Contents

Introduction 2
Exhibition Programme 2018/19 3-11
Off-site - Birmingham 12-13
Off-site – International 14-15
Touring Exhibitions 16
Fundraising / New Developments 17-18
Funding 19
Jonathan Watkins Biography 20
Trustees & Patrons 21
Images 22
Notes to Editors 23

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Introduction

Ikon, Birmingham’s internationally acclaimed contemporary art gallery, presents an exciting programme during 2018, including exhibitions of work by artists Thomas Bock, Edmund Clark, Langlands & Bell, Rie Nakajima, Osman Yousefzada, Francis Alÿs, Vladimír Kokolia, Polly Apfelbaum and Haroon Mirza.

In addition Ikon continues to work off-site at HMP Grendon, Buckinghamshire; at Perrott’s Folly in Ladywood, Birmingham; and across the local canal network with Slow Boat. Further afield Ikon takes a programme of video work to Baghdad and participates in the Quebec Biennial 2019. Selected Ikon exhibitions also tour nationally and internationally.

Ikon’s dynamic and influential Learning programme provides a rich mix of talks, symposia, workshops, tours and outreach activities, designed to engage the gallery’s diverse and ever-developing audiences.

Established in 1964 by a group of artists looking for a new, accessible place to share artistic ideas, Ikon’s first home was in a glass-sided kiosk in the Bullring shopping centre, a ‘gallery without walls’. Since then, Ikon has had a number of venues around the city centre, including the Pallasades shopping centre where, in 1974, it was the unintended casualty of an IRA bomb, the actual target being the army recruitment office next door. In 1998 Ikon moved to its current premises in Brindleyplace, converting an old Victorian school building into a contemporary art gallery. In March 2018 Ikon marks 20 years since it opened the doors at the former Oozells Street School. Ikon now welcomes over 130,000 visitors a year.

From a humble start, Ikon has grown to establish a worldwide reputation as one of the most international art institutions in the UK. In recent years, exhibiting artists have hailed from China, Japan, Australia, France, USA, Lithuania, Canada and Vietnam, in addition to homegrown talent including Jesse Bruton, Vanley Burke, Ruth Claxton, Mahtab Hussain and Hurvin Anderson. Ikon has played a key role in the development of many artistic careers - Antony Gormley, Beatriz Milhazes, Cornelia Parker, Julian Opie and Carmen Herrera all had important exhibitions here.

Ikon is a registered charity, with free entry for all. In 2015 the gallery celebrated its 50th anniversary through a series of special exhibitions and events, collectively known as Ikon 50.
Ikon Programme: 2018-2019

Thomas Bock
6 December 2017 – 11 March 2018

Ikon presents the first UK exhibition dedicated to the work of convict artist Thomas Bock (c.1793 – 1855). A selection of drawings, paintings and photographs demonstrate Bock’s technical skill and sensitivity to a wide range of subject matter.

Born in Birmingham (UK), Bock trained as an engraver and miniature painter. In 1823 he was found guilty of “administering concoctions of certain herbs ... with the intent to cause miscarriage” and was sentenced to transportation to Tasmania for fourteen years. He was soon pressed into service as a convict artist and early commissions included portraits of captured bushrangers, before and after execution, including the cannibal Alexander Pearce.

At the heart of the exhibition is Bock’s extraordinary series of portraits of Tasmanian Aboriginal people, now in the British Museum. The sitters have a demeanour that conveys both pride and despair, suggesting that Bock, being marginalised himself, closely identified with them and sought to convey the tragedies suffered by these indigenous people through the British settlement in Australia. Exhibition organised in partnership between Ikon and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.
Edmund Clark
_In Place of Hate_
6 December 2017 – 11 March 2018

Edmund Clark, _In Place of Hate_, (2017), courtesy of the artist and Flowers Gallery

British artist Edmund Clark is Ikon’s artist-in-residence (2014-2018) at Europe’s only entirely therapeutic prison, HMP Grendon, in Buckinghamshire. This exhibition is the culmination of his residency, comprising photography, video and installation.

Clark, an artist with a longstanding interest in incarceration and its effects, has worked with inmates, prison officers and therapeutic staff, immersed himself in the prison routines and taken part in wing community meetings, a key element of life at Grendon.

Clark’s work is shaped by his engagement with issues of censorship, security and control. He cannot make images that reveal the identity of the prisoners or details of the security infrastructure and so his response has been to create work that explores ideas of visibility, representation, trauma and self-image. These themes influence how prisoners and the criminal justice system are perceived by the public, politicians and media and are above all central to the experience of the men and staff engaged in the therapeutic process at Grendon. Exhibition organised in partnership with HMP Grendon and the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust.
Langlands & Bell

Internet Giants: Masters of the Universe

21 March – 10 June 2018

Ikon presents an exhibition of new work by British artists Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell, marking the 40th anniversary of their artistic partnership. Featuring the new iconic architecture of the global technology companies such as Apple, Facebook, Alibaba and Google, the exhibition includes a new series of relief sculptures, installations, digital animations and portraits that explore the increasingly profound influence these huge companies have on our lives in the age of 'Big Data'. The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, with an essay by historian and critic Anthony Vidler and an interview with the artists by Dr Hans-Michael Herzog.

"Nearly all of our art explores human social and cultural relationships, from the personal to the political, through architecture and the coded structures of communication and exchange that surround us. We see architecture as the most tangible and enduring record of the way we live. The internet giants continue to grow exponentially, becoming ever more powerful by the day, and exercising an increasingly profound influence over our lives. They are reshaping the cultures, politics and economies of societies all over the world comprehensively."

Langlands & Bell
Rie Nakajima
*Cyclic*
21 March – 3 June 2018

Rie Nakajima Photograph by Greg Pope.

Rie Nakajima is one of the most experimental artists working in the UK. Fusing sculpture and sound, her artistic practice is open to chance and the influence of others, raising important questions about the definition of art. Nakajima makes pieces often in direct response to architectural space, using a combination of kinetic devices, musical instruments and found objects. Ikon’s exhibition consists entirely of new work and includes a number of performances in collaboration with other artists.

“I work/communicate with architectural environments, and there is always something new to discover with sounds and objects. I would like to make the exhibition at Ikon flexible and open, with the potential to change and transform at any moment.” Rie Nakajima
This is the first solo exhibition by Birmingham-born fashion designer Osman Yousefzada. A leading light of London Fashion Week, Osman works at the intersection of art and fashion, combining his multi-disciplinary design practice with a strong sense of social commentary. His style combines haute couture techniques and fabrics with strong sculptural designs and a clear perception of modernity, making him a go to designer for confident women from the worlds of art, film, entertainment and commerce.

Osman’s work has developed from a place where he considered himself to be a “fashion outsider”, making him more aware of political contexts, not engaged with fashion for fashion’s sake: “I’m a product of multicultural England”. Osman’s exhibition at Ikon consists entirely of new commissions, with a personal consideration of the contemporary fashion world and the industry’s inherent inequalities, juxtaposed with representations associated with the experience of immigration. Installations include a tent-like structure covered in delicate hand-embroidered cloth, patterned with a repeated signature based on Osman’s mother’s mark, which is presented adjacent to an evocation of an “immigrant’s bedroom” – inspired by his Afghan/Pakistani family’s experiences – full of furniture and decoration signifying cultural displacement.
Francis Alÿs
*Knots’n Dust*
20 June – 9 September 2018

Francis Alÿs, *Tornado*, Milpa Alta (2000-10) Video documentation of an action, 55mins

Ikon’s exhibition by Mexico-based artist Francis Alÿs reflects on the notion of turbulence itself, from simple instability to chaos, from a meteorological phenomenon to a geopolitical context, from a simple knot in the hair to an ascending spiral. Knots represent links and bonds, as well as resistance and binding.

*Tornado* (2000-10), a 30-35 min’ video sees the artist chasing "dust devils" and attempting to enter their eye with a camera in hand. Alÿs films their windless core, a monochrome of dust that literally abstracts him from the outside world. Similarly photographs taken by Alÿs in 2015 in Beirut reveal the impact of a sand storm, bringing yellow dust from neighbouring countries where the soil is no longer fixed by roots and plants, instead becoming unstable and volatile after years of conflicts. Organised in partnership with the Beirut Art Center.
This will be the first UK exhibition of work by Vladimír Kokolia, the renowned Czech artist who established himself on the international circuit at Documenta 9, 1992. A combination of new and recent paintings, the show exemplifies an intensely experimental attitude that distils abstraction from everyday experience.

Kokolia is very alive to the possibility of epiphanies, seemingly unremarkable events that give rise to a kind of weaving of wonder.

“I usually paint some snapshot, some distinctly illuminated scene I glimpse somewhere, even peripherally, and which then remains in my head. It tends to have a differing measure of concreteness and resolution, but it always carries light in a unique way ... My paintings may look like lianas, mazes, or winding footpaths but they have a source somewhere else. Their mesh is nothing but a screen through which the image percolates during the painting process.” Vladimír Kokolia
Polly Apfelbaum
Waiting for the UFOs (a space set between a landscape and a bunch of flowers)
19 September – 18 November 2018


Ikon’s Autumn exhibition of new work by New York-based artist Polly Apfelbaum will exemplify an art practice that places emphasis on the essential quality of materials, especially colour and texture, whilst asserting the importance of popular culture and craft activity. Her use of various fabrics – stained and dyed – and more recently glazed ceramics, is beguiling and refreshing in its offerings of simple pleasures. In this way, she subtly assumes a political, and feminist, position, challenging pomposity, notions of entitlement and hierarchies in cultural practice – against “high” fine art – to suggest an egalitarianism in society across the board.

Concerned to strike a balance with those encountering her work, she explains:

“It’s important to me that people have to move through the works so the spectator activates it and participates in the experience. As you move, the colour and the nap of a fabric change and the work plays a lot with light. I am always working with site, scale and the architectural setting.” Polly Apfelbaum
Haroon Mirza
28 November 2018 – 17 February 2019

This will be the most comprehensive exhibition of work by Haroon Mirza in the UK to date, filling Ikon’s exhibition spaces entirely with moving imagery, sculptural installation and electronic sound. Involving smart sampling, often through collaboration with other artists, Mirza conveys an easy-going knowingness through a wide range of cultural references that foils sheer physical impact. His understanding of the nature of human perception - of what and how we see and hear - is demonstrated and combined with countless possibilities of meaning, and so his aesthetic proposition is more to do with messages received than those transmitted, circumscribed by our constitutions, testing the limits of what we can experience and what we think we know.

“I don’t wish to make any demands on someone present with the work. If one spends time they will hear and see more. If one thinks and delves then ideas, concepts, methodology, points of reference and narrative will hopefully emerge but that’s not something I can or wish to control.” Haroon Mirza
Ikon Off-Site: 2018-2019

Birmingham

Ikon Slow Boat: Looping the Loop
Ladywood, Birmingham
2017 – 2019

Ikon Slow Boat continues its three year programme, Looping the Loop (2017-2019) in Birmingham’s Ladywood. A converted narrow boat, Slow Boat provides a lens through which to consider the unique landscape of Ladywood’s waterways in a continuing programme of artistic activity with local communities and artists.

Slow Boat is co-curated with members of the Ikon Youth Programme (IYP) who use Slow Boat as a reconfigurable space. For Spring, Slow Boat becomes a stage, cinema, musical object and production space working with experimental sound artists O YAMA O and artist educator Henry Ward.
Max Eastley

*Aeolian Harp and Sculptures for Perrott’s Folly*

Ladywood, Birmingham

10 May – 10 June 2018

Max Eastley is an internationally recognised artist who combines kinetic sculpture and sound into a unique art form. His sculptures exist on the border between the natural environment and human intervention and use the driving forces of electricity, wind, water and ice.

Having first worked with Ikon in 1979, he returns to make an installation involving eight lightweight Aeolian harps mounted on the roof of Perrott’s Folly, a landmark 18th century tower in Birmingham’s Ladywood district. The sound made by wind blowing through the harps is amplified and fed to loudspeakers at lower levels to combine with the sounds emanating from a number of acoustic sculptures, transforming the interior of the tower into an immersive aural experience. Audio engineering by Dave Hunt. Presented in partnership with RE:Future Collective.
International

*Floating World*
The Ruya Shop, Baghdad, Iraq
April 2018

Ikon screens *Floating World*, a programme of video work by British and international artists, at The Ruya Shop in Baghdad. Located on Mutanabbi Street, famous for its book market, the shop was recently opened by the Ruya Foundation in a brave attempt to make contemporary art, especially video and photography, accessible to a general public in Iraq. Ikon’s contribution comprises silent films that variously communicate the strangeness of everyday life, as if to suggest that human beings are aliens on Earth. Artists include Michel François (Belgium), Graham Gussin (UK), Dean Kelland (UK), Lutz and Guggisberg (Switzerland), Marko Mäetamm (Estonia), Shi Jong (China), Shimabuku (Japan), John Stezaker (UK), Beat Streuli (Switzerland), Cornelia Parker (UK), Noguchi Rika (Japan) and Gillian Wearing (UK). Organised in partnership with The Ruya Foundation.
Quebec Biennial

*Large Against the Sky, Small Between the Stars*

14 February – 21 April 2019

Ikon participates in the Quebec Biennial 2019. Inspired by our relationship with the natural world, the Biennial takes its title, *Large Against the Sky, Small Between the Stars*, from lyrics by Quebec-born singer songwriter Leonard Cohen (*Stories Of The Street*, 1967). Cohen was preoccupied by our place in the natural order and Ikon now addresses similar concerns through the work of artists including Polly Apfelbaum, Dinh Q. Lê, Haroon Mirza, Cornelia Parker, Susan Philipsz and Beat Streuli. Showing artworks ranging across media including film, installation, woodcut prints and photography, Ikon’s presentation features a number of new commissions such as a sound piece by British artist Oliver Beer.
Ikon Touring Exhibitions

Portrait of the Artist: Käthe Kollwitz

Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945) Woman with Dead Child (1903)
Soft-ground etching with engraving overprinted lithographically with goldtone-plate
© The trustees of the British Museum


Thomas Bock

Thomas Bock, Untitled, Wurati (Woureddy) (1831)
Drawing, watercolour. Courtesy The trustees of The British Museum.

Ikon’s exhibition of drawings, paintings and photographs by convict artist Thomas Bock is the first in the UK. Showing at Ikon, 6 December 2017–11 March 2018, it tours to our partner, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania (17 August–11 November 2018).
Fundraising / New Developments

20 for 20

Ikon Gallery. Photo: Handover Agency

Ikon's Spring exhibitions open on 21 March 2018, exactly 20 years to the day since the gallery opened the doors to its current home in Brindleyplace on 21 March 1998.

Ikon is a charity and we are marking this anniversary with a special fundraising campaign - please donate £20, or whatever you can give, to support our next 20 years. You can donate in a number of ways – in person at the gallery, online at ikon-gallery.org/support, text IKON20 £20 to 70070 or call Ikon Shop on 0121 248 0711. With your support we could host more landmark exhibitions, welcome more schools and showcase more artists.

Ikon has made its mark on Brindleyplace in many ways – follow us on social media for our 20 fun facts, including the time Ikon worked with 47 dachshund dogs to form a UN delegation!
IKON LED


Ikon is delighted to announce the launch of the IKON LED; a high quality, multi-solution gallery track-mounted light, co-designed and produced by Ikon with Designed Architectural Lighting (DAL), and funded by an Arts Council England Capital Grant.

The IKON LED was developed to create beautiful, evenly lit spaces and be flexible to suit the varying needs of galleries and museums. The luminaire brings all the advantages that galleries benefit from when using cutting-edge LED technology including ultra-low energy consumption, on-board dimming, zero UV output and exceptional colour rendering. In addition the IKON LED can switch between 3000k and 4000k colour appearances and, notably, overcomes the major problem usually associated with LED wash lights which is the prominent and distracting shadows they create - especially in architecturally rich or sculpture filled rooms.
Funding

Ikon is a registered charity and is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. These core grants cover the gallery’s running costs, enabling Ikon to provide free entry. The exhibitions, learning programme and off-site projects across the city are primarily paid for through fundraising activity.

Ikon raises money through venue hire, Ikon shop, private grant giving trusts and foundations, corporate patrons and sponsors, international funding sources and the generosity of those visitors and supporters who make a donation.

Partnerships

PLUS TATE

Plus Tate aims to support the development of the visual arts across the UK, and to foster a climate where exchange and partnership can flourish. Tate's resources are used to contribute to a network of organisations and individuals for the benefit of the wider public, expanding Tate's reach, and increasing public access to the national collection of British and international modern and contemporary art. Joining together to exchange ideas, knowledge, skills and resources, as well as programmes and collections, the Plus Tate partners, along with and facilitated by Tate, will broaden and deepen engagement in modern and contemporary art across the country.

CULTURE CENTRAL

Culture Central is a collective voice and development agency for culture and the creative industries in Birmingham and the wider region. Culture Central is committed to developing and leading projects, alongside other leadership bodies in the city region, that have the potential for a positive impact on the sector and on the region.
Jonathan Watkins has been Director of Ikon Gallery since 1999. Previously he worked for a number of years in London, as Curator of the Serpentine Gallery (1995-1997) and Director of Chisenhale Gallery (1990-1995).


Jonathan Watkins has written extensively on contemporary art. Essays have focused on the work of Giuseppe Penone, Martin Creed, Semyon Faibisovich, Yang Zhenzhong, Noguchi Rika, Caro Niederer, Beat Streuli and Cornelia Parker. He was the author of the Phaidon monograph on Japanese artist On Kawara.

Jonathan Watkins has served on numerous committees and boards, most recently for the Imperial War Museum (2011 - 2016), Arts Council Collection Acquisitions Committee (2011 - 2013) and 14-18 Now: First World War Centenary Cultural Programme (2013 - ). In 2013 he was nominated as one of the top 100 Global Thinkers by Foreign Policy Magazine.
Trustees & Patrons

Ikon Board of Trustees

Chair: Oliver Longmore, Corporate Banking Manager, Handelsbanken UK

Councillor Tristan Chatfield, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities, Birmingham City Council

John Claughton, Former Chief Master, King Edward’s School, Birmingham

Professor Helen Higson, OBE, Professor of Higher Education Learning and Management; Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Aston University

Soweto Kinch, award winning alto-saxophonist and MC

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Corporate Patrons

ARTiMBARC, Deutsche Bank, Emmerson Press, EY, Glenn Howells Architects.
Images

Below is a link to the file which contains images for Ikon’s 2018 Programme:

http://ow.ly/QqQS3ogH761

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Notes to Editors

1. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon’s off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon’s activities and through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon’s Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art.

2. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am-5pm. Free entry.

3. For the latest news and events follow @ikongallery on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

4. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding by Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council.

5. For more information and high-res images please contact Rebecca Small or Emily Luxford at Ikon on 0121 248 0708 or email r.small@ikon-gallery.org or e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org

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Open Tuesday-Sunday & Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am-5pm / free entry
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