

# INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

PRESS RELEASE

ICA POET-IN-RESIDENCE: NICK MAKOHA  
NOVEMBER 2022 – APRIL 2023

The ICA is pleased to welcome Poetry London prize winner Nick Makoha as the 2022/2023 poet-in-residence. During his residency, Makoha will continue his research into American painter Jean-Michel Basquiat's practice through his writing and an event workshop series.



Photo credit: Dirk Skiba

In November 2022, the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) welcomed writer and poet Nick Makoha as our next poet-in-residence. During his time in residence, Makoha will complete the final poem of his poetry collection in addition to developing a series of events and workshops inspired by the historical and artistic connection between the ICA and American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, who held his first UK institutional exhibition at our location on The Mall in 1984 titled *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Paintings 1981 – 1984*. Makoha's residency will culminate in a Basquiat mixed tape, bringing to life the exhibition once held at the ICA.

This is not the only time Makoha has engaged with Basquiat's paintings – the first time the poet saw a Basquiat painting he burst into tears, moved by the closeness he felt to the artist and his practice. Since this initial experience, Makoha tries to create work in the same place Basquiat created a desire that has brought the poet to New York to see *Jean-Michel Basquiat: King Pleasure*, an exhibition presented by the late artist's family, among many other important Basquiat locales across America.

While here, Makoha continues this exploration into the influences of Basquiat. At the end of 2022, Makoha went with ICA staff to our archive housed at the Tate Britain to view the materials from our Basquiat exhibition. There, Makoha was able to find the contact information of people who helped with the show and has since spoken directly to one of Basquiat's assistants. In January, the poet held a critical review session where he shared a sample of his work-in-progress with ICA staff and a selection of his critical friends.

Commencing 23 February is the first of Makoha's *Basquiat Brunches* as well as a workshop for writers and creatives and in March the poet will run a series of youth workshops in collaboration with the ICA Youth Network. As part of the residency, Makoha is going on behalf of the ICA to the Musée des Beaux-Arts Montréal to interview Mary-Dailey Desmarais, curator of the exhibition *Seeing Loud: Basquiat and Music*, organised in collaboration with the Musée de la musique – Philharmonie de Paris.

— ENDS —

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **Nick Makoha**

Nick Makoha is the founder of The Obsidian Foundation. Winner of the 2021 Ivan Juritz prize and the Poetry London Prize. In 2017, Nick's debut collection, *Kingdom of Gravity*, was shortlisted for the Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection and was one of the Guardian's best books of the year. Nick is a Cave Canem Graduate Fellow and the Complete Works alumnus. He won the 2015 Brunel International African Poetry Prize and the 2016 Toi Derricotte & Cornelius Eady Prize for his pamphlet *Resurrection Man*. His play *The Dark* – produced by Fuel Theatre and directed by JMK award-winner Roy Alexander—was on a national tour in 2019. It was shortlisted for the 2019 Alfred Fagon Award and won the 2021 Columbia International Play Reading prize. His poems have appeared in the Cambridge Review, the New York Times, Poetry Review, 'e Rialto, Poetry London, TriQuarterly Review, 5 Dials, Boston Review, Callaloo and Wasafiri. He is a Trustee for the Arvon Foundation and the Ministry of Stories, and a member of the Malika's Poetry Kitchen collective.  
<https://nickmakoha.com>

### **The Institute of Contemporary Arts**

The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) is London's leading space for contemporary culture. We commission, produce and present new work in film, music, performance and the visual arts by today's most progressive artists. In our landmark home on The Mall in central London, we invite artists and audiences to interrogate what it means to live in our world today, with a genre-fluid programme that challenges the past, questions the present and confronts the future. The cross-disciplinary programme encourages these art forms and others to pollinate in new combinations and collaborations. We stage club nights and film festivals, gigs and exhibitions, talks and digital art – with interplay and interaction at the core of all we do. Our history of presenting and promoting visionary new art is unrivalled in London: from Kenneth Anger to Kathy Acker, k-punk to Klein, Jackson Pollock to Jean-Michel Basquiat, Gay Sweatshop to Forensic Architecture, Pop Art to queer techno. Today, as ever, our inclusive programme reflects and represents who we are as a disparate and diverse collection of cultures and identities.

Exactly 75 years after a group of artists and poets founded the ICA as an alternative to the mainstream, we are committed more than ever to pave the way for the next generation and to platform creative voices. The ICA continues to celebrate risk and champion innovation, and experimentation across the arts – a playground and a home for today's most vital artists. The ICA is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and supported by the DCMS Culture Recovery Fund.

### **Access**

If you have an access requirement that we can assist you with, please contact us in advance of your visit for more information at [access@ica.art](mailto:access@ica.art) and we will make our best endeavours to help you. Full venue accessibility information can be found here, and you can download an accessibility map of the venue at <https://www.ica.art/media/01795.pdf>.

**Press Enquiries**

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**Visitor Information**

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