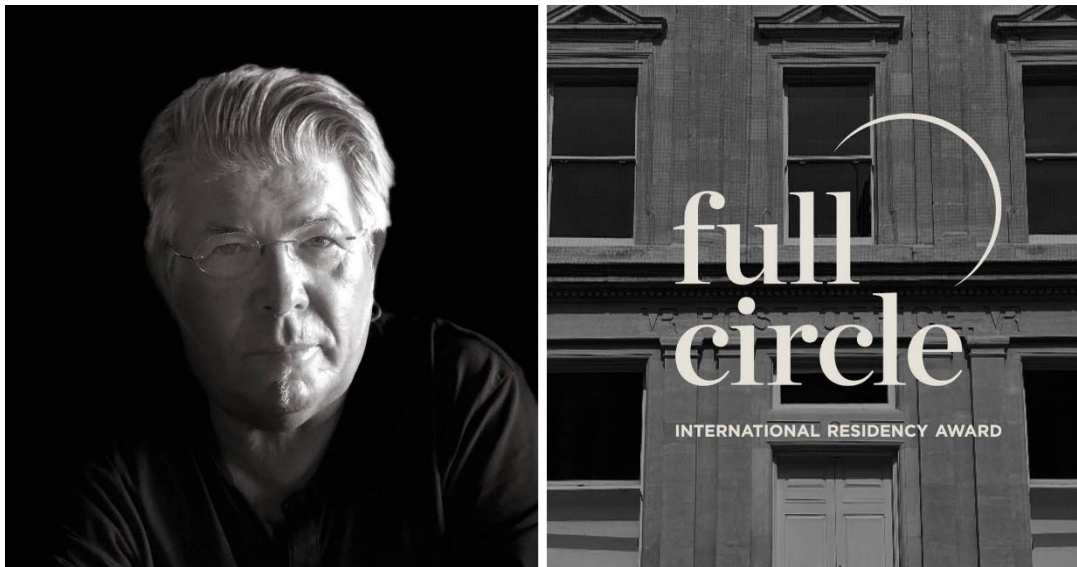


PRESS RELEASE

Approved for immediate release

For further information please contact: Alison Wright: alison@messums.org

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**MESSUMS ORG ANNOUNCES THE RECIPIENT OF THE
INAUGURAL FULL CIRCLE INTERNATIONAL RESIDENCY AWARD**

For further information, please visit: www.messums.org/learning/full-circle-international-residency-award/

Messums ORG confirms that Dr Nigel Helyer has been awarded the inaugural *Full Circle International Residency Award* for 2026, a fully funded six-week residency with Messums East in The Old Post Office in Lowestoft, a refurbished new arts complex on the most easterly point of the UK. This will be followed by a solo exhibition at Orange Regional Gallery in New South Wales in Australia in 2027.

The *Full Circle International Residency Award* is a unique collaboration between Messums ORG and the Orange Regional Gallery, it aims to offer a transformative immersive experience, accelerating learning through the opportunity of working for an extended period in a studio in an historic area, offering the daily diversity of new environments to help stimulate creativity. Upon returning to Australia, the artist will present a six-week solo exhibition the following year at Orange Regional Gallery, receiving curatorial support, an artist's fee, and a publication to present and document the work produced during the residency.

Johnny Messum, founder of Messums Creative said *"The Post Office Lowestoft is a repurposing of a building that was built to connect people. The Full Circle award and other ventures will continue that purpose of knowledge exchange through shared learning on site. We are hugely honoured to be part of this cyclical project and thank*

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those who have also supported it. Connecting the vibrant Australian creative mindset and the Suffolk Coastline centre is a personal pleasure and I'm delighted that Nigel Helyer is the recipient of the inaugural Full Circle International Residency Award for 2026. We look forward to welcoming him for his six-week residency to Messums Creative in Lowestoft."

Bradley Hammond, Director, Orange Regional Gallery, added *"Full circle represents a shape made by joining two halves. Supporting the Australian creative mindset within the UK to take root and participate is one side. To see this fulfilled in partnership with our Orange Regional gallery and the resulting support to artistic careers offers a shared shape for creative practice."*

Dr. Nigel Helyer is an internationally prominent sculptor and sound artist, whose interdisciplinary practice combines art and science to embrace our social, cultural and physical environments. He brings these concerns together in creative projects that prompt the community to engage with their cultural histories, identity and sense of place, inviting us to examine the abstract conditions of our world and our complex relationships to it.

Aida Tomescu, artist and guest judge for the awards this year said, *"Looking at the submissions for the Full Circle International Residency Awards, I enjoyed the great diversity, the very different media and approaches. I was attracted by the rigorous approach and consistency of Nigel Helyer's work, its intelligence and the complexity of his proposal"*.

Messums Creative and the Orange Regional Gallery would like to thank all the artists that applied for *Full Circle International Residency Award* this year. Applications for the *Full Circle International Residency Award* for next year will reopen in early 2027.

About the Full Circle International Residency Award

The Full Circle International Residency Award aims to support mid-career Australian artists based in New South Wales through a unique residency, research and exhibition opportunity.

The initiative, presented through a partnership between Orange Regional Gallery, Australia, and Messums ORG in the UK, is made possible thanks to generous support from Rowena Danziger in memory of Ken Coles AM.

Each year, one mid-career artist working in New South Wales, Australia will be selected to participate in a fully funded six-week residency in the UK at Messums East. Situated in The Old Post Office in Lowestoft, a refurbished new arts complex on the most easterly point of the UK. The Award culminates with an exhibition at Orange Regional Gallery the following year.

The Award supports visual artists who engage with the landscape and/or environment, to evolve their creative practice. Valued at AUD \$33,000, this International Residency Award includes international flights, travel, accommodation, studio space, art

materials and living expenses, and an exhibition—providing a rare opportunity for creative growth, research, connection and exploration.

About the Full Circle International Residency Award Panel

The *Full Circle International Residency Award* selection panel for 2026 included:

Aida Tomescu, Artist and Guest Judge: **Johnny Messum**, Director Messums ORG: **Bradley Hammond**, Director Orange Regional Gallery: **Dr Claudia Milburn**, Director of Programming, Messums ORG: **Belinda Hungerford**, Curator and Exhibition Coordinator, Orange Regional Gallery.

About the Residency

The six-week residency must take place between 1 September and 30 November in the year in which the award is given.

The Old Post Office, Lowestoft which once shared and brought information from around the world into the town has been brought back to life as a 1,700 sqm centre providing exhibition spaces, research facilities, and creative studios that support interdisciplinary engagement across the arts and sciences.

The residency places emphasis on contemplation, community engagement and social outreach, drawing on the town's rich historical and cultural heritage. Participants are offered opportunities to explore local sites that may provide access to research material and insights into the region's cultural and environmental history.

The centre facilitates connections with local resources for the production of work across a wide range of materials and techniques, enabling residents to integrate contemporary practice with the town's historical and artistic context.

The Award will support the artist to document and present their research whilst in residence.

- ENDS. -

For further information and images, please contact:

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Notes to editors:

MESSUM ORG: Messums ORG was founded by Johnny Messum in 2016 as a platform to provide a circular relationship between art and social engagement. It is the umbrella organisation and provides the gateway into Messums creative ecology. The organisation is based across venues and arts communities in the West, and East of England, with a central gallery space in London.

MESSUMS CREATIVE: Messums Creative Ltd (Registered Charity No.1214246) is the not-for-profit social outcome programming arm of Messums ORG. It is a charitable organisation that advances creativity as a force for lifelong learning, wellbeing, and connection. It aims to empower through the core pillars of Access, Learning and Excellence.

MESSUMS EAST: Messums East will open at the Old Post Office at 51 London Road in Lowestoft in Autumn 2026, alongside the neighbouring National & Provincial Studios. It will offer a hub for creativity within the community, introducing and sharing ideas from around the world and sending out creativity inspired by the local area. Messums East will be a 'Thought Shop' providing accessible opportunities for learning, collaboration, and problem-solving through creativity.

MESSUMS WEST: Messums West is a leading multi-purpose gallery set inside a restored 13th-century tithe barn in Tisbury, Wiltshire with surrounding buildings, gallery space, sculpture garden and restaurant. It brings together artists, writers and thinkers from the UK and beyond in a space where exhibitions, ideas and creative practice can be developed, tested and shared.

MESSUMS LONDON: Messums London is the commercial presentation space on Cork Street, behind the Royal Academy. It hosts a programme of exhibitions of modern and contemporary art offering opportunities to engage and collect. This includes Messums Editions, an affordable way to collect limited edition art which is also available online.