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## Dramatic changes for Newlyn Art Gallery result in significant new art spaces for Cornwall

A £4m scheme for the extension of **Newlyn Art Gallery** and the development of **The Exchange**, a stunning new art space in the heart of Penzance will launch on **Saturday 7 July 2007**. Both venues will open with major international projects by artists Christine Borland, Hassan Hajjaj and Eloisa Cartonera, as part of *social systems*, a multi-site exhibition curated by ProjectBase.

Newlyn Art Gallery and The Exchange will commission and present the best of national and international contemporary art, including artists from the region. In addition to delivering programmes across three exhibition spaces in two venues, they also plan a stimulating off-site commissions programme.

Behind a dramatic undulating glass façade, The Exchange has the largest single contemporary exhibition space within 180 miles, enabling audiences to see projects on a scale new to the region. Learning and inclusion are at the heart of the operation, so both venues also boast dedicated education spaces, providing a new capacity to connect the work of leading practitioners with local and regional audiences.

The architects for the scheme, MUMA have developed remarkable solutions to the challenges posed by each site. In Newlyn they have developed a new two storey pavilion on the seaward side of the existing building which accommodates the bright new education space, café and bookshop. In Penzance, they have radically transformed the town's former telephone exchange building into a single large and dramatic gallery space with adjoining shop, café and an educational wing with workshop and separate seminar and resource room.

In **Newlyn Art Gallery**, the new Pavilion on the seaward side of the gallery is a glass structure on ground floor level, which supports a first floor clad in wet-laid Cornish slate, a building method specific to the region, but rarely seen in modern buildings. The glass curtain wall allows panoramic views of Newlyn Green and the sea while sliding doors lead to a secluded garden and outdoor seating area. The versatile new Lower Gallery presents small exhibitions, projects and events. Windows provide natural daylight from one end but it can also be portioned off to allow a more intimate space for projections and performances.

The main stairs or new platform lift take visitors to the first floor, to the Upper Gallery refurbished with a pale hardwood floor, lighting and air-handling system. The perfect proportions and basic character remain unchanged. The Victorian lantern that allows natural daylight to fill the gallery is undergoing much-needed renovation. The Education Room on the first floor of the Pavilion has a vast window offering panoramic views across Mounts Bay, as well as a skylight the length of the gabled ceiling, offering a light and welcoming space.

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**The Exchange** has a striking undulating glass façade which runs the entire length of the building, a former telephone exchange. A dramatic, changing light display, designed by Penwith-based artist Peter Freeman illuminates the glass panels according to the exhibitions and time of day and year. At the centre of The Exchange is the large T-shaped Gallery, double the size of Newlyn's. The unique shape and proportions provide a versatile and welcoming showing space. Retaining much of the industrial feel of the original Telephone Exchange, the Gallery is a noticeable contrast to the Victorian Gallery at Newlyn.

The project so far has received £1.65 million Arts Council funding, £1.5 million from Objective One and significant funding has also come from Cornwall County Council, Penwith District Council and has been invested in by the Rural Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Partnership (RCP) through the SW Regional Development Agency Rural Renaissance Initiative.

**James Green, Director of The Exchange and Newlyn Art Gallery** says, "We are witnessing the most dramatic period of change in Newlyn Art Gallery's 112 year history. All of this has been a very long time in the planning and to see these international artists starting to inhabit the galleries and bring their visions to life is really exciting for all involved. We now have the opportunity to present work on a scale never before presented in the region. The gallery space at The Exchange, the largest single exhibition gallery space for over 180 miles, is vast and industrial in feel, contrasting markedly with the refined classical top-lit gallery at Newlyn. Together these galleries provide artists with an extraordinary repertoire of spaces to work with and will bring the best in regional, national and international contemporary art to audiences in the South West."

**Arts Council England, South West Executive Director Nick Capaldi** said, "For many years we've been championing the importance of Newlyn Art Gallery for the promotion of the contemporary visual arts. We're delighted that with our investment, we now have wonderful new gallery spaces of which West Cornwall and the wider region can be justifiably proud. Newlyn Art Gallery and The Exchange create powerful new opportunities to present work of international quality whilst also improving facilities for education and community activity. These are important strands in the Arts Council's ten year strategy to develop the visual arts, 'Turning Point'. These new cultural assets will make a significant contribution to economic regeneration in West Cornwall, ensuring also that Cornwall's reputation for enterprising visual arts activity remains firmly on the international map."

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#### Notes to editors:

**Newlyn Art Gallery** has a 112 year history of developing regionally significant contemporary art projects. Over the past 20 years the level of ambition within the organisation has increased very significantly, to the point now where the gallery consistently delivers nationally significant programmes of exhibitions and education projects. However, the gallery was limited by its existing building, necessitating a redevelopment in order to realise its plans to give local, regional and national audiences access to the very best national and international art.

The project so far has received £1.65 million Arts Council funding. Visit [www.newlynartgallery.co.uk](http://www.newlynartgallery.co.uk)

Newlyn Art Gallery, New Road, Newlyn, TR18 5PZ

The Exchange, Princes Street, Penzance, TR182NL



**ProjectBase** is a contemporary visual arts organisation (with organisational partners including Newlyn Art Gallery, Tate St. Ives and University College Falmouth), a registered charity and not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. ProjectBase commissions internationally established artists to work with local communities to present exciting and innovative projects. It aims to raise the profile of contemporary visual art in Cornwall by working with its partners and other organisations to realise these projects and to make contemporary visual art accessible to a diverse audience. Visit [www.projectbase.org.uk](http://www.projectbase.org.uk)

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