

**Press Release**

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**Artful Migration Film Project Will Focus on Scotland’s Visiting Ospreys**

**The ospreys which migrate each year from Africa to breed at the National Trust for Scotland’s Threave Gardens and Estate, in Dumfries & Galloway, are to be the focus of a film project.**

Environmental video artist and filmmaker **John Wallace has been named as the recipient of the *Artful Migration* residency which** commissions artists to create new work informed by wildlife, the natural world, the environment and climate change.

**Based in Annandale, in the east of the region, he not only plans to explore the lives of the rare birds of prey but also wants to look at the wider ecosystem that supports them, plus their impact on people.**

**John said: “It’s a real privilege for our area that the ospreys have been reintroduced and migrate here for this vital part of their lifecycle – the breeding and raising of their next generation.**

**“I’ll be looking at the period of their absence as well as their presence, because so much happens in the ecosystem all year round that prepares it for the return of these predators which are at the top of the food chain.**

**“And they have a cultural impact too. So I’ll be talking to osprey experts, estate staff, volunteers and birdwatchers about what the ospreys mean to them – and their experiences of these birds.”**

**Each year, says John, there is a sense of anticipation ahead of the ospreys’ arrival which is matched by a melancholy at their departure. And the sense of freedom they embody is particularly striking during this period of lockdown.**

**John added: “Covid-19 brought society to a standstill but nature carries on. The birds have still been free to fly while we have not.”**

***Artful Migration* is a partnership between Upland CIC arts development agency** and Ginnie Wollaston and Nicholas Parton Philip of *Moving Souls Dance.* Ithas been developed with the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) which owns and manages the estate, near Castle Douglas, and has received funding from Creative Scotland.

Originally planned to start earlier in the year, the project had to be delayed and re-planned due to the pandemic.

Much will initially be done remotely and on-site work will be carried out once restrictions are lifted. It is hoped that John’s work will be shown at Threave in 2021.

Outreach work with schools will also take place, at a later date, as part of the commission.

**Amy Marletta, Uplands Creative Director, said:** “The arts have been severely affected by Covid-19, so we are pleased to have been able to adapt this project and find a way it can go ahead.

“And we are delighted to have been able to award the residency to John. His strong track record of making high-quality films about nature, the environment and society in southern Scotland made him an ideal choice.”

Ginnie Wollaston set up *Artful Migration* in memory of her uncles George and John Clark. John was a keen artist who lived for many years in Gatehouse of Fleet.

**She said:** “It is so important for Moving Souls Dance to honour the legacy of the Clark family and to be part of this new *Artful Migration* residency, allowing John to create work informed by the lifecycle of the ospreys at Threave Estate and Gardens.

“This year there is a special opportunity to focus on the importance of these birds to the biodiversity and ecology of Dumfries & Galloway, which reminds us that we are deeply interconnected and responsible for our survival and the future of our planet.”

**Ospreys have now been breeding at Threave for more than a decade and are one of its many wildlife attractions.**

**Samuel Gallacher, who is responsible for the National Trust for Scotland’s activities in Dumfries & Galloway, said:** “This is a great example of partnership working in the cultural sector, which we are delighted to support. We are thrilled to be hosting John and are looking forward to seeing the results of his artistic endeavours.

“The osprey conservation programme is long-established at Threave. It is supported by a highly enthusiastic and knowledgeable team of volunteers and staff, who will take pleasure in working with John to help promote the story of these magnificent raptors and their cultural and ecological significance.”

**Amanda Catto**, **Head of Visual Arts** at **Creative Scotland** said: “Through supporting artists to respond to wildlife and the environment, the *Artful Migration* residency is creating work that connects audiences to the natural world around them.

“Whilst the country has been in lockdown, nature has been thriving and we’re looking forward to seeing how the ecological and cultural significance of these visiting birds of prey is brought to life.”

***About Artful Migration***

This is the second *Artful Migration* residency and is part of a series which began in 2018 at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Caerlaverock centre when Angela Alexander-Lloyd created work based around the annual migration of whooper swans from Iceland to the Solway Firth.

*Artful Migration* has been set up to:

* encourage and support artists, including young and emerging artists to create work informed by wildlife, the natural world, the environment and climate change
* increase interpretation opportunities at wildlife reserves in Dumfries and Galloway
* create new and exciting work around particular birds and scientific research
* develop a programme of creative activities for groups and individuals
* connect with international partners or artists along migratory routes.

Upland has been involved in previous wildlife initiatives and ran a project in which young people worked with ecological building designer Sam Booth to create a new bird hide at the RSPB Scotland reserve at Crook of Baldoon, near Wigtown.

* See the Upland website at [www.weareupland.com](http://www.weareupland.com).

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**Notes for editors**

**About John Wallace**

* John makes installations and films that explore our human relationships with different aspects of made and natural environments.
* He likes to focus on places where he has a lived experience of the area or activity under study.
* John collaborates with scientists, academics, educators, technical specialists, other artists and all kinds of people I find along the way.
* He is a founding director of the annual [D-Lux Festival of Light-based Art](http://www.d-lux.org.uk).
* His Roadspace installation at the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh won the RSA Morton Award 2018.
* See <https://www.johnwallaceartist.co.uk>.

**About NTS Threave Garden and Estate**

* Threave Garden and Estate is one south-west Scotland’s most popular visitor attractions, welcoming over 100,000 people in 2019.
* The estate comprises Threave Garden, home to NTS School of Heritage Gardening (est. 1960), Scotland’s only bat reserve, extensive walks and woodlands, scheduled ancient monuments, including the picturesque Threave Castle, which is at the heart of the RAMSAR, SSSI, SPA designated Threave Nature Reserve and Wetlands on the banks of the Galloway Dee.
* The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland’s heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.
* From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. If you would like to join or donate to help them do their vital work, please go to [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

**About Moving Souls Dance**

* Moving Souls Dance was set up in 2017 to combine the skills and experiences of its directors, Ginnie Wollaston and Nicholas Paton Philip.
* Ginnie has worked with professional dance companies as a practitioner (Second Stride, Extemporary Dance Theatre, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company) and within the funding system as Dance Officer (Arts Council West Midlands) and Cultural Officer (Birmingham City Council). She is now an independent producer offering professional support services to artists to facilitate a step change in their careers.
* Nicholas has worked in the social care sector for 30 years, from adult mental health and mediation to residential setting with young people and as a social worker for children in care. His experiences are grounded in therapeutic management and creative group work. Nicholas is an ICF approved life coach offering one to one sessions.
* Moving Souls produce artists who want to extend their skills in directing, choreography, performance and present their work for touring and work with promoters and programmers to find ways for audiences to engage with the artists and their work.
* The company partners with arts organisations to co-create participatory projects with young people and communities.
* It provides professional and personal coaching opportunities for artists to develop participatory and teaching skills and engage in meaningful dialogue with communities.
* See <http://movingsouls.dance>.

**About Creative Scotland**

* Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here.  We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life.  We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. For further information about Creative Scotland please visit [www.creativescotland.com](http://www.creativescotland.com). Follow us @creativescots and [www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland](http://www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland).

**About Upland**

Upland CIC (Community Interest Company) supports artists and makers based in, and with connections to, the region. It will delivers, events, training, networking, support and opportunities as part of a year-round programme to benefit the region, its artists, communities and economy. Upland CIC runs the annual Spring Fling contemporary visual art and craft open studios weekend in Dumfries and Galloway. It will work closely with other arts bodies in the region to further-strengthen the sector. Upland is based at Gracefield Arts Centre in Dumfries and exists to:

* produce and deliver festivals, events, and experimental projects of the highest quality
* nurture an environment where artistic excellence thrives and grows
* inspire and educate a wide range of audiences, customers and clients to understand, celebrate, be actively engaged in and supportive of visual art and craft practice
* raise the profile of visual artists and makers locally, nationally and internationally fulfilling a crucial role in the culture and tourism of Dumfries and Galloway
* build strategic partnerships at regional, national and international level
* maintain a financially sound and adaptively resilient organisation
* use, and encourage the use of, innovative and emerging digital technology
* work to the benefit the local economy and the sustainability of local communities.

Its funders are Creative Scotland, D&G Council, The Holywood Trust, The William Grant Foundation, The Heritage Lottery Fund, ASWT, Barfill.

For media information contact Matthew Shelley on 07786 704299 or at Mjhshelley@hotmail.co.uk or call Upland on 01387 213 218.

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