

Immediate Release

Tri-City Co-lab takes place in the world's leading festival city

WKCD's Performing Arts department unveils *International Co-Lab*, an innovative, collaborative tri-city artist residency programme kicking off in Edinburgh

(23 August 2017, Hong Kong) – The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD) today announced the launch of its latest initiative supporting the long-term development of the performing arts in Hong Kong: ***International Co-Lab***, an innovative tri-city residency programme for mid-career performing artists. The ambitious three-year project will launch in Edinburgh, United Kingdom, on 20 August 2017 – in the heart of the city's famed festival season – before travelling to Auckland, New Zealand, in 2018 for the *Auckland Arts Festival* before finally landing in Hong Kong in 2019, when the residency outcomes will be presented as part of the opening programme for Freespace at West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD). *International Co-Lab* is developed by Forest Fringe (the UK), The Basement Theatre (Auckland, New Zealand) and WKCD (Hong Kong). The residency is supported by British Council, Creative Scotland, Creative New Zealand and the WKCD.

The two-week Edinburgh event is a result of conversations during the international delegates programme *Momentum 2016 at Festivals Edinburgh*. This peer-led programme will see three artists from each territory, selected from a range of artistic disciplines, share their artistic skills and cultural knowledge, expand their creative practice, and build their international networks during experimental encounters, conversations, seminars, workshops and project sharing.

Participating artists include Abby Chan, Ata Wong and Dick Wong from Hong Kong; Julia Croft, Nisha Midhan and Jason Wright from New Zealand; and Sharron Devine, Nic Green, and Eilidh MacAskill from the UK. The programme is co-curated by leading performing arts professionals from the project cities, including Anna CY Chan, Head of Dance, Performing Arts (PA), and Low Kee Hong, Head of Theatre, PA, WKCD; Gabrielle Vincent, Programme and Artist Development Manager of Basement Theatre in Auckland; and Ira Brand and Andy Fields, Co-Directors of Forest Fringe from Edinburgh. Each curator brings their expertise and knowledge of their respective areas to the programme.

"A number of new venues will be opening in WKCD in coming years, so it is important for us to continue to present a wide range of initiatives that support our core strategies of venue and programming development, cultural exchange, new works creation, and learning and participation," said **Low Kee Hong, Head of Theatre, PA, WKCD**. "We believe that this exchange will create moments of artistic conversation amongst the group of participating artists during the intensity of the Edinburgh festival. It will enable these artists to push their practice to a new level of creative and artistic experimentation where the encounters, conversations and debates can lead to possible collaboration and new work creation."

“We anticipate the programme will be creatively rewarding for the artists and help to extend networks with the potential for new understandings, connections and opportunities. This exchange successfully links our Edinburgh and Focus on Asia initiatives and we’re delighted to continue building our relationships with our partners in Hong Kong, New Zealand and Scotland,” added **Cath Cardiff, Senior Manager International, Creative New Zealand**.

“This innovate programme offers a new route for our Scottish participants to forge links with their international contemporaries, and vice versa. Being able to bring these artist and practitioners together in Edinburgh during the creative feast that is the city’s festival season adds great potential for opportunities and partnerships to grow as a result,” said **Graham Sheffield, Global Arts Director, British Council**.

“We are excited to collaborate with renowned professionals from New Zealand and the UK, in the midst of one of the world’s leading performing arts festivals,” commented **Anna CY Chan, Head of Dance, PA, WKCD**. “Events like this help us share the philosophy of our arts programming and give us the opportunity to explore strategies for each venue, reach out to new audiences and establish partnerships with leading institutions from around the world. We want the *International Co-Lab* to become a successful laboratory for ideas and part of an exciting new programme for the 2019 opening of Freespace, which is one of WKCD’s most anticipated performing arts venues.”

The three-year, three-city structure of the *International Co-Lab* is designed to allow preliminary artistic conversations to advance over time, deepen relationships between artists and curators, and generate greater understanding of cultural contexts, resulting in more opportunities to develop collaborative works together. Hosting the *International Co-Lab* at major performing arts festivals will provide participating artists with unique opportunities to experience and reflect upon a wide range of programmes.

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Notes to Editors

Co-Curators

West Kowloon Cultural District

Located on Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour, West Kowloon Cultural District is one of the largest cultural projects in the world. The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority's vision is to create a vibrant new cultural quarter for Hong Kong. With a complex of theatres, performance spaces and M+, a museum for contemporary visual culture, West Kowloon Cultural District will produce and host world-class exhibitions, performances and cultural events, as well as provide 23 hectares of public open space, including a two-kilometre waterfront promenade.

Basement Theatre (New Zealand)

Basement Theatre is Auckland's culture-defining powerhouse and home to an artistic mix tape of theatre makers, dancers, visual artists, poets, musicians and comedians creating original New Zealand content. World premieres make up more than half of its programme with the aim of showcasing the best new voices and fresh perspectives.

Forest Fringe (Scotland)

Forest Fringe is an organisation run collaboratively by three artists based in the UK, Ira Brand, Andy Field and Deborah Pearson. Together we create festivals, host residencies and occasionally commission new work as a way of helping support a large and diverse community of independent artists working across and between theatre, dance and live art. We are perhaps most well known for the free venue we have run at the *Edinburgh Festival* for the last 10 years, providing space for new and experimental work within what is otherwise a very challenging commercial environment. Forest Fringe exists outside of any major cultural institution and without regular government subsidy as an attempt to provide artists with agency and community and to imagine new ways of existing together under capitalism.

Supported by:

Creative New Zealand

Creative New Zealand encourages, promotes and supports the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders through funding, capability building, our international programme and advocacy.

Creative Scotland

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life.

British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. Using the UK's cultural resources we make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

Participating Artists (Hong Kong):

Abby Chan

Abby is a graduate of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and was a dancer and guest choreographer with the Hong Kong City Contemporary Dance Company. She is the founder of Chan-candance Theatre and co-artistic director of MCMUI Dansemble. Abby received the Lee Hysan Foundation Fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council to present her work in the United States and expand her dance horizons. She has danced with choreographers Rosalind Newman, Sarah Skaggs, Muna Tseng, Bill Young and Colleen Thomas, Sally Silvers, Maura Donohue and Pele Bausch. In New York, her work has been presented by the Mulberry Street Theater, Joyce SoHo, Chashama OASIS Festival, Brooklyn Arts Exchange Women Festival, 92 Street Y, Galapagos Arts, Chen Dance Center and La Mama.

Abby's choreography has been performed in Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Taipei, Singapore, Seoul, Tokyo, Kyoto, Malaysia, Sydney, Sao Paulo, Colorado and New York. She is also a four-time recipient of the Hong Kong Dance Award.

In addition to dance, Abby has collaborated and performed with many theater companies, showcasing her versatility in performing arts. Her recent appearances included Candace Chong's play *Wild Boars*, directed by Olivia Yun for the 40th Hong Kong Arts Festival; Unlock Dancing Plaza's first consecutive novel cross-media trilogy *Walls 44*; and her own free-form dance theatre production, *Kidult Ophelia*. She was also the Movement director of Dionysus Contemporary Theatre's *Equus* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She was a featured actress in the independent movie *PSEUDO SECULAR*, and both performed and served as movement director in O Theatre Workshop's *Black Monday* as well as Reframe Theatre's *A Concise History of Future China* in the Hong Kong New Vision Festival.

Her latest production, *Cattle Runway*, mixes theatre with an exhibition-like experience, live string quartet and multimedia, exploring the dynamics of human behavior in society in the form of a catwalk and fast fashion to illustrate how our society looks today.

Ata Wong

Ata Wong is a director, choreographer, actor, and physical theatre director and instructor. He graduated from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts' School of Dance and later studied at École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris. Ata was one of the few Chinese artists who completed the two-year program and courses in Le Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement. After graduation, he studied the making and uses of leather masks under Italian mask-making master Stefano Perocco di Meduna at l'academie Albatros.

During his time in Europe, Ata was involved in performances by a number of theatre groups and directors, including the theatre documentary *Sur un Fil (The Tightrope)* by Brook Production, co-directed by Peter Brook and Simon Brook, and *PAN* by Compagnie Irina Brook.

After returning to Hong Kong in 2013, Ata joined Tang Shu-Wing Theatre Studio as director researcher to help train its full-time actors. He now acts as course designer and instructor in his One-Year Professional Physical Theatre Youth Training Programme.

Ata formed the Théâtre de la Feuille in 2010 and serves as director and artistic director. His latest directorial works with the company include *Sonnets*, *Papa*, *Zheng-he*, *L'Orphelin*, *I Want Euthanasia* and *L'Orphelin 2.0*. He choreographed *Chater Road* and *Très léger* for the Hong Kong Jockey Club Contemporary Dance Series in the Hong Kong Arts Festival. He was also movement director for the crime thriller *Three*, a 2015 film directed by Johnnie To.

Dick Wong

Dick Wong is a journalism graduate who left the publishing industry in the mid-'90s to pursue a career in contemporary dance and theatre. In 2004, he was commissioned by the Hong Kong Arts Festival to create *B.O.B.**, which was later developed into two versions and toured extensively in Europe and Asia until 2012. In 2010, he was chosen as a laureate of the French International Residence Programme at Recollets, and he presented *1+ 1* at Fondation Cartier during his stay in Paris. Commissioned by the In Transit Festival, he premiered *Be Me* at Berlin's Haus der Kulturen der Welt in 2011. Recent works include *0/2* (2014), a collaboration with Xing Liang; *The World According to Dance* (2015), a dance/theatre work of four generations of contemporary dance makers in Hong Kong; and *The Rite of Spring* (2016).

Participating Artists (New Zealand):

Julia Croft

Julia Croft is a performer and feminist theatre-maker based in Auckland. She creates original performance that sits somewhere between theatre, dance and performance art, and investigates the relationship between representation, politics and violence. She likes to use confetti cannons and make a mess. She is a maximalist. She has presented her work in New Zealand, Australia, Mexico and the UK.

Nisha Madhan

Nisha Madhan is the artistic director of The Town Centre. Her work ranges from commercial television to performing, producing and directing for contemporary theatre, public installations, writing, dramaturgy and mentorship for emerging artists. She has toured many works nationally and internationally with The Town Centre, Future Hotel, Winning Productions and Indian Ink.

Jason Wright

Jason Wright is a composer and sound artist working across dance, theatre, film, sound installation and videography. Jason collaborates frequently with New Zealand choreographers and theatre makers, and his work has been presented both nationally and internationally, including with the New Zealand Festival, Hong Kong Arts Festival and M1 Contact Dance Festival Singapore. Jason holds a Masters of Music in Sonic Arts and Composition from New Zealand School of Music.

Participating Artists (UK):

Sharron Devine

Sharron Devine trained classically as an actress 20 years ago in London at East 15. Based in Scotland she works as an independent theatre-maker / practitioner in the UK and internationally. Working alone she creates immersive one-on-one human specific works and is also an experienced collaborator crossing creative disciplines from dance to visual and live art. Rarely using text as her starting point, her inspiration is ignited from human, spacial, musical, visual and aural sources. She has spent the last 8 years consciously researching grief, memory, olfactory, immersive, site specific, responsive performance. She recently circumnavigated the globe with her family.

Nic Green

Based in Glasgow Scotland, the forms of Nic Green's performance work are discovered through relational practice with people, place, material or context. Ranging from dance to vocal composition, her work has been commissioned and presented to acclaim winning 'Best Production' at Dublin Fringe Festival, a Herald Angel at Edinburgh Fringe and her latest piece *Cock and Bull* won the Total Theatre award for

Best Visual/Physical performance in Edinburgh last year. She has also shown pieces in Finland, Australia, Japan, Norway, Belgium, Austria, Canada and Ireland. She is the first recipient of the Adrian Howells Award for Intimate Performance and also teaches Directing for Theatre at Glasgow University.

Eilidh MacAskill

Eilidh MacAskill is a live artist and theatre-maker based in Glasgow. She creates playful and unique performances for both adults and children. She is the artistic director of Fish And Game. Recent projects include *The Polar Bears Go Up*, a co-production with the Unicorn Theatre for 2-5s, part of the *Made In Scotland Showcase 2017*; *STUD* - a solo show responding to Freud, masculinity and horses; and *Gendersaurus Rex*, a major research project supported by Imagineate exploring gender and queerness in work for children.