THE MAXWELL CENTRE is a new building for pioneering scientific research and industrial partnership in the University of Cambridge, inspired by the remarkable physicist James Clerk Maxwell. Maxwell was the first Cavendish Professor of Physics in Cambridge and a fellow of Trinity College; his discoveries include the unification of electromagnetic and light waves. From mobile phones to television, radio, and radar, we owe much of our current technology to Maxwell’s discoveries. In the spirit of Maxwell, the new Centre is designed to foster creative and fundamentally ground breaking science discoveries and partner with industry to translate these to technological applications.

INTO BOUNDLESS SPACE I LEAP is a special exhibition and series of events celebrating the opening of the Maxwell Centre.

James Clerk Maxwell used art and poetry as an expression of his scientific research, and the title of the exhibition is taken from one of his poems. The exhibition presents work by fourteen contemporary artists of international standing, including sculpture, video, installation and painting. The artworks, which include new commissions, have been selected or created in response to the new Centre’s ethos of scientific discovery and collaboration, and the persistent quest shared by artists and scientists to explore the world around us. The exhibition reflects the Maxwell Centre as a space for experiment, interaction, and ideas - creating the future through the physical sciences.

New commissions include a large-scale graphic text work by Mark Titchner using words from Maxwell’s poetry; photographic works by Laura Buckley and Fold sculptures by Rana Begum. A specially commissioned new dance and sound work by choreographer Wayne McGregor in collaboration with artist Haroon Mirza will be performed on 9 April, and a film of the performance will be available afterwards. Both artists are internationally renowned for the pioneering nature of their work.

Paul Purgas has developed a new sound piece that transmits live electromagnetic audio feeds using special microphones that have been attached to scientific equipment in the new quantum materials laboratories at the Maxwell Centre. Issam Kourbaj has made new photographs using a camera obscura, of cutting edge research at the Cavendish Laboratory.

Visitors will also encounter Fischli/Weiss’s iconic film that follows a series of chain reactions between everyday objects. Two further films in the exhibition explore technology, materials and how humans interact with the world: Strike a 28 second film by Hito Steyerl in which the artist strikes a monitor with a chisel and the dream-like Mainland Rock by Benedict Drew. Also on view are Light Drawings by Gustav Metzger and sketches of the Aurora Australis by polar explorer Edward Wilson (1872-1912) member of Scott’s expeditions.

The exhibition has been curated by Kettle’s Yard in collaboration with the Maxwell Centre. Dr Suchitra Sebastian, Director Cavendish Arts-Science Project, Maxwell Centre, Department of Physics: ‘Our exhibition is a celebration of scientific and artistic discovery. The Cavendish Arts-Science Project partnership between scientists at the Maxwell Centre, curators at Kettle’s Yard, and collaborating artists, has proved an exciting exploration of each other’s worlds. We hope that it gives you a glimpse of those worlds too, and ignites your scientific curiosity and imagination – to see further, and dream bigger.’

The exhibition is open every Saturday, 11am-4pm
Open days and events
Free, open to all, booking essential, see kettlesyard.co.uk/maxwell
Saturday 9 April, 11am-3.30pm
OPEN DAY
Tours of the Centre, talks by artists and scientists on topics including DNA origami, nanoworlds, levitating trains, and new-generation batteries, and live performances of a new dance and sound work by Wayne McGregor and Haroon Mirza.
Free, refreshments available
Saturday 9 April, 4.30-6pm
PANEL DISCUSSION
Sharing Creative Exploration: What can the arts and sciences do for each other?
With Professor John Barrow, Dr Suchitra Sebastian, Mark Titchner and Dr Philip Barnard chaired by Andrew Nairne, Director of Kettle’s Yard
Join Cambridge scientists and artist Mark Titchner for a stimulating debate.
Free, booking essential. Followed by drinks.
Saturday 25 June, 11am-4pm
OPEN DAY
Tours of the Centre, talks by artists and scientists on topics including DNA origami, nanoworlds, levitating trains, and new-generation batteries, and activities for all ages.
Free, refreshments available
To book and for more information about the full programme of events please visit kettlesyard.co.uk/maxwell

Editors notes

New commissions by: Rana Begum, Laura Buckley, Issam Kourbaj, Wayne McGregor & Haroon Mirza, Paul Purgas and Mark Titchner.

The exhibition is a collaboration between the Kettle’s Yard and the Maxwell Centre. The project is conceived by the Cavendish Arts Science Project directed by Suchitra Sebastian, Maxwell Centre; and the exhibition is curated by Guy Haywood, Assistant Curator, Kettle’s Yard.

James Clerk Maxwell
The Maxwell Centre takes its name from James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879). Maxwell was the subject of a recent BBC documentary, ‘Scotland's Einstein’. He is arguably one of the most overlooked physicists in history.

‘To him we owe the most significant discovery of our age - the theory of electromagnetism. He is rightly acclaimed as the father of modern physics. He also made fundamental contributions to mathematics, astronomy and engineering,’ James Clerk Maxwell Foundation. Einstein kept a framed photograph of Maxwell in his study.