

Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson Song for Armageddon

21 – 24 September 2017
Level One Performance Space, BALTIC Centre for
Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK

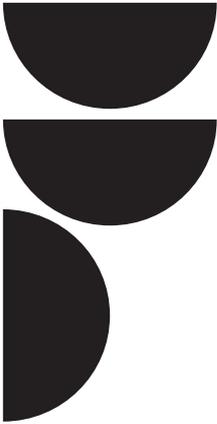
Press Preview Wednesday 20 September, 1pm

Reception / Artist Talk Wednesday 20 September, from 6.30pm



Forma and University of Salford Art Collection present *Song for Armageddon*, an ambitious new video work by Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson, premiering at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead this September.

Armageddon is a place in northern Israel that lends its name to the end of the world. A UNESCO World Heritage Site known by its modern name Tel Megiddo, Armageddon is thought to have seen more battles than any other location in the world, and dominated the the crossroads of ancient trade and military routes linking Egypt with Mesopotamia.



A hellish sodium-lit environment provides the setting for Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson's video installation, *Song for Armageddon*, shot on location at Tel Megiddo and made in collaboration with Israeli composer Ophir Ilzetzki. Over one night, a group of workers endlessly set out and wipe down thousands of chairs to create a large auditorium for an unknown audience, waiting for sunrise.

The artists' largest production to date, *Song for Armageddon* engages with Tel Megiddo's remarkable heritage but also elaborates on historical confusion between place and event. The film loops every 17 minutes, creating a powerful visual and acoustic meditation that culminates with a haunting performance by singer Faye Shapiro.

“In an age of Trump, Putin and climate change, with globalisation and wars - civil and otherwise - racking the globe, this work is a chance to return to the source of ‘end times’ iconography. *Armageddon* is a nexus of metaphysics and geopolitics.”

– Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson

“Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson are visionaries at the intersection of art and conscience. *Song for Armageddon* opens us an array of pathways of thought, contemplation and reflection for those who love sublime art and have hopes for the future of our world. A work of prophecy, activism and art, *Song for Armageddon* is an end times intervention. Forma is proud to present this beautiful and intelligent new work, especially at a time of profound crisis, one in which the survival of the species hangs in the balance.”

– Debbi Lander, Artistic Director, Forma

Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson, born in Barnsley and Macclesfield respectively, work collaboratively between studios in Berlin and Manchester. Working together since 1994, they are fascinated by spectacle and drawn to the ways in which power and authority articulate themselves, their works often combining densely layered visual and acoustic allusions to faith, politics, national identity and the environment.

Song for Armageddon is produced by Forma. Created by Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson in collaboration with Ophir Ilzetzki in 2016–17. Cinematography by Martin Testar. Commissioned by Forma and University of Salford Art Collection, in association with BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. Supported by Arts Council England.

Notes to Editors

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Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson

Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson have been collaborating since 1994, living and working in Manchester and Berlin. In 2014 their acclaimed work *Song for Coal* was exhibited at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield and received global press attention and acclaim from a range of online, print and broadcast media including the Financial Times, BBC Radio 3, *Aesthetica* and *Hunger TV*. Crowe and Rawlinson's video and sculptural works have been exhibited widely within the UK and internationally, including commissioned projects with Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, 2015; Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, 2013; *Platforma Revólver*, Lisbon, 2012; *SALT*, Istanbul, 2012 and Institute of Jamais Vu, London 2012. Crowe and Rawlinson were also selected for the Northern Art Prize in 2009.

Ophir Ilzetzki

Ophir Ilzetzki is an Israeli composer based in Tel Aviv. His music explores the intersection between through-composed and improvised pieces. In recent years, Ophir has been researching the application of games to musical structures, a fascination leading more often than not to another intersection that combines music with dramaturgy. Ilzetzki's music is published by

BabelScores and he teaches at the Levinsky College of Education. He has recently become an Israel State Lottery (Mifal Hapais) scholar in collaboration with The Israeli Centre for Digital Art Holon.

Martin Testar

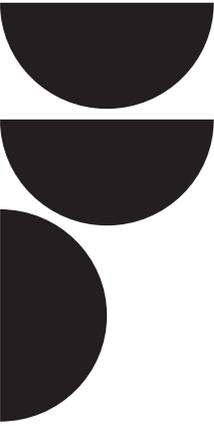
Martin Testar has contributed to many artists' films and shot works by Jane and Louise Wilson, Mark Wallinger, Steve McQueen, Mark Lewis, Ori Gersht, Mark Leckey, Simon Martin and Johan Grimmonprez. His artistic connection to Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson began with their 2003 film *Two Burning Bushes*, following on to *The Carrier's Prayer* in 2007 for their solo exhibition at FACT Liverpool and 2016's *Courageous*. Testar's wide-ranging practice also includes shooting commercials, music videos, short films and TV idents.

Faye Shapiro

Faye Shapiro is a singer and composer working in Israel and beyond. Her works range from inclusive, text-based processes for the stage, performed by singers and non-singers alike, through instrumental improvisation structures to electronic and live solo pieces incorporating space and memory. Shapiro founded and leads NEHAROT, a free-singing ensemble for women, and curates the *Wire Tapping* experimental music and performance series at the Barbur Gallery, Jerusalem.

Forma

Forma is one of Europe's leading creative producers, working with British and international artists to develop and deliver new cross art form productions across the world. Characterised by excellence in over 6



concept and context, production values and the audience experience, Forma exists to imagine, enable and deliver remarkable art by exceptional artists.

The University of Salford Art Collection

The University of Salford has been collecting artworks since the early 1960s, including post-war British painting, print-making and later, photography. In particular, works with a connection to Salford or Greater Manchester were acquired, such as those by Northern School painters LS Lowry, Adolphe Valette and Harold Riley, and prints from the Manchester Print Workshop (Adrian Henri and Kip Gresham). Over the years the collection has evolved to include an extensive collection of works by expressionist painter Albert Adams and a number of works by Young British Artists (YBAs). Since 2013 the collection has taken a more defined and articulated approach which focuses on three areas of collecting: artworks about or made using digital technologies, Chinese contemporary art and art from the north of England.

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

Situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art consists of 2,600 square metres of art space, making it the UK's largest dedicated contemporary art institution. BALTIC's mission is to create exceptional access to important and innovative contemporary art in a unique setting, that encourages and enables learning and transformational thinking. BALTIC has gained an international reputation for its commissioning of cutting-edge temporary exhibitions. It has presented the work of over 415 artists from over 57 countries in over 202 exhibitions

to date and since opening in 2002, has welcomed 6 million visitors.

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

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Open daily 10am –6pm
except Tuesdays 10.30am –6pm

#SongforArmageddon

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