

PRESS RELEASE

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Production image. L-R: Diane Clark and Graham Faen. Graham Faen. 'The Slave's Lament'. 2015. Photo: Holoer Mohaut.

Graham Fagen: Scotland + Venice 2015 Collateral Event of the 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (9 May – 22 November 2015) Preview: Tuesday 5 May, 12pm – 6pm

The Scotland + Venice partnership is delighted to announce further details of the 2015 presentation with Glasgow-based artist Graham Fagen as a Collateral Event of the 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. Fagen will present an entirely new body of work, including sculptures, drawings and a five channel audio-visual installation, commissioned and curated by Hospitalfield in Arbroath, Scotland. The exhibition will be held at Palazzo Fontana, a Venetian palace located on the Grand Canal in the Cannaregio district of Venice. This is the first time the venue will be used for an exhibition of visual art and is a new location within the city for Scotland + Venice.

Graham Fagen is one of the most influential artists working in Scotland today. Throughout his career as an artist, Fagen has regularly incorporated elements of his own national, cultural and social identity within his work. Often using the artifice of theatre for the development of a narrative, Fagen will use the 16th century Venetian palace as an historic

backdrop for his presentation, choreographing a new body of work across four rooms of the palazzo to create a path through which visitors can effectively become performers within the piece.

Drawing on his long-term commitment to collaboration across multiple art forms and disciplines, Fagen will bring together internationally renowned composer Sally Beamish, the musicians of Scottish Ensemble, reggae singer and musician Ghetto Priest and music producer Adrian Sherwood to realise an ambitious installation. Sound that draws on very different musical traditions – Scottish folk songs, classical music and reggae – will pervade the rooms of Palazzo Fontana, creating a melancholic and ambiguous body of work within the surroundings of one of the world's most prestigious visual art exhibitions.

An illustrated publication which documents the breadth of Fagen's career, including his presentation for Scotland + Venice 2015, will be published by Hospitalfield to coincide with the opening of the exhibition in Venice. The catalogue includes contributions from Penelope Curtis, Director of Tate Britain, and Katrina Brown, Director of The Common Guild, alongside an interview with Scottish novelist Louise Welsh and Graham Fagen, with an introduction from Lucy Byatt, Director of Hospitalfield.

Graham Fagen, artist selected for Scotland + Venice 2015, said:

"The Venice Biennale offers an exciting platform to showcase my work in a truly international context. I am honoured to have been recognised and chosen by the Scotland + Venice partnership to participate in Scotland's presentation at this year's Biennale. Having their support has enabled me to work collaboratively with the renowned composer Sally Beamish and to rekindle my long term collaborations with producer Adrian Sherwood and the fantastic vocals of Ghetto Priest."

Lucy Byatt, Director of Hospitalfield, said:

"I first began working with Graham on the long-running Royston Road Project in north Glasgow (1992-2002) for which he made a series of important works. Working together again on the 2015 Scotland + Venice presentation is an extremely rewarding experience; an important international platform for Graham and a vital opportunity for Hospitalfield as we develop the visibility and programming for this important and long-lived Scottish art institution."

Amanda Catto, Visual Arts Portfolio Manager, Creative Scotland, said:

"Scotland + Venice has a long-established history of promoting new work by leading Scottish artists at la Biennale di Venezia. Graham Fagen's presentation will continue this tradition of showcasing some of the best Scottish contemporary art within the context of one of the world's most important exhibitions of visual art. We look forward to welcoming visitors to experience this presentation first-hand."

Ghetto Priest, musician, said:

"Coming together with Graham for this project was engraved on the path of 'destiny'.... I think we played our roles well."

Sally Beamish, composer, said:

"I am extremely excited to be collaborating with Graham Fagen on such a significant moment in his career. Our collaboration highlights the impact Scottish folk song has had on both of us – and I am honoured to take part in this extraordinary opportunity with so many inspirational artists and musicians."

Jonathan Morton, Artistic Director of Scottish Ensemble, said:

"I've really enjoyed meeting and working with Graham, who had a very strong and personal connection to the material he was working with. His exploration of the relationships between different cultural heritages is perceptive and fascinating and it's been a privilege to be invited to take part in this collaboration. Graham's approach of integrating different art forms to find new meaning also resonates with Scottish Ensemble's current ambitions and practice, so the collaboration was both natural and inspiring."

SCOTTISH EVENTS PROGRAMME:

23 April 2015, 18:30 – 20:30

Artist's Talk with Graham Fagen at Hospitalfield, Arbroath

20 May 2015, 18:30 – 20:30

Artist's Talk with Graham Fagen at the National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh

To find out more, sign up to the Scotland + Venice mailing list:

www.scotlandandvenice.com/newsletter

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- **Scotland + Venice** is a partnership between Creative Scotland, the National Galleries of Scotland and the British Council. Representatives of these organisations sit on a Steering Group that oversees the successful delivery of the project. Scotland + Venice also works in partnership with architects and designers from M+B Studio in Venice who provide critical support as project co-ordinators.

La Biennale di Venezia (9 May -22 November 2015), one of the world's most prestigious visual art exhibitions, is an important context in which to build Scotland's profile and reputation as an international centre for visual arts. Scotland + Venice 2015 complements further presentations from the UK taking place across the city at the same time. The British Pavilion will feature Sarah Lucas and the work of Helen Sear will appear in the Welsh presentation, curated by Ffotogallery.

Scotland + Venice 2015 with Graham Fagen will be open 10am – 6pm, every Tuesday – Sunday, from 9 May – 22 November 2015 at Palazzo Fontana (Cannaregio 3829, Venezia; access for the public via Strada Nuova, Calle Fontana). Admission is free. For more information, please visit the partnership's new website www.scotlandandvenice.com or follow on Twitter [@ScotlandVenice](https://twitter.com/ScotlandVenice), www.instagram.com/scotlandvenice and facebook.com/scotlandandvenice

- **Graham Fagen** is one of the most influential artists working in Scotland today. His work mixes media and crosses continents; combining video, performance, photography and sculpture with text, live music and plants. Fagen's recurring artistic themes, which include flowers, journeys and popular song, are used as attempts to understand the powerful forces that shape our lives. Fagen studied at The Glasgow School of Art (1984-1988, BA) and the Kent Institute of Art and Design (1989-1990, MA) and is senior lecturer at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design. For further information, please visit www.grahamfagen.com or follow him on Twitter [@grahamfagen](https://twitter.com/grahamfagen)
- **Hospitalfield: An Artist's House**, located in Arbroath, Scotland, holds a programme of residencies, commissions and curated projects which aim to negotiate and inspire an interplay between the heritage and history of the site and contemporary cultural ideas and practices. From the semi-rural location on the east coast of Scotland we work with a range of partners to ensure that Hospitalfield plays a significant role within the national cultural ecology and wider international network. The 19th century Scottish artist Patrick Allan-Fraser (1813-1890), inspired by his term of presidency at the Royal Academy in Rome, left his estate in Trust to become a residential art school. The model has necessarily changed over time and Hospitalfield are currently working on the first phase of a 21st century Future Plan, led by architects Caruso St John. For further information on Hospitalfield, please visit: www.hospitalfield.org | www.facebook.com/Hospitalfield | [@Hospitalfield](https://twitter.com/Hospitalfield)

- **Sally Beamish** is a London-born composer based in Scotland. Her music embraces many influences, particularly jazz and Scottish traditional music, and has been performed and broadcast internationally. Recent commissions include 'Dance Variations: Percussion Concerto No. 2' for percussionist Colin Currie with the Bergen Symphony Orchestra, Scottish and Swedish Chamber Orchestras and Stanford Lively Arts, CA. Sally's new concerto for Scottish fiddle and harp, 'Seavaigers', was premiered in Glasgow at Celtic Connections 2012 and has recently been recorded by Chris Stout, Catriona McKay and the Scottish Ensemble for release to coincide with a tour in 2014. For more information please visit: www.sallybeamish.com
- **Ghetto Priest** is one of the most flamboyant and creative performers to have emerged from the UK Reggae scene. He honed his vocal talents and artistic persona around the sound system dances of the early 80s, before beginning his illustrious recording career. Ghetto Priest possesses a raw energy and emotion unmatched by many artists of his generation, and while constantly pushing at the boundaries of Roots music, Priest's style strongly maintains the essence of his Jamaican heritage. Ghetto Priest is currently working on his latest album with producer Adrian Sherwood, as well as fronting Asian Dub Foundation. For more information on Ghetto Priest, visit www.ghettopriest.wix.com/ghetto-priest or follow on Twitter [@GhettoPriest](https://twitter.com/GhettoPriest)
- **Adrian Sherwood** is a music producer based in Ramsgate and founder of the legendary dub label On-U Sound. Over the last 30 years, Sherwood has worked with artists as diverse as Lee Scratch Perry, Primal Scream, Depeche Mode, Asian Dub Foundation, Little Axe and Sinéad O'Connor. For more information, please visit: www.adriansherwood.com
- **Scottish Ensemble (SE)** inspires audiences in the UK and beyond with vibrant performances which are powerful, challenging and rewarding experiences. The UK's only professional string orchestra is based in Glasgow and is built around a core of 12 outstanding string players who perform together under Artistic Director Jonathan Morton. SE has commissioned new works from composers such as John Tavener, James MacMillan, Sally Beamish, and Martin Suckling amongst others in recent years, as well as working with guest artists such as trumpeter Alison Balsom, tenor Toby Spence and cellist Pieter Wispelwey. Alongside performances across Scotland, SE presents an annual series of concerts at leading UK festivals and recent international tours have included performances in Belgium, Austria, Turkey, Taiwan, China and the USA. For more information, please visit: www.scottishensemble.co.uk

With special thanks from Scotland + Venice 2015 to partners and funders who have provided additional support to the project:

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