

Metal

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For immediate release

Metal Billboard

National arts organisation Metal, based in Peterborough, have been working with artists and designers to create new billboard signs that ask passers-by to engage in a conversation about big issues

Inspired by the quote from Anton Chekhov in 1888, that *'the role of the artist is to ask questions'*, arts organisation Metal, based at Chauffeurs Cottage on St. Peters Road, Peterborough, approached key national figures working in the art-world today to pose questions to the city of Peterborough. These included comedian Phill Jupitus, singer/songwriters Neil Hannon from The Divine Comedy and Mark Stewart from The Pop Group, poet Mark Grist and authors Paul Morley and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown. The questions posed range from the humorous to the thought provoking, and often relate to real issues that the city or the world is facing. For example, themes like migration, finance, war, and animal rights are all explored.

The Questions

"When was the last time you went to an art gallery?" Phill Jupitus, comedian

"What happens next?" Paul Morley, author

"Are migrants not human?" Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, author

"Are you worth it?" Neil Hannon, singer/songwriter (The Divine Comedy)

"What's an artist worth?" Mark Grist, educator and poet

"Why do animals exist?" Kate Garner, photographer

"Can you fall up?" Mehmet Sander, choreographer

"For how much longer do we tolerate mass murder?" The Pop Group, post punk provocateurs

"What role does love play in economics?" Jude Kelly, artistic director (Southbank Centre)

"What is necessary here?" Sally Tallant, artistic director (Liverpool Biennial)

The questions acted as inspiration for new art works created by ten visual artists who were selected from a national call-out. Two of the artists chosen were local to the city - Jason Duckmanton and Lee Mason. All the artists spent a week in the city in June researching the history of Peterborough, visiting local landmarks and projects, and talking to people to inform their designs. Throughout September, to coincide with Peterborough Arts Festival, their

designs will be displayed on billboards sited on key routes into the city; at Thorpe Road, Bourges Boulevard, Westgate, Lincoln Road, and Oundle Road.

The aim of the project is to turn the city into an exciting outdoor public gallery that stimulates reflection and conversation. Metal are very keen that as many people as possible get involved and join in the conversation. There are a number of ways both online through social media and via public discussion and debates where you can contribute.

Mark Richards, Director of Metal Peterborough says 'we wanted to reclaim the space used by advertising, and turn the city itself into a large gallery that speaks directly about real issues and to real people. A great piece of art can stop you in your tracks and make you question what you think. We hope that passers-by will not only enjoy the images, but also feel compelled to answer the questions and join in the conversation.'

You are invited to join in on Facebook and Twitter: #MetalBillboard and attend some of the free stimulating talks and discussions programmed to compliment the Billboard questions.

All of the comments and responses to the billboards will be captured and contribute to a large exhibition programmed for Peterborough City Gallery in December 2014.

Talks and Discussions

Sunday 31st August, 2pm. Artist-led walking tours of Billboard sites. Meet at Chauffeurs Cottage

Sunday 31st August, 5pm. Billboard artists in conversation with curator Simon Poulter at Chauffeurs Cottage

Tuesday 2nd September, 8pm. 'What makes a good role model?' with Michael Reid, Peterborough Philosophy Group at Chauffeurs Cottage

Wednesday 3rd September, 7pm. Screening of award winning film 'Black Fish' exploring 'Why do animals exist?' at Chauffeurs Cottage

Saturday 6th September, 10am 'Are you worth it?' with Michael Reid, Philosophy in the Park at Buttercross Tea Rooms, Central Park.

Thursday 11th September, 7pm. Choreographer Mehmet Sander talks about his work and considers 'Can you fall up?' at Chauffeurs Cottage

Monday 15th September, 7pm. Peterborough Playwrights writing workshop exploring the Billboard questions at Chauffeurs Cottage

Tuesday 16th September, 6pm. Susan Jones (Artists Newsletter) and Pauline Tambling (Creative and Cultural Skills) consider 'What's an artist worth?' at Chauffeurs Cottage. (supported by Chamber of Culture)

Thursday 18th September, 7pm. Sarah Boiling (Audiences Agency), Gill Nichol (Lights Going On) and Alex Hugo (Vivacity) consider 'When was the last time you visited a gallery?' at City Gallery, Priestgate. (supported by Chamber of Culture)

Thursday 25th September, 7pm. Economist John Deval and social activist Chris Erskine consider 'What role does love play in economics?' at Chauffeurs Cottage

For more information about the project and other Metal events see
www.metalculture.com or call 01733 893007

EDITOR'S NOTES

Who Asked the Questions?

Phill Jupitus is an English stand-up and improv comedian, actor, performance poet, cartoonist and podcaster. He has been a team captain on BBC Two's popular music quiz *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* since its inception in 1996 and also appears regularly as a guest on several other panel shows, including *QI* and BBC Radio 4's *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*

Paul Morley is an English writer, journalist and music producer. He wrote for the *New Musical Express* and has since written for a wide range of publications. He has also been a band manager and promoter as well as a television presenter. He achieved genuine notoriety as co-founder, with Trevor Horn, of ZTT Records, and electronic group Art of Noise. He was the first presenter of BBC Two's *The Late Show*, and has appeared as a cultural commentator and music pundit on a number of other programmes including *The Review Show*.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown is a Ugandan-born British journalist and author, who describes herself as a "leftie liberal, anti-racist, feminist, Muslim, part-Pakistani, and ... a very responsible person". Currently a regular columnist for *The Independent* and the *Evening Standard* she is a well-known commentator on issues relating to immigration, diversity and multiculturalism.

Neil Hannon is a Northern Irish singer and songwriter, best known as the creator and frontman of the chamber pop group The Divine Comedy, a band who have achieved critical and commercial success throughout the past 25 years. Hannon is considered one of the last 'crooners' in the pop landscape and a masterful lyricist.

Mark Grist is a poet and battle rapper based in Peterborough, who rose to prominence when his rap battles became an internet sensation with over 3 million views. Following a career as an English teacher, he formed Dead Poets, a double act that fuses spoken-word poetry with hip-hop, with fellow Peterborough MC Mixy. Mark has most recently been seen on TV in Mr. Drew's School for Boys.

Kate Garner is an English photographer, fine artist and singer. She first came to prominence as one third of the 1980s avant-garde, pop project Haysi Fantayzee. Garner then returned to painting, photography and video, launching a successful media arts career. Garner has photographed many musicians and celebrities with her work appearing in the American and British versions of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, *GQ*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Elle*. Kate is also a strong supporter and champion for animal rights and welfare.

Mehmet Sander is a Turkish choreographer living in Istanbul. He formed his dance company in 1990 and toured extensively internationally over the next decade. His work, often described as 'brutal', challenges perceptions of what is dance. Associating his pieces more closely to the fields of architecture and physics rather than performance and music, Sander's movement is about space and time, explored through collaboration with physical forces such as gravity, inertia and velocity.

The Pop Group are a British post-punk band from Bristol, formed in 1977, whose dissonant sound spanned punk, free jazz, funk and dub reggae. Their lyrics were often political in nature. They have been cited as an important influence in the development of alternative

music in the 1980s and particularly the 'Bristol sound' of bands like Massive Attack and Portishead. The band is touring the UK in October 2014.

Jude Kelly OBE is a theatre director and producer. She has directed over 100 productions including at the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, Chichester Festival Theatre, the English National Opera, and in the West End. She is currently Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre in London, Britain's largest cultural institution. In February 2013 she was assessed as one of the 100 most powerful women in the United Kingdom by Woman's Hour on BBC Radio 4

Sally Tallant is Artistic Director of Liverpool Biennial - The UK Biennial of International Contemporary Art. From 2001-11 she was Head of Programmes at the Serpentine Gallery, London where she was responsible for the development and delivery of Exhibitions, Architecture, Education and Public Programmes. She has curated exhibitions in a wide range of contexts including the Hayward Gallery, Serpentine Gallery, hospitals, and schools as well as public commissions

Who Designed the Billboards?

Alan Dunn studied at Glasgow School of Art and The Art Institute of Chicago. He was curator of *The Bellgrove Station Billboard Project* (Glasgow 1990-91), lead artist on the *tenantspin* project (FACT, Liverpool 2001-7) and recently produced the 10xCD opus *The sounds of ideas forming*. Through these projects Dunn has developed collaborative work with Bill Drummond, Douglas Gordon, Yoko Ono, Philip Jeck, Pauline Oliveros and Brian Eno. He currently lives and works in Liverpool and lectures at Leeds Metropolitan University where he has just completed a PhD on sound art. <http://alandunn67.co.uk/>

Richard Cramp studied Fine Art at Wimbledon School of Art (2004). He lives and works in London. His practice is influenced by architectures, structures within societies, science fiction; and the processes and materials used in construction. He produces installations, sculptures and photographic works that comment on utopian ideals, capitalist issues, and society's formed coping mechanisms in a world in flux. See <http://www.richardcramp.com/on>

Helen Schell is a visual artist based in Newcastle, UK. She specialises in work about space exploration and the science of the cosmos under the auspices of Space Agency. The artwork takes the form of vast paintings & drawings, smart materials costumes and glass installations. She has devised a series of space art projects at the London Science Museum, Centre for Life, British Science Festival, The Arts Catalyst, and World Monument Fund. This has included an education project with NASA & currently with ESA. She is an ESERO-UK Space Ambassador for the education wing of the European Space Agency.

Jessie Brennan is an award winning visual artist who lives and works in London. Her practice explores the representation of places, informed by their social histories and changing contexts. Brennan graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2007. Recent exhibitions and projects include: *Progress*, The Foundling Museum, London (2014); *Interchange Junctions*, HS Projects, London (2014); *Adrift on Life's Tides*, Rochester Art Gallery, Kent (2013, solo); *Coup de Ville*, Sint-Niklaas, Belgium (2013). Jessie is also an educator and visiting lecturer at a number of universities in the UK. <http://www.jessiebrennan.co.uk>

Edén Barrena studied Fine Arts at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, spending her last year in the ABK-Stuttgart, Germany. She is currently doing a Printmaking MA at the Royal College of Art. Her practice deals with the face conceived as a form rather than portraiture, researching alternative ways of interpreting reality through deformation and

abstraction. She is currently exploring the possibilities of the 'instant' drawing as a tool for capturing the moment in a project with OCAT (Contemporary Art Terminal) in Shanghai, China.

Paula Begvenu is a product designer and art director of a London based design studio. The studio focuses on bespoke sculptural furniture designed to commission in addition to a range of products retailed through galleries and shops. She has a broad career history of working for design agencies in both Madrid and Buenos Aires. <http://paulabenvegnu.com/>

Scott Spencer is an accomplished graphic designer/illustrator based in Liverpool. He studied Fine Art at Hull School of Art and Multi Media Design at Liverpool University. In addition to his design work for clients, Scott often collaborates working closely with other creatives like poets, musicians and designers to create print and digital artworks, video and set designs. <http://www.joyofatoy.co.uk/>

Laura Keeble is a sculptor and painter who creates 'un-commissioned' site specific installations often in the public realm. Her work is both playful and radical employing covert tactics, and using symbolism and familiar objects in unexpected places to encourage the viewer to pause and reflect. She studied Fine Art at South East Essex College. <http://www.laurakeeble.com/>

Jason Duckmanton received a BA (Hons) in Illustration from the University of Lincoln in 2007. Since then he has worked as a commercial illustrator and graphic designer whilst also exhibiting his artwork in local galleries and participating in street art festivals. Jason is based in Peterborough and a partner of the design co-operative Paper Rhino. Paper Rhino's latest project has been the public art regeneration of the Peterborough Cowgate underpass in collaboration with Blok Collective. www.jasonduckmanton.com www.paperrhino.co.uk

Lee Mason is a self-taught designer and digital illustrator based in Peterborough. He has over 15 years' experience of working in the design industry, leading projects for clients large and small. Lee is currently putting plans into action to focus more on his artwork, exploring his passions for drawing, animation and film making. Visit: www.lee-mason.co.uk

About Metal

Metal was founded by Jude Kelly OBE in 2002 and was created as an artistic laboratory to champion the need for continual investment in artistic investigation and the development of innovative ideas that could shift the thinking in the UK cultural sector.

It provides innovative, multi-disciplinary residency space for artists from the UK and overseas in Liverpool, Peterborough and Southend on Sea.

Alongside providing space for artists and thinkers to develop their ideas and further the philosophy of their work, Metal is interested in how this artistic process, and the practice of artists can input into, and potentially influence political and social issues of the day.

Metal is supported by Arts Council England, Peterborough City Council and Vivacity Culture and Leisure Trust.

If you require further information about the project or events, please contact Mark Richards, Director at Metal Peterborough on 0785 465 1610 or email mark@metalculture.com