

**PRESS RELEASE: 26 February 2021**

***GHOSTS***

Written and directed by **Adura Onashile**

With **Niroshini Thambar** (Sound Designer and Composer), **Adebusola Ramsay** (Researcher), **Bright Side Studios** (Immersive Media Artists), **Zo*ë* Charlery** (Creative Researcher), **Claricia Parinussa** (Associate Producer).

Cast: **Reuben Joseph,** **Lisa Livingstone, Simon Donaldson** and **Fiona MacNeil**

**Available for download from 12 - 25 April 2021 (subject to COVID regulations in Scotland)**

A young man in 18th Century Glasgow, leads us on a powerful journey of over 500 years of resistance through the streets of the Merchant City down to the River Clyde.

Audiences are invited to download a bespoke app, to plug in their headphones, and immerse themselves in this AR experience exploring the myth of the collective amnesia of slavery and racialised wealth, of empire and identity, and of being lost and found in space and time.

Using visuals and sound design, ***Ghosts*** will take audiences on a physical and emotional journey, walking through the heart of modern Glasgow. A lament to lives lost and an impassioned call to action in the present day.

Lead artist Adura Onashile has worked with researcher Adebusola Ramsay, composer Niroshini Thambar, historian Dr Peggy Brunache and developers at immersive design outfit Bright Side Studios to explore the legacies of Glasgow’s past through augmented reality to tell an urgent and essential story about the city.

The story at the heart of ***Ghosts*** was inspired by adverts placed in newspapers for the capture of escaped enslaved people in Glasgow and the rest of Scotland in the 17th and 18th centuries. These adverts have been collated in the “Runaway” Slavery project, which has seen the creation of a searchable archive of hundreds of real newspaper advertisements that were published by the city’s slave-owners seeking, and often rewarding, the capture and return of the enslaved people who had escaped their service.

**Lead Artist Adura Onashile:**

*“The young man that audiences will follow is our attempt to make real, over 500 years of history, rebellion, resistance and protest. When enslaved Africans liberated themselves from their masters, they started a process that continues today.*

*We don't know what happened to him, and history hasn't afforded him a name or presence, but this is our attempt at saying that he existed, and though we can’t be sure whether he ever found the refuge he was seeking, this is our attempt to put his ghost to rest."*

Glasgow has begun to acknowledge its former ties to the slave trade. Last year the University of Glasgow became one of the first educational institutions in the United Kingdom to attempt to openly atone for its historical links to the slave trade, announcing that it would pay £20 million as part of a restorative justice scheme.

Adura Onashile has been developing the idea for ***Ghosts*** for about seven years. She had always envisioned it as an intimate project that would involve walking through Glasgow’s built heritage.

More recently the use of phones in ***Ghosts***, through which audiences will experience the work, has become more prescient, with smartphones having become instrumental both as tools of protest and in galvanising of social justice movements across the world.

Adura Onashile is an award-winning Glasgow based writer, actor and director whose work is known to Scottish audiences, and has toured to India, Brazil, Trinidad, Jamaica, South Africa, Zimbabwe and New Zealand. Her debut as a film maker, *Expensive Shit,* premiered at the BFI London Film Festival 2020 and is showing as part of the Glasgow Film Festival from 5 to 8 March 2021.

***Ghosts*** is also creatively supported by Alberta Whittle as Research Artist Consultant, Zoë Charlery as Creative Researcher and Claricia Parinussa as Associate Producer.

**HOW TO ACCESS GHOSTS**

**Dates:** 12 to 25 April ***Ghosts*** can be downloadedfrom either the App Store for Apple or Google Play for Android devices.

**Price**: £4.99

**Minimum mobile specs:** iPhone 6S and above and Android 7 and above. Fully charged battery required

**Running Time:** approx one hour

**Access:** route is accessible for wheelchair users. Details of accessible versions will be available on nationaltheatrescotland.com in April.

**Preview access**: for preview access to the app please contact Emma or Jane – details below.

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**NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND PRESS OFFICE CONTACTS:**

**Emma Schad – Head of Communications** [emma.schad@nationaltheatrescotland.com](mailto:emma.schad@nationaltheatrescotland.com)

Tel: +44 (141) 227 9016 M: +44 (0)7930 308018

**Jane Hamilton – Media & Communications –** [jane.hamilton@nationaltheatrescotland.com](mailto:joe.blythe@nationaltheatrescotland.com)

M: +44(0)7967 742491

[**Press Images: available from dropbox**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/elerjhl7sqcd443/AACahMv_s5hS6O9KpXhrbLnya?dl=0)

**Artist biogs**

**Zoë Charlery**

Curator, Producer for Movement and Performance artist Claricia Parinussa, Researcher of Black Diasporic Visual Culture, Critical Race Theory and Post-Colonial Studies, Committee member of Transmission Gallery. Zoë is currently undertaking an MSc researching the oeuvre of Maud Sulter, a Scottish contemporary fine artist, poet, writer, curator and educator of Ghanaian heritage. Weaving Queer Post-Black Theory, Hauntology and Black Feminist Critique within their analysis. Since February 2020 Zoë has been a committee member of artist led initiative,Transmission Gallery and a Producer to Scottish based contemporary performance artist, Claricia Parinussa. Zoë recently completed a curatorship with Africa in Motion for the film festival in 2019 and has worked as a curator for Historic Environment Scotland. 

**Simon Donaldson** trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Recent theatre credits – *Ali the Magic Elf* (Tron Theatre), *What Girls Are Made Of* (RAW Material/Traverse) *Ballyturk* (Tron) *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* (Eastern Angles) *When the Penny Drops, Dusty Won’t Play, Thoughts Spoken Aloud from Above, Lovesick Blues: The Hank Williams Story* (Oran Mor), *Hello Dolly, Present Laughter, A Chorus of Disapproval, Lady Windemeres Fan* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre), *Tam O’Shanter, Zlata’s Diary* (Communicado), *The Not So Fatal Death of Grandpa Fredo* (Vox Motus), *The Adventures of Robin Hood, The Spokesman, Jason and the Argonauts, Big Baby, The Curse of the Demeter*(Visible Fictions), *Elf Analysis, Turbo Folk, 200, The Ching Room* (Oran Mor) and *Fly* (Liverpool Everyman) Recent Radio credits – *Lamentation, Weir of Hermiston, The Lexicon of Murder, For the Love of Leo, Pillow Book, Nest Eggs, Paul Temple, Sullom Voe, McLevy, The Pearl, Rebus, Maigret, The Heart of Midlothian, Dr Korczak’s Example, Westway, Book at Bedtime* and the *I-dent* for BBC Radio 4 extra. TV/Film Credits – *Outlander, Andrew Marr’s Great Scots: The Writers Who Shaped a Nation, Outpost 2: Black Sun, Behold Me Standing, Sunsets and Silhouettes* and *No More Shall We Part.*

**Reuben Joseph** trained at Glasgow Clyde College and graduated in 2018. Theatre credits include: *Rapunzel, The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil, Midsummer* (National Theatre Scotland); *Sinbad* (Perth Theatre); *How Not to Drown* (ThickSkin); *Anything That Gives Off Light* (The TEAM); *A Christmas Carol* (Citizens Theatre); *Arsenic and Old Lace, The Hobbit, Animal Farm, The Day the Whores Came Out to Play Tennis, Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Glasgow Clyde College), *We’re Here Because We’re Here* (National Theatre Scotland/ NOW 14-18), *The Island* (Platform Young Company). Radio credits include: *Fissures, This Thing of Darkness, The Kids Table* (BBC).

**Lisa Livingstone** trained at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, where she received the Lawrence Olivier Bursary Award in 2004. Recent television credits include *Vigil, The Nest, The Demon Headmaster, The Farm, The Loch* (ITV Studios) and *Trust Me* (BBC) Lisa has also played guest roles for the BBC in *Holby City, Lip Service, Gil Mayo Murder Mysteries, Sea of Souls, Waking the Dead* and *Mind Away* by Jackie Kay for Sky Arts. Film credits include *Born to Run* (Barry Crerar), In the Spider’s Web by Terry Windsor, Redwood Massacre and House of Shadows, both by David Keith. Theatre credits include Straw Girl, Adoption Papers, and Children’s Hour all for the Royal Exchange Manchester. Radio includes *The Ladies Room* (BBC Radio) and The Colour Purple for BBC Radio 4.

**Fiona MacNeil** Fiona, originally from the Isle of Barra in Outer Hebrides, trained at the Manchester Metropolitan University’s School of Theatre (MMU) where she was awarded a Laurence Olivier Bursary.Theatre Credits include: *Descent* (Edinburgh Fringe/Scottish Tour/ Oran Mòr/Traverse) *Descent* was nominated for a CATS Award 2016 and won a Sprit of the Fringe Award 2017. Other theatre includes: *Never Land* (Eden Court Scottish Tour dir. Jimmy Yuill) *Shame* (Digital Cast. Edinburgh Festival Assembly Rooms)Radio Credits Include: *The Cairn* (BBC Radio Drama)

**Adura Onashile** is an award-winning Glasgow based artist. She has been a part of the British Council Edinburgh Showcase and has worked with companies such as Untitled Projects, Royal Shakespeare Company, Young Vic, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Chicago Shakespeare Company and St Anne’s Warehouse, New York. She has premiered two productions, *HeLa* and *Expensive S\*\*t* at The Edinburgh fringe festival, winning a Fringe First, Edinburgh Guide Best Scottish Contribution to Drama and TOTAL and Amnesty nominations. Both shows toured nationally and internationally supported by the British Council ad Creative Scotland. Her inquiry into the contexts in which she makes and tours work as a Black artist in Scotland, led to a series of discussions titled “Empowering Change: Discussions on Art, Race and Privilege”. Named number 10 in The List magazine 2018 HOT 100, she was described as "creating politically charged and provocative work, Onashile is proving that she simply cannot be ignored". Her debut as a filmmaker, short film, *Expensive S\*\*t,* will premiere at the London Film Festival 2020 as part of the UK FOCUS strand. She is developing new work across Theatre, Film and Television and is a recipient of the Channel 4 playwright bursary.

Immersive Media Artists **Bright Side Studios** design illusionary experiences that bring stories of all sorts to vibrant life. They deliver their art using technologies such as motion capture, projection-mapping, augmented reality and VR. Playing with the senses, they dynamically engage with audiences across both the cultural and commercial world. The studio was founded in 2015 by digital artists Susanna Murphy and Cristina Spiteri.Their work includes: Elemental, a magical multi-sensory journey of discovery for Edinburgh International

Science Festival. Strange Tales《聊斋》, illusionary projections for an immersive theatre production from Grid Iron & Traverse Theatre. Message from the Skies, an immersive city-wide experience, using landmarks around the capital as a canvas for storytelling, for Underbelly, Edinburgh's Hogmanay 2019 & 2020. Invisible Landscapes of Music, a film and augmented reality experience, commissioned by Alt-W for Aberdeen Music Hall. Visions of Remembrance, a historical, audio visual, storytelling experience for Aberdeen Art Gallery. Abstraction, a collaboration with award-winning, contemporary dance choreographer, the late Janis Claxton, using motion capture techniques to translate dance into emotional VR and immersive audience experiences, supported by Creative Scotland, featured on BBC Taster, and exhibited at Custom Lane. Bud; animated/interactive storytelling, for the traveling educational museum, sharing stories of reflection and hope, for PoppyScotland.

**Claricia Parinussa** is a performance artist, producer and facilitator. Her practice is rooted in body based research, currently considering caretaking in interrogative processes. She works with producers Zoë Charlery and Natasha Ruwona under ID.Y; an evolving project of collaborative research, artist development and events aiming to centre and advocate for queer, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. She is currently producer at Tramway and BUZZCUT, works independently with Palestinian choreographer Farah Saleh and is a core member of V/DA multidisciplinary collective. Previous work with NTS includes Co-Director on *Chronicles* (2018) in Edinburgh National Museum with Thulani Rachia and Project X; and *One Day to Pla*y (Just Start Here 2018) with Hannan Jones, curated by Ashanti Harris and Ray Camara.

**Adebusola Ramsay,** an abstract artist, whose practice has been developing for over two decades, and recently began exhibiting and collaborating with other artists in the last two years. In tandem with painting, over the last 6 years, she has been researching the history of chattel slavery, processes of racism and racialisation, resistance and rebellion to antiblack racism. Between 2016 and 2018, during Black History Month, co-led walking tours through Glasgow highlighting the historical links between city’s legacy, built heritage and transatlantic slave trade, colonisation and empire. Delivered presentations and participated in discussions with historians and other artists to bring awareness of these histories. Role on Ghosts is as researcher and dramaturg.

**Niroshini Thambar** is a musician, composer and sound designer for theatre and installation, with a particular interest in creating work around identity, belonging and connection to land. She has previously worked with National Theatre of Scotland as co-sound designer on *Chronicles* (NTS/Project X/Thulani Rachia) for the Futureproof Festival, composer for the Scenes for Survival short *The One With the Lockdown,* and was a Starter Artist in 2018, using the residency to develop ideas for new work. Niroshini has also collaborated with a range of companies and artists including Dundee Rep, Annie George, Imaginate, Mara Menzies, Solar Bear, Ailie Cohen Puppets, TAG Citizen’s Theatre, Iron Oxide, Edinburgh Mela, Vision Mechanics, Jabuti Theatre, Scottish Youth Theatre, Curious Monkey, and Frozen Charlotte. Her audio-visual installations include *Transmission*, engaging with aging, memory and creativity; *Memory Box*, exploring Sri-Lankan diaspora history and shifting identities; *trans:migration*, inspired by the work of Scots naturalist John Muir and connection to nature. Niroshini has worked as a session musician on violin and keyboards, performing on the UK festival and live circuit, and recording on album releases. She is experienced in devising and leading inclusive music and sound-led creative projects with schools and community groups, and also has an MSc in Human Ecology from the University of Edinburgh where her interdisciplinary research interests were in ecofeminism, music/creative arts and socio-ecological justice. Recent and current projects include a 2020 micro-commission from Magnetic North Theatre, music and sound design for *Here* (Curious Monkey/Northern Stage) and *Ghosts* (NTS), and soundtrack development for the film *The Album* (BOFA Productions) from documentary filmmaker Sana Bilgrami. Website: [www.niroshinithambar.com](http://www.niroshinithambar.com/)

**Notes for Editors**

**The National Theatre of Scotland** is dedicated to playing the great stages, arts centres, village halls, schools and site-specific locations of Scotland, the UK and internationally. As well as creating ground-breaking productions and working with the most talented theatre-makers, the National Theatre of Scotland produces significant community engagement projects, innovates digitally and works constantly to develop new talent. Central to this is finding pioneering ways to reach current and new audiences and to encourage people’s full participation in the Company’s work. With no performance building of its own, the Company works with existing and new venues and companies to create and tour theatre of the highest quality. Founded in 2006, the Company, in its short life, has become a globally significant theatrical player, with an extensive repertoire of award-winning work. The National Theatre of Scotland is supported by the Scottish Government. [www.nationaltheatrescotland.com](http://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/)

