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Until 8 January 2017

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New permanent garden by Gabriel Orozco

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ROMAN ONDAK: THE SOURCE OF ART IS IN THE LIFE OF A PEOPLE

29 SEP 2016 - 6 JAN 2017

MAIN GALLERY

ADMISSION FREE

EXHIBITION GUIDE

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SLG

South London Gallery, 65–67 Peckham Road, London SE5 8UH

020 7703 6120 mail@southlondongallery.org

www.southlondongallery.org

Twitter: [@SLG_artupdates](https://twitter.com/SLG_artupdates)

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ROMAN ONDAK:
THE SOURCE OF ART IS IN THE LIFE OF A PEOPLE
29 SEP 2016 - 6 JAN 2017

For his first solo show in London for more than a decade, internationally acclaimed artist Roman Ondak presents an exhibition lasting one hundred days that brings together a new body of work exploring ideas around the passage of time and the intertwining of present and past. The exhibition title, *The Source of Art is in the Life of a People*, is taken from the inscription on the South London Gallery's original nineteenth century marquetry floor designed by Walter Crane. Usually hidden from public view, Ondak has uncovered the floor to reveal it to the public for the first time in many years, harnessing the coincidence of past and present which underpins all the works within the show.

Symbolising a period of one hundred years, on each of the hundred days of the exhibition a pre-sawn disk is separated from the trunk of an oak tree to reveal the delineation in ink of one of its age-defining rings alongside a stamped text identifying a key historical event which occurred in that year. The artist's inevitably subjective selection of events exposes the impossibility of an objective, unbiased history, as well as the impact of teaching on our understanding and interpretation of the past. Entitled *Event Horizon*, his central sculpture gradually evolves over the course of the show as the oak tree is incrementally transferred from floor to wall to create a notional calendar, setting the tone for other works in which the historic collides with the contemporary.

High up on the gallery walls, in *Awesome Rules of Language* illustrations from 'Teaching the Language', a 1960s children's text book which Ondak found in a second-hand bookshop, are reproduced on a huge scale. The book outlines principles and practices inherent in the teaching of language, as well as instructions on social codes of behaviour. Here the illustrations have been daubed with drawings and comments by adolescents living locally to the SLG, invited by Ondak to express whatever they chose to in the public arena of the gallery space, thereby injecting the outdated text book with alternative nuance and meaning. Harking back to school days in a very different way, four blackboards salvaged from Ondak's native Slovakia introduce a hint of autobiographical content into the show but equally symbolise the passing down of knowledge from one generation to the next. In *Four Moon Phases*, the bowl of a ladle is inserted into each of the boards, positioned in sequence to symbolise four phases of the moon in a further reference to the passage of time and the perpetual oscillation between past and present which inevitably informs everyone's existence.

Roman Ondak lives and works in Bratislava and is a leading conceptual artist whose work explores patterns of behaviour and alternative social and political possibilities, often born of observations of post-communist society in his native Slovakia.

Exhibition supported by the Henry Moore Foundation, kurimanzutto and Patricia Marshall.

The Henry Moore Foundation kurimanzutto

Photography is permitted in the galleries.
Please refrain from touching all objects in the exhibition.
Please do not walk on the original marquetry floor.

#RomanOndak
 #TheSourceofArt
 T @SLG_artupdates
 I @SouthLondonGallery
 F South London Gallery
 @RomanOndak

Artist biography

Roman Ondak (b. 1966 Slovakia) studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava from 1988 to 1994. He also studied at Slippery Rock University, Pennsylvania (1993). His residences include Collegium Helveticum in Zurich (1999–2000); the CCA in Kitakyushu (2004); the DAAD in Berlin (2007/08) and the Villa Arson in Nice (2010).

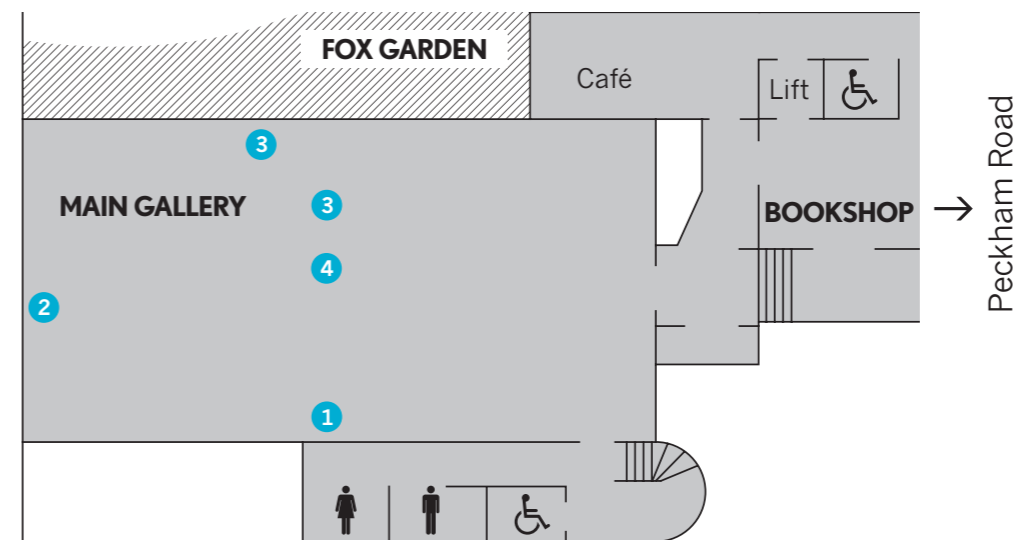
His most important solo exhibitions include: *Roman Ondak: Storyboard*, Guangdong Times Museum, Guangzhou, China (2015); *Escena*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Palacio de Cristal, Madrid, Spain (2013); *Some Thing*, The Common Guild, Glasgow, United Kingdom (2013); *do not walk outside this area*, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, Germany (2012); *Roman Ondak*, Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris France (2012); *Enter the Orbit*, Kunsthau Zürich, Zürich Switzerland (2011); *Time Capsule*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom (2011); *Before Waiting Becomes Part of Your Life*, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg, Germany (2011); *Loop*, Czech and Slovak Pavilion of the 53rd Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (2009); *Measuring the Universe*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, United States (2009); *Path*, CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, United States (2008); *It Will All Turn Out Right in the End*, Tate Modern, United Kingdom (2006).

Ondak's work has been included in group exhibitions at institutions such as Tate Modern, London (2016, 2006); MALBA Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (2015); Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit, United States (2013); Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Germany (2012); MoMA PS1, New York United States (2011); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Neatherlands (2010, 2005); ICA, Boston, United States (2008); Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany (2005), among others.

He has participated in the following biennials: the 54th and 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2011 & 2003); the 5th Moscow Biennial, Moscow, Russia (2013); Documenta 13, Kassel, Germany (2012); the 5th Liverpool Biennial, United Kingdom (2008); the 8th Panama Art Biennial, Panama City, Panama (2008); the 27th Bienal São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2006) and the Prague Biennial, Prague, Czech Republic (2003).

Roman Ondak currently lives and works in Bratislava.

LIST OF WORKS



1. *Four Moon Phases*, 2016
 Found blackboards, ladle bowls
 108 x 1210 x 16cm

2. *Awesome Rules of Language*, 2016
 Textbook illustrations painted in acrylic on gallery walls, interventions by adolescents in graphite
 Dimension variable

3. *Event Horizon*, 2016
 Oak tree, stamped ink, acrylic paint, steel fixtures
 Dimension variable

4. Original marquetry floor panel designed for the South London Gallery by Walter Crane for the gallery's official opening in 1891, and unveiled by Roman Ondak on the occasion of his SLG exhibition.

With thanks to all those who drew on the wall to create *Awesome Rules of Language*

Gift Ajimokun
 Thea Al Hirsi
 Olayinka Aresa
 Alejandro Argote
 Milo Baker
 Max Baker
 Sam Baraister Smith
 Max Baraister Smith
 Steve Batai
 Mirit Beck
 Raphaela Blake
 Mursal Butt
 Krystal Charles

Kit Clark
 Zara Crosland
 Mehmet Cucel
 Joseph Delaney
 Lamees Forrester
 Lean Gordon
 Luke Greig
 Cemar Harding
 Jacob Harris
 Sabrina Hart
 Scott Hazelwood
 Farenca Hendrickson
 Lorenzo Henry-Rennie
 Eugene Herbert
 Majid Karimi
 Finbar Kelly
 India Marzin
 Lorevaya Miller

Barnaby Mills
 Taniffia Morrison
 Rachel Ogunsanya
 Sarah Parke
 Kayley Pearman
 Savannah Prarfe
 Grace Rogers
 Sanatha Sylla
 Eve Sylvie Watson
 Oskar Thompson
 Iona Tompkins
 Sammy Trieu
 Thai'ra Walker
 Trevanna Watkis
 Courtney Woolgar

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