

Artangel

Events: Inside - Artists and Writers in Reading Prison

For the first time in its history, Reading Prison will open to the public for a major new project by Artangel. Leading artists, performers and writers respond to the work of the prison's most famous inmate Oscar Wilde, the architecture of the prison and themes of imprisonment and separation. Titled **Inside - Artists and Writers in Reading Prison**, the project runs from **4 September – 30 October 2016**.

As part of *Inside*, Artangel present a lecture series in association with the University of Reading. The series of one-hour lectures by some of the world's leading experts on Oscar Wilde and Reading Prison - Joe Bristow, Anna Gruetzner-Robins, Gavin Stamp, Peter Stoneley - explores Oscar Wilde in the context of Victorian society and Reading Prison.

From 9 September to 29 October, visitors will be able to go on one-hour guided walking tours of Reading Prison, presented in association with the National Trust. These will focus on the history and architecture of the Victorian prison. Formerly known as Reading Gaol, the prison opened in 1844 and was a working prison until 2013. Oscar Wilde was incarcerated there between 1895 and 1897, enduring the Separate System, a harsh penal regime designed to eliminate any contact between prisoners.

On Sunday 4 September, starting at 12pm, actor, director and author Neil Bartlett's sold out reading of *De Profundis*, a hundred-page letter written by Oscar Wilde during his time incarcerated in Reading Prison, will be broadcast live online. Available to watch on the Artangel website and Artangel Youtube channel, the broadcast from the prison chapel will last around five hours.

Between 29 September and 1 October, theatre company Reading Between the Lines will stage performances based on the transcripts of Oscar Wilde's trials in the prison chapel.

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Neil Bartlett Reads De Profundis – Live Online Broadcast

4 September 2016, 12.00 – 17.00

Free at: www.artangel.org.uk/inside
www.youtube.com/Artangellondon

The Trials of Oscar Wilde

29 September 2016, 20.00

30 September 2016, 20.00

1 October 2016, 20.00

Tickets: £11 - £14 (includes entry to exhibition from 18.00)

www.artangel.org.uk/inside/
www.readingbetweenthelines.co.uk

During three sensational trials in London's Old Bailey in early 1895, Oscar Wilde stood in the dock and faced his accusers with great dignity and unmatched wit. Wilde was initially confident that he would win, but by the end of the third trial he was devastated to be found guilty of "extensive corruption of the most hideous king among young men" and sentenced to two years in prison.

Inside the very jail where Wilde served most of his sentence, Reading's acclaimed theatre company Reading Between the Lines present a special performance based on the transcript of the trials of Oscar Wilde.

Oscar Wilde and Reading Prison Lecture Series **presented in association with the University of Reading**

In Prison with Oscar Wilde

Peter Stoneley

6 October 2016, 19:00 - 20:00

Tickets: £7 - £9 (includes entry to exhibition from 17.00)

www.artangel.org.uk

Professor of English at the University of Reading. Peter Stoneley's recent research on Wilde's prison experiences drew coverage from newspapers and broadcasters around the world, indicating the continuing international fascination with Wilde and his fate. This talk draws on rare images and documents to reveal the regime Wilde lived under in Reading Gaol. The talk also sets out the enduring impact of the prison on Wilde as it played out in his writing and public statements after his release.

Reading Gaol and the Architecture of George Gilbert Scott

Gavin Stamp

13 October, 2016, 19:00 – 20:00

Tickets: £7 - £9 (includes entry to exhibition from 17.00)

www.artangel.org.uk

Acclaimed architectural writer and broadcaster Gavin Stamp presents an illustrated lecture on the life and work of the important Victorian architect George Gilbert Scott, and considers his landmark design for Reading Gaol in the context of early workhouse designs by the young Scott then in partnership with W.B. Moffatt.

Taking a Stand: Oscar Wilde, Art and Anarchism

Anna Gruetzner-Robins

20 October 2016, 19:00 - 20:00

Tickets: £7 - £9 (includes entry to exhibition from 17.00)

www.artangel.org.uk

Professor Emeritus in History of Art, University of Reading. Anna Gruetzner-Robins has written widely on Sickert, Degas and Whistler, on the reception of French art in Britain and is currently completing a book on Wilde and the artists of the 1890s. This talk will discuss Wilde's conduct during his three trials as a performance of his

anarchist beliefs and networks, centred around the Vale artists in London and symbolist circles in Paris, rather than an exercise in self-destruction.

Blackmail, Sodomy and Sex Work: Oscar Wilde on Trial

Joe Bristow

27 October 2016, 19:00 - 20:00

Tickets: £7 - £9 (includes entry to exhibition from 17.00)

www.artangel.org.uk

Distinguished Professor of English at the University of California. This talk explains the extraordinary circumstances that led John Sholto Douglas — the 9th Marquess of Queensberry—to gather as much information as he could about Wilde's intimate involvement with young male sex workers, these "gilded snakes" (as he called them), and reveals the ways in which Queensberry's defence team ensured that this group of male prostitutes and blackmailers was rewarded for giving carefully groomed evidence against Wilde.

Tours of Reading Gaol presented in association with the National Trust

Guided one-hour walking tours of Reading Prison, focusing on its Victorian architecture, taking place on Fridays and Saturdays from 9 September – 29 October.

Fridays, 12noon and 2pm

Saturdays, 12noon, 2pm, 4pm

Tickets: £12 adults, £10 concessions (includes entry to exhibition)

www.artangel.org.uk

The dark history of Victorian prison life will be revealed to visitors on the guided and timed tours, presented by the National Trust, which will tell the history of the gaol and the penal regime of the Separate System. Visitors will arrive at the main prison gate before being led into the austere interior of the prison, exploring its corridors and cells as well as the former chapel. A highlight will be the visit to Wilde's cell where his penultimate work, *De Profundis*, was written and which inspired his famous *Ballad of Reading Gaol*.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

PRESS VIEW & PHOTOCALL

1 September 2016, from 10.30am

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Address: Reading Prison, Forbury Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 3HY

Open: **4 September – 30 October 2016**
Wednesday – Thursday 11.00 – 19.00
Friday – Saturday 11.00 – 20.00
Sundays 11.00 – 17.00

De Profundis Readings: Sundays 12.00 – 17.00

Entry: Timed entry with strict capacity, advance booking recommended

£9 adults, £7 concessions, £2 children under 18
Further group concessions available
Tickets available on the door and in advance at
artangel.org.uk/inside, on 0118 960 6060

De Profundis reading tickets £20 (including entry to all other areas)

Visitor Information: artangel.org.uk/inside

A small amount of material is not appropriate for children as it contains nudity and content of a sexual nature.

Public enquiries: info@artangel.org.uk / +44 (0)207 713 1400

Disabled Access: Those with specific access requirements are encouraged to visit the Artangel website to read the full access statement or call the Artangel office for further information before their visit.

Reading Prison is a former prison located in Reading, Berkshire, England. The Grade II listed building was designed by George Gilbert Scott and was formerly known as Reading Gaol. The prison became a Remand Centre and Young Offenders Institution in 1992, closing in September 2013.

Oscar Wilde, born October 1854, was a renowned poet, author and playwright. His works include *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). Wilde was incarcerated in Reading Gaol between 1895 and 1897. He spent the rest of his life in Europe, publishing *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* in 1898. He died in Paris on 30 November 1900.

Further reading: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/wilde_oscar.shtml

Artangel produces and presents extraordinary art in unexpected places in London, the UK and beyond. For over 30 years Artangel has generated some of the most talked-about art of recent times, including projects with Clio Barnard, Jeremy Deller, Roger Hiorns, Michael Landy, Steve McQueen, Rachel Whiteread, and more recently Ryoji Ikeda and PJ Harvey and currently Jorge Otero-Pailos's *The Ethics of Dust* at Westminster Hall, Houses of Parliament. Appearing anywhere from vacant apartments stores, to subterranean vaults and London's night sky, Artangel produces art that surprises, inspires and wouldn't be possible within the confines of a gallery.

www.artangel.org.uk

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