



LOOK/17 Liverpool International Photography Festival

7th April - 14th May 2017

Cities of Exchange: Liverpool/ Hong Kong

## **LOOK/17 explores *Cities of Exchange* in Liverpool & Hong Kong**

LOOK/17, Liverpool's International Photography Festival, returns in its tenth year exploring Cities of Exchange. The festival, the largest photography festival in the North, this year commissioned new works from a number of artists based in the UK and Hong Kong, exploring various themes including urbanism, social housing, architecture, commerce and colonialism.

Working with Hong Kong based curator Ying Kwok and in close partnership with Open Eye Gallery - one of the UK's leading photography spaces which this year celebrates its 40th year - the festival is twinning Liverpool and Hong Kong, exhibiting images taken in both cities, **each** of which are places with a long history of exchange.

Photography is increasingly part of how we talk about our cities. From our own streets to new spaces, we use social platforms to tell the stories of our cities. Billions of photographs of urban life are shared each day. LOOK/17 invites artists to consider that perspective in a new city, to see what the shared experience and connections are from place to place.

New commissions at LOOK/17 include:

Wo Bik Wong, the active photographer and mixed media artist who lives and works in Hong Kong, is creating a new commission to be exhibited at Open Eye Gallery. One of Hong Kong's leading female photographers, Wo Bik has shown internationally in over 100 exhibitions, although less frequently in the West. Her work is rooted in city architecture and documenting buildings with cultural and historical significance in Hong Kong. Her new work focuses on the Port of Liverpool Building, one of the city's famous Three Graces and formerly the HQ of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company.

Luke Ching has created a new commission turning a hotel room into a pinhole camera. *Room 118, Titanic Hotel, Stanley Dock, Regent Road, Liverpool, L3 0AN* focuses on the Tobacco Warehouse opposite, an important site of the city's historical maritime commerce from the regenerated Titanic Hotel. Influenced by social issues and city environments, Ching combines a camera and architectural space to create a work reflecting on permanent and temporary space. The completed work will be shown at Open Eye Gallery alongside existing work from Hong Kong.

Derek Man has travelled to China to create a new commission examining social housing and the diversity of homes and habitation. Half of Hong Kong's population lives in public housing. Regularly topping the list of least affordable housing markets, the Hong Kong government

embarked on a public housing scheme in the 50s. Man has talked to people living in Hong Kong, exploring how they use their homes, capturing both the building and location. Comparing the oldest and newest social housing, as well as the most controversial examples like the Cage Homes, he is examining how an exchange of ideas could affect social housing both in Liverpool and Hong Kong. This will be exhibited at Open Eye Gallery.

The work of Wo Bik Wong, Luke Ching and Derek Man will collectively form Open Eye Gallery's *Culture Shifts: Global* exhibition, taking place across all three spaces of the gallery from 7th April - 18th June. The exhibition will also feature work from Yan Preston, displayed on the venue's Digital Window Gallery.

Yan Preston's new commission *Now and Before* will be shown in the public realm in Liverpool ONE. A British-Chinese artist based in West Yorkshire, Preston's work will capture the faces of modern China in Liverpool. As the site of the oldest Chinese community in Europe, Liverpool is home to several generations of Chinese students, businesses, artists, creatives both young and old. A digital version of the commission will be shown at the Museum of Liverpool.

Victoria Gallery and Museum will host 'Building the Civic, an exhibition continuing the theme of urbanism and Hong Kong. Work from Yau Leung, regarded as one of Hong Kong's most accomplished documentary photographers, will be presented alongside a series from South Ho on the recent Occupy movement. New work from German-born Michael Wolf and Lau Chi Chung will also be on show.

Curator Ying Kwok says, "This festival centres on the theme of urbanism and the challenges we face globally and locally. We are living in a shifting world that changes, where interactions take place on a daily basis. I believe artists play an important role in inventing their own universe, and re-inject the liveliness into the world we live in. They respond to the world and bring our attention to particular subject matters that are worth thinking through."

Sarah Fisher, Director of Open Eye Gallery says, "We share billions of photographs of urban life every day via social media. The idea of a specific city, our understanding of how we live in it, its history, people, institutions, icons, challenges and triumphs are all expressed through these photographs we share."

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## Notes to editors

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For artist images, biogs and image credits visit <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B-fiWC-GrloCWxpDa1kwc0kxcms>

Ying Kwok is an independent curator based in Hong Kong working internationally. As curator of the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art in Manchester between 2006 and 2012 she was responsible for the centre's artistic programme with four exhibitions each year. She frequently works with organisations in the UK and Asia. In 2017, she will organise Hong Kong's Venice Biennale Pavilion featuring work by artist Samuel Young.

LOOK, established in 2007, is held every two years and is an international festival of photography, based in Liverpool. The four week festival features work by emerging and established artists, including new commissions, historical work, contemporary solo and group shows. It exists to celebrate and explore every facet of photographic practice and has become one of the leading photography festivals in the UK.

The festival also expands to other galleries and museums, including Victoria Gallery and Museum at the University of Liverpool, which will feature work by Lau Chi Chung and South Ho along with work from Yau Leung. The Digital Window Gallery at Open Eye Gallery will feature work by Yan Preston, Virgile Bertrand and other LOOK/17 photographers with work by photography students at the University of Salford. A series of public realm projects called The Forest, will be shown at Mann Island and at the Victoria Gallery & Museum, featuring work by photographer Michael Wolf in a series of images capturing the tremendous density of Hong Kong. At the Museum of Liverpool a series of works selected from Open Eye Gallery's 40 year archive will be displayed in the Skylight Gallery.

LOOK/17 is funded by Arts Council England and Liverpool City Council

We are working in close collaboration with a wide range of local and national partners: Open Eye Gallery, Victoria Gallery & Museum, National Museums Liverpool: Museum of Liverpool, Tate, RIBA North, Liverpool ONE, Art Collection University of Salford, University of Salford, Redeye, University of Central Lancashire, Duo Vision: The Gallery Liverpool, University of Liverpool, Hugh Baird College, Hardmans' House: National Trust, and Bluecoat. We are generously sponsored by Ilford PHOTO and Titanic Hotel. Our Media Partners are British Journal of Photography and The Skinny magazine. LOOK is part of the Festival City group - [www.liverpoolfestivalcity.com](http://www.liverpoolfestivalcity.com)

Open Eye Gallery, founded in 1977, is an independent, not-for-profit photography gallery based in Liverpool. One of the UK's leading photography spaces, it is the only gallery dedicated to photography and related media in the North West of England. Their upcoming exhibition *Culture Shifts: Global* forms a central part of LOOK/17. The exhibition is part of Open Eye Gallery's *Culture Shifts* programme, a socially engaged project dedicated to making photography meaningful to various local, national and international communities.