

FESTIVAL FUTURES

Mikey Martins, Sam Hunt and Neil Butler unpack our Festival Futures at a panel discussion.

Symposium
Port Eliot Festival
Round Room Main House
11.00am – 2.30pm
Saturday 28th July 2018



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CONTEXT

Welcome to the first 'Festival Futures' Symposium hosted by LRS Arts and delivered in partnership with Port Eliot Festival, UZ Arts and In Situ.

Rationale

The Festival Industry understands that it offers the gateway to an increasingly large and diverse audience. The Festival season in the UK alone, programmes and commissions thousands of performers: actors, comedians, musicians, acrobats and cultural activists each year. Add to that the incredible feat, of creating sophisticated infrastructure starting from what is effectively a greenfield site and it's clear this is a sector that is employing a significant number of the creative industries' finest minds.

The life-blood and the distinctive character of these Festivals (over and above the headliners) are the additional creative programme across all genres. Within this creative programme a good proportion of festivals actively support emerging talent. They also develop the talent pool by drawing experienced professionals from traditional venues, with individual area producers offering stage time to lesser known acts, set designers, lighting and sound specialists, artist liaison, production and construction crew as a matter of course. However, this is often unstructured, lacks critical review, can create stagnation and has a tendency to lean toward nepotism.

The lack of structured support for emerging talent, with its minimal amount of investment, lacks the critical feedback and mentoring that fosters confidence, encourages experimentation and creative development. This is counterproductive, as the overall reputation of any given Festival is dependent on their ability to identify, support and present the innovators and talent that will inevitably shape our 'Festival Future'.

Why these partners?

LRS Arts who have been piloting new ways of commissioning work for the last five years, appreciate that there is much work to be done

LRS Arts is an artist development and a live performance programme that identifies, supports and then actively promotes talented performers, content creators and festival professionals at the early, to mid-career stage in Devon and Cornwall lrsarts.org

LRS Arts has sought partners, who have proven the ground as commissioners and supporters of emerging talent such as:

UZ Arts is a Scottish based international arts charity that develops, commissions, produces and distributes the work of artists in all art forms. UZ Arts seek to explore new economies and create platforms that make innovative art accessible to the widest audiences uzarts.com

IN SITU is the European platform for artistic creation in public space. Since 2003, it has supported more than 200 artists working outside conventional venues and contributing to the transformation of our territories in-situ.info/en

By working with these respected organisations there is potential to establish a benchmark for quality and outline a best practice approach to signposting and commissioning.

The curatorial and commissioning practice of Port Eliot Festival, makes it unique and underpins its growing popularity. This is expressed through a rich mixture of visual art, spoken word, live music performance, literary offerings and workshops that give it a unique Culture. This Culture permeates through the very fabric of the festival and can be distilled into what makes a festival work, whilst pushing contemporary practice and current critical boundaries. All of this happens, nestled in the most sophisticated of English landscapes and with an audience of six thousand people.

Festival Futures proposes that this is achieved through innovation in event production and challenging and exceeding audience expectation through contemporary artistic curatorial and programming approaches. It is therefore particularly appropriate that Port Eliot hosts 'Festival Futures' as this has been the essence of its offering, since its inception in 2003 and also the home festival of the LRS Arts Artist Development and a Live Performance Programme.

Legacy

Nothing can stand still. The future commissioning practices of these idiosyncratic and inimitable events can be improved to ensure the Festival Futures landscape is both viable for business and exciting for artists and audiences.

Festival Futures proposes that commissioning can take a longer-term approach that requires investment and by opening this dialogue and publishing the findings in the form of a manifesto. If this is proven to be a shared belief, it will ask festival producers to pledge to incorporate the manifesto into their approach to commissioning and bring inclusivity and participatory arts practice to the fore.

Proving the Case

The Symposium will close with a performance of extraordinary Cornish artists who are the exemplar of excellence in their field. With a performance featuring Mary Woodvine with a short-handed rendition of the recently successful "Booby's Bay," a passionate attack on unoccupied second homes in Cornwall.

In addition, the Project is supporting the presence of Above and Beyond at Port Eliot Festival, one of the UK's most experienced and longest established aerial performance company. They will be bringing a team of dedicated artists to enthral the Port Eliot crowds with a hair-raising midnight show and holding daily workshops to introduce you to trapeze, rope, aerial hoop and tightrope walking. Fri - Sat Midnight, Sun 10:30pm Outside Stage.

This project is funded by Arts Council, National Lottery Project Grants.

SCHEDULE

Location: Round Room at Port Eliot House
from 10.30 to 2.45 on
Sat.28th July 2018

- 10.30 Welcome, Refreshments
- 11.00 Chair
Neil Butler

Speakers
Mikey Martins
Sam Hunt
Rick Worthy
- 11.45 Open Discussion Q&A
- 12.15 Focus Group Breakout
- 1.00 Lunch
- 1.45 Regroup Focus & Feedback
- 2.15 Panel Discussion & Findings
- 2.45 Close

WELCOME MESSAGE

Festivals continue to be an incredibly important aspect of Culture in the UK. Festivals are a place where innovation and creativity merge into diverse new work both in the art form and its ability to reach new audiences.

The Arts Council is keen to engage in this dialogue and actively explore new ways of commissioning into the future.



Nick Green

Relationship Manager – Combined Arts at Arts Council England

Nick Green is a Relationship Manager for Arts Council England, based in the South West and working nationally to support the development of festivals, outdoor arts, carnivals and circuses. Previously he worked in East London, helping turn Victoria Park into a major festival venue and supporting festivals in Tower Hamlets, and has commissioned, produced or production managed festivals and events from Cornwall to Edinburgh working with a huge variety of artists and art forms.

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CHAIR



Neil Butler

CEO & Artistic Director – UZ Arts

Neil Butler is an artist, producer and cultural strategist. He commissions, produces and distributes the work of innovative artists and performance companies working in all art-forms, often outside conventional venues. He has worked internationally with public and private organisations, cities and governments to create festivals and events. His projects not only develop and showcase creative individuals and organisations, they often through partnerships across sectors, create positive social and economic outcomes. He is interested in developing audiences and supporting a dialogue between artists and the public where on occasion they become co-creators in the work. He has established a series of successful commercial and charitable companies as platforms to realize medium to long term strategic aims. He has worked as a consultant in event and cultural strategy and created workshop programmes to develop artistic projects and support the personal development of artists and producers. As an artist his work is expressed through installation and performance and the creation of large-scale multi art-form events.

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SPEAKERS



Mikey Martins

Festival Director – Freedom Festival

Mikey Martins has worked in the arts festival industry for over 20 years, across Europe, Australia and Canada. He has worked on numerous high-profile national and international cultural events, festival projects and organisations, including Norfolk & Norwich Festival, Sydney Festival, Winchester Hat Fair, Auckland Arts Festival, multiple Edinburgh Festivals, The Out There Festival, and as a creative producer with Theatre Bristol. Mikey is on the steering group for the IN SITU network and on the Board of Surge (formerly Conflux) in Scotland. He is a firm believer in festivals as agents of social change, transforming public spaces and never underestimating the general public's appetite for quality arts experiences. Mikey is originally from St Ives, Cornwall has lived and worked in various places in the UK, Europe and Australia and moved to Hull after taking up his appointment as CEO and Artistic Director of Freedom Festival Arts Trust in 2016.

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Sam Hunt

Creative Director – Mayor of London's First Borough of Culture

Sam is responsible for the Creation and delivery of cultural and artistic programmes and festivals often responding to place. Sam – who led the creative programme for Hull's year as City of Culture in 2017 – will lead on the creative delivery of an ambitious £5million cultural programme for the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's first London Borough of Culture. Specialties: Creative Producer, Artistic Direction, Programming, Project Management, Event Producing, Marketing, PR.

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Rick Worthy

Director & Stage Producer – LRS Arts, Glastonbury T&C and Port Eliot Festival

Rick is one of the founders and a producer of several stages at Port Eliot Festival. Rick is seasoned professional, having been the Director of the Circus Field at Glastonbury Festival for over twelve years. Rick also runs his own, successful events company. Rick is a key partner in LRS Arts, an artist development and a live performance programme that identifies, supports and then actively promotes talented performers, content creators and festival professionals at the early, to mid-career stage in Devon and Cornwall.

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PARTICIPANTS



Gordon Seabright

Chief Executive – Eden Project

Gordon took on leadership of the Eden Project in 2014. His focus is the development and implementation of Eden's strategy, the major themes of which are growth in the business based in Cornwall, diversification to reach new audiences and extend the impact of Eden's community initiatives, the growth of Eden's educational work, an improved digital presence, and making best use of Eden's site and other assets. He is driven by Eden's purpose – ordinary people trying to change the world.

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Lindsey Hall

CEO & Co-Founder – RIO

Lindsey Hall is CEO and co-founder of RIO. Lindsey's track record in the public and private sectors as a social entrepreneur, thinker and leader has seen her set up and develop products and services across the creative, learning and education sectors. From building award-winning programmes in the UK to driving groundbreaking initiatives internationally, Lindsey has the experience and skills at management, board and executive level to steer social business ideas towards success; making money and make a difference at the same time. Lindsey is a NESTA Cultural Leadership fellow, an INSEAD graduate, a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a trustee of Fifteen Cornwall and a board member of RISE.

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Sue Hill

Associate Director – Wildworks

Sue is an Associate Director of WILDWORKS, who was born and educated in Cornwall. She has worked with many companies including Welfare State International, Emergency Exit Arts, Walk the Plank Theatre Ship, and the Royal National Theatre. In 1988 she joined Kneehigh theatre company, serving on their management team from 1994 – 2001 and helping to grow their distinctive style of theatre. From 2000 until 2006 she was Artistic Director for the Eden Project, developing their innovative interpretation strategy, commissioning artists, writers and performers to illuminate Eden's ideas and messages. With her brother Pete Hill she has made many large-scale carnival images and earth sculptures, including the iconic Mudmaid in the Lost Gardens of Heligan.

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Birigitte Aga

Producer – iDAT Interactive

Birigitte Aga [B] is an interdisciplinary designer, artist/maker, technologist, researcher and producer. She creates collaborative and data driven prototypes, sometimes as art works, cultural probes, interventions, or proof of concept and other times just to play. For the last fifteen years she has been part of the i-DAT Research and Design Collective. Her research currently focuses on prototyping intimate data-driven experiences to question the use of predictive algorithms and personal data for human enhancement and commercial gain. Underpinning her work is a belief that one must embrace the opportunities created by digital technologies to be open and collaborative in order to sustainably co-create.

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Nema Hart

Relationship Manager – Creative Media at Arts Council England

In 2003 Nema joined Arts Council England South West ACESW where she held the strategic lead for local government and was responsible for managing £1million partnership projects; she also became the regional lead for international work and developed strong links with Brazil. In 2007 she was invited to do a secondment at ACE's national office in London where she led on the Creative Economy Programme. Nema returned back to the South West region as a Relationship Manager and is now leading on ACESW priorities for Arts Technology and holds the strategic lead for Cornwall and Plymouth.

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Emma Hogg

Executive Director – Wildworks

Emma was born and educated in Cornwall and after nearly 10 years of fleeting moments with WildWorks, joined the team in December 2014. Emma spent 13 years at The Eden Project, where her final role was Eden Live Programme Producer, creating and leading programmes such as A Time of Gifts, Dinosaurs Unleashed, Green Fingers and Halloweden. She also worked on two consecutive co-productions with No Fit State Circus; Labyrinth in 2011 and Bianco in 2012. Emma manages the overall running of WildWorks working closely with Charlie, Producer and the core artistic team. She leads on all aspects of the day to day business and is also the lead on a number of projects.

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Grant Tilbury

A&R – Trident Studios A&R

Grant looks after artists and the A&R side of things at Trackd Music. Trackd is an award winning innovative new mobile app that allows musicians and songwriters to collaborate around the world. To date Trackd have over 120,000 users with big plans for expansion! My background is in artist and tour management. Grant has worked with the teams at Liquid Management who represent Public Service Broadcasting, Animal Noise, Flamingods, Pat Dam Smyth. He is also a partner at 'Listen To This' who represent Our Last Night, Alien Ant Farm and Dan Bettridge playing at this year's Port Eliot Festival. Through his management experience Grant aims to offer artists who come through Trackd a holistic approach to developing their craft and artist businesses.

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Doug Francisco

Director – Invisible Circus. Producer – Boomtown

With his creative roots in music and painting, he found his natural calling in performance shortly after the Invisible Circus was born into the creative explosion of early 90's festival and rave culture. A key figure in the alternative arts scene. Driven by an ethos of creative renewal and dynamic community arts, he went on to secure Bridge House, a large unused site under the iconic Westway flyover which would become the first Artspace Lifespace project. The Circus troupe formed as a mobile unit in 1993 and spent a nomadic decade as street performers across Europe before developing their first stage production "The Renegade Fabulon" in 2002 for the Glastonbury Festival. The infamous late night area Lost Vagueness was the perfect arena for the Invisibles to launch their character and concept driven shows with performances that spanned circus, theatre and the threads of creative subculture.

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Charlie Bunker

Producer – Wildworks

Charlie joined the team in July 2011, having worked at Arts Council England National Office for 4 years. During her time at ACE she worked in Enquiries, Arts Planning and Investment and Arts Strategy – specialising in Learning and Project Management for the majority of her time. Her last position was as Senior Officer for Learning, with responsibility for the re-development of the Artsmark Award and leading nationally on Young People at Risk. Charlie studied Film and Theatre at The University of Reading between 2003–2006 and specialised in Practical Theatre.

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