

Portico Quartet Ensemble with Hannah Collins

Terrain: The Earth Beneath My Feet

Start time: 8pm

Approximate running time: 70 minutes, no interval.

Please note all timings are approximate and subject to change.

Mercury Prize nominated Portico Quartet return to the Barbican with an extended ensemble, presenting the world premiere performance of a new audio-visual work in collaboration with Turner Prize nominated artist Hannah Collins.

Based in London, Portico Quartet have defied easy categorisation over the course of seven studio albums, from their 2007 Mercury Music Prize nominated breakthrough *Knee-Deep in the North Sea*, to their most recent release, 2021's *Monument*, which showcased the band at their most focused and dance music influenced. Tonight's performance sees them revisit their long form piece *Terrain*, composed in 2020.

Hannah Collins was born in London in 1956. From 1989 to 2010 she lived and worked in Barcelona, and today lives between London and Almeria, Spain. Collins has received many awards including a Fulbright Scholarship and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1993. Her body of work includes photographs, films, written texts and books. She is known for her work in expanding the fields of photography and film. Her works are embedded in historical and social frameworks with a wide range of subjects and geographical locations. Her involvement in a body of work often continues over many years. Most recently she curated the exhibition *We Will Walk - Art and Resistance in the American South* at Turner Contemporary in Margate UK in 2020.

Produced in collaboration with editor Rafael Ortega, this performance brings Portico Quartet's *Terrain* and Hannah Collins' *The Earth Beneath My Feet* into a gently resonant dialogue. Presented with a specially commissioned prelude, the music is a suite in three parts: Terrain I, II & III are all subtly different, but a short rhythmic motif that repeats is the starting point in all three movements. Portico Quartet's Jack Wyllie explains: 'We've always had this side of the band in some form. The core of it is having a repeated pattern, around which other parts move in and out, and start to form a narrative. We used to do longer improvisations not dissimilar to this around the time of our second record *Isla*. On *Terrain* we've really dug into it and explored that form'.

Terrain I was the first piece they worked on and it started with a hang drum pattern, improvised by drummer Duncan Bellamy, who added cymbals and synthesiser. From there on it grew, Wyllie adding saxophone, another synthesiser section and strings. Wyllie explains, 'There is a sense of conversation between us both, in that someone presents a musical idea, the other person responds to it with something else, which would then be responded to again... until it feels finished. These responses are often consonant with each other but there is also a dissonance to some of this work. The music slowly evolves through these shared conversations.'

Tonight's unique collaboration takes the concept of a shared conversation even further. *The Earth Beneath My Feet* is Collins' original title for a work she made in the Atacama Desert in Chile, from which this new collaboration with Portico Quartet is a development. She travelled to visit Carnegie Institute's Las Campanas observatory, situated in the driest environment on earth, which is home to some of the worlds most sophisticated telescopes, capable of looking to the edges of our ever-expanding Universe.

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Her images examine the instruments themselves, the work of the astronomers as they attempt to look further into deep space and the digital languages used to interpret far away phenomena such as black holes, as well as the ancient surrounding landscape where both the largest and smallest scale mining operations in the world take place. They are both a visualisation of the ways in which we are using up the earth that we live upon, as well as a poetic examination of space beyond us.

History is visualised – from human beings' ancient interpretations of place as rock drawings found in the surrounding desert, through to our current renderings of imagery that allows us to perceive distant phenomena many light years away. The human body is itself made up of the material of the universe we are looking at.

Concert Programme

Terrain: The Earth Beneath My Feet SEP

Prelude (composed by Duncan Bellamy & Jack Wyllie)

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Terrain I
Terrain II
Terrain III

(composed by Duncan Bellamy & Jack Wyllie)

Performers

Duncan Bellamy drums, sampler

Jack Wyllie saxophone, piano

Simmy Singh violin

Joy Becker violin

Laura Senior violin

Francesca Ter-Berg cello

Taz Modi keyboards, bass

Delia Stevens hang, piano

Produced by Portico Quartet and Hannah Collins for the Barbican Centre and presented in collaboration with Rafael Ortega.

With thanks to the Carnegie Institute, Las Campanas Observatory.



The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre