



## **The Connect! Winners Announced**

**The public decides where Yinka Shonibare MBE, Pure Evil and Gillian Wearing will go for Museums at Night**

34,000 members of the public have cast their votes to decide where six contemporary artists will go for Museums at Night's new October festival - taking place October 30 and 31 2015.

The Connect! open competition sees venues compete for a chance to host a special event by a leading contemporary artist during Museums at Night.

The six winning museums and galleries who will be hosting special events by artists during Museums at Night October 2015 are:

**Backlit, Nottingham** (Gillian Wearing)

**Verdant Works, Dundee** (Pure Evil)

**The Novium, Chichester** (Yinka Shonibare MBE)

**Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Honiton** (Luke Jerram)

**The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, Birkenhead** (Davy and Kristin McGuire)

**Freud Museum, London** (Alinah Azedeh)

This year's competition saw some of the tightest results the Connect! competition has ever seen, with The Novium winning Yinka Shonibare by 41 votes and Thelma Hulbert Gallery winning Luke Jerram by only six votes!

Nick Stockman, Campaigns Manager at Museums at Night said: "This year's Connect! competition has given six diverse venues the chance to work with some of the most creative talents in the country. In October's Museums at Night festival the winning venues, together with their artists, will create unique and special events that will again involve the very people that voted for them to happen – an unprecedented collaboration between contemporary artist, cultural venue and the general public."

## **Gillian Wearing**

Winner of the Turner Prize in 1997, Gillian Wearing's work draws on theatrical techniques, private fantasies and psychological trauma. She explores how public personas and private lives intersect, in an investigation of the way in which we present ourselves to the external world.

[Backlit](#), Nottingham, present a 'Karaoke Selfie' event as part of their Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2015 exhibition inviting local writers, spoken word groups and the wider community to take part in a creative writing session with local poets and recording artists, culminating in a showcase of the participants' work.

## **Pure Evil**

Pure Evil is the name by which Charles Uzzel-Edwards, direct descendent of Sir Thomas More, is known in the contemporary art and street graffiti world. His art is heavily inspired by skate culture and graffiti artists from the west coast of America and includes the trademark 'Evil Bunny' tag. Pure Evil has exhibited globally and also owns and runs the Pure Evil gallery in Shoreditch, London from which he's produced over 50 exhibitions for other artists.

[Verdant Works](#), Dundee invite Pure Evil to use their collections and archive to explore the themes of Invention, Engineering, Power and Politics in the renovated 1833 High Mill. Based on one of Pure Evil's artistic principles, we'll ask young people to 'WEAR THEIR POLITICS PROUDLY'; collaborating with local collective Projector Club to create an immersive sound and projected light installation.

## **Yinka Shonibare MBE**

2004 Turner Prize nominee Shonibare describes himself as a 'post-colonial' hybrid, questioning the meaning of cultural and national definitions through painting, sculpture, photography and film. His trademark material is the brightly coloured 'African' batik fabric he buys at Brixton market. The fabric was inspired by Indonesian design, mass-produced by the Dutch and eventually sold to the colonies in West Africa. In 2004, Shonibare was awarded an MBE, a title he has added to his professional name.

[The Novium Museum](#), Chichester will create Inventive Factory spaces inspired by local inventor Colin Pullinger whose own Inventive Factory was the first humane mousetrap! This mini-festival exploring Yinka's favourite theme of identity will partly be led by visitors, community groups and students with the objects and artwork that are produced at the event resulting in an Alternative Museum collection.

## **Luke Jerram**

Luke Jerram has created a number of extraordinary art projects which have excited and inspired people around the globe. He is known worldwide for his large scale public engagement artworks. Most recently his giant installation Park and Slide caught the world's imagination. His celebrated street pianos installation 'Play Me, I'm Yours' has been presented in over 46 cities so far, reaching an audience to date of over 6 million people around the world.

[Thelma Hulbert Gallery](#), Honiton, Devon will build on the work of their youth group Masterpieces to create a participatory experience based on the past occupants of the Georgian building. The ticking and chiming of the clocks will be amplified and the visual splendour will be projected on an outside wall as the event stretches from dusk to late.

### **Davy and Kristin McGuire**

The McGuires head an award winning creative studio that design unique visual experiences through art installations and theatrical projects. As well as creating bespoke projects for cultural institutions and brands, they produce and sell their own works through international galleries. Their hybrid art works are delicate, filigree fantasies that are momentarily brought to life through projection mapping and storytelling.

[The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum](#), Birkenhead will enable the McGuires to use two marble statues, 'Pauline' and 'Love' to create a series of grottos. Using projections, lighting, contemporary interventions, textures, sound and print the gallery will be transformed into an enchanted garden animating a narrative imagined and developed with staff and visitors.

### **Alinah Azadeh**

Alinah Azadeh is a UK artist working across media. Whether a small sculpture or a dialogue with a stranger, her works are rooted in the living and disclosure of personal experiences, which act as a bridge into the work for others to take. Involving the public in acts of gift, ritual and playful exchange, they create dialogue around the nature of loss, longing and our social identities.

[Freud Museum](#), London, plan to give visitors the chance to recline on a Freudian couch and tidy up unfinished business by recounting tales of deserved thanks not given. Closure will be achieved by leaving gifts under a tree and visitors will ponder what gift they would have given to Freud while exploring the great man's collection of art.

Full results can be seen here: <http://museumsatnight.org.uk/connect/>

Previous participating artists have included **Bob & Roberta Smith, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Gavin Turk, Jessica Voorsanger** and photographer **Rankin**. Previous events have included a

**Grayson Perry** teddy-bear hunt around York Museum, New York artist **Spencer Tunick** photographing 100 nudes on Folkestone beach and **Bompas & Parr** floating the Bristol's ss Great Britain on a sea of lime green jelly. In 2014, the Connect! competition attracted more than 62,000 public votes.

Connect! is funded by Arts Council England to support venues to try something different to attract new audiences to their Museums at Night event. In 2014, over 60,000 members of the public voted to win an artist for their town or city.

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For further information and images please contact:

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#### Notes to Editors:

1. **Museums at Night** is the annual after-hours festival of arts, culture and heritage when hundreds of museums, galleries, libraries, archives and heritage sites open their doors for special evening events. It takes place from Wednesday May 13<sup>th</sup> – Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup>. [www.museumsatnight.org.uk](http://www.museumsatnight.org.uk)
2. **Culture24** is an independent non-profit company, which exists to support the cultural sector to reach and connect with audiences. It is best known for [publishing great websites](#) about culture; producing the successful [Museums at Night](#) festival of after-hours openings and leading [Let's Get Real](#), the collaborative action research project involving cultural organisations across the UK and Europe. [www.WeAreCulture24.org.uk](http://www.WeAreCulture24.org.uk)
3. **Arts Council England** champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2011 and 2015, we will invest £1.4 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1 billion from the National

Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)