



THE ARTS OF SURVIVAL

THE BLACK-E
connecting artists and communities

education
enthusiasm
energy

A CUT TOO FAR

The Black-E was launched in 1968 as the UK's first community arts project. Since its inception the project has pioneered a youth arts programme which is recognised as a model of excellence and innovative practice.

The Arts Council England (ACE) recently announced a cut of 35% in its support for The Black-E for 2015-18 - down from \approx £170k to \approx £110k - the largest cut for any National Portfolio Organisation in Liverpool. The Black-E (Great Georges Community Cultural Project) and its many supporters are convinced that ACE has made a mistake.

Indeed, ACE has already admitted to mistakes. At the conclusion of a wholly positive Assessment Report, Arts Council officers gave The Black-E a lowly rating of 'Met' for cultural diversity. However, when reminded that in terms of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) representation some 50% or more of Black-E Trustees, staff, artists, audiences, and participants were from this category ACE admitted its mistake and upgraded the diversity rating to 'Strong', the highest possible rating. Other mistakes have also been admitted. But the one rating from ACE which was not a mistake was for the highly important rating for meeting the ACE's Goals, Great Art For Everyone. The rating here was 'Strong', the very top rating.

The Black-E has made a formal Complaint against the mistaken procedures which led to a mistaken decision. There has also been an outpouring of letters of support and protest to Sir Peter Bazalgette.

A cut of 35% will enforce some significant change in identity, purpose, and function of The Black-E. The primary sufferers will be young people and their families who will be deprived of their only access to creative and artistic activities, from cooking, fashion, and poetry to contemporary circus.

There is also a puzzling context to the proposed 35% cut. The Black-E's home and base is in a distinguished former 19th Century Church once known as 'Liverpool's Third Cathedral'. It was recently upgraded through a \sim £6m capital programme (including £1.2m from the Arts Council). The Arts Council also announced (at the same time as the announcement of the 35% cut) the approval of a Small Capital grant (£450k) for further improvements. So while adding more to the resources of the building the Arts Council are reducing support to require The Black-E to do less.

Look at the following feedback from The Black-E's 2012-14 programme. Judge for yourself. Does The Black-E deserve to be cut by 35% ?

Youth Arts, Arts Awards

'Inspiring staff and wonderful venue at the Black-E ! The passion and drive of the advisor and all staff I met was fantastic and has a huge impact on the young people who have taken part in Bronze Arts Awards. A mix of ages and portfolio formats, with half electronic (website) and half sketchbook style showed off their interest in circus skills.Well done to all involved and such a great group of young people to speak with-I am thoroughly inspired.' *Moderator*

(Note : *One submission is now being used as 'How to do it' on Arts Awards website)

Youth Arts, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Pilot Project

Hi we would really love to say a massive THANKYOU for all your hard work this week my girls have had an amazing time and thoroughly enjoyed it, naomi is never included in anything with her peers and so often chooses not to join in as a result often telling me she is used to it bless her, naomi has not once felt left out and has been included in everything she is a happy girl and is even more happy and confident in her self, we look forward to seeing you in September x
god bless tracey and pete x (Stansfield)

Kinetic Theatre Programme (Dance, Circus, Physical Theatre)

Kinetic Theatre, River Festival

'The Black-E's skylight performance and workshops provided a beautiful and inspirational element to the River Festival. The young people involved were a real credit to the city and the Black-E as their performances were fantastic. We most certainly look forward to working with the Black-E in the future.'

Liverpool City Council Commissioning Officer

Kinetic Theatre, Casus Circus

'Those lucky enough to have caught Australian contemporary circus troupe Casus for their two short but sweet Liverpool performances were in for a treat; a genuinely breathtaking spectacle that leaves the mind boggling at the wonders of the human body...' *(From <http://madeup.lv/review-casus-the-black-e/>) (AO)*

'I would, and plan to come back to the Black-E to work with the youth circus. I feel that I have found a home here and that I can give my skills as an artist, and mentor...

Emma Serjeant, Artistic Director and Founder, Casus

hi all
thanks for the ticket to such an amazing show! well done. And the kids show was lovely too, very cleverly put together and hardly a move out of place! d
ACE Relationship Manager

Kinetic Theatre, Physical Theatre

Married in Black

'The performance took me back in time and made me weep thinking of the way us women were treated. As being a white woman in a mixed relationship I could relate to the performance.' *Gillian Omar*

Kinetic Theatre, Jonzi D

'The end product was a performance by us all to the poem, it was quite intense at times, Jonzi D was always there, encouraging, fine tuning and motivating us all! The workshop was good fun and we all got a lot out of it.' *Stephen Bennett*

Archive

'...we are currently running a Foundation Degree in dance, the programme is unique as it's the only accredited qualification in Europe that has African and Caribbean dance running throughout the programme. Because of the lack of historical materials, particularly on Black dance in Britain, the Black-E's archive has been an invaluable source of evidence and information'. www.iredancetheatre.org

Publications

'Women, Art and Society: A Tribute to Virginia Woolf' by Judy Chicago

'Many thanks for the publications. At last I've had the time to read them. Judy Chicago is very moving.' *Melvyn Bragg*

Visual Arts, Tate Liverpool

Art Turning Left (Black-E work 'My Room' in exhibition)

'..it goes some way to transform the visitor experience into something more potentially creative and participatory. To show how this could happen, there's a collaborative piece [My Room] .. which confirms the fact that art can indeed, be a positive exercise.'

<http://www.liverpoolconfidential.co.uk/Culture/Arts/Review-Art-Turning-Left-Tate-Liverpool>

Visual Arts, Installation, The Black-E

Married in Black

'The Married in Black installation truly evoked feelings of joy and pain in equal measures. Through this emotive piece of art I was intellectually and emotionally transported back in time to my childhood.' *Ibrahim Mohamed*

**LETTERS OF SUPPORT MAY BE SENT TO SIR PETER BAZALGETTE, 21
BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON WC1B 3HF**

Cover : Aliya Byrne performing in The Black-E Youth Circus, photo Paul Jamieson

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