



## Assembly Swansea: Thursday 23 May 2019

### National Waterfront Museum / Glynn Vivian Gallery / Elysium Gallery

Assembly 2019 kicks off in Swansea with a day-long event across three of the city's art spaces. Programmed in collaboration with Swansea-based artist Jane Simpson, Assembly Swansea will explore the difficulties and advantages of running artist-led projects in the city.

Swansea is a city at the end of a train line, the exit off the motorway you pass on the road to a holiday in West Wales. When the city you are based in isn't a 'destination', how can artists reach audiences, maintain relevance and remain engaged and connected? Described by Simpson as 'brimming with talent', Swansea is home to a community of resourceful and creative people – but it also faces economic and geographical challenges.

Simpson has devised a day that addresses these issues and has proposed to ground the event with research from a pre-Assembly

questionnaire. The day will conclude with a tangible outcome for the benefit of the city's art scene.

The questionnaire has been devised by artists Jason & Becky and will be sent to participants in advance of the event to begin to identify the barriers to setting up artist-led projects. Their findings, along with a series of Artist Soap Boxes will be used to activate discussion throughout the day. Assembly Swansea will also look outwards at existing projects for inspiration, culminating in a call-to-action with the creation of a manifesto for a Swansea union of artists, and road-map to foster a resurgence of artist-run activity.

The event will be compered by Dr Ben Reynolds, Director of Urban Foundry, a Swansea-based creative regeneration agency whose mission is to forge great ideas that change the world for the better.

For more info and to book visit:  
[a-n.co.uk/assembly/assembly-swansea](http://a-n.co.uk/assembly/assembly-swansea)

**START AT:**  
**National Waterfront Museum,  
Oystermouth Road, Maritime  
Quarter, Swansea, SA1 3RD.**

**Pobl Curator Tour**  
**10 – 10.30am**

To coincide with Assembly Swansea, limited places are available on a tour of Pobl at the National Waterfront Museum led by Senior Learning, Participation and Interpretation Officer Zoe Gealy. Pobl is an exhibition celebrating communities the museum has collaborated with over the last 14 years. To register your interest please email [zoe.gealy@museumwales.ac.uk](mailto:zoe.gealy@museumwales.ac.uk).

**Welcome and introduction to the day**  
**11 – 11.15am**

a-n CEO Julie Lomax introduces a-n, highlighting the [Paying Artists Campaign](#) and a-n's 40th Anniversary in 2020.

**Artists Soap Box #1**  
**11.15 – 11.45am**

Collaborative duo [Jason & Becky](#), who create interventions and socially engaging experiments, propose questions for the day from the results of the pre-Assembly questionnaire. Throughout the event they will gather pertinent words, statements and ideas, as well as presenting their pilot project 'The Artist Wellbeing Network', to feed into a manifesto workshop at the end of the day.

**WHO ARE WE?**  
**11.45am – 12.30pm**

When the city you're based in isn't a 'destination', how can artists reach audiences, maintain relevance and remain engaged and connected? With similar economic, social and geographical

confines to Swansea, we hear from Aberdeen-based artist-led initiative [Tendency Towards](#) who share their practice and offer some solutions.

**Artists Soap Box #2**  
**12.30 – 12.45pm**

Roger Louher shares his experience of running artist-run project [Rhôd](#). Established in 2009, The Rhôd Artists Group (RhAG) organises events, exhibitions, talks, symposia, residencies and educational activity. The enduring theme of their activity is the exploration of the dialogue between rural and urban environments, and to make visible and audible these exchanges.

**Lunch**  
**12.45 – 1.30pm**

Time for a break and to recharge! Malaysian curry with some ingredients grown in the Graft garden. Vegan and gluten free options will be available.

**Panel Discussion: Outreach and art  
in ordinary life | 1.30 – 2.45pm**

Artist [Owen Griffiths](#), who has worked extensively on developing a socially-engaged practice – including collaborating with HMP Prisons, Social Services, [The Trebanog Project](#) and the edible land and community workshop space [Graft \(a soil-based syllabus\)](#) will give a talk about his work.

Following this presentation [Glynn Vivian](#) curator Karen Mackinnon, who worked with Griffiths on The Trebanog Project whilst at Artes Mundi, and Zoe Gealy from [The National Waterfront Museum](#) where Graft is based, will take part in a panel discussion with the artist. They will be joined by a representative from [Arte Util](#) an international body that promotes ways for art to work effectively in ordinary life.

The discussion will examine the strengths and relevance of such projects in South Wales before turning to the work and practice of Arte Util.

**Artists Soap Box #3**  
**2.45 – 3pm**

**Fern Thomas's** practice plays with the intersection between ritual, mythmaking, folk beliefs and contemporary DIY healing culture and ecological consciousness. Here she shares an exploration of 'dormancy' and 'activation' within a creative practice.

**MOVE TO:**  
**Glynn Vivian Lecture Room,  
Alexandra Rd, Swansea, SA1 5DZ**

**Panel Discussion: DIY Culture -  
Artists doing it for themselves**  
**3.30 – 4.30pm**

How can Swansea get the confidence boost it needs to realise the full potential of its arts scene? A panel discussion with Jane Simpson, **GS Artists**, Jonathan Powell, **Elysium Gallery**, and Pria Borg-Marks, **Shift**, will seek to inspire more artists to instigate their own artist-led projects in Swansea.

**Artists Soap Box #4**  
**4.30 – 4.45pm**

**Thomas Goddard** presents 'The Battle of Ninian Park Revisited' a performance that uses the local rivalry between Cardiff and Swansea City football clubs to draw out strategic and psychological similarities between football and art.

**A Rallying Cry to Artists**  
**4.45 – 5.45pm**

Jason and Becky outline their pilot project 'The Artist Wellbeing Network', before hosting an interactive session using the findings from the pre-Assembly questionnaire and information gathered from the day to produce a manifesto for a Swansea union of artists.

**MOVE TO:**  
**Elysium Gallery, 210 High Street,  
Swansea, SA1 1PE**

**Manifesto Party**  
**6 – 8 pm**

We round off the day with informal drinks (pay bar) and vegan chilli (produced by GS Artists).

Lunch and refreshments are provided as part of the day. This is a full day event. Booking is required. Tickets are free for a-n members and £10 for non-members.

**#artistsassembly2019**  
**#assemblyswansea**

**For more info and to book visit: [a-n.co.uk/assembly/assembly-swansea](http://a-n.co.uk/assembly/assembly-swansea)**