

Creative Estuary announces exciting new cultural commissions

£60k funding will help realise four new artistic projects

Creative Estuary - a partnership of public sector and cultural organisations working together to transform 60 miles of the Thames Estuary across Essex and Kent into one of the most exciting cultural hubs in the world – has announced its first four commissions to showcase the creative talent that exists in the region.

Located in Gravesend, Southend, Chatham and Tilbury each of the innovative *Creative Estuary Commissions* will reflect the rich history of North Kent and South Essex, with the Thames Estuary linking the two shores.

The inaugural commissions – each awarded £15,000 in funding - form a central part of *Creative Estuary's* commitment to supporting the region's artists and engaging its communities, to further connect them with the huge amount of creativity that exists in this part of the UK.



Moored in Gravesend, Kent, *LV21* is a 40-metre former lightship that has been transformed into a floating arts and performance space. Under the captaincy of its Director, Päivi Seppälä, a crew of creative professionals and volunteers from the surrounding community will examine the theme of *SILT*: “...soil that is carried along by flowing water and then dropped at a bend in a river or at a river's opening...”

The *LV21* commission will explore the town's boundary at the edge of the River Thames, by sifting through silt and in so doing, dredge deeper into the layered sediment of untold tales left behind by the rushing tides and strong currents passing by.

Working with artists, performers and local people of all ages, *LV21* will embark on a journey to discover, capture and bring to life the forgotten stories and histories of Gravesend that have over time, sunk deep into the riverbed. Using soundscapes, projections, and lights, *SILT* will bring back to life the calls of the shrimpers returning with their hauls, the creaking timbers and flapping sails of their boats, mixed with contemporary music and sounds to create a fascinating, immersive experience.

Across the water in Essex, *Precarious straits ~ survival on Southend's new coast, Southend-under-Sea* is the result of a new collaboration between The Other MA (TOMA) and The Old Waterworks (TOW), two small Southend-based arts organisations who are starting to work together more closely. The commission will culminate in an exhibition held at the TOMA Project Space, a contemporary art space in the Royals Shopping Centre on Southend's High Street, with a series of workshops taking place at TOW, a former pumping station converted into an art centre and artists' studios.



Their commission's starting point is the research put forward by Climate Central - an independent group of leading scientists and journalists - that huge swathes of the world's coastlines will be submerged by 2050, including much of Southend. *Precarious Straits* will be a manual for survival, looking at the speculative economic, political and ecological futures people may have to live with.



In Chatham, members of the local community and visitors to the historic Kent town will be invited to reflect on the changes witnessed by the ancient river, including its own traditional influence on the area and what the future of this rapidly-developing town holds.

Throughout next Spring's Estuary 2021 festival period, Chatham's Sun Pier House and Intra Arts in Rochester will work together to present a programme that draws on themes such as estuary explorations, recording living memories of the river's industrial heritage, and bringing Chatham Intra's previously hidden histories into public view.

British artist EVEWRIGHT will create *Tilbury Bridge Walkway of Memories*, a unique art installation at Tilbury Cruise Terminal Essex, between September and October 2020. Launched as part of Black History Month, EVEWRIGHT'S work will be a memory walk of images and documents, installed on the bridge's 432 panes of glass, representing the lives of Windrush pioneers and descendants.

The installation will also feature a soundscape of new and existing audio stories that visitors can download on to their devices using QR codes. The Tilbury Bridge installation will form a backdrop to a series of live performances, by selected artists and curated by EVEWRIGHT.



Announcing the new commissions, Emma Wilcox, *Creative Estuary* Director says: "As we grow the region's potential as a cultural and creative hub, we are committed to supporting artists who live and work in the Estuary region. In everything we do for the Estuary, we want to capture imagination, change perceptions and provide opportunities. Over the next two years, *Creative Estuary* Commissions will further support a range of cultural projects, with new funding for producers and artists, from small-scale activity to large scale projects."

"Creative Estuary's support will also include access to funding, new partnerships, training and development opportunities. We are always keen to hear from curators, artists, and organisations and in particular, individuals from Black, Asian, Disabled, D/deaf and Minority Ethnic communities, along with those who feel their voices and stories are not commonly represented."

For more information about Creative Estuary, visit www.creativeestuary.com, [Twitter @creativeestuary](https://twitter.com/creativeestuary) / [Linkedin / creative-estuary](https://www.linkedin.com/company/creative-estuary/) / [Instagram @creativeestuary](https://www.instagram.com/creativeestuary)

NOTES FOR EDITORS

[High resolution images for all the commissions can be downloaded here.](#)

LV21 - Photography by Jason Arthur
The Old Waterworks © Anna Lukala
Edith May Sailing Barge, at Chatham. Credit Rikard Osterlund
Tilbury Walkway of Memories - Tilbury Passenger Bridge © EVEWRIGHT

CREATIVE ESTUARY - Launched in 2019, with an ambition to transform 60 miles of the Thames Estuary across Essex and Kent into one of the most exciting cultural hubs in the world, the £6.5m Creative Estuary programme will transform the visibility, identity and future of the region's creative production infrastructure, supporting more than 400 new jobs, delivering new skills, qualifications and apprenticeships for 300 people.

Stretching from Southend to Margate, the Thames Estuary is a region of untold creative potential. A network of fishing towns, heritage sites, imposing dockyards and post-industrial communities, it is home to some of the fastest growing regions in the UK and benefits from unprecedented levels of regeneration investment.

In early 2019 the University of Kent was awarded £4.3m from the DCMS Cultural Development Fund on behalf of the partners who include the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), Kent and Essex County Councils, the Greater London Authority, 11 local authority areas represented by Thames Gateway Kent Partnership and Opportunity South Essex, South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN), University of Essex, Locate in Kent and cultural organisations, Metal and Cement Fields.

LV21 is an arts, culture, education and heritage organisation with extensive experience of producing large-scale creative programmes. LV21 specialises in community participatory site-specific work across art-forms, working in close collaboration with creative professionals and a variety of organisations, community groups and individuals of all ages and abilities to encourage active participation and empower participants to get involved with innovative cultural projects that affect positive social change.

TOW, or The Old Waterworks as it is also known, is an art centre and artists' studios based in a former pumping station in Southend-on-Sea. TOW's focus is to provide access to the arts as well as practice development for artists starting on their careers and those who are more established. Research, process and experimentation are at the forefront of TOW's ethos. www.theoldwaterworks.com

TOMA (The Other MA) is a 12-month, artist-run education model, also based in Southend-on-Sea. TOMA is currently the only postgraduate level art programme in Essex after all others were stopped by their host universities. Although unaccredited in the traditional sense, TOMA provides a programme of learning that benefits artists in the same way. It was established in 2016, in partnership with Metal, Southend, with collaboration and community at its core. Today, TOMA is now an independent CIC.

Sun Pier House in Chatham and **Intra Arts** in Rochester are both not-for-profit organisations running arts venues and creative projects. They have in-depth knowledge of the area, its communities and histories. Sun Pier House is a characterful venue with a gallery, artist studios, art workshop rooms, and meeting rooms, that regularly hosts visual arts, music and film events. www.sunpierhouse.co.uk Intra Arts offers public access to specialist arts equipment (including for printmaking, glass work and crafts), workspaces, exhibitions and a programme of courses and creative events. www.intraarts.org

Everton Wright (Evewright) is a British artist, with parentage from Jamaica. His work is a conscious 'mash-up' of drawing, sculpture, combined with digital film and live installations. Evewright's work explores the intricate connections between the body and our experience of the modern environment, and he communicates this through bold interactive art, also using urban and rural landscapes as his canvas.

His eponymous **Evewright Arts Foundation** is an Essex-based not-for-profit voluntary community arts organisation, working with young Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) people to advance and develop contemporary arts, culture and heritage within these communities. EAF's passion is to seek out, find and preserve valuable untold stories from marginalised back communities and present them in informal settings, in an innovative and engaging way and in doing so, bringing hard-to-reach young and older generations together. Evewright Arts Foundation has launched a call out to Caribbean elders and friends and families of the Windrush generation for images and audio recordings of their loved ones to include in the installation to find out more go to <https://conta.cc/2V8gg5n>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES

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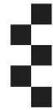
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