

SUSPENDED ISLAND

JANE AND LOUISE WILSON

Uncover a lost urban geography as Jane and Louise Wilson question what it means to be Northern, British and living on an island in the current political flux of Brexit.



Life To Live Films



GREAT
EXHIBITION
OF
THE
NORTH

BALTIC



SUSPENDED ISLAND | PRESS KIT

Uncover a lost urban geography as **Jane and Louise Wilson's** video installation questions what it means to be Northern, British and living on an island in the current political flux of Brexit.

Jane and Louise Wilson use film, photography and sculpture to create arresting and atmospheric installations that grapple with often challenging subject matter. *Suspended Island* is their first outdoor commission.

Commissioned by the **BALTIC** for the **Great Exhibition of the North**, Jane and Louise expand upon the idea of a 'Suspended Island', one which hints at the current political flux and the perception of the North East: closer to Scotland but still remaining part of England. This video installation is displayed on two LED screens that run distinct interconnecting footage and accompanied by a sound track which unites the images, installed at Low Yard - part of Trinity House in Newcastle.

Director's Statement

We wanted to expand on the idea of a *Suspended Island* which hints at the current political flux and the perception of the North East; closer to Scotland but still remaining part of England, some might argue, as another island within the island of Great Britain. We aimed to create a publicly sited video installation, which addresses the current state of Britain at this moment of BREXIT. In this current context, the image of the island becomes all the more resonant. We want to consider not only what it means to be British but significantly to be Northern as well.

Using filmed footage we shot in 2004, documenting the now abandoned coastal fortifications on Governors Island off the coast of Manhattan, New York, which was formerly home to the United States Coast Guard before being decommissioned in 1996, *Suspended Island* weaves this together with footage from the Palace of Westminster, **Parliament**, as well as animation featuring artefacts from **Trinity House**, and a newly commissioned text by **Vesna Maric** who came to the UK as a refugee from Bosnia Herzegovina in 1992. The soundtrack riffs with the Calvinist hymn "We've Sighted the Golden Gate" taken from a 1948 recording sung by artist's grandmother and her siblings.



The location of this work is significant. Set back from Newcastle Quayside, at Low Yard, part of Trinity House, which was established 500 years ago. A Royal Charter was granted by Henry VIII to the Corporation of Trinity House in 1514, and it has been concerned with the safety of shipping and the well-being of seafarers ever since. Ships and seafarers all over the world depend upon Trinity House's reliable aids to navigation, for their safe passage into the UK's ports and harbours. Its first charter permitted the Brethren of Trinity House to levy dues on ships trading into the River Tyne, at the rate of two pence per English ship and four pence per foreign ship. The image of the Brethren and the importance of the lights come together on a personal and biographical level in the form of the family recording made of the evangelical song in 1930. The lyrics describe the guiding lights towards the golden gate of the shore and to safety.

We are particularly interested in what happens when the geography of a location takes on a porous identity, or becomes a place outside its own border and, in particular, this idea of "the suspended island". This image of an island- as something that is at once cut off and yet connected - is particularly resonant, raising questions of what it means to be British.



The Team

OHNA | **PRODUCER**



JANE AND LOUISE | **DIRECTORS**



VESNA | **WRITER**



Jane and Louise Wilson have been working as an artist duo in collaboration for over two decades. They Graduated in 1989 with a joint degree show in Dundee and Newcastle, then continued in a working collaboration through their postgraduate at Goldsmiths College, graduating in 1992. Since 1990, they have gained a national and international reputation as artists working with photography and the moving image, installation in an expanded form of cinema and lens based media. Their early works centred on abandoned buildings, often imbued with the presence and ideology of the original occupants. Through carefully choreographed film installations, sound works and photography they have explored some of Europe's least accessible sites, including former Stasi Prison in former East Berlin, the British Houses of Parliament and the huge Star City complex in Moscow, a key site of the Russian Space Programme. As well as exhibiting widely in international group shows, The Wilson Sisters have held exhibitions in the UK and internationally all over the world. A full bio is available on request.

Ohna Falby has collaborated with Jane and Louise on previous films including [Toxic Camera](#) (2012), [Undead Sun](#) (2014), and [We Put the World Before You](#) (2016). Together they have shown at international film festivals such as Rotterdam, Oberhausen, Indielisboa and Villa du Conde. Check out the Life to Live Films website to discover more about the talent she collaborates with, their films and awards. She is known for discovering distinctive emerging talent, through insightful dedicated development work.

Vesna Maric was born in Mostar in 1976. When she was sixteen she left Bosnia-Herzegovina and travelled to the UK, an experience she tells in her best-selling novel 'Bluebird: A Memoir' for which she was on the long list for an Orwell Prize for literature in 2010. She lived in Hull and Exeter, and studied Czech literature at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London before working for the BBC World

Service. She is now a travel writer and journalist who has worked for Lonely Planet, Timeout and BBC Online. Vesna is currently writing her first novel.

Daniel Goddard who edited, scored and oversaw the post process is a frequent collaborator on Jane and Louise's work. He is known for his extensive work on pop promos and big band documentaries for the likes of [Depeche Mode](#) and [U2](#), as well as groundbreaking artist documentary work such as [The Arbor](#) (Clio Barnard) and [Self-Made](#) (Gillian Wearing).

Sam Hope and **Steven Payne** at [Picasso Pictures](#) collaborated on the animation work.

Felix Young provided graffiti designs and graphics.

[Gwyn Evans](#) was our amazing colourist and **Ben Young** of [Young and Young](#) was our illustrious sound re-recording mixer.

And **Katherine Welsh** and **Adrianne Murray-Neil**, the team at [BALTIC](#) who commissioned and curated the exhibition as part of The Great Exhibition of the North

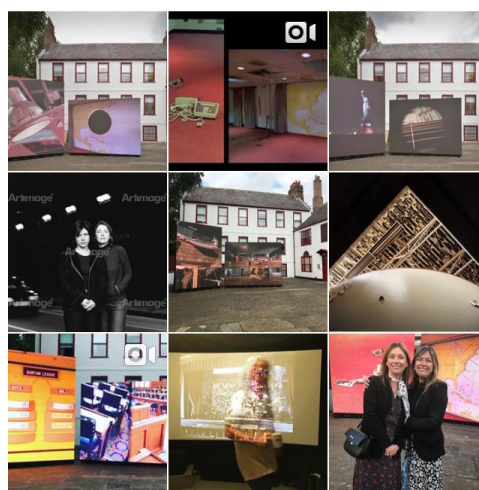
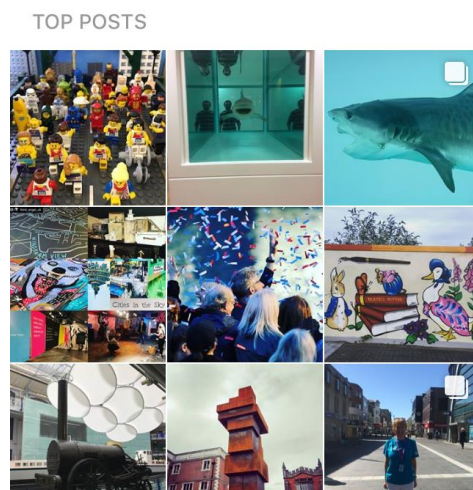


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For more information on upcoming projects and the festival journey for Suspended Island check out the [Life to Live Films website](#). Or for more information on Jane and Louise look at [The Baltic](#) and [303 Gallery](#).

