



As part of *Back to Earth* presented at Serpentine North from 22 June to 18 September 2022, *Sun & Sea* will feature in the *Back to Earth LIVE* programming, bringing together Serpentine's vast network of individuals and organisations involved in tackling the environmental crisis in an extensive and **ambitious 3-month programme of talks, performances and debates.**

A crowded beach, the burning sun, bright bathing suits and sweaty palms and legs. Tired limbs sprawling lazily across a sea of towels. The rumble of a volcano, or of an airplane, or a speedboat. The squeal of children, laughter, the sound of an ice cream van in the distance. Sunbathers sing languid songs of worry, of boredom, of almost nothing. Songs of early morning flights and half-eaten sandwiches in the sand, the crinkling of plastic bags whirling in the air then floating silently, jellyfish-like below the waterline. Stories that glide between the mundane, the sinister and the surreal. Witness from above as an afternoon at the beach reveals a mesmerising exploration of the relationship between us and our planet.

Staged on an indoor beach at the Albany from 23 June – 10 July as part of LIFT 2022 and Lewisham's year as the Mayor's London Borough of Culture 2022, this durational work will unfold on a loop over several hours. Audiences will watch from the balcony as dozens of performers bring the scene below to life. At first appearing to present a vision of a mundane afternoon at the beach, at the heart of *Sun & Sea* lies an urgent exploration of our relationship with the planet, the threat climate change presents and the dangers we face if it is ignored. Presented as Lithuania's national entry for the 2019 Venice Biennale, *Sun & Sea*'s all-female creative team - composer **Lina Lapelyte**, librettist **Vaiva Grainytė** and director **Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė** - received the festival's top award, the Golden Lion. *Sun & Sea* has since traveled the world, curated by **Lucia Pietroiusti**, founder of General Ecology at Serpentine, earning acclaim from audiences of theatre, visual art, music and opera.

In its 40th year, LIFT has embarked on a year of celebrations to mark four decades of commissioning and presenting joyful, daring and risk taking theatre from around the world, using the whole of London as its stage. LIFT's 40th anniversary launched with our 2021 programme, LIFT LOVES LONDON, a collection of projects celebrating the city of London. The anniversary culminates with the 2022 festival which will continue to establish a new standard for touring and international collaboration, that is environmentally sustainable and helps forge new ties between global and local artists, participants and audiences.

As a part of the 40th anniversary celebrations LIFT has launched a crowdfunding campaign which will look to support the next 40 years and enable LIFT to continue to provide a source of joy, inspiration, solidarity, rebelliousness and strength for London and Londoners. Audiences can access priority booking to LIFT 2022, including *Sun & Sea*, by joining LIFT as a member through the crowdfunding campaign or on LIFT's website.



Kris Nelson, Artistic Director and CEO of LIFT says “*We could not be more thrilled to be presenting this landmark performance in London. Sun & Sea is sensational. And timely.*”

Lina, Vaiva and Rugile’s Sun & Sea will give London audiences a chance to encounter a work of singular beauty and resonance. It’s a theatrical experience that’s like no other. The piece shifts our perspective and asks us to look at the lives we lead and our impact on the planet differently. We’re so pleased to be partnering with the Albany, Lewisham Council and Serpentine to realise this unforgettable artwork here in London.”

Tickets for LIFT 2022 and further programming will be announced in Spring 2022. For further information sign up at www.liftfestival.com

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LISTINGS

NOTES TO EDITORS

About *Back to Earth*

Back to Earth is a multi-year project that invites over sixty leading artists, architects, poets, filmmakers, scientists, thinkers and designers to respond to the environmental crisis. With the support of partner organisations and networks, these collaborators are devising artistic campaigns, protocols and initiatives.

Interdisciplinary at its core, *Back to Earth* manifests throughout all of Serpentine’s onsite, offsite and online programmes, sharing its resources in order to amplify ongoing projects or campaigns around the climate emergency, as well as to develop new ones. *Back to Earth* considers ecology as embedded in everyday practices and agencies.

Back to Earth is a programme about change and a catalyst for change. Echoing the global response to the climate crisis, *Back to Earth* is a complex web of interconnected research, interventions and activities. The project asks: What new ecosystems can foster agency within organisations? Which kinds of research-sharing, resource-sharing and collaborative working practices are necessary to present complex responses to complex problems? How can arts institutions bring visibility to climate actions that create positive change for communities, places and imaginations around the world?



The programme emerged out of Serpentine's long-standing engagement with the topics of extinction and the disappearance of species, knowledges and customs, which began with the 2014 Extinction Marathon, co-curated with artist Gustav Metzger, as well as out of General Ecology, Serpentine's overarching environmental research project. Collaborators include Judy Chicago, Sir David Adjaye, Vivienne Westwood, Etel Adnan and Olafur Eliasson.

About LIFT

LIFT, London's biennial international festival of theatre, has been bringing joyful, daring and unforgettable theatre from around the world to London for 40 years, using the whole of the city as its stage.

Every two years, LIFT presents a festival full of bold and relevant culture, international perspectives, and thought-provoking performances. Whether it's a much-loved venue, iconic landmark or unsung corner of London, LIFT gathers Londoners around incredible art.

LIFT's mission is to create powerful, invigorating experiences that challenge artistic, political and social conventions; to champion artist advancement at home and abroad; to lead sustainable internationalism; and to celebrate and connect London to the world. We engage and create communities around ideas and projects, connect leading artists to locals, connect international artists and local artists to London, and together make incredible art happen.

A charity limited by guarantee and based in Toynbee Studios in East London, LIFT has a diversified income mix and is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation with a biennial turnover in the region of £2 million.

To find out about the different ways you can help LIFT celebrate their 40th anniversary year, visit www.liftfestival.com/support

About the Albany

Based in the heart of Deptford, the Albany is a performing arts centre that exists to inspire, develop and support creativity in South East London. With year-round activities and events including award-winning programmes for young creatives and adults over 60, music, theatre, spoken word and family performance, the Albany is led by the talent and imagination of its local community.

With four performance spaces and a range of rehearsal space, meeting rooms and offices for community and creative businesses, the Albany is underpinned by a commitment to collaboration and artistic excellence. In a normal year 80,000 people attend performances or take part in projects at the Albany, and a further 100,000 attend events.



The Albany has 26 resident organisations based in the building, and manages and programmes Deptford Lounge and Canada Water Theatre on behalf of Lewisham and Southwark Councils. It is co-lead of the national Future Arts Centres network and lead partner of the Family Arts Campaign. In September 2020, the Albany was appointed Lead Delivery Partner for the Mayor's London Borough of Culture 2022 in Lewisham. They are taking lead responsibility for key strands of the programme and working closely with the team at Lewisham Council on the overall direction of the year.

About The Mayor's London Borough of Culture award

London Borough of Culture is a Mayor of London initiative, launched in June 2017. The award puts culture at the heart of local communities, where it belongs. It shines a light on the character and diversity of London's boroughs and brings culture to everyone, so that all Londoners have the chance to be part of something extraordinary.

About Lewisham Council

Lewisham is a vibrant and culturally diverse borough. This reflected in all aspects of daily life, from the response to the pandemic where the community rallied to support our most vulnerable residents, to the 170 languages spoken in our homes, schools and businesses. We have a rich history of welcoming people from all over the world and are proud to be recognised as the UK's first Borough of Sanctuary, for our work in championing the rights of refugees and migrants.

We are committed to tackling inequalities so that everybody has the opportunity to succeed. The pandemic has shone a light on the disparities experienced by those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in all areas of their lives. In November, Lewisham became the first local authority to commission a headcount study of high streets to better support our BAME independent retailers through Covid 19 recovery and to champion the diversity of town centres.

As we plan ahead, we are working towards a fairer, greener, healthier and more economically sound future for all in Lewisham. This means continuing our efforts to tackle climate change for generations to come; ensuring that good health and wellbeing is equally accessible to everyone; and safeguarding local jobs and upskilling residents with tools they need to succeed. Building on the community spirit and activism that has helped us through the pandemic, we are committed to creating a Future Lewisham we can all have a part in.

About Serpentine

Championing new ideas in contemporary art since 1970, Serpentine has presented pioneering exhibitions for half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists of our time.



Across two sites only 5 minutes apart, in London's Kensington Gardens, Serpentine presents a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architecture, education, live events and technological innovation, in the park and beyond.

Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, thanks to its unique location Serpentine reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a deep connection with its local community.

Rugile Barzdžiukaite (b.1983, based in Vilnius) works as a filmmaker, theatre director and visual artist. In her creative practice, Barzdžiukaite explores the gap between objective and imagined realities, while challenging an anthropocentric way of thinking in a playful way. Her recent full-length documentary film-essay *Acid Forest* was awarded at the Locarno International Film Festival among others, was shown at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, Lincoln Center in NYC, American Film Institute festival in LA and many other events and venues for cinema and contemporary art. *Sun & Sea* is her latest collaboration in the medium of performance.

Vaiva Grainyte's (b. 1984, based in Lithuania and Canada) text-based practice shifts between genres, interdisciplinary theatre works and publications. As a writer, playwright, and poet she takes action as an observant anthropologist: challenged by Grainyte's poetic interpretation, mundane social issues take on a paradoxical and defamiliarised nature. Her book of essays *Beijing Diaries* (2012) and the poetry collection *Gorilla's Archives* (2019) were nominated for the Book of the Year awards, and included in the top twelve listings of the most creative books in Lithuania. Her oeuvre has been translated into over 10 languages. Her upcoming, bilingual, cross-genre novel, *Roses and Potatoes* (2022), deconstructs the contemporary enforcement of happiness.

Lina Lapelyte's (b.1984, works in Vilnius and London) performance-based practice is rooted in music and flirts with pop culture, gender stereotypes and nostalgia. Her works engage trained and untrained performers often in an act of singing through a wide range of genres such as mainstream music and opera. The singing takes the form of a collective and affective event that questions vulnerability and silencing. Her recent and upcoming shows include Cartier Foundation, Paris, Tel Aviv Museum of Art; RIBOCA2 – Riga biennale; Tai Kwun, Hong Kong; Glasgow International; Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussels; Kaunas Biennale, Lithuania; Pompeii Commitment and Castello di Rivoli, Italy.

In their collaborative practice, the artists pay special attention to the relationship between documentary and fiction, reality and poetry as well as the overlap of theatre, music and the visual arts. Their opera-performance *Sun & Sea* is the second collaboration for the three artists. The work was most recently presented as *Sun & Sea (Marina)*, representing Lithuania at the 58th Contemporary Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, where it was awarded the Golden Lion for Best National Participation. Their previous work, the contemporary opera *Have a Good Day!* for 10 cashiers, supermarket sounds and piano, premiered in 2013 and is touring worldwide.



Lucia Pietroiusti is a curator working at the intersection of art, ecology and systems, usually outside of the gallery format. She is the founder of the General Ecology project at Serpentine, London – a strategic, cross-organisational effort dedicated to the implementation of ecological principles throughout the Galleries’ public-facing programmes, internal infrastructure, and networks; and is currently developing the Institute for General Ecology as a distributed, independent organisation. Pietroiusti is the curator of Sun & Sea (Marina) by Rugile Barzdziukaite, Vaiva Grainyte and Lina Lapelyte, the Lithuanian Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (and 2020-2022 international tour). She is the curator of the second edition of POWER NIGHT at E-Werk Luckenwalde, titled Being Mothers, in 2021/2022. Together with Filipa Ramos, she will be the curator of the 8th Biennale Gherdeina, Persons Persones Personen, in May 2022.

At Serpentine, Pietroiusti is currently Strategic Consultant for Ecology, and she was Curator of General Ecology from 2018-2021. General Ecology has presented live events, radio programmes, publications as well as ongoing research projects. Pietroiusti is also a co-curator of Back to Earth – Serpentine’s 50th anniversary programme, dedicated to the environment (ongoing), which invites 65+ artists to devise environmental campaigns, prototypes or interventions in artwork form. Pietroiusti was the co-founder and co-curator of the Serpentine Podcast (since 2015, with Eva Jäger, Ben Vickers and Kay Watson).

Ongoing projects include The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish an interdisciplinary festival, radio and publication series on consciousness and intelligence across species (with Filipa Ramos, since 2018).

Pietroiusti was one of the curators of the 13th Shanghai Biennale, Bodies of Water (2020/2021, with Andrés Jaque, Chief Curator; Marina Otero Verzier; Filipa Ramos and You Mi). In 2022, Pietroiusti will join James Bridle in curating a section of the Helsinki Festival, dedicated to artificial and more-than-human intelligences. Publications include More-than-Human (with Andrés Jaque and Marina Otero Verzier, 2020); Microhabitable (with Fernando García-Dory, Spanish edition published 2020; English edition forthcoming in 2021); PLANTSEX (MAL Journal, 2019) and Sun & Sea (Marina) (2019).