

Unfolding Theatre

Annual Report 2018/19



Ready to save
the future?
Insert hands here

Use this map to find
the Multiverse Arcade
Take a photograph of the
map and start your journey
Look out for the secret
message hidden on your way

@multiverse_arcade
#MultiverseArcade

Unfolding Theatre makes big-hearted theatre that delights in bringing people together.

We tour our shows to audiences across the UK and beyond. We are proud to have won awards and critical acclaim for our productions, *Multiverse Arcade*, *Putting the Band Back Together*, *Lands of Glass*, *What if?*, *Best in the World* and *Building Palaces*. We are even more proud to have audiences describe their experiences as “**incredible – filled with hope and screaming of happiness**”; “**the humanity of it – that’s what makes it special**” and “**one of the most magical and joyful things I’ve ever seen**”.

Unfolding Theatre brings together surprising combinations of people to make remarkable theatre for national audiences. Participatory creative processes generate warm, distinctive theatre, rich in ideas. By reflecting and celebrating stories of people from diverse communities, our projects have

a positive, sometimes profound impact on audiences, artists and those who take part. Long-term, we aim that:

- **More people are leading happier, more creatively fulfilled lives**
- **Mainstream theatre better reflects England’s diversity, driving excellence**
- **People with different life experiences are better connected**

Artistic Director, Annie Rigby, founded Unfolding Theatre in 2008. In 2018/19 she led the company alongside Company Producer, Morag Iles. Dick Bonham and Gloria Lindh (LittleMighty) produce our national touring. We collaborate with inventive, talented artists including Associate Artists, Alex Elliott, Garry Lydon and Luca Rutherford. Recent collaborators include writers Chloe Daykin (Northern Writers Award) and Selina Thompson (Total Theatre Award), musicians Mariam Rezaei, Ross Millard (The Futureheads), Royal Northern Sinfonia and Paul Smith (Maximo Park) and visual artists Imogen Cloët and Bethan Maddocks.

We are based with xsite architecture at Arch 6 in Ouseburn, Newcastle upon Tyne.



Artistic Director's report

2018/19 was an extraordinary year for Unfolding Theatre. In our first year as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, we reached massively bigger audiences than we ever expected.



18,785 people attended our live events. To put it in perspective, this represents 60% of our entire 2018-22 audience target! We also significantly increased our digital output, engaging 21,848 digital audiences. Our workshops and community projects enabled 725 individuals to take part in creative processes, generating insightful theatre that reflects our diverse society.

We made and presented a brand new, large-scale video and audio artwork, *Multiverse Arcade*. It was created with 51 young people, including many young people of colour and those with autism. *Multiverse Arcade* was created by young people for young audiences. It reflected their concerns about the world around them, as well as their hopes for the future. Presented as part of Great Exhibition of the North at Newcastle's Mining Institute, it

attracted 16,701 visitors, including 7,220 young people over 80 performance days.

The creation of 3 Associate Artist roles has enabled Unfolding Theatre to deliver community projects and touring that has reached people across the North East and beyond. This includes a focus on areas of socio-economic disadvantage and low levels of arts engagement. Our Associate Artists engaged older people in partnership with Chain Reaction (Newcastle) and parents and babies with Barnardo's Family Hub at Byker Sands Centre (Newcastle) as part of the creative process for future show, *Hold On Let Go*. We delivered workshops and a large-scale outdoor show, *Everything There Ever Was*, with people of all ages across East Durham with East Durham Creates. We created a community panto with families at Edberts House in Felling (Gateshead). We also co-created new digital artworks with young people with learning disabilities at MIXiT Days (County Durham) and students at Durham Sixth Form. We have toured to audiences at Grassington Festival (North Yorkshire) and The Ropewalk (Lincolnshire)

We are excited to have grown and diversified our workforce. We employed 41 artists and production staff in 2018/19. 15% of these employees came from communities under-represented in the arts (4 artists of colour, 2 disabled artists).

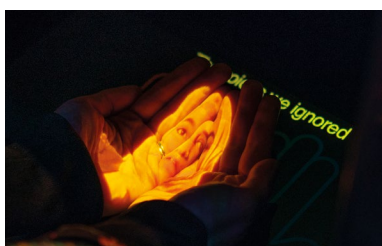
We supported talent development of diverse emerging artists by hosting 3 volunteers, 1 paid internship and mentoring 1 emerging artist. We established *Right Now People*, a new young people's steering group for Unfolding Theatre. We also grew and diversified our board of trustees to 6 people, welcoming 3 new trustees, Michelle Booth, Bex Bowsher and Kevin Wilson.

We are proud to have had a strong year financially, building Unfolding Theatre's reserves to £39,751. This enables Unfolding Theatre to continue to deliver its work, engaging people with high quality theatre experiences.

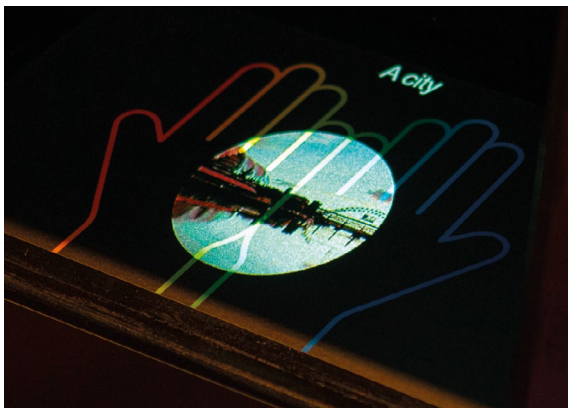
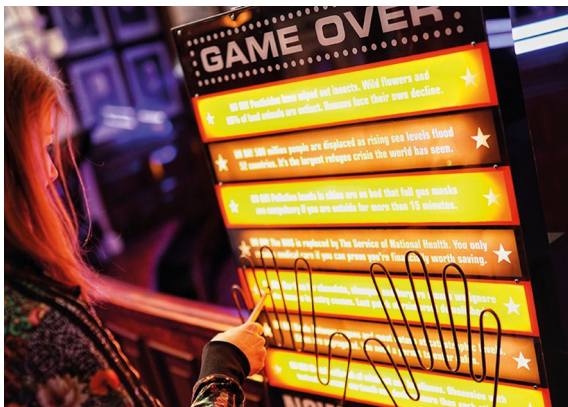
We were delighted to be named as Finalists in the Journal Culture Awards 2019 for Best Event Durham and Best Arts & Business Partnership. The awards will be announced later in 2019.

Thank you to 41,258 people who attended Unfolding Theatre's events in 2018/19, engaged with our work digitally and took part in workshops. An equally massive thank you to the 41 artists and production staff, funders, venues, community partners and commissioners who made our projects possible! It has been an incredible start to our 2018-22 Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation programme, reaching more people than ever before and building deeper, longer term creative relationships with communities

Annie Rigby
Artistic Director



2018/19 projects



Multiverse Arcade

“My whole body is tingling, going around here and listening to all of this”
Audience member

Evening Chronicle’s Top 5 Things to See This Summer

Multiverse Arcade was created with 51 young people from Young Writers’ City at Excelsior Academy (Newcastle) and Queen’s Hall Youth Theatre (Hexham). The young people brought rich perspectives to the creative process. They included young people of colour, those with ADHD, autism and those living in care. Together, they explored issues including racism, mental health and LGBTQ+ experiences. Feedback described how the project built their sense of empowerment:

“It’s hard having your voice heard in a society that doesn’t want change. It makes my voice feel valuable. It’s been put across to all different kinds of people who can really be impacted.”
Manar (15)

Multiverse Arcade became an audio and video installation. It presents a vision of 2066. The future is in trouble because we didn’t listen to diverse voices today. It asks young audiences, “What is the change we need to make to save the future?”. Bespoke software captured and amplified young audience’s responses, adding their voices to an Instagram arcade and within the live sound design.

Multiverse Arcade was presented for 80 days for Great Exhibition of the North at Newcastle’s Mining Institute. It attracted 16,701 live audiences, including 7,220 children and young people. This massively surpassed our expectations, achieving 54% of our overall 2018-22 audience target, and 70% of our young audiences target.

A pop-up arcade at The Gate attracted 5,203 digital audiences. The site was suggested by our young collaborators to engage their peers. It was very popular and built a new relationship with The Gate.

Multiverse Arcade was awarded a Creative FUSE Innovation Pilot grant, making possible the digital innovation at the heart of the piece. It supported collaboration with academics from 5 North East universities, Teesside University software developers, Tyneside Cinema and talented artists (Imogen Cloët, Alex Elliott, Kat Pierce, Mariam Rezaei, Luca Rutherford). The relationships fuelled our digital practice and reach.

Multiverse Arcade radically increased Unfolding Theatre’s young people led digital output. Their work reached 10,041 digital audiences via Instagram, videos online and pop-up arcades. 3,240 people took part digitally, adding voices to the arcade.

“It felt powerful. I feel powerful.”
9-year-old audience member
describing how she felt after adding her voice to *Multiverse Arcade*

Annie spoke about *Multiverse Arcade* at Virgin Money Foundation Youth Social Action Symposium and Creative FUSE conference. Young volunteer, Emily Keeton, presented at City of Dreams *Our City, Our Stories*, at Live Theatre.

Multiverse Arcade’s success attracted touring demand from community organisations across the North East. Funding from Virgin Money Foundation’s #iwill fund supported presentation in Newcastle and North East touring in 2019/20.



Everything There Ever Was

“THANK YOU for providing an amazing opportunity and experience to children and young people I work with.”

Joanne Bowen
Dawdon Youth & Community Centre

Working with East Durham Creates and artists Daniel Bye, Bethan Maddocks, Beccy Owen and Boff Whalley, we created large-scale outdoor performance, *Everything There Ever Was*. The piece, made up of original songs, drama, community art installations and a picnic, was presented in the amazing

setting of Crimdon Dene. 85 people became a specially created community choir alongside Trimdon Brass. It attracted 520 audience members to celebrate Crimdon Dene’s past and present. The performance has been short-listed as a finalist for Best Event Durham in the Journal Culture Awards.





Hold On Let Go: Research & Development

“The work was fantastic. The feedback from families was very positive.”

Simone James

Barnardo's

We engaged 54 people in projects exploring what we remember, forget and hope to pass on from our life stories. Their work is inspiring the creation of new touring show, *Hold On Let Go*, which will be presented at Battersea Arts Centre and Summerhall (Edinburgh Festival Fringe) in 2019.

14 older people, with community organisation Chain Reaction, created a booklet and digital artworks of their creative writing. Associate Artist, Alex Elliott, supported participants to attend other events, broadening their arts access.

We explored the same themes with 19 parents and 21 babies at Byker Sands Centre, with Barnardo's Family Hub. Families created memory books, capturing day to day experiences.

The memory books were treasured, with one dad even getting a tattoo of his son's first drawing.

The success of these projects is demonstrated by demand from our community partners for ongoing work. We are returning in 2019, and extending the project to Wandsworth families with Young Mums Support Network.

We brought together 7 talented artists (Alex Elliott, Garry Lydon, Liv Lorent, Luca Rutherford, Selina Thompson, Mariam Rezaei, Paul Smith) at a residency at Northern Stage to explore ideas emerging from the community projects. Work-in-progress was shared with participants and peers to inform the making of this new touring production.



THE SIR JAMES KNOTT TRUST

The Joicey Trust



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ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



Right Now People

Unfolding Theatre established a new young people's steering group. 6 young people bring diverse perspectives and experiences to our work. Meeting monthly, the group will create its own digital and live artwork, manage its own budget, and shape Unfolding Theatre artistic planning.

Touring

We have loved touring to new audiences, with *Putting The Band Back Together* at Grassington Festival and *Best in the World* at The Ropewalk, Barton-upon-Humber. An installation version of *Building Palaces* attracted 206 people to Northern Stage, Newcastle.



Other Projects

High demand for Unfolding Theatre's projects enabled us to reach new audiences across the North East. Workshops and performances in site-specific and community venues reached diverse audiences, including those who rarely access the arts.

Local Trust's Creative Civic Change programme invited Annie to be an Artist Facilitator, with communities in Whitley Bay and Walthamstow. She helped local groups develop ambitious plans for a 3-year programme and engage wider communities in the thinking. She spoke at the Creative Civic Change Conference, Battersea Arts Centre, and on Local Trust's podcast.

Annie directed *Durham Hymns*,



a large-scale World War I commemoration piece for Durham Gala. This led to a digital project exploring themes of hope and peace with 17 young people with learning disabilities at *MixIT Days*, and 30 Durham Sixth Form students, commissioned by Durham Arts Team. She directed *Where There's Muck There's Bras* with stand-up poet Kate Fox. She co-directed Jade Byrne's *Pricks*, exploring Type 1 Diabetics' experiences. She delivered workshops with veterans for Sunderland Opera, for their project, *A Soldier's Return*.

Unfolding Theatre co-created an original panto with 49 children and parents at Edberts House in Felling, Gateshead. They performed to a sold-out audience.

Company development

Securing National Portfolio Organisation 2018-22 funding from Arts Council England has been transformational. It has enabled Unfolding Theatre to develop long-term community partnerships, reach wider audiences and build deeper relationships.

Artists & Production Staff

Arts Council England and Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund has enabled our team to grow. 2 new Associate Artists, Garry Lydon (focussed on digital) and Luca Rutherford (children & young people) join Alex Elliott (community). This creates more opportunities for people to take part, live and online, and inform the theatre we make.

We have employed 41 artists and production staff in 2018/19. 6 (15%) came from communities under-represented in the arts (4 artists of colour, 2 disabled artists). We are committed to diversifying our workforce, so our theatre-making reflects and is enriched by society.

Board

We welcomed 3 new trustees, Michelle Booth, Bex Bowsher and Kevin Wilson to join Anna Disley (chair), Tim Bailey and Mark Robinson. They bring wisdom and new perspectives from social enterprise, disability arts and communications. Enormous thanks to Wendy Smith who stood down after 4 years of fantastic contributions as a trustee.

Mentoring & Volunteering

We mentored Ella Mesma, a dancer and artist of mixed heritage, during development of her piece, *Foreign Bodies*. Mentoring is part of Unfolding Theatre's commitment to nurturing the North's performing arts ecology, with a focus on artists from communities under-represented on our stages.

We supported emerging artists through hosting 3 volunteers, Emily Keeton, Emma Hansen and Helen Doyle. We ran workshops for Northumbria University students, emerging and disabled directors with Greyscale and RYTDS, young people at Kings Priory School and Razzamatraz Drama School. We ran workshops for emerging digital artists via Great Exhibition of the North's N18 programme, and supported 2 artists, Andra Milou and Glenn Cutwerk, to develop work in response to *Multiverse Arcade*. Garry Lydon was hosted on a 14-week paid Northumbria University internship. This led to him applying for, and being appointed, as our Associate Artist: Digital.

We invested in artistic practice with mentoring from Tassos Stevens (Coney) and Selina Thompson. Training from StageTEXT, and collaborating with disabled artist and Teesside University academic, Simon McKeown, developed our practice in subtitling and d/Deaf audience access. Luca Rutherford undertook Arts Award: Bronze training, with plans to start delivering the programme from 2019.

Supporters & Partnerships

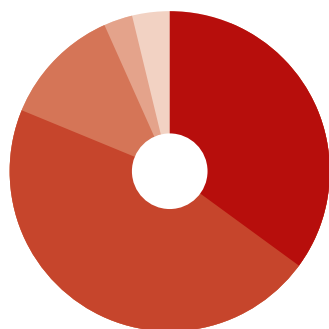
Thank you to funders and commissioners who made our work possible in 2018/19. Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation funding supported our programme. NewcastleGateshead Initiative, Community Foundation, Creative FUSE North East, #iwill Fund Virgin Money Foundation, Finn Family Fund and Barbour Foundation supported *Multiverse Arcade*. Joicey Trust and Sir James Knott Trust supported *Hold On Let Go*. Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund supported *Right Now People*. East Durham Creates commissioned *Everything There Ever Was*. Durham Arts Team commissioned digital young people's project, *Hope/Peace*.

Unfolding Theatre engaged in North East strategic activities: young people's programme, City of Dreams, Newcastle Local Cultural Education Partnership, Culture Bridge and Case 4 Culture Participation Group. We contributed to events showcasing young people's creativity (*Our City, Our Stories*, Live Theatre), promoted arts to schools (Newcastle LCEP's Schools Marketplace) and shared practice (*Who Knew?*, Northern Stage).

Our partnership with xsite architecture is a Finalist for Best Arts & Business Partnership in The Journal Culture Awards.

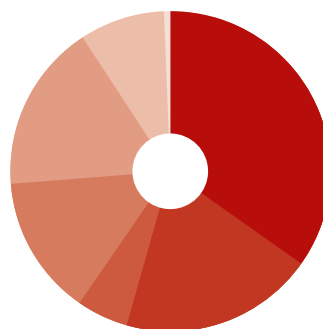
Finances

Company turnover in 2018/19
£227,393



- Earned income **£79,683**
- Arts Council funding **£105,000**
- Trusts & Foundations **£27,700** (including £10,000 carried over for activity in 2019/20)
- Individual giving/donations **£6,600**
- Other public funding **£8,410**

Company expenditure in 2018/19
£191,873



- Artists & Production staff **£66,746**
- Project costs **£37,627**
- Marketing **£10,017**
- Artistic Director (salary) **£27,119**
- Other salaries & salary costs **£32,674**
- Core running costs **£16,490**
- Governance **£1,200**

Unfolding Theatre made a total surplus of £35,520 of which £10,000 represents Restricted Funds carried forward for activities in 2019-20. The remaining unrestricted surplus of £25,520 brings Unfolding Theatre's Unrestricted Reserves to £39,751.

Unfolding Theatre's accounts were independently examined by chartered accountant, Pete O'Hara FCA. Full copies of the accounts are made publicly available via the Charity Commission and on request.

Audiences, participants & staff



In 2018/19 we presented 97 performances, reaching 18,785 live audiences. 21,484 digital audiences tuned in via Instagram, BBC Radio 4, YouTube and online. 725 people who took part in our creative processes through 70 workshops. We employed 41 artists and production staff.

What artists & production staff we worked with said:

“Unfolding Theatre created a fulfilling workplace, where I felt at home, respected and involved.”

“The organisation is so well run, and so artistically ambitious, but at the same time kind, ethical and completely down to earth”

“Absolutely unforgettably amazing!”

What audiences & participants said:

“It makes me feel proud. I feel like I’ve made a change in the world.”

Aaron

Young creator of *Multiverse Arcade*

“It’s an unexplainable feeling knowing so many people heard my point of view.”

Lucie

Young creator of *Multiverse Arcade*

“It’s important to hear what everyone says – every generation. Old people and the young people. It’s how we get new ideas and develop the world.”

Yuri

Young creator of *Multiverse Arcade*

“Inspiring to hear young people’s voices describing their hopes for the future in #MultiverseArcade from #ACEsupported @unfoldingtheatr”

Darren Henley via Twitter

Audience member & Arts Council Chief Executive

“I do hope these children really are the future with thoughts like these. Loved being able to hear my boys’ voices amongst them.”

Deb Sharrett Chart via Twitter

Audience member

“It’s really good for young people and old people to talk about their memories and share them, so they can pass down to the next generation. On the day it was wonderful, seeing all them people. It’s great that they have these community things to get people together. I was a thousand percent pleased that I agreed to be part of it.”

Janet

Participant and performer, *Everything There Ever Was*

“We thoroughly enjoyed the event. Absolutely fantastic.”

John

Audience member, *Everything There Ever Was*

“I wasn’t really that confident to have one of the main parts, but I did it, and it built my confidence”

Young participant & performer, *Everything There Ever Was*

“I was very pleased with how easy Annie and Luca made the sessions and how the parents felt comfortable to share their stories. It appeared to be therapeutic for the families, which is high on our agenda to promote infant and parent mental health.”

Simone James

Barnardo’s, Byker Sands Centre, *Hold on Let Go: Research & Development*

Plans & goals for 2019/20



Unfolding Theatre plans to tour *Multiverse Arcade* to 6 locations across the North East, including Greenfield School in Newton Aycliffe (County Durham), Sunderland, Middlesbrough, South East Northumberland and Cowgate, Newcastle. The tour aims to reach young people in areas of low arts engagement with an empowering, playful creative experience.

We are delighted that *Hold On Let Go* has been selected by Summerhall to be presented at Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2019. This creates a high-profile platform to engage new audiences, and attract interest in future touring. We will also present previews at Battersea Arts Centre (Wandsworth). The creative process will engage older people at Chain Reaction and parents

and babies at Byker Sands Centre (Newcastle) and Young Mums Support Network (Wandsworth). Workshops and performances explore personal and social memory, and what we do in the face of forgetting.

Touring *Best in the World* to Chapel FM (Seacroft, Leeds), St Robert’s of Newminster School (Sunderland) and Alphabetti Theatre (Newcastle) aims to reach new audiences. It offers associated drama workshops, exploring personal achievements and aspirations.

Commissions from Durham Gala, Kate Fox, NE1 and more help us reach new audiences. We look forward to welcoming more audiences to performances and workshops in 2019/20.



How you can support Unfolding Theatre



Work with us

If you would like to commission Unfolding Theatre we would love to hear from you. Since 2008 we have delivered performances, participation projects, training and workshops for theatres, schools, community groups, universities, businesses and festivals.

We love working with people and in places new to us, so drop us a line and let's start talking.

Get involved

Come and see one of our shows. Take part in a workshop. We'd love to have you in the room.

You can find details of our upcoming performances and opportunities to take part on our website.

Make a donation

Your donation will support the development of a new production. We are returning to collaborate with people aged 8 to 80 in Sunderland who helped make *Putting the Band Back Together*. Your donation will support community workshops to bring people together to work on a brand new production for 2020/21.

To make a donation send a cheque made out to 'Unfolding Theatre' to the address below, or email us for details of how to make a donation online.

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