

Artangel

Press Release

12 October 2016

ARTANGEL EXHIBITION AT READING PRISON IS EXTENDED DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND

For the first time in its history, Reading Prison has opened to the public for a major new project by Artangel exploring the work of the prison's most famous inmate, Oscar Wilde. Over 16,000 people have visited **Inside: Artists and Writers in Reading Prison** since it opened on 4 September and the exhibition has now been extended to 4 December due to popular demand.

For Artangel's exhibition, new works have been made in response to the prison's architecture and history by leading artists including **Marlene Dumas, Robert Gober, Nan Goldin, Steve McQueen, Jean-Michel Pancin** and **Wolfgang Tillmans**, and are installed in the prison's corridors, wings and cells.

Audio recordings of **Neil Bartlett, Ralph Fiennes, Kathryn Hunter, Ragnar Kjartansson, Maxine Peake, Lemn Sissay, Patti Smith, Colm Tóibín** and **Ben Wishaw** reading Wilde's *De Profundis*, the extended letter he wrote to his lover Lord Alfred Douglas from his prison cell, will be available to listen to in the prison chapel from 3 November.

Reading Prison, formerly known as Reading Gaol, 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.

Historical plans, late 19th century mug-shots of inmates and work by **Ai Weiwei, Vija Celmins, Rita Donagh, Peter Dreher, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Richard Hamilton, Roni Horn, Doris Salcedo** and **Jeanette Winterson** are also on display.

The hugely popular one-hour guided walking tours of Reading Prison, presented in association with the National Trust, are also being extended until 26 November. The tours focus on the history and architecture of the Victorian prison.

James Lingwood and Michael Morris, Co-Directors of Artangel, said:

"There has been an overwhelming interest and excitement in *Inside: Artists and Writers in Reading Prison*, and we are delighted to be able to offer even more people the opportunity to experience the remarkable work by artists and writers inside the prison."

Graham Deans, the National Trust's Assistant Director of Operations for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxon said:

"We are delighted that the tours of Reading Gaol have been extended to December. The first set of tours sold out within days of being released, and have been a great success with many

visitors getting to experience a glimpse into what prison life was like, in the present day and in the Victorian times. We hope with this extension of the tours that many more local people, and members, will be able to enjoy this unique experience that the Trust has had the opportunity to be involved in.”

Inside has been made possible with the kind support of the Ministry of Justice and is presented as part of Reading 2016, Reading’s Year of Culture.

Inside is part of University of Reading’s ‘Reading International’, which is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through the Arts Council’s Ambition for Excellence Programme.

Inside is generously supported by Dayana Tamendarova with further support from Jack Kirkland, Matthew Marks Gallery, Sylvie Winckler and those who wish to remain anonymous.

Press images: http://bit.ly/Inside_Press

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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

3 November – 4 December 2016
Wednesdays Closed
Thursdays 11.00 – 17.00
Friday – Saturday 11.00 – 19.00
Sundays 11.00 – 17.00

Entry: Timed entry with strict capacity, advance booking recommended £9, £7 concessions £2 children under 18

Booking: artangel.org.uk/inside, on 0118 960 6060

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.

Events

24 November 19.00 – 20.00

The history of Reading Prison

A talk by Berkshire Record Office Archivist Mark Stevens in the chapel at Reading Prison

Tickets £9, £7 concessions

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 – 26 November.

Fridays, 12noon and 2pm

Saturdays, 12noon, 2pm, 4pm

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

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/readinggaoltours

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*.

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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