Ikon Slow Boat continues its three year programme, Looping the Loop (2017–2019) in Birmingham’s Ladywood district. A converted narrow boat, Slow Boat is a unique floating space which offers a stimulating and creative environment for artists and local communities to make new connections and consider alternative perspectives.

Slow Boat is co-curated with members of the Ikon Youth Programme (IYP), a group of young people, aged 16–21 years old, who share an interest in art and culture. IYP meet once a week and use Slow Boat as a social space to develop ideas and skills in dialogue with partners - in Spring 2018, Slow Boat becomes a stage, cinema, musical object and production space working with experimental sound artists O Yama O and Max Eastley, and organisations Flatpack Film Festival, Celebrating Sanctuary and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.
Slow Boat launched on Wednesday 21 March, 3–7pm, as a temporary studio for IYP and designer Keith Dodds who invited visitors to make their own limited edition screen-print. Future events include a screening of Thinking Making (2017), a Freelands Foundation film by Creative Director Henry Ward on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 May. Over the next six months Slow Boat will be used as an alternative production and studio space, hosting a number of artist residencies as part of Looping the Loop. A socially responsive artistic programme, it aims to encourage a greater understanding of the experiences of refugees and new arrivals to the city, whilst examining the ‘slow movement’- inherent to the pace of canal travel.

Central to Slow Boat’s aims is the engagement of Ladywood communities. Following on from our work in 2017/18 with artist Mahtab Hussain, who photographed local residents, we are working with local partners Brasshouse Languages, Canal & River Trust, Centre of the Earth, Roundhouse, Karis Neighbour Scheme, Ladywood Community Centre, The Real Junk Food Project Birmingham and MotherShip Projects in a programme of artist residencies, screenings and workshops.

This Spring and Summer Slow Boat can often be seen journeying the canal network around Ladywood – it’s easy to spot the striking blue and yellow exterior, featuring a design by Lamorna Conlon (IYP member). Come and join us at one of our events.

Events
Slow Boat 2018 launch
Wednesday 21 March, 3–7pm – FREE
Drop in, limited capacity
Brewmaster Bridge, Brindleyplace
Birmingham B1 2JB
Slow Boat 2018 launches with a free drop in session. Join us to make your own limited edition screen-print co-produced by IYP and designer Keith Dodds.

Roundhouse Birmingham Open Day
Friday 6 April, 11am–4pm – FREE
Sheepcote Street, Birmingham B16 8AE
No need to book, just drop in
Roundhouse Birmingham, built in 1874, opens the doors for a family friendly day. Join IYP on Slow Boat, moored just along the towpath, for a model-making workshop inspired by the building’s iconic architecture. Open to all ages.

Film screening – Thinking Making
Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 April, 12–4pm
FREE, drop in
Brewmaster Bridge, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2JB
Slow Boat becomes a floating cinema, screening Thinking Making (2017) a Freelands Foundation film by Creative Director Henry Ward on an ethos of learning through making at Plymouth College of Art. Half hour duration, screenings on the hour and half hour.
O YAMA O
Saturday 21 April
1–2pm – live performance – FREE, drop in
3–4.30pm – film screening – FREE, drop in
Centrala and Slow Boat, Minerva Works
158 Fazeley Street, Birmingham B5 5RS
Rie Nakajima and Keiko Yamamoto, vocalist, artist and co-founder of Cafe OTO, perform as O YAMA O. While Yamamoto sings, whispers, roars, walks and dances, Nakajima makes a soundscape of objects arranged by hand. The screening includes films selected by O YAMA O. Part of Flatpack Film Festival Optical Sound programme.

Slow Boat tour, Perrott’s Folly to Brindleyplace
Friday 11 May, 5.30–7.30pm – £8
Limited capacity, booking essential
Perrott’s Folly, Waterworks Road, Edgbaston
Birmingham B16 9AL
Join us for an exclusive viewing of Max Eastley’s installation Aelolian Harp and Sculptures for Perrott’s Folly, followed by a short walk to Icknield Port Loop. Then board Slow Boat, and travel to Brindleyplace with the artist for an introduction to his work. Lastly visit Ikon for a tour of Rie Nakajima’s exhibition.

Book online at ikon-gallery.org or call us on 0121 248 0708. All events take place at Ikon Gallery unless otherwise stated. Please consider making a donation for free events. Ikon is a registered charity and your support helps us with everything we do.

Ikon’s Slow Boat programme, Looping the Loop, is supported by Arts Council Strategic Touring, Michael Marsh Charitable Trust, W.A. Cadbury Trust, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, the Canal and River Trust and Grantham Yorke Trust.

Ikon’s history on the canals
Ikon has a long history of working on the canals, collaborating with artists on the waterways for nearly 20 years. In 2000 Japanese artist Shimabuku made Cucumber Journey, a two week voyage between Chisenhale Gallery, London and Ikon, Birmingham, during which time he pickled vegetables, with the flavour intensifying as the journey progressed, echoing the slowness of the passage of time. In the same year Tadashi Kawamata collaborated with a group of local volunteers on his work Canal Boat, converting a narrowboat into a communal social structure. Subsequent artworks have included Icknield Port Loop (2007) with Marie Lorenz who built a small boat by hand, using rubbish found in the city’s canals; Hey for Lubberland! (2009) with Simon and Tom Bloor, who painted the exterior of the canopy with their interpretation of dazzle camouflage.

In 2011 Ikon Sandwell Council generously lent Ikon a narrowboat, the Aaron Manby, launched for the first iteration of Slow Boat (2011–2013) involving the Ikon Youth
Programme (IYP) and artists Marjolijn Dijkman, Sarah Browne and Navin Rawanchaikul. Black Country Voyages (2014–2017) saw Ikon navigate the canals in and around Smethwick, Langley, Cradley Heath, Stourbridge, Tipton and Brownhills. Artist-duo Juneau Projects transformed the boat into a hand-painted archive of people’s ideas of the natural world, Jacques Nimki created a floating laboratory and Mahtab Hussain used the boat to tell a story of mass displacement in Pakistan in the 1960s.

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

Social Media Handles:
Instagram, Twitter and Facebook: @ikongallery #IkonGallery

Links
ikon-gallery.org

Note 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, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. 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. www.ikon-gallery.org

2. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. For the latest news and events follow @ikongallery on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.
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Ikon Youth Programme (IYP), Build Your Own Film Night, Slow Boat (April 2017)
IYP workshop with artist James Lomax (October 2017)

Boat trip with members of IYP (August 2017)