PRESS RELEASE
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Kelly Richardson
Mariner 9

The Spanish City Dome
Whitley Bay
3 August - 19 August 2012
and

LEGION

Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art
Sunderland
5 July – 29 September 2012

International tour 2012 – 2014

One of the leading artists in a new generation working with advanced digital technologies, Kelly Richardson reveals two distinctive presentations of her large-scale highly-charged, hyper-real cinematic installations with *Mariner 9* at The Spanish City Dome in Whitley Bay and *LEGION* at the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art in Sunderland.

Mariner 9 is the first major artist commission by Tyneside Cinema, one of the UK's leading independent cinemas, in partnership with North Tyneside Council, supported using public funding by Arts Council England and sponsored by Creative Studios, part of Tyne Metropolitan College. During *Mariner 9* the Cinema is presenting a programme of films, talks and music events in the Spanish City Dome.

Richardson's works evoke imagined futures for mankind, futures that are both beautiful and unnerving. The 12 metre-long panoramic installation is a minutely detailed battlefield of real and imagined spacecraft amidst a dust storm. Whilst most of the failing, abandoned craft are no more than corroding remains, some still partially function, attempting to find signs of life, and occasionally transmitting data back to a planet where possibly there's no-one left to receive it.

Richardson has taken NASA's own imagery and technical data of the Martian landscape, and combined it with Terragen, a complex scenery generation software used by the film and gaming industries, pushing the software to its limits to create an uber-realistic red planet, minutely replicating its distinctive geology and weather patterns. The opening of *Mariner* 9 also coincides with the landing of NASA's Mars Science Laboratory - known as "Curiosity" - on the red planet at the beginning of August.

Standing very close to the sea, Spanish City has been an iconic feature of the north-east's coastline and culture for over a hundred years, and the raw texture of its darkened interior is the perfect atmospheric setting for Richardson's human-scale version of Mars.

Linda Arkley, Elected Mayor for North Tyneside, said: "I'm delighted that Tyneside Cinema have agreed to work with us to bring the premiere of *Mariner 9* to the Spanish City Dome, which has already been key to other successful art events recently held in the area such as Global Rainbow and Shimmer. It's important we to continue to use the Dome in interesting and exciting ways ahead of Spanish City's regeneration."

Canadian-born Richardson draws on science-fiction cinema, literature and the history of landscape painting in works that interweave fine art, animation, real footage of spectacular natural wildernesses and Hollywood special effects, to create highly sophisticated and immersive works that are realised over several months and sometimes years. She has shown work in Beijing, Gwangju and Busan biennales, the Sundance film festivals of 2009 and 2011 and has exhibited in major museums in the USA and Canada including the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington; Albright-Knox Gallery and Museum, Buffalo; and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montreal and the Art Gallery of Ontario. She currently lives and works in Whitley Bay.

Jon Vincent, Principal and Chief Executive, Tyne Metropolitan College, said: "We are delighted to support Kelly's spectacular *Mariner 9* commission, which will be a real visual encapsulation of digital art and technology. Kelly's work is a real inspiration to other young artists such as those studying at our own centre for Art & Design, The Creative Studios in North Shields. The College is very keen to support and showcase both established and emerging artists across the varied fields of fine art, graphic design, photography, fashion, media and film studies."

Although Richardson has exhibited widely in North America, Asia and Europe, Mariner 9 and the solo survey show *LEGION* at NGCA in Sunderland is the most substantive exhibition of her work to date in the UK, spanning 15 years of her practice and highlighting her extraordinary technical virtuosity. *Exiles of the Shattered Star*, the work that first brought Richardson international recognition, presents the idyll of the Lake District on to which glowing fireballs slowly and persistently rain down. *Leviathan* reveals an alternate futurescape, of bare Cypress trees, semi-submerged in sticky yellow water, the uncertain result of melted ice caps, an oil spill or nuclear disaster.

In *The Great Destroyer*, a major new commission for *LEGION* that has taken five years to complete - an eight-screen installationenvelops the viewer in a dense, seemingly endless forest. The unnerving stillness of the environment highlights the sounds of animals, insects and birds, including the lyrebird, one of nature's mimics. In the lush verdant surroundings, the twenty-first century intrudes as it imitates a car alarm, the clicking of camera shutters, gunshots, and a chainsaw…

For further information, interviews and images please contact Janette Scott Arts PR on +44(0)7966 486156 or janettescottartspr@gmail.com, or Anna Cornelius on Anna.Cornelius@tynesidecinema.co.uk or 0191 227 5528 or for NGCA, Alistair Robinson on ngca@sunderland.gov.uk, 0191 561 8478.

TYNESIDE CINEMA

Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art.

Notes to Editors

1. *Mariner 9*, 3 - 19 August 2012, Spanish City Dome, Whitley Bay, NE26 1LX. For further information on *Mariner 9* and the film and events programme at Tyneside Cinema see www.thepixelpalace.org/mariner9 Admission Free.
LEGION, 5 July – 29 September 2012, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, City Library and Arts Centre, Fawcett Street, Sunderland, SR1 1RE. Telephone +44(0)191 561 8478 or www.ngca.co.uk Admission Free.
LEGION and *Mariner 9* are touring as follows: *LEGION (II)* Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool (does not include *Mariner 9*), 13 October 2012 – 31 March 2013; *LEGION (III)* Towner, Eastbourne, 19 January – 31 March 2013; *LEGION (IV)*, Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York, 15 February – 9 June, 2013; and *LEGION V*, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (Spring 2014); and *Mariner 9*, Laing Art Gallery, June 2014.
Tyneside Cinema is also presenting *Post Apocalypse Now* a season of classic end-of-the-world features co-curated with Richardson and is hosting a series of public events at the Spanish City alongside the exhibition including screening by the Whitley Bay Film Festival.
In parallel to her shows at the NGCA and Spanish City Dome, Richardson presents a new photographic print work - *Orion Tide* - at the National Glass Centre in Sunderland, 1 June – 9 September 2012. National Glass Centre, Liberty Way, Sunderland SR60GL. Telephone: +44(0)191 515 5555 or www.nationalglasscentre.com Admission Free. *Orion Tide (Edition) I & II* are limited edition signed prints developed from *Orion Tide* and available from www.modernempire.co.uk
2. Kelly Richardson was born in 1972 in Ontario, Canada. She studied at Ontario College of Art and Design and gained masters degrees from Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and Newcastle University. Recent solo shows include at Artpace, San Antonio, Texas (2011); Yukon Art Centre, Yukon (2010); Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Quebec (2009) and a two-person show with Mark Napier at Pace Digital Gallery, New York. Recent group shows include with John Gerrard, Simon Faithfull and others at Le Fresnoy, studio des arts contemporains, France (2012); Kulturhuset Stockholm (2012); Edel Assanti, London (2012); *The Cinema Effect: Illusion, Reality and the Moving Image*, Caixaforum, Barcelona (2011); *Videosphere: A New Generation* (2011) at Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York (2011); and White Box, New York (2011). www.kellyrichardson.net
3. Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art presents changing exhibitions of new work by artists from around the world, bringing new art to new audiences. It has a strong reputation for picking the most promising young artists, giving the current Turner Prize nominee Sparatacus Chetwynd her first public show in 2003, and Sam Taylor-Wood her first public gallery show in 1996. http://www.ngca.co.uk
4. Tyneside Cinema is one of the UK's leading independent specialised film and media venues. Alongside its programmes of new world cinema and digital media arts the cinema is also famous as a screen heritage attraction, housed in its spectacular Grade II listed building in the heart of Newcastle. Tyneside Cinema is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation and also receives revenue funding from Newcastle City Council, BFI and Creative England. www.tynesidecinema.co.uk. In 2011 Tyneside Cinema launched its brand new programme of new media art, Pixel Palace: a digital arts programme that supports artists in the creation of new work. By reflecting on the key features of cinema including narrative, moving image and immersion, Pixel Palace experiments with new approaches to making work as well as creating opportunities for dialogue and engagement between artists and audiences. Pixel Palace is supported using public funds by Arts Council England, and also receives funding from the Northern Rock Foundation. www.thepixelpalace.org
5. North Tyneside Council commissions and supports innovative, site-specific arts projects in the borough. Recent projects at the coast include: "Diversión" by Novak Collective, a digital animated projection onto the exterior of the Spanish City Dome, commissioned and premiered in 2010; "Shimmer", a series of newly-commissioned installations on the Whitley Bay seafront in November 2011, a Finalist in the 'Best Event – Tyneside' category at the Journal Culture Awards 2011; and the UK premiere of Yvette Mattern's laser artwork "Global Rainbow", projected from St Mary's headland in Whitley Bay and seen nearly 60 miles away in North Yorkshire. www.northtyneside.gov.uk/arts