



## Press Release

### BRIAN ENO, ES DEVLIN AND JON RONSON LAUNCH HARD ART WITH FOUR-DAY TAKEOVER 'THE FÊTE OF BRITAIN' AT AVIVA STUDIOS



© Charlie Waterhouse

Brian Eno, Es Devlin, Cornelia Parker, Jon Ronson, Jeremy Deller and Louis VI are among a group of musicians, artists and creatives who are launching a new movement called **Hard Art**. They have come together to develop a cultural response to the major critical issues facing the world today, such as climate change, injustice, cost of living, and the crisis in our democracy.

Hard Art will be launched with **The Fête of Britain** (22 – 25 February), a four-day takeover at Aviva Studios, Manchester. Through a mix of play, workshops, people's assemblies, talks and performances The Fête of Britain will explore the intersecting crises affecting the UK – with a focus on the cost-of-living crisis and climate collapse – and ask how we can draw on our history of resistance, art, culture and assembly, to find our collective power today.

Championing community, collaboration and imagination, the four-day event is an interactive, inspiring and moving event for all ages, bringing together artists, audiences, community groups and organisations to show that *"The fate of the nation is in our hands"*.

**Brian Eno**, musician and member of Hard Art: *"What's happening to this country? Where are we going? What do we need to do to make a future we can be proud of? We hope our event will inspire people to embrace their collective power and intelligence, to delight in differences rather than fight over them, and show the creativity in us all when we come together."*

**Clare Farrell**, co-founder of Extinction Rebellion and member of Hard Art: *"We all know the world is in crisis. We're great believers in empowering and enabling people to know that together we can deal with it. The Fête of Britain is all about showing that we have faith in people, that when we come*

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*together we make better decisions than politicians. Spaces like people's assemblies, singing together, having fun, talking and eating at the same table can bring people together across artificial divides, and these are the ways to help people take control of their communities and fix what's not working."*

*The Fête of Britain highlights include...*

- Drawing from his book *So You've Been Publicly Shamed* and two seasons of his BBC podcast *Things Fell Apart*, **Jon Ronson** will tell funny, startling human stories about the origins of the cultural conflicts that tear us apart today, and offer ideas for how we might repair the damage. Jon will be joined by a top line-up of some of the country's best comedy talent (23 February).
- Shown across the four days will be a series of films exploring democracy, climate change, and the everyday experience of life in Britain from artists such as **Cornelia Parker**, **Jeremy Deller** and **Human Atlas**. There will also be family fun with traditional fayre games with a contemporary British twist, pop-up performances, play and workshops and participatory activities from **Empathy Museum**, and **Community Conversations** hosted by local organisations. (22-25 February).
- An evening of revolutionary bass culture curated by the **LOWD Sound System** and featuring multi-instrumentalist, rapper and "nature geek" Louis VI and many more on a festival-style programme running from Saturday afternoon into the evening. The LOWD (Love Overcomes World Destruction) Sound System is a cultural intervention bringing politics to the street through music and education (24 February).
- A celebration of food, faith and uplifting ritual as communities from across Manchester and the UK come together to eat, talk, sing, share and listen to one another. Everyone will collaborate on a fitting ritual finale for the Fête. Also featuring the performances of **Brian Eno's** new collaborative sound installation and anew 'Common Anthem' for Britain written by Fête visitors with **Commoners Choir**. (25 February).

Tickets for the Jon Ronson comedy event and LOWD Sound System will be onsale to the general public on 2 February. All other events in the programme will be free, but may require tickets.

**ENDS.**

### LISTINGS

The Fête of Britain

22 – 25 February 2024

Aviva Studios, Water Street, Manchester, M3 4JQ

Commissioned and produced by Factory International and Hard Art.

<https://factoryinternational.org/whats-on/the-fete-of-britain>

**For more information please contact:**

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## Press Release

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### NOTES TO EDITORS

#### About Hard Art

Hard Art is a movement of artists, musicians and others in the creative and cultural worlds who have come together to respond to the world's major critical issues such as climate change, racism, and the crisis in our democracy. Hard Art is helping to psychically prepare people to live in a radically different future, and to popularise alternative forms of democracy (such as citizen's assemblies) that we desperately need to upgrade our broken politics to create positive change that benefits everyone. The Fête of Britain is the launch of Hard Art, and features new and existing work from those cultural figures involved.

<https://hardart.metalabel.com/>

#### 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.

The design of 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.

A unique 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. 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 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 in venues and spaces across Greater Manchester.

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

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participating in flagship commissions to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums.

Factory International is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.  
**[factoryinternational.org](https://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](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk)**

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