



# news release

2 March 2009

## Unique new collaborations at the heart of Scottish Tides-Polish Spring contemporary art programme at Threshold artspace

**PICTURE CALL: Friday, 6 March 2009 as follows:**

**6-6.30pm at Threshold artspace, Redrooms, Perth Theatre, Perth, UK**

**6.30-7pm at Threshold artspace, Glassrooms and Norie Miller Studio, Perth Concert Hall, Perth, UK**

*Izabella Gustowska, artist, Marek Styczen, artist, Iliyana Nedkova, Horsecross' curator and Urszula Sniegowska, guest curator*

**ALTERNATIVELY: Please contact Pam Dochard, Media Relations, pdochard@horsecross.co.uk, tel 0044 1738 477728, mob 0044 7884 017199 for a set of downloadable high resolution images**

Horsecross is celebrating this spring having secured not one, but two, ambitious new contemporary art exhibitions for its Threshold artspace at Perth Concert Hall and Perth Theatre.

Life Story. A Scottish Episode is the first solo exhibition in a public institution in Britain by the internationally recognised Polish artist Izabella Gustowska. It opens to the public on Saturday 7 March 2009 and will continue at Threshold artspace in Perth Concert Hall until Friday 3 April 2009.

Acres Wild is the first ever solo exhibition by emerging Perth-based Polish artist Marek Styczen. The show also opens to the public on Saturday 7 March 2009 and will run at Threshold artspace in Perth Theatre until Thursday 7 May 2009.



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Both exhibitions are particularly relevant in this, Scotland's year of Homecoming as they focus on the ever-changing migration of people between places and countries. Both will mark the launch of Scottish Tides-Polish Spring – a three month celebration of Scotland's vibrant cultural connections with Poland.

Organised by Horsecross, with support from Homecoming Scotland 2009 and Perth and Kinross Council, Scottish Tides-Polish Spring forms part of the national Homecoming celebrations and Polska! Year: A Year of Contemporary Everything from Poland! – an initiative of Adam Mickiewicz Institute under the official patronage of HM The Queen and HE The President of the Republic of Poland. Concentrated over several weekends from February to May, Scottish Tides-Polish Spring features a range of unique collaborations, performances, exhibitions and events at Perth Concert Hall and Perth Theatre.

Migration and homecoming are increasingly appreciated as creating a positive state of mind and are embraced by artists as part of their practice, yet Scottish and Polish people have been doing it for centuries.

Life is a Story. Scottish Episode is also the title of Horsecross' commission by Gustowska for the unique Threshold Wave of twenty two flat screens that dominate the Glassrooms area at Perth Concert Hall. Utilising her signature style of saturated, deep greens, the artist has compressed our ordinary life into twenty two symbolic audio-visual 'crystal balls' revealing anything from daily passions to abstract gestures.

Following her short but inspiring artist's residency during January 2009 in Perth Gustowska said:

"I believe that my work deals with universal subjects such as life and death and the green colour, for me, equals nature and energy. Some of the twenty two micro videos which comprise my new commission for the Threshold Wave have more sensuality and symbolism in them, while others are observations, often in slow-motion. A Scottish bagpipe player acts as the narrator in my life story".



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"We are very pleased to be able to work with such an outstanding artist, alas virtually unknown in this country," said Iliyana Nedkova, Horsecross creative director (contemporary art).

"Gustowska's work which is celebrated internationally for its pioneering use of video could be summed up in a word 'ona' – Polish for 'her' – an evolving story of the contemporary woman and the male gaze. This accounts for its enduring appeal".

Gustowska's major new commission will be acquired for the Horsecross permanent collection of contemporary art. *Life is a Story. A Scottish Episode* will also be complimented by the UK premiere exhibition of the artist's most recent work. For one weekend only, six critically acclaimed video works including *She*, *Media Story* 2008, *The Art of Hard Choice* 2006/7 and *My Europe* 2004 will screen and cycle on an hourly loop in the specially converted, state-of-the-art micro cinema in the Norie-Miller Studio adjacent to the Threshold artspace at Perth Concert Hall.

During this exhibition opening weekend Gustowska will be joined by Horsecross' guest-curator Urszula Sniegowska from the Centre of Contemporary Art known as Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw. Sniegowska will lead an informal guided tour in conversation with the artist, as well as contribute to a new issue of *Read More* – Horsecross journal of critical writing – dedicated to *Life is a Story. A Scottish Episode*.

At the core of the concurrent exhibition, *Acres Wild* by Marek Styczen, is a pre-selected series of fifty landscape photographs mounted on aluminum and never exhibited in its entirety before. *Acres Wild* falls into a distinct black-and-white period followed by colour and back to toned monochrome prints – all carefully executed and envisaged as final compositions before the shutter release button was pressed. No digital manipulation at play. At the newly extended Threshold artspace at Redrooms, the works stand out as if charting new migrant topographies.

With an air of a globalised citizen of the world, Styczen says:



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"My aim is to capture the beauty of the natural world and my current passion is the Scottish natural landscape. I try and visit remote areas, hiking and often camping on location. I particularly enjoy working in the East Coast, the Western Isles and Scottish Highlands, despite the difficulties that the weather and remoteness of some locations present. Since coastal landscape is close to my heart, I feel privileged to be able to work in the part of the UK offering some of the most varied and dramatic coastline."

Styczen's Acres Wild is also complimented by the ongoing exhibition of Us, But Not Only Us (My, I Nie Tylko My), 2008 – a 10 minute video showing on a loop on a specially installed wall-mounted flat screen. Members of Perth Polish Support Group including Styczen collaborated to create this film as a celebration of their lives, marking their presence in Perth. It offers an insight into the culture and traditions they have nurtured in their new surroundings. The 'Polonez' national dance recurs throughout the film as a homing symbol of the vibrant Polish culture.

Iliyana Nedkova says:

"I am delighted that our new initiative Collect + Support continues with such a strong solo exhibition by Perth's own Marek Styczen. It was a real revelation to discover a budding contemporary artist amongst the vibrant Polish community on our doorstep."

For more information about individual Scottish Tides-Polish Spring events and tickets, call Horsecross Box Office on 0044 1738 621 031 or visit [www.horsecross.co.uk](http://www.horsecross.co.uk)

## **Notes to Editors**

1. *Launched in September 2005, Threshold artspace is about positioning Perth and Scotland within the contemporary art world at large through commissioning, producing, exhibiting, publishing and collecting.*



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2. *Life is a Story. A Scottish Episode* by Izabella Gustowska is on view from 7 March – 3 April 2009 at Threshold artspace, Perth Concert Hall. The admission is always free and open to the public Mon-Sat, 10am–6pm and Sun 12-6pm or late on performance evenings. Alternatively, *Life is a Story. The Scottish Episode* will also be on view daily between 8am-1am from the open public plaza in front of the Perth Concert Hall's glazed building.

3. Izabella Gustowska's survey of recent video works is on view on Sat, 7 March 2009, from 6pm until late and on Sun, 8 March 10am until late at Norie-Miller Studio, Perth Concert Hall. The admission is free and open to the public.

4. Izabella Gustowska and Marek Styczen will be in conversation with Horsecross' curator Iliyana Nedkova and guest curator Urszula Sniegowska over brunch and informal guided tour on Sat, 7 March 11am-1pm. Admission free. All welcome. Meet at the Threshold artspace, Perth Concert Hall.

5. Izabella Gustowska's exhibition is accompanied by a new issue of *Read More* – Horsecross journal of critical writing ISSN 1755-0866 (Online). Specially designed, each issue features a newly commissioned essay about a selected work from the collection. The contributing writer for this issue is Urszula Sniegowska.

6. *Acres Wild* by Marek Styczen and *Us, But Not Only Us (My, I Nie Tylko My)* are on view from 7 March until 7 May 2009 at Threshold artspace, Redrooms, Perth Theatre. The admission is free and open to the public Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm or late on performance evenings. *Acres Wild* works are available to purchase through Horsecross and can help start or nurture a collection of contemporary art.

7. *Us, But Not Only Us (My, I Nie Tylko My)* cast and crew include Malgorzata Bielecka, Kasia Guzowska, Alina Janik, Leszek Janik, Beata Korowaj, Andrzej Nowak, Marek Styczen, Jacek Siewierski, Mariusz Szmajdzinski, Aneta Wiecek, Directed by Juliet Rees of *Shifting Sands Films* [www.shiftingsandsfilms.com](http://www.shiftingsandsfilms.com). Funded by the Scottish Arts



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*Council and Perth and Kinross Council Arts Development Service as part of Life is Art.  
North Perth Film Project 2008 initiative.*

*8. Scottish Tides-Polish Spring continues with two more solo exhibitions featuring major new Horsecross' commissions by Igor Krenz and Julita Wojcik and showing until 4 June.*

*9. Scottish Tides-Polish Spring exhibitions are produced by Horsecross for Threshold artspace in partnership with 55degrees, Glasgow, the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw and the Perth Polish Support Group. Supported by Homecoming Scotland 2009, Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Scottish Arts Council.*

*10. Scottish Tides-Polish Spring at Horsecross is part of POLSKA! YEAR: A Year of Contemporary Everything From Poland! – an initiative of Adam Mickiewicz Institute under the official patronage of HM The Queen and HE The President of the Republic of Poland.*

*11. POLSKA! YEAR comprises more than 200 events featuring some of Poland's best efforts in film, theatre, architecture, design, history, literature, music, fashion and other forms of art. POLSKA! YEAR is a chance for British folks to get to know Poland as more than the homeland of their nation's finest builders and waitresses. And it's also a chance for Poles in the UK — even if they happen to be doctors, bankers, scientists, etc., as a third of Polish immigrants to Britain are — to indulge in a spot of homegrown culture.*

**[www.PolskaYear.pl](http://www.PolskaYear.pl)**

## **Notes to Editors ctd**

*1. Scottish Tides-Polish Spring at Horsecross is part of nationwide Homecoming Scotland 2009. The roots of this event are four hundred years old and spread across a continent. From Scotland to Poland and back again, centuries of migration have sown the seeds for a shared cultural landscape. And now the fruits of this unique relationship flourish in a season of events at Perth Theatre and Perth Concert Hall. Polish Spring adds a 21st Century twist to this artistic alliance by bringing together Poland's top rock*



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*and comedy groups, alongside acclaimed Scots folk, contemporary visual artists and classical musicians in a celebration of the comings and goings of Scots and Poles through the arts.*

*2. Homecoming Scotland 2009: Throughout 2009 Scotland hosts its first Homecoming year, designed to mark the 250th anniversary of Scotland's national poet, the international cultural icon, Robert Burns. From the weekend around Burns Night in January to St Andrew's Day in November a country wide programme of exciting and inspirational Homecoming events and activities celebrates some of Scotland's great contributions to the world: Burns himself, Whisky, Golf, Great Scottish Minds and Innovations and our rich ancestral culture and heritage which lives on at home and through our global family.*

*3. Homecoming Scotland 2009 is a Scottish Government initiative managed by EventScotland in partnership with VisitScotland.*

*4. Homecoming Scotland 2009 seeks to motivate people of Scottish descent, as well as those who simply love Scotland, to come home and join us in a national celebration of our culture, heritage and the many great contributions Scotland has given the world:*

**[www.homecomingscotland2009.com](http://www.homecomingscotland2009.com)**

## **Media contact**

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**POLSKA! YEAR**

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