

# CIVIC ROOM

## PRESS RELEASE

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CIVIC ROOM ANNOUNCES 2019 – 2020 PROGRAMME

### ***Of Lovely Tyrants and Invisible Women***

Lauren Printy Currie, Preview 14<sup>th</sup> March 5pm, Exhibition 15<sup>th</sup> March - 25<sup>th</sup> April

Ashanti Harris, Preview 11<sup>th</sup> July 5pm, Exhibition 12<sup>th</sup> July - 18<sup>th</sup> Aug

Thulani Rachia, Preview 19<sup>th</sup> September 5pm, Exhibition 20<sup>th</sup> September- 3<sup>rd</sup> November

Marija Nemčenko, Preview 14<sup>th</sup> Nov 5pm, Exhibition 15<sup>th</sup> November - 22<sup>nd</sup> December

*Of Lovely Tyrants and Invisible Women* investigates themes of spatial politics, gender and racial hierarchies within imperial architecture. This year-long programme, curated by Civic Room, Glasgow features four solo exhibitions from artists - Lauren Printy Currie, Ashanti Harris, Thulani Rachia and Marija Nemčenko and an events programme in collaboration with cultural organisations, community groups and public audiences.

Each selected artist is challenged to respond to the architectural symbolism and spatial politics of Civic Room, a former British Linen Bank, built in 1897 by profits garnered through the slave trade. Every project offers the same rhythm of visitor engagement beginning with a Preview and then Performance, followed by an Artist led community breakfast, Curatorial Conversation and Reading group hosted at CCA, Glasgow.

*Of Lovely Tyrants and Invisible Women* provides a physical space to re-imagine and re-configure discriminatory and entrenched class, gender and racial hierarchies symbolised by the Civic Room building, an emblem of Victorian imperialist attitudes.

This one-year programme from February 2019 until February 2020 is co-curated by Director, Sarah Strang and Associate Curator, Alasdair Campbell and is generously funded by Creative Scotland with additional project funding provided by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Civic Room receives support in-kind from Oran Mor, Carson & Partners and Civic Room Advisory.

### **Lauren Printy-Currie, *Masses and Classes and Apparatus of Capture***

“Becoming intense, becoming natal, becoming animal,  
becoming molecular, becoming five aspects of sorcery,  
becoming multiplicity at 7pm, becoming 232  
Tell Us What Broods There - a double becoming,  
point and line, memory and thread  
Becoming Block  
Anticipate and ward off the meaning of the word &quote;last&quote;  
Exchange and stock for capture  
landownership, fiscal organisation, public works, profit  
The Smooth and Stuck Textile Model 474

*Masses and Classes and Apparatus of Capture* is a new sculptural work by Lauren Printy Currie which brings together the artist's research into the textile industry's role in the chronicling of historical events interweaved with personal narratives and moments of experience; a texture of different stories and elements.”

- Lauren Printy-Currie

### **Ashanti Harris, *Second site***

“Ashanti’s artistic practice embraces sculpture, dance, performance, research and facilitation. Her current work engages with themes of mobilities - the movement of people, ideas and things as well as the broader social implications of these movements. In response to the ideas within Of

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Lovely Tyrants and Invisible Women, Ashanti will be developing Second Site - a site specific installation and performance re-imagining the female, African and Caribbean diasporic history which haunts the Mercantile era of architecture in Scotland. Working with a de-colonial methodology and a desire to make invisible histories visible, Second Site will explore the historical presence and hidden legacies of Guyanese women in Scotland in the 18th and 19th century.

The Republic of Guyana is a Caribbean country on the coast of South America bordered by Venezuela, Brazil and Suriname. Guyana is a former colony of the British Empire and is historically known as the last frontier of British colonial expansion in the West Indies, populated by both enslaved and indentured people who worked the plantations spanning the Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice regions. Scots were prominent among the plantations in Guyana and by the mid-1790s, these colonies were predominantly occupied by Highlanders. Consequently, this colonial relationship between Scotland and Guyana led to the movement of Guyanese women to Scotland in the 18th and 19th century, spanning the Highlands, to Paisley, Greenock and Glasgow (Alston, 2016). Responding to this little known history, the installation and performance, Second Site, will occupy the Civic Room building, re-imagining the legacies this forgotten diaspora, seeking to reconfigure historical narratives past, present and future.”

- Ashanti Harris

## **Thulani Rachia, *of sugar and Bones***

*“what do You remember?*

*my body told Me that this land is built on sugar and Bones.*

*how do We excavate the Dreams which were laid to rest in these walls?*

From the end of the 19th Century, Glasgow’s geographical position makes it the Second City of the Empire. The River Clyde in particular becomes a conduit for transportation and trade, aiding the generation of wealth and the advancement of Glasgow to a centre of colonial profits. Today, the built fabric of the city is scattered with reminders of the city’s connections with the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. However, these emblems of authoritative memory and the continual process of urban renewal are petrifying the city into a state of collective amnesia.

*of sugar and Bones* is a site specific installation responding to the imperial architecture of the Civic Room and its surrounds and seeks to make an interjection about our collective memory and who we are as a city.

Thulani Rachia's practice integrates the fields of architecture, performing and visual arts. His inquiries have addressed spatial politics of exclusion and division and the psychological effects of these physical and conceptual barriers. Thulani's practice-as-research approach currently sees him exploring site and history and how these come together in the formation of identity, culture and memory.”

-Thulani Rachia

## **Marija Nemčenko, *In the eyes of LISA***

“The exhibition is centered around historic Lithuanian migrant communities in the UK and the perceived loss of identities through integration with Scottish society. It is a response to the little-known stories of Lithuanian migrants and their contribution to British industrial growth. The first wave of migration to Scotland in the early 20th century was prompted by the industrial success of the country, needing ‘cheap labour’ to power the mining industries. Lithuanian miners were sought by British industrialists to work for little pay and with no opportunities to join workers’ unions to campaign for equality. In order to survive, many migrants changed their names and erased their former identities.

Traversing through time, the exhibition will make connections between the first wave of immigrants in the 19th century and the more recent communities that were formed as a result of ‘cheap labour influx’ post joining the EU in 2004. Researching the division of labour and the

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constructed stereotypes that have supported this partition of work and rights, In the eyes of LISA aims to study how Lithuanian migrants' identities have been strategically mis-shaped in the popular British imagination since the 19th century."

- Marija Nemčenko

## Notes to Editors

1. Civic Room is non-profit gallery established August 2015 by Director Sarah Strang and Civic Room advisory of architects and artists who are committed to exploring new perspectives and identities in the city of Glasgow through visual art. "Artists have always found Glasgow a city rich in possibilities. Its urban fabric is strong enough to sustain interventions, its citizens and communities strong enough to question ideas without feeling threatened. What better environment to create a room in the city where all of this can be discussed." Gerry Grams, Civic Room advisor
2. ARTIST Lauren Printy Currie, born Glasgow, 1985 works in sculpture, performance and writing investigating how a sculptural enquiry can find form in language. Her installations are created in response to specific contexts and extended periods of research. Considering how an engaged politic can provide an interrogation of materiality, the artist uses installation, writing and voice to describe varying registers of embodiment as they oscillate between subject and object positions. Recent exhibitions include 'such tender bodies cannot bear so much pressure' 2018, Rhubaba, Edinburgh, 'settings' 2017, the men and women in the text are referred to as, Stirling; 'her body remembered a night-blooming cereus, sweated industry and salt (what came near)' 2017, Glasgow Women's Library & Travelling Gallery, 'a feeling of and, a feeling of if, a feeling of but, a feeling of by, a feeling of blue, a feeling of cold' 2017, Cove Park (Edition 1) and Platform (Edition 2) and; 'If by chance when we are walking, we happen to walk in step' 2017, CCA Glasgow as part of 2HB journal.  
<https://www.laurenprintycurrie.co.uk>
3. ARTIST Ashanti Harris is an artist, teacher and community activist, working with dance, performance and installation. Harris' work focuses on themes of mobilities - the movement of people, ideas and things as well as the broader social implications of these movements, specifically in relation to the diaspora of West Africa and The Caribbean. Harris' current research is concerned with the body as a repository of incorporated histories which are communicated through dance and movement practices. As part of her creative practice, she also works collaboratively within the collective Glasgow Open Dance School (G.O.D.S) – facilitating movement workshops, research groups and collaborative performances; and as co-lead artist for Project X – a creative education programme, platforming the dances of the African diaspora. [www.ashantiharris.com](http://www.ashantiharris.com)
4. ARTIST Thulani Rachia is a South African artist based in Glasgow. His creative practice sees him working between facilitation, performance, installation, curating and film/video. He completed the BA in Contemporary Performance Practice at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and holds a BA in Architecture at the University of Cape Town. Thulani is currently a curator on the committee for Transmission Gallery and works as a facilitator. Recent performances and talks include (2018): Catalyst 25 Year Symposium, Catalyst Arts, Belfast (Transmission), Artist Run Multiverse, East Side Projects (Transmission); What Gives Me Strength, Ignite Theatre, George Square Glasgow; Chronicles, National Theatre Scotland and Project X, National Museum of Scotland; TEXT-iLE, Toynbee Studios London, Artsadmin
5. ARTIST Marija Nemčenko (b. 1989, Kaunas, Lithuania) lives and works in Glasgow, UK. Marija Nemčenko is an artist and creative learning activities facilitator working in Glasgow, Scotland. She received her MFA from Glasgow School of Art in 2016 and BA(Hons) in Sculpture from Camberwell College of Arts in 2013. Despite Glasgow being her base, her working environment shifts between Glasgow, Kaunas and Berlin where she exhibits and devises workshops, discussions or activities. Recent participation includes: Berlin Project Space Festival 2018 and Glasgow International 2018. Marija has recently been nominated to participate in A.M Qattan and E-flux Residency program "Ways of Travelling" in Ramallah, Palestine.  
Marija Nemcenko website [marijanemcenko.com](http://marijanemcenko.com)
6. OPENING TIMES Thursday - Sunday, 12-6pm 215 High Street, Glasgow G1 0DU
7. FUNDING: Creative Scotland, Heritage Lottery Fund, supported by Oran Mor, Carson & Partners
8. Exhibition photography Martin Gray
9. Design by Neil McGuire, After the News