

News release

To be released: Immediately
Date: 1 October 2008

'Little White Feather and the Hunter' – a new film by artist Anna Lucas
First UK screening 10 October 2008 at 6.00pm
Harwich Electric Palace Cinema, Kings Quay Street, Essex, CO12 3ER

Following an encounter with a lute-playing Pocahontas enthusiast in Essex during the summer of 2007, artist Anna Lucas travelled around Virginia, USA in the autumn of 2007 using the legendary figure of Pocahontas as a virtual guide. The ensuing single screen film 'Little White Feather and the Hunter' (40 colour stereo HDV 16:9) interweaves multiple accounts of the Pocahontas story gathered from amateurs and experts in Harwich, Essex and around Jamestown, Virginia. These voices are accompanied by images of hunting and fishing and the haunting estuary landscapes of Essex and Chesapeake Bay. The film also features shanties and specially written folksongs by American singer Dani Siciliano and rising folk-inspired singer Mara Carlyle. The film is accompanied by a publication and DVD with an essay by curator and critic Lisa LeFeuvre.

Lucas uses the iconic figure of Pocahontas as a protagonist for discovering contemporary realities in Essex and Virginia and to explore how our understanding of the world and historical events are assimilated through museums, fiction, documentary films and oral narratives. Lucas's filming style, though almost always within a documentary context, is often quite formal and cinematic, playing in subtle ways with audience uncertainty about what is real or fictional. The story of Pocahontas has been told and re-told through history, and many versions of the truth are now circulating.

This film presents academic and personal accounts of episodes in the life of Pocahontas including interviews with a Chelmsford anthropologist, Jamestown archaeologist, ancestors of Powhatan tribe and other people of both communities randomly encountered en route. The work navigates the delicate and passionate opinions of these diverse storytellers, without attempting to uphold factual accuracy, but instead revealing different forms of truth and knowledge.

'Little White Feather and the Hunter' will be screened at the Virginia Film Festival in the USA on 1 November 2008 (www.vafilm.com) and will be featured in the Vertigo film magazine launch at the Curzon Soho on 10 November 2008.

'Little White Feather and the Hunter' was commissioned by Essex County Council in partnership with Commissions East with funding from Arts Council England, East in commemoration of the American connections between Essex and Virginia, USA and is part of the Jamestown 400 anniversary of the first permanent English speaking settlement in North America.

To attend the first UK screening on 10 October 2008 at 6.00pm at the Harwich Electric Palace Cinema, Kings Quay Street, Essex, CO12 3ER, please contact Hannah Thomas on hannah@commissionseast.org.uk.

For more information contact:

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Editors notes:

1. Pocahontas

Although she was not the first Native American to reach British shores, Pocahontas was a significant figure within the early history of British settlement in America. She was the daughter of the Chief Powhatan and acted as translator and mediator between the new settlers and the Native Americans, and eventually converted to Christianity and married the tobacco businessman John Rolfe in 1614. Between 1616 and 1617 she and John lived in England with their son but on the journey back to Virginia she died aged 22 and was buried at Gravesend in Kent. It is uncertain whether or not Pocahontas (also known as Rebecca after her baptism) would have visited Essex, but the links between Essex and contemporary Native Americans of Virginia are strongly recognised. Chief Anne of the Powhatan tribe today sees Essex as her mother county. Pocahontas is a distinct female figure within the dominantly male early settlers of America and embodies the connection formed between England and America after 1607.

2. Anna Lucas

Anna Lucas is a London based artist film-maker who makes work that develops observations of social networks and group dynamics in response to specific geographic and architectural locations. Her work Here and Your Here has been shown at FACT, Liverpool, with previous solo shows Adrift at Chisenhale Gallery, London, Bud, Spike Island, Bristol and at Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne. She recently curated Land of Silence and Darkness, a series of events around visual perception as part of a Wellcome Trust Fellowship at Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art and the School of School of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics at Oxford University, UK.

3. Commissions East

Commissions East is one of the UK's leading public art agencies. It works in partnership with the public and private sectors to develop and deliver outstanding visual arts projects that define places, unite people and challenge perceptions.

Commissions East

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