Liverpool Biennial

PRESS RELEASE
UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 0900 TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2026

Liverpool Biennial announces title and artists for its 2027 edition



Design by Praline

- **'The Age of Magical Thinking', curated by Aimee Harrison and Lucía Sanromán, takes inspiration from the shared experience of childhood and youth as a time of transition**

- **UK's largest free festival of contemporary visual art returns to Liverpool 5 June – 19 September 2027, with 25 artists and collectives including new commissions from Francis Alÿs, Tania Candiani and Laakkuluk Williamson**

- **The 2027 festival includes a public realm artwork hosted on Williamson Square, co-created with local young people and artist Harold Offeh**

- **New commissions and existing artworks to be unveiled across the city at venues such as the Bluecoat, FACT Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, Open Eye Gallery, Victoria Gallery & Museum, Liverpool Cathedral, and the Exhibition Research Laboratory at Liverpool John Moores University**

Today, Liverpool Biennial reveals the title and participating artists for its 14th edition, 'The Age of Magical Thinking'. The Biennial is curated by Aimee Harrison and Lucía Sanromán and will run between 5 June and 19 September 2027. The title draws on psychologist Jean Piaget's identification of a particular period in childhood development when the lines between reality and make-believe are blurred. This is an age when the imagination is powerful; tomorrow is charged with potential and when magical thinking can help to create new, alternative worlds.

'The Age of Magical Thinking' brings 25 international artists and collectives to Liverpool's galleries and public spaces, with artworks ranging from reflections on the experience of childhood and the importance of children's rights, to projects that recognise young people as experts of their own experience, encouraging visitors to learn together through play and technology.

Throughout the city, artworks will explore the complexity of the past, address the uncertainty of the present, and provoke necessary questions about the future. The participating artists are:

Ad Minoliti (Argentina), **Amalia Pica** (Argentina/UK), **Anya Paintsil** (Wales), **Charmaine Poh** (Singapore/Germany), **Dor Guez** (Jerusalem/Athens), **EBB.Global** (France), **Elias Nafaa** (Lebanon/Canada), **Francis Alÿs** (Belgium/Mexico), **Harold Offeh** (Ghana/UK), **Hiroko Kubo** (Japan), **Immy Mali** (Uganda), **Iván Argote** (Colombia/France), **the vacuum cleaner** (UK), **Laakkuluk Williamson** (Greenlandic Inuk/Canada), **Wen Cheng Lee** (Taiwan), **Marilyn Boror Bor** (Guatemala), **Petrit Halilaj** (Kosovo/Germany), **Rineke Dijkstra** (The Netherlands), **Robert Gabris** (Slovakia/Austria), **Ronak & Roza Moshtaghi** (Iran/Germany/Norway), **Ruth Ewan** (Scotland), **Tania Candiani** (Mexico),**Yarema Malashchuk and Roman Khimei** (Ukraine), **Zohra Opoku (**Germany/Ghana).

As part of the Biennial, Williamson Square will be activated with a public realm artwork, co-created with local young people, and artist Harold Offeh. Together they will programme the space with events and activities throughout summer 2027. This major project is supported by Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grants and delivered in partnership with the European Children's Rights Unit (ECRU), The University of Liverpool's School of Law and Social Justice, Merseyside Youth Association and PLACED.

Lucía Sanromán, Co-Curator, Liverpool Biennial 2027, said:

"As someone deeply committed to socially engaged and participatory forms of art, working on a Biennial informed by the perspectives and experiences of children and young people has given Aimee and I a lens to view and face the complexity of this particularly uncertain political moment, globally. I think of childhood and youth as a period of constant transition, of change and possibility, but also a time that demands and requires the urgency to question the present. Artists in the exhibition give us insights into the imagination of childhood, spurring us to boldly ask for a better future. The exhibition responds to the loud demands by young people throughout the world to be taken seriously in how political decisions are made, and for whom."

Aimee Harrison, Co-Curator, Liverpool Biennial 2027, said:

"It's been a long-held passion of mine to bring together artists to explore a stage of development that we have all shared. We have an opportunity to learn alongside children about living in a world that is both hard and full of possibility. My first role in an arts organisation was working with young people. I have always been heartened by their hope, honesty and spirit for justice. It has been a privilege to explore these complexities with the incredible artists and Co-Curator Lucía Sanromán. Our Biennial is truly grounded in the experiences of children and young people. Projects like the Williamson Square artwork are an important reminder of why the

perspectives of children and young people are vital to the present and future of our cultural spaces, places and creative practice."

Sam Lackey, Director, Liverpool Biennial, said:

"'The Age of Magical Thinking' brings together artists from across the globe to reflect on childhood and its inevitable complexity and difference. We are delighted to work again once more with our brilliant partner venues across the city and are, as always, grateful for the support of our core funders Arts Council England, Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Accommodation BID for enabling us to achieve our mission of sharing extraordinary contemporary art with everyone and making Liverpool an exceptional place to work, study and visit."

Liverpool Biennial is the UK's largest free festival of contemporary art. Taking place in galleries, historic buildings and unexpected spaces, the Biennial has been transforming the city through art for over two decades. A dynamic programme of free events, including performances, parties and community and learning activities unfolds throughout the summer.

The Biennial programme is presented in venues and the public realm across Liverpool, in partnership with the city's leading art venues, including Bluecoat, Exhibition Research Lab at Liverpool John Moores University, FACT Liverpool, Open Eye Gallery, Victoria Gallery & Museum, and Walker Art Gallery. The festival will also return to Liverpool Cathedral, with further venues and sites announced in Spring 2027.

Click here to register for the Liverpool Biennial 2027 previews and opening programme on 3 and 4 June 2027.

Ends.

Notes to Editors:
Liverpool Biennial 2027
The Age of Magical Thinking
5 June – 19 September 2027
Venues and sites across Liverpool, free entry
www.biennial.com

Social Media
Join the discussion online at:
Instagram @liverpoolbiennial
TikTok @liverpoolbiennial
Facebook /liverpoolbiennial
LinkedIn /company/liverpool-biennial

Curatorial text:

'The Age of Magical Thinking' explores the universally shared experience of childhood and youth as a time marked by change. Childhood involves experiencing the uncertainty of the present as a transition — an invitation towards the yet-to-be. This future focus suggests a vital lens through which to view this time of global crisis. The exhibition brings together artists who invite immersion in the present as an antidote to our catastrophic world, and artworks that create critical alternatives, and sometimes fantastical realities, as escape routes from a dystopic future.

Some artists reflect on their own childhood to understand the present. Others focus on the fundamental role of play in developing individual identity and collective thinking or create digital

worlds to model alternative ways of being, appropriating digital technologies to their chosen ends. Engaged artists acknowledge young people as creative agents who shape their own experience. Artists presenting in public spaces across Liverpool reflect how young people encounter this ever-changing city.

'Magical thinking' allows us to view childhood imagination as a productive and creative space, but also to think of the present and the extraordinary changes we face in social, economic and political life across the globe. It is a psychological term broadly understood as the belief that thoughts, actions, or symbols can influence the external world.

The exhibition references psychologist Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, describing how 2-7 year olds make sense of the world, through lines blurred between reality and fantasy - fuelling creativity. It is also known through Joan Didion's autobiographical text 'The Year of Magical Thinking', which recounts the author's journey of using this psychological mechanism to survive life-altering grief. More recently, 'magical thinking' has described the effects of ideological polarisation, authoritarian rhetoric, and swarm political behaviour. It has also been used to discuss the world-shaping challenges brought by technology and Artificial Intelligence.

As youth take to the streets across the world, demanding a just and dignified life, 'The Age of Magical Thinking' makes space for young people's realities and dreams, including their rights to self-determination and public space. It encourages us to address the present with a sense of curiosity: summoning futures to be claimed.

Press enquiries:
For further information, including full artist biographies and images, please contact:
Grace Edwards Dixon, Liverpool Biennial grace@biennial.com

Matthew Brown, Sam Talbot matthew@sam-talbot.com (For UK & International press)
Catharine Braithwaite cat@we-r-lethal.com (For regional press)

About Aimee Harrison, Co-Curator of Liverpool Biennial 2027
Aimee Harrison is a curator and producer from Liverpool. She has worked at Liverpool Biennial since 2019 as Curator of Learning, producing collaborative projects with international artists as well as designing and delivering extensive Learning Programmes. Prior to the Biennial she was Children and Young People's Producer at Heart of Glass, St Helens and previously worked at FACT Liverpool as Learning Coordinator. Aimee has produced many community projects throughout her career, working extensively with children and young people, d/Deaf and Disabled people, older adults, migrant communities and people within the criminal justice system. Harrison took part in the Jerwood Curatorial Accelerator Programme and her practice is currently being supported by The Ampersand Foundation.

About Lucía Sanromán, Co-Curator of Liverpool Biennial 2027
Lucía Sanromán is an independent curator. She was Chief Curator at the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) from 2025 to 2026, and Director of the Laboratorio de Arte Alameda in Mexico City from 2019 to 2025. While there, she implemented a programme balancing experimentation with a commitment to local communities. Her exhibitions included *Escucha Profunda: Prácticas Hacia el Mundo al Revés {Yutsil, María Sosa, Naomi Rincón Gallardo y Fernando Palma Rodríguez}* (2021–22) and *Pedro Lasch: Entre Líneas / Between the Lines* (2023). She was Director of Visual Arts at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco from 2015 to 2019. Under the programme title 'Changing the Ratio', she organised a

series of survey exhibitions of women artists, including Tania Bruguera, Suzanne Lacy and Lynn Hershman Leeson, among others, who are also pioneers of socially engaged practice.

About Dr. Samantha Lackey, Director of Liverpool Biennial
Dr. Samantha Lackey has held the position of Director at Liverpool Biennial since late 2020. She joined the Biennial from her role as Head of Collection and Exhibitions at the Whitworth at the University of Manchester. Before this she was curator at The Hepworth Wakefield (2010-16), where she was part of the team that opened the gallery in 2011 to critical acclaim. Her background is in academia, receiving a PhD in 2005 in the subject of surrealism, which was the context of her work as a lecturer, research fellow and her first co-curated exhibition at the Whitworth, 'Subversive Spaces: Surrealism and Contemporary Art.' She has published on surrealism and contemporary art and worked on multiple group and solo exhibitions with artists including Cecily Brown, Susan Hefuna, Linder and Eva Rothschild. Sam is also Vice-President of the International Biennial Association and is a Co-Director of Contemporary Visual Arts Network North West.

About Liverpool Biennial
Liverpool Biennial, established in 1998, is the UK's Biennial of contemporary visual art – free for everyone to enjoy. Taking place in historic buildings, unexpected spaces and art galleries, the Biennial has been transforming the city through art for over two decades. A dynamic programme of free exhibitions, performances, screenings, community and learning activities and fringe events unfolds over 14 weeks, shining a light on the city's vibrant cultural scene.

Since its inception, the Biennial has commissioned 414 new artworks, presented work by over 592 leading artists, delivered 40 collaborative artworks, and received over 50 million visits. Permanent public artworks commissioned by Liverpool Biennial include 'Ngialibalibade – to the Lost Myth' by Eleng Luluan (2023), 'Liverpool Mountain*'* by Ugo Rondinone (2018), 'Evertro*'* by Koo Jeong A x Wheelscape (2015) and 'Everybody Razzle Dazzle*'* by Sir Peter Blake (2015).

About Arts Council England
Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Between 2023 and 2026 we will have invested over £467 million of public money from Government, alongside an estimated £250 million each year from The National Lottery, to support individual practitioners, arts organisations, museums and libraries, and to help ensure that people in every part of the country have access to culture and creativity in the places where they live. Visit www.artscouncil.org.uk to learn more about our work.

About Liverpool City Council
Liverpool City Council is one of the largest local authorities in the UK serving a population of around 500,000.
Culture Liverpool is a department of Liverpool City Council, responsible for delivering an ambitious programme of sports and cultural events, festivals, and creative activity across the city region. By working with artists, communities, and partners locally and internationally, it champions creativity, supports talent, and showcases Liverpool as a leading cultural and sporting destination.

About Liverpool BID
Liverpool Business Improvement District is a private, not-for-profit organisation, representing the interests of 930+ levy paying businesses in Liverpool city centre, across three BIDs (Business

Improvement Districts) - Retail & Leisure BID and Culture & Commerce BID and the Accommodation BID.

Liverpool became the first city to have an operating Accommodation BID after a successful ballot from the city's hotels and serviced accommodation providers. Managed by Liverpool BID and overseen by a board of industry representatives and an Executive Board, the Accommodation BID works to provide a voice for the sector, to invest in destination marketing, improvements to the public realm and security that helps to drive forward the city's tourism economy.

About The Ampersand Foundation
The Ampersand Foundation is a UK grant-awarding charity dedicated to supporting the visual arts. The Foundation funds high-quality visual arts activities that are free to the public at least one day per week. Projects supported by the Foundation include new commissions, exhibitions, the expansion of public collections and collection care, with a primary focus on organisations and activities within the UK.
theampersandfoundation.com Instagram: @ampersandfoundation

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Liverpool City Council

Culture LIVERPOOL

Founding Supporter
James Moores

THE AMPERSAND FOUNDATION

Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art Limited is a company registered in England and Wales / Company No. 3659361 / Registered Charity No. 1073956 / VAT Registration No. 732988395