

Scotland + Venice



Media Release

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The University of Edinburgh Acquires Rachel Maclean's Scotland + Venice commission, *Spite Your Face*

**Rachel Maclean: *Spite Your Face* is a Collateral Event of the 57th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, 13 May-26 Nov, 2017
Chiesa di Santa Caterina, Fondamenta Santa Caterina, 30121, Cannaregio**

The University of Edinburgh is delighted to announce their acquisition of acclaimed artist Rachel Maclean's new film commission for Scotland + Venice, *Spite Your Face*, premiering at the 57th Biennale di Venezia. Her most ambitious work to date – presented within a dramatic deconsecrated church in Venice - has been acquired by the institution that the artist attended. In 2009, Maclean graduated from Edinburgh College of Art (ECA), which is part of the University of Edinburgh.

The film, a post-truth dystopia alluding to the recent changes in the political climate, references the potential implications of Brexit (to “cut off your nose to spite your face”) and satirises the language of today's political leadership, where the language of truth and untruth is employed, with little regard for factual accuracy. A modern fairy-tale drawing upon the Italian folktale, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, the film is positioned at the altar of the former church, Santa Caterina, as an eight metre high projection.

Rachel Maclean, graduate of Edinburgh College of Art says: “I'm so excited about the acquisition and humbled to be represented alongside such an impressive and important collection of artworks. ECA has been hugely significant in my development as an artist. My experience studying Drawing and Painting and the inspirational people I met at the college was life changing and I'm delighted to be currently tutoring on the dynamic Fine Art Post-Graduate course.”

Neil Lebeter, the University of Edinburgh's Art Collections Curator, says: “Rachel Maclean is one of the most highly regarded contemporary artists working in Scotland today. As both a graduate of Edinburgh College of Art and Scotland's representative on the world stage at the Venice Biennale, the acquisition of *Spite Your Face* to the University's Art Collection is hugely significant. This will provide an ongoing legacy for Scotland + Venice 2017 and celebrate the University's key role in the overall project.”

An emerging voice in the visual arts in Scotland, Maclean's work presents a bold and unique vision, where she creates fantasy narratives involving studio based green-screen techniques, custom prosthetics, costume, and voice actors. Citing Cindy Sherman, Paul McCarthy and Barbara Kruger as early points of inspiration, Maclean plays all the characters in the films herself, while working directly on every detail of post-production.

The news comes just over a year after the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art acquired Maclean's previous film commission, *Feed Me*, presented as part of British Art Show 8.

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Check out the **Facebook Live** @scotlandandvenice for an exclusive tour of the exhibition with Rachel Maclean and Richard Ashrowan.

See a behind-the-scenes glimpse into Rachel Maclean's new work, in a film commissioned by the British Council: <https://youtu.be/9k7PAcKEMlg>

To embed the film, please use:

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<iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/9k7PAcKEMlg"
frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>
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Notes to Editors

The Exhibition Guide, with further details on Scotland + Venice's presentation, can be found at the venue.

Based in Glasgow, **Rachel Maclean** (1987) was educated at Edinburgh College of Art where she completed her BA in Drawing and Painting in 2009. Rachel premiered a new commission, *Again and Again and Again* at Frieze Art Fair as part of Frieze Film 2016.

Maclean has risen to significant recent acclaim, with major, solo UK exhibitions *Rachel Maclean: Wot u :-) about?* at HOME, Manchester and Tate Britain, 2016-17. Maclean graduated in 2009 and her work came to public attention in New Contemporaries later that year. Since then, her work *A Whole New World* won the prestigious Margaret Tait Award in 2013, she has twice been shortlisted for the Jarman Award, and has achieved widespread critical praise for *Feed Me* (2016) in British Art Show 8. [@Maclean_Rachel](http://www.rachelmaclea.com)

Current and upcoming exhibitions include: *Feed Me* at The Dick Institute in Kilmarnock 20 May–August 2017; *Ars 17 - Hello World!* at Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, 31 March 2017–14 January 2018. Recent exhibitions include: *Wot U :-) About?*, Tate Britain (2016-17); *Wot U :-) About?*, HOME (2016-17); *We Want Data* (2016), Artpace, Texas; *British Art Show 8* (2015-17), *Ok, You've Had Your Fun*, Casino Luxembourg (2015), *Please, Sir...*, Rowing, London, (2014); *The Weepers*, Comar, Mull, (2014); *Happy & Glorious*, CCA, Glasgow, (2014). Recent screenings include: *Feed Me* at Athens and Luxembourg Film Festival (2016); *Moving Pictures*, British Council and Film London, (2015-16); *Lolcats*, Impakt Festival, Utrecht, The Netherlands, (2014).

Established in 1583, the **University of Edinburgh** is one of the UK's leading research-intensive universities and regularly ranks among the top 50 universities in the world.

Talbot Rice is the **University of Edinburgh**'s public art gallery. As the project's creative and academic partner, Talbot Rice Gallery will host Rachel Maclean's work from the Venice Biennale in early 2018. Founded in the early 1970s, Talbot Rice has an influential national and international reputation founded on its exhibition and integrated education programmes. In the last decade the Gallery has curated exhibitions with some of the most influential artists in the world, including: Luc Tuymans, Jane and Louise Wilson, Joseph Kosuth, Jenny Holzer, Lucy McKenzie, Alasdair Gray, Mark Dion, Rosemarie Trockel, and Tim Rollins. [@talbotrice75](http://www.ed.ac.uk/talbot-rice) www.facebook.com/talbotricegallery/

Scotland + Venice is a partnership between Creative Scotland, the National Galleries of Scotland and the British Council Scotland.

14 art students have been selected from six Scottish art colleges for the **Scotland + Venice Professional Development Programme**. Participants will spend 4 weeks in Venice sharing time between invigilation of the Scotland + Venice presentation and independent study and research. Meet the students here: <http://scotlandandvenice.com/scotland-venice-partnership-announces-participants-in-the-2017-professional-development-programme/>

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. www.creativescotland.com [@creativescots](https://www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland) www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland

The National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) looks after one of the world's finest collections of Western art ranging from the Middle Ages to the present day. These holdings include the National Collection of Scottish art which is displayed in an international context. Last year the NGS welcomed over 2 million visitors from Scotland and the rest of the world to our three Galleries sited in Edinburgh. These include the Scottish National Gallery, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. www.nationalgalleries.org

British Council Scotland's mission is to build long-term international relationships and trust between the people of Scotland and other countries through the exchange of ideas, knowledge and information in the arts and education. Our involvement in the arts arena stretches back to 1947 when we helped to found the Edinburgh International Festival and every year we continue to work on new and exciting cultural projects connecting Scotland and the world. <https://scotland.britishcouncil.org/>

Founded in 2010, **Alchemy Film & Arts** celebrates experimental film and artists' moving image culture in Scotland. Its annual Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival, now approaching its eighth edition 1-4 May, 2018, is produced in partnership with Heart of Hawick in the Scottish Borders. Alchemy Film & Arts also raises the profile of Scottish based artists internationally through developmental projects for experimental film and artists' moving image, including artists' filmmaking residencies, filmmaking symposia, international and rural touring programmes, and community filmmaking initiatives. www.alchemyfilmfestival.org.uk [@alchemyfilmfest](https://www.facebook.com/alchemyfilmfestival) [facebook.com/alchemyfilmfestival](https://www.facebook.com/alchemyfilmfestival)