

# CULTURE & CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY IN LIVERPOOL

ARCC

LIVERPOOL ARTS REGENERATION CONSORTIUM'S  
THRIVE PROGRAMME





Creative Apprentice Paul Dunbar at the Unity Theatre (Terry Mealey)



Tate Liverpool



The RLPO's In Harmony project (Leila Romaya)



Ai Weiwei's inspirational spider installation at Liverpool Biennial (A Database).



A Long Night event at the Bluecoat (Mark McNulty)

Eight of the leading cultural institutions in Liverpool have established a unique collaboration to ensure that cultural organisations play a significant role in the regeneration of the Liverpool City Region, and in establishing Liverpool as a world class creative city.

Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC) includes **the Bluecoat**, **FACT Liverpool Biennial**, **Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse**, **National Museums Liverpool**, **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic**, **Tate Liverpool** and the **Unity Theatre**.

Together with the wide range of smaller cultural organisations and other major venues in Liverpool, we represent a cultural infrastructure that is among the best of any of the major English regional cities.

The eight LARC partners share a fundamental belief in the power of art and culture to change lives far beyond the confines of galleries, museums, theatres and concert halls.

# THE VISION

We aim to harness the power of the arts and culture to inspire, engage and involve the people of the Liverpool City Region, in order to create a confident, prosperous and healthy city that is open to ideas, globally connected and constantly learning.

Maintaining a world class cultural sector is fundamental to this vision and to the ultimate success of Liverpool as a major international city. So too is Liverpool's thriving cultural life, and LARC will work to ensure that this artistic vitality gains the highest possible profile both in the UK and internationally.

## **Cultural Organisations and Civic Leadership**

Cultural organisations play an integral part in the success of communities of all sizes, combining their roles as drivers of leisure and tourism industries, charities, and, above all, as creators of outstanding art and artistic experiences.

Beyond their significant contribution to local economies, cultural organisations have a particular ability to create real social capital, to bring individuals and whole communities together and to inspire civic confidence.

LARC members believe that, as leading cultural organisations, we have a responsibility to engage with these opportunities, and to make our unique and special contribution to the renaissance of Liverpool. We are therefore working to increase the role of the cultural sector in civic leadership through the delivery of a radical and collaborative programme of work, with funding and support from Arts Council England's Thrive programme.

We are using the strength of our collaboration to understand how we can drive efficiencies and add more value to what we each do in helping more people enjoy and participate in the arts.

The following pages demonstrate how we are using the opportunity of the Liverpool Thrive programme to build a leading role for the cultural sector in the city region. We do this by creating innovative programming, by engaging people with great art and culture, by stimulating creativity, by connecting different parts of the city, by empowering local communities, by promoting the image of Liverpool and the region and by creating economic growth.

LARC is a ground-breaking partnership committed to pushing back boundaries, whether it's in the art and culture we present, the way we collaborate or the way in which we enable more people to take part in culture and the arts.

We are exploring how, in the post-recession climate, we can tackle the challenges set by both the economic and the environmental circumstances, and create new efficiencies by joint working within and beyond the cultural sector. We bring together staff from across the LARC organisations, from Chief Executives to Operations Managers, encouraging them to share ideas, and to initiate and manage shared programmes of activity.

## INSPIRING ENTERPRISE AND

# INNOVATION

Amongst our own members, we've identified a host of areas – from human resources to education – where we can collaborate more closely – whether it's by sharing activities, procurement of services or knowledge. We are already finding that this has created new shared initiatives and helped us to deliver better quality services. We've built valuable links with professionals in other sectors such as health, higher education and tourism and have developed opportunities to pool information and provide mutual support for the staff involved.

## FOCUS ON: LONG NIGHTS

Liverpool's Long Nights programme is a low cost but high impact initiative which gives a wider range of people the chance to enjoy the city centre at night in new ways. It is inspired by similar events in the UK and Europe but LARC has managed to deliver similar visitor levels at a lower cost, with over 50 cultural organisations contributing special programming and activities funded by their own resources, supported by a small central team and a group of enthusiastic volunteers.

By working with the police, transport, retail and cultural sectors, the Long Night events aim to create a safer city centre environment and encourage a more diverse night time economy.

The first two Long Night events attracted over 15,000 gallery visits. Almost half those who attended did not usually come into the city centre at night. On the first Long Night, 84% of visitors attended venues that were new to them. Liverpool City Council is now working with LARC to support an increase in the number of Long Night events, linking to national schemes such as Museums at Night and the Association of Town Centre Managers' Light Night scheme.

Working with Liverpool City Council and Open Culture, we've gone a step further with the concept by staging our first Light Night in May 2010. The event attracted 12,700 gallery visits and is destined to become an annual event which other partners will be able to stage in future.

Building on the success of the Long Nights, LARC members have developed a new scheme to commission a series of artist-led interventions to look at new ways of making the city centre more appealing and to bring new people into cultural venues. The scheme will bring planners and artists together in developing better connectivity between different areas of the city and in promoting a safer and healthier city.

Working in four of the most deprived wards in North Liverpool, we are supporting grass roots community groups to develop new skills and valuable expertise in programme development and fundraising.

We are promoting greater involvement of community organisations in cultural activity and connecting them to the major cultural institutions in the city region. We are working closely with neighbourhood management teams and other agencies involved in the area to learn how cultural interventions can make a real difference in addressing the issues that face people in North Liverpool.

## EMPOWERING LIVERPOOL'S

# COMMUNITIES

We make sure that what we do complements existing activities and programmes, so that our contributions genuinely enhance the work already underway. For example, we are providing one-to-one support for community organisations to help them develop viable ideas for cultural projects and then fundraise for them. Many of the people benefiting from this scheme work on a voluntary basis and we are training up future community leaders to play an active role in creating more grassroots cultural activity.

We're also supporting cultural organisations working in North Liverpool to evaluate their own work – not just so they can get better at what they do but so they can effectively demonstrate the contribution that cultural projects can make to successful, happy and healthy communities.

## FOCUS ON: OPEN CITY

LARC's Open City project is a compelling volunteering model that encourages a range of community groups to attend museums, art galleries, theatres and concert halls. The project connects with people who might not often participate in cultural activity – for example, people with mental health issues, dads' groups and disabled people. The scheme pairs community groups with volunteers, who are well-informed about what is on offer, and negotiate special deals and incentives to encourage the groups to take up cultural opportunities and enjoy new, stimulating environments.

Evaluation proves that the scheme has had a resounding impact on all those involved – volunteers, community groups and individual group members.

Community groups say that it encourages them to attend cultural events on a regular basis and continue to get involved in cultural activities: One group commented: "We have and will continue to visit as many venues as possible". Another group said: "Any new art exhibition or theatre productions, we will be paying them a visit".

Volunteers highlighted a catalogue of personal benefits, in particular, an improved understanding of the arts and culture; familiarity with Liverpool venues; the personal satisfaction of 'making a difference' and a new understanding of community groups.

Open City is being delivered in partnership with All About Audiences (formerly Arts About Manchester), who initiated the scheme in Manchester.

## Creative Apprenticeships

LARC members are also supporting communities and individuals through delivery of other major national programmes such as Creative Apprenticeships.

The first phase of this programme was a year-long pilot with the Creative and Cultural Skills Council, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, to develop generic skills and employability of ten 16 to 24 year-olds from backgrounds under-represented in the cultural sector. The programme was led by a steering group involving employers as well as national and local stakeholders, including Liverpool Community College, whose enthusiastic support was vital to the success of the pilot.

The programme has clearly proved an alternative route into creative sector employment. All ten of the Liverpool apprentices completed the full programme; eight of them achieved their NVQ (with four of them achieving Level 3 - a level higher than originally planned). Three of the eight Creative Apprentices gained employment with LARC partners, one secured a job in the commercial media sector, three went on to related further or higher education courses, and one is working as a freelance artist.

In its second year, the scheme has extended to more than twenty employers, including private sector firms and schools. Through the Thrive programme, LARC is helping to build skills and capacity amongst participating employers by training youth mentors and the line managers of the apprentices.

LARC is still closely involved in Creative Apprenticeships and is now working with North West Vision and Media to develop a range of new employers right across the North West.

## Family Engagement

Healthy and happy families make stronger, healthier communities and, as individual organisations, and as LARC, we are exploring new ways of bringing families together to share the inspiring cultural experiences offered by our city.

LARC marketing staff commissioned a family-friendly website from All About Audiences – [www.familyfriendlymerseyside.org.uk](http://www.familyfriendlymerseyside.org.uk) – with a linked campaign to build awareness of the rich cultural offer for families. LARC will step up this campaign by working with strategic partners to reach out to more families who do not usually access cultural provision in the city centre and by increasing the cultural offer for families in the Liverpool City Region.

## FOCUS ON: INTRINSIC IMPACT STUDY

LARC's Intrinsic Impact study is among the first of its kind to be conducted in the UK. The study aims to help get LARC partners closer to our audiences by exploring the personal, emotional, social and intellectual impact that engaging with a live performance or work of art might have – whether it is a play, concert, exhibition or museum display.

The study builds on groundbreaking work from the USA and is being led by the American researchers Alan Brown and Jennifer Novak-Leonard of WolfBrown, known for their work on understanding consumer demand for cultural experiences. WolfBrown is partnering with Baker Richards to conduct and develop this research.

The project is investigating a range of reactions to the specific performance or visual experience, including captivation, intellectual stimulation, emotional resonance, spiritual value, aesthetic growth and social bonding. As well as surveying audiences, it is also collecting individual stories to explore the impact of particular experiences in more depth.

The project will help shape the way we engage with our audiences and visitors, and help all those involved in arts and culture to better articulate, rationalise and evaluate the cultural experiences.



Strange Attractors (The Anatomy of Dr Tulp) by KMA. Interactive kinetic light installation projected on to the exterior of FACT as part of the inaugural Abandon Normal Devices Festival, Liverpool, 2009.

Photo Brian Slater

LARC partners are a fundamental part of the economic mix that is helping fuel the city region's renaissance, and making Liverpool a competitive economic force again. Not only do we contribute to a distinctive sense of place, but we are also major employers and businesses making a significant contribution to the city's wealth.

## DEVELOPING LIVERPOOL'S

# ECONOMY

Above all, culture is at the heart of the city's growing tourism and visitor economy, which underpins Liverpool's regeneration. Liverpool's cultural institutions have an international reputation and in themselves attract growing numbers of new visitors to the city. The Liverpool City Region's Visitor Economy Strategy to 2020 acknowledges this pivotal role.

We are ambassadors for the city region, promoting its reputation for excellence as our organisations achieve a growing international profile and connect with other cities around the globe.

We are also working with the universities to build on Liverpool's reputation as a research centre dedicated to developing rigorous thinking around cultural programmes.

Our success in winning major funding for programmes such as Creative Apprenticeships has also enhanced Liverpool's reputation – not simply as a place where partnerships deliver but as a city worth doing business with, in a national and global market place.

LARC is also working closely with the City Council and other agencies to support new initiatives to promote Liverpool cultural events to local, national and international audiences.

Our direct economic contribution is as significant as the social capital generated by the partnership. The consortium itself has attracted more than £3.5 million worth of extra investment to the city since 2007 for its collaborative projects. This is on top of the combined income of the individual partner organisations which totalled over £63 million in 2009/10.

LARC has commissioned an economic impact study in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of our collective economic impact. The study aims to create a consistent approach to measuring the economic impact of the arts and will provide a framework that organisations can use in future as the basis for their own impact assessment.



Our status as cultural, charitable organisations gives us invaluable opportunities to contribute to the civic leadership of the region and the ability to reach people and places that agencies in other sectors cannot reach.

We work with partners in the city region, across the cultural ecology, and we have become a first port of call for politicians (from local councillors to Government ministers), wanting to connect with a partnership that speaks with a single, coherent voice on behalf of a large part of the city's cultural sector.

We contribute to new strategies being developed both locally and at national level, and we are working with Liverpool City Council to help shape a new cultural vision for Liverpool.

## DELIVERING CIVIC

# LEADERSHIP

We are collaborating with senior management at Liverpool City Council, the city's regeneration, tourism and inward investment agencies and key services such as the police and the transport authority, Merseytravel. LARC has developed special relationships with both the health and education sectors and discovered new collaborative opportunities. It is also a key player in the development of city business partnerships such as Liverpool Waterfront Partnership, Ropewalks Partnership and the Hope Street Partnership.

We use the fortnightly meetings of LARC chief executives as an opportunity to meet with senior staff from public agencies seeking the expertise of our partners and cultural input to their own strategies.

We're investing in the future of the city region's creative and cultural sector by delivering development programmes and leadership training to build the skills of our own staff and staff from many other cultural organisations, equipping them to make a fuller contribution to the city as a whole.

We're engaging with public agencies responsible for the design and management of the city centre to improve the overall experience of our audiences and visitors as they journey to and from our venues. Discussions cover everything from street signage to city centre events management.

## FOCUS ON: CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Almost 60 people from the cultural sector have taken part in a course delivered by LARC in partnership with Common Purpose and designed to help develop emerging leaders.

As well as building a new generation of arts and culture leaders, the five-day course sought to develop participants' awareness of leadership in different contexts and of the key issues and agencies involved in the city region's cultural, regeneration and political landscapes (and the main challenges facing them). It also aimed to build the communication skills of those taking part.

A survey showed that by the end of the course, 90% of those taking part saw themselves as leaders of arts and culture in Liverpool compared to just 57% at the start of the event.

Participants also stated that they had a better understanding of the key issues, agencies and individuals influencing the city's development and felt better connected to other leaders in the city as a result of the sessions.

The course was so successful that graduates are being invited to advise and help on new LARC projects and the model has inspired and informed similar leadership development courses for leaders in the arts in other cities.

## Creating and Sharing World-Class Art

The individual members of LARC exist, first and foremost, to deliver the highest quality art and culture.

Whether it's drama, classical music, visual or performance art or crowd-pulling museum exhibitions, we produce world-class work that enables Liverpool to punch far above its weight and compete on a truly international stage.

The sheer quality of what we produce as individual organisations is what powers the success of LARC, enabling us to contribute to the economy and wider community in all the ways that we do.

This same quality will inspire our future contributions to LARC as we continue to develop and share a model which has proved that culture-led charities can play a far reaching role in the renaissance of a city region.

In strengthening the cultural sector's skills in key areas, in helping empower local communities and exploring new ways in which cultural excellence can deliver real change, LARC continues to demonstrate how arts and cultural organisations can redefine the concept of civic responsibility and provide new and lasting opportunities for everyone.

Log on to [www.larc.uk.com](http://www.larc.uk.com) to find out more about the work of the LARC partnership.



## The Bluecoat

The Bluecoat is Liverpool city centre's oldest building and has evolved into Liverpool's hub for creativity over a fascinating 300-year history. It houses a creative community of artists and businesses and runs a participation programme with local communities. The Bluecoat is one of the UK's most established arts centres but still commands a worldwide reputation for showcasing some of the best and most exciting emerging talent working across visual art, music, dance, live art and literature.

As a leading participant in the Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival – an annual celebration of Arabic arts and culture – the Bluecoat delivered *Arabicity: Such a Near East*, a platform on which six contemporary Arabic artists explored their cultural heritage from unique perspectives and a variety of artistic disciplines.

Following a multi-award winning £14.5 million redevelopment the Bluecoat re-opened in 2008 to provide a home to over 30 artists and creatives and new major new galleries and performance spaces.



## FACT

FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology) is a new media arts centre, gallery and cinema and the UK's leading organisation for commissioning, exhibiting, promoting and supporting artists' work and innovation in the fields of film, video and new media.

Established in 1989, FACT moved into its iconic home in 2003. The building was Liverpool's first purpose-built arts venue since the 1940s, and now sits as a central hub within the City's distinctive and bohemian RopeWalks district.

FACT has commissioned and presented over 250 digital media artworks with artists including Mark Wallinger, Barbara Kruger, Tony Oursler, Pipilotti Rist, Vito Acconci, Isaac Julien and Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

FACT has collaboration at its heart, delivering cultural and creative projects in Liverpool, across the UK and internationally. It continues to pioneer new forms of social interaction outside of the building and online, demonstrating innovative partnership-led approaches to health, housing and education through award-winning programmes such as its tenantspin community media project.



## Liverpool Biennial

Established in 1998, Liverpool Biennial is one of the UK's leading art commissioning agencies as well as the UK's largest and most widely reviewed festival of contemporary visual art. In 2008 the festival attracted almost one million visits.

Liverpool Biennial 2010 is the biggest yet and its six programmes include the International exhibition *Touched*, with 45 new commissions featuring artists from across the world – from the Czech Republic and Austria to Japan, China and the USA. Significant public art projects that engage art, people and place in recent years include: Antony Gormley's *Another Place*, Richard Wilson's *Turning the Place Over* and Jaume Plensa's *Dream*.

For the past year Liverpool Biennial has been working with a group of young people from Anfield/Breckfield who have been part of the commissioning process for two artists: Ed Purver and now Jeanne van Heeswijk. Jeanne has made two research trips to Anfield which have led her to propose a communal self-build scheme.



## Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse

Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse create theatre which is firmly rooted in their community but international in scope and ambition. Together they form a single engine for creative excellence, artistic adventure and audience involvement and are acclaimed by national media for spearheading a "theatrical renaissance on Merseyside" (Observer). In less than six years they have produced 22 world premières (the majority by Liverpool writers); audiences have grown by 47%; over 90,000 school and college students have participated in their work, and each year they have worked closely with over 10,000 people who had never been involved with theatre before.

Collaboration is central to their approach, and co-productions ensure that the theatres' work travels regularly outside Liverpool. In 2010 this has included two national tours, two West End transfers and a sell-out collaboration with another regional theatre. Future plans for collaboration include continued national touring and a US tour in 2012.



## National Museums Liverpool

National Museums Liverpool is the only group of national museums in England based outside London and enables people from all backgrounds, from the locality and from further afield, to enjoy the benefits of engagement with a world-class museum service.

Operating across eight venues, it attracted 2.7 million visitors during 2008 and plays a major role in the educational, cultural and economic life of the city, the region and the UK as a whole. The Museum of Liverpool, the largest newly built national museum for a century, will open in 2011.

National Museums Liverpool is a museum service with a genuinely international outlook. The International Slavery Museum highlights transatlantic and contemporary forms of slavery, while the art galleries continue to showcase the very best from around the world.



## Royal Liverpool Philharmonic

The award-winning Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra is a symphony orchestra at the height of its powers and, during the last five years, has built a global reputation for excellence under the leadership of Chief Conductor Vasily Petrenko.

The orchestra is spearheading the acclaimed *In Harmony* community development programme in the North West and is increasingly playing for Liverpool on the world stage. In 2010 alone it toured in Switzerland, Spain and China, including supporting the City of Liverpool's presence at the Shanghai Expo. It has celebrated 10 successful years of its groundbreaking media partnership with Classic FM, the UK's biggest commercial radio station, secured a new media partnership deal with international satellite broadcaster BSkyB's arts channel, Sky Arts, and currently has one of the most significant recording programmes of any orchestra worldwide.

As well as the orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic includes a choir, contemporary music group Ensemble 10:10, chamber music, youth orchestra and youth choirs, and an extensive education programme. It also runs the Grade 2 listed Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, one of the UK's premier arts and entertainment venues, presenting a wide-ranging programme featuring many international artists.



## Tate Liverpool

Tate Liverpool is the home of the national collection of modern and contemporary art in the North of England and a critical force in the region's rich visual arts scene. It is the most visited gallery of modern art outside London, shows a lively mix of international exhibitions and displays and produces a wide range of events and projects in the Liverpool city region. Working with contemporary artists, commissioning new art and trialling experimental approaches to audience interaction are at the core of Tate Liverpool's philosophy of innovation. The current collection displays have been co-curated with a variety of partners including Wayne Hemingway, Mike Figgis, and poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy.

Tate is one of the top ten international cultural brands. Tate Liverpool reflects this through partnerships with major institutions across the world including MoMA New York and the Pompidou, Paris and generates significant national and international media coverage for its programmes. *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* will travel to Vienna in 2010 and Copenhagen in 2011 developing a tradition of significant international exhibitions visiting and originating at Tate Liverpool.

Tate Liverpool is a core partner for research, audience development and curatorial initiatives across the region and nationally. It will continue to innovate through an ambitious programme, wide ranging partnerships and engaging the broadest possible audiences.



## Unity Theatre

Unity Theatre is one of Liverpool's best-loved theatres with a reputation for staging unusual, innovative, high quality work in a friendly and enthusiastic atmosphere.

It has a commitment to working with the best professional companies nationally and internationally and has a proud tradition of presenting new writing and supporting new companies. People visiting Unity are enormously loyal and trusting – taking risks on unknown but hugely rewarding pieces of work because of a confidence in the theatre's artistic policy and judgement.

The theatre also hosts an open access season making professional facilities available to local community theatre companies to present work that reflects the diverse communities in Liverpool.

Unity enhances the quality of the performing arts on Merseyside by encouraging creativity, participation, innovation and diversity.



Liverpool skyline (Graeme Morgan)



St Georges Hall image courtesy of NWDA (Nic and Becky Gaunt)



Everyman and Playhouse artistic director Gemma Bodinetz at a LARC workshop (Terry Mealey)



National Museum Liverpool's Slavery Museum (National Museums Liverpool)

## LARC THRIVE

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the  
Bluecoat.

FACT

  
liverpool biennial

EVERMAN  
LIVERPOOL  
PLAYHOUSE

NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL

  
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic

LIVERPOOL  
TATE

unitytheatre

Written and produced by DHA Communications

  
Northwest  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

  
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