

PRESS RELEASE

Black Gold Arts Festival, 5 – 8 October 2016

Black Gold Arts Festival has grown from three shows over three days in 2015 to a four-day Festival week this October. The festival features brand-new and emerging theatre, dance, live and performance artists as well as new shows from established names, a Cinema Event, new writing produced with new directors, and monologues from up-and-coming writers chosen from nation-wide entries.

Festival Week starts with our **Launch: The Sistas Slay! Cabaret** at Contact, Oxford Road, Manchester, M15 6JA. **Wednesday, 5th October 7pm**

For the **Black Gold Arts Festival Launch**, women take charge. Live music, dance and spoken word share one space in this unique event, featuring Manchester-based talents, singer Yvonne Shelton, performer Cheryl Martin, tap dancer Imani Jendai, and perennial Vogue Ball favourites The House of Ghetto Girls.

<http://contactmcr.com/whats-on/61892-black-gold-festival-launch-sistas-slays-cabaret/>

BGAF Day 2, Thursday 6th October 7.30pm

For our second day, we have two offerings: **Whose Sari Now?** at Contact, Oxford Road, Manchester, M15 6JA.

Whose Sari Now? is the funny and poignant journey of one sari: handed down, handed over, and handed out to the characters in the play. Through each character's relationship with the sari, we get a glimpse of the myriad ways in which the garment impacts the lives of women across boundaries and generations.

<http://contactmcr.com/whats-on/62092-black-gold-festival-rani-moorthy-whose-sari-now/>

Also on Thursday, for something completely different: **Divergency 6-9pm** at **Z-arts** (335 Stretford Rd, Manchester M15 5ZA), a series of tabletop performances, installations and sit-down shows from a group of artists as diverse as their subject matter. From early ideas to fully fleshed intimate shows, these works in development see artists bring a

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new twist to food, family, home and the Universe. Get to know some new faces and see more established names experiment with new forms. Divergency features Maya Chowdhry, Afreena Islam, Jamil Keating, Chanje Kunda, Cheryl Martin, Chelsea Morgan, Toni-Dee Paul and Yvonne Shelton.

<http://www.divergencymcr.org/current/artist/>

BGAF Day 3, Friday 7th October 7.30pm

Strike A Pose Dance Cinema Event, STUN Studio at Z-arts 335 Stretford Rd, Manchester M15 5ZA

BGAF with the help of Queer Media, has bagged the Northwest premiere of **Strike A Pose**, What does it take to express yourself? The surprising and moving story of Madonna's most famous troupe of dancers.

In 1990, seven young male dancers - 6 gay, 1 straight - joined Madonna on her most controversial tour. On stage and in the iconic film Truth or Dare they showed the world how to express yourself. Now, 25 years later, they reveal the truth about life during and after the tour. Strike a Pose is a dramatic tale about overcoming shame and finding the courage to be who you are.

For a Friday-night blow out, BGAF has the Manchester-based Vogue Ball favourites the House of Ghetto supporting a brand-new choreographer, Natasha Wooden in this first Cinema Event. Madonna's dancers speaking for themselves on film, accompanied by a newly commissioned response-piece dance, supported by Vogue-Ball-style madness. Guaranteed no-holds-barred entertainment.

<http://www.z-arts.org/events/strike-a-pose/>

BGAF Day 4, Saturday 8th October

For the final day of the 2016 Festival, we have two sets of new stars to introduce: New Voices at Contact, 2 pm – 3 pm



BGAF has given two new writers and two new directors a week of Masterclasses, featuring guest workshops from John McGrath, Artistic Director, Manchester International Festival; Karena Johnson, Artistic Director, Hoxton Hall; and Matthew Xia, Associate Artistic Director, Royal Exchange Theatre. We'll be sharing the results at Contact, to celebrate new talent: writers Fereshteh Mozaffari and Mez Ndukwe, and directors Amy Lawrence and Shana Riley. They'll be supported by a couple of acting pros, Trevor-Dwyer-Lynch and Ashden Oke. Come along to see what the hot tickets for next year's theatre will look like.

<http://contactmcr.com/whats-on/61893-black-gold-arts-festival-new-voices/>

And, later on stage at Contact supporting Lemn Sissay as part of the Commonword Black Writers' Conference.

Talking About Family: Monologues on family and adoption (with Lemn Sissay), Contact, Oxford Rd, Manchester 7pm

Following a nation-wide search, Commonword and BGAF found four writers to tackle some of the hardest things to talk about: family, adoption, love and loss in the first and closest relationships of all. Join Lucy Sheen, Christina Fonthes, Claire Hynes, and Seni Seniviratne as they explore the family from 30s Yorkshire to today's London.

That's BGAF October 2016 Festival Week. But this year, one week wasn't enough. BGAF has burst out with shows all over.

<http://contactmcr.com/whats-on/59292-the-8th-black-and-asian-writers-conference-lemn-sissay/>

Black Gold Arts - on Tour

Darren Pritchard - Body of Light: Peterborough Festival, 3rd & 4th September

Body of Light, choreographed by Darren Pritchard, combines dance and technology to create a sensuous performance of light and movement. Using everyday technology, dance is translated into beautiful projected imagery; with each twist and turn, light is painted around the dancer like oil on canvas. After the show there will be a session of

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interactive play: you are able to track your movements and have a go at creating projection art of your own.

<http://cms.vivacity-peterborough.com/theatres-and-arts/peterborough-arts-festival/the-body-of-light/>

Chanje Kunda - Amsterdam: Southbank Centre's Africa Utopia Festival, Sunday 4th September 7.30pm

Experience a high-powered, ultra-modern play of love and lust. Combining spoken word, physicality and music, Amsterdam follows Chanje as she is seduced by the attractions of the titular city and the charms of a Surinamese man she met on holiday. Wonder at her fate as she embarks on a voyage into the unknown in this truly 21st-century play.

<http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whatson/amsterdam-98649>

Cheryl Martin - Alaska: And What? Festival, Geffrye Museum London, Friday 28th October 6.30pm & 9pm

Alaska is a funny, magical trip to the moon, with singing and dancing thrown in: one woman's extraordinary story of how she survived growing up with severe depression. A raw and powerful performance, with humour, heart and soul, with stunning vocals and beautiful imagery in the storytelling. With one in four of us estimated to experience mental health difficulties at sometime in our lives, this is a story that touches everyone, whether first-hand or through family and friends.

And now, Cheryl takes her critically acclaimed show to the And What? Festival of Queer Art, for a late-night showing in Hoxton's Geffrye Museum.

<http://andwhatfest.com/venues-tickets>

Black Gold Arts - Manchester

Yvonne Shelton – Testimony, The Wonder Inn 9 Shudehill, Manchester M4 2AF. 20th September 4pm

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Testimony explores the possibilities of language and movement, transforming meaning to reach a higher state of awareness. Yvonne's powerhouse vocal, a Gospel Choir, plus music from A Guy Called Gerald combine to produce a visceral, computer-aided grand opus featuring a specially created track written by Jimi Goodwin of The Doves.

**Jamal Harewood - The Privileged, HOME, 2 Tony Wilson Place, M15 4FN
Friday 30th September 7pm – Saturday, 1st October 9pm**, in association with **BGAF**

Have you ever seen a polar bear in the flesh? Been close enough to notice just how white these magnificent mammals are? Remove your shoes, coats and bags, as you are about to encounter the Arctic's whitest apex predator, with black skin.

<http://homemcr.org/production/the-privileged/>

Keisha Thompson - Man on the Moon: work-in-progress, STUN Studio at Z-arts, 335 Stretford Rd, Manchester M15 5ZA. Friday 21st October, 7.30pm

My dad is a conundrum. He shapes his tongue like a crescent, then beams his way upwards. Most times he leaves me books, books and books covered in stardust. Other times he leaves me with a heavy sense of dread. How do you communicate with a man who has a moon where he should have a head?

A new show from one of Manchester's best and brightest up-and-coming talents.

<http://stunlive.com/october-season-keisha-thompson-man-moon-work-progress/>

**Strike A Pose Dance Cinema Event, HOME, 2 Tony Wilson Place, M15 4FN
Saturday 5th November 6pm**

BGAF and Queer Media Festival present **Strike A Pose**, What does it take to express yourself? The surprising and moving story of Madonna's most famous troupe of dancers.

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In 1990, seven young male dancers - 6 gay, 1 straight - joined Madonna on her most controversial tour. On stage and in the iconic film Truth or Dare they showed the world how to express yourself. Now, 25 years later, they reveal the truth about life during and after the tour. Strike a Pose is a dramatic tale about overcoming shame and finding the courage to be who you are.

<http://homemcr.org/>

Notes to Editors:

Black Gold Arts Festival (BGAF) brings together established and emerging black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) artists from dance, theatre, live and performance art, with new work, critically acclaimed pieces, and some stuff just for fun. A new force, led by artists, working for artists. More info at bgafestival.com | @bgafestival

Sustained Theatre Up North (STUN) are part of a National Movement dedicated to the growth and prosperity of BAME Creatives across the UK. More info at stunlive.com | @stunlive.

Contact

- Contact is the leading national contemporary arts organisation placing young people's decision-making at the heart of everything. Young people aged 13 -30 work alongside staff on programming, marketing and technical support, as Board members and deliver projects in business and the community.
- Contact commissions and produces up to 10 new shows each year for national touring. Recent shows include *No Guts, No Heart, No Glory* (Common Wealth), *Rites* (with National Theatre Scotland), *The Spalding Suite* (with Southbank Centre and FUEL), and *Under the Covers* (Contact Young Company and Stacy Makishi).
- Contact is also a creative space for young people aged 13-30, providing workshops and opportunities, mostly for free.
- Contact is funded by Arts Council England, Manchester City Council, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and the University of Manchester.

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