

LOWERY

ANNUAL REVIEW



2023/24

WELCOME



Julia Fawcett.

Julia Fawcett OBE
Chief Executive

LOWRY

I am writing this at a truly exciting time for The Lowry. This annual review looks back over another year of incredible achievements taking us and our work above and beyond our building, our theatres, our galleries and our communities. One highlight of this has been the launch of a regional tour of LS Lowry's *Going To The Match, 1953*. When we were fortunate enough to save this painting thanks to the incredible generosity of the Law Family Charitable Foundation, we didn't want to just keep it for ourselves. And so this iconic piece of Art and North West cultural history has been out on tour; first to Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, then onto Oldham, Blackpool, and even making a flying visit to London to be seen by MPs at the House of Commons. It is currently being enjoyed by audiences at the Williamson Art Gallery in Birkenhead and later this year it will be at the National Football Museum in Manchester, and then Bury. We are so thrilled that, thanks to our tour partners and Arts Council England, we have been able to share this magnificent artwork with so many people from across our region, and that it continues to inspire and engage so many visitors of all ages, in their own hometowns.

Our commitment to commissioning and co-producing new work has resulted in some very exciting new projects which we just know will be delighting audiences for years to come, and which will be the start of big things for the artists and creative teams we're supporting – well beyond our own stages. We're so proud that our co-production **Rambert Dance's *Peaky Blinders: The Redemption of Thomas Shelby*** is returning to The Lowry after a fantastic year on tour after its premiere here last year; and we cannot wait to share with you the fabulous **42 Balloons**, a brand new musical produced in association with The Lowry.

A real joy of this past year has to be our spectacular exhibition **Julia & Axel: 30 Years of Favourite Stories**, which was a beautiful celebration of their beloved stories, and attracted record-breaking numbers of visitors. In a perfect example of our entire organisation coming together to deliver a moment, families and visitors were able to enjoy this exhibition alongside an amazing programme of free activities across our whole building, and a production of **Zog** could be seen in our Quays Theatre. It was so rewarding seeing our building so busy and alive with visitors and families, especially during a time when high quality, low-cost cultural activities and days out are so needed. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Lowry staff and volunteer team that made this so special.

Not only is this a moment to look back and reflect on our achievements over the past year, but also to look forward. We are entering our 25th Anniversary year; and with that we begin a number of exciting projects and even bigger celebrations. Part of that will include the sharing of a major social and economic impact report which we commissioned in 2023. We are thrilled with the results we have seen so far and excited to share this publicly in due course.

It just remains for me to say, as always the biggest thanks to everyone who has supported and worked with The Lowry over the last 12 months, our audiences, visitors, artists, partners, participants. We cannot wait to embark on the next chapter of our story, and hope you will all be a part of the very exciting year ahead.

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THANK YOU

2023-24

IN NUMBERS...

143,385

visitors to the Julia & Axel exhibition, including 51,901 were children 12 and under

980,000

visitors to The Lowry

50

free workshops and masterclasses delivered for artists

320

volunteers have given up 2,907 hours of their time every month

82

accessible performances and 16 livestreams

1,084

five-star reviews for our Pier Eight restaurant and bar

1,567

seats in our Lyric Theatre have been newly refurbished after almost 25 years, thanks to The Wolfson Foundation, Biffa Awards and HFL Building Solutions.

23,000

Children and Young People engaged in creative workshops and projects through 3,721 creative workshops and activities

33,094

plastic bottles replaced with aluminium cans, saving approximately 413,675 grams of PET plastic - roughly 0.414 metric tons, the average weight of a grand piano!

1,493

hours of rehearsal space provided to independent artists and companies, with 410 hours of professional support

500,000+

audience members experiencing 961 performances

17 - 93

Volunteers range from 17 to 93 - and include a retired midwife who delivered one of our younger volunteers



PERFORMING ARTS



CONTEMPORARY & COMMISSIONING

We continue to be committed to commissioning, co-producing, supporting and nurturing new work for the whole sector. It was an exceptional year for our commissioning programme in particular, receiving fantastic national and local recognition for our work, including a feature in The Stage in April 23.

Following on from the huge success of our co-commission, **Rambert Dance's Peaky Blinders: The Redemption of Thomas Shelby** in March 2023, we presented the regional premiere of **Complicité's Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead** in April. The Lowry were proud co-commissioners of this important new work from one of the country's most influential theatre companies – performances from The Lowry stage were live-streamed around the World. The Lowry was the only venue across the North where you could see the show. It has since toured to Athens, Geneva, Girona and Hamburg.

Our commissions this year have spanned the widest range of artists and art forms, working with new and emerging artists to well established and familiar names.

In July, **Message In a Bottle** from **Sadlers Wells** finally made it to The Lowry stage. Originally commissioned before lockdown, this stunning full length contemporary hip hop ballet delighted audiences, blending the music of Sting with outstanding choreography from Kate Prince.

In February, one of The Lowry's new partner companies, **Ockham's Razor** brought us **Tess**; a critically acclaimed new show reflecting a major development in the company's growth, using circus skills to present a full-length narrative work and playing to packed houses across the country.

In our dance programme, **Bert and Nasi** brought us **The Beginning (Commission) and The End**; a double bill from this most enigmatic Franco-Greek pairing, The Beginning, a UK premiere commissioned

by The Lowry, was a dance about beginnings, created with eight over 60's non-professional performers from Greater Manchester. **MAMA**, an amazing new work from **Botis Seva** opened in the Quays Theatre in June, performed by Botis' company **Far From the Norm**, another new addition to The Lowry's Partner Companies.

The Lowry supported all stages in the development of a brilliant new show from **Laura Murphy**, a genuine maverick and brilliant theatre maker. **A Spectacle of Myself** is now touring Europe. **CAKE: The Marie Antoinette Playlist** was a pre-West End preview of the new musical about Marie Antoinette, Starring Zizi Strallen and directed by Drew McOnie, the new Artistic Director of Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. Written, created, and performed by mothers all working in

theatre, the musical comedy **The Good Enough Mums Club** gave voice to the different experiences (and challenges!) facing mums today.

Other highlights include the return of **Unfortunate**; supported by The Lowry, this delightfully silly and naughty musical that tells the origin story of Ursula the Sea Witch from Disney's Little Mermaid. The show sold over 4,000 tickets over a sellout two week run in the Quays Theatre.

Two challenging literary titles were given dynamic and brave reimagings in **Frantic Assembly's** interpretation of Kafka's **Metamorphosis**, adapted by Lemn Sissay OBE and **Imitating The Dog** took on Mary Shelly's **Frankenstein** in a fusion of technology and live performance.



Left: *Metamorphosis*. Photo by Tristram Kenton.
Top: *Drive Your Plow over the Bones of the Dead*. Photo by Marc Brenner.
Bottom: *The Good Enough Mums Club* by Pamela Raith.
Top: *Unfortunate: The Untold Story of Ursula the Sea Witch*. Photo by Pamela Raith.





OTHER HIGHLIGHTS



OPERATION MINCEMEAT

Operation Mincemeat opened at the Fortune Theatre in the West End in April. This smash-hit comedy musical is the debut show from Spitlip, made up of members of Kill the Beast who graduated through our artist development programme over a ten-year period. A short section of Mincemeat was first scratched as part of our Rewrites new musical platform, and has since gone on to receive more than 64 5-star reviews and several award nominations, including winning the 2024 What'sOnStage Awards best new musical. The show received six 2024 Laurence Olivier Award nominations and we were so proud and delighted that they were awarded Best Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical and the coveted Best New Musical. The show is expected to go to Broadway in 2025.



REWRITES FESTIVAL

We announced the first national edition of **Rewrites** – our new musical theatre platform that puts shows on their feet and in front of an audience for the first time through scratch nights, works-in-progress workshops and concerts. Launched in 2017 it has now expanded with three new partner venues – Birmingham Hippodrome, MAST Mayflower Studios in Southampton and Norwich Theatres. In March we presented performances of **Sheep Soup's Nel's Place** and curtain raiser previews from Glasgow-trained **David Fallon and Fraser Scott (Coming Back Around)** and Lowry Associate Artist (also Scottish) **Finn Anderson (The Edge of Me)**. Both performances sold out and the platform now moves onto programme partners.

Left: Ockham's Razor's Tess. Photo by Kie Cummings.

Above: Operation Mincemeat. Photo by Matt Crockett.

Next page: Message in a Bottle. Photo by Lynn Theisen.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

A stunning hip hop ballet to the music of Sting



NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Our work continues with The Theatre Nations Partnership, a collection of very diverse venues from areas of low engagement.

*This page: Sucker Punch. Photo by Manuel Harlan.
Top right: Boy at the Back of the Class. Photo by Manuel Harlan.
Bottom left: Falstaff. Photo by Richard H Smith.
Bottom right: Waldo's Circus of Magic and Terror. Photo by Paul Blakemore.*

Working together across audience development, community engagement and performances we have presented a remarkable body work across the year – including performances of **Sucker Punch** (Theatre Royal, Hornchurch), **Jekyll and Hyde** (NT) and **My Beautiful Laundrette** (Leicester Curve). We were also very proud to collaborate with the **Children's Touring Partnership** on **The Boy at the Back of the Class**, an outstanding and timely piece of brilliant theatre for young people.



Working with other venues and the support of the **Korean Cultural Centre UK** we presented three outstanding evenings of Korean Dance across all three theatres in our building – culminating in the brilliant **Dragons** in the Lyric Theatre from Eun-Me Ahn.

Our long-term relationships with household names **National Theatre**, **Royal Shakespeare Company** and **Opera North** remain stronger than ever. Following a very successful run of **Ocean at the End of the Lane** as our 2022 Christmas show, the production returned for an extra week in October.

The company will return again in October 2024 with **War Horse**. **The RSC** brought us a radical new version of **Julius Caesar** – incorporating a locally recruited Community Chorus. **Opera North's** Green Season in November (productions staged as sustainably as possible) brought us **Falstaff**, **La rondine** and **Masque of Might**. In March 2024 the company returned with a double-bill of **Cavalleria Rusticana/Aleko** and **Così fan Tutte**.

In our circus programme, **Extraordinary Bodies** are an amazing circus company working with integrated casts of disabled and non-disabled performers. Our four-year relationship culminated in the production of **Waldo's Circus of Magic and Terror** which ran for a week in the Quays in April 2023.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT



SUCKER PUNCH

A performance that packed a punch on The Lowry stage



DANCE

We continue to be committed to commissioning, co-producing, supporting and nurturing new work for the whole sector. It was an exceptional year for our commissioning programme in particular, receiving fantastic national and local recognition for our work, including a feature in The Stage in April 23.

In April, the **National Youth Dance Company** celebrated their Tenth anniversary by premiering a brilliant new show created by Wayne McGregor CBE, highlighting the power and creativity of young people from all dance styles and backgrounds.

We were delighted to once again welcome **Akram Khan** with his spellbinding retelling of **The Jungle Book**; Akram and his team reinvent the journey of Mowgli through the eyes of a climate refugee, blending dance-theatre with state-of-the-art visuals and animations.



The recognised home of **Matthew Bourne's New Adventures** in the North West, we enjoyed two production from Matthew Bourne this year. Audiences flocked to see **Romeo and Juliet** and the beloved **Edward Scissorhands**. Partner company **Birmingham Royal Ballet** also treated dance fans to their timeless classic, **Sleeping Beauty**.

Through our **Dance Consortium** partnership, we were very fortunate to be able to bring UK audiences the thrilling **Ailey 2** (the next generation of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater) and the UK and Ireland premiere of **Sao Paulo Dance**, Brazil's finest dance company, as part of the Consortium's mission to bring the very best in international dance to the UK and Ireland's stages.



RITE OF SPRING

Seeta Patel married Indian classical dance and Western classical music

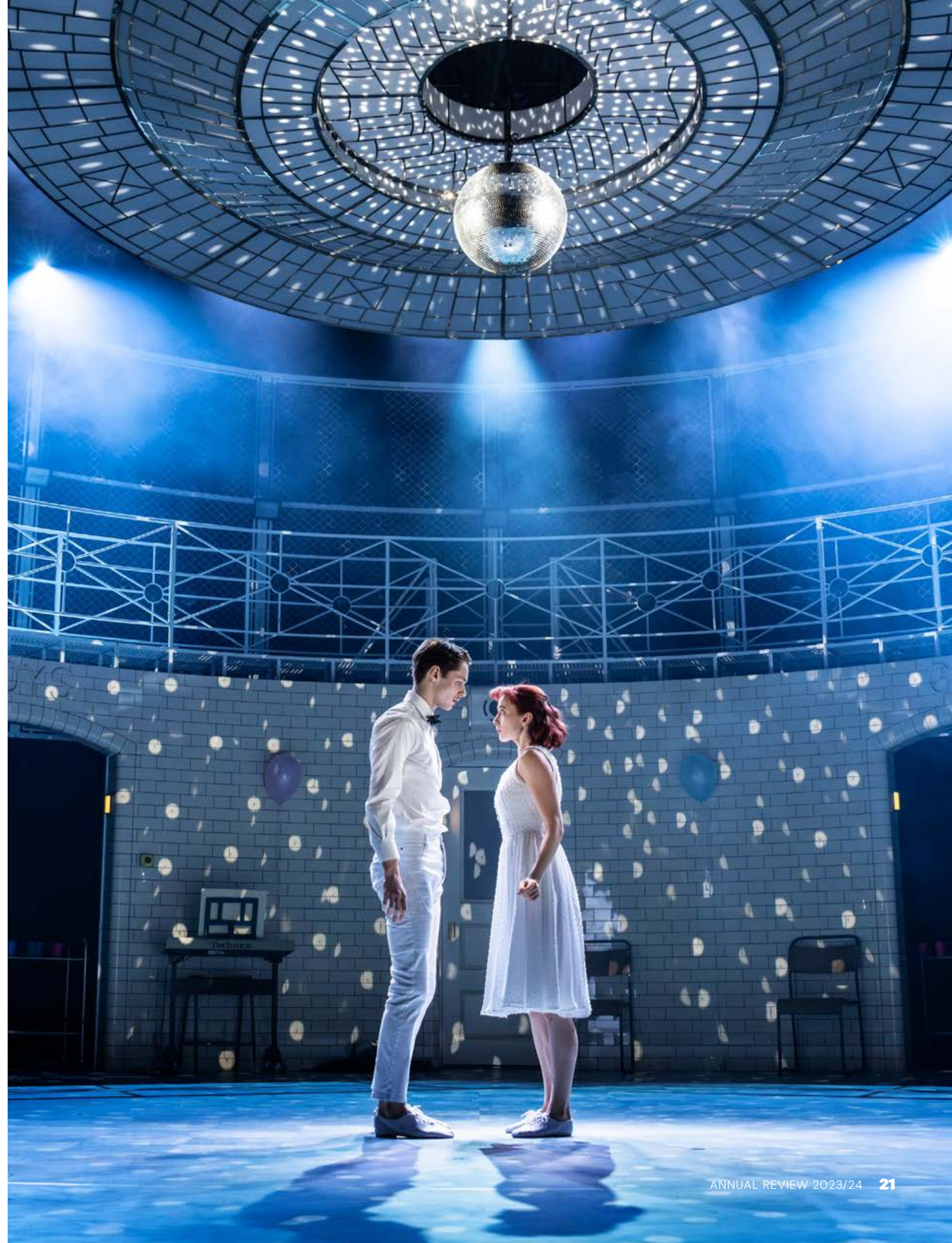




Other highlights from this year's programme demonstrate how dance spotlights and celebrates our artistic and cultural communities. **Pagrav Dance's Anusthan** showcased the bright future of kathak dance in the UK, in a celebration of neo-classical Indian Dance. **Ballet Black's** double-bill **Pioneers** blended classical ballet, music and poetry, alongside an exploration of the life and work of Nina Simone, whilst **Alleyn Dance's** hard-hitting **Far From Home** was a powerful interrogation of immigration and its consequences.



Previous page: Seeta Patel – *Rite of Spring*. Photo by Foteini Christofilopoulou; *Ailey 2*. Photo by Nir Arieli.
Top: *The Sleeping Beauty* by Birmingham Royal Ballet. Photo by Tristram Kenton.
Bottom: *Edward Scissorhands* by Matthew Bourne's *New Adventures*. Photo by Johan Persson.
Opposite: *Romeo and Juliet* by Matthew Bourne's *New Adventures*. Photo by Johan Persson.



LYRIC THEATRE PROGRAMME

We continue to be committed to commissioning, co-producing, supporting and nurturing new work for the whole sector. It was an exceptional year for our commissioning programme in particular, receiving fantastic national and local recognition for our work, including a feature in The Stage in April 23.

These productions are an important part of our performing arts strategy as not only do we pride ourselves on bringing high-quality, big-name productions to our audiences, but through their popularity, they enable us to balance this with new work, work which may yet not have found its audience, or work which otherwise might not be seen in the North West – or indeed the UK.



April got off to a flying start with the fabulous **Mother Goose**. The Legendary Sir Ian McKellen returned to the Lowry in his long-awaited panto debut, joined by John Bishop. This brilliant traditional pantomime sold out the Lyric Theatre for a week at Easter.

Our year has also included highlights which are able to combine popular and commercially successful names with world-class performances, such as Craig Revel Horwood's **Strictly Ballroom**, the triumphant return of **Everybody's Talking About Jamie** and the thrilling **2:22 Ghost Story** which joined us, fittingly, on Halloween as part of its first UK tour.



Opposite: Noises Off. Photo by Pamela Raith.
Top: The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Photo by Pamela Raith.
Above: Calendar Girls. Photo by Alex Harvey Brown.



Left: John Bishop and Sir Ian McKellen star in Mother Goose. Photo by Samuel Harlan.
Above: The Crown Jewels. Photo by Ellie Kurtz.
Next page: Life of Pi. Photo by Johan Persson.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT



LIFE OF PI

The multi-award winning production thrilled audiences across December and January





In December, we very proudly presented **Life of Pi**, the multi-Olivier winning and Broadway smash as our mainstage Christmas production. This fantastic show was a visual feast and a triumph of story-telling. The launch event itself became a worldwide viral sensation on Facebook with a clip of the legendary tiger Richard Parker launching himself at an unsuspecting guest.

2024 continued in the same vein, as a stunning revival of **The King and I** graced our stages with a sell-out run in January, followed by a powerful production of courtroom thriller **Twelve Angry Men**, a real treat for drama lovers.

Family audiences remain a key part of our programme and we present a remarkably diverse and high-quality programme of work for young people across all of our stages. Just some of those enduring and much-loved titles include **The Smeds and The Smoos**, **We're Going on a Bear Hunt**, **Mog** and **The Gruffalo's Child**. Over the summer, our hugely successful **Julia & Axel – Thirty Years of Favourite Stories** exhibition in our galleries was perfectly complimented by **Zog**, and families were able to combine both experiences into one memorable visit.



Left: *The King & I*. Photo by Johan Persson.
Above: *The Gruffalo's Child*. Photo by Lesley Cook.



Opposite page: *We're Going On A Bear Hunt*. Photo by Lesley Cook Photography.
Above: *Twelve Angry Men*.



VISUAL ARTS



CONTEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS PROGRAMME

Alongside our permanent LS Lowry collection, our contemporary exhibitions programme enables us to ensure our visual arts programme is dynamic, diverse, inclusive and representative, with intersectionality at its core. This programme enables us to identify adventurous artists who often explore convergences between visual art and performance, and these exhibitions enable us to provide a safe environment for our visitors to reflect on the changing world we live in by supporting them to engage with the art and artists we show, thinking and working creatively themselves.



HEW LOCKE: THE AMBASSADORS

29 April - 25 June 2023

Originally commissioned by The Lowry in 2019, we were delighted to present **The Ambassadors** in Salford, by Guyanese-British sculptor Hew Locke. The Ambassadors is a sculptural installation consisting of four Black figures on horseback, acting as envoys, bringing messages from the past to the future. Each sculpture is intricately decorated with symbols that echo past cultures, referencing Benin bronzes, colonial medals, slave pennies and much more. With these figures, Locke offers a counterpoint to traditional statues and monuments, subverting their symbols of colonial power, and questioning who our society chooses to memorialise and celebrate. Visitors to the exhibition also had an opportunity to explore and reflect on public monuments in the UK, and to make their own creative response to The Ambassadors through sculpture, drawing and writing.



Above: Hew Locke speaks at the opening of *The Ambassadors*.



JO LATHWOOD: MAKING UP

20 January – 3 March

With sustainability at the core of her practice, Jo Lathwood makes sculptures and large-scale installations in response to a particular site, event, material, or process. For Making Up, The Lowry invited Lathwood to spend four weeks in residence developing, building, and ultimately deconstructing a new sculptural installation made especially for our galleries. Inspired by the history and heritage of Salford Quays, the area that is now home to The Lowry, and by her longstanding interest in journeys and movement, Lathwood built a raised pathway that connected to a circular rotating platform, made from recycled timber. Lathwood then dismantled the pathway, repurposing the wood into reusable boxes which were given away, leaving no trace and minimal waste.

Above: Jo Lathwood's finished structure, before deconstruction. Photo by Paul Blakemore.



NIKTA MOHAMMADI: MEMORY STONE

23 March – 5 May

Nikta Mohammadi is an artist and filmmaker originally from Tehran and now based in West Yorkshire. This is Mohammadi's first solo exhibition, premiering a new film commissioned by The Lowry. Memory Stone is a film installation exploring dreams and displacement within the context of the British countryside, accompanied by a visceral soundscape by composer Babak Mirsalari. Combining elements of science fiction and Iranian mythology, Mohammadi reflects on her own and other migrants' psychological and physical relationship with land and place. This brand-new work has been commissioned by The Lowry through its Artist Development Programme 'Developed With The Lowry' and is also supported by A-N, University of Salford and Arts Council England.

JULIA & AXEL

THIRTY YEARS OF FAVOURITE STORIES

This record-breaking exhibition dedicated to the hugely popular collaborations between author Julia Donaldson and illustrator Axel Scheffler was a fabulous celebration of thirty years of storytelling, illustration and imagination.



**180,000+
VISITORS**

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT



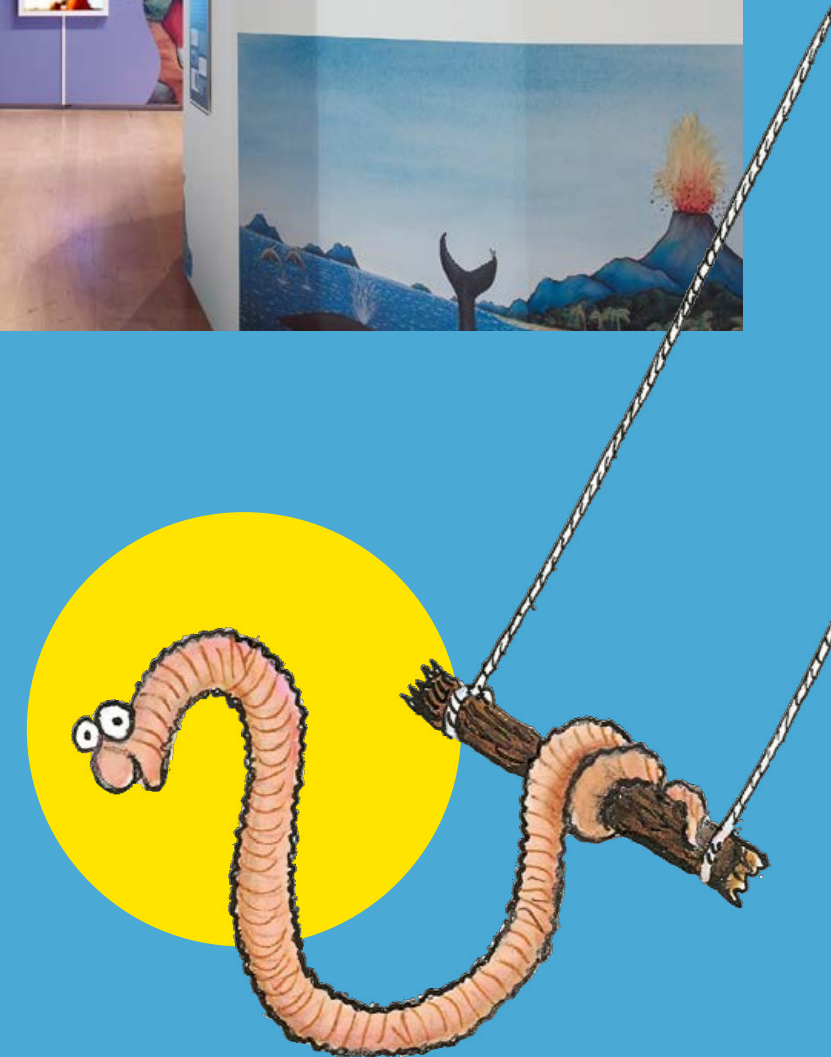
WITHOUT DOUBT, THE LOWRY'S MOST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITION SINCE OPENING...

Conceived and curated by The Lowry, it brought to life timeless classics beloved by families everywhere, *The Gruffalo*, *Stick Man*, *Zog* and *Charlie Cook's Favourite Book* and was designed and written specifically for younger children and their families.

With thanks to Julia and Axel themselves, a selection of Donaldson's original notebooks were exhibited for the first time ever – including one showing the first time she came up with the word 'Gruffalo' – as well as a huge selection of Scheffler's original illustrations and sketches.

Alongside were enormous immersive displays, hands-on interactive exhibits, board games, lots of dressing up, sing-songs, and clips from the BBC's Christmas animated stories, made by Magic Light. Every young visitor was given their own free Julia & Axel notebook, encouraging them to write and illustrate their own stories and fall in love with the world of picture books, inspired by the exhibition around them. There were lots of opportunities for families to sit down and read stories together in cosy corners. We worked closely in partnership with publishers Macmillan and Scholastic to ensure we were able to produce an exhibition which was packed full of favourite characters and beautiful imagery.

Exhibition photos by Nathan Chandler. Superworm illustration by Axel Scheffler © Scholastic, 2013.





This exhibition came at a time when access to free, high quality cultural experiences was more important than ever. The cost-of-living crisis has made it increasingly difficult for families to enjoy days out on a budget. Our response to this was to not only offer this fantastic free exhibition, but to extend this experience to enable families to have a full day out for free, or very little cost. The whole of The Lowry building was taken over by these fabulous stories and loveable characters – including a giant bespoke sculpture of the Gruffalo greeting visitors on arrival – alongside a huge programme of free activities from Highway Rat’s Storytelling Corner to Zog’s Flying Academy, and The Gruffalo’s Kitchen, with a specially designed picnic offer for little ones.

Over the summer families could complete their visit to the Quays Theatre to enjoy the ever-popular production of Zog, making this a truly all-encompassing experience.

Every morning there were queues outside the building and by the time we finally closed the exhibition, over 180,000 visitors had seen it, including over 50,000 children aged 12 and under. There was lots of lovely feedback from our young visitors, including “To Zog, I am visiting the lowry to see your exhibition. I live in Streford and came here on a tram and I am having a great time. Love Leah aged 6” and “My name is Patrick and I am from Paisley, Scotland. I love the exhibition and it would be great to stay here forever!”

It was a real delight to see so many families enjoying their visit – many children arriving dressed as their favourite character – and whilst we were expecting this to be an exceptionally popular exhibition, we were truly overwhelmed by the number of visitors from the very first day, proving this to be – without doubt – The Lowry’s most successful exhibition since we opened.



JULIA & AXEL BUILDING TAKEOVER



GRUFFALO'S KITCHEN



ZOG ACADEMY



**HIGHWAY RAT'S
STORYTELLING CAMP**

Left: Room On The Broom illustration by Axel Scheffler © Macmillan, 2002.

THE LS LOWRY COLLECTION

Following the successful acquisition of LS Lowry's *Going to the Match* 1953, thanks to a generous gift from the Law Family Charitable Foundation, the painting is currently on a tour of venues where it can be seen, for free, across the North-West. Communities in Bolton, Oldham, Blackpool and Birkenhead have all been able to see this legendary masterpiece for themselves, with Bury and a return visit to the National Football Museum in Manchester next on the tour. Supported by Arts Council England and the Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation, the tour is accompanied by a wraparound programme of bespoke schools and community workshops and other learning

activities, designed with our partner venues to support each town and community to provide their own personal response to the piece.

With loans from the Collection, we have supported the *LS Lowry* exhibition at The Beacon in Whitehaven and forthcoming exhibitions at The Granary Gallery in Berwick-upon-Tweed, the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle and Tullie House in Carlisle. The Lowry in turn has benefited from loans from major private collections, including the oil paintings *Newbiggin by the Sea* 1966, *Beach at Penarth* 1960, *Beach*

Scene, Lancashire 1947, a group of five works from a private Liechtenstein collection which includes the iconic *Father and Two Sons* 1950, *Punch and Judy* 1943 and a rare Cotswolds scene, *Bourton on the Water* 1947, as well as Lowry's striking drawing, *Child with Doll* 1968.



10 NEW LOANED WORKS ON DISPLAY IN THE EXHIBITION



From left to right:
LS Lowry Bourton-on-the-Water, 1947, on loan from a private Liechtenstein Collection; LS Lowry Punch and Judy, 1943, on loan from a private Liechtenstein Collection;
LS Lowry Father and Two Sons, 1950, on loan from a private Liechtenstein Collection; LS Lowry Mill Scene, 1953, on loan from a private Liechtenstein Collection.



ARTIST DEVELOPMENT



DEVELOPED WITH THE LOWRY

Our six Developed With artists have spent the last 18 months creating new work and focusing on their professional development including building relationships with new national and international partners, securing funding to realise their projects, and in some cases establishing their own independent companies to take that next step to making their work more resilient and future-proof.

2022-2024 COHORT



1 ALICE CHRISTINA-CORRIGAN

Alice Christina-Corrigan opened her latest production **FADE** in the Aldrige Studio in April; a disabled-led production featuring dynamic new writing, integrated creative access and original music.



2 BOBAK CHAMPION

Bobak Champion is a British-Iranian hip hop dance artist, working on the first research and development phase for his new interactive dance theatre show for 3-8yr olds called **Maaman Baba**. Working with local families and communities to develop the show, Bobak will then share a work in progress performance in Autumn 2024.



3 NIKTA MOHAMMADI

Artist and filmmaker **Nikta Mohammadi** opened her first solo exhibition (pictured right), an immersive film installation, **Memory Stone in** our Galleries from March – May 2024.



4 EDY HURST

Writer, comedian and theatre maker **Edy Hurst** completed the first research and development phase of his new show **Edy Hurst's Wonderful Discoverie Of Witches In The Countie Of Himself**. Edy is now moving onto the second stage of development for the show which will open in the Aldrige Studio from Thursday 31 October – Friday 1 November.



5 LAUREN YVONNE TOWNSEND

Lauren Yvonne Townsend is a writer and creative producer. Lauren presented a work in progress performance of her new show **Obsessed** at The Lowry and as part of the 2024 SICK! Festival in May; a semi-autobiographical debut play exploring the experience of living with OCD as a young black woman.



6 TANIA CAMARA

Bringing together stories and creative practices from Cape Verde, Portugal, Guinea Bissau and the UK, performance artist **Tania Camara** is developing her new show **As I Am Naturally** which will open in the Studio in September 2024.



Left: Installation photograph (top) and film still (bottom) from Nikta Mohammadi's *Memory Stone* exhibition.

Above: Poster artwork for Edy Hurst's *Wonderfull Discoverie Of Witches In The Countie Of Himself*, ahead of its tour at The Edinburgh Fringe. Photo by Andy Hollingworth, design by Seb Ward.

Right: *FADE* by Alice Christina-Corrigan makes its premiere in The Aldridge Studio at The Lowry. Photo by Andrew AB Photography.

"In my opinion, Developed with is the best programme in the whole of the UK. Not only has it taken me to a new level professionally, but it has also allowed me to learn integral skills about being a lead artist, running a full production team, looking at future projects and ultimately leaving me confident and creatively driven. It has really made me look at where I sit in the industry, the power I have within myself to make the changes that I want to in the UK theatre scene."

Alice Christina-Corrigan

ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

Our Associate Artists are mid-career or established artists and companies making nationally or internationally touring work and tackling the challenges of our industry. Over a sustained period of time we work together to explore the questions that sit at the heart of our Associates' practice and support them to explore, respond and challenge those questions through creative and professional development activity.

We are delighted that our artists are receiving industry recognition for their fantastic work; **Police Cops** and **Thick & Tight** both won awards at The Offies 2024 Awards Ceremony in February, including Best Choreography / Movement and Best New Musical for **Police Cops: The Musical** by Police Cops and Best Cabaret Performance for **Short & Sweet** by **Thick & Tight**.

Thick & Tight are touring their latest show **Tits & Teeth** – a collection of best bits from their back catalogue – to venues across the country, and following a successful run at Southwark Playhouse Borough in 2023, the critically acclaimed **Police Cops: The Musical** returned to London in Spring 2024 for another seven-week London run. It is expected to open in the West End in 2024-25.

Also in the field of new musicals, **Finn Anderson** will be starting a second phase of research and development for new musical **The Edge Of Me** later this year. **Meghan Doyle & Stan Hodgson** successfully completed the first phase of research and development for a new gig-theatre adaptation of **Billy Liar**. Meghan and Stan also worked with us to co-curate the **Scratch Night X Musical Theatre** event in October.

THICK & TIGHT



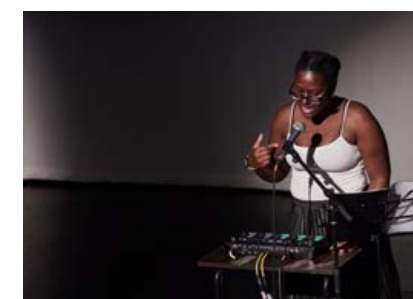
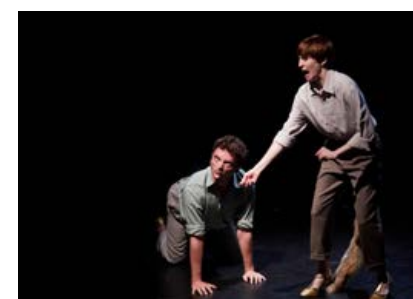
BEST CABARET PERFORMANCE
OFFIES AWARDS 2024

POLICE COPS
★ THE MUSICAL ★

ALL SINGING, ALL DANCING
ALL GUNS BLAZING



BEST NEW MUSICAL
OFFIES AWARDS 2024



ARTIST DEVELOPMENT SHOWCASE 2023

Right: Stan Hodgson
This page: Bobak Champion, Edy Hurst, Alice Christina-Corrigan, Nikta Mohammadi, Thick & Tight, Tania Camara, Lauren Yvonne Townsend. Photos by Shawn Stephen.

We delivered a very successful showcase event on Wednesday 28 June in our Aldridge Studio, showcasing work in development from our Developed With and Associate Artists. We welcomed 70 industry colleagues from across the UK including colleagues from Edinburgh Fringe Festival, National Theatre, Leeds Playhouse, Storyhouse Chester and Arts Council England Relationship Managers.

All of our supported artists are now benefiting from conversations with those that attended including developing future touring and co-commissioning partnerships.



SCRATCH NIGHTS

Over the past year we have delivered three fantastic Scratch Nights, offering a platform for local, regional and national artists to test brand new ideas and receive feedback from audiences in our Aldridge Studio.

Scratch Nights X Circus (April 2023) presented new work from five circus artists based across England and Scotland. Through juggling, acrobatics, parkour, contemporary dance, hoop work and burlesque, the evening explored themes of migration, identity, sexuality, surrealism and the female body. **Scratch Nights X Musical Theatre (November 2023)** showcased four new musicals in development from artists based in Greater Manchester and the Northwest. This included *The Popstar* by Ella Langley & Stephen Hyde, *Eric the Musical* by Ste Reid and *Paperwork Theatre*, *Terminal Sound* by

Jack D'Arcy and *Tit Swingers* by Abey Bradbury and Sam Kearney-Edwardes. **Scratch Nights X New Earth Academy+ (February 2024)** presented new work from five British East and South East Asian artists based in Greater Manchester and the Northwest who had recently taken part in our New Earth Academy+ programme. Working across gig theatre, contemporary theatre/performance, circus, physical theatre, visual theatre / projection and puppetry, the programme included *Scatterbrain* by Matthew Bevan, *You're on Mute* by Louiseanne Wong, *Home to Home* by Isabella So, *Nail Diva* by Sarah Murray and *Drift* by Pui-Ka Cheng.

ARTIST NETWORK

A free, open access creative and professional development programme for artists at all stages of their career. The programme offers a range of events, workshops and opportunities for artist to develop their practice, explore new ideas and build networks. We have now reached over 800 subscribers to our Artist Network newsletter. Programme highlights over the past year include; Devising skills workshop with Complicité, Verbatim Theatre workshop with LUNG, Podcasting for Artists: Beginners Workshop with Edy Hurst; Finding Your Creative Access Footprint workshop with Alice Christina-Corrigan, A rigging workshop for female and non-binary creatives working in technical theatre with Ockham's Razor, Artist 1:1 sessions with visual artist Jo Lathwood and seven Artist Network Socials.



OTHER PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS



We also support a wide range of other artists and work through standalone commissions, events and development opportunities. We co-commissioned two shows from local artists which opened in the Aldridge Studio in September and October, **The Cost of Everything** by **Hidden Track** and **Mushroom Language: A Fungal Gothic** by **Ali Matthews and company**. CTRL (Creative Technology Research Labs) ran from January to July 2023 as a development programme for artists in Greater Manchester, focusing on creative technology performance, immersive experience making, and digital tools.

In May we launched our new **New Earth Academy+** programme, supporting 15 British East and South East Asian artists who are interested in taking the next steps in their work and developing an idea into a performance. In September we selected early career artists for two Fellowship opportunities as part of the **Venice Biennale 2024**, supported by the British Council. **Isabella So and Amy Townsend-Lowcock** will both spend a month in Venice in July and September 2024 as part of the British Council Pavilion team and take on the role of exhibition ambassador for John Akomfrah's forthcoming exhibition.



L&E YOUTH TALENT

**ANNUAL REVIEW
2023/24**

The Lowry is passionate about improving access to cultural engagement for early years, children, young people, families, underserved communities and schools. We have a long history of using the arts as a powerful tool for improving wellbeing and developing skills, and our national profile and reputation enables us to work strategically with partners to act as a platform for young voices and to advocate for real change. This work continues to be increasingly important;

the rise in mental health needs of children, young people and adults means there is now a greater need than ever for wellbeing interventions in schools and communities. Educational attainment and attendance is slipping for primary and secondary school children in Salford and nationally; much of which is attributed to the effects of the pandemic. Numbers of young people becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) are increasing and long-term NEET levels are rising.

Many of our communities continue to be impacted by the Cost of Living crisis and child poverty is a growing concern. We are so fortunate to be in a position to contribute to the local and national agendas which seek to tackle these issues through a wide range of initiatives, whilst also being able to nurture young talent and strengthen the future of the creative industries.



Over the last 12 months, we opened **three free, open-access youth theatre hubs** in Salford; two in Walkden and one at The Lowry. Welcoming over **50 young people** who live or study in Salford aged 8-18, **weekly sessions** increase creative habits and performing skills by working with arts professionals. As part of these sessions, we are also training the next generation of creative facilitators, employing **three trainees** to skill up as practitioners through placements with our young people.

In August 2023, we welcomed returning and new young people to University of Salford to create a new performance within five days with **82 young people** taking part in drama activity and technical theatre training. Their final show drew an audience of **150 family members and supporters**. From the cohort, **37 young people** used their participation in the project to **achieve an Arts Award**.

Through our **creative careers work** Stage Directions has worked with **over 700 young people**. In November 2023, we launched a new **creative careers website** offering young people the chance to practice job interviews for roles across arts and media, working with **TripleDot Makers, BBC, UTC @ Media City & Oakwood Academy and many more**. The website received over **4,000 visits** in its first three months alone. The team continue to deliver briefings to education professionals and workshops for students as part of the wraparound offer, introducing students and teachers to the resource.



NATIONAL THEATRE SPEAK UP

National Theatre Speak Up is a three-year funded partnership project with The National Theatre, working with 15 targeted schools in Salford, Wigan and Rochdale. In this second year we have delivered over **520 weekly sessions** in various art forms to co-create work, enabling over **1,400 unique participants** to develop confidence, connectivity and make change. We hosted 10 sharing events that were designed and led by young people, including a whole school Pride and Diversity Day with over **390 attendees**.

We have an emphasis on upskilling local freelancers, working with **42 artists** across the year and providing our 11 Speak Up Reps with access to 24 hours of training and CPD. The project has also provided **917 free theatre tickets** for schools, including free return transport to The Lowry. Our 11 Speak Up Reps with access to 24 hours of training and CPD. The project has also provided **917 free theatre tickets** for schools, including free return transport to The Lowry.

SPEAK UP

*Left, bottom: Photo by Lizzie Henshaw.
Above: Photo by Tom Doona.*

NT CONNECTIONS FESTIVAL AND THE LOWRY YOUNG COMPANY



We were thrilled to once again be invited to be a Partner Theatre for the 2023 for the National Theatre's annual, nationwide youth theatre festival. We welcomed **10 companies** to the festival which took place at The Lowry from Friday 28 to Sunday 30 April. Over the course of the weekend, every group took part in a workshop with a professional actor, and spent two hours with our technical team preparing for their performances. Each day culminated with a performance in either the Studio or Quays Theatre with over **350 audience members**, made up of family and friends.



Top: Poster artwork for The Lowry Young Company's performance as part of the NT Connections festival.
Bottom and opposite: The Lowry Young Company's performance of Back In The Day. Photos by Lizzie Henshaw.



CENTRE FOR ADVANCED TRAINING IN DANCE (CAT)

The Lowry CAT Programme supports **70 talented young dancers** to access world-class dance training, aiming to progress onto full-time training and careers in dance, developing confident technical dancers with strong artistic voices who make informed decisions about their future career. In 2023 we engaged freelance artists in delivering **2,871 hours** of core curriculum and additional enrichment activity and invited in a range of diverse visiting artists including **Payal Ramchandani, Ailey 2, Special K, Northern School of Contemporary Dance's Cultural Dance Forms, Bobak Champion, Ballet Black, Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, Company Carpi, Night People, Ugly Bucket, Aakash Odedra** and explored styles such as South Asian classical dance, popping, Iranian dance & Afro fusion in addition to our core contemporary and ballet offer.



OUTREACH AND U.DANCE

We delivered **247 outreach and recruitment sessions**, engaging **2,182 young people** across the North West region. We aim to widen awareness and access to all young people, particularly those who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to access dance training, though DfE's Means Tested grant funding. Target areas included Priority Investment Areas of Salford, Oldham and Blackpool, developing our reach within rural areas such as Cumbria, and areas of multiple deprivation. Notably, in Blackpool our partnership with **The Royal Ballet Primary Steps** has encouraged young people from areas of socio-economic deprivation to develop the confidence, skills and motivation to travel out of the area for further training.

This bridges the provision for dancers graduating from Royal Ballet School into the CAT, whilst contributing to developing local infrastructure for this

Priority Interest Area. Over the year, freelance artists delivered **469.50 hours** of activity across all outreach activity including our regional youth dance festival **U.Dance NW**, hosted and delivered by the dance team.

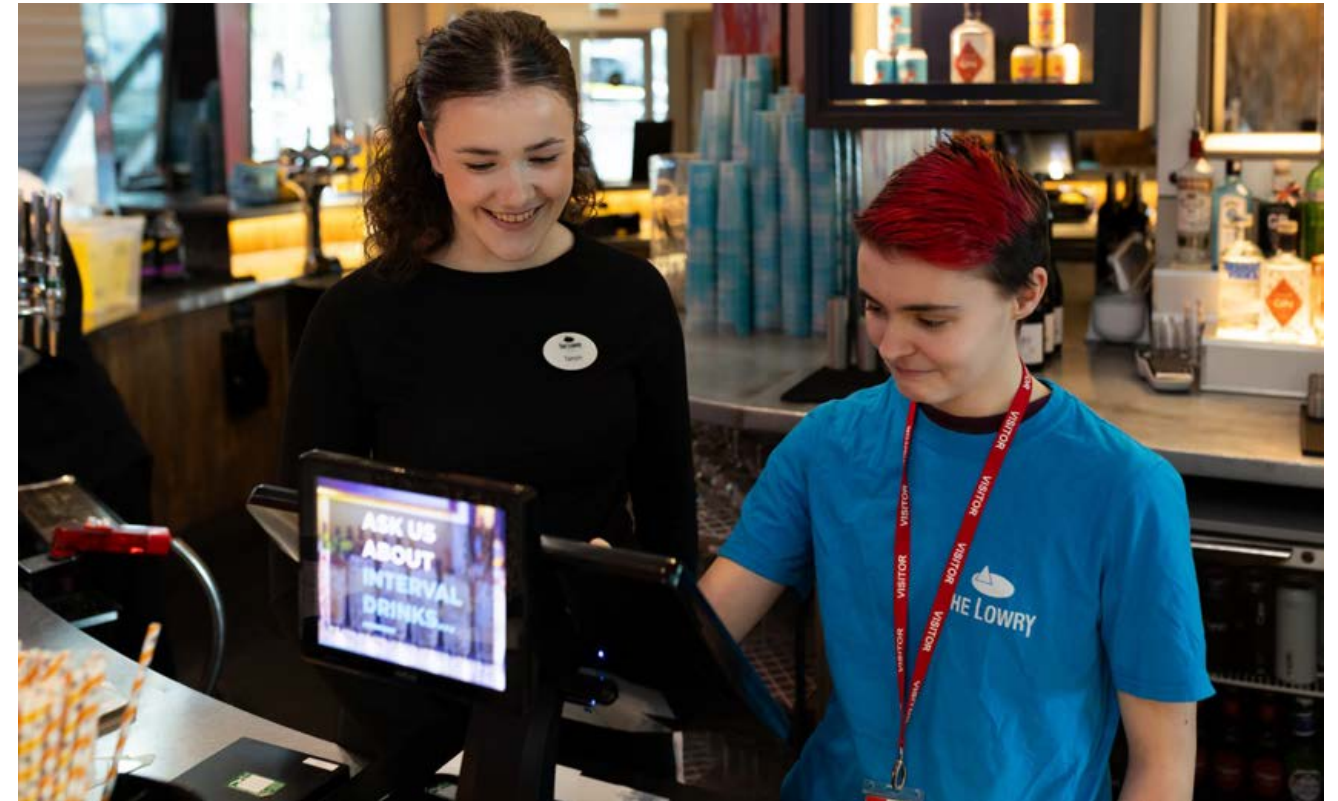


AFSC L&E & YES



YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY & SKILLS (YES)

The Lowry's Youth Employability & Skills Programme works with young people, aged 13-25 in Salford, who are not in education, employment or training, offering a wide variety of opportunities ranging from short-term creative projects to longer term work-based placements.



During 2023-24 we worked with 140 individuals on the YES Programme, 30 of whom undertook placements and received one-to-one pastoral support. We delivered 290 sessions across the year that included building tours, off-site workshops, visual art masterclasses, mock interviews, catering challenges, drama workshops, paid internships and long-term work placements.

YES HUB

This year we began YES Hub, a weekly group for NEET 18-25 year olds in Salford, to engage them in creative activity, share employability opportunities and keep young people connected to their peers and professionals. This responds to a growing need in Salford for more, and better opportunities, for young adults 18+. Some of the young adults who attend YES Hub have been involved with The Lowry over the past couple of years and are making the transition into adulthood, trying to find their place in the world.

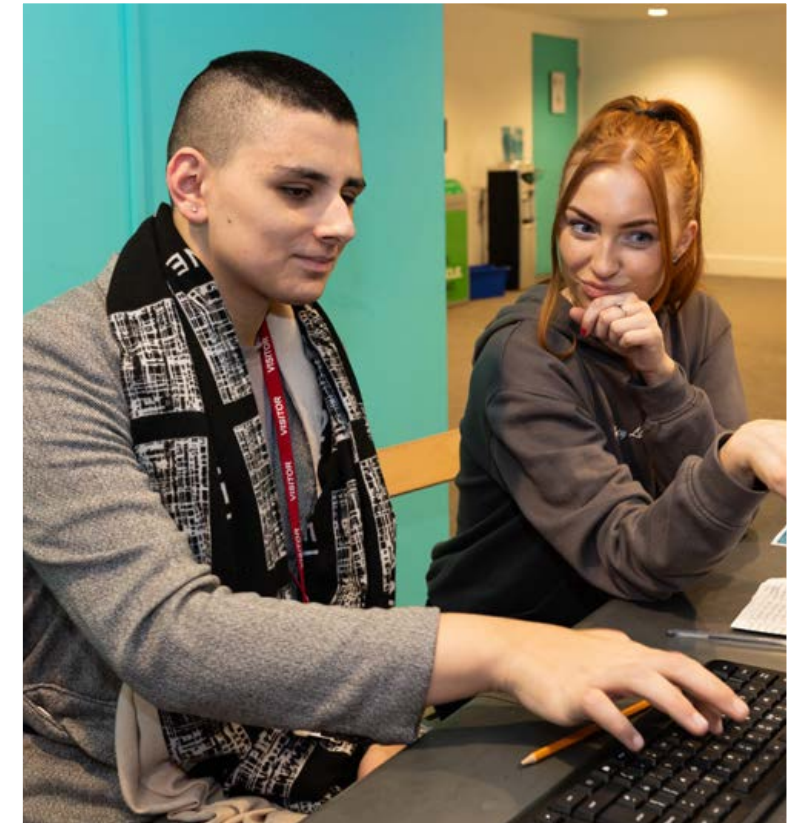
YES DRAMA

YES Drama is our group for young people, 16-25, with learning disabilities.

This past year they have worked with artists Joe England and Amy Hailwood. Now the group is well established, we are challenging the young people to think of themselves as a young company and work with experiences and professional theatre makers. Alongside new challenges for the participants, we have also supported a Transforming Leadership placement for a young person with learning disabilities to work alongside a professional director and develop their skills and practice as a theatre director. Charlotte Little has been working with YES Drama since October, receiving regular mentoring sessions and developing her skills as a professional director.

We always take each young person's personal development individually, identifying ways in which we can help them grow...

One such opportunity this year was a paid internship for a young person who had taken part in the YES Programme. This young person is a developing artist; she was paid to come and work alongside Lowry Young Artists to help them collate and pull together their artwork. She offered practical advice, demonstrated different artistic techniques and encouraged the group. It was a real step up in terms of responsibility and commitment, and she responded fantastically to the challenge. We will continue to support the young person on the next step of her journey.



Left: Young people involved in the YES programme are shown how to do various jobs around The Lowry

ARTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Throughout 2023/2024 our Arts for Social Change Programme continued to deliver long term, in-depth creative engagement with young people in Salford who are facing the biggest barriers and living in some of the most complex circumstances. Including care experienced young people, young carers and youth at risk of homelessness, using the arts as a tool for personal development, building skills, improving health and well-being and increasing life chances.



LOWRY YOUNG ARTISTS

Adopting an arts for wellbeing approach Lowry Young Artists explores visual arts and provides a safe space for young people aged 11 to 17 to calm their minds and grow in confidence. We have engaged 42 young people over the year who have created art and performance work as part of the Arts for Social Change Annual Showcase. The group have also visited a number of exhibitions and galleries including the Manchester Open Exhibition and The Tell-Tale Rooms at HOME Manchester.

GET INVOLVED

Our inclusive drama and theatre group for young people aged 11 to 17 engaged 57 Salford young people and explored various theatre techniques whilst building positive friendships and increasing confidence. Through a fusion of storytelling, physical theatre, movement and multimedia art forms, the young people ignited conversations, challenged perspectives, and inspired action. They performed their work at the Arts for Social Change showcase in July and have enjoyed cultural trips, watching large scale productions including Life of Pi, as well as productions at Factory International and HOME.

YOUNG PARENTS AND FAMILY OUTREACH

We delivered the 'Wishing Tree Seeds of Change Project' in partnership Salford CVS and Salford Family Hubs. The project gathered 424 wishes from families across Salford that have now informed decisions relating to family services and family activities within Salford. In November we hosted a celebration of the 'Wishing Tree Project' and shared the communities' wishes with professionals and decision makers in Salford. The Wishing Tree can now be seen in our family space The Lookout. We supported 26 Young Parents and children to attend **We're Going on a Bear Hunt** as well as a babes in arms performance of **Good Enough Mums Club** and inviting them to explore the Julia and Axel exhibition and activities that took over the Lowry during the summer.

BIG LIGHT PROJECT

Engaging 37 young people living in temporary accommodation provisions in Salford the 'Big Light Project' uses music and other creative forms to explore the young people's experiences and advocate for change. Over the last year the young people have produced their own music and a music video, platforming their work at a showcase at The Lowry and an open mic night at Salford Foyer. Young people engaged with the project at Liberty House have been working with a visual artist to make their own home décor such as screen-printed cushions and clay ornaments, using their creativity to personalise and improve their spaces.

The young people also participated in the Youth Homelessness Protocol Project, working with a digital artist to design an accessible flyer that gives young people the understanding of what support is available when someone becomes homeless under the age of 18. The digital resource is now used by various services and the local authority.



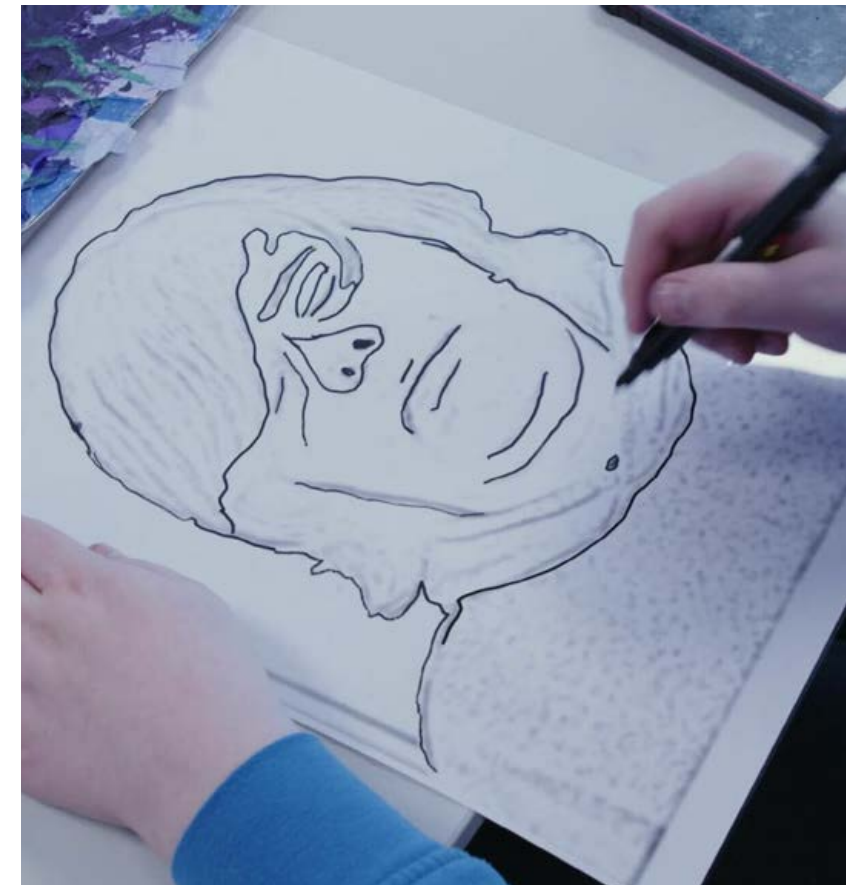


AFSC SHOWCASE 2024

In July, The 2023 Arts for Social Change showcase was a joyous sharing of authentically youth led, co-created work.

41 young people performed in the showcase, having their voices heard through a series of films, music, short pieces of theatre and artwork. YES Drama, Get Involved and Young Leaders collectively explored what issues matter to them; their pieces explored themes such as the power of protest and mental health. The Big Light Project performed an original song and shared a music video, and Lowry Young Artists developed a performance art piece, themed around the detrimental effects of social media, performing a spoken word piece alongside their artwork on stage.

Throughout June and July 2023, we worked closely with local authority partners including Childrens Services and the Virtual School to deliver a creative project with Cared for Children in Salford, culminating in a **Cared For Children's event**. Collaborating with the Fight for Change Council, Walkden Coop Academy and Newcroft Residential Home, the young people created a film which was shared at the event at The Lowry in July. The event celebrated the young people's resilience, determination and strength, whilst giving young people the opportunity to take part in activities and see performances by Global Grooves and Move Manchester alongside speeches by the Director of Children's Services, Local Councillors and The Virtual School Head. This was the first Cared for Childrens Celebration event to be held at The Lowry and we are delighted to be working with local authority partners again to host another event in July 2024.



YOUNG CARERS

The Lowry has worked with Young Carers since 2011 and we continue to creatively raise awareness of the challenges faced by Young Carers. Over the last year we have delivered creative workshops and hosted theatre trips for 38 Young Carers across Salford and Greater Manchester, including a visit to The Lowry to see **The Ocean at the End of the Lane** and the **Jo Lathwood: Making Up** exhibition. We delivered a project in partnership with Trafford Young Carers and Manchester Young Carers in the run up to 'Young Carers Action Day 2024' engaging 28 young people, using visual arts and creating self-portraits to express who they are.

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Good Enough Mums Club and inviting them to explore the Julia and Axel exhibition and activities that took over The Lowry during the summer.





L&E LEARNING & PARTICIPATION





CREATIVE WRITING CHALLENGE

Now in its second year, The Lowry Creative Writing Challenge is a competition for children across Greater Manchester age 7-11yrs, designed to encourage children to be creative, imaginative and confident through their writing. The inaugural challenge culminated on 18 May 2023, with a wonderful celebration evening, where 16 shortlisted entries were performed live on The Lowry's Quays Theatre stage, chosen by a panel of high-profile judges. This spectacular event included poetry readings, drama and film, bringing each piece to life; hosted by Manchester-based actor, writer and director Carla Henry, with performances from poet Tony Walsh.

All those shortlisted received a certificate and book token, with the winners also receiving an original illustration created by artist and illustrator Catherine Booth.

The competition is underpinned by a programme of outreach across 24 schools in Greater Manchester through a combination of one day 'inspiration' workshops and longer-term engagement working with some of the finest creative writing facilitators across the North West. The programme supports teachers to explore creative writing in a new and innovative way to foster a passion for literacy and oracy amongst children.

The Creative Writing Challenge is kindly supported by Beryl and Trevor Jones

SCHOOLS

Alongside supporting schools with trips to the theatre and galleries, we offer a diverse and inclusive creating learning offer with a variety of workshops linked to the curriculum, mental health and wellbeing and project work. This year we have delivered **434 workshops** to **10,684 pupils** exploring topics such as LS Lowry, The Great Fire of London, Basics of Drawing and Painting, The Environment, Local History, Julia & Axel and many more.



FAMILIES

We love to welcome families to The Lowry and offer a weekly programme of creative activities for babies, under 5's and under 11's as well as a range of performances and exhibitions for young audiences.

This year we reached **1,119 children** and **648 families**, through delivery of **135 sessions** for children under 5 and their families, designed to support those formative years of development and nurture a support network for parents. We have engaged over **19,000 under 11's** and their families in a programme of **3,000 interactive workshops** connected to exhibitions, performances and festivals. A real highlight for us was our free participation offer for families, designed alongside the hugely successful **Julia & Axel** exhibition engaging families in a rich programme of lively storytelling, crafty activities and our very own Zog Academy, as well as The Gruffalo's kitchen set up to feed little imaginations in our Pier Eight lounge.



THE BOOTH CHARITIES FAMILY SCHEME

Our long-running Booth Charities Family Scheme offers families of children with a disability in Salford the opportunity to see three relaxed live theatre performances at The Lowry for free and take part in creative activities together. Over 40 families registered to take part in the scheme this year, and we were delighted to welcome them to performances of **Fantastically Great Women that changed the World, We're Going on a Bear Hunt** and **Zog**.





THE COPLEY PRIZE

"I chose this piece especially because I loved the stark contrast between the shadows and the highlights on his face. I didn't think much of it at first. But when my Dad first saw the artwork a few months back he was very impressed. I never imagined having my work in an art gallery like The Lowry and, honestly it has been an amazing experience so far."

Sophia, age 11

Our annual LS Lowry art challenge...

This year's winner of our annual Copley Prize was 10 year old Sophia Kidane from Sale. Sophia created her own LS Lowry inspired masterpiece which is currently on display in the Galleries. Sophia and her family were welcomed to The Lowry on Wednesday 20 September with her very proud family and Art Teacher, who attended a public award ceremony to celebrate Sophia's artwork, and enjoyed their own tour of the LS Lowry collection.

Alongside the prize, the **Copley Children's Creative Arts Programme** is a series of outreach work taking place in 10 schools across Salford, aiming to inspire and ignite a passion for the arts amongst their pupils. Children engage in visual arts, drama, mindfulness and watch a live performance at The Lowry all alongside achieving an Arts Award. The Copley Prize and Copley Children's Creative Arts Programme were founded and are kindly supported by Alison and Noel Copley, along with supporters of The Lowry Schools Appeal.



LIVESTREAMS

In December 2023, The Lowry delivered a live broadcast of **We're Going on a Bear Hunt** from The Quays Theatre to children's hospitals and hospices across the North West. Two performance showings were offered to each setting over a day, alongside a selection of supporting activities and interactive elements. Staff and artists from The Lowry went along to each location, and worked alongside the hospitals and hospices' own play teams to bring the experience to life with props, costumes and activities to make the viewing and even more magical and memorable experience, for poorly children and their families going through a very difficult time together, and who weren't able to be at home during the festive season.



L&E COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We know that culture and the experiences it offers can have a profound and lasting effect on places and the people who live in them. We work collaboratively with communities through a variety of initiatives to better understand and respond to their needs and interests, shaping cultural activities together to increase engagement and improve health and wellbeing.





COMMUNITY CHORUS PROJECT

Throughout April and May we worked closely with the RSC to recruit, engage and support six local community champions to form a Community Chorus. The group attended weekly rehearsals, received training from the RSC's production team and performed on the Lyric stage as part of the cast of **Julius Caesar** in June 23.

"I have found this a wonderful experience, the chance to be creative and playful with the most encouraging and lovely bunch of people and truly a privilege and a pleasure to be involved with."



COMMUNITY CONNECTORS

In October, we worked closely with our Community Connectors to ensure free tickets (funded by the National Theatre) enabled us support 300 underserved communities and young people to visit The Lowry to see **The Ocean at The End of The Lane**. The feedback was great to receive:

"It was a fantastic show. Thank you so much. It was a fantastic opportunity for the men to get out. A couple of them had never been to a show at The Lowry, now they can't wait to go again!"

(Group Leader – Talk About It Mate – Men's Mental Health Group)

OPEN DAY 2024

Sunday 6 August was one of the highlights of The Lowry's calendar, the annual Open Day, featuring a wide range of fun and interactive activities for visitors of all ages. Over 5,000 visitors from across Salford and Greater Manchester joined us to make this one of our biggest and busiest Open Days yet. The day included sneak-peak backstage tours, life-drawing, family-friendly gallery tours, to LS Lowry Gin Cocktail making, and music & dancing on the Plaza. We were supported by an array of fantastic artists and companies, including National Theatre, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Developed With artists Bobak Champion and Edy Hurst, Graffiti Artist Samina 'Sleek' Hussain', and Global Grooves, Community Dootsi and Masresha Wondmu celebrating an array of dance and movement styles from around the world.



INCREASING ACCESS TO THE ARTS

We received funding from the government's Holiday Activity and Food Fund to host two events for young people aged 8-16 who are eligible for free school meals, supporting families who may be facing food insecurity during the holiday period. The offer was also accessible for young people who have an EHC plan, SEND young people, young carers or cared for young people. We engaged 106 young people in creative activities; providing a hot meal and a theatre trip.

"L had such an amazing day at The Lowry, he loved every minute and he felt safe throughout. I was very nervous leaving him as he doesn't cope well in crowds but your team supported L throughout. He loves theatre but hadn't seen anything as big as the show he watched and he thought it was brilliant and spoke about it all the way home."



GALLERIES STEERING GROUP

Our **Galleries Steering Group** offers members of the Salford community the opportunity to learn about gallery curation and interpretation, and planning exhibitions, and to inform ways in which we can remove barriers to accessing visual art. The group, with support from the Lowry Galleries team, have enjoyed visits to several galleries and exhibitions across Salford and Greater Manchester, expanding their understanding of art and the ways in which venues make art accessible to the public, including exhibitions at FACT 51 and The Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, to see the different ways that art can be displayed and experienced. They meet fortnightly to discuss their experiences and to take part in creative workshops with local artists, and the group are working together to curate an exhibition of community art which they have named **Mixing Colours** to be launched in April 2024.

In January the group had a session with the Lowry Gallery team, making frames for their own art works in the gallery workshop. This encouraged the group think about how they would like their exhibition to be framed and consider the work that goes into the framing process. In February they visited a local community art exhibition at **Langworthy Cornerstone** to see how other community artists are exhibiting work in public spaces. They also took part in a tour of the **Jo Lathwood exhibition** in The Lowry Gallery, meeting the artist and sharing a discussion about her own processes. The group are currently working on their promotional materials for their exhibition and are working on the labels that will be used to describe their work.



SHOW SELECTORS

Show Selectors is our community programming panel, made up of Salford residents experiencing barriers to cultural engagement. They are equipped with industry knowledge and expertise along with a programming budget, and supported to plan and programme events with the aim of ensuring that people who don't usually access The Lowry have the opportunity to experience high quality shows, delivered in relevant and accessible community spaces.

Over 140 people attended the Show Selectors Sunday Showcase community event in October at Walkden Shopping Centre. The showcase included a piece of children's theatre by Handmade Theatre, entertainment from Nana Funk and a range of creative activities coordinated by group members. In December, the group hosted their second community event targeted towards young adults and adults at Patricroft Conservative Club in Eccles.

Whilst unfortunately the original planned performances of *Santa Must Die!* couldn't go ahead due to cast illness, around 100 people joined us for an alternative event, providing mince pies, coffee, Christmas crackers, a Q&A with the company producer and hearing live folk music from a local musician, before watching a screening of the show on a projector. Every one thoroughly enjoyed themselves and were glad of the opportunity to come together and share some festive community fun.

In January 20 people from our Galleries Steering Group and Show Selectors group participated in a new show called **A Citizens Assembly** a performance which positioned the audience as players in a show that creates a safe space for thinking and debate around the issue of climate change. This was an inclusive performance that took into consideration people's additional needs. The groups really enjoyed this

performance and the Show Selectors group are now considering programming it in community settings.

The Show Selectors are currently working with the **Quays Culture** team to inform programming of community performances for the **We Invented The Weekend** event being hosted across Media City in June.



SALFORD CULTURE AND PLACE PARTNERSHIP

The Salford Culture and Place Partnership (SCPP) is a cross-city leadership collective leading Salford's strategy for culture, creativity and place. It is led by Arts Council England, Salford City Council, The Lowry and the University of Salford.

WE INVENTED THE WEEKEND

As a key part of the SCPP's delivery plan, we were delighted that Quays Culture were successful in a bid to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Culture & Social Impact Fund, for £570,000 to support 'Quays Festivals' over three years to deliver five free large-scale arts festivals underpinned by year-round engagement programmes across Greater Manchester in the development of artwork, performance, commissions, broadcasts, and digital experiences. The first of these, We Invented The Weekend, a huge, new free festival took place at Salford Quays on the 3 and 4 of June and was an enormous success, attracting 60,000 visitors who enjoyed a programme of over 200 performances and activities.

"I've never seen the site so alive and vibrant in all my time at MediaCityUK"

"There is nothing else like this that is free for families. It was an amazing event for us that we all enjoyed... everyone had a good time without the pressure of what we could afford"

The total economic impact of the event was £3.2million contributing £990,000 contribution to the economy.



LIGHTWAVES 2023

Lightwaves Salford also took place from Thursday 7 - Sunday 10 December 2023 and 169,665 visitors of all ages enjoyed illuminated works from established as well as emerging artists, local and national, bringing a variety of different pieces; thought-provoking, surprising playful and all free of charge.



Four brand new commissions and four co-commissions were presented including six world premieres. One of the programme highlights was a performance by 21 of The Lowry's own young CAT dancers from across Greater Manchester interacting with the piece GLOW by Australian artist collective Amigo & Amigo.



OUR PRINCIPLES IN ACTION



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Lowry continues its commitment to environmental sustainability, with the ambition of becoming a net zero carbon organisation by 2038, in line with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority target. We are also progressing towards our goal of becoming a Carbon Literate organisation; over 60% of staff have now undertaken Carbon Literacy training.

We use the Theatre Green Book (TGB) as our framework, and our Commercial Director sits on the steering committee for the *Buildings* volume. The Lowry is also participating in testing the second version of the TGB, designed to be a more efficient and easier process for other venues to follow.

Our DEC (energy performance) rating for 2023 was a score of 81D, an improvement from 94D in 2022. Aside from the two years of limited hours during the pandemic, this is the lowest rating we have ever achieved. When the DEC scheme was launched in 2010 our rating was 126F, evidencing that the efforts made and improvements implemented have delivered tangible results.

In 2023 we implemented the following environmental initiatives and improvements:

- Upgrade of two lifts to modern energy efficient type
- Reprogramming theatre house lights to allow for 'cleaning mode' which ensures lights are not left on for long periods of time when not required
- Installation of local timers to catering equipment to switch off out of hours
- Continuation of LED lighting upgrade with high level LED strip lighting installed in the foyer Installation of two variable speed drives to large motors on condensate water pumps
- Introduction of good practice guide (a 'green rider') for visiting companies
- Switched ice cream supplier to Jude's, a B Corp carbon negative organisation

- Completed 100% removal of single use plastic cups, replacing with reuseable poly-carb cups
- No Christmas crackers used over the festive period
- Installed a 'quality dispense system' on our beer keg lines, reducing the cleaning chemicals used

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Our work in the field of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) goes from strength to strength through a number of initiatives delivered over the last twelve months, demonstrating our commitment to ensuring that The Lowry is a safe, inclusive and representative space.

- Unconscious Bias training rolled out and delivered to the entirety of our staff and volunteer base, met with an excellent satisfaction from participants. Designed and delivered in house, it serves as a foundation for more advanced EDI related training that will be delivered in subsequent years.
- Successfully resubmitting our Bronze and Silver Attitude is Everything (AIE) Action Plan, in line with our commitment to revisit the plan for the first time since its initial submission in 2016. This will ensure we are ready to submit our Gold Action Plan, following the launch of AIE's new charter, released later this year.
- Commissioning a full review of our entire suite of policies, to examine whether they met our standards from an EDI perspective. Results are positive, with some necessary changes implemented to ensure best practice and legal compliance.
- A new content warnings system has been developed, following our adaptation of Nottingham University's NEON typology, which will provide comprehensive coverage for any individual who may need content warnings to safely access theatre.
- We would like to thank all our visitors, audiences, artists and companies for their support of our initiatives and projects to help us achieve these important aims, and to uphold our valuable principles.

THANK YOU

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Denise and Steve Parker
Sandy Lindsay MBE

We would like to thank all those who have pledged a legacy gift to The Lowry and to remember those whose gifts we have received this year, with thanks to their loved ones.

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