

# PUMP HOUSE

## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

Wandsworth Council presents:

### Zadie Xa: The Conch, Sea Urchin and Brass Bell

3 August – 24 September

In collaboration with PS/Y's *Hysteria* programme Pump House Gallery presents the first major solo exhibition in the UK of London based Canadian artist Zadie Xa. The exhibition *The Conch, Sea Urchin and Brass Bell* is the narration of a displaced body's journey and return to a 'homeland'. Through spatial aspects of the gallery, the protagonist searches for an understanding of belonging but instead finds a concoction of excitement, rejection, and bewilderment.

Across moving-image, soundscapes, objects and textiles Zadie Xa interlaces imagined and learned Korean folklore in search of a reflexive space in which diasporic knowledge can be transformed into new realities. Filmic flashbacks, almost recognisable figures and looping dream states invite the audience to join Xa on a journey through her own memory, Korean cultural memory and future possible scenarios. Using the transformative structure of the ritual - storytelling, rhythm, and repetition - the exhibition responds to a desire to reach states of ecstatic enlightenment.

In her work Zadie Xa interweaves fact with fiction, past with future, to explore identity, desire and personal fantasy. Through circular narratives and perplexing fiction she seeks to create a space in which we can reconsider notions of national identity, cultural ownership, and folkloric displacement. Employing painting, textile, video, and sound within her storytelling, Xa's practice is preoccupied with performative presentations where traditional cultural knowledge is passed between diasporic bodies.

This exhibition is part of PS/Y's *Hysteria* programme and is curated by Mette Kjærgaard Præst in partnership with Pump House Gallery.

*Hysteria* is a combined arts programme inviting audiences to explore health and illness in contemporary society, focusing on issues of gender, race and cultural identity. The programme is delivered by PS/Y and takes place in partnership with organisations and institutions across London.

During the development of *The Conch, Sea Urchin and Brass Bell* Zadie Xa presented *Basic Instructions B4 Leaving*, as part of PS/Y's *Hysterical X*, at Café OTO in December 2016.

The exhibition is supported by Wandsworth Council, Wellcome, Arts Council England and Canada Council for the Arts.

## GALLERY

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 PumpHouseGallery

info@pumphousegallery.org.uk

www.pumphousegallery.org.uk

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## GALLERY WORKSHOPS

The exhibition is accompanied by an exciting programme of events and activities for children and adults.

Pump House Gallery's InHouse Project Space presents 'Unwanted Memory Bank' – a new piece of work by artist Ania Bas to complement Zadie Xa's exhibition in the gallery.

This project invites visitors to consider the value we attach to objects and memories. Inspired by objects around the Project Space, we challenge you to dig into your bag to find unwanted things from which to make a sculpture, or make drawings of things you don't need or want anymore.

Join Ania Bas for free drop-in family workshops throughout August and September to experiment with writing, drawing and publishing. This is a fun and interactive way for families to creatively explore their unwanted belongings and memories.

Upcoming family workshops:

Sundays 6 August, 20 August, 3 September, 17 September, with a final event and workshop on 24 September.

Venue: **Pump House Gallery**, Battersea Park, London SW11 4NJ.

Telephone 020 8871 7572.

Email: [info@pumphousegallery.org.uk](mailto:info@pumphousegallery.org.uk).

Opening hours: Wednesday - Sunday 11am - 5pm. Closed Monday and Tuesday, and between exhibitions.

Admission free.

For more information contact Anna Williams on 020 8871 5545 or [AWilliams1@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:AWilliams1@wandsworth.gov.uk) Visit [pumphousegallery.org.uk](http://pumphousegallery.org.uk) / follow us on twitter @PumpHouseGal.

## Notes to editors:

### Zadie Xa's biography

Through performance, video, painting and textiles, artist Zadie Xa interrogates the overlapping and conflation of cultures that inform self conceptualised identities, notions of self and her experience within the Asian diaspora. Her intricate hand-sewn fabric work stitches together familiar symbols of yin-yangs, knives, lucky numbers and monolid eyes, all operating within a system of personalised semiotics. These exaggerated motifs are utilised by Xa to both combat and

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engage with Eurocentric perceptions of Asian identity and otherness and aspire to create new and alternative Asian identity narratives often fantastical and within the realm of the supernatural.

Zadie Xa was born in 1983 in Vancouver Canada and currently lives in London UK. She received an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art in 2014 and a BFA at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 2007. Recent exhibitions and performances include *Crash Boom Hissssss. Legend of the Liquid Sword*, Somerset House, for Block Universe, London, 2017; *Dark Water The Dead of Night*, programmed by Tai Shani and A-Z, CGP Gallery; *Walled Gardens in an Insane Eden*, curated by Marcelle Joseph Projects, Sara Zanin Gallery, Rome IT, 2017; *Linguistic Legacies and Lunar Exploration*, Serpentine Gallery; *Kind of Flossy*, Assembly Point Gallery; *A Rose Is Without a 'Why'. It Blooms Because It Blooms*, Carl Freedman Gallery; *Ride the Chaktu // First Contact*, Serpentine Radio; *With Institutions Like These*, Averard Hotel (all London, 2016).

Future exhibitions at the Pump House Gallery: **David Panos**, 4 October – 17 December 2017; **Sriwhana Spong**, 10 January – 1 April 2018

**Pump House Gallery** is a public contemporary exhibition space housed in a distinctive four story Grade II\* listed Victorian tower by the lake in Battersea Park. The pump house tower was built in 1861 to contain a coal-fired steam engine house, water pump and cast iron tank to feed water from the Thames to an artificial rock cascade in the nearby lake and water plants in the Park. After a fire in the 1950s, which destroyed the windows and the original roof, the building fell into disrepair and eventually became derelict. In 1988 Wandsworth Council renovated the building and re-opened it as an interpretation centre. Following further development the building became Pump House Gallery in 1999, presenting a year round programme of contemporary visual art. Collaboration and participation are at the heart of its programme. Pump House Gallery has presented a year-round programme of contemporary visual art, including most recently, *Developer*, a site-specific installation in the Battersea Park Mirror pools by Samara Scott, and *Each fighting its own little battle in happy ignorance*, a group exhibition based on the Graham Greene novel *It's a Battlefield* in 2016. The gallery is operated by Enable Leisure & Culture on behalf of Wandsworth Council.

**Battersea Park** is a 200 acre, Grade II\* listed Victorian park formally opened in 1858, one of many intended to improve living conditions for those living in the city. During both wars, the park was utilized by the military to protect London, shelters were dug, allotments were created and a pig farm was set up. After the Second World War in 1951, thirty-seven acres were developed to form the Festival Pleasure Gardens. In 1986 when Wandsworth Council became responsible for the park, there were serious signs of neglect and much needed improvements restored and recreated the most significant Victorian and Festival features. In 2011 the Winter Garden designed by Dan Pearson was opened. [wandsworth.gov.uk](http://wandsworth.gov.uk)

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## Culture and Leisure at Wandsworth Council

Wandsworth Council is proud to support the borough's cultural infrastructure and ensure that all residents have access to quality creative activities. Through Enable's Arts Team, Wandsworth Council ensure the delivery of cultural infrastructure support and a high quality arts and culture programme that is accessible to all residents, businesses and visitors to the borough.

## About Enable Leisure and Culture

Enable Leisure and Culture is a not-for-profit charitable organisation and delivers first class leisure and culture services. Enable Leisure and Culture manages and delivers the arts, bereavement services, parks, sports facilities, events, film office, public halls, Pump House Gallery and Putney School of Art and Design across the borough on behalf of Wandsworth Council.

## About PS/Y

PS/Y is a research, curating and public engagement group exploring the interface of arts and health sciences. PS/Y develops interdisciplinary projects and dialogue with artists, scientists, arts organisations, academic institutions and communities. We aim to create new creative insights to engage diverse audiences for an interdisciplinary arts practice that explores the relationship between mind and body in Western culture. PS/Y has previously been involved in delivering *Anxiety*, London, 2014 and *Acting Out*, Nottingham, 2015 in partnership with institutions including Barbican, BFI, National Portrait Gallery, ICA, Freud Museum, Gasworks, South London Gallery, Nottingham Contemporary, University of the Arts, Kings College, and Wigmore Hall.

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