

CYMRU YN FENIS WALES IN VENICE



Press Release: 15 April 2013

Bedwyr Williams and *The Starry Messenger* Collateral Event of the 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia

Organised by Cymru yn Fenis Wales in Venice

"The astronomer is stood in the window in a kind of half trance because he is getting a buzz from seeing his observatory with a starry night above it. So whilst he should be in there with his telescope, breathing through his nose chomping on the eyepiece with his baggy eye he's actually getting some pleasure from looking at his hobby. The brochure he had thumbed for months showed a scene not unlike this.

This man is observing his observatory." From 'The Astronomer' by Bedwyr Williams

The Welsh artist Bedwyr Williams, is the artist participating at the Collateral Event of the 55th International Art Exhibition, in a project jointly curated by MOSTYN and Oriel Davies and supported by the Arts Council of Wales. He will present *The Starry Messenger* at the **Ludoteca Santa Maria Ausiliatrice**, Venice, which will explore the relationships between stargazing and the home, the cosmos, and the role of the amateur in a professional world.

Born in St Asaph in 1974, Bedwyr Williams lives and works in Caernarfon, North Wales. His comedic and poetic live performances and installations deal with Welshness, otherness and difference. He has in the past assumed different personas in his work - a one-eyed preacher, the Grim Reaper and Count Pollen.

"I'm interested in worst case scenarios and the people that get caught up in them", he says.

The artist's work often draws upon the quirky banalities of his own autobiographic existence to develop his sculptures and performances. His work merges art and life with an idiosyncratic twist that is instantaneously sympathetic and relational. His sculpture, installations, text and photography based works and live performances explore subject matter ranging from growing up in Colwyn Bay with size 13 feet, to a mini bus crash with four other artists in residence (in which he is the only survivor).

Bedwyr Williams' work featured in the opening show at MOSTYN and last year created a memorable installation in Oriel Davies of *Nimrod* - a piece first shown at Ceri Hand Gallery. His exhibition *My Bad* opened at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham and toured to Mission Gallery in Swansea. Ceri Hand Gallery represents Williams and recently launched a new solo show, *Dear Both*, by the artist in their new gallery in London, during Frieze London 2012. Williams also presented *Curator Cadaver Cake* as part of Frieze Projects, in association with Grizedale Arts. Conducting a live autopsy on a life-sized curator made from cake, complete with edible internal organs, it was one of the much talked about highlights of Frieze.

The inaugural Art13 London international art fair in March 2013 featured a dedicated performance booth designed by Bedwyr Williams, for which he also presented two performances.

Bedwyr Williams is a fitting choice for a challenging contemporary art arena such as the Venice Biennale. During the 2005 Biennale presentation of work in the space occupied by Wales in Venice on the Giudecca Island by Peter Finnemore, Paul Granjon, and Laura Ford in the exhibition *Somewhere Else*, Bedwyr Williams was awarded an artist placement commission by Cywaith Cymru Artworks Wales. This took place alongside the official exhibition as a complementary add-on. It built to a book and presentation on the Giudecca entitled BASTA, the Italian for "That's Enough!" BASTA was a rueful and wry reflection on the homesickness of the artist in residence.

Bedwyr Williams' exhibition in Venice will be curated by two of Wales's leading galleries; MOSTYN and Oriel Davies and will be shown in the Ludoteca, midway between the critical exhibition sites for the Biennale of the Giardini and the Arsenale. This is the second time Wales has shown at the Ludoteca.

Amanda Farr, Director, Oriel Davies, says: "Bedwyr truly epitomizes that very rare being - an artist whose vision and clarity of thought forces us to look at the world differently. I can think of no better artist at this moment and of our particular time to represent Wales in Venice."

Alfredo Cramerotti, Director, MOSTYN, says: "Bedwyr is one of the artists of the moment. He brings himself to the forefront of a seemingly unsolvable puzzle - how to bridge, deal with and even solve the idea of the minor and the major, the particular and the universal."

The exhibition is commissioned and managed by the Arts Council of Wales and Wales Arts International with support and collaboration from the Welsh Government and British Council.

- Ends -

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Wales in Venice social media:

[Facebook.com/WalesInVenice](https://www.facebook.com/WalesInVenice)

[Twitter.com/WalesInVenice](https://twitter.com/WalesInVenice)

Notes to Editors:

MOSTYN is the leading contemporary art gallery in Wales and receives financial support from the Arts Council of Wales, Conwy County Borough Council Art Services and Llandudno Town Council. Its recent new build and refurbishment has won many plaudits. It is key partner of Plus Tate network of the twenty most dynamic contemporary art galleries in the UK. MOSTYN programmes have recently included a show of David Nash exploring for the first time the role of colour in his work. Director Alfredo

Cramerotti previously curated Manifesta 8, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, Region of Murcia, Spain and All That Fits: The Aesthetic of Journalism.
<http://www.mostyn.org/>

Oriel Davies is a key contemporary art gallery of Wales and the principal visual arts venue for the mid-Wales and the Welsh Borders region. From this highly rural setting the gallery presents world-class, thought-provoking and challenging art by national and international artists. Oriel Davies is supported by the Arts Council of Wales and Powys County Council. <http://www.oriel Davies.org/>

Ceri Hand Gallery is a commercial contemporary art gallery established in Liverpool in 2008, which recently relocated to London. The Gallery represents a selection of the best emerging and mid-career artists, with a special focus on conceptual and performance art, producing and exhibiting major new works on and offsite.
<http://www.cerihand.co.uk/>

Arts Council of Wales is the country's funding and development agency for the arts. Its vision is of a creative Wales where the arts are central to the life of the nation and to ensure that the contribution of the arts is recognised, valued and celebrated.
<http://www.artswales.org/>

For Bedwyr Williams see <http://www.bedwyrwilliams.com/>

For the 55th International Art Exhibition, which takes place from 1 June – 24 November 2013 (previews on 29, 30, 31 May), see <http://www.labiennale.org/en/art/index.html>

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