



PRESS RELEASE

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FESTIVAL BY THE RIVER: shimmering pavilion in Worcester to host festival of artists and musicians

15-24 June

South Quay, Worcester (WR1 2JN)

PHOTO-OPPORTUNITY: pre-launch photo-op featuring NEON and Dave Crowe on Friday, 15 June, 11am at South Quay, by the River Severn in Worcester (WR1 2JN)

Ten days of art, music, dance, poetry, food, and drink are coming to Worcester this June, with a specially built shimmering pavilion taking centre stage in South Quay.

The Weorgoran Pavilion is the creation of award-winning art, architecture and design studio NEON as part of *The Ring* arts programme, which is running throughout spring and summer to celebrate the county's rivers and canals.

NEON has teamed up with company Shimmerwalls to create the amazing stage especially for the Festival, a sculptural pavilion that takes its inspiration from the ancient origin of the name Worcester as "the people of the winding river". Made up of 100,000 sequins that will move in reaction to air and music as well as shimmer with natural light, it will offer an immersive experience for all who visit it. It will also feature a commissioned soundscape, *Shire Skies*, by acclaimed Ledbury-born composer, musician and beatboxer Dave Crowe, that will play at selected times throughout the ten days.

Dave Crowe will be headlining the Festival's launch night on Friday, 15 June, featuring performances with Worcester Young Voices Choir and his band Stranger Faces. Acts including Shelley Eva Haden (dance) and Julia Palmer-Price (cello) will also be on the bill, with everything kicking-off from 6pm.

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The Weorgoran Pavillion will then host a fabulous feast of entertainment over the ten days, with premier acts K.O.G (LIVE), Hotsteppas, Clik Clik Collective, Holly Holden, Snazzback, Matuki and The Brass Funkeys entertaining the crowds in the evenings; all for free. During the day there's everything from storytelling with Cat Weatherill to Drum Love workshops and RSVP Bhangra, with displays and workshops galore from local talents including the brilliant Dancefest.

Check out theringart.org.uk for the full programme, map and information about all the acts.

The Ring is an arts programme 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.

Cathy Mager, artistic director of *The Ring*, says: "We're are so excited that the festival is finally here and we'll be seeing incredible artists from across the region including many of Worcestershire's talented resident artists. The Weorgoran Pavilion by NEON is an ambitious and beautiful design and will host a huge array of workshops, arts and music. We're delighted to have been able to work with them and see their creation come to life. That someone as renowned as Dave Crowe is headlining the launch is amazing, he's one of those artists that can blow you away with his performances. There's so much happening over the ten days, it's free and there should be something for all ages. So if you're out and about in the city or looking for some culture, pay the Weorgoran Pavilion a visit at South Quay."

Mark Nixon, NEON says: "It has been a pleasure to research and respond to the legacy of the canal and waterways of the area through the duration of this project. As well as being an exciting and interactive spectacle, we hope that the pavilion will become a lens through which the visitors to the festival will reflect on their own personal relationship with the waterways. We can't wait to see the pavilion come to life as part of the festival by the river."

Talking about the inspiration for his work, Dave Crowe, 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."

Tim Eastop, executive producer of the Canal & River Trust's *Arts on the Waterways* programme says: "It's amazing to have such a rich cast of artists and performers converging on Worcester in June next to the River Severn at South Quay. The canals and rivers here have long been an inspiration to artists from all disciplines and it will be wonderful to see this new wave of creativity released onto NEON's brilliant sculptural stage. I'm particularly looking forward to immersing myself in Dave Crowe's soundscape which will weave throughout this pop-up festival. Our waterways are at the heart of the communities here and I'm sure this great programme will illuminate one our most treasured rivers, making lives better by water."

All workshops are completely free of charge but spaces are limited, please book via the Eventbrite links on our website. Thanks to our event sponsor, OLPRO.

For more information about NEON <http://www.seeneon.com/> More information about Dave Crowe is available at www.instagram.com/davecroweofficial/

To find out more about the Canal & River Trust, including how you can volunteer or donate to the charity, visit canalrivertrust.org.uk

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Notes to editors

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The Ring has been developed with the support of a range of partners, led by the Canal & River Trust, the charity that looks after 2,000 miles of waterways across England and Wales. It has also become a leading project of the Worcestershire Arts Strategy '1000 Days'. The project partners include: Arts Council England, 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

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 Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a real difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to transform their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day. www.canalrivertrust.org.uk @CanalRiverTrust @crtcomms

Artists taking part in *The Ring*:

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

As summer arrives *the Weorgoran 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. 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 Rings* 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.