

BIRMINGHAM 2022 COMMONWEALTH GAMES CULTURAL PROGRAMME

Update: March 2020



BACKGROUND

In July 2022, Birmingham will host the **XXII Commonwealth Games**, the largest multi-sport event to be held in England in 10 years.

The mission principles of the 2022 Commonwealth Games are to

- Bring people together
- Improve health and wellbeing
- Help the region to grow and succeed
- Be a catalyst for change
- Put us on the global stage

The core values of the Commonwealth Sports Movement are

- **Equality**
Embrace all Commonwealth athletes, citizens, communities and nations
- **Humanity**
Promote fairness, non-discrimination and inclusion
- **Destiny**
Through impactful, high-performance sport, help Commonwealth athletes, citizens and communities realise their aspirations and ambitions

Over 12 days, approximately 6,500 athletes and team officials from 72 nations and territories across the Commonwealth will come together to compete across 19 sports. Sporting events will take place across Birmingham and the West Midlands, entertaining approximately 1.3 million ticketed spectators and reaching a global broadcast audience of more than one billion.

At the heart of the 2022 Commonwealth Games will be a cultural programme, a world-class arts festival running March to September, surrounding the sports programme. The power of art and culture to bring people together, celebrate our identities and find common ground will be central to the Birmingham 2022 Games. For this we will commission, curate and collaborate on a six-month programme of new work, installations, exhibitions, performances and major events to showcase the artists, creatives and cultural organisations of Birmingham, the West Midlands and the Commonwealth, on a global stage.



The cultural programme will be developed and delivered by the Organising Committee (OC) of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. A cultural team, with a deep working knowledge of Birmingham and the West Midlands' cultural landscape and a passion for the long-term impact of arts and culture in the region, is now in place. The cultural team sits within the wider Ceremonies, Culture & Queen's Baton Relay (CCQ) division of the OC, incorporating a number of other functional areas and opportunities for collaboration with colleagues leading the opening, closing and welcome ceremonies, Sport Presentation and the Queen's Baton Relay.

MEET THE TEAM

- Martin Green CBE: Chief Creative Officer
- Phil Batty: Head of Ceremonies, Culture and Queen's Baton Relay
- Raidene Carter: Executive Producer, Cultural Programme & Live Sites
- Louisa Davies & Tim Hodgson: Senior Producers, Cultural Programme & Live Sites
- Gurpreet Bains: Administrator, Ceremonies, Culture and Queen's Baton Relay

The core producing team of Raidene, Louisa and Tim, guided by Martin's vision for culture within the Games, will be primarily responsible for bringing about the cultural programme and the vision for the live sites – locations where people can watch broadcast sport and engage with cultural animation/activities. The three producers are responsible for drawing a coherent narrative through the cultural programme, devolving much of the artistic and production delivery to the city and region's artists and cultural organisations, recognising existing infrastructure and expertise.

SECTOR ENGAGEMENT & DESK RESEARCH

Throughout 2019, the team has engaged in conversations and research to guide and inform the cultural programme. They have met with more than 200 artists and organisations across the cultural sector of Birmingham and the West Midlands, listening both to what the sector feels is needed from a cultural programme around the Games, and to where the sector wants to be in 2022.

In addition, the team has been guided by existing cultural consultations, the initial Birmingham bid, Arts Council England's 2020-2030 Strategy 'Let's Create' and the findings from two focus groups conducted by Beatfrees with young people from the region.

Important to this process has been their understanding of the ambitions for Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 and awareness that 2022 is a year of major events including the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the BBC's centenary and Festival 2022 (working title).

The primary findings from engagement and research have informed the cultural team's curatorial framework.



CURATORIAL FRAMEWORK

Core principles

The core principles are building blocks, articulating how and with whom the programme will be curated, and the outcomes it seeks to achieve:

1. The cultural programme will be a curated festival of work that is artistically led by creative individuals and organisations.
2. It is an opportunity to be extraordinary and for Birmingham and the West Midlands to have its long-overdue moment in the spotlight. This moment will celebrate world-class institutions and creative individuals, develop quieter voices in the sector and empower everyone to be ambitious, risk-taking and disruptive.
3. It will be achieved through new relationships and partnership working of all kinds, with individuals and institutions, and with a spirit of generosity and humility.
4. It will showcase the creativity of Birmingham and the West Midlands through projects born out of diverse, international, cross-genre and cross-sector collaboration on a global stage.
5. It will encourage relationships with artists from Commonwealth countries, developed through establishing long-term partnerships and exchange.
6. It will be transformational for the city and region, its cultural sector and audiences, with extensive local impacts and sectoral legacy.
7. It will build capacity in, and the profile of, the region's cultural and creative organisations, recognising that the Games is a temporary moment and event.

Curatorial lines

The curatorial lines express the themes and questions the programme will explore. They will connect projects and events and give shape to an overall narrative.

They represent a starting point. They will evolve and develop as creative ideas are developed and discussed. They should be read as interconnecting points, rather than isolated agendas.

Artists and organisations are invited to respond creatively to:

- Our place in the Commonwealth
 - An honest acknowledgement of its legacy
 - The search for common ground
 - Lasting exchange
 - Profiling communities with Commonwealth roots





Curatorial lines (continued)

- The present moment
 - Urgent and timely conversations
 - Catalysing all generations to make change
 - The collective power of youth across the region, the Commonwealth and throughout the Games
 - Positive disruption of the everyday
- The stories of Birmingham and the West Midlands
 - Living and reimagined stories that resonate with people and places
 - Experiential narratives that connect people to their place in the world

Curation of the programme

The programme will be curated in several ways:

- By including existing or separately funded projects and events that align with our curatorial framework
- Through direct commission or co-commissions
- Through open calls e.g. there will be an artistic commission per sport
- Through small grants programme/s

Where possible, proposals should not be linked to specific dates in the cultural programme period to enable an overall narrative to be curated by the team in discussion with artists and partners. We will actively avoid presenting major events in the cultural programme during the 11 days of sporting activity and ask our collaborators to support our scheduling where possible.

The team will be looking for innovative approaches to form, and in particular, projects that:

- are artistically-led or creatively driven, and of a high quality
- are created through collaboration
- show artistic ambition or an extension or development of practice
- can be repeated or tour to different places and spaces
- take place through exchange or residencies, long term development and co-creation
- engage audiences and participants on multiple levels and in multiple ways, including digital
- leave a legacy of better representation in the city and region's cultural sector, considering content, workforce and/or leadership
- have potential for future life and/or impact beyond 2022





Audiences

The cultural programme is for everyone in its reach to experience. The region should feel joyful and euphoric, true to itself and connected, welcoming and friendly, regardless of where and how it is being experienced.

Approximately 1.3 million tickets will be sold to the Games sporting events, and at least this many people should encounter the culture programme.

The bulk of the audience will be people who consider Birmingham and the West Midlands home. The cultural programme will also reach a wider UK and international audience through tourism and the opportunity and reach of Sport Presentation, ceremonies, online, broadcast and live sites.

Duration and locations

The cultural programme will last for 6 months, from the middle of March until early September 2022, and take place across Birmingham and the West Midlands. It will happen venues and institutions, and public and non-traditional spaces, venturing outside of the known city centres and into local high streets, neighbourhoods, green spaces and waterways. It should challenge and reconfigure how our public spaces are used and experienced – and be playful and surprising.

Impact and evaluation

A robust evaluation framework will be developed collaboratively with key stakeholders and peers to measure the impact of the cultural programme, including the degree to which it delivers against the core principles and audience ambitions set out above. Evaluation will also draw out key learnings and gather insight to support the continued advocacy of the role of the arts in public life.





TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

Programme development:	Now until Summer 2021
Programme launch:	Autumn/Winter 2021/22
Programme begins:	March 2022 (incorporating Commonwealth Day on 14 March)

***Commonwealth Games 27 July – 7 August 2022
(includes Opening & Closing Ceremony and Sport Presentation) ***

Programme ends:	September 2022
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The team is proactively meeting with artists, creative companies and cultural influencers throughout Spring 2020 ahead of launching specific programme and funding pathways later in the year.

You can contact the cultural programme team directly on culture@birmingham2022.com

Please note, that this document will be updated or changed as and when new information is available. To stay up to date, please join the Birmingham 2022 Culture mailing list [here](#).

If you would like to receive this information in an alternative format, please contact culture@birmingham2022.com

