



PRESS RELEASE

26 January 2022

## From 'WalkShops' to Maxilla Men's Shed, the shortlist is announced for the £150,000 Award for Civic Arts Organisations by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and King's College London, showing emphasis on co-creation and partnership

Today, 26 January, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch), in partnership with King's College London, announce the shortlist for the second Award for Civic Arts Organisations. Each arts organisation was chosen for its outstanding capacity to adapt to the pandemic and for how they have all deepened their commitment to their communities over the past two years. What shines through is the way that the pandemic has accelerated the engagement of the arts organisations with their communities and how collaboration and more equitable partnerships are now central to their practice. The 10 shortlisted organisations, from across the UK and chosen from 202 applications, are:

**ACAVA: Association for Cultural Advancement through Visual Art** (London) create opportunities for those who have experienced displacement and trauma to build their confidence and increase wellbeing during the pandemic, when so many have felt isolated. Such programmes include *Maxilla Men's Shed*, which gives space for older men at risk of social isolation to learn a new skill, and *Flourish in the Forest*, which provides outdoor creative activities for families. Based adjacent to Grenfell Tower in London, ACAVA has been working with this ethnically diverse community for many years providing help, refuge and support.

**Art Pop-Up** (Stamford) have discovered how art can help them to better understand their community. Taking a hyper-local approach, the organisation has understood the divisions within their community and found ways of bridging these through co-created projects. One example of this was the Secret Doorstep Festival, which took performers out into the streets. Through the 10 performances, Art Pop-Up reached some of the most vulnerable people in the local area and created a new model for delivering COVID-secure outdoor performances.

**In Place of War CIO** (Salford) enable change-makers to work in conflict zones across the world, inspiring hope and developing creativity. During the pandemic they have worked with 12 grassroots community organisations in the UK to find *100 Agents of Change*. The project has involved refugees, asylum seekers, people living in poverty and LGBTQI+ communities and resulted in 100 young people connecting with artists and activists around the world to share their experiences, skills and knowledge.

**Koestler Arts** (London) have continued their work providing a platform for prisoners to explore their creativity. The pandemic has been particularly tough and isolating for prisoners. Art tutors were unable to visit prisons, so they created Art Aid activity sheets, which have provided a lifeline for some prisoners. Koestler have also curated exhibitions at the Southbank in London, as well as galleries in Manchester and Nottingham, with strong digital aspects to ensure that the prisoners (artists/participants), and others who were unable to visit the venues in person, could still enjoy the work.

**Nottingham Contemporary** (Nottingham) have accelerated their partnership-based approach, working with faith groups and foodbanks to distribute their art activity packs more widely. Local teachers have developed an anti-racist curriculum for schools; and the Red Cross and the refugee forum have helped the organisation to move beyond the gallery walls by creating the 'WalkShops'. These creative walks are for people to discover their local, urban and natural environments, with participants sharing their own stories of migration and journeys, along the way. The 'WalkShops' have helped the gallery to reduce the barriers between artists and the local communities.

**Project Art Works** (Hastings) reimagined how they wanted to engage with their community and how best to help those with complex support needs. Through a combined innovative digital and community-based creative practice called Studio B, and by using tools such as letters, video conferencing and the exchanging of objects, they ensured that the participants were able to make work from their homes, during the pandemic and maintain the important connection they had with the organisation. During this period, they were shortlisted for the Turner Prize.

**Streetwise Opera** (London) has been working in a committed and meaningful way with people experiencing homelessness for many years. At the start of the pandemic, they created a digital programme across the UK, including involving participants in composing an opera alongside creatives. Giving their community a sense of empowerment as well as an outlet for their creativity, the company discovered that co-creation enables them to work more authentically. The learning and insights gained have led to a fundamental review of their approach and altered their future strategy.

**The Art House** (Wakefield) have created the first studio sanctuary for asylum seekers in the UK. Their *Makey Wakey* programme has provided free interim spaces to artists and creative businesses. This has contributed to bringing down the barriers between their creative programme and their community work. Art House continue to look after artists and community groups through grants, activity packs and wider social programmes.

**Union Chapel Project** (London) hosted the first ticketed livestream event in the UK during the pandemic. Pivoting to a co-creation model, they have introduced *New Voices* and the *Community Leaders* programme to inform their work and are succeeding in connecting and empowering their communities. Union Chapel continues to host talks and discussions about important social issues such as anti-racism and good mental health. Co-creation is now at the heart of the organisation's approach, as it looks to the future.

**Wales Millennium Centre** (Cardiff) are putting young people at the centre of the decision-making process through their Youth Council. They are also developing 'Maker spaces' inside this well-known venue in Cardiff and handing over the ownership of these facilities to young people. When the Centre opened after the lockdowns, they presented an exhibition of art made by local people from Cardiff and across Wales.



The Award  
for Civic Arts  
Organisations

Each organisation is a testament to the capacity of the arts to deliver positive and lasting change in their communities. Through the work of these organisations, we can get a better understanding of the courage and resilience shown by these communities over the past two years. The pandemic has shone a light on the pivotal civic role that arts organisations are playing and how they are now embedding the learning from this experience into their practice. The impact of this shift in culture will be seen over the next decade. As well as celebrating the shortlisted organisations, the Award aims to catalyse the outstanding practice of these exemplars. We hope that these inspirational stories will encourage others to rethink their own relationships with their local communities.

The shortlist was chosen by a panel of judges chaired by Baroness Bull (Deborah Bull), Vice President (Communities & National Engagement) and Senior Advisory Fellow for Culture, King's College London and consisting of: Sukhy Johal, Director of the Centre for Culture & Creativity, University of Lincoln, Chair, West Midlands Arts Council, Trustee, Arts Council; Amanda Parker, Founder and Chief Executive, Inc Arts, a national body campaigning for increased inclusion in the arts sector workforce; Briana Pegado, Co-Director, We Are Here Scotland; Isabelle Schwarz, Head of Public Policy, European Cultural Foundation; Devinda de Silva, Head of Collaboration, National Theatre of Wales; and Mark Williams, CEO and Artistic Director, Heart n Soul (recipients of the 2021 Award).

**Louisa Hooper, Interim Director of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch) says:**

In this second edition of the Award, we have seen again the strength and diversity of 'civic role' activity across art forms, across the UK. In 2022, we have a focus on how arts organisations have deepened, expanded, reimagined what it means to play a civic role as communities continue to grapple with the impacts of COVID-19. The ten organisations on the shortlist do so wholeheartedly in and with the communities they serve, showcasing the transformational potential of this relationship for all concerned.

**Baroness Bull, Vice President (Communities & National Engagement) and Senior Advisory Fellow for Culture at King's College London (chair of the judges), comments:**

This second edition of the Award for Civic Arts Organisations has demonstrated once again the creativity and flexibility of large and small organisations across the UK, as well as their resilience in the face of extraordinarily challenging times. Creating a shortlist from such an exceptional pool of submissions was no easy task, but it was inspiring for the panel to witness the deep connections between cultural organisations and their local communities and to see the imaginative ways in which they have committed to embedding the learning of the last two years into their core values and purposes.

The Award is funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch), with King's College London as the academic partner to deliver the Award. Students from the Department of Culture, Media & Creative Industries in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities at King's will research how the ten organisations are reinforcing their civic role and using new models.

The final award recipients will be announced in March 2022, with one award of £100,000 and two of £25,000 (one of the largest amounts for an award in the arts sector). The judges reserve the right to disburse the grants in an alternative configuration.

ENDS



For more information about the award, please visit:

[bit.ly/AwardCivicArts](https://bit.ly/AwardCivicArts)

Images of the shortlist are available to download [here](#)

For further information, please contact Four Communications:

Truda Spruyt [Truda.Spruyt@fourcommunications.com](mailto:Truda.Spruyt@fourcommunications.com) 07740 725206

Harriet Clarke [Harriet.Clarke@FourCommunications.com](mailto:Harriet.Clarke@FourCommunications.com) 07384 917947

## Notes to Editors

The Award for Civic Arts Organisations is being managed by Culture In Flux <https://www.cultureinflux.com/projects/> an international consultancy geared around the design of cultural strategies and interventions that can make a measurable difference to the lives of individuals and communities. Shreela Ghosh and Sarah Macnee have more than 20 years experience in grant-making having worked for Trusts & Foundations, Arts Council England and NESTA.

### The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch)

The fundamental purpose of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is to improve the quality of life for all through art, charity, science and education. The UK Branch is focused on building coalitions to tackle complex global problems. Based in London, the UK Branch sits at the heart of a world centre for philanthropy which enables us to deliver on the Foundation's mission using our networks, experience and way of working. We look ahead, thinking globally and acting locally, to create the conditions for change by connecting across borders of all kinds – national, cultural, organisational, disciplinary and social. We prioritise the vulnerable and underserved in the UK and elsewhere.

The Foundation has a long and rich history in fostering the arts in its 60 years of existence. From *Help for the Arts* in the 1950s to Sir Ken Robinson's work in the 1980s on [creativity in schools](#). More recently, the foundation originated the now highly successful [Museum Prize](#), which in the last decade has been run by the Arts Fund. The prize has contributed to recognising and raising the quality of museum practice across the country.

The Award is being funded under the Foundation's [The Civic Role of Arts Organisations](#) programme. The programme's [Rethinking Relationships report](#), published in 2018, shows that arts organisations can embrace their 'civic role' in many different ways. The Foundation is committed to helping create the conditions in which every arts organisation receiving regular public subsidy can acknowledge its civic role in ways that are meaningful to the context in which they operate and to the communities each serves.

### King's College London

[King's College London](#) is a civic university at the heart of London. This means close collaboration with London's businesses, policymakers, universities and further education institutions, as well as with the communities in its home boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Westminster. It also means connecting the global to the local, extending the reach and benefits of problem solving to generate knowledge that benefits London and the world.

### About the judges

#### **Baroness Bull (Deborah Bull)**

Deborah Bull is Vice President (Communities & National Engagement) and Senior Advisory Fellow for Culture at King's College London. She is also a Crossbench Peer in the House of Lords.

Deborah joined King's College London in 2012 following a long and successful career in the arts, first as performer and then as creative leader and cultural commentator. She danced with The Royal Ballet for twenty years before joining the Royal Opera House Executive to devise and implement strategies for developing new art, new artists and new audiences, including its innovative ROH2 programme. She became Creative Director in 2008, taking executive responsibility for ROH Collections and leading on the organisation's Olympic programming as well as its live relays to Big Screens nationwide.

Deborah writes and presents a wide range of work for television and radio, is the author of four books, and regularly writes and speaks across the media on issues relevant to her work at King's. Deborah has served on the Boards of South Bank Centre, Arts Council England, as a Governor of the BBC, as a judge for the 2010 Booker Prize and was a member of the governing body of the Arts and Humanities Research Council. She has received honorary doctorates from Derby University, Sheffield Hallam University, the Open University, Kent University and Lincoln University and was awarded a CBE for her contribution to the arts in 1998.

She was nominated for a life peerage in June 2018 and joined the House of Lords as Baroness Bull in July 2018, sitting as a cross bench Peer.

#### **Sukhy Johal MBE**

Sukhy Johal MBE is the Director of the Centre for Culture & Creativity at University of Lincoln. Sukhy has a depth of senior leadership experience spanning 30 years across the Public, Higher Education and Third sectors. He has a strong affinity across the cultural ecology and its vital contribution to the wider development agenda. Amongst his current roles, Sukhy is the Director of the Centre for Culture and Creativity at the University of Lincoln, and an Arts Council Trustee and Chairs the Midlands Region.

He has spent his career passionately advocating and enabling strategic environments in unlocking the capability of the sector to support thriving communities and places. He understands the barriers faced by communities in striving for better life chances, as well as the challenges organisations must address to affect change.

#### **Amanda Parker**

Amanda Parker is the Founder and Chief Executive of Inc Arts. In this role, Amanda advocates for the creative, contractual and economic rights of the UK's ethnically diverse arts sector workforce. Previous Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion roles include her leadership of BBC's recruitment and awareness campaign for the launch of BBC Radio 1Xtra, and as Head of Communications for Directors UK, Amanda was responsible for overseeing the UK's first industry-wide research into gender diversity in TV directing.



The Award  
for Civic Arts  
Organisations

A former broadcaster in BBC news and current affairs teams, Amanda's previous roles include Development Producer for BBC Arts (TV) and BBC Radio and Music, as well as Campaigns management for BBC Education. Recognition for her work in EDI advocacy and campaigns include CRE Race in the Media, Royal Television Society, MIND Mental Health in the Media and the Stephen Lawrence Foundation awards.

Amanda's advocacy includes representations to UK and European Parliaments on behalf of cultural and creative sector workers, and UK-wide campaigns on anti-racist action in the arts and cultural sector. Amanda is on the Arts and Culture Strategy Group for the Covid-19 London Government Task Force, the advisory board for the UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity, and the advisory board for Sheffield University's COVID-19 culture and arts recovery project.

Amanda has been a trustee of Film London since 2016, serving on the FLAMIN visual arts committee, as well as the communications and public affairs and audience development working groups; she is a trustee of Intermission Youth and was the inaugural chair of Parents and Carers in Performance Arts in 2017. Amanda is Director of London Short Film Festival, is an RSA Fellow, and a Clore Fellow.

### **Briana Pegado**

Briana Pegado is Co-Director at We Are Here Scotland. She is Founder of the Edinburgh Student Arts Festival (ESAF) and Co-Director of We Are Here Scotland, a community interest company that supports Black and People of Colour creatives in Scotland. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Art and is Chair of the Board of YWCA Scotland – the Young Women's Movement, a 150-year old feminist movement that supports women's leadership.

She has held roles as Executive Director of Creative Edinburgh and a Co-Director of Creative Informatics, a Creative Clusters Programme by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) established to invest in data-driven innovation in the creative industries in Edinburgh and the Lothians. She is a multi-award winning social entrepreneur whom was named one of Scotland's Top 10 Social Innovators by Third Force News. She holds a Master of Arts with Honours Sustainable Development from the University of Edinburgh and has worked across the arts as a senior manager for over 7 years focusing on alternative, sustainable business models for the creative industries.

### **Isabelle Schwarz**

Isabelle Schwarz is Head of Public Policy at European Cultural Foundation. Building on her personal upbringing, multi-track education and life-long interest in culture, Europe and international relations, Isabelle Schwarz is a passionate advocate for culture in building communities and the European project. She joined the European Cultural Foundation in 2002 with the responsibility to lead the organisation's advocacy. Her expertise combines EU policy influence and development, philanthropy, and cross-cultural relations.

Previously, Isabelle was Executive Director of ENCATC (European Network of Cultural Management and Policy), and worked as research assistant with the World Commission on Culture and Development (UN/UNESCO) that published the landmark report "Our Creative Diversity". She also held research and project management posts with the Council of Europe, Ministry of Culture of France, and foundations/NGOs in Brussels, London, Paris, and Copenhagen. Isabelle is a frequent contributor (speaker, moderator, host) to international encounters and serves on juries and boards.



The Award  
for Civic Arts  
Organisations

### **Devinda de Silva**

Devinda de Silva is Head of Collaboration at National Theatre of Wales. At National Theatre Wales, he has led the creation and development of the TEAM programme – the company’s unique approach to engagement. Devinda has over 20 years’ experience working within the field of social change. He has worked in partnership with communities across Wales and internationally, focusing on the arts and its ability to address inequality, develop practices based around co-creation and to encourage greater and more meaningful participation. He is currently a Council member of Arts Council of Wales and a trustee of Disability Arts Cymru.

### **Mark Williams MBE**

Mark Williams is CEO/Artistic Director of Heart n Soul. He co-founded Heart n Soul in 1986. Throughout the last 33 years he has been central to the strategic development of Heart n Soul, helping take it from a locally based touring company to an internationally respected creative community/organisation, producing music, clubs, live art, dance, and films by artists with learning disabilities/autistic artists in collaboration with non-learning disabled artists. At the heart of Heart n Soul is an ethos and approach to innovation, inclusion and thinking differently that effectively puts people at the heart of decision and change making.

Mark led the Core Team for the recent Heart n Soul at the Hub Wellcome residency and is Co-Director of the Believe in Us programme funded by the Health Foundation. Heart n Soul were awarded the main Gulbenkian Award for Civic Arts Organisations in 2021.