

UNLIMITED...

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11AM, 27 MARCH 2019

Unlimited, the largest supporter of disabled artists worldwide, announces latest awards with over £550,000 to support the development of ambitious new artistic work.



Unlimited, the UK's arts commissioning programme which supports disabled artists to create and present exceptional work across all art forms, today announces its latest awards to **26** artists to develop ambitious new work.

Currently funded by Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, British Council and Spirit of 2012, and delivered by Shape Arts and Artsadmin, Unlimited has provided nearly **£4 million to 280 disabled artists since 2013** through commissions, awards and support. We are delighted to be able to offer Partnership Awards this year, working with Wellcome Collection, Farnham Maltings, Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust, GOSH Arts and Forma.

These new projects are supported through four different types of award:

- 7 Main Commissions for a full commission project by established disabled artists and companies to develop an idea through to production and presentation.
- 10 Research and Development (R&D) Awards for mid-career artists to explore a new creative project.
- 6 Emerging Artist Awards for artists who are still early in their career to develop or produce a new artwork or participatory project.
- 3 Strategic Commissions, filling gaps within our current portfolio of works

“Unlimited is an incredibly powerful opportunity for organisations like Arts Council England to support some of England’s most talented disabled artists. We’ve been extremely proud to invest in the creativity of all the Unlimited artists over the years and I know that this year’s cohort will continue to push artistic barriers, through their innovative and ambitious projects.”

- Claire Saddleton, Arts Council England

The 2019 awarded artists and works include:

- **Bim Ajadi - HERE/NOT HERE.** A deaf hip hop music drama, showcasing a new kind of story-telling language combining sign, dance music and Visual Vernacular, and aimed at hearing and deaf audiences.
- **Sop - You are already here.** What happens if we reject the binary of 'sick' and 'well'? Film, workshop and performances on topics from the pharmaceutical industry to gender identity engage with chronically ill folx/people and their allies.
- **Matilda Ibini - A.I.D.A.N.** A theatre piece imagining that the government introduces AI (artificial intelligence) support workers in the face of rising social care costs.

You can explore all the supported commissions on [Unlimited’s website](#).

“This superb batch of artworks in receipt of Unlimited’s awards showcases perfectly disabled creatives’ brilliant capacity for artistic innovation and break-out content. These ambitious projects are provocative, dangerous, challenging and cast light on the way we all live now, and I am very much looking forward to seeing how they develop. I am hugely delighted that they show so well the importance and success of Shape’s purpose – to remove barriers for creative excellence to grow, impact and change the creative landscape for all.”

- David Hevey, Chief Executive, Shape Arts

“This year's inspiring and ambitious Unlimited Commissions are a vibrant spectrum of disabled artists' voices, perspectives and reflections on contemporary life, exploring everything from intersectionality to armed resistance, the social care system, emerging technologies and beyond. Artsadmin is delighted to continue our partnership with Shape

Arts to deliver the Unlimited programme, celebrating excellent new work by disabled artists, as well as pushing agendas around inclusion within the cultural sphere.”

- Dr. Cecilia Wee, Head of Artist Development, Artsadmin

The works were selected from over 270 applications, whittled down to a shortlist of 50 projects, then the final decisions were made by three selection panels comprising of at least 50% disabled arts professionals and artists, representatives from Arts Council England, Southbank Centre and Wellcome Collection, and chaired by an independent disabled person.

“We’re always excited to welcome the announcement of Unlimited’s Commission awards. They never fail to be bold, ambitious and exciting, celebrating extraordinary and distinctive creative talents. We’re proud to be able to support a programme that strives to support artists and encourage them to make challenging work of the highest quality.”

- Nick Capaldi, Chief Executive of Arts Council of Wales

"I am excited to see the wealth of new ideas from UK d/Deaf and disabled artists and I look forward to working with many of them on British Council projects around the world. To date, the British Council has worked with Unlimited commissioned artists in over 40 countries, encouraging international exchange and helping the UK to be recognised as a world leader in disabled-led arts. We are proud to be working together to transform the global artistic landscape and create far-reaching social change."

- Carole McFadden, British Council

“The rich diversity of this year's Spirit Unlimited Impact commissions across dance, literature, theatre and combined arts is dazzling. We are delighted to be enabling six such talented emerging artists to express their creativity, reach new audiences and advance their careers.”

- Debbie Lye, Spirit of 2012

Previous Unlimited-supported commissions included high-profile works such as Kate O'Reilly's [**And Suddenly I Disappear: The Singapore/UK 'd' Monologues**](#), The British Paraorchestra's [**The Nature of Why, Unlimited House of Krip**](#) by Fittings and Kristina Veasey's [**My Dirty Secret!**](#).

For more information please contact Niamh Hall – Digital, Communications & PR Officer at Shape Arts: niamh@shapearts.org.uk or +44 (0) 20 7424 7357

Image: Sea Sharpe as part of [Brownton Abbey](#) - Tarik Elmoutawakil. Photo by Victor Frankowski.

Notes to Editors

About the 2019 awardees

Details of all commissions are on [Unlimited's website](#).

Main Awards

- **Anna Berry** - Breathing Room
Visual Arts, South East
- **Bim Ajadi** - HERE/NOT HERE
Combined Arts, London
- **Byron Vincent** - Instagramming The Apocalypse (Farnham Maltings Partnership Award)
Combined Arts, London
- **Cheryl Martin** - One Woman (Wellcome Collection Partnership Award)
Theatre, North
- **Justin Edgar** - Reasonable Adjustment - The Disabled Armed Resistance Movement
Visual Arts, South East
- **Suzie Larke** - Unseen
Visual Arts, Wales
- **Tarik Elmoutawakil** - Brownton Abbey
Combined Arts, South East

R&D Awards

- **Ailis Ni Riain** - Pencil Piano - Koji Nishioka
Music, North
- **John Finn** - Finn's Fish Tank
Visual Arts, Midlands
- **Jonny Cotsen** - HHA (Hearing Hearing Aids)
Theatre, Wales
- **Kristina Veasey** - Basketcase (Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust Partnership Award)
Visual Arts, South East
- **Matilda Ibini** - A.I.D.A.N. (Wellcome Collection Partnership Award)
Theatre, London
- **Natasha Sutton Williams** - Lesbian Pirates!
Theatre, London

- **Rhiannon Armstrong** - Cradled
Combined Arts, London
- **Rowan James** - A Room Full of Elephant
Literature, South West
- **Sophie Hoyle** - Psychic Refuge (Forma Partnership Award)
Combined Arts, London
- **StammerMouth** - Fluff
Combined Arts, Wales

Emerging Artists Commissions

- **Christopher Pavia** - The Journey in Between
Dance, South East
- **Ellen Renton** - Told in Parts
Literature, Scotland
- **JoAnne Haines** - Colour Full
Combined Arts, North England
- **Sonny Nwachukwu** - Circles
Literature, London
- **Sop** - You are already here
Visual Arts, London
- **Stephanie Anne Back** - I Said I Love You (ISILY)
Theatre, Wales

Strategic Commissions

- **Second Hand Dance** - Touch (GOSH Arts)
Dance, South East
- **Shawanda Corbett** - Cyborg Ceramics
Visual Arts, South East
- **Studio of Sanctuary** - Mohammad Barrangi Fashtami
Visual Arts, North

Unlimited is an arts commissioning programme that aims to embed work by disabled artists within the UK and international cultural sectors, reach new audiences and shift perceptions of disabled people. Unlimited has been delivered by the disability-led arts organisation Shape Arts and arts-producing organisation Artsadmin since 2013, and is funded from 2016-20 by Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, British Council and Spirit of 2012. Since 2013 Unlimited has awarded nearly £4 million to 280 ambitious disabled artists and companies. These artworks and projects have resulted in over 4,100 events (including performances, exhibition days, workshops, screenings,

readings, sharings and talks), which were seen by more than 650,000 people.

www.weareunlimited.org.uk

www.twitter.com/weareunltd

www.facebook.com/weareunltd

Shape Arts is a disability-led arts organisation which works to improve access to culture for disabled people by providing opportunities for disabled artists, training cultural institutions to be more open to disabled people, and through running participatory arts and development programmes. www.shapearts.org.uk

www.twitter.com/shapearts

Artsadmin enables artists to create without boundaries, producing bold interdisciplinary work to connect with local, national and international audiences. At Toynbee Studios in east London, Artsadmin have established a centre for the creation and presentation of new work. Their advisory service supports artists at every stage of their development with free advice and opportunities. www.artsadmin.co.uk

www.twitter.com/artsadm

Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual 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 2018 and 2022, we will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. www.artscouncil.org.uk

Arts Council of Wales is responsible for funding and developing the arts in Wales. Arts Council of Wales is an independent charity, established by Royal Charter in 1994. Its members are appointed by the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure. Its principal sponsor is the Welsh Government and they also distribute funding from the National Lottery and raise additional money where we can from a variety of public and private sector sources. Working together with the Welsh Government, they are able to show how the arts are helping to meet the Government's policy ambitions. www.arts.wales

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 65

million people directly and 731 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. We make a positive contribution to the countries we work with - changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. www.britishcouncil.org

Spirit of 2012 is a funding charity, established by the Big Lottery Fund with a £47m endowment from the National Lottery. Spirit was founded to continue and recreate the spirit of pride, positivity and social connectedness that people experienced during the London 2012 Games. Spirit funds projects that bring people together – to learn something new, do something different, or experience something unique – and that leave behind a social legacy of increased wellbeing at an individual level, as well as happier and more connected communities. For more information as well as up-to-date news on all Spirit's projects and funding opportunities, go to www.spiritof2012.org.uk.

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