

THE LOWRY

Review of 2015/2016



THE LOWRY
ART & ENTERTAINMENT





Cover Image: Daniel Rozin, *Darwinian Straw Mirror* (part of Right Here Right Now)

Image from Week 53 at The Lowry

Welcome

Looking back on this year, I am amazed by how much The Lowry has achieved in just 12 months. It has been another year packed full of fantastic work, but it has also been a year where we have laid strong foundations for our future ambitions. In our theatres, our dance programme has been bigger and more ambitious than ever before and we have been developing and nurturing new partnerships that span every corner of the globe and that will delight our audiences for many years to come.

In our Galleries we set out a bold new direction with our first major digital exhibition, 'Right Here Right Now', that opened in November and provided a critically-acclaimed snapshot of contemporary digital art today. As ever, our Learning and Engagement programme continued to draw its inspiration from our artistic programme to engage local communities, develop talent and skills and broaden access to The Lowry and our work, with over 100,000 hours of engagement activity delivered across the year. In recognition of this work we not only

won a Children and Young People Now Award, but were thrilled to be named 'Arts Charity of the Year' at the National Charity Awards!

This year also saw us conclude the £5.5million first phase of our 2020 Capital Project which has seen major technical upgrades in our theatres, a wide-reaching programme of energy efficiency measures and, of course, the creation of our stunning new destination Bar and Restaurant, Pier Eight. This important project not only future-proofs our building and programme, but through cost savings and new income we are able to invest further in our exciting artistic and engagement programmes. We are hugely grateful to Arts Council England and all of those organisations and individuals who helped us make this project a reality.

There are of course many people to thank every year including all of the artists, companies and communities with whom we work who are the reason why we are here. I would also like to thank our Trustees and my fantastic colleagues,

but in particular to highlight our 300 volunteers who this year were collectively awarded the MBE for Voluntary Groups, the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This amazing group of people make The Lowry what it is and this award could not be more deserved, particularly in such an incredible year.

I hope you will enjoy our look-back on the year

Julia Fawcett OBE
Chief Executive



Lowry Volunteers with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

In Our Theatres

Every year we aim to ensure that our theatres programme both thrills and challenges our audiences with the highest quality work of all genres from around the world. This year we saw an unparalleled range of work drawing in hugely diverse audiences and The Lowry once again provided some of the true highlights of the year for theatre-goers in the North West.

We are continually working to grow and further cement our position as one of the UK's leading dance houses and this year we welcomed an extraordinary range of artists and companies, including our old friends and long-standing partners Birmingham Royal Ballet, Rambert and Matthew Bourne's New Adventures alongside companies and artists that are finding new homes at The Lowry including Akash Odedra, Arthur Pita, Wim Vendekeybus and Russell Maliphant, from whom we co-commissioned *Conceal-Reveal*. We were also delighted to work with both Fevered Sleep and Luca Silvestrini to create work specifically for our Compass Room - truly opening up the whole of our building for dance.



Badke

In Our Theatres

This year has also seen us take our audiences on a journey to explore the exciting new work being created in the amazing world of contemporary circus with another co-commission - *Tipping Point* from our regular collaborator Ockham's Razor - and appearances from leading artists and companies including Keziah Serreau, Hogwhallops and NoFit State. This programme also brought fantastic international influence to bear from Natalie Reckert (Germany), Circa (Australia) and Circolombia (Columbia).

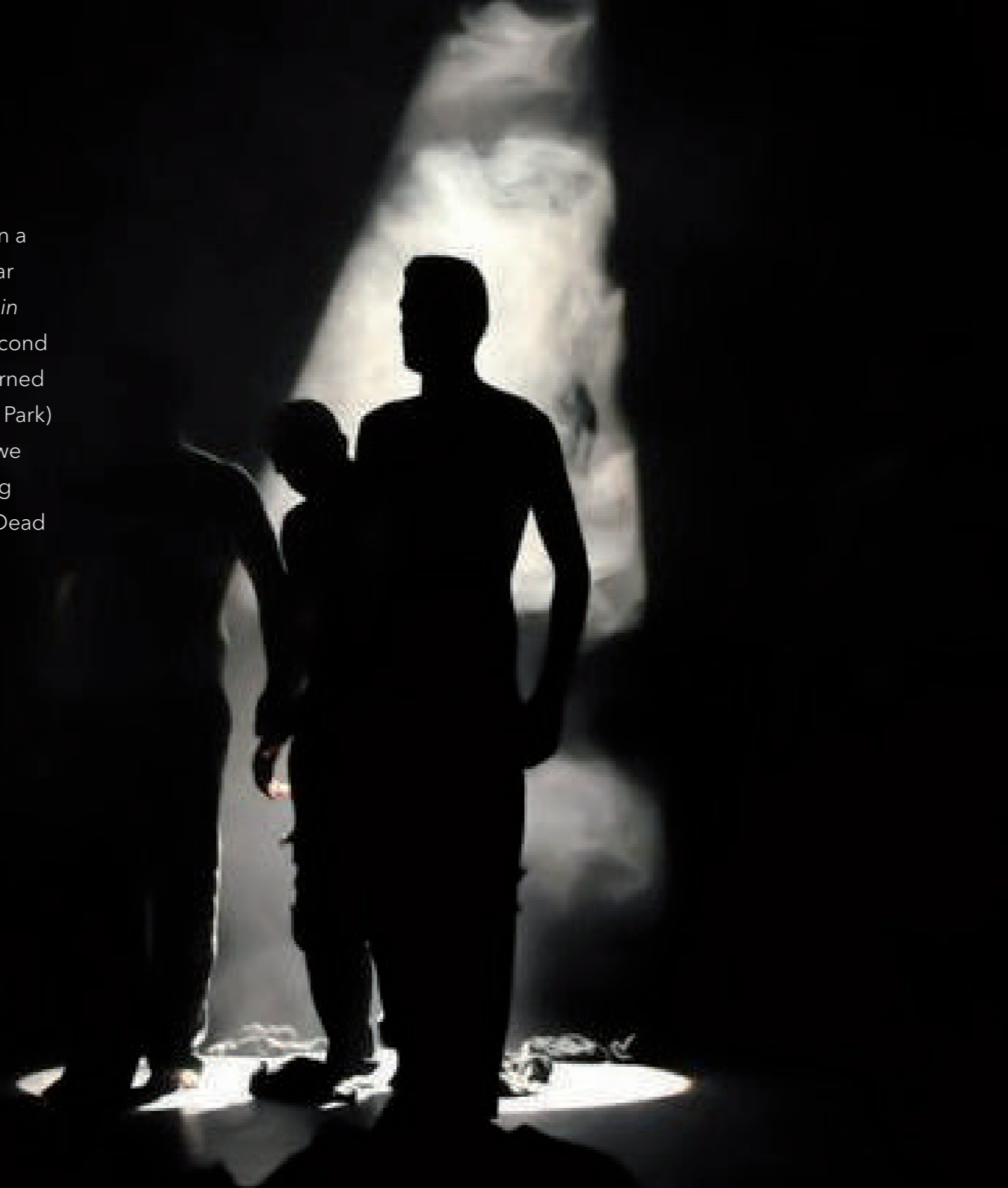


Circa, Opus

In Our Theatres

For our drama audiences, our programme was once again a feast of new and challenging work alongside more familiar titles. The National Theatre's *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* continued to delight audiences with its second sold-out run at The Lowry and other familiar partners returned with *Rebecca* (Kneehigh), *To Kill a Mocking Bird* (Regent's Park) and *Constellations* (Royal Court). Across all three stages we also provided a platform for some of the most challenging contemporary drama from around the world with *Lippy* (Dead Centre - Ireland), *Sirens* (Ontroerend Goed - Belgium), *La Merda* (Silvia Gallerano - Italy) and *The Siege* (Freedom Theatre of Jenin - Palestine).

Freedom Theatre of Jenin, *The Seige*



In Our Theatres

Overall it was another fantastic year for our theatres programme in terms of bringing the highest quality work to the most diverse audiences - whether that was through *Roundabout*, Paine's Plough's pop-up intimate theatre space that sat outside The Lowry for a week in September, or the multi-award winning *Wicked* which played to over 95,000 people and generated £5.8million in legacy for the tourism economy in Greater Manchester.

The Lowry truly is the home for the best and widest ranging theatre in the North West.

Dead Centre, *Lippy* (part of SICK! Festival)



The Lowry Studio

Our Studio is home to an extended family of up and coming theatre makers, companies, and mavericks from the North West and beyond. This award-winning space presents shows with a sense of adventure, from touring shows through to brand new productions.

The Artist Development programme in The Studio sees us invest in new work from developing artists and companies. There are three elements: Studio Members, Developed With The Lowry and Associate Artists.

Studio Members is a free scheme for aspiring theatre makers of all ages who are keen to learn more about working professionally. Our 380 members have access to a dedicated programme of workshops, masterclasses and seminars across the year.

We select five promising emerging companies a year to join our Developed With programme and these companies benefit from a 12 month package of support to help them develop a brand new show and take a step forward in their practice.



Monkeywood Theatre, *By Far the Greatest Team*

Most of the Developed With shows go on to tour nationally and internationally and some even return to The Lowry to play in one of our bigger theatre spaces. Artists that have been part of our family of Developed With artists this year have been: Fergus Evans, Laura Lindow, The Letter Room, Fellswoop, Animikii Theatre, 2Magpies Theatre, Art With Heart, Colour The Clouds and Sophie Willan.

The Lowry Studio

Moving on from Developed With we select one company each year to become an Associate Artist, giving them full access to all the production and creative support The Lowry can offer, not just for one project, but for an extended period of development. Our Associate Artists during the year were: Theatre Ad Infinitum, Kill The Beast, Monkeywood Theatre and Lung.

This year we have:

- Engaged **187** companies and individual artists
- Given **65** companies free rehearsal and R&D space
- Provided **2,840** hours of free rehearsal space
- which equates to **405** days and has a cash value of more than **£280,000**

"The Lowry invited us to become one of their Associate Artists. This came with innumerable benefits from the staff at The Lowry, including financial support and advice, introductions to other companies, theatres and industry experts, help to vastly improve the technical side of our productions gave us (the always-important and ever-elusive) rehearsal space. It's not an exaggeration to state that without the overwhelming support from The Lowry Kill the Beast would never have got as far as we have. The belief, the financial help, the advice, and the constant enthusiasm and passion from the staff has meant that from day one, we weren't afraid to give it a damn good try. Thanks to The Lowry, we've got a lot of work to do. And we can't imagine it any other way." - Kill The Beast



The Letter Room, *Five Feet in Front*



Kill The Beast, *He Had Hairy Hands*



Theatre Ad Infinitum, *Drawing with Light*

In Our Galleries

A major highlight of this year was the launch of our first major digital exhibition, *Right Here Right Now*, which brought together 16 international artists from around the world, ranging from German innovator Robert Henke to the Manchester-based artist Mishka Henner. The exhibition explored digital interaction, surveillance and voyeurism through the plethora of systems embedded around us, whether they are visible or invisible to us.

The exhibition proved a 'moment in time' upon which visitors could reflect on the developments in art and digital technology over the last five years and also anticipate the next tantalising steps. The diversity of artworks brought together truly illustrated the experimentation of artists from many different backgrounds across a huge variety of practice.

In Our Galleries

Over the summer months we also curated *ExtraORDINARY* an exhibition that saw everyday objects and actions expressed as contemporary art. The exhibition included Roelof Louw's *Soul City* (Pyramid of Oranges) and Karina Smigla-Bobinski's *ADA* installation – which proved a hit with families and young children in particular. We were also delighted to feature Turner Prize-winner Martin Creed whose work, *Word No. 79*, proved something of a talking point, being a piece of Blu-tack kneaded, rolled into a ball and depressed against a wall!



Karina Smigla-Bobinski *ADA* (part of *ExtraORDINARY*)

In Our Galleries



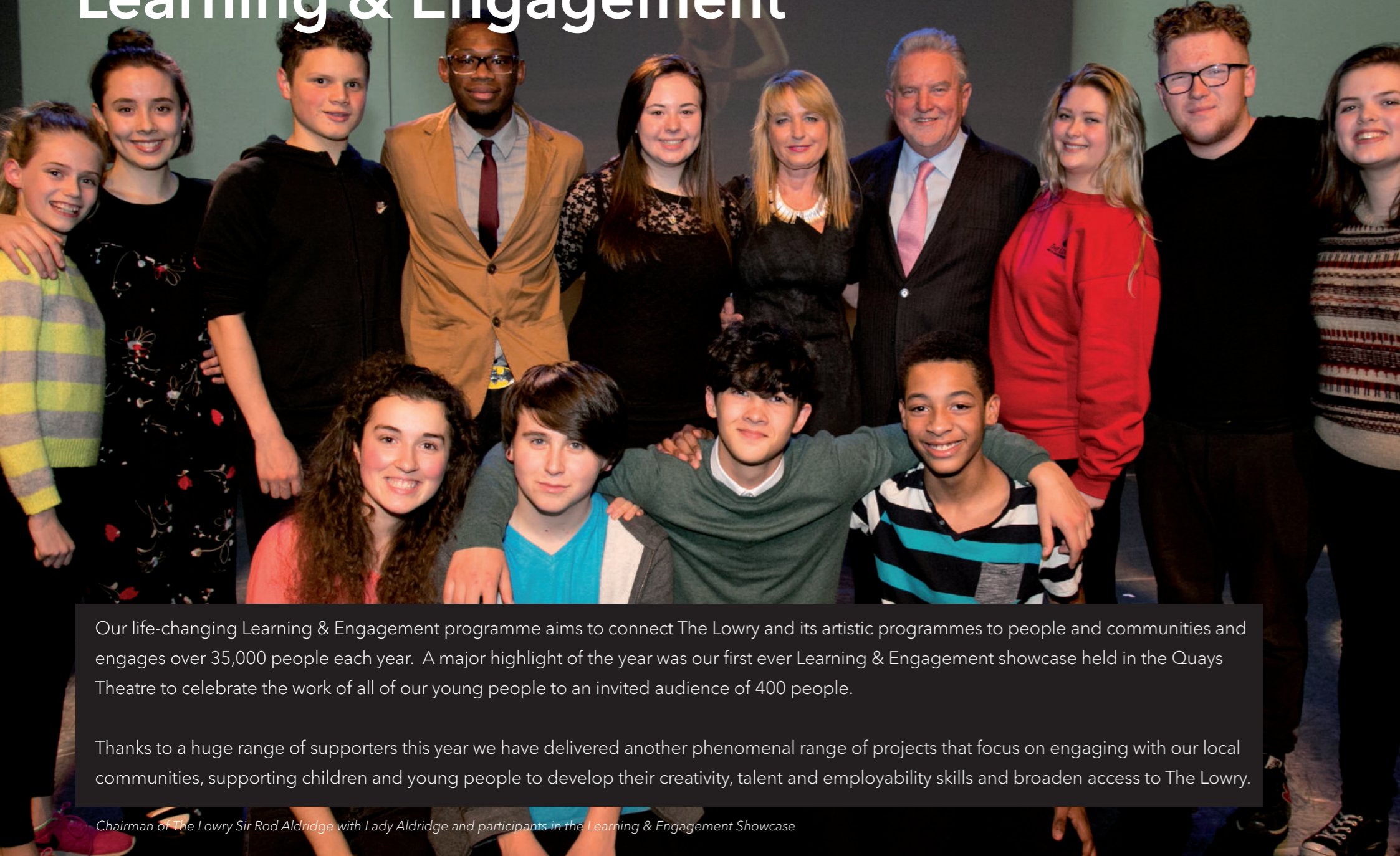
Responding to the enduring love our visitors have for LS Lowry, in June we more than doubled the size of the permanent exhibition of his work. Re-launched as *LS Lowry: The Art & The Artist*, the new exhibition afforded more room for interpretation of his work including the opportunity to compare and contrast Lowry with his contemporaries and to feed visitors' fascination with Lowry's life in Salford.

New works that joined our permanent collection as loans this year included *The Liver Building*, *Liverpool 1959* and *The Railway Platform 1953* – the latter recently acquired at auction and immediately brought to The Lowry by our long-standing loan partner, the Professional Footballers Association.

LS LOWRY
THE ART &
THE ARTIST

LS Lowry: The Art & The Artist

Learning & Engagement



Our life-changing Learning & Engagement programme aims to connect The Lowry and its artistic programmes to people and communities and engages over 35,000 people each year. A major highlight of the year was our first ever Learning & Engagement showcase held in the Quays Theatre to celebrate the work of all of our young people to an invited audience of 400 people.

Thanks to a huge range of supporters this year we have delivered another phenomenal range of projects that focus on engaging with our local communities, supporting children and young people to develop their creativity, talent and employability skills and broaden access to The Lowry.

Chairman of The Lowry Sir Rod Aldridge with Lady Aldridge and participants in the Learning & Engagement Showcase

Learning & Engagement

Young Carers

Working with Salford Young Carers Service we have worked intensively with young carers aged 8 - 16 to create a new digital educational resource that has been marketed and distributed nationwide to schools and health professionals alongside the three films that they have made about what it is like to be a young carer.



"Using creativity as a way to talk about how I feel has been a big learning curve for me- it's taught me how to focus my thoughts and articulate my emotions in a new way. My life without these projects without a shadow of a doubt would be very different. I wouldn't be alive today without the support I've had."

Paige, Young Carer, Salford

Looked After Children

#Getinvolved is our free weekly drama drop-in session, with the majority of young people attending being Looked After Children - in the care of Salford City Council. This year the group of 50 has seen a range of theatre performances and enjoyed workshops with visiting theatre companies exploring spoken word, performance poetry and beat-boxing to give them courage to share their thoughts and feelings.



"It's been 5 years since I did my first project at The Lowry and it has changed my life because I'm really different to how I used to be. If it wasn't for these people I don't know what would of happened to me. It's my home".

Luke, Care Leaver, Salford

Young People with Autism and Additional Needs

This year we worked with 60 pupils from two local schools who saw shows and met regularly with actors, theatre makers and artists to learn new skills and develop their imagination and ideas. Pupils explored what makes them who they are, using video, images and music as well as taking part in a special performance. Pupils also enjoyed a backstage tour at The Lowry, exploring sound desks and lighting rigs. The project has given these children and young people an insight into a different reality, building their confidence and allowing them to have fun through the use of creative activities.



Pupils from Springwood Primary School

Learning & Engagement

Increasing Access and Participation

We were delighted that more than 1,700 people attended our 7 relaxed performances during 2015. Highlights included relaxed performances of *The Stick Man*, *The Bounce*, *The Scarecrow's Wedding*, *Snow Child* and *The Witches* where we made changes to the production lighting and sound and offered break-out rooms with show-themed activities and a show relay so audiences could take a break whenever they needed it.

This year we also launched the Booths Charities Family Scheme - an innovative creative engagement project supported by the Booth Charities, designed to enable 20 young people in Salford with a disability and their families to access 3 live theatre performances and related activities together over the course of the year.

Developing Young Talent

We continue to deliver an annual programme of high quality training in dance for 65 students drawn from across the North West through our Centre for Advanced Training (CAT) in Dance. Each year our students receive more than 4,000 hours of the highest quality dance training in the region and alumni from our CAT have now gone on to train and study all over the world. We have a particular focus on recruiting young people through targeted outreach in areas of low engagement both for the CAT and Commotions, our in-house Youth Dance Company that offers young people both boys and girls aged 11-19 from across the region access to technique training sessions and a huge range of creative opportunities.

As well as our programmes for developing talent, we also play an important role in providing a platform for young talent from across Greater Manchester and beyond. In May we saw 26 youth drama companies perform in the Studio

and Quays theatres as part of the annual NT Connections festival, delivered in partnership with National Theatre. In March, over 20 youth dance companies from across the whole of the North West had the opportunity to perform on the Quays stage as well as to participate in professional workshops and activities throughout the weekend - this was an important trail-blazer for the National Youth Festival coming to The Lowry in July 2016.



Dancers from The Centre of Advanced Training in Dance

Learning & Engagement

Youth Employability & Skills Project

Our YES (Youth Employability & Skills) Project has worked with 474 young people aged 14-19, inspiring them back into employment or education through a series of tours, work challenges and placements at The Lowry aimed at changing perceptions of work, increasing employability skills and providing real-life training opportunities. Supported by one-to-one coaching and artist-led creative sessions this year 15 participants have received a nationally recognised qualification including Arts Award.

Access to the programme has been through referral from an agency (including social workers, Children's Services, The Looked After Children's Unit and the Teenage Pregnancy Team) and through self-referral. We are absolutely delighted that The Lowry has also formally employed two young people from the YES project during year.



Tyrone - Participant in YES Project



Company Chameleon performing along side Mads Christensen's Cathedral of Mirrors

Quays Culture

Quays Culture is the programme of large-scale art events staged throughout the year in the public spaces around Salford Quays and MediaCityUK. The Lowry leads the programme on behalf of all of the partners on the Quays and it has now become one of the key contributing factors to the area's incredible growth as a centre for the creative industries and tourism.

One of the key commissioned pieces in 2015 was *Cathedral of Mirrors*, a collection of twelve pillars of LED lights that responded to any movement of its audience, by the Danish artist Mads Christensen. It was presented on the Lowry Plaza in the run up to Christmas 2015.

Other work in 2015 included: *Mini Burble*, a ten-storey high cloud sculpture of interactive luminous balloons by Umbrellium; *Intrude*, Amanda Parer's family of five giant illuminated bunny rabbits; and *Amaze*, a towering psychedelic maze by the Spanish artist Marcos Zotes.





Lyric Theatre

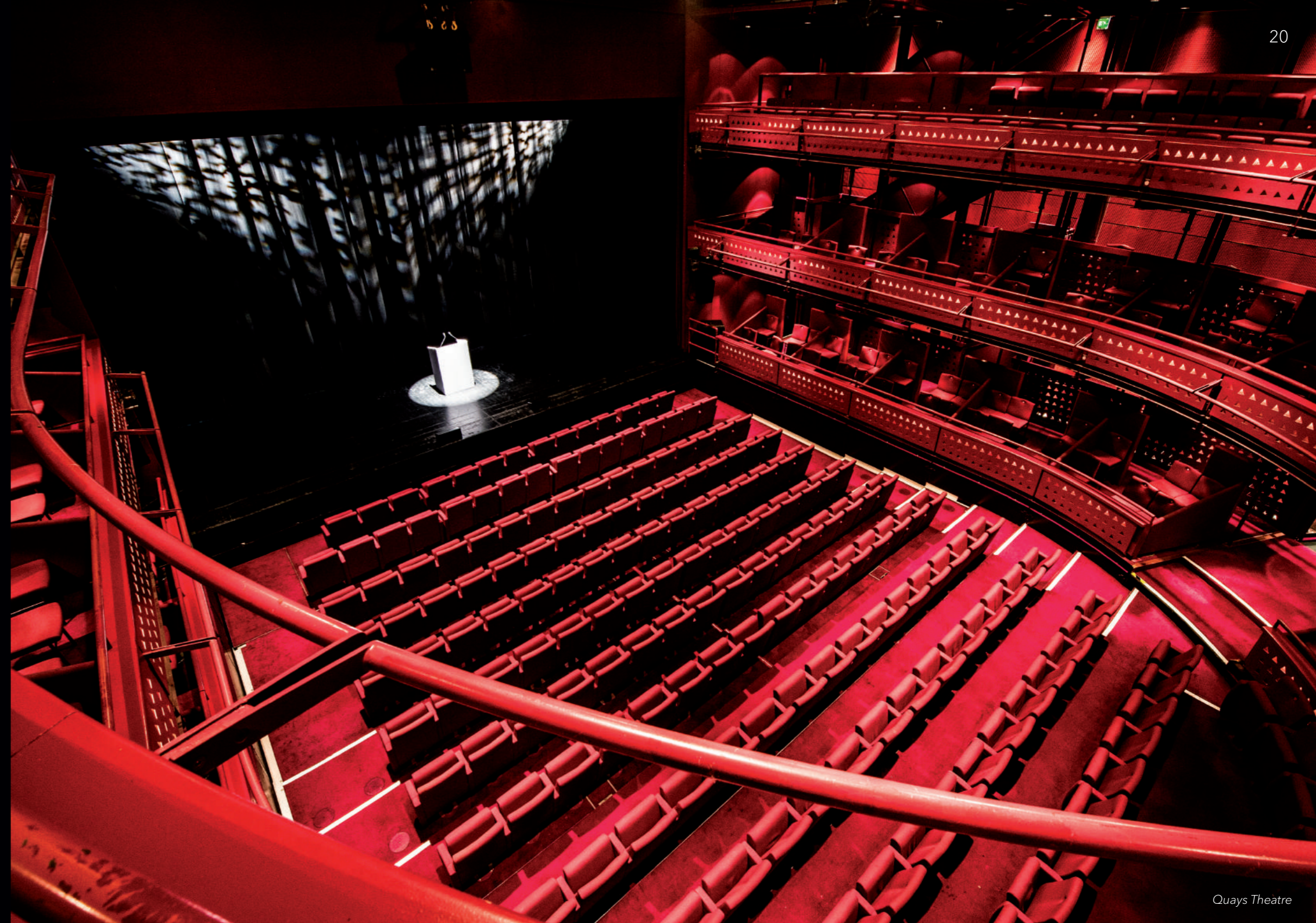
2020 Capital Project

We were delighted that Phase 1 of our 2020 Capital Project, our ambitious masterplan for the development of our iconic building and its setting at the heart of MediaCityUK, completed on time and on budget in November 2015.

The project had three works strands:

- A major technical refurbishment and upgrade of The Lyric and Quays theatres, future-proofing our ability to deliver our high quality and diverse range of performing arts work;
- A programme of energy efficiency measures across all areas of the building to reduce current energy usage and generate significant cost savings;
- The re-development of our Bar and Restaurant, providing additional and more flexible spaces and a new destination facility that connects with MediaCityUK.

This project was the result of a huge team effort and the support of a great many organisations without whose support it would not have been possible.



Quays Theatre



2020 Capital Project

Pier Eight is a beautifully-designed destination for pre-theatre diners, as well as those looking for a relaxed dining experience on MediaCityUK.

The new extension incorporates into its design two 'shipping containers', which provide views over the Manchester Ship Canal. The complete extension includes a terrace area, event space with a second private terrace, as well as the Pier Eight restaurant and bar with extended kitchen.

The development of Pier Eight at The Lowry has opened up our building to maximise the opportunities presented by our position at the centre of MediaCityUK, the UK's most exciting hub for the creative and digital industries. The space has allowed The Lowry to realise its 'destination within a destination' vision for our restaurant and bar.

Pier Eight interior



Pier Eight exterior

A Glance at Week 53

At the very end of this year we launched Week 53, a new annual cross-arts festival of innovative, provocative, national and international work commissioned for and presented in a series of spaces including areas of The Lowry normally off-limits to the public.

Week 53 brings together contemporary dance, visual arts, music and theatre in interactive installations, exhibitions and performances. Anchored around the theme Locus, exploring home and place, the festival aimed to reward the compulsively curious, challenge convention and celebrate creativity.

200 artists
11 days
63 performances

Some highlights from the inaugural festival were: **Syzygy** by Katie Paterson, one of Britain's most talented and sought-after young artists, explored our place in the Universe and the Earth's relationship with myriad other celestial bodies through a series of compelling and thought-provoking installations and art works, including new commissions for Week 53.

Century Song is a live performance hybrid created by the exquisite soprano Neema Bickersteth, and Dora-award winning collaborators Ross Manson (direction) and Kate Alton (choreography), presented in the Quays theatre as part of Week 53. This unique show featured music by some of the past 100 years' most adventurous composer, as well as projections by Germany's fettFilm.

30 Days of The Smiths, a Lowry Commission by Jackie Kay and Oberman Knocks for Week 53. The music and legacy of The Smiths are synonymous with Manchester and Salford, and Jackie Kay (Scotland's national poet and Chancellor of the University of Salford) took these lyrics as a starting point to draw extraordinary stories from ordinary local people with the surname of Smith. UK sound artist Oberman Knocks then created an immersive audio artwork *30 Days of the Smiths* that reflects a contemporary audio landscape of the lives and landscape of Salford.



The Lowry in Numbers

Percentage of total annual income from public funding **6.6%**

6.6%

203 Total full time equivalent jobs supported by The Lowry

203

Total Building Visitor Numbers **888,591**

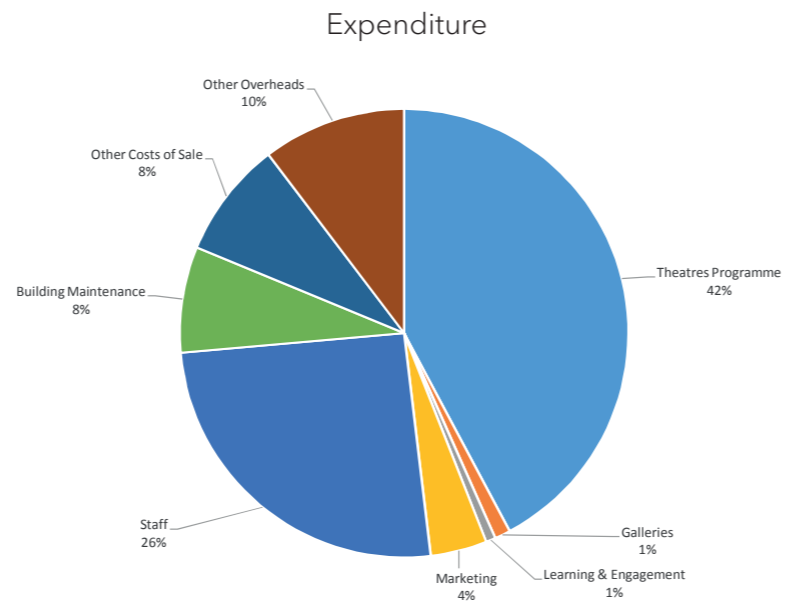
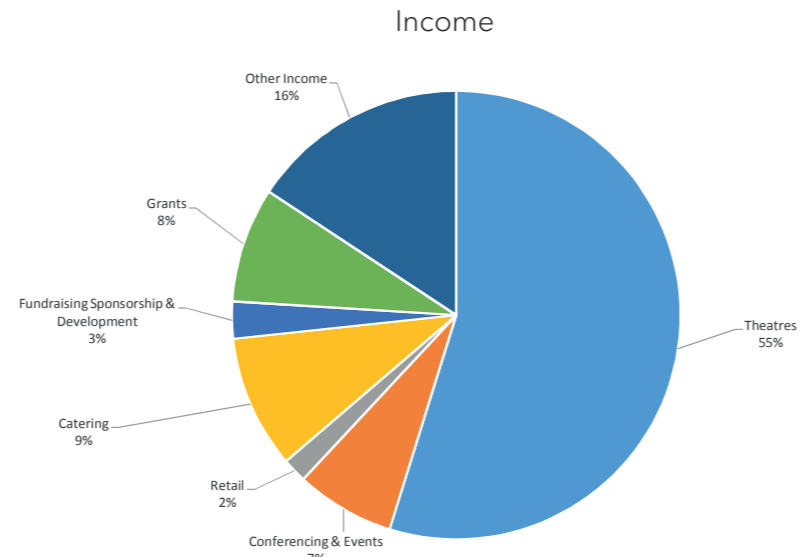
888,591

35,489 Number of Learning and Engagement participants

35,489

Number of volunteer hours **46,127**

46,127



THANK YOU to all our supporters

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THE LOWRY
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Kill The Beast, He Had Hairy Hands



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ENGLAND**

Salford City Council

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