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Meanwhile, what about socialism?

Northumbria University will be one of the venues hosting this year's AV Festival – the North East's biennial celebration of contemporary art, film, sound and music.

The [University Gallery](#) at City Campus will host an exhibition by Ukrainian art collective R.E.P as part of this year's festival, which launches on 27 February.

Launched in 2003, the AV Festival works with innovative and experimental artists on risk-taking artworks that encourage audiences to engage with

contemporary art in original ways. This year's festival, titled: Meanwhile, what about socialism? features 12 solo installations, 48 film screenings, nine artist talks and four performances, taking place at 14 venues across the region.

The title of the 2016 festival comes from a quote in George Orwell's book *The Road to Wigan Pier*, which analyses English socialism and concludes that the basis of democratic socialism is equality and fairness. Mirroring the book's structure, AV Festival 2016 will see artists situating themselves in relation to historic and contemporary political struggle.

[Dr Mark Jackson](#), curator and lecturer at Northumbria in Fine Art Critical Theory and Curatorial Practice, said: "We are very excited to be involved in the 2016 AV Festival with work by the Ukrainian artist collective R.E.P. This is an opportunity to demonstrate Northumbria University's commitment to radical exhibition practice, especially the kinds of artistic enquiry that is not afraid to tackle important questions that may define or disturb contemporary political rhetoric and debates around the effects of capitalism.

"It's also significant for Gallery North to be part of something that takes place in a number of venues simultaneously across the North East, and become part of a wider community exploring new possibilities of creative exhibition-making."

R.E.P. (Revolutionary Experimental Space) formed in Kyiv in 2004, the same year as the Orange Revolution, and was the country's first art collective. In 2006, the group launched the Patriotism project, a visual dictionary of graphic symbols indicating social phenomena, values and relationships. This 'alphabet' is used spatially to create vinyl wall murals that comment on the place and context of the exhibition. The language has been used to talk about communities, labour migration, political systems, art institutions, education and equality. Free from identity politics, Patriotism draws on ideas such as universalism, the monumental propaganda of ideology-driven societies, and the consumer logos of capitalism.

The AV Festival takes place at venues across Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland and Middlesbrough, with partners including BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Tyneside Cinema, MIMA, and Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums. For more information about the whole AV Festival 2016 programme please visit: www.avfestival.co.uk

To find out more about the University Gallery go to:

<http://gn.northumbria.ac.uk/>

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If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk