

**Strict embargo until 9am, 7 February 2017**

## **M.I.A. TO CURATE SOUTHBANK CENTRE'S 2017 MELTDOWN FESTIVAL**

*Friday 9 – Sunday 18 June 2017, Southbank Centre*

[www.southbankcentre.co.uk/meltdown](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/meltdown)

Southbank Centre today announces that rapper, producer, director and visual artist **M.I.A.**, or Mathangi 'Maya' Arulpragasam, will curate the 24th Meltdown festival from **9-18 June 2017**. Launched 25 years ago, the festival is famed for bringing to life the world of its curator, counting Patti Smith, David Bowie, Yoko Ono, David Byrne, Ray Davies, Morrissey and Ornette Coleman amongst those that have held the position.

Having been nominated for an Academy Award, two Grammy Awards and a Mercury Prize, M.I.A.'s accolade-studded musical career spans thirteen years, five albums and has defied stylistic genres, with influences ranging from Nu Rave and Dancehall to Hip Hop from around the world. M.I.A.'s vast list of collaborators includes Diplo, Christina Aguilera, Madonna, Nicki Minaj, Kanye West, Jay Z and Lil Wayne.

Named in 2009 as a defining artist of the decade by Rolling Stone Magazine and an influential person by both Time Magazine and Esquire Magazine, M.I.A.'s artistic projects aim to challenge convention. Her Top 20 track *Paper Planes*, questions immigrant stereotypes and was featured on the soundtrack of Danny Boyle's hit film *Slumdog Millionaire*, and her later music videos for *Bad Girls* and *Born Free*, directed by Romain Gavras, were critically acclaimed and politically polarising.

As well as a musician, M.I.A. is a director, visual artist, activist, photographer, fashion designer and model. She spearheaded a clothes recycling project with high-street brand H&M and her first public exhibition of art was nominated for an Alternative Turner Prize. The single, *Borders*, from her latest album *AIM* tackles the European refugee crisis, particularly in the track's video that she herself directed. M.I.A. has earned a reputation for innovation – leading to a Meltdown this year with more than a few surprises.

**M.I.A.**, said:

*"For me this Meltdown will be about putting on a musical week that shows different types of music which have inspired each other to exist. Genres that support other genres, redefining*

*the concept of a melting pot. Respect the history, don't live in it. I plan to bring together music's best forward thinkers who have contributed to all our lives. When music acts as inspiration, it's boundary-less."*

**Jude Kelly**, Artistic Director at Southbank Centre, said:

*"It's not often that we encounter such an unbridled creative force, excelling in whichever field they try their hand. M.I.A. has not just broken barriers as a musician, creating music that is embraced the world over, but she has made art her rallying cry - and has stayed true to her conviction, as an artist, woman and citizen of the world."*

**Bengi Unsal**, Senior Contemporary Music Programmer at Southbank Centre, said:

*"In a progressively polarised world, we are now appreciating those that don't fear standing out and those that defy moulds. M.I.A. is fearless in the way she pushes boundaries and makes music that is so refreshingly original that it effectively doesn't age. Her ever-evolving, yet readily identifiable musical style inspires people to dance, whilst giving a voice to the voiceless, from refugee camps in Africa through to London's streets. M.I.A. is a trend setter and social critic, but most importantly, an internationally loved and acclaimed musical star."*

## **FULL LINE-UP FOR MELTDOWN TO BE ANNOUNCED IN THE COMING MONTHS**

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For press images see here: <https://goo.gl/qaTTdb>

[www.southbankcentre.co.uk/meltdown](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/meltdown)

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### **Notes to Editors:**

#### **Meltdown festival, 1993 – present**

Southbank Centre's annual Meltdown festival has been running since 1993 and each year invites a different cultural figure to act as director of the event and pick the performers of their choosing. Previous directors include: Elvis Costello, David Bowie, Patti Smith, David Byrne, Lee Scratch-Perry, Morrissey, Massive Attack, Jarvis Cocker, Nick Cave, Scott Walker, John Peel, Ornette Coleman, Richard Thomson, Laurie Anderson, Yoko Ono, Ray

Davies, Guy Garvey and Anohni (previously Antony). Performers have included musicians, artists, filmmakers and comedians, such as Jeff Buckley, Nina Simone, Ivor Cutler, Radiohead, Grace Jones, Sir Michael Palin, Damon Albarn, Sir Les Paterson, Nancy Sinatra and The Master Musicians of Jajouka. Meltdown has a reputation for staging one-off performances and collaborations by legendary artists. The New York Dolls reunited for Morrissey; Jeff Buckley played his final UK show at Elvis Costello's Meltdown; Nick Cave, Grace Jones and Pete Doherty sang Disney songs with Jarvis Cocker; Patti Smith performed Horses in full for her Meltdown; Ray Davies re-staged the TV pop show Ready Steady Go!, and a rare live performance from Cocteau Twins' Elizabeth Fraser as part of Antony's Meltdown.

## **M.I.A.**

In 2000, the Sri Lankan born, London bred Mathangi "Maya" Arulpragasam was encouraged, by electro-clash icon Peaches, to make music on a Roland MC-505 Groovebox. Since then she has released five critically acclaimed albums and is the only artist in history to receive nominations for a Mercury Award, Academy Award, Grammy Award, Brit Award and Alternative Turner Prize. She has also been named by multiple magazines as leading influencer of her generation - as a rapper, songwriter, record producer, director, visual artist, activist, photographer, fashion designer and model.

## **About Southbank Centre**

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21 acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as The Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. For further information please visit [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk).