

Whitechapel Gallery Director Iwona Blazwick awarded Officier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres

Director of the Whitechapel Gallery Iwona Blazwick OBE has been awarded Officier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture and Communication. The award was presented by HE Bernard Emié, French Ambassador to the UK, at a ceremony on 13 November 2013.

Iwona Blazwick has been Director of the Whitechapel Gallery, London since 2001, leading its expansion in 2009. The Gallery has a history of exhibiting major French artists including *Pierre Klossowski* (2006) and *Sophie Calle: Talking to Strangers* (2009). French-born artist Laure Prouvost, winner of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, was shortlisted for the Turner Prize this year following her Whitechapel Gallery exhibition and a major new commission by French Algerian artist Kader Attia will be unveiled this November. Talks by leading thinkers organised by the Gallery include Nicolas Bourriaud and Jacques Rancière.

Iwona Blazwick, Director, Whitechapel Gallery, said; 'I am delighted and honoured to have been awarded the rank of Officier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. The Whitechapel Gallery brings the most significant developments in art and culture to audiences world wide and French artists and thinkers are central to everything we do. I am very proud and moved by this recognition.'

Notes to Editors

- Iwona Blazwick was educated at Exeter University where she graduated with a degree in English and Fine Art. A writer, curator and broadcaster, she was Director of Exhibitions at London's Institute of Contemporary Art from 1987 until 1992. From 1993 until 1997 she worked as an Independent Curator in Europe and Japan and was also a Commissioning Editor at Phaidon Press. In 1997 she joined Tate Modern as art programme curator and subsequently became Head of Exhibitions and Displays. Prior to the opening of Tate Modern in 2000, she worked on devising the display strategy for the Tate's twentieth century collection and the future exhibitions programme.
- Iwona Blazwick was visiting tutor at the Royal College of Art and teaches occasionally at Goldsmiths School of Art, Central St. Martins, Middlesex University, the Slade School and Sotheby's MA Course; in addition, she has taught at academies in Hamburg, Malmo and Vienna. She has honorary degrees from Goldsmiths College; University of the Arts London; London Metropolitan University; Plymouth University; and is a fellow of the Royal College of Art.
- Her writings have also been published extensively; they include contributions to monographs on Hannah Collins, Ceal Floyer, Katharina Fritsch, Gary Hume, Ilya Kabakov, Cornelia Parker and Elizabeth Peyton among others; and anthologies such as *Fresh Cream* in 2001. Iwona Blazwick was editor of the *Tate Modern Handbook* and *Century City* and writes art criticism for numerous periodicals. She is the Series Editor of *Documents of Contemporary Art*, co-published by Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press.

Press Release

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Whitechapel Gallery
77–82 Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

T +44 (0)20 7522 7888
F +44 (0)20 7539 3340

whitechapelgallery.org

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She is also a broadcaster contributing occasional reviews and commentaries for BBC and Channel Four television and BBC radio.

- Iwona Blazwick has been a judge for the Turner Prize (1993), the Jerwood Prize (1997), Citigroup Photography Prize (2001), Paul Hamlyn Awards (2002), the Wolf Prize in Arts (2003), The Vincent (2004), The Hiroshima Art Prize (2004), The Clark Prize (2005), The Wolfgang Hahn Prize (2007) and the Venice Biennale Golden Lion Award (2007). She chairs the Jury of the ongoing Max Mara Art Prize for Women and is a member of the jury for the Jarman Artists' Film Award. She was on the Advisory Board of dOCUMENTA (13) and the Trafalgar Square Fourth Plinth Commission. She is also chair of the Mayor of London's Cultural Strategy Group.

- In 2008, Iwona Blazwick was awarded an OBE. Iwona Blazwick lives and works in London.

Press Information

For further press information please contact:
Rachel Mapplebeck on 0207 522 7880 or email
RachelMapplebeck@whitechapelgallery.org
Daisy Mallabar on 020 7522 7871 or email
DaisyMallabar@whitechapelgallery.org



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