

## Visions of the future transform Whitechapel Gallery

### Is This Tomorrow?

14 February – 12 May 2019

Galleries 1, 8 & 9

#isthistomorrow

[3 January 2019] Whitechapel Gallery is transformed by experiential installations, environments and pavilions, conceived by over 30 world-leading artists and architects working in collaboration. Ten new experimental multimedia projects responding to critical issues of today to offer speculative visions of the future are presented in *Is This Tomorrow?*.

Inviting visitors to travel through a sculpture formed from security barriers, peer into a model museum for the world's most famous artwork, empathise with animals by entering structures built for them, or consider how a machine could equip us for the future, the ten intriguing and provocative projects pose the question – is this tomorrow?

Diverse international artists and architects explore universal topics including borders, migration, privacy, living space and our relationship with technology. Working together in ten interdisciplinary pairs or groups commissioned by Whitechapel Gallery, each project reveals the expansive potential of collaboration. The exhibition features **6a architects**, **APPARATA**, **Rachel Armstrong**, **Rana Begum**, **Tatiana Bilbao Estudio**, **Cao Fei**, **Mariana Castillo Deball**, **Cécile B. Evans**, **Simon Fujiwara**, **Andrés Jaque / Office of Political Innovation**, **David Kohn Architects**, **mono office**, **Farshid Moussavi Architecture**, **Hardeep Pandhal**, **Amalia Pica**, **Jacolby Satterwhite**, **Zineb Sedira** and **Marina Tabassum Architects**.

The commissions are arranged by in a maze-like configuration throughout the galleries. In the first, **6a architects** (established 2001, UK) collaborate with artist **Amalia Pica** (b. 1978, Argentina) to explore the way architecture proscribes our relationship with animals. Boundaries between human and animal are blurred in their pens weaving throughout the galleries.

**APPARATA** (established 2015, UK) and **Hardeep Pandhal** (b. 1985, UK) consider what happens to architecture when political systems collapse or become outmoded, presenting a top-heavy sculpture on an insufficient support.

Exploring the relationship between people and technology, particularly how consumers adapt themselves and their environments in a rapidly changing society, **mono** (established 2017, China) and **Cao Fei** (b. 1978, China) conceive a prototype for a machine that dispenses objects and emotions to represent and imagine possible futures.

### 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](http://whitechapelgallery.org)

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A large-scale sculptural prop in the form of a mountainside contains a crevice revealing a series of films and images in which sex, designer babies, wealth, gentrification, queerness and fracking all converge. Conceived by a New-York based group Office for Political Innovation including principal **Andres Jaque** (b. 1971, Spain) and artist **Jacolby Satterwhite** (b. 1986, US), the installation considers the relationship between bodies and resources.

**Tatiana Bilbao** (b. 1972, Mexico) and **Mariana Castillo Deball** (b. 1975, Mexico) take living space as their point of departure. Their installation consists of vertical and horizontal elements, placed using ancient Mesoamerican measurements such as the distance between the heart and the outstretched hand.

Visitors walk beneath a seemingly banal structure with a blocky exterior, containing a beautifully textured and pigmented interior surface which reflects and refracts the light. This space of hope and spiritual reflection is presented by **Marina Tabassum** (b. 1968, Bangladesh) and **Rana Begum** (b. 1977, Bangladesh).

A model for a museum made to host Leonardo da Vinci's *Salvatore Mundi*, arguably the world's most famous artwork, is conceived by **David Kohn Architects** (established 2007, UK) and **Simon Fujiwara** (b. 1982, UK). They explore how iconic works of art are gaining increasing currency in a world dominated by international capital and driven by mass populist appeal.

**Farshid Moussavi** OBE (b. 1965, Iran) and **Zineb Sedira** (b. 1963, France) present an experiential pavilion made of a series of security gates, considering the physical architecture of borders and control. With an accompanying soundscape, they imagine the potential to overturn and subvert the tedium of these structures.

**Rachel Armstrong** (b. 1966, UK) and **Cécile B. Evans** (b. 1983, UK) are interested in systems that may already be in the process of eclipsing constructs of capital, like time and space. They present an installation that incorporates microbes, a curtain of fog, and other traditionally uncooperative elements within a framework dictated by absurd units of measurement: the 13sqm surface area deemed as the minimum "acceptable" space for human living and the 999 years designated as the maximum period of occupancy for land within the UK. What can be achieved in spite of, and beyond, the structures that attempt to rationalise or even contain humanity?

More than 60 years on *Is This Tomorrow?* takes its model from *This is Tomorrow*, one of the most influential exhibitions in Whitechapel Gallery's history. Held in 1956, it grouped British architects, painters and sculptors including Eduardo Paolozzi, Erno Goldfinger, Richard Hamilton, James Stirling and Alison and Peter Smithson who worked in groups to present installations. It is now widely considered a watershed of post-war British Art.

Artists and architects invited to participate in *Is This Tomorrow?* were born after the original exhibition took place. Expanding the vision of the original exhibition and reflecting changes of the intervening years, they are based around the world and reflect an equal gender balance.

#### Notes to Editors

- The exhibition is curated by Lydia Yee, Chief Curator at Whitechapel Gallery, with Trinidad Fombella and Cameron Foote, Assistant Curators at Whitechapel Gallery and Pedro Gadanho, MAAT as curatorial advisor
- It is co-commissioned with MAAT - Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon, where it will be presented in 2020.
- The exhibition will be open until 9pm on Thursdays and Fridays.

- The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated publication including contributions from each group. Special exhibition price: £20

Supported by:

The Whitechapel Gallery Commissioning Council: Erin Bell, Leili Huth, Irene Panagopoulos, Catherine Petitgas, Mariela Pissioti, Alex Sainsbury

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### About Whitechapel Gallery

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Frida Kahlo to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Mark Wallinger. With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, dining room and bookshop, the Gallery is open all year round, so there is always something free to see. It is a touchstone for contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter.

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm; Thursdays, 11am – 9pm

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

Nearest London Underground Stations: Aldgate East, Liverpool Street, Tower Gateway DLR

T + 44 (0) 20 7522 7888 | E [info@whitechapelgallery.org](mailto:info@whitechapelgallery.org) | W [whitechapelgallery.org](http://whitechapelgallery.org)

### Whitechapel Gallery Press Information

For more information, interviews and images, contact:

Lucy Hawes, Senior Media Relations Manager

T +44 (0)20 7522 7871 | E [lucyhawes@whitechapelgallery.org](mailto:lucyhawes@whitechapelgallery.org)

Anna Wates, Media Relations Assistant

T +44 (0)20 7522 3360 | E [annawates@whitechapelgallery.org](mailto:annawates@whitechapelgallery.org)