



Supplementary Information Pack

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Introduction

Since 1962, **mac birmingham** has introduced over 14 million people to the arts and is one of the UK's most important and busiest arts centres. **mac** is part of the fabric of the community for people of all ages, abilities, and walks of life. In 2010 **mac** reopened following a £15.4m redevelopment and extension delivered in partnership with Birmingham City Council, Arts Council England and a wide range of individual, corporate and Trust supporters. The project has been a key to securing **mac** for future generations.

What does mac do?

mac is an arts centre, based in Birmingham, which offers a wide array of theatre performances, music, comedy, plays for children, literature, poetry events, creative learning and participation activities, family shows, films and free exhibitions. Well loved and well used, it's a relaxed friendly place, with a café, shop and lively bar, attracting a diverse mix of users. Off site, **mac** delivers artistic and educational activities through an extensive community outreach programme. **mac** came into being thanks to the imagination of Sir Frank Price, and the dedication of the centre's founders, John and Mollie English. In 1962, Birmingham City Council granted them 8.6 acres of land in a local park and their dream was realised - The Midlands Arts Centre for Children and Young People was born. **mac**, as it became known, was ahead of its time, with a belief in lifelong learning and the transforming power of participation in the arts for all. **mac** continues to play a vital role in the cultural, social and economic life of the region.

mac's policies and programmes emphasise opportunities and access for all; participation in arts activities; and the importance of achieving high standards. **mac** provides activities which are particularly attractive to young people and those new to the arts. We place importance on building partnerships and providing resources and support for others. Many projects are conceived and developed jointly with other arts and community organisations and a number of independent organisations are based at **mac** whilst many more groups rehearse or base their programmes there.

Our programme is extensive; it covers all art forms and reflects the diversity of cultures in the region. It covers a range from participation by local people learning new skills to the presentation of professional work from around the world. It includes structured educational courses, outreach projects and informal events. **mac** presents around 400 performances, 15 exhibitions, 1,000 film screenings and 5,500 educational sessions each year. These attract over 250,000 monitored attendances. But this excludes the many informal events, book and craft fairs, events outside the centre, conferences, events promoted by others, exhibitions in our public areas and purely social visits. Since reopening in May 2010 over 3.5m visits have been made to the centre

mac is an important and established venue for artists, shows and exhibitions on tour. Our policy puts artists at the heart of our work with a number of associate artists, companies and producers. Whenever possible "residences" are arranged for artists on tour – extending the time they can spend in the region and creating involvement with other activities and organisations.

mac places great importance on new and innovative work. A special New Work Trust, established in 1992 to assist with commission and production costs, has raised over £160,000 and supported a range of projects.

mac's Facilities

mac has several auditoria – an outdoor arena theatre (470 capacity); refitted and flexible theatre (<300 capacity); Hexagon Theatre (96 capacity); Foyle Performance Studio (126 capacity); a dedicated cinema (150 capacity); a new dedicated gallery, an exhibition space in the ground floor public space and a range of public spaces which can be used for exhibition; eighteen practical applied and performing arts studios, a digital studio, workshop and rehearsal areas; a number of informal spaces for performances; a bar, cafe, and function rooms; meeting and conference rooms. **mac** is open 14 hours a day, seven days a week, 363 days a year.

mac is operated by Midlands Arts Centre, a limited company also registered as a charity. **mac** employs over 50 permanent and over 130 sessional and contract staff. It receives regular grants from Birmingham City Council and Arts Council England and has a consolidated annual turnover in excess of £4m.

Where is mac?

mac is located a mile south of the city centre adjoining Cannon Hill Park in Edgbaston, now a busy cosmopolitan park with green flag status. Birmingham is one of the most culturally diverse regions in the country and **mac** is situated on the cusp of several districts – Moseley, Selly Oak, Edgbaston and Sparkbrook – amidst a real mix of ethnicity, affluence, and social disadvantage. Wealthy Edgbaston, with its famous Cricket ground stands in stark contrast to its neighbour Sparkbrook - the second most deprived district in Birmingham, and one of most disadvantaged in the UK, where 60% of the population come from BME communities. **mac** leads the way in engaging with and attracting diverse audiences.

Why is mac important?

mac's mission is to make participation in adventurous and creative arts activities an important part of everyone's lives. For over 50 years **mac** has been a landmark of the region's lively cultural scene, providing a unique and highly valued home for contemporary, creative and accessible arts events, courses, and activities. **mac** is not only unique to Birmingham and the West Midlands but it is also nationally important. Widely respected, **mac** is held in high regard and affection by its audiences, stakeholders and peers within the cultural world.

What has mac achieved?

mac is a very special place. It has carved out an important role for itself as a gateway to the arts - fostering talent and innovation - as well as making a significant social and economic contribution to the region. Most significantly **mac**

- provides artistic opportunities for young people - 22% of our users are aged under 16, and 43% overall are under 25. **mac** is a national leader in the development and production of high quality and energetic work for children and young people
- attracts over 900,000 visits each year
- contributes over £13m worth of local economic activity annually
- engages over 60,000 participations in learning and participation events each year
- provides a safe and friendly environment which attracts large numbers of families, young people and women
- achieves true diversity of access, with 23% of our visitors coming from BME communities

- operates an extensive concessions policy to ensure that the centre is accessible to all regardless of age, culture or economic circumstance
- sustains high levels of audience crossover – the ‘holy grail’ for arts centres - achieving 30-60% across our arts programme, and 83% between our arts and social and commercial activities
- runs specific courses and programmes for people with special needs and learning difficulties, working with partners such as the National Institute for Conductive Education and many special schools, as well as the Adult Training Centres for vulnerable adults
- engages a substantial number of artist tutors who not only undertake their own creative work, but also lead a wide range of learning activities for both closed groups and open programmes for children and adults
- manages city and regional initiatives including **mac makes music** delivering music development activities for children and young people in challenging circumstances, and networking activities for professionals using music in Early Years settings
- sustains a very strong artistic partnership with **sampad**, the dynamic Birmingham based South Asian arts development agency, which was founded at **mac** 24 years ago.

Summary

mac has the ability to attract people, particularly those from deprived, socially excluded and minority communities, who otherwise would never use or engage in art activities – providing skills, fostering a sense of belonging, and broadening horizons. Our recent re-build allows us to increase our levels of adult learning, third age and youth projects, so that we can better serve our local communities and the wider region. **mac** was conceived in 1950s Birmingham – then a mainly white, working class, industrial city - still reeling from the impact of the Second World War. Today, cosmopolitan Birmingham is set to become one of the UK’s first majority non-white cities, with all the opportunities and challenges that will bring. As the youngest city in Europe the city is perfectly placed to encourage more young people to choose Birmingham as the place to take their all-important first steps in life. The importance of culture in regeneration – attracting inward investment, fostering cultural cohesion, pride and achievement – is not in doubt. **mac** is crucial not only to the cultural life of the West Midlands, but also to its economy and the harder to quantify, but no less important, morale and general well being of its diverse population.

mac birmingham’s STRATEGIC STATEMENT

Mission

mac’s Mission is:

“To promote innovative, creative arts activities in ways which help to establish them as an important part of people’s lives”

Starting Point

It is critical to the success of **mac**’s role that its users reflect the population and character of the surrounding city and region. Research has shown that, uniquely among arts organisations nationally, the profile of **mac**’s users actually does reflect the demographic make-up of its catchment area. While this is a cause of celebration, providing equality of access is a dynamic process that can never be set in stone, but has to be continually sustained, modified and developed.

Ethos

mac's ethos is based on a set of values which inform the whole of its activities. The tensions within the values help to shape the organisation's work and add an extra, creative spark to its activities. **mac** values the following:

- artistically experimental activities – and ones striving to engage with their audiences
- celebrating diversity - and strengthening social cohesion
- offering equal opportunities to everyone – and recognising the uniqueness of artistic talent
- increasing the accessibility of the arts – and respecting their complexity
- giving users and audiences more involvement in, and control over, programming – and introducing them to new challenges and innovations
- helping artists to find their own, unique voice – and to forge productive partnerships with other artists and the general public
- making the most of the social benefits of the arts – and valuing the pleasure people gain from their own individual artistic expression

Key Objectives

mac's principal objectives are to encourage as many people as possible to:

- explore, examine and enjoy the arts activities of others
- participate in, and undertake, their own arts activities

Key Strategies

mac seeks to achieve these objectives by:

- using its ethos to promote an adventurous, expressive, and approachable programme of arts events and activities
- developing intercultural projects which increase people's enjoyment and understanding of their own and different cultures
- encouraging and facilitating the development of people's own creativity, knowledge and skill
- providing creative projects and activities for children and young people
- increasing the numbers and range of **mac**'s existing users
- deepening the impact of **mac**'s work through community outreach, and regional and national touring
- offering support, opportunities and practical help to artists to develop their work and careers
- building on established partnerships with other arts organisations, community groups and agencies, and developing new ones
- working in partnership with schools, cultural organisations, agencies, public bodies and the non-arts sector to develop programmes for particular target groups
- becoming the natural hub for artists making new and contemporary work in the city, and create opportunities for artist development
- providing access to arts projects and programmes to as many people as possible including those with fewer resources and opportunities
- ensuring the highest possible quality of work



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

(Extract)

Overview

mac birmingham is an organisation committed to embracing and exploring diversity in its mission to provide a gateway connecting people with the arts. Both in its provision of services and as an employer, **mac** will seek not only to ensure equality of opportunity, but to develop a long term strategy to develop a greater understanding of the diversity of people that we live and work with in order to strengthen our programme, enhance our visitors' experience and enable staff to maximise their potential.

Our commitment to equality and diversity

mac birmingham is open to the public 7 days a week and to maintain a environment of acceptance, accessibility and enjoyment for all and, while recognising that there are many differences within the community we serve, we strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

Diversity goes beyond the requirements of the Single Equality Act 2010. Diversity is not about them and us. It's about all of us. The range of perspectives and experience diversity brings is an asset to our organisation, and we strive to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for visitors, artists, partners and employees alike where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued. Our jobs, like our arts centre, are open to all. Diversity is reflected in our employment strategies, our engagement with the public, our programming and business planning. This then provides unlimited opportunities for everyone to tap into their full potential and to add to the richness of our creative programmes and services.

Discrimination is unacceptable and the Company has measures in place to ensure that no-one experiences discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics under the Single Equality Act 2010).

Staff Structure

