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**MANCHESTER TO RING IN THE NEW YEAR AS SPECTACULAR ART INSTALLATION LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT SKY FROM ‘FACTORY INTERNATIONAL’, MANCHESTER’S LANDMARK NEW CULTURAL SPACE**

**Artist impression revealed for Luke Jerram’s new public artwork *First Breath* on the bank of the River Irwell outside Factory International, ahead of the opening of the new cultural space in June 2023.**

Each evening from 1-29 January 2023 between 4pm - 10pm, *First Breath* will cast powerful beams of light up into the clouds to celebrate new life. The lights will gently pulse to represent the first breaths of babies born that day in Greater Manchester. Audiences will be able to get up close to the artwork, walking in and around the lights, as well as witnessing it from vantage points across the city.

*First Breath* is being created by world-renowned artist **Luke Jerram** whose *Museum of the Moon* has been experienced by more than 20 million people worldwide and his giant 10m *Floating Earth* was seen by thousands in Media City in Salford and in Pennington Flash near Wigan in 2021.

Luke Jerram says: *"I want to reveal, celebrate and connect the hidden community of people giving birth each day in Greater Manchester. Disconnected and yet going through the life-changing experience at the same time, there are on average over 70 babies born each day in the city. This new artwork is designed to celebrate the moment a child is born – the extraordinary moment when they take their first breath and a new life arrives in the world."*

*First Breath* takes place in what will be a unique new public space at Factory International which will come alive in June 2023 with a wide-ranging year-round programme of free events and activities, creating a thriving riverside destination in the city centre for everyone to enjoy.

Programmed and operated by the team behind the world-famous Manchester International Festival (MIF), Factory International will be a global destination for arts, music and culture, commissioning and presenting a year-round programme by leading artists from across the world.

Factory International has already begun delivering creative education programmes to hundreds of young people aged 9-14 across Manchester and the wider region with a focus around social and emotional learning, teamwork, leadership and resilience. *First Breath* will set in motion a new programme of bespoke family activities and early learning opportunities for babies and parents at Factory International connecting a new generation through culture and exploring how art can be woven into daily family life from birth.

Hundreds of babies born in January 2023 will also receive lifetime membership to Factory International – providing priority booking, discounted tickets and exclusive invitations to everything from major exhibitions and epic concerts, to family performances and workshops.

**John McGrath**, Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Factory International and Manchester International Festival said, *“At the turn of 2023 we’ll celebrating new beginnings with a beautiful public artwork projected from the site of our future home into the night sky. As we welcome hundreds of new-borns into the world through Luke’s light sculpture, we will also be breathing life into our new building and, we hope, setting in motion a fruitful life-long relationship with a new generation."*

Expectant parents due in January 2023 from all backgrounds and pregnancy journeys can sign-up to *First Breath* at factoryinternational.org/first-breath

The artwork is free and will run from 1-29 January 2023 from 4-10pm. The artwork will be accessed on Water Street, at the bottom of Liverpool Road.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, IMAGES, QUOTES AND INTERVIEW REQUESTS PLEASE CONTACT:**

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Download high resolution images [here](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/cp4er4y3xbgqi95b5zftx/h?dl=0&rlkey=f1djocsf9szt16fqb4yurm2wt)

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About Luke Jerram**

Luke Jerram’s multidisciplinary practice involves the creation of sculptures, installations and live arts projects. Living in the UK but working internationally since 1997, Jerram has created a number of extraordinary art projects which have excited and inspired people around the world. With over 25 years’ experience in creating successful artworks, in 2021 alone he had 104 exhibitions in 17 different countries.

As well as touring his installations, his artworks are in over 50 permanent collections around the world including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Wellcome Collection in London.

His artwork the [Museum of the Moon](http://www.my-moon.org/) is one of Luke’s most successful arts projects that has caught the public’s imagination which so far has been presented in different ways, more than 250 times in 30 different countries. With universal appeal, the exhibit has been breaking audience records in venues around the globe. Experienced by more than 10 million people worldwide, the artwork has recently toured India with the British Council, been presented at the Commonwealth Games in Australia, Art Basel in Miami 2020 and exhibited in Aarhus, Denmark for the European Capital of Culture.

**About Factory International**
Factory International is a global destination for arts music and culture opening in the heart of Manchester in 2023. The design of the landmark new cultural space is led by Ellen van Loon of the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). Its development is being led by Manchester City Council, with backing from HM Government and Arts Council England.

Programmed and operated by the team behind Manchester International Festival (MIF), Factory International will commission, produce and present an ambitious year-round programme of original creative work, music and special events by leading artists from across the globe. It will also stage the city-wide Festival every other year at Factory International and at venues and spaces across Greater Manchester. Driven by the same interests and ambitions that defines MIF, artists will be encouraged to create work in new ways, to collaborate across disciplines and blur the boundaries between art and popular culture.

The building design is based around large, open, ultra-flexible spaces that can be constantly reconfigured, enabling large-scale artistic work of invention and ambition that isn’t made anywhere else in the world. It will offer audiences the opportunity to enjoy year-round, in a new world-class facility, the broadest range of art forms - from major exhibitions and concerts, to intimate performances and immersive experiences – including over 80 gigs a year.

The 13,350 square metre building includes a 21m high warehouse with capacity for up to 5,000 people standing, which can also be divided by a movable, full-height acoustic wall, and a hall with a flexible stage which can house an audience of up to 1,600 seated or 2,000 standing, as well as other spaces inside and out. The warehouse and the hall can also work together, with the proscenium capable of opening fully into the warehouse and allowing the stage to run deeper into the building.

Its public spaces, from the foyers to its outdoor areas, will come alive with year-round activities such as family friendly workshops, pop-up food stalls, music, workshops and markets, many of them free, creating a thriving riverside destination for everyone to enjoy.

International in spirit and practice, Factory International will collaborate with venues, festivals and companies across the world to commission artists together. Working with local, national and international partners and co-producers, it will produce and premiere major new work, before it travels globally, and share ideas, projects and training with peers worldwide.

The possibilities of digital technology lies at the heart of the vision for Factory International, driving experimentation and innovation in its physical productions and enabling the creation of entirely new experiences for audiences through digital first works created within the virtual world. It will also engage audiences beyond its physical structures through broadcast and streaming of live and hybrid projects.

A laboratory for experimentation and R&D, Factory International will be a training ground for the next generation of creators. Artists from Manchester and all over the world will be commissioned to make new work in physical and online realms, while talent development programmes such as the Factory Fellowships will see emerging artists placed alongside international creatives.

Through the Factory Academy, it will become a major training centre for local people, equipping them with the skills needed for careers in the creative industries and helping to build the technicians, producers and other creative talent that will bring the future alive.

Building on MIF’s record of working with communities, as audiences and as participants, Factory International will be a space where local people are actively involved – from participating in flagship commissions, co-designing programmes of activity, to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums.

Rooted in Manchester, Factory International will strengthen the city’s status as a national and international centre for culture, creativity and innovation, as well as a major visitor destination. The economic impact of Factory International will be considerable, creating or supporting up to 1,500 direct and indirect jobs and adding £1.1 billion to the city’s economy over a decade.

Located in the new St John’s neighbourhood next to the River Irwell, Factory International will be at the heart of a burgeoning city centre hub for culture, creativity and digital innovation and make a major contribution to the ongoing regeneration of this part of the city centre.