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**Arts Council Collection's 70th Anniversary
Commission awarded to Keith Piper for
new Iniva/Bluecoat commissioned work**

Exhibition: 29 Oct 2016 – 22 Jan 2017

Press view: 28 Oct 2016



Summary:

Iniva and Bluecoat secure prestigious national Arts Council Collection Commission for new work by artist Keith Piper which will be acquired by the Collection to mark its 70th Anniversary.



Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) is pleased to announce that Keith Piper's new commission **Unearthing the Banker's Bones** has been acquired by the Arts Council Collection to mark its 70th Anniversary. The acquisition is a result of our successful submission to the Arts Council Collection's open call for proposals from National Portfolio Organisations on behalf of an artist already making a commissioned work.

Unearthing the Banker's Bones, initiated as an Iniva/Bluecoat commission, will form the centrepiece of the most significant presentation of the artist's work for several years comprising new digital works, large-scale installation and drawings. This major monographic exhibition will open in October 2016 at Bluecoat in Liverpool.

In the new immersive work Piper interrogates the imagined remnants of globalised capitalism through a series of chapters that examine contemporary themes of environment, human migration, capital and new empires, and the 'post' body. Using conventions borrowed from mythology, science fiction, reportage, travelogue, research commentary, history and landscape painting, Keith will be developing the work over the coming months.

The commission and exhibition is a partnership between two Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations, Iniva and Bluecoat, who share a commitment to supporting artists who are under-represented and challenge us to think about contemporary issues in new ways using a variety of forms and media.

Keith Piper: "*Unearthing the Banker's Bones* is a work emerging out of a period of research into science fiction as a space in which metaphors around social, racial and class anxieties are played out. Weaving together references drawn from a diverse range of classic novels, films and other texts, I am attempting to employ visual montage to play with notions of landscape and history painting to devise a narrative played out across a triptych of video screens. The story that unfolds will be one of exploration, excavation and autopsy as a way of examining the present from an imagined future."

Melanie Keen, Director of Iniva: "Iniva supports artists at different moments in their careers providing guidance and opportunities to present new work. I first worked with Keith in 1997 on a major



monographic exhibition produced by Iniva so I am particularly thrilled to facilitate this acquisition for Keith as one of my first achievements as Iniva's new director. Securing this commission and a permanent place for Keith's work in the Arts Council Collection marks a very significant moment in Iniva's history. The commission is a tribute to Keith's talent and artistic career which spans three decades. We join Bluecoat, our partner, in congratulating Keith on winning this prestigious commission."

Bryan Biggs, Artistic Director of Bluecoat: "Keith's association with Bluecoat dates back to 1985 when he first exhibited here in *Black Skin Bluecoat* and continued through significant projects like *Trophies of Empire* in 1992, so we are delighted to see his challenging and vital work achieve such important recognition today. We are committed to working closely with artists to develop their work throughout their careers, and are pleased to be collaborating with Iniva to host Keith's most substantial exhibition for some time later this year."

Jill Constantine, Head of the Arts Council Collection: "Eight new artworks, in total, have been commissioned by some of the most celebrated artists living and working in the UK today and will be on show across England during 2016 before becoming a permanent part of the Arts Council Collection. These works will be available for loan to galleries across the country and will enrich their own programmes. It has been a real pleasure to work with the artists from the very beginning of the process and institutions like Bluecoat and Iniva to bring these commissions to fruition."

For further information about the commission and the exhibition *Unearthing the Banker's Bones* visit Iniva's website <http://www.iniva.org/>

Notes to Editor

About Keith Piper b. 1960, Malta

Keith Piper is an artist, curator, critic and academic. He was born in 1960 in Malta and raised in Birmingham. He studied at Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham and the Royal College of Art, London. Piper was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Arts by University of Wolverhampton in 2002. Since 2006 he has been Reader in Fine Art and Digital Media at Middlesex University, London.

Along with fellow artists Eddie Chambers, Marlene Smith and Donald Rodney, he was a founder member of the BLK Art Group, an association



of black British art students, mostly based in the West Midlands, between 1980-1984. He has exhibited widely, including solo and group exhibitions in the UK, Europe and USA. His work was included in *Afro Modern: Journeys through the Black Atlantic*, Tate Liverpool (2010) and *Migrations: Journeys into British Art*, Tate Britain (2012).

Iniva Publication: Keith Piper monograph *Relocating the Remains* accompanied the exhibition of the same name which toured nationally and internationally between 1997-2000.

http://www.iniva.org/shop/artist_focused/keith_piper

http://www.iniva.org/exhibitions_projects/1998/keith_piper_relocating_the_remains

About Iniva

Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) is a leading UK contemporary visual arts organisation which creates exhibitions, publications, digital initiatives, education and research projects. Iniva explores the politics of race and global identities through the visual arts to challenge the status quo. Iniva was established in 1994 to address an imbalance in the representation of culturally diverse artists, curators and writers.

In 2004, we published the groundbreaking *Changing States* which charts a decade of artistic programming at Iniva, in the context of global economics and local politics. The book includes an important timeline of Iniva's work. Iniva has been fortunate to work with a wide range of talented and internationally-respected artists, curators and writers including David A Bailey, Sonia Boyce, Sheela Gowda, NS Harsha, Isaac Julien, Steve McQueen, Chris Ofili, Yinka Shonibare, Kobena Mercer, Okwui Enwezor, and Guy Brett.

Iniva also runs the Stuart Hall Library which was renamed in 2007 in honour of the renowned cultural theorist and inaugural chair of our board. The development of the collection takes Hall's work as a guiding principle, and in keeping with this, the library collects around art which takes issues such as cultural identity as its theme. The library also plays an important role in documenting marginalised art histories, for example, the UK Black Arts Movement of the 1980s which are under-represented in other collections and national institutions. The collection includes over 4,000 exhibition catalogues, 1,000 monographs, covering cultural, political, gender and media studies, and over 140 periodicals. Iniva is a registered charity and an Arts Council England National Portfolio organisation.



About Bluecoat

Bluecoat is Liverpool's centre for the contemporary arts, supporting and presenting visual art, music, dance, live art and literature, as well as practices that fall in between these categories.

The most historic building in Liverpool city centre, Bluecoat has four galleries and a variety of performance spaces. It is also home to over 30 arts organisations and individuals including visual artists, graphic designers, crafts people, dancers, theatre companies and printmakers. Amongst its retail spaces are Probe Records, Liverpool's longest running seller of vinyl, founded in 1971.

Dating from the early 18th century, the building's architectural importance is illuminated by its UNESCO world heritage and Grade One listed status. It is the UK's oldest arts centre, with a rich artistic history; early exhibitions include the first showing of the Post Impressionists alongside their UK peers in 1911. In March 2008, Bluecoat re-launched after a £14 million re-development designed by Rotterdam architects Biq Architecten.

The past few years have seen the organisation show internationally renowned artists such as William Kentridge, Sonia Boyce, John Akomfrah and Mark Leckey, while simultaneously engaging the most vulnerable, from those with dementia to families facing disadvantage, through its community projects.

Bluecoat is more than a contemporary arts centre in an historic building: it is an intersection between art and our times, a cultural and social meeting point that creates a strong dynamic between art, the city and culture of Liverpool, and everyday life.

www.thebluecoat.org.uk

Exhibition listings information

Exhibition: Keith Piper: Unearthing the Banker's Bones

Preview date: 28 October 2016

Dates: 29 October 2016 – 22 January 2017

Venue: Bluecoat, School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BX

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10am-6pm

Sunday: 11am - 6pm

Admission: free



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