



CREATIVITY IN THE UK

Press release

Thursday 21 October 2021

TEN COMMISSIONS ANNOUNCED AS PART OF UNBOXED, A CELEBRATION OF CREATIVITY TAKING PLACE ACROSS THE UK IN 2022

- UK-wide programme of live events and digital, online and broadcast experiences
- Creative collaborations across science, technology, engineering, arts and maths
- Wide-reaching learning and audience participation programmes

Announced today, **UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK** is a celebration of creativity taking place across the UK in 2022, designed to reach millions and bring people together. It features free large-scale events, installations and globally accessible digital experiences in the UK's most ambitious showcase of creative collaboration.

Produced by some of the brightest minds in science, technology, engineering, arts and maths, UNBOXED features ten major multi-site and digital creative projects that share new ideas and possibilities for the future. Events and activities take place from 1 March to 2 October 2022 – from the Outer Hebrides to Dover and from Omagh to Swansea, and across traditional and online media.

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is funded and supported by the four governments of the UK and is commissioned and delivered in partnership with Belfast City Council, Creative Wales and EventScotland.

- The programme begins in Paisley in March with audiences in towns and cities across the UK immersed in 13.8 billion years of history, from the Big Bang to the present day, using innovative projection mapping technology combined with poetry, music and science (***About Us***).
- A Scotland-wide project featuring Unexpected Gardens, vertical farms, free music events and plant giveaways reimagines the annual harvest festival for the 21st century, from Caithness to Dumfries (***Dandelion***).
- Audiences in the UK's four capital cities are immersed in sound and light in an artwork experienced with closed eyes that explores the limitless potential of the human mind (***Dreamachine***).
- Communities from across Wales, creatives and a Hollywood production studio are working together to shape and share a story set 30 years in the future across TV drama, digital platforms and live events in three Welsh locations (***GALWAD: A story from our future***).

Funded by



Delivered in partnership with



- 20,000 people are being invited to create vast outdoor artworks in some of the UK's outstanding landscapes, using new light technology that has been specially designed to be sensitive to the night-time environment, to create compelling online experiences (**Green Space Dark Skies**).
- A scale version of our solar system, staged across 10km sculptural trails in Northern Ireland and Cambridge, invites us to consider our relationships with each other from the perspective of our place in space (**Our Place in Space**).
- A monumental forest garden of living plants and architectural trees is springing up in the city of Birmingham in celebration of the global origins of the UK's plants and population (**PoliNations**).
- A decommissioned North Sea offshore platform is being transformed into an immersive public art installation and celebration of British weather in the coastal town of Weston-super-Mare, suggesting new possibilities for retired structures (**SEE MONSTER**).
- Augmented reality, new developments in 3D internet technology and young creatives are shaping one of the most ambitious living history and archive projects ever undertaken (**StoryTrails**).
- A festival of nightlife and countercultures inspired by and created in collaboration with the Moon is travelling in convoy around England with a mission to imagine multiple better futures for, and with, young people (**Tour de Moon**).

Central to UNBOXED are extensive learning and public participation opportunities, reaching hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren, young people and communities. These opportunities include invitations to take part, shape and deliver UNBOXED through school poetry and coding competitions, community workshops, citizen science projects and new employment and skills development opportunities for diverse young creatives and freelancers. There are also partnerships with the BBC, the British Council and the RSA (the Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) that will further global conversations about the role of creativity and innovation in society.

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

“From the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, 2022 is going to be a year of celebrating UK at its best. And today, we are launching our fantastic new festival – UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK.

“A celebration of UK ingenuity, energy, innovation, optimism and all-round creative genius, it will be unlike anything else that has been seen before. Light shows, sculpture trails and a festival of ideas are just some of the spectacular events that will take place in locations across the UK – alongside work and experiences you can interact with digitally.”

Tracy Meharg, Permanent Secretary in the Department for Communities Northern Ireland said:

“This a chance to experience cutting edge technology in an accessible and inclusive project developed right here on our doorstep. *Our Place in Space* celebrates local talent and creativity on a grand scale, and we look forward to sharing it widely at home and with others in England, Scotland, Wales and around the world. We in turn will benefit from the wider festival commissions which are being delivered at some wonderfully diverse geographical locations.”

Scottish Government's Culture Minister Jenny Gilruth, said:

"Scotland's creative and events industries have a world-class reputation and the inspirational programme of activities planned by Dandelion showcases the breadth of that artistic vision. It's hugely important too that, in terms of accessibility, the Dandelion offering will be available to audiences right across Scotland.

"Culture has a vital role to play in driving our recovery from the pandemic - the celebration of creativity and innovation through our participation in UNBOXED aims to support Scotland's collective wellbeing and the events and culture sectors in that endeavour."

First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford, said:

"This is an investment in the Welsh creative industries, which contribute to our strong and unique national identity and help to promote Wales, our culture and talent to the world.

"We're committed to creating a future which is stronger and fairer for us all – the creative activity and community engagement of GALWAD is an exciting vision of what this Wales could look like.

"I look forward to seeing what exciting creations are revealed during 2022 and to welcoming four of the other UNBOXED commissions to Wales next year."

Martin Green CBE, Chief Creative Officer, UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, said:

"Hundreds of creatives from across science, technology, engineering, arts and maths are creating extraordinary once-in-a-lifetime events and online experiences for millions in the UK's biggest and most ambitious public creative programme to date.

"UNBOXED represents an unprecedented, timely opportunity for people to come together across the UK and beyond, taking part in awe-inspiring projects that speak to who we are while exploring the ideas that will define our futures."

Dame Vikki Heywood DBE, Chair of Board, UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, said:

"As society adapts to the ever-evolving digital revolution and we see our innate creativity play an increasingly important role in all our futures, UNBOXED explores the power of collaboration to generate new possibilities for the way we live, work and play.

"The programme will support economic recovery in the UK by reanimating towns and cities and expanding our connectivity through new online communities. As the programme unfolds, it will both entertain us and inspire us to imagine what the future might hold by combining the creative powers of science, technology, engineering, arts and maths."

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK

1 March to 2 October 2022 | unboxed2022.uk

Download [images](#)

Further information and interview requests:

Jeanette Ward | UNBOXED | jeanette.ward@festival2022.uk | 07729 930 812

UNBOXED: CREATIVITY IN THE UK – TEN COMMISSIONS

About Us | Paisley, Derry–Londonderry, Caernarfon, Luton and Hull

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK begins in Paisley with *About Us*, a series of large-scale public events that takes audiences on a journey through 13.8 billion years of our history from the Big Bang to the present day. It explores the infinite ways in which we are connected to the universe, the natural world and one another.

About Us combines live shows and multimedia installations with animation, poetry, original music and live performance. The live show will transform buildings and landmarks in five towns and cities – Paisley, Derry–Londonderry, Caernarfon, Luton and Hull – into a vast canvas featuring bespoke animations, cutting-edge projection mapping technology and a new score by composer Nitin Sawhney performed by local choirs. The outdoor installation will incorporate submissions from a UK-wide poetry and computer coding competition for children and young people, launched today. *About Us* runs for a week in each location, with multimedia installations open throughout the day and multiple free performances every evening.

About Us is created by 59 Productions Collective and led by design studio and production company 59 Productions; Stemettes, an organisation that brings young women and non-binary young people into careers in science, technology, engineering and maths; and The Poetry Society, one of the UK's most dynamic arts organisation championing poetry for all ages.

Lysander Ashton, Project Director, About Us, said: "Everywhere we look there are networks of connection and meaning. We are stardust: every atom in our bodies can be traced back to deep space and time; our family tree connects us to every living thing on Earth and our lives are defined by our relationships with others. About Us will shine a light on the magic and awe revealed in the most everyday object or moment in towns and cities across the UK."

Dandelion | Across Scotland

Dandelion reimagines the harvest festival for the 21st century. Beginning in April and following the growing season, *Dandelion* shares a programme of food, music, and ideas with communities across Scotland. At its centre sit the Cubes of Perpetual Light, miniature vertical farms where design, horticultural expertise and technological innovation combine. 'Unexpected Gardens' will spring up from the Borders to the Highlands, in urban and rural locations and from islands to canals and derelict dock sites, showing that even the unlikeliest space can be a place to grow produce for local communities. New music inspired by plant growth and seasonal change will be shared at live events including two major music and food festivals in Glasgow and Inverness. The next generation of growers also become citizen scientists, with 100,000 schoolchildren and young people invited to take part in the largest community growing experiment ever undertaken in Scotland. *Dandelion* culminates as the growing season concludes, with hundreds of community Harvest Festivals – reimagining this cultural celebration for the 21st century.

Dandelion is led by the Dandelion Collective, commissioned by EventScotland and funded by the Scottish Government.

Angus Farquhar, Creative Director, Dandelion, said, "Driven by the concept of 'Sow, Grow, Share', Dandelion brings together musicians, scientists, artists, makers, performers and technologists in cross-generational growing and the creation of original and truly local events across Scotland – from its remotest islands to the centres of its great cities – as well as online through films and digital activities. The Dandelion Collective represents both urban and rural participation and aims through the simple pleasure of growing and sharing good food and new music to re-establish harvest as a significant annual festival for everyone."

Dreamachine | Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London

Dreamachine is an artwork seen with your eyes closed that explores the limitless potential of the human mind in a powerful new kind of collective experience.

It is inspired by radical artist Brion Gysin's pioneering 1959 invention: the 'Dreamachine', a homemade flickering light device that created vivid illusions, kaleidoscopic patterns and explosions of colour in the mind of the viewer. Over 60 years after its original invention, Gysin's concept, designed as the "first artwork to be experienced with your eyes closed", has been radically reimaged into a major participatory programme, featuring an immersive live experience that will tour the four capitals of the UK. Audiences across the UK will be invited to take part in one of the largest scientific research projects of its kind as active collaborators, led by Professor Anil Seth from the Centre for Consciousness Science at the University of Sussex.

An interdisciplinary collaboration led by Collective Act, *Dreamachine* brings together Turner Prize-winning artists Assemble, Grammy- and Mercury-nominated composer Jon Hopkins and a team of pioneering scientists and philosophers from the University of Glasgow and University of Sussex.

Jennifer Crook, Director for Dreamachine and Collective Act, said: "Dreamachine will engage audiences across ages and cultures in a powerful new kind of collective experience – one that's unique to you. The rich kaleidoscopic visuals created by the Dreamachine will come from within, providing a magical insight into the extraordinary potential of our own minds. Beyond the confines of screens or devices, our programme will creatively explore the most fundamental of human connections: how we perceive and create the world around us. To explore one of the greatest remaining mysteries to humankind... all you need to do is close your eyes."

GALWAD: A story from our future | TV, online and on location in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Merthyr Tydfil, and Swansea

GALWAD, meaning 'call' in Welsh, is a story set 30 years in the future, brought to screens and locations across Wales through a TV drama, digital immersive app and live performance in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Merthyr Tydfil and Swansea.

The near-future world of 2052 is being co-designed with Hollywood production designer Alex McDowell (*Minority Report*) and communities across Wales and is inspired by the ground-breaking Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, which puts issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change at the heart of public decisions.

GALWAD is commissioned by Creative Wales. It is produced by Collective Cymru led by National Theatre Wales, a partnership of Wales-based organisations including Disability Arts Cymru, Centre for Alternative Technology, Clwstwr, Ffilm Cymru, Frân Wen in association with Experimental Design Studio and Sugar Collective.

Claire Doherty, Creative Director for GALWAD and Collective Cymru, said: "The making of GALWAD has begun and we are already seeing that when you change the storytellers, you change the story. GALWAD brings together Wales' boldest talent in film and TV, creative technology and live performance for a new kind of multiplatform story that invites audiences to explore the moral dilemmas and possibilities of a different kind of future."

Green Space Dark Skies | National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and online

20,000 people are being invited to help create *Green Space Dark Skies*, a series of interventions celebrating the UK landscape using geo-positioning low impact light technology to be experienced by audiences online.

20,000 people, from all paths in life, will experience wild and beautiful landscapes across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) as dusk falls. The project takes as its inspiration the 1932 Kinder Scout mass trespass, an act that led to the establishment of access rights to the countryside. Participants, known as 'Lumenators', will be recruited from communities across the UK and equipped with handheld low impact lights that make moving pictures across the landscape, to be filmed and shared online. Specially developed by Siemens to be sensitive to the night-time environment, the lighting technology uses existing wireless programmable lights and incorporates something that's never been done before: the ability for these lights to be animated through geo-positioning, where the position of each light can be known in relationship to the others.

Green Space Dark Skies is produced by Walk the Plank Collective, led by UK outdoor arts pioneers Walk the Plank working in collaboration with technology company Siemens, the University of Salford, National Parks UK and Landscapes for Life: the National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which is responsible for the management of the project's event sites; and working with diverse artists and creative collaborators in different locations, including integrated circus company Extraordinary Bodies, the collaboration between Diverse City and Cirque Bijou, and film production company CC-Lab.

John Wassell, Creative Producer, Walk the Plank Collective said: "Green Space Dark Skies is about class and landscape, race and landscape, disability and landscape. We want to build more countryside stewards for the future, and to inspire more people to see the connection between their use and enjoyment of the land and our care for the planet."

Our Place in Space | Derry–Londonderry, Belfast Divis and the Black Mountain, Cambridge and Ulster Transport Museum

Our Place in Space is an epic scale model of the solar system designed by artist Oliver Jeffers, combining a 10km sculpture trail in Northern Ireland and Cambridge, an interactive augmented reality app, and learning and events programmes.

From creating a star to writing a symphony for the universe, inventing a new form of transport, building a Minecraft planet or connecting with space watchers in Vietnam or Iraq, *Our Place in Space* invites participants to look at our solar system in a different way – exploring what it means to live on Earth in 2022, and how we might better share and protect our planet in future. Designed by artist and children's author Oliver Jeffers with support from leading astrophysicist Professor Stephen Smartt, and featuring music by award-winning composer, producer and sound artist Die Hexen, the trail will travel from Derry–Londonderry to Divis and the Black Mountain, Belfast and to the Ulster Transport Museum and the North Down Coastal Path in Northern Ireland as well as a riverside location in Cambridge.

Our Place in Space is produced by Nerve Centre Collective, led by arts organisation the Nerve Centre and commissioned by *UNBOXED* with Belfast City Council. The collaboration behind the project includes the Astrophysics Research Centre at Queen's University Belfast, National Museums NI, NI Science Festival, Big Motive, Taunt, Microsoft, Jeffers & Son, Dumbworld, Live Music Now, Little Inventors, the National Trust and Urban Scale Interventions.

Oliver Jeffers, artist, said: "For centuries, we've defined ourselves by who we are and who we're not. Which side we choose, on what ground we stand, who and what we fight for. A human story, that lives merely in human minds. But with distance comes perspective... Our Place in Space is a playful experiment that asks: What is the difference between 'us' and 'them'? What happens to your perspective on everything when you look back at Earth from space?"

PoliNations | Edinburgh and Birmingham

PoliNations is a monumental pop-up forest garden in the centre of Birmingham that celebrates the global origins of the UK's plants and population through immersive installations, live music, talks and performances.

Starting with a single large tree structure in Edinburgh, *PoliNations* will 'grow' into an immersive forest in the centre of Birmingham filled with real and architectural trees as well as plants, grasses and flowers grown in collaboration with local communities. From daisies to horse chestnut trees and dahlias to the English rose, many of the plants that we consider to be part of the UK landscape originate overseas. *PoliNations* – also part of the Birmingham 2022 Festival – is a celebration of diversity in the UK, exploring multiculturalism through the metaphor of the incredible biodiversity of our plant life and culminating in a party that brings together the spirit of the Notting Hill Carnival, Pride and Mela with the joyous anarchy of Songkran and Holi.

PoliNations is produced by Trigger Collective and led by Bristol-based arts organisation Trigger with multi-disciplinary designer Carl Robertshaw, set and costume designer Bronia Housman, events specialist Dock Street Events, architectural studio THISS, and horticulturalists Arbor-Nova.

Angie Bual, Creative Director of PoliNations and Co-Director of Trigger Collective, said: "PoliNations celebrates the colour and vibrancy that plants and flowers have brought to the UK and invites us to reimagine our cities as greener and wilder places to be. Combining engineering, horticulture, theatre and music from around the world, PoliNations is a spectacular co-grown forest garden that will ignite the senses and deepen understanding of our shared history, bringing people together from all walks of life with an utterly unforgettable finale."

SEE MONSTER | Weston-super-Mare

SEE MONSTER is a decommissioned North Sea offshore platform transformed into a public art installation in the coastal town of Weston-super-Mare and celebrates British weather.

SEE MONSTER's location in the town's former lido, the Tropicana, references the heyday of British coastal resorts while creating new opportunities and possibilities for both the site and the platform. It will harness the power of the elements to provide renewable energy for the reimaged structure. With planted gardens, places to meet and learning programmes, *SEE MONSTER* invites audiences to consider new ideas for creatively repurposing retired structures for future use.

SEE MONSTER is brought to life by NEWSUBSTANCE Collective, led by Leeds-based creative studio NEWSUBSTANCE in collaboration with Dose of Society, REDHOUSE, Rocket Women, Empowering Women with Tech, kinetic sculptor Ivan Black and representatives from The British Antarctic Survey, and is supported by North Somerset Council.

Patrick O'Mahony, Artistic Director of SEE MONSTER and Founder of NEWSUBSTANCE, said: "The arrival of SEE MONSTER in Weston-super-Mare is a springboard to explore the concept of inherited structures – physical, social and environmental – and to question what we do with them, how they can enhance our lives and what actions they inspire, both individually and universally."

StoryTrails | Blackpool, Bradford, Bristol, Dumfries, Dundee, London Borough of Lambeth, London Borough of Lewisham, Lincoln, Newport, Omagh, Sheffield, Slough, Swansea, Swindon and Wolverhampton.

StoryTrails will bring together augmented reality, new developments in 3D internet technology and the next generation of creative voices to shape one of the most ambitious living history and archive projects ever undertaken.

StoryTrails is an immersive experience that will bring to life untold stories from the past and stories of belonging from today, inspiring a UK-wide conversation about who we are and where we are going. Libraries, streets, town squares and public spaces are being transformed into virtual portals through which to explore stories of historical change in 15 locations across the UK in 2022. The *StoryTrails* creative team will work closely with communities in each of the towns and cities to uncover unknown, surprising and intriguing stories. It will culminate with a brand new film for the BBC and the BFI by David Olusoga: exploring our history, considering our lives today and starting new conversations about where we might go next.

StoryTrails is produced by StoryFutures Collective, led by StoryFutures Academy which is run by Royal Holloway, University of London and the National Film and Television School (NFTS) and delivered in partnership with the British Film Institute (BFI), broadcaster and filmmaker David Olusoga, Uplands Television, and leading immersive specialists ISO Design and Nexus Studios. It will be brought to life in The Reading Agency's national network of libraries and by event-making specialists ProduceUK.

Professor James Bennett, Director StoryFutures Academy, said: "StoryTrails will reignite people's pride and passion for their hometown. We are putting the promise of the 3D internet into the hands of a new generation of creatives who will reflect the full diversity of the UK and build a history project unlike any before it: one that makes a magical connection between past, present and future."

Tour de Moon | Leicester, Newcastle and Southampton, and satellite locations across England

Tour de Moon is a series of festivals, satellite events, nightlife experiences and a travelling convoy inspired by and, in collaboration with, the Moon.

Tour de Moon aims to open conversations about future utopias and support the creation of new work by creatives, makers, digital artists, musicians, scientists, writers, nightlife artists and performers aged 18 to 25. Following an open call, bursaries are being awarded across eight programming strands including sport, publishing, filmmaking, music, digital and debate. Those recruited are shaping the content of *Tour de Moon* through unexpected collaborations. *Tour de Moon* aims to ignite imaginations in playful, critical and intriguing ways: popular sounds are being merged with recordings of the galaxy to create a new alien music genre; music tracks are transmitted to and from the Moon using Earth-Moon-Earth communications technology (EME), also known as 'Moon bounce'; and there are opportunities to DJ with the Moon or phone the Moon for advice.

Tour de Moon is produced by a diverse team led by Nelly Ben Hayoun Studios.

Dr Nelly Ben Hayoun-Stépanian, Tour de Moon Director, said: "Tour de Moon travels with the night collaborating with our universal satellite- the Moon- seeking for new beginnings, to empower others to create, to initiate, to innovate with new thinking and pluralistic practices so that history does not repeat itself on and beyond Earth. In this cosmic night-time adventure, the Moon is both character and landscape, in permanent transformation and flux, to ignite radical imagination. We are an after-party of immersive experiences, new technologies and science innovation which support decolonial practices, celebrate and support the creativity of night-time workers and youths."

-ends-

Notes to editors

1. **UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK** is a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of creativity, taking place across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and online from March to October 2022. **UNBOXED** is lifting the lid on 10 awe-inspiring new ideas, shaped across science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics by brilliant minds working in unexpected collaborations. Unmissable events and unforgettable experiences are coming to places and spaces right across the UK: from coastal towns and city centres to breathtaking areas of natural beauty.

Everyone in the UK can experience **UNBOXED**, in person, on TV, on radio and online – entirely for free. And there are countless ways for people to get involved in every part of the **UNBOXED** programme: diving into UK-wide learning programmes, taking part in workshops and special events, even playing a central role in bringing some of these astonishing projects to life.

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is the biggest and most ambitious creative programme ever presented on these shores. It's funded and supported by the four governments of the UK, and is co-commissioned with Belfast City Council, EventScotland and Creative Wales. Join millions for this landmark exploration of how creativity – *our* creativity – has the power to change the world.

unboxed2022.uk

2. The *UNBOXED* projects were commissioned following a paid three-month research and development (R&D) programme, from 16 November 2020 to 31 January 2021. The rigorous assessment process involved more than 500 creatives, including more than 100 freelancers from across the UK, drawn from science, technology, engineering, arts and maths. The original open call-out for the R&D resulted in 299 submissions, involving almost 3,000 individuals and organisations.
3. Several projects have already announced opportunities to get involved or develop professional skills and creative practice, including *About Us*, *Green Space Dark Skies*, *StoryTrails* and *Tour de Moon*. For links, please visit the *UNBOXED* website – unboxed2022.uk.