

PRESS RELEASE: 9 August 2019

**From proscenium arches to pop-ups
Theatres Trust's conference Centre Stage looks at putting artists
and audiences at the forefront of theatre design**

Theatres Trust, the national advisory public body for theatres, announces programme details of its 2019 conference 'Centre Stage – artist and audience at the heart of theatres' to be held on Tuesday 15 October at the Battersea Arts Centre in London.

Conference 19: Centre Stage will look at theatres from the perspective of the people they are there to serve. It will ask how to ensure that the needs of artists and audiences sits at the centre of theatre buildings.

It is fashionable in some circles to say that 'traditional' theatre buildings are not suitable for contemporary artistic practice and that by their nature they are a barrier to wider audience engagement and inclusion. However, it's time to move on from that false assumption. Just as there are many new artistic voices who prefer to make their work in found or pop-up spaces so there is also an exciting young generation of artistic directors now running many of long-established theatre buildings. All of those perspectives will be shared at **Conference 19: Centre Stage – artist and audience at the heart of theatres.**

Plenary speakers include celebrated sociologist and urbanist **Professor Richard Sennett**, who chairs **Theatrum Mundi**, a network of artists, critics and scholars who explore the relations between stage and street, **Rebecca Holt, Battersea Arts Centre** and the architect who worked on its recent restoration, **Martin Lydon, Haworth Tompkins.**

David Micklem, 64 Million Artists, Hannah Fox, Derby Museums and **Matt Fenton, Contact, Manchester** along with members of the **Con:Struct** young people's capital project team will offer their thoughts and experience of democratic design.

Taking part in an Artists' Panel Discussion are: **Nadia Fall, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Tarek Iskander, Battersea Arts Centre, Joe Douglas, Live Theatre, Newcastle** and **Bryony Shanahan, Royal Exchange Manchester.**

Punchdrunk, Theatre Absolute, Theatre Deli and Troubadour Theatres – undoubtedly some of the biggest names in working in non-traditional theatres – will discuss their motivations for working in these spaces and the possibilities they create for artists and audiences.

Devonshire Park Theatres, Polka and **Theatre Royal Wakefield** will talk about how to adapt and use theatres to make them truly accessible, inclusive and welcoming to all audiences.

Theatres Trust

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Chair Tim Eyles **Director** Jon Morgan

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The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with the Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

A lightning round will give conference attendees a taste of current theatre building trends across the UK and the people considerations informing them. Featured theatres include: **Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Bolton Octagon, Fairfield Halls, Leeds Playhouse, Shakespeare North, Theatr Clwyd.**

Jon Morgan, Theatres Trust Director says: “There’s nothing as magical as a full theatre where artist and audience together are engaged in the collaborative process of storytelling. Our theatre buildings are an essential ingredient that make that magic happen – Centre Stage will challenge us to place people at the heart of how we design and use them”.

The annual conference, now in its 13th year, attracts a high number of key decision makers and influencers, and provides an unparalleled opportunity for delegates to hear thought-provoking speakers, network and share experiences.

Conference 19 is generously sponsored and supported by a diverse group of theatre service companies and product manufacturers, consultancies and industry organisations including:

Platinum Sponsors **Theatre Projects** and **Unusual**, alongside fellow sponsors **Bennetts Associates, Haworth Tompkins, HQ Theatres & Hospitality, Stage Electrics, Charcoalblue, Northern Light, BuroHappold Engineering, EM Acoustics, Hawthorn, LW Theatres, Plann, Triple E, Harlequin Floors, Robe, Theatreplan, GoboPlus, ETC, GDS** and partners **The Stage, Creative Industries Federation, Federation of Scottish Theatre, ITC, Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre.**

Alan Jacobi of Platinum Sponsors **Unusual** says: “From our Unusual perspective we are no strangers to delivering solutions in non-traditional performance spaces – railway stations, casinos, under canvas...and we look forward to sharing our anecdotes and ways we have overcome the challenges these projects have thrown our way. Events like this annual conference are a fundamental way of ensuring that we keep talking, keep knowledge sharing and keep questioning – it is only through doing so that we ensure that we, as equipment, service or solutions providers within the industry are delivering, not just what the buildings allow, but what performers need to create the art and what the audiences require in order to experience the art in the way it has been envisioned.”

Tickets are on sale now at via the Theatres Trust website with an Early Bird discount available until 23 August.

<http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/latest/events/889-centre-stage-artist-and-audience-at-the-heart-of-theatres>

Follow the conversation on social media [#CentreStage19](#)

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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Download: [Logos and images of Conference 19 venue Battersea Arts Centre](#)

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We believe that current and future generations should have access to good quality theatre buildings where they can be inspired by, and enjoy, live performance. We champion the future of live performance by protecting and supporting excellent theatre buildings which meet the needs of their communities. We do this by providing advice on the design, planning, development and sustainability of theatres, campaigning on behalf of theatres old and new and offering financial assistance through grants. theatretrust.org.uk

Conference 19: Centre Stage – artist and audience at the heart of theatre buildings is on Tuesday 15 October at Battersea Arts Centre in London.

Thanks to the support of ETC, GDS and HQ Theatres & Hospitality, a number of bursary places are available for higher education students, emerging artists and small / unfunded organisations. Find out more at <http://bit.ly/CentreStage19Bursaries>

Press places are available for journalists who want to cover the event and its themes for relevant publications – please email press@theatretrust.org.uk to request a place.

All information correct at the time of going to press. More contributors and sponsors will be confirmed in due course. Please check theatretrust.org.uk for updates.