

A MANIFESTO FOR THE PUBLIC ARTS

The Arts, People, and Place

We are passionate about the importance of place in our society and committed to promoting the role of artists and the arts in putting culture at the heart of placemaking.

Why A Manifesto?

- The importance of place in our society is fundamental, yet our urban landscape and buildings are often marred by soulless developments.
- Culture is as important to successful place-making as business, housing, jobs, and transport, but is often seen as an optional extra.
- The arts are important to both people and place-making, but their role is misunderstood, undervalued, and marginalised.
- The arts, including the public arts, are important in the development of active citizenship, yet our education system fails to give them equal weight and provide access to them.
- Artists can contribute to all stages of the planning and design process, to public engagement, and to the animation of public space, but are not normally involved.
- Public art is often bland, disconnected from place, designed 'by committee', poorly executed, or 'bolted on' to existing designs.
- The creative vision of artists is sometimes lost within mistaken notions of public participation, or expectations that over-emphasise social outcomes at the expense of artistic quality.
- Within the built environment and public realm management professions there are some who are unaware of, or even hostile to, the arts.
- There are also people who believe the arts, their making and enjoyment, are restricted to certain purposes, people, and contexts.

We Believe.....

- The consideration of culture through the public arts should be seen as a joyful obligation that is fundamental, not ornamental, to every significant initiative impacting the public realm.
- The public arts have the potential to help regenerate and revitalise all of our urban spaces, towns, and parks, and to play a vital role in stimulating a successful people-centred economy in the service of a democratic society.
- Artists can contribute creative thinking, design and placemaking skills; help engage people of all ages and backgrounds in discussing, understanding, planning, and designing the public realm; help animate and enhance a meaningful sense of place through their individual vision, permanent or temporary art, performance, and street arts.
- The public arts should be defined as anything that artists can do, plan, instigate, design, produce, stimulate and contribute, working with citizens, communities and other professionals, in the context of the built environment and place.
- Like placemaking, the public arts are the concern of everyone --- citizens, institutions, agencies, the creative industries, property developers, community groups, and leaders, as well as politicians in national and local government.

We Are Calling For.....

....a renaissance of the public arts and creativity inspired by ideas, experimentation, learning, and participation.

1. **A step change** in how our built environment and public spaces are regarded and in the knowledge and skills needed to making ordinary places better, with the arts at their core.
2. **The public arts to be re-defined** and practised in an imaginative, multi-artform, cross-disciplinary and participatory way, recognising the individual vision of artists within a dynamic mix of professionals and citizens.
3. **Support for the 'New Rules of Public Art'** (*Situations Bristol*, <http://www.situations.org.uk>)
4. **The education system to recognize the value** of giving young people participatory access to the public arts within a creative democratic education.
5. **The inclusion of the public arts** in the education and ongoing skills development of built environment professionals, engineers, public realm managers, and local authority officers and members.
6. **A greater encouragement of the arts** and culture in the implementation of the National Planning Policy Framework.
7. **The introduction of an Artistic and Cultural Audit** in Local and Neighbourhood Plans, and within or alongside Design and Access statements in mid- and large-scale planning applications.
8. **An innovative and more robust approach to financing** the public arts, developed by the sector with Arts Council England and other key organisations.
9. **Government at all levels to play an enabling role** through developing, funding and implementing effective policy that promotes the public arts through its own procurement system and as part of the overall context for placemaking.
10. **A new gathering of 20 sector leader champions** --- artists, cultural and built environment professionals, educators, politicians, business people, and active citizens – to champion the role of the arts and artists nationally.

Please Pledge Your Support for this Manifesto

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The Arts and Place initiative emerged from the *Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment* 2014 (<http://www.farrellreview.co.uk/>) and has been adopted as part of the newly-formed Place Alliance movement (<https://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/placealliance>). It has been led by Beam (<http://beam.uk.net/>) in collaboration with Farrells (<http://www.terryfarrell.co.uk/>) and supported by a range of artists and arts professionals through a series of open forums in 2014-15. Their ideas, together with Graham Henderson's essay *Putting Soul in the City*, have informed the drafting of this Manifesto.

