

PRESS RELEASE
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Recipients announced for the £150,000 Award for Civic Arts Organisations by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and King's College London

- London based organisation Heart n Soul will receive the top award of £75,000
- Eden Court Highlands in Scotland, Museum of Homelessness in London and The Whitworth in Manchester will each receive £25,000

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch), in partnership with King's College London, today announce the recipients of the Award for Civic Arts Organisations. The four recipients were chosen for surpassing their usual roles, adjusting their practices and missions using bold and imaginative ideas which served their communities in ways relevant to them.

The main recipient is London based organisation, Heart n Soul, which co-created an online programme of activities for members with learning difficulties, providing work for freelance artists who delivered club nights, quizzes and baking sessions. The other three awarded organisations are: Inverness based Eden Court Highlands who in partnership with the Highland Council repurposed themselves as the humanitarian aid centre for the region; Museum of Homelessness in London who created a Covid-19 Homelessness Taskforce; and The Whitworth in Manchester who reframed their mission to cover three principles - learning through making and doing, creating a place of care, consideration, and community, and taking action. The recipients will receive funding and further support to continue their work and share learning, and were chosen from a shortlist of ten announced back in January 2021.

As the UK comes up to a year since the first Covid-19 lockdown, the final recipients are celebrated for the outstanding ways in which they adapted to the pandemic despite the hardships they themselves faced as institutions. Coming from all around the UK, across the cultural spectrum and with differing ways of operating at different scales, the recipients are all impressive examples of how arts organisations are helping to shape the future: culture, creativity and the arts are manifesting stories that enable us to realise what it means to be fully human, individually and collectively.

This Award complements the growing movement of arts organisations reflecting on their relationship with society and builds on other initiatives supported by the Foundation, including [Rethinking Relationships](#), a report that demonstrated the need for arts organisations to work more closely with their communities if they are to stay relevant in a rapidly changing world.

Andrew Barnett OBE, director of the UK branch of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, says:

'This Award builds on the sea change that has been occurring in the arts sector over recent years, with a growing movement of organisations reflecting on their relationship with society. The Foundation's work on the Civic Role has demonstrated the need for arts organisations to work more closely with their communities if they are to stay relevant in a rapidly changing world. At this difficult time, this principle

feels even more important. I hope that the sector will take inspiration from these wonderful examples of the civic role that arts organisations can play, and incorporate the lessons into their plans to build back better.'

Baroness Bull (Deborah Bull), Vice President & Vice-Principal (London) at King's College London and chair of the judges, comments:

'We saw throughout the submissions the creativity, flexibility, dogged hard work and extraordinary resilience of artists and arts organisations in this most challenging of years. The final scoring could not have been tighter and so I'm delighted that we have been able to recommend not three but four recipients of this inaugural award. Each of these four co-created with their communities to build resilience, enhance wellbeing and challenge conventions, amplifying voices that are often unheard and making a meaningful difference to lives.'

The Award is funded by the Foundation, with King's College London as the academic partner to deliver the Award, involving students from the Department of Culture, Media & Creative Industries in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities. Baroness Bull (Deborah Bull), Vice President & Principal (London) and Senior Advisory Fellow for Culture at King's College London chaired the judging panel. The other panellists were: David Bryan, Fiona Doring, Anisa Morridadi, Jo Verrent and André Wilkens.

The 260 applications were received from publicly funded arts organisations and recipients were chosen from a shortlist of 10: Deveron Projects (Aberdeenshire); Eden Court Highlands (Inverness); EGO Performance Company Ltd (Coventry); Friction Arts (Birmingham); Heart n Soul (London); Key Changes (London); Museum of Homelessness (London); Quiet Down There CIC (Brighton); The Big House Theatre Company (London); and The Whitworth (Manchester).

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For more information about the award, please visit:

bit.ly/AwardCivicArts

Images are available [here](#)

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Notes to Editors

About the awardees

Eden Court Highlands is Scotland's largest combined arts organisation, the cultural heart of the region, presenting and making work with, by and for the people of the Highlands and Islands.

Within days of closure due to Covid-19, Eden Court Highlands used existing partnerships with community organisations, and collaborated closely with the Highland Council, helping to identify where support was needed. This included: setting up and staffing a helpline for vulnerable people; using the web-based box office phone system; delivering creative activities for children attending keyworker childcare hubs; turning the venue's restaurant windows into a temporary community exhibition site to

display a collection of Black Lives Matters banners and commissioning an artist of colour to create an artistic response; packing and distributing thousands of food parcels each week; and re-purposed the 850 seat theatre as the humanitarian aid centre for the region. There was an audit of the personal and professional skills of the large staff team, unable to do their usual work, and the wide range of skills was redeployed for community support.

Heart n Soul is an award-winning creative arts company and charity, who believe in the power and talents of people with learning disabilities, providing opportunities for people to discover, develop and share this power and talent as widely as possible.

During the lockdown, they came up with a system whereby staff made weekly calls to 160 participants to keep in touch and consult members on their needs. When speaking with participants, they asked them what they would want from Heart n Soul during the lockdown. From there, they moved all of their activities online, making opportunities for more people to access the internet and take part online (supported by phone calls), forming a steering group to give ownership and leadership to people with learning disabilities, amplifying their voices across the internet. There was then a meeting with steering teams and co-producers to adapt chosen activities to be online e.g. club nights, bingo nights, baking sessions and quiz night. Heart n Soul also understood that not everyone has access to the internet, but that everyone has access to the post, so Heart n Soul commissioned collaborated with different artists to make creative packs which were sent out every fortnight. This provided regular work for freelance artists. They also produced simple guides to staying safe in the pandemic and how not to be lonely in lockdown.

Museum of Homelessness is a community driven social justice museum, created and run by people with direct experience of homelessness.

In March 2020 they redirected their funds and co-created the UK's only Covid-19 Homeless Taskforce which brought together frontline and grassroots organisations with arts organisations, Streets Kitchen, The Outside Project, The Simon Community and the Union Chapel, and responded to the breakdown in food supply chains and the overnight shutting of homelessness services. Within five days, they published a plan to help the homeless community – to block book empty hotel rooms for the community to self-isolate, which was adopted as national strategy to bring 29,000 people into safe accommodation. The taskforce worked 7 days a week with 50 volunteers, partnering with the council and many local organisations, to help those living in this accommodation or still living on the streets, including dispatching hot meals and care packs.

The Whitworth gallery and park were created with a specific purpose to use art to improve the lives and increase the creative capacity of people in Manchester.

Their mission, rewritten to respond to the extreme social inequities exposed by the pandemic, is to use art for social transformation, through three main principles: learning through making and doing; creating a place of care, consideration, and community; and taking action. The Whitworth's expanded online programme engaged almost 300,000 people throughout the pandemic. This 'At Home' programme reached almost 1,000 families, health partners, volunteers and older people and connected with networks such as Digital Pride Festival with their 'Queering' takeover. With many people unable to access digital resources, they also developed partnerships to distribute Creative Care Packs across Greater Manchester. Their programme now centres on the social agenda and they have developed a school of Creativity and 'national cultural health service'.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch)

The fundamental purpose of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is to improve the quality of life for all throughout art, charity, science and education. The Foundation is committed to the future, to those most vulnerable, and to the value of culture. The UK Branch is focused on building coalitions to tackle complex global problems. Based in London, the UK Branch sits at the heart of a world centre for philanthropy which enables us to deliver on the Foundation's mission using our networks, experience and way of working. We look ahead, thinking globally and acting locally, to create the conditions for change by connecting across borders of all kinds – national, cultural, organisational, disciplinary and social. We prioritise the vulnerable and underserved in the UK and elsewhere.

The Foundation has a long and rich history in fostering the arts in its 60 years of existence. From *Help for the Arts* in the 1950s to Sir Ken Robinson's work in the 1980s on [creativity in schools](#). More recently, the foundation originated the now highly successful [Museum Prize](#), which in the last decade has been run by the Arts Fund. The prize has contributed to recognising and raising the quality of museum practice across the country.

The new Civic Award initiative is being funded under the foundation's [The Civic Role of Arts Organisations](#) programme, which produced the [Rethinking Relationships](#) report.

King's College London

King's College London is a civic university at the heart of London. This means close collaboration with London's businesses, policymakers, universities and further education institutions, as well as with the communities in its home boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Westminster. It also means connecting the global to the local, extending the reach and benefits of problem solving to generate knowledge that benefits London and the world.