

conjunction08

FANTASTIC, FOUND and FAKE

8 November - 13 December

www.conjunction.org.uk

Welcome to Stoke-on-Trent's first Contemporary Art Biennial.

Conjunction 08 will open on 8 November across the city and will run until 13 December 2008. The festival will involve over 30 artists, including 25 new commissions by artists of international, national and regional significance. The theme is FANTASTIC, FOUND and FAKE, and it is to this stimulus that the artists have been invited to respond, seeking out the extraordinary in the everyday.

The Biennial will take place in the city centre - predominantly at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, AirSpace Gallery, the beautiful Bethesda Chapel and a temporary Conjunction 08 gallery space in a vacant retail unit on Piccadilly - Area 23. There will also be site-specific artworks in and around a variety of spaces and places in the city centre and an exhibition of street and urban art at the region's newest commercial gallery, Let them Create in Barlaston.

The theme is perfectly suited to a multi-sited event, where the audience encounters its apparently everyday nature - things we find in the streets of our city suddenly take on a new significance. It is no coincidence that many of the sites chosen for Conjunction are not conventional art spaces. Bethesda Chapel, for instance, can certainly be considered a find, now re-opened after having been closed to the public for many years. The artworks placed within the chapel address a sense of this new collective spirit.

Conjunction also features a reclaimed retail space, swapping a commercial exchange (or shopping experience) for an alternative exchange - a cultural one. We hope that the transformation of these spaces by the artists in the festival opens new perspectives on our city's buildings and the value of their contents.

The festival has been formed both by invited artists and by artists who responded to an open call for the submission of proposals. We received over 250 submissions in this, the first year of Conjunction from national and international artists.

Alongside the exhibitions there will be opportunities to attend artist talks and a panel discussion; to enjoy guided tours of the exhibitions and to benefit from some professional business advice. We look forward to welcoming you at one of the many exhibitions that make up FANTASTIC, FOUND and FAKE at Conjunction 08. And remember, it's all FREE for you to enjoy.

www.conjunction.org.uk

Funders

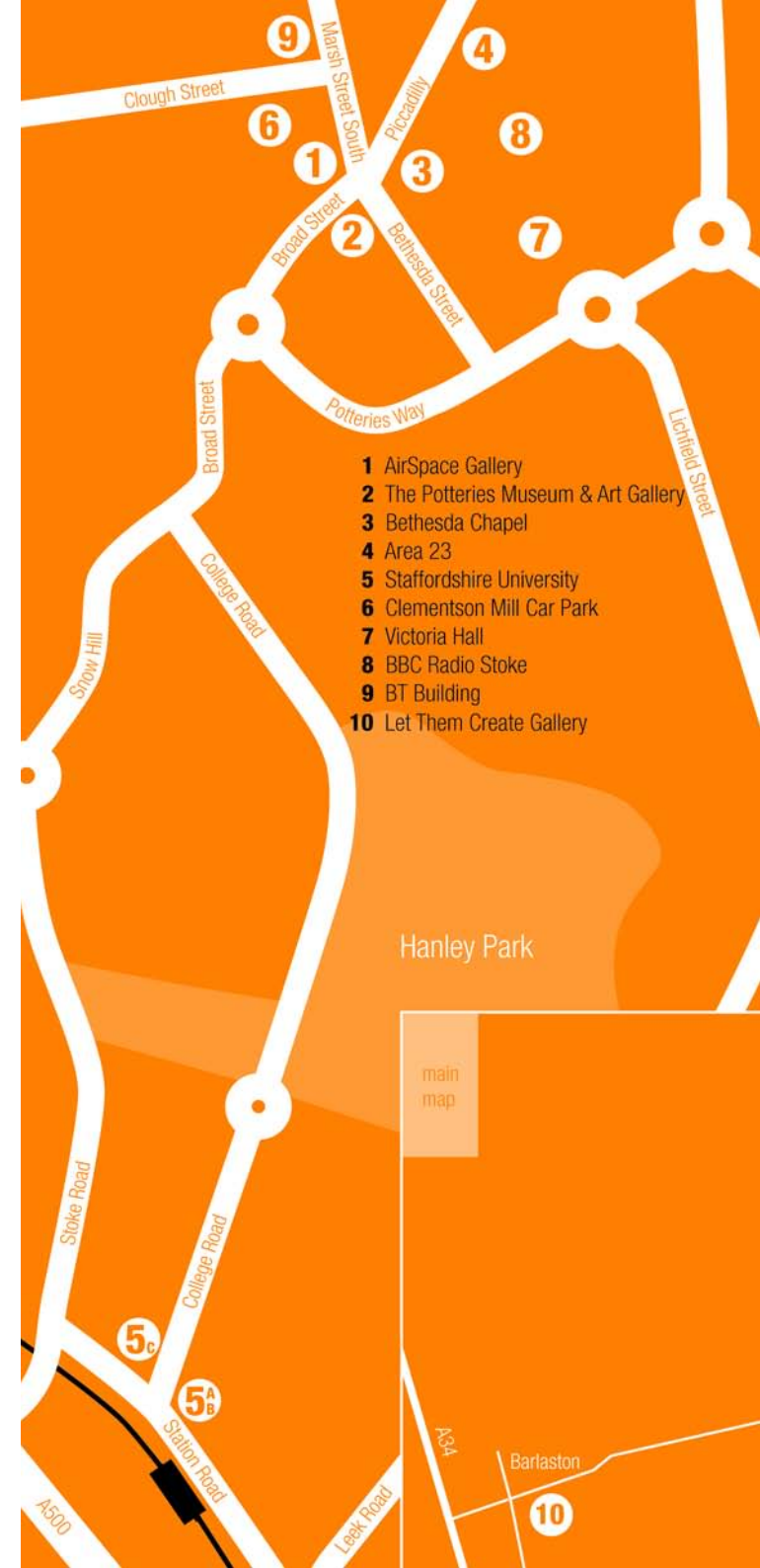


Sponsors



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All artists are listed by venue in alphabetical order. Where artists' work is featured in more than one venue or has specific opening times this is clearly stated as appropriate on the individual listing.

1 Airspace Gallery

4 Broad Street Hanley ST1 4HL

8 November - 13 December

Open 11.00am - 5.00pm (Tuesday - Saturday)

Pascale Canning

Stephanie Davidson and **Georg Rafailidis**

Jan Dunning

Hondartza Fraga

Alex Frost

Kate Lynch

Paul Vivian

At one level, **Pascale Canning's** work 'Stranded' evokes the paraphernalia of bath-time play through this familiar domestic object. Initial impressions however, are soon scuppered by the implicit realism of the tiny merchant ship, positioned at some distance from a receding, resinous sea.

'Found Space', by **Stephanie Davidson** and **Georg Rafailidis**, is one of the few permanently sited artworks to be commissioned for Conjunction 08. The contoured tiles developed for this piece transform walls into surfaces that reach out to touch and be touched. The undulating form of 'Found Space' is ergonomically attuned to the spaces found between bodies and architectural surfaces. These implicit forms have been materialised as ceramic tiles, provoking curiosity and inviting interaction.

To the casual observer **Jan Dunning's** work seems to sit comfortably within the canon of landscape photography. On closer inspection the perfectibility of the terrain starts to trigger a sense of disquiet. Dunning has skilfully constructed a version of reality in microcosm, the qualities conjured by these exquisitely lit pinhole photographs operate somewhere between cinematic special effects and romantic painting.

A constructed model is filmed and photographed with a night vision camera. In previous works **Hondartza Fraga** has used the dollhouse as an object purely manipulated through individual daydream and contemplation; it represents an inner and emotional space. For this piece she has reconstructed her own

living space. The technological enhancement of the night vision suggests danger, surveillance and insecurity. The boundaries between fantasy and reality are blurred, brought in to question by the analytic eye of the night vision lens.

Alex Frost's recent work has been an exploration of adult sophistication through sculptures and drawings that play on tasteful, high minded or mature aesthetics. This contemporary world of good manners, restrained taste and self-reflection is paired with the handmade or home-spun nature of his work which uses oven-baked polymer clay sculptures, smashed tile mosaics and brass rubbings.

'Local Studies' is a series of small artworks, informed by the local colour and patina of surfaces sampled at the venues used to host this distributed exhibition. **Kate Lynch's** work uses two main strategies; one which excavates the surface of buildings to access surface - as a form of historical sediment, the other involves the production of swatches of paint and print added to buildings, these activities constitute an intimate mapping of the city and more specifically the infrastructure of Conjunction 08 itself.

Paul Vivian resurrects the simplicity of an earlier epoch in his recent series of improvised magic lanterns entitled 'Homemade Projections'. Miraculous imagery is emitted from contingent projectors, created by Vivian from discarded food packaging and household appliances. There is often a surprising interplay between the detritus that he co-opts to construct a projection, and the subject matter Vivian chooses to show.

2 The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery

Bethesda Street Hanley ST1 3DW

8 November 2008 - 25 January 2009

Open 10.00am - 4.00pm (Monday - Saturday) and 1.00pm - 4.00pm (Sunday) Closed 25 December - 1 January

From **Gayle Chong Kwan's** photographs of imaginary landscapes to **Jonathan Callan's** intriguing books, this exhibition brings together work in a variety of media that explores the fantastic, found and fake. The show also juxtaposes the work of artists with 'found' objects from the Museum's collections, creating a dialogue between past and present, art and artefact.

Jonathan Callan

Gayle Chong Kwan

Kate Lynch

Louise Fago Ruskin

Johanna Laitanen

Jonathan Callan

Books are seen as cultural objects. For some of the work I make (though not all) I like to see them first and foremost simply as objects; made in a particular way from particular kinds of stuff.

I hope that by working in this way I might be able to say something about how we understand the nature of meaning; how we understand the world through received wisdom (the book) and how we understand the world on a much more direct experiential level.

Being interested in these two things is perhaps why all the approaches I take are quite physical.

Gayle Chong Kwan presents a series of twelve large-format photographs based on 14th-century ideas of a glutton's paradise. Each depicts a mythical landscape constructed from a single foodstuff, which appears enticing but on closer inspection verges on the repellent. Exploring the exotic in tourism, myth, senses, and history, the scenes share horizons; visually linking up into a fantastical, sensory and overbearing landscape reminiscent of scenarios created by Dufour in the 19th Century.

Within the confines of the studio, photographic apparatus acts as a protective screen behind which previously concealed truths may be told. Taking the form of the private confessional box, a metaphorical traversal through uncomfortable psychological landscapes is both encouraged and enabled by **Louise Fago Ruskin**. Surreal and dreamlike in atmosphere, elements of the unconscious and of memory are elicited and a redressing and rebalancing enabled.

Johanna Laitanen's works give Conjunction 08 visitors rare access to the hidden recesses of another museum, more specifically the Natural History Museum. These beautifully judged photographic compositions, poignantly document inventories of artifacts, which seem to have receded from view. Laitanen's investigations tend to infer that the museum has no institutional immunity from fluctuating taste, and to evoke the restless nature of scientific investigation.

3 Bethesda Chapel

Bethesda Street Hanley ST1 3DX

8 November - 13 December

Open 12.00noon - 4.00pm (Wednesday - Saturday)

Chris Biddlecombe

Rinat Kolter

Kate Lynch

Michael Shaw

Broadcasts from the other side and contemplations of daily

channels from the dear departed - artist **Chris Biddlecombe** reinterprets hidden artefacts developed in the 1920s by outsider physicist Ernest Bridgeman. Using early 20th Century documentation of radio-wave experiments, the composition of ether and the belief in Spiritualism by scientist Sir Oliver Lodge, the concealment of a psychic radio station is exposed... shhhhh... look... listen...

In her work **Rinat Kotler** is engaged with narrative in art, using stories in order to stimulate people to tell their own thoughts and feelings. 'Dark' features a man recounting a near death experience. The work uses fiction to reach a moment of reality; perhaps the way to truly reach our innermost fears and truths is through fabricated fantasies.

Michael Shaw's pneumatic interventions will excite renewed interest in Bethesda Chapel. One of Shaw's large-scale structures is a transparent skeletal object on the verge of invisibility. The exciting juxtaposition of this work with the interior of Bethesda promises to breathe life into a celebrated building that has already undergone architectural intensive care.

4 Area 23

23 Piccadilly Hanley ST1 1DH
Sponsored by BJB Commercial

8 November - 13 December
Open 12.00 noon - 4.00pm (Wednesday - Saturday)

Nisha Duggal

Rich White

Jessica Lloyd Jones

Johanna Laitanen (see 2 for artist details)

Eagle and Feather (see 5 for artist details)

Pete Smith

Kate Lynch

"Didn't We Do Well?" is a high definition projection featuring artists, organisers, facilitators and volunteers involved in Conjunction 08. Each subject has been filmed separately; this portrait-like-footage has been edited into a matrix structure by **Nisha Duggal**. Despite their apparent separation, these subjects appear to act in concert, waves of applause and congratulation sweep repeatedly across the screen. The work transgresses norms of reticence that would stifle any whiff of self-congratulation.

Rich White's sculptural intervention within the temporarily vacant retail space is symptomatic of his deregulated approach to building and buildings. White's physical engagements with interiors develop out of an imaginative response to a given site.

He tends to operate without the safety net of an established theme or blueprint, preferring instead to react to the opportunity (and structures) afforded by materials sourced in the immediate vicinity.

Jessica Lloyd-Jones' art practice and research focus on a domain where art, science and technology converge. The properties of light, space and time are explored through immersive installations, sculpture and more recently through the use of film as an expressive vehicle.

Pete Smith constructs mechanical automata that appear to interact with the fabric of the gallery/site. These mechanisms move in a manner that is calculated to trigger associations with human behaviour. Smith's animated artworks seem to oscillate between tragedy and absurdity, as they reiterate a poignant commentary on mundane existence.

5 Staffordshire University

College Road (A Film Theatre exterior concourse, B billboard and C Film Theatre Foyer)

8 November - 13 December
Open 9.00am - 5.00pm (Monday - Saturday)

Littlewhitehead - A
Student Art Commission - B
Eagle and Feather - C

Inspired by old movie scenes and subconscious musings, **Littlewhitehead's** multi-sensory installation investigates the relationship between reality and unreality, between the fictionalisation of the real and the realisation of a fiction.

Student Art Commission It's not a comb over, honest!
Hanley Town Centre and Staffordshire University Billboard
Exhibition contact: lizwroe@hotmail.com
Curated by Pete McManus, Stuart Porter and Liz Wroe

Many artists are identified more by their pseudonyms than their birth names. Selected current and past students of Staffordshire University work under a chosen pseudonym, a new identity. Each piece is a transcription of a more well known artist's, taken as inspiration and interpreted in their own way.

Eagle and Feather take found VHS videos from local charity shops and through a process of editing and remixing produce a reordering of meaning. They take simple, often obscure and forgotten material, such as old documentaries or instructional television programmes, and find a new way for them to inter-relate or co-exist.

City Centre (Hanley)

If not stated, the exact date, time and location of the artists' work will be announced on the Conjunction 08 website and in local media outlets.

Michael Coombs
Eagle and Feather
Ronnie Heeps
NSEC

Visual Tourettes Collective and guests

6 Clementson Mill car park

Clough Street Street Hanley
8 November - 13 December

Michael Coombs has created a new work entitled "Hidden" for Conjunction 08 and it is hoped that people parking in Clementson Mill car park will eventually become alert to Coombs' work. The monumental qualities of permanent public sculpture have been jettisoned in favour of a more low-key sculptural engagement. Coombs' resin-soaked suggestion of a motorbike can be encountered within the city centre, quietly positioned - a vehicular interloper.

7 Victoria Hall

Bagnall Street Hanley
10.00am - 5.00pm (Wednesday - Friday) and 10.00am - 2pm (Saturday)

Eagle and Feather (see 5 for artist details)

8 BBC Radio Stoke

Cheapside Hanley ST1 1JJ
9.00am - 5.00pm (Monday - Friday)

Eagle and Feather (see 5 for artist details)

9 BT Building

Marsh Street Hanley ST1 1HJ
6, 7 and 8 November 7.00pm - 10.00pm

"A Kaleidoscope is a physical object which provides entry into a multi faceted world and can be seen metaphorically as a reflection of that other multi faceted world lurking beneath the surface of the mundane conciseness sometimes referred to as reality." Ralph Deeson, The Illusionist in Us All

Make sure that you don't miss this ambitious large-scale public projection work by **Ronnie Heeps**, on the exterior of the BT Building. It weaves together contemporary images of the city through a kaleidoscopic filter.

With thanks to Monterey and BT

Various locations in the city centre near to AirSpace Gallery, Bethesda Chapel and The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery. 8 and 9 November 1.00pm, 4.00pm and 8.00pm

The preening melodrama of power ballads (which constitute "My Heart Will Go On") will become the recurring soundtrack audible at dusk in the vicinity of the Airspace Gallery. Artistic combo, **NSEC** are the choreographers behind occasional, apparently abandoned vehicles, pumping out this twilight rock opera.

4 Near **Area 23**

Piccadilly ST1 3DW

8 November: 9.00am - 4.00pm

Sponsored by the Let Them Create Gallery

Let Them Create is proud to present **Visual Tourettes**; an exciting live painting performance featuring **DBO, Kev Munday, Two Pence, Sazzelli Rocket01, SU1, Famous When Dead** and incorporating music from **ASUBU** and guests.

A temporary wall will be created on which artists using a combination of acrylics, spray paint, stencils, collage and markers will create two collaborative pieces based upon the theme - Famous, Found and Fake. A DJ mixing a live soundtrack as the work emerges will also accompany the event.

10 **Let Them Create Gallery**

Lea House Barlaston ST12 9DA

8 November - 13 December Fri - Mon 11.00am - 3.00pm

The region's newest commercial gallery presents

Walking the line outsider/insider art

An exciting new exhibition, which seeks to explore the boundaries between contemporary art and the explosion of creativity, that is represented by the street and urban art movement. Presenting a wide range of works from artists as diverse as D*Face, DBO and Famous When Dead to Paine Proffitt, Eve Entwistle and Selina Yuk Tsang Pan this show brings together a range of work never seen before in the UK.

Conspicuous Conjunction

As a key part of the development for the festival we will also be working with photographer **Paula Moss** who has been commissioned to explore the theme of Fantastic, Found and Fake in relation to the people, places and spaces that make up the city of Stoke on Trent. This will be a 'live' commission taking place throughout the festival period, so look out for regular updates on progress and examples of the photographs produced via our website www.conjunction.org.uk

Public talks

As part of Conjunction 08 we are inviting the public and other artists to attend any or all of a series of free talks and events that will consider the theme of the festival, the artworks in it and the wider context of artistic production.

Artist Talk **The Secret Life of the Fine Art Photographic Portfolio** 8 November

1.00 - 3.00pm The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery

Bethesda Street ST1 3DW

Rhonda Wilson is Creative Director of Rhubarb-Rhubarb, the UK's international photographic review. Rhonda will discuss the importance of the portfolio in building a career in the fine art world, and what to do with it once you own one! This talk is most suitable for photographers and fine artists intent on having a future in the image world.

Artist Talk **Alex Frost** 19 November

1.00 - 2.00pm (artist talk) and 3.00 - 4.00pm (Q&A)

Film Theatre Staffordshire University College Road ST4 2DE

Alex Frost will discuss his new artwork, commissioned especially for Conjunction 08, on show at AirSpace Gallery, and will relate that to the other works and commissions he has undertaken in his career so far.

Alex has had solo exhibitions at Milton Keynes Gallery, Spike Island Bristol, Tramway Glasgow, Artsway New Forest and Galerie Sanra Buerger, Berlin. He has also exhibited at Frieze Art Fair and in galleries in New York, London, Leeds, Melbourne, Vienna, Edinburgh and Liverpool. Alex studied his BA in Fine Art at Staffordshire University and is represented by Sorsha Dallas, Glasgow.

Panel Discussion **Fantastic, Found and Fake**

22 November 12.00 - 4.00pm The Forum Theatre - The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery Bethesda Street ST1 3DW

The curators of Conjunction 08; Stephen Boyd, Ian Brown, Andrew Branscombe and David Bethell will introduce this panel discussion by discussing the formula for the festival. The curators will be joined by a selection of artists to discuss their work and responses to the theme FANTASTIC, FOUND and FAKE.

A short tour of the exhibition spaces will then enable the public to engage with the artworks whilst the artists and curators provide some commentary on many of the works in the festival. Artists invited: Rich White, Johanna Laitanen, Michael Coombs, Eagle and Feather and Michael Shaw.

Artist Talk **Gayle Chong Kwan** date to be announced
1.00 - 2.00pm (artist talk) and 3.00 - 4.00pm (Q&A)
Film Theatre (artist talk), Activity Space (Q&A)
Staffordshire University College Road ST4 2DE

Gayle Chong Kwan will discuss her artwork, which can be seen as part of the festival at The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, and will relate that to the other works and commissions she has produced during her career.

Gayle has had solo exhibitions at Artsway New Forest, Tate Britain, National Portrait Gallery London, Chinese Arts Centre Manchester and MAC Birmingham. She has also exhibited at The Venice Biennale, South London Gallery and Tate Modern.

Business Advice for Artists with **Denise Taylor**

11 November 11.00am - 12.00pm, 12.30 - 1.30pm,
2.00 - 3.00pm AirSpace Gallery 4 Broad Street ST1 4HL

Business Link will be providing free advice for artists and arts organisations. If you have any questions about setting up as an artist or an organisation, then this will provide you with valuable advice on issues from setting up as self employed to how to market yourself or your organisation. This session will provide you with everything you'll need to know to kick-start your career.

Guided Tours 28 November 9.45am - 12noon and 1.45pm - 4.00pm Meet at the Film Theatre (foyer) Staffordshire University College Road ST4 2DE

Starting at the Film Theatre at Staffordshire University and ending at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery (with a complimentary hot drink) these free tours with Peta Murphy-Burke; Arts Development Officer from Stoke on Trent's Cultural Development Team and David Bethell from AirSpace Gallery, will provide an insightful but informal guided tour of the exhibitions in the venues, spaces and places used for Conjunction 08.

Booking

The guided tours will leave the Film Theatre promptly at 10.00am and 2.00pm respectively.

Places for all artist talks, discussions and events are strictly limited and must be booked in advance. To avoid disappointment, reserve a free place by contacting AirSpace Gallery on 01782 261 221 or email fantastic@conjunction.org.uk.

All exhibition details, dates, venues and locations are correct at the time of going to press but may be subject to change. To keep up to date with all future Conjunction initiatives please visit our website and register your details www.conjunction.org.uk