

Press Release: August 2020

Keiko Higashi joins Arnolfini as Engagement Producer



image credit: Lisa Whiting for Arnolfini

Keiko Higashi has been appointed as Engagement Producer at Arnolfini, Bristol's international centre for contemporary art.

Prior to joining the team in June, Keiko worked as Director of Phakama, a diversity-led, participatory arts organisation and Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (ACE NPO) based at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL).

Keiko brings over 16 years experience in the arts and heritage sector as a key member of programming teams, working on several ambitious cultural projects in nationally leading cultural organisations including The New Art Gallery Walsall and Turner Contemporary in Margate, where she was involved with the launch.

Her career has ranged from starting off as a freelance artist in Yorkshire working on carnivals and festivals, moving into gallery education in the Midlands, Project Management in museums, Producing and Directing in Theatre and Outdoor arts in London before relocating to Bristol in June.

In her new role with Arnolfini, Keiko is responsible for building relationships and stronger connections with community groups, schools, young people and families; delivering projects that support and inform Arnolfini's cultural programme. The role is central to Arnolfini's plans to encourage greater involvement and voice from a wider representation of Bristol's diverse communities and creating a space for meaningful conversations and creative ideas to be shared.

Commenting on her appointment, Keiko said "I am really excited to be working for an organisation that I have admired for so long and is so open to try new ideas and approaches."

"As a female arts practitioner of colour, I am passionate about creating pathways into the creative arts for underrepresented groups. I want to help break down any perceived physical and mental barriers to accessing the gallery and reaffirm Arnolfini as a place where everyone feels welcome and valued."

Details of Arnolfini's family and cultural programme will be rolled out on Arnolfini's website at www.arnolfini.org.uk and across their social media @ArnolfiniArts, following the reopening of the Bookshop and ground floor gallery with *Hassan Hajjaj: The Path*.

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For further information please contact Sara Blair

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About Arnolfini

Woven into the fabric of Bristol since 1961, Arnolfini is a pioneer of interdisciplinary contemporary arts, presenting an ambitious, eclectic programme of visual art, performance, dance, film and music, carefully curated to appeal to a broad audience.

Housed in a prominent Grade II listed, accessible building on Bristol's harbourside, Arnolfini is an inspiring public space for contemporary arts and learning, greeting over half a million visitors each year and offering an innovative, inclusive and engaging experience for all.

An internationally-renowned institution, throughout its history Arnolfini's programme has welcomed artists from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, supporting and developing their work, investigating their influences and aspirations.

Arnolfini has long-standing relationships with a variety of partners and celebrates the heritage and wide-reaching impact of the organisation through sharing a 60 year archive of exhibition slides, publications and artist book collection.

In 2019, Arnolfini relaunched its major exhibition programme *with Still I Rise: Feminism, Gender and Resistance Act 3* and continues to build on the multicultural, diverse and inclusive ethos that has prevailed since its inception.

Arnolfini remains at the heart of the Bristol community, always mindful of founding director Jeremy Rees' principle to 'Enjoy Yourself', inviting everyone to join in.

About UWE Bristol

The University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) has a global and inclusive outlook, with approximately 30,000 students and strong industry networks and connections with over 1,000 employers. Research at UWE Bristol focuses on real world problems and the University plays a pivotal role in the regional economy. With over £300 million invested in infrastructure, buildings and facilities across all Campuses, UWE Bristol is creating a place for learning that is innovative, ambitious, connected, enabling and inclusive. UWE Bristol is ranked 28th in the Guardian university league table, as well as 11th in the UK for student satisfaction, and has recently been awarded the highest possible rating in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) 2018, achieving GOLD Standard.

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. They support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, ACE will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. artscouncil.org.uk

About Ashley Clinton Barker-Mills Trust

Arnolfini Gallery is supported by a linked charity, the Ashley Clinton Barker Mills Trust (ACBMT). Arnolfini founders Jeremy and Annabel Rees were first introduced to the artists and benefactors Peter and Caroline Barker-Mill in 1963, by the London gallerist Lesley Waddington. It was a fortuitous meeting that was the catalyst in allowing Arnolfini to develop from a small volunteer-run private gallery into a major international arts centre. The Trust's principle object is to 'support' Arnolfini and it does this primarily by making annual grants from the income earned on its investments to make quarterly payments. It has also been able to make small fund one-off capital grants to help the Arnolfini transition to its current financial model.