

ARTANGEL ANNOUNCES MARIAM ZULFIQAR AS ITS NEW DIRECTOR



Mariam Zulfiqar, 2021. Photograph: Jasprit Singh

Artangel is delighted to announce today the appointment of Mariam Zulfiqar as its new Director.

Mariam brings to Artangel a vision that combines exceptional, ambitious artistic projects with a focus on social and environmental issues that are critical to our present and future. She comes to Artangel from Forestry England, where she has been leading its National Arts Programme, focusing on the intersection of the arts, environment and ecology. She has worked as an independent curator for Chiswick House and Gardens and was the curator of the acclaimed programme of events and art commissions *Bring into Being*, which broadened audiences and charted a new direction for the historic 18th century site. Previously she was Deputy Director and Chief Curator for UP Projects and raised the organisation's national and international profile overseeing programmes such as *Constellations*, an artist development programme and *This Is Public Space*, a digital commissioning strand that explores the internet as a site for art.

Projects she has curated independently include touring the UK canal network on *The Floating Cinema*, an award-winning structure commissioned by UP Projects (2017); *Changing Places*, a nation-wide touring exhibition marking the 70th anniversary of Indian Independence at sites of historic significance across Britain for Film and Video Umbrella (2017/18); *Merzbank* (2013) digital commissions exploring the legacy of Kurt Schwitters; and *The Palace That Joan Built for Art on the Underground* (2014/15), a multi-site cross-disciplinary commission inspired by the legacy of pioneering theatre director Joan Littlewood. Alongside working with diverse UK based artists, Mariam has consistently championed the work of international artists, commissioning and presenting artworks by practitioners who live and work in South Asia, the USA and the Caribbean.

Mariam studied Curating Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art, and Design and Public Art at Chelsea College of Art. She has lectured at the Royal College of Art, Goldsmiths College,

University of Richmond USA London Campus, and McGill University Barbados Campus. She was a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Scholarship Fund 2013 for research into the intersection of heritage, environment and contemporary art production in Barbados.

Mariam will take up the position of Director in January 2022 and will focus on developing the future vision of the organisation. James Lingwood and Michael Morris will stage their final programme of commissions throughout 2022 and early 2023.

Jenny Waldman, Chair, Artangel said:

In Mariam Zulfiqar, the Board of Trustees is delighted to have found a unique and exciting creative leader. Mariam's appointment signals a bold new direction for Artangel and a new chapter in its development, combining a clear commitment to artistic ambition with a recognition of the social and environmental issues that challenge contemporary life. As we face the future, the need for ambitious, visionary ideas has never been greater.

As Artangel embarks on its next 30 years, it is exciting to be building on the remarkable legacy created over the past three decades by its Co-Directors, James Lingwood and Michael Morris, working with exceptional artists and staff colleagues. Artangel has generated some of the most widely discussed art of recent times and is amongst the most consistently admired cultural organisations, respected by artists and audiences alike in Britain and beyond. We believe Mariam has the sensibility and imagination to carry this legacy forward."

Mariam Zulfiqar said:

"I have been following the work of Artangel since I went to see Michael Landy's Breakdown in Oxford Street in 2001. At the time, I was studying Public Art at Chelsea College of Art. Since then, Artangel's work has continued to exemplify what ambition and excellence looked like in this area of the arts. To be appointed Director of an organisation I admire greatly is an honour, and I am excited to bring my focus on social and environmental issues to its future programming.

The exhibitions and commissions I have curated always seek to create new relationships between people and site. It has been a privilege to work with communities and organisations across the country and to witness first-hand the transformative role the arts can play in our daily lives. I am delighted to bring my experience to the team at Artangel and look forward to working with them on a programme that is reflective of our contemporary times and the distinct challenges it places on artists and wider society.'

James Lingwood and Michael Morris, Co-Directors, Artangel said:

"We're delighted that Artangel's Board of Trustees have appointed Mariam Zulfiqar to lead the organisation into the future. We greatly look forward to welcoming Mariam in the new year and working together closely in the transition between our final year of commissions in 2022 and the realisation of her new vision for Artangel from 2023 onwards"

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Artangel – A Brief History

For more than three decades, Artangel has developed close collaborations with many of the world's leading artists, filmmakers, writers, composers and performers to produce surprising new works of scale and originality. There have been recurrent landmark projects along the way, with exceptional projects shaped by different places, and seizing public attention and resonating long afterwards. From Michael Clark's *Mmm...*, a radical reworking of *The Rite of Spring* with his mother Betty and muse Leigh Bowery to Rachel Whiteread's concrete cast of a terraced house, London has been at the heart of Artangel's work since the early 1990s.

Over the thirty years that have followed, signature projects range from Michael Landy's *Break Down*, P J Harvey's *Recording in Progress*, and Steve McQueen's *Year 3* to Taryn Simon's *An Occupation of Loss*, Jorge Otero-Pailos's *The Ethics of Dust* and Roger Hiorns's *Seizure*. These and others have exerted a magnetic pull towards particular destinations in the city.

Some projects unfold over a single day, such as Jeremy Deller's re-enactment of *The Battle of Orgreave* in South Yorkshire; whilst others evolve over the long term, notably Jem Finer's continuous thousand-year *Longplayer*. Sometimes the visitor experience is solitary. Witness the unnerving encounter with Gregor Schneider's *Die Familie Schneider* or Janet Cardiff's immersive audio walk, *The Missing Voice*, both sited in Whitechapel. At other times, large crowds have gathered, such as the multitudes drawn to Ryoji Ikeda's *spectra* over seven summer nights in 2014 to mark the centenary of the First World War.

Moving image works such as Matthew Barney's *Cremaster 4*, Yael Bartana's *And Europe will be Stunned*, Francis Alys' *Seven Walks* and Tony Oursler's *The Influence Machine* have been widely seen around the world, as have Artangel's feature films for the cinema, including Clío Barnard's *The Arbor* and *Here for Life* by Andrea Luka Zimmerman and Adrian Jackson.

Artangel has often spread its wings beyond the capital with presentations from The Artangel Collection throughout the UK. Comprising more than 25 film and video works, the collection was set up in partnership with Tate in 2011 to mark 20 years of Artangel commissions under the directorship of James Lingwood and Michael Morris.

Most commissions begin as conversations with an artist but sometimes they are inspired by a site. The chapel and silent cells of the empty Reading Gaol, where Oscar Wilde was incarcerated, housed haunting works by artists, writers and readers including Rita Donagh, Marlene Dumas, Robert Gober, Richard Hamilton, Nan Goldin, Wolfgang Tillmans, Doris Salcedo, Patti Smith and Colm Tóibín.

Recently, at Orford Ness on the Suffolk coast, *Afterness* featured new installations by artists Alice Channer, Emma McNally and Tatiana Trouvé for this former military test site, with a walking trail in which new writing by poet Ilya Kaminsky could be heard on headsets. Further afield, Artangel has realised three major long-term commissions - Roni Horn's *Vatnasafn/Library of Water* in Iceland, Mike Kelley's *Mobile Homestead* in Detroit and Cristina Iglesias' *Tres Aguas* in Toledo, attracting audiences to places of enduring significance for each artist.

Artangel was established as a charitable organisation in 1985, and is generously supported by Arts Council England, the private patronage of the Artangel International Circle, Special Angels, Guardian Angels and The Company of Angels. Over 500 individuals have been 'angels' for Artangel over the past three decades and a successful fundraising campaign in 2018 created a £2m *Artists for Artangel* fund for new commissions.