

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Public art installation unveiled for the TUC's Congress House**

Hugh Broughton Architects' ongoing redevelopment of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) London headquarters, Congress House, reached a significant milestone this week as the TUC unveiled a permanent public artwork commission for the Grade II\* listed building. Commissioned by culture and placemaking consultancy Futurecity, Berlin-based visual artist Eva Berendes has created a glass screen, clearly demarcating the entrance to the revitalised south side of the building at the junction of Dyott Street and Bainbridge Street. It is a striking artwork that will visually reflect the TUC's values and history.

In Fitzrovia, just north of New Oxford Street and a few minutes' walk from the British Museum, the location of the TUC's Congress House headquarters on Great Russell Street couldn't be more central. The creation of new rentable offices and revamped staff facilities at Congress House will bring new tenants to the south side of the building. Named The Rookery, this flagship refurbishment takes its name from the term coined in the eighteenth century to describe densely populated, gloomy alleyways which characterise the back streets off Great Russell Street.

The TUC has a reputation for embedding the arts into the fabric of its building. It began in 1957 with the opening of the original Modernist building designed by David du Rieu Aberdeen, which included a monumental set piece in the courtyard created by sculptor Sir Jacob Epstein as a memorial to fallen trade union members from both wars. This seminal work is now protected by a steel and ETFE roof canopy installed in 2016 as an earlier phase in Hugh Broughton Architects' phased redevelopment.

Eva Berendes' artwork will unfold across the curved car ramp, animating the building's Dyott Street façade. The design comprises bold, colourful geometric forms inspired by motifs used in the enamel badges of the affiliated unions, an important part of the trade unions' identities. The glass screen is mounted on a grey Yorkstone dwarf wall, matching the main entrance steps on Great Russell Street.

The artist considers the screen as a 'promenadic' painting, following the curve of the building to engage passersby and set up a dialogue between the institution and the life of the street, the footfall of which is expected to increase dramatically when Crossrail arrives at Tottenham Court Road Station in 2018.

The designs are hand sandblasted into the glass and filled with ceramic paint, in a process known as 'ceramic bake', to achieve a fine-textured relief, a technique which will continue the legacy of craftsmanship associated with the building.

The new illuminated entrance will open into a spacious ground floor reception space, which incorporates an informal meeting space. The design extends the original material palette and modernist idiom. Refurbished rentable offices will be created from ground to fifth floors, and revamped staff facilities will be created at basement level. Refurbishment of the south side for the use of tenants will reinstate the original plans of David du R Aberdeen, whose layouts included entrances on both north and south sides of the building.

The refurbishment and art installation will be unveiled in January 2018 as part of the TUC 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

Hugh Broughton said:

*"Our practice has enjoyed a fantastic relationship with the TUC and Congress House over the last 20 years, helping to restore many parts of this post-war modernist masterpiece. This latest phase of refurbishment will revitalise the south side of the building. As part of the project, we are thrilled by the appointment of the artist, Eva Berendes, to contribute a stunning piece of contemporary public art which reflects the spirit of trade unionism, and will brighten and animate the surrounding urban realm in exciting ways."*

Frances O'Grady, General Secretary, TUC, said:

*"Congress House has been a key part of the TUC's identity since its completion almost 60 years ago. We're proud of the trade union history our building embodies and are delighted to continue the long history of embedding art into Congress House. The design has both a visual and tactile finish allowing the piece to be appreciated by many, fitting with the union movement's values of inclusivity. Eva and Hugh Broughton Architects have done a fantastic job to make this project a reality."*

Andy Robinson, Senior Strategist, Futurecity, said:

*"Eva's practice is dynamic, surprising, and contemplative. It is exciting to be able to commission her first permanent architectural artwork within such an engaging context as the heart of the TUC in London. Her widening of an approach to the Formalist artistic movement takes on the site's specific social and cultural context. Building users and passersby will be able to recognise and enjoy its subtle referencing and interpretation of the TUC and its values."*

Eva Berendes said:

*"I'm delighted by the opportunity to collaborate with Hugh Broughton Architects and Mayer of Munich, an architectural glass and mosaic studio founded in 1847, on this permanent commission for the TUC."*

*The commission has introduced a different set of parameters to my practice, notably the TUC's social and historical background, the existing architectural context and new materials and techniques. It has provided an ideal arena for me to continue to explore ideas such as people's physical relationships to, and interactions with, the pictorial. And as an artwork experienced while moving, it relates to the TUC's identity as a social movement."*

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**Notes to editors:**

Address: Congress House, 23-28 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS  
Completion: January 2018  
Client: Trades Union Congress  
Architect: Hugh Broughton Architects  
Artist: Eva Berendes  
Structural Engineer: Price and Myers  
M&E Engineer: Harley Haddow  
Quantity Surveyor: Jackson Coles  
Main Contractor: Sharkey SE

**Hugh Broughton Architects**

Hugh Broughton Architects was formed in 1996 and has a reputation for producing carefully crafted contemporary architecture. The practice has designed projects for many high profile clients including the British Council, Institution of Structural Engineers, National Galleries of Scotland, Royal Society of Chemistry, Henry Moore Foundation and the TUC. The practice is best known for the design of Halley VI Antarctic Research Station designed for the British Antarctic Survey, which was officially launched in 2013 and has received fifteen international awards to date; and a purpose-built gallery for the Portland Collection, on the Welbeck Estate, Nottinghamshire, which was crowned RIBA East Midlands Building of the Year Award 2016. The practice recently completed the redevelopment of Henry Moore Studios & Gardens in Perry Green, Hertfordshire and is currently leading the conservation of Sir Christopher Wren's Painted Hall in Greenwich and the refurbishment of Inner Temple Treasury Building.  
[www.hbarchitects.co.uk](http://www.hbarchitects.co.uk)

**Trades Union Congress**

The TUC is the voice of Britain at work. It represents over 5.6 million people through 50 trade unions. Founded in 1868, the TUC is based in Congress House near Tottenham Court Road, in a Grade II\* listed building, opened in 1958 to commemorate union members who died in the world wars. The building features a Sir Jacob Epstein statue in the courtyard and a Bernard Meadows piece above the entrance.  
[www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)

**Futurecity**

Futurecity develops cultural visions for the urban realm. It creates the partnerships, research and projects that invigorate public space, and shape our cities for the future. Founded by Mark Davy in 2007, Futurecity works internationally to connect city makers with artists, curators, galleries and cultural institutions. From commissioning ambitious public art works to producing strategies that unlock the cultural potential of entire districts, Futurecity operates between art and other disciplines, whether science, architecture or technology. As the curator delivering cultural projects from inception to completion, Futurecity is interested in championing artists who are changing the way culture is presented in an urban context.  
[www.futurecity.co.uk](http://www.futurecity.co.uk)

**Eva Berendes**

Eva Berendes lives and works in Berlin, and has studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich, Berlin University of the Arts and Chelsea College of Arts, London (MA Fine Art, 2002). Her work has featured in numerous international solo and group exhibitions at venues including Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; CRG Gallery, New York City; S1 Artspace, Sheffield; Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam; and Bundeskunsthalle Bonn. She has been awarded grants including Kunstfonds, Bonn, a DAAD stipend and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant.

A monograph documenting her work was published by Verlag für Moderne Kunst in Vienna (2017). Eva has collaborated with choreographer Sebastian Matthias on sculptural installations for dance performances. The TUC glass screen is her first permanent architectural commission.  
[www.evaberendes.com](http://www.evaberendes.com)