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Gillian Wearing, Yinka Shonibare and Pure Evil announced for Museums at Night Connect! Competition

Culture24 is delighted to announce the names of the six contemporary artists chosen for Museums at Night's Connect! competition.

Connect! is the national competition that gives members of the public the chance to win a leading contemporary artist to create a unique event at their local museum or gallery during Museums at Night, the UK's after hours festival of arts, culture and heritage.

Cultural venues now have a five weeks to 'bid' for their chosen artist by coming up with a fantastic participatory event idea. The best ideas will be shortlisted by the artist and it's then up to the public to vote for who goes where. Voting for Connect! 2015 will open on May 1 and winning venues will be announced during Museums at Night in May. The public can vote at www.museumsatnight.org.uk

The winning Connect! events will take place during Museums at Night's new two-day October festival (October 30/ 31). This year Museums at Night will take place in both May and October. The May festival will run over four days, from Wednesday May 13 until Saturday May 16.

The artists chosen for Connect! 2015 are:

- **Alinah Azadeh**
- **Davy and Kristin McGuire**
- **Gillian Wearing**
- **Pure Evil**
- **Luke Jerram**
- **Yinka Shonibare**

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.

Nick Stockman, Culture24 Campaigns Manager said: *'This year Connect! is more exciting than ever with voting taking place during the May festival and the events in October. The event prize money has*

also gone up to £3,000 so we are expecting more venue applications than ever before.'

John Orna-Ornstein, Director of Museums at Arts Council England said: 'I'm looking forward to seeing what the artists involved in Connect! 2015 have in store for us: we had incredible feedback following last year's unique artist-led events.'

Now in its seventh year, Museums at Night offers the chance to experience culture and heritage in a totally unexpected way. The festival sees hundreds of museums, galleries and historic spaces all over the UK opening their doors at nighttime to put on an array of special events. The festival has experienced phenomenal growth over the last few years: last year (2014) attracting 180,000 visits to 700 events in over 500 venues across the country.

About The Artists:

- **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. Installations include; *The Bibliomancer's Dream* (2009, South Bank Centre), *The Gifts* (2010, Bristol Museum) and *All Is Not Lost* (2014, Museum of Picardy). *Burning the Books* is a collaborative performance project exploring the power of debt, currently on national tour. www.alinahazadeh.com

- **Davy and Kristin McGuire**

The McGuires head an award winning creative studio that designs unique visual experiences through art installations and theatrical projects. Their hybrid art works are delicate, filigree fantasies that are momentarily brought to life through projection mapping and storytelling.

Winners of The Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award 2013, Davy & Kristin McGuire's work has included theatre productions such as international hit *The Ice Book* (the world's first projection mapped pop-up book) which has toured over 13 countries around the world and award winning theatre show *The Paper Architect* which premiered at The Barbican. www.davyandkristinmcguire.com

- **Gillian Wearing OBE RA**

Born in Birmingham in 1963, British artist Gillian Wearing investigates the tensions between public and private, fiction and reality, and the relationship between the artist and the viewer. Her performative photographs and films explore personal revelations, private fantasies, and psychological trauma. Drawing on theatrical techniques, fly-on-the-wall documentaries, and reality TV, her work explores public personas and private lives in an investigation of the way in which we present ourselves to the external world. In 1997 Wearing was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize.

- **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.

Pure Evil's 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. He has recently been on a mission to complete one piece of street art every day for a year but still finds time to produce a monthly radio show, participate in street art lectures and direct regular workshops.

www.pureevilgallery.virb.com

- **Luke Jerram**

Luke Jerram's multidisciplinary practice involves the creation of sculptures, installations and live arts projects. 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. Launched by the French Minister of Culture in Paris and Mayor Bloomberg in NYC, the installation has received press coverage across the globe. www.lukejerram.com

- **Yinka Shonibare MBE**

Shonibare's work explores issues of race and class through the media of painting, sculpture, photography and film. Having described himself as a 'post-colonial' hybrid, Shonibare questions the meaning of cultural and national definitions. 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 the 1960s the material became a new sign of African identity and independence.

Shonibare was a Turner prize nominee in 2004. Other notable work has included *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, which was displayed on the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square from 2010 -2012 – it was the first commission by a black British artist and is now on permanent display outside the Maritime Museum in Greenwich. Shonibare has exhibited at the Venice Biennial and his works are included in prominent collections all over the world. www.yinkashonibaremb.com

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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 13th – Saturday May 16th. www.museumsatnight.org.uk

2. **Culture24**

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

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

