

Press Release – The **Other** Great Exhibition of the North
Friday 18th May 2018

[start]

Artists, historians, educators, community activists, trade unionists and campaigners have come together to challenge the ‘artwashing’ behind the official Great Exhibition of the North (GEOTN) due to launch on the banks of the Tyne 22nd June 2018.

Deeply concerned that GEOTN represents the imposition of George Osborne's Northern Powerhouse vanity project, the OTHER Great Exhibition of the North has been formed to expose the hypocrisy of the cultural event and to celebrate the true culture of the North; enabling a platform for discussion, debate and critique.

OTHER wants to bring together all creatives and local communities to create their own Great Exhibition.

“If we as local artists don’t do this then the narrative about the arts and culture in the North will belong to politicians, institutions, the developers and gentrifiers whose aim is to extract wealth from local areas, pricing out and pushing established communities to the margins.” Stephen Pritchard, activist & campaigner.

“We don’t have £5m from central government like the GEOTN. But like the trade union movement, we are self organised, self sustaining and we have an independent voice that belongs to local artists and local people and not politicians in Westminster” Theresa Easton, Artists’ Union England member.

“We hope to create and showcase a truly authentic, independent, grassroots exhibition festival, curated by Northern artists, musicians, writers, theatre makers, performers, academics and activists, that celebrates the true diversity of culture in the North; in all its glories. We are creating OTHER as an opportunity for those who would otherwise not be able to showcase, access and engage with the cultural programme that GEOTN purports to be delivering” Bethany Elen Coyle

“We want to enable communities to debate, identify and celebrate what they themselves define as the Great North” Jude Murphy

“OTHER wants to bring together all creatives and local communities to create their own Great Exhibition” Silvie Fisch

OTHER are calling on communities, creatives, campaigners and trade unionists to pledge their support for their Manifesto and get involved.

[End]

Contact:

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[Notes to Editor]

Great Exhibition of the North

The Great Exhibition of the North is free summer long celebration of the North of England's pioneering spirit with exhibitions and unforgettable experiences packed into 80 days.

www.getnorth2018.com

Theresa Easton

Theresa is an artist and activist based in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and one of the founding members of Artists' Union England, a trade union for visual and applied artists, and artists with a socially engaged practice.

www.artistsunionengland.org.uk

Stephen Pritchard

Stephen is an academic and activist, a radical art historian and a community artist, a writer and a Labour and Momentum member. His work explores and critiques the corporate takeover of the arts and seeks to undermine the institutional dominance and the quiet terror of neoliberalism. Stephen is a member of Artists Union England.

www.colouringinculture.org

Bethany Elen Coyle

Bethany Elen is a freelance community musician, educator, project coordinator and activist based in the NE. Her education and community work centres around using music as a tool for engagement, education and expression; supporting communities and marginalised groups to use their voice and to tell their stories. Her campaigning work centres around highlighting issues of social justice and creating sustainable social and political change.

www.bethanyelen.co.uk

Jude Murphy

Jude is a cultural historian, musician, educator and project organiser. Her research - informed by many years' performing music in diverse settings - has centred around construction of NE identity through the adoption of folk and popular culture. She facilitates a wide range of socially and politically aware heritage and music projects which engage communities in documenting and artistically celebrating their stories.

Silvie Fisch

Silvie is the director of 'Northern Cultural Projects CIC', a community arts and heritage organisation based in Newcastle.