

Dr Rob La Frenais
Bio and CV December 2015
Born, London 1951

Summary

Rob La Frenais is an experienced independent curator, writer and lecturer. He has been working as a curator since 1987, working internationally and creatively with artists entirely on original commissions. He believes in being directly engaged with the artist's working process as far as possible, while actively widening the context within which the artist can work.

From 1997 - 2014 he was curator of the art-science organisation The Arts Catalyst, a UK Arts Council National Portfolio organisation in London, where, along with director Nicola Triscott he developed an ambitious artistic programme and built up an unparalleled creative team. His most recent exhibition with the Arts Catalyst, Republic of the Moon on London's South Bank attracted 10,000 visitors.

As a freelance curator between 1987 and 1997 he worked at the AIR Gallery, London, curating major early installations with Mona Hatoum in 1987 and 1988, among others. As Director of the Edge Biennale trust he produced major exhibitions for the European Capitals of Culture in Glasgow and Madrid, and in Newcastle and Clerkenwell, London. These exhibitions included major new commissions by Isaac Julien, Cornelia Parker, Stelarc, Muntada, Stuart Brisley and Helen Chadwick, among others and included the first UK performances by Marina Abramovic.

He was artistic director of the Belluard-Bollwerk Festival Switzerland, where he co-organised an international conference and exhibition, The Incident, with James Turrell, which continued to the ICA, London.

Between 1979 and 1987 he founded and edited the influential arts journal Performance Magazine which published exclusive interviews with Joseph Beuys, John Cage, Robert Wilson, Yoko Ono and Marina Abramovic, and he is currently preparing an exhibition about this magazine.

In early days, between 1972 and 1979 he was a member of the experimental arts group Action Space, where he specialised in early videomaking and created and produced video performances for the Serpentine Gallery and De Appel Amsterdam

He is now visiting curator at the University of Texas at El Paso, USA where he is curating a major project by Tomas Saraceno, visiting professor at Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology, visiting curator at FACT Liverpool and curator of the 2016 residency programme at the Maison Des Arts Georges Pompidou, Cjarc, France. He is an Expert for the EACEA (The Education Audiovisual, and Culture Executive of the European Commission) He writes regularly for the UK journal Art Monthly.

Positions and qualifications

Phd, Brunel University, School of Arts and Humanities

Honorary Doctor of Arts. Dartington College of Arts (Plymouth University)

External Examiner, BA Fine Art Oxford Brookes University (4 years)

External Examiner, Phd, University of the Arts Chelsea.

External Examiner University of Cumbria at Lancaster

Phd Supervisor Royal Holloway College.

Visiting professor at Srishti School of Art Design and Technology

Selected Visiting Tutor lectures:

St Martins College of Art, Royal College of Art, Dartington College of Arts, Glasgow School of Art, Oxford Brookes University, University of Westminster, Nordkoping University, Sweden, Vienna Art Academy, Chicago Art Institute School of the Arts, Newcastle University, Boston University, MIT, University of Edinburgh, University of Dundee, University of Northumbria, Goldsmiths University, London College of Communications, University of Edinburgh, Falmouth University, University of California Riverside, Claremont College, Los Angeles, Universities of Texas at Dallas and El Paso, Falmouth University, Umea University, Sweden, Srishti Institute of Art Design and Technology and many other international universities and art academies.

Curatorial

Selected commissioned major new projects by artists including the following:

Marina Abramovic, James Acord, Laurie Anderson, Anne Bean, Jerzy Beres, Guillaume Bijl, Ansuman Biswas, Black Audio Film Collective, Bow Gamelan Ensemble, Ian Breakwell, Stuart Brisley, Black Market, David Cerny, Helen Chadwick, Hannah Collins, Critical Art Ensemble, Dorothy Cross, Revital Cohen and Tuur Van Balen, Richard Couzins, Jimmie Durham, Jan Fabre, Rose Garrard, Stefan Gec, Bruce Gilchrist, Guillermo Gomez-Pena, Ariel Guzik, Simon Faithfull, Vadim Fishkin, Mona Hatoum, Melanie Jackson, Isaac Julien, Tina Keane, Andrew Kotting, London Fieldworks, Yuri Leiderman, Liliane Lijn, Rachel Mayeri, Muntadas, Alastair McLennan, The Otolith Group, Katie Paterson, Ria Pacquee, Cornelia Parker, Marko Peljhan, Ivan Puig and Andres Padilla Domene, N55, Nek Chand Saini, Cesare Pietrousti, Kathleen Rogers, Ulrike Rosenbach, Thomas Rulle, Mark Thompson, Carolee Schneeman, Stelarc, Symbiotica, James Turrell, Albert Vidal, Zbigniew Warpechowski, Neal White, We Colonised the Moon, Richard Wilson, Louise K. Wilson, Paul Wong, Carey Young.

Institutions worked with:

Ars Electronica, AND Festival, Baltic, Gateshead, Barbican, London, British Library, Canada House, London, Cornerhouse, Manchester, DadaFest, Edinburgh Art Festival, Exploratorium, San Francisco, HMKV, Dortmund, Germany, Horniman Museum, London, ICA, London, IMERA, Mediterranean Institute of Advanced Studies, Imperial College of Science, Laboratorio Arte Alameda, Mexico, La Maison de la Photographie, Paris, Leonardo/OLATS, France/US, Matts Gallery, Natural History Museum, London, Projekt Atol, Slovenia, Royal Society of the Arts, London, Science Museum, London, SpaceArtOne, France, Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology, Bangalore, SymbioticaA, University of Western Australia, S-Air, Sapporo, Japan, Tate Britain, London, transmediale, Berlin, V2, Rotterdam and Z33, Hasselt, Belgium.

Selected exhibitions curated

Art In Danger, Diorama, London 1986, Confrontations, Laing Art Gallery Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1987, At The Edge, Air Gallery, London 1987, Last Sweat of Youth, Air Gallery, London, 1988, EDGE 88, London, EDGE 90, Newcastle Upon Tyne, EDGE 92, London and Madrid, Earthwire, near Middlesborough, 1994, Belluard-Bollwerk International, Switzerland - The Incident 1995, The Incident ICA, London 1996, Forbidden Science, Third Eye, Glasgow 1996, (From 1997 exhibitions with The Arts Catalyst) Parallel Universe, South London Gallery 1997, Atomic, Imperial College, 1998, Wollaton Hall, Nottingham, 1999, Gravity Zero, Lux Centre, 1999, A Consilience, Jan Fabre, Natural History Museum, London 2000, Seaclipse, Anne Bean and others, in association with Matts Gallery, 2000, Makrolab, Scottish Highlands 2002, Clean Rooms, Gallery Oldham, 2002, Jerwood Gallery, Natural History Museum, London, 2003, MIR, Cornerhouse, Manchester, Stills, Edinburgh, 2003, Artists Airshow, Royal Aeronautical Engineering Workshops, Farnborough, 2004, Astro-Black Morphologies, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, Science Museum London, 2005 Space Soon, Roundhouse, London, 2006, Interspecies, Cornerhouse, 2007 A Foundation London, Dark Places, John Hansard Gallery, 2007 Autonomous Infrastructures, Baltic, Newcastle, Republic of the Moon, FACT, Liverpool, 2009 Hehe, Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester, 2011 Primate Cinema, Edinburgh College of Art Gallery, 2012 Edinburgh Art Festival, Republic of the Moon, South Bank, 2014 London, SEFT, Furtherfield 2014. Tomas Saraceno, Rubin Center, El Paso and site-specific performance and sculpture and White Sands Missile Range New Mexico 2015.

Career by date

Ended full-time education at 18.

Apprentice journalist	1969-70
Arts worker, special needs children	1970-71
Member of Action Space, artists in the community, performance and video work	1972-79
Editor of Performance Magazine	1979-87
Freelance curator and researcher	1987-88
Director of the Edge Biennale	1988-92
Freelance curator and researcher	1992-97
Director of the Belluard-Bollwerk International	1994-95
Part-time MPhil and Phd research, Brunel University	1997-2006

Curator of The Arts Catalyst	1997-2014
Independent curator and visiting curator at The University of Texas at El Paso and FACT, Liverpool. Writer for Art Monthly.	2014-2015
Visiting professor at Srishti School of Art, Media and Design, Maison Georges Pompidou Cajarc, France,	2015-2016
Visiting Fellow, Bournemouth University	2016-

Selected Publications:

The Artist's Body (Eds. Warr, Jones) 'The Pit and the Pendulum,' Phaidon, (2000)

Performance and Place (Eds. Hill and Paris) 'An Introduction to Vertigo' Macmillan (2006)

Ubiquity and Fluidity of Art, Science, Performance and Technology (Research documentation) Brunel University (2006)

Catalogues 'Atomic', (1998) 'Clean Rooms', (2003) 'Zero Gravity-A Cultural Users Guide' (2005) *Primate Cinema, Apes as Family* (2013) *Manifesto for a Republic of the Moon* (2014).

Recent articles in Art Monthly, Review of Transmediale 2015, Profile of Tania Candiani, Mexican Pavilion Venice Biennale, Review of Istanbul Biennial, Feature on Cosmonauts, Science Museum London.

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