



Art connects us

# ARTS AND THE UK

# EXCHANGE ANALYSE

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## Foreword

Using the cultural resources of the UK, the British Council creates friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries.

Our work in the arts has been central to this mission for more than 80 years, seeking new ways to connect with and understand each other through creativity.

### THE BRITISH COUNCIL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

Our programme uses the world-leading innovation and creativity of the UK to make a positive contribution to the people, institutions and governments of the countries we work in. We create opportunities, build connections and engender trust. Cultural exchange supports economic, social and cultural development, and strengthens connections. This is increasingly important in challenging times.

Our work in the arts has grown substantially over the last five years. We now operate in over 110 countries around the world, across six art forms and three multidisciplinary programmes covering the full breadth of UK creative industries. In 2015–16 our work in the arts reached 10.9 million people on the ground and a further 186 million online and through the media.

Henry Moore, Printmaker exhibition at the Kasteyev Museum, Almaty.  
© British Council Kazakhstan

### WIDER EUROPE REGION

We operate in 15 countries across Wider Europe, a region that borders the Middle East to the south, Asia to the east and EU Europe to the west. The region's population, currently around 335 million, will be 2 billion people by 2050, with the majority living in urban environments. 70% of the population is under the age of 25 and this demographic will grow at 15% year on year for the next 10 years. With an average of just 25 years since their foundation, most nations in the region are emerging from periods of isolation and, in re-engaging with the rest of the world, are seeking contact with international cultural sectors.

1	Albania	3.0m	8	Montenegro	0.6m
2	Armenia	3.0m	9	Kazakhstan	18m
3	Azerbaijan	9.0m	10	Kosovo	1.7m
4	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.8m	11	Russia	143m
5	Georgia	5.0m	12	Serbia	7.0m
6	Israel	8.0m	13	Turkey	76m
7	Macedonia	2.0m	14	Ukraine	45m
			15	Uzbekistan	30m



## WIDER EUROPE'S CREATIVE SECTOR

Our work in the region aims to foster connections and broker opportunities between the UK and Wider Europe's creative sectors. We aim to strengthen the role of the UK as a preferred partner by supporting the ambition to develop more open, prosperous and creative societies.

The main challenges we have identified in Wider Europe are: political instability, slow pace of institutional reform, lack of diversity, inaccessible public environments, limited opportunities for sponsorship and co-funding, and variable market insight.

The region's countries have a rich cultural heritage and established traditions in craft and design, film, literature and the visual and performing arts. National institutions, particularly in the former Soviet Union, remain well-funded. However, with state investment focused on the maintenance of large performing ensembles, heritage buildings and complex administrative structures, there is little money spare for commissioning new work or fostering young talent. Decades of dependence on guaranteed public subsidy have resulted in a focus on repertoire and collections rather than audiences and participation, while the development of programming through diversification of income streams is a new concept. Culturally diverse practice, as we understand it, is underdeveloped and a lack of inclusivity in legislation and civil society means that disabled people are usually excluded from wider cultural participation.



Left: TransLit: UK writers on the Trans-Siberian Railway.  
© British Council Russia

Right: A workshop with Kate Marsh of Candoco in Istanbul.  
© British Council Turkey



But a youthful society means a rapidly changing one, and with many of the region's young artists and cultural entrepreneurs studying and regularly working overseas, we are gradually seeing new approaches gaining a foot hold. As a result, audiences are gradually becoming more open and international programming is more frequent. Networks of independent artists and creative clusters are forming in major cities and institutional mavericks are emerging in the state-funded sector.

These cultural innovators want to develop the leadership, creative and business skills necessary to present work to international standards, collaborate internationally and to develop a strong and sustainable independent sector. As communities of practice, they tend to look to the UK for its strong social enterprise models in the creative industries, its tendency to foster cross art forms collaboration, to promote public engagement, invest in professional development for arts practitioners and for its inclusive approaches to commissioning, programming and audience development.

Despite the unstable and sometimes fragile economic environment, arts festivals and visual arts and design biennales flourish in major countries across the region and awareness of UK artists and companies among producers and presenters is high. These festivals and seasons provide valuable opportunities for audiences to see a range of international work and are important frameworks for collaborative projects, particularly between independent artists.

Working in partnership with national and local governments, cultural organisations and NGOs, the British Council supports independent movements and the revitalisation of national institutions in the region through a reciprocal programme embracing all arts sectors and by enabling access to creative and cultural skills and opportunities.



## OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

Wider Europe:  
Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Georgia  
Israel  
Kazakhstan  
Russia  
Turkey  
Ukraine  
Uzbekistan  
Western Balkans

The overall focus of our Wider Europe programme includes.

- Creation of dialogue through artistic exchanges and collaborations, such as the UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature (2016), Future Creative at Expo Kazakhstan (2017), a cultural programme in tandem with the Western Balkans Summit (2018) and, since 2014, an extensive aid-funded programme aimed at young professionals in Ukraine.
- Opportunities to share UK theatre, dance and contemporary performance productions with international audiences at major festivals in Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kazakhstan and Israel and through a partnership with the UK's Total Theatre Awards.
- Digital programmes and campaigns to extend audiences for major exhibitions and events.
- Promotion of UK design talent and opportunities for international designers through fashion weeks, biennials and a partnership with the UK's Linbury Prize for Stage Design.
- Our award-winning radio show, The Selector, broadcast across the region, is now supported by a capacity-building industry platform, Selector Pro, which will take place in six countries from 2017.
- Syndicated programming of UK film festivals in eight countries and touring visual arts exhibitions with embedded cultural skills and capacity-building programmes.
- The Canny Creatives scheme which, since 2013, has enabled twelve UK arts professionals to undertake secondments to cultural organisations in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia and Ukraine.
- Unlimited: Making the Right Moves, initially focusing on four of the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine), aims to develop a region-wide network of artists and cultural activists committed to the promotion of diverse societies and the participation of disabled people in social policy-making.
- Innovative creative industries programmes drawing on UK expertise and managed in partnership with national and local partners.

Left: Living Pictures Diary of a Madman at Highfest, Armenia.  
© British Council Armenia

Right: A Winter's Tale at Les Kurbas Theatre, Lviv, designed by Linbury Prize winner Minglu Wang.  
© British Council Ukraine

## CONCLUSION

Our work in the arts in Wider Europe has grown substantially over the last five years, with programmes re-established in all fifteen countries and new opportunities created for the UK cultural sector. In 2015-16 we worked with 1.94 million people directly, engaged 32.1 million through television, radio and publishing and another 13 million via digital platforms. By 2020 we aim to reach a further 28 million people through innovative online and media content, connecting them with the UK and providing opportunities for the UK in the region.

Gregory Nash  
Director Arts, Wider Europe

## Armenia

### COUNTRY CONTEXT

Armenia is a country with a population of 3 million and a rich history and cultural heritage. The Armenian diaspora around the world plays a valuable role in the development of the country as well as the promotion of its culture abroad.

Armenia's economic development remains constrained by geopolitical and security challenges, including a blockade by two of its neighbours—Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Although Armenia joined the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in 2015, government and the public favour deeper cooperation with the EU in political and social spheres. In October 2015, Armenia and the EU launched talks on a new treaty with the aim of deepening cooperation, enhanced by Armenia's participation in the EU's Eastern Partnership programme.

Young people in Armenia are predominantly Western-oriented, inspired by European values and interested in further integration with Europe. They look to Europe for professional growth and are particularly inspired by the UK's education system and its innovative arts sector.

### CULTURAL SECTOR OVERVIEW

The current government's priorities in the arts sector include the development of cultural heritage and cultural tourism in Armenia, as well as support for its sustainability and independence through the development of individual entrepreneurial skills.

Although the ambition is to modernise the Armenian cultural sector, the country's economic downturn has impacted on government's investment in the arts. There is, however, significant funding available through international organisations, particularly for cultural heritage projects, museums development and skills training. The European Union and other European institutions contribute to the development of the creative economy sector in Armenia.

There are well established international festivals in Armenia, including the HIGH FEST International Performing Arts Festival and the Golden Apricot International Film Festival.



### OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

*Sharing UK arts with the world:* showcasing UK arts and creativity to the Armenian public through well-established international festivals, the British Film Festival and The Selector radio show.

*Arts for social change:* promoting UK best practice in inclusive arts to contribute to changing public perception.

*Capacity building:* helping to strengthen Armenia's film, theatre and dance sectors through the skills development of arts professionals.

Left: Candoco warm-up with Armenian dancers during the Unlimited season at Glasgow Tramway.  
© British Council Armenia

Right: Premiere of Hiraeth by Jemima Hoadley at the Small Theatre, Yerevan.  
© British Council Armenia

### MAKING THE RIGHT MOVES

This partnership with Candoco Dance Company in the UK and the Small Theatre in Yerevan, came about as a result of the first Unlimited season at London's Southbank Centre in 2012 and has led to the creation of Armenia's first integrated performance company.

The programme is supported by the Ministry of Culture in Armenia, the British Embassy and members of the Armenian diaspora in the UK. Following a public workshop programme the company was formed in 2013 and *Hiraeth*, the second of its two productions developed with Candoco associate artists, opened the Unlimited Festival at Glasgow Tramway in September 2016.

Four of the company's artists are now part of the full-time ensemble at the Small Theatre and since its formation the company has made a significant contribution to public debate about the full inclusion of disabled people in Armenian society.



## Azerbaijan



# AZ

### OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

*Capacity building:* our work creates opportunities for bilateral collaboration, developing the cultural sector's capacity for innovation.

*Developing stronger creative sectors that are better connected to the UK:* we increase the cultural connections between the UK and Azerbaijan and enhance the profile of the UK creative sector.

*Policy development:* we work with policy makers and institutions to **raise awareness** of cultural policy for creative economy development in Azerbaijan.

*Arts for social change:* we position the arts and the cultural sector as a key contributor to a more open, prosperous and diverse society.

### CULTURAL SECTOR OVERVIEW

Twenty-five years after independence from the Soviet Union, political realities in Azerbaijan have meant that new developments in the arts are not given priority and state support remains tied up in national institutions. The creative industries remain underdeveloped and a nascent independent sector struggles to take root.

However, during the years of oil wealth, Baku's cultural infrastructure saw impressive developments, including the Carpet Museum, the International Mugham Centre, and the Zaha Hadid designed Heydar Aliyev Centre. Efforts are made to promote contemporary culture as part of the national cultural diplomacy strategy, including Azerbaijan's pavilions at the Venice Biennale and the first European Olympic Games. There is interest in, and awareness of, contemporary visual arts.

There is considerable scope for capacity building in the arts sector in Azerbaijan. Economic diversification favours the creative economy, where the UK has much to offer in expertise and experience.

### SHAKESPEARE CARPET COMPETITION

Azerbaijan has a rich tradition of carpet-making. The Ardabil carpet – the oldest dated carpet in the world – was made in southern Azerbaijan some 15 years before Shakespeare's birth. It was sold in Manchester in 1892 and bought by the V&A in London on William Morris' recommendation.

Our nationwide Shakespeare Carpet Competition, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and the Academy of Arts, called for carpet designs to celebrate Shakespeare's legacy. We received hundreds of creative, colourful and beautiful entries from craft professionals, children and the general public from all over the country. The three winning designs are being woven into carpets and the overall winner of the competition will visit London's V&A Museum and Shakespeare's Globe theatre.

### COUNTRY CONTEXT

Azerbaijan is the easternmost country in Europe, sitting between Russia to the north, Iran to the south and Turkey to the west. Although influenced by its neighbours, Azerbaijan – a secular Muslim-majority democracy – safeguards its cultural identity and independence.

The largest of the three South Caucasus countries alongside Georgia and Armenia, Azerbaijan's population is just under 10 million with around 45% living in the capital city Baku.

For more than a century, Azerbaijan's economy has been dominated by oil and gas. Economic growth in the 2000s was among the fastest in the world and the oil sector has attracted significant international investment, with the UK as the leading foreign investor. New gas reserves have been discovered, but the decline of oil prices in 2014/15 has meant a recent economic downturn for the country. In the new economic climate, diversification, including the creative economy and skills-building are a priority.

Commercial and trading relations with the UK are strong and the political relationship is generally positive. The UK is the destination of choice for Azerbaijani students studying abroad and a growing network of UK alumni plays an important role in developing relations between the two countries.



Above: DJ/VJ training in Baku led by Alex Phountzi from Point Blank Music UK.  
© British Council Azerbaijan

Left: 1927 theatre company performs The Animals and Children Took to the Streets in Baku.  
© 1927

# Georgia

## COUNTRY CONTEXT

Georgia has a population of 4.6 million and occupies a strategically important geographical and political location at the crossroads of European and Asian cultures. Russia, Turkey and Iran are its biggest neighbours.

Georgia aspires to greater integration and more strategic relationships with the EU. Stability in Georgia is critical in balancing the spheres of influence and ensuring energy, security and the flow of trade in the volatile region. Georgia is a priority country within the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. In June 2014, the EU and Georgia signed an association agreement, which includes a comprehensive free trade agreement. Since signing the agreement, the EU has become the country's largest trading partner, accounting for over a quarter of Georgia's total trade turnover.

Georgia is a security partner for the UK and other NATO countries for cooperation on Afghanistan and Central Africa. However, Russia's increased investment into cultural and economic sectors in Georgia is indicative of its ambition to re-establish influence in the country.



## OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

*Capacity building:* providing professional development opportunities for the cultural and creative sector in Georgia and in the UK.

*Audience development:* showcasing high-quality, innovative work in theatre, dance, visual arts and music from the UK, with a specific focus on inclusivity and social agenda.

## CULTURAL SECTOR OVERVIEW

The role and the value of the arts in social development is well recognised by the government and general public in Georgia. The government aspires to establish Georgia as a cultural hub for the region and to boost cultural tourism. However, due to economic recession and frozen military conflicts with Russia, funding for the arts and culture is low, with the priority given to the social, economic and defence sectors. Public funding remains the main source for the cultural sector and corporate investment and sponsorship opportunities are marginal.

Georgia joined the Creative Europe programme in 2014 but cultural institutions find it difficult to bid and secure EU funding due to the lack of contact with their European counterparts. Georgia's cultural sector requires substantial investment in institutional and skills development. Traditional art forms still prevail in Georgia but there is a strong interest in innovative, contemporary art, which is evident in the development of Georgian theatre, visual arts and music.

## AJARA PERFORMING ARTS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Initiated in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport in the autonomous republic of Ajara in 2012, the programme responds to the development needs of arts professionals and venues, and aims to build capacity in the sector and to forge creative connections with the UK. Focusing, in its fifth year, on festivals management the programme's achievements to date include extensive training courses for theatre professionals, visits by two UK theatre companies and three UK-Georgia co-productions seen, so far, by more than 10,000 people. Significantly, the programme has led to the introduction of new cultural policies in the region and stimulated interest in similar initiatives in other parts of the country.

Above: Paper Cinema performs The Odyssey in Batumi.  
© British Council Georgia

Left: Sam Hall (Goldierocks) hosts a Selector Party in Tbilisi.  
© British Council Georgia



# Israel



## COUNTRY CONTEXT

In 2016, the population of Israel was estimated at 8.5 million people. It is the world's only Jewish-majority state with 74.8% of the population being designated as Jewish. The country's second largest group of citizens are Arab, numbering 1.8 million people.

While Israel's diverse society is characterised by cultural and political differences between secular and ultra-orthodox Jews, Jews of Middle-Eastern and European descent, and divisions between the Jewish and Arab Palestinian communities, it remains one of the most stable countries in the region.

The economy of Israel is technologically advanced by global standards. As of 2015, it ranked in the top 18 nations in the world on the UN's Human Development Index. The major economic sectors include high-technology and industrial manufacturing.

Left: Mix the Play Launch. Dame Helen Mirren with director of the Cameri theatre Noam Semel and director of Habima theatre Ilan Ronen. Photograph by Ben Kelmer

Right: CAST – Cultural skills programme in Negev. Photograph by Caroline Meaby



## CULTURAL SECTOR OVERVIEW

Similar to the European cultural model, Israel's cultural scene is made of a network of larger institutions such as HaBima Theatre, Batsheva Dance Company and a network of cinematheques based in central Israel and receive most of their funding from the government, alongside self-generated income and philanthropic support. Smaller institutions and groups are less supported by the government and mostly rely on private and corporate donations and earned income.

Israel has the highest number of museums per capita in the world, with millions of visitors to 200 institutions annually. Major art museums operate in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa and Herzliya. The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, plays throughout the country and overseas, and almost every city has its own orchestra, with many musicians hailing from the former Soviet Union. Israeli contemporary dance is highly acclaimed internationally. Israeli literature has been widely translated since the 1980s and several Israeli writers have achieved international recognition.

## OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

*Fostering collaborations and networks:* developing high-impact partnership projects between UK and Israeli artists and institutions across all art forms.

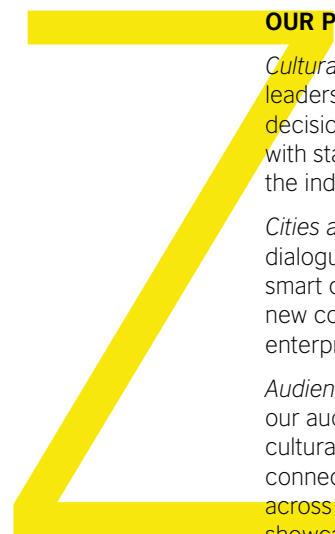
*Arts for social change:* building deeper engagement with artists and communities in the periphery of Israel, and engaging with disempowered artists through co-funded, strategic and sustainable models of working.

*Cultural relations:* fostering and supporting cultural understanding, trust and collaboration between Israel and the UK.

## CAST – CREATIVE ECONOMY ART SKILLS TOOLKIT

CAST is an ambitious new programme that provides UK creative economy knowledge, training, tools and support to Israeli artists who demonstrate the potential to create meaningful social impact in peripheral communities. CAST works with NESTA and local partners to deliver training and toolkits that focus on business modelling, understanding audiences, research and development, and presentation skills. The approach combines face-to-face training sessions with interactive workshops, practical toolkits, early career development opportunities and mentorships and some seed investment to selected creative initiatives that have positive potential for local communities.

# Kazakhstan



## OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

*Cultural leadership:* building cultural leadership capacity and engaging with decision-makers through partnerships with state and municipal institutions and the independent sector.

*Cities and creativity:* promoting high-level dialogue around the creative economy, smart cities and creative hubs to foster new collaborations and support new enterprise partnerships.

*Audience development:* diversifying our audiences by creating a network of cultural leaders and entrepreneurs and connecting them with similar groups across Kazakhstan and the UK; and showcasing high-quality and innovative live events and amplifying them digitally.

## COUNTRY CONTEXT

Kazakhstan is the world's largest landlocked country. Its population of 17 million with an average age of 27 is small compared to neighbouring China and Russia.

Kazakhstan is a mining giant and one of the world's top 20 oil and gas producers. Its economy has grown enormously over the last two decades but low oil prices have contributed to a recent slow-down. However, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development predicts that Kazakhstan is still on track to become one of the top 30 most developed countries in the world by 2050.

The ambitions of Kazakhstan's leadership distinguish it from other post-Soviet states. There is a clear drive to modernise and reform, especially in terms of developing and diversifying its economy through international engagement. The UK is Kazakhstan's second-largest investor since independence in 1991, and the UK's knowledge and creative economy is seen as a source of inspiration and expertise.

## CULTURAL SECTOR OVERVIEW

Political engagement with Kazakhstan's cultural sector is limited because state authorities are not sufficiently aware of its potential. Equally, the sector's leadership has yet to persuade the government of its potential as a contributor to national development and prosperity.

The independent cultural sector, based largely in Almaty, receives little public funding. The Ministry of Culture, headquartered in the capital city of Astana, mainly supports institutions such as national museums and state theatres. Meanwhile Almaty Municipality's Department of Culture has no systematic approach to developing the thriving cultural sector, though the new mayor has a vision to link culture and business.

The cultural industries in Almaty are driven by the younger generation. Cultural activists advocate the importance of creative hubs and cultural centres, which has led to recent renewal of the independent arts scene. This has been supported by a new generation of arts managers who are motivated and active but who need support through international connections, advocacy and business development.

## GREAT UK FASHION AND DESIGN

In 2016, we worked with the GREAT campaign on a highly focused networking and skills development programme for 200 young Kazakhstani fashion and design professionals. Supported by Chevron and drawing extensively on UK expertise, a range of activities took place over the year and resulted in City Nomads, an exhibition presented at the British Council's head office during the London Design Festival which was visited by 35,000 people and reached a further 550,000 online. City Nomads will now travel to Astana to be part of our extensive UK programme for Expo 2017.

Above: Stephen Wigley from the University of Huddersfield with participants in the Fashion Education Showcase, Almaty. © British Council Kazakhstan

Left: City Nomads exhibition in London and Astana. Photography by Oleg Zuev. Designer: Khan Kuchum



## Russia

### COUNTRY CONTEXT

Russia is the largest country on earth, spanning 11 time zones. Its population is 143 million, with 12 million in Moscow and 5 million in St Petersburg. There are 12 cities with populations of over 1 million and 24 cities with populations of over 500,000 in European Russia, Siberia and the Far East.

A long economic boom came to an end in 2013 as a result of falling oil and gas prices. This was exacerbated by the imposition of sanctions over Ukraine in 2014. Russia is acknowledged to be over-dependent on raw materials and this crisis highlights the need to diversify, including a case for modernising its strong education and science base, and developing the cultural and creative economy.

The UK-Russia political relationship is at its lowest point since the end of the Cold War. Against this backdrop, cultural relations are acknowledged to be particularly important. This has been reflected in the success of the UK-Russia Year of Culture 2014 and UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature 2016.



### CULTURAL SECTOR OVERVIEW

Russia is the inheritor of the Soviet legacy of public funding for the cultural sector. It has an even longer tradition of artistic achievement and reverence for artistic talent.

Government, at both federal and regional level, remains the main source of funding for culture, but grants and subsidies no longer cover cultural organisations' full needs. Public-private partnerships are in their infancy and sponsorship mainly takes the form of one-offs and is not helped by the economic crisis.

Following 25 years of historically minimal government interference in the culture sector, a number of laws have been passed since 2012, which have increased government control. Russia's national cultural strategy has a strong patriotic thrust, but the arts continue to show resilience, independence and diversity.

There is a huge appetite in Russia for cultural exports from the UK, and also a desire to benefit from the UK's experience in cultural leadership and management. There are some notable long-term cultural partnerships between Russia and the UK, and new arrivals are welcome.

Left: Sir Ian McKellen performs Shakespeare at the Midsummer festivals in Moscow and Ekaterinburg.  
© British Council Russia

Above: Cultural management workshops led by Morris Hargreaves MacIntyre in Kaliningrad.  
© British Council Russia

### OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

*Diversifying audiences:* engaging with new audiences in key regional cities.

*Digital innovation:* harnessing the power of digital technology to engage new audiences and inspire collaboration between the UK and Russia.

*Capacity building:* developing collaborations and building networks between artists and cultural institutions in the UK and Russia.

### CULTURAL LEADERS AND YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

We identified a significant opportunity for the UK to connect with young cultural leaders and entrepreneurs across Russia and in 2016 ran a mapping exercise and pilot cultural management programme. Manchester-based Morris Hargreaves MacIntyre won the public tender to run the programme and engaged with 300 future leaders in the ten cities that will host the football World Cup in 2018. In addition to developing new partnerships and collaborations between Russia and the UK, the programme, which will be extended in 2017, aims to develop capacity for innovative programme and audience development.





## COUNTRY CONTEXT

Turkey is a young country in two senses – it is less than 100 years old and its population of 80 million people has a median age of just 30. The 36 million people under 30 face an uncertain future due to domestic and international security challenges and community tensions amplified by the economic and social impact of the refugee crisis.

Influencing Turkey's young people to make positive life choices is of paramount importance to Turkey, the Middle East and the UK. The country is, however, deeply polarised between conservative, traditional and more overtly religious individuals, and those who identify as more liberal, secular and progressive. These two 'halves' of Turkey traditionally distrust each other and do not interact. Young people hold the key to Turkey's future and it is in our shared interest to engage with them, understand their aspirations and goals, and improve their perceptions of the UK.

Above: Grayson Perry: The Vanity of Small Differences at Pera Museum, Istanbul.  
© Pera Museum

Left: Workshop for professional actors with Aitor Basauri of Spymonkey during the Istanbul Theatre Festival.  
© British Council Turkey



## CULTURAL SECTOR OVERVIEW

Turkey's state investment in the arts is directed largely towards institutions and programmes that embrace and promote traditional values and to the maintenance of the cultural heritage. As a result the contemporary arts sector is heavily dependent on private funding and corporate sponsorship.

Istanbul is an international hub, and home to many of the country's leading artists and institutions, but its outward-looking creative community has been affected greatly by recent social and political changes, by falling tourism and by the government's withdrawal from the Creative Europe programme.

Nationally, a lack of philanthropic foundations and incentives for individual donors has enabled private corporations, who establish institutions – mostly museums – under family or brand names, to become the most powerful cultural stakeholders. The independent sector is vibrant and ambitious but its infrastructure is fragile. It is a rapidly changing and constantly shifting environment for the arts in Turkey, but its communities are resilient and there remains an interest in cultural entrepreneurship, capacity building and networking and a wish to maintain and extend international connections.

## OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

*Women in culture:* creating opportunities for female culture professionals to enhance their leadership skills, to move into senior roles, influence the wider cultural sector and support the next generation.

*Social inclusion:* supporting the development of artists and organisations from the disability and LGBT communities, highlighting the impact of their work on social change and making it accessible to the widest possible audience.

*Creative enterprise and innovation:* creating learning and development opportunities for young entrepreneurs, culture professionals and artists in order to sustain a strong, internationally connected, creative arts sector in Turkey.

*Diverse voices:* promoting a culture of critical thinking and supporting individuals in creating arts content which is accessible to a broad audience.

## DESIGN CONNECTIONS ISTANBUL

Working with the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennial, we invited eight senior design curators from the UK to attend the biennial's opening week to connect with local design professionals and gain insights into architecture and design practice in Turkey. Riya Patel, senior curator at London's *Aram Gallery* commented 'Istanbul's urban and political situation is continually changing and for the curators this made it an ideal place in which to question the role of design and encourage a young scene to define it for themselves. Many of the spaces we visited operate with uncertainty and must find creative and alternative ways to keep going. For a London-based curator, this was a real eye-opener.'

## Ukraine

### COUNTRY CONTEXT

Ukraine is the largest Eastern Partnership country bordering the European Union. Closer ties with the EU prevent the prospect of increased stability and prosperity for its 45 million people, but it is currently facing a sustained period of economic entrenchment caused by the war in the east and dramatically changed relations with Russia since the 2014 Revolution of Dignity.

Ukraine has a well-educated workforce, but its education system needs large-scale reform to develop the capacity and skills needed for the country's economy to recover from 20 years of corruption, missed opportunities and the current conflict. The new leadership of the Ministry of Education and Science is actively working to reform the fundamentals and practice of education, and sees the UK as a relevant and attractive source of ideas and models.

The Revolution of Dignity and subsequent events in 2014 have created a great appetite for change within the general population, especially its young people. The British Council's *Hopes, Fears and Dreams* report in 2015, exploring the views of Ukraine's next generation, revealed considerable optimism for the future, and a readiness to participate in the building of that future within Ukraine. These young people will provide the engine for Ukraine's prosperity and stability, and will determine its democratic direction.



### CULTURAL SECTOR OVERVIEW

Ukraine has a vast artistic tradition, and a diverse and rich contemporary arts scene, both of which are largely unknown in Britain. Key figures in Europe's cultural history were Ukrainian, from Gogol and Malevich, to Prokofiev, Dziga Vertov and Oleksandr Dovzhenko.

As in most former Soviet states, Ukraine's cultural sector was entirely subsidised by the state for decades. Reliance on government subsidy continues for most traditional artistic disciplines, while contemporary practice in the major art forms (visual arts, film, fashion) rely on private funding for development and internationalisation.

This division between traditional state-funded culture and the independent scene is now being challenged. For example, the government is introducing new legal mechanisms that allow private cultural institutions and enterprises to bid for state funding. The government is also working more closely with NGOs, private foundations and international agencies to develop cultural diplomacy initiatives to improve its image overseas.

With 15 million of the population online, Ukraine is a potentially large market for UK cultural products and services. Increased levels of English fluency make it a potentially important market for export-dependent UK cultural trade.

Above: Graeme Thompson of Live Theatre, Newcastle introduces new UK play readings in Kyiv, part of a project with Live, Hull Truck, the Young Vic and Sherman Cymru. Photograph by Oleksandr Pilyugin

Left: Benjamin Clementine performs at Selector Live in Kyiv.  
© British Council Ukraine

### OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

*Policy development:* we lead a consortium of European cultural institutes delivering the EU's Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme, reforming cultural policy, and building capacity for artists and institutions.

*Skills development:* we include a capacity building component in all of our theatre, fashion, film, visual arts and creative economy programmes.

*Arts for social change:* we develop country-wide projects to support urban development in post-industrial, economically deprived mid-sized cities in Ukraine, and support cultural programmes that champion equality, diversity and inclusion.

### UK/UKRAINE ARTIST RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

Our SWAP programme seeks to connect artists from Ukraine and the UK and to support their professional development and internationalisation. It is designed to give artists time to research, explore and reflect on the UK and Ukraine's vast artistic traditions. In 2016 we worked with the Liverpool Biennial and six leading venues and organisations across the Ukraine to host a series of residencies. An exhibition of the work created by the residency artists in both countries will open in Kyiv in March 2017.



## Uzbekistan

### CULTURAL SECTOR OVERVIEW

The cultural sector in Uzbekistan is predominantly state-funded with a few emerging independent, privately owned theatres and galleries. The training process for arts specialists is undergoing revision and modernisation as part of the national education reform.

There is strong recognition by the government of the value of culture and national heritage. There is also growing demand for skills development to deliver and manage national cultural infrastructure, and to champion quality programming that highlights innovation, entrepreneurship and audience participation.

UK institutions are well placed to work across the arts, education and creative industries sectors, and their expertise and experience in the area of cultural skills is respected in Uzbekistan.

### COUNTRY CONTEXT

Uzbekistan is a regional hub in Central Asia, which makes its stability crucial to the security of the whole region. It is the third largest former Soviet republic and has a young demographic – 65% in a population of 32 million are under 30. The country is at a critical juncture in its development, as the post-Soviet generation begins to come into its own and seeks greater engagement with the rest of the world. Education is prioritised by the government as a key driver for economic development and social change.

The British Council has a key role to play in bridging the knowledge gap between Uzbekistan and the UK, and this has been stated on a number of occasions by Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister. In 2015, the British Council successfully re-launched its arts programme and identified visual arts and theatre development as the two priorities, in consultation with key local partners.



### OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

*Capacity building:* continue a programme of professional development and international networking for arts professionals.

*Fostering collaboration and networks:* collaboration on curriculum development in arts higher education institutions and systemic changes in art management.

*Showcasing:* audience engagement through the showcasing of contemporary Uzbekistan art in the UK and UK art in Uzbekistan.

### THEATRE MATTERS

Our theatre programme dedicated to Shakespeare's 400th anniversary began in November 2015 with the tour of the Globe Theatre's *Hamlet* to Uzbekistan. It was followed by the high profile UK-Uzbekistan Theatre Matters forum that brought together 37 state theatres in Uzbekistan and leading theatre experts from the UK.

Following the forum, the British Council commissioned a report summarising key directions with short and long-term steps in theatre development through partnership with the UK, namely educational activities for theatre students and young professionals, longer term capacity building, and curriculum enhancement initiatives.

Above: Acting master class at the Uzbek State Institute of Arts and Culture led by John Tucker of Rose Bruford College, UK.  
© British Council Uzbekistan

Left: Kerry Michael, Theatre Royal Stratford East, speaks at the Theatre Matters conference in Tashkent.  
© British Council Uzbekistan



## Western Balkans

### COUNTRY CONTEXT

The Western Balkans region embraces six countries, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia. It has a total population of 18 million people – 55% of which live in urban areas. All countries have an EU candidate or potential candidate status and are at different stages of the accession process or negotiations. Being emerging markets, socio-economic reforms are high on governments' agendas.

Domestic trade, accommodation and food services are on average the largest sectors, while industry and agriculture rank at 20% and 12% respectively. The region enjoys a high degree of macroeconomic stability, favourable taxes and labour costs, and geographic proximity to EU markets is a strong advantage. Innovation is rated as a strong area of potential growth.

Social challenges are marked by instability, complex political relations, corruption, weak rule of law, and high youth unemployment. GDP per capita is less than half of that of EU members and press index averages at 87.

English is widely spoken, and an estimated 85% of the population is considered to have multilingual education. UK education and culture, especially music, film, television, comedy and visual arts, are widely respected.

Above: Ghostpoet with Albanian musician Bledi Boraku during the filming of *Mix the Balkans*.  
© British Council

Below: Damien Hirst: *New Religion*, an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Novi Sad, Serbia.  
© British Council



### CULTURAL SECTOR OVERVIEW

The cultural landscape of the Western Balkans features a combination of large cultural institutions and a wide range of independent cultural organisations. Institutions house a rich regional and global heritage but are burdened by a legacy of outdated management models that are slowly changing. Independent initiatives form a significant portion of the cultural scene, engaging creative entrepreneurs that are burdened by a legacy of outdated, slowly changing management models. They tend to focus on film, music, design, creative enterprise and theatre.

The sector looks to the UK for best practice in areas such as cultural skills, creative economy growth, innovation, audience engagement and cultural policy. Progressive initiatives have strong regional collaboration, solid international and UK connections, and strong potential for collaboration. Government funding is scarce, and organisations look to commercial sponsorship and EU funding for creative projects.

Consumer expenditure on culture varies from a low of 0.40% to a high of 2.9%. Arts and culture are positioned as instruments for social change and socio-economic development. Several national plans are explicitly directed at sustainable development and include culture as one sector contributing to sustainability objectives.

### OUR PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

*Capacity building:* our work creates opportunities for professional and creative development of artists, creative entrepreneurs and cultural relationships with the UK.

*Fostering collaboration and networks:* we are strengthening the creative sector and increasing the number of cultural connections with the UK.

*Sharing UK arts with the world:* we are enhancing the profile of UK creativity and developing new ways of engaging audiences.

*Arts for social change:* we will position the arts and cultural sector to have a leading role in regional and international collaboration, creating a more inclusive society, with a special focus on youth and digital innovation.

### CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ARTS FROM THE UK

More than 120,000 people have experienced our recent visual arts exhibitions: *Henry Moore – The Printmaker (2014)* and *Damien Hirst's New Religion (2016)*. Breaking visitor records and hailed as cultural events of the year, we appeared in over 400 media pieces, putting the UK in the spotlight.

Working with cultural institutions in the region, we identify artists or shows that have the potential to stimulate public discussion and policy reform. We focus on digital and innovative ways of working with audiences. Our ambition is to broaden the range of artists and work that we show.

Exhibitions are set as frameworks for professional development of curators in areas such as exhibition installation and international touring strategies. This all-inclusive model enhances collaboration and creates links for UK institutions to develop partnerships in the region.

## Find out more

### Armenia

[www.britishcouncil.am/en](http://www.britishcouncil.am/en)

### Azerbaijan

[www.britishcouncil.az](http://www.britishcouncil.az)

### Georgia

[www.britishcouncil.ge/en](http://www.britishcouncil.ge/en)

### Israel

[www.britishcouncil.org.il/en](http://www.britishcouncil.org.il/en)

### Kazakhstan

[www.britishcouncil.kz](http://www.britishcouncil.kz)

### Russia

[www.britishcouncil.ru/en](http://www.britishcouncil.ru/en)

### Turkey

[www.britishcouncil.org.tr/en](http://www.britishcouncil.org.tr/en)

### Ukraine

[www.britishcouncil.org.ua/en](http://www.britishcouncil.org.ua/en)

### Uzbekistan

[www.britishcouncil.uz/en](http://www.britishcouncil.uz/en)

## WESTERN BALKANS

### Albania

[www.britishcouncil.al/en](http://www.britishcouncil.al/en)

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

[www.britishcouncil.ba/en](http://www.britishcouncil.ba/en)

### Kosovo

[kosovo.britishcouncil.org/en](http://kosovo.britishcouncil.org/en)

### Macedonia

[www.britishcouncil.mk/en](http://www.britishcouncil.mk/en)

### Montenegro

[www.britishcouncil.me/en](http://www.britishcouncil.me/en)

### Serbia

[www.britishcouncil.rs/en](http://www.britishcouncil.rs/en)

## Our structure

The British Council's Arts department consists of two main parts: UK and international. In the UK, we have one executive, four cross-disciplinary, three national and six art form teams. These teams are responsible for developing an expert understanding of the UK and the potential partners the British Council might work with in their sector.

Arts staff in countries within each of the seven regions work with their colleagues in the UK to co-create our programmes based on their expert knowledge of the local context in which they operate.

Overall decision making across Arts is made by a senior leadership team, which consists of a director in each region and 11 directors in the UK.

## Our funding

Over 75 per cent of the British Council's turnover is earned through teaching and exams, tendered contracts and partnerships. The British Council also receives grant-in-aid funding from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This makes up less than 20 per cent of our total income, but enables us to represent the UK's long term interest in countries where we cannot rely on earned income alone.

Much of our work in Arts is supported by Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding. ODA is UK tax payers' money that supports aid and development in low- to middle-income countries. Using this, we deliver arts programmes that promote economic development and welfare in these countries, which contribute to building trust and opportunity with the UK.

