

2012 Games – our vision

The Cultural Olympiad and beyond



Introduction

Arts Council England works to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives.

As the national development agency for the arts, we support a range of artistic activities from theatre to music, literature to dance, photography to digital art, carnival to crafts.

Great art inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better.

Between 2008 and 2011 we'll invest in excess of £1.6 billion of public money from the government and the National Lottery to create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

We believe the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games offer an unprecedented opportunity to reinforce the UK's reputation as a world leader in culture.

The four year cultural festival leading up to the Games will represent the very best of British talent, celebrating imagination and creativity, innovation and excellence. This has the potential to inspire individuals and communities to take part in the arts, raising the aspirations of young people for years to come and leaving a legacy of increased participation in the arts.

Not only will the Olympics have an enormous impact on London, but they can and will create new cultural opportunities around the UK, reflecting and developing local talent and creativity, and increasing the wider business and tourism potential.

We hope to see increased participation in the arts as well as more diverse audiences, and an increased profile for the arts sector where our world class talent is recognised and celebrated on the world stage. If this can be fulfilled, we can create a cultural legacy that extends far beyond 2012.

We are directing our investment in a number of ways to try and ensure that these things happen. This includes developing major projects for the Cultural Olympiad in partnership with London 2012, working with Legacy Trust UK to see a range of cultural projects realised around the country, and supporting our regularly funded organisations to make the most of the opportunities ahead.

We believe that this combined investment will achieve extraordinary results for London and the UK. We hope you will join us on this incredible journey for the arts.

Moira Sinclair Executive Director
Arts Council England, London

Our vision for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012:



A vibrant environment


in which UK artists can express
and fulfil their creative potential –
highlighting the diversity that
enriches our culture

A celebration of imagination and creativity

*that inspires individuals and
communities to take part in the arts,
maximising cultural benefits and
raising the aspirations of young
people for years to come*

A unique opportunity

to reinforce the UK's reputation
as a world leader in culture



We are focusing our work in five key areas to raise the profile of artists and arts organisations in England. These priorities are:

Developing **major projects** for the Cultural Olympiad

Supporting our regularly funded organisations to develop **world class art**

Providing opportunities for the **wider arts sector**

Working with **Legacy Trust UK** to see our investment realised

Using the catalyst of the Games to develop and improve **partnerships**

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Developing major projects for the Cultural Olympiad

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Artists Taking the Lead

Artists Taking the Lead is our flagship project for the Cultural Olympiad.

Twelve artists' commissions will be created in 12 contrasting locations across the UK in the run up to 2012.

We are working in partnership with London 2012, and with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Scottish Arts Council and Arts Council Wales to deliver the project, to ensure that each commission will showcase the range of creative talent across the UK locally, nationally and internationally.

The successful projects will be developed closely with local communities, creating culturally relevant and inspiring art in unexpected places. The commissions could take the form of festivals, installations, performances or events, but all of them will be fully accessible and celebrate the cultural diversity and creativity of this country.

We hope that the creative sector will feel inspired and rise to this challenge, showing what can be achieved when they take the lead.

Artists Taking the Lead timeline

Investment
£7 million

Spring 2009
programme opens for applications

Autumn 2009
12 successful projects selected

2010 to 2011
projects take shape

Summer 2012
celebratory event brings
all 12 projects together

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Unlimited

Unlimited will be the UK's largest ever celebration of arts and disability, culture and sport. We will help to deliver the programme in partnership with the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG). It will incorporate a series of commissions for disabled artists and organisations, as well as workshops, mentoring, career and training advice.

Artists will be encouraged to create work 'like never before', forging new partnerships, creating site-specific work and participating in showcases and festivals that challenge traditional images of disabled people. Unlimited will be fully accessible to allow all disabled people to participate in creating work on a scale never seen before in the UK.

Further information will be available soon.

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**Supporting and investing
in our regularly funded
organisations to produce
and promote world class art**

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World class art

We will invest £1.3 billion in nearly 900 arts organisations in England between 2008 and 2011. This helps shape an arts sector that is committed to delivering excellent art to the widest range of people.

Many of these world class organisations will deliver celebratory events for the London 2012 Games as part of their core business, and be an integral part of the Cultural Olympiad.

We will encourage and support this, helping to increase market opportunities where possible, and allowing the sector to make the most of the opportunities ahead.

Going global: UK artists performing on the world stage

Four of our regularly funded organisations, CandoCo, the London Symphony Orchestra, dancers from the Royal Opera House and performers of the **National Youth Theatre** played a key role in the cultural ceremonies of the Beijing Olympic Games, welcoming the world to the London Olympiad while being watched by 1.5 billion people worldwide.

They represented our world class culture and set the scene for what promises to be a culture-packed four years leading up to London 2012.

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**National Youth
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Further opportunities for the wider arts sector

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Grants for the arts is our open application funding programme for individuals or organisations to carry out work over a set period of time, and is funded by the National Lottery. We will consider applications for funding which support the themes and values of the Cultural Olympiad, as part of our published assessment criteria.

Artists or arts organisations may also want to apply to be considered for the 'Inspired by London 2012' brand. Creative Programmers can provide support and advice on the application process.

We are co-funders of this network of eight **Creative Programmers**, working in the English regions outside London to ensure each part of the country is reflected and involved in the Cultural Olympiad. They are the first point of contact for any artists or organisations wishing to get involved in London 2012, and can be contacted through www.london2012.com/culture.

We have also committed funds to help develop an **International Festival** for London in 2012. This is in the early stage of planning, but will be developed in close collaboration with many of our regularly funded organisations. It will celebrate the world class talent we have here in the UK, and provide an opportunity for international collaboration.

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**The Water
Margins**

Working with Legacy Trust UK to see our investment realised across the UK

We have endowed £5 million of National Lottery funds in **Legacy Trust UK**, a charitable trust fund set up to support a diverse range of cultural and sporting initiatives throughout the UK associated with the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We are working with them in an advisory capacity to see our investment realised in high quality initiatives across the UK – of which roughly 70 per cent will be cultural.

Successful projects range from expanding the Big Dance festival in London, to a Great Exhibition in the East Midlands, incorporating arts and media, heritage, science and sport.

Projects will start to take shape in the coming year, all aiming to leave a lasting and meaningful legacy.

[Legacy Trust UK](#)



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Using the catalyst of the Games to develop and improve partnerships

We have been working closely with a range of partners including the LOCOG and the Mayor's Office since 2004, providing staffing, funding and advocacy with the aim that culture is firmly at the Olympic and Paralympic tables.

We have supported planning for the Cultural Olympiad across local authorities. This has included working closely with the five host Olympic boroughs of Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest to develop a new annual festival of cultural events, launched this year as Create 08.

Developing such projects is helping our investment to go further and reach more people, and we hope these valuable partnerships will leave a lasting legacy of improved collaboration.

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Spring 2009:

Artists Taking the Lead is open to applications from artists and arts organisations



2010– 2011:

Artists Taking the Lead commissions take shape across the UK



Early 2012:

The Olympic Torch will pass through the UK



Summer 2012:

All 12 Artists Taking the Lead commissions will take part in a celebratory event



27 July 2012:

The London 2012 Olympic Games opening ceremony



12 August 2012:

The London 2012 Olympic Games closing ceremony



29 August 2012:

The London 2012 Paralympic Games opening ceremony



9 September 2012:

The London 2012 Paralympic Games closing ceremony

Further sources of information and funding and how to get involved



Visit the London 2012 website to read about the wider Cultural Olympiad
www.london2012.com/culture

Find out how to apply for the Inspire Mark for the Cultural Olympiad programme
www.london2012.com/get-involved/cultural-olympiad/inspire-mark-projects.php

Contact your local Creative Programmer
www.london2012.com/get-involved/cultural-olympiad/creative-programmers.php

Read about our Grants for the arts funding programme
www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/gfta2006.php

See what Legacy Trust UK is supporting
www.legacytrustuk.org

Find out about volunteering at London 2012
www.london2012.com/get-involved/volunteering/index.php

National Youth Theatre

In the summer of 2008, the National Youth Theatre (NYT) took part in a groundbreaking international venture. They were the only British company invited to participate in the Beijing International Youth Arts Festival and also the first British company to tread the newly polished boards of the National Centre for Performing Arts in Beijing.

NYT revived their celebrated 2005 production of *The Merchant of Venice* for the occasion and were joined by 12 young actors from Beijing, transforming this project into a truly remarkable cultural experience.

Josh Hart, who played Antonio in *Merchant of Venice*, described his time in China: **'The experience was eye-opening. Personally it not only taught me about a contrasting culture, but helped me reflect upon myself and my home.'**

The opportunity has both developed me as a performer, but perhaps more importantly, has given me the chance to grow as a young adult, leaving me with memories and pride that will stay with me for years to come.'

The National Youth Theatre company returned to Beijing to perform in the Handover Ceremony on 24 August 2008. They opened the London 2012 segment by singing the National Anthem, accompanied by the London Symphony Orchestra.

The National Youth Theatre are a regularly funded organisation based in London.



The National Youth Theatre perform *The Merchant of Venice* in Beijing, 2008. Photo: Traistan Parkes

world class art

Case study:
National Youth
Theatre

Case study:
Inside Out
in Dorset

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Inside Out in Dorset

Just one of the events helping to mark the launch of the Cultural Olympiad on 26 and 27 September 2008 in the south west was the Inside Out Festival staging of *Veles e Vents* (Wind and Sails).

An initiative of Dorset Theatre Promoters' Consortium with Bournemouth and Poole promoters, the event received a £63,000 investment of National Lottery funds through Grants for the arts. The project was managed by regularly funded theatre company Activate.

This special event was created by acclaimed Spanish artists Xarxa Teatre to take place in Bowleaze Cove, which overlooks the London 2012 Games sailing course in Weymouth Bay.

The performance was an outdoor spectacle of large-scale proportions. Inspired by both the beauty and the force of the sea it charts the story of a dangerous sea journey, told through drama, sound and pyrotechnics.

Guy Lavender, South West England Director for the 2012 Games commented: 'The Cultural Olympiad will run throughout the four-year build to the London 2012 Games and will be a UK wide celebration of our diverse heritage,

landscape, food, fashion, creative and sporting excellence. Exciting high profile events such as Inside Out that bring culture to everyone are a core part of our vision.'



Veles e Vents by Xarxa Teatre, part of Inside Out, 2008. Photo: Andy Crouch

world class art

Case study:
National Youth Theatre

Case study:
Inside Out in Dorset

The Water Margins

North London Strategic Alliance received £30,000 of National Lottery funds through Grants for the arts towards the costs of staging The Water Margins, on Sunday 22 June 2008.

The Water Margins transformed the beautiful natural environment of the River Lee and Tottenham Marshes into a magical wetland picnic and performance area.

Walk the Plank's giant multi-coloured Silverfish swam up and down the river all day squirting water at unsuspecting passers-by, and human-sized seagulls descended in flocks on picnickers, generally causing chaos.

In the marshes, celebrated flag artist Angus Watt's specially commissioned installation created an impressive visual focus for the festivities which included a Global Local hosted stage of folk and roots inspired music.

The Water Margins took place on the final day of the Lee Valley Festival, which aims to link Olympic activities in Broxbourne with those in the Lower Lea and the Olympic Park, involving the communities on both the east and west sides of the River Lee.

Creative producers Continental Drifts were brought in to develop the project. Christopher Macmeikan and Lis Ssenjovu said: **'We wanted to create an event that was as inspired as much by the natural landscape as it was by the local communities that reside on and along the River Lee, a natural link through all five of the host Olympic Boroughs.'**

'It was a challenge to produce a varied and high quality arts event in one of the most marginal areas of London. Crucial to its success was the use of local artists, contractors and crew. All along the river are artistic groups and creative industries who see themselves as a part of the Olympic vision.'

The Water Margins was a great start to what promises to be a lasting cultural legacy for the Lee Valley.



The Water Margins, 2008. Photo: Hal Satterthwaite

wider arts sector

Case study: The Water Margins

Acknowledgements



Mandinga Arts performer Valentina Ramirez at the Mayor's Thames Festival, 2007. Photo: Ignacio Izquierdo



Bend it... by Srishti at Greenwich+Docklands International Festival, 2008. Photo: Alastair Muir



The Night Carnival featuring Kinetika Bloco dancers at the Mayor's Thames Festival, 2007. Photo: Elicio Carrio



Underground by Slung Low. Photo: Keith Pattison



The Sultan's Elephant, a production by Artichoke, 2005. Photo: Sophie Laslett



Interior view of Colourscape. Photo: Eye Music Trust



David Lock and Stine Nilsen from CandoCo Dance Company performing *Shadow* by Finn Walker, 2002. Photo: Anthony Crickmay



An Antony Gormley figure on London's South Bank, 2007. Photo: Kieron McCarron



Stravinsky Project featuring Melissa Hetherington from Michael Clark Dance Company. Photo: Hugh Glendenning



The Artists First Studio at Spike Island. Photo: Kevin Clifford



Festival of Light in Scarborough by artist Chris Eckersley. Photo: Pete Massey



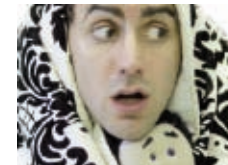
Big Dance on Dartmoor, 2006. Photo: Jim Wileman



Jewellery pieces by Junko Mori, artist in residence at Persistence Works, 2008. Photo Yorkshire ArtSpace Society



Flag installation by Angus Watts, part of The Water Margins, 2008. Photo: Hal Satterthwaite



Tutti Frutti Productions. Photo: Peter Byrne

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Charity registration no 1036733

You can get this publication in Braille, in large print, on audio CD and in electronic formats. Please contact us if you need any of these formats

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ISBN 978-0-7287-1435-9

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We are committed to being open and accessible. We welcome all comments on our work. Please send these to Moira Sinclair, Executive Director, at the Arts Council England address above

Cover image: Mandinga Arts performer Valentina Ramirez at the Mayor's Thames Festival, 2007. Photo: Ignacio Izquierdo