

Outside the Conventional and into the Mainstream

Arts in Public Space in England



A report commissioned by **101 Outdoor Arts**
Written by **David Micklem** with **Sud Basu** and **Simon Chatterton**



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“ This year more than ever the power and value of arts in public space have shone. Across the UK artists and arts organisations have re-inhabited public spaces and re-imagined them for a post-pandemic world. It’s an important and innovative area of practice, and one of several making vital strides forward in enabling art to become more accessible to all. This report is a timely review of the practice and its potential, and provides welcome provocations about what is needed to help it sustain, develop and thrive in the years to come.”

Jennifer Cleary – Director, Combined Arts & North, Arts Council England



Foreword

When Little Amal arrived in the UK in October 2021, thousands of people turned out to welcome the nine-year-old refugee puppet after her epic journey across Europe, walking in the footsteps of so many displaced adults and children before her. As she travelled through the UK, locals came out onto the streets greeting her with their own imaginative artistic responses in which creativity and compassion sat side by side. This was a moment when art connected us to our humanity.

Most art is hidden away in theatres or museums, the questions it raises about the way we live and how we view the world are posited behind closed doors. Access is restricted to those who can pay and who are in the know, connected through mailing lists or social media. The same people who are likely to feel comfortable in our building-dominated arts institutions, seeing the door as a way in, not a barrier to keep them out.

But arts in public spaces are uniquely positioned to invite the outside in. They take place in parks and open spaces, in city squares and on village greens, on rivers, over lakes and on mountains. They are frequently free at the point of access so welcoming everyone, including those who just happen to be passing and who get drawn in. They can make us see space and place differently, they can make the everyday seem extraordinary. They have to engage and provoke, or the crowd just drifts away.

Arts in public space are a broad church which encompasses street arts, outdoor performance, visual and sonic installations dance, carnival, theatre and circus. They include Kaleider's Pig, a plastic pig filled with money on the streets of Hull in 2018, which invited passers-by either to contribute to its community fund or to spend it, and Into the Mountain, Simone Kenyon's 2019 walk in the Highlands, a trek studded with dance and superb musicianship from a locally assembled all-female community choir.

When a million people turned out on to the streets of London in 2006 for The Sultan's Elephant, and what seemed like the whole of Port Talbot was held rapt by Wildworks and National Theatre Wales' The Passion in 2011, it was clear that the public appetite for arts

in public spaces was massive and unsatisfied.

But a traditional emphasis in the UK on performance made in and for buildings, the established structures of funding and the often inadequate conditions in which arts in public spaces is created, has meant that demonstrable public demand has gone unsated.

As this report, commissioned by 101 Outdoor Arts demonstrates, arts in public spaces are a natural fit with many of the main planks of the Arts Council England's *Let's Create* strategy, and have the potential to be one of the fastest growing areas of the creative industries as they effortlessly reach large and diverse audiences. But they need support to reach their as yet untapped potential.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the way we live our lives and how we view indoor public gatherings (including arts gatherings). It has emptied out our city centres leaving them sad and boarded up, and impacted adversely on physical, mental and financial health, particularly in our most disadvantaged communities.

Increasing evidence demonstrates the significant impact of the arts on health and wellbeing, and arts in public spaces are uniquely placed to deliver that; playing a significant role in bringing communities together and enabling them to be better connected and stronger. With further support from funders and arts strategists they can and will take up a central role in UK arts and the daily lives of millions of people.

Lyn Gardner



Introduction

101 Outdoor Arts is delighted to be commissioning this report as a document that can support and focus our own work over the coming years but also as a national strategy paper that we hope will inform, reflect on and encourage debate around the area of work about which we are passionate.

Run as part of Corn Exchange Newbury and based on the former USAF Greenham Common cruise missile base; 101's 20,000sq ft warehouse space with on-site fabrication, accommodation and rehearsal facilities offers artists, companies and producers unrivalled access to dedicated time, space and specialist support for the creation of work.

A major focus for artistic residencies, the creation of new work for public spaces and for the support of innovation in site-specific and outdoor performance, 101 supports approximately 50 companies each year and has hosted over 16,000 artist days of residencies since it opened in 2013. The work that passes through our doors goes on directly and indirectly to impact on hundreds of thousands of people across the country.

Alongside its dedicated residency programme, 101 plays a leading role in the development of practice through a programme of artist development, technical innovation and creative leadership activity for practitioners seeking to make art for outdoors and public space contexts.

As we move into what we can only hope is a post-pandemic era, an age when issues of inclusion and relevance in the arts are foremost, I also hope that this document can articulate why work in public space matters now more than ever.

Simon Chatterton

Strategic Lead

101 Outdoor Arts – www.101outdoorarts.com

National Centre for Arts in Public Space ■

Aims of the report

This report aims to take an overview of the landscape of arts in public space in and going forward from 2021 and draws on interviews undertaken during the preceding twelve months. It aims to identify ways in which this sector can evolve and respond to the challenges and opportunities of the current context as well as to evidence of the need for further sustained and appropriate investment in its often fragile ecology.

The report focuses primarily on England and is funded with support from Arts Council England. It draws on examples from all other nations however, and recognises that many of the themes and issues explored will be of wider relevance to artists, companies and stakeholders across the UK.

This report (and the research that underpins it) makes no claims to be extensive nor all-embracing. Interviews are with representatives of a broad area of practice but inevitably also exclude many others who contribute to this field. Interviewees are listed in Appendix 1.

The report was researched and written during the Covid-19 pandemic during a period of uncertainty and challenge for the cultural sector. Despite the problematic nature of forming clear long-term perspectives in this climate it seeks to reflect on the last decade's achievements, consider the current landscape, and look to future potential and challenges through and beyond the current public health and economic crisis. It also coincides with the period in which Arts Council England have launched *Let's Create*, a new ten-year plan which will inevitably inform and influence the development of the arts over the next decade.

David Micklem

Writer and arts consultant ■

Executive Summary

Despite a decade of spending constraints, the global pandemic and an ensuing economic recession, arts in public space have become a valued part of the cultural fabric of this country. They now find themselves playing an ever-widening role in creating cultural engagement in national and local programmes.

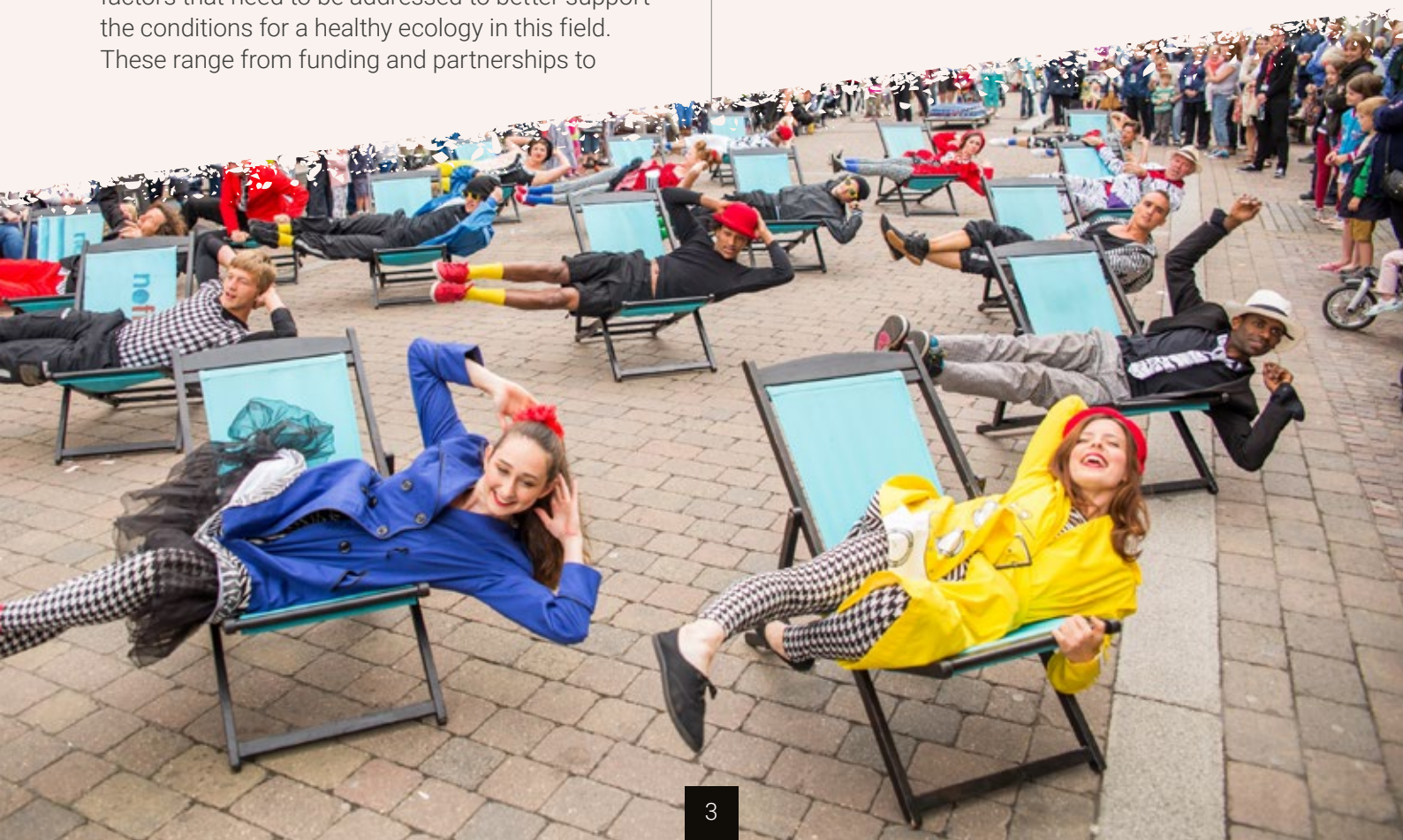
Half a century of practice and two decades of increased investment have led to the evolution of a remarkable range of approaches which can offer and respond to opportunities on a range of scales within dramatically varied contexts.

Arts Council England's ten year strategy for the arts, *Let's Create*, provides an excellent strategic environment in which to further develop this inherently socially engaged area of work. Other public and private bodies are also increasingly recognising the potential of arts in public space to deliver on their priorities. If funders' ambitions are not derailed by the pandemic, work of this kind should be well placed to attract greater levels of investment for artists and companies, for festivals and commissioners, and for organisations committed to artistic and technical development of practices.

This report details a range of wider themes, questions and challenges relating to arts in public space. At the time of writing there are a significant number of factors that need to be addressed to better support the conditions for a healthy ecology in this field. These range from funding and partnerships to

support structures and professional development. Another critical factor is the diversification of decision-makers and gatekeepers. Although this is not an issue unique to this area of the arts, the structures of street and outdoor arts have historically been driven by a relatively fixed group of highly dedicated individuals. These leaders have championed this work for many decades. Their skills, experience and advocacy continue to play a key role in the support of these practices but the make-up of this leadership group will need to be refreshed if the arts in public space are to become truly representative and meet their fullest potential.

Whilst acknowledging these challenges, work commissioned and produced for public space is becoming increasingly representative of UK society as a whole, and with strategic investment and recognition, those artists and organisations working beyond the constraints of building-based practice can be uniquely positioned to respond to a post-pandemic era. ■





Chapter One

From a sector to a strategy

The last twenty years have seen the rapid growth and professionalisation of art and culture that is made for contexts beyond the conventional. Street arts, outdoor arts, and arts in public space are terms representing a breadth of creative practices that hundreds of artists and companies engage with, and which, through their work, hundreds of thousands of people experience as participants and audiences each year.

This report chooses to use the term **arts in public space** to encompass a broad and dynamic range of durational and performance practices that can create a unique bond between artist, the art, its audience and the environment. They encompass everything from street corner busking to town centre festivals, large-scale opening ceremonies for live and broadcast audiences, and everything in between. They include temporary visual installations, forms of socially engaged practice and sited work in the landscape amongst many others. They are an unashamedly broad church, including dance, circus, performance and live art, carnival arts, theatre in all its diversity (immersive, site-specific, promenade, seated, standing), comedy, music, visual arts and installation work. The term is used deliberately to encompass a wider spectrum of modes of creation and presentation than what has become known as 'outdoor arts', which has perhaps become more often perceived as relating to touring shows within festival contexts. It's a pluralistic term designed to include a wide range of practices, avoiding false binaries and artificial divisions. For the purposes of this report our definition will be restricted to time-based and ephemeral practices and will exclude permanent public art.

Arts in public space are vigorous, responds to their audience and their site, and cover the broadest spectrum of forms and scales. The work can be intimate and quiet, or epic and pyrotechnic. Its audience might witness this work fleetingly or stay for an hour or a day or a weekend. It might be made for a destination – a hilltop in Dorset or a town in South Wales – contribute to a wider festival programme in a town or city centre or spring from the community itself as part of a carnival or mela. Shows can comprise an unexpected intervention in public space – a 42 tonne elephant on The Mall in London or a pop-up activist performance in a town centre on a Saturday afternoon. Or they may form part of an outdoor programme for a local authority, a theatre, an arts centre or a commercial developer. The recent journey of the Syrian refugee puppet [Little Amal](#) by Good Chance theatre has been perhaps the most recent and the most resonant example of the power of arts in public space.

This paper steers away from binaries – what's in and what's out – and instead focuses on correspondences – what opportunities might exist for joined up approaches and collaborative practices. The following pages seek to champion plurality and porosity,

recognising the complex environments in which works are made and presented. The experience of this work – for all who encounter it – is defined, enhanced and made accessible through its siting. The art is different because it's located outside of conventional arts spaces, away from many of the barriers to cultural engagement and often in places that have a connection to their audiences.

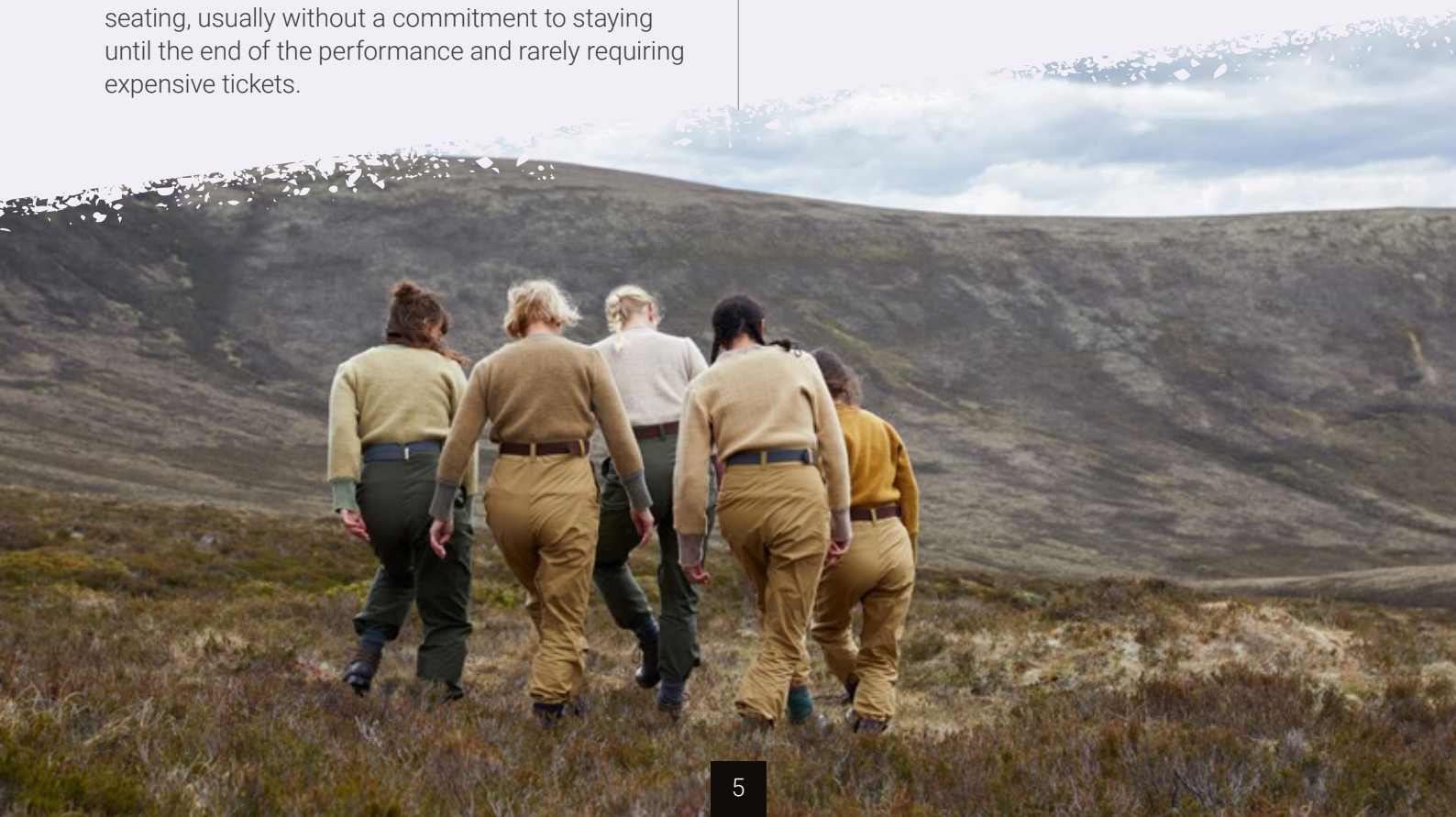
And because this work is often presented in environments that don't present the barriers to engagement that others do, audiences and participants are far more likely to be representative of the places in which the work is presented. Analysis of audience data as part of a [national survey](#) by the Audience Agency determined that arts in public space can uniquely reflect the demographic of the town or city in which it takes place and is highly successful in attracting a wide range of ages, with particular appeal to younger people, and those considered low cultural engagers. Beyond location, ticketing considerations also play a role, with work that is free at the point of access attracting dramatically larger and wider audiences. Even with work that is ticketed however, the range of partnerships inherent in much outdoor work offers opportunities to connect with far wider audiences. Parks and gardens, heritage and environment organisations, town centre Business Improvement Districts BIDs have all helped attract audiences that theatres struggle to engage.

This work often dispenses with the markers of more conventional arts practices – audiences will often feel they have greater agency in relation to this kind of work, able to move freely, unencumbered by fixed seating, usually without a commitment to staying until the end of the performance and rarely requiring expensive tickets.

This paper suggests that the placing of the work changes its nature. The relationship to an audience might be paid and ticketed, or free and unlimited, but the context for the work is crucial. This art is presented on beaches and in high streets and shopping centres and empty department stores. It transforms familiar environments through art and culture – a local park made into a magical night-time environment through lighting and sound, a beach a place of quiet pilgrimage, a shopping centre filled with music and laughter. Summer festivals, carnivals and melas transform streets, squares and parks into gathering places with performances attracting both zealous audiences and intrigued bystanders alike. A passion play performed in the streets of Port Talbot is changed by the fact that it's in spaces familiar to its public. What might be conventional in a theatre is rendered different because of the unique interplay between artist, audience and site when it plays out in a shopping centre or a car park or on the beach.

The strengths of arts in public space are in their breadth and depth. They encompass almost anything that engages with an audience outside of conventional spaces and are often transdisciplinary, drawing on a range of art forms and approaches, and it is this range of practice that is sometimes unhelpful in establishing definitions or unifying terminology.

Some practitioners identify principally with a traditional art form label as choreographers, sound artists, theatre-makers. Others prefer to identify with process or place in creating work with communities or in site-specific contexts. Historic labels such as street arts,



after the European tradition, and outdoor arts – a more recent UK appellation – have been useful. They have created an environment in which a broad range of forms are recognised as having special value and this has enabled funding to be directed to them without needing to classify them further.

The identification of an outdoor arts 'sector' has created the conditions in which funding has been made available to many artists and companies who make the work, to the festivals and commissioners who want the work, and to the spaces around the UK that can support its development when previously the lack of recognition would risk these practitioners being overlooked or undervalued.

However, an attempt to define outdoor arts or arts in public space simply as a 'sector' risks creating artificial barriers that exclude. The term implies reductive definitions that these practices constantly stretch. The emergence of a visible outdoor arts sector – whose main drivers are festivals presenting touring work – doesn't always immediately or fully reflect the range of work made, the types of location it is presented in, or the artists who make it. The contexts in which artists produce and present their work vary dramatically within their work and even artists who might identify with the term 'outdoor arts' may well also produce work for conventional theatres and galleries and concert halls.

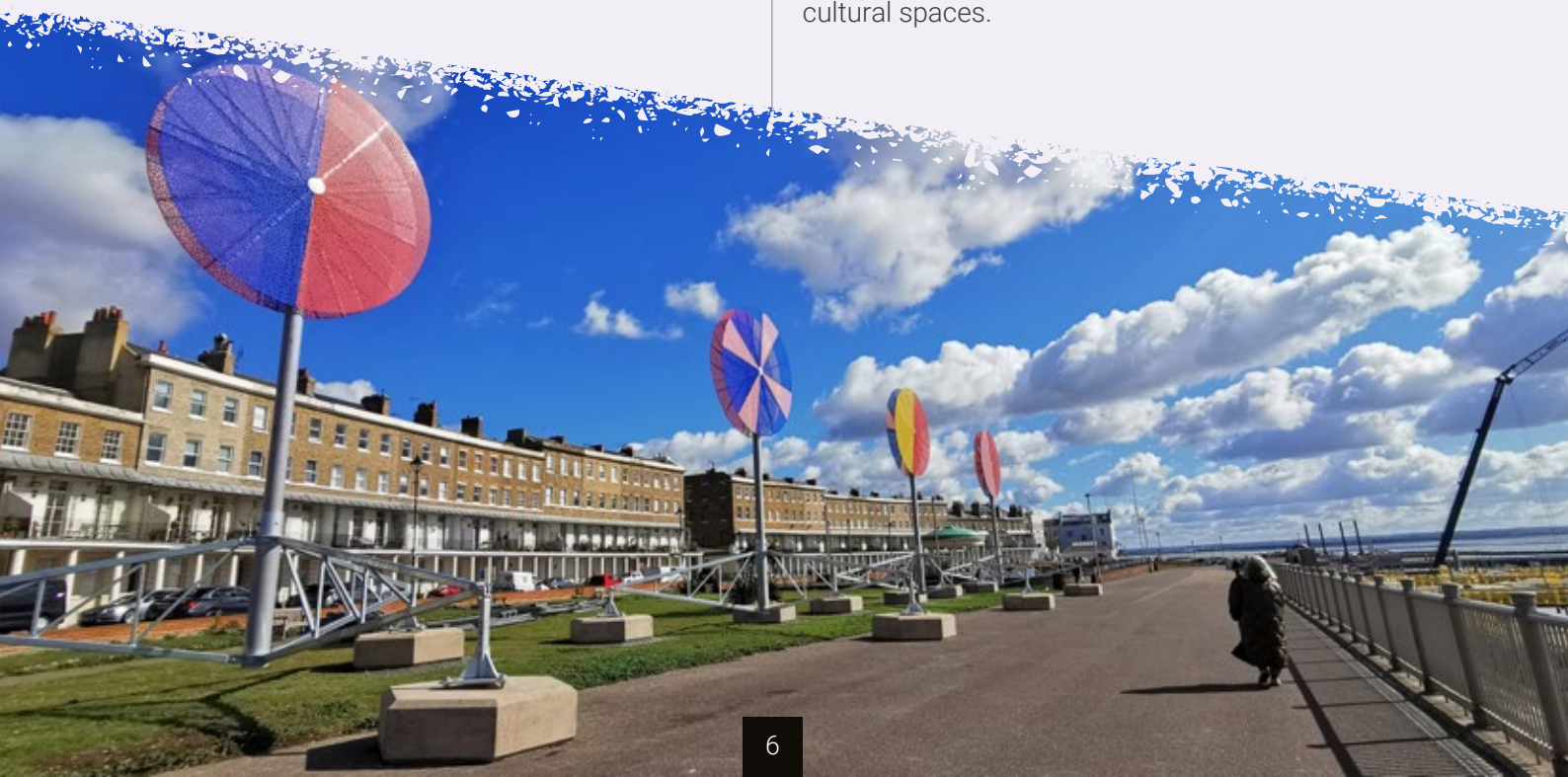
A 'sector' gives voice to artists, creates advocacy, helps develop standards and opportunities. But it is also limiting, carrying with it ideas about status and value that are reductive and unhelpful. Too often, reference to a 'sector' diminishes the value of work because it is seen to stand for a certain kind of all-encompassing practice that fails to express its full

range and diversity. This report calls for a loosening of definitions and a change of terminology to influence policies and to encourage recognition and support for the broadest range of artists, companies and practices.

“ Arts in public space are taking their place at the centre of our contemporary culture. To my mind they are the most relevant and engaging range of arts practices. They happen everywhere and can involve everyone, even those who think the arts are not for them. You cannot truly talk about diversifying audiences unless you talk about outdoor work and so I'm delighted by the publication of this timely report.”

Martin Green – Chief Creative Officer, Unboxed: Creativity in the UK and Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

For the purposes of this paper, **arts in public space** is used as a term to suggest a strategy centred on a fundamental mode of creation, presentation and engagement; a strategy that can acknowledge, encompass and support the broadest range of practices that are inherently distinct because of how they are made, where they are sited and their potential for reaching people who are not attenders of conventional cultural venues. Shows, installations and promenade performances that are changed by their relationship with an audience, outside of the confines, conventions and rigid frameworks of formal arts and cultural spaces.



In suggesting a shift in perception of work in public space – from identifying a sector towards forming a strategy – this paper seeks to open up the thinking around arts in public space to the broadest range of artists, companies, organisations, and practices. This report argues for a commitment to a strategy that builds the case for increased support for, and investment in, a larger, more diverse, more representative and more sustainable ecology of artists, commissioners and presenters making and staging work for non-conventional arts environments.

These practices – performative and visual, time-based, made for informal and semi-formal environments – have a long history in the UK, across Europe and beyond. And due to the nature of their presentation in public space, often free, always direct and immediate in their modes of engagement, these practices are usually dynamic and urgent in ways that others simply aren't. Because this work is made for familiar spaces – urban and rural, public and private – it is better placed to respond to the landscapes, environments and the people who live and work within them. To do this requires different skills and approaches, supported and resourced in different ways. The demands of making work in public space are very different and the relationship with space and audience need careful negotiation when the formalities and frameworks of the conventional venue constructs are not at play. Artists need to be supported to develop their practice in public space and presenters need dedicated resources to support them to work beyond the safety net of built infrastructure and established venue skill sets. The value of sustaining artists to work in public space over several years needs to be recognised to allow them to build up a body of knowledge and experience working in these contexts.

In the UK, the decade ahead offers significant opportunities to build on these modes and histories of informal and formal performance-making, and to exploit shifts in the public perception around the value of art and culture. In a country where citizens seek to be more actively engaged in creative activity, where digital technologies enable many of us to produce, curate and critique, arts in public space offers space to engage people differently. The expansion of the wider outdoor event industry in recent years and the recent added focus on outdoors as a safer place post-pandemic, provides an expanded backdrop for making and experiencing arts practices. A limited infrastructure, of commissioners, festivals, making spaces, producers, programmers, artists and companies, is poised to grow and adapt to changes in who gets to make art, where, and for whom.

Unencumbered by significant cultural assets, artists and companies working in public space embody

a fleetness-of-foot that ensures they are well placed for the decade ahead. With increased and sustained resources, carefully and generously targeted at artists, companies and commissioners, arts in public space can respond to a society that increasingly wants to be involved in cultural production. For artists, producers, programmers and companies, Arts Council England's [Let's Create](#) strategy for 2020-2030 offers an extraordinary opportunity to bring practices that have long existed outside of the conventional, into the mainstream.

This paper aims to set out strategies to build on past strengths, deal with current challenges, and embrace opportunities for the future, to ensure arts in public space thrives through the decades ahead. Nothing less than coordinated and sustained support for an ecology that underpins these strategies will unlock the full potential of arts in public space's societal and creative impacts. ■





Chapter Two

— Current context

The last years have been dominated by COVID-19 and the ensuing global economic downturn. The outcome of the crisis is far from known – in terms of the impacts on public health (physical and mental) and on the economy. Whatever the longer-term prospects, it's likely that arts and culture as we know it will be radically altered, artists' livelihoods upended, and audience confidence reduced.

Along with the tourism sector, cultural and creative sectors have been the most affected by the current COVID-19 crisis, with jobs at risk ranging from 0.8 to 5.5% of employment. The venue-based sectors (such as museums, performing arts venues, live music, festivals, cinema, etc.) have been the hardest hit by social distancing measures. The abrupt drop in revenues through the pandemic period has put their financial sustainability at risk and resulted in reduced wage earnings and lay-offs with repercussions for the value chain of their suppliers, from creative and non-creative sectors alike. Some cultural and creative sectors, such as online content platforms profited from the increased demand for cultural content streaming during lockdown, but the benefits from this extra demand largely accrued to the largest firms in the industry.

The consequences of the COVID-19 crisis will be long-lasting due to a combination of several factors. The effects on distribution channels and the drop in investment by the cultural sector will affect the production of cultural goods and services and their diversity in the months, if not years, to come.

The crisis has sharply exposed the structural fragility of some producers in the sector, not least in areas of low cultural engagement where investment is fragile and infrastructure, capacity and leadership exposed. Audience confidence and habits will take time to rebuild. The sector also faces a crisis in retention and recruitment due to many individuals leaving the arts due to the pressures of the pandemic.

The introduction of lockdown and “stay-at-home” orders led to the closure of public spaces, galleries, museums, arts venues, and other cultural assets. However, the pandemic also provided new ways to engage in the arts at home through both increased digital availability of the arts (e.g. virtual choirs and online arts classes) and the introduction of furlough schemes, whereby large proportions of the population were required to take leave from work. Home-based arts engagement therefore increased during the pandemic. There is evidence that the arts have played an important role in supporting wellbeing specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whilst there appeared to have been an overall increase in arts engagement during initial COVID-19

lockdowns, engagement may have been socially patterned. Pre-pandemic studies have repeatedly found that arts engagement is higher amongst younger adults, women, people living in rural areas, those with higher educational levels, and individuals with greater social support. Many of these groups have also made greatest use of the arts during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is some evidence that other factors such as ethnicity, partnership status, socio-economic status, and mental/physical health conditions were differentially associated with arts engagement prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also in contrast to previous findings, people with higher levels of loneliness and diagnosed mental health conditions had higher engagement levels. This suggests that new profiles of arts audiences might have emerged during the pandemic.

The Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum and focus in 2019/20 – fuelled by the tragic murder of George Floyd in the US, the lasting impact of the 2017 Grenfell fire in London and the disproportionate numbers of deaths from COVID-19 in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in the UK. Serious questions continue to emerge from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic artists and cultural organisations – fuelled by an ever-increasing sense of inequality, a need for voices to be heard, and a drive towards parity for funding and opportunities. These questions have given rise to greater focus on power and privilege within the arts – and a broader willingness across the sector to explore cultural democracy. What comprises art? Who gets to decide? Who makes it? How? For whom? These questions became the subject of renewed debate as the pandemic placed our cultural lives on pause. COVID-19 has further exposed inherent inequalities right across our society, and deep within the arts.

Commissioners, programmers and curators are starting to embrace the need for cultural programmes and activity that reflect more broadly the diversity of our communities through opening up what constitutes art, who gets a say in it, and who gets to make and experience it. Artists and companies who make work for the wider public, beyond conventional cultural spaces, have been quick to respond to these changes in society. The past decade might be characterised by increased participation, citizen-programming, and civic-celebration, driven by an enhanced focus on arts in public space. We are no longer mere witnesses to arts and culture content within the passively seated modalities of conventional venues. We both seek and deserve an active and multi-dimensional cultural engagement, new experiences catalysed by performance and installation and the potential to see our civic and natural spaces enlivened by inclusive arts and culture. These developments lay the

groundwork for much-needed strategies in support of arts in public space.

Since the first impacts of the pandemic in spring 2020, the repeated refrain from artists, companies and arts professionals has been that whatever happens, we can't go back to how things were pre-Covid – even if at this moment that might seem better to many than the challenges that the pandemic has brought to the arts.

Despite overwhelming evidence of climate emergency, there is little to suggest sufficient commitments to rapid decarbonisation across the globe. And at a local level, within communities, and across the arts sector, there is an emergence of thematic cultural programming, increased activism and key structural initiatives – however what is clear is that there is still much that needs to be done to raise consciousness and commit to more sustainable activity – a message that desperately needs to be made visible in every sphere of our public lives.

All this, and a decade of austerity in the UK has significantly reduced local authority funding, and barely maintained lottery and central government spending on the arts. This local authority cultural spending – alongside arts development roles – had been a prime driver for the circuit of smaller festivals and events that enabled many artists to sustain a living working outdoors.

A final threat has come in the shape of the UK's exit from the European Union in 2020 which has unpicked longstanding ties with partners across the continent and cut off access to financial support for international networks. At a stroke Brexit removed possibilities for co-commissioning through schemes such as Creative Europe, made touring work more challenging and less affordable to EU partners and diminished the dialogue and partnership that underpinned public space performance networks such as [In Situ](#) and [Circostrada](#).

And yet, despite all this and the uncertain months and years ahead, arts in public space are by their very nature dynamic, responsive, resilient. These practices demonstrate myriad opportunities to engage the wider public in arts and culture, across the UK and around the world. They offer a unique potential to find new audiences, respond to new societal agendas and to express new preoccupations through new forms and ways of expressing our collective creativity. This paper explores these opportunities through the prism of hope and suggests ways in which arts in public space art might respond to life with/after the significant impacts of COVID-19 and by which it can be supported to grow stronger and richer. ■



Chapter Three

Hope and opportunity?

The last decade could be characterised by changes in wider perceptions about outdoor culture more generally. The UK as a society now enthusiastically embraces the outdoors. The increasing prevalence of pavement cafes, parks and green spaces and accompanying outdoor festivals pre-pandemic reached its zenith in the explosion of alfresco culture in our homes and gardens through the pandemic lockdowns. The positive impacts on physical and mental health of engaging with others and with our extraordinary natural environment is now better understood – and the UK now increasingly celebrates life without walls.

Against this backdrop, increasing numbers of artists and companies have been making work for a growing range of programming opportunities in outdoor and public space contexts.

Festival commissioning and programming

Festivals continue to provide a vital part of the way in which artists can be supported, work can reach the widest possible public and audiences can be built over a sustained period.

The existing outdoor arts festival infrastructure has been relatively well placed to present Covid-safe experiences and despite the challenges posed by sudden changes in restrictions or local Covid infection rates, has worked with free ticketing systems, socially distanced seating and durational performances to maintain programming. Companies and organisations working in arts in public space have seen their work

become part of a wider interest in arts in outdoor locations and are now positioned to offer expertise and networks to a wider arts and cultural sector.

Significant support from Arts Council England (ACE) in the commissioning consortium [Without Walls](#) (see Appendix 2) and other touring networks has bolstered festivals' ability to commission and present outdoor work in their programmes, and created a limited but consistent national touring circuit for some artists' and companies' work. Unfortunately, increased investment in England via ACE's National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and lottery funding, for these programmes has coincided with funding pressures within local authorities. The latter have led to a reduction in wider touring opportunities and created a particular challenge for artists working without the subsidy of commissioning and touring consortia.

Place-based initiatives

Investment in place-based cultural activity [Creative People and Places](#) (CPP) and [Great Places](#) – ACE; [Ideas, People and Places](#) – Arts Council Wales) have provided new contexts for arts in public space and underlined their value in wider public realm contexts. Typically taking place in areas of low cultural engagement these schemes have often used arts in public space as part of wider placemaking, cultural tourism, regeneration and community cohesion agendas. Great Places was a joint initiative between Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund which over three years saw £20 million invested in 16 towns across England. Arts in public space featured in almost all the programmes and in many cases formed a central plank of the project activity, bringing local authority planning and policy teams together with cultural organisations and resulting in programmes such as [Eyeview](#) in Torbay and in the [Pioneering Places](#) scheme across East Kent which curated major pieces of temporary visual art by artists such as Conrad Shawcross and Morag Myerscroft.

“ At LEEDS 2023 we are wanting our year of culture to really Let Culture Loose across our city and with all our communities. The arts in public space is an important strand in our programme enabling our diverse communities to discover afresh, in new and different ways, the complex stories of our city, its people and its heritage.”

Kully Thiarai – Creative Director, Leeds 2023

The UK City of Culture programme (and more recent London Borough of Culture programme) is a domestic response to the perceived successes of the EU Capital of Culture programmes. [Evidence](#) suggests Glasgow 1990 and Liverpool 2008 were key drivers in reviving a sense of civic pride as well as the cultural infrastructure of both cities. Newcastle Gateshead (a bid city for EU Capital of Culture 2008) also drove national perceptions of the North East through significant investment in arts and culture. UK Cities of Culture Derry 2013 and Hull 2017 provided major commissioning and presenting opportunities for artists and producers with experience of making arts in public space. Public spaces again formed part of the fabric of the [Coventry UK City of Culture 2021](#) programme and Leeds' vision for its [Year of Culture](#) in 2023 is likely to further develop these possibilities.



At the same time commercial developers across the UK have seen the benefits of investment in outdoor art to animate their spaces (examples include [U and I](#) in [Mayfield](#) in Manchester, [Argent](#) at Granary Square in King's Cross and [Quintain](#) at Wembley Park).

Many cities in the UK have also responded to the challenges of the pandemic by fast-tracking pedestrianisation, creating improved cycling infrastructure and prohibiting cars from their centres. These gains for public space may yet be developed and consolidated longer term.

As levelling up becomes an ever more prominent agenda we can also anticipate that culture and particularly arts in public space will play a significant part in post-pandemic recovery and improving the wellbeing of communities in towns that have been traditionally underserved economically and culturally.

Celebratory and commemorative cultural programmes

The past decade has seen other new and significant commissioning opportunities for arts in public space – increasingly initiated and led by the UK Government. The London 2012 Olympic Games offered extensive and UK-wide commissioning opportunities for UK and international artists to present ambitious new works

– primarily in the public realm. Significant investment in all four nations and in each English region realised vast public engagement and appetite for arts and culture, with over 40 million people connecting with one or more projects. 14-18 NOW offered a further high-profile context for the commissioning of major projects realised for the public realm. Work by artists such as [Jeremy Deller](#), [Danny Boyle](#), [Marc Rees](#), [Mark Anderson](#), [Rachel Whiteread](#), [Anya Gallacio](#) and [Wildworks](#) offered new ways of exploring civic and creative contexts – whilst also engaging large audiences and participants in a similar way to London 2012 – across the boundaries of our four nations. Similarly to London 2012, 14-18 NOW offered mass engagement of a level unseen in this context – with 35 million engagements over the four-year period. Festival UK 2022 – now [Unboxed: Creativity in the UK](#) – is the latest example of this type of activity. This radical shift in project development will realise ten ambitious works which bring together consortia of STEAM organisations, to create a national work which engages the entirety of the UK. Whilst there has been a backlash from the cultural sector on the project and its initial roots, the commissioning teams include many artists or organisations expert in developing work for public spaces. This push towards mass engagement, perhaps increasingly led by the UK Government, appears to connect and coalesce arts in public space strategically with digital/broadcast activity and participation.

Wider event contexts

Carnival and mela have historically offered some of the largest, free and most diverse opportunities for arts practice in public space as well as some of the most established models for engagement and participation. These increasingly vibrant and well networked fields span a range of traditional and recent events including Afro-Caribbean carnivals like [Notting Hill](#) and [St Pauls Carnival](#), the [traditional carnivals of the South West](#) and an expanding number of [Asian melas](#) predominantly in major cities.

The emergence of winter Light Festivals or White/Light Night events – exemplified by Artichoke's [Lumiere](#) in Durham and [Leeds Light Night](#) – are now a hugely popular feature in the UK, offering new opportunities for artists and companies to make and present work outside the traditional summer festival season. Mainly materialised in the autumn or winter months, the opportunity to realise often temporary installation-based work has brought together conventional arts organisations or producers, local authorities, and commercial enterprises. The [Light Up the North](#) consortium has seen five organisations across the north of England join together in an ambitious partnership and around the country many public and private gardens including Kew and Blenheim, as well

as many smaller venues have also adopted winter light trails with varying degrees of artistic ambition.

In addition, greenfield festivals including those run by commercial organisations, have increasingly programmed circus and outdoor performance alongside their core music offer, which, although lying outside a strict public realm context, engages different audiences to those attracted to many traditional venues, and creates income and exposure for artists. [Glastonbury Festival](#) has historically been the focus of much of this activity – but over the last ten years other weekend festivals such as [Just So](#), [Latitude](#), [Green Man](#), [Blue Dot](#), [Wilderness](#) and many more have developed performance or installation-based programming strands – with an increasing interest in commissioning.

Venues have been consistently exploring the possibilities of outdoor programming to expand the possibilities for the creation and staging of work, engage more closely with their communities and develop new audiences. Some, like [Corn Exchange Newbury](#) (which runs 101 Outdoor Arts), [The Place](#) and [Birmingham Hippodrome](#) are committed to ongoing outdoor programmes of work and dedicated producing and commissioning activity. Beyond the existing built venue infrastructure model, the two national theatres of Scotland and Wales – both conceived and delivered 'without walls' – have provided significant opportunities for performance practices to relocate outside of the conventional performance spaces. Performances such as [Mametz](#) (2014) or [The Passion](#) (1997) commissioned by National Theatre Wales, or [306](#) from National Theatre Scotland – presented at dawn in a converted farm in the Perthshire countryside – provide a different level of ambition for outdoor theatre work in the UK.

Particularly during the pandemic, formal arts spaces which were out of commission sought to retain connections with audiences while their buildings were closed. Whilst many galleries, museums and theatres have developed enhanced digital skills, infrastructure and capacity over this period to maintain and expand their focus many have also considered or undertaken strands of outdoor presentation including [Arcola Theatre](#)'s new outdoor space. From a visual arts' context, there has been a recent upsurge in temporary installations in the public realm. Sculpture parks and landscape art commissions became a central part of the UK's cultural offer while the built environment was forced to close or limit visitor numbers.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its ensuing economic impacts, there is cause for hope that arts in public space will play a key role in the recovery not just of the cultural sector but of our society as a whole post-pandemic. ■



Chapter Four

— An overview of the cultural ecology

Arts in public space are sustained by a complex ecology which in simple terms can be summarised as comprising three parts. This 'three-legged stool' is sustained by nuanced and ongoing investment in and advocacy for:

- Artists and companies making work and producers working with them to develop projects;
- Festivals and commissioners presenting the work (and sustaining economically viable touring circuits);
- Support for artists – spaces and facilities in which the work is made, training, advice, and development opportunities.
- Creation centres, support organisations and artistic development programmes require financing to cover core costs, to enable residencies and R+D opportunities, to grow professional development programmes and undertake strategic initiatives tailored specifically to making work outdoors and in public space.

The health of this ecology is predicated on sustained investment in each of these three aspects (and through a combination of public, private and earned income, as set out in the next chapter).

In overview:

- Artists, companies and producers developing work need sustained financial support to cover overheads, R+D costs, projects, and to encourage artistic risk-taking;
- Festivals and commissioners presenting the work need sustained financial support to cover overheads and provide sufficient commissioning and presenting fees for artists and companies at all scales, and in support of touring;

Similar to all other cultural activity, sustained economic investment is central to the health of an ecology of arts in public space. Sitting at the very heart of a long-term and sustainable strategy is proper funding for artists and companies, commissioning and touring support to present work across a range of festivals and contexts, resources for appropriate making and rehearsal spaces and provision of training and professional development opportunities that are geared to the specific needs of the sector. The festival business model and wider national and regional cultural programmes are reliant on continued investment in public space programmes and underpinning all of this, a healthily resourced year-round infrastructure attuned to the specific demands of the work. ■



Chapter Five

Finance and economics

The most sustainable arts and cultural practices have thrived on a fluid blend of public, private and earned income. From the National Theatre to a rural festival and the artists and companies that make work for these contexts, it is the interplay of income from Arts Council England (ACE) and local authorities (public), trusts and foundations, and individual giving (private), plus fees, box office and sponsorship (earned income) that historically provide stability and protection from unanticipated fluctuations in income sources in the subsidised cultural sector.

Public finance

Sustained public funding has often been seen as a central and significant driver in the success of cultural activity. Public investment from UK Government and National Lottery funds has been distributed over the last decade principally through ACE and through local authorities – but also through [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#) (NLHF) and [National Lottery Community Fund](#) (NLCF).

ACE has been a key supporter, funder, and strategic

enabler of arts in the public space. Through its use of both UK Government funding and National Lottery funds over the last 20 years ACE sustained its investment in artists and companies, festivals, and other commissioners, and in spaces to develop and rehearse work for public spaces. Precise data is difficult to find as arts in public space cross a broad range of artform and geographic contexts. But it is evident that major policy initiatives have had a significant impact on levels of investment including:

- The [Without Walls](#) commissioning consortium;
- The introduction of a range of new companies and festivals into the National Portfolio as well as increased support for organisations such as [Outdoor Arts UK \(OAUK\)](#), [101 Outdoor Arts](#) and [Out There Arts](#) who support the practice of artists and companies;
- The creation of new place-based initiatives (eg [Creative People & Places](#); [Great Places](#)) that have contributed opportunities for artists making work for public spaces;
- Support to individual practitioners through the [Developing Your Creative Practice](#) fund.

Since the publication in 2005 of its Street Arts Strategy (and subsequent [New Landscapes](#) 2007) ACE has recognised that a healthy ecology thrives on investment across each of the interlinked areas as outlined previously – artists, artistic companies and producers, festivals, commissioners and producers, and sectoral support organisations and initiatives.

The role of the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has also been significant in providing additional opportunities for artists, festivals and creation centres. National and international initiatives such as London 2012 and City of Culture schemes have contributed significant investment alongside that of ACE and other public funders and created a specific platform or context for making work. The emergence of new commissioning bodies such as [14-18 NOW](#) or [Unboxed](#) offer similar new investment that can enable and potentially sustain larger ambitious works often made for public spaces.

Local authorities continue to be a significant partner in public investment. Through festivals and other contexts, local authorities have played, and continue to play, a central role in supporting public investment in arts in public space. However, since 2010 local authority grants from central government have reduced by around 40% and spending has decreased by 26%. A decade of reducing budgets has placed significant pressure on local authorities who have no statutory obligation (beyond library services) to fund arts and culture. By 2019 almost £400m had been stripped out of annual local authority spending on culture and the arts since 2010, according to research by the County Councils Network. The added pressure of the pandemic on local services has further decreased available funds for arts and culture and, without central government investment or significantly increased Council Taxes, arts in public space are unlikely to be prioritised for local authorities. To mitigate this or perhaps simply to enable or encourage efficient or dynamic models of delivering cultural activity in areas of diminishing investment, there has been an emergence of Cultural Trusts in

many towns and cities across the UK. These providers often retain the cultural budgets from local authorities – and lever further investment from additional fundraising resources. Often managing venues, libraries, and other cultural services on behalf of local authorities these Trusts can be a key driver for the creation or enablement of festivals and arts in public space activity in towns and cities. [Culture Liverpool](#) perhaps is a strong example of where this model has sustained delivery – with significant activity and profile with arts in the public space.

Notwithstanding the recognition of dwindling local authority resources at this time, investment in arts in public space has made significant and positive impacts in towns, cities and regions across the UK. Local authorities have rightly identified it as a key contributor to community cohesion, placemaking, and the celebration of our urban and rural environments. In some cases, they have particularly prioritised this work due to a recognition of its audience reach and diversity. Local authorities can play a significant role as commissioners, co-commissioners, and funders of work for unconventional contexts and supporters and enablers of local festivals. They also have a role to play in licensing, planning, brokering relationships with commercial developers, Section 106 spending decisions and other forms of influencing.

Public funding from other sources has also been a mainstay of the cultural ecology for arts in the public space. [Creative Europe](#) has historically been an important and influential funding partner. Several UK-based cultural organisations have been leading partners in small, medium, and large-scale cooperation/partnership projects – providing foundations for artistic exchange, collaboration, commissioning and network creation. Organisations and festivals such as [Out There](#), [Freedom Festival](#), [So Festival](#), [Walk the Plank](#), [ArtReach](#) and others have directly benefitted from sustained investment – enabling commissioning, and increased support for UK and EU-based artists. As noted in the opening section and expanded on in following sections – the UK's departure from Europe in 2020 will have a significant impact on future participation in such schemes – and thus a reduced impact and investment from Creative Europe.

Finally, there is [Theatre Tax Relief](#) (also known as Theatre Tax Credit), a government incentive that has enabled many theatre producers in the commercial and subsidised sector to claim deductions in tax related to production costs. Recently doubled as a response to the impact of the pandemic on the theatre sector, it has conspicuously failed to widely benefit the outdoor performance sector as it excludes work that is free

for the public, only benefitting a small number of new outdoor productions which have sought to charge for tickets from the outset.

Private finance

Trusts and foundations are significant funders of artists, companies, festivals and commissioning bodies. Their support can range from grants for one-off projects, to multi-year investment. Increasingly trusts and foundations are directing their support towards grassroots and community initiatives, a nationwide 'levelling up agenda' and towards tackling systemic inequalities in our society. Artists, companies and commissioners of work for public space are extremely well placed to continue to contribute to these civic agendas. In a study in 2020, the level of investment from Trusts and Foundations had increased to approximately 10% of income to the average arts organisation in the UK. Unlike larger funders, the majority of grants awarded by Trusts and Foundations are still below £400,000 – and for many Trusts the average investment is between £10,000 and £30,000. The combined investment in arts and cultural organisations from Trusts and Foundations totalled £88 million in 2019/20 – and remains for now stable and focussed.

The strategies that underpin this work vary – some Trusts are community engaged, some support the development of individuals or access to the arts and others work in pursuit of civic pride, social justice and wider goals. Many Trusts have been rethinking their strategies in the wake of COVID-19, which has seen several schemes restricted temporarily to existing beneficiaries. Successful investment is highly dependent on many factors – not least strategic alignment – but for some, geography or social impact are factors too. Increasing competition for these funds can be seen – particularly in the context of post-pandemic recovery and pressures on local authority and other funding meaning that fundraising resource, capacity and expertise of artists, companies and festivals may be key in the future.

The main Trusts and Foundations supporting this area of the arts include:

- [Esmée Fairbairn Foundation](#)
- [Paul Hamlyn Foundation](#)
- [Jerwood Foundation](#)
- [Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation](#)
- [Garfield Weston Foundation](#)
- [The Foyle Foundation](#)
- [Leverhulme Trust](#)
- [Tudor Trust](#)
- [John Ellerman Foundation](#)





Individual giving or philanthropic routes provide some income towards arts in public space. Whilst more prevalent within funding models in the visual arts, there has been an increase in this approach – primarily for larger scale works, or complex project delivery. This can also comprise ‘friends of’ schemes (often related to a festival) or crowdfunding activity towards a specific project. Individual giving schemes take time and effort to manage successfully and are not particularly prevalent across this loose sector. Individual giving carries the advantage of Gift Aid tax relief on all donations.

Commissioning fees and earned income

Income – in the form of commissioning/presenting fees, box office (where appropriate), sponsorship, merchandising – is a necessary component of a healthy ecology. For artists and companies making work for contexts where presentation is often free for an audience, earned income is most likely derived from commissioning or presentation fees. These can range significantly from a few hundred pounds to tens of thousands, depending on the scale of the project, anticipated audience, numbers of artists involved, duration of performance and / or installation. The maintenance of appropriate artists’ fee levels is likely to be an ongoing challenge in the face of economic uncertainty and increasing costs of living.

Many artists and companies have long histories of successfully maintaining and growing their practices through sustained access to earned income. Encouraged by Arts Council England and other funders they have over time become less reliant on grant funding, through generating larger sums from exploitation of their work and the spaces that they make it in.

Traditionally, however, it has been harder for arts in public space to develop and maintain sources of earned income, as they are underpinned often by a commitment to free access and provide fewer identifiable opportunities for branding and corporate entertainment.

Maintenance of a healthy financial basis for arts in public space requires consistent and simple communication to public bodies in the UK of its value and relevance to cross-cutting agendas. A greater understanding of the inter-related aspects of funding needs to be shared across the ecology, alongside a more informed appreciation of sources of non-arts support eg. Social prescribing, placemaking, etc (see following chapter on policy contexts). ■



Chapter Six

Policy contexts

Policy contexts are changing to create new opportunities to commission and present arts in public space. The economic crash of 2008, the ensuing drive for austerity in the UK, changing consumer habits and the pandemic have fundamentally changed our urban landscape. Local and national initiatives are actively seeking to address these changes.

Arts Council England

Arts Council England's [Let's Create](#) seeks to support a cultural ecology that is rooted in principles of ambition and quality, inclusivity and relevance, dynamism, and environmental responsibility. A shift in focus marks an evolution from 'great art and culture for everyone' to what might be considered 'art and culture by, with and for everyone' and expressed in a set of new Investment Principles which will be the focus of their funding plans for the next decade. And Arts councils in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have similarly placed renewed focus on place, community and everyday creativity in their plans for the years ahead.

Since the start of the pandemic, Arts Council England has reiterated its commitment to a period of reset informed by the spirit of their strategy. Creative Scotland's [Unlocking Potential Embracing Ambition](#) describes a vision of a 'Scotland where everyone actively values and celebrates arts and creativity as the heartbeat'. Arts Council Wales [Strategic Plan](#) focuses on two priorities – developing artists and companies, and building the civic role of the arts

across Wales. It's noteworthy that each of these published plans is peppered with images of work outside of conventional spaces.

ACE-led funding streams all have a role to play in supporting arts in public space. [Project Grants](#) will continue to be the focus for artists and festivals. Other schemes such as [Developing Your Creative Practice](#) have and will continue to see artists explore public spaces. Through 2020 and 2021, the significance of the [Cultural Recovery Fund](#) – administered by Arts Council England – cannot be underestimated here as a fundamental safety net for artists, venues and festivals operating in the sector. Alongside the extension of the furlough scheme, this specific grant scheme not only provided or supported the necessary overhead costs for many, but enabled many others to consider making or presenting work in public space or within a digital context (or both) for the first time. As the pandemic continues to have an impact on society and quality of life, the legacy and influence of these schemes has been significant yet remains to be fully understood.

National Lottery Heritage Fund/ Community Fund

Our cultural landscape has significantly benefitted from the ongoing investment from other Lottery Funders including [NLHF](#) and [NLCE](#). Targeted schemes for both funding providers have widely been accessed by artists and festivals alike – enabling a richer landscape of subject and context for arts in public space. Projects such as [14-18 NOW](#) and [Great Places](#) – have demonstrated the ability of traditional heritage funding to support and enable large-scale outdoor works. Others such as [The Agency](#), led by Battersea Arts Centre have provided access for young people to create social change projects – resulting in a wider access to cultural activities across the UK. NLHF partnership Initiatives such as [High Street Action Zones](#) and [Great Places](#) (detailed elsewhere) have seen an expanding role for this major funder.

Social prescribing

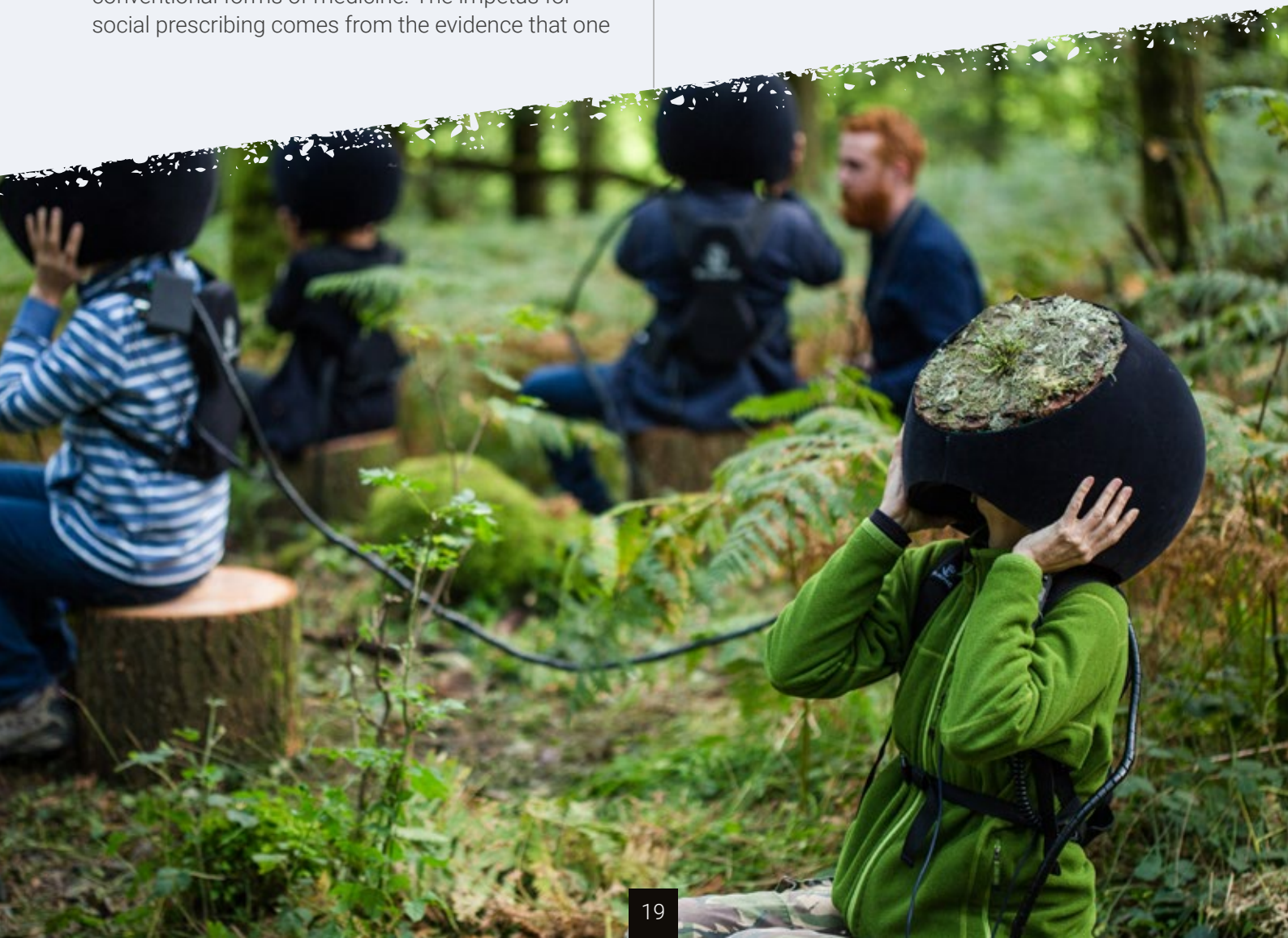
Over the past few years social prescribing has become increasingly recognised as a significant area of development within the arts and cultural sector. It's a term often used in relation to the work of GPs, and can be broadly defined as the referral of patients to social activities, instead of, or in addition to, more conventional forms of medicine. The impetus for social prescribing comes from the evidence that one

in five people visiting a GP does so for reasons that aren't fundamentally medical – including loneliness or debt. Up to another one in five people live with a condition or symptoms where medicine isn't the sole, or even the best, solution. The arts generally, and arts in public space specifically, offer significant opportunities to support the improvement of health and wellbeing across society.

Arts Council England has created an [introductory report](#) that also describes how social prescribing links with the ambition at the heart of its own Let's Create strategy. It is possible to imagine how this recognition of the value of participation in the arts might particularly benefit arts in public space, however, as yet the funding to underpin this is largely absent.

The [Creative Health](#) report is particularly pertinent in the context of arts in public space. Its findings included:

Arts engagement can help with the self-management of chronic and long-term conditions. For example, there is evidence that art therapies diminish the physical and psychological suffering of cancer and the side effects of its treatment. The participatory arts have a contribution to make to overcoming childhood obesity, and the natural and built environments are crucial to health creation;



Arts-on-prescription programmes can give rise to significant reductions in anxiety, depression and stress;

There is evidence that the arts have a part to play in healthy ageing.

The NHS, through individual Trusts or Hospital sites also have a continued and ongoing programme of arts and culture focussed on patients and staff. These increasingly important schemes have provided a different footing for the role of arts in wellbeing – often enabling artists to work in increasingly socially engaged ways across sites, and locations. Their commissioned works are often out of sight of public audiences – yet have a fundamental purpose in our cultural sector. Their role with arts in public space is perhaps more emerging. Luke Jerram's [‘In Memoriam’](#) is an example of NHS (University Hospitals Bristol & Weston NHS Foundation Trust) co-commissioning – specifically here with Without Walls and Greenwich and Docklands International Festival.

Urban policy

Cutbacks to local authorities have meant that the voluntary and private sectors are taking a greater share of the responsibility for keeping town centres alive. Pseudo-public sector governance approaches have begun to play an increasing role in shaping the public realm and animating town centres. Major developments in London like [Granary Square](#) in King's Cross and [Cardinal Place](#) in Victoria are illustrations of where streets, squares and plazas may mimic public space but are in fact private property and subject to different regimes of governance and maintenance. Commercial developers and landowners are increasingly using cultural activity to animate public space as part of their placemaking endeavours. These activities, which often are developed in partnerships with cultural venues, festivals or producing organisations, continue to emerge across the country – adding to an ever-increasing presence of artists working within areas of regeneration across the UK.

Section 106 funding has often been a critical opportunity for developers to financially support this type of activity – as well as more permanent installations. Collectively with the [Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government Future High Streets Fund](#), [Historic England's High Street Action Zones](#) are driving new policy contexts for outdoor and public space arts. [Emergency Exit Arts'](#) success in delivering a major strand of the four-year [High Street Culture](#) programme, which also includes sound walks and art installations, perhaps demonstrates the increasing importance and influence of the arts in the public space in this context.



Back in 2013, the Mayor of London published [Culture on the High Street](#) which set out the many ways that artists were animating town centres, fuelling the night time economy, taking over empty shops, making the built environment a little more engaging, etc. It was published shortly after the [Portas Review](#) into high streets and the year after the London Olympiad had done so much to animate the capital. There are examples in it from the UK and beyond.

The recent [Cultural Cities Enquiry](#) looks at more than just neighbourhoods and town centres but at municipal cultural policy in the UK more widely. It was commissioned by the Core Cities Group representing the UK's second-tier cities such as Liverpool and Bristol and makes a number of recommendations, mostly aimed at those working in town halls.

Most recently [A High Street Renaissance](#), commissioned by Arts Council England, used a combination of case studies and polling data to demonstrate the value of culture on the high street, revealing that 69% of those interviewed agreed that 'cultural experiences on the high street make their local area a better place to live.' With the challenges that the pandemic and the rise in internet shopping have brought to retail, many local authorities have launched high street recovery funds that can help businesses to recover.

Some key drivers of cultural activity in recent years include Business Improvement Districts, Cultural Districts and Cultural Compacts:

Business Improvement Districts are perhaps the most common vehicle by which urban neighbourhoods are managed outside the classic local authority approaches and can be active managers of public events programmes.

A Cultural District sometimes mimics a BID but is made up of exclusively or predominantly cultural members. It's a familiar way for metropolitan culture to be organised in the US where there is less of a role for local politicians, and is becoming increasingly common in the UK. In some instances there are BIDs (or BID-like outfits) which are exclusively or predominantly formed of cultural organisations. [Cultural districts](#) are more common in the US and Asia where cultural policy is less centralised at a national level. They explore defined areas of a city in which a high concentration of cultural facilities and programmes serve as the main anchor of attraction. They help strengthen local economies, create an enhanced sense of place, and deepen local cultural capacity. In London there are Cultural Districts such as [Culture Mile](#) (in the City of London) and [Fashion District](#) (at the former Olympics site), both of which have taken

existing cultural venues and reconstituted them in new organisational structures in order to work more collaboratively and attract investment.

Cultural Compacts are a relatively new initiative and gaining traction with funding bodies keen to make more profound connections between arts and culture and other aspects of civic life. Arts Council England has recently supported a [pilot project](#) in Southwark to explore how its funding might unlock other opportunities in this south London borough. The [Cultural Cities Report](#) from Core Cities group proposes City Culture Compacts: "a strategic partnership bringing together city authorities, business, education, cultural and community leaders, to co-design and deliver a vision for culture in the city. Effective Compacts will set out business plans to deliver measurable progress against local priorities." Several of Without Walls Touring Network Partners (see Appendix 2) are part of Cultural Compacts.

Levelling up and recovery and renewal funding

With the current government priority on levelling up, coupled with a priority of post-pandemic recovery very significant resources are being invested in target areas to deliver on an agenda of recovery and renewal. [The Levelling Up Fund](#) and [Cultural Development Funds](#) are two of the mechanisms designed to achieve this. The former, designed for local authorities has to date identified culture and heritage as a core theme. The latter, a Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) fund delivered by Arts Council England and awarded to place-based partnerships, puts an emphasis on capital investment and infrastructure but also allocates significant funds to project activity aimed at making places more attractive to live, visit and work. ■



Chapter Seven

Key themes

This report identifies eight overarching themes:

Theme 1: Diversity, equality and inclusion

Arts in public space have much to offer in the ways they can and often have embraced diversity. The range of artists, audiences and participants performing, watching and taking part in public contexts is often used as a way for funders and commissioners to signal an art 'by and for all' in policy and marketing documents.

Arts in public space are by their very nature visual, and often inherently democratic – they take place in a public realm unencumbered by the barriers associated with many conventional arts and culture venues – art and culture presented in spaces that belong to each and all of us. They can, therefore, inevitably be seen by many as a driver for audience development – increased participation and wide engagement. The prioritisation of increased access and inclusion within cultural settings – and a push for greater representation across all lived experience in all areas of practice – is widely understood and embraced within venues, commissioners, and festival settings. However, barriers – whether structural or systemic – remain evident.

Carnival artists have been important advocates and ambassadors for pushing, addressing and enabling representation – sometimes over generations.

Alongside Asian mela, this critical ecology of engagement and participation has provided the foundation for progression and platforms for presentation for many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic artists, in the public realm. Carnival's strong community roots and dramatic manifestation in the streets reminds us powerfully of how arts in public space can facilitate inclusion.

Beyond the traditional contexts of carnival and mela, artists from diverse cultural backgrounds are making a range of contemporary work in public space settings. Within a festival context, key strategic initiatives and approaches to commissioning and making work, often supported by Arts Council England, have sought to address some of the barriers to inclusion – both for audiences/participants but also for artists working within this area.

Some examples of this include:

- **Without Walls** – a partnership of 36 England-based festivals that work together through an Artistic Directorate, a Touring Network Partnership and a Creative Development Network - has taken an active lead in commissioning and presenting work made by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and D/deaf and disabled artists. Commissions for these artists have ensured partners have a sufficient roster of fully-resourced high-quality work from a representative range of artists and Without Walls has recently commissioned a report analysing the successes of these initiatives.
- **Greenwich and Docklands International Festival's** programme has championed new work from artists from diverse backgrounds, placing a particular focus (post the 2012 Paralympics) on D/deaf and disabled artists.
- **101 Outdoor Arts** has provided targeted support to a range of artists and companies from diverse backgrounds through its residency programmes and in particular its Seedbed residency scheme which has featured many ethnically diverse and deaf and disabled led projects.
- **Unlimited** is an arts commissioning programme that aims to support work by D/deaf and disabled artists, reach new audiences and shift perceptions of disabled people. Since its inception it has commissioned a significant number of projects in public space.
- **Creative People & Places** – which encompass a range of models and activities – delivered by partnerships across England and promoting ideas of cultural democracy, specifically in areas of low cultural engagement.

However, there is more work to do principally by festivals and venues to enable work that is commissioned and presented to fully represent the lived experiences of the communities it is seen by. Despite the powerful work of Carnival, Mela and some festivals, alongside the ongoing activity of a small number of artists, much of the work seen still reflects a limited cultural frame.

The risks and costs of making large-scale work impact artists and companies from all backgrounds. Sustaining and developing practices, to ensure that opportunities to make work at scale can be taken, are essential components of a healthy ecology for artists and companies. Too few companies are sustained to enable a broad range of possible candidates for large-scale opportunities. Despite some notable exceptions – there are still too few opportunities for D/deaf and disabled artists, and those from Black,

Asian and Minority Ethnic or low socio-economic backgrounds to make work across all scales for public spaces.

The decade ahead provides an incredible opportunity for artists, commissioners and producers engaged in public space work to show leadership around commitments to diversifying practices. Proactive commitments to shifting dynamics of power and privilege, to confronting unconscious biases in decision-making, and to taking a holistic approach to artist development, across all scales, will enable arts in public space to be at the vanguard of a more equitable and socially just cultural sector.

“ Creating work in public space has historically enabled Akademi to create remarkable, high impact performances which have extended our creative boundaries, engaged hundreds of participants and brought South Asian dance to new and diverse audiences. This kind of work will continue to be at the core of our practice.”

Subathra Subramaniam – Artistic Director, Akademi

Whilst it could be argued that some of the UK's longest serving festival and consortium directors have made the most significant and positive impacts on the diversification of arts in public space, many interviewees report that for all this good work the gatekeepers and decision-makers don't currently represent the diversity of contemporary society, nor the artists who make work for it. Several interviewees feel that these programmers and commissioners represent the tastes and perspectives of an 'outdoor arts establishment' and sadly – consciously or unconsciously – restrict access to opportunities to make their work sustainably and at scale.

Issues around racial justice and social justice are not the unique preserve of arts in public space. They are being debated and acknowledged throughout the UK's arts and cultural ecology. Across the performing and visual arts, literature, and music, these wide and complex issues are rightly at the forefront of contemporary debate. Whilst there has been greater voice to advocate the need and urgency for society to change, the pace of change in the composition and makeup across the cultural sector remains slow.

What are the radical shifts that are needed – and who are those in positions to undertake/ lead these interventions? Perhaps there are significant opportunities through place-based initiatives, established networks of festivals across the UK, and of other commissioners and programmers, to work collaboratively to shift what kinds of work get made, by and for whom. Above all, significant and sustained investment in diverse talent will ensure these and other contexts are truly representative.

A commitment now, to serious and actionable change, will accelerate perceptions of arts in public space, right across the cultural ecology. These practices can be at the vanguard of change, acknowledging past biases, and adopting exemplary new models of arts leadership.

Theme 2: Partnerships

This report – and the interviews that underpin it – has identified a range of subsidised and commercial opportunities for partnership development that can support arts in public space and create new opportunities for this work to have wider impact, relevance and reach. These partnerships also generate exciting new creative possibilities and are bi and multi-directional – benefitting artists and companies and a range of other arts and non-arts organisations. Partnerships around arts in public space are being brokered and undertaken at every level of the cultural infrastructure from Memorandums of Understanding between national bodies through to commissioning consortia of venues, to one-off initiatives by and with individual artists in localised contexts:

i. Commissioning and touring consortia

Touring remains a lynchpin of a healthy strategy for arts in public space but it should be noted that even when outdoor work tours this is likely to comprise dispersed dates throughout a seasonal calendar rather than the back-to-back weekly schedules that define much theatre touring. With some work touring is not an appropriate term but consideration is made for the restaging of the work in a similar or site-adaptive form on successive occasions over a period of years.

The ability to tour or remount work can:

- Directly or indirectly provide the financial framework in which work can be made – either demonstrating public benefit to access public funding, facilitating a company's cashflow or bringing several presenters or commissioners together to share the costs of making through co-production or consortia models such as [Without Walls](#) or [In Situ](#);
- Sustain artist livelihoods with pieces often remaining in rep for several years;

- Enable increased audience development and reach across a range of sites;
- Contribute to improvements in the qualities of work through continued exposure to audiences;
- Provide a more sustainable model in terms of human and ecological impacts;
- Build relationships that can be sustained for the long-term.

Much touring of work outdoors and in public space relies heavily on formal and informal networks of festivals and events across the UK, sustained and developed over a number of years. Some of the most established and longest running include [Stockton International Riverside Festival](#), [Greenwich and Docklands International Festival](#), [Norfolk & Norwich Festival](#), [Brighton Festival](#), [Hat Fair](#) in Winchester, [Freedom Festival](#) in Hull and [Out There Festival](#) in Great Yarmouth. These annual festivals, over several decades, have provided regular and supportive contexts to sustain work and develop audiences. Other smaller festivals and one-off programmes also provide an important context for work, programming independently and as part of consortia, but it can often be a challenge for these organisations to sustain budgets and infrastructure year on year.

[Without Walls](#) (see Appendix 2) is particularly notable as a long-standing consortium of festivals and organisations dedicated to raising the profile of the UK outdoor arts sector, promoting artistic excellence and supporting innovative new work for the benefit of artists and audiences, but other consortium initiatives such as the [Circulate](#) scheme in the outer London boroughs, the [Coasters](#) network of seaside towns, [Stomping Ground](#) dance consortium and the internationally focussed [Global Streets](#) have also had real success in undertaking shared commissioning and touring.

ii. Landscape

Arts in the landscape – whether rural or urban – give us new ways to view the familiar and encourages exploration of new places for the first time. The arts are a great way of connecting people to landscape or cityscape and, through their experience, to develop a deeper emotional connection. Opportunities to develop and present work for these contexts have begun to be unlocked through a range of partnerships including with [Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty \(AONB\)](#), the [National Trust](#), the [Canal and Rivers Trust](#), [Forestry England](#), the Arts Council's [Great Places scheme](#), and through local authorities seeking to drive regeneration, visitor numbers and access to underused natural resources.

The pandemic has created an additional recognition

of the value of natural spaces. The prevalence of nature deficit disorder and the increasing focus of many landowners and agencies on the power of the arts to raise awareness of diverse environments, creates new contexts for making and sharing art.

“ The NAAONB have adopted a National Arts Strategy which recognises people can experience a deeper connection to the natural beauty of the landscape through the arts. Art provides an opportunity for new audiences, new to the arts and to these landscapes, to experience what natural beauty means to them, giving them a say in these special places.”

John Watkins – Chief Executive, National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Some examples of partnerships and practice include:

- The Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Trust have recently been working with the University of Derby to [explore ways](#) in which art can enhance our connection to nature;
- Festivals like [Inside Out](#), [Wye Valley River Festival](#), [Lakes Alive](#) and [Abandon Normal Devices festival](#) have championed fresh ways of opening up landscapes through art commissioning and it is increasingly recognised that simple but effective interventions (night-time walks, light and sound installations and fire festivals) can encourage a deeper engagement with our natural world;
- [Canal & River Trust](#) collaboration with [Coventry City of Culture](#);
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's) between Arts Council England and organisations like [Forestry England](#) to enable more cultural activity to take place in forest and natural settings across England.

Journalist Julian Glover's [Landscapes Review](#) argues that our system of national landscapes should be a positive force for the nation's wellbeing. In it he makes the case for long-term programmes to increase the ethnic diversity of visitors. An art and culture offer to open up landscapes to people from diverse backgrounds could be at the very heart of this ambition and [Art in the Landscape](#); a strategy document written for the Landscapes for Life: the National Association of AONBs, by long-standing outdoor arts commissioners and presenters [Activate Performing Arts](#), strongly argues for this.





iii. Urban placemaking

As highlighted earlier, arts in public space have become a valuable tool in placemaking processes through which places that people want to live, work, or explore are created. Town and city centres can be transformed by artistic interventions in the public realm and artistic programmes built over multiple years can achieve real changes in how inhabitants perceive their home town. Festivals continue to be one part of a placemaking approach but increasingly artists and organisations are exploring wider ways of working that maximise public engagement on every level.

[Creative People & Places](#) (CPP) has been a major ongoing programme that addresses this appetite for locally driven culture. It is a long-term action research initiative comprising thirty projects in areas where evidence shows that people are less involved in arts and cultural activities than elsewhere in England. The scheme, funded since 2013, and expanded in 2016 and 2019, places citizens at the heart of decision-making, commissioning, creating and experiencing creativity. Connected by a loose affiliation, each project has a unique approach to empowering communities to develop and present art. Many CPP schemes have used arts in public space as a major plank of their activity.

The [Great Places](#) initiative, funded jointly by Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery fund has recently concluded, but its success creating local partnerships and supporting a wide range of arts in public space activity points to the potential in this area through successor schemes and investment through new central government funds including the [Levelling Up](#) prospectus and the [Cultural Development Fund](#).

City of Culture, Capital of Culture and more recently Borough of Culture programmes also connect and intersect with this area of practice – providing commissioning and presenting opportunities for site responsive, placemaking works – often at scale. On a hyper-localised level MIF's [Festival in My House](#) supported residents to create and host their own micro-festivals in their local area.

Artists making work in partnership with communities can refresh the ways in which local people see themselves and their locality. These types of projects have a commitment to long-term, iterative, and careful engagement with residents or target groups over time to understand the people and place that form the context for the work. These works can be time-consuming and sometimes costly, but ultimately transformative. Some notable examples of artists working in this way in public space include [WildWorks](#), [Slung Low](#), [Assemble](#), [Entelechy Arts](#) and [Jeremy Deller](#).

“ Locating and making art in response to public space has a unique impact on both creativity and audiences. With barriers and frameworks removed, artists and public are given an open invitation to respond to and explore the world in which they find themselves – and the meetings that happen are rich and unpredictable. Ask anyone which moments of art and performance have felt life-changing, and work in public space will usually feature high up the list.”

John McGrath – Artistic Director, Manchester International Festival

iv. Partnerships with commercial developers

Over the past decade, partnerships with commercial developers have opened up significant opportunities for artists and companies making work for the public realm. Many commercial developers see arts in public space as a key component of their community and placemaking agendas. Developers recognise the power of arts in public space to build community cohesion, to win over local authorities, and ultimately to sell and rent new retail and residential space to clients. Placemaking agencies (eg [Future City](#)) have been central to driving initiatives and strategies that ensure art and culture are central to such developments. Local authorities have, and continue to, play a significant role in underpinning these contributions to commissioning and presenting opportunities.

Post-pandemic public space will play an even more important role in the physical and mental health of communities. Public-private partnerships are likely to be at the heart of reimagining city and town centre developments post-COVID-19.

Whilst there have been a range of exciting and innovative ideas emerging in these areas, a few notes of caution have been voiced by those interfacing with them – towards partnerships with commercial developers:

- The amount of genuinely [public space is decreasing](#), and is increasingly being controlled by unelected private entities;
- The last decade has seen local authorities increasingly enter into deals with private developers (eg [Hondo in Brixton](#)) in the name of (often unpopular) regeneration;
- These public private partnerships are often characterised as being short-term interventions rather than exemplars of longer term community intervention;
- Developers have tended to favour physical sculptural and urban design interventions with a long life, over ephemeral performative commissions;
- Not all developers share some of the more enlightened companies' (eg [Assemble](#)) commitments to more collaborative, socially embedded, process-based activity;
- Often developers will favour a one-off investment in arts and culture often favouring permanent sited work over a longer term commitment;
- Local authorities appear to have little influence over the distribution of funds (despite mechanisms like [Section 106 agreements](#)).



Exemplary partnerships include:

- [Thamesmead/ Peabody](#)
- [Mayfield/](#) New Islington Manchester
- [Nine Elms](#)
- [Coal Drops Yard](#)
- [Wembley Park](#)
- Situations' interventions for [Oslo Harbour](#)

v. Arts and heritage

The interactions between art and heritage have increased significantly over the years – supported and enabled by a number of agencies. National bodies such as [National Trust](#), [National Trust for Scotland](#), [English Heritage](#), [Cadw](#) in Wales, [Historic Environment Scotland](#), [Canal & River Trust](#) and [Historic Royal Palaces](#) each has responsibility for public access to various estates and environments around the country, and through developing innovative approaches towards public engagement have created powerful platforms for storytelling and the sharing of histories/ heritage. Arts Council England has Memoranda of Understanding agreements with many of these agencies and these have driven a greater understanding of the transformational power of arts and culture in these contexts. [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#) have also

set out their future strategic focus – which includes landscape and nature – and may usefully intersect with work made for the public realm.

As referenced elsewhere, high streets and urban contexts are also becoming an increasing focus for arts and heritage programmes.

[Arts and Heritage](#) is an independent body that exists to forge collaborations between contemporary artists and heritage organisations. Its projects bring to life the narratives, atmosphere and architecture of histories and places. Many of the organisation's funded projects draw on the work of visual artists, but examples include theatrical and dance commissions for specific heritage environments.

Exemplary partnerships and projects within heritage contexts include:

- [14-18 NOW](#) – Various
- Hofesh Schecter Company & East London Dance/ Tower of London – [East Wall](#)
- Jeanfer Jean Charles - [Black Victorians](#)
- In Between Time Festival's [Night Songs](#) with National Trust at Tynesfield
- [The Mansio](#) for Hadrian's Wall from Hexham Book Festival
- [Trust New Art](#) – Various National Trust properties



vi. Arts and health

Arts in public space present significant opportunities to support developments in a burgeoning [arts and health](#) sector. In recent years, a growing body of evidence has been compiled exploring the potential of the arts to impact on health and wellbeing in a variety of social contexts, to counter inequalities and increase engagement.

In July 2017 the Association of Directors of Public Health and All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing published [Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing Report](#) which contains compelling evidence of ways in which arts engagement can improve the public's health.

Participation in the arts and access to a range of arts opportunities can dramatically improve (both physical and mental) health outcomes and increase wellbeing. Supplementing medicine and care, the arts can positively impact the health of people who experience mental or physical health problems. Engaging in the arts can promote prevention of disease and build wellbeing. Increasingly, this notion has gathered traction among policy makers and the medical establishment, as well as among patients, artists and the wider community.

The impact across society of COVID-19 has in some ways brought wider attention to the important connections between art and health. During the numerous national lockdowns, artists across the UK developed projects and programmes that continued to support wellbeing in a range of ways. As venues reopen, projects and festivals restart – and COVID commemorative projects continue to emerge – the role of arts in public space may provide an important way in which art and health might come together and help us to reflect upon this global impact.

Exemplary partnerships and projects within health contexts include:

- [Culture Shots](#) – Manchester Hospital, Whitworth Art Gallery & Manchester Museum
- [In Memoriam](#) – Luke Jerram, NHS Weston & Bristol, Without Walls
- [Arts, Heritage and Design in Healthcare Network](#) – a NHS network of 21 trusts developing projects in hospital and care settings

vii. The cultural venue infrastructure

Arts in public space are also playing an expanding role within the existing ecology of theatres and built venues. An array of regional theatres and presenting organisations are seeking to work outside the constraints of their venues – driving agendas around cultural engagement, inclusion and audience development as well as opening up new artistic and

creative possibilities and partnerships. Some of these organisations are also involved in commissioning and producing work. Examples of venue-based presenters that have embraced programming and producing in public space include [Watermans](#), [Corn Exchange](#) Newbury, [Birmingham Hippodrome](#), [The Place](#), [New Vic Theatre](#) Stoke, [The Stables](#) in Milton Keynes, [Albany](#) in Deptford, Dorset Theatre Promoters Consortium, [Oxford Playhouse](#) and others. Given the enhanced focus on inclusivity and relevance for Arts Council-funded NPOs it is likely that many other venues will be start to explore the programming and creation of work outside their formal venue environments as well as explore the potential for working more widely with local communities in public space.

Theme 3: Climate, Environment and Sustainability

Arts in public space have the ability to raise awareness of the climate emergency and its impact on habitat destruction, extinction, extreme weather and biodiversity, bringing the urgency of the need for change to a wider audience. Work made in the landscape can reflect on our impact upon it and intensify our emotional connection to it.

Artists and companies making work for public space have a long history of close connection to activist movements. Since the 1960s art and activism have played a key role in changing public perception around certain contemporary issues. In recent years [Extinction Rebellion](#) has brought the climate emergency to the streets through a series of actions that place art and creativity at their heart.

Art is a brilliant tool for communicating complex problems and possible solutions. Artists are extraordinary imaginers of the future. A focus on Climate Justice increasingly has emerged as an urgent frame for artist-led projects – including those for public space.

Exemplary partnerships and projects within this context include:

- [Season for Change](#) – Julie's Bicycle and [ArtsAdmin](#)
- [Culture Declares Emergency](#) and Music Declares Emergency
- [Julie's Bicycle](#) supports the creative community to act on climate change and environmental sustainability

Within the artistic, commissioning and presenting communities of arts in public space, increased focus is being placed on reducing the environmental impact of making and touring work. Forums and working groups have been convened to share best practice, devise tactics to minimise waste, share resources, advocate to public and partners and to explore new models for distribution – but much more needs to



be done. The work of the greenfield music festival sector to reduce environmental impact over recent years provides some indications of what might be possible to effect change on an immediate level.

Theme 4: Participation and co-creation

In arts and culture generally, there is a growing realisation of, and commitment to, the power of participation, engagement and co-creation to open up practices. Work made by, with, and for communities can be more accessible to a wider range of people than work that can feel ‘done to you’. Arts in public space can build on these trends and appeal to funders (both public and private) for whom engagement and participation are at the heart of current arts policy.

This report recognises a spectrum of practice – from work made by an artist (or company) for an audience, to that which is commissioned and developed by, with and for participants and audiences. And while arts policy is increasingly looking to practices that better engage individuals and communities in its making, there is still room for the singular visionary making work for public space.

Acclaimed participatory works such as Situations’ [Sanctum](#), or Paul Chan’s [Waiting for Godot](#) in Katrina-destroyed New Orleans, share a deep understanding of place and the people who call it home. Such work tends to explore universal truths and comes from

techniques of deep listening deployed by artists and producers. Other more recent examples, such as [Processions](#) from Artichoke or [Pages of the Sea](#) by Danny Boyle/ 14-18 NOW , offer devolved delivery framework to create projects of scale and spectacle, connecting with civic commemoration – yet provide a grounding in co-creation and active participation at a national level. [Land of Green Ginger](#), produced by Hull City of Culture was a city wide engagement project involving over 1500 local people and artists including [Periplum](#), [Joshua Sofaer](#) and [Macnas](#).

Arts in public space have a long history of offering significant opportunities for co-creation – work developed by, with and for participants and audiences in towns, cities and rural communities around the UK. Co-creation, and the values that underpin this approach to artmaking, are central to a democratising agenda that sits at the heart of the UK arts councils’ future strategies (with ACE’s [Let’s Create](#) taking a particular focus on work developed in partnership with communities and non-professionals). Arts in public space are well placed to capitalise on these shifts in focus, and to build on the sense of belonging and community cohesion that has underpinned much of the UK’s local response to lockdown and the pandemic.

Arts in public space often offer routes into engagement and participation that other contexts can't. The intersections with civic society – as well as faith – are more pronounced in this area of work. Culturally rooted activities such as Diwali, Chinese New Year or St Patrick's Day can often provide a framework for cultural engagement and participation across the UK where partnerships with artists can create new works.

Making work in partnership with communities takes time and can be much more expensive than work that is merely presented. Careful consideration needs to be given to who is involved and who leads, whose stories are being told as well as the balance between process and product and the potential for conflicting expectations from funders, audiences and participants. Attention needs to be paid to impact and relevance, and lazy site-specificity transcended. Carnival arts and [Creative People & Places](#) projects around England – alongside theatre companies such as [Wildworks](#) – provide some of the most lasting exemplars of these participatory and socially engaged ways of working.

Legacy is a crucial component of work made by, with and for communities in public space to avoid any sense of art being 'parachuted in' to a particular place. What happens when the show is finished, or the art removed, or the artists have gone? What's next for this town or city or village, and the people that live and work there? How can one festival or show or intervention be a stepping-stone towards others?

Theme 5: Artist development, networks and support

Making work for public space by its nature can be unpredictable and messy. It adapts and relates to its context and its audience and is affected by it, even in those pieces that are not consciously site-specific. Outside theatres, galleries and dedicated art spaces, the environments for work are impossible to tame entirely, although all present distinct qualities and characteristics that can be harnessed. The most impactful work for public space chooses its location with care and lets the environment play its part – the sound of traffic, the weather, altered perspectives, unengaged passers-by. There is magic for audiences in not knowing what is real and what is performed or is a temporary intervention in public space. These creative sleights of hand and the necessity to embrace and exploit the challenges and opportunities of working in public space require distinct and unconventional approaches that are very different to working in traditional venue environments.

Work in public space is not just about location. Artists who imagine relocating indoor work outdoors are missing something crucial. Public space often implies

a political position or a state of mind. The artworks that responded to the tearing down of the Colston statue in Bristol in summer 2020, inspired by the [Black Lives Matter](#) movement, were political because of their location, not in spite of it. Public spaces offer something different – an absence of control, an inherent political potency, an altered relationship to audiences. Work that exists in public space has a history of provocation and at its best, a singular ability to confront audiences with deep truths and to enable a wider public to question both their own perspectives and the way we live as a society. Investment in the artists who make work for public space and the process of supporting them to make rigorous, intelligent and ambitious work that plays to the full the potential of its public context is critical.

Even on the level of the simplest street theatre performance a myriad of factors unique to performance in public space can be ascertained: an understanding of site, the ability to engage and sustain an audience who can walk away at any moment, an intuitive feel for interaction. For medium-scale shows for several hundred people there are yet more challenges relating to creating rich and distinctive work that can deploy strong dramaturgy, striking scenography and meet its diverse audience on their own territory. For larger scale productions additional demanding questions emerge of how to tell stories at scale and balance the inevitable logistical demands with the need to retain subtlety, nuance and a direct connection with a public.

Beyond the inherent challenges of these forms, there are also more fundamental and far-reaching questions that can be asked of arts in public space over the coming years:

- What can the public realm inform us about future art forms? How might liberation from built infrastructures open up opportunities for new kinds of work and new practices?
- What role can socially engaged practices have in impacting on the wider arts and cultural ecology?
- How might artists and companies liberated from conventional spaces be supported to embrace the outdoors and all its possibilities?
- Relinquished from the constraints of the black box and the white cube, how might a larger network of artists respond to sites and communities across the UK?
- What might artists do when thinking about engaging with people and communities over hours, or days, or even weeks? What changes in audience makeup might we see when work is left for longer periods of time?

Whilst work in public space is diverse in its practices and only ever perfected through first-hand, real world experience, the ability to learn from seasoned practitioners and from peers is priceless. A critical context for the development of ideas and practice is vital and in the last decade there has been a burgeoning of artistic development programmes to support making of work in public space. Many of these training opportunities have recently started to extend online.

[101 Outdoor Arts](#) – National Centre for Arts in Public Space on Greenham Common (commissioners of this report) has led the way in developing and delivering programmes of support focused on the making of work – curating a range of intensive residential labs and symposium events around directing, writing, performance, design and digital work amongst other topics. Its Toolbox cultural leadership programme supports the development of producers and its Seedbed residency schemes offer funded R&D opportunities to explore early stage ideas with access to specialist facilities and expertise. Supported by leaders in their field, 101 has welcomed hundreds of practitioners onto its programmes.

Internationally, the European network [In Situ](#) has worked with the French training centre [FAI-AR](#) to produce [Create in Public Space](#), an acclaimed online course that examines how to tackle scenography, writing and audiences in public space contexts.

With a broadened scope, active leadership and an expanding membership, [Outdoor Arts UK](#) (OAUk) has played a significant role in supporting artists and organisations working with outdoor arts. They have provided advice, advocacy, networking opportunities and surgeries that have maintained and enhanced communication and co-operation that has been vital through the pandemic in particular. Historically OAUk has also created national sector conferences and published a series of User Guides examining aspects of commissioning and presenting outdoor work. Despite limited resources, [NASA](#) (National Association of Street Artists) have also been notable for facilitating artist networking and skills exchange. In Scotland, [Articulate](#) and [Surge](#) and in Wales [Articulture](#) have been active in supporting artists in the field.

[Without Walls](#) (for more details see Appendix 2) also offers professional development opportunities for artists and strategic projects for the wider ecology of artists and producers making work for public contexts. The Blueprint R&D scheme and a range of initiatives including the Discover programme for diverse artists and a number of labs co-presented with other organisations in the sector have expanded their reach beyond consortium members and those artists commissioned for touring. Without Walls project managers [Xtrax](#) are also active in developing



showcasing and sector networking activities and supporting industry skills development.

Beyond Without Walls, a number of festivals including [GDIF](#) and [Out There](#) offer allied industry networking events and a number of artistic development opportunities through residencies and commissions. Wider presenting organisations and artistic companies have increasingly developed artist development and training programmes. Notable examples include [OCM's Boom](#) scheme for sound artists and musicians working in public space, the [Jerwood Jazz Encounters scheme](#), [Producer Farm](#), [EEA's](#) trainee producer scheme and [Walk the Plank's](#) Awen and EU-wide School of Spectacle programmes.

In the carnival and mela sectors organisations like [EMCANN](#), [Carnival Network South](#), [Yorkshire West Indian Carnival Network](#) and [Mela Partnership](#) have been critical to supporting the growth and development of these events, providing networking, training and advocacy.

Interviews have revealed a need for further skills development and training for a range of contributors to arts in public space. These include (but are not limited to):

- Programmers, festival directors and gatekeepers
- Artists and companies
- Producers
- Production personnel
- Funders and local authority staff

A healthy ecology for arts in public space will be further supported by skills and training opportunities for all involved in its creation, distribution and presentation. Whilst residencies, mentoring and training may offer solutions to current needs, there is likely to be a need for a greater shared national approach – which intersects formal/tertiary and informal educational or training – and may involve a variety of institutions. Investment in skills and artistic development will need to be a key feature in the future; determining how this may manifest will need much thought and the coming together of artists and organisations in the UK.

Theme 6 – Scale

The ability to make work at scale is one of the unique prospects of the arts in public space.

Arts in public space provide opportunities to explore scale, perspective and duration. In his blog, producer Neil Butler says, “making art and performance in public space is taking it to the public unencumbered by the limitations and expectations of working in conventional venues.” Artists and companies are therefore able to range much more widely across scales, from the intimate to the epic, from projects

that populate an entire landscape to those that might fill a shop window or a street corner.

Scale can be imagined and embodied in a range of ways – traditionally large spectacles for audiences of thousands have been an element of major civic and cultural programmes. Beyond one-off commissions, however, this form has also been a basis for touring projects that can potentially have a life of many years on an international circuit. An exemplar of this being [Wired Aerial Theatre's](#) and Nigel Jamieson's *As the World Tipped*. However other forms of larger-scale work may use the environment in which they are staged to create not just scale but creative possibility; unencumbered by the confines of the white cube or the black box, artists are free to play with perspectives, landscapes and environments in ways more akin to those of the filmmaker. Festivals like [Oerol](#) on the Dutch island of Terschelling have led the way in providing context for these kinds of techniques and approaches to presenting and experiencing work. Projects such as Robert Wilson's *Walking at* [Norfolk & Norwich Festival](#) exemplify this type of experience.

Much of the touring or site-responsive work in development and being presented in the UK is small to medium scale. The economics of the festival or presenter infrastructure, the availability of funds and spaces in which to make and develop work, and the inherent risks of making larger works, have resulted in a body of work that tours more readily at a smaller scale. This work is often relatively light on its feet and works within budgets that are more widely available to festivals and other programmers. For companies this smaller scale provides a more sustainable context for the development and distribution of work.

Making work at scale can take time, resources and skill as well as opportunity. When given these conditions, the work can often be transformative for participants and an audience. When the quality of work falls short, it is the absence of one or more of these elements that is a major factor. It is also recognised that work at scale can take time to be acknowledged and accepted by local communities. Longer runs of work at scale give time for the impact of word of mouth and community buy-in to take effect. Multiple presentations, over time, give work the chance to be honed and audience feedback incorporated into more mature iterations of a piece. However, performative works of scale can also face challenges in this respect in terms of the difficulties of previewing/rehearsing such work in front of a public due to the costs entailed and the restrictions of access to suitable sites.

Making work at scale is inherently risky. If artists aren't given time, budget and support structures for their vision, the work can fail to ignite audiences' imaginations. These support structures are rooted in the provision of the time, space and money to properly engage in the process that underpins the highest quality work. Both emerging and established artists will sometimes create work at scale which similarly fails to meet expectations. These are not arguments for playing safe nor only commissioning smaller scale work, but reminders that producing work at scale, in environments that can't be tamed, is no guarantee of continued critical success.

Scale in the context of arts in public space can also imply depth of impact. One marker of success may be an audience of hundreds or thousands. Another (much harder to assess) is the depth of long-term impacts that a work might generate. Working outside of conventional space can give artists opportunities to establish deep and longstanding relationships to audiences and environments. Relationships within and around performances are negotiated with communities and users of public space, building trust, forming relationships and changing perceptions. These impacts are much harder to evaluate but there is considerable anecdotal evidence of the long-term impacts of works of scale made within communities. Beyond individual events, a local authority's sustained investment in a festival like [Stockton International Riverside Festival](#) also shows how, over three decades, an audience for and an appreciation of the value, and values of, a consistent offer of quality outdoor work can be built. Through this consistency and quality the festival has been enshrined in the self-identity of a town that otherwise has strikingly low levels of cultural engagement. In these contexts, audiences that may have been new to the arts become, over a period of years, highly engaged festival attenders and advocates to others.

The emergence of year-long national programmes and projects such as the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, City and Capital of Culture initiatives and commemorations such as [14-18 NOW](#) – have provided a new platform and impetus for one off, ephemeral works of scale to be developed and realised. The onward path of [UnBoxed](#) has perhaps pushed our concept of scale to a new level – through commissioning of works that seek to engage the entirety of the UK. Many of these projects are likely to combine work in public space with digital or broadcast opportunities.

Recent significant UK works of scale include:

- [As the World Tipped](#) – Wired Aerial Theatre
- [The Hatchling](#) – Trigger
- [The Bridge](#) – Imagineer Productions

- [451](#) – Periplum & Corn Exchange Newbury
- [Furious Folly](#) – Mark Anderson
- [Museum of the Moon/GAIA](#) – Luke Jerram
- [Circus Circus](#) – London 2012/Crying Out Loud
- [Dr Blighty](#) – Nutkhut
- [Rise](#) – Southpaw
- [Electric Hotel](#) – Requardt and Rosenberg
- [ZARA](#) – Mind the Gap/Walk the Plank
- [Dominoes](#) – Stationhouse Opera

Theme 7 – Internationalism

The evolution of UK arts in public space have always been fundamentally internationalist, their development inspired by and entwined with trends across Europe.

The reasons for this are multiple: arts in public space are an inherently visual form which often transcends language barriers. This in turn facilitates touring, co-commissioning, and international partnerships. There is also a wider international history of outdoor cultural traditions such as Commedia del Arte, travelling circus and carnival which have been clear inspirations for UK performance. It's also arguable that in a country that has traditionally prided itself on its text-based theatre heritage, artists working in the field have often looked for inspiration overseas where there has been a stronger tradition of physical and visual performance.

However, as well as these traditional cultural foundations, mainland Europe has also developed a particularly rich field of outdoor and public space work over the last 50 years. This has ranged in style and scale from French street arts and new circus to Polish physical performance and Dutch object theatre. The flourishing of these forms of arts in public space across mainland Europe has been achieved over half a century through a combination of factors including:

- Significant state investment in many markets – especially in France;
- Extensive infrastructure including networks of dedicated creation centres and an estimated 200 festivals in France alone within which the work has time to develop in front of an audience;
- A recognition of the need for longer development and rehearsal periods (and associated budgets);
- Lower living costs for artists in some parts of Europe and in other countries eg France and Belgium, state subsidy to intermittent cultural workers in the performing arts providing a greater level of financial stability for individual artists.

These conditions and artist mobility across the continent (encouraged by membership of the European Union), have sustained and grown a healthy European ecology for arts in public space. UK promoters and programmers have drawn heavily on the richness of this body of European work in creating their programmes. It is broad – encompassing dance, music, sound art, visual art, landscape theatre and circus – and often comprises minimal text. This, coupled with qualities born of the factors listed above, has created an attractive proposition for UK festival and other directors.

UK artists have also historically made an impact on the development of work in Europe and beyond through the work of theatre companies such as [Footsbarn](#) and [Welfare State International](#) in the '60s and '70s, artists such Richard Wilson, Paul Burwell and Anne Bean's [Bow Gamelan](#) in the '80s, choreographer [Rosemary Lee](#), artist [Jeremy Deller](#) and others in the '90s and 2000s. Some UK companies including [Motionhouse](#) and [Walk the Plank](#) with Mark Murphy have delivered substantial European Capital of Culture projects overseas. Other stalwarts of UK street performance such as [Whalley Range All Stars](#), [Desperate Men](#), [Acrojou](#) and [Mimbre](#) have historically undertaken significant international touring. However on a wider level British work has often struggled to achieve its full potential abroad often due to the additional transport costs to mainland Europe, lack of dedicated support for export and the high cost of living in the UK.

The past decade in the UK has seen the emergence of a new British aesthetic – one that increasingly reflects the diversity of our wider society. High quality, socially engaged arts and cultural practices made by, with, and for people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, and from D/deaf and disabled practitioners, have been a British success story in recent years with companies including [Upswing](#), [Stopgap](#), [Extarordinary Bodies](#), [Akademi](#) and [Far from the Norm](#) and others consistently producing dynamic outdoor work. [Greenwich and Docklands International Festival](#), [Without Walls](#), [Unlimited](#), [DiverseCity](#), [101 Outdoor Arts](#) (and others) have made recent and significant contributions to commissioning and supporting a new wave of work in public space. Work that is highly diverse and reflects the breadth of contemporary UK society.

[846 Live](#) – a co-production with Theatre Royal Stratford East and the Royal Docks Team presented as part of the 2020 Greenwich and Docklands International Festival – is an exemplary creative response to the murder of George Floyd. It is a collaboration between some of Britain's finest theatre-makers, reimagining a work for a public space context.





Works like 846 Live that use spoken word and performance in outdoor contexts, along with other acclaimed pieces that deploy sound art, visual installation, innovative choreography, digital interactivity and more, now offer international markets a range of contemporary practice that is rounded and representative of a range of cultures. On a domestic level, the greater the confidence of UK-based artists to make work for public spaces that reflects and represents a wider demographic, the more the British public is also likely to respond positively to work made. There are significant opportunities for British artists and producers to take a leadership role around work that better reflects contemporary society, and to collaborate with European partners to develop and promote work that is more representative of the public at large.

Despite significant successes and promising developments, the pandemic, the ensuing economic recession, the rise of nationalism and the UK's exit from the European Union threaten to throw up a series of existential challenges for the arts and cultural sectors in this country. Whilst wider international relationships across the globe continue to be important, artists, producers and programmers in the UK have historically relied particularly heavily on dynamic relationships with counterparts living and working in the European Union. Networks – both formal such as [In Situ](#), [Circostrada](#), [European Federation for Education and Training in Street Arts](#) and informal – have helped sustain intercultural dialogue and commissioning and touring opportunities across Europe. The UK's exit from the

bloc challenges UK membership of these networks and undermines opportunities for frictionless touring for UK artists and companies across Europe.

While the longer-term impacts of Brexit on arts in public space are yet to be known, artists and commissioners are assessing the impact of the UK's exit from the European Union in a range of areas:

- Artist mobility (incoming and outgoing)
- Touring and commissioning networks
- Access to markets

In particular the [Creative Europe](#) and [Interreg](#) scheme have underpinned UK organisations' participation in many of these European partnership projects as well as contributing to core budgets and there is currently no mechanism to replace these.

A governmental emphasis on a wider vision of 'Global Britain' raises the possibilities of new relationships further afield but one which needs to be reconciled with the economical and logistical challenges of working in these more geographically dispersed territories as well as the considerable environmental impact of developing and delivering work in these markets.

Despite Brexit, arts in public space still have the potential to create wider connections and opportunities for artists and companies from the UK around the world working with the partners such as Arts Council England, Department for International Trade and the [British Council](#).

Internationalism has been increasingly a part of Arts Council England's thinking over recent years and whilst opportunities are disparate, artists working in public space have increasingly found support to work

overseas through schemes such as [DYCP](#) and [Project Grants](#) as well as recent international initiatives such as the collaboration between ACE and Arts Council Korea and targeted support for international showcasing.

A recent report on [Art in the Public Realm in the Gulf States](#) along with programmes such as its '[Connected City](#)' programme in Seoul, the 'Sound in the City' event in Beijing and support for the [Watershed-led Playable Cities](#) project – which has now been produced in nine cities across the world – indicate the British Council's continued engagement with arts in public space as a part of their work.

The twin impacts of Brexit and the pandemic on the British Council are likely to be significant and Britain's soft power role diminished in the world. However, despite this, outdoor and public space arts practices can still strive to provide a context for bridge building with European and other international partners. A healthy international multilateral ecology, which facilitates intercultural dialogue, can be seen as a positive counter to nationalism across the globe. The UK now has considerable expertise in working in arts in public space that can be transferred to contexts and partners abroad.

Theme 8 – Infrastructural support

There is a limited but developing physical infrastructure for supporting the research, development, rehearsal and making of new work in the UK. This has been greatly inspired by some exemplary models in mainland Europe, principally the 14 French creation centres of the [CNAREP](#) network. Further examples of creation spaces in other countries include the massive [Seoul Street Arts Creation Centre](#) in Korea and spaces for creation run by festivals such as Imaginarius Creation Centre in Santa Maria de Feira in Portugal and [Fira de Tarrega's](#) spaces in Catalonia, as well as many organisations offering space and facilities as part of a wider programme of support for circus and/or physical theatre. The UK now has several spaces which host making processes for artists working outdoors and in public space although some of these serve primarily as a base for an individual artistic company who then make their facilities available at a charge for outside users.

Principle amongst UK making and creation spaces are:

1. [101 Outdoor Arts](#) (commissioner of this report) is the UK's major centre for the creation of new work for public space and for artist development and innovation in site-specific and outdoor performance. Run by Corn Exchange Newbury, it comprises a 20,000sq. ft warehouse with on-site fabrication workshop, fully equipped rehearsal spaces and accommodation and living facilities for up to fifteen people at a time. 101 offers free

residencies and accommodation to around fifty companies each year, along with technical and producing support and in some cases a financial bursary for artists;

2. Out There in Great Yarmouth manages [The Drill House](#) – a dedicated circus and street arts creation and training facility offering a number of free residencies to artists and companies;
3. [Daimler Powerhouse](#) – the new Coventry space managed by Imagineer, promises space for resident companies and visiting artists;
4. [Cobden Works](#) – Walk the Plank's Salford-based space for R&D, rehearsal and fabrication spaces designed by Liverpool-based Architectural Emporium and featuring offices, archive spaces, workshops and an outdoor making environment;
5. [Wild Rumpus](#) manage a woodland creation space The Forge which they make available to artists as a space for creation and workshop activity;
6. [Rothbury Hall](#) in East Greenwich is Emergency Exit Arts' home and offers making, rehearsal and development space for artists, participants and makers;
8. [Carnival Village Trust's](#) Tabernacle and YAA buildings offer performance, rehearsal and creation spaces for carnival artists and steel pan orchestras in London;
9. [The Vale in Mossley](#), Greater Manchester is home to [Global Grooves](#) and hosts courses for the next generation of carnival and outdoor arts practitioners; offering rehearsal, making and development studios.

Beyond these spaces, the existing built venue infrastructure has the potential to turn its focus towards work made for unconventional contexts. Theatres across the UK have rehearsal rooms and workshops and staff with expertise in fabrication and set building. Dance studios, rehearsal spaces, workshops and factories around the UK with physical and human resources well placed to support the development of arts in public space. However, despite attempts to develop these spaces for outdoor arts production, these opportunities have yet to materialise. Significant issues – lack of prioritisation/ need for commercial income, lack of continuity of available space at appropriate times, unsuitability of facilities and lack of accommodation/fabrication/ outdoor spaces – remain unresolved, and while the impact of the pandemic and the internet on real estate may create new opportunities, there is still much work to be done to compel gatekeepers of these spaces to shift their focus in order to embrace and support the creation of work for public space. ■



Conclusions

Making arts for public space offers artists and companies new strategies for engaging participants and audiences. In a post-pandemic world, as active citizens crave creative engagement, and seek to be more involved in its creation, art made by, with and for communities holds incredible potential for our cultural sector. Against the backdrop of Arts Council England's new 10-year strategy – Let's Create – arts in public space are poised for growth. The next ten years suggest myriad new opportunities for artists and companies, from the widest of backgrounds and experiences, to develop and present work for the outdoors and in public spaces. The road out of the pandemic is likely to be long and bumpy and the challenges of Brexit ongoing. But with investment and support, arts in public space hold the potential to make an increasingly significant contribution to the cultural ecology of the UK.

Much has been done over the last few years to build the infrastructure for arts in public space and much work remains. Further investment in creation centres and new forms of commissioning consortia is vital to growth but so is investment in individuals and companies. Support for work in public space remains uneven and resources concentrated in a relatively small number of organisations. Building a sustainable basis for artists to create and present work and for festivals to develop and thrive remains a challenge. Specialist frameworks for artist development need to be recognised as central to the capacity of artists to respond to the unique challenges of making work in public space.

Despite good work to develop diversity there is still a need to extend programmes of support for deaf, disabled and black and minority ethnic artists. The importance of organisational development and

equality, diversity and inclusion training for festivals and commissioning organisations should also not be underestimated. Beyond this, as with the wider cultural sector, there is a need to pursue more fundamental structural change and a commitment to diversification of decision-makers if under-represented groups are to be able to participate fully and equally.

The potential of work in public space has only just begun to be tapped – new forms of socially engaged, durational and participant-led work can be developed and a new generation of artists capable of creating ambitious work of scale nurtured. A lively and dynamic dialogue between funders, artists and public realm partners will be the necessary foundation for maximising the possibilities of this most inventive and inclusive area of work – one that can bring creativity into every corner of our world. ■

Appendix 1

Interviewees

Vicki Amedume	Artist, Director of Upswing
Neil Butler	Sura Medura, Sri Lanka
Simon Chatterton	101 – Outdoor Arts
Ajay Chhabra	Artistic Director, Nutkhut, Mela Partnership
Rachel Clare	Crying Out Loud
Maggie Clark	Xtrax /Without Walls
Neil Darlison	Arts Council England
Howard Davies	Former Chief Executive, National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Claire Doherty MBE	National Theatre Wales/Formerly Situations
David Evans	National Theatre of Wales
Katy Fuller	Pinwheel, independent
Bill Gee	Inside Out, Milton Keynes international Festival, independent
Martin Green CBE	Unboxed: Creativity in the UK, Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games
Stella Hall	Festival of Thrift
Bradley Hemmings MBE	Greenwich and Docklands International Festival
Anisha Jogani	Croydon Council
Lina Johansson	Mimbre
Jason Jones-Hall	Creative Folkestone
Chetna Kapacee	Croydon Mela
Judith Knight	Founder Artsadmin
Jon Linstrum	Arts Council England
Sally Lockey	Up Your Street (Creative People & Places)
Angus MacKechnie	Outdoor Arts UK
Joe Mackintosh	Out There
Lisa Maguire	National Theatre of Wales
Helen Marriage MBE	Artichoke
Graeme Miller	Artist
Mark Murphy	Artist
Colin Nightingale	Punchdrunk, independent
Liz Pugh	Walk the Plank
Marc Rees	Artist
Tina Redford	Left Coast (Creative People & Places)
Marie Rose-Tulley	Croydon Council
Paschale Straiton	NASA
Jenny Waldman CBE	Art Fund (formerly Director 14-18 NOW)

Appendix 2

Without Walls

Artistic Directorate:
101 Outdoor Arts, Corn Exchange, Newbury
Brighton Festival
Certain Blacks
FESTIVAL.ORG, London
Hat Fair, Winchester
Just So Festival, Cheshire
Norfolk & Norwich Festival
Salisbury International Arts Festival
Stockton International Riverside Festival
Timber Festival
Touring Network Partnership:
Appetite, Stoke-On-Trent
The Arches Festivals Worcester, part of Severn Arts
Arts by the Sea, Bournemouth
Basingstoke Festival
Birmingham Hippodrome
First Art, Mansfield
Lancashire Encounter, Preston
Leicester City Council
Mouth Of The Tyne Festival, North Tyneside
Now Northwich, Cheshire Dance
Oldham Council
Rochdale Feel Good Festival
SO Festival, East Lincolnshire
The Culture House, Grimsby
Theatre Orchard, Somerset
Vision Redbridge Culture and Leisure
Wakefield Council
WE Great Place, Wentworth and Elsecar
Creative Development Network
2021 Visual Arts, North Lincolnshire Arts Development
All in the Mind Festival, Basingstoke & Hampshire
Citadel Arts
Dancin' Oxford
Historic England
Lincoln Performing Arts Centre
The Cultural Spring, South Shields

Photo Credits

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- Cover** Chorus by Ray Lee at Inside Out Dorset. Commissioned by Oxford Contemporary Music, and Newbury Corn Exchange with the Sonic Arts Research Unit at Oxford Brookes University. Created at 101 Outdoor Arts. Photo by Roy Riley
- 1** Little Amal by Good Chance in collaboration with Handspring Puppet Company as part of The Walk. Photo Zozan Yasar
- 2** Dominoes by Stationhouse Opera as part of Absolutely Cultured, Hull. Photo by Tom Arran
- 3** Open House by No Fit State with Newbury Corn Exchange and community participants. Created at 101 Outdoor Arts. Photo by Farrows Creative
- 4** Captive by Motionhouse. Commissioned by Without Walls, Swindon Dance, Birmingham Hippodrome, Warwick District Council and Bristol City Council. Photo B-FIT festival
- 5** Into the Mountain (2019) by Simone Kenyon. Dancers: Jo Hellier, Claricia Parinussa, Caroline Reagh, Keren Smail and Petra Söör. Photo by Felicity Crawshaw
- 6** Beacons by Conrad Shawcross. Commissioned for Ramsgate as part of Pioneering Places. Photo by Jason Jones-Hall
- 7** Manchester Day 2016. Produced by Walk the Plank. Commissioned by Manchester City Council. Created by Manchester People. Photo by Mark Waugh
- 8** Bill & Bobby by Stopgap Dance Company. Supported by National Theatre, Without Walls Consortium with individual commissioning support from Winchester Hat Fair and the University of Surrey. Photo Ludovic des Cognets
- 10** People's Tower by Olivier Grossetete and community participants as part of Fantastic Feats in City of London. Photo by Ben Broomfield
- 11** Hymn To The Big Wheel by Liz West at Ushaw Historic House, Chapels & Gardens. Lumiere 2021, produced by Artichoke. Photo by Matthew Andrews
- 13** Lifted by Mimbire. Commissioned by Stockton International Riverside Festival. Supported by Without Walls. Photo by Luka Dasklober
- 14** The Hatchling by Trigger in Plymouth. Commissioned by Plymouth City Council and Mayflower 400 with Jerwood Arts, Reach Robotics, University of Bristol, Watershed, 101 Outdoor Arts and The Space. Photo by Dom_Moore
- 16** Why? by Gravity and Levity as part of Dancing City, GDIF. Supported by Without Walls. Commissioned by Norfolk and Norwich Festival. Photo by Mark Morreau
- 17** Belly of the Whale by Ockhams Razor. Belly of the Whale is commissioned by Without Walls, Stockton International Riverside Festival, Greenwich+Docklands International Festival, Out There International Festival of Circus & Street Arts, Norfolk & Norwich Festival, Lift Off! - Wiltshire Creative, Circulate, Stratford Circus Arts Centre and Basingstoke Festival. Photo by Mark Dawson
- 18** Stockton International Riverside Festival launch on Stockton High Street. Photograph: Stuart Boulton
- 19** In The Eyes of the Animal' installation by Marshmallow Laser Feast. Commissioned by Abandon Normal Devices festival, Grizedale Forest in partnership with Forestry Commission. Photo by Barnaby Steel

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- 20** Bonded by Alleyne Dance. Commissioned by Norfolk & Norwich Festival, Salisbury International Arts Festival (part of Wiltshire Creative) and supported by Without Walls. Created at 101 Outdoor Arts. Photo by Lidia Crisafulli
- 22** Preston Mela. Photo by Michael Porter
- 25** Museum of the Moon by Luke Jerram at Milton Keynes IF2021. Supported by Without Walls. Commissioned by GDIF, Brighton Festival, Norfolk and Norwich Festival, Cork Midsummer Festival, Lakes Alive, Dommelhof, We the Curious, Les Tombees de la Nuit, Kimmel Center in partnership with UK Space Agency, UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres and University of Bristol. Photo by Shaun Armstrong
- 26** Born to Protest by Joseph Toonga. Commissioned by Stomping Ground. Photo by Jean Philipse.
- 27** Greenham by Ceschi + Lane. Produced by 101 Outdoor Arts as part of a Seedbed residency, Photo by Camilla Greenwell
- 28** Pages of the Sea by Danny Boyle in Weston Super Mare. Produced by Sand in Your Eye and delivered by Theatre Orchard. Commissioned by 14-18 NOW. Photo by Paul Blakemore
- 30** The Dance WE Made by Casson & Friends. Photo by Alisa Boanta
- 32** What am I Worth by Extraordinary Bodies in production at 101 Outdoor Arts. Photo by Paul Blakemore
- 35** 846 LIVE: co-produced by Theatre Royal Stratford East and the Royal Docks Team for GDIF. Photo by Wright
- 36** Furious Folly by Mark Anderson. Commissioned by 14-18 NOW and Stadt Poperinge. Produced by Simon Chatterton/Corn Exchange Newbury and OCM. Created at 101 Outdoor Arts. Photo by Farrows Creative
- 38** Catch Me by Upswing at GDIF. Photo by Matthew Kaltenborn.jpg
- 39** Pig by Kaleider. Commissioned by In Situ. Photo by Tom Arran

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