**Embargoed until Mon 20 November, 11am**

**NEW CHAIR OF TRUSTEES ANNOUNCED FOR FACTORY INTERNATIONAL**

**Moira Sinclair OBE will take over from Tom Bloxham MBE as Chair of the organisation behind the biennial Manchester International Festival and Manchester’s landmark new cultural venue, Aviva Studios.**

Factory International is delighted to announce Moira Sinclair as its new Chair of Trustees. Sinclair has a wealth of experience in senior roles in the arts and cultural sector and is a graduate of Manchester University. Formerly Executive Director London and South East for Arts Council England, her current role is as Chief Executive of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. She is also Chair of Clore Leadership and Chair of the London Mayor’s Cultural Strategy Board, and a member of the British Library Advisory Council.

As Chair of Factory International, Sinclair will oversee the Board for the organisation that produces and programmes both Manchester International Festival (MIF), and Aviva Studios - the landmark new cultural space which opened last month, creating a global destination for arts, music and culture in the heart of Manchester.

**Moira Sinclair** **OBE** says: *“My guiding star has always been a commitment to supporting access to the very best, ambitious, thrilling arts and culture, for everyone – artists, producers, audiences - and that is why I am truly honoured to take on the role of Chair of Factory International at such an exciting time for the organisation. I am looking forward to building on Tom Bloxham’s incredible legacy as Chair and to working with John McGrath, the team and my fellow trustees to shape a future full of possibility and purpose.”*

**John McGrath**, Artistic Director & Chief Executive, Factory International says: *“I’m so pleased that Moira Sinclair will be joining the team as Chair of the Board of Factory International. Tom has done a fantastic job at leading us through an extraordinary period of growth and transformation, from helping to establish us as one of the most renowned festivals on the international stage to moving into our incredible new home, Aviva Studios. I look forward to working with Moira, whose experience and values are perfectly suited to help us take our next steps as we continue to invent tomorrow together.”*

**Tom Bloxham** MBE says: *“It’s been a huge privilege to lead the Factory International Board since MIF’s inception and I am immensely grateful to my fellow Board members, who all bring a wealth of expertise and knowledge from the worlds of arts, business, sport, media and civic leadership, as well as John and the whole Factory International staff team, who have given their time and skills to help us realise our massive ambitions. Now that we have successfully opened Aviva Studios I’m delighted to hand over the baton to Moira next February who I know will do a brilliant job overseeing the organisation as it continues to grow and flourish.”*

Designed by Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), Aviva Studios is located at the heart of the new St John’s neighbourhood in Manchester. Its development has been led by Manchester City Council, with backing of £99.05m from HM Government and £7m National Lottery funding from Arts Council England. 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. Matching Manchester’s ethos as an ever-evolving city, this dynamic space invites artists to create bold new work by providing a canvas to make, explore and experiment.

Programmed and operated by Factory International, 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. Over 230k visitors were welcomed to the venue this summer when audiences were given the opportunity to preview the new building with a series of events including a spectacular exhibition by **Yayoi Kusama**. The official opening production, the Matrix-inspired *Free Your Mind* created by **Danny Boyle, Es Devlin, Boy Blue** co-founders **Kenrick ‘H2O’ Sandy** and **Michael ‘Mikey J’ Asante** and **Sabrina Mahfouz** - launched to sold out audiences and critical acclaim. It was followed by *The Welcome*, an invitation from local people to celebrate the new cultural space opening in the heart of their city, programmed over two years by a cross-section of Greater Manchester residents.

**Councillor Luthfur Rahman OBE**, Deputy Leader Manchester City Council, said: *"Tom was always going be a hard act to follow and I want to thank him on behalf of the city for his boundless energy, enthusiasm and support over the years since Manchester International Festival first began. Moira brings with her a wealth of experience and commitment to making the very best of world-class arts and culture accessible to everyone and is a perfect fit both for Factory International and our wider cultural ambitions for the city moving forwards."*

**Sarah Maxfield**, North Area Director, Arts Council England: *“We are delighted that Moira Sinclair will be taking up the role as Chair of Factory International. She is joining the organisation at a pivotal moment following the opening of Aviva Studios and her vast experience will help Factory International continue to grow and realise its ambitions. We must also thank Tom Bloxham who in his time as Chair of the organisation from the very beginning has led Manchester International Festival to grow in stature as well as the development of Factory International’s landmark new home. His dedication and commitment have been key to the organisation establishing an international reputation for developing and delivering world class artistic activity.”*

Sinclair will take up the post of Chair following Tom Bloxham’s final Board meeting in January 2024.

***Ends.*
For more information please contact:**
**Emma Robertson, Head of Press and PR,** +44 (0)7813 521104 emma.robertson@factoryinternational.org

 **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**About Moira Sinclair:
Moira Sinclair** OBE is Chief Executive of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, an independent grant maker whose vision is for a just society in which everyone, especially young people, can realise their full potential and enjoy fulfilling and creative lives. In 2022/2023, PHF made £39m grants to organisations and individuals working in the arts, in cultural education, in migration and integration, and in giving young people voice.

Moira is Chair of Clore Leadership and Chair of the London Mayor’s Cultural Strategy Board. She is also a member of the British Library Advisory Council and of the Investment Committee for the Arts & Culture Impact Fund. In late 2021, she became a Visiting Leadership Fellow at Exeter University Centre for Leadership.

Previously, as Executive Director London and South East for Arts Council England, she oversaw a portfolio of 322 funded cultural organisations and contributed to national policy development, with a particular focus on the resilience and sustainability of the cultural sector and workforce development. She played a key role supporting the cultural programme for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and continues to support its legacy at home and internationally.

Before joining Arts Council in 2005, Moira was Director of Vital Arts, an arts and health charity. She has also worked in local government, and in theatre and production management. A graduate of Manchester University where she studied drama, Moira became a Clore Fellow in 2004/05.

**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.

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.

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 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 1.7 million people in more than 30 countries to date.

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

 **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