



Press Release

ART COLLECTIVE FAFSWAG IN MANCHESTER TAKEOVER

Critically acclaimed art collective **FAFSWAG** will take over HOME for this year's Manchester International Festival. They will present *Fale Sā / Sacred House* (4 July – 10 August), a cultural journey that encompasses a digital art exhibition, live cultural ceremony and a programme of films and talks that are grounded in Pacific identity and culture.

The work responds to the fact that home is a precarious notion for cultures in a constant state of motion and displacement. It draws on rituals and ancestral stories from the Pacific Diaspora of Aotearoa New Zealand and the wider Moana.

The work is an outcome of a two-year artistic residency, which began at Manchester International Festival in 2023. *Fale Sā / Sacred House* will explore themes including transformation and ritual, fantasy and futurism, the environment, cultural languages and spirituality.

FAFSWAG collective said:

"We're excited to see all the threads of development culminate in our collective offering for Manchester International Festival. *The Fale Sā / Sacred House* has allowed us all to have a collective journey of discovery, exploring the unique history of our cultures and sharing stories with audiences of Manchester. We're eager to see what new stories we can make together, through this cultural exchange."

Low Kee Hong, Creative Director of Factory International and MIF, said:

"FAFSWAG are a brilliant multi-disciplinary collective of queer indigenous artists and we are so fortunate to have been working with them over the past few years to create *Fale Sā / Sacred House* for MIF25. This multiform project invites us to reimagine and reflect the future of home through the rediscovery of ancestral stories and rituals and how they inform these speculative formulations of community and assembly."

Karen O'Neill, CEO of HOME, said:

"Working with Manchester International Festival to bring FAFSWAG to Manchester is fantastic. FAFSWAG are an incredible and exciting collective starting dynamic conversations. This programme will be exceptional. HOME is honoured to be part of this work and is looking forward to welcoming audiences to experience *Fale Sā / Sacred House* as part of MIF25."

Founded in Auckland in 2013, FAFSWAG's work centres Indigenous world views, drawing from a deep well of ancestral knowledge to imagine potential futures for Indigenous people beyond the colonial gaze.

Fale Sā / Sacred House is grounded in three distinct Samoan cultural practices – Fāgogo, Sauniga and Talanoa which come together to create a multi-layered experience.

Fāgogo (Exhibition)

In this exhibition of new work, FAFSWAG artists have imagined a future home for celestial bodies, sacred objects, ancestral stories and collective gatherings.

Fāgogo refers to a traditional storytelling technique from the Samoan Islands. The exhibition of digital art brings into question the nature of our relationships to community, the environment, and the constantly expanding cosmos, with artists directly accessing ancestral memories to craft collective stories and imagine Indigenous futures.

Curated by FAFSWAG, featuring Tanu Gago, Tapuaki Helu, Nahora Ioane, Māhia Te Kore, Pati Tyrell and Jaimie Waititi.

Sauniga (Ceremony)

This is a presentation of cultural ceremony that seeks out playful discoveries and reflections on our relationship with animals and the environment. It brings together dance, chanting and ceremony and is told through a Samoan world view.

Created by FAFSWAG director Pati Tyrell, this cultural activation features Pati Tyrell, Jaycee Tanuvasa and Peni Fakaua. Sauniga was developed with support from Asia TOPA and Creative New Zealand.

Talanoa (Conversation)

Expanding on the world of cultural storytelling explored in the *Fale Sā / Sacred House*, Talanoa presents a public programme of discussions, workshops and cinema, taken from a Samoan term commonly understood among Pacific cultures as conversation or dialogue.

FAFSWAG partners with filmmakers and moving image artists from the Pacific region to deliver a programme of rich storytelling from across the Moana. Featuring documentaries, short films and experimental screenworks, this public programme is curated by Elyssia Wilson-Heti.

There will be a series of artist panels, a workshop on voguing and ballroom dancing, as well as community discussions as part of *Fale Sā / Sacred House*. Each is centred around indigenous practice and collective storytelling, as well as ritual and ceremony.

Listings Information:

Fale Sā / Sacred House

HOME

Manchester

4 July – 10 August 2025

www.factoryinternational.org

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Notes to Editors:

About Factory International

Factory International is the organisation behind Manchester International Festival and the city's landmark cultural space, Aviva Studios. Factory International commissions, produces and presents a year-round programme of original creative work and special events at Aviva Studios, online, and internationally through its network of co-commissioners and partners. It also stages the city-wide Manchester International Festival (MIF) every other year.

MIF is one of the world's leading arts festivals, and the first to be entirely focused on the commissioning and producing of ambitious new work. Staged every two years in Manchester since 2007, the festival invites world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds to create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work in venues and spaces across Greater Manchester. Previous artists include, Björk, Jeremy Deller, Akram Khan, Yayoi Kusama, David Lynch, Wayne McGregor, Steve McQueen, Yoko Ono, Maxine Peake, Skepta, and The xx.

Factory International plays an important role in the lives of Greater Manchester residents, bringing jobs, skills, training and creative opportunities. Through the Factory Academy, Factory International is training the creative workforce of the future, while its pioneering creative engagement and artist development programmes create year-round opportunities for local people to get involved, from participating in flagship commissions to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums.

Aviva Studios was designed by the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), with Ellen van Loon as lead architect – their first major public building in the UK. Its development was led by Manchester City Council, with backing from HM Government and National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

Factory International is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

factoryinternational.org

About HOME

HOME is Manchester's premier arts centre and a registered charity, welcoming over 4 million visitors since opening. HOME features two theatres, five cinemas, an art gallery, and a popular restaurant. HOME works with international and UK artists to produce extraordinary experiences, creating an exciting mix of thought-provoking drama, dance, film and contemporary visual art with a strong focus on international work, new commissions and artist development. HOME's ambition is to push the boundaries of form and technology, to experiment, have fun, take risks and share great new art with the widest possible audience. HOME has welcomed the following artists and more since opening: AL and AL, Rachel Maclean, Phil Collins, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, Larry Achiampong, Sophie Al-Maria, Noor Afsan Mirza & Brad Butler, John Walter, Lubaina Himid and David Lynch.

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