

Liverpool Biennial

PRESS RELEASE

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LIVERPOOL BIENNIAL REVEALS THEME AND PARTICIPATING ARTISTS FOR 12TH EDITION IN 2023.

- **‘uMoya: The Sacred Return of Lost Things’, curated by Khanyisile Mbongwa, examines the thread between Catastrophe and Aliveness, asking how different ways of living and being are possible.**
- **UK’s largest free festival of contemporary visual art returns to Liverpool 10 June – 17 September 2023.**
- **More than 30 artists and collectives including Albert Ibokwe Khoza, Brook Andrew, Eleng Luluan, Julien Creuzet, Nicholas Galanin, Raisa Kabir and Torkwase Dyson will respond to the theme of the 12th edition of Liverpool Biennial.**
- **New commissions and existing artworks will be unveiled across the city at galleries including the Bluecoat, FACT Liverpool, Open Eye Gallery, Tate Liverpool and Victoria Gallery & Museum, and in further unexpected spaces to be announced in Spring 2023.**

Today Liverpool Biennial reveals the theme and participating artists for its 12th edition. Titled ‘uMoya: The Sacred Return of Lost Things’, the Biennial festival will take place 10 June – 17 September 2023, curated by Khanyisile Mbongwa with Director Sam Lackey and the Liverpool Biennial Team.

In the isiZulu language, ‘uMoya’ means spirit, breath, air, climate and wind. ‘uMoya: The Sacred Return of Lost Things’ addresses the history and temperament of the city of Liverpool; it is a call for ancestral and indigenous forms of knowledge, wisdom and healing.

Khanyisile Mbongwa, Curator, Liverpool Biennial 2023, said:

“Wind often represents the fleeting and transient, the elusive and intangible, but I remember my first moment standing at the docks in Liverpool and feeling the wind in my bones. The same wind that made Liverpool the epicentre for the trade of enslaved people and a city that built itself through each ‘merchant’ ship. And I wondered, how can this wind redraw the lines of cartography as pathways for a

reckoning to occur? How can it gesture towards healing through implementing systems of care that would allow for a sacred return? A return to self that aligns the celestial and ancestral, a return where one is not denied access to themselves, a return where all that is lost or stolen is acknowledged, remembered, accounted for, ignited and returned.”

‘uMoya: The Sacred Return of Lost Things’ explores the ways in which people and objects have the potential to manifest power as they move across the world, while acknowledging the continued losses of the past. It draws a line from the ongoing Catastrophes caused by colonialism towards an insistence on being truly Alive.

uMoya eases the way for breathing to be a passage for the mourning, the ancestral, the spiritual and the intellectual, enabling a move towards emancipation. More than 30 international artists and collectives have been invited to engage with uMoya as a compass, divine intervention, and thoroughfare.

Liverpool Biennial is the UK’s largest free festival of contemporary visual art. Taking over historic buildings, unexpected spaces and art galleries, the Biennial has been transforming the city through art for over two decades. A dynamic programme of free exhibitions, performances, screenings, community and learning activities and fringe events unfolds over 14 weeks, shining a light on the city’s vibrant cultural scene.

The Biennial programme is presented in locations across Liverpool, working in public spaces, historic sites and with the city’s leading art venues including the Bluecoat, FACT Liverpool, National Museums Liverpool, Open Eye Gallery, Tate Liverpool and Victoria Gallery & Museum. Further venues and sites will be announced in Spring 2023.

Sam Lackey, Director, Liverpool Biennial, said:

“I am excited to bring the spirit of uMoya to the city of Liverpool for our 12th edition in 2023, our 25th anniversary year. At this moment of global instability, the vision and experience of our curator Khanyisile Mbongwa brings a perspective of historic acknowledgement that ultimately proposes alternative futures for our world. The geographical breadth of artists will provide new perspectives on our city that acknowledge its past and continued effects on the world and suggests new modes of repair, freedom and joy. We look forward to working with our partners across the city to deliver the festival, bringing 14 weeks of engaging visual arts programming to regional, national and international visitors.”

The participating artists confirmed to date are:

Albert Ibokwe Khoza (South Africa); **Antonio Obá** (Brazil); **Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński** (Austria); **Benoît Piéron** (France); **Binta Diaw** (Senegal/Italy); **Brook**

Andrew (Wiradjuri/Australia); **Charmaine Watkiss** (UK); **David Aguacheiro** (Mozambique); **Eleng Luluan** (Rukai Nation/Taiwan); **Fátima Rodrigo Gonzales** (Peru); **Francis Offman** (Italy/Rwanda); **Gala Porras-Kim** (Colombia/USA); **Isa do Rosário** (Brazil); **Julien Creuzet** (Martinique/France); **Katy'taya Catitu Tayassu** (Brazil/France); **Kent Chan** (Singapore/The Netherlands); **Lorin Sookool** (South Africa); **Lungiswa Gqunta** (South Africa); **Melanie Manchot** (Germany/UK); **Nicholas Galanin** (USA); **Nolan Oswald Dennis** (South Africa/Zambia); **Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum** (Botswana/Canada/The Netherlands); **Rahima Gambo** (Nigeria); **Rahmi Hamzi** (Palestine); **Raisa Kabir** (UK/Bangladesh); **Ranti Bam** (Nigeria/UK); **Rudy Loewe** (UK); **Sandra Suubi** (Uganda); **Sepideh Rahaa** (Iran/Finland); **Shannon Alonzo** (Trinidad & Tobago); **Torkwase Dyson** (USA); **Unmute Dance Theatre** (South Africa).

Accreditation for Liverpool Biennial 2023 for arts professionals is now open – [click here](#) to register.

Ends.

Notes to Editors:

Liverpool Biennial 2023
uMoya: The Sacred Return of Lost Things
10 June – 17 September 2023
Venues and sites across Liverpool, free entry
www.biennial.com

Social Media

Join the discussion online at:
Facebook /liverpoolbiennial
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#LB2023

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About Khanyisile Mbongwa, Curator of Liverpool Biennial 2023

Khanyisile Mbongwa is a Cape Town-based independent curator, award-winning artist and sociologist who engages with her curatorial practice as Curing & Care, using the creative to instigate spaces for emancipatory practices, joy and play.

Mbongwa is the curator of 'Puncture Points', founding member and curator of 'Twenty Journey' and former Executive Director of Handspring Trust Puppets. She is one of the founding members of arts collective Gugulective, Vasiki Creative Citizens and WOC poetry collective Rioters In Session. Mbongwa was a Mellon Foundation Fellow at the Institute of

Creative Arts at the University of Cape Town, where she completed her masters in Interdisciplinary Arts, Public Art and the Public Sphere, and has worked locally and internationally. She is also currently a PhD candidate at UCT where her work focuses on spatiality, radical black self-love and imagination, and black futurity; and a Blak C.O.R.E (Care of Radical Energy) Fellow at the University of Melbourne.

Formerly Chief Curator of the 2020 Stellenbosch Triennale, her other recent projects include: 'Process as Resistance, Resilience & Regeneration' – a group exhibition co-curated with Julia Haarmann honoring a decade of CAT Cologne (2020), Athi-Patra Ruga's solo at Norval Foundation titled 'iiNyanka Zonyaka (The Lunar Songbook)' (2020) and a group exhibition titled 'History's Footnote: On Love & Freedom' at Marres, House for Contemporary Culture in Maastricht, Netherlands (2021).

About Dr. Sam Lackey, Director of Liverpool Biennial

Dr. Samantha Lackey initially joined Liverpool Biennial as Interim Director in late 2020 and was appointed Director in April 2021. She joined the Biennial from her role as Head of Collection and Exhibitions at the Whitworth at the University of Manchester and Senior Lead on the Leadership Team. Before this she was curator at The Hepworth Wakefield (2010-16), where she was part of the team that opened the gallery in 2011 to critical acclaim. Her background is in academia, receiving a PhD in 2005 in the subject of surrealism, which was the context of her work as a lecturer, research fellow and her first exhibition at the Whitworth, 'Subversive Spaces: Surrealism and Contemporary Art.' She has published on surrealism and contemporary art and worked on multiple group and solo exhibitions with artists including Cecily Brown, Susan Hefuna, Linder and Eva Rothschild.

About Liverpool Biennial

Liverpool Biennial established in 1998 is the UK's largest free contemporary visual arts festival and the country's first Biennial. Every two years the festival brings together international artists, arts professionals, communities and audiences to experience exhibitions across the city, alongside a hybrid programme of talks, performances and events, providing an opportunity for Liverpool and the UK to connect with the world, reflecting new ways of thinking. Liverpool Biennial aims to create long-lasting impact through the economic investment it brings to the city, through support for artistic, peer and young people's professional development, through community and school programmes and through its contribution to placemaking in the city and wider region.

Permanent public artworks commissioned by Liverpool Biennial include 'Liverpool Mountain' by Ugo Rondinone (2018), 'Evertro' by Koo Jeong A x Wheelscape (2015) and 'Everybody Razzle Dazzle' by Sir Peter Blake (2015).

Liverpool Biennial is supported by Arts Council England, Liverpool City Council and founding supporter James Moores.

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. www.artscouncil.org.uk.

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and

individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies responsible for administering the Government's unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund. Find out more at www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19.

About Liverpool City Council

Liverpool City Council is one of the largest local authorities in the UK serving a population of 491,500. Culture Liverpool is the city council department which aims to maintain the city's reputation as a cultural and sporting destination, positioning Liverpool as the most exciting place in the UK in which to live, visit, work, study and invest. Through the production and delivery of events, and championing creativity via funded projects across Liverpool City Region, Culture Liverpool pushes boundaries and inspires audiences, ensuring everyone has access to arts and culture. For more information, visit www.cultureliverpool.co.uk.



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