

# E.A.F Edinburgh Art Festival

Press release for immediate use – Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July

## Edinburgh Art Festival 2021 opens with month long citywide celebration of Scottish, UK and International visual art



*Artist Isaac Julien, CBE, RA unveils the UK Premiere of his work Lessons of Hour at the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art as part of Edinburgh Art Festival 2021. Credit Duncan McGlynn*

IMAGES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

Edinburgh Art Festival officially gets underway, running from 29 July – 29 August 2021. The 17th edition brings together over 35 exhibitions and new commissions in visual art spaces across the city, complemented by an online programme of events and digital presentations.

Following last year's cancellation and an exceptionally challenging period for the creative sector, this year, more than any, we are proud to cast a spotlight on the uniquely ambitious, inventive and thoughtful programming produced each year by Edinburgh's visual art community.

This year's programme continues to place collaboration at its heart, with a series of festival-led commissions and premieres devised and presented in close partnership with leading visual arts organisations and a specially invited programme of new commissions curated in partnership with an Associate Artist.

All our festival venues will be following the latest Scottish Government Covid guidelines to ensure visitor safety, and we will be keeping our website regularly updated on what audiences can expect during their visit.

### **Highlights from the 2021 Festival Programme**

Our **festival-led programming** features major new commissions and presentations by leading international artists, including the UK & European premiere of *Lessons of the Hour* by **Isaac Julien** in partnership with National Galleries of Scotland; and two new festival co-commissions, with work by **Sean Lynch** in collaboration with Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop; and a sound installation by **Emeka Ogboh** with Talbot Rice Gallery.

In a new approach for the festival, we are delighted to collaborate with Glasgow based artist, film-maker and programmer, **Tako Taal as Associate Artist**. Responding to the festival's invitation to reflect on themes and ideas emerging from Isaac Julien's *Lessons of the Hour*, Taal has invited new commissions for public and digital spaces, by a new generation of artists living and working in Scotland: **Chizu Anucha, Sequoia Barnes, Francis Dosoo, Thulani Rachia, Camara Taylor** and **Matthew Arthur Williams**.

We will also see the return of *Platform*, the festival's annual showcase supporting artists in the early stages of their careers to make and present new work – with **Jessica Higgins, Danny Pagarani, Kirsty Russell** and **Isabella Widger** invited to create new work for **Platform: 2021** at Institut français d'Ecosse.

There will also be chance to discover new generation artists at some of our **partner galleries across Edinburgh**, including the work of *Satellite* participant **Alison Scott** at Collective, **Sekai Machache** at Stills, **Andrew Gannon** at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop and **gobscure** at Edinburgh Printmakers.

Solo presentations across the capital include **Christine Borland** at Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, **Alberta Whittle** and **Rachel Maclean** at Jupiter Artland, **Frank Walter** at Ingleby Gallery, **Ian Hamilton Finlay** at The City Art Centre, **Sonia Mehra Chawla** at Edinburgh Printmakers, **Jock McFadyen** at Dovecot Studios and a major exhibition by the artist **Karla Black** for the newly developed and reopened Fruitmarket and **Alison Watt** at The Scottish Portrait Gallery.

This year's edition will also feature important retrospectives and major survey shows including **The Galloway Hoard: Viking-age Treasure** at National Museum of Scotland, **Victoria & Albert: Our Lives in Watercolour** at The Queen's Gallery and **Archie Brennan** at Dovecot Studios.

Edinburgh's commercial galleries present a richly diverse offering including; a new group show from Arusha Gallery and **Ella Walker, Shaun Fraser and Will Maclean** at The Fine Art Society, **Leon Morrocco** at Open Eye Gallery and the centenary of the birth of **Joan Eardley** is marked with an extensive new show at The Scottish Gallery.

The festival is also planning a series of digital events, to include artist and curator conversations, bespoke tours through the programme, events and activities for families and community groups, as well as newly commissioned work for digital space.

**Sorcha Carey, Director, Edinburgh Art Festival said:** “Festivals have always offered a space for gathering, and this year more than any, we are proud to come together with partners across the city to showcase the work of artists from Scotland, the UK and around the world. Some exhibitions are newly made in response to the seismic shifts of the past year; others are the result of many years of planning and careful research; but all are the unique, authentic, and thoughtful products of our city’s extraordinarily rich visual art scene.

The past year has revealed how precarious things can be for artists and creative freelancers, as well as for the institutions and organisations that support the production and presentation of their work. As our summer festival season gets underway, and we look forward to welcoming audiences safely back to the festival and our city, now more than ever we need the space for community and reflection that art and artists can provide.”

**Culture Minister Jenny Gilruth said:** “Edinburgh Art Festival shines a spotlight on the ambitious, inventive and thoughtful work being produced by Scotland’s visual arts community.

“I am pleased to see that the 17th edition of the Edinburgh Art Festival has brought together over 35 live exhibitions and new commissions, including a series of creative new works by six Scottish artists supported by £135,000 from the Scottish Government’s Festivals Expo Fund.

“A further £215,000 has been awarded through our PLACE programme to provide greater opportunities for artists at the beginning of their careers. I look forward to seeing the results of the Festival’s work during this challenging time.”

For more information, please visit [www.edinburghartfestival.com](http://www.edinburghartfestival.com) or follow the festival on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @EdArtFest #EdArtFest #ArtUnlocks

**Edinburgh Art Festival runs from 29 July – 29 August 2021.**

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**IMAGES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)**

**For full exhibition and event listings visit - [www.edinburghartfestival.com/events-listing](http://www.edinburghartfestival.com/events-listing)**

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Festival Safety Measures**

Extensive work and care has been undertaken to maintain the safety of the public, our team and artists in presenting our 2021 festival programme. Our partners have worked tirelessly to ensure their venues and exhibitions adhere to all relevant and current government and industry Covid-19 safety guidance, ensuring every effort is made to protect audiences at all times. Further safety guidance for this year’s festival will be published in July via [edinburghartfestival.com](http://edinburghartfestival.com).

## **Edinburgh Art Festival**

Founded in 2004, Edinburgh Art Festival is the platform for the visual arts at the heart of Edinburgh's August festivals, bringing together the capital's leading galleries, museums, production facilities and artist-run spaces in a city-wide celebration of the very best in visual art. Each year, the festival features leading international and UK artists alongside the best emerging talent, major survey exhibitions of historic figures, and a special programme of newly commissioned artworks that respond to public and historic sites in the city. Edinburgh Art Festival is a registered charity supported by Creative Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council.

## **EventScotland**

EventScotland is working to make Scotland the perfect stage for events. By developing an exciting portfolio of sporting and cultural events EventScotland is helping to raise Scotland's international profile and boost the economy by attracting more visitors. For further information about EventScotland, its funding programmes and latest event news visit [www.EventScotland.org](http://www.EventScotland.org). Follow EventScotland on Twitter @EventScotNews.

EventScotland is a team within VisitScotland's Events Directorate, the national tourism organisation which markets Scotland as a tourism destination across the world, gives support to the tourism industry and brings sustainable tourism growth to Scotland. For more information about VisitScotland see [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org) or for consumer information on Scotland as a visitor destination see [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com).

## **Creative Scotland**

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. For further information about Creative Scotland please visit [www.creativescotland.com](http://www.creativescotland.com). Follow us @creativescots and [www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland](http://www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland)

## **The City of Edinburgh Council**

The City of Edinburgh Council is a funding partner for Edinburgh Art Festival. The Council aims to maintain and build on Edinburgh's reputation as the ideal location for major events and festivals. Working with the city's cultural sector, the Council's arts development team ensures that arts play a vital and lasting role in Edinburgh by developing strategic policy, offering advice on cultural projects and awarding cultural grants.

## **Art Unlocks**

All over the country this spring and summer, Scotland's art galleries, studios, contemporary art venues and production workshops will be opening up. The #ArtUnlocks campaign organised by Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN), will highlight the cultural opportunities in neighbourhoods across Scotland, with venues that are ready to welcome visitors and artists over the coming months. New openings will be announced and shared

using the hashtag #ArtUnlocks and a continually refreshed list of contemporary art openings will be available at: [www.sca-net.org/artunlocks](http://www.sca-net.org/artunlocks).