

History is Now: 7 Artists Take On Britain
Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre
10 February – 26 April 2015

In Spring 2015, the Hayward Gallery will embark upon an exciting and thoughtful exhibition considering episodes in British life, society, and culture since 1945 to the present day. As a part of Southbank Centre's *Changing Britain 1945 – 2015* Festival (Winter/Spring 2015) a reflection on 70 years of history in the lead up to the May general election, this exhibition will provide a series of focus points for examination and enquiry across this period.

For *History is Now*, seven artists have been invited to curate sections which bring together a set of thematic ideas and are generally situated in a particular historical moment. Working with Cliff Lauson, Hayward Gallery Curator, the artists have select artworks from both public and private collections, and additionally have drawn upon informal collections and non-art objects such as maps, newspapers, films, collectibles, artefacts, photographs, models, etc. While the overall tone of the exhibition will be one of historical and social enquiry, its aim is not to comprehensively illustrate or present history (or art history), but instead to bring together original and perhaps unexpected groupings of objects that will shed new light on how we remember, rethink, and reconsider the past.

Artists have been invited to curate the exhibition in order to think creatively across artworks and objects, allowing new relationships and connections to emerge that are equally historical investigations, poetic mediations, exercises in lateral thinking, and serendipitous occurrences. Previous examples of artist-curated exhibitions organised by the Hayward include Tacita Dean's *An Aside* (2005), Mark Wallinger's *The Russian Linesman* (2009), and recently, Mark Lecky's *The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things* (2013). In all, *History is Now* will provide a series of insightful, revealing, and thought-provoking takes on Britain and British life.

The artists participating as curators and their themes are:

Richard Wentworth (b.1947 Samoa NZ, lives London) – the post-war period, modernism of modest means, the beach as a discursive site, the body, the handmade, new consumerism and Pop, the domestic, start of the cold war, militarisation, industrial design, cultural memory

John Akomfrah (b. 1957 Accra, Ghana; lives London) – a selection of films from the Arts Council Film Collection (c.1960-90s), documentary and educational film, space between cinema and TV, avant-garde film, movement and dance

Jane and Louise Wilson (b. 1967, Newcastle, live London) – sites of change, contestation and protest, feminism; Peterlee and Apollo Pavilion urban planning, art in public space, Greenham Common, Cold war Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Northern Ireland conflict, concrete in architecture, social housing, feminism, obsolescence, aura of place

Hannah Starkey (b.1971 Belfast, lives London) – a selection of photographs from the Arts Council Collection (primarily c. 1970-90s), photography as art vs as advertising, identity, consumerism, rhetorics of the image

Roger Hiorns (b. 1975 London; lives London) – Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD), bio-medical research, healthcare, agriculture, animal husbandry, food production and consumption, and social impact

Simon Fujiwara (b.1982 London; lives Berlin) – an archaeology of the present, manifestations of optimism in late capitalism, consumerism, post-Thatcher society, celebrity culture, experience economy, material culture, technology, reality TV, well-being

A full-colour catalogue for the exhibition will be published in conjunction with the exhibition, illustrating the artists' sections and including newly commissioned texts by David Mellor, Adrian Forty, Charlotte Higgins, Jackie Kay, Sheila Dillon, and Daniel Fujiwara.