

PEER

PRESS RELEASE

Ingrid Swenson, director of PEER contemporary arts organisation in Hoxton recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2018



View of PEER from Hoxton Street.

Ingrid Swenson, director of PEER has been honoured with an MBE for Services to the Arts in East London in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2018. Over the past two decades, Swenson has established PEER as a significant small-scale contemporary arts organisation presenting highly regarded and critically acclaimed exhibitions and projects to the local community of Hoxton and beyond.

Isabelle Nowak, Chair of PEER said, "Ingrid's MBE award is very well-deserved. She has built an organisation that has meaningfully enriched Hoxton, engaging deeply with local audiences by offering the highest quality art as part of daily life. PEER's programme has contributed to building and cementing community relationships in a socially, culturally and economically diverse area. Ingrid has delivered superb proof that art can act as a catalyst for social change."

In 1998, Swenson began working with The Pier Trust (as PEER was then known), when it was a peripatetic, short-term curatorial project, supported by The Glass House Trust. In 2002, Swenson secured affordable local authority premises for the

organisation in the form of a 1970s shop unit located next to the post office and near Hackney Community College on Hoxton Street, which provided gallery and office space. When the funding for PEER ended in 2007, Swenson found new means of support through local partnerships, trusts and foundations, and other income generating initiatives. Soon after acquiring the adjoining lease and doubling the gallery space, in 2012, Swenson attained Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio status for PEER. This was followed in 2015-16 when Swenson succeeded in raising further capital support from ACE and matched funding to carry out radical improvements to the exhibition spaces and the public realm area to the front of the gallery. The area was re-landscaped with a garden, tree planting, seating, new paving and bike parking. Swenson also commissioned a 10-metre long sculpture open to habitation for local wildlife by London Fieldworks, and a landmark illuminated pedestal clock with artwork by Turner Prize winner Chris Ofili.

Between 1998 and 2018, Swenson has commissioned and presented an ambitious programme for the gallery and offsite, by established and emerging artists. PEER's landmark shows include Martin Creed (1998) whose commission for PEER is now part of Tate's collection; Mike Nelson (2001) whose 3,000 sq ft immersive installation at PEER, became the precursor for his astonishing transformation of the British Pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennale; and *We The People* by Danh Vo (2013) whose work has recently shown to great acclaim at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. PEER has also exhibited work by renowned artists including Chris Marker (1999), Breda Beban (2003), Siobhan Hapaska (2004), Anthony McCall (2006), Bob & Roberta Smith (2006), John Frankland and Yuko Shiraishi (both 2008), Stuart Brisley (2010), John Smith (2011), Karin Ruggaber (2013), Fiona Banner (2014), Andrea Luka Zimmerman (2015), Angela de la Cruz (2016), Emma Hart & Jonathan Baldock (2017) and most recently, Abigail Reynolds (2018).

For further information, images and interview requests please contact Janette Scott Arts PR on janette@janettescottartspr.com or 07966 486156.

NOTES TO EDITORS

CURRENT EXHIBITION: *The Universal Now and Further Episodes* by Abigail Reynolds, 26 April – 23 June 2018, PEER, 97/99 Hoxton Street, London N1 6QL. Opening hours: Wednesday – Saturday 12:00pm – 6:00pm (closed Friday 30 and Saturday 31 March for Easter Bank Holiday) Free admission. Telephone 020 7739 8080.

www.peeruk.org

Ingrid Swenson has an MA in Art History from the University of Sussex (1984). Prior to PEER, she worked in a range of galleries and museums including the ICA, London (1988-1994); Serpentine Gallery, London (1996-1997) and The Contemporary Art Society (1996-1998). She also curated the Raymond Pettibon retrospective at Whitechapel Gallery in 2001, and in 2014 curated *The Best is Not Too Good for You*, a trans-historical display of ceramics and pop art from museum collections in the Midlands, also at Whitechapel Gallery. In 2015 she curated a solo exhibition of work by Kathy Prendergast for the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland.

Swenson served as a Trustee (1997-2008) and Chair (2001-2003) at Cubitt gallery and as a Trustee for Milton Keynes Art Gallery (2000-2002). She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts and an executive member of AICA UK Section (International

Association of Art Critics), and has also taught at a number of art colleges and sat on many award panels.