



THEPOETRY SOCIETY



fifty nine productions



Poet Laureate Simon Armitage and broadcaster Rachel Riley join the judging panel of nationwide competition for young people's poetry and Scratch animations

Winning entries to feature in *About Us*, a thrilling outdoor event exploring 13.8 billion years of history, which opens **UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK** in March 2022

Monday 20 December 2021: 59 Productions Collective - Stemettes, The Poetry Society and 59 Productions - are delighted to announce the names of the judges selecting entries to the *About Us* poetry and Scratch animation competition for young people aged 4 to 18 years old in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. ***About Us* is one of ten major projects that make up UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK** - a UK-wide celebration of creativity and one of the biggest events of 2022.

Young people have until midnight on Sunday 9 January 2022 to get creative, and send in their entries. Our judging panel can't wait to see them.

Bringing together poets, educators, scientists and technologists, the *About Us* competition judges will include:

Simon Armitage - Poet Laureate

Ghislaine Boddington - co-founder and Creative Director of body>data>space and Stemettes Trustee

Ifor ap Glyn - National Poet of Wales

Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon MBE - Co-founder and CEO of Stemettes

Kathleen Jamie - Scots Makar

Keith Jarrett - writer, poet, performer, educator, UK and International Poetry Slam winner

Rachel Riley - author and TV broadcaster (*Countdown*, *8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown*)

Stephen Sexton - award-winning Northern Irish poet

A selection of the young people's work will be chosen to feature within an amazing live show in spring 2022. *About Us* is a free large-scale outdoor event for all ages that combines live shows with multimedia installations to tell the story of the infinite ways in which we are connected to the universe, natural world, and one another - from the Big Bang to the present day. It will open UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK on 1 March 2022 in Paisley.

'Connectivity and the universe' is the theme of the *About Us* competition and young people across the UK are invited to enter a poem or Scratch animation project, or both, that reflects on the many ways in which life across the universe is interwoven. To spark creative inspiration, young people, and their parents, teachers and youth workers are encouraged to explore the [About Us microsite](#) which features a raft of free digital resources from leading poets and scientists on subjects ranging from whale song to astrophysics, cell migration to climate impact. The competition is now open and will close on Sunday 9 January 2022 - so there are just three more weeks to enter!

The competition is an invitation to look at the world through fresh eyes, to illuminate the things that help us understand the wonders of the world from a new perspective. Inspiration might be drawn from the collapse of massive stars and the formation of black holes where nothing and nobody escapes the pull of gravity or the oceans' circulatory currents that carry food and nutrients to sustain our wildlife or even the beauty of fungal habitats deep down in the rainforest where the world's future medicines lie awaiting discovery. The choices are as vast as the universe, and the competition is now open to enter at: <https://aboutus.earth/competition>. Winning entrants will be published in a digital anthology, win mentoring opportunities and other prizes as well as the opportunity to feature in *About Us*.

From March to May 2022, *About Us* will run for a week in Paisley, Derry–Londonderry, Caernarfon, Luton and Hull with bespoke multimedia installations open throughout the day, and multiple free projection mapping shows every evening. The evening shows will transform buildings and landmarks in each of the five towns and cities into a vast canvas featuring bespoke animations, cutting-edge projection mapping technology set to a brand new score by composer Nitin Sawhney performed by local choirs. During the daytime outdoor installations will incorporate submissions from the *About Us* competition in a celebration of the boundless creativity of children and young people from across the UK; winners will be announced on 28 February 2022.

The *About Us* competition is free to enter and open to young people living in the UK aged 4 to 18 years. The closing date is 23:59 GMT on Sunday 9 January 2022. Full details of the rules of entry and the entry form can be found here: <https://aboutus.earth/competition> and poetry entries can be submitted in English, Welsh, Braille or BSL.

Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon MBE, Co-founder and CEO of Stemettes said: *“STEAM is all about creativity. I'm excited to see the creativity of the next generation as they explore what connectivity looks like across our universe and beyond.”*

Judith Palmer, Director, The Poetry Society, said: *“Young people’s creativity never fails to amaze us. We can't wait to see what inspires young people about science, the natural world and the web of inter-reliance that connects us all together. ”*

Martin Green CBE, Chief Creative Officer, UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, said: *“UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK features ten major multi-site and digital creative projects that share new ideas and possibilities for the future and are produced by creatives from across science, technology, engineering, arts and maths. It is fitting that the ideas and inspiration of children and young people will shape the opening event of UNBOXED through a nationwide competition that brings together poetry writing and technology. About Us is an invitation to consider our awe-inspiring universe, a huge-scale exploration of the vast networks of connection that take us from the Big Bang to now. I am so excited to see how these epic themes will be enriched and emboldened through the contribution of young people.”*

About Us is created by 59 Productions Collective and led by design studio and production company 59 Productions, the award-winning design studio and production company who created the video design for the London 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony; 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.

Find out more: aboutus.earth

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Notes to Editors'

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.

unboxed2022.uk

[1 March to 2 October 2022](https://unboxed2022.uk)

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Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon MBE created the **Stemettes** in 2013 to ensure girls, young women, and non-binary young people know that technical fields are for them. The Stemettes' mission is to inspire, encourage and support young people into STEM fields with their 'Free, Fun, Food' ethos. As of 2021, Stemettes has changed the lives of more than 55,000 young people across the UK, Ireland and parts of Europe. Stemettes run more than 50 interventions each year - a mixture of intersectional cohort programmes, impactful events and inspirational content platforms. These interventions improve perceptions of STEM, raise awareness of options within STEM, grow the network these young people have across STEM and improve their self and STEM confidence. The next steps for Stemettes lie in developing the reach and programmes they have across the country to STEM cold spot areas, extending the Stemettes provision to Parents, Guardians and Teachers (who the Stemettes call Influencers) and transitioning alumnae into STEM fields. Anyone wanting to help can donate to Stemettes Futures, spread the word about Stemettes as far and wide as possible, and volunteer on a Stemettes programme. For anyone already in the industry, the best way to support would be to ensure that Stemettes doesn't need to exist. Use your sphere of influence to be a good ally, ensure that equitable practice is employed in your work-place across hiring practices, promotion and the allocation of positions of responsibility.

stemettes.org | Twitter, Instagram, Facebook & LinkedIn /Stemettes

The Poetry Society is the UK's leading organisation for poetry. With innovative education and commissioning programmes, and a packed calendar of performances, competitions, and digital projects, The Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages. The Poetry Society was founded in 1909 to promote a 'more general recognition and appreciation of poetry'. Since then, it has grown into a dynamic arts organisation, representing poets and poetry both nationally and internationally. It has a thriving worldwide membership, publishes the UK's leading poetry magazine, *The Poetry Review*, and runs influential talent development schemes such as the National Poetry Competition and Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award. Every year people of all ages participate in Poetry Society activities from every single postcode area of the UK and more than 100 countries around the world. Experts in young people's poetry education, The Poetry Society organises poet visits in classrooms year-round, as well as creating trusted teaching resources, facilitating work in informal learning settings and running the vibrant online community Young Poets Network. The Poetry Society is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and a registered charity.

poetrysociety.org.uk | youngpoetsnetwork.org.uk | Facebook & Twitter @PoetrySociety | Instagram @thepoetrysociety

59 Productions is a design studio and production company that specialises in story-driven design. From architectural projection mapping to exhibitions; from Virtual Reality experiences to events; from theatrical design to technical consultancy, 59's company of writers, directors, architects, animators, visual artists and technologists produce artistic work that seeks to amaze audiences of all kinds. Building on more than a decade of experience making theatrical work for some of the world's greatest venues – including Olivier and Tony Award-winning work for the National Theatre, West End and Broadway, and for many of the major cultural organisations of the world – the company has more recently become renowned for creating spectacular public artworks, projection-mapping some of the world's most iconic buildings, including the Sydney Opera House, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, the Washington Monument in DC and the United Nations Headquarters in New York. 59 Productions is also known for projects such as the *David Bowie Is*

EMBARGOED until Monday 20 December @ 09:00 GMT

exhibition at the V&A Museum, which it designed, and for its own multi award-winning work in Virtual Reality.

59productions.co.uk | Twitter: @59productions | Instagram: @59_productions

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