

REVOLUTON ARTS | PHASE ONE



Revoluton Arts

BE INSPIRED, ENJOY AND CREATE IN LUTON



Welcome to Revoluton Arts!

With energetic enthusiasm and a love for the cultural scene in Luton, Revoluton Arts was launched with funding from Arts Council England as one of the first 21 Creative People and Places projects; a nationwide programme built to encourage and empower more people to choose, explore, create and take part in brilliant, engaging and inspiring art experiences in their town.

The project links up with a wide range of social and economic forces, playing a critical part in the town's ongoing regeneration.

Our Initial Vision

For the first phase of this project, we knew we would need to learn and adapt quickly to ensure we were supporting and nurturing arts and culture in the town. With a higher than national average population of young people, Luton is a super-diverse town with a population of just over 200,000 people. Engagement in arts and culture here is low, but through targeted projects, we have started to create change through our vision:

to increase engagement and participation in high quality arts for all of Luton's communities [and] ... inspire and engage new audiences through building relationships with our communities based on trust, good communication and a commitment to a co-production approach.

A hand holding a black sign with the words "BE THE CHANGE" in large, bold, yellow, blocky letters. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall or a large piece of paper. The lighting is dramatic, with the sign being the brightest element.

COMING Making Connections

Revoluton Arts events have been successful in reaching and engaging with people who traditionally have low engagement in arts and culture activities:



There were
109,066
engagements at
45 events.

44% from
the Low
Engagement
Groups and
33% from
the Mid
Engagement
groups.

45% non-white
people

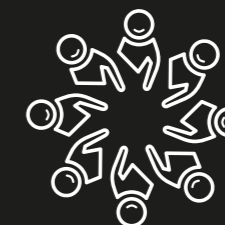
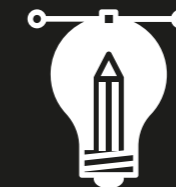
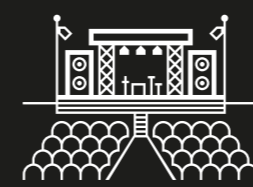
29,790
'physical'
attendances
at events

577 people
took part in
workshops and
participatory
activity,
177 volunteers,
38 commissions
of Luton artists

78,522 online
engagements

Participation

Luton is rich in community, story and value. Working across international, national, local and amateur/grassroots arts, Revoluton Arts has explored how people engage in the 'ladder of participation' be that as audience, volunteer, participant, creative, decision-maker and/or digital engager through our multi-strand approach, including:



Large-scale
outdoor events

**Community
residency
programmes**
targeted,
hyper-local,
specialist

Creative
Connections

Community
Connections



WHAT WE DID

Strategic Commissions: Large Scale Outdoor Arts Events



We commissioned local plus nationally and internationally renowned creative practitioners to bring their skills to support local makers in discovering, developing and using their talents. We worked alongside internationally acclaimed artists to bring large scale and spectacular arts events to Luton. Local people got involved as participants, volunteers, creatives and as audience members. The events attracted large family audiences into 'neutral spaces' bringing people together and reanimating public spaces as safe spaces.

"Luton is a town that loves being on the street ... Luton Carnival, St Patrick's Day Parade, High Town Festival ... Everything happens on the street and there is something very empowering for Luton to say – 'these are our streets'!"

- Jenny Williams,
Producer, Revoluton Arts

2017

Powerful sound, bright lights, saturated colours and explosions intoxicated the senses when we brought Compagnie Off's Electro Parade a Colour of Light to Luton Town Centre.

Delivered in partnership with Global Streets Network and Luton Culture, and funded by Arts Council England.



"Luton is a town of culture and it brought everyone together – just brilliant"

– audience member

COLOUR OF LIGHT

Library & Theatre

"I love doing it ... meeting new people, being part of the team and being able to challenge myself with what I'm happy doing – my confidence has definitely grown."

– Luton Participant



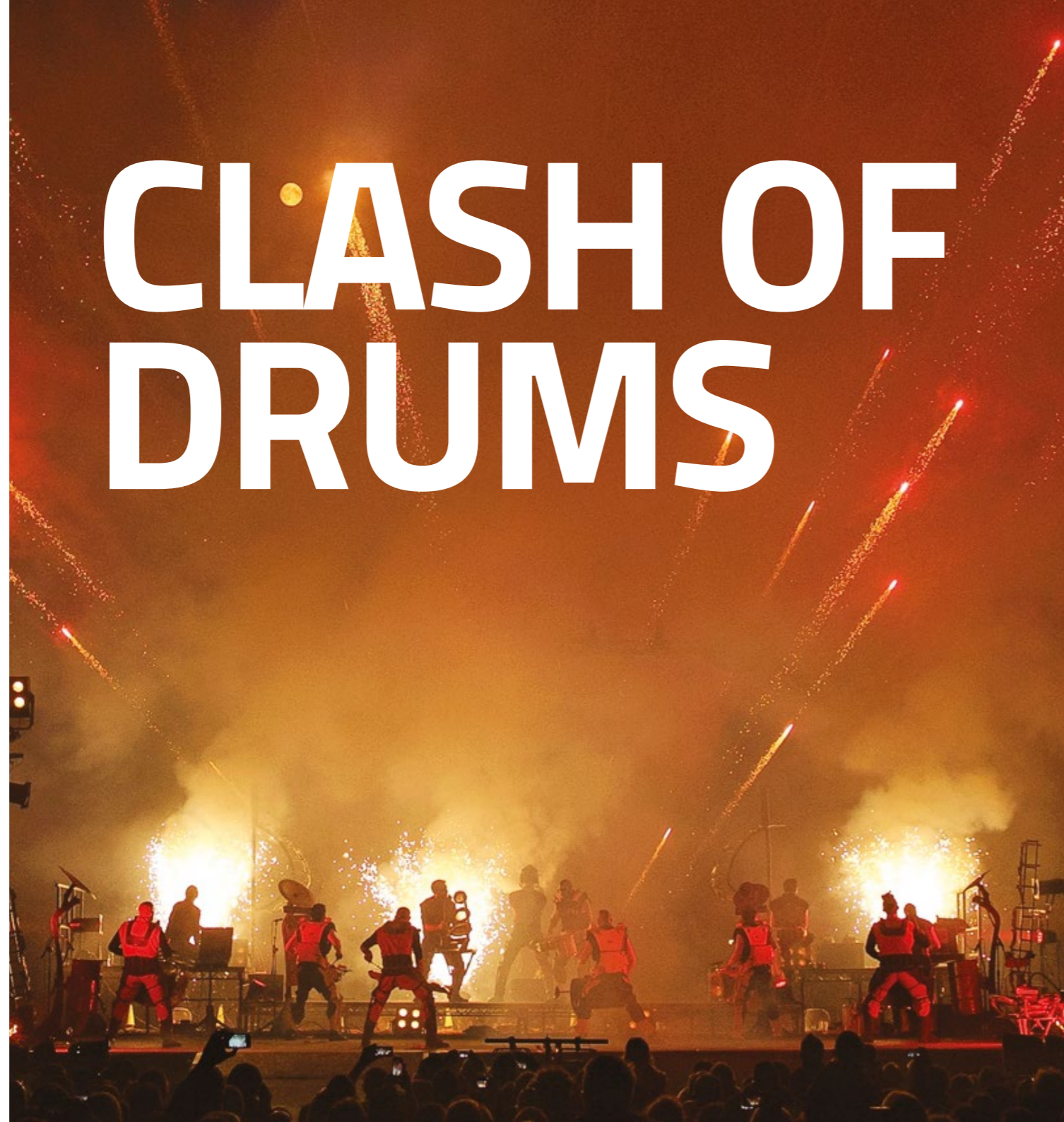
2016

An explosive, free, outdoor spectacular for all the family took place at Wardown Park, with pyrotechnics and fireworks. Two drumming 'tribes' confronted each other with energetic drumming and war-like chanting in an impressive display which was a feast for all the senses.

Revoluton Arts presented Les Commandos Percu & Deabru Beltzak in DANBOR TALKA: Clash of Drums



CLASH OF DRUMS



COLOUR OF TIME



2015

A rainbow eruption of powder, dance and music, The Colour of Time was a stunning reinvention of the traditional Holi Festival in Luton Town Centre.

Delivered in partnership with Global Streets Network



Hyper-local Connections: Residency Programmes

Our partner 'residency animators' have designed opportunities for communities in two specified areas identified with some of the lowest arts engagement levels in Luton: Bury Park and Marsh Farm.

Working with the diversity of communities in each area, our residency programmes have been specifically tailored to resonate with the local community. Cultural specificity has been important to the success of this strand, with the projects providing stories that people can identify with.

A photograph of a live performance in a dimly lit venue. In the foreground, a man with a beard and a black cap is seen from the side, singing into a microphone. He is wearing a dark jacket. To his right, a DJ with glasses and a beard is partially visible, wearing a dark jacket with a fur collar. In the background, two large portraits of men are displayed on the wall. The audience, consisting of several young people, is seated in the foreground, looking towards the stage. The lighting is warm and focused on the performers.

**PEOPLE
PLACE
COMMUNITY**

RESONANT

A magical and immersive promenade performance of The Emperor's Lost Gem took school children and families on an adventure around Bury Park high street, in shops and restaurants, with the audience following the performers around the local area. This style of theatre broke down traditional barriers and brought the performance into an interactive context.

NUTKHUT presented The Emperor's Lost Gem by Simmy Gupta in December 2017.



"I think the passion from everybody has really brought Bury Park to life"

– Imrana Mahmood, local artist.

BURY PARK

"It's been brilliant participation for the children, going into the shops, listening to the story, and the interaction between the actors and the children has been fantastic and I think they've all had a thoroughly enjoyable experience today"

- Head of Year,
Dallow Primary School



MARSH FARM

Key finding:

Local and diverse family audiences grew by 50% over the first 3-year period

"Seeing Riots to Revolution ... brought out celebrating that bit of history that is ours and should be owned by everyone in Luton, especially the young kids..."

– Audience member



UNITED

One of our creative commissions, developed in partnership with Marsh Farm Outreach (MFO), Riots to Revolution used real life testimonies to offer an alternative perspective on Luton's notorious Marsh Farm riots in 1995. The story of passive defiance demonstrated the power that music and art can have in uniting people and changing the course of events.

The homegrown performance helped create a sense of community, reclaimed and celebrated people's history, created a sense of pride and challenged deeply held stereotypes.

The performance took place as part of Paines Plough's Roundabout pop-up theatre space, on the Marsh Farm estate in autumn 2016.

The legacy of Riots to Revolution, saw a continuation of the partnership with MFO. Culminating in the co-creation of a new mural at Marsh House, which was launched at a Long Table event in 2017, entitled United We Stand, Together We Rise.

Creative Connections



Creative Cafés

Creative Cafés play a unique role in Luton's cultural ecology. They are small-scale, sociable events for local creatives that happen across the town. During Phase 1, we facilitated five Creative Cafés bringing the creative community together to talk about their work and practice and sparking new collaborations.



Long Table

Revoluton's Long Table events are a cross between a roundtable and a dinner party — a question is put to guests and they can only speak if they are sitting at the table. These events bring together individuals, professional organisations, amateur groups, arts and non-arts groups and local animators, enabling Revoluton Arts to place community voice at the heart of our programme.



© June Brown photography

Midnight Run

Midnight Run was an event to explore, create and play, as five Luton artists led a night-time, arts-filled, walking journey through the town on Friday 19 Aug 2016

The Midnight Run founded by Inua Ellams took place in many cities around the world, not just in Luton. It brought together strangers and artists to share in a unique night of adventure, fun and creativity.



MonologueSlam

MonologueSlam UK is a national industry showcase for actors, held in multiple locations around the UK. Revoluton brought MonologueSlam Heats to Luton in 2016 & 2017 and Luton actors from all backgrounds had the opportunity to show their skills to a panel of casting agents, directors, theatre professionals and a welcoming audience.

LEGACY

"To go from having a conversation with Revoluton's Community Activist to essentially working with them as a freelance producer in the space of two years is a testament of what opportunities and growth, development and mentoring they offer ... [through] Revoluton you've got opportunities that you find in London, here, which meant I could really make a difference in my own home town. It was really, really special"

Adeyinka Akinrinade
- Winner of Monologue Slam
UK Luton heats, presented
by Revoluton Arts

A Next Level Event

A music festival of bands and DJs took place in 5 Luton venues from Friday 7th October - Sunday 9th October 2016, featuring international, national and Luton artists, performing a wide variety of music genres. The new festival was co-created in partnership with 9 Luton promoters.

Over 60 groups/bands/artists performed, of which 31 were from Luton. 51% of the online ticket sales were from Luton residents. Venues included The Bear Club, The Castle, Edge, UK Centre for Carnival Arts and Harvey's.



LEVELS FESTIVAL



Local Creatives & Local Commissions

Firestarters

Firestarters was an incubation programme for small-scale creative projects designed to encourage local talent development and participation from the from a diversity of communities, providing mentoring and on-going support. It enabled us to consult and reach new communities, test new ways of working and feed cultural intelligence into our programme. This programme enabled Lutonians passionate about art and creativity, to build 'activism' (combination of art and activism) into their practice resulting in socially engaged community building work centred around creativity.



Qalam

Qalam, a women's creative writing collective developed by Imrana Mahmood, is a revolutionary movement using the arts for positive social change. Beyond Forms was a collection of creative writing on topics including beginnings, barriers, bodies, belonging, and beyond forms which took place at the Hat Factory in December 2017.

"The kind of incentive for me being a part of this project is that I want to enable others to have spaces to come together as women ... it's really important to me to be a part of this project for that reason."

- Shana Kiely,
Artistic Facilitator



Riki Cycle

Riki Cycle was developed in late 2017 by Aaron Spendelow as a brand-new cross-platform educational experience for children. Featuring puppetry, original music, lyrics, and movement it taught children about the benefits of recycling in an exciting, rewarding and entertaining way.

The development of the programme was supported by other Luton Artists including puppets designed by Charlotte Read.



Grimoire

Love Moore is an Arts Collective that hosted a series of creative arts workshops which led to a live art and virtual reality event called Grimoire.

Created by a group of women, Grimoire explored ways of liberating themselves from painful memories through art, ritual, and performance.



The end of the beginning

Reflecting on Phase One, we recognise we were successful in generating a process of encouraging, commissioning and mentoring local creatives. We have helped unleash hidden creativity by delivering a distinct programme of activity reaching through the diversity of the town.

With much to build on, we have been refining our vision and reach, reshaping and adapting as we embark on Phase Two of our mission during 2018-2021. We have grown in influence, confidence and purpose; with a renewed vigour we have more ambitious plans ahead!

Find out more:

www.revolutonarts.com

  /revolutonarts

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Additional information

Revoluton Arts is delivered with the support of:

1. The Consortium Steering Group
2. Revoluton Arts Team
3. Community Partners
4. Artists (local and national/international)

Photography Credits:

June Brown - Midnight Run
Kane Howie - Levels festival
Ben Hodson - Colour of Time
Paul Curry - Levels festival
Melissa Sandoval - Colour of Light
Alex Warchol - All other photos

The Consortium Steering Group comprises the following partners:

- The Culture Trust, Luton (lead consortium partner)
- Cultural Enabler (Luton Borough Council)
- Community Development (Luton Borough Council)
- University of Bedfordshire
- Volker Fitzpatrick Keir
- Luton Council of Faiths
- Commissioning for Health and Wellbeing (Luton Borough Council)



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