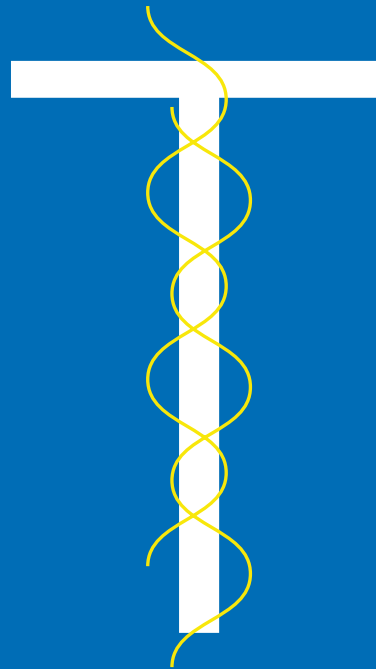
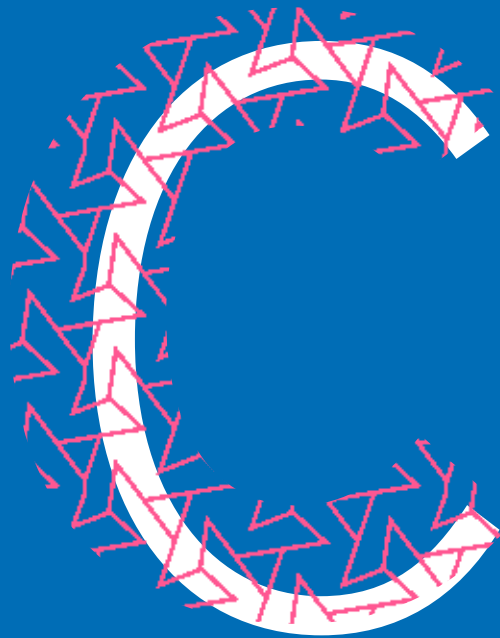
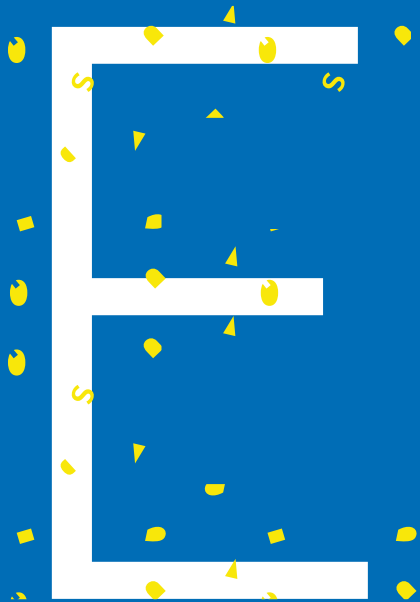
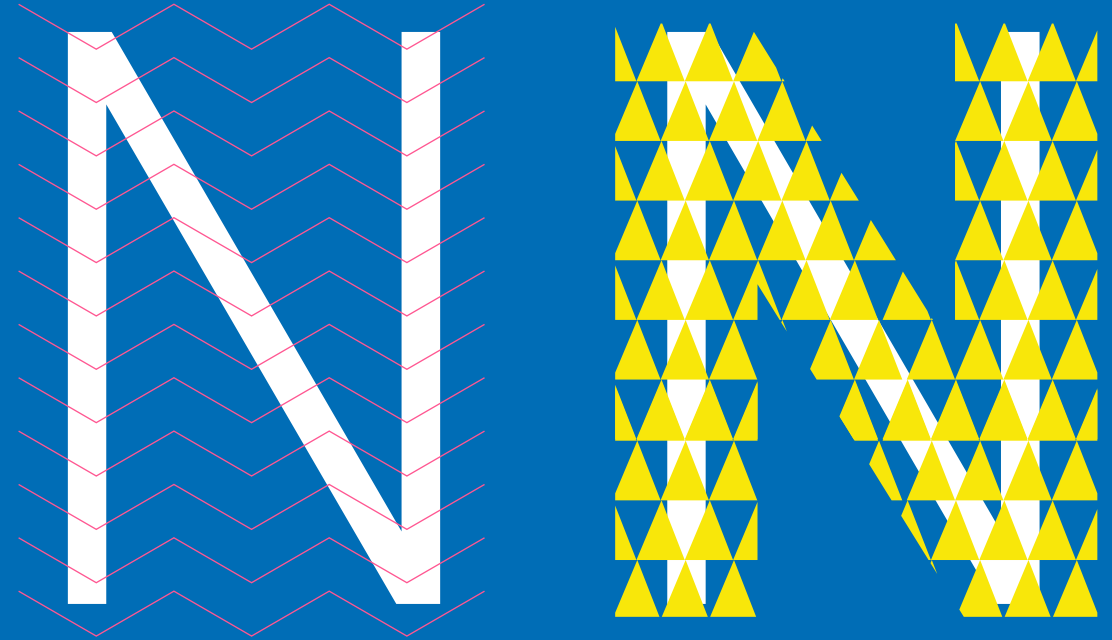




CONNECTS US



Finding new ways of  
connecting with and  
understanding each  
other through creativity

## Foreword

### **Arts and heritage have never been more important for the UK's international cultural relations.**

Exposure to the diverse cultural riches the UK has to offer creates new opportunities and inspiration for artists around the world and the fostering of new collaborations with their British counterparts. More widely, it creates a modern, vibrant and creative image of the UK amongst millions of people in fast growing economies, encouraging more trade, investment and tourism. It can also help to bring together divided communities and build connections, trust and opportunity for people affected by conflict.

Cultural exchange supports economic and social development, strengthens relationships and creates opportunity. This is increasingly important in troubled times, as the safety of our people at home, the ability of UK organisations to operate internationally, and the freedom of UK citizens to travel and trade, face serious and growing challenges. Our programmes find creative ways of connecting with each other to maintain relationships and support the optimism and imagination of people worldwide to explore more positive futures.

For more than 80 years, the British Council has been working to create a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world. We now operate in over 110 countries around the world and our work in the arts reached 10.9 million people on the ground and a further 186 million online and through broadcast media in 2015/16.

Through seasons and festivals in China, Brazil, Mexico and Nigeria we have continued to develop new relationships with governments, artists and audiences. The UK-Mexico Year of Cultural Exchange closed with the UK as guest of honour at the Guadalajara International Book Fair, the largest of its kind in the Spanish-speaking world. The festival included more than 200 events for an audience of 800,000, with sessions from top British writers including Salman Rushdie, Irvine Welsh, and Jeanette Winterson; new exhibitions from David Hockney and David Shrigley; a film festival; and dance, music and theatre performances from the Aurora Orchestra, Company Wayne McGregor, Little Boots and Graeae.

Elsewhere, the 2015 UK-China Year of Cultural Exchange resulted in 100 new relationships formed between UK and Chinese cultural institutions and over £20 million worth of culture and creative industry commercial agreements were signed.

### **OUR AMBITION FOR 2021**

#### **By 2021 we will have increased the number of cultural connections between the UK and the world.**

This will include:

- The international ambition of the UK culture sector will be doubled.
- We will partner or lend support to more than 100,000 artists and organisations worldwide each year, building lasting affinity and connections for the UK, including at least 5000 from the UK.
- We will deliver a world leading arts programme on the ground and online, which will connect more than 20 million people digitally each year with art and culture from the UK.
- The UK will be a global hub for collaboration. Arts professionals around the world will look to the UK as a respected and trusted partner.

- The UK will be recognised as a world leader in protecting cultural heritage, as a convenor of expertise and policy development, and UK organisations will lead the way in delivery.
- The world will look to the UK for the development of policy and practice regarding the place of culture in inclusion, representing marginalised voices and access to the arts.
- The UK will be a leader in building the capacity of creative sectors around the world.

This will directly and indirectly create value for the UK, through new international opportunities; access to a large international network; and increased influence for the UK more widely. This also meets the priorities of the UK's devolved administrations to promote their culture overseas.

## HOW WE WILL GET THERE

### Sharing UK arts with the world

Our expert teams partner with the UK's most exciting established and emerging artists to curate innovative programmes and present them to a global audience. We work at the forefront of the UK's world leading arts sector, helping the next generation of artists break new ground. Our programme attracts a diverse and wide-ranging audience, and we continually work to extend and deepen our dialogue and engagement with them. We create new opportunities for artists and organisations to work internationally, and introduce audiences around the world to the best of UK creativity.

### Fostering collaboration and networks

We help the world meet the best of UK arts by creating spaces in which meaningful creative dialogues can take place, informing and benefitting international relationships between the UK and countries around the world at every level.

We support creative people to collaborate and experiment with new ideas, solutions, content and forms of practice, which enable new ways to produce, distribute and finance their work.

We support UK culture to raise its international ambitions by raising awareness of opportunities, supporting emerging artists and companies to internationalise, helping mid-scale organisations to grow and working with major international players to open new doors and develop new networks.

Through this work, artists and organisations develop sustainable ways of working for long term prosperity, and benefit from sharing knowledge and practice.

### Arts for social change

We extend safe spaces for culture, creative exploration and exchange; building trust, enabling dialogue and presenting marginalised voices. We support the protection of cultural heritage, and the retention and expression of cultural identities.

We work with emerging and established artists in the UK and overseas to support and promote their work. This includes supporting excluded and at risk young people, using arts to support the empowerment of women and girls, and increasing the representation of work by Deaf and disabled artists.

This work contributes to security and stability by creating alternative pathways, and through building understanding, tolerance and cooperation. It creates opportunities for artists by ensuring the reflection of a diverse and open society in our and other countries' cultural output.

### Capacity building

We strengthen the arts sector worldwide by developing its capacity to innovate, to reach new audiences, to develop skills, and support livelihoods. This is embedded in every aspect of our projects as well as through three core programme areas: cultural skills, creative economy and Creative Europe Desk UK.

This work supports prosperity for arts professionals, and grows networks and influence by positioning the UK as a leader in these fields, creating new opportunities for training and developing livelihoods.

### Policy and research

We aim to better understand and shape cultural policy through our programme. This includes our work in culture and development, capacity building, inclusion, and the role culture plays in international relations. We share our research with the cultural sector in the UK and overseas and support partners to shape policy, which leads to the development of new opportunities and understanding. We showcase artistic work that illustrates these conversations.

## CONCLUSION

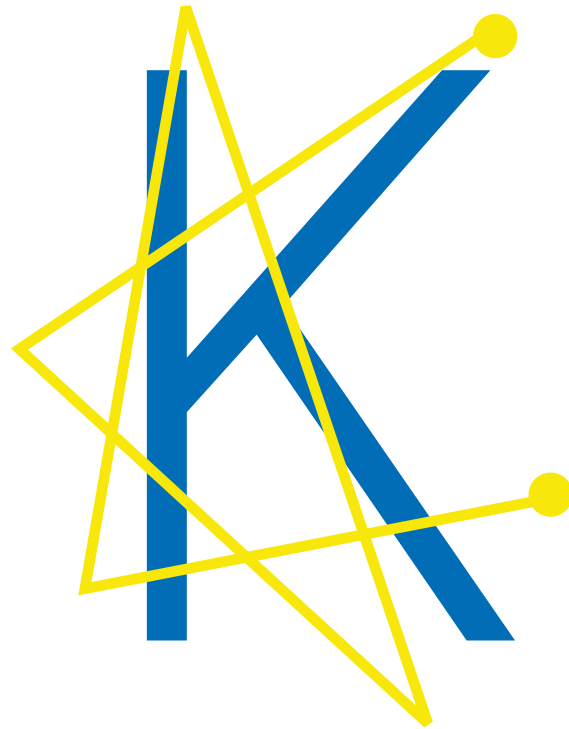
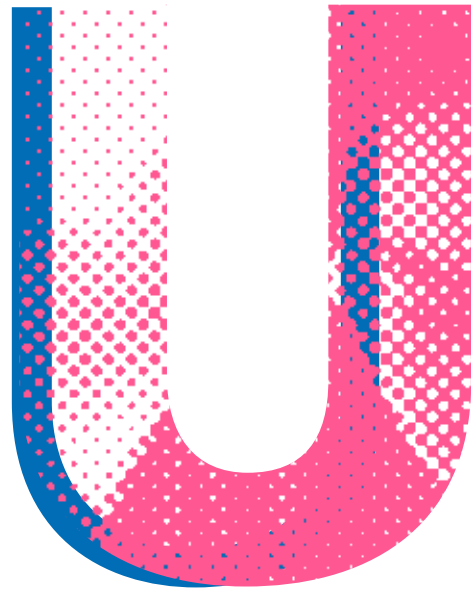
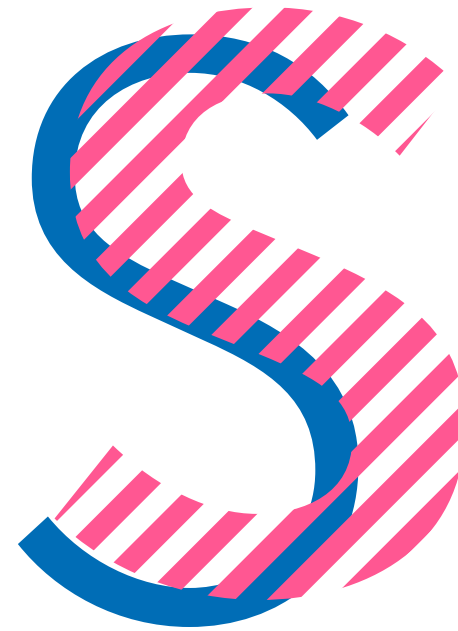
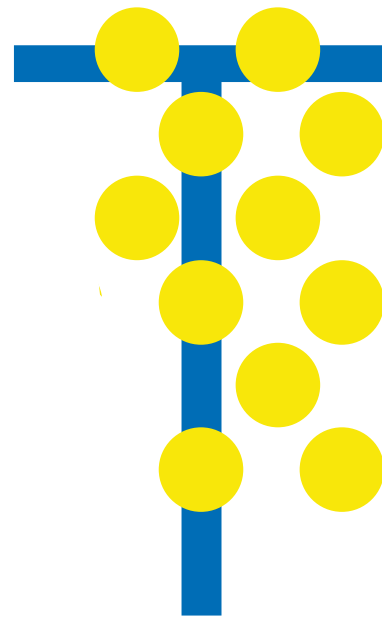
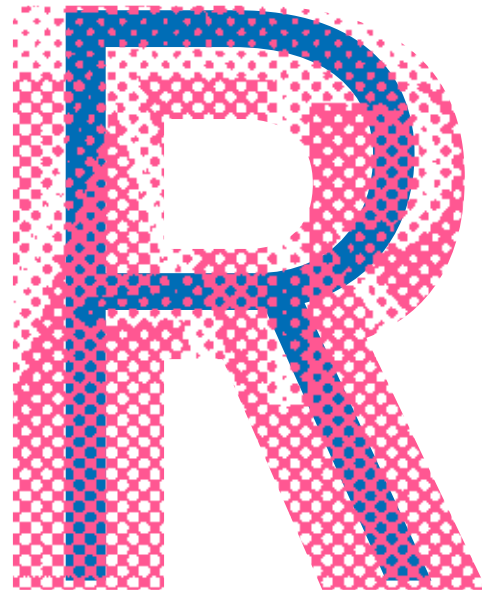
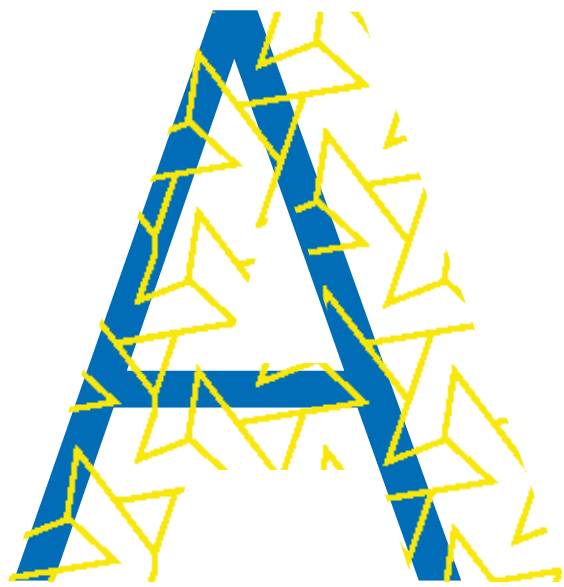
Our work in the arts has grown substantially over the last five years, delivering more impact and reaching more people around the world than ever before. With partnerships at the heart of our work, we are providing more opportunities for British artists and organisations, creating vital networks and influence for the UK across the globe. As ever, we are extremely grateful for our partners' continued support and welcome new connections.

This new strategy will support us to deliver our aim for stronger creative sectors across the world that are better connected with the UK for the next five years and beyond.



Graham Sheffield CBE  
Director Arts  
British Council





The place  
of arts in UK  
cultural relations

## WHY CULTURAL RELATIONS AND THE BRITISH COUNCIL?



### Artists in the UK have long reflected traditional values as well as questioning, mocking or undermining them.

The arts offer an approachable way to reach people who might not otherwise engage with complex issues, presenting an accessible way for audiences to become part of a community and talk with others about what they have seen. Art can create and represent distinct identities for our nations and regions, articulate the voices of all our communities, and influence the way others see us and the way we see ourselves.

Since 1934, the British Council has existed to create 'a basis of friendly knowledge and understanding' between the people of the UK and the wider world. Our work in the arts has been central to this mission for more than 80 years, from presenting the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, being a driving force behind the first Edinburgh International Festival and presenting *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Egypt during the Suez crisis; to Shakespeare Lives, our 2016 celebration of Shakespeare's work, and major seasons of work in Brazil, China, Mexico, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia and South Africa.

Our work in the arts has changed dramatically since our founding. In the early years of the British Council, we had our own drama company – the London Shakespeare Group – who rehearsed productions in London before taking them on tours around the world. In literature we were probably most famous for our multi-volume series on *Writers and their Works*, all commissioned by the British Council and including T S Eliot on George Herbert. Film meant the worldwide touring of our vast 16mm film library, taking *Genevieve* or *Brief Encounter* to rural Africa or Asia often projected with a power supply from the British Council Land Rover. Meanwhile our own art collection provided the contents for most of our overseas visual arts exhibiting. While the Collection remains one of our greatest assets and is seen by audiences around the world, the last 30 years has seen the British Council become an informed and imaginative conduit and catalyst for real engagement between UK and overseas arts and artists through innovative collaboration and co-production.

A Good Day for Cyclists. Painted by Sarah Tynan at British Pavilion 2013. © the British Council. Photo: Cristiano Corte

We now work in over 110 countries worldwide. These include all of the places of major importance for UK trade and security, from China, India, Brazil, Russia and its neighbours, to North America and the EU, to the Commonwealth, to the Middle East and North Africa. We are at the forefront of the UK's international networks and soft power.

We use the cultural resources of the UK such as art, sport, education, science, culture, language, innovation and creativity to make a positive contribution to the people, institutions and governments of the countries we work with. This creates opportunities, builds connections and engenders trust, so that we make a lasting difference to the security, prosperity and influence of the UK.

Our work helps to keep the UK safe and secure by improving stability and security in strategically important countries. It increases UK prosperity by encouraging more trade, investment and tourism. It makes a lasting difference to the UK's international influence by developing connections and networks with key decision makers globally, increasing the number of people who know and trust the UK.

Research by Ipsos MORI for the British Council shows that arts, and cultural and historic attractions, are two of the top five contributors to a nation's attractiveness to people from other countries. It is because of the quality of our cultural sector in the UK that the country is regularly placed in the top of global rankings of soft power.

Our extensive network enables connections to form between artists, organisations and audiences around the world. Our teams on the ground provide deep local insight helping to deliver excellent programmes that are as culturally relevant as they are compelling. In everything we do, we seek to create mutual benefit for both the UK and the countries where we work, based on our understanding of conditions on the ground, demand for our services and the need to provide a balance between learning from and contributing to the places where we work.



VR experience at MUTEK festival, Canada. © MUTEK VR Salon / Trung Dung Nguyen

## The strength of UK creativity

The British Council works across eight art forms covering the full breadth of the UK creative industries:

### ARCHITECTURE DESIGN FASHION

The UK is recognised for its thriving design sector, from structural engineering, vehicle design and public transport, to communication, digital design and public space. There is an opportunity for greater cultural engagement through design areas of UK excellence, such as graphic design and engineering. The quality and renown of UK education in architecture, design and fashion has created a dynamic context of debate, research and experimentation, and an incredibly international scene. Meanwhile, professional boundaries between design disciplines are breaking down, with many young designers working across a number of forms and questioning design processes and ways of working, and design thinking increasingly regarded as an employable skill. This has led to a great deal of innovation within the design sector, and the growth of a 'maker culture', combining digital innovation with a desire to rediscover the practical skills of making.

Fashion Utopias: International Fashion Showcase 2016, Indonesia Artwork: James Dawe. Designer: Dian Pelangi. Photo: Dion Muharrom



### FILM

Film is the most accessible and popular art form globally, and UK film occupies a significant position as a commercial driver and as a creative force. Our national output is renowned for its range, from vast budget blockbusters to small-scale critically-acclaimed work by auteurs.

UK film is consistently well-received internationally, topping key awards nominees lists and making the selection in global festivals and markets from Toronto and Sundance to Busan and Cannes. UK short filmmakers are consistently sought after on the international circuit; our reputation as a centre for creativity in independent animation continues; and we lead the field in documentary with Asif Kapadia's *Amy* opening with one of the all-time biggest box office returns for any documentary and going on to win both a Bafta and an Oscar for best documentary.



Cámara Chica project, Caracas, Venezuela 2016. Photo: Chris Kemp



## LITERATURE

Literature is a wide-ranging, thriving, diverse part of the UK's cultural sector with a global reputation for excellence. It embraces everything from basic literacy and picture books to major literary prize winners; from graphic novelists and emerging poets to renowned military historians. The UK is an influential source of experimental fiction as well as thrilling crime writing and children's literature that inspires its readers. UK non-fiction writers throw new light on topics and promote debate, whether they are peering into great lives, challenging historical orthodoxy or recording the life of the bumblebee. The literature sector includes big international publishers and festivals, but is dependent on the dedication of a multiplicity of individuals and small organisations, engaging passionate audiences. The fundamental literature relationship is a one-to-one interaction between writer and reader. The universal desire to tell our stories makes literature in all its many forms an invaluable bridge between the people of the UK and the countries of the world.



Book signing at London Book Fair – Mexico Market Focus 2015.  
Photo: Kajal Patel

## MUSIC

Music, transcending language barriers as it does, is a powerful force for strong and lasting connections between cultures. The UK has a thriving, world-renowned music sector of great richness, breadth, diversity and innovation that draws on numerous cultural influences. Our classical music industry is admired globally for its quality, innovation, relevance, access and education work. The independent sector can be experimental and risk-taking while the vibrant commercial rock and pop market is supported by a complex and nuanced industry of record labels, publishers, live agents and promoters. The UK festival circuit is world-leading across all genres from Glastonbury to the BBC Proms. The places where music, media, technology and other art forms combine to inspire digital and audio-visual work, from soundtracks through video games to sound art, is one of the UK music industry's great strengths. This is complemented by high-quality training opportunities across the UK at university and conservatoire level, for musicians and industry professionals across the classical and commercial genres.



Ben Ufo at Mutek Festival, Mexico.  
Photo: Elizabeth Cacho



## THEATRE AND DANCE



The UK is a world-leader in theatre and dance, from hugely successful commercial work in the West End, to innovative smaller companies that often feed into the commercial sector, to the increasing interplay between theatre and film with performances being streamed around the world. Beyond London, there is a strong theatre tradition across the UK, with high levels of community engagement and participation through touring and local productions.

Shakespeare is the best-recognised cultural figure in the world, while the UK continues to produce more new writing for theatre than any other country. There is a strong history of political theatre, with artists continually exploring new ways to reflect on difficult issues and challenge traditional attitudes. We have excellent children's theatre and an active outdoor arts scene that reaches diverse audiences.

Company Wanye McGregor perform  
Random Dance at Feria Internacional  
del Libro, Guadalajara, Mexico.  
Photo: British Council Mexico

There is a high regard for the independent and experimental work that comes from UK devised theatre, contemporary dance and live art. This work thrives on influences from international artists and different cultures. From circus to hip hop to new technology, artists are experimenting with new approaches.

UK theatre and dance enjoys a sophisticated working practice that creates work from, with, for and by diverse communities. This includes world-class work in engagement, participation, working with young people and empowering marginalised groups. We also lead in the field of disability arts practice. From technical skills to leadership and management, there is high demand for our education and training institutions, with people from all over the world coming to study here.

## VISUAL ARTS

The UK visual arts and museums sector is certainly one of the oldest, and arguably the highest-quality, most adventurous and most diverse of its kind in the world. Thanks to investment in new institutions, and a programme of upgrades to existing ones, the sector is now experiencing a golden age: with soaring attendance figures at beautifully designed, excellently run and imaginatively programmed facilities across the UK. These organisations have invested heavily in improving the diversity of their programmes and improving visitor experience, so much so that the UK is now an acknowledged world leader in a huge range of skills from education events and family friendly policies, to digital outreach, audience development and engagement programmes, as well as governance and policy. This expertise is much in demand globally to support museum infrastructure in a wide variety of cultural and political contexts.

London is now one of the most important centres of the global art market, attracting visitors to auctions, art fairs and galleries,



while its public museums are hugely successful, globally recognised brands, exporting international touring exhibitions and making international networking a core activity. Outside London, clusters of commercial galleries and entrepreneurial artist-run spaces are flourishing, contributing to regeneration projects and city centre revival.

The UK produces and educates brilliant artists and curators, who graduate from its world renowned universities and colleges, many of whom enjoy flourishing international careers and global name recognition. Britain's diverse and dynamic cultural landscape offers artists a huge range of influences from popular culture and digital innovation, to traditional techniques; we seek to share the range and inventiveness of current UK visual arts practice with the world.

Artist David Shrigley collaborating with students  
on the installation of his exhibition Lose Your Mind  
at Hospicio Cabañas in Guadalajara, Mexico. A  
British Council touring exhibition presented as  
part of UK-Mexico 2015. © Carlos Jimenez

## CREATIVE ECONOMY

The UK is rightly regarded as a leader in defining and developing its creative economy. The creative industries are now the fastest growing sector in the UK, contributing more than £80 billion each year. Globally, they generate 3% of GDP and employ 1% of the population. Beyond financial success, they have been recognised for their innovative role in social and civic development. But major shifts in digital technology and funding mean this dynamic, diverse sector is changing rapidly; generating new possibilities for creative experiences as well as uncertainty. Accessing the new means of production, finance, collaboration and distribution can be challenging. As most countries are now considering how best to foster creativity and culture holistically, there is much for the UK to contribute and learn.



Participant in our Casade\_ZA 2015 programme, South Africa. Courtesy onedotzero. Photo: Jody Brand



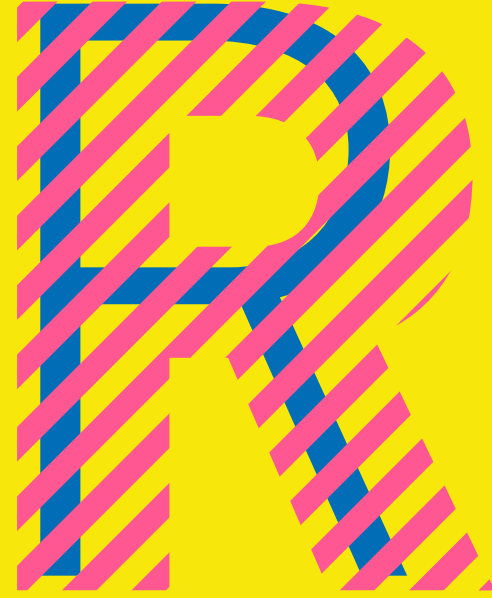
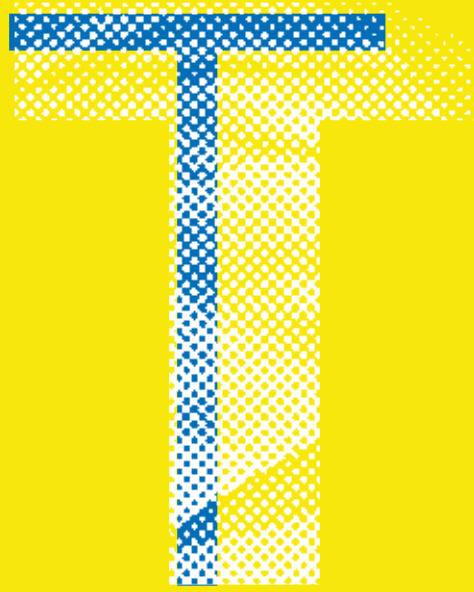
## CULTURAL SKILLS

The UK cultural sector encompasses community arts, literature, fashion, film and television, museums, visual arts, and the performing arts. Each of these industries has a unique global reputation for excellence. The professional skills that underpin and drive these sectors include sector specific skills, such as technical theatre (light, sound, stage management) and curatorial skills, as well as crosscutting skills, such as audience engagement and leadership.

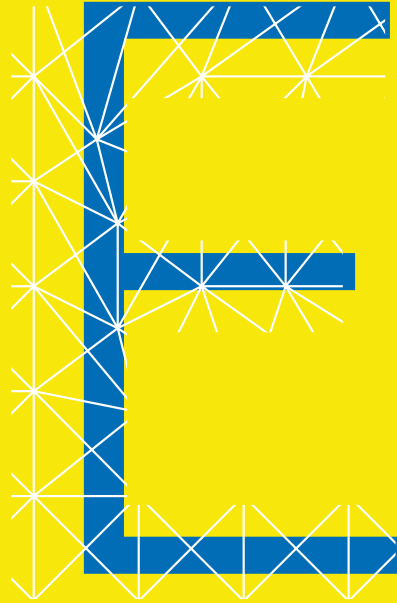
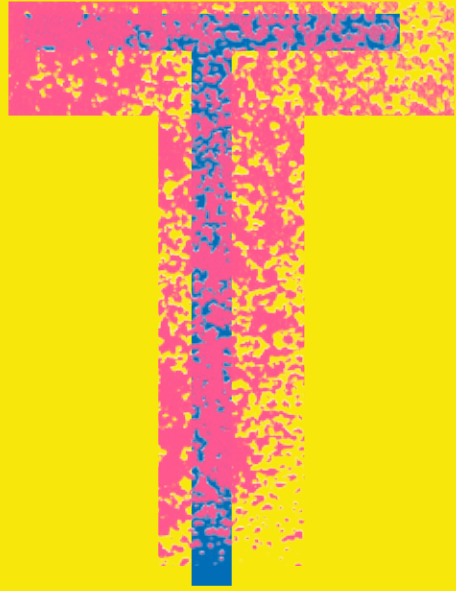
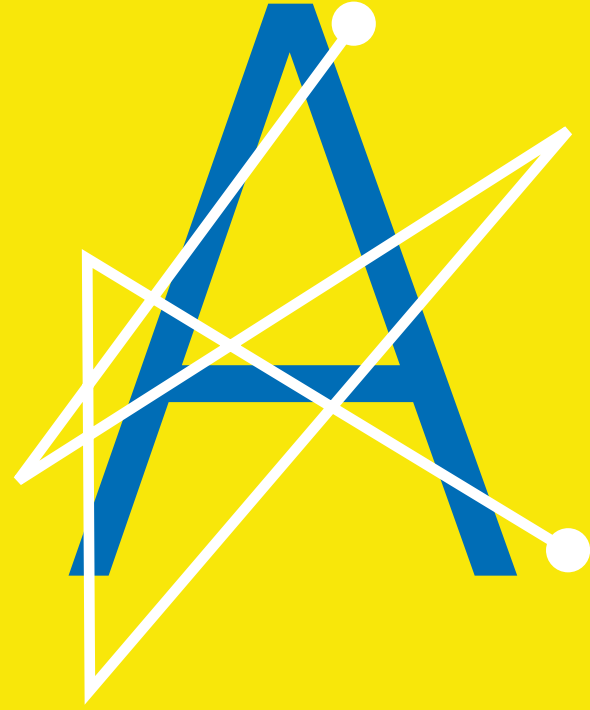
The UK is considered a global leader in cultural skills through its world-class practitioners, creative cultural businesses, festivals, cultural institutions, and highly developed education sector. This expertise creates a significant opportunity for the UK to build the capacity of the cultural sector internationally by exchanging its knowledge and best practice, and learn from others in doing so.

Dancers on the High Street at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. © Edinburgh Festival Fringe





Our new strategy







## THE NEED FOR A NEW STRATEGY

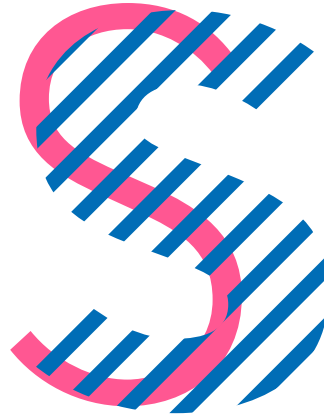
**The world has changed a great deal in the five years since our previous Arts strategy was created. There is a greater understanding and recognition of the value and potential of soft power. Relations between countries have changed, the digital landscape has transformed, and the civil war in Syria has created a refugee crisis unseen in the modern era.**

We have refreshed our strategy to take into account these changes in the global context, a refreshed and growing Arts programme, significant demand for UK arts from around the world, and increased desire to internationalise by UK arts organisations.

This strategy encapsulates a significant growth in our ambition to deliver impact around the world. It reflects a call for more work in the arts from the Triennial Review of the British Council in 2014, a strong endorsement of our programmes in key regions, such as the Middle East,

in both the 2015 Spending Review and the new UK Aid Strategy in the same year and aims to support the recently launched White Paper on culture from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Most importantly, this strategy reflects the changing contexts of the UK organisations we work with. We ran a series of consultations in 2015 around the UK with our existing partners and those we do not currently work with. Feedback on a draft of this strategy from those sessions has been incorporated into this final version, including increased work to share insight with our partners, a more consistent service level in all of our operations globally, and a commitment to work in partnership for long-term impact.

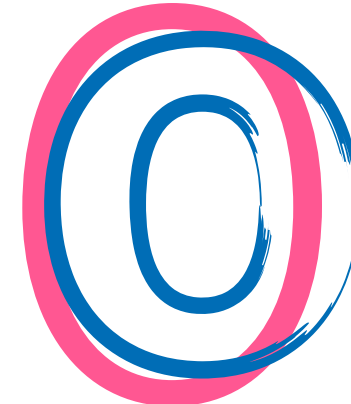


## WHAT WE WILL DO

**By 2021 we will have increased the number of cultural connections between the UK and the world.**

This will include:

- The international ambition of the UK culture sector will be doubled by increasing awareness of opportunities, supporting artists and organisations to emerge onto the world stage, and partnering more closely with major international players to open doors.
- 20,000 British artists will have benefited from British Council programmes.
- We will partner or lend support to more than 100,000 artists and organisations worldwide each year building lasting affinity and connections for the UK, including at least 5000 from the UK.



- We will deliver a world leading arts programme on the ground and online, which will connect more than 20 million people digitally each year with art and culture from the UK.
- The British Pavilion at the Venice Art and Architecture Biennales will be a world leader in displaying the best of contemporary practice.
- The British Council Collection will be amongst the most travelled collections of contemporary British art in the world. We will be working with curators from around the globe to create their own exhibitions drawn from our Collection, lending more than 1000 works to be shared with audiences globally, in specially tailored programmes to develop networks, skills and expertise for the benefit of the UK.
- The UK will be a global hub for collaboration. Arts professionals around the world will look to the UK as a respected and trusted partner.



- The UK will be recognised as a world leader in protecting cultural heritage, as a convenor of expertise and policy development, and UK organisations will lead the way in delivery.
- The world will look to the UK for the development of policy and practice regarding the place of culture in inclusion, representing marginalised voices and access to the arts. Our programmes will lead the way in supporting disability arts; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights; and the empowerment of women and girls.
- The UK will be a leader in building capacity of creative sectors around the world.

# Art Connects Us

Finding new ways of connecting with and understanding each other through creativity.

## OUR AMBITION FOR 2021

To increase the number of cultural connections between the UK and the world.

## WHERE WE WORK:

Afghanistan	Finland	Malta	Slovakia
Albania	France	Mauritius	Slovenia
Algeria	Georgia	Mexico	South Africa
Argentina	Germany	Montenegro	South Sudan
Armenia	Ghana	Morocco	Spain
Australia	Greece	Mozambique	Sri Lanka
Austria	Hong Kong	Namibia	Sudan
Azerbaijan	Hungary	Nepal	Sweden
Bahrain	India	Netherlands	Switzerland
Bangladesh	Indonesia	New Zealand	Syria
Belgium	Iran	Nigeria	Taiwan
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Iraq	Norway	Tanzania
Botswana	Ireland	Occupied - Palestinian - Territories	Thailand
Brazil	Israel	Oman	Trinidad
Bulgaria	Italy	Pakistan	Tunisia
Burma	Jamaica	Peru	Turkey
Canada	Japan	Philippines	Uganda
Chile	Jordan	Poland	Ukraine
China	Kazakhstan	Portugal	United - Arab Emirates
Colombia	Kenya	Qatar	United States - of America
Croatia	Korea	Romania	Uruguay
Cuba	Kosovo	Russia	Uzbekistan
Cyprus	Kuwait	Rwanda	Venezuela
Czech - Republic	Latvia	Saudi Arabia	Vietnam
Denmark	Lebanon	Senegal	Yemen
Egypt	Libya	Sierra Leone	Zambia
Estonia	Lithuania	Sierra Leone	Zimbabwe
Ethiopia	Macedonia	Sierra Leone	
	Malawi	Sierra Leone	
	Malaysia	Sierra Leone	

## SHARING UK ARTS WITH THE WORLD

- Introducing audiences around the world to the best of UK creativity
- Creating new opportunities for artists and organisations to work internationally

## POLICY AND RESEARCH

- Shaping cultural policy through our programme
- Sharing research with the cultural sector in the UK and overseas
- Supporting partners to shape policy

## ARTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

- Extending safe spaces for culture, creative exploration and exchange
- Building trust, enabling dialogue and presenting marginalised voices
- Supporting the protection of cultural heritage and expression of cultural identities

## FOSTERING COLLABORATION AND NETWORKS

- Supporting UK culture to raise its international ambitions
- Supporting creative people to collaborate and experiment with new ideas
- Developing sustainable ways of working for long-term prosperity and benefit from sharing knowledge and practice

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Strengthening the arts sector worldwide by:

- Developing its capacity to innovate
- Reaching new audiences
- Developing skills and supporting livelihoods

## OUR TEAMS:

Architecture Design Fashion  
Creative Economy  
Cultural Skills  
Film  
Literature  
Music  
Theatre and Dance  
Visual Arts

HOW WE WILL  
ACHIEVE OUR  
AMBITION

How we will  
achieve this

We will develop  
programmes that focus  
on five pillars to support  
our 2021 ambition. Many  
of our programmes will  
cover more than one of  
these pillars. Every project  
will feature at least one.

1

Sharing UK  
arts with  
the world



This includes:

- Seasons and festivals. We create and deliver significant engagements intended to kick-start programmes and relationships in major markets, particularly in fast-emerging economies. We aim for these to be reciprocal and mutual in design, and we develop them through partnerships across UK government and arts councils, overseas governments and with commercial sponsorship.
- The British Council Art Collection - we extend the value of our art collection, and other UK collections, by sharing them at home and around the world. The Collection contains nearly 9000 items from hundreds of artists, and the work is loaned and exhibited widely.
- The Venice Art and Architecture Biennales. We have managed the British Pavilion in Venice since 1938, commissioning British artists at the longest-running, most prestigious international art biennial in the world. We have also commissioned the exhibition for the Venice Architecture Biennale since 1991. The Art and Architecture biennales represent the most significant opportunities to showcase the creativity of UK art and architecture on a world platform.
- Showcases of the best contemporary UK culture, which can be linked to supporting export in partnership with the GREAT Britain campaign and UKTI in relevant markets through The Culture Diary. This work is often a collaboration with the arts councils of the UK.
- A digital showcasing programme, working with organisations from across the UK to curate and present content about their work to online audiences around the world. This programme grows international access to UK arts and familiarity with UK cultural organisations to support future work on the ground.
- The Selector, our weekly two-hour radio show that covers all styles of music, from indie, dubstep, folk, soul, electro and everything in between. Broadcasting in more than 40 countries, The Selector presents an overview of all that is exciting and fresh in British music. The show reflects the brilliance and diversity of British music, promoting the sounds, talents and musical culture of modern Britain to an international audience.

Still from film about Jackie  
Karuti's East African Exchange  
in Kampala, Uganda. ©32° East

**Our expert teams partner  
with the UK's most exciting  
established and emerging  
artists to curate innovative  
programmes and present  
them to a global audience.**

We work at the forefront of the UK's world leading arts sector, helping the next generation of artists break new ground. Our programme attracts a diverse and wide-ranging audience, and we continually work to extend and deepen our dialogue and engagement with them.

We create new opportunities for artists and organisations to work internationally, and introduce audiences around the world to the best of UK creativity.



## Fostering collaboration and networks

**We help the world meet the best of UK arts by creating spaces in which meaningful creative dialogues can take place, informing and benefitting international relationships at every level.**

We support creative people to collaborate and experiment with new ideas, solutions, content and forms of practice that enable new ways to produce, distribute and finance their work.

We support UK culture to grow its international ambitions by raising awareness of opportunities, supporting emerging artists and companies to internationalise, helping mid-scale organisations to grow and working with major international players to open new doors and develop new networks.

Through this work, artists and organisations develop sustainable ways of working for long term prosperity, and benefit from sharing knowledge and practice.

This includes:

- Briefing UK arts professionals on the opportunities of international working, where to work, with whom to work and how to do business. Where possible, we link with export support from UKTI, the GREAT Britain Campaign and other partners.
- We support emerging and mid-career artists to develop new connections and new possibilities for their practice through the Artists' International Development Fund and Shorts Support Scheme. We run these in partnership with UK arts councils and the British Film Institute.

- We broker collaborations between artists and organisations in the UK and around the world, and new opportunities for major UK organisations who regularly work overseas.
- We run Creative Europe Desk UK with our partners the British Film Institute, and in collaboration with arts councils and governmental bodies in the UK. Creative Europe Desk UK supports UK cultural and audiovisual organisations by promoting awareness and understanding of the opportunities that the Creative Europe programme provides, and offer free advice and support for applicants.

Ne Me Quitte Pas (2015).  
Courtesy British  
Council Armenia.  
Photo: Photolure Agency



**We extend safe spaces for culture, creative exploration and exchange; building trust, enabling dialogue and presenting marginalised voices. We support the protection of cultural heritage, and the retention and expression of cultural identities.**

We work with emerging and established artists in the UK and overseas to support and promote their work. This includes supporting excluded and at risk young people, using arts to support the empowerment of women and girls and increasing the representation of work by Deaf and disabled artists.

This work contributes to security and stability by creating alternative pathways, and through building understanding, tolerance and cooperation. It creates opportunities for artists by ensuring the reflection of a diverse society in our and other countries' cultural output.

## Arts for social change

This includes:

- Operating the UK's new Cultural Protection Fund in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The fund aims to foster, safeguard and promote cultural heritage overseas. This will lead to safeguarding against permanent loss by supporting local professionals to manage and promote cultural assets. In turn, this will enable local people to protect their cultural heritage and the role it plays in society and the economy.
- Our Artists in Recovery programme highlights the role of the arts and artists in supporting resilience, recovery and transition in conflict-affected environments through creative interventions.
- Voices and Spaces for Social Change is a programme encouraging free expression and creativity to help build more inclusive and dynamic communities. This promotes social wellbeing and supports open, inclusive, stable societies. We also support and run programmes that increase inclusion in its widest sense. This includes our work in disability arts; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights; and empowering women and girls. We focus on contexts where we can commit to systemic change over a long period.
- World Voice, our programme which trains teachers around the world to lead singing in schools to develop children's musicality and enrich cross-curricular learning. It opens children's eyes to British and other cultures through song; is transforming pedagogy and improving children's attendance, attention, listening, self-confidence, positivity, teacher-child relationships and democracy in the classroom; engages overseas policy-makers; reaches teachers in the remotest and hardest-to-reach regions of the world from Kashmir to post-earthquake Nepal; and helps to erase negative stereotypes of Britain in places where other institutions have limited influence.

Homework (2012) Part of our  
Syria: Third Space exhibition.  
© Mohammad Ghannam



## Capacity building

**We strengthen the arts sector worldwide by developing its capacity to innovate, to reach new audiences, to develop skills, and support livelihoods.**

This is embedded in every aspect of our projects as well as through two distinct programmes: cultural skills and creative economy.

This work supports prosperity for arts professionals, and grows networks and influence by positioning the UK as a leader in these fields, creating new opportunities for training and developing livelihoods.

This includes:

- Cultural skills development in priority countries. We research needs in target markets, and match these with experienced UK organisations to create training opportunities for delivery.
- Supporting the formation of policy and leadership in cultural skills training, youth engagement, English language skills and professional learning. We also share insights with policymakers to promote the development of creative economies worldwide.
- Supporting creative hubs. We support and connect collaborative communities to share ideas, best practice and policy on the development of workspaces for people in the creative industries.
- Enabling creative enterprise. We help to build sustainable businesses in the creative and cultural industries worldwide. We share knowledge and experience through workshops, mentoring and peer networks. Through our Maker Libraries programme, we connect designers and makers internationally to swap skills, share resources, exchange ideas and take part in mentoring sessions.

Digital Futures UK-Mexico 2015.  
Photo: British Council Mexico

## Policy and research

**We aim to better understand and shape cultural policy through our programme.**

We share our research with the cultural sector in the UK and overseas and support partners to shape policy, which leads to the development of new opportunities and understanding. We showcase artistic work that illustrates these conversations.

This includes:

- Arts and social change.
- Capacity building.
- Inclusion.
- Impact evaluation of our programmes.
- Research into arts markets globally.
- The role culture plays in international relations and soft power.

UK-Korea Dance Exchange Programme.  
James Cousins workshop.  
Photo: British Council Korea.



# DIAGLOGUE

How we  
will work

We will foster creative dialogues between the UK and the world to share the transformative power of the arts.

## Global connections

Our extensive network will enable connections to form between artists, organisations and audiences around the world. Our teams on the ground in over 110 countries will provide expert local insight helping to deliver excellent programmes that are as culturally relevant as they are compelling.

## World leading curators

Our expert teams will curate established and emerging art of the highest quality and help it find a global audience. We will work at the forefront of Britain's pioneering arts sector, helping the next generation of artists break new ground.

## Cultural connectors

We will help the world meet the best of British arts by creating spaces in which meaningful creative dialogues take place, informing and benefitting international relationships at every level.



## Developing futures

We believe that art has the power to transform; from skills development to sustainable projects, we nurture lasting relationships with people and places to leave a positive and enduring legacy everywhere we work, both internationally and in the UK.

## Identifying impact

Genuine evaluation of our programmes will be embedded into our working practice. We will measure the things that matter through a set of key performance indicators, including skills development, profile raising, connections created and innovation supported. We will learn from and communicate our findings, maximising the return on our investment. We will track this through monitoring both short term and longer term impacts.



Where we  
will work



## AMERICAS

**Relationships – political, economic and cultural – between the different parts of the Americas are changing fast, as is the way the continent as a whole relates to the rest of the world.**

Recent economic growth has decelerated but the long-term outlook is sound. Highly innovative cultural practice can be found across the continent and public and private funding is being invested in cultural infrastructure, creative enterprise and in arts for social action. The continent's economy exceeds China, Japan and India combined but wide inequalities, often related to the complex dynamics between indigenous, European-and African-origin populations, nourish organised crime, high levels of violence and insecurity. Optimism and resilience prevail nevertheless.

The themes of our work in this region overlap but can be identified as follows:

- Linking the emerging generation of artists and creative entrepreneurs across the Atlantic.
- Challenging exclusion and inequity through transformative experiences.
- Future infrastructure strategies – for cities especially.
- Updating knowledge and perceptions about the UK.
- Connecting the whole UK with the Americas.

Instalación Mirar by Morag Myerscough and Luke Morgan. Part of Mexican Design Open.  
Photo: British Council Mexico



Argentina  
Brazil  
Canada  
Chile  
Colombia  
Cuba  
Jamaica  
Mexico  
Peru  
Trinidad  
United States -  
of America  
Uruguay  
Venezuela



## East Asia is a diverse region, with more than two billion inhabitants.

The area has a rich cultural history, and a rapidly ageing population combined with the fact that 25% of its citizens are under 14 years of age. Nearly 50% of the world's internet users live in this region, and it contains seven of the world's ten most populous cities. Indonesia is the biggest Muslim democracy in the world; the middle class in China comprises more people than the entire population of Europe; one third of the region's people still live in poverty. The growing economic and political power of East Asia is bringing about a renewed confidence in cultural identity and a desire to have a more balanced relationship with the West. Countries in East Asia are focusing on intra-Asia connections and are increasingly moving towards a knowledge economy valuing creativity and innovation to drive growth and develop more inclusive societies.

Our programme in East Asia responds to a number of local needs:

- Changing perceptions about the UK through artistic exchanges and collaborations.
- Developing connections and networks intra-Asia in relation to the UK.
- Stimulating creativity and innovation through creative education and engagement with creative hubs in cities.
- Developing cultural leadership, and the creative and business skills necessary to present work to international standards, collaborate internationally and develop a strong and sustainable sector.
- Support creative industries policy development and platforms for mutual learning.
- Using the arts to strengthen and develop more inclusive and prosperous societies.

## EAST ASIA

Australia  
Burma  
China  
Hong Kong  
Indonesia  
Japan  
Korea  
Malaysia  
New Zealand  
Philippines  
Singapore  
Taiwan  
Thailand  
Vietnam

UK-Korea Dance Exchange Programme.  
Marc Brew Community Workshop.  
Photo: British Council Korea.

## EUROPEAN UNION

Austria  
Belgium  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Malta  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland



## The EU remains the UK's largest trade partner and is vital to UK economic sectors, including the arts and creative industries.

It is a global continent, with strong links to wider Europe, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa. The EU is the first port of call for many organisations who wish to internationalise, and our joint leadership of the UK's Creative Europe Desk reflects this. Alongside this, the strategic importance of links with the Baltic and Russian neighbourhood countries, and the UK Presidency of the EU in 2017, means the region is a priority for the British Council. There are great opportunities to deliver cultural relations work on a large scale, partnering with major corporates, government and civil society partners, and under contract from the European Commission. As a leading partner in EUNIC, the network of EU institutes for culture, we can influence cultural policy in the EU.

Our priorities include:

- Showcasing: opening up opportunities for collaboration and international showcasing of UK artists and organisations with European counterparts. This will focus on high profile large-scale activity and relationship building between UK arts institutions and festivals and those key European counterparts that meet UK sector interest and enable us to reach new young audiences. We will significantly increase our digital showcasing offer in the region.
- Creative Economy: supporting the subsistence and growth of creative hubs in Europe, celebrating digital technology and innovation as a way to tackle social challenges and contribute to a smart future; and promoting stronger ethical and cultural value in fashion.
- Arts and Disability: promoting artistically excellent and innovative work by disabled artists from the UK, increasing the number of British disabled artists programmed, presented and commissioned at the highest level in Europe, and developing opportunities for mutual exchange between disabled artistic practitioners, cultural leaders, and disabled-led arts organisations.
- Cultural Skills: sharing research on skills shortages and needs in Europe, designing and delivering innovative training programmes to respond to current and future skills needs and opening up entry to the sector opportunities for aspiring cultural professionals.

Creative Europe Desk UK  
event at the BFI, 2016.  
Photo: Linda Nyland

## The Middle East and North Africa is a region of impressive cultural history and traditions, but has largely poor infrastructure to support the arts and creative industries.

In many countries, there is a significant disconnect between state and independent cultural sectors, fuelled by conservative attitudes or a rigid focus on the promotion of a politically motivated sense of cultural identity. There are very few examples of strong art form sectors or even professional networks for artists and arts institutions across the region.

The region is critically important for UK security and prosperity. Because of the conflict and instability in the region it has become a focus for UK Government initiatives to support stability and resilience.

The region is distinctly gender-biased with most development indicators showing women sharply underprivileged and underrepresented in economic and political life. Young people are generally excluded from political processes. There is a very young demographic (30% under 24 years old) and youth unemployment at 30% is twice the global average.

MENA has four of the world's five most dangerous countries, and most countries in the region are affected by conflict and instability.

Employers across the region complain about the skills gap; many school and university leavers lack the skills to enter employment successfully. The social and economic burden on host countries of the Syrian conflict is immense. Amid the chaos, Islamic State has appeared as a significant threat to stability in the region and beyond.

Our work has four major priorities to respond to this:

- Showcasing UK arts in the Gulf to build creative links with a new generation, focussing on youth and contemporary culture with a commitment to diversity, disability arts and wider access.
- Culture and development work focussing on strengthening resilience to crisis in Syria and the host countries surrounding it and voice and inclusion particularly in North Africa.
- Operating the Cultural Protection Fund in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The fund aims to foster and promote cultural heritage overseas and safeguard against permanent loss by supporting local professionals to manage and promote cultural assets. In turn this will enable local people to protect their cultural heritage and the important role it plays in society and the economy.
- Cultural skills development, focussing on Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco.

## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Algeria  
Bahrain  
Egypt  
Iraq  
Jordan  
Kuwait  
Lebanon  
Libya  
Morocco  
Occupied -  
Palestinian -  
Territories  
Oman  
Qatar  
Saudi Arabia  
Syria  
Tunisia  
United Arab -  
Emirates  
Yemen



Left: North Africa Dynamics rehearsal at Sadler's Wells, part of our Say It Through Breakdancing programme. Image: Helen Maybanks

Above: DESH(2014), performed by Akram Khan in Bangladesh. Photo: Mizanur Rahman Khoka

## SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan  
Bangladesh  
India  
Iran  
Nepal  
Pakistan  
Sri Lanka



**The region has a combined population of more than 1.7 billion with 50% under 30 years old. Over two million people of South Asian origin (diaspora) live in the UK. India is the second largest country in the world and a strategic priority for developing relationships with the UK.**

There are major gaps between rich and poor, and the security situation in many countries is fragile. It is one of the least interconnected geopolitical regions in the world, with only 2% of trade taking place between countries in the region despite a strong shared cultural heritage. Rapid uptake and growth of mobile technologies (1.2bn mobile phones in use) offers significant openings for digital engagement.

Countries are characterised by a relatively vibrant cultural life hampered by poor infrastructure and lack of government support. In some countries, this is coupled with an increasingly conservative attitude among audiences towards some forms of cultural expression. The potential of the creative economy to contribute towards poverty reduction and economic development is increasingly recognised by governments.

Our programme will focus on:

- Increased showcasing of UK arts in the region, and of the region back in the UK, supported by digital showcasing.
- Professional and skills development opportunities.
- Supporting future cultural leaders.
- Increased brokering of relationships between the UK and the region.
- Work on diversity and inclusion in fragile states and those emerging from crisis.



Seven out of ten of the world’s fastest growing economies are in Sub-Saharan Africa and by 2050 an estimated fifth of the world’s population will live there.

The British Council is long-established in Sub-Saharan Africa, opening our first office in 1943. We have been working and building relationships across the arts, education and society in the region for over 70 years.

There are major challenges for African states despite a young population and a growing consumer class. Growth is uneven across countries, inequality is rising and unemployment is high, particularly amongst young people; access to education and skills training is also a widespread problem. Countries remain vulnerable to economic shocks, social unrest and the increasing threat from international terrorism.

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, public and private sector investment in the creative economy is increasing. If this continues, it will provide a platform for sustained growth particularly in South Africa and Nigeria. There are also significant opportunities in Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya. We contribute to the development of the creative industries across the region, exchanging and showcasing excellent African and British artistic work and providing skills training. Our work makes a lasting difference connecting artists, decision makers, creative businesses, institutions, influencers and the wider public in the UK and Sub-Saharan Africa. We extend safe spaces for culture, creative exploration and exchange; enabling dialogue and presenting marginalised voices. As the UK’s principal cultural relations organisation the British Council is strongly committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and our work in Africa is centred on building meaningful and enduring relationships across different cultures. Partnerships between African and British artists, institutions and organisations are at the heart of our programme which aims to develop skills and capacity across the creative industries.

Our work aims to:

- Create access to art with an emphasis on new digital work, innovation, art in public spaces and working with young people.
- Connect artists and creatives in sub-Saharan Africa with their contemporaries in the UK.
- Support the development of skills by sharing expertise and ideas.
- Connect African arts and creative industries with the UK.

Above: Artist Eyob Kitaba working on Chess in Kampala. Part of our East African Exchange Programme. Photo: 32° East | Ugandan Arts Trust

Right: Mardin Biennial (2012). British Council Turkey and Mardin Biennial screen three British art films at public venues around Mardin. Courtesy Mike Nelson and British Council Turkey.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



- Botswana
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

WIDER EUROPE

Wider Europe is a region spanning eleven time zones and embracing a population of 335 million people.

Our priority countries are Israel, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine but there are vibrant arts programmes in all fifteen states in the region. The majority of its countries have been established for less than twenty-five years, are emerging from periods of isolation and, in re-engaging with the rest of the world, are seeking contact with the UK cultural sectors.

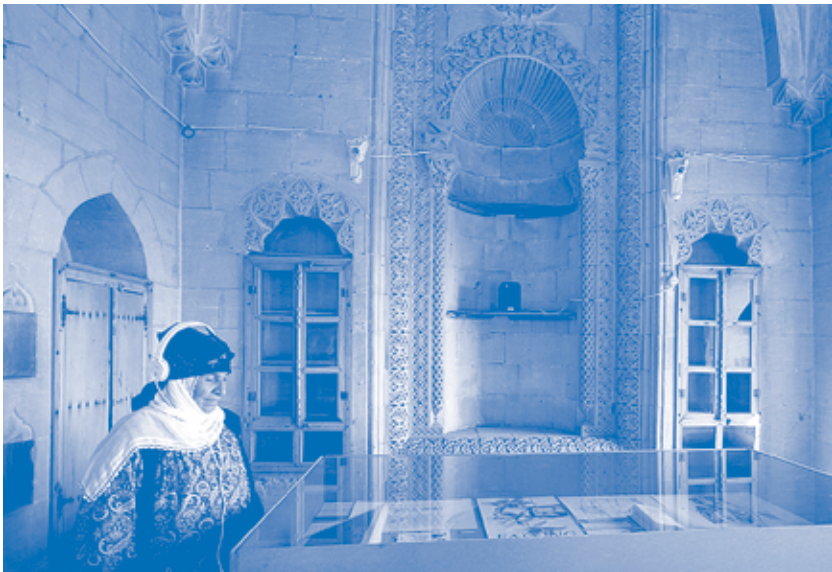
The region borders the Middle East to the south, Asia to the east and the EU to the west.

There are three key challenges for our arts programme in Wider Europe: political instability, slow pace of government reform, and variable market insight.

Our programme in Wider Europe has four priorities:

- Digital innovation: online programmes and campaigns have more than doubled audiences across our programmes in the last two years and by 2020, we aim to reach 75% of our audiences online and via media.
- Capacity-building for individuals and institutions: this includes programmes alongside our showcasing work, such as industry platforms and professional development built into our weekly radio show The Selector and syndicated programming of UK film festivals in eight countries.
- Supporting the development of creative economies: substantial creative economy programmes are active in four key countries and clusters and it is a focus of our extensive work in Ukraine.
- Diversifying audiences: working across art forms, British Council business areas and country and regional borders.

- Albania
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Georgia
- Israel
- Kazakhstan
- Kosovo
- Macedonia
- Montenegro
- Russia
- Serbia
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan



# Who we are

## Our structure

The Arts department at the British Council 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.

These UK teams work with their counterparts in seven regions.

Arts staff in countries within each region 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 & Commonwealth Office (FCO). 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.

## How to get in touch

### The quickest way to contact us is online:

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[arts@britishcouncil.org](mailto:arts@britishcouncil.org)

### Twitter:

[@BritishArts](https://twitter.com/BritishArts)

### Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/BritishCouncil.Arts](http://www.facebook.com/BritishCouncil.Arts)

