

UNLIMITED...

PRESS RELEASE

Strict embargo until 12pm, Tuesday 30 March

34 exceptional UK disabled artists and companies receive over £715K in funding from Unlimited to develop their work

The Unlimited arts commissioning programme is delivered by Shape Arts and Artsadmin. It supports disabled artists to create and present their work across all art forms.



Artists who will receive funding this year work in the artforms of music, theatre, combined arts, dance visual and live art, with this round, also supporting opera, literature, zines, technology and work for young audiences and in rural locations. The selection criteria requires that projects are disability-led and show quality, innovation and ambition to develop new artistic work. Artists funded live throughout the UK, resident in Scotland, Wales and England.

Unlimited's main aim is to commission disabled artists and companies to make exceptional work. In this round, 468 artists applied and 77 artists were shortlisted.

The awards in statistics:

- 34 awards with 17 of these awards in collaboration with partners.
- 11 Emerging awards, 13 Research and Development awards, 8 Main Commission awards and two strategic commissions have been awarded.
- £717,490 awarded
- 67% of artists have never been funded by Unlimited before
- 32% of awards are going to artists of colour
- 24% of funds awarded are going to Midlands-based artists, 21% to those based in London, 18% South West England, 12% North of England, 10% Wales, 9% Scotland and 6% South East England.
- 46% of funds are going to combined arts, 15% theatre, 11% visual arts, 7% literature, 5% music, 3% dance, 13% other (including music theatre, environmental sound art)

One of Unlimited's core aims is to embed disabled artists within the cultural sector, and we do this through our partnerships. Unlimited is funded by Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales and Creative Scotland and, for this commissions round, we have partnered with Artsadmin, Bagri Foundation, Coventry City of Culture Trust, Farnham Maltings, Museum of the Home, Sage Gateshead, Southbank Centre, Pentabus, Polka Theatre, The Art House and Wellcome Collection. Unlimited also partnered with the [David Toole OBE Bursary](#) to support a project by an emerging dancer, received this round by Laura Fisher.

Explore all the supported commissions on Unlimited's [website](#).

Jo Verrent Senior Producer at Unlimited said: "It feels important at this time, when many artists and companies have been stopped from touring and sharing work, to keep commissioning artists, even if we are unsure of what shape the cultural sector might be in when these works will be due to bloom. We've done our bit. Now it's up to the cultural sector of the world to help support, develop and share these artists and their ideas. And not just those we have awarded, but all those we have [shortlisted](#) too – there is a lot of great work here ready to be picked up, funded and experienced."

Simon Mellor, Deputy CEO, Arts and Culture, Arts Council England, said: "The Arts Council is committed to ensuring that everyone across the country is able to develop their creativity and the Unlimited programme plays an important part in this work. Our longstanding investment in this programme has resulted in inspirational work from disabled artists and organisations and I'm looking forward to seeing how the new commissions develop as we emerge from the pandemic."

Diane Hebb, Director of Arts Engagement at Arts Council of Wales said: "The Unlimited Commissions programme is central to our work in Wales, in providing dedicated support to and raising the profile of disabled artists as well as shining a spotlight on the huge range of exciting work created across the UK. We're thrilled to be a part of this hugely successful programme and have seen the impact the programme has had for Wales-based disabled artists continue to strengthen and grow over a number of years. The Unlimited Commissions play an important part in supporting our commitment to

promoting equality and inclusion across the arts sector.”

Joan Parr, Interim Director, Arts and Engagement at Creative Scotland said:

“Creative Scotland is excited by the incredible range of talented artists and projects we’re able to support as part of our partnership on the Unlimited commissioning programme. The artists will benefit from the opportunity to develop their practice, and strengthen their professional networks across Scotland and the UK through this highly successful programme. The commissions explore artforms and ideas that challenge perceptions of disability and interrogate representation in our public spaces.”

David Hevey, Chief Executive, Shape Arts said: “It is with enormous pride that we announce this outstanding selection of commissions which in myriad ways push boundaries, challenge expectations and continue Unlimited’s legacy of innovative, exceptional work. Having worked alongside Artsadmin for the past eight years to deliver Unlimited, I am extremely excited that our final collaboration platforms projects of such a high calibre.”

Róise Goan, Artistic Director, Artsadmin said: “This year’s selection of Unlimited commissions represent a breadth of talent and ambition that gives us many reasons to celebrate. Of particular pride is our partnership with Unlimited to co-commission Mish Weaver’s Parade of Horribles, a daring, collaborative-performance work for the street. After eight years of successfully co-delivering Unlimited with Shape Arts, we are thrilled to see this vitally important commissioning programme transition to its own organisation over the next year, and excited for future collaborations with the independent Unlimited.”

Notes to Editors:

PR Contact: Binita Walia binita@thespaceinbetween.co.uk 07734 507799

Unlimited Website. [LINK](#)

Read more about our partnerships. [LINK](#)

The commission pages on Unlimited’s website will be live from Tuesday 30 March

Images: [Link to Google Drive](#)

Top left: Cheryl Beer, Top right: Vijay Patel, Bottom left: Rachael Young, Bottom right Laura Fisher.

The 2021 awardees are:

Main Awards

- Cheryl Beer, Wales, Environmental sound artist
- Christopher Samuel, England: Midlands, Visual arts, Wellcome Collection Partner Award
- Dolly Sen, England: South East, Combined arts, Wellcome Collection Partner Award
- Jack Dean & Company, England: South West, Music, Farnham Maltings Partner Award
- Mish Weaver, England: South West, Combined arts, Artsadmin Partner Award
- Mind the Gap & Nickie Miles-Wildin, England: North, Theatre
- Rachael Young, England: Midlands, Combined arts

- Tom Wentworth, England: London, Theatre, Pentabus Partner Award

Research & Development Awards

- Aby Watson, Scotland, Dance
- Ailís Ní Ríain, England: North, Music, Sage Gateshead Partner Award
- Bobby Baker, Daily Life Ltd. England: London, Combined arts, Museum of the Home Partner Award
- Clara Weale, Scotland, Combined arts
- Ellen Renton, Scotland, Literature
- Estabrak, England: London, Combined arts, Bagri Foundation Partner Award
- Gareth Churchill, Wales, Music
- John Kelly, England: London, Music, Sage Gateshead Partner Award
- Joseph Wilk, England: South West, Combined arts, Southbank Centre Partner Award
- Lilac Yosiphon, England: London, Theatre, Polka Theatre Partner Award
- Rhine Bernardino, England: London, Combined arts, Bagri Foundation Partner Award
- Touretteshero, England: London, Theatre
- Vijay Patel, England: London, Theatre

Emerging Artists Commissions:

- Ayesha Jones, England: Midlands, Combined arts, Coventry City of Culture Trust Partner Award
- Clare and Lesley Disabled Dance Artists, Scotland, Combined arts
- Emily Beaney, Scotland, Combined arts
- Hayley Williams-Hindle, England: Midlands, Visual arts, Coventry City of Culture Trust Partner Award
- Jack Foulks, England: Midlands, Visual arts, Coventry City of Culture Trust Partner Award
- Jameisha Prescod, England: London, Visual arts
- Laura Fisher, Scotland, Dance
- Lilith Cooper, Scotland, Combined arts
- Mohammed Hassun Zafar, England: North, Combined arts, The Art House Partner Award
- Sam Metz, England: North, Combined arts
- Stephanie Back, Wales, Theatre

Strategic Commission

- Al Davison, England: Midlands, Visual arts, with Coventry City of Culture Trust
- Raquel Meseguer Zafe, England: South West, Combined arts with Coventry City of Culture Trust

Unlimited is an arts commissioning programme that aims to embed work by disabled artists within the UK and international cultural sectors, reach new audiences and shift perceptions of disabled people. Unlimited has been delivered by the disability-led arts organisation Shape Arts and arts-producing organisation Artsadmin since 2013, and is currently funded by Arts Council

England, Arts Council of Wales, Creative Scotland and the British Council. Unlimited is transitioning into being an independent organisation from 2022.

Since 2013, Unlimited has awarded more than £4.7 million to over 400 ambitious disabled artists and companies, through commissions, awards and support, which have been seen by or engaged with more than 3.8 million people globally and online, making it the largest supporter of disabled artists worldwide. www.weareunlimited.org.uk
[Unlimited Twitter](#) [Unlimited Facebook](#) #UnlimitedCommissions

Artsadmin is a company of creative people working with artists to develop and make performance projects for local, national and international audiences in a variety of places and contexts. We offer a range of support for artists and rehearsal studios, workspaces and a programme of public events at Toynbee Studios, our home in London's East End. We also collaborate on national partnership projects engaging with disability-led arts and climate justice. www.artsadmin.co.uk @artsadm

Shape Arts is a disability-led organisation breaking barriers to creative excellence. We deliver a range of projects supporting marginalised artists, as well as training cultural venues to be more inclusive and accessible for disabled people as employees, artists and audiences. Running alongside this portfolio is the HLF funded National Disability Movement Archive and Collection (NDMAC), a radical telling of the story of the golden era of the Disability Rights Movement; and Unlimited, which, largely supported by Arts Council and British Council funding, provides a platform for disabled artists to develop, produce and show ambitious and high-quality work, and which aims to transform perceptions of how the work of disabled artists is received in the mainstream art world.

[Shape Twitter](#) [Shape Facebook](#) [Shape Instagram](#)

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. www.artscouncil.org.uk

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies administering the Government's unprecedented £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Funds. Find out more at www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19

Arts Council of Wales is responsible for funding and developing the arts in Wales. Arts Council of Wales is an independent charity, established by Royal Charter in 1994. Its members are appointed by the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure. Its principal sponsor is the Welsh Government and they also distribute funding from the National Lottery and raise additional money where they can from a variety of public and private sector sources. Working together with the Welsh Government, they are able to show how the arts are helping to meet the Government's policy ambitions. www.arts.wales

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and The National Lottery. Further information at creativescotland.com. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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