of Gray's School of Art (2009-2013) and were previously involved in setting up the art collective Visual Artist Unit that organised talks for previous Look Again Festivals 2016-2018. Rachel is the designer and maker behind RR Designs, having previously graduated from the Jewellery department at Cardonald College (2010-2012).