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HAYWARD TOURING ANNOUNCES WINNER OF 2017 CURATORIAL OPEN

Southbank Centre's **Hayward Touring** programme has today announced British artist **John Walter** as the winner of the 2017 Curatorial Open- its yearly call for proposals for an exhibition of contemporary art aiming to nurture new and diverse curatorial talent and expand the parameters of the contemporary curatorial landscape.

Chosen from an open submission of 125 proposals, Walter was selected for Hayward Touring's fourth Curatorial Open exhibition with his proposal ***Shonky: The Aesthetics of Awkwardness***, a group exhibition that will bring together international artists and architects to explore the nature of visual awkwardness. Shonky is a slang term meaning corrupt or bent, shoddy or unreliable, that stands here for the hand-made, deliberately clumsy and amateurish - against the slick production values of much contemporary art.

John Walter works across a diverse range of media including painting, video, installation and performance. Using his distinctive maximalist aesthetic, Walter creates artworks that seduce visitors into engaging with complex and often uncomfortable subjects through an exuberant use of colour, humour and social interaction - such as his recent Ambika P3 exhibition *Alien Sex Club* that aimed to educate audiences about HIV transmission through an immersive installation.

Walter studied at The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art at The University of Oxford, The Slade School of Fine Art and recently completed a PhD in the Faculty of Architecture and The Built Environment at The University of Westminster. His work is also held by a number of public collections in the UK including The Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool and The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

Shonky will open at the MAC, Belfast on 20 October 2017 before touring to Dundee Contemporary Arts, the Bury Art Museum & Sculpture Centre and one further venue, yet to be confirmed.

Artist John Walter said: *"Shonky will create a new discursive space for ideas around visual awkwardness, exploring the role that the hand plays in artworks made in a range of media, including video, painting and sculpture, and the importance of authorship in communicating with audiences about identity politics. The exhibition will draw together artists and architects whose work has not previously been exhibited together or discussed within the same context, to allow for new ways of thinking to emerge that privilege 'shonkiness' over other aesthetic forms that have dominated recent visual culture."*

Roger Malbert, Head of Hayward Touring said: *"The Curatorial Open has established itself as an important platform for new approaches to exhibition making. On each occasion we collaborate with different galleries whose curators share with us the selection process. We were all impressed by the high quality of the proposals this time: there were so many good ideas that deserve to be realised. John Walter's stood out and was chosen unanimously because it combines an original - and eccentric - view of contemporary art with a wholehearted and imaginative commitment to engaging a new public. 'Shonky' is guaranteed to be stimulating and enjoyable."*

Further details on the exhibition will be announced in Spring 2017.

ENDS

For further press information or interview requests please contact:

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Tour details

The MAC, Belfast - Friday 20 October 2017 - Sunday 14 January 2018

Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee, February - May 2018

Bury Art Museum & Sculpture Centre, Bury (dates TBC)

Plus one further venue (to be confirmed)

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Hayward Touring

Hayward Touring organises contemporary art exhibitions that tour to galleries, museums and other publicly funded venues throughout Britain. In collaboration with artists, independent curators, writers and partner institutions, Hayward Touring develops imaginative exhibitions that are seen by up to half a million people in over 45 cities and towns each year. Current exhibitions include *Elizabeth Price Curates: IN A DREAM YOU SAW A WAY TO SURVIVE AND YOU WERE FULL OF JOY* which will continue its tour at the De La Warr Pavilion in January 2017.

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. Southbank Centre is carrying out vital restoration work on the Hayward Gallery, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room to make the buildings fit for future generations to enjoy, more information can be found here: letthelightin.southbankcentre.co.uk

About John Walter

John Walter lives and works in London. He is an artist and academic working across a diverse range of media that includes painting, video and installation. He studied at The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art at The University of Oxford, The Slade School of Fine Art UCL and recently completed a PhD in the Faculty of Architecture and The Built Environment at The University of Westminster. He was awarded the Sainsbury Scholarship at The British School at Rome in 2006 and was a participant at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2012. His work is held by a number of public collections including The Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool and The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Recent exhibitions include *The Zany Capsid* (Hardwick Gallery, Cheltenham 2017); *Essex Road III* (Tintype Gallery, London 2016); *Alien Sex Club* (Ambika P3 London 2015); *Courtship Disorder* (White Cubicle Toilet Gallery, London 2015); *Turn My Oyster Up* (Whitstable Biennale 2014). He is currently Resident Artist in Infection at UCL supported by a Wellcome Trust Large Arts Award for his collaboration with Professor Gregory Towers entitled CAPSID. His commission for the new London super sewer, Tideway, will be installed at Chambers Wharf in early 2017.

About MAC, Belfast

The MAC is a cultural powerhouse, regarded as one of the leading art centres in the UK and Ireland. Across three dedicated gallery spaces we present between 6-8 exhibitions per year, profiling the very best contemporary Irish art practice within the context of a high profile, tightly curated international programme. Recently nominated for the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year and members of the Plus Tate network, we have welcomed some 1.3

million visitors to our award-winning building since opening in 2012, creating an essential shared cultural space for Belfast.

About DCA, Dundee

Dundee Contemporary Arts is a world class centre for the development and exhibition of contemporary art and culture, with two gallery spaces, two cinema screens, an open access print studio and an award-winning learning and engagement programme. Our exhibitions programme showcases the best of international contemporary art alongside outstanding work from Scottish artists, and is always free of charge. We firmly believe that art and culture change people's lives for the better, whether as artists, audiences or participants. With over 375,000 visits a year we act as a vital cultural and social hub for the people of Dundee, Scotland and beyond.

About Bury Art Museum and Sculpture Centre, Bury

Bury Art Museum & Sculpture Centre showcases the best of international and local art, it is the perfect place to enjoy contemporary exhibitions and find out about the history of Bury. The museums programme is supported by a range of events and activities that encourage visitors to further explore and enjoy the shows and collections. Bury Art Museum & Sculpture values ideas, concepts and risky thinking, the museum explores these in its approach to the display and interpretation of both collections and exhibitions. Historic and contemporary works and objects are juxtaposed to provoke questions and present visual prompts that seek to inspire and challenge visitors to make their own connections and develop their own ideas. Exhibitions and the collections are shown in the context of a contemporary dialogue to develop object conversations.