

press release



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Edinburgh Art Festival announces line-up for 2005

Over thirty galleries will take part in this year's Edinburgh Art Festival, which will complement and run concurrently with Edinburgh's other major festivals in August.

The Edinburgh Art Festival, piloted for the first time last year, has been brought about by a strong conviction from the artistic community that an independent visual art festival should sit alongside all the other festivals that take place in Edinburgh over the festival period each year. Edinburgh has a long history of involvement in the visual arts and the creation of the Art Festival ensures that the imaginative and innovative programming already taking place within Edinburgh's galleries will be recognised more widely.

The galleries brought together by the Festival's Steering Committee (chaired by Tessa Jackson, independent curator and founding Artistic Director of the Artes Mundi Prize), will exhibit a range of new and existing artwork, including work by internationally renowned artists, works loaned from some of the world's most prestigious and important collections, artistic talent from Scotland, and exciting collaborative projects by artists working across different media including site-specific installations.

An underlying principle of the development of the Edinburgh Art Festival is to support the work of existing galleries and artist-led organisations as well as to offer some organisations funds to commission new projects. This year the Festival is supporting **thirty per cent** more galleries than in 2004 and plans to offer total funding **of £15,000** for projects commissioned specifically for the Festival.

Tessa Jackson, Chair of the Edinburgh Art Festival Steering Committee said :

'EAF will highlight the importance of the visual arts to Edinburgh at a time when it stages one of the world's foremost cultural events in August. Galleries, museums, organisations as well as individual artists have made a significant contribution over many years, and EAF aims to celebrate and bring them together to raise the profile of the visual arts further.'

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Amanda Catto, Head of Visual Arts at the Scottish Arts Council, said:

'We are delighted that there has been such an enthusiastic response from Edinburgh's visual arts community for this year's Edinburgh Art Festival. The success of last year's pilot demonstrated that there is a real desire from artists, galleries and audiences for an event such as this and, with such a great programme on offer, I am sure that this year's festival will attract even more visitors to the participating galleries over the festival period.'

Among the highlights of this year's Edinburgh Art Festival are major 'blockbuster' exhibitions planned by Scotland's national arts organisations, reflecting Edinburgh's place on the world stage. These include : **Henri Cartier-Bresson** – one of the giants in the history of photography, at the Dean Gallery – the only UK venue for this world tour; **Francis Bacon**, one of the most important British artists of the 20th century, at the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art; rare court costumes and Fabergé items from St Petersburg at the Royal Museum illustrating the history of **Nicholas and Alexandra: The Last Tsar and Tsarina of Russia**; and **Gauguin's Vision** at the Scottish National Gallery.

Events and exhibitions unique to Edinburgh which have been programmed to take place during the Art Festival include : **Cai Guo Qiang's** 'black rainbow' suspended over Edinburgh Castle made from over two thousand black pyrotechnic smoke shells alongside an exhibition of his work at the Fruitmarket Gallery; Edinburgh-based philosopher and poet **Ian Hamilton Finlay** who marks his 80th birthday with exhibitions at the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Ingleby Gallery and the Scottish National Poetry Library; and **The Healing Touch** at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery which celebrates Edinburgh's Royal College of Surgeons' 500th year with a look at Scottish men and women who have pioneered medicine.

International artists of outstanding quality and leading Scottish artists are also exhibiting in Edinburgh in August including: Greek artist **Jannis Kounellis** at the Edinburgh College of Art and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art; Portuguese painter **Paula Rego** at the Talbot Rice Gallery; fifteen contemporary **Japanese artists** at the Merz Gallery; and '**Looking Both Ways**' at the City Art Centre, an exhibition of work by twelve contemporary African artists curated by the Museum for African Art in New York.

Scottish artists taking part who already have international profiles include : Glasgow based **Claire Barclay** with a new site-specific sculptural installation at doggerfisher; **Jackie Anderson's** figurative paintings at the Amber Roome Gallery; **Leon Morrocco** at the Open



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Eye Gallery; and for the first time the **RSA Annual Exhibition** will take place in August showcasing the works of the 127 Academy members alongside a number of invited artists at the Royal Scottish Academy. Edinburgh's artist-led groups and spaces, including Aurora, Magnifitat, EmergeD, Total Kunst and The Embassy will be offering a variety of exhibitions and projects across the city, which will encourage and present new work and new collaborations.

The Edinburgh Art Festival is supported by the Scottish Arts Council, The British Council and Edinburgh City Council.

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For information about participating galleries and specific exhibitions please contact the individual galleries. Contact details are given below.