



FUTURE ARTSCENTRES

Annual Report 2016-17



Summary

This report covers activity undertaken by nine leading UK arts centres during 2016/17, and is intended to provide a snapshot of the artistic, social and economic contribution and impact the arts centre sector is making.

We believe that arts centres can play an essential role in broadening participation in cultural activity – changing who makes art, who experiences it and who manages it.

Increasingly arts centres are playing an active role in the creation of new work, achieving artistic excellence whilst at the same time reaching a wide range of audiences in their local communities. Business models show an increasingly diverse range of income streams and strong partnerships, and diversity is embedded in our work, evident in the range of artists we support, the audiences we attract and the people we employ.

Working from this position of artistic and organisational strength, we are ambitious for growth.

Case Study

“I’m a freelance artist - more specifically a theatre maker, director, and facilitator. I first came to ARC when I joined the youth theatre class when I was 11 years old.

I don’t think my interest in drama would have developed half as much as it did if I hadn’t attended classes at ARC. Through ARClub, I gained confidence as a performer, developed improvisation skills, had my first tastes of directing, as well as in leading and running games and being a facilitator as a class assistant. I also have longstanding friendships with a multitude of past ARClub members.

Over the course of my MA in Theatre & Performance, and following my graduation I further established a relationship with ARC through schemes like Meet the Programmers and Bridging the Gap.

As a theatremaker looking for support in making the step from a student to a professional within theatre, ARC were a huge help. I wouldn’t be anywhere near the stage in my career that I am without ARC’s support over the last year - and I’m really grateful to have a building 10 minutes away from my home that is willing to cultivate artists in such a way.”

Holly Gallagher, Associate Artist, ARC Stockton

“I wouldn’t be anywhere near the stage in my career that I am without ARC’s support”



FUTURE ARTSCENTRES

Future Arts Centres

Future Arts Centres (FAC) is a partnership of nine founding partners which supports a wider network of 100+ arts centres. Future Arts Centres was established in 2013 to:

- champion the achievements of arts centres at local, regional and national level
- raise the profile of arts centres' vital contribution to the cultural civic life of our town centres and cities
- support arts centres' sustainability
- drive forward growth and innovation

The FAC partners are:



The wider FAC membership includes more than 100 arts centres from across the UK, representing small, mid and large scale centres from both urban and rural areas, from all four countries. Future Arts Centres members are linked by an active online community providing highly valued peer support as well as national events in 2014 and 2016.

In addition to the nine partners, eight other FAC members who took part in the survey are:

- Calstock Arts
- Colchester Arts Centre
- CAST, Doncaster
- HOME, Manchester
- The Core at Corby Cube
- The Ropewalk, Barton upon Humber
- The Spring Arts & Heritage Centre, Havant
- Z-arts, Manchester

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Artistic achievements

Many arts centres have an excellent track record of commissioning high quality new work from across many artforms, and of ensuring it reaches a large and diverse audience. Some examples of work supported during 2016/17, which demonstrates our commitment to Arts Council England's Creative Case for Diversity, include:



ARC Stockton commissioned disabled writer and director Vici Wreford-Sinnott to stage *Butterfly*, a new show that tackled the stigma around mental health conditions. *Butterfly* was part of Cultural Shift, a three year programme of work which aims to challenge commonly held perceptions of disability. Produced by ARC, it went on to tour to 11 UK venues.

During Summer 2017 **artsdepot** supported HighRise Theatre to take a new production *The Concrete Jungle Book* to the Edinburgh Festival. The show was developed through a creative learning programme delivered in partnership with Centrepont where young people worked towards Bronze Arts Award qualifications and explored the relationship between care leaving and youth homelessness. The show was picked up as a national news story by Reuters and featured in the New York Times.



Case Study

"Originally from the States, I have spent the last ten years in Stratford, East London. When my husband and I moved here in 2007, Stratford Circus was one of the few places in Stratford where I felt welcome.

After ten years, we have experienced everything from shows to classes, family days, meetings and cooking activities. I have looked forward to every event and never been disappointed. When I think of the joy and fun we have had and social developments we have made as a family, I think that we have had more than value for money.

Stratford Circus Arts Centre has provided me, as a Mum to Madison, a child with special needs, support in ways they probably aren't even aware of. I am sure that partaking in classes alongside Madison in her early years offered me a liberation I didn't realise I would benefit from. It is now wonderful to see Madison's 'sense of self' continuing to develop as she attends the classes on her own.

Despite the dramatic and commendable changes development has brought to the area, I doubt my family would have stayed in Stratford was it not for the cultural riches Stratford Circus provide the community."

Fay Minty, customer, Stratford Circus



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Artistic achievements



Brewery Arts Centre presented The Museum of Water, a collection of publicly donated water and accompanying stories accumulated over two years from different sites, worldwide, brought together by live artist, sculptor and film maker, Amy Sharrock. Nominated for the 2016 European Museum of the Year, the exhibition was presented by the Brewery in the normally inaccessible Old Boat House at Wray Castle on the shores of Lake Windermere in May 2016. Hosted just months after devastation of Storm Desmond, the exhibition sought to explore Cumbria's relationship with water – its benefits and negative impacts.



Cambridge Junction continues to commission innovative family theatre for Christmas. In 2016 New International Encounter's (NIE's) *Beauty and the Beast* was co-commissioned with Bristol's Tobacco Factory Theatres. The presentation of work as part of Cambridge University's Science Festival has also continued and in 2017 included the premier of Sheila Ghelani's *Sulphur*, which was co-commissioned with the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts. In 2017 Cambridge Junction expanded its long-standing programme of work with young disabled people by working with professional film makers at a local SEN School where young people wrote, acted, animated and directed their own film.

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Artistic achievements



Lincoln Drill Hall pushed the boundaries of how we have presented work to audiences by investing more fully in the creation of a piece of new writing. *Getting Better Slowly* provided venue staff with the opportunity to be involved in the marketing, technical, and producing side of a national tour. The show rehearsed and opened at Lincoln Drill Hall, co-commissioned with other venues in the Lincolnshire One Venues Network. In February 2017 the show returned to the venue for a live streamed performance in partnership with Pilot Theatre Company.

Midlands Arts Centre

commissioned a new exhibition, *Shock and Awe*, by Birmingham based artist, Barbara Walker. Large-scale wall drawings dominated the gallery and sought to acknowledge an absence of representation of the contribution made by servicemen and women from the Caribbean and West India Regiments in World War II. Part of the collection was later acquired by the Herbert Art Gallery for their permanent collection. The exhibition also influenced Walker's contribution as part of the Venice Biennale 2017.

Case Study

"I am a hybrid of many things. I am a full-time student, a part-time supervisor in a local coffee shop, and a freelance drama and performance assistant facilitator. I am young, a migrant (from Italy) and a local (I feel my home is here now, in Lewisham). I am alone in London but connected with so many people.

I found the Albany as a result of seeking a place to express myself as an artist new to London. In the past year I have been involved in the Albany Young Creatives, shows, gigs, workshops, a work placement with the Albany Creative Team involving my own ethnographic research, chaperoning for Love2dance, freelancing for the marketing/creative team and assisting in the new Uncover Theatre sessions.

Getting involved in activities/events at the Albany has definitely had an impact on my life. It helped me deciding what I want to do next, to feel I have a chance in the performative sphere and to dare and try. It made me feel an adult able to make things happen. It also provided me lots of material for my research on community, development, applied theatre, alternative learning and the role of the arts in our lives – this changed my awareness and perception of what happens around me every day."

Camilla, Young Creative participant, the Albany



"It made me feel an adult able to make things happen"

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Artistic achievements

As part of **Rich Mix's** Ten Year anniversary celebrations, we worked with local schools, artistic partners Apples & Snakes and Bangladesh-based visual agency DRİK to commission new work reflecting young people's views of Tower Hamlets. As a result of these collaborations, we published a volume of poetry called *Stepney Words* and created a photography exhibition entitled *Being Me*, both of which were launched to the public in April 2016.

Stratford Circus Arts Centre

co-produced an all-black production of *Hamlet* with Black Theatre Live and Watford Palace Theatre. Directed by acclaimed actor Jeffery Kissoon, the production toured the UK following a development period at SCAC. Autumn 2016 saw SCAC work with take stock exchange to develop a new workshop model encouraging dialogue and sharing within community groups, which was rolled out to libraries and faith groups.



The Albany commissioned *Muhammad Ali and Me* from Mojisola Adebeyo, a BSL integrated production telling the story of a queer Black girl growing up in foster care in 1970s South London, which went on to perform nationally in boxing gyms; *Tomorrow I Was Always a Lion* from international company Belarus Free Theatre; *The Residents*, a site specific ghost story performed in houses across Lewisham from Teatro Vivo; and a new version of *Give Me Back My Broken Night*, from Uninvited Guests, creating a guided tour of not only the past but the future of Deptford.

Audiences

Arts centres are embedded in their local communities, which enables us to reach people who may not otherwise access arts and cultural activity. Audience Spectrum data for the nine FAC partners shows that we engaged an average of 20% of our audiences from the four least engaged categories, compared to the average of 14% across the English regions, demonstrating how successful arts centres can be at attracting non-traditional arts attenders.

Audience Spectrum	National engagement	FAC Partners engagement
Metroculturals	13%	17%
Commuterland Culturebuffs	20%	14%
Experience Seekers	9%	12%
Dormitory Dependables	20%	18%
Trips and Treats	14%	13%
Home and Heritage	9%	5%
Up Our Street	5%	4%
Facebook Families	4%	4%
Kaleidoscope Creativity	4%	12%
Heydays	1%	1%

Over the past year, the nine FAC partners have been working in partnership with Spektrix to analyse and benchmark our audience data.



Key factors which have emerged from this include:

The average ticket price across the nine venues was just **£9**, compared to the national average (according to Audience Finder) of **£23.53** for the full spectrum of arts events, demonstrating our commitment to ensuring our activity is affordable.

FUTURE ARTSCENTRES

The 17 arts centres which took part in the survey hosted a combined total of more than 29,000 events, including 4,740 live events and 14,500 film screenings, reaching audiences in excess of 1.6 million. Participation exceeded 376,000.



Case Study

"I visit mac almost every week for cinema visits and special events. I have attended both creative textile courses, film appreciation, Tai Chi and recently creative writing and reading group. I have enjoyed foreign cinema all my life and mac is particularly good at bringing foreign and relevant cinema films that attract a variety of audiences.

The course tutors are very talented, knowledgeable in their field and skilful at teaching and encouraging at both creativity and discovering abilities and possibilities. It means that as well as individual attention I felt that I was enabled to learn from the skill and experience of others, hence enriching my experience. The courses I have attended have enabled me to learn and improve skills but also get to know new people, make friends and share both life and specific experiences. My work has always been all consuming both physically and mentally and it has been important to me to find balance with activities that I enjoy and acquiring new skills."

Ariella, customer, mac Birmingham

"get to know new people, make friends and share both life and specific experiences"

FUTURE ARTSCENTRES

Finance and partnerships

Our sample of 17 UK art centres, with turnovers ranging from £70k to £6.5m, show that arts centres are thriving businesses within their communities, with an estimated combined economic activity valued at £73m. With average Arts Council investment of £457,000 per venue, and local authority investment of £140,000 per venue, arts centres are generating an average of 63% of turnover from earned income and fundraising activity.

Our mixed income models help maintain our financial resilience, and depend on strong, mutually beneficial partnerships forged with a wide range of organisations. Examples of these include:



ARC Stockton continues to access health funding through Stockton & Hartlepool Clinical Commissioning Group and Stockton Borough Council's Public Health to provide regular creative arts activity for older people at risk of hospital admission or social isolation. Investment to date exceeds £250,000.



artsdepot invited audiences to increase donations on top of tickets to £5 supporting a workshop place for a disadvantaged young person. We were surprised at how many people responded, 877 donations of £5 were received in 2016/17 supporting 1,520 creative learning opportunities for 65 disadvantaged young people.



In February 2017, **Brewery Arts Centre** launched a new Brewery Membership programme. Membership grew to over 300 within the first six months of launch. Members are offered the opportunity to gain a greater insight into the work of the Brewery, engage more deeply in its programme and benefit from a range of discounts and dedicated events. 80% of Members have committed to paying via Direct Debit and over 100 are supporters new to the Brewery.

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Cambridge Junction has built a strong relationship with Stobbs, a Cambridge-based law firm specialising in intellectual property (IP). Stobbs has taken out membership for all staff, Cambridge Junction delivers the Stobbs Cup, an innovative and tongue-in-cheek team building programme led by artists, and most recently Stobbs has supported a commissioning initiative for new artistic ideas.



Working alongside partners in the Lincoln Cultural and Arts Partnership, **Lincoln Drill Hall** was integral to delivering Cultural Destinations activity across the city. One element of this included additional investment that allowed us to explore raising the game in terms of artists/companies that we present - culminating in Spymonkey bringing The Complete Deaths to the venue in June 2016 - a company on a scale that without support we wouldn't afford to present. Collaborative working through this partnership also saw the development of a bid to the Ambition for Excellence programme from Arts Council England.

Case Study

"I first came to artsdepot around a year ago, I'd lived in the area for 37 years but never actually visited, now I come most days. On my first visit I was impressed by the light bright atmosphere, there was activity everywhere and the people are really friendly.

I'm 93 today, I've been in a wheelchair for 21 years but the venue is fully accessible, I've seen 4-5 shows and have also joined the Creative Circle over 60s arts group. The best thing about artsdepot is the warm welcome and the friends I've made, whether it's Martin the London Studio Centre pianist, students or artsdepot staff, I feel like I'm always amongst friends here.

The best thing about the Creative Circle workshops are they make you think and get you talking to other people, especially good if you happen to be a bit shy. Also, at around £2.40 a session it's really good value. I used to think I was shy but now I realise I'm probably a bit of an extrovert!

I look forward to coming to artsdepot, otherwise I'd be sitting at home with the 4 walls closing in on you, the dreaded TV. It really is a very happy place and a place I feel at home."

Victor Crump, café customer, artsdepot



"best thing about artsdepot is the warm welcome and the friends I've made"

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Midlands Arts Centre's commercial trading activities contribute 42% (£1.9m) to MAC's annual turnover an increase of 4%. Income increased across Trading with catering for the first time extended into the park precinct and a financial plan to return income on car parking charges negotiated with the Local Authority. MAC also developed a new partnership agreement with SENSE UK, sharing space, funding opportunities, staff CPD and artistic programme across venues, leading to a specialist disability festival for PMLD visitors - Sensibility, planned for May 2018.



Rich Mix has an extensive and wide-ranging private hires programme which generates around 18% of our overall turnover. Increasingly, we are finding ways to connect these activities with our cultural programme and support our core purpose, such as the staging of the inaugural VFX Festival curated by Escape Studios. As part of this event we engaged a number of Tower Hamlets schools in VFX activities and workshops. Through this partnership we are providing employability and skills development opportunities in a fast growing area of the creative economy for local, diverse young people.



Stratford Circus Arts Centre has grown steadily since its establishment as an independent charity in 2012. Income has grown year on year, with a 13% rise in 16/17. We have an excellent track record in leveraging income from the building through our hires business and have a number of long term partnerships with FE/HE institutions including UEL and Rose Bruford. We have evolved our fundraising model in the last two years, significantly increasing our trust and foundation funding and managing successful individual giving campaigns, actively supported by our local community.



The Albany's partnership with local social housing provider, Lewisham Homes, grew during the year and supported the expansion of our Meet Me at the Albany project, which works with isolated older people, to work in sheltered housing sites across the borough. During the last year, the project won the first National Campaign for the Arts 'Hearts for Arts' Award for its contribution to social cohesion. Committed investment to date from Lewisham Home now exceeds £700k over a five year period.

Employment

Employing an average of 38 FTE staff, our sample of 17 arts centres provided employment for nearly 12,000 artists, 19 apprentices and were supported by more than 900 volunteers.

An average of 29 businesses per arts centre were supported in 2016/17.



Case Study

“I got involved through Meet Me at Lewisham Homes which is an arts club for older people that takes place where I live.

Instead of staying at home watching telly I thought I'd get out, get on a bus, and see what was happening. There was so much going on! I love singing a lot so I joined the choir. There's a knitting group. Then I was chatting to someone I'd made friends with and she told me about a drama group that was happening on Mondays. In my youth I used to act and a lot, so I thought I'd check that out. So now I've joined another new group, making up and acting in plays. I love it. I go every week with other Lewisham Homes residents on a bus that is arranged for the project.

When you sit at home doing nothing, when you are indoors alone, you feel very low. You start thinking back about the problems that you have been through and all of the problems you are in at the moment. That makes you worried and sad. But when you come here you feel happy. Talking to other people, seeing them, watching what they are doing –it's good for your health. It makes you feel so much better.

My children saw me perform in the Albany theatre. They said 'the choir didn't sing like elderly people.' They said we sounded really young when we sung.”

Daisy, Meet Me at Lewisham Homes participant, The Albany

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