

JOHN LAWRENCE // O COMPLEX MASS A Concrete Liturgy for Dilston Gallery

Sunday 23rd October 2022

Performances at 12pm, 1pm, 2pm & 4pm

Southwark Park Galleries is pleased to announce *O Complex Mass* - a new site-specific performance by artist John Lawrence with composer Stephen Crowe and experimental London-based choir Musarc - created in response to our historic Dilston Gallery.

When quiet, and uninhabited... do buildings dream? *O Complex Mass* asks how a building might dream about itself: its own purpose, history, materiality and meaning. Developed over an extended period of site-responsive research, and produced specifically for, and about Dilston Gallery through an approach Lawrence refers to as 'spatial writing' (alluding to both Spatial Music and site-writing practices), *O Complex Mass* encompasses a new choral work about concrete production with Musarc's singers giving voice to this building's own self-reflexive dream.

Dilston Gallery is architecturally significant for being the first in-situ poured concrete building in the UK. Designed by architects Sir John Simpson and Maxwell Ayrton it was built as a church at speed in 1911 using this relatively new technology to serve what was deemed, by at least one writer at the time, to be a 'spiritually destitute district'.

For many Clare College Mission Church became known as 'Dilston Grove'. On completion it was described as being the finest modern church in South London and for years the building 'flourished ... hosting dances, plays, local sports teams and socials.'

This was followed by a long period after the war where it sat unused and fell into disrepair, until a group of artists occupied the space as a studio, reenergising the building and starting it on its path to having the second life we know it for today - a home of ambitious, experimental artworks and projects.

Proposed as a form of 'concrete liturgy' for Dilston and its extended community, *O Complex Mass* explores the overlapping histories of this unique building, emphasising and sharing its rare qualities with an aim to give audiences a heightened experience of the space itself.

A project by **John Lawrence**

Graphic Score by **Stephen Crowe**

Performed by **Musarc**

NOTES TO EDITOR

BIOS

John Lawrence (b. 1981, Oxford) is an artist and sometime producer/curator. Taking a fluid approach to practice he works in an interdisciplinary way, often instigating collaborative projects in order to find new ways of working with others.

Solo projects include: *The Solar Pessimist*, Kim Fielding Award recipient exhibition at Spit and Sawdust, Cardiff (2017); *Sickly Revelations: Life is brittle // REAL*, touring to Project Number, London, The Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, and Oriol Davies Gallery, Newtown (2016); *Dry Riser*, One Thoresby Street, Nottingham, (2015); and *Original Carbon Copies*, Fold Gallery, London (2012).

Selected curatorial and group projects include: *Oh: Link Zone*, Black Tower Projects, London (2018); *Find Your World In Ours*, commissioned by Mark Titchner for Ikon Gallery and Supersonic Festival Birmingham (2018); *Hmn 13*, curated by Chris Fite-Wassilak and Anne Tallentire (2018); *Video Days*, Bonington Gallery, Nottingham (2018); *Radio Space*, Borealis Festival, Bergen, Norway (2018); *Work Work*, Tintype Gallery, London (2017); *Happy Hypocrite_#ACCUMULATOR_PLUS*, Book Works / NTS Radio (2017); Associate Artist, Open School East, London (2015); *Super Woofer*, Matt's Gallery, London (2015); *After/ Hours/ Drop/ Box*, touring to Modern Art Oxford, Spike Island, Bristol, and Andor Gallery and Hackney Picturehouse Cinema, London (2014).

Lawrence is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at the University of the West of England, Bristol. He is also currently undertaking a practice-based PhD at Kingston University around the idea of 'spatial writing'.

Stephen Crowe is a visual artist and composer. He produces work for the stage as well as short films and animations. His music often sets texts by iconoclastic writers such as Sappho, Rabelais, James Joyce and DH Lawrence. His chamber opera 'Francis Bacon' has been performed at The National Portrait Gallery, The Courtauld Gallery, Camden Art Centre and Dublin City Gallery. Other performances of his work have been at Tate Britain, The James Joyce Centre, The National Justice Museum and Cafe Oto. In his heyday he sang in a heavy metal Barbra Streisand covers band with performances in England, Ireland and Switzerland.

Musarc is one of the UK's most progressive choral collectives. Founded by Joseph Kohlmaier at the School of Art, Architecture and Design, London Metropolitan University in 2008, the ensemble has developed a distinct reputation for its interdisciplinary and research-led approach to music and performance, and the space it affords artists and singers to experiment with new ideas. Since its inception, the choir has collaborated with more than one hundred artists and composers, including Jennifer Walshe, Lin Chiwei, Laure Prouvost, Ed Atkins, Jenny Moore, Lina Lapelytė, Sam Belinfante, Fritz Hauser, Neil Luck and many others; and numerous festivals and arts organisations in the UK and abroad - including the BBC Proms, London Contemporary Music Festival, Post Disaster Rooftops EP03 (Taranto, Italy), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), the Royal Academy, CCA Goldsmiths, Museum of London, Extra City (Antwerp), Serpentine Gallery, MK Gallery, Wysing Polyphonic, STUK (Leuven) Cafe OTO, Bold Tendencies and Whitechapel Gallery.

ABOUT SOUTHWARK PARK GALLERIES

Southwark Park Galleries is a contemporary arts organisation delivering exhibitions, public engagement and learning programmes across two galleries in the heart of Southwark Park in North-East Southwark, London.

We present exhibitions of national significance that remain relevant to our local community. We foster creative career development by providing excellent opportunities for artists at a crucial point in their career to significantly transcend their practice. We support them to breakthrough the barriers of convention, take risks and to make their most ambitious work to date.

Central to our mission is our commitment to offer local people of all ages and from a range of economic, social, cultural and historical backgrounds excellent creative experiences. We wish to continually inspire everyone to celebrate their own cultures through creative participation.

LISTING DETAILS

Southwark Park Galleries
Dilston Gallery, Southwark Park, London SE16 2DD

Website: www.southwarkparkgalleries.org | Instagram: @southwarkparkgalleries
Twitter: @SPark_Galleries | Facebook: @SouthwarkParkGalleries

BOOKING DETAILS

Free via Eventbrite:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/john-lawrence-o-complex-mass-tickets-429141873897>

TRANSPORT

Southwark Park Galleries is well connected via 3 different tube/rail lines, with 4 stations at each corner of Southwark Park, and many bus routes. We are 2 stops from London Bridge.

Jubilee Line to Canada Water and Bermondsey
Overground Line to Canada Water and Surrey Quays
National Rail to South Bermondsey
Bus routes: 1, 47, 188, 199, 225, 381, 395, P12, C10
Up to 4 hours free parking within Southwark Park

**For further press information, please contact
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