GRENFELL
STEVE McQUEEN

7 April – 10 May 2023
Serpentine South

Press view: Tuesday 4th April, 4pm for a prompt screening start at 4.15pm – 5pm and 5.15pm – 6pm
Wednesday 5th April, 9am – 10.15am; 10.15am – 11am; and 11.15am – 12pm

Please book your press screening here

Serpentine presents Grenfell by Steve McQueen at Serpentine South from Friday 7 April to Wednesday 10 May 2023.

In December 2017, artist and filmmaker Steve McQueen (b. 1969, London, UK) made an artwork in response to the fire that took place earlier that year on 14 June at Grenfell Tower in North Kensington, West London. 72 people died in the tragedy. Filming the tower before
it was covered with hoarding, McQueen sought to create a record so that it would not be forgotten.

Following the fire, a Government Inquiry was launched that was conducted in two phases. Four years since the publication of the Phase One report, the recommendations are yet to be implemented, meaning a similar tragedy could happen again. The findings of the second and final phase of the Inquiry are due to be reported in late 2023. There is an ongoing criminal investigation.

The presentation is 30 minutes long and the work is 24 minutes long.

Following a period of community outreach and private community viewings, prioritising bereaved and survivors, the artwork will be on view to the public.

Steve McQueen: “I knew once the tower was covered up, it would start to leave people’s minds. I was determined that it never be forgotten.”

Paul Gilroy, contributor to the exhibition guide has written: “To me, Steve McQueen’s work suggests that there is much to gain in confronting the meanings of the damaged structure and making the shock of our painful contact with it instructive. Opening ourselves humbly to that possibility can be accomplished without betraying the tower’s plural traumas or the political complexity of this moment in which closure is not an option. We cannot understand Grenfell unless we keep the reality of this building firmly in mind.”

Following the exhibition at Serpentine, the work will be placed in the care of Tate and the Museum of London’s collections.

Notes to Editors

Please book your press screening here or please book a timed slot in advance at: https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/

Content note: Visitors are advised that the film contains close-up aerial imagery of the tower six months after the fire. This includes views inside the building and contractors at work. Some visitors may find the imagery upsetting. There will be a space to pause, rest and reflect in the galleries.

Important: The preview screenings of Grenfell will take place at 15 minutes past the hour. This work is intended to be seen from the start, so unfortunately latecomers cannot be admitted. Doors open fifteen minutes before the screening time.

Booking a ticket: Please book a timed slot in advance and arrive with your mobile ticket or printed e-booked ticket.
Screenings take place at Serpentine South Gallery Kensington Gardens, London, W2 3XA.

The production of the work was self-funded by Steve McQueen, it is not a commercial project and will not be sold.

Image: The film still has been issued to be as sensitive to the bereaved families, survivors and the community as possible in the media coverage of the exhibition. Please use this still to accompany articles on Steve McQueen’s work Grenfell. Please refrain from using other stock images of the Tower, especially those on the night of the disaster and of the uncovered tower to be respectful to the Grenfell community as these images can be distressing.

Steve McQueen has been in conversation with Grenfell bereaved and survivor groups and individuals from the wider community at different times over the last five and a half years. Serpentine and Steve McQueen have engaged in these discussions so that Grenfell is delivered sensitively and with the considerations of bereaved and survivors at the forefront.

Steve McQueen was born in West London in 1969 and studied Fine Art at Goldsmiths College where he first became interested in film. Over the last 30 years, Steve McQueen has been influential in expanding the way in which artists work with film. He has made several feature films with many accolades, including the Academy Award for Best Film for 12 Years a Slave (2013). In 2020, he made Small Axe, an anthology film series about London’s West Indian community. As an artist, McQueen won the Turner Prize in 1999 and represented Great Britain at the Venice Biennale in 2009. McQueen’s work is held and exhibited in public museums around the world. He lives and works in London and Amsterdam.

About Serpentine

Building new connections between artists and society, Serpentine presents pioneering contemporary art exhibitions and cultural events with a legacy that stretches back over half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists, writers, scientists, thinkers, and cultural thought leaders of our time.

Based in London’s Kensington Gardens, across two sites, Serpentine North and Serpentine South, Serpentine features a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architectural showcases, education, live events and technological activations, in the park and beyond the gallery walls.

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