



OUR NATIONAL PORTFOLIO, 2018-22

Combined arts Narrative



The 2015-18 combined arts portfolio comprises 165 organisations and an investment of £52.7 million per annum (14 per cent of the total portfolio spend). The proposed 2018-22 portfolio is 187 organisations and a total investment of £66.7 million (16 per cent of the total spend). This increase of 22 organisations represents a 13.3 per cent increase to the combined arts portfolio. This artform now makes up 22 per cent of the overall portfolio, compared to 24 per cent of the 2015-18 portfolio.

Combined arts is where different artforms interact and create something new and exciting across outdoor arts, carnival, festivals, spectacle, interdisciplinary work, live art and participatory and social art practice. It takes place in a diverse range of venues from established theatres and galleries to communal settings, cross-artform venues and arts centres, pop-up spaces and outdoor sites.

It is often through the accessibility of combined arts that people become involved with the arts for the first time. The Arts Council works closely with the sector to ensure that the contribution combined arts make to broadening access is matched by its commitment to excellence, through the quality of art and artists it supports.

Investment has helped the development of the influential Future Arts Centres network, bringing in organisations that experiment with new ways of making, viewing and distributing art – including AND Festival, that took VR and drone technology to the rural Lake District and drew thousands of people to witness new art at Jodrell Bank. We have ensured that our National Portfolio investment in carnival organisations and infrastructure is strategic and complementary to our investment through Grants for the Arts. This approach better supports the development and quality of carnival arts in England.

We have brought in some exciting new organisations such as Diverse City, who are creating the world's first professional integrated circus company. We are also maintaining investment in Da-Da Fest, which is a flagship for the disability arts sector. The number of carnival/cultural festivals in the portfolio has risen from nine to 14, creating a more stable infrastructure for diverse work of quality.

Significant international production capacity of scale will be realised in the North; Manchester International Festival will grow to encompass the new cross-artform production and creation space Factory, thanks to additional government revenue support of £9 million per annum.

Bringing in Without Walls (making and touring 10 outdoor productions a year, as well as developing artists) and Liverpool Culture Company as new National Portfolio Organisations, and awarding uplifts to Seachange Arts, SIRF and ISAN creates growth in the outdoor arts and festival ecology, making it well placed to bring high quality art to larger and more diverse audiences.

There is a notable increase in investment in contemporary social arts and participatory arts organisations that contribute to the UK's long-held important role in the development of community arts. Sitting alongside existing National Portfolio Organisations such as Multistory are notable new joiners Friction Arts and Heart of Glass, the delivery organisation behind Creative People and Places in St Helens.

Other new joiners provide innovation in the commissioning and production capacity of this portfolio – for example SICK festival, Tangled Feet and Invisible Flock.

MORE INFORMATION:
[artscouncil.org.uk/npo](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/npo)

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