



Submission Guidelines

Submitting a proposal for performances at mac birmingham

Arts activity at **mac birmingham** is programmed by the Arts Development Team. We are currently accepting proposals for performances and projects. As a multi art-form venue, our focus is upon supporting opportunities for creating and producing, learning and participating, and presenting, as well as encouraging artistic development through and between artistic mediums. We are keen to present performances and support projects which provide potential and scope to impact across our programmes of activity.

We are proactive and ideally like to see a company's work live before we programme it. We particularly focus on supporting the creation and presentation of work of regional artists and companies, and therefore our capacity to programme touring work is limited.

mac birmingham's outline criteria for performing arts proposals provides a basis upon which we review and base a decision. Our criteria and preferred format of proposal materials is as follows:

mac birmingham actively encourages performance proposals which satisfy four key assessment criteria:

- Quality (content)
- Risk taking, playing with form and artistic development (artist)
- Diversity and appeal (audience)
- Cross disciplinary practice and dialogue (opportunities)

To propose a performance for **mac birmingham** you'll need to address the above criteria and provide the following information:

- Tour pack or full details of your show/ project
- Company background
- (If available) a weblink to film footage of your work

Please email your proposals to performingarts@macbirmingham.co.uk

Please try to avoid sending very large attachments. We are happy to receive proposals via WeTransfer or similar file sharing sites.

This inbox is checked once a week and proposals that are of initial interest are fully considered at a monthly programming meeting.

We regret that due to the volume of proposals received we are unable to give detailed feedback or respond to every enquiry.



About mac

Introduction

Since 1962, **mac** has introduced over 12 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. With current visit figures exceeding 850,000 per annum, **mac birmingham** was officially listed the 'Top Free Attraction in the West Midlands 2012' in a recent survey carried out by VisitEngland. Positioned 15th nationally in the same category, the arts centre was the sole West Midlands venue to secure a position in the top 20 attractions, along with the British Museum, Tate Modern and the V&A Museum. With 1,511 attractions completing the survey, this is a huge accolade and a fitting end to **mac's** 50th year celebrations.

What does mac do?

mac birmingham 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** and 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 200,000 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 1.7m 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

Following a major Building Project (reopening May 2010) **mac** has four auditoria – an outdoor arena theatre (470 capacity); flexible theatre (<300 capacity); Hexagon Theatre (96 capacity); a dedicated cinema (150 capacity) which can also be used for performances; a dedicated gallery, exhibition spaces in the ground

floor public space and a range of public spaces which can also be used for exhibition; fifteen practical applied and performing arts studios, 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 birmingham is operated by Midlands Arts Centre, a company 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 an 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 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 (prior to temporary closure for our Building project) **mac** was

- providing 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
- attracting half a million visits each year
- contributing over £12.5m worth of local economic activity annually
- engaging over 120,000 participations in learning and participation events each year
- providing a safe and friendly environment which attracts large numbers of families, young people and women
- achieving true diversity of access, with 23% of our visitors coming from BME communities
- operating an extensive concessions policy to ensure that the centre is accessible to all regardless of age, culture or economic circumstance
- sustaining 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
- running specific courses and programmes for people with special needs and learning difficulties, working with partners such as the National Institute for Conductive Education, many special schools, as well as the City Council's Adult Training Centres for vulnerable adults
- engaging 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

- managing 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
- sustaining a very strong artistic partnership with **sampad**, the dynamic Birmingham based South Asian arts development agency, which was founded at **mac** nineteen 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 birmingham'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