

# COVENTRY BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART 2019

*Coventry Biennial of Contemporary Art celebrates and promotes contemporary art and artists, producing high quality exhibitions and events in one of the UK's most creative and industrious cities.*

**4 October to 24 November 2019**

This biennial festival is deeply connected to Coventry, its histories and wider context, but also retains an outward looking perspective, ensuring that the programme has wider appeal, significance and impact.

Our programme of exhibitions, events and activities occupies unexpected locations across the city and surrounding area such as empty retail units, community centres, theatres, historic buildings and public spaces, alongside more familiar cultural venues. This strategy engages new audiences, including those who may seldom venture into traditional art galleries, leading to uniquely rich and distinctive interactions between public, artwork and city.

Coventry Biennial is artist-led and aims to provide meaningful opportunities for practitioners at all stages of their careers, from recent graduates to more established, internationally active artists. We seek to attract artists and creatives to the city, to retain recent graduates and to ensure visiting artists are supported in fully engaging with the city and its residents. Peer-to-peer development opportunities embedded in the programme unfold through artist residencies, internships, and workshops.



Martin Green

Photograph: Emily Jones

# INTRODUCING THE TWIN

by Ryan Hughes

COVENTRY WAS THE FIRST CITY IN THE WORLD TO BECOME TWINNED WITH ANOTHER.

During the Second World War, Coventry and Stalingrad (now Volgograd) formed a formal bond of friendship, agreeing to heal together. Since then, Coventry has formed and maintains 26 of these international relationships from Dresden and Sarajevo in Europe, to Kingston, Jamaica and Jinan in China.

Coventry Biennial 2019 takes *The Twin* as its starting point for a series of investigations into duality within contemporary artistic practice. As the Biennial's exhibitions, events and activities with artists and artist groups unfold across the city and surrounding area, their artworks and projects will be entering into a close dialogue with each other and with place.

Whilst each of the artworks and projects within *The Twin* will explore these ideas around duality and place, they will also unfold through our eight distinct programme channels. These programme channels aim to make our curatorial decisions more digestible for those outside of the art-world, and to tie our exhibitions, events and experiences into the social, political and economic cycles and agendas at work across the city and wider Midlands region:

## SKY BLUE MAKING

Presents activity by artists from Coventry and Warwickshire, ensuring the creation of opportunities for artists from the city and allowing them to reach wider audiences.

## CONNECTED FORMS

Presents activity by artists who use or make reference to new technologies and the networked relationships they produce, ensuring that artists are making work that is speculative, innovative and engages directly with contemporary lifestyles, culture and science.

## NEW PEERS

Presents activity by early career artists, ensuring that recent graduates and other 'emerging' artists receive support to make new work and continue their practice to the highest standards.

## A HEALTHY CULTURE

Presents participatory activity by artists who encourage healthier lifestyles, ensuring that artists can contribute to facets of civic life that are not ordinarily considered to be aesthetic.

## TOGETHER

Presents activity by artists from or with clear connections to Coventry's twin cities, ensuring that this unique feature of the city's international identity remains both active and contemporary.

## FREE AND OPEN

Presents activity by artists that is freely and widely distributed, ensuring that audiences have increased opportunities to engage with and own high quality contemporary art.

## CONCEPTUAL C&W

Presents activity by artists who are engaged with the production and legacy of conceptual art, ensuring that the role Coventry and Warwickshire played in the development of the art-historical movement is recognised.

## LEADERS

Presents activity by high profile, industry leading artists, ensuring that audiences in the city have access to some of the best of contemporary art in the world.

# CALL FOR PARTICIPATION – VOLGOGRAD

*Ryan Hughes continues*

“Coventry and Volgograd have a long-standing history of friendship and cultural exchange and we look forward to building on that strong tradition by exhibiting photography and video art by practitioners based in Volgograd as a part of the 2nd Coventry Biennial, taking place later this year.

We also hope to grow these relationships as we plan our 3rd biennial which will happen as a part of the UK City of Culture 2021 celebrations.”

It would be ideal if artists from Volgograd could send us some ‘expressions of interest’ in being involved in Coventry Biennial by the 1st of May. In the ‘expressions of interest’ it would be useful if artists could explain how their work deals with the theme of twinning or dualities (as you’ve already guessed, that’s important to us).

The Coventry Biennial directors will then be able to make a decision on which artist/s we include as a part of our festival. Artists can e-mail me directly on: [ryan@coventrybiennial.com](mailto:ryan@coventrybiennial.com)

Artists should expect us to include no more than 3 artworks. However, we are pleased to consider that one artwork might include multiple elements such as photographic diptychs for example. I imagine that we would be eager to promote the artists work on our website and social media channels and would very clearly credit the artists on each occasion.

If artists are proposing that they send us moving image work, this would either be installed on a screen or would be projected in one of our galleries. If artists are sending photography then we would most likely print and frame these in the UK to save on shipping costs, these photographs would then be gifted to local organisations, providing a longer term presence in the city beyond the festival. In either case, I image that we would discuss the details of displaying the artworks with whichever artists we select to include in the festival.

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