



Press Release

MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL (MIF) AWARDED ARTS COUNCIL NPO FUNDING AS IT PREPARES FOR THE OPENING OF FACTORY INTERNATIONAL

Factory International/Manchester International Festival (MIF) is pleased to be confirmed as a continuing part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio for 2023-2026 as it prepares for the opening of its landmark new cultural venue in June 2023. The funding combines support for Factory International and the biennial festival, which will continue across the city every other year, equating to £9,908,150 per year.

Factory International will be a global destination for arts, music and culture, commissioning and present a year-round programme of original creative work, music and special events by leading artists from across the world, at its unique new venue, online, and internationally. It will also stage the city-wide Festival every other year at Factory International and in spaces and venues across Greater Manchester.

Designed by the world-leading Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), Factory International is the practice's first major public project in the UK. Spanning 13,350 square metres, the ultra-flexible building will offer multiple configurations, enabling large-scale artistic work of invention and ambition that is not made anywhere else. Audiences will be able to enjoy year-round, in a new world class facility, the broadest range of art forms from major exhibitions and concerts to intimate performances and immersive experiences. Outside, its public areas will come alive with pop-up performances, events and markets, creating a thriving riverside destination for audiences to enjoy.

The official opening production will be *Free Your Mind*, a large-scale immersive performance based on The Matrix films created by Danny Boyle, Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy MBE, Michael 'Mikey J' Asante MBE (co-founders and artistic directors of the Olivier award-winning Boy Blue), Es Devlin and Sabrina Mahfouz and featuring a cast of hundreds of Manchester participants (18 October -5 November 2023). Before the official opening, the new venue will form the centrepiece of MIF23 (29 June to 16 July 2023) with a major exhibition, *You, Me and the Balloons*, which celebrates three decades of Yayoi Kusama's spectacular inflatable sculptures, shown together for the first time.

The development of Factory International is being led by Manchester City Council, with backing from HM Government and Arts Council England. With its focus on commissioning new, large-scale work, Factory International will be a unique and invaluable part of the

factory international



Press Release

national arts landscape. Its economic impact will be considerable, creating or supporting up to 1,500 direct and indirect jobs and adding £1.1 billion to the city's economy over a decade.

Manchester residents will play a key role in Factory International through activities such as participating in flagship commissions, co-designing programmes of activity, and shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums. It will also bring skills, training and creative opportunities for local people through the Factory Academy, equipping them for careers in the creative industries, and run development programmes for emerging and mid-career artists in the region.

John McGrath, Artistic Director & Chief Executive MIF & Factory International said: *"We are extremely grateful for the continued support and strong endorsement from Arts Council England for our work and our exciting plans ahead as we prepare for the opening of Factory International in June 2023."*

"Our extraordinary new space will strengthen Manchester's reputation as a nationally and internationally important centre for culture and creativity, and as a significant cultural destination, but like MIF it will be proudly rooted in the city. Factory International will play an important role in the lives of people in Greater Manchester and the North, building on MIF's record of working with a wide range of communities, and is already bringing jobs, skills, training and creative opportunities to the region. We will build on our role taking the best new art and performance to international audiences, globally and digitally, bringing new investment and opportunities to UK artists and cultural workers. We are also pleased to see continued funding for our many partners throughout the city and across the region."

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Factory International is a global destination for arts music and culture opening in the heart of Manchester in 2023. The design of the landmark new cultural space is led by Ellen van Loon of the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). Its development is being led by Manchester City Council, with backing from HM Government and Arts Council England.

Programmed and operated by the team behind Manchester International Festival (MIF), Factory International will commission, produce and present an ambitious year-round programme of original creative work, music and special events by leading artists from across the globe. It will also stage the city-wide Festival every other year at Factory International and at venues and spaces across Greater Manchester. Driven by the same interests and ambitions that defines MIF, artists will be encouraged to create work in new ways, to collaborate across disciplines and blur the boundaries between art and popular culture.

factory international



Press Release

At 13,350 square metres, the building design is based around large, open, ultra-flexible spaces that can be constantly reconfigured, enabling large-scale artistic work of invention and ambition that isn't made anywhere else in the world. It will offer audiences the opportunity to enjoy year-round, in a new world-class facility, the broadest range of art forms - from major exhibitions and concerts, to intimate performances and immersive experiences - including over 80 gigs a year.

Its public spaces, from the foyers to its outdoor areas, will come alive with year-round activities such as family friendly workshops, pop-up food stalls, music, workshops and markets, many of them free, creating a thriving riverside destination for everyone to enjoy.

International in spirit and practice, Factory International will collaborate with venues, festivals and companies across the world to commission artists together. Working with local, national and international partners and co-producers, it will produce and premiere major new work, before it travels globally, and share ideas, projects and training with peers worldwide.

The possibilities of digital technology lies at the heart of the vision for Factory International, driving experimentation and innovation in its physical productions and enabling the creation of entirely new experiences for audiences through digital first works created within the virtual world. It will also engage audiences beyond its physical structures through broadcast and streaming of live and hybrid projects.

A laboratory for experimentation and R&D, Factory International will be a training ground for the next generation of creators. Artists from Manchester and all over the world will be commissioned to make new work in physical and online realms, while talent development programmes such as the Factory Fellowships will see emerging artists placed alongside international creatives.

Through the Factory Academy, it will become a major training centre for local people, equipping them with the skills needed for careers in the creative industries and helping to build the technicians, producers and other creative talent that will bring the future alive.

Building on MIF's record of working with communities, as audiences and as participants, Factory International will be a space where local people are actively involved - from participating in flagship commissions, co-designing programmes of activity, to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums.

Rooted in Manchester, Factory International will strengthen the city's status as a national and international centre for culture, creativity and innovation, as well as a major visitor destination. The economic impact of Factory International will be considerable, creating or

factory international



Press Release

supporting up to 1,500 direct and indirect jobs and adding £1.1 billion to the city's economy over a decade.

Located in the St John's neighbourhood next to the River Irwell, Factory International will be at the heart of a burgeoning city centre hub for culture, creativity and digital innovation and make a major contribution to the ongoing regeneration of this part of the city centre.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, IMAGES, QUOTES AND INTERVIEW REQUESTS PLEASE CONTACT:

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