

UNLIMITED...

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DISABILITY INDUSTRY HEAVYWEIGHTS LAUNCH 'UNLIMITED' NATIONAL DELIVERY PARTERSHIP

A three year commissioning programme called 'Unlimited' supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England to support disabled artists in developing ambitious and high quality work, will be delivered throughout England and Scotland, and has been launched today with a celebration event held at the Tate Modern.

'Unlimited' will not only help disabled artists develop their practice and encourage the development of new relationships and collaborations with producers, venues and promoters, but will also increase distribution of disabled artists' work (through digital means and touring up to an international level), affording greater opportunities for audiences to see the work.

The national delivery partners for the Unlimited commissioning programme, Shape and Artsadmin, were awarded a £1.5 million grant supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England' earlier this month, and have announced today the official launch of the Unlimited website www.weareunlimited.org.uk and the delivery team to include disability industry heavyweights Jo Verrent and Ruth Gould.

Already on board as partners since the announcement include: Creative Scotland, the British Council, Southbank Centre, and DaDaFest.

Leonie Bell, Acting Director of Creative Development, says:

"We are delighted to be supporting this new round of Unlimited commissions. The 2012 Unlimited programme saw ground-working work being produced to great acclaim in the UK and internationally by talented artists from Scotland. We look forward to enabling and celebrating new artists voices through this next round."

Carole McFadden, Programme Manager for East Asia, China & Hong Kong, Middle East and North Africa, British Council says:

"The British Council is once again delighted to be working on Unlimited. Given the unprecedented number of works which toured internationally following the Unlimited Festival in 2012, we are looking forward to the next round of excellent work created by disabled artists for possible inclusion in our global arts programmes. This a very exciting opportunity for the UK to demonstrate its excellence in the Arts and Disability sector and we are pleased to be able to play a part in it."



www.shapearts.org.uk

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Jo Verrent joins the Unlimited team as Senior Producer following over 15 years of working in the disability sector at strategic levels in arts & culture, with national agencies and on the ground working with organisations and individuals, embedding the belief that diversity adds texture, turning policy into real action.

Renowned for being the co-creator of PUSH ME, a groundbreaking film project focusing on Unlimited artists as part of the cultural olympiad and SYNC, a leadership development programme reframing the work of artists and focusing on the interface between disability and leadership, Jo is a Clore fellow, and believes that 'different' is delicious not divergent.

Jo Verrent, Senior Producer for Unlimited says:

"Unlimited broke boundaries in 2012 - it encouraged disabled artists to stretch their art and transform public perceptions. I'm delighted to be Senior Producer for Shape and Artsadmin's £1.5 million partnership to deliver Unlimited for the next three years on behalf of Arts Council England. Building on the momentum of Unlimited 2012 will ensure this legacy is embedded within the cultural sector, whilst also challenging and changing public perceptions of disability."

Ruth Gould, Artistic Director of DaDaFest, one of the key partners in the bid, will chair the Unlimited selection panel, determining the commissioned projects. Ruth comments:

"Unlimited has changed the playing field and been a fantastic opportunity for disabled artists, so I am more than delighted it is being rolled out again for two more rounds. Being asked to chair the panel is an enormous privilege which I know will certainly be a highlight of my career to date, as well as recognition for our success and achievements within DaDaFest. I am so looking forward to seeing what proposals come forward which will deliver even more groundbreaking and exciting arts."

Arts Council England has invested in Shape, the disability-led arts charity, and arts producing organisation Artsadmin to support disabled artists through a programme of commissions and run a complementary mentoring programme between 2013 and 2016.

The programme will support disabled artists to develop their practice, forming new relationships and collaborations with producers, venues and promoters; it will increase distribution of the work (through touring, including international touring, and digital iterations) affording greater opportunities for audiences to see some of the very the best work available from disabled artists right across the country.

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Shape is a disability-led arts organisation working to improve access to culture for disabled people by developing opportunities for disabled artists, training cultural institutions to be more open to disabled people, and running participatory arts and development programmes.

Artsadmin is an arts lab for the 21st Century, supporting the creation of new performance, site-specific and interdisciplinary work by the most talented and innovative artists through mentoring, development and producing support.

Alan Davey, Chief Executive for Arts Council England said:

"Supporting diversity in arts and culture is the right thing to do. I firmly believe that artists and organisations should make work that draws upon the full range of backgrounds of our society. Unlimited in 2012 was a real success story, enabling disabled artists from across the UK to showcase their talent as part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. Building on this success, Unlimited will ensure that disabled artists have a strong platform from which they can create ambitious, high quality work to develop and stretch audiences across England and beyond. The collaboration between Shape and Artsadmin is a really exciting combination with both demonstrating really strong experience in supporting artists' development; we believe this partnership will enable us to build on what was achieved in 2012 and continue to challenge public perceptions of disability."

London 2012, the UK Arts Councils and the British Council commissioned 29 ambitious pieces of work by disabled artists. These included:

1. **Ménage à Trois**, a beautiful study of love, obsession, loneliness and manipulation through dance theatre from award-winning performer Claire Cunningham and choreographer/video artist Gail Sneddon
2. **MACROPOLIS** by Joel Simon and Flickrpix is a light-hearted animated film tracking adventures through the city of two toys with impairments, who have been discarded from a factory production line.
3. **The Dean Rodney Singers** is an international interactive multimedia project which saw the creation of a global band of 72 musicians and dancers. This project was produced Heart n Soul under the creative guidance of 21 year old artist Dean Rodney, lead singer of The Fish Police.

To register an interest or to make an application to the Unlimited programme visit the website which is now live: www.weareunlimited.org.uk and follow on Twitter: @weareunltd

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For more information contact: Robin Robinson - Shape Marketing & PR, Direct Mobile – 07989 436 807, Email – robin@shapearts.org.uk



Notes to editors

Unlimited:

The Unlimited programme will support disabled artists to develop ambitious and high quality work, which will help them to develop their practice. It will also help to develop new relationships and collaborations with producers, venues and promoters, increase distribution of the work (through touring, including international touring, and digital means), and afford greater opportunities for audiences to see the work. For more information visit the website here: www.weareunlimited.org.uk - follow on Twitter: @weareunltd

Jo Verrent:

Jo Verrent works in arts & culture at strategic levels with national agencies and on the ground with organisations and individuals embedding the belief that diversity adds texture, turning policy into real action. Jo believes that 'different' is delicious not divergent.

2014 sees Jo working as senior producer for the three year Unlimited Commissions programme (working with Shape and Artsadmin) for disabled artists and companies and has previously delivered numerous projects co-creating SHORT CIRCUIT - fusing disability artistry and digital acumen, **PUSH ME** – film making for The Space (a digital platform created by Arts Council England and BBC) and the national disability and leadership programme, SYNC.

Jo is a Clore fellow, and has won both **COSMOPOLITAN's** woman of achievement award and her village award for making jam. Jo is partially deaf and has tinnitus. She uses residual hearing, lip reading and sign language.

Ruth Gould:

In July 2013 Ruth Gould became the Artistic Director of DaDaFest, and previously was the Chief Executive Officer, since February 2001. Passionate about Disability and Deaf arts celebrated as cultural diversities, Ruth established the festival in 2001. From Liverpool, Ruth initially trained in performance arts, speech and drama at Liverpool Theatre School. In 1988 she undertook further training in School of Creative Arts' Australia becoming the movement and drama teacher, leading to work opportunities in New Zealand and USA.

Ruth is on the Board of Contact Theatre, a Governor of Alder Hey Children's Hospital, and an advisory member for Granada Foundation and Liverpool City Council Tourism and Culture Select Committee.

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DaDaFest is a leading disability and deaf arts organisation, with a vision to inspire, develop and celebrate talent and excellence in disability and deaf arts. The next DaDaFest International festival, based in Liverpool, is happening November- December 2014. www.dadafest.co.uk

Shape is a disability-led arts organisation working to improve access to culture for disabled people. We develop opportunities for disabled artists, we train cultural institutions to be more open to disabled people, and we run participatory arts and development programmes. We aim for:

- More disabled people as arts **audiences**
- More disabled people **employed** in, and **leading**, the arts
- More disabled people **participating** in arts activities

Twitter: @ShapeArts

Facebook: ShapeArts

www.shapearts.org.uk

Artsadmin is an arts lab for the 21st Century, supporting the creation of new performance, site-specific and interdisciplinary work by the most talented and innovative artists. **We do this by:**

- Producing contemporary artworks for all kinds of contexts around the world
- Supporting artists throughout their career, from young people getting involved in making work for the first time through to established artists
- Offering our Toynbee Studios home as a hub for the creation and development of new work - a space for artists and audiences to experiment

www.artsadmin.co.uk

Twitter: @artsadm

Facebook: Artsadmin

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2010 and 2015, we will invest £1.9 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1.1 billion from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. www.artscouncil.org.uk

Creative Scotland is the national organisation that funds and supports the development of Scotland's arts, screen and creative industries. Creative Scotland has four objectives: to develop and sustain a thriving environment for the arts, screen and creative industries; to support excellence in artistic and creative practice; to improve access to and participation in, arts and



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creative activity; and to deliver our services efficiently and effectively. In 2013/14 we will distribute over £100m in funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. www.creativescotland.co.uk Follow us @creativescots and www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland.

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 7000 staff – including 2000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year teaching English, sharing the Arts and in education and society programmes.

We are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter. A publically-funded grant-in-aid provides less than a quarter of our turnover which last year was £781m. The rest we earn from English teaching, UK exams and services which customers around the world pay for, through education and development contracts and from partnerships with other institutions, brands and companies. All our work is in pursuit of our charitable purpose and creates prosperity and security for the UK and the countries we work in all around the world.

For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org. You can also keep in touch with the British Council through <http://twitter.com/britishcouncil> and <http://blog.britishcouncil.org>