

# WITHOUT WALLS ASSOCIATE TOURING NETWORK 2013 - 2015

Engaging new audiences through Outdoor Arts

  
Street Arts Consortium  
**WITHOUT WALLS**  
Associate Touring Network

  
ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND  
LOTTERY FUNDED

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“ Being part of the Without Walls Associate Touring Network has been fundamental to the development of Derby Festé over the past three years. The programme has allowed for us not only to develop artistically but also to invest resources in audience development. Initiatives such as the Ambassadors Scheme has meant the festival has had significant impact in areas of the city which have not previously engaged allowing us to diversify our audience. ”

**Stephen Munn, Artistic Lead, Derby Festé**

## Foreword from Without Walls



Without Walls is a consortium of commissioning festivals, dedicated to supporting inspirational new outdoor work. Since 2007, with the support of Arts Council England and a range of other partners, we have supported over 80 new shows, of all scales and genres, transforming the landscape of outdoor arts in the UK.

The Without Walls Associate Touring Network (ATN), established in 2013 with support from Arts Council England's Strategic Touring Funds, has been a hugely successful extension of our work, touring these shows to a wider network of festivals across the country accompanied by a range of creative audience development projects. Through the combined efforts of the

Without Walls team, the festival partners, the artists, and countless festival volunteers, 1.3 million people from all backgrounds and walks of life, have enjoyed free, high quality outdoor performance in their local communities.

As we make plans for our continued development of the ATN, this document is created as a way of evidencing some of the achievements of this work as well as sharing the learning from the first three years of this project. It celebrates the inventiveness of the artists, the creativity of the festivals, and the diversity of the audiences who enjoy this most democratic of art forms.

**Jo Burns, Chair of Without Walls**

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## Foreword from Arts Council England

The Without Walls Associate Touring Network has played a significant part in Arts Council England's continuing vision of great art and culture for everyone.

Within the Outdoor Arts sector it has been at the forefront of connecting an ever increasing body of artistic work with presenters keen to find work of proven quality to present to audiences. These audiences have been growing year on year in their number and in their appetite for work in the public realm which moves, challenges, excites, and entertains.

This audience growth has been evidenced by some of the research commissioned by the Network, and we have seen Festivals grow and develop too, supported not only by the work

they now have access to, but by the many opportunities to learn, share and collaborate which the Network provides. We have also seen an increase in the opportunities for artists to present their work, connecting with new audiences and new presenters, testing, learning and developing in varied environments across the length and breadth of England.

As the Associate Touring Network moves into its next phase, introducing new partners and sharing the learning developed by the original consortium, it is good to see this report reflecting on many of these successes and looking in detail at some of the learning.

**Jon Linstrum, Arts Council England**







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# THE WITHOUT WALLS NETWORK

**The Without Walls consortium is a network of festivals in England, who commission and support artists to create and tour new and ambitious outdoor work.**

- Ageas Salisbury International Festival
- Brighton Festival
- Greenwich+Docklands International Festival
- Hat Fair, Winchester
- Norfolk & Norwich Festival
- Out There International Festival of Circus & Street Arts, Great Yarmouth
- Stockton International Riverside Festival

#### **Affiliated members:**

- Showzam!, Blackpool
- Just So Festival, Cheshire
- 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space, Newbury

The **Associate Touring Network (ATN)** is a group of festivals working together to extend the reach and benefits of the Without Walls programme to areas where there is low engagement with the arts.

#### **ATN partners, 2013-2015**

- 1 Appetite, Stoke-on-Trent
- 2 Birmingham Hippodrome
- 3 Bradford Festival
- 4 Derby Festé
- 5 Freedom Festival Hull
- 6 Fuse Medway Festival
- 7 LeftCoast, Blackpool
- 8 Out There, Great Yarmouth
- 9 SO Festival, East Lindsey

Supported by Strategic Touring funds from Arts Council England, member festivals have undertaken programmes of audience development over three years (2013-2015), with the aim of engaging new audiences.



# ASSOCIATE TOURING NETWORK PARTNERS 2013-2015





## GROWING AN EXPERIENCED NETWORK OF OUTDOOR PROMOTERS

The partners that form the ATN are not all big established festivals, and many are pioneers within their region in presenting Outdoor Arts events and investing in the development of this work as a vehicle for audience engagement; Outdoor Arts being recognised for its ability to engage audiences who may not attend arts venues or buy tickets for theatre or performing arts events.

The ATN has offered a valuable opportunity for less established festival promoters to learn from the more established festivals in the network and to gain access to new ambitious work created by Without Walls. The project has provided an opportunity for the festivals to be fast-tracked in their experience of presenting Outdoor work and delivering audience development initiatives, resulting in the development of a network of experienced promoters of Outdoor work in areas of low engagement across the country.

The investment of subsidy via the ATN project in programming and audience development has also enabled the festivals to lever additional funds from their local authority and other private and public sector partners in their region - resulting in more financially stable festivals and additional new investment in Outdoor Arts across the country.

### What's Next:

- New Vic Theatre in Stoke-On-Trent has been awarded a £1 million Arts Council England grant to continue the Appetite programme for a further three years
- LeftCoast is now working with SeaChange Arts to produce Showzam! Blackpool's annual festival of circus and performance
- Following a nationwide open call for applications, Out There Festival and Showzam! have been invited to join the Without Walls Consortium

With the support from Arts Council England, Without Walls is continuing the development of the ATN over the next 3 years (2016-2018), working with a new set of partners:

- Right Up Our Street (Doncaster)
- Leicester City Council
- Preston City Council
- Appetite (Stoke-on-Trent)
- Freedom Festival (Hull)
- Watermans (Hounslow)
- Derby Festé
- Peterborough Arts Festival
- Yorkshire Festival
- SO Festival, East Lindsey



“ LeftCoast is a new organisation running the Creative People and Places programme in Blackpool and Wyre... the opportunity to take risks and test out new ideas has been critical in helping us develop and build new audiences. Equally as important are the networking opportunities and new collaborations that being part of the network has provided. LeftCoast is now working with SeaChange Arts to produce one of its flagship festivals, Showzam! This relationship would not have developed without LeftCoast being part of the Associate Touring Network. ”

**Julia Turpin, Executive Director,  
LeftCoast**



Spare Parts, Blackpool



## BUILDING NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH ARTISTS

Most of the companies had never toured to the ATN festivals before, so the project provided an invaluable opportunity for the artists to build relationships with a range of new festivals. In some cases the partners became commissioners of new work; Southpaw Dance Company were commissioned by SO Festival and Appetite (Stoke-on-Trent) to create *Carousel*, whilst Wet Picnic were commissioned by Birmingham Hippodrome to create its new outdoor piece, *Suitcases*.

Many Without Walls companies teamed with the festivals to offer workshops and deliver projects suitable for people of all ages and backgrounds. Amongst others, Kuljit Bhamra delivered dance workshops at Fuse Medway Festival, Mimbire delivered circus workshops in Skegness, Graeae Theatre Company ran creative making workshops in libraries in Birmingham, and Prodigal Theatre delivered a series of parkour workshops in Blackpool. These opportunities enabled the artists to build their expertise in engagement techniques, whilst providing them with valuable ideas and resources that can be offered to festivals as part of their wider touring.

In order to support the artists in touring their shows to the ATN and beyond, Without Walls commissioned

a film company to create short trailers featuring interviews with each of the 7 companies commissioned in 2014 and the 12 companies commissioned in 2015. This was a useful tool to help the ATN festivals' Ambassadors understand and recommend these shows to their local community groups.



**Kuljit Bhamra, Chutney**

28 WITHOUT WALLS  
COMPANIES

430 PERFORMANCES



200 ARTISTS,  
TECHNICIANS  
+ & PRODUCERS

207 WORKSHOPS  
WITH OVER  
10k participants



of the shows were  
created by Deaf &  
Disabled artists/  
companies and 15%  
by culturally diverse  
artists/companies



“ The ATN has had a profound impact on the onward touring life of the work we have created through Without Walls in terms of exposure, and audience. The ATN provides a strong basis of tour dates that makes onward touring feasible and generates further interest in the work nationally and internationally, while providing an opportunity to refine and develop the show throughout. It has also resulted in strong relationships with ATN Festivals, generating a great following for Southpaw's work and with the local communities where we have delivered participatory workshops. ”

**Robby Graham,**  
Artistic Director for Southpaw Dance Company



# 4

## COMPANIES TOURING TO THE WITHOUT WALLS ATN





Orkestra del Sol



Upswing, Red Shoes



Wet Picnic, *The Lift*

- **Acrojou** *Frantic & The Wheel House*
- **Akademi** *Sufi:Zen*
- **Bad Taste Company** *Tribal Assembly*
- **Bootworks Theatre** *The Little Box of Horrors*
- **C-12 Dance Theatre** *Trolleys*
- **Candoco Dance Company** *Two for C and Studies for C*
- **Company Chameleon** *Push*
- **Graeae Theatre Company** *The Iron Man*
- **Helen Chadwick Song Theatre** *White Suit*
- **Inspector Sands** *A High Street Odyssey*
- **Kuljit Bhamra** *Chutney!*
- **Les Enfants Terribles** *Marvellous Imaginary Menagerie*
- **Marc Brew Company** *(i)land*
- **Mimbre** *Falling Up!*
- **Motionhouse** *Underground, Captive and Cascade*
- **Nuno Silva** *Soul of Fado*
- **Oxford Contemporary Music** *Audible Forces*
- **Orkestra del Sol**
- **Periplum** *The Bell*
- **Pif-Paf** *Something to Hold*
- **Plunge Boom** *Vegetable Nannies*
- **The Accidental Steam & Pressure Navigation Company 'Manchester' Ltd** *Galvonium*
- **Prodigal Theatre** *The Next Level*
- **Southpaw Dance Company** *Faust*
- **Upswing** *Red Shoes*
- **Wet Picnic** *The Lift*
- **Whalley Range All Stars** *Imaginary Friends*
- **Wired Aerial Theatre** *As The World Tipped and Straw Dog*



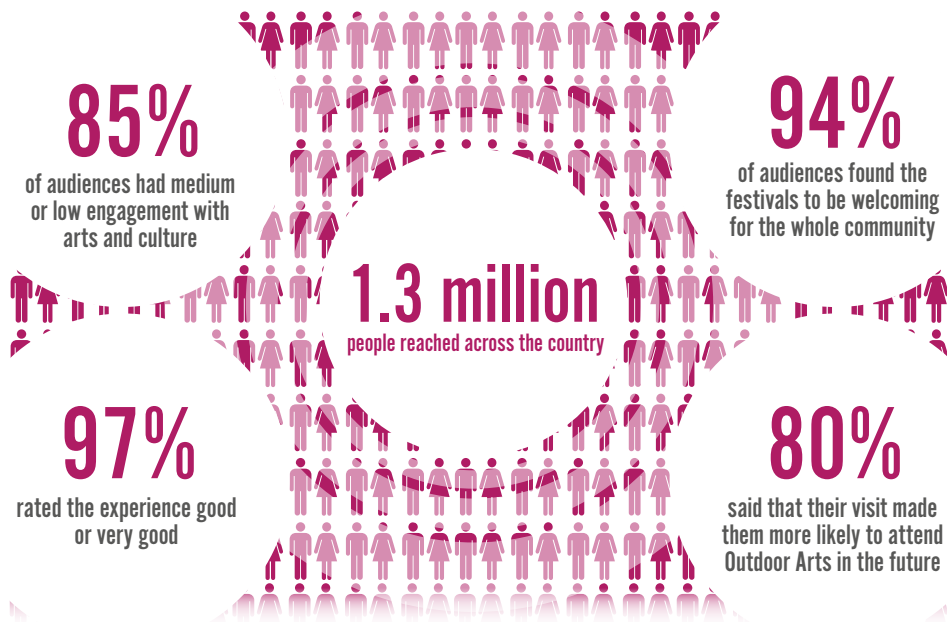
## DEVELOPING AUDIENCES FOR OUTDOOR ARTS

This project has created many opportunities for audiences to access free, high-quality outdoor performance in their local communities. In total, the Associate Festivals have reached 1.3 million people across the 3 years, providing opportunities for people who don't normally attend arts events to discover an interest in Outdoor Arts.

A key focus for festivals has been engagement with young people.

Over the three years (2013-2015) ATN festivals have seen an increase in the proportion of 16-24 year-olds attending, from 10% in 2013 to 15% in 2015.

Another focus for festivals has been reaching diverse audiences. Audiences from ethnic minority backgrounds have increased from 11% in 2013, to 17% in 2015.







The Big Feast, Stoke-on-Trent



## AMBASSADOR SCHEMES

Each festival worked to create innovative programmes of engagement; one initiative which spanned the entire network was the Festival Ambassador scheme.

Ambassadors are networkers who are uniquely placed to spread the word about events within their communities, and also reflect and represent the views of target communities back to organisations.

There are three models of Ambassador working, each of which is appropriate for different priorities. Partner festivals worked with the model best suited to their needs and resources.

### Promotion

Ambassadors function primarily as promoters for the event, spreading the word through friends, family and community networks. In this model ambassadors will aim to target new attendees and to increase attendance.

### Audience Development

Here the ambassador is an advocate for the event and the target community. In this model, a partnership develops between arts organisations, audiences and communities through a range of activities including targeted training, programming and commissioning.

### Co Creation / production

Ambassadors co-create and co-produce events within their communities which are relevant to them.

The success of this cross-network initiative was credited to the Ambassadors, who are uniquely placed as community gatekeepers, providing access to target audiences and bringing the views of the communities back to the project partners.

The Ambassador Schemes have been mutually beneficial for festivals and Ambassadors. Festivals benefited from building relationships and trust with target communities, and having additional support in running their events. Ambassadors developed valuable social and professional skills, including confidence, networking, and communication and developed specific skills in media, programming, and events management.

Without Walls organised a training session which welcomed 25 Ambassadors representing all 9 of the ATN festivals. Walk the Plank delivered a training session on interpreting art giving the Ambassadors confidence when talking to the public at their festivals. The Audience Agency delivered a workshop on communication and presentation skills and offered advice on how digital skills

and social media can be used to engage audiences. A common hashtag was used by the Ambassadors throughout the training event in order to collate feedback and was used to create a sharable story through Storify.

Without Walls also created opportunities for Ambassadors to visit other festivals in the network, including Out There Festival, Greenwich+Docklands International Festival, and Freedom Festival. This helped to give Ambassadors a sense of being a part of an ambitious nationwide project, as well as providing opportunities to see the Without Walls shows.



Out There Festival, Great Yarmouth



Freedom Festival, Hull

**OVER 150** AMBASSADORS  
INVOLVED OVER THE 3 YEARS







## AMBASSADOR STORIES

### Inderjit (Indie) Sandhu Festival Ambassador, Appetite (Stoke-on-Trent)

Indie had recently moved to Stoke when she came across the opportunity to become an Ambassador for Appetite - Stoke-On-Trent's Creative People and Places programme.

“ I first heard of Appetite when I watched *As the World Tipped* in 2013. I was in awe of the performance and extremely excited and privileged to be watching a first class performance in my ‘new’ home town.

Through Facebook I went along to an Ambassador meeting and learned that Appetite was aiming to engage with the people of Stoke through the arts. This was something I wanted to be a part of - to explore and share my interest in the arts and meet local communities.

We did a variety of arts workshops working with all types of groups. I learned how to put forward ideas in a creative brainstorming session and then see those ideas to fruition, evaluating what worked and what didn't work.

The most successful project was when we set up a stall at Stoke Pride. We asked people what they were proud of and

their words were then incorporated into a performance poem. It was heart-warming to read the words people wrote. Being an Ambassador opened the door to a whole world of outdoor performing arts. Visiting other festivals was a highlight, as I got to experience and watch great performances and meet other Ambassadors. The best thing about being an Ambassador was to see how people were affected by the arts and how the arts really can bring pride to a community.”



**Tim Jennings**  
**Ambassador Coordinator, Derby Festé**

Tim was recruited as Ambassador Coordinator for Derby Festé to manage the delivery of the Ambassador Scheme for the festival, with a view to working with the city's wider cultural vision and its partners.

“ I have aimed to challenge local communities' assumptions about the festival in a meaningful and personal way.

This hands-on approach has taught me a great deal about these local communities, their own artistic and creative output and the barriers they consider to be in place. These barriers are unique to each community and can range from their perceived levels of integration, to the level of representation they feel they have in the festival or the wider arts programme.

The Ambassador Scheme has involved a great deal of approaches that were unique to each community. By communicating with these groups, we were able to incorporate them into the festival and give them the confidence to perform in front of large audiences and positively represent their community. This was one of the most rewarding aspects of the project, as many of these groups have been performing in their

community for years and had not had the chance to perform as part of Derby's wider arts offer. I felt a great deal of pride in watching audiences and performers from all communities come together to perform in front of each other at Fringe Festé, and again during the main festival.

This approach has in turn led to an Ambassador Scheme made up of influential community leaders and we are training Youth Ambassadors who are committed to developing opportunities for BME groups, audiences and young people through Derby Festé.

Projects like the Ambassador Scheme are vital and we need to continually make positive strides in this direction. Certain communities don't have the confidence to perform or to publically represent their heritage and culture in front of new audiences. It won't happen overnight, however as a result of projects like this, this can change.”





## REACHING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES – DERBY FESTÉ

Derby Festé had ambition to make its audience more inclusive and diverse, and so opted to hold a fringe event which would bring people to experience the diverse array of talent on offer and to showcase local performers alongside Festé artists.

Without Walls supported the development of the event, providing funding for Derby Festé to organise community workshops and engagement initiatives, and contributing towards the costs of staging the event. The event featured local acts from diverse backgrounds, providing them with the opportunity to perform on a high-profile stage under the Derby Festé banner. Performers included Chango Fuego, melodic African rhythms from Arimba Arts, tabla player Pritam Singh, and world-renowned Ukrainian dance and music ensemble, Hoverla. Members of the Roma community were also given the opportunity to perform and share their cultural heritage, performing upbeat and heartfelt songs from their rich musical tradition, both at the fringe event and over the main Festé weekend.

Fringe Festé was felt to be an effective platform through which to encourage integration and community cohesion in Derby; staging the event in Normanton, a suburb of Derby, and giving local people control of programming the event,

created a sense of ownership as well as raising the profile of the festival in the area. The smaller event also succeeded in attracting a diverse audience, with members of the Roma community and young people in attendance, many of whom went on to attend the main festival.





“ It was a great privilege and honour to host the Derby Fringe Festé at our Ukrainian Cultural Centre. The Ukrainian community, and moreover the Hoverla Ukrainian Dance Ensemble, have long established ties with Derby Festé (originally through Derby City Council) and have been performing for many years at the annual event. To hold the Fringe Festé event at our centre, with so many high standard acts performing throughout the evening, was a great coup for our community and Hoverla was also very proud to be part of the preforming cast. ”

**Joe Kupranec – Leader of ‘Hoverla’ Ukrainian Dance Ensemble  
and Branch Vice Chair of the Association of Ukrainians in Derby**



Hoverla Dancers, Derby Fringe Festé



## REACHING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES – BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

Birmingham Hippodrome is located in the Southside area of Birmingham, near the Chinese Quarter, and is responsible for a number of the outdoor events in the city's cultural calendar including Summer in Southside and Birmingham Weekender. Despite this proximity, the organisation has found it difficult to attract members of the Chinese community to its events. Keen to understand more, Birmingham Hippodrome, with support from Without Walls, undertook an engagement project with the Chinese community.

The Hippodrome commissioned British-Chinese artist Aowen Jin to produce an inspiring, outdoor, light-based installation. As part of the commission, Without Walls supported the artist to conduct a research study to understand the Chinese community's current levels of engagement with the arts, barriers to attendance, and potential ways to overcome these barriers.

The research was carried out using a number of different techniques, including:

- ④ Four art-focussed workshops with local Chinese families and students
- ④ In-depth interviews with nine participants, ranging from established and successful business people to students
- ④ A survey about attitudes to the local area, the arts and Birmingham Hippodrome

The study revealed that many members of the Chinese community are willing and eager to be involved in the arts, but that there are a number of barriers preventing them from engaging with Birmingham Hippodrome, including:

- ④ Language barriers, both in marketing and in show content
- ④ Cultural misunderstandings within the community towards Western theatre and Outdoor Arts
- ④ Reluctance to enter the theatre building, and fear of embarrassment when attending a show or participating in an Outdoor Arts event
- ④ An unwillingness to be the first or only minority member to attend art events
- ④ A disparity between the community's social networks (WeChat, Weibo) and the Theatre's social networks (Facebook, Twitter)

The report concluded that there is significant potential to ignite a passion for the arts within the Chinese community and that some of the easier actions could increase engagement with more curious and enthusiastic early-adopters almost immediately, including:

- ④ Continue to programme Outdoor Arts as a way to engage with the community in a safe, mutual space

- ❑ Staffing theatre events and Outdoor Arts shows with Chinese volunteers
- ❑ Creating a Hippodrome presence on Chinese social media sites
- ❑ Marketing the Hippodrome's arts programme directly to locals through Chinese language social media, flyers and posters
- ❑ Continue to run workshops to build understanding about Hippodrome and the arts
- ❑ Build a grassroots presence within the community of theatre and Outdoor Arts advocates

“

I've always been curious about the outdoor events around the Chinese Quarter, but I never really knew where they came from or anything about them, so I always found it hard for me and my family to get involved.

When I saw the flyer for the workshop I wasn't sure whether we would be welcome or not, but I was curious and it was in Chinese so I thought we should give it a go. We had a really enjoyable time - it was the first time that me or my daughters had ever felt part of the

outdoor events, and afterwards we went into the theatre to create art related to performances we'd seen, and it was the first time we'd ever been inside the theatre too. I'm delighted that my daughters got to see theatre and public art, as I want them to grow up as part of the local society and to be able to see and do things that I never could do when I was her age.

”

**Ru Sha, who attended Aowen's workshops with her two children**







## CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

Creative community-led workshops have proven successful in incorporating home-grown arts and crafts within the site dressing and visual aesthetics of festival spaces.

### Site Dressing Workshops Great Yarmouth

Out There Festival, Great Yarmouth, offered creative décor-making workshops as an afterschool activity in St George's Park. Participants created individual décor items and contributed to group pieces that were then installed around the workshop area for the week and into the park for the weekend. The workshops were accessible to both parents and children and were a good way for families to participate in creative activities together. Many of the participants were excited to know that their work would be on display during the festival, and went on to attend the festival, seeking out their creations.

### Flag Making Workshops SO Festival, East Lindsey

Without Walls supported a flag installation to feature as part of SO Festival, with flags being created by people of all ages from schools and community groups across East Lindsey. Working with Infinite Arts, local groups made hand-painted bunting featuring designs such as the iconic clock tower in

Skegness, as well as Tibetan style 'Wish Flags' showing what they wish for the world. Fifty large banners were created to reflect communities in Horncastle, Louth, Alford, Woodhall Spa, Mablethorpe, Spilsby and Skegness in celebration of the festival.





Great Yarmouth Site Dressing Workshop

## Bradford Festival

Bradford Festival's Ambassador Coordinator delivered a series of workshops in community centres and schools across the district. The diverse range of workshops included:

- Music production and recording workshops for European and Roma migrant communities at The Joshua Project
- Workshops at The Inclusion Project, for young people with special needs
- Street Dance workshops with a local Church community centre
- Free-running workshops with young people at Buttershaw Youth Club
- Mentoring support for two music groups at Belle Vue Girls' School, who went on to perform at Bradford Festival and on the main stage at the Urban Festival

These local engagement projects and workshops gave young people the opportunity to participate in creative activities, contribute to the festival programme and in some cases supported young people to perform at the festival. This made the festival much more relevant to their friends and families and helped to make the programme more attractive to target audiences.

As a result of this work, 79 workshop participants went on to attend the festival, 41 of whom were attending for the first time.

## Whipper Snapper workshops LeftCoast, Blackpool

LeftCoast commissioned a series of workshops which took place in children's centres, teaching the key skills and techniques of photography. The aims of the project were to engage young people in the art of photography, building confidence, encouraging communication and fostering creativity in the process. The Whipper Snapper workshops were run by Blackpool-based photographers Jill Reidy and Claire Griffiths, in the run up to the Spare Parts Festival. The weekly workshops each focussed on a different topic, which culminated in an exhibition, curated by the young people, at The Mount Pavilion in Fleetwood, where their photographs of the Tram Sunday event were displayed. The photographs were uploaded onto the Whipper Snappers blog and Facebook page, for friends and family to see. The blog and Facebook page will continue on as a creative legacy of the project.

“What a fantastic opportunity for youngsters to get that step onto the creative ladder – and for that to be such fun and relevant to where they live has been just amazing. I truly hope that this is just the very start of this workshop and it goes on to be even bigger because if so I can honestly see amazing young talent nurtured and emerging from our coast.”

### Parent of Whipper Snapper Participant



Tram Sunday, Blackpool

© Red Snapper Photography



### **Voices of Freedom, lantern making and procession, Freedom Festival, Hull**

Freedom Festival inspired and engaged new audiences through creative workshops which celebrated the heritage and history of the River Hull. With support from Without Walls and led by participatory artist Alyson Lloyd, six lantern-making workshops with family groups took place in the lowest-engaged areas of Hull, in youth clubs, schools and community centres, and attracted over 180 attenders.

The lanterns made by the participants featured on the Friday night of Freedom Festival. Participants led an illuminated procession of lanterns from the Wilberforce statue to the Scale Lane Bridge, where they offered the lanterns up to the river. Participants congregated in a special location at the side of the bridge to watch the rest of the event, while their lanterns remained lit and were seen from the other side of the river by an audience of thousands.



Freedom Festival, Hull



## LIBRARY ENGAGEMENT SCHEME

During a successful pilot project in 2013, Birmingham Hippodrome worked in partnership with Arts Connect and ASCEL (Association of School and Education Librarians) to develop a new Library Scheme for the West Midlands by initiating new partnerships with three library services - Telford & Wrekin, Staffordshire and Worcestershire.

Libraries in each of these areas became cultural hubs, actively promoting attendance at Birmingham Hippodrome's Summer in Southside events. Each library hosted a free fun cultural day out (with transport provided) to the events in Birmingham, prior to which they hosted a cultural workshop led by one of the Without Walls companies. Creative making workshops were delivered by Graeae Theatre Company in a local deaf college with children who made small puppets of the Iron Man using recycled objects and then came to see the performance.

In 2014, the second phase of this project commenced with continued support from Arts Connect and ASCEL. Key elements of this second phase included increased audience participation and engagement through new partnerships with additional libraries across the West Midlands, and an increase in the artistic offer for library visitors. Over an eight-month period, participants attended two outdoor

festival events in Southside Birmingham, created and produced by the Birmingham Hippodrome, and also had the opportunity to take part in an artistic workshops delivered by regional artists within their local libraries.

By the third and final year of the project, 14 libraries were involved in the Library Engagement Scheme. Overall engagement with the workshops was strong, and those who attended the festival on the coaches came away with an enhanced perception of Birmingham as a cultural place.



“ It was lovely to have brought a whole range of age groups together and seeing them all enjoy themselves. On the coach hearing all the chatter about how much they had enjoyed the different performances was a joy. ”

Audience Member

52 workshops  
& daytrips



14 libraries







## ENHANCING FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Many Without Walls shows, such as *The Vegetable Nannies* by Plunge Boom, *The Marvellous Imaginary Menagerie* by Les Enfants Terribles and *The Iron Man* by Graeae Theatre Company, are well suited to family audiences. Shows of this nature are programmed by ATN partners to ensure that this segment of the community is catered for.

To complement the family-oriented programming, many festivals organised activities to further enhance the family experience. LeftCoast developed an interactive map, which was sent to primary schools in Blackpool, for children to follow when attending Showzam! By taking part in three activities at the festival, children were able to complete the map and obtain Explore Arts Awards.

Other festivals took a different approach to enhancing the family experience by making improvements to the festival facilities or site. SO Festival, East Lindsey, created a designated area featuring family friendly activities such as arts and crafts, games, a picnic area, and with plenty of Ambassadors on hand to provide information on the programme and engage audiences in conversation.

Out There, Great Yarmouth, held a Schools Day which included workshops and performances at the Drill House – an international creation centre for street

arts and circus. Four schools were invited to watch shows and take part in workshops led by Southpaw Dance Company. The children were asked if they had been to the Drill House, or to Out There Festival before, and there was a mixed response even though many lived nearby. Engaging with schools in this way proved to be an effective way for the festival to reach new audiences.

Appetite took accessible, family friendly shows into the heart of areas of low engagement, to places popular with families such as shopping centres. Taking place prior to the main festival, and with promotional support from the local radio station, the Big Feast Taster Tour gave audiences the opportunity to sample bite-sized arts projects and to find out more about The Big Feast and the work of Appetite. Outdoor shows were integral to this scheme with Wet Picnic taking their show *The Lift* to the heart of local communities.



Summer in Southside, Birmingham



Appetite Taster Tour





## MAKING OUTDOOR ARTS ACCESSIBLE

Without Walls worked closely with the associate partners to help them develop strategic initiatives designed to improve accessibility for audience members with a disability at their events, and to raise awareness of work created by culturally diverse and Deaf and disabled artists.

### Working with culturally diverse and Deaf and disabled artists

Since its formation in 2007, Without Walls has championed diversity in Outdoor Arts, supporting the development of 12 new projects by disabled artists and 13 new projects by culturally diverse artists. Many of these shows have toured widely across the current ATN partners, and received very positive feedback from audiences. Shows include:

- ↳ *The Iron Man* by Graeae Theatre Company
- ↳ *Two for C* and *Studies by C* by Candoco Dance Company
- ↳ *(i)land* by Marc Brew Company
- ↳ *Sufi:Zen* by Akademi
- ↳ *Chutney!* by Kuljit Bhamra
- ↳ *Red Shoes* by Upswing
- ↳ *Push* by Company Chameleon

### Making performances accessible to Deaf people

Without Walls worked with STAGETEXT to provide captioning services to the ATN festivals for text-based shows such as *The Iron Man* by Graeae Theatre Company and *As The World Tipped* by Wired Aerial Theatre. The text was displayed on a caption unit facing the audience. Captioning proved to be useful not just for audiences who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing, but also for audiences for whom English isn't their first language.

### Training

Without Walls offered training opportunities to the ATN partners in the area of accessibility and supported partners to attend a workshop led by disability awareness experts and theatre makers Graeae Theatre Company about accessible marketing. This session provided a valuable opportunity for participants to reflect on their marketing tools and to learn about effective print and e-marketing approaches for accessible marketing campaigns.





Candoco Dance Company, *Two for C*





## BROADCAST AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Many of the ATN festivals already used social media to widen their reach beyond the traditional marketing channels. However, combining this with the work of the festival Ambassadors, and their natural affinity for networking, opened up new channels for engagement.

- Birmingham Ambassadors created a blog which enabled them to act as the voice of the festival
- Bradford's Ambassador Coordinator made use of Storify – a social media platform which draws together content from other channels (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) - to create a narrative around an event
- Bradford Festival produced videos to tell the Ambassador stories, and promote the festival, which were featured on the BBC Big Screen in Bradford city centre
- Appetite piloted Appetite TV, an Ambassador-led initiative where they interviewed audience members immediately after the shows to engage directly with the festival's audience and to gather feedback. These videos were uploaded online and promoted the activities and shows taking place

- Freedom Festival supported a freelance journalist to deliver training in broadcast techniques to Ambassadors
- Festival Ambassadors attended a workshop, delivered by the National Association of Street Artists as part of its Reclaim the Streets project, which encouraged critical debate and artistic discussion around the topic of Outdoor Art

### Community Correspondents Freedom Festival, Hull

Freedom Festival, Hull created a Community Correspondent scheme, devised as a means of promoting the artistic programme to the public, as well as charting the journeys of new audiences from participant through to festival attendee. Freedom Ambassadors were provided with training by a freelance broadcast journalist which equipped them with the journalistic, technical skills, and confidence to carry out live interviews.

This training was put to the test when the Community Correspondents attended Greenwich+Docklands International Festival, where they interviewed Without Walls company Periplum, prior to their headline performance of *The Bell* at Freedom Festival. The Correspondents also made a series of audio stories for

broadcast and online streaming, in which participants of the Voices of Freedom workshops (see page 27) were interviewed to tell the story of why they chose to take part, and what they had created for Freedom Festival.

The interviews provided a resource for the festival and were made available on the festival website as well as being featured on BBC Radio Humberside.

### Signal Radio and Taster Tour Appetite Stoke

In 2014 Signal Radio, the main local radio station for Staffordshire and Cheshire, featured interviews with artists who were performing at The Big Feast, Appetite's Outdoor Arts festival. Every day in the week prior to The Big Feast, the radio show featured a preview of the performances, where the hosts spoke to artists and discussed their shows on air.

The festival found that audiences and footfall grew throughout the week. This led to the Big Feast Taster Tour being created the following year, which took a smaller, more succinct, programme of shows directly into areas of low engagement.





## UNDERSTANDING OUTDOOR ARTS AUDIENCES

The Outdoor Arts sector often struggles for profile and recognition in the arts in the UK, and this project has successfully brought the voices of artists, promoters, community leaders and audiences together to articulate the importance of Outdoor Arts. This has been backed up by a strong, statistical, evidence base created through the detailed research delivered alongside the project's evaluation partner, The Audience Agency.

At the beginning of the project, partners made a commitment to collect survey data to help understand audience profiles at each of their festivals, and to develop a picture of audiences for Outdoor Arts nationally. This was made possible through Audience Finder, a national data collection programme delivered by The Audience Agency. The data collected by ATN partners, along with data from Without Walls festivals and other national Outdoor Arts events, has been used to evidence the make-up of audiences and the impact of Outdoor work on people and places. The findings from this research can be found in The Audience Finder Outdoor Arts Report, available to the wider sector to help understand and develop audiences.

Understanding Outdoor Arts audiences is a crucial tool for public recognition and legitimacy of a sector, and having such

tangible evidence is key to helping the sector make the case for greater recognition, support and investment.

The project has also created opportunities to share learning about audience development and consortia working with the rest of sector. Thanks to the work of the ATN, the UK is now perceived as a lead in the field of audience development for outdoor arts in Europe.







Bradford Festival





## CREATIVE WAYS OF COLLECTING AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

As part of a commitment to gathering audience feedback, partner festivals supported their traditional survey techniques with new innovative ways of engaging with audiences and to elicit their opinions.

### The Big Feast Bingo, Appetite Stoke

For the Big Feast Festival, Appetite's flagship event, Ambassadors developed a scheme to record which shows audiences had seen on the day. The aim was to create a fun and engaging activity, different to formal data collection methods. Audiences were given The Big Feast Bingo cards to complete, indicating which shows they had seen, and also had the opportunity to comment on what they had seen. Feedback suggested that audiences enjoyed this idea, and Appetite felt that the concept had potential to be developed further. Other partner festivals have expressed an interest in using this at their own festivals.

### Chalk boards

Many festivals made use of chalk boards as an informal, immediate, and fun opportunity to have a photo taken and leave a comment, which proved popular with audiences across the festivals.



© Birmingham Hippodrome

Summer in Southside



## Talkaoke table, Birmingham Hippodrome Summer in Southside

Ambassadors of Birmingham Hippodrome received training in innovative ways of gathering audience feedback- using a Talkaoke Table to encourage audiences to talk about what they had seen. Designed by The People Speak, Talkaoke is a battery powered table with built in speakers and microphone. A host facilitates discussion in a creative and constructive way, allowing people to voice

opinions and share ideas. The training that the Ambassadors received focussed on confidence building exercises that established each host's performance style and helped develop the techniques that are fundamental to operating Talkaoke. In order to engage with the public attending Summer in Southside, the Festival Ambassadors were programmed into the festival to perform Talkaoke and Tea, using the table to encourage post-show discussions. The public were encouraged to choose the topics for

discussion and were eager to discuss the themes embedded within the performance, which varied from the aggressive nature of sport, the quality of touch and its physical and emotional resonance, to our perceptions of the high street. These discussions were enhanced by the performing artists who joined in with the discussions. By inviting audiences to share a dialogue with the artists they gained an insight that stretched beyond simply watching the performance.





Summer in Southside, Birmingham

# GET IN TOUCH

**If you would like to find more about the work of the Associate Touring Network, please contact the Without Walls Management Team:**

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Out There Festival, Great Yarmouth



