
ACHIEVING GREAT ART FOR EVERYONE

A STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK
FOR THE ARTS

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EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS

DAME LIZ FORGAN, Chair, Arts Council England

People often ask what Arts Council England means by excellence. It is a tricky word, lazily taken for granted by some, suspected by others as carrying connotations of class or conventional culture, contentious, politically loaded and capable of starting fights. However, it is the star we steer by so we need to explain what we, at least, understand by the idea.

Everyone will have their own sense of what excellence is, but for us it is simply the bravest, most original, most innovative, most perfectly realised work of which people are capable – whether in the creation of art, its performance, its communication or its impact on audiences. It can be found in the classical canon or in wild anarchy, in elegant theatres or railway arches; it can be accessible or obscure, aimed at a tiny audience or millions. It can be costly or cheap to achieve, last half an hour or a hundred years. Be the work of an inspired teacher or a great diva, a radical outsider or an acclaimed genius. Work on a global scale or speak to a small community. It ticks no boxes but it is to be measured in its effect on both those who make it and those who experience it – and it is the opposite of the safe, routine and imitative.

We cannot expect excellence every day from everyone, but we can insist on the aspiration towards it. And the Arts Council's job is to recognise it, support it, nurture it and protect its freedom to be itself as far as we possibly can.

Such an all-encompassing description will not satisfy those who insist that a definition of excellence must place everything from Purcell to Sarah Lucas in a gigantic league table or else be accused of cultural relativism. But the Arts Council is not an academy. It is an organisation whose duty is to engage with living artists and audiences, to encourage and inspire to ever-greater ambition and boldness. And excellence, in its most creative sense, is at the heart of our vision for the arts that we support.

At a time when the dizzying potential of digital technology is transforming the way we make, distribute, receive and exchange art it would be absurd to define excellence in the language of the conventional art forms. Art forms are morphing and combining. To be relevant in the 21st century, any definition of excellence has to find room for participation in art, as well as the classical notion of creation.

But we are not in the business of 'anything goes'. There is a difference between the profound and the trivial, the visionary and the routine, the ground breaking and the repetitive. It is just getting harder and harder to be sure where the boundaries are if we are to keep our aesthetic faculties open to the unfamiliar and the puzzling. That, however, is the task for all of us.

'At a time when the dizzying potential of digital technology is transforming the way we make, distribute, receive and exchange art it would be absurd to define excellence in the language of the conventional art forms.'

Of course, much art in England takes place outside the operations of the Arts Council. But we are a significant part of the cultural life of the country, in that we are responsible for much of the nation's public investment in its art and its artists. We therefore thought it right to produce this document – the fruit of a year-long dialogue with audiences, artists, public and private funders and arts organisations – to set out both our goals for the next 10 years and our priorities for the next four.

In the next few years, we will need a clearer sense than ever before of what really matters – what matters over everything else when funds are tight. In seeking to achieve our mission, great art for everyone, artists must be supported and appreciated. Children and young people must learn about and love their culture if they are to carry it on. And the art itself must be enriched by the contribution of the whole of England's vibrant and changing society and by the transforming impact of digital technology.

Why is this so important? Because art is intrinsically valuable? Because it is necessary for a successful economy, to our national prestige, to our mental health, to our social cohesion, to our sense of identity, to our happiness and to our well-being? All of the above – as we and others have constantly sought to demonstrate as scientifically as it is possible to do. As people responsible for spending substantial amounts of public money, we are duty bound to account for the public value of art with all the data we can muster. Intrinsic and instrumental arguments all have their place. But art, like excellence, will always elude neat definition. We must be as clear as we can and then acknowledge that it simply has mysterious aspects that are immensely powerful and can never be anticipated or accounted for. As Benjamin Constant said, ‘Art achieves a purpose which is not its own’. We shall steer the next 10 years by our star of excellence, but no one can be entirely sure where art will take us.

What can art do?

‘Great art helps to develop thinking, imagination and understanding. Artists translate nature, our environment and our lives into what we see in our galleries, theatres and concert halls, adding depth and helping us to appreciate the value of our existence. But unlike with medicine, you cannot see the immediate result.’

Valery Gergiev /
Principal Conductor,
London Symphony Orchestra

ACHIEVING GREAT ART FOR EVERYONE

ALAN DAVEY, Chief Executive

It may seem strange to be publishing a document with the ambition 'Achieving great art for everyone' when, at the time of publication, central government funding for the arts has been cut, reflecting wider pressures on public spending.

It is not strange, it is vital.

This year of writing, 2010, is a golden one for the arts. Investment in theatres is paying off, with producing theatres all over the country making challenging work that is engaging audiences everywhere. Last year we had two great Hamlets from David Tennant (and his understudy Edward Bennett) and Jude Law, this year two more from Rory Kinnear and John Simm – all very different, with different insights. Some young and already great choreographers such as Hofesh Shechter and Akram Khan are producing work that really does get to the heart of humanity. The eight symphony orchestras that we fund for less than the public subsidy of the Berlin Philharmonic are pushing the boundaries for classical music, bringing curious audiences with them, with a collection of conductors who in individual ways are exploring different artistic avenues to the benefit of musical life in this country. Our opera companies are also challenging themselves artistically, and English National Opera in particular has come through a period of turmoil to something great, with rigorous musical excellence led by Edward Gardner at the core of its achievement. Traditional musical forms that go deep into the roots of the country are enjoying renewal – artists like Sam Carter mining a future by exploring forms from the past.

New galleries such as Nottingham Contemporary are attracting audiences to experience the best of contemporary visual arts for the first time. Their opening David Hockney exhibition was intelligent and popular and I am proud of our association with numerous ground-breaking shows from the astonishing and moving Wolfgang Tillmans retrospective at the Serpentine Gallery to Bridget Riley in Birmingham and elsewhere. And poetry goes from strength to strength, from our collaboration with Faber and Faber which produced pamphlets with a new generation of poets, to several collections from poetry publishers we support being shortlisted for major prizes.

So much more could be said – but in 2010 we have the conditions for excellence in the arts in this country that are quite simply working. We want to keep this golden age alive, for the long-term good of the arts themselves, for their place in society, and simply for the fact they make this nation rich in intellectual, spiritual and economic terms. They are part of our collective soul and common wealth. As President John F Kennedy said, quoting Robert Frost, 'The nation that disdains the arts...has nothing to look back on with pride or forward to with hope'.

Key to these conditions are two things: the mixed economy of funding from public and private sources, where public investment is made to work hard; and the arm's length arrangements for providing central government funding for artists through an independent expert Arts Council. This latter ensures that decisions are made for reasons of artistic merit and not short-term political instrumentalism. What Keynes described in 1946 as a uniquely British arrangement, that has been copied and admired the world over, has resulted in particular success in this country.

Sustaining that success is going to be very challenging. Overall, we will have less public money to spend. Less from the Arts Council, less from local government. The fiscal elements of the successful mixed economy of the arts will have to work harder. We will work in this period to try and deliver more from the private sector, by improving fundraising skills and the overall culture of giving to the arts, but this is not a quick job or a quick fix. And in the meantime the bottom line is that the Arts Council and our funding partners will have to make tough decisions, exercise judgement, and try to do what is best for arts and culture.

‘We want to keep this golden age alive, for the long-term good of the arts themselves, for their place in society, and simply for the fact they make this nation rich in intellectual, spiritual and economic terms.’

We must do so not with a view to the short term, but the long, looking to support artistic aspiration across a period of time that bridges current austerity into better economic times. Hence this booklet. It is a manifesto for ambition and a framework for getting there. It distills in very short form the results of many conversations with artists and arts organisations, with audiences and other people who are interested, about the kind of ambition the Arts Council should have in the job it does over the next 10 years. We hope the ambition set out here matches that of the arts leaders, artists and audiences we have been talking to.

It begins with excellence, because without that what we do does not work. It is imbued with our collective ambition to realise our full potential – to respond to technology, to widen our international perspective, to instill resilience and build sustainability. Running throughout is the need for collaboration – an ambition in which the Arts Council will lead by example. For us to do our job well, requires a clear sense of the needs of the artists and audiences we serve. That is a sobering responsibility, one not to be taken lightly. In the dark hours before the dawn I am frequently awed by the responsibility we have but equally determined we will do it well. Everyone in the Arts Council shares this ambition – we need you who work in the arts to continue to help us. Thank you for your help so far.

At a time when the arts are at their best, we need to hang onto the fact that we really have found a way of supporting the arts in this country that works – combining money from local and national government, from the National Lottery, and from private and corporate

giving, delivered at arm's length from political expediency. We need to keep that, it is in itself a precious national treasure.

A precious thing that provides the means to admit the marvellous and the beautiful into our lives and into the fabric of our nation.

That is what this small booklet is about.

That is why it matters.

What can art do?

‘Art can do many things: entertain, instruct, console, inspire, enrage, transform. It teaches us things we can’t be taught in any other way and makes us see things we wouldn’t otherwise see. It allows us the illusion of escaping our daily lives while simultaneously taking us deeper inside ourselves.’

Blake Morrison
writer

‘Art can make you:
Escape
Make political and personal statements
Think
Raise awareness
Question the world
Tell stories
Record memories and keep them alive
Challenge ideas and the world.
See the world poetically. See the world as you wish.’

Zineb Sedira
artist

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arts Council England is the lead body charged with developing the arts in England.

We work to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people’s lives.

A 10-year strategic framework

We have produced a strategic framework to focus our work over the next 10 years and encourage shared purpose and partnerships across the arts. It provides the rationale for our investment in the arts and will inform our future funding decisions. It has been shaped by the views of artists, arts organisations, the public and our many other stakeholders and partners.

With its focus on long-term collaborative action, the strategic framework will enable the Arts Council to work with partners towards positive change in the arts. It will help create the conditions in which great art can be made, experienced and appreciated by as many people as possible. It will support us in realising our vision of England as a world-leading creative and cultural nation. It will enable us to focus our investment and achieve even more impact.

Long-term goals

At the heart of the framework are five 10-year goals.

Goal 1: Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated

England is regarded as a pre-eminent centre for artistic excellence.

Goal 2: More people experience and are inspired by the arts

The arts are at the centre of people's lives – more people are involved in arts in their communities and are enriched and inspired by arts experiences.

Goal 3: The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative

Collaborative and networked, the arts are known for resilience, innovation and their contribution to the nation's reputation and prosperity.

Goal 4: The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled

The diversity of the arts workforce reflects the diversity of society and artistic practice in England. Outstanding arts leaders play a wider role in their communities and nationally.

Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts

Children and young people have the best current and future artistic lives they can have. They are able to develop their artistic capabilities and engage with, and shape, the arts.

Within each goal, we set out why it is an important area of work, what we will do and what success looks like. We also indicate what we will focus on in the first four years. The next Arts Council Plan, to be published in spring 2011, will describe our approach to these priorities in more detail.

Realising our vision

Mobilising behind long-term goals will require collaborative effort between the Arts Council and its many partners. This will require changes in the way that we work and change from the arts organisations we fund.

Our strategic framework therefore sees us working even more effectively across all three of our roles.

We will become a more effective champion for the arts: using advocacy, research, the media and broadcasting to demonstrate their broader impact. In particular, we will place emphasis on becoming a key partner, working collaboratively to achieve our goals.

We will rigorously pursue our development role. We will use the goals to identify challenges and opportunities that could develop the arts, if addressed successfully.

We will seek to improve our impact as a funder. We will make informed decisions about how best to allocate public money. We will review and improve our funding programmes. We will establish mutually beneficial relationships with those we fund, to encourage innovation and sustain excellence.

In addition to artists and arts organisations throughout England, our partners include central and local government, the UK Arts Councils, higher and further education institutions, national and regional museums, the BBC and Channel 4, the British Council and the wider cultural and public sector. We also value and work with trusts and foundations that support the arts, and the amateur and private sectors where they share our ambitions and aspirations.

Evaluating success

The strategic framework will enable us to evaluate success. We will have discussions with artists, arts organisations and our partners and stakeholders in order to assess progress and encourage innovation and new ideas. A renewed commitment to research will provide a powerful, longer-term evidence base for policy making and demonstrating public value.

In this way the framework offers, we believe, a powerful means both to recognise better our collective achievement and to drive ambition for the future success of the arts in England.

What can art do?

‘The arts have the potential to show that the everyday can be reinvented and that the ordinary is usually extraordinary and that the extraordinary, can become part of or intervene and wonderfully interrupt everyday life.’

Naomi Kashiwagi
artist

‘I meant to write to you that art
can close a wound
and open a legal case
that it can stare further than a telescope
go faster than the internet and
beat like a loved one’s heart
I wanted to tell you that art is loved as a hammer
because of how well it breaks lies and speaks truths
it can say something
many things
any things
can say much
or little in the best way of things
and I think it has value not always bound up with price’

Tim Etchells
artist, writer, performance maker,
Forced Entertainment

THE ARTS NOW AND LOOKING FORWARD

A new arts landscape

Over the past 15 years the arts have enjoyed a period of outstanding success. Sustained investment – greatly helped by the National Lottery – has transformed the cultural landscape. More than £2 billion of Lottery funding has been awarded through the Arts Council, over £1.4 billion of which has been spent on buildings. Around 100 new theatres, galleries and arts centres have been created, while almost 500 have been rejuvenated and refurbished. These have been the focus of urban and rural regeneration, bringing renewed vitality to neighbourhoods, cities and regions across England.

Our investment has also enabled artists and arts organisations to thrive. Our total investment in regularly funded organisations has grown in cash terms by 130 per cent from £149 million in 1996/97¹ to £344 million in 2009/10 and last year we made 2,795 awards through our Grants for the arts programme totalling £64.9million.² This stability has given organisations the space to plan ahead, be ambitious and experiment. It has created the conditions in which the best and most innovative art can emerge. The enhanced quality and range of art on offer has reached more people through touring and, more recently, through digital distribution. It has attracted international critical acclaim, positioning England as a creative hub, constantly interacting with artists and audiences worldwide.

Audiences have responded, with more people enjoying the arts than ever before. In 2009/10, 76 per cent³ of the adult population engaged with the arts and in 2008/09 our regularly funded organisations attracted 85 million attendances.⁴ The arts have played an increasingly important role in education. Indeed, more and more the arts are recognised as a frontline service in achieving

extraordinary outcomes across the public sector. Participation in the arts can increase individual well-being, encourage active citizenship, and contribute to prosperity locally and nationally.

We are proud of these achievements – but we know we can go further. Our success has fostered an aspiration in us and our partners to redouble our efforts to ensure that the impact of the arts is felt even more powerfully and widely across the country.

Changes are occurring in the arts, in society, in the economy and environment, and in the way people live their lives. These present complex challenges for the arts but also enormous opportunities.

Our commitment to excellence and diversity

There is an increasing blurring of boundaries between different art forms, as well as the emergence of new kinds of practice and presentation. Artistic hybrids have evolved in response to the new and unusual spaces in which art is taking place, and the opportunities created by digital technology. New relationships with audiences are developing, and people can become involved in the creative process itself.

Consequently, the range of artists and arts organisations supported by the Arts Council must also evolve. In making judgements about who and what to fund, the Arts Council needs to balance competing pressures – different views of artistic quality, of what is offensive and what is inspiring, different art forms and aesthetics, different audiences, timeframes and places reflecting a vast and extraordinary breadth of activity. Our guiding principle in making judgements across this spectrum is to look for excellence: how original, innovative and artistically ambitious is the work, project, or event? Does it, in some way, have the ability or potential to change how the audience or participants view the world?

While the definition of excellence is rightly a matter of continuous debate, we will confidently shape that debate. Our investment will favour art that is both artistically excellent and inspiring to audiences. Our aim is to promote the conditions in which the most talented artists can be their best, take risks and change

direction – thereby constantly redefining our understanding of what great art can be.

Our commitment to excellence demands a commitment to diversity in the arts.⁵ We know that the arts we currently support are not as diverse as they could or should be. There are still barriers in the arts world that mean that the potential for great art to be produced and enjoyed remains unrealised. We are becoming clearer about how the country's artistic excellence is reliant on, and benefits from, the richness and innovation that diversity brings. In supporting this artistically-led approach to diversity, we will continue to push for equality in access to the training, work and careers that our funding supports.

Connecting art with people

The arts are popular, with ambitious programmes really making a difference. One of the results of Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture in 2008 was a significant increase in arts engagement. Our commitment to building arts audiences is given renewed energy by the knowledge that this type of concerted and collaborative effort can have such a positive impact.

Yet we know much work remains to be done because only a minority of the population has much to do with the arts on a regular basis. A big challenge lies in addressing the disparities in levels of engagement between different sections of the population, as currently those that are most active tend to be from the most privileged parts of society. A further challenge is presented by demographic change. It means that arts engagement can only be successful if it is based on a real understanding of how communities are evolving. A growing and an ageing population has implications for audience profiles, for example.

Population movement remains an important factor, as UK society continues to become more diverse. This gives an added imperative to our focus on diversity and to our ambition to strengthen the international connections of the arts. England's cultural and intellectual traditions have been shaped by centuries of intercultural exchange. These rich traditions demonstrate the opportunities offered by the arts to build links between different communities and cultures, and promote mutual understanding and respect. A diverse talent pool

produces arts experiences that are relevant locally and globally – a tremendous asset when the eyes of the world are on us during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The future sustainability of the arts

It is clear that the future resilience of the UK arts sector is dependent on a sustainable mixed economy of increasingly varied income sources. However a model that relies on public subsidy as a catalyst for securing self-generated and private sector income may come under considerable strain in the short term. The need to reduce the UK public spending deficit over the lifetime of our strategic framework will have a major impact on the arts economy as a whole.

We see it as vital, therefore, that the Arts Council works with partners to strengthen the mixed economy of the arts. Part of our response must be to ensure that public investment works hard to harness even greater investment from the private sector. This will be challenging in the current environment, so we will explore with our funded organisations how best to strengthen business models, diversify income streams, and encourage greater private giving. We will encourage enterprise and support the partnerships and networks that will determine future sustainability.

A clear focus for us must also be to deepen the links between the arts and the wider creative economy – we will work hard to ensure that artists and arts organisations continue to feed the creative industries with talent, skills and ideas. Much comment has been made about the way in which the arts straddle the commercial and public sectors, with practitioners switching between multiple roles and balancing a portfolio of activities. There is a widespread acceptance of the artistic interdependence between the two. Art funded through public subsidy is valued far beyond the subsidised sector itself and provides a key inspiration for the film, television, design, advertising and computer games industries. The Arts Council needs to enhance its role as an investor that understands how to support and position the arts as a driver for economic growth.

The sustainability of the arts will also be determined by the number and quality of our arts buildings. In some art forms there remain important gaps in the physical infrastructure, while in others there is a need for repairs and renewals. Environmental change also requires the arts to be even more enterprising, efficient and collaborative in contributing to a low-carbon future.

Changing lives and communities

There may be other opportunities in this post-recession world. Quite apart from arts organisations being well placed to lead the creativity and innovation that will be a driver of economic recovery, the insight, inspiration and solace that art offers may have new prominence in a world that is questioning the values which matter. The arts may reach a new tipping point in terms of their contribution to the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

Public policy is increasingly focused on meeting the needs of communities at a local level. There are major opportunities for the arts to become even more integral to local life, with art and arts buildings often vital to regeneration. There are long-lasting benefits to the communities involved, whether as audience members, amateurs, professionals or volunteers.

To realise this potential the arts workforce needs to become more reflective of society as a whole. An important priority will be to equip the workforce – and especially the arts leadership – with the skills they need to better understand their communities, forge new public/private partnerships and work creatively with a wide range of commissioning partners.

The Arts Council will play its part. We will deepen our relationships with local authorities and other investors to secure greater impact from our shared investment in the arts. We will recognise the ability of arts organisations to work at the centre of civil society. We will use our national overview and our local knowledge to work effectively in partnership to transform communities through the arts. We will balance our commitment to the development of our metropolitan centres with our commitment to the arts in rural areas.

The next creative generation

Perhaps the most radical shift that will impact on the arts is change in people's behaviour and expectations about how they access experiences and information. The digital revolution is fuelling a democratisation of culture. Young people are leading the charge, they are equipped and skilled to make and debate their own art. Responding to this is both a major challenge and a great opportunity for arts organisations. Yet, our research shows that only a small minority of our funded organisations are taking full advantage of technology to experiment artistically and build relationships with audiences.

For other reasons, a focus on children and young people remains a priority for the Arts Council. Evidence points to the importance of early arts involvement in building tomorrow's artists and arts audiences. The arts are crucial to a holistic, rounded education that values creativity and nurtures talent. Music education in particular has surged in the past decade, bringing with it government investment to support instrument tuition and singing in primary schools. There has been a proliferation of programmes and projects across the arts and young people are generally highly involved. But again there remain inequalities – young people in the most challenging social and economic circumstances are the least likely to participate in the arts. New research has demonstrated the impact of the arts on children's learning.⁶ It renews the vigour behind our commitment to ensure that every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts.

Focusing our efforts behind long-term change

None of what has been achieved in recent years could have happened without partnerships – between arts organisations, between the Arts Council and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and other government departments, with local government, the UK Arts Councils, national and regional museums, heritage organisations, further and higher education institutions, film and media organisations, the voluntary and amateur sectors and the private and commercial sectors.

We know collaboration is going to be critical as the arts adapt to the changes ahead. We also know that it will be important for the Arts Council to have a clear understanding of its unique role within the ecology, to set strategic vision and direction, and to be clear about its goals and priorities.

This 10-year strategic framework is our guide to addressing these challenges. It identifies how the Arts Council and its partners can build on existing strengths, respond to opportunities and rise to the challenges we face now and in the future. It is about advancing our collective ambition to secure the legacy of the arts now, to continue to realise and respond to the ambitions of artists and the needs of audiences and so increase the extraordinary impact of the arts still further.

1 CSR Report 1: the RFO portfolio 1996/7 – 2006/7, Arts Council England

2 Arts Council England annual review 2010

3 Taking Part survey 2008/09

4 Regularly funded organisation annual survey 2009/10

5 Our definition of diversity encompasses race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, class and socio-economic disadvantage

6 A systemic review of the learning impacts for young people, DCMS, 2010

What can art do?

‘Art is very commonly separated from reality, as if it was something else, ‘another world’... reality in our minds is full of ‘functional’ elements, banks, hospitals, estate agencies, whereas art... is for dreamers...

Placing the words ‘art’ and ‘function’ one next to another might feel impossible... maybe even ridiculous. Art feels unreal because of its immense mystic power to trigger the imagination, to stir emotions and provoke thoughts and confusion of the most surreal kind. These elements, these powers, of imagination, of excitement, are all of very real existence, they are tangible in their ability to motivate a human being to act, to change, to become more generous, more modest, inspire for hope, for letting go... what we call reality, is limited. Bound by dusty rules, by fears and worry.

Art is a keyhole through which you can see the ocean of human potential. In that way, art can do everything reality can’t.’

Hofesh Shechter /

artistic director, dance choreographer and composer

MISSION, VISION AND GOALS

Arts Council England is the lead body charged with developing the arts in England.

Our mission is Great art for everyone.

We work to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people’s lives.

Our aim in championing is to embed the arts in public life through advocacy and by brokering partnerships.

In developing, we commission projects or programmes to address particular challenges or seize new opportunities.

In investing, we aim to make informed decisions about how best to allocate public money to ensure that the arts thrive.

We seek the following outcomes from our work:

- **excellence**
outstanding art and outstanding art experiences
- **reach**
more people attending and taking part in the arts
- **engagement**
more people feeling that the arts are meaningful to them
- **diversity**
the arts reflecting the diversity of contemporary England
- **innovation**
artists and organisations having the freedom, and being challenged, to innovate

The strategic framework builds on our mission by bringing clarity and focus to what we want to achieve over the next 10 years. It provides the rationale for our investment in the arts and will inform our future funding decisions. It includes a vision statement, five long-term goals and a number of priorities within each goal for the next four years. It has been shaped by the views of artists, arts organisations, the public and our many other stakeholders and partners.

With its focus on long-term collaborative action, the strategic framework will enable the Arts Council to work with partners towards positive change in the arts. It will help create the conditions in which great art can be made, experienced and appreciated by as many people as possible. It will support us in realising our vision of England as a world-leading creative and cultural nation. It will enable us to achieve even more impact from our investment.

In essence, the strategic framework offers a powerful means both to recognise better our collective achievement and to drive ambition for the future success of the arts.

Vision

Our vision is of England as a world-leading creative and cultural nation.

In 2021 the arts are thriving. They are internationally renowned for excellence – diverse new work is being created, art forms are evolving, and artists can develop their talent. Growing audiences are engaging in new and inspiring ways.

The arts are at the heart of civil society, valued by local communities across the country. They are the bedrock of the creative economy, contributing to the nation's prosperity and its international reputation.

Large and small arts organisations make up a strong ecology, achieving more impact through collaboration and innovation. Through Arts Council investment, a sustainable, mixed economy of public and private funding provides strong support for the arts. Artists and organisations have responded with commitment and brilliance to the challenges of the decade, including environmental and technological change.

Above all, there is a sense that outstanding arts belong to and are available to everyone. They are unmissable; they offer unique experiences and opportunities. Whatever your age or circumstances there are ways to participate and get involved in the arts.

Long-term goals

We plan to focus our activity, working with and alongside many partners, to achieve a small number of long-term goals. The goals are interconnected and contingent upon one another.

What can art do?

‘Make life worth living’

Jeremy Deller
artist

What can art do?

‘We all have the perception to play and work with our active imaginations. Artists help us to connect with ideas of making and destroying so that we may feel more confident about renewal rather than frightened of change.’

I make work and of course I doubt what I do. The doubt keeps me explorative and guides me to demand more accuracy of myself. The failures are when I learn the most.

Art is as complex as we are. It is hard for any one of us, artist or not, to understand who we are and what we genuinely do and art, which comes out of this creative chaos, reflects our situation and helps us recognise its variations, how we connect and disconnect with other people, places and ideas.’

Siobhan Davies
artist and choreographer

Goal 1

Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated

Why this goal?

Great art inspires; it encourages people to value the arts. Without a dedicated pursuit of excellence, the achievements of artists and arts organisations would diminish and audiences would suffer. Excellence does not just happen. It requires a concerted effort to nurture talented artists from the earliest years. We want to establish England as a pre-eminent world centre for artistic excellence. This means a vigorous commitment to enabling artists to take risks and change direction. It means encouraging excellence in all its forms and defending and celebrating freedom of expression. It means supporting strong arts organisations, networks, training and spaces.

What will we do?

- we will use our expertise, unique overview and local knowledge to invest in artistic excellence, and in the conditions which create excellence
- we will advance a coherent, nationwide approach to developing artistic talent in partnership with arts organisations, artists, and other stakeholders
- we will champion artists and companies who seek to expand their artistic horizons through ambitious programming, exploring new ideas, reflecting the rich diversity of England's communities and being open to international perspectives
- we will celebrate and promote the achievements of England's artists

What will success look like?

- England is regarded as a pre-eminent world centre for artistic excellence
- the diversity of our artists and companies, and the innovative work they make, are widely celebrated and valued
- there is an increase in the public's appreciation and enjoyment of excellent art, experienced live and through broadcast and digital means

Goal 2

More people experience and are inspired by the arts

Why this goal?

The arts enrich people's lives. Everyone should have the right to benefit from public funding of the arts. To achieve this goal, we want to ensure that the arts have an even stronger focus on building audiences for excellent work and that the needs of audiences and communities are at the heart of what we fund. We believe that it will benefit society, communities and individuals if more people are experiencing and shaping the arts. It will also benefit the arts – offering new sources of ideas and inspiration, new markets and new income streams. So, we will work with our partners to pool resources, innovate and promote more participation and involvement in the arts.

What will we do?

- we will build long-term collaborations between arts organisations, cultural partners and local authorities to encourage inspiring, sustainable arts programmes in places where engagement in the arts is low
- we will support those artists and arts organisations presenting and promoting the arts in new and inspiring ways, including through the use of touring and digital technologies
- we will use our research and work with the media and other partners, including our funded organisations, to attract new audiences
- we will champion the value of the commercial, amateur and voluntary arts sectors in encouraging people to take part in the arts

What will success look like?

- more people are engaging in the arts in places where participation is currently low
- an increased likelihood of people's engagement in the arts, irrespective of their socio-economic or educational background
- more people value the arts as being important to the quality of their lives and are actively involved in shaping provision in their communities
- larger and more diverse audiences are experiencing and benefiting from the work of the organisations and artists that we fund

Goal 3

The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative

Why this goal?

This goal is about ensuring the sustainable growth and success of the arts. With public investment in the arts reducing, it is also about developing resilience, as arts organisations extend their roles and responsibilities within the wider cultural landscape and civil and national life, including how they adapt and respond to climate change. For arts organisations to thrive in a mixed economy, they will have to be even more enterprising. Our vision depends on arts organisations continuing to innovate, collaborate and evolve to sustain the excellence of their work and to make a wider contribution to the nation's well-being and prosperity.

What will we do?

- we will invest in the sustainable growth of the arts ecology – encouraging networking, collaboration and partnerships
- we will broker partnerships with other major public and private funders to secure greater impact from our shared investment in the arts
- we will work with partners, including government, to encourage and enable a higher level of private giving to support the arts
- we will encourage innovation through recognising the value of research and development in the production, presentation and distribution of art

What will success look like?

- the arts are known for resilience – with organisations building sustainable business models that include a greater diversity of income streams, including a higher level of private giving
- the arts are naturally collaborative and networked, sharing knowledge and ideas
- there are more partnerships between arts organisations, the wider public sector and the commercial sector
- with commitment and innovation, the arts have contributed to the reduction of carbon emissions

Goal 4

The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled

Why this goal?

Unless the arts workforce is diverse and highly skilled it will not reach its potential. For our arts leaders to play an active role at the heart of civil society, they need to be diverse and highly skilled. Diversity in the workforce is important to fostering diverse arts practice; it is also important to ensuring that artists and arts organisations can understand and reflect the values of their local communities. Likewise, the ongoing professional development of the sector is important to its resilience during times of change. In both areas, there remain challenges to address. A long-term approach is needed.

What will we do?

- we will promote equality within the arts, focusing in particular on creating equal opportunities to enter the arts workforce
- we will encourage skills development, collaborative working and knowledge sharing, including enabling the arts to realise the potential of technological change
- we will seek to ensure that mainstream funding for learning and skills development supports the training needs of the arts
- we will renew our commitment to leadership development in the arts, working with a network of arts leaders to share knowledge and skills, while promoting best practice in the governance of arts organisations

What will success look like?

- more arts leaders are regarded as world class, renowned for excellence and playing an active role at the heart of civil and national life
- the arts leadership and workforce will reflect the diversity of society
- professional development is regarded as essential to the health of the arts

Goal 5

Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts

Why this goal?

The arts fuel children's curiosity and critical capacity. They are every child's birthright. It is vital that children engage with the arts early in their lives. The arts contribute to the development and well-being of children and young people. They inspire future audiences and the next generation of artists and arts leaders.

What will we do?

- we will advocate for a coherent and targeted approach to high-quality arts provision for children and young people, working with the Department of Education, funded organisations and artists, schools, cultural partners, local authorities and higher and further education institutions
- we will invest in the development of arts practice and programmes that are inspired by, and produced for, with and by children and young people
- we will champion high-quality opportunities for children and young people to enjoy the arts in and out of school

What will success look like?

- there is a coherent, national approach to the development of children and young people's engagement with the arts, in and out of school
- more children and young people have access to excellent art and are shaping their future arts provision as creators and critical consumers
- England becomes a world leader in artistic programming for children and young people

What can art do?

‘Make life twice as deep, twice as wide, twice as high...’

Graham Vick

Artistic Director,
Birmingham Opera Company

‘A great achievement of recent years has been the sociability of art: outings and walks and talks and reading groups, people talking, thinking, feeling together. Seamus Heaney writes, in *The Redress of Poetry*, that “We go to poetry, we go to literature in general, to be forwarded within ourselves”. But what he said can be extended to all the different arts. Through the arts we exchange ideas; they define the common ground and the not-so common ground of opposition; they introduce and shape meaning for the future, as well as making us see what meanings lie in the past and the present.’

Marina Warner

writer

REALISING THE VISION

Realising the vision and goals requires changes in the way that we work with our partners. But the arts sector itself must change if it is to sustain excellence and reach more people. Mobilising behind long-term ambitions requires shared purpose and joint effort. The goals can only be achieved through partnership.

Change is an imperative for the Arts Council. The organisation is getting smaller. Just as significant is a new culture within the organisation, a culture that aims to be more permeable, inclusive, open and collaborative. While we will always seek to be bold in grasping opportunities for the benefit of the arts, our starting point will be – who can we work with? Who can we support to undertake this task?

Our strategic framework will see us working even more effectively across all three of our roles.

Championing the arts

We will continue to use our advocacy to champion the value of the arts within society and the economy, working with our funded organisations, the media, and broadcast partners to reach more people.

Our consultation confirmed the value our stakeholders place on partnerships as central to sustainable growth, especially in the context of reduced public funding for the arts.

We will lead by example, aiming to be a key partner within the public sector at local and national levels. We will make the most of our unique overview of the arts to broker beneficial relationships. We will pursue a partnership approach where it offers the most effective means of delivering the greatest benefit from our investment. In doing so, we will engage in partnerships that involve genuine

reciprocity and which harness the wide-ranging expertise and knowledge of our partners in pursuit of our collective goals.

In particular, we will develop partnerships with central government, especially departments whose work impacts on the arts. We will work hard to sustain our long-standing relationship with local government, focusing most where there is evidence of, or strong potential for, a shared agenda for the arts. In addition, we will use the framework of our goals to identify partners across the wider cultural sector, the creative commercial sector, with higher education and with the voluntary and amateur sectors. We will encourage partnerships with the private and philanthropic charitable sectors.

In turn, we will ask for greater collaboration among the organisations and artists we fund so that they can work collectively to increase the impact of the arts. We will empower arts leaders to become leaders in civil society, contributing to and shaping their wider public and artistic communities.

Developing the arts

We will use the goals in our strategic framework to identify the challenges and opportunities that could most effectively develop the arts, if addressed successfully. Our priorities indicate what we believe to be the key challenges over the next few years.

Investing in the arts

We will make informed decisions about how best to allocate public money to ensure that the arts thrive. We have reviewed and improved our funding programmes to ensure that they have the most impact.

We wish to become a more proactive investor, using the five goals as the framework within which we make decisions and establishing mutually beneficial relationships with those we fund.

Our funding programmes recognise the need for more flexibility in the kinds of relationships we have with arts organisations. All funded organisations will need to demonstrate how they help us to achieve the goals. We will seek to establish deeper strategic relationships with those best placed to take on a leadership role in relation to their art form, geography or specialism. For others, the focus of our relationship will be the programmes of work they deliver. Grants for the arts will focus on new relationships and individual artists. And we will create a strategic Lottery fund to address new challenges and opportunities.

What can art do?

‘Art gives meaning. Life is meaningless and art is an attempt to make sense of it. Art is useless and often ridiculous, but that is the point, it seems similar to the way religious people have faith in the irrational.

Art can make you cry, wonder, be joyful,
bored or annoyed

Art employs a lot of artists and also administrators

Art can be an arena for experimental behaviour

Art can make you travel a long way to see it

Art can make us remember

Art decorates your house

Art can be a commodity

Art keeps me busy

Art can disappoint’

Grayson Perry /

artist

THE FIRST FOUR YEARS

The strategic framework sets out what we want to achieve over the long-term. We will continue to plan the detail of what we do according to the funding cycle set by central government. The next Arts Council plan will be published in spring 2011 and will cover the period 2011-15.

To inform the Arts Council Plan and the investment process that will take place over the autumn and winter of 2010/11, we have identified the following priorities for the period 2011-15. They are the areas of focus which we believe are most urgent and critical to ensuring the enduring success of the arts through the immediate challenges of the next few years and beyond.

Goal 1

Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated

- using our investment to ensure excellent art happens
- establishing a coherent, nationwide approach to the development of artistic talent, particularly for emerging and mid-career artists
- supporting an artistically-led approach to diversity in the arts
- responding to major opportunities such as the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to showcase talent and build audiences for excellent art

Goal 2

More people experience and are inspired by the arts

- developing arts opportunities for people and places with the least engagement
- strengthening the distribution of excellent art through touring and digital platforms
- encouraging funded organisations to be even more focused on attracting audiences

Goal 3

The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative

- promoting greater collaboration between organisations to increase efficiency and innovation
- strengthening business models in the arts and helping arts organisations to diversify their income streams, including by encouraging private giving

Goal 4

The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled

- building a network of arts leaders who value sharing their knowledge and skills, for the benefit of the arts and civil society
- creating equal opportunities to enter the arts workforce

Goal 5

Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts

- improving the delivery of arts opportunities for children and young people
- raising the standard of art being produced for, with and by children and young people

Our operational approach to each of these priorities will be described in the Arts Council Plan.

What can art do?

‘Art has the ability to change and improve lives. This could be through taking part in a single art workshop session and making something for the first time, being at a concert by your favourite performer or band, walking in the park and encountering a beautiful sculpture, or visiting a museum or gallery and seeing something precious or unexpected. Any of these simple activities can be transformational for the individual concerned.’

Councillor Mick Henry

Leader of Gateshead Council

‘Art in the form of books and the written word can inspire, educate and entertain. Books are the foundation stones of our culture, recording ideas, creativity and knowledge for current and future generations to discover. They give us depth and substance at a time of complexity and fragmentation. They have the power to influence events, to dominate the national debate, to achieve change.’

What can art do for us? Make us better human beings and create the circumstances for a creative and humane society.’

Dame Gail Rebuck

Chair and Chief Executive Officer,
The Random House Group

EVALUATION

How will we know if we are succeeding?

As a major public body we want our stakeholders to be confident we are performing well and succeeding in achieving the things we set out to do.

Using the framework as the starting point in our approach to evaluation, for each goal we will ask a number of key questions. Seeking to answer these questions will enable us to have the best sense of whether the goals are being achieved and to what extent. This will enable us to judge the effectiveness of our work and consider whether alternative courses of action are needed. We will gather or request information or data from arts organisations and partners when we know it will help us to answer these questions.

We will also use the framework to renew our commitment to research over the next 10 years. Robust evidence will be important, both to inform effective policy making and to demonstrate the impact and value of the arts. Our approach to research will also be collaborative, seeking to create networks around each of the goals and to share knowledge and information for the benefit of all those working in or interested in the arts.

A new conversation

The goals set a clear direction for the Arts Council's work, but we know their ambition and focus is shared by many working in arts and culture and beyond. We want to have regular discussions around the country open to all those contributing, or with the potential to contribute, to achieving the goals. We will use our website as a public forum for these discussions and as a place to publish what we learn through research and evaluation.

We hope this publication will be a catalyst for new conversations about deepening the value of the arts, from Plymouth to Middlesbrough, from Colchester to the Lake District. The next 10 years in the arts are far from predetermined. They are ours to create.

What can art do?

'Art is where we practise being fully human.

Art is where we work out how to live and love together, and how to live with dreams of immortality when we know we're going to die.

Art invites us and requires us to be curious about our full human potential. It can also help us achieve it; training us to think and see, to speak and hear and move and therefore simply 'be' more vividly.

Art can cut through conventional wisdom and reveal the next, unforeseen, agenda, because it is created in the alchemy of the imagination rather than the factory of the will.

Art can give shape to our deepest fears, and help us to address and overcome them.

Art can help us find expression for the ecstatic joy of being alive and thereby help us feel that joy.'

Michael Boyd /
Artistic Director,
Royal Shakespeare Company

What can art do?

‘Art reminds us
of what more is left
to do in the world.’

Madani Younis
Artistic Director,
Freedom Studios

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To download this publication, or for the full list of Arts Council England publications and details of how to order them, see www.artscouncil.org.uk

© Arts Council England, November 2010

Written, edited and produced by Arts Council England, with thanks to John Knell.

Acknowledgement: this publication is the result of the generous advice and thoughtful and expert contributions of many people working in the arts. Thank you to all.

You can receive this publication in Braille, in large print, on audio CD and in electronic formats. Please contact us if you need any of these formats.

ISBN: 978-0-7287-1493-9

Design: Blast

www.blast.co.uk

Printed in England by

Gavin Martin Colournet Ltd

using vegetable-based inks

(CU-COC-807273)



the 1990s, the number of people with diabetes has increased in all industrialized countries. In the Netherlands, the prevalence of diabetes is estimated to be 6.5% in 1995, which corresponds to 1.5 million people (1). The prevalence of diabetes is expected to increase to 10% by the year 2010 (2).

Diabetes is a chronic disease, and the long-term complications of diabetes are a major cause of morbidity and mortality. The most common complications are retinopathy, nephropathy, neuropathy, and cardiovascular disease. The prevalence of these complications is also increasing in all industrialized countries (3, 4). The long-term complications of diabetes are a major cause of disability and death (5).

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