substance

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hull

7-10 December

2017

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a cultural celebration of the north

music, literature, architecture, film, arts

**SYNOPSIS**

**SUBSTANCE** is a festival of place. A bespoke celebration and exploration of The North– the people and stories, music, arts and culture, urbanism and architecture.

So far, every conversation revolving around the idea of a ‘Northern Powerhouse’ has centred on politics and business.**SUBSTANCE** will change the conversation and put artists and cultural architects at the centre of any such debate, exploring how the culture of the north has defined its identity and how, in recent times, it has powered its regeneration, civic and regional pride, and international reputation.

**SUBSTANCE** aims to own the discussion about where, what and how the cultural Northern Powerhouseexists. How we might define it;should we try and define it. How it has changed our cities and landscape. How it has regenerated our cities and changed national and international perceptions of them. The impact it has on everything from economy to civic pride. How it has changed, how we might change it.

The first **SUBSTANCE** will be the final event of Hull, UK City of Culture 2017. The conversation will start at the end of 2016, with a diverse series of satellite and partner events,talks, screenings, installations, street art, exhibitions and live performance, leading up to the final weekend in Hull on 7-10 December, when a dedicated **SUBSTANCE** festival train will bring artists from cities across the North to Hull.

**SUBSTANCE** will be led by the creative team behind **Festival No.6** (voted UK’s Best New Festival) in partnership with **RIBA, The University of Hull**, and other creative partners, with the full support of **Hull UK City of Culture**. We will also be working with key partner venues across the North.

In the 70s and 80s, there was a marked difference in the cultural response to Thatcherism and the climate of the times. The North responded to Thatcherism with Joy Division and The Smiths, while London responded with Spandau Ballet. In the 90s and the start of this century, much of the North has been regenerated by the arts, from The Lowry to The Sage, from Manchester International Festival to Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008. Although based in Hull, with satellite events across the North, **SUBSTANCE** will be an international, out-looking festival. A celebration of the culture that has put the North on the international stage, and the role that cities play in supporting that culture, and how they can be redefined by it.

**SUBSTANCE** will be where the future of places like Hull are imagined, a platform for the independence of thought and creative vision that has defined the film, music, literature, arts and built environment that collectively articulates the soul of the North.

Hull is undergoing a period of change; it is a city that like any other is finding ways to adapt socially and economically in order to meet both the demands placed on it through post-industrial decline and the opportunities that new industries afford. Hull’s story is not unique; it is the story of many neither regional cities across the northern hemisphere that are not centres of significant political or economic power. Theirs is a story of pragmatic survival, certain steps that are needed to be taken in order to thrive, Hull is making those steps and through an exploration of those steps **SUBSTANCE** will illustrate the wider issues, opportunities and futures for cities like Hull.

**LOCATION AND TIMINGS**

The main **SUBSTANCE** festival weekend will be the final event of Hull UK City of Culture, taking place over the weekend of 7-10 December.

The festival will be based around the **SUBSTANCE HUB** at Hull City Hall, which will have a full programme across the three days of the weekend, but we will also work with venues across Hull for partner events, debates, lectures, live music and performances, pop-up theatre, installations, screenings and after parties, including a couple of headline events with major artists. Events at **SUBSTANCE HUB** will be free, but some of the stand-alone headline events will be ticketed.

In the autumn of 2016, a year before the final weekend festival, **SUBSTANCE** will start the debate with a diverse, year-long series of satellite talks, screenings, installations, street art, exhibitions, podcasts and live performance. These will engage artists and audiences in Hull and across the North, with pop-up events, installations and publicationsand public artworks, from stand-alone publications to billboards, from Liverpool to Hull. **SUBSTANCE** aims to put culture at the heart of any ‘Northern Powerhouse’ debate and to be a hub around which the conversation takes place. As well as physical events and artwork, **SUBSTANCE** will be a place online and social media where artists and the public can continue that debate.

The main question and issues that are provoked in this year-long series of provocations, events and dialogue, will help form the structure of the debate and events over the weekend of **SUBSTANCE 2017.**

Looking forward, after 2017, **SUBSTANCE** will continue as an on-going annual celebration, with the weekend long festival moving around different Northern cities each year, with satellite events across the North. We see carrying on the debate and the legacy as a hugely important part of **SUBSTANCE 2017,** facilitating a more open cultural conversation between the northern cities. **SUBSTANCE** will continue this debate and keep supporting artists throughout 2017 and for years to come.

**EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Education and engagement across a wide demographic of general public and students, as well as the existing audience of arts venues across the North, nationally and internationally, is key. **SUBSTANCE** should not be a conversation purely among artists, or preaching to the converted. **SUBSTANCE** is about recognising, celebrating and debating the role of culture in shaping our cities, environment, economy, social habits and every other area of life.

We will work closely with **SUBSTANCE** partners to achieve this aim, in reaching their core target audience and also introducing a wider pubic audience to the events and to the debate.

**TIMELINES**

**January-March 2016**

Reach agreement with key partners, and begin discussions and planning on their roles and involvement in **SUBSTANCE**. Development of website, branding and other marketing.

**March-June 2016**

Development of website and branding, planning of content, marketing plans, satellite event activations and starting to build a calendar of events for the year leading up to **SUBSTANCE 2017**.

**July-September 2016**

Commissioning artists, further planning of content and readying for launch.

**September 2016**

**SUBSTANCE** launch

**January 2017-December 2017**

Year-long calendar of satellite and taster events, publications, installations and artwork… all leading up to

**7-10 December 2017**

**SUBSTANCE**, Hull UK City of Culture 2017