

CULTURE SHED

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CULTURE SHED

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ALEX POOTS NAMED FOUNDING CEO AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF CULTURE SHED

*CEO and Artistic Director of Manchester International Festival, Artistic Director of Park Avenue Armory
Appointed to Lead Culture Shed*

New York, NY – Culture Shed, the new center for artistic and cultural innovation in New York City, announced today it has appointed Alex Poots as CEO and Artistic Director. Poots brings an unparalleled reputation for ambitious, wide-ranging arts programming and dynamic cultural leadership to Culture Shed, which is now under construction on Manhattan's far West Side at the intersection of the High Line and Hudson Yards.

"Culture Shed will be a purpose-built international center for artistic and cultural innovation," said **Alex Poots, CEO and Artistic Director-Designate of Culture Shed**. "Our goal is to support artists and creative minds to develop and evolve their practice, welcoming the widest audience. It's an honor to accept this once-in-a-generation opportunity."

Poots will assume a full time role at Culture Shed in September 2015, and will immediately begin to build the organization's staff and plan its inaugural programming. Poots currently serves as CEO and Artistic Director of the Manchester International Festival (MIF), which he has built in just nine years from a start-up into the world's leading commissioning festival of original, new work and special events. Alongside his work for MIF, Alex has acted as Artistic Director for the 2013, 2014 and 2015 seasons at the Park Avenue Armory.

Poots also acts as external Arts advisor to the BBC, and previously held positions as Artistic Advisor to the London 2012 Olympic Games cultural festival; Director of Contemporary Arts at the English National Opera (ENO); and co-creator and programmer for Tate Modern and Tate Britain's first live event series. (See bio to follow)

“Culture Shed began with a vision for a new kind of cultural space in New York City, a forward-looking institution that responds to the needs of artists and creative industries,” said **Dan Doctoroff, Chairman of the Board of Culture Shed**. “No one is more suited than Alex Poots to transform these aspirations into a vital and compelling artistic vision for Culture Shed.”

Enabled by its unique combination of infinitely flexible spaces of varying scales, Culture Shed's mission is to commission, program and present innovative work – generated internationally, nationally and locally – across the spectrum of arts, culture and the creative industries. It will also provide a creative context and facility for like-minded artists, companies and presenters. Culture Shed will work closely with leading artists and organizations from around the world, including those from New York City.

Construction is underway on the foundation of Culture Shed, with full construction to begin in mid-2015. The project is anticipated to be completed and ready for opening in 2018.

“We envisioned Culture Shed as open infrastructure, capable of responding to a limitless array of creative desires with agility,” said **Liz Diller of Diller Scofidio + Renfro and David Rockwell of Rockwell Group, the architects of Culture Shed**. “Alex has a great feel for the building as a toolkit for innovative programming across arts and culture.”

Culture Shed will also welcome the widest range of innovative creative industries, from film, fashion and video to performing arts, culinary arts, music and publishing. The venue includes three museum-quality, world-class gallery spaces.

“Under Alex's leadership, Culture Shed will bring the world's boldest, most innovative artists and creative partners together under one roof. This incredible addition to New York City's artistic and cultural offerings will ensure that our city continues leading and evolving,” said **Diane von Furstenberg, Board Member of Culture Shed**.

Poots offered a glimpse of his vision in initial conversations about Culture Shed. “Culture Shed presents a vital opportunity to offer leading artists, innovators and creative minds from far and near, a uniquely accommodating environment in which to realize their most ambitious work.”

For more information, visit **www.nyccultureshed.org**

CULTURE SHED

ALEX POOTS BIOGRAPHY

Alex Poots is the CEO & Artistic Director of Culture Shed, effective September 2015. Alex is currently the founding CEO & Artistic Director of the Manchester International Festival (MIF) and the Artistic Director of the Park Avenue Armory.

As founding CEO & Artistic Director, Alex conceived of and established the Manchester International Festival (MIF) in 2005, the world's first commissioning festival of original, new work and special events. This biennial three-week festival was launched in 2007 as an artist-led event, presenting new works from across the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts, and popular culture. MIF now has a \$19 million festival budget, \$4.5 million in private sector sponsorship (the largest amount for a UK festival), and a \$50 million economic impact for the city. More than 246,000 people attended MIF in 2013; that year, The New Yorker called MIF "*probably the most radical and important arts festival today.*"

MIF artistic highlights include Steve McQueen's *Queen and Country*; Group show *Il Tempo del Postino*, including works by Carsten Höller, Tacita Dean and Matthew Barney; Kanye West; Punchdrunk and Adam Curtis' *It Felt Like A Kiss*; Kraftwerk's 3D production + new work by Steve Reich; Zaha Hadid's temporary concert hall for JS Bach's solo works; Carlos Acosta - ballet works; *The Life and Death of Marina Abramović*, with Robert Wilson, Marina, Antony Hegarty and Willem Dafoe; the group show *11 Rooms*, featuring artists such as John Baldessari, Cao Fei, Roman Ondák and Tino Sehgal; the world premiere of Björk's new work, *Biophilia*, Abida Parveen and Sir John Tavener; Kenneth Branagh's *Macbeth*.

Alongside his work at MIF, Alex was appointed Artistic Director of the Park Avenue Armory in 2011, with a commitment to commissioning and presenting ambitious work specially conceived for this unique New York landmark. Highlights from his first two seasons include Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Oktophonie* in a new setting by Rirkrit Tiravanija; the world première of Paul McCarthy's *White Snow*; the launch of a new recital room featuring artists such as Christian Gerhaher and Igor Levitt; The xx new staged concert.

Alex's roles at the Armory and MIF have facilitated a co-commissioning partnership between these organizations, creating new work such as Massive Attack v Adam Curtis, and Kenneth Branagh's *Macbeth*. Concurrently, Alex was invited by the BBC's Director General in 2014 to be their External Arts Advisor with a specific remit to develop new commissions for BBC Arts and co-commissions with MIF.

In 2010, Alex acted as a part-time Artistic Adviser to the London 2012 Olympic Games cultural festival.

Works co-commissioned for the London 2012 Festival and MIF included Rufus Norris and Damon Albarn's *Dr Dee*, and the children's extravaganza *Music Boxes*. Other commissions included the UK-wide tour of Africa Express with an array of special guests, and Olafur Eliasson's *Little Sun*.

In 2003, he joined English National Opera (ENO) as Director of Contemporary Arts, commissioning events such as *Voices of Central Asia* and ENO's performance of *Die Walküre* (Act III) on Glastonbury Festival's main stage.

Prior to this, Alex established and ran his own programming and producing company from 1996-2003, creating festivals, artistic seasons, and series for a number of arts organizations in London, including co-creating and programming Tate Modern & Tate Britain's first live event series, conceiving of and programming BBC's *Somerset House Series*, and co-creating and programming for London's Barbican.

For more information, visit **www.nyccultureshed.org**

CULTURE SHED

CULTURE SHED is a nonprofit cultural organization in New York City that will be an international center for artistic and cultural innovation. Its commitment to leading artists, as well as an ever-evolving mix of disciplines and audiences, will promote an expansive view of culture rarely seen in a single location – one which aims to redefine how we present and participate in the arts and culture. As the building expands and contracts, it can work in many configurations, welcoming multiple events simultaneously, including performing arts, visual arts exhibitions, public concerts, festivals, film events, literary events, digital expositions, culinary events, fashion events and forms of artistic and cultural innovation we can't yet foresee.

Housed in a technically innovative and remarkably agile 200,000 square foot space on Manhattan's Far West Side, at the intersection of the High Line and Hudson Yards, Culture Shed is expressly designed to accommodate the evolving forms of artistic and cultural expression of the future: innovative, fluid, and technologically enabled. Culture Shed won't have a permanent collection; instead, it will seek to commission, produce, present and collaborate with artists, innovators, institutions, and creative industries across the spectrum of artistic and cultural production. Led by CEO and Artistic Director Alex Poots, construction is underway on the foundation of Culture Shed, with full construction to begin in mid-2015.

OUR MISSION

Enabled by its unique combination of large-scale flexible spaces, Culture Shed's mission is to:

- Provide a center for artistic and cultural innovation for leading artists and cultural partners from around the world
- Present and produce wide-ranging and innovative work, including high quality new productions, exclusive exhibitions, special commissions and carefully curated existing works, alongside thoughtfully chosen co-productions, across the spectrum of the arts and creative industries, with a special emphasis on collaboration among cultural disciplines
- Attract and engage diverse audiences, from across the street and around the world
- Provide and program artistic and cultural activities that don't currently have a venue in New York City
- Work with leading international and NYC-based artists and organizations to complement, enhance and realize their creative visions

WHY CULTURE SHED

Culture Shed is a new kind of venture that responds to today's shifting arts and cultural landscape: the artists and audiences challenging institutional boundaries and definitions around culture; the dissolving distinctions separating art forms; the global networks being created between far-flung destinations; and the new technology supporting it all.

THE BUILDING

Culture Shed's extraordinary building is a collaboration between Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Rockwell Group. Designed with extensive input from artists and cultural leaders, the building is purpose-built for flexibility to accommodate a broad range of activities that can't be staged elsewhere in New York. The building includes 40,000 square feet of museum quality exhibition space and a large telescoping outer shed structure that slides open using industrial crane technology to create an additional 17,000 square feet of tall open space when needed.

For more information, visit **www.nyccultureshed.org**



Alex Poots
CEO and Artistic Director of Culture Shed
Photography by Antony Crook



Aerial View from South with 30th Street Entrance under the Highline

Courtesy of Diller Scofidio + Renfro in collaboration with Rockwell Group



Gallery Interior

Courtesy of Diller Scofidio + Renfro in collaboration with Rockwell Group



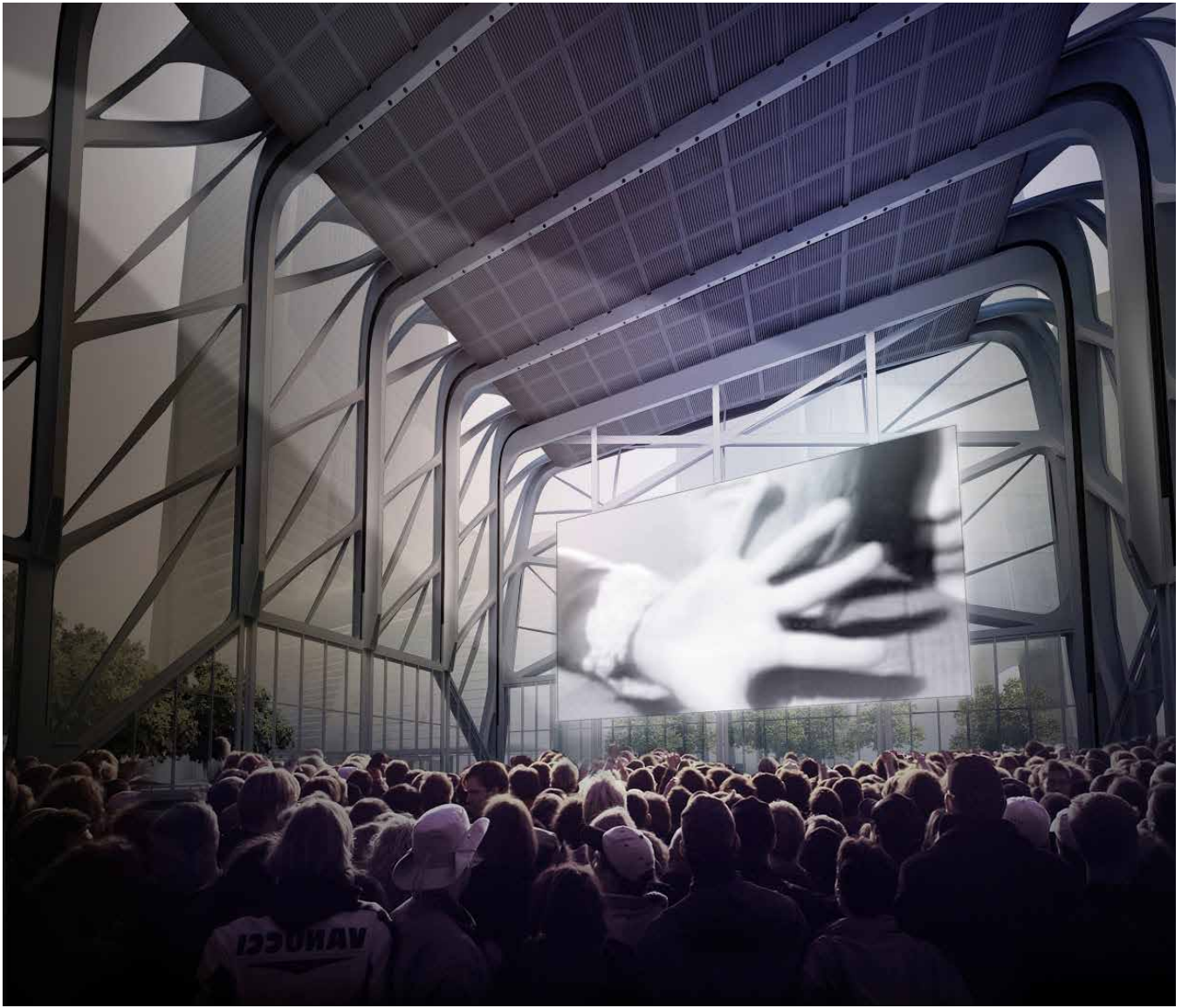
View from North of Nested Shed

Courtesy of Diller Scofidio + Renfro in collaboration with Rockwell Group



View from North of Deployed Shed with Indoor-Outdoor Performance

Courtesy of Diller Scofidio + Renfro in collaboration with Rockwell Group



Shed Interior

Courtesy of Diller Scofidio + Renfro in collaboration with Rockwell Group

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