

A woman with long brown hair tied in a ponytail is seen from the side, wearing a VR headset and a black backpack. She is holding onto a black pole that supports a large, black, dome-shaped structure. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a person walking in the distance.

CANADA

## ABOUT NOW | À PROPOS 2017 CULTURAL PROGRAM

2017 HIGHLIGHTED A MILESTONE FOR CANADA, AND IT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE BRITISH COUNCIL TO REFLECT ON THE MEANING OF CULTURAL RELATIONS TODAY.

DEFINED BY RECIPROCAL CULTURAL INTERACTIONS, THE 2017 CULTURAL PROGRAM TITLED ABOUT NOW | À PROPOS EXPLORED THE RICH STORIES THAT CAN BE FOUND IN THE COMPLEX AND PROLIFIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UK AND CANADA.

Developed with a diverse range of partners in both countries, About Now | À Propos featured projects by Canadian and British artists and provided spaces that encouraged collaboration and social transformation. Across communities in both countries, the program inspired themes of equality, diversity and inclusion, and initiated progressive and inquisitive conversations which will be integral to our work moving forward.

Thanks to the profoundly talented artists who shared their time and craft with us, as well as to the open-minded organisations who we were lucky to work with, we have achieved those aims. Collaborations were successful because participating artists were open to engaging with new people and ideas, due to their celebration of differences in individual backgrounds, languages and artistic styles. Moreover, an important part of several UK artists' experience in Canada was gaining an appreciation of Indigenous cultural expressions and an exposure to the current social dialogue around Truth and Reconciliation.

We are thrilled about the quality of conversations, connections and insights that have come out of our collaborations and have elevated our program.

PHOTO FROM A COLOSSAL WAVE

## INTER\_CONNECT LONDON AT MUTEK FESTIVAL

2017'S EDITION OF MUTEK LAUNCHED INTER\_CONNECT, A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO MONTREAL'S 375TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS. IT HIGHLIGHTED THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF MONTRÉAL AND FOUR MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CITIES INCLUDING LONDON, MEXICO CITY, BERLIN AND BARCELONA.

Inter\_Connect London included the participation of 18 UK and Canadian digital artists and musicians for a day dedicated to London's innovative creative economy and electronic music scenes. Residents from Somerset House Studios curated one of their signature Nocturnal City events, while other discursive activities led by Sound Diplomacy investigated issues relevant to London and Montréal as important music cities. Additionally, the 6-month alt.barbican exchange culminated with the 5 emerging UK artists working at the intersection of art and technology who showcased their projects on 'the subversion of reality'.

New connections and artistic opportunities were created for UK and Canadian artists. The participants gained valuable cultural insight about Montréal and its lively and invigorating arts and culture scene. It also had a strong impact on the artists to pursue their artistic ideals and the potential to lead them to try new approaches and take new directions in their artistic practices. It provided them with opportunities to enhance their professional development and present work in front of an international audience.



I THINK IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO BUILD COMMUNITIES THROUGH SHARED SPACES, PARTICULARLY PHYSICAL REAL WORLD SPACES THAT CAN BRING A FOCUS TO DIGITAL NETWORKS. IN CURRENT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WHERE INCLUSIVE WORK AND LEISURE SPACES ARE INCREASINGLY RARE, IT'S GREAT TO BE INVOLVED IN AN EVENT LIKE MUTEK BRINGING LOTS OF DIVERSE PEOPLE TOGETHER.

DAN HAYURST, MUSICIAN

## A COLOSSAL WAVE

THE UNITED KINGDOM GIFTED AN INTERACTIVE DIGITAL SCULPTURE TO THE CITY OF MONTRÉAL TO HONOUR THE CITY'S 375TH ANNIVERSARY.

A Colossal Wave was created by London-based design studio Marshmallow Laser Feast in collaboration with local Montréal artists DPT., Headspace Studio and Presstube. This interactive digital sculpture encouraged visitors to experience urban space differently and provided an enriching VR experience showcasing the connections between Canadian and UK artists. The piece was presented at the Quartier des spectacles as part of the public art event KM³, as well as at the Phi Centre, as part of the exhibition Lucid Realities. The installation travelled to Hull, UK in December 2017 for Tell The World - Hull UK City of Culture.

This project created several opportunities for artistic partnerships, including A Colossal Wave showcase at SXSW in Austin, Texas.

Travelling to Montréal and spending time with Canadian artists gave MLF “a really solid snapshot of contemporary culture in Montréal”. Artists from both countries cited the creativity, resourcefulness and passion of their artistic partners, who brought together their artistic talents to physical installations that had a large impact on the public.



# THE REPUBLIC OF INCLUSION

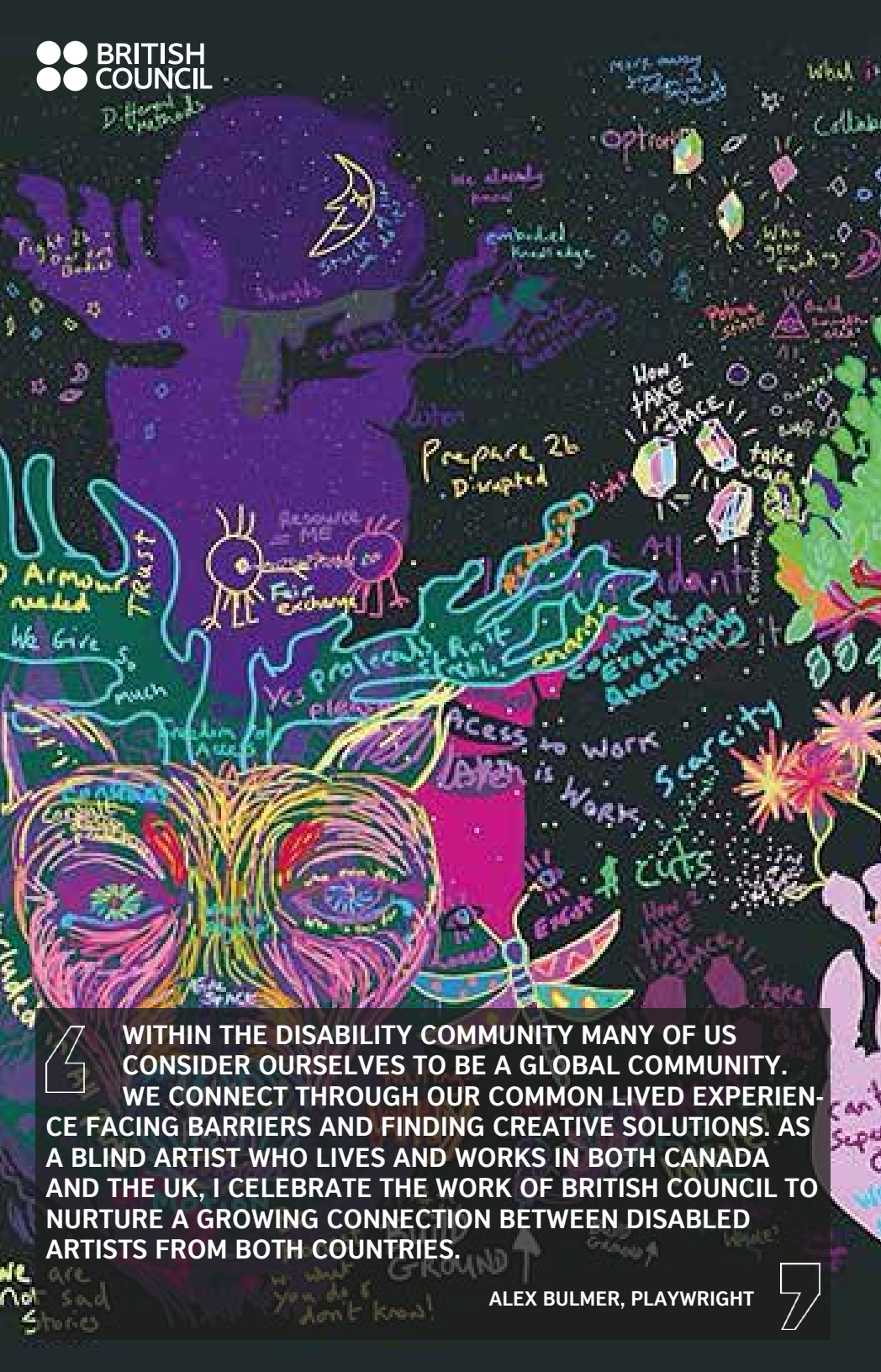
THE REPUBLIC OF INCLUSION WAS THE CULMINATION OF *THE CYCLE: DEAF, DISABILITY, MAD ARTS AND INCLUSION*, A TWO-YEAR PROJECT EXPLORING DISABILITY THEATRE PRACTICES. THROUGH VARIOUS PHASES AND WITH THE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE OF BEST PRACTICES FROM THE UK, THE CYCLE HAD THE INTENT OF SHIFTING THE SHAPE OF CANADIAN THEATRE THROUGH A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF DISABILITY AND ABILITY AND THE PROCESSES USED IN THE CREATION OF THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS.

Featuring 115 leading artists and creators from Canada and the UK, The Republic of Inclusion in Ottawa encouraged cultural and creative change in the world of Deaf, disability and Mad arts. It fostered a national network of artists and organizations engaging through a livestreamed public conversation and performance event, and fuelled a broad dialogue on access and inclusion across contemporary performance practice.

This event created opportunities to bring together engaged artists from the UK and Canada to express shared values and challenges. It expanded the knowledge of contemporary Canadian and British cultures through mutual dialogues, exchanges, and conversations between creators across different landscapes. These conversations, which had a lasting effect on the people who attended, have a great potential to lead to institutional change.

WITHIN THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY MANY OF US CONSIDER OURSELVES TO BE A GLOBAL COMMUNITY. WE CONNECT THROUGH OUR COMMON LIVED EXPERIENCE FACING BARRIERS AND FINDING CREATIVE SOLUTIONS. AS A BLIND ARTIST WHO LIVES AND WORKS IN BOTH CANADA AND THE UK, I CELEBRATE THE WORK OF BRITISH COUNCIL TO NURTURE A GROWING CONNECTION BETWEEN DISABLED ARTISTS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES.

ALEX BULMER, PLAYWRIGHT



## ÉCHANGE BUZZCUT/ OFFTA EXCHANGE

BUZZCUT IN GLASGOW AND OFFTA FESTIVAL IN MONTRÉAL: TWO ORGANIZATIONS COMMITTED TO FINDING NEW, BESPOKE FORMS OF ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT FOR EMERGING TALENTS.

Through this collaboration, the two festivals united for a week of artistic exchange, performances and discussions at OFFTA in the spring of 2017. They shared their approach to the performing arts, the engagement between artists and the multi-faceted nature of artists support.


By engaging in this project, the organizations' leaders as well as the 5 Scottish and 3 Canadian artists involved highly benefitted from the experience of connecting with an international counterpart, providing them an opportunity for live presentation and dialogue on international level.

## OUTRIDERS

CREATED BY THE EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL AND SUPPORTED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S EDINBURGH FESTIVALS EXPO FUND, OUTRIDERS SAW FIVE WRITERS FROM SCOTLAND UNDERTAKE JOURNEYS ACROSS THE AMERICAS. THIS PROJECT EXPLORED THE IDEA THAT IN TURBULENT AND SHIFTING TIMES, WRITERS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, REVEALING UNTOLD STORIES AND OFFERING A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PLACES AND EVENTS.

As part of the Canadian journey, the Orkney-based poet and performer Harry Giles and Métis author Katherine Vermette travelled from Montreal to Churchill, stopping in Winnipeg along the way. Their collaboration was based on a mutual interest in the complexities of regional and minority languages, as well as the connections to the Orkney culture that remain present in Manitoba. Following their presentation at EIBF in August, the pair returned to Winnipeg to perform a public presentation as part of the Winnipeg Writers Fest in September 2017.

Outriders Canada deepened the perception of Canada for UK audiences, participants and partners, by providing a greater understanding of history and connection, particularly around Indigenous life and politics. This project both gave them the opportunity to develop their artistic practice, networks and connections during their journeys.



CANADIAN HISTORY HAS MANY STORIES OF TRIUMPH, BUT WE ARE FINALLY RECKONING WITH THE DARK CHAPTERS OF DISPLACEMENT, BIGOTRY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE. MAKING SPACE FOR KATHERENA VERMETTE AND HARRY GILES TO SHARE THEIR OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS WAS A BRILLIANT ADDITION TO [OUR PROGRAMMING.]

CHARLENE DIEHL, DIRECTOR, WINNIPEG WRITERS FEST




## SOUND JOURNEYS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE HARBOURFRONT CENTRE AND BRITISH UNDERGROUND, THE SOUND JOURNEYS TRAIN RESIDENCIES ACROSS CANADA BROUGHT TOGETHER 9 UK & CANADIAN ARTISTS TO COLLABORATE AND CREATE NEW WORK TOGETHER THROUGH THE DISCOVERY OF SOUNDS AND STORIES ALONG THE WAY.

From the Rocky Mountains, passing through the Manitoban prairies, to the shoreline of the Maritimes, the artists were given an opportunity to collaborate on new sounds and ideas, while reflecting on the land, territories and communities they traversed. Each residency concluded with live performances at the Harbourfront Centre in front of 5000 audience members.

This residency project enabled the artists to create work in a different context, to showcase their talent on a renowned stage and through a digital platform. Moreover, they expanded their knowledge about their shared history, while also developing their artistic practice, skills and networks through collaboration.



MAKING MUSIC ON MEDICINE LAKE IN ALBERTA WAS AN EXPERIENCE I WILL NEVER FORGET. THE COMBINATION OF WHERE WE WERE AND THE MUSIC THAT CAME OUT WAS VERY SPECIAL AND NEVER BE REPLICATED.

SARATHY KORWAR, MUSICIAN AND COMPOSER

# WALKING CITIES

## LITERATURE TOUR ACROSS CANADA

A MONTH-LONG LITERATURE PROGRAMME CONNECTED CONTEMPORARY VOICES FROM CANADA AND THE UK TO EXCHANGE ON IDEAS RELATED TO IDENTITIES, PLACES AND TERRITORIES.

We partnered with Vancouver and Winnipeg Writers Fest, International Festival of Authors (Toronto) and La Poésie Partout (Montreal) to support innovative programming and build connections between 72 writers from UK and Canada. The events as part of this literature tour reflected on the relationships of the writers to the places and spaces where they live, visit, imagine and write: Come Rhyme With Me, a spoken word and culinary dining experience in Toronto and Vancouver, engaged emerging poets from the local spoken word community; Walking Cities, a digital series of recorded conversations between local and visiting writers, prompted them to compare and contrast views and experiences from different sides of the Atlantic as they walked through a city.

This programme of events and activities showcased diverse voices with a wide range of perspectives. These conversations were significant for the participants as it gave them valuable insights and brought perspective to our shared heritage and history. For the UK-based writers, it increased their understanding of Canada's current social dialogues.





CANADA

## MICHAEL LANDY AT THE POWER PLANT

ARTIST MICHAEL LANDY WAS INVITED TO CREATE A NEW IN SITU ART INSTALLATION AT THE POWER PLANT CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY. THE EXHIBITION, TITLED DEMONSTRATION, PLAYED A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE GALLERY'S YEAR OF PROGRAMMING CENTERED ON CELEBRATING CANADA'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONFEDERATION.

Landy invited the public to collaborate in building a 'wall of protest' by submitting images, words, texts and slogans that represent their thoughts and feelings—of hope or of despair, on matters small or large, from high to low and across the cultural spectrum—to be transformed by the artist into drawings. With the help of local assistants, Landy created from these submissions red and white drawings of protesters, which were pinned directly on to the wall of the gallery as they are produced in a continually evolving display. At the end of the exhibition, each image is given back to the participating citizen who shared it.

Demonstration engaged The Power Plant in interesting and challenging conversations with its audiences, and showcased the excellent UK work of a renowned artist in a new innovative way.

IT'S MEANT TO OPEN UP SOME KIND OF CHANNEL OF ENGAGEMENT IN TORONTO. THEY CAN BE SMALL IDEAS, BIG IDEAS. IT'S A DEMONSTRATION: PEOPLE CAN BE ANGRY OR SAD. THERE ARE NO RULES, IT'S JUST WHATEVER PEOPLE WANT TO SEND IN.

MICHAEL LANDY, INTERVIEW IN MACLEAN'S

# CREATIVE RESIDENCIES: WE ALL HAVE STORIES

2018 GUEST-CURATOR KAREN ALEXANDER FOR NUIT BLANCHE TORONTO INVITED ARTISTS FROM THE UK AND CANADA FOR A RESIDENCY TO EXPLORE THEMES OF MIGRATION, MEMORY AND TRANSFORMATION.

During their week-creative residency, the artists experienced the 2017 Nuit Blanche festival in Toronto from sunset to sunrise. They also engaged with local artists and practitioners, deepening the relationships with potential collaborators, visited potential sites and venues and participated in a talk back session with curator Karen Alexander. This opportunity will inform, strengthen and contextualize the next stage of their creative processes for Nuit Blanche 2018.


The participating artists were exposed to an in-depth cultural history of Toronto. This project in development will be a great platform and will create international exposure for their work.

# THE ART OF CHANGING THE WORLD

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE VIBRANT AND FAST-GROWING FIELD OF ART FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND COMMUNITY-ENGAGED ARTS WAS EXPLORED DURING THE ART OF CHANGING THE WORLD CONFERENCE IN OTTAWA.

Artists, scholars and students from diverse public and private sectors presented research on art for social change practices in Canada and abroad. The gathering of 200 change-makers provided information and resources for both practitioners and those interested in learning more about the growing field of art for social change. We supported the participation of a group of 7 UK, international and Indigenous youth guests to engage in wider discussions, and bring different perspectives to the conference.

The event provided new opportunities for knowledge exchange and sharing, as well as enabling new relationships with emerging and established artists, leading and newer scholars in the field, NGOs and funders from Canada and abroad.



I BENEFITTED FROM THIS EXPERIENCE BY LISTENING AND TAKING PART WITH PEOPLE DISCUSSING PARTICIPATORY AND COMMUNITY ARTS IN ANOTHER CONTEXT. VERY IMPORTANTLY, WAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ART AND CULTURE OF CANADA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.

CHRISSIE TILLER,  
WRITER, THINKER, TEACHER & ADVISOR BASED IN THE UK

# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

Edinburgh  
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