
Combined arts: achievements, challenges and opportunities

Consultation paper appendix

Arts that cross artistic and cultural boundaries and which share ideas and expertise across disciplines are continuing to grow. The shift is visible throughout the whole arts landscape and is particularly apparent within the programmes of our 'combined arts' organisations such as the Southbank Centre, Warwick Arts Centre and Brighton Festival.

Combined arts organisations use one or more artforms to achieve their aims. Many work at the point at which art, culture and communities meet. As most do not have a large in-house producing base, they can respond more easily to new artistic and audience trends and new ways of bringing art to – and creating art with – the public. The strength of many is their international vision, recognising how communities in England connect with others across the globe.

We are often a joint funder with local authorities of combined arts organisations, illustrating their importance within local areas. These organisations can reach large numbers of people, particularly through outdoor arts, exhibitions and festivals. In 2006/7 our regularly funded combined arts organisations had more than six million attendances for ticketed events and more than 10 million for non-ticketed ones. The Taking Part survey shows that 17 per cent of adults have attended a carnival. It identifies carnival as an 'exceptionally inclusive' artform, attracting people of all levels of social status, education, class and income. The *Our Creative Talent* report notes that many people participate in 'multi-arts' activity, demonstrating real public interest in work, and organisations, that span multiple artforms.

Our history of supporting combined arts organisations sprang from the recognition that a wide range of companies use more than one artform to achieve their aim of making or presenting great art. The Southbank Centre supports a wide range of resident orchestras and associate artists spanning the full breadth of the arts. Our portfolio also includes organisations that serve particular cultural or geographical communities with less access to art, such as touring circuits and arts centres encompassing wide rural areas of England.

Like all of the arts, combined arts organisations face considerable change. Many have benefited from funding from the National Lottery, resulting in a strengthened infrastructure. New arts centres such as the Lighthouse in Dorset and The Courtyard Centre for the Arts in Hereford have become part of the national touring circuit outside London, programming ambitious, often international, art for local people. More flexible and better-equipped spaces within traditional buildings facilitate art practices that blend elements from traditional artforms to create something distinctly new. The Roundhouse's unique space, for example, allows it to mount an adventurous multidisciplinary programme.

Other organisations choose not to present their work within specific buildings, favouring outdoor areas, village halls and other spaces. Much of this work has captured the public imagination. There is growing interest in multi-artform festivals that utilise different indoor and outdoor spaces. Their artistic, economic and cultural impact is illustrated by the success and media attention given to the Manchester International Festival and the two BT Visit London awards won by the Greenwich and Docklands International Festival.

The growing professionalisation of carnival arts organisations and artists has contributed richly to the range of high-quality, ambitious outdoor work produced in England. The newly built UK Centre for Carnival Arts in Luton and Carnival Village (due for completion in 2010) support carnival skills development. Alongside the production centres being developed in London and the south east, these facilities will offer a core infrastructure for carnival and outdoor arts. This will help the development of these disciplines to continue during and beyond the Cultural Olympiad.

Our ambitions for combined arts

Goal 1: Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated

We want the excellence and often pioneering innovation evident in the work of combined arts organisations to infuse the arts sector as a whole.

We want to support the 'promoters' who create, commission, organise and develop the programmes. We want to facilitate their emergence as creative brokers developing new ways of connecting art with the public. We want them to be able to shape future touring projects and to work together on building sustainable touring networks that support emerging artists and artforms.

We believe this approach could extend the reach and the life of arts projects. Festivals could co-commission and share resources, for example. Promoters would be encouraged to develop work with touring rather than 'one-off' potential.

We want multi-arts organisations to work across platforms, applying their artistic development skills in the digital realm. In particular, we want to see arts centres with cinemas taking a lead in bringing together their live and digital programmes and supporting artists to develop work across platforms.

We want to see the continued development of the carnival and outdoor arts sector.

Goal 2: The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled

We want to create the best conditions to encourage talent in carnival and outdoor arts to thrive. We want to help to improve business skills and leadership training for those wishing to establish companies or work as artists and freelance educators.

We would like to see organisations that specialise in working with communities currently under-represented in the arts workforce developing a new generation of arts leaders. This could include offering professional development opportunities to their own employees and to people from beyond their organisation.

Goal 3: More people value and enjoy the arts

We want funded organisations to advance audience development strategies with ambitious goals supported by strong artistic programmes.

We want combined arts agencies, promoters and producers to have more opportunities to work with communities currently enjoying limited access to art. They should excel at developing, commissioning and producing challenging art that responds to different communities and involves people directly in its creation. We want to ensure that this work is ambitious, high-quality and able to tour.

Goal 4:
Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts

We want to see more combined arts organisations extending their reach by offering opportunities to young people. Over a quarter of Arts Awards have been given for 'multi-arts', a statistic suggesting that young people are often attracted to working across multiple artforms. In particular, we want to harness the potential of carnival and outdoor arts in reaching children and young people across the social spectrum.

Goal 5:
The arts sector is sustainable, resilient and innovative

We want to ensure that combined arts organisations are well-prepared to explore the opportunities offered within local government, education and other sectors and to use their arts expertise in working with multiple funding partners to exploit future opportunities, from local authority commissions to European Union projects.

We want organisations to consider the environmental impact of their work, and to find creative solutions to address any potentially negative impact. In particular, we want building-based organisations to consider their buildings management, both in terms of the environment and physical accessibility.

What next?

Proposed areas of focus, 2011–14

Area of focus	Supporting
Encourage more connections between audience and artistic development within combined arts organisations.	Goals 1 and 3
Support promoters: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• encourage promoters to find new ways of curating multi-artform programmes in both the live and digital realm that connect with different audiences• help them to champion work by artists from different social and cultural backgrounds, and extend the reach of this work through touring	Goals 1 and 3
Encourage producers and promoters to commission more accessible, exciting, high-quality work for outdoor and non-traditional spaces.	Goals 1 and 3
Maximise the opportunity afforded by London 2012 to build the skills, capacity and infrastructure of the carnival and outdoor arts sectors.	Goals 1, 2 and 3
Enable a diverse leadership to thrive and to use its experience to develop the next generation of diverse leaders.	Goals 2
Enable more formal and informal learning opportunities for young people in carnival and outdoor arts and in other combined arts organisations.	Goals 4
Encourage collaboration, networking, the sharing of resources and environmental sustainability within combined arts organisations.	Goals 5