



Canal &
River Trust

Arts on the Waterways

Autumn 2017 Newsletter

Stilling the Flow (Side Pond)
Image: Jim Cooke

The Canal & River Trust's Arts on the Waterways programme is transforming places and enriching lives. 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. At the same time the programme supports the Trust in its mission to change public attitudes to its canals and rivers and engage with a wider diversity of people who live near them. We want the arts to help unlock the potential of our canals, rivers and docks to benefit the wellbeing of the communities they serve

This summer has seen some magical interventions by artists inspired by rivers, canals and the people who live and work around them. Extraordinary experiences for canal-side visitors were made possible through our creative partnerships, for example with *The Floating Cinema*, which travelled for the first time through South Yorkshire towards Hull, City of Culture. Our strategic partner, Arts Council England, invited Canal & River Trust to write a guest blog about the way the project engaged local communities through arts activities and open-air screenings en route.

There is a lot to look forward to this Autumn including the imminent announcement of our third Canal Laureate, in partnership with The Poetry Society, following Luke Kennard's illuminating tenancy. We're pleased to invite those in the Birmingham area this weekend to visit Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's first venture on the canals of Birmingham.



BCMG, Serenade on the Canals
(Trombone facing forward)
Image: Alex Walker

Canal Serenade

The area around the so called Worcester Bar at Birmingham's Gas Street Basin close to Broad Street, where the Fazely, Main Line and Worcester Canals merge, forms the heart of the unique nationwide network of canals. What was once the base for the City's industries and trade, the exchange of material goods vital to Birmingham and the British economy, is to be the venue for a serenade, produced by Birmingham Contemporary Music Group in partnership with the Canal & River Trust. *Canal Serenade* is a free outdoor performance with a single work jointly written by UK composer Richard Baker and two international composers, Cypriot Yannis Kyriakides and Czech Ondřej Adámek, for an array of instruments including trombone, accordion and percussion, voice and electronics. The compositions are inspired by the architecture and the geography of the city's waterways and will be performed on three separate narrowboats, uniting at the meeting point of three canals. The premiere is on 10 September 2017 at 4pm followed by a repeat performance at 2pm on 23 September.

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Simeon Nelson, 2017,
Hydrosiren construction

Meanwhile Hydrosiren

A new Canal & River Trust commission by artist Simeon Nelson, *Meanwhile Hydrosiren* is currently in production. The art work, a floating sculptural boat incorporating a soundscape recorded and engineered by composer Rob Godman – of the diverse inhabitants and users of Meanwhile Gardens, both human and non-human – will be launched on 14 October. Canal & River Trust volunteers have been instrumental in the boat build and ornamentation, with opportunities for their involvement continuing throughout the project. *Meanwhile Hydrosiren* will sail along the Meanwhile Gardens stretch of the Grand Union Canal, Little Venice, during weekend afternoons, with weekday moored performances. The project is curated and managed by art consultants, Modus Operandi.

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Selina Cooper, Idle Women
Image: Wendy Burnett

Idle Women: On the Water in St Helen's

idle women's canal-based project *On the water* reaches the final stages of its slow tour of the canals in North West England and West Yorkshire this Autumn. *Selina Cooper*, named after a Victorian campaigner for women's rights from Burnley, is a bespoke narrowboat serving as a resource and arts centre built by and for women. Celebrate the launch in St Helen's with live music from Hectic Egg, a welcoming ceremony, buffet and possibly some bra burning! Women can participate in a 'boot camp' of creative and practical activities to help build independence, resilience and friendships, such as seed collecting, plant medicine, self-defense, disguises, mechanics and more. For full details and to book your free place at these events please visit the [website](#).

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Super Slow Way: Fabrications

Canal & River Trust's leading arts project is Super Slow Way which has just launched *Fabrications*, an ambitious season of commissions and events celebrating textiles and the textiles industry through contemporary art. The social and urban fabric of the canal corridor of Penine Lancashire was shaped by textiles – by the end of the 19th century Lancashire was producing 85% of the world's cotton goods. Drawing on this rich heritage, *Fabrications* is the UK's first festival that explores the textiles industry through the eyes of artists, highlighting the worldwide production and distribution of textiles, as well as future innovations. Taking place in galleries, museums and former textile mills across Blackburn, Hyndburn, Burnley and Pendle throughout September, the festival presents something for everyone – with exhibitions, residencies, major art installations and performances, a symposium, workshops and a craft fair hosted by Selvedge magazine. Listen to BBC Front Row feature on the project here (forward 23 minutes).



Block printers,
Harriet Riddell (*Fabrications*)

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In at the Deep End and Best Foot Forward: final performances

Yorkshire-based company, the much-loved Mikron Theatre, continues through the Autumn to delight old and new audiences with its touring programme. Funded by Arts Council England, Mikron has become a unique waterways institution. The beautiful boat, Tyseley, is at the heart of Mikron's current tour along England's waterways until 11 October as the company presents two new plays to waterways audiences. The first is inspired by hiking through the eyes of hostelers, *Best Foot Forward*, and the second play, *In at the Deep End*, explores the history of the much loved RNLI.



Craig Anderson, James Mclean, Claire Marie Seddon, Rose Mcphilemy, James McLean
Image: Peter Boyd Photography

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Stilling The Flow: final tour dates

You can catch the final stages of the *Stilling The Flow* touring exhibition this Autumn through to Spring. Artist, lecturer and boater, Jim Cooke has returned to the canals of his youth in his boat, deploying large-format film cameras. His fascination with canals began while walking, fishing and bird-watching along the Coventry, Ashby and Oxford canals as a child, a time when waterways were drifting towards the tail end of their industrial working lives. His photography embraces our canals' man-made landscapes, bankside vegetation, surface flows and feelings of timelessness. This recent body of work is currently at the National Waterways Museum, Gloucester until 1 October, followed by Phoenix, Brighton (18 Oct – 12 Nov) and Drill Hall Gallery, Portland (31 March – 29 April) in 2018.



Stilling the Flow, Jim Cooke
Image: Jim Cooke

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Rich White at Diglis Island
Image: R Farkas

The Ring

During the summer Bristol-based sculptor, Rich White, was appointed resident artist for Diglis Island, an often unnoticed stretch of land that sits between the lock and weir at Diglis in Worcester. Rich has been exploring the island to inform a new sculpture which will appear on the island in the Spring, when he will reveal his finding. You can visit the project page for more information on his research and plans for his artwork in 2018. From March to September 2018, *The Ring* will uncover and present unusual stories of place, people and nature through a series of new commissions by established and upcoming artists. Their ambitious and dynamic artworks and live events will entice visitors and local people to discover this loop of waterways in Worcestershire. Full details of *The Ring's* artistic programme will be announced this autumn and you can follow the latest information on the website, sign up for e-news or follow on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

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Changing Places at The House Mill, London.
(Still *The Distance From Here*, Bani Abidi),
Courtesy of Film & Video Umbrella
Image: Anna Arca

Changing Places: final tour dates

The Trust has been delighted to partner with Film & Video Umbrella for *Changing Places*, a unique touring programme of moving-image work by artists from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh that addresses the idea of people and places in transition, alluding to the topical phenomenon of migration. Several of the historic building locations are linked with key waterways that the Canal & River Trust manages or supports, including the National Waterways Museum on the Shropshire Union Canal (exhibition runs until 17 September) and the Whaley Bridge Transhipment Warehouse, (7 October 2017) on the Peak Forest Canal. From 23 September – 19 November the exhibition continues at Quarry Bank Mill, a stunning former textile mill run by the National Trust, historically linked to the Bridgewater Canal to transport raw cotton from the port of Liverpool. Mike Jones, Technical Manager at Film and Video Umbrella, provides some fascinating insights about the challenges and rewards of presenting contemporary artists' film and video in heritage buildings as guest blogger on the Canal & River Trust website.

[View full tour details](#) →



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



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