
Press Release

Date: Tuesday 23 January 2018

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Women of the World come together in London to celebrate the power of women's voices

Today sees the launch of Southbank Centre's *WOW - Women of the World* festival line-up for 2018, supported by Bloomberg. This year more than ever, *WOW* will celebrate how far we've come and look at the big challenges that still lie ahead. Featuring **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Laura Bates, Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Dr Helen Pankhurst and Ruby Wax**, as well as **Yassmin Abdel-Magied, Anita Anand, Munroe Bergdorf, Vicky Featherstone, Mei Fong, Janice Galloway, Silke Grygier, Afua Hirsch, London Hughes, Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala, Doris La Trine, Hyeonseo Lee, Kathy Lette, Winnie M Li, Li Maizi, Dame Helena Morrissey, Anjula Mutanda, Lucy Jane Parkinson, Professor Gina Rippon, Jacqueline Rose, Angela Saini, June Sarpong, Ahdaf Soueif, Jordan Stephens, Sandi Toksvig, Sophi Tranchell, Zing Tsjeng, Tea Uglow**, and more to be announced.

From #MeToo and No Grey Area, to Time's Up and this month's Golden Globes protest, the world has seen a historical shift in women standing together against marginalisation, to say 'no more'. In the 100th anniversary year since the first British women won the right to vote, Southbank Centre's eighth *WOW - Women of the World* festival celebrates the seismic changes brought about by women and men historically, and brings together the voices of women and girls of all ages to transform the future for gender equality and highlight solutions to modern day challenges.

From 7-11 March 2018, Southbank Centre's *WOW - Women of the World* festival welcomes everybody for a programme of more than 200 talks and debates, concerts, performances and workshops.

Founded by Southbank Centre Artistic Director Jude Kelly in 2010, who announced last week that she will be leaving the arts centre in May to further globally develop the festival, *WOW* is now the world's largest convener of women and girls, with more than 480,000 visitors during *WOW London 2017*, and more than 2 million participants globally.

WOW London 2018 celebrates those who have broken silences and changed the world throughout history, and provides space for those still finding their voice. **Dr Helen Pankhurst**, great-granddaughter of Suffragette leader Emmeline, explores women's rights, then and now. Women on the frontline of global movements, such as **Patrisse Khan-Cullors**, co-founder of **Black Lives Matter**, and **Laura Bates** of **Everyday Sexism**, join those making a change in their neighbourhoods, like **Women for Grenfell**, who share their perspective nine months on. International acts share the stage with individual stories, from **Li Maizi**, one of China's 'Feminist Five', who was detained by police on the eve of International Women's Day 2015 for protesting sexual harassment on public transport, and **Gulalai Ismail**, a Pashtun human rights activist and recipient of the 2017 RAW in WAR 'Refusing To Be Silenced' award, to survivor activists **Silke Grygier** and **Winnie M Li**.

Leading voices such as **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie** and **Dame Helena Morrissey** take a candid look at the position of women in society, from the home to the boardroom, and the prejudices still present there. **June Sarpong** shares how to diversify our lives, and **Angela Saini** discusses how science got women wrong, with **Gina Rippon**, Emeritus Professor of Cognitive Neuroimaging and **Adam Rutherford**, scientist and BBC broadcaster.

This year's festival sees the return of the **Women in Creative Industries Awards** (7 March) recognising the women progressing equality in the arts and creative industries, judged by: Tate Director **Maria Balshaw CBE**; **Anne-Marie Curtis**, Editor-in-Chief of ELLE Magazine; **Martin Green**, CEO & Director, Hull City of Culture 2017; **Amy Lamé**, co-founder of Duckie and London's first Night Czar; **John McGrath**, CEO & Artistic Director of Manchester International Festival; **Dame Julia Peyton-Jones DBE**, Senior Global Director of Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac; **Jenny Sealey MBE**, CEO & Artistic Director of Graeae; **Nikesh Shukla**, author, and editor of *The Good Immigrant*; and **Deborah Williams**, CEO at Creative Diversity Network. The judging is convened by **Jude Kelly** and arts editor, broadcaster and critic, **Sarah Crompton**. The Women in the Creative Industries Day features a series of talks including **Vicky Featherstone** on her initiative No Grey Area, which aimed to shine a light on the systemic nature of sexual harassment in the theatre industry, and looks to the future.

Further topics explored across the festival include disabled motherhood, deafness, childlessness, childcare, endometriosis, sexual pleasure, the dating game, pensions and power, women in politics, homelessness, women in space, women in business, China's two-child policy, sexual consent, 'code switching' survival strategies for black women at work, why Brits are the booziest women in Europe, and if women dream of a different future, celebrating women in science fiction and the bicentenary of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

WOW - Women of the World festival founder and Southbank Centre Artistic Director, Jude Kelly CBE, said: "*There has never been a more timely need for our WOW festival, an unsparing but lively public examination of the untapped potential of women and girls and how we can fulfill it, buoyed by a riotous celebration of what we are and how far we've come.*

"It's 100 years since the majority of women in the U.K. finally won the vote and as those women showed it's only by standing together side by side that we can produce the seismic societal shifts we saw last year. But in the intervening years, so much has remained unjust, cruel even, and it is that that we must address. In our five-day festival we will celebrate and

relish all that girls and women have done and are doing, not just because we deserve it but because it gives us, at the same time, the strength and optimism to analyse and tackle all that remains to be done.

“Through art, drama, music, comedy or simply conversation, WOW provides an open space for women to share experiences with people they may never have met before, and to speak out as one. There is no silence on any subject and no sense that women, or those who identify as women, should be shamed by the circumstances of inequality. We are very excited to be taking WOW even further forward and joining women together across countries, to break down social barriers and make crucial positive change.”

Jude’s vision for the expanded global festival will be announced in due course.

Highlights of this year’s festival include:

- **No More.:** an evening bringing together women on the frontline of global movements who are transforming the future by demanding 'No More', featuring very special guests including **Patrisse Khan-Cullors**, the co-founder of Black Lives Matter;
- An evening with award-winning author of *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *We Should All Be Feminists* and leading voice, **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**;
- **Sandi Toksvig’s** Sweep Through the Year: 12 months in 12 minutes, followed by keynotes from those at the centre of the stories including DJ and activist **Munroe Bergdorf**, the first trans model to front a L’Oréal campaign;
- Author, comedian and leading mental health campaigner, **Ruby Wax** discusses her new book, *How to Be Human: The Manual*, answering the big questions about what makes us human and how our minds work;
- **June Sarpong**, on her new book *Diversify* and how to diversify our lives;
- **Sandi Toksvig’s Mirth Control** - an evening of comedy, music and performance featuring **Josette Bushell Mingo** performing an extract from her show *Nina & Me* - a searing tribute to Nina Simone;
- Author **Kathy Lette** performing her one woman show *Girls’ Night Out*;
- *MANWATCHING*, a Royal Court Theatre production written by an anonymous woman and performed by an unprepared man. Directed by **Lucy Morrison**;
- Back by popular demand, comedian **London Hughes** hosts the Funny Women comedy showcase workshop;
- Presenter and journalist **Anita Anand** on the Princess and Suffragette Sophia Duleep Singh;
- Author and North Korean defector **Hyeonseo Lee** on international activism and women crossing borders;
- **Tea Uglow**, Creative Director of Google’s Creative Lab in Sydney, speaking on The Genius Gap: Women and Creative Confidence;
- **Jordan Stephens**, one half of Rizzle Kicks, on toxic masculinity;
- **Dame Helena Morrissey** talking about gender equality in the workplace and changing the system as she publishes her first book *A Good Time to be a Girl*;
- Egyptian novelist and political and cultural commentator, **Ahdaf Soueif** and **Jacqueline Rose**, internationally known for her writing on feminism, psychoanalysis, literature and politics - in conversation;

- **Yassmin Abdel-Magied**, a Sudanese-Australian mechanical engineer and 2015 Young Australian of the Year, Queensland, speaking about international activism;
- **Yes yes yes! Ruby Stevenson**, sex educator at Brook, the Young People's Sexual Health Charity, leads a whistle-stop tour of female pleasure;
- **Winnie M Li**, author of *Dark Chapter* which was inspired by her own experience of being raped, and Survivor Activist, Psychologist, and Dramatherapist **Silke Grygier** lead a workshop on speaking out about violence committed against you;
- Journalist and author of new book *BRIT(ish)*, **Afua Hirsch** speaks on a Mothers of Colour panel;
- Novelist **Janice Galloway** gives a WOW Bite celebrating the centenary of the birth of the iconic writer Muriel Spark, best-known as the author of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*;
- Pulitzer prize-winning journalist **Mei Fong** speaks on a panel about China's new two-child policy;
- **Women on the Move Awards** returns to *WOW*, celebrating inspirational leadership from migrant and refugee women;
- **International Women's Day** celebrations on **8 March**, when 250 school girls will amass at Southbank Centre for **WOW Schools Day**;
- Pop-up performances from **Lips** - the London-based trans-inclusive all-woman choir;
- *Fangirls* - a bloodthirsty musical about teenage fangirls who are prepared to kill for love by artist **Yve Blake** and based on 100s of interviews with teenage girls;
- *Joan* - Joan of Arc's story of courage, conviction and hope performed by drag king champion **Lucy Jane Parkinson**;
- **Wickedly Wild Cabaret** featuring a line-up of emerging feminist, queer and crip performance artists in an evening hosted by **Doris La Trine**;
- *Yap Yap Yap* - hilariously irreverent and teary recreations of women's speeches throughout history, written and directed by **Deborah Coughlin**;
- *Yvette*, a one-woman show about a stolen childhood and growing up with a secret, written by **Urielle Klein-Mekongo** and based on a true story, with original music, produced by China Plate;
- *The Butch Monologues*: a powerful and humorous collection of secret stories exploring sexuality, vulnerability and desire, taken from interviews with butches, masculine women and gender rebels living world-wide. A collaboration between **Hotpencil Press**, **Vital Xposure**, and **The Drakes**;
- SRSly podcast: 'Brand Feminism'. SRSly, the pop culture podcast from the *New Statesman* hosted by **Caroline Crampton** and **Anna Leszkiewicz**, explores how celebrities champion women's empowerment and if #feminism can translate into activism with a panel including **Zing Tsjeng**, UK Editor of *Broadly*;
- Stance Podcast: 'Dead Bedroom'. **Chrystal Genesis** and **Heta Fell**, host a live show exploring sexless relationships with their expert panel including broadcaster and counselling and relationship psychologist **Anjula Mutanda**;
- Twerkshop led by **Kelechi Okafor**, founder of Kelechneoff Fitness;
- The founders of **CupAware Party**, Mandu Reid of The Cup Effect and Gabby Edlin of Bloody Good Period, winners of the 2017 WOW Den, are back with their biggest menstrual-cup party yet;

- The return of **Under 10's Feminist Corner** for both girls and boys, **WOW Speed Mentoring** and the **WOW Market** with a range of stalls offering information, raising awareness, and showcasing the best of female entrepreneurship.

Tickets are on sale now at southbankcentre.co.uk/wow or on 0203 879 9555

Link to press images [here](#)

Link to full listings [here](#)

WOW London 2018 would not be possible without its generous sponsors and supporters - Bloomberg, UBS, American International Group, Inc. (AIG) and the Chartered Insurance Institute.

#ENDS#

For more information visit southbankcentre.co.uk/wow

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If you'd like to request press accreditation for *WOW*, please send an email to

wowpress@southbankcentre.co.uk

In your email, please clearly state which event(s) / day(s) you'd like to attend and provide full details on your coverage plans.

In any coverage, please include the following tagline: "Southbank Centre's *WOW - Women of the World* festival runs 7-11 March, supported by Bloomberg."

NOTES TO EDITORS

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 17 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 National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. For further information please visit www.southbankcentre.co.uk.

In 2017 Southbank Centre was recognised for its leadership on workplace gender equality in **The Times Top 50 Employers for Women list**, published in partnership with Business in the Community,

the Prince's Responsible Business Network. The list acknowledges UK employers making gender equality a key part of their business strategy, with consistent commitment to creating inclusive workplace cultures and progressing women in the workplace that covers their entire organisation at all levels

About WOW

Southbank Centre's *WOW – Women of the World* festival is a global festival movement launched by Jude Kelly CBE in London in 2010, followed by the first festival in March 2011, that celebrates women and girls and looks at the obstacles that stop them from achieving their potential. To date, *WOW* has reached over 1.5 million people worldwide and this number is growing year on year.

Each festival across the world - made up of talks, debates, music, activism, mentoring, pop ups and performance - celebrates women and girls, takes a frank look at what prevents them from achieving their potential, and raises awareness globally of the issues they face and possible solutions. It reaches girls and women, boys and men from a broad range of social backgrounds and supplies a completely different sense of action and energy than a conventional conference approach. Speakers have included Malala Yousafzai, Christine Lagarde, Angela Davis, Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie, Salma Hayek, Annie Lennox, Gordon Brown, Julie Walters, Patrick Stewart and many more including hundreds of women and men who don't have public profiles but are working everyday to achieve gender equality.

Over 480,000 visited Southbank Centre during *WOW London 2017* and thousands more have come to *WOWs* across the world including *WOW Karachi*, *WOW Apollo* in New York, *WOW Kathmandu*, *WOW Ake* in Nigeria, *WOW Baltimore*, *WOW Bradford*, *WOW Brisbane*, *WOW Derry-Londonderry*, *WOW Katherine* and more. Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall has been President of *WOW* since 2015.

The *WOW London 2018* Committee is: Sughra Ahmed, Munroe Bergdorf, Melanie Eusebe, Nadia El Sebai, Ayesha Hazarika, Lucy Litwack, Fatima Manj, Francesca Martinez, Phyll Opoku-Gyimah, Simone Roche, Dr Nicola Rollock and Sarah Sands. The Standing Committee is: Rosie Boycott, Shami Chakrabarti, Baroness Helena Kennedy, Catherine Mayer, Kate Mosse, Frances Osborne, Dame Gail Rebuck, Sandi Toksvig and Gauri Sharma Tripathi.

southbankcentre.co.uk/wow

WOW festivals around the world include:

2018:

7 – 11 Mar – *WOW London*, UK, #WOWLDN @WOWtweetUK Facebook

17 Feb – *WOW Kathmandu*, Nepal

6 – 8 Apr – *WOW 2018 Celebrating Women of the Commonwealth*, Gold Coast, Australia

27 – 29 Apr – *WOW Norwich*, UK

29 Apr – *WOW Baltimore*, USA

Sep – *WOW Beijing*, China

28 – 30 Sep – *WOW Perth*, UK, #WOWPerth

Oct – *WOW Exeter*, UK, #WOWExeter

16 – 18 Nov – *WOW Rio de Janeiro*, Brazil

16 – 18 Nov – *WOW Bradford*, UK, #WOWBradford

23 – 25 Nov – *WOW Cardiff*

2019:

Apr - *WOW Dhaka*, Bangladesh

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