



ATTENBOROUGH CENTRE FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS WELCOMES FOUR LEADING WOMEN IN ARTS LEADERSHIP BACK TO SUSSEX FOR PANEL DEBATE

In anticipation of International Women's Day and to mark the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act - which gave many women the vote in UK for the first time - Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, Brighton, will host a panel debate on women in creative leadership.

Working with the University of Sussex, four influential female alumni will return to the university for the conversation, which takes place on February 28 and will be chaired by ACCA's Creative Director Laura McDermott.

McDermott will be in conversation with **Dr Maria Balshaw** (the first female director in Tate's 120-year history), **Catherine Mayer** (author and co-founder of The Women's Equality Party), **Philippa Gregory** (novelist, broadcaster and philanthropist) and **Helen Pankhurst** (author, activist, great-granddaughter of Emmeline Pankhurst & granddaughter of Sylvia Pankhurst, and ambassador for CARE International).

The panel will share recollections on their contributions to the fields of art and politics and their thoughts on being role models for future female leaders.

Catherine Mayer said, "Our cultural output has the power to drive change or to uphold the status quo, and too often it does the latter. One of the seven core objectives of the Women's Equality Party is 'equal treatment by and in the media' because we cannot have one without the other or reach equality without a media and wider cultural landscape that draws on the talents and perspectives of women in all our diversity. The #MeToo movement has helped to puncture the myth of media, arts and culture as a haven of progressive values in a regressive world, but these testimonies have also showed how much remains to be done to close the gender gap. I am participating in this debate because the best way to celebrate the suffrage centenary is to continue the work. "

Laura McDermott, Creative Director, Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, added, "Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts are delighted to be hosting this event with our colleagues from the University of Sussex alumni team. The four speakers are leaders in their respective fields and will no doubt offer some fantastic insight into their careers to date and on female leadership in the creative, cultural and political sectors, for those in our campus community and beyond."

Event organiser Mary Connolly, Development Manager in the alumni team at the University of Sussex, said, "We are honoured to welcome these outstanding women back to Sussex. They represent the remarkable community of alumni who are making a difference to society, and are an inspiration to our students."

The event takes place on Wednesday 28 February at Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts at 8pm. Tickets are £5/£3.

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For press information contact: Nicola Jeffs – Nicola@attenboroughcentre.com / 01273 678 822

About Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts:

- Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts is a state-of-the-art cultural hub located on the University of Sussex campus. The centre brings the university, local residents and the wider national and international arts communities together through its programme of music, film, dance, installation, performance, discussion and debate.
- The building is a Grade II* listed building designed by Sir Basil Spence and originally opened in 1969. The fully refurbished space contains a flexible 350-seat auditorium, studios for teaching/research/rehearsal, café/bar and social meeting area.
- The Centre is named after Richard Attenborough (former Chancellor at University of Sussex). The programme at the centre is guided by Lord Attenborough's values: human rights, social justice, creative education and access to the arts for all. Formerly known as the Gardner Arts Centre, Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts is now open, following a full refurbishment and installation of brand new lighting, sound and audio-visual equipment. The public areas are fully accessible.
- Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts is led by Creative Director Laura McDermott.

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Box office (open between 10am-4pm Monday to Friday):

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01273 678 822

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Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts
University of Sussex
Gardner Centre Road, Brighton, BN1 9RA