

BALTIC

Media Release: Friday 2 February 2018

KIRSTY LANG APPOINTED CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF BALTIC CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, GATESHEAD



BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art is delighted to announce the appointment of **Kirsty Lang** as the new Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Following in the footsteps of Peter Buchan, who held the position since November 2009, Kirsty Lang was appointed Chair with unanimous support from the Board and key stakeholders on 25 January 2018. Lang will take up the position from April 2018.

Lang is an experienced and respected journalist across all media platforms, digital TV, radio and newspapers and has been a visiting professor in Communications at the School of International & Public Affairs, University of Columbia, New York.

Kirsty Lang is perhaps best known as the presenter of Radio 4's flagship arts programme, **Front Row**. Her broadcast career includes a spell as a reporter on *The Today Programme* and *Newsnight*. She also presented *Channel 4 News* and BBC World News. With special interests in foreign affairs and culture, Lang spent many years as a foreign correspondent reporting for the BBC and the Sunday Times from Eastern Europe and later Paris and Brussels.

Kirsty Lang said:

"I'm really excited and honoured to be appointed the new chair of BALTIC. It's a beautiful and dynamic space, a beacon of creativity and a recognised leader in contemporary art both nationally and internationally.

I love the fact that it's free entry and open to all. In my view, the arts are just as important to the collective well-being of our nation as sport and everyone, from the very young to the very old, should have access.

Exposing children and young people to the arts encourages creativity which will give them an edge in the workplace of the future, particularly at a time when arts subjects are being phased out in many schools. I believe BALTIC has a key role to play in this.

It's also a great excuse for me to spend more time hanging out in Newcastle and Gateshead which as we know from the Rough Guide is the top destination to visit in the world in 2018!

Kirsty is an experienced chair who has moderated conferences and panels all over the UK and internationally on topics ranging from education and health to arts, culture and foreign affairs. This has included chairing discussions and talks with the Arts Council, Royal Opera House, WHO, NICE, IBM, BMA, Eurostudies UK, Union of Head Teachers, the Bosch Foundation and the WISE Education conference in Qatar. She has also chaired the Orange Prize for Fiction and the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting 2017. She is also member of BAFTA.

More recently, Lang has spent three years on the Board of the British Council, the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, working with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. This multi-national organisation operates both commercially and as a charity with an annual turnover of £1billion. During her time on the board of the British Council, the organisation has undergone a major strategic review and acquired a new CEO and a new Chair.

BALTIC Director Sarah Munro commented:

We are absolutely thrilled that Kirsty Lang will be taking up the role of Chair. Over the past 18 months we have been developing a powerful new vision aimed at expanding the role artists and institutions can play in connecting communities through creative civic empowerment. Kirsty's understanding and commitment to this vision will provide a strong united leadership for BALTIC as we navigate the challenging and exciting times ahead.

Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England added:

We are delighted with the appointment of Kirsty Lang as the new Chair of BALTIC. Kirsty's skills as a professional communicator, which are so important to the role of Chair, made her a very strong candidate. Her knowledge of arts and culture here and internationally, gained at the helm of Front Row, makes her ideal to step into the role. Her evident enthusiasm for making art and culture accessible to all, and for the value of creativity in helping children and young people achieve their full potential, resonates so well with BALTIC's vision and our own priorities.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

BALTIC is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England and has welcomed over 7 million visitors since opening to the public in July 2002. BALTIC presents a distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation and commissioning of contemporary visual art.

Housed in a landmark ex-industrial building, BALTIC consists of 2,600 square metres of art space, making it the UK's largest dedicated contemporary art institution. BALTIC has gained an international reputation for its commissioning of cutting-edge temporary exhibitions.

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

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OPENING HOURS:

Monday – Sunday 10.00-18.00
(excluding Tuesday)
Tuesday 10.30-18.00

ADMISSION FREE

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