

SOMERSET HOUSE PRESS RELEASE



Gandini Juggling © ASH

Circus Sampler

The biggest free outdoor contemporary circus event in central London this summer

28 - 29 July and 4 - 5 August 2018

Free: Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court

Circus Originals Exhibition

25 July - 7 August 2018

Free: East Wing Galleries

Two weekends of distinctive and original contemporary circus featuring:

- London Premiere by **Far From The Norm**
- **Marawa and the Majorettes** performance and workshops
- **Gandini Juggling** with live music by **Circa Tsuica**
- Exhibition exploring the history of contemporary circus with a new installation by **Rose English**

Original partnerships and unusual collaborations have created exciting and distinctive contemporary circus shows to be premiered over two weekends at Somerset House in high summer. Bringing outstanding outdoor performances to the courtyard at Somerset House, **Circus Sampler** matches hip hop theatre with Chinese pole and tight wire, virtuoso juggling with basketball skills and brass bands, hoola hooping with roller-skating to celebrate 250 years since **Philip and Patty Astley** pioneered circus in London. All performances and participatory events will be free to see on both Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

Somerset House and visual theatre producers **Crying Out Loud** (based at Somerset House) have joined forces to commission and present compelling, large-scale work from 65 artists, including experimental hip hop theatre collective **Far From The Norm**, hoola hoop acrobat and twelve times Guinness World Record holder **Marawa the Amazing and the Majorettes**, juggling maestros **Gandini Juggling** with live brass music from French circus company **Circa Tsuica**.

To kickstart the first weekend of circus activity across the site, on **Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 July**, Far From The Norm and a group of international and London artists perform the London premiere of new show Union Black that combines their signature fast-paced footwork and physical floor-work with Chinese Pole and tight-wire. Union Black is a bold fusion of humour, hip hop and circus that draws on the worlds of football and the politics of Brexit. Between performances, Marawa and the Majorettes stage their special brand of synchronised hoola hooping and roller skating, inviting audiences at the end of each show to learn how to spin a hoop.

On the second weekend, **Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 August**, trailblazers Gandini Juggling give the world premiere of a special commission, Cascade, accompanied by the rousing brass music played live by French company Circa Tsuica. Performing within the rhythmic rise and fall of the 55 water jets of the courtyard fountain, 30 jugglers will send balls large and small flying through the air in a constant flow of movement, water. For Cascade, the Gandini's are joined by ten basketball players and ten amateur jugglers.

Circus Originals, an accompanying exhibition in the East Wing Galleries, explores the history of contemporary circus from the beginnings of modern circus in the 1800s through to the radical acts of the 1980s, to present day styles and approaches. Throughout its history circus has always attracted the independent-minded, the curious, the delightfully different. This display uncovers a selection of the pioneers and new thinkers who have transformed the circus genre and shows how their work has had an outsider influence on art, culture and the way we think.

Circus Originals features a new site-responsive installation by Rose English, who emerged from the conceptual art, dance and feminist scenes of 1970s Britain to become one of the most influential performance artists working today. Her long fascination with circus – and especially the equestrian arts - includes pieces drawn from the history and mythology of legendary riders, past and present. In this new installation entitled **Remember This!**, she traces the roots of her fascination through the figure of Katja Schumann, a renowned rider of the traditional circus.

Circus Sampler is presented by Crying Out Loud as part of Circus250, the nationwide celebration of the 250th anniversary of modern circus, with the support of the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, the Institut Francais in Paris, The Garrick Charitable Trust, and supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Ends

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Notes to Editors:

Circus Sampler

Dates: 28 - 29 July and 4 - 5 August

Opening hours: 12:00-17:00; times of performances vary

Address: Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA

Circus Originals Exhibition

Dates: 25 July - 7 August

Opening hours: 10:00-18:00 daily

Address: East Wing Galleries, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA

Transport: Underground: Temple, Embankment / Rail: Charing Cross, Waterloo, Blackfriars

Website: www.somersethouse.org.uk

Somerset House Facebook: www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse

Somerset House Twitter: @SomersetHouse

Somerset House Instagram: @SomersetHouse

About Far From The Norm

Far From The Norm was set up in 2009 by artistic director Botis Seva as a collective of dance artists who experiment with hip hop to tackle socio-political concerns, incorporating styles such as b-boying, krump, popping, house, locking, lindy hop and contemporary dance. Their portfolio includes theatre performances, outdoor spectacles and immersive experiences that are known for both challenging and inspiring audiences. Far From The Norm have performed nationally and internationally at festivals such as Sadler's Wells' Breakin' Convention, VAULT Festival, Plymouth Fringe, Talawa Firsts, Austria's Hip Hop Goes Theatre, Aerowaves, SiDance, Festival Hop! and San Francisco's International Hip Hop Dance Fest and presented work in theatres and venues across the UK. Company members include Jordan Douglas, Shangomola Edunjobi, Naïma Souhair, Joshua Nash, Ezra Owen and Victoria Shulungu. For *Union Black*, Far From The Norm have worked with circus and dance artists Alessio Motta (Chinese pole) from Sweden, Arthur Sidoroff (tight wire) from France and Mateusz Szczerek (contemporary-urban dance) from Ireland.

Union Black is the outcome of a four-country partnership which aims to address the need for high-quality, ethnically-diverse work that can appeal to popular audiences. The partners - Crying Out Loud (UK), Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde (France), Cork Midsummer Festival (Ireland) and Subtopia (Sweden) - are all widely recognised for supporting emerging artists, initiating work that integrates artforms and developing audiences. The project, Circus250 Diverse • Real • Physical is funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union and provides the opportunity for hip hop and circus artists to collaborate on a new piece of work and to upskill local, early career artists in all four countries.

About Marawa and the Majorettes

Marawa trained at the National Institute of Circus Arts Australia, specialising in swinging trapeze but later turned to hoops. She has performed and taught hoola hooping across the world from Nepal to Mexico, worked with fashion houses in London and Paris, and appeared on television across the world including Britain's Got Talent, Arab's Got Talent and Australia's Got Talent. She played Josephine Baker in New York for six months to rave reviews. Marawa holds 12 world records including the world record for spinning 200 hoops simultaneously. Marawa's Majorettes was launched in 2012 as a glittering team of hoop performers who perform and teach workshops to entertain and inspire people all over the world.

About Gandini Juggling

Gandini Juggling is an ever-evolving ensemble of virtuosic jugglers which regularly expands to include up to 20 performers for specially commissioned events and performances. Since its formation in 1992 by world-renowned jugglers Sean Gandini and Kati Ylä-Hokkala, the Gandinis have performed over 5,000 shows in 50 countries. They continue to perform at many of the world's most prestigious festivals and venues throughout the world. Teaching workshops, creating performances and supporting the next generation of circus artists. 30 productions and 23 years later, Gandini Juggling continue to create vibrant and challenging performance pieces.

About Rose English

Rose English emerged from the Conceptual art, dance and feminist scenes of 1970s Britain to become one of the most influential performance artists working today. Her uniquely interdisciplinary work combines elements of theatre, circus, opera and poetry to explore themes of gender politics, the identity of the performer and the metaphysics of presence. English has mounted performances in ice rinks; at the Royal Court Theatre and Tate Britain, London and Franklin Furnace, New York; and collaborated with horses, magicians and acrobats. Her work ranges from her site-specific performances and collaborations of the 1970s including *Quadrille*, *Berlin* and *Mounting*, to large scale spectacles of the 1990s including *Walks on Water*, *The Double Wedding* and *Tantamount Esperance*. Her internationally celebrated solo with a horse - *My Mathematics* - was produced by Cultural Industry and a series of vignettes with horses were presented by The Banff Centre, Canada and The Serpentine Gallery, London. *Ornamental Happiness* - a show in song and circus opened the Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art in 2006 followed by *Flagrant Wisdom*, commissioned by National Glass Centre in 2009. English co-wrote and designed the feature film *The Gold Diggers*, 1983 directed by Sally Potter. English's performance works of the 1970s featured in the exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles 2007. Her installation *Quadrille* was shown at Freize Masters, London, 2013 with Karsten Schubert, and is now part of the Tate collection. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Eros of Understanding*, 2014 at Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen and *A Premonition of the Act*, 2015 at Camden Arts Centre, London.

About Crying Out Loud

A pioneering creative producer, Crying Out Loud nurtures extraordinary artists working in visual theatre often in the fields of circus, physical theatre and installation. Since 2002, they have presented exceptional events for audiences of all ages and abilities at festivals, in venues and at site specific locations in the UK, USA, the Middle East and Europe. In 2012 Crying Out Loud programmed *Piccadilly Circus Circus*, a large-scale outdoor event that transformed central London into a pedestrianised circus for the Cultural Olympiad, and most recently toured eleven British and international contemporary circus companies as part of Circus Evolution, a four-year Arts Council Strategic Touring funded project the purpose of which was to bring more contemporary circus to more people in the UK. The Company is a network leader and advocates for artists and contemporary visual theatre by making connections, initiating collaborations and developing partnerships in the UK and Europe. In partnership with NoFit State Circus, Crying Out Loud has most recently launched Spotlight UK Circus showcasing British contemporary circus companies at CIRCa festival du cirque actuel, Subcase Subtopia Circus Fair and Festival OFF d'Avignon. Since its inception, Crying Out Loud has worked with a wide range of British and international theatre makers including: from France, James Thierrée's Compagnie du Hanneton, Collectif AOC, Company XY, CirkVost, Jeanne Mordoj, Company Non Nova, Capilotractées, L'Insomnante, Camille Boitel, Aurélia Thierrée and Victoria Thierrée, Company BettiCombo and Circa Tsuica; Groupe Acrobatique de Tangier from Morocco; Italy's Company TPO; Race Horse Company from Finland; and Laika and Inne Goris from Belgium. They have also developed the careers and practice of a variety of UK-based artists and companies including Far From The Norm, Pirates of the Carabina, Stopgap Dance Company, Acrojou, Sophia Clist, Layla Rosa, Marawa the Amazing, Iona Kewney, Maresa von Stockert, Nikki & JD and Barely Methodical Troupe.

About Somerset House

Inspiring contemporary culture

A unique part of the London cultural scene, Somerset House is an historic building where surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18th century origins, Somerset House has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Somerset House is today a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be a part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming to all and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries.

Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture, with an extensive learning programme attached. Now home to the biggest community of creative organisations in central London including the The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King's College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses, Somerset House currently attracts over 3 million visitors every year.