



AV FESTIVAL 10 in MIDDLESBROUGH
International Festival of Electronic Arts
(5-14 March 2010) www.avfestival.co.uk

The North East-based biennial AV Festival is one of the UK's largest international festivals of electronic arts. It returns to Middlesbrough, Sunderland, and NewcastleGateshead this year (5-14 March), presenting a diverse programme of work including 24 exhibitions, 20 performances, 10 screenings, 14 talks, 4 club nights and three symposia, by over 100 visual artists, musicians and filmmakers, and will include 15 World Premieres of new AV Festival commissions.

The theme of this year's Festival is 'energy' and all the works in the Festival respond to this idea in some way ranging from sound, light and mechanical energy, to the spiritual and human.

Carol Bell, Head of Programme Development at Culture¹⁰, said:

"AV Festival 10 is set to be the best yet with a real diverse programme of events, many of which offer a variety of opportunities for engagement. The theme of energy shines through and is sure to leave those involved feeling they have experienced something both unique and special."

AV Festival in Middlesbrough:

- * A certain distance, endless light- A major FREE exhibition, and highlight of the Festival which brings together Cuban-born American artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Irish artist William McKeown at mima (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art).
- * 'Untitled' (Strange Bird) 1993 by Felix Gonzalez-Torres - The artist's work is installed on commercial advertising billboards in Middlesbrough, Sunderland and NewcastleGateshead.
- * Silent Sound - Part classical concert, part public séance at Middlesbrough Town Hall by artists Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard, and featuring musician Jason Pierce of Spiritualized and TV's Most Haunted parapsychologist Dr Ciarán O'Keefe.
- * Energy Shorts - Two FREE screenings of moving image work on the North East's only Big Screen, in Centre Square, Middlesbrough.

* A CERTAIN DISTANCE, ENDLESS LIGHT: A PROJECT BY FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES AND WILLIAM MCKEOWN, a free exhibition at mima, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art from Fri 5 March until 4 July (Tues, Weds, Fri, Sat, 10am-5pm, Thurs 10 - 8pm, Sun 12-4pm) which brings together work by Cuban-born American artist Felix

Gonzalez-Torres (1957-96) and Irish artist William McKeown (b. 1962). Both artists' work answers the Festival theme of 'energy' in different ways, through highly personal pursuits of beauty, happiness and freedom.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres is one of the key artists of the 1990s, known for his quiet, minimal installations, he is renowned for developing interactive art that can be taken away by the public, such as his signature paper stacks and piles of sweets. William McKeown is one of Ireland's most highly regarded artists best known for his luminous, near-abstract paintings that explore states of mind such as happiness and freedom, and qualities of nature like the morning sun. His work is poetic, expansive and captures the essence of a place and time.

* 'UNTITLED' (STRANGE BIRD), 1993, by FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES, a series of billboards on sites usually reserved for commercial advertising will present work by this renowned international artist. (Various billboards across Middlesbrough, NewcastleGateshead and Sunderland, see AV Festival website for locations.)

* SILENT SOUND, by Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard, part classical concert, part public séance, at Middlesbrough Town Hall (Sun 7 March, doors 6pm, performance 6.30-7.30pm, £8/£6 concessions).

Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard are collaborative artists who use controversial mind control technology to stage their most remarkable work, Silent Sound, first presented during the Liverpool Biennial (2006). In the Victorian grandeur of Middlesbrough Town Hall, Iain and Jane explore the idea that the subconscious mind can receive information the conscious mind is unaware of. Part public séance and part classical concert, the work draws inspiration from Victorian public performances of Spiritualism, particularly the Davenport Brothers who used a 'spirit cabinet' to attempt contact the souls of the dead. Iain and Jane perform from inside their own cabinet where they repeatedly transmit an inaudible 'message' which is subliminally embedded within a live musical score composed by Jason Pierce of the rock band Spiritualized. The artists have also enlisted the help of Dr. Ciarán O'Keeffe of popular paranormal TV show Most Haunted, who will be present at the performance, adapted specially for the Town Hall, a building with its own haunted history.

* ENERGY SHORTS, is a free screening compilation of eight works by international filmmakers and artists shown on the North East's only Big Screen in Centre Square, Middlesbrough. All the works were selected by an open submission call out on the Festival theme of energy.

Ends.

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AV Festival was initiated in 2003 to acknowledge the role that technology plays in creativity. Three editions of the AV Festival have taken place to date, in 2003, 2006 and 2008. 43,038 people attended AV Festival 08, which was held across three urban centres in the North East.

Electronic art is a vibrant interdisciplinary field of creativity. It includes work across the spectrum of visual art, music, performance and film created using technology and electronic media. It includes artists working collaboratively with scientists and occupies diverse spaces.

AV Festival 10 is organised by Audio Visual Arts North East, an independent charitable company. AV Festival 10 forms part of North East England's world-class programme of festivals and events developed by culture¹⁰.

AV Festival 10 collaborators to date include: amino, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, BBC Big Screen, Bow Brand, Contemporary Art Society, Circa Contemporary Art Projects, Cleer, CRUMB, Culture Lab, Discovery Museum, EAT! Festival, Environment Agency, Gallery North, Great North Museum: Hancock, Habit, Gallery: Great North Museum, Laing Art Gallery, mima (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art), Middlesbrough Town Hall, MMM, Narec, National Glass Centre, Newcastle ScienceFest, Newcastle University, Nexus, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Northern Lights Film Festival, No-Fi, NRFTA, Polytechnic, PRMNT Vibes, Road to Rimini, Reg Vardy Gallery, Science City, Star & Shadow Cinema, Sunderland Aquatic Centre, Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, Sunnyside Partnership, Teeside University, The Arts Catalyst, The Sage Gateshead, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, Tyneside Cinema, and Vane.

Media partners include: The Wire magazine and Little White Lies

AV Festival 10 is supported by: One North East, Arts Council England North East, Northern Film & Media, UK Film Council, Middlesbrough Council, Sunderland City Council, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Big Lottery Fund, The Wellcome Trust, Codeworks, PRS for Music Foundation, Sasakawa Foundation, Office for Contemporary Art Norway, The Sir James Knott Trust, William Leech, Go North East, and the Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust.

The full programme and website for AV Festival 10 will be launched on 20 January 2010: www.avfestival.co.uk