



PRESS RELEASE

27 April

Sculpture to travel by boat to the historic salt centre of Droitwich to celebrate the town's unique place in history

Artist Katy Beinart is set to make an historic boat trip on the waterways leading to the salt centre of England this May, to celebrate the salt trade in Worcestershire that dates back more than 2,000 years.

Her innovative art work, entitled *Saltways*, takes inspiration from the town of Droitwich's heyday as an international centre for salt production, when local waterways were used to export hugely valuable salt around the world.

Katy will travel on *Scorpio*, a heritage working boat, from Gloucester Docks to Droitwich between 4-6 May, carrying a sculpture based on the town's old salt works factories. The pavilion structure will then be filled with salt from around the world, including from Bolivia, Turkey and South Africa, as well as that which is locally produced at Churchfield Saltworks.

The work is part of *The Ring*, an arts programme and cultural first for Worcestershire that celebrates the region's canals and rivers. The project, run by the Canal & River Trust - the charity that cares for the nation's waterways - will see a series of new commissions created by local and internationally celebrated artists in response to the 21 miles of waterways encircling Droitwich and Worcester, namely the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, the Droitwich Canals and the River Severn.

Droitwich was founded on its natural salt brines and, at its peak, exported 120,000 tonnes a year. Katy has been inspired by the last "Wych Barge" to leave Droitwich in 1916, a salt cargo boat designed to navigate canals and open sea.

Katy's salt pavilion will be on display at the Salt Museum in Droitwich from May until September before departing on board a canal boat as part of Salt Fest on 8 September.

Katy says: "*Saltways* both celebrates the past and asks what the future of salt will be in Droitwich. The sculpture contains the past of Droitwich in its form but also the future as an important part of a network of contemporary salt manufacturers. In this way *Saltways* seeks to present a future vision of the town which inspires and ignites other forms of exchange, and value."

Tim Eastop, executive producer of the Canal & River Trust's *Arts on the Waterways* programme says: "*Saltways* promises to be a poignant and exciting spectacle recreating a waterway route that was travelled for thousands of years. The artwork will remind people that waterways are historic places that inspire creative insights about their past, as well as offering intriguing glimpses into their future as places of new culture and

wellbeing. Katy's work promises to bring to life the importance of the community's past stewardship of salt and their contribution to the world."

Cathy Mager, artistic director of *The Ring*, adds: "We are absolutely delighted to see the Salt Pavilion and its associated events arrive in Droitwich after over a year of exceptional research by the artist. The route of *The Ring* holds many hidden histories and *Saltways* shines a light on the important story of the town's international salt trade and how this heritage continues to inspire local salt entrepreneurs"

Events as part of Katy Beinart's *Saltways*:

- Boat arrival: St Richard's Festival, Droitwich, 6 May: Witness the boat's arrival in Vine's Park at 11am as its salt cargo is unloaded and poured into the salt pavilion, along with locally produced salt, in a special ceremony at 12noon attended by the Mayor of Droitwich. Take part in family salt and art workshops with local artists
- Artist's Talk: Droitwich Spa Heritage & Information Centre, 14 July. Join Katy at Droitwich Arts Network as she talks about the *Saltways* project, as part of the arts festival. Join in the family activities on the day
- Boat Farewell: Salt Festival, Droitwich, 8 September: Enjoy the carnival atmosphere of Droitwich Salt Festival: bands and craft stalls pop up in Vine's Park as the salt pavilion embarks on its farewell journey

The Ring is a part of the Canal & River Trust's *Arts on the Waterways* programme and is funded by Arts Council England, Canal & River Trust together with support from local authorities, trusts and foundations. For full details please visit: www.theringart.org.uk

For details about the Canal & River Trust's *Arts on the Waterways* programme visit: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/waterway-arts>

Ends

Notes to editors

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This project has become a leading project of the Worcestershire Arts Strategy '1000 Days' following initial meetings led by the Worcestershire Arts Partnership.

Project partners include: Arts Council England, Canal & River Trust, Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Arts Partnership, Wychavon District Council, Worcester City Council, Meadow Arts, Visit Worcestershire, South Wales and Severn Waterways Partnership, For Droitwich Spa, Worcester, Birmingham and Droitwich Canals Society, University of Worcester, Severn Arts, Droitwich Arts Network, Sustrans, Museums Worcestershire, New Art West Midlands, Droitwich Waterways Trust and Museum of Royal Worcester.

Web: www.theringart.org.uk Facebook: @TheRingWorcs Twitter: @TheRingWorcs Instagram: TheRingWorcs

After 75 years, the Droitwich Canals were restored, resulting in the reconnection of the Mid-Worcestershire Ring in 2011, a 21-mile route, reconnecting Droitwich to the River Severn and from there the open sea. The restoration involved decades of hard work in which

300,000 tons of mud was shifted by volunteers and canal workers. Today, the waterway is a thriving boating route and a peaceful retreat for the local community and wildlife.

Canal & River Trust

The Canal & River Trust is proud to support *The Ring* as part of the charity's *Arts on the Waterways* programme, which is supported through Arts Council England and Arts Council Wales. It provides artists with time and space along the waterways where they can slow down, research and make ambitious new work responding to important social, environmental and heritage questions.

The Trust launched in 2012 as the guardian of 2,000 miles of the historic waterways across England and Wales, as well as the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites. The Canal & River Trust believes that *life is better by water* and *living waterways transform places and enrich lives*. The role of the charity is to ensure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk @CanalRiverTrust @crtcomms #ArtsontheWaterways

Rich White, Occupation (Diglis Island Residency), Diglis Island, Worcester (March - Sept 2018)

Bristol-based sculptor Rich White will be taking residence on and exploring the heritage of Diglis Island, during which he will explore the island's history and future, and create a temporary, large-scale sculpture, entitled *Occupation*. Visible from the towpath, the work will evoke a bygone era of huge activity on the island, harking back to when, amongst other things, it was a centre of waterways maintenance, production and manufacturing. Research and in-progress reports will be documented on his project website.

Heather Wastie, The Muck and Shovel Brigade, Droitwich Canals. View an e-book of Heather's poems on-line from 19 March 2018

Former Worcestershire Poet Laureate, Heather Wastie was introduced as a child to the canals of the West Midlands. She has written a series of poems that sparkle with wit and warmth, inspired by the Droitwich Canals, the people who restored them and the photography archive of Max Sinclair, documenting the completion of the Mid-Worcestershire Ring canal system: its journey from an overgrown, unloved place to the lively network it is today was a labour of love for hundreds of volunteers over decades. This limited edition book of poems and photographs conjures the spirit of the 'muck and shovel brigade'.

Katy Beinart, Saltways, Vines Park, Droitwich and Droitwich Heritage Centre (May - Sept 2018)

Brighton-based interdisciplinary artist Katy Beinart will explore Droitwich's historic past as a salt production centre, exporting salt around the world via vital canal routes and other

'Saltways'. In a symbolic journey that mirrors the 'Saltways' routes, a heritage working boat will travel from Gloucester Docks to Droitwich carrying a sculptural pavilion based on the old saltworks, to be filled with salt from around the world and locally produced Droitwich Salt. Droitwich was founded on its natural salt brine springs and, at its peak, exported 120,000 tonnes of salt a year. The Salt Pavilion will be displayed at the Salt Museum in Droitwich Heritage Centre until early September before departing on board a working boat as part of Salt Fest. The canal was reopened in 2011 following a major restoration programme, including the Netherwich Canal Basin which was the terminus of the Barge Canal where larger vessels came to pick up salt from the brine springs.

NEON, Weogoran Pavilion, South Quay, Worcester City Centre (15 - 24 June 2018)

As summer arrives *the Weogoran Pavilion* will appear in the centre of Worcester. Prepare to be mesmerised by this innovative performance pavilion and its vibrant programme of literature, music, dance and workshops led by local artists. The stage's vibrant design is the creation of NEON, a design studio that works between the disciplines of art and architecture. The sculptural pavilion takes its inspiration from the Saxon origins of the name Worcester and its ancient translation, "the people of the winding river". NEON is an award-winning art, architecture and design practice that who are experienced at producing public projects at an urban scale. Their work engages with the public, transforms the ordinary into extraordinary and creates moments of surprise and excitement. They are fascinated with initiating an emotional response, stopping people in their tracks and breaking the monotony of the everyday.

Dave Crowe, Shire Skies, South Quay, Worcester City Centre (15 - 24 June 2018)

Beatboxer Dave Crowe and *Stranger Faces* headline our opening night performances on stage (15 June) with a lively mix of funk and beatbox sounds. Dave Crowe has created a site-specific soundscape especially for the stage, working with local choirs to compose an atmospheric and mysterious recording inspired by *The Ring's* waterways, which will play at selected times. He says, "The waterways of this beautiful landscape have linked the communities for millennia, yet they reflect at all times the vastness of the skies that bring us the water flow needed to have such a precious link with one another."

Dave Crowe began his career as a street beatboxer in Ledbury, mimicking and morphing environmental sounds of his home town into spectacular vocal compositions. His music videos have since gone viral, commanding multimillion hits on YouTube. He performs around the world with his bands *HeyMoonShaker* and *Stranger Faces*.

Emily Speed, Hollowware, Diglis Canal Basin, Worcester (August 2018)

Working with the Museum of Royal Worcester, sited a short walk from *The Ring's* route, Emily Speed presents an interactive performance work. Explore the museum and then encounter a costumed character, emerging from a narrowboat to share tales of the curious and fantastical history of Royal Worcester Porcelain, which owes its success to the

international transport links provided by the waterways. Commissioned by Meadow Arts as part of a major autumn exhibition at Museum of Royal Worcester, Emily Speed utilises ceramics, costume, architecture and performance to explore themes of shelter and the personal histories of inhabitants of buildings. Emily has looked at the museum's archives and its symbiotic relationship to the canal and river network, as well as how the decorations of canal boats link to the fine art traditions of porcelain production.

Lucy McLauchlan, Opening the Floodgates, Oil Dock Basin, Worcester (August - September 2018)

Lucy is one of the UK's leading female street artists. Her internationally acclaimed, large-scale monochromatic paintings combine ancient, almost prehistorical influences with graphic sensibilities. Lucy will be creating a new work for The Ring in Worcester throughout the spring and summer. Her career has seen her exhibit in galleries, museums and festivals across the globe, creating work using a 'one-take' philosophy that rejects extensive preparation using digital tools. Her commissions have adorned multi-story buildings across Europe, gigantic billboards in China, huts in The Gambia, windows in Japan, walls in Moscow's Red Square, water towers in Italy, a Norwegian lighthouse, Detroit car parks and abandoned NYC subway tunnels. Within the UK, Lucy infamously created the 'Todo es posible!' mural in 2010 on the outside of the former brutalist Birmingham Central Library, while four of her works are in the Victoria & Albert Museum permanent collection.