

## Press Release

For immediate release

## HELENE BINET: THE POETICS OF CONSTRUCTION – BEHIND-THE-SCENES PHOTOGRAPHS OF AVIVA STUDIOS ON SHOW FOR THE FIRST TIME



Factory International is delighted to announce a new exhibition by the internationally acclaimed Swiss/French photographer **Hélène Binet**, one of the world's leading photographers of architecture. *The Poetics of Construction (7 May to 9 June 2024)* brings together a selection of special-commissioned large-scale photographs which capture the construction of Manchester's landmark new arts venue, Aviva Studios, on display for the first time.

Over four years and eight visits to the construction site of Aviva Studios, Binet captured the building rising from the ground to produce what she describes as a 'photographic essay'. Shot on film, each image reveals a moment of the construction captured in time – exposing the different processes and materials that were key to making the building. Melding the poetic and industrial, this astonishing series of large colour and black and white imagery tells the story of Aviva Studios and offers a poetic interpretation of a working site.

**Hélène Binet** says: *"I think of this work as a photographic essay – a personal, poetic response to the building rather than a documentation. To photograph a working site is like looking at the skeleton of a body, from the smaller bones to the vertebral column. It is also the childhood of the building, a miraculous stage that will never come again. I shoot only on film with a large format camera and my process is like a performance – it exists in the moment. Every building will communicate something*

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*different to me. I didn't realise the full potential when I said yes to this project – it was beyond anything I could imagine.”*

Designed by Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), Aviva Studios is a global destination for arts, music and culture which officially opened in October 2023 at the heart of the new St John's neighbourhood in Manchester. Ultra-flexible in design, the building is based around large, open, adaptable spaces that can be constantly reconfigured, enabling artists to develop and create large-scale work of invention and ambition of a kind not seen anywhere else in the world, and providing a canvas to make, explore and experiment.

The 13,350 square metre building includes a 21-metre-high Warehouse, which can be divided by a movable, full-height acoustic wall; and the Hall, an auditorium theatre with a flexible stage. 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. Programmed and operated by Factory International, the organisation behind Manchester International Festival, Aviva Studios hosts a year-round programme of original productions and special events across all artforms – from major exhibitions and concerts to intimate performances and immersive experiences. The venue's development was led by Manchester City Council, with backing of £99.05m from HM Government and £7m National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

Hélène Binet is an internationally acclaimed Swiss/French photographer based in London. She creates large-format photography and works exclusively with film. Her work has been exhibited around the world –including at PSA, Shanghai. In 2019, she was awarded the Ada Louise Huxtable Prize for her exceptional contribution in the field of architecture. In 2021/22, she became the first woman photographer to present a major solo exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts.

**John McGrath**, Artistic Director & Chief Executive, Factory International says: *“We are delighted to be able to exhibit this selection of Hélène Binet's captivating photographs, offering audiences a unique insight into the building of our magnificent new home. Aviva Studios has been designed as a new type of performance space – a flexible invitation for artists to dream about making new kinds of art and events – and a place for people to meet, share ideas and experience something different every time they visit. Binet's personal and poetic photographs are a fitting tribute to this vision and the unique architecture of the building.”*

Hélène Binet will appear in conversation at Aviva Studios on 11 May at 3pm, discussing capturing the build and her unique approach to the photography of architecture.

**Ends.**

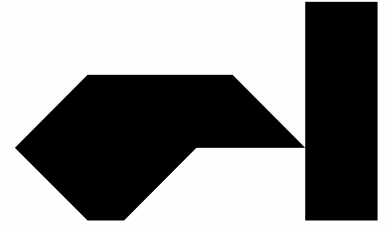
## LISTINGS

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### **Hélène Binet: The Poetics of Construction**

7 May to 9 June

Aviva Studios, Water Street, Manchester, M3 4JQ

Free

<https://factoryinternational.org/whats-on/helene-binet-the-poetics-of-construction/>

### **Download [high res images here](#)**

For a full selection, please contact below.

### **For more information please contact:**

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### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

#### **About Factory International**

Factory International commissions, produces and presents a year-round programme of original creative work and special events at Aviva Studios, its landmark new home in Manchester, online, and internationally through its network of co-commissioners and partners. It also stages the city-wide Manchester International Festival every other year.

Factory International builds on the legacy of Manchester International Festival, 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, world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work reflecting the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture, staged across Greater Manchester. Working closely with cultural organisations globally, whose financial and creative input helps to make many of these projects possible, much of the work also goes on to travel the world, reaching an audience of 1.8 million people in more than 30 countries to date.

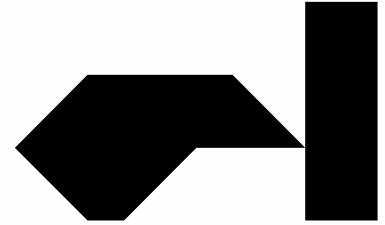
A space for invention and discovery, the design of Factory International's new home, Aviva Studios, is led by Ellen van Loon of the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). Built with flexibility in mind, the building is based around large, open, adaptable spaces that can be constantly reconfigured, enabling artists to develop and create large-scale work of invention and ambition, of a kind not seen anywhere else in the world, and providing a canvas to make, explore and experiment. Audiences can enjoy the broadest range of art forms from major exhibitions and concerts to intimate performances and immersive experiences, while the venue's outside areas come alive with pop-up performances, events and markets, creating a thriving new riverside destination for all.

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This new cultural landmark strengthens the city's status as a national and international centre for culture, creativity and innovation, as well as a major visitor destination. Its economic impact 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. The venue's development is led by Manchester City Council, with backing of £99.05m from HM Government and £7m National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

Factory International plays an important role in the lives of Greater Manchester residents, bringing jobs, skills, training and creative opportunities for local people and artists. Its pioneering creative engagement and artist development programmes creates year-round opportunities for local people to get involved, from participating in flagship commissions, co-designing programmes of activity, to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums. Through the Factory Academy, Factory International is training the creative workforce of the future, providing opportunities for careers in Manchester's ever-growing creative industries, while talent development programmes such as the Factory Fellowships see emerging artists placed alongside international creatives.

Factory International is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

[factoryinternational.org](http://factoryinternational.org)

### **About Arts Council England**

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £467 million of public money from Government and an estimated £250 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

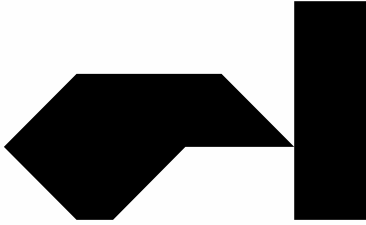
[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

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