



Paths to Utopia

Friday 1 July – Sunday 2 October 2016

King's College London

Press Preview: Thursday 30 June, 10.00–12.00 (broadcasters – 09.00)

Celebrating the 500th anniversary of Thomas More's inspirational book *Utopia*, *Paths to Utopia* is a collection of new art works resulting from collaborations between artists, performers, architects, technologists and King's College London academics. In this unique cultural hub, audiences will have the chance to encounter whales, ascend to a community on the clouds and witness the ubiquitous, transcendental pursuit of creativity.

This wide-ranging exhibition features new works from Le Gun Collective, author Philip Hoare and artist Caitlin Shepherd amongst others. On show will be films, immersive installations, durational performance, a national scratch choir and loans from The Courtauld Gallery, that allow audiences to create a figurative map of what Utopia means in today's society. *Paths to Utopia* seeks to question our contemporary understanding of Utopia and to examine Thomas More's vision.

With artist/academic collaborations that bring together health, education and creativity, this truly unique exhibition bridges art forms.

Running for three months across King's College London's Strand Campus and Somerset House, the work in this exhibition ranges from the ephemeral to the permanent. The exhibition is free to attend, but a number of the pieces need to be pre-booked. Throughout the summer, there will also be a series of talks related to the projects in *Paths to Utopia*.

Paths to Utopia is part of *Utopia 2016: A year of imagination and possibility* is a collaboration between three neighbours: Somerset House, King's College London and the Courtauld Institute.

Deborah Bull, Assistant Principal, King's College London said *The imaginative range of works within Paths to Utopia each result from a bold new collaboration between a King's academic and artists, performers, architects and technologists. The programme aims to guide audiences as they map their own journey towards a better, brighter future, exploring as they go the new and intriguing spaces where academic thinking, artistic practice and More's enduring text converge.*

Andy Franzkowiak, Creative Producer *Paths to Utopia*, at King's College London comments, *Utopia is a vast landscape to cover. It has been attempted thousands of times via fact and fiction and, though coined by Thomas More 500 years ago, cultures have been fascinated by the idea for millennia. We hope that visitors will add their own ideas, discover their own paths and find moments of Utopia in their own eventful journeys. Our particular journey is laid out by artists, academics, architects, technologists, nurses, neuroscientists, Navajo, singers, linguists, mathematicians, and many more. We also really hope people will want to come back time and time again to this cultural hub to reveal new parts of their personal and unique Utopian map. One thing is for sure, no two paths are the same.*

Highlights of *Paths to Utopia* include:

Discord – 20th August – 2nd October

Through the experience of *Discord* participants must accept that any Utopia can only be lived by the individual and not enforced onto another. Be prepared to be challenged as we are invited to reflect on who is really setting the agenda of domestic and economic perfection. Artist Caitlin Shepherd has interviewed people about their perfect home to create this immersive installation which questions how our ideas of Utopia differ. Created with James Wood (King's College London) and Victoria Johnson (Sound and Music).

We account the whale immortal: Film and performance – 1st July – 2nd October

The whale forever exists, like Utopia, as a parable, a myth, and a nightmare – caught between the wide open ocean and our two-dimensional confinement, between reality and imagination. *We account the whale immortal*, an ever-changing film and a one-off performance, explores the arrival of three mythic whales in the Thames, from the 17th to the 21st century, as evocative emblems of Utopian intent. Created by Jessica Sarah Rinland (Artist-Filmmaker), Dr Edward Sugden (King's College London) and Philip Hoare (Writer, Broadcast & Curator).

The Naming of Clouds – 2nd July, 6th August and 3rd September

The Naming of Clouds is a series of inter-related performances, displays, talks and gatherings which allows audiences to explore the utopic possibilities of cloud walking. Taking place on the first weekend of every month on the River Terrace, the performances and events look at the cultural significance of clouds, making an imaginary ascent into the clouds, venturing through

the history of cloud walking and crunching through the icy upper-reaches of cirrus. Looking at the landscape of the skies, *The Naming of Clouds* considers how air and water have become human history, how the wind reshapes our love and life and how the weather alters who we can be. *The Naming of Clouds* emerges from a collaborative process between Philip Stanier (The Strange Names Collective) with Penny Newell (poet and PhD candidate, King's College London).

Night school on Anarres: Imaginings of an anarchist Utopia – 1st July – 14th August

Night school on Anarres is an educational experiment examining the Utopian proposals of twentieth-century anarchism. Drawing from Ursula K Le Guin's seminal Utopian novel *The Dispossessed*, members of the public will be 'invited' onto the anarchist planet Anarres to participate in classes and performative workshops in order to understand how language can be employed to imagine alternative ways of living. Created by Noam Toran (Artist) and Onkar Kular (the current Stanley Picker Fellow in Design at Kingston University, Artist and newly appointed Professor in Design Interventions at HDK, Gothenburg University) with Nestor Pestana (Artist), Dr Simon Coffey and Dr Martin Edwardes (Linguistics Department, King's College London).

We're here: Singing our way to Utopia – 27th August

We're here: Singing our way to Utopia is a bold choral experiment, a national scratch choir selected to roughly represent the UK's demographic make-up. Each singer will learn their part alone and, in a fragile Utopian moment, the choir will come together for the very first time to perform the piece live. Created by Boff Whalley (formerly a member of the band Chumbawamba), Daniel Bye (award-winning theatre-maker), Sarah Punshon (director and curator) and David Green (King's College London).

In our hands – 1st July – 2nd October

Ernst Bloch declared in *The Spirit of Utopia*, *Life has been put into our hands*. In this vein, audiences will have the chance to experience a collection of intercultural Utopian expressions drawn from Navajo designs to Roger Fry and Slavoj Žižek, and our stories of creation. Le Gun Collective, weaver Stella Benjamin and Dr Richard Howells, King's College London, demonstrate how humanity is striving to fashion a better world from the raw materials we inherit. Le Gun Collective create idiosyncratic imagery which blends a punk, occult, pop and surrealist aesthetic.

Dr Richard Howells, Reader in Culture, Media & Creative Industries at King's, comments, *It has been a terrific opportunity to work with the Le Gun Collective on this project. I'm aware that my academic publications are designed to be read by fellow academics and there is nothing wrong with that. On the other hand, I also want ideas about Utopia to resonate with people outside the university walls. Le Gun have been terrific at understanding my attempts to say something intellectual about the relationship between creativity, aesthetics and Utopia, and then to represent these ideas in a visually immediate and enjoyable way.*

Utopian Lab – 1st July – 30th September

King's College Hospital began in a workhouse on the Strand and was propelled to notoriety by the work of Joseph Lister in the late 19th Century. Florence Nightingale said, *I think one's feelings waste themselves in words, they ought all to be distilled into actions and into actions which bring results*. The Utopian Lab offers a contemporary glimpse into this crusade. This exhibition will rotate every 3 weeks through the stories of present day work being carried out across the Health Faculties at King's College London. Covering topics such as genetics, the psychological impact of being a nurse, tissue engineering and the perfect death.

The Dancing Monks of Majuli Island – 10th July

For the first time ever in the UK, monks from the beautiful island of Majuli, centre of Assamese Krishna, perform the classical Indian dance cultivated as a form of worship in the monasteries of Assam. The monks trace the origin of their art form to Sankardeva, the 15th century founder of Assamese 'Neo-Vaishnavism'. The monks dance in his honour and narrate the playful, sensuous and fantastical episodes of his life as recounted in the ancient epics. Their participation in *Utopia 2016* forms part of a four-city tour of the UK, organised by King's College London PhD candidate Georgie Pope, supported by the Arts Council, LAHP and the British Museum.

Paths to Utopia Talks – Thursdays in July, August and September

Throughout *Paths to Utopia* King's will host a series of talks, discussions and workshops elucidating the works presented in the exhibition. These talks will be broadcast live online with arts website this is tomorrow and will give audiences the chance to delve deeper into the ideas and the people behind them. Hosting each of these will be Resonance FM's Neil Denny.

To view the full programme, please visit www.kcl.ac.uk/utopia2016

Our neighbours and collaborators, Somerset House will continue their celebration of UTOPIA 2016 with a new series of displays, installations and performances collectively entitled *Utopian Voices Here & Now*. The site-wide exhibition will showcase the utopian visions of young UK-based artists and give voice to the issues most affecting them today, including the body, gender, sexuality and race.

Notes to Editors

Title *Paths to Utopia*

Dates Friday 1st July – Sunday 2nd October 2016

Location	King's College London, Inigo Rooms, Somerset House East Wing, Strand, London, WC2R 2LS
Opening Hours	Monday – Sunday, 10am-6pm
Getting there	The Inigo Rooms, King's College London's flagship exhibition space is in Somerset House East Wing and can be accessed from the Somerset House courtyard. The closest tube stations are Temple (on the Circle and District lines), Covent Garden (on the Piccadilly line) and Charing Cross (on the Northern and Bakerloo lines). The nearest mainline rail stations is Charing Cross.
Twitter	#Utopia2016, #PathsToUtopia, @CulturalKings @KingsCollegeLon, @SomersetHouse, @CourtauldGall
Notes	The exhibition is free of charge. Some of the events require pre-booking.
Media Partners	this is tomorrow, Little Atoms
Website	www.utopia2016.com

King's College London

King's College London is one of the top 20 universities in the world (2015/16 QS World University Rankings) and among the oldest in England. King's has more than 26,500 students (of whom nearly 10,400 are graduate students) from some 150 countries worldwide, and nearly 6,900 staff.

Across King's, arts and culture offer distinctive opportunities to students and academics, helping to deliver world-class education and research that drives innovation, creates impact and engages beyond the university's walls.

Over recent years, King's has developed symbiotic partnerships with artists and cultural organisations that enhance the King's experience and, at the same time, add value and deliver benefits across the cultural sector. From uniquely tailored teaching, training and internship programmes, through collaborative research projects and enquiries, to exhibitions and public events, arts and culture are helping to generate new approaches, new insights and new networks.

Somerset House

Somerset House is a unique part of the London cultural scene, a historic building within which surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18th century origins, it has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Today, Somerset House is a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be a part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming to all and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries. Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture including photography, fashion, architecture and design, with an extensive integrated learning programme. We currently attract over 2.5 million visitors every year. It is one of the biggest communities of creative organisations in London including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King’s College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses.

The Courtauld Institute of Art

The Courtauld Institute of Art is the world’s leading centre for the study of the history and conservation of art and architecture. Through its unique integration of activities, facilities and resources, The Courtauld provides an exceptional environment for research, learning and professional development. Facilities for students are exceptional, including outstanding libraries, the Research Forum which offers access to visiting speakers from around the world and The Courtauld Gallery’s outstanding collection. Open to the public daily, The Gallery is famous for its iconic Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces, as well as numerous other important paintings and works of art from the Renaissance through to the 20th century. The Courtauld Gallery regularly presents major exhibitions and special displays which are consistently acclaimed for their outstanding quality and originality.

Utopia 2016

Utopia 2016 is four seasons of activity celebrating the 500th anniversary of the publication of Thomas More’s Utopia. Published in Leuven in December 1516, More’s Utopia presented an imaginative and playful vision of the world as it could be at a time of great change. More’s Utopia is deliberately ambiguous: both “no place” and “good place”, he is clear that many other visions for society are possible. Through a series of exhibitions, events, new commissions, talks and workshops, Utopia 2016 will explore the broad cultural history of the idea of utopia and its relevance to 21st-Century cultural, ecological, and social challenges and opportunities. The year celebrates the pivotal role of the arts and culture in creating spaces where utopian dreams are possible. Throughout Utopia 2016 people from all walks of life will be invited to experiment with new ways we might live, make, work, play and dream.

[All enquiries, high res images and further information:](#)

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