

# Edinburgh Art Festival Commissions Programme 2018

Alongside a rich programme of exhibitions and events curated by partners across the city, each year we invite Scottish and international artists to make new projects specifically for the Festival.

With a focus on bringing art out of formal gallery settings and into conversation with the city, our Commissions Programme invites artists to develop new work for public spaces and historic buildings, often providing access to spaces that are not generally open to the public.

Our 2018 Commissions Programme presents new work by four artists at sites across the city, ranging from the street performance sites of the Royal Mile, to a 15th century kirk, a Victorian Fire Station, and Scotland’s smallest wildlife reserve.

Touching on current political and social concerns, several of the 2018 commissions have been developed in dialogue with other artforms – including poetry, music and magic. Strategies of orchestration and the act of close listening inform a number of the works, while freedom of expression and a questioning of economic models feature prominently as themes within the programme.

The 2018 Commissions Programme also includes:

**Ross Birrell & David Harding: *Triptych***

Trinity Apse, Chalmers Close, 42 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1SS

**Ruth Ewan: *Sympathetic Magick***

Various venues – see [www.edinburghartfestival.com](http://www.edinburghartfestival.com) for details

**Shilpa Gupta: *For, in your tongue, I cannot hide***

The Fire Station at Edinburgh College of Art, 76-78 Lauriston Place, Edinburgh, EH3 9DE

26 July – 26 August | Monday – Sunday, 10am-6pm

**Core Funders**

Creative Scotland  
City of Edinburgh Council



**Project Funders and Supporters**

Scottish Government’s Festivals Expo Fund  
EventScotland  
Institut Français D’Écosse



Design: James Brook, [www.jamesbrook.net](http://www.jamesbrook.net)

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## Adam Lewis Jacob: *No Easy Answers*

Cover: Adam Lewis Jacob, *No Easy Answers*, 2018 (video still). Courtesy of the Artist.







**Left:** Adam Lewis Jacob, *No Easy Answers*, 2018 (video stills). Courtesy of the Artist.



## Adam Lewis Jacob: *No Easy Answers*

*'The suburbs dream of violence. Asleep in their drowsy villas, sheltered by benevolent shopping malls, they wait patiently for the nightmares that will wake them into a more passionate world...'*

– J G Ballard, *Kingdom Come*

At the centre of the room, viewers encounter a collection of modular shelving, acquired by the artist from the former chainstore Maplins, after the company went into administration earlier this year, and re-purposed as readymades. Placed as if remote islands within the work, they are emblematic of a cycle of consumption and failure which runs as a reference point throughout the work. In a press release, company directors cited *'the impact of the Brexit-hit pound, a weak consumer environment and the withdrawal of credit insurance'* as the reasons for its closure.

Inspired variously by J G Ballard's dystopian vision of suburbs, and his own childhood experience of hours spent sheltering 'in benevolent shopping malls' to varying degrees of alienation, Adam Lewis Jacob's new work reflects on how the language and landscapes of consumer culture have shaped a national identity as much as the personal. Sited in the building which is now home to the French consulate, the work deliberately and ironically appropriates its title from a 1992 essay criticising the UK's membership of the EU.

The installation is punctuated by three screens which endlessly loop through a rhythmic cycle of imagery. Mixing mobile-phone footage captured in shopping centres of gambling machines and digital advertising screens, with strip-away collages of still imagery drawn from catalogues and family albums, the syncopated montage deliberately disintegrates the boundaries between personal, consumer and national identity. Cartoon characters familiar from childhood

and now reappropriated to advertise banks, appear alongside footage of the 1977 jubilee, and photographs of the artist as a young child. At points we catch glimpses of shoppers (and the artist himself) reflected in shop windows. There is a dream-like, hallucinatory quality to these sequences, a kind of psychedelic realism, the flickering pace reminiscent of R.E.M, at once disorientating and subversive, as they flick(er) through their jumbled archive.

Snaking through the installation is a network of lamps, borrowed from friends, and now programmed with morse code. Periodically flashing on and off, the lamps relay an edited version of an interview between the artist and his grandmother. 'It's all gone dead really' his grandmother said, of the shopping centre which was a formative part of Lewis Jacob's adolescence, a meeting place for a community, as well as a subconscious social and political influence on the people that frequent it. The substance of the artist's conversation with his grandmother (a critical element in the formation and development of the project) remains private, translated into a language which is almost exclusively used to send signals of distress.

Another dialogue – with the writer Hussein Mitha – appears in the form of a written text within the work. Obscured and abstracted, these conversations thread an indeterminate path through the work, speaking not of Ballard's passionate and conclusive waking to violence, but of more mundane decline and disintegration, of inconclusive, indeterminate dreams.

## Adam Lewis Jacob

Adam Lewis Jacob (b. 1985, Poole) lives and works in Glasgow. He studied at the Arts Institute of Bournemouth (2008), Mountain School of Arts, Los Angeles (2011), and completed the MFA at Glasgow School of Art (2015) during which he studied on exchange at Piet Zwart Institute.

His work has been presented in one person presentations at Collective, Edinburgh (2017) and Lux, London (2018). He has also participated in group shows including: *Here was Elsewhere*, Cooper Gallery, Dundee (2018); *British Video Art*, Studio 55, South Korea (2017); *Double Parrhesia*, Catalyst, Belfast (2017); *ANTIPHON*, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India (2016). Lewis Jacob was a member of the Transmission Committee from 2015 to 2017 and co-founder of exhibition space Celine. He has undertaken residencies including Hospitalfield (2017) and Triangle France (2017.)