

Press release  
European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017  
February 2017

## ***For Aarhus*, a new public artwork by American artist Jenny Holzer debuts February 25 in city's Bispetorv**

**Ten nights of light projections on the Aarhus Theater facade will explore the current global crisis, featuring poetry and prose from contemporary poets, writers, and ordinary citizens – many of them displaced or living far from the country of their birth.**

***For Aarhus*, a highlight of European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017's events, is the artist's first project created especially for Denmark.**

The Aarhus 2017 Foundation is pleased to announce Jenny's Holzer's *For Aarhus*. Presenting a selection of poetry, short prose works, and even personal letters, the artwork explores the consequences on civilian life whenever it is shattered by armed conflict. Holzer's work examines what it is to be forced to abandon home, find asylum in foreign refugee camps, begin anew in another country, or live permanently in exile. Established writers, contemporary younger voices, and ordinary citizens from Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Ethiopia, and Nigeria, each offers their personal perspective and a part of the larger story.

"Aarhus 2017 is putting art Coast to Coast in a series of works and projects that bring some of the world's leading artists to the Central Denmark Region. These site-situational, context specific and special exhibitions are made as new commissions for townships, art spaces and across municipal borders," says Rebecca Matthews, Chief Executive Officer of European Cultural Capital Aarhus 2017.

As Juliana Engberg, program director for Aarhus 2017, explains, "Holzer's project helps us understand the plight of communities in flux, in transition, and in hopeful search of new lives and possible futures. As we rethink what it means to be a community and who is part of community here in Denmark, in Europe, and across the globe, Holzer's project communicates tremendous humanity."

Beginning in 1996, with *Xenon for Florence* – when Holzer first presented a programme of illuminated scrolling text that was projected onto the south embankment of the Arno River and the facade of the Palazzo Tempi – she has created almost three-dozen projections in locations around the world. Then as now, these temporary performance works – typically lasting only a few hours, and staged on several successive nights shortly after dusk – have appealed equally to those long familiar with the artist's work and the passerby.

Among the sources that Holzer will include in *For Aarhus* are several recent prose poems by Ghayath Almadhoun, a Palestinian poet born in Damascus who lives in Sweden. Some of these texts include: "Greetings to the People of Europe!" by Alemu Tebeje Ayele, an Ethiopian poet, journalist, and community activist based in London; a short story set in the immigrant community of Los Angeles by Syrian writer Dima Alzayat; works by a group of young Assyrian Iraqi poets, living in tents in flooded refugee camps in the fall of 2014, whose plight became the subject of a reading vigil held at Cambridge University; and a series of postcards written by displaced residents of Aleppo, Syria, that began when Issa Touma, a local gallery owner and photographer, invited a cross section of people to write about themselves and their experiences—resulting in both a book and a contemporary opera performed in Amsterdam this past autumn.

For more info, please contact:  
Peter Vestergaard, pressechef, Aarhus 2017, [tlf: 2013 1090](tel:20131090)

### Schedule:

Saturday 25. February:	20.00 - 22.00
Sunday 26. February:	17.30 - 19.30
Monday 27. February - Friday: 3. March:	17.30 - 19.00 and 19.30 - 21.30
Saturday 4. March - 5. March:	17.30 - 19.30
Monday 6. March:	17.30 - 21.30

### Biography

For more than thirty-five years, Jenny Holzer has presented her astringent ideas, arguments, and sorrows in public places and international exhibitions, including 7 World Trade Center, the Venice Biennale, the Guggenheim Museums in New York and Bilbao, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Her medium, whether formulated as a T-shirt, a plaque, or an LED sign, is writing, and the public dimension is integral to the delivery of her work. Starting in the 1970s with the New York City posters, and continuing through her recent light projections on landscape and architecture, her practice has rivaled ignorance and violence with humor, kindness, and courage. Holzer was awarded the Leone d'Oro at the Venice Biennale in 1990, the Award to Distinguished Women in the Arts from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 2010, and the 2017 International Medal of Arts from the U.S. Department of State. She holds honorary degrees from Williams College, the Rhode Island School of Design, The New School, and Smith College. She lives and works in New York.

Photo1:

*In the Garden*, 2015

Text: "Motion" by Octavio Paz, translated by Eliot Weinberger, from *The Collected Poems 1957–1987*, © 1986 by Octavio Paz and Eliot Weinberger. Used with permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.

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Photo: Ben Hider

Photos of past projections: <http://projects.jennyholzer.com/projections>

For more photos, please contact: Hana Tran, Holzer Studio, [hana@jennyholzer.com](mailto:hana@jennyholzer.com)

Photos from *For Aarhus* will be available at <https://aarhus2017.smugmug.com/> from February 27.

Read more here:

<http://www.aarhus2017.dk/en/calendar/jenny-holzer-for-aarhus/9259/>

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