



Canal &  
River Trust

# Arts on the Waterways

Autumn 2016 Newsletter



Exbury Egg, Stephen Turner  
Image: Richard Tymon

**The Canal & River Trust's *Arts on the Waterways* programme is helping to transform places and enrich lives. It provides artists with time and space along the waterways where they can slow down, research and make ambitious new work responding to important social, environmental and heritage questions. At the same time it is allowing the Trust to transform public attitudes to its canals and rivers and engage with a wider diversity of people who live alongside them. In just four years the programme has grown from an initial pilot of six projects to more than fifty by 2016, covering everything from performance poetry to sound art, brass bands to cinema, and sculpture to digital.**

The programme continues to connect places, audiences and communities that the arts do not easily reach, and we expect to attract more than 70,000 people during 16/17. In order to develop audiences the Trust is working with other national agencies including the National Trust, Forestry Commission and Audience Agency to collectively research the impact of contemporary arts activities in heritage and outdoor settings.

The Canal & River Trust is pleased to announce a new four-year Memorandum of Understanding with Arts Council England in order to deliver more high-quality, socially engaged contemporary arts on the waterways, building new visitors to the waterways, new audiences for the arts and great opportunities for artists. We hope to renew an equivalent agreement with the Arts Council of Wales, following a successful series of artists' practice-based residencies exploring Welsh waterways that will culminate in a touring exhibition next year.



Shapes of Water, Sounds of Hope  
Image: Chris Payne

## Super Slow Way

*Super Slow Way* is a £2 million project supported by Arts Council England's Creative People & Places programme and shaped in collaboration with the people of Pennine Lancashire. Led by Artistic Director, Laurie Peake, local, national and international artists and arts organisations, working across art forms, are making new works inspired by the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, with a focus on manufacturing past and present, the natural environment and the digital world.

On the first stop in a national tour, *Exbury Egg* by Stephen Turner was installed at Finsley Gate Wharf in Burnley from April 2016. The structure is an elegant, award-winning, energy-efficient, self-sustaining workspace taking the form of an egg. Working with Burnley Wood Community Centre, Stephen spent the summer conducting personal, environmental, historical and cultural investigations into the site to create a vital resource for the local community. The public exhibition is open until 30 October.

The first Kinara Festival, a new partnership initiative between Love & Etiquette and Super Slow Way, took place in July, bringing international artists to local stages across the canal corridor of Pennine Lancashire in a vibrant exploration of Islamic South Asian art and culture.

US artist Suzanne Lacy, in collaboration with In-Situ, held a huge banquet in the former Smith & Nephews canal-side mill in Brierfield to celebrate the building's history while looking to its future. A pioneer of public art and social practice, the artist invited local people to an all-day event on 1 October that included a spirited sing-along and a Sufi chanting experience, ending with a catered banquet for all participants. Listen again to BBC Front Row's story of [Shapes of Water, Sounds of Hope](#). The acoustics of the mill sound great on the radio. A unique film about the project will be premiered in 2017.

*Super Slow Way: A Rhapsody to the Leeds & Liverpool Canal* is a new choral piece marking the canal's bicentenary in 2016. Composed by Ian Stephens, with a libretto by poet Ian McMillan, the piece was performed on 16 October at King George's Hall, Blackburn featuring choirs, bands and soloists from across the region. The performance was preceded by an afternoon of outdoor musical entertainment in the town centre.

There are many forthcoming Super Slow Way events coming up in the next few months in community spaces and canal-side locations. View the Super Slow Way [facebook page](#) or the [website](#) for updates.

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Canal Opera, Chirk Aqueduct, Nicky Coutts  
Image: Addo

## Welsh residencies international

Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust in Wales, is working in partnership with the Arts Council of Wales on a series of seven artists' residencies across waterways in Wales and Europe, curated by Addo. This autumn, the latest six-month artist residencies got underway with Cheon Pyo Lee on the Swansea Canal and Mo Abd-Ulla at Trefor Basin in North Wales. A new strand of European residencies has also commenced this autumn. Nicky Coutts is splitting her time between the historic terminus of the Montgomery Canal in Newtown and the Emscher river valley in the Ruhr area of Germany. Dan Rees is resident both at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff and Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation in Venice to explore the history of both the old inland canals of Cardiff and the less well-known waterways and international port links surrounding Venice.

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Luke Kennard  
Image: Billie Charity-Prescott

## Canal Laureate

The collaboration between the Trust and the Poetry Society continues with our second canal poet, Luke Kennard, who has been commissioned to write new poems inspired by the canal network and act as both curious pedestrian and ambassador for the Trust. He is creating a regular blog and poems based on his surreal observations while engaging with the buildings, barges, staff and boating communities along the canals. Luke recently participated in National Poetry Day Live at the Royal Festival Hall, South Bank Centre on 6 October and will be performing at various canal-side locations later this year.

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Mahtab Hussain, *The Auspicious Journey*  
Image: Ikon Gallery

## Black Country Voyages: The Auspicious Journey

Commissioned by Ikon Gallery, in collaboration with Canal & River Trust, the Black Country Voyages art programme for young people (aged 16–21), is continuing with Mahtab Hussain who was appointed as lead artist for 2016. Hussain has converted the boat into *The Auspicious Journey*, a story of mass displacement caused by the Mangla dam construction in Pakistan in the 1960s that led to the establishment of new communities around the waterways of The Black Country. Family-friendly workshops have been regularly hosted along the canal network for visitors to interact with the project. The next series will be held at Brewmaster Bridge, Brindleyplace, Birmingham during 26–29 October.

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Floating Cinema, *Another Country*  
Image: Hydar Dewachi

## Floating Cinema: Another Country

This summer the Trust supported and participated in *Another Country*, an exciting programme curated by UP Projects in collaboration with Hari Kunzru, acclaimed author of *Gods Without Men*, *My Revolutions* and *The Impressionist*. Three canal-side weekends in King's Cross, Mile End and Hackney Wick explored contemporary notions of feminism, DIY culture, rural versus urban living and the world city. The events engaged through on-board and outdoor film screenings, as well as participatory talks and skills workshops.

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Dance on Water  
Image: Danilo Moroni

## Dance on Water

The Trust led the fundraising and project management of *Dance on Water*, a new collaboration with Matthew Bourne's New Adventures company. Based on the highly successful, Shakespearean *Stratford 2 Stratford* initiative of 2015, young people (aged 16–25) from disadvantaged areas of Birmingham and Salford took part in a series of waterways-inspired dance workshops. Twenty participants were selected from these workshops for a unique canal journey with dancer-choreographers from Matthew Bourne's New Adventures. They devised a new contemporary dance work that was performed at The Lowry during U:Dance 2016 National Festival and Birmingham's Hippodrome in July.

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Michael Craig-Martin, *The Hammer* (blue), 2011  
Image: Roger Stirk Harbour + Partners

## The Line

The Trust is working with The Line on plans to add an iconic sculpture, *The Hammer*, by celebrated artist Michael Craig-Martin to the world-class sculpture walk alongside the River Lee in East London near Bow Locks. *The Line* already includes major works by Abigail Fallis, Thomas J Price and Damien Hirst sited next to this historic waterway. An engagement programme led by The House of Fairy Tales, is being planned in partnership with local schools and family audiences next year.

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Charles Danby and Rob Smith,  
*Peak/Copa, Limelight*, 2016  
Image: Charles Danby and Rob Smith

## Limelight

Arts Alive Wales and the Trust hosted artists Rob Smith and Charles Danby for a short residency to research the question 'What would happen if we reactivated an industrial lime kiln?' Rob and Charles have been exploring the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal and its working landscape of canals, quarries, tramways and kilns. NESTA and the BBC are supporting the digital streaming of a series of live illuminations of heated quicklime into the Cardiff Contemporary and the city centre. Following a live streamed event at Brickworks, Williams Court, Cardiff and online on 22 October the installation will remain open to the public until 19 November.

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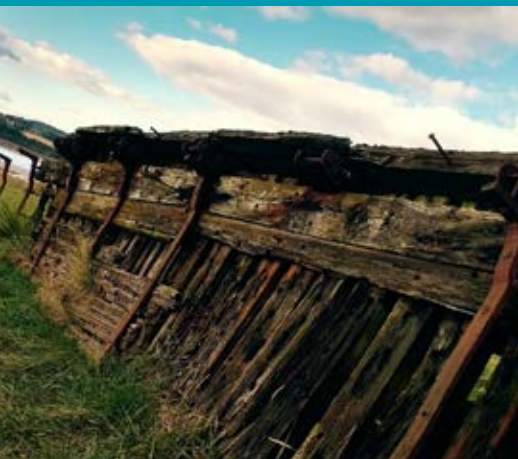


Anna Read and Shane Johnstone  
Image: Darren Andrews / Light Up Lancaster

## Light Up Lancaster

Light Up Lancaster will host a weekend festival of art and light incorporating an annual fireworks event on 4–5 November. Artists, Anna Read and Shane Johnstone, are working with Dallas Road Primary School students to present *If Boats Could Talk*, a floating sculpture and lantern display inspired by the historic Aldcliffe area of the Lancaster Canal. This community-led installation celebrates the movement of people to and from the city and Lancaster folk tales relating to the canal.

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Purton Ships Graveyard  
Image: Beth Whalley

## Research partnership with King's College, London

Canal & River Trust became a partner in a new PhD with King's College London. The Trust is delighted to welcome Bethany Whalley as the selected scholar who has been in post since September. Bethany's three-year research programme, funded by Kings' College London's Sir Richard Trainor Scholarship scheme and the Trust, will explore the cultural history, politics and uses of waste and waterways in the UK. Future newsletters and our website will provide updates on Beth's important research.

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Staffordshire and Worcester Canal  
Image: Richard Straton

## The Ring

Following a successful fundraising campaign, the Trust recently appointed Artistic Director, Cathy Mager, and Project Manager, Manda Graham, to deliver an exciting 18-month series of events and commissions celebrating the 21-mile circle of waterways made up by the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, the Droitwich canals and the River Severn. The team will be working with local partners and arts organisations to support the commissioned artists who will be drawing inspiration from both local communities and the area's cultural heritage to produce an ambitious programme that will attract audiences from both near and far. The first public events will be announced early in 2017. The initiative is funded by Arts Council England, local authorities, Bransford Trust, Elmley Foundation and Rowlands Trust.

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**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**



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[Arts on the Waterways webpage](#)

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