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Museums at Night to become a Biannual Festival & Connect! Competition Announced

Culture24 is pleased to announce that Museums at Night, the UK's annual after-hours festival of arts, culture and heritage, will now be taking place twice a year– in May and October.

The May festival will now run over four days, from Wednesday May 13 until Saturday May 16, while a second festival, lasting two days, will take place on Friday and Saturday, October 30 and 31.

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 after hours to put on an array of special events. The festival has experienced phenomenal growth during the past few years, attracting 180,000 visits to 700 events in more than 500 venues across the country in 2014.

The annual Connect10 competition - which gives people the chance to 'win' a leading contemporary artist to create a unique event at their local cultural venue during Museums at Night - is to be rebranded Connect! for 2015. This year it will feature six artists, with each event taking place during the October festival.

The artists taking part in Connect! 2015 will be announced shortly.

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

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 trying something different to attract new audiences to their Museums at Night event.

Nick Stockman, Project Manager, Museums at Night said:

“After record numbers of visitors in 2014 the Museums at Night festival will take another giant leap forward in 2015, doubling the number of event nights to six and extending to October as well as an extra day in May. We are really excited about the opportunity this gives venues to offer visitors something new and exciting, particularly those people who don't usually visit museums and galleries.”

John Orna-Ornstein, Director of Museums at Arts Council England said:

“I sometimes think museums are at their best out of hours. Museums at Night brings the opportunity for people everywhere to engage with brilliant objects and museums close to their home in fun, quirky and stimulating ways. If you thought museums are boring, think again! 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.”

Tying in with the European initiative La Nuit des Musées, Museums at Night is run by Culture24 and designed to attract new audiences into museums and galleries via a whole range of exciting events.

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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