



Press Release

Inaugural women leaders set to inspire

The first group of trailblazing women have been selected for a pioneering arts leadership programme.

Women Leaders South West (WLSW), which aims to address the gender imbalance in the arts and cultural sector, has chosen 16 incredible Associates from over 350 applications for a training opportunity at eight arts organisations in South West England: The Point, Activate Performing Arts, Art Asia, Diverse City, Kaleider, Pavilion Dance South West, Strike a Light and The Arts Development Company.

The organisations will host two Associates each over the next eighteen months, supported by social entrepreneurship and business training from Southampton Business School and mentoring from Jude Kelly and The WOW (Women of the World) Foundation. The programme is funded by Arts Council England's Transforming Leadership scheme.

The two Associates who will be working with Art Asia are Anjali Mavi and Romana Syed. Anjali is an active member in the cultural landscape of Southampton and Eastleigh. She is a voluntary radio presenter with Southampton's Unity 101 and Hot Radio Dorset. She is also the co-founder member of three cultural organisations in the South West region Eastleigh & Southampton Asian community (ESAC) Bournemouth Poole & Christchurch (BPC) Asian Community Music Lovers of Bollywood (MLB) As an active member of these organisations her aim is ensure that art and culture thrive in all communities and that they are accessible to all.

Romana Syed is based in Southampton and is the founder of Women's Integration Group in Southampton. The aim of the group is to reduce isolation of women in the community and help them to engage in activities with their young children through various arts and crafts activities. She is deeply passionate about community engagement and aims to make significant changes for all by using creativity as a tool. She has worked with various arts organisation in Southampton like the John Hansard Gallery, Southampton Solent University Showcase Gallery and the NST Theatre.

Maricka Oglesby, Director of the Women's Leadership Institute of Baltimore at Notre Dame of Maryland University, an Advisor for the programme, said: "Women Leaders South West is doing very intentional work to bring thoughtful leaders to the arts. It is a great privilege to interact with the applicants and the organisations who will undoubtedly have an incredible impact going forward."

Jude Kelly CBE, Founder and Director of The WOW Foundation, said: "This is an impressive, ambitious and ethically driven project that understands the need for home grown talent to develop commitment and loyalty to place. The South West region dreams big and The WOW Foundation is excited to be bringing the international dimension to the table."

Phil Gibby, Area Director, South West, Arts Council England, said: "We are proud to have invested £585,284 in Women Leaders South West, a consortium of eight successful female-led cultural organisations from all corners of the south west, through our National Lottery



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funded Transforming Leadership programme. This ensure leaders in the sector are appropriately

fund was set up to skilled

and represent a range of backgrounds, and Women Leaders South West helps to create fairness and career development opportunities. We welcome today's news and send our congratulations to the

sixteen new women associates selected, we wish them well in this opportunity and look forward to watching the next generation of female leaders in the south west develop.

For More Information About the Programme:

Please contact

education@artasia.org.uk

Notes to Editor

The selected women Associates are: Adrienne Dove Armstrong; Shenice Ellis; Fee Francis Hudson; Vrushali Harihar; Daisy Higman; Zahra Hoccom (<https://www.zahrahoccom.com/>); Halima Malek; Anjali Mavi; Vandna Mehta; Natasha Nixon (<http://www.natashanixon.co.uk/>); Ruth Pitter (<https://bwlltheatre.co.uk/>); Rosanne Robertson (<https://rosannerobertson.art/>); Lorna Rose (<https://lornayrose.wordpress.com/>); Romana Syed; Amber Weyman (<https://www.instagram.com/choreograph.the.reform/>); Abby Young.

The programme is supported by four external consultants to support better representation and decision making: Kym Oliver, Writer, Speaker, Lecturer and founder of The Triple Cripples, Maricka Oglesby, Director of the Women's Leadership Institute of Baltimore at Notre Dame of Maryland University, Sabeena Ahktar, Writer/Editor and an Arts and Culture programmer, and Choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh.

Women Leaders South West exists as a knowledge exchange programme for the women Associates and the partner organisations to learn from one another. Funded by Arts Council England's Transforming Leadership Fund, the aim is to address specific issues around diversity across leadership, opportunities for emerging and early career leaders, and support the long-term resilience of the sector. According to Arts Council England's 2018-19 data report for Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case just 10% of people of Asian, African, and Caribbean heritage, 7% of people with a disability and 11% of LGBTQ people work in arts leadership. In South West England, 73% of Artistic Directors are white.

According to Arts Professional (2018), "Only 31% of Artistic Directors of large Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations are women. Men are still paid 10.6% more than women in the arts."

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Arts Council England is the national development and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in 2030 we want England to be a country in which the

agency for creativity
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creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. www.artscouncil.org.uk

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies administering the Government's unprecedented £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Funds. Find out more at www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19

About The WOW Foundation:

The WOW Foundation was created by Jude Kelly CBE in 2018 to run the global movement that is WOW - Women of the World Festivals. The Festivals began in the UK in 2010, launched by Kelly at Southbank Centre London, where she was Artistic Director, to celebrate women and girls, taking a frank look at what prevents them from achieving their potential, raising awareness globally of the issues they face, and discussing solutions together.

To date, WOW has reached over 2 million people in 17 countries on six continents, in locations including Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Finland, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Somaliland, the UK and the USA. In 2018/19 WOW was in Rio de Janeiro, Cardiff, Bradford, Bangladesh, Brisbane, Janakpur (Nepal), Baltimore, London, Exeter, Norwich, Perth, Beijing, Ghana and Nigeria. In June 2020, WOW held its first ever worldwide online festival focused on women and girls — WOW Global 24. The festival travelled around the world everywhere from the UK to Nigeria, and Pakistan to Australia exploring the intersectional impact of COVID-19 on gender inequality, and responding to Black Lives Matter.

Over the last 10 years the Festivals have developed a reputation as a space for world renowned artists, activists, thinkers and performers including Angela Davis, Malala Yousafzai, Annie Lennox, Patrick Stewart, Baroness Doreen Lawrence and Salma Hayek, to come and participate, alongside thousands of women and girls who don't have public profiles but are doing amazing things. WOW provides platforms for people of all kinds, changes attitudes, brings communities together and provides a unique space for people to work together towards gender equality in their own communities. One example of the impact of the festival came in 2015, with the founding of the Women's Equality Party by Sandi Toksvig and Catherine Mayer.

In 2018 Kelly left the Southbank Centre to run The WOW Foundation full time as a charity working to build, convene and sustain a global movement that believes a gender equal world is possible and desirable through festivals and empowering women and girls. The unique festival model creates numerous pathways for participants to take part in WOW projects, amplify their own causes, or start new initiatives which have a wide impact on communities. It is the biggest, most comprehensive and most significant festival dedicated to presenting work by women and promoting equality for women and girls.

WOW festivals and events are presented by arrangement with Southbank Centre. The President of WOW - Women of the World is HRH The Duchess of Cornwall.



Key messages / responses:

Women Leaders South West exists as a knowledge exchange programme, for the women Associates and the partner organisations to learn from each other and address the barriers to leadership in the culture sector.

The programme is funded by Arts Council England's Transforming Leadership Fund.

According to Arts Professional (2018), "Only 31% of Artistic Directors of large Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations are women. Men are still paid 10.6% more than women in the arts."

According to Arts Council England's 2018-19 data report for Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case just 10% of people of Asian, African, and Caribbean heritage, 7% of people with a disability and 11% of LGBTQ people work in arts leadership. In South West England, 73% of Artistic Directors are white.

The programme will be evaluated against 5 leadership characteristics; participants will demonstrate they are:

1. Able to bring others with them
2. Authentic in own vision and voice
3. Collaborative in practice and enabling of others
4. Inclusive and open to all communities
5. Situated and contextually aware

The programme seeks to address the gender imbalance in senior roles in arts organisations.

The addition of formal learning through Southampton Business School means the Associates will learn essential business and social entrepreneurial skills. This will equip the Associates with the skills and knowledge to lead successful and resilient businesses and arts organisations in the future.

The support of The WOW Foundation will offer the Associates expert mentors and a gateway to global opportunities. The women will gain practical leadership skills by training within the partner arts organisations and Southampton Business School.

There is a glossary of agreed terminology for the programme:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/11jv3nYr7icANX_lcsXnCpah5q638zpCn/view?pli=1



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Supporting articles:

Arts Council England, Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case: a data report, 2018-19
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/equality-diversity-and-creative-case-data-report-2018-19>

Arts Professional, May 2018
<https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/men-still-dominate-major-arts-organisations-data-reveals>

Arts Professional, December 2018
<https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/exclusive-gender-gap-dominates-latest-arts-pay-figures>

Arts Professional, November 2020 (written by Sacha Lee, The Point)
<https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/339/feature/developing-leadership-south-west-women>

The Guardian, January 2021
<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2021/jan/13/uk-report-reveals-disgraceful-gender-inequality-in-the-arts>



Social media:

#WomenLeadersSouthWest
#WLSW
#ACEsupported

Facebook Page: @WomenLeadersSouthWest

Please post through your channels from Wednesday 23rd February 2021.

Tag your Associates and encourage them to share via their own channels.

Link to information on your own website about your Associates.

Suggested Posts:

Excited to announce the 2 Associates selected from over 350 applications that will be training with us as part of the #WomenLeadersSouthWest programme. They will develop their skills and build their network across the South West region.

2 inspiring women are joining our team as part of the #WomenLeadersSouthWest programme. This @ace_national funded programme seeks to address the gender imbalance in senior roles in the arts and cultural sector. #ACEsupported

Thanks to @ace_national we are starting 2021 with two new Associates as a partner organisation of the #WomenLeadersSouthWest programme. These incredible women will develop their leadership skills and train with us.

Partner organisation	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram
The Point	@PointEastleigh	@thepointeastleigh	thepointeastleigh
Activate Performing Arts	@ActivatePArts	@ActivatePerformingArts	activate_parts
Art Asia	@art_asia	@artasiasouthampton	
Diverse City	@diversecity1	@DiverseCity1	diverse_city1
Kaleider	@kaleider	@Kaleider	kaleider
Pavilion Dance South West	@PDSW_org	@PDSW.org	pdsw_org
Southampton Business School	@SotonBusiness	@SouthamptonBusinessSchool	uni_southampton



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Strike a Light	@strike_a_light	@strikealightfestival	strikealightfestival
The Arts Development Company	@artsdevco	@artsdevelopmentcompany	theartsdevelopmentcompany
WOW Foundation	@WOWisGlobal	@womenoftheworldfestival	wowglobal

Programme advisors

The programme is supported by four external consultants to support better representation and decision making.

Kym Oliver, The Triple Cripples

“...An unapologetically Black, African AND Caribbean, British, Disabled, Woman, with a wheelchair-ish case of Multiple Sclerosis...”

Kym is dedicated to illuminating their ‘lived experience’ with a long-term condition. Examining its psychological, emotional, practical, social, cultural, structural and interpersonal effects, in order to create a blueprint for a more equitable future. She is determined to be the change she wishes to see.

Kym is a Writer (*gal-dem, Spotify, AAJHS*), Speaker (*SOAS, LSE, Omnicom*), Expert Lecturer (*University of Oxford, Cambridge, KCL*), Sex and Dating aficionado (*Inner Hoe Uprising, Long Island Institute of Sex Therapy, Decolonising Contraception, SH:24*), ‘Peer-reviewed Vegan Food Critic’ (*Virgin Media*), Professional Cackler and the ‘Official Goddess’ for The Triple Cripples (*BBC, Metro, Black Ballad, Vogue, AJ+*) – a platform dedicated to highlighting the narratives and increasing the visibility of People of Colour, living with Disability.

A multifaceted creative, deep lover of Anime and UX design student, Kym spends umpteen hours staring at a screen talking to an invisible, future audience. Ironically, she also happens to be a qualified Personal Trainer & Integrative Health Coach, who spends most of their days lying in bed, feeling poorly and promising themselves that “tomorrow” will be the day that they “eat better & go to the gym...”

Maricka Oglesby, Director of the Women’s Leadership Institute of Baltimore at Notre Dame of Maryland University

Maricka Oglesby is the Director of the Women’s Leadership Institute of Baltimore at Notre Dame of Maryland University, an historic institution educating women and girls for the past 125 years. She also serves as the Producer of the Women of the World Festival – Baltimore USA since 2015. Maricka curates and executes engaging, and impactful events focused on the advancement of gender equity in collaboration with global and local partners including the WOW Foundation in London. As a convenor of women of all ages including 30+ organisations and leaders who are committed to gender equity, Maricka works to expand authentic conversations, actions, and connections.



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Maricka is committed to proactive women's issues, operational excellence, and inspirational leadership. Maricka studied journalism at the University of Maryland at College Park and has held positions at many non-profit and educational organisations including the National Women's Law Center, the National Committee on Pay Equity, and the WOW Foundation in addition to other corporate experience in conjunction with her personal mission for gender and racial justice.

Maricka is the single parent of a 10-year-old son who she is proud to be raising as a feminist.

Sabeen Ahktar, Women of the World festival programmer, writer and editor

Sabeena Akhtar is a Writer/Editor and an Arts and Culture programmer working across a variety of literary festivals. She is the Festival Coordinator of Bare Lit, the UK's principal festival celebrating remarkable writers in the diaspora. A co-founder of the Primadonna Festival which spotlights the work of women writers, the Primadonna Prize for writing and Bare Lit Kids, the UK's first children's festival showcasing the work of writers of colour. She is also Senior Programmer at the WOW Foundation. A keen advocate for Partition commemoration, in 2017 she partook in the BBC's coverage of the 70th anniversary of Indian independence and alongside her daughter, filmed a programme on the Partition of India for children. She has since been invited to discuss the subject on various media outlets. She has published a wide variety of work including a children's book on Islamophobia published by Hachette and a forthcoming Anthology by British Muslim women entitled *Cut From the Same Cloth?* She was a contributor to Saqi Books, *Smashing It: Working Class Artists on Life, Art and Making it Happen* and is currently working on her debut novel.

Shobana Jeyasingh, internationally recognised choreographer

Shobana Jeyasingh is an internationally recognised choreographer who founded Shobana Jeyasingh Dance 30 years ago. She has created over 60 critically acclaimed works for diverse platforms including stage, screen and unconventional public spaces such as Palladian monasteries, fountain courtyards and city offices. Her work is noted for both its intellectual rigour and its visceral physicality.

Over the course of a distinguished career she has collaborated with scientists, gallery curators, composers, film makers, digital creatives as well as dancers and designers to make bold multi disciplinary work. Her work has toured extensively to Europe, USA, India and the Far East and is now part of the national curriculum in the UK. Her recent dance works *Material Men redux* (2017) and *Contagion* (2018) were both chosen to be in the top ten dance works of the year by UK broadsheets.

<https://www.shobanajeyasingh.co.uk/about/>



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