MARGARET

FITZROVIA CHAPEL

THE FITZROVIA CHAPEL ANNOUNCES

Middlesex Hospital Blues

FEATURING

Derek Jarman Jenkin Van Zyl Simon Fisher Turner Tilda Swinton

QUIET VIEW: Thursday 15 October 2026 - 4-5PM
PRESS VIEW: Thursday 15 October 2026 - 5- 6PM
EXHIBITION DATES: 16 October - 18 November 2026

CURATED BY IAIN FORSYTH & JANE POLLARD
2026 CURATORS-IN-RESIDENCE AT THE FITZROVIA CHAPEL

London, 24 September 2026: The Fitzrovia Chapel is proud to present the third and final exhibition by its inaugural Curators-in-Residence, the award-winning artists and BAFTA-nominated filmmakers **Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard**. ***Middlesex Hospital Blues*** completes the trilogy of exhibitions, following *Souvenir* and *Miseris Succurrere Disco*.

Middlesex Hospital Blues centres around *Blue*, the final film by **Derek Jarman,** released just four months before his death from AIDs-related complications**.** An unbroken field of saturated colour accompanied by a spoken text and score, *Blue* is a profound meditation on illness, perception and mortality. For Forsyth & Pollard the film holds a particular resonance: it was released while they were students at Goldsmiths – the same year they began making work together – and has remained a continuous point of inspiration and reference ever since.

Rather than install Jarman's film, the curators translate its singular gesture into a collective act of remembrance and resistance. The setting is deliberate and poignant: The Fitzrovia Chapel was once part of Middlesex Hospital, home to the country's first dedicated HIV/AIDS wards.

At the heart of *Middlesex Hospital Blues* is a newly commissioned ambisonic work by composer, **Simon Fisher Turner,** drawing on his archive recordings of Derek Jarman during their long-running friendship and collaboration. The piece was created with **Tilda Swinton,** another frequent Jarman collaborator. The new composition weaves excerpts from an assortment of Jarman's texts and projects, including *Blue* and *Bliss*. Swinton's voice will move through the chapel via a bespoke speaker array developed with **Arup,** enveloped in Fisher Turner's score and extending the methodology of the live performances into an immersive, spatial encounter.

Working in dialogue with the sound piece, the artist **Jenkin Van Zyl** presents a new sculptural installation. A two-way mirrored screen spans the full width of the chapel, its 16:9 proportions echoing the shape of the cinema screen that *Blue* itself once filled. Behind it stand two mirrored sculptures of an embracing couple, holding one another upright, positioned before the altar. These chrome sculptures draw on the dance marathons of 1920s and 30s America, where couples danced for days in exchange for food, shelter and the slim chance of a prize. Partners were assigned rather than chosen, and if one stopped moving, both were eliminated, so holding each other upright was less devotion than survival.

Further shaping the encounter, a lighting design by Arup suffuses the chapel's ornate interior in a deep, saturated blue, bringing to life the monochrome of Jarman's film. As an echo of Yves Klein's International Klein Blue, the image has always been more than just a hue or a passive visual. Just as the premier of *Blue* was presented simultaneously on two separate devices - the Blue square broadcast on TV and sound on the radio - the colour has always been a thing to experience. At The Fitzrovia Chapel, it is a thing to exist within.

Amongst that, slow bursts of bright white light puncture the space, producing ghostly retinal afterimages and recalling the flashes Jarman described during clinical eye examinations - "*Blue flashes in my eyes.*" In those moments, the embracing figures emerge phantasmagorically – closer to a mirage than a reveal – as shifting states pulse and flash behind the glass, momentarily dissolving reflection into revelation.

The smallest work in the exhibition is from Jarman himself. *The Spirit of the World* is an oil on canvas from 1981 will be presented on the chapel's ornate font. Although now somewhat overshadowed by his filmmaking, Jarman continued to pursue painting throughout his life. Twelve years before *Blue*, in this small painting Jarman had already almost entirely emptied the frame.

Middlesex Hospital Blues also recalls the visit from Diana, Princess of Wales, who in 1987 visited the Middlesex Hospital's HIV/AIDS unit and was photographed shaking hands, ungloved, with a HIV-positive patient. Wearing an ultramarine dress uncannily close to International Klein Blue, the widely circulated image marked a turning point in public attitudes to HIV/AIDS, putting compassion over fear. The exhibition stands as a timely tribute to this visit's enduring resonance, ahead of its 40th anniversary next year.

The title resonates on several levels: Jarman's *Blue*; the blue uniforms once worn by Middlesex Hospital staff, colloquially known as "hospital blues"; and the naming tradition of the blues as a universal feeling, with no lament as palpable as blues music. Through sound, colour and form, the exhibition becomes an act of bearing witness – to the lost, to the care given, and to what was once deemed unseeable, unspeakable and untouchable. Here, it becomes a communal lament.

Middlesex Hospital Blues forms the third and final chapter in a trilogy of exhibitions curated by Forsyth & Pollard throughout 2026, each responding to the layered histories of The Fitzrovia Chapel and the surrounding former Middlesex Hospital site. It follows *Souvenir* and *Miseris Succurrere Disco*, which together traced the chapel's glimmering, Byzantine-inspired interior as a site of memory, grief and collective care. As with the previous editions, the exhibition is accompanied by a limited edition booklet of images and texts relating to the exhibition, including newly commissioned writing by the Mexican-American novelist Chloe Aridjis and designed by Chris Bigg of the legendary design studio v23. These shows form part of the chapel's annual cultural programme.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

For further press information, interviews and assets, please contact:
Robyn Deane at Margaret
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Press Preview:
Thursday, 15 October 2026, 5 - 6pm.
Please join us for a press preview of the exhibition - refreshments will be served, and curators Iain & Jane will be available for interview or comment.

If you require early access, please let us know and we will try to accommodate you.

For all queries and to RSVP, please contact robyn@margaretlondon.com.

The Fitzrovia Chapel
2 Pearson Square
London W1T 3BF

Opening times:
11am to 6pm Monday - Saturday
Late night Thursday until 8pm
12pm to 5pm Sunday

Admission free
fitzroviachapel.org
@fitzroviachapel

Praise for 'The Horror Show!' at Somerset House, co-curated by Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard

'I am starting to think all exhibitions of contemporary art should be curated by artists. Pollard and Forsyth don't get snagged by the laboured rationalities that often crush shows. You need to think like an artist in order to be able to connect so many gothic strands, strike a pose that's funny and serious at the same time, and leave us unsure whether we should laugh or scream or cry." - **The Guardian ★★★★★**

About the Fitzrovia Chapel
The Fitzrovia Chapel is an enchanting jewel of Byzantine-inspired architecture located in the heart of London's Fitzrovia community. As the former chapel of the Middlesex Hospital, it is a place of meaning, memory and sanctuary for many. Today the Chapel is an enriching cultural space for health and wellbeing, hosting events such as concerts, book launches and exhibitions, free to visit on particular days and open to all. The Chapel offers a distinctive artistic programme, supporting emerging and established artists and learning opportunities. It is a space for quiet reflection, discovery and celebration, connecting a diversity of communities, visitors and partners. A registered charity, the Chapel is open to everyone – of all faiths, beliefs, backgrounds and cultures.

About Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard
Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard are award-winning artists and BAFTA nominated directors working across film, installation, sound, documentary and TV drama. Working collaboratively since meeting at Goldsmiths in the mid-nineties, their work has been exhibited around the world and is collected by museums and institutions including Tate and the Government Art Collection. In 2023 they co-curated *The Horror Show!* a landmark exhibition at Somerset House. Their film about Nick Cave, *20,000 Days on Earth* premiered at Sundance, where it won awards for directing and editing. Their most recent film, *Broken English,* made with and about Marianne Faithfull, premiered at the Venice Film Festival in August 2025 and was released across UK & Irish cinemas in Spring 2026.

About Arup
Arup is a global built environment consultancy providing advisory and technical expertise for our clients across more than 130 disciplines. We create safe, resilient, and regenerative places.

Raj Patel has worked at the intersection of sound, music, art, technology, design, and engineering for over 30 years and is noted for his artist collaborations and international portfolio of projects in the built environment, focusing on sensory-driven solutions. Pioneering the use of spatial audio as a design and artistic medium, he has co-created ground-breaking immersive tools for listening to, feeling, and visualizing the built environment. He has worked in close partnership with Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard on a range of their work over the last twenty-years. He is a Fellow at Arup.