

# SKIMSTONE ARTS

England & Wales · Charity number 1182284

## Details

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**Other names** SKIMSTONE PERFORMANCE COMPANY LIMITED

**Status** Registered

**Legal form** Charitable company

**Company number** [06261728](#)

**Registered** 2019-03-01

**Register** [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

## Contact

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Skimstone Studios  
The Newbridge Project Arts Centre  
The Shie

**Phone** 07803670654

**Email** [claire@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:claire@skimstone.org.uk)

**Website** [www.http://skimstone.org.uk/](http://skimstone.org.uk/)

## Activities

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**Objects:** THE COMPANY IS ESTABLISHED TO ADVANCE THE ARTS, PARTICULARLY BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, THE VISUAL ARTS, DRAMA, MUSIC AND FILM, BY THE PRODUCTION OF PLAYS, EXHIBITIONS, CONCERTS, FILMS AND PERFORMANCES INVOLVING DIVERSE GROUPS OF DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC.

**Activities:** Skimstone Arts' supports diverse artists and those at risk of isolation, to create work with, for and about the world that matters to them. One of the North East's leading names in inclusive arts practice and social action with particular expertise in high-quality work led by , involving young people and vulnerable older people, collaborating with diverse artists, researchers and communities.

## Classification

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- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** Arts/culture/heritage/science
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, The General Public/mankind

## Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£155,354	£176,938	-	-
2024-03-31	£127,444	£107,932	-	-
2023-03-31	£180,610	£185,655	-	-
2022-03-31	£225,352	£206,524	-	-
2021-03-31	£152,000	£167,684	-	-

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Alida Cornelia Maria Vollering		2023-04-03
Angela Mortimer		2023-05-25
Carol Candler		2024-09-04
Jessica Sarah Johnson		2023-04-03
Simon Michael James		2023-04-03
Talha Ozleblebici		2023-07-20

**SKIMSTONE ARTS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1182284

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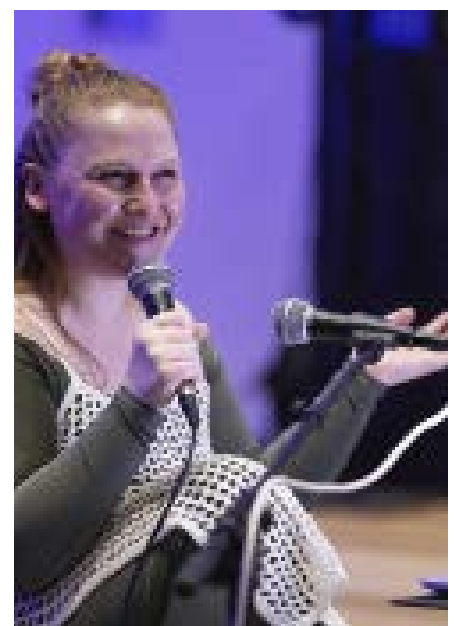
# Accounts

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# Skimstone Arts

Skimstone Arts  
Annual Report and  
Accounts  
2024 - 2025



Photos: Mark Savage, Top Image: Claire Webster Saaremets

**Our Mission: To support diverse artists, people and communities at risk of social isolation to create work with, for and about the world that matters to them.**

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# 01

## About Skimstone Arts

**“I believe this organisation continues to make a genuine difference to the people they work alongside, rather than simply alleviating the symptoms or current problems, they successfully do this by: continuing to champion the arts as a way of giving positive recognition, active voices, opportunities to those who have been forgotten, neglected, unpopular, addressing social injustice and isolation ... enabling groups to visit their accessible Studio space in the city ... and beyond.”**

**- Arts Development Officer,  
Newcastle City Council**

Skimstone Arts is a welcoming, safe yet risk taking charity, passionate about promoting equality and visibility in the arts and society. Established in 2007 by Claire Webster Saaremets and lead musician Peter Saaremets.

***Our mission is to support diverse artists and communities and those at risk of social isolation to create work with, for, and about the world that matters to them.***

We produce and embed social action, equality and visibility in our

### **PROGRAMME**

We produce an annual programme of accessible live, radio and online events, with local, national and international communities for: regional UNITY Festival exploring the (themes of humanity and our environment), National Holocaust Memorial Day, and national Refugee Week.

### **COMMUNITIES**

We collaborate with local, national and international artists, co-creators and audiences with skills, talents, ideas and potential and are living with life challenges, needs and societal isolation, to work with us and create authentic artworks for our annual programme.



Image: Mark Savage

We support our Young Artists Collective and their band Reality Boots run by our young people's Leadership Team. The Lead Musician supporting our young people is Peter Saaremets, funded by Youth Music.

Our bands create and record original work about what they want to say about the world for our programmed events.

### **PARTNERSHIPS**

We work with regional universities, cultural venues and a range of partners regionally, nationally and internationally to create work that contributes to important research, festival events and invites audiences to think about and respond to arts and social action.

The process of hearing stories, exploring themes, and working together with such a rich diversity of voices to create this work has been a very powerful journey. We hope that audiences are moved by our songs, performances, images, films, poetry and events, which respond to lived experiences.

We invite people who have a right to be visible to join us in being positive activists, nurturing and recognising humanity and our living world... to bring peace, respect and open hearts.

# 02

## Our Activities and Aims

### Our general aims include:

- Creating a voice for our diverse artists, communities and all those we work with to promote inclusion, collaboration, ownership and respect, for anyone who has a social and political right to make artwork but may face barriers to do so.
- Making accessible artistic work including performances, exhibitions, radio broadcasts and gigs, that reflect current stories and themes that engage diverse audiences.
- Being actively inclusive and supporting and nurturing opportunities for all those made isolated by society; recognising and celebrating skills and talents, despite the multiple life challenges they may be experiencing.
- Presenting free events throughout the year, giving audiences the chance to enjoy: live music, performance, arts, exhibitions, stories and workshops, that celebrate humanity, the environment and positive social action.

### How we do this

We bring the artworks created by the different artists and co creator communities into the same public platform e.g. our young people's band Reality Boots, commissioned artists, photographers, musicians etc and community members perform original songs, poetry, exhibit work from creative sessions for our UNITY Festival/Holocaust Memorial Day Events and Refugee Week. This creates equal visibility and invites audiences to be inspired and engage with a broader spectrum of experiences, stories and social action.

### Why do we do this

We believe in equality of opportunity, of being curious and playful about the world, and expressing ideas and thoughts in different art forms that help us to think more deeply about humanity and the environment. We are passionate about travelling together, listening, responding and learning about the diversity of voices, ideas and artworks. Then we can begin to change individual, community and world perceptions, and recognise how artistic processes and artworks can reinforce equal worth, visibility, and appreciation of a new lens on the world, and positive relationships that make us feel good TOGETHER.



# 03

## Report From Our Chair of Trustees

When I think about this past year at Skimstone Arts, the first thing that comes to mind isn't a single event or performance – it's the shared atmosphere we've helped to create. Whether that's the buzz of a festival stage, the quiet focus of a creative workshop, or the spark of ideas flying in rehearsal, there's been a sense of something alive and deeply connected. That's what we're here for. We've had a year full of those moments. UNITY Festival brought people together to celebrate humanity and the natural world. Holocaust Memorial Day asked us to pause, listen, and reflect on how we can help create a better future. Refugee Week reminded us that community really can be a superpower. And through it all, our Young Artist Collective and Reality Boots kept making bold, original work – saying what they want to say about the world in their own voices. What I love about Skimstone is that it's never just about putting on an event. It's about relationships – listening, collaborating, making sure people who are often unheard get to shape the conversation. It's about saying, "Your story matters, and we want to share it."

None of this would happen without the amazing people who make up our team – Claire and Peter, our staff, trustees, associate artists, volunteers – and of course, the audiences, partners and funders who keep the

wheels turning. A huge thank you to all of you. You're part of this story too. It's not always easy out there for the arts – or for the communities we work with – but the creativity, resilience, and hope I see here every day tell me we've always been on the right track. As the time comes when we move on from this chapter, I know these moments will remain – in the art, in the friendships, and in the changes we've helped make together. Here's to the unexpected magic that happens when people come together.

**Simon James**  
Chair of Trustees



**Simon James**  
Chair



**Jess Johnson**  
Secretary



**Angela Mortimer**  
Trustee



**Talha Ozleblebici**  
Trustee



**Lya Vollering**  
Trustee



**Carol Candler**  
Trustee

# 04

## Artistic Director's Report

**“Some years just stand out. They stand out because an experience, a happening, an exchange has meant something, something deep and long lasting, that I will remember, long after it’s time. This has been a year full of those experiences.”**

**Claire Webster Saaremets**

Perhaps one of the biggest highlights of my 18 year Skimstone Arts journey was our UNITY Festival 2024. We were supported by all our funders (see our special Thank You to them later in this report) and this helped myself and the staff and community members to commission and produce such a varied diverse programme of performances, talks and workshops. There we all were, 3,500 audience members from so many different backgrounds and experiences in one place, delighting in the artists and speakers and workshop leaders provocations and offers. Watching new audience visitors listen to Harkling’s extensive vocalisations and samples about trees’ mycelium, printing slogans together to create

and wave proudly our unity banners, seeing Bilai reveal ways of magically portraying sand stories, all to explore themes of the world that matters to us. I loved the whole programme! We felt so supported by our venues – Great North Museum: Hancock and Kirkleatham Museum, Redcar I found myself just smiling almost incredulously at how all these people - artists and communities, audiences of all ages, many of who were performing or coming to those venues for the first time. It was so full of joy, and hope, and connection.

Our world continues to feel very precarious and trying to reinforce division, so continuing to be committed to Refugee Week and national Holocaust Memorial Day 2025 gave an opportunity for our bands Shirley And The Gang and Reality Boots, to share their original songs with such intensity, alongside our poets and story sharers, after recording their work in the ever supportive Blank Studios professional recording venue. We can always gauge how audiences have been inspired from the conversations that happened afterwards. We often hear how they had felt really deeply connected with the lyrics of a song or elements of a performance such as UNITY Tree’s Turning to Face the Sun.

So it is timely then that this year, being such a positive year should bring with it the news that



Image: Mark Savage

we have decided to celebrate the 18 years of Skimstone Arts with a final journey. This means that Skimstone Arts will close in December 2025.

I have to acknowledge that post my brain surgery and other tumour removals from years ago, have brought risks and I think it’s only fair that the art charity should always be at its best.

It was a very hard decision, but it’s the right one. I want to acknowledge the amazing support of our Chair and current Trustees who have helped us to make this careful decision. Peter and I have been able to feel their diligence, care, commitment and understanding has meant so much to us.

Although we are closing Skimstone Arts, to alleviate some of the demands and challenges of continual fund raising and the exhaustion

after major events, Peter and I will continue to have a studio at NewBridge and consider and develop our practice as artists and collaborators. We will also host monthly gatherings to listen to how people from the Skimstone community are doing. We want to see people fly and flourish in new ways.

During this celebratory and final year we are thrilled to be making a special zine of the stories of impact. And of course, in true Skimstone Arts style ... we’re having a party! and it will be free as all our events have been, and it will celebrate everyone and our many many projects with all the diversity of people that we’ve been honoured enough to work with.... so watch this space !

**Claire Webster Saaremets**  
Artistic Director/CEO

# 05

## Leadership Team Report

**“A significant milestone for me was making my film Ordinary Oppression. There was a time constraint to get it finished but I got to make a film I was very proud of and had total creative control over. It was also great to collaborate with all the other YAC members”**

– Phillip

This year was a year of even more extensive collaboration with other bands and groups of young people, alongside the artistic development of Reality Boots. We saw this in the way the bands worked together to write songs, for example one of the songs spoke deeply about the frustration of the way the world is moving to less tolerance and those marginalised groups. These were performed to new audiences especially for our UNITY Festival. Some bands members were challenged in their musical abilities and expand their musical skills. Preparing to record at Blank Studios meant that band members were then well prepared for live performances.

Having the opportunity to explore print making with Northern Print really helped to develop the identity of the band and we were all very proud of the finished design.. which made it to the T-shirts. It's being further developed for the forth coming album cover.

We'd also like to mention our new band song Eye to Eye. This was a great example of how much the band work so competently together, and respond in a short timescale, to the national Holocaust Memorial Day theme – A Better Future. Audience feedback showed how much this song moved them.



**“We are looking forward to recording our final album with partners at Blank Studios in the coming year.”**

- Reality Boots

A big journey of recognition this year was earned by Phillip as he rose to meet the demands, opportunities and challenges of completing his Gold Arts Award.

Claire and I really respected the tenacity and self development of leadership skills that Phillip showed during the process.

**Peter Saaremets**

Lead Musician with Reality Boots and Young Artist Collective (YAC)

**“A highlight for me was seeing the song “Innocence” come together as it had the most complex arrangement we’ve had for a song so far. The challenge of the involved wind section parts and the satisfaction of seeing the songs performed.”**

- Keith (Music Leader)

# 06

## UNITY Festival 2024

**“I was overcome with deep emotion... I felt grief and I felt hope and a deep space for how we feel about the earth.”**

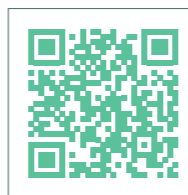
**Audience Member**

A FREE music and arts festival celebrating humanity, nature and social action.

UNITY Festival took place at Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle Upon Tyne 18, 19 and 20 October and Kirkleatham Museum in Redcar 26 and 27 October.

Audiences joined us for a free festival of music and arts celebrating community, nature and social action. UNITY Festival proudly premiered newly commissioned performances celebrating a range of diverse regional and international musicians and performers. Skimstone Arts' free UNITY Festival 2024, was made in partnership with Great North Museum: Hancock and Kirkleatham Museum Redcar, and presented two weekends of free live music, performance, arts, exhibitions, creative workshops and exciting talks, something for everyone.

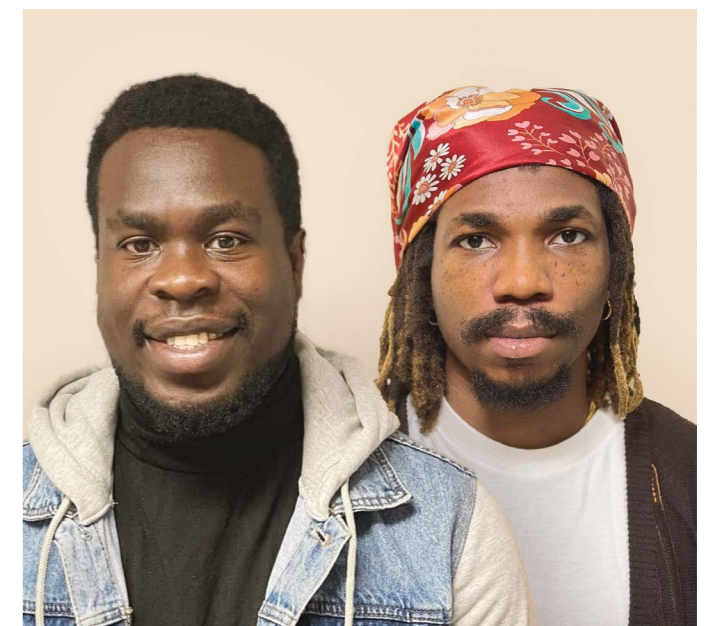
The festival, co-created with diverse community groups across the North East, offered a platform for artists and audiences to uncover the often-overlooked aspects of humanity and nature. From hidden voices within our communities to the unseen wonders of the natural world, festivalgoers will embark on a journey of discovery, connection, and hope.



Watch the UNITY Festival '24 Magic Moments Impact Film, filmed and produced by Chad







# 08

## Holocaust Memorial Day

**“So many stories to ground us in the human impact of what blasts out at us from the news everyday making us compassionate again.”**

### Audience Feedback

Skimstone Arts presents Turning to Face The Sun as part of the National Holocaust Memorial Day Programme and Newcastle City Council’s Holocaust Memorial Day Events.

Turning to Face The Sun was a live story sharing and performance event. Audiences witnessed audio and film recordings of songs and poetry and live performances, inspired by Ukrainian, Syrian, Bosnian, Palestinian, Kurdistan Iraq and other war testimonies. Audiences were invited to help us explore what it means to look for hope, resolution, and dream of a better future. What part can we play individually and collectively to make a difference?

Skimstone Arts is committed to national Holocaust Memorial Day Events programme, supported by Newcastle City Council and Newcastle City Library, to support artists and contributors who have been affected by oppression. All members of the public were welcome to come and experience this event together in peace, solidarity and positive social action.

***“Being part of HMD 2025 with this year’s theme of ‘For a Better Future’ could not be even more timely. With the rise of disturbing far right presence in Europe and globally, ongoing crisis’ including Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Iran, we need to remember, respect and acknowledge the importance of diversity and seeing each of us... equally... as a human being. Our performance, song, poetry, film and recorded voice event Turning to Face the Sun, brings together***



Image: Mark Savage

***performers, poets, musicians who seek to create a space for us all to listen, reflect and act for a better world, one we all dream to be part of.”***

Claire Webster Saaremets -  
Artistic Director of Skimstone Arts.

### Contributors included;

- Manifestation2 by UNITY Tree -Ukrainian performance group (Live performance)
- Canvas of Freedom - Lanre Sonde (poet)
- Dream for Syria (Film testimony) by Balsam Ahmed
- Hope by Omed (Film testimony) by Ako Ismail and Shaho Omar
- Future Gaza? (Film testimony) by Dr Rima Hussein
- I am Hopeful, What is life? by Shirley & the Gang (Original songs)
- Eye to Eye (Original song) by Reality Boots
- Small things (True story audio) by Olha
- A Better Future (Audio Testimony) by Smajo Beso OBE

Hosted by Claire Webster Saaremets.



# 09

## Reality Boots

**“I enjoyed the process of learning to play drums and sing at the same time. It was a challenge but has inspired me in my musical journey outside of Skimstone Arts in another band.”**

**Raf**

Another busy year for Reality Boots with both musical and visual art collaborations. April and May saw the band head over to Northern Print for print making workshops and work on various print making processes. Working through designs lead to one of the prints becoming the design for the new Reality Boots T-shirt. During this time the band also worked on and performed a song dedicated to Claire for her birthday celebration. Nicole mentioned how difficult it was to keep this a secret! (Claire was thrilled with her surprise song)

During the summer months we visited Jack Drum Arts to work on a new song “Blood Boiler”, a song about the representation of minorities in the media. During this period, band members also visited the Great North Hancock museum as a stimulus for another new song “Hidden Worlds”.

During autumn the band recorded 2 new songs at Blank Studios both of which had been started earlier but put on the back burner - “Innocence” and “Landslide” a commentary on the inaccuracy of media reporting and the potential consequences of a skewed public opinion.

Reality Boots biggest event of the year was UNITY Festival with 2 live performances debuting 4 new songs and a practice sharing workshop on “the Journey of the song” detailing the song writing process from members points of view.

The winter of 2025 brought another new song and a recording session at Blank Studios. “Eye to Eye” was played for an audience at Newcastle City Library for Skimstone Arts Holocaust Memorial day event in January 2025.

Finally March saw all the band members support and take part in Phillip’s film Ordinary Oppression which was posted to YouTube as part of his Gold Arts award.

All in all a busy and vibrantly creative year for the band who are now looking forward to recording their final album with partners at Blank Studios later this year.



**“The highlight for me was seeing the song “Innocence” come together as it had the most complex arrangement we’ve had for a song so far. The challenge of the involved wind section parts and the satisfaction of seeing them performed.”**  
- Keith

**“For me collaborating to write 3 different songs over a short period of time in June and July was both interesting and challenging in a good way as the songs were stylistically different. Nice to see the creative processes such as the feel Verity brought to a particular song and the wind arrangement for another.”**  
- Nicole

**“I enjoyed the opportunity to bring the Saxophone into the band and the how it has motivated me to practice. Teaching Clarinet and playing sax has helped me develop my use of music theory by having to think in different keys.”**  
- Verity

We are looking forward to recording our final album with partners at Blank Studios in the coming year.



# 10

## The Upstartz

**“It was the way you coordinated and helped them to produce what they did. To achieve that level of performance you held them together but you didn’t take away from what they did, that it was their production.”**

### Audience Feedback

From our weekly vocal warm up and song writing sessions at St Anthony’s, we now have a band called The Upstartz. Friday mornings have now become band practice sessions and from these The Upstartz recorded their original songs at Blank Studios in May 2024, and then

launched their EP at UNITY Festival ‘24 Great North Museum: Hancock.

The EP launch included an amazing performance from the band where they had their audience up and dancing and even got an encore!

They are now working on their second album exploring myths, legends and fairy tales that inspire social action today.

Helen Woods Waters, CEO of St Anthony of Padua Community Association says

*“Over the last few years as we have been embedding new ways of working, it has been inspiring to watch how people we support grow and flourish as part of the journey with Claire and Peter.*

*Being part of the band, being involved in writing and composing and performing has had a significant impact on their lives, which they can tell you themselves. It reaches far beyond the rehearsal studio into other aspects of people’s lives which has brought about positive change. For many this is the first time they have had the opportunity to create.”*

*The Upstartz performed at the UNITY Festival in October 2024, the first time performing away from St Anthony’s. We shared with Claire and Peter at the time that it had been the best Upstartz performance we had seen to date, all members of the band really rose to the occasion and yes, the turnout was fabulous. What Claire and Peter have created is amazing, for all those that had perhaps doubted the power of musical engagement and performance are now converts!! At the time we were worried that the band hadn’t rehearsed for a week, but we had nothing to worry about. The question at the time for the band was, when is our next gig!!! This is why the journey with Skimstone Arts is and continues to be important to us all at St Anthony’s. Thank you, Claire, and thank you Peter.”*

For Peter and I and also Rafael and Verity who lead and facilitate band practice, this partnership is very special to us for a number



of reasons. ALL staff are supportive, helpful, engaging and motivating with us and The Upstartz band members. Dedicated time and space is valued for band practice each week. Helen and her team work with all of us to have and make happen a joint vision of creativity and visibility to ensure that ensure older people are recognised for their skills, knowledge and ability to write and perform great songs!

Quotes from The Upstartz band members:

*“It’s about coming together and contributing, and we’ve all contributed to the songs.”*

*“We work together as a band, this creates inclusivity and it doesn’t matter about your age, ability or background, we’re all members of the one band. Even if it’s just one word we contribute.”*

*“I’ve enjoyed every minute of it.”*

*“I live on my own and feel lonely so it helps to be part of something. In this band I don’t feel so lonely.”*

*“I liked it when we performed in front of people, I was glad. I was proud of myself.”*



Image: Mark Savage

# 11

## Refugee Week 2025

**“I really liked it as I am Ukrainian so I felt everything that they were showing us, I felt all the emotions... It made such a big impact on different people who are not from Ukraine, because not everyone truly understands what’s happening right now, it was a nice way to show how it actually feels.”**

**Audience Member**

**“...It was really important for me as I can say, professionally I was part of a performance and spiritually... helped me to recharge myself.”**

**Rini, member of UNITY Tree**

For Refugee Week 2025 Skimstone Arts worked in partnership with the Fine Art Department of Newcastle University. We explored the theme Community as a Superpower through live performance and a mixed media exhibition from Ukrainian artists including their newly printed book, alongside diverse artists from around the world.

Community is the incredible everyday. Ordinary and extraordinary. Simple acts of shared generosity. Kindness multiplied to become an unstoppable force!

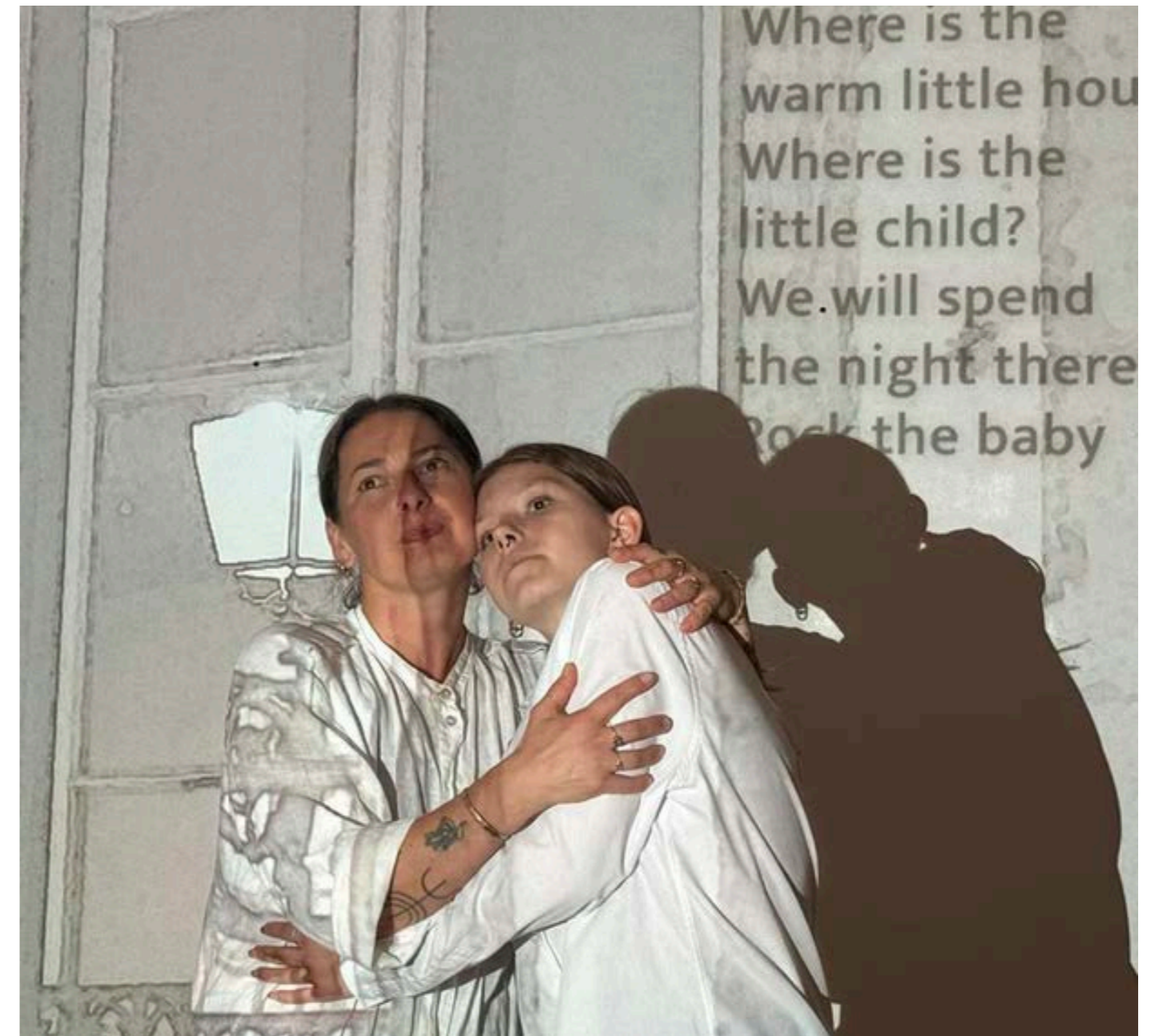
**“We can begin the process of making community wherever we are. We can begin by sharing a smile, a warm greeting, a bit of conversation; by doing a kind deed or by acknowledging kindness offered to us.”**

- bell hooks, American Author.

Communities can bring people together. Bridging divides and offering support. Spaces of resilience and places for healing. This Refugee Week everyone was invited to spend time with friends and build new connections in and beyond our neighbourhoods. From communal meals and open air film screenings, to football matches and music making, we’ve shared the feelings of welcome and belonging. Listening, learning, laughing together.



Take a look at our Associate Artist Ako Ismail’s video where he has beautifully captured our event.



# 14

## Legal and Administrative

“ The venue is an amazing choice; it brings both the worlds together. Great North Museum, the public and artist. Also easy to access.”

Rapasa

### Registered office address

Skimstone Arts, The Newbridge Project,  
Clarence Walk, Shieldfield Centre,  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1AL

### Directors

Simon James - Chair  
Jessica Johnson - Secretary  
Angela Mortimer  
Alida Vollering  
Talha Ozleblebici  
Carol Candler (Appointed 4th Sept 2024)

### Bankers

Co-operative Bank



# 15

## Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Skimstone Arts – Company No. 6261728 Charity No. 1182284 - Year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

The directors for the purposes of company law have pleasure in presenting their report and the unaudited financial statements of Skimstone Arts (The Company) for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

### Objects

Skimstone Arts is established to advance the arts, particularly but not exclusively, the visual arts, drama, music and film, by the production of plays, exhibitions, concerts, films and performances involving diverse groups of disadvantaged people for the benefit of the public.

### Statement of trustee's responsibilities

The directors for the purposes of company law are responsible for preparing the Directors Annual Report and Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and UK Accounting standards.

Company Law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the company for that year preparing the financial statements the directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in operation

The Directors are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within part 15 of the companies Act 2006.

On behalf of the board

Director Signature Simon James Name SIMON JAMES  
Date 25.7.25

# 16

## Independent Examiner's Report

### Independent Examiners Report

I report on the financial statements of The Company for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

### Independent Examiners Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
  - i. To keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
  - ii. To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (the FRSSE) (effective January 2015);
- (2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable to proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Date 11 July 2025

Mark Thompson MAAT

42 Lesbury Road

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE6 5LB

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

# 17

## Statement of Financial Activities

### Statement of Financial Activities – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 2025 Total £	2023 2024 Total £
<b>Income</b>				
Donations and Legacies	817	0	817	340
Charitable activities	0	139,827	139,827	113,154
Other Trading Activity	14,710	0	14,710	13,950
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,527</b>	<b>139,827</b>	<b>155,354</b>	<b>127,444</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Raising funds		0	0	0
Charitable activities	38,384	138,554	176,938	107,932
Donated services			0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,384</b>	<b>138,554</b>	<b>176,938</b>	<b>107,932</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period</b>	<b>-22,857</b>	<b>1,273</b>	<b>-21,584</b>	<b>19,512</b>
<b>Transfers between funds</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>-22,857</b>	<b>1,273</b>	<b>-21,584</b>	<b>19,512</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>				
Adjustment to Opening Reserves			0	259
Total funds brought forward	39,776	36,852	76,629	56,858
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>16,920</b>	<b>38,125</b>	<b>55,045</b>	<b>76,629</b>

# 18

## Statement of Financial Position

### Statement of Financial Position – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Note	At 31 March 2025 £	At 31 March 2024 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	-	-
<b>Total fixed assets</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	2,760	960
Cash at bank and in hand	58,605	85,577
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>61,365</b>	<b>86,537</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	-	-
	6,320	9,907
<b>Net current assets/(liabilities)</b>	<b>55,045</b>	<b>76,630</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>55,045</b>	<b>76,630</b>
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>		
Restricted income funds	38,125	36,853
Unrestricted funds	16,921	39,777
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>55,045</b>	<b>76,630</b>

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/03/2025 THE COMPANY WAS ENTITLED TO EXEMPTION FROM AUDIT UNDER SECTION 477 OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006 RELATING TO SMALL COMPANIES

THE MEMBERS HAVE NOT REQUIRED THE COMPANY TO OBTAIN AN AUDIT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 476 OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

THE DIRECTORS ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLYING WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACT WITH RESPECT TO ACCOUNTING RECORDS AND FOR THE PREPARATION OF ACCOUNTS

THESE ACCOUNTS HAVE BEEN PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO COMPANIES SUBJECT TO THE SMALL COMPANIES REGIME

Approved by the Board for issue on 25.7.25

Director Name S. JAMES Director Signature S. M. Jones

Company No. 06261728

# Statement of Financial Position

Skimstone Arts – Company No. 06221728 Charity No. 1182284 - Year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

## 1. Accounting Policies

### 1.1 Accounting Convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008)

### 1.2 Income

Income from fees is recognised in the accounts when invoiced unless it relates to future accounting periods, in which case it is deferred and included in creditors

Grants / Income receivable are credited to incoming resources on the earlier date of when they are received or when they are receivable, unless they relate specifically to a future accounting period, in which case, they are deferred.

Where a grant is received relating to a future accounting period, the profit and loss account shows the gross amount together with the changes in the amount deferred to future accounting periods. Deferred grant income at the year-end is included in creditors.

### 1.3 Expenditure

Expenditure is brought in to the financial statements on the accruals basis

### 1.4 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Fixed Assets are initially recorded at cost

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of the assets, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

20% straight line

## 2. Donations and Legacies

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2024 2025 Total	2023 2024 Total
	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	817		817	340
			0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>340</b>

## 3. Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2024 2025 Total	2023 2024 Total
	£	£	£	£
NCIF		25,000	25,000	25,000
Youth Music		42,327	42,327	42,327
Arts Council England		65,000	65,000	4,327
The Newcastle Fund				6,000
Newcastle City Council HMD Fund		1,500	1,500	
Garfield Weston	0		0	20,000
High Sheriff	0		0	1,000
Ringtons		0	0	5,000
Passionist Fund		6,000	6,000	0
Ouseburn Trust	0		0	9,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>139,827</b>	<b>139,827</b>	<b>113,154</b>

## 4. Other Trading Activities

	15,527	0	15,527	13,950
<b>Total income</b>	<b>15,527</b>	<b>139,827</b>	<b>155,354</b>	<b>127,444</b>

# 19

## Thank You Funders & Partners

### My Voice Found A Home

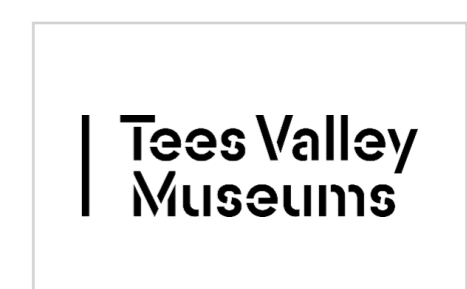
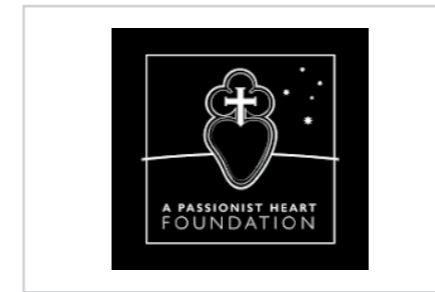
At first,  
It was about playing a part  
In a community of creatives.  
But then,  
I found the perfect medley—  
Voices soft as a lily.  
Here, art is a tool,  
A channel, a call to action.  
Skimstone Arts gave me a platform,  
A rare privilege to collaborate.  
My journey became clearer, like a blue lake.  
From workshops to grand stages—  
The Great North Museum—my words  
Found a place with historical memories.  
To Kirkleatham Museum—oh, please take me  
back  
To this surreal experience.  
Honouring and advocating for a better  
tomorrow  
At the Holocaust Memorial—my heart was  
overwhelmed.  
A stranger from across the ocean, now more  
than acquainted.  
My work mattered.  
I was heard. I felt the freedom to express.  
For once in my life, saying thank you didn't feel  
enough.  
Skimstone Arts is home.  
I was embraced with tenderness and kindness.

**Lanre Sonde**

We wish to acknowledge the tremendous support from funders for the period covered by this Annual Report. In this ever challenging landscape of growing demand for diminishing funds, we were thrilled and grateful to have been supported for core funding from Garfield Weston and both core and project funding from our long-term funders Youth Music and Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund, managed by Community Foundation. Our significant Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grant alongside smaller grants from Ringtons, once again enabled us to commission artists and community involvement on a bigger scale.

We must also thank our venue partners such as Newcastle City Library (and especially Andrew Scrogam), Great North Museum: Hancock and Kirkleatham Museum, Redcar and Newcastle University (especially Theresa Easton) for their enormous amount of dedicated in kind support.

All the above is much appreciated.





### **Skimstone Arts**

The NewBridge Project  
Art Centre  
Clarence Walk  
Shieldfield Centre  
4-8 off Stoddart Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE2 1AL

### **Online**

[www.skimstone.org.uk](http://www.skimstone.org.uk)



@SkimstoneArtsEnsemble



@Skimstone\_Arts



@skimstonearts

### **Contact**

#### **Artistic Director/CEO**

Claire Webster Saaremets  
[claire@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:claire@skimstone.org.uk)  
07803670654

#### **Lead Musician/Operations**

(Re: Reality Boots band, Young  
Artist Collective, young people)  
Peter Saaremets  
[peter@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:peter@skimstone.org.uk)  
07855674012

### **Freelance Staff**

#### **Finance Administrator**

Julie Maxwell  
[julie@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:julie@skimstone.org.uk)

#### **Assistant Project Managers**

Verity Alderman  
[verity@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:verity@skimstone.org.uk)

Rafael Bagott

[rafael@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:rafael@skimstone.org.uk)

#### **Design**

Andrew Hardie

**Registered Charity: 1182284**

All photo credits Skimstone Arts  
unless otherwise specified.

**SKIMSTONE ARTS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1182284

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# Accounts

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# Skimstone Arts

## Skimstone Arts Annual Report and Accounts 2023 - 2024



**Our Mission: To support diverse artists, people and communities at risk of social isolation to create work with, for and about the world that matters to them.**

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# 01

## About Skimstone Arts

**“Such a powerful performance that evoked so much emotion. The work exploring the heart and the burdens we share, a powerful reminder to the need of community.”**

### Audience Feedback

Skimstone Arts is a welcoming, safe yet risk taking charity, passionate about promoting equality and visibility in the arts and society. Established in 2007 by Artistic Director/artist Claire Webster Saaremets

***Our mission is to support diverse artists and communities and those at risk of social isolation to create work with, for, and about the world that matters to them.***

We produce and embed social action, equality and visibility in our:

### PROGRAMME

We produce an annual programme of accessible live, radio and online events, with local, national and international communities for: regional UNITY Festival exploring the (themes of humanity and our environment), National Holocaust Memorial Day, and national Refugee Week.

### COMMUNITIES

We collaborate with local, national and international artists, co-creators and audiences with skills, talents, ideas and potential and are living with life challenges, needs and societal isolation, to work with us and create authentic artworks for our annual programme.



Image: Colin Davison

We support our Young Artists Collective and their band Reality Boots run by our young people's Leadership Team. The Lead Musician supporting our young people is Peter Saaremets, funded by Youth Music.

Our bands create and record original work about what they want to say about the world for our programmed events.

### PARTNERSHIPS

We work with regional universities, cultural venues and a range of partners regionally, nationally and internationally to create work that contributes to important research, festival events and invites audiences to think about and respond to arts and social action.

The process of hearing stories, exploring themes, and working together with such a rich diversity of voices to create this work has been a very powerful journey. We hope that audiences are moved by our songs, performances, images, films, poetry and events, which respond to lived experiences.

We invite people who have a right to be visible to join us in being positive activists, nurturing and recognising humanity and our living world... to bring peace, respect and open hearts.

# 02

## Our Activities and Aims

### Our general aims include:

- Creating a voice for our diverse artists, communities and all those we work with to promote inclusion, collaboration, ownership and respect, for anyone who has a social and political right to make artwork but may face barriers to do so.
- Making accessible artistic work including performances, exhibitions, radio broadcasts and gigs, that reflect current stories and themes that engage diverse audiences.
- Being actively inclusive and supporting and nurturing opportunities for all those made isolated by society; recognising and celebrating skills and talents, despite the multiple life challenges they may be experiencing.
- Presenting free events throughout the year, giving audiences the chance to enjoy: live music, performance, arts, exhibitions, stories and workshops, that celebrate humanity, the environment and positive social action.

### How we do this

We bring the artworks created by the different artists and co creator communities into the same public platform e.g. our young people's band Reality Boots, commissioned artists, photographers, musicians etc and community members perform original songs, poetry, exhibit work from creative sessions for our UNITY Festival/Holocaust Memorial Day Events and Refugee Week. This creates equal visibility and invites audiences to be inspired and engage with a broader spectrum of experiences, stories and social action.

### Why do we do this

We believe in equality of opportunity, of being curious and playful about the world, and expressing ideas and thoughts in different art forms that help us to think more deeply about humanity and the environment. We are passionate about travelling together, listening, responding and learning about the diversity of voices, ideas and artworks. Then we can begin to change individual, community and world perceptions, and recognise how artistic processes and artworks can reinforce equal worth, visibility, and appreciation of a new lens on the world, and positive relationships that make us feel good TOGETHER.



Image: Colin Davison

# 03

## Report From Our Chair of Trustees

Welcome to the Skimstone Arts Annual Report for 2023/4!

Enjoy our report and linger over the joyous images. As you will see, it's been another hugely successful year, artistically and culturally for Skimstone, working alongside an ever-widening range of different communities across our region in the face of huge social and environmental challenges nationally and internationally.

However, the year has also had challenges for Skimstone itself. The amazing work that Claire and Peter and the team have yet again produced this year, is all the more striking when you remember (and who could forget?!) how much else was going on under the surface.

Claire's health issues not only impacted on her and Peter and their wider circle of family and friends but meant that many of the wider team had to step up to new roles and responsibilities – something they did with dedication and no small success.

Similarly, from the beginning of the year, the new board had to get to know each other, get to grips with our role and maintain strategic continuity – as well as supporting Claire and Peter. I'd like to take this

opportunity to thank all my board colleagues for their unstinting commitment and dedication to the work throughout the year.

The Board has also taken the opportunity to review our Theory of Change – the core document that helps the whole team focus on what we're doing, why we're doing it and how we're doing it. In the year ahead we expect to refine and focus that thinking further.

We can't wait for you to join us on the next stage of our journey.

**Simon James**  
Chair



**Simon James**  
Chair



**Jess Johnson**  
Secretary



**Angela Mortimer**  
Trustee



**Talha Ozleblebici**  
Trustee



**Lya Vollerling**  
Trustee

# 04

## Artistic Director's Report

**“An uplifting year, despite great personal challenge.”**

**Claire Webster Saaremets**

Our Annual programme continued to create significant opportunities to create artistic work with such a wide diversity of people. Highlights include: having positive coverage from ITV for our audio and poetry work with creative members of West End Refugee Service, in partnership with Newcastle University; listening to quiet thoughtful audience responses at our Fear or Freedom Holocaust Memorial Day Events in January 2024; the creation of our new band The Upstartz at St Anthony's Day Centre, Walker; devising and directing a new performance group from the Ukrainian community; being asked to speak at the Human Rights Activism Panel and Networking Event the joyful commissioning by Ouseburn Trust to programme their woodland area, giving us a great platform for our diverse artists, and our own band Reality Boots to perform... despite the torrential rain on the first day!!

2023 to 2024 was a significant year of personal challenge for me. Having been diagnosed with a brain tumour in November 2022, but being able to still work until two weeks before my brain tumour removal operation in August 2023, resulted in a three-month recovery period. I'm so grateful for the kindness, care and support from Chair Simon James, Board of Trustees, Skimstone staff, artists, partners



such as St Anthony's Day Care and our young people to Peter Saaremets (Lead Musician/ my husband) and myself. I remain indebted to the skills of our NHS. I was able to return to work at Skimstone Arts on 1st November.

We made a strategic change to put our UNITY Festival into October 2024 allowing us to fund raise and have a longer lead in time and we were thrilled to match our existing funds and secure £65,000 from Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grants and further core funding from Garfield Weston alongside existing multi year funding from Youth Music and Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund. This alongside developing new partnerships with Great North Museum: Hancock, Newcastle upon Tyne and Kirkleatham Museum, Redcar who will be hosting our UNITY Festival '24.

We're so excited that UNITY Festival '24 will be our biggest and most ambitious yet!

**Claire Webster Saaremets**  
Artistic Director/CEO

# 05

## Leadership Team Report

**“I enjoyed seeing some of our young people debut at their first gig at BOP Fest with our partners from Jack Drum Arts. It was great to take part in something you believe – an ecological awareness raising event.”**

**Young Artist Collective Leadership Team**

This year has been another packed year with recording in a studio, print workshops at Northern Print and creating new songs around the themes of Holocaust Memorial Day and the local environment.

A lot of achievements within a variety of artforms – music, film and print and very productive despite Claire’s absence.

Ouseburn Festival was a new venture for us and a lot to organise, especially putting up tents in the pouring rain.

Here are some personal reflections from the Young Artist Collective and members of the Leadership Team:

*“Ouseburn Festival was a particular highlight for me and I put the most into and got the most out of. Major reason – was an event from the ground up, using a space that is land left to the side and not thought about all that much. We created almost a type of village in that space with constant programme of music from bands and individual buskers, art, dance, stuff that people could take away. I really enjoyed the process of organising, being part of the festival staff itself and coordinating the volunteers. Arranging a tent that was vital for the festival to run in the pouring rain, was important for me.”*

*“For me the Ouseburn Festival was a milestone – doing the evaluation and organising a project for another company, the Ouseburn Trust,*



*was a first. It was a new challenge for me – helping to set things up and taking on a new role... Interacting with the public and asking questions face to face for feedback then editing it to a deadline as it had to be delivered to the Ouseburn Trust. It was a lot of work but worth it, a highlight of Skimstone Arts 2023.”*

*“Being in the recording studio was a great chance to be together and have all the different elements come together in Blank Studio. It had a welcoming atmosphere. We started with the theme of Fragility of Freedom and we used everyone’s input into the song. We had to make sure that we were well practiced. We tested it out at a Dwellbeing event at Christmas and it was well received by the audience. They were dancing!”*

*“I was wearing quite a lot of hats for HMD as I did the marketing, performed my own song and spoke on behalf of Reality Boots, to present the song Human Will that we had worked on.*

*I think HMD was quite a challenging event as it’s difficult subject matter but that’s why it was important. At each performance audiences were very engaged and you could see this in the audience discussions afterwards. It was nice for me to write up that feedback and see the impact it had had.”*

We’re looking forward to writing new material, welcoming some new members, being part of the programme for UNITY Festival 24 and hopefully recording and collaborating with more young people across the region.

# 06

## Young Artist Collective & Reality Boots

**“It’s a chance to express a lot of things I wouldn’t be able to express in daily life. It can be a calm place. I can be social and interact with other people who aren’t my children. It gives opportunities to do events that I wouldn’t be able to do otherwise.”**

**Young Artist Collective member**

Our Young Artists Collective (YAC) and their band Reality Boots is made up of a diverse group of young people who work in and beyond the studio to create an individual and collaborative arts practice.

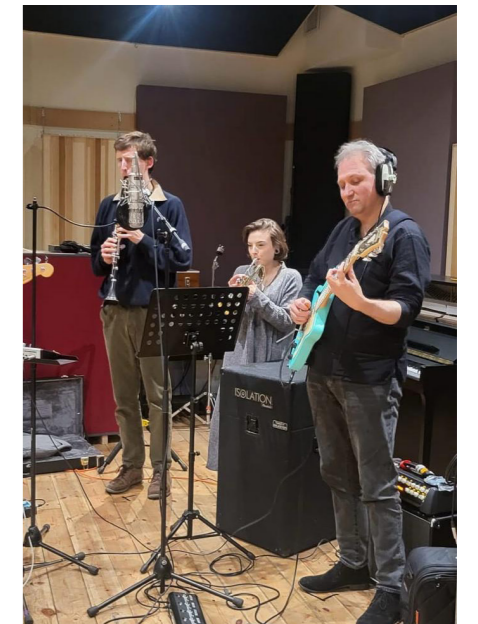
***“It helps people come out of their shells, and express our feelings through art and music.”***  
- Young Artist Collective member

In 2023 – 24 Our Young Artists Collective continued their journey with weekly sessions that provided opportunities for anyone 16 to 25 years of age with an interest mainly in music, sound and other art forms to create work with a diverse group of people in a supportive, nurturing environment. Our young artists create work responding to national themes such as national Holocaust Memorial Day and Refugee Week events and our own UNITY Festival.

Reality Boots performed at Ouseburn Festival with their original songs as a band and members also had the opportunity to be part of the busking programme, performing some of their solo material.

***“The Young Artists Collective expands peoples’ social and artistic circles.”*** - Young Artist Collective member

Reality Boots took part in Skimstone Arts’ Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 events A Night of Fear and Freedom, at Newcastle City Library and NewBridge project. They wrote a song



called Human Will that they then recorded at Blank Studios. The recording was also played on Skimstone Radio broadcast A Night of Fear and Freedom.

The Young Artist Collective then worked with Northern Print based in the Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle to use the lyrics of their song to create different compositions with a variety of printing techniques.

Young people are given the opportunities to apply for specific roles and join the staff team e.g. marketing, recruitment and evaluation.

### **Opportunities for young people have included:**

- Paid artistic and leadership skills development.
- Gaining experience in understanding professional recording studio experience.
- Paid marketing and website management, evaluation and event management, and volunteer coordination.
- Key leadership within the band and providing 1:1 support for members with additional needs.



# 07

## Freeflow Creativity Café

**“The Freeflow Creativity Café was a delightful experience. Working with other creatives and people from different backgrounds, we shared our experiences and stories. As a collective, we collaborated and deliberated on ideas to bring forth something that has become a testament to the power of creative diversity. As a poet, I was able to view other perspectives and feel like I was part of a community.”**

**- Lanre Sonde, Project Member**

Freeflow Creativity Café explored the theme of ‘Our Home’ over 6 x free sessions, writing lyrics, poetry and monologues, inspired by real stories and our own ideas, with Skimstone Arts’ Claire Webster Saaremets (Artistic Director) and poet/performer Clare Matthews (Associate artist).

Skimstone Arts’ Freeflow Creativity Cafés brought together a wonderful diversity of people, including residents in Newcastle and those with lived refugee experience. Together we collaborated and co created a range of poetry about the theme of HOME, which will be recorded at Blank Studios, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Audio and printed poems will be featured in the XL Gallery at Newcastle University as part of Skimstone Arts’ Refugee Week events 2024.

One collective poem from Freeflow was made into a stand alone artwork using Letterpress with Northern Print based in the Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle upon Tyne.



# 08

## West End Refugee Service and St Peter's Stockton-on-Tees

**“Thank you ...support you have given to such a good cause...helping us make such a difference.” - Peter Noble Chief Executive West End Refugee Service**

**West End Refugee Service**

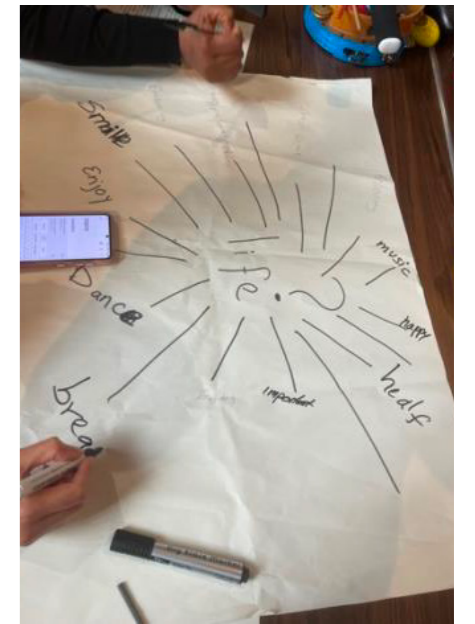
At Skimstone Arts we actively support members of the refugee communities to co-create and experience:

- artistic opportunities to perform and exhibit work of a high standard that expresses hope, integration, cultural value and moving stories we can all learn from.
- ways of engaging positively with new audiences through talks and discussions about their work and lives, skills and talents that helps understand importance of integration and social cohesion.
- event management opportunities that platform the skills and talents of refugee communities ie being part of Skimstone Arts' administrative, production, stewarding team.

All our experiences have been so positive in learning how communities commit to being involved and helping to co design our projects with us.

WERS

***“We’ve made music together, from all these different places in the world. Today I felt togetherness.” - WERS member, St Peter's Church – Newcastle upon Tyne***



We have formed a very new band called Shirley & the gang inspired by the lead singer – Shirley – and her amazing voice. The band will work together to make songs to perform at Refugee Week 2024.

***“Today we made a song about Hope. It gave me hope.” - from Shirley & The Gang, St Peter's Church, Stockton-on-Tees***



# 09

## Refugee Week 2023

**“My grandparents were holocaust survivors. As I came into the room with this identity I was unsure what to expect. I have been blown away by how beautifully “Where Do You Sit” links Holocaust Memorial Day to our current world and highlights its relevance for people who are marginalised in so many ways. It does an excellent job of showing how we are all connected wherever/whoever we are. Thank you.”**

**Audience Member**

2023 marked the 25th anniversary of Refugee Week. Taking place from 19 to 25 June, the theme for this year is **what compassion looks like in action**. It aimed to encourage people to explore what we can do together to create a shared understanding of compassion which is extended widely to all. This year, we were delighted to return to Newcastle University to share two exhibitions, Where Do You Sit? and Underneath, Within, Beyond, along with a new sound installation, Sanctuary of Sound, created by refugee and asylum seekers we're working with who live in Newcastle, Sunderland and Stockton.

**Sanctuary of Sound** took place in the atmospheric Arches at Newcastle University, where audiences could experience the collaborative sound installation created by The Resonators - a collective of people with lived refugee experience. The sound piece, which explored urban and natural soundscapes of Newcastle, was created with the West End Refugee Service, artist Martin Heslop and our Artistic Director Claire Webster Saaremets. Participants explored areas of Newcastle to listen, capture field recordings and write collective poetic compositions which were woven together in this immersive piece.

**“I am proud of my voice. I sounded like a journalist. Maybe I could do something like this in the futures. That day I believed in myself.”**  
- Member of The Resonators



ITV recorded and broadcast the experiences and impact of taking part from The Resonators and Claire Webster Saaremets.

**“Here in the park, beside the ducks and geese, we began to make our poetry. I would like to go again.”** - Member of The Resonators

You can watch The Resonators on ITV as they listen to their sound piece:



**“We all sat under the fallen tree. There was a difference in recording sound, what we were listening to, and making our own sound.”**  
- Member of The Resonators



# 10

## Ouseburn Festival 2023

**“Following the success of UNITY Festival 2023, we were thrilled to be commissioned by Ouseburn Trust to programme the Woodland spaces and this year’s Ouseburn Festival. We aimed to create a programme that reflected diversity of artists and all that lives in the woodland, from original songs and sounds to dance and observing mushrooms in a microscope. We celebrated all that Ouseburn Valley had to offer as a home for humans and wildlife.”**

**Claire Webster Saaremets,  
Artistic Director at  
Skimstone Arts**

Ouseburn Festival was a free, community-led family-friendly festival that celebrated the Ouseburn Valley, its people and its businesses.

This year visitors to the Festival enjoyed over 50 different activities and events. This included live music and performances, craft and food markets, boat trips on the river and much more.

Skimstone Arts was commissioned by Ouseburn Trust to programme the Ouseburn Woodland and present a diverse line-up of performers and creative workshops in beautiful spaces across the Ouseburn, including:

- **The Bandstand** - in the heart of the woodland under the railway viaduct
- **The Orchard** - behind the gate by Crawford’s Bridget, the cobbled bridge heading into the woodland
- **The Stone Circle** - by the Cumberland Arms

### Ouseburn Festival - Woodland Takeover

Audiences were invited to build beautiful bird feeders with artist Anne Curtis, discover the hidden beauty of mushrooms with illustrator Fran Thomas, and experience a Kenyan musical journey with Rapasa Nyatrapasa Otieno, join a joyful exploration into African dance with Nii Kwartey Owoo and the electrifying Afrocentric sounds of Asasaa, make a clay pot with Will



Benson and listen to live music from buskers. Skimstone Arts also presented songs co written by St Anthony’s Day Centre members The Upstartz with the Orchard Song Book Band, original songs by our young people’s band Reality Boots.

**“I think it’s really good and multicultural, I think it’s good for my daughter to see people from different cultures... and it’s just happy isn’t it?”**  
- Audience Feedback

At the stone circle festival-goers created beautiful water marbling pictures with artists Tuguy and Melike Yalcin. There was something for everyone.

**“Fantastic live music, great lyrics, real energy, really enjoyed it, well done.”**  
- Audience Feedback

Hear what festival-goers thought of our Woodland Takeover by watching one of Skimstone Arts young artists Phillip Melody’s evaluation video:



# 11

## Impact Case Study: Peace Night Hexham

**“Claire Webster Saaremets... You directed and created a wonderful composed event, which followed the peace journey perfectly and that the audience understood the message of the evening. Well done and thank you. Well done and thank you, to you Peter and all your team and for introducing us to wonderful poets as in Clare, Verity for her gorgeous voice and song and Rapasa too for his words and music too. Fabulous.”**

**Member of Hexham Together  
Feedback**

### **Peace Night Hexham Together for Ukraine in collaboration with Skimstone Arts**

Performances and stories from our Holocaust Memorial Day event A Night of Fear and Freedom were invited to be part of Peace Night, an event made in collaboration with Hexham Together for Ukraine.

Together at Hexham Abbey, we hosted a two-part Peace Journey, inviting the local community to reflect on the devastating impact of war, urging us all to join our voices for the cause of peace, as we marked the second anniversary of the beginning of the war in Ukraine on 24 February. Powerful music, movement, and performances from Ukrainian community with our diverse artists/musicians. We also exhibited Fear or Freedom Exhibition again alongside Ukrainian Tapestry entitled Trees of Manifestation.

Peace Night Hexham video on Facebook:



# 12

## Impact Case Study: Holocaust Memorial Day

**“Hearing real stories from people was a very impactful experience... experiencing the emotional power of music and the thoughts it provoked when discussing important sensitive topics. It felt a very friendly accessible event.”**

### Audience Feedback

Skimstone Arts presented A Night of Fear & Freedom 18 to 24 January 2024 as part of the National Holocaust Memorial Day Programme and Newcastle City Council’s Holocaust Memorial Day Events 2024.

In January 2024, communities across the North East were invited to join our A Night of Fear & Freedom - a series of free events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, part of Newcastle City Council’s programme. The national theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 is Fragility of Freedom.

A Night of Fear & Freedom included a powerful new photographic and text exhibition, the chance to hear live and recorded performances of true stories, original songs, music, spoken word and poetry in a compelling, thoughtful and uplifting event, and the opportunity to listen to highlights from the project during a special broadcast on Skimstone Radio.

As Skimstone Arts’ Artistic Director, Claire Webster Saaremets, explains:

*“When we look at what is happening across the world with war and conflict and how it is irrevocably affecting the lives of those caught up in the onslaught, we need to, as artists and activists, create work together with diverse artists and communities that explore how freedom is an intrinsic part of all our lives, and how we can consider ways to contribute to the strengthening freedoms of those we live alongside and those much further away.”*



Image: Colin Davison

***"A Night of Fear & Freedom is a chance for people to come together to pledge not to take our freedoms for granted and consider what we can do to strengthen freedoms around the world."***

### Live events

On Wednesday 24 January, at Newcastle City Library's Bewick Hall and on Thursday 25 January at The NewBridge Street Project's Cinema Space, visitors were invited to join Skimstone Arts' Artistic Director Claire Webster Saaremets, Associate Artist Ako Ismail, musicians and story sharers to sit around a 'gathering light' and listen to live and recorded performances of true stories, new and original songs, music, spoken word and poetry.

This powerful, thoughtful and uplifting experience highlights stories from diverse contributors about how freedoms have been stolen, lost and found.

***"The variety of voices and stories shared. It's great to hear the work from such a diverse range of artists and individuals. The volunteers and staff members were also very welcoming and warm." - Audience Feedback***

### Fear or Freedom? Exhibition

Thursday 18 to Wednesday 24 January 2024, 10am to 4pm

Exhibition space outside Bewick Hall, Level 2, Newcastle City Library

Skimstone Arts presented this powerful exhibition consisting of fragments of real stories, poems, songs, photographs, drawings and lyrics that have been contributed by artists, photographers, musicians and young people in the North East of England. Contributors and collaborators included those with lived experience of war and oppression, from Bosnia, Ukraine, Kurdistan Iraq, Guatemala, Poland, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Iran, with additional research from Holocaust survivors.

Skimstone Arts worked with the above diversity of people in a series of story sharing, song writing, recording, creative and reflective sessions, including our regular Freeflow Creativity Cafe and Youth Music project alongside individual interviews and recorded conversations. They explore the national Holocaust Memorial Day Events 2024 theme - Fragility of Freedom.

***"Thank you for bringing individual voices and our shared humanness and hope amongst people's trauma and pain." - Audience Feedback***

Supported by Fine Art Department at Newcastle University, Fear or Freedom? exhibition was collaboratively created by connecting together how war, oppression,



genocide and conflict erodes our freedoms, and how humanity is forever affected, whatever country or era of time. Torn fragments represent how our identities, loved ones, being human, respect and closure for those who have died and we have lost, and our natural world can all be taken away. How do we find forgiveness and new freedoms ?

Fear or Freedom? considers our own fragility of freedom and asks us to consider: How does 'what's happening over there' in war torn parts of our planet affect how we treat each other and our world? How can we support others to find a new freedom of hope, healing and peace?

***"Very moving exhibition. Words can't express how sad this is. What is wrong with this world we live in." - Audience Feedback***



Bottom Image: Colin Davison

# 13

## Impact Case Study: The Upstartz

**“I think it went well. After last week (public performance) I just felt, go for it, you can do it! That dragon on my shoulder’s gone now.”**

**Upstartz Member**

Skimstone Arts have been commissioned by St Anthony’s Day Services on a three-year project.

Inspired by the garden project at St Anthony’s, sessions initially focused on creating songs about the importance of our living planet and how we need to care for our trees, flowers and the natural world. This sense of social activism helped to create a series of songs, with original lyrics, that we were all proud of. We crafted lyrics that: expressed what we wanted to say about the world; promoted individual and collective voices within the group; provided a focus for each session; introduced skills in vocal training, lyric writing, percussion, song structure and production, performance.

A public performance of this collective of 5 x songs was performed at Conaty Awards to an audience of 120 people in December 2023.

We now have a band called The Upstartz that recorded their songs at Blank Studios in May 2024.

Together with the support of all the staff we’ve observed:

- Regular attendance at every session - from 14 - 18 people every week with new people attending and being welcomed into the band.
- Willingness to actively participate e.g. in the physical and vocal warm ups at the start of each session, lyric writing, percussion and



singing elements and the end of session feedback and the public performance.

- Warm ups – physical and vocal e.g. being familiar with a routine that keeps us fit and enables us to care for our bodies, brain and voice.

- Increase in self confidence, self esteem and resilience e.g. L used to sit at the back but now sits at the front and is a lead singer. J attends even when feeling down or depressed.

***“I am me!” Catherine. “Beforehand, I wouldn’t have done anything like this.”***

- Working together as a whole band. This identity means that there is a collective ownership of the songs created and where people feel we can craft, edit, change and adapt the songs to make them ‘the very best’.

***“I think it’s original.”***

***“I think they’ve got incredible team work.”***  
- Staff Comment

***“I was quite impressed with the way we were improving.”***

- Extending musical abilities e.g. recognising Tango, Ska, Reggae as musical forms and singing in two part harmony.

***“I like the idea of bringing in different styles of music.”***

***“It’s just a proper mixture, different things each week. Each weeks different and not the same as the week before. It makes it more enjoyable.”***

***“I like the rock and roll and the waltz!”***

- Lyric writing e.g. exploring language to convey ideas, form, rhythm etc.

***“It’s really good to see how it (songwriting) all comes together.” - Jan***

- Staff support – band feel at one with the room, working to a practice schedule for the public performance and the recording at Blank Studios.

- Events – Conaty Awards – visibility and collective pride. This event was a very strong platform for the group to show their work to the community and for their skills, creativity and talents to be recognised. Linda introduced each song when performing at the Conaty Awards.

***“Everyone was fantastic because they all joined in!”***

***“People thought our songs were very good.”***

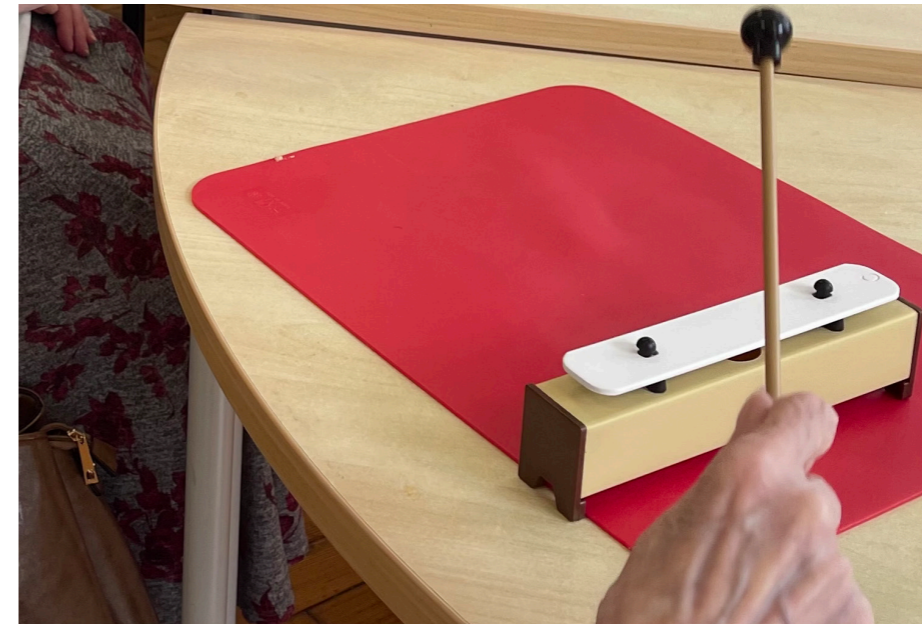
***“Great... exciting.” (to perform our songs tonight)***

Their songs were also presented by Skimstone musicians at Ouseburn Festival and Memory Studies Conference.

- Community and Shared Humour – people often comment on everyone being together. Shared humour demonstrates friendships and how we are all a social group with new connections and networks e.g. Sean wanting to have the royalties for the songs and our performances!!

***“When you’re singing with quite a lot of others and you’re guitar playing, your voice can get in amongst them and hide.”***

***“Everyone’s been brought together.”***



***“Friendship and companionship.”***

***“Everybody has been lovely.”***

***“Great....It’s always great – every day.”***

***“It was the way you coordinated and helped them to produce what they did. To achieve that level of performance you held them together but you didn’t take away from what they did, that it was their production.”***

- Audience Feedback



# 14

## Structure, Governance and Management

### Legal and Administrative

Registered office address:  
Skimstone Arts, The Newbridge Project,  
Clarence Walk, Shieldfield Centre,  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1AL

### Directors

Simon James (Chair)  
Jessica Johnson  
Angela Mortimer  
Alida Vollerling  
Tahla Ozleblebici

### Bankers

Co-operative Bank

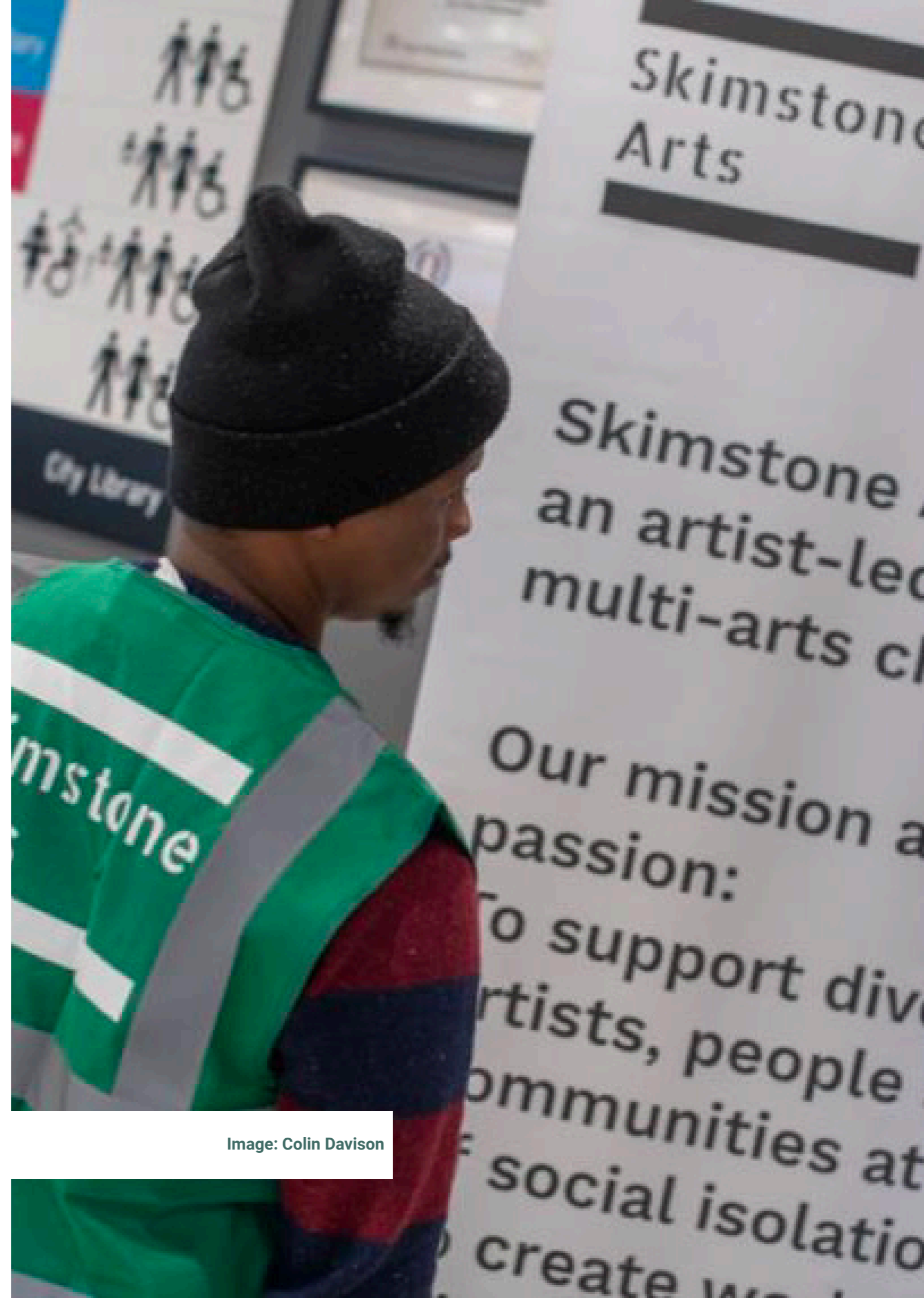


Image: Colin Davison

# 15

## Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Skimstone Arts – Company No. 06221728 Charity No. 1182284 - Year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

The directors for the purposes of company law have pleasure in presenting their report and the unaudited financial statements of Skimstone Arts (The Company) for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

### Objects

Skimstone Arts is established to advance the arts, particularly but not exclusively, the visual arts, drama, music and film, by the production of plays, exhibitions, concerts, films and performances involving diverse groups of disadvantaged people for the benefit of the public.

### Statement of trustee's responsibilities

The directors for the purposes of company law are responsible for preparing the Directors Annual Report and Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and UK Accounting standards.

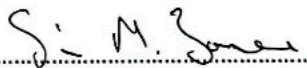
Company Law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the company for that year preparing the financial statements the directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in operation

The Directors are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within part 15 of the companies Act 2006.

On behalf of the board

Director Signature  Name Simon JAMES

Date 4.9.24

# 16

## Independent Examiner's Report

Skimstone Arts – Company No. 06221728 Charity No. 1182284 - Year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

### Independent Examiners Report

I report on the financial statements of The Company for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

### Independent Examiners Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
  - To keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
  - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (the FRSSE) (effective January 2015);
- (2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable to proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Date 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2024

Mark Thompson MAAT

42 Lesbury Road

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE6 5LB

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

# 17

## Statement of Financial Activities

Skimstone Arts – Company No. 06221728 Charity No. 1182284 - Year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024  
Statement of Financial Activities – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 2024 Total £	2022 2023 Total £
<b>Income</b>					
Donations and Legacies	2.1	340	0	340	2,140
Charitable activities	2.2	21,000	92,154	113,154	174,028
Other Trading Activity		12,950	1,000	13,950	4,442
<b>Total</b>		<b>34,290</b>	<b>93,154</b>	<b>127,444</b>	<b>180,610</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Raising funds			0	0	
Charitable activities	3.2	20,927	87,004	107,932	185,655
Donated services				0	
<b>Total</b>		<b>20,927</b>	<b>87,004</b>	<b>107,932</b>	<b>185,655</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before tax for the reporting period</b>					
		13,363	6,150	19,512	-5,045
<b>Transfers between funds</b>					
		-107	107	0	0
<b>Net movement in funds</b>					
		<b>13,256</b>	<b>6,257</b>	<b>19,512</b>	<b>-5,045</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Adjustment to Opening Reserves		259		259	
Total funds brought forward		26,262	30,595	56,858	61,903
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>39,776</b>	<b>36,852</b>	<b>76,629</b>	<b>56,858</b>

# 18

## Statement of Financial Position

Skimstone Arts – Company No. 06221728 Charity No. 1182284 - Year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024  
Statement of Financial Position – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

	Note	At 31 March 2024 £	At 31 March 2023 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	6	-	-
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	7	960	21,527
Cash at bank and in hand		85,577	64,186
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>86,537</b>	<b>85,713</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	9,907	28,855
<b>Net current assets/(liabilities)</b>		<b>76,630</b>	<b>56,858</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>76,629</b>	<b>56,858</b>
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>			
Restricted income funds		36,853	33,571
Unrestricted funds		39,777	28,332
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>76,629</b>	<b>61,903</b>

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/03/2024 THIS COMPANY WAS ENTITLED TO EXEMPTION FROM AUDIT UNDER SECTION 477 OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006 RELATING TO SMALL COMPANIES

THE MEMBERS HAVE NOT REQUIRED THE COMPANY TO OBTAIN AN AUDIT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 476 OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

THE DIRECTORS ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLYING WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACT WITH RESPECT TO ACCOUNTING RECORDS AND FOR THE PREPARATION OF ACCOUNTS

THESE ACCOUNTS HAVE BEEN PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO COMPANIES SUBJECT TO THE SMALL COMPANIES REGIME

Approved by the Board for issue on 31.10.24.

Director Name Simon James Director Signature Simon James

Company No. 06261728

# Statement of Financial Position

Skimstone Arts – Company No. 06221728 Charity No. 1182284 - Year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

## 1. Accounting Policies

### 1.1 Accounting Convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008)

### 1.2 Income

Income from fees is recognised in the accounts when invoiced unless it relates to future accounting periods, in which case it is deferred and included in creditors

Grants / Income receivable are credited to incoming resources on the earlier date of when they are received or when they are receivable, unless they relate specifically to a future accounting period, in which case, they are deferred.

Where a grant is received relating to a future accounting period, the profit and loss account shows the gross amount together with the changes in the amount deferred to future accounting periods. Deferred grant income at the year-end is included in creditors.

### 1.3 Expenditure

Expenditure is brought in to the financial statements on the accruals basis

### 1.4 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Fixed Assets are initially recorded at cost

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of the assets, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

20% straight line

### 1.5 Reserves Policy

The trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. In recognition of the significant number of projects which the organisation operates, the trustees have established a policy whereby unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be three months of core running costs

Skimstone Arts – Company No. 06221728 Charity No. 1182284 - Year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

## 2. Donations and Legacies

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 2024 Total	2022 2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	340		340	2,140
			0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>2,140</b>

## 3. Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 2024 Total	2022-2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
NCIF		25,000	25,000	25,000
Youth Music Arts Council		42,327	42,327	42,237
Newcastle Fund		4,327	4,327	64,691
Garfield Weston	20,000	6,000	6,000	1,500
Well Newcastle Gateshead			20,000	20,000
High Sheriff Quaker Legary	1,000		0	2,050
Community Foundation			1,000	0
Ringtons			0	5,000
Ouseburn Trust		0	0	3,000
Wellesley		5,000	5,000	0
other		9,500	9,500	9,800
	0		0	750
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>92,154</b>	<b>113,154</b>	<b>174,028</b>

## 4. Other Trading Activities

	12,950	1,000	13,950	4,442
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# 19

## Thank You Funders & Partners





Image: Claire Webster Saaremets

## Skimstone Arts

The NewBridge Project  
Art Centre  
Clarence Walk  
Shieldfield Centre  
4-8 off Stoddart Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE2 1AL

### Online

[www.skimstone.org.uk](http://www.skimstone.org.uk)



@SkimstoneArtsEnsemble



@Skimstone\_Arts



@skimstonearts

**Registered Charity: 1182284**

All photo credits Skimstone Arts  
unless otherwise specified.

## Contact

**Artistic Director/CEO**  
Claire Webster Saaremets  
[claire@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:claire@skimstone.org.uk)  
07803670654

**Lead Musician/Operations**  
(Re: Reality Boots band, Young  
Artist Collective, young people)  
Peter Saaremets  
[peter@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:peter@skimstone.org.uk)  
07855674012

## Freelance Staff

**Creative Producer**  
Cristina Armstrong  
[cristina@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:cristina@skimstone.org.uk)

**Comms Manager**  
Claire Cockroft  
[clairecockroft@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:clairecockroft@skimstone.org.uk)

**Finance Administrator**  
Julie Maxwell  
[julie@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:julie@skimstone.org.uk)

**Technical Manager**  
Nii Kwarty Owoo

**Assistant Project Managers**  
Verity Alderman  
[verity@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:verity@skimstone.org.uk)

Rafael Bagott  
[rafael@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:rafael@skimstone.org.uk)

**SKIMSTONE ARTS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1182284

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# Accounts


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# Skimstone Arts

## Skimstone Arts Annual Report and Accounts

April 2022 - March 2023





**Our Mission: To support  
diverse artists, people and  
communities at risk of  
social isolation to create work  
with, for and about the world  
that matters to them.**

**Skimstone Arts  
Registered Charity: 1182284**

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# 01

## About Skimstone Arts

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Skimstone Arts is a welcoming, safe, yet risk taking charity, passionate about promoting equality and visibility.

Our mission is to support diverse artists, people and communities and those at risk of social isolation to create work with, for, and about the world that matters to them.

*“See this is... the thing about Skimstone is, we would never normally see stuff like that, you know, in the circles that I go around. Yes, I might a little bit more, but I would never normally interact with a band like that. I would never see the plays or do any extra stuff like the recordings and things like that. I would never see that in my normal life, which is where Skimstone comes in to it; because then you get to see all of this. You get to be part of an exhibition. You get to meet new people. You get to talk to a lot of people.”*

Community participant/co-creator,  
Evaluation Report 2022

### Programme

We produce an annual programme of events, exhibitions, gigs, performances, radio broadcasts and UNITY Festival *with* our diverse artists and communities, exploring the themes of humanity and the environment.

### Communities

We work *together with* (and call this co-creating) diverse artists, individuals, communities, audiences that society has marginalised or made isolated, and celebrate talent and potential by creating authentic artworks locally, nationally and internationally.

### Young People

We support and learn from our Young Artists Collective and their band Reality Boots and co-create songs, film shorts and exhibitions about what they want to say about the world as special commissions for our programmed events.

### Partnerships

We work with a range of partners regionally, nationally and internationally to create work that contributes to important research and invites audiences to think about social action, including local community partners, regional universities, national arts organisations and international artists.



Curt Gardner – Where Do You Sit?  
Photo: Ako Ismail

# 02

## Report From Our Chair of Trustees

---

In the face of the huge economic and social challenges that have affected all of us in the arts world and more widely, Skimstone Arts has responded with its usual creativity, flexibility and consistency. In spite of funding challenges, important pieces of work have been successfully delivered and participants' lives have been changed by the dedication and skill of Claire, Peter and the whole staff team to whom, as ever, we owe much thanks.

As part of a long term strategy to involve those participants at board level, we took the opportunity presented by several of our existing board members retiring by rotation to welcome new board members with lived experience, and with new skills and talents, ideas and resilience, and an understanding of many of the issues that our participants face in their daily lives.

As Jess, our new Secretary says: "I became a trustee to give back to the charity that did so much for me. I joined Skimstone Arts as a young person, so I've been on the receiving end of all the good they can do. As an alumni I still speak to current members of the Young Artists Collective, and it's important for the young people to see what one of their own could aspire to."

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the former board members who dedicated so much time and experience to overseeing the organisation, and shaping a strategy that has allowed us as the new board to move seamlessly into our roles.

We're really looking forward to next year and beyond!

**Simon James**

Chair of Board of Trustees



**Simon James**  
Chair



**Jess Johnson**  
Secretary



**Angela Mortimer**  
Trustee



**Tahla Ozleblebici**  
Observer



**Lya Vollering**  
Trustee



**Carol Candler, former Trustee**  
continues in advisory capacity

# 03

## What We Do and Why

*“The event itself was high quality and ran well. It was amazing that it was free for people to attend and so many might have accessed the event who might not of normally done so. I think it did get people thinking about other people, other experiences and how we are all together, not as separate as sometimes we might feel. I like the opportunity it gave to people to express themselves and be heard by others.”*

Diverse young artist living with special abilities,  
Evaluation Report 2022

We produce an annual programme of events, exhibitions, touring performances, radio broadcasts, and attending and hosting festivals like UNITY Festival.

Together with those we work with, we make accessible performances, exhibitions, radio broadcasts and gigs which are inspired by real stories and experiences, concepts, ideas and social action. Our broad themes of humanity and the environment help us explore together what we think, feel or want in and about the world today.

### **We Have Three Core Areas of Delivery**

1. Our annual programme of activities includes:
  - Holocaust Memorial Day
  - UNITY Festival
  - Refugee Week
2. Our Young People’s creative programme
3. Our partnership and research projects

### **Our Activities and Aims:**

Skimstone Arts exists to support diverse artists, people and communities at risk of social isolation to create work with, for and about the world that matters to them. Our general aims include:

- Creating a voice for our diverse artists, communities and all those we work with to: promote inclusion, collaboration, ownership and respect for anyone who has a social and political right to make artwork but may face barriers to do so.



Artists, stewards and production team at *UNITY Festival 2023*, Preston Park, Stockton-on-Tees

- Making accessible artistic work including performances, exhibitions, radio broadcasts and gigs that reflect current stories and themes that engage diverse audiences.
- Being actively inclusive and supporting, nurturing opportunities, for all those made isolated by society; recognising and celebrating skills and talents, despite the multiple life challenges they may be experiencing.
- Presenting free events throughout the year, giving audiences the chance to enjoy: live music, performance, arts, exhibitions, stories and workshops, that celebrate humanity, the environment and positive social action.

### **Why Do We Do This?**

We believe in equality of opportunity, of being curious and playful about the world, and expressing ideas and thoughts in different art forms that help us to think more deeply about humanity and the environment. We love people and nature and want to travel with the joy and learning of diversity, so that we can begin to change individual and community perceptions, and recognise and support purpose, worth and collaboration *together*.

When we skim a stone we hope it will skip along and travel as far as possible, creating beautiful rings out into the water; and yet when we can no longer see the stone, it's still there, on the ocean or river bed, placing itself equally among others.

# 04

## Who We Work With and How We Work

---

**“I loved seeing such a range of people pass through, the regular applause as art was created at the next table, and the range of people who talked with me through the day resulting in lots of writing I need to do afterwards... In all, the day was as much for learning as giving because it was so much a new experience. Getting through without messing up badly was a relief to take forward into the year ”**

**Diverse artist and community commissioning member (identifies as queer, autism, mental health, trans, anxiety, chronic illness)  
Evaluation Report 2022**

### **Young People**

We support young people aged 16-25 in our Young Artists Collective and their band Reality Boots to create work about what they want to say about the world for our programmed events.

The Young Artists Collective (YAC) is a diverse group of young people who work in and beyond the studio to create an individual and collaborative arts practice. Members explore different art forms and develop arts leadership skills with others.

Part of our mission is to go out into the community in order to help amplify voices of those who feel unrepresented in our communities. We use a variety of different art forms, such as songs, photography and video/film to highlight and respond to national themes such as Holocaust Memorial Day, Refugee Week and our own UNITY Festival.

We place great importance on the collaborative process with our young people. Taking inspiration from members and their lived experience, we help enable their voices to be heard by sharing a space. Artists and musicians genuinely support and care to nurture people and their work, using key resources e.g. musical instruments and hardware/software.

Together with the Leadership Team, we plan events to showcase work through live



Peter and Nicole recording at Blank Studios



Verity busking at *UNITY Festival*



Image: Phillip preparing for filming



Aliya presenting about Reality Boots song



Brooke busking at *UNITY Festival*



Nicole rehearsing song



Claire and Yahyah working on a photography project at Winter Gardens, Preston Park. Photo: George



Smajo Beso OBE speaking at *One Day Changes* Exhibition at Newcastle University



Clare Matthews performing at HMD 2023 at Newcastle Library.  
Photo: Colin Davison



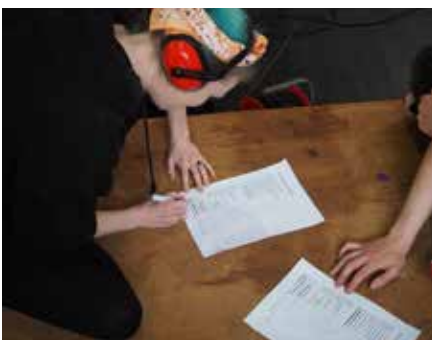
Phillip performing ideas (FODI)



Peter and Loretta songwriting for HMD



Kev and Claire poetry writing for HMD. Photo: Peter Saaremets



Nicole and band members creating a new song



Photojournalists Ako Ismail and Shaho Omar with Alix Collingwood-Swinburn and Claire – purchase of *One Day Changes* by Durham University

performances and curated exhibitions. All members of our YAC also have the opportunity to join our band Reality Boots to create and perform original live music.

## **Communities**

We collaborate with communities to create authentic artworks inspired by their ideas, lived experience and visions of the future, locally, nationally and internationally.

Our local and regional communities (including co-creators, artists, audiences and residents) are often living with multiple challenges that can cause isolation. These include; experiencing poor mental health, poverty, social isolation and anxiety, disabilities and facing challenges when identifying as neurodiverse, LGBTQIA+ and/or with status as asylum-seekers and refugees, and those in later years/older people.

We seek to provide a space, artistic and personal resources for co-creating artists; with a genuine respect for working together, and build strong relationships that nurture talent, skills, positive visibility and social cohesion.

We try where possible to 'mix' our communities across the North East (Stockton, Durham, Sunderland and Newcastle), as well as nationally and internationally with partners such as Radio GaMashie (in Ghana) to encourage a wider view of the world, and interesting artistic responses that feature in our annual programme.

We want to celebrate and be proud of the work we make together; and feel that we can safely take risks, push boundaries, listen to all voices, that also impact on social action, performances and curated exhibitions.

## **Partners**

We work with a range of partners regionally, nationally and internationally, to create work that contributes to important research and invites audiences to think about the stories, narratives and themes, embedded in the artistic work and social action.

As an organisation we have over 25 years experience of producing, collaborating, performing, training, engaging and co-creating with diverse artists and communities, in over 300 collaborative artistic projects and commissions, regionally to internationally with over 20,000 people. This activity has been supported through a diverse group of funders, stakeholders and commissioners.

Integral to our organisation's development and growth is our commitment to partnerships that reflect the inclusive values of our mission statement, representation of voice, and social action.

Our partnerships and collaborations include regional to international services for: refugees and asylum seekers; ageing, health and wellbeing services and providers; academic partners including UK Universities (Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Edinburgh) and international knowledge sharing; music and performance venues and producers, as well as partnerships that enable our diverse young leaders to flourish, and providing pathways for nourishing creative talents.

Our annual programme has continued to develop these positive partnerships. UNITY Festival demonstrates how key cultural venues, community organisations and refugee action groups can co-design and deliver inclusive and accessible events together.

# 05

## Our Year of Impact

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**“What I found was great for me...? I’m quite conscious of other people when I’m out. I’ve realised it’s not me, it’s the people I’m with... When I was at Skimstone Arts I could sing. I could dance. All of those these things that I would be a bit shy doing. I was thinking it’s really taken me out of my comfort zone, because I wasn’t being judged, and because people just wanted to see you having a good time. It was lovely, so I sang and danced all weekend. I’m a different person going into that festival, coming out of the festival. I really do feel like it’s been brilliant for me.”**

**Community participant/co-creator,  
Evaluation Report 2022**

We place artists, communities, audiences and governance at the heart of all our projects and annual programme. This helps us to collect stories and experiences from our co-creators, audience and partners who create work with us so that we can understand and learn from what the impact has been and how we can continue to make it even better. We work closely with external evaluators so that feedback and responses can be honest and anonymous alongside direct reactions.

Impact is always a two-way process at Skimstone Arts as we also reflect on the transformation that co-creators and communities have on us, helping us to make artworks about the world that matters and also extend this beyond the artistic sessions into our event, production and programming management.

We also want to learn about how audiences were able to come to our events, how they felt, what worked or didn’t work, and how they may go away thinking about their own involvement in the world.

We hope you enjoy these Impact Case Studies as much as we do. They share and celebrate the difference the travelled journey has been, by collaborating together with our artists and communities.

Skimstone  
Arts

# UNITY Festival



Festival Attendee at *UNITY Festival 2023*

**3497**  
IN-PERSON  
AUDIENCE MEMBERS

**16** PROJECTS  
DELIVERED

**3 CPD**

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTINUOUS  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
SESSIONS FOR THE SECTOR

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

**49,121**

SYMPOSIUMS

**292**  
CO-CREATORS

**1** FEST  
49 WORKSHOPS

**78** EVENTS  
IN PERSON / LIVE / BROADCAST

**3**

**4**  
OR  
CR  
**3**  
**4**  
FI  
O  
**4**

**FESTIVAL**  
WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

**185**

**48**

**SESSIONS**

**REALITY BOOTS:  
1 ALBUM LAUNCH  
10 LIVE GIGS  
1 REGIONAL TOUR**

**ORIGINAL ARTWORKS  
CREATED**

**31**

**DIVERSE YOUNG PEOPLE  
CORE TO THE PROGRAMME**

**222**

**FREELANCE ARTISTS  
OPPORTUNITIES**

**40 VOLUNTEERS**

# Impact Case Study: One Day Changes

---

One Day Changes is an exhibition by Kurdish Iraq photojournalists Ako Ismail and Shahor Omar who now live in the North East of England. The exhibition and film, *The Smell of Apples*, commissioned by Skimstone Arts, premiered as part of Holocaust Memorial Day 2022 at Newcastle City Library in January 2022, and featured a radio broadcast performed to a live audience, and via Skimstone Radio and Facebook Live. The broadcast featured original music, alongside film, poetry and spoken word all inspired by real stories, research and lived experiences, exploring how we can build a better future, one change at a time.

In March, One Day Changes toured to Pop Recs, Sunderland, coinciding with the anniversary of the Halabja chemical attack, and St. John's College, Durham University which included a seminar and panel discussion following the screening. In June the exhibition toured to Newcastle University to coincide with Refugee Week 2022, presented outdoors in a unique setting on campus accompanied by a soundscape by international Kurdish composer Rzgar Hama Rauf, commissioned by Skimstone Arts. The film *The Smell of Apples* was screened and followed by a panel discussion.

## Outcomes

- Exhibition and film tour to **4** high profile venues, including regional universities as well as new expressions of interest to host the work nationally.
- Over **600+** people have attended the exhibition and film screenings, live and online.

## Impact

- Ako and Shahor are now established Associated Artists embedded in Skimstone Arts practice and support project development, documentation and film production across Skimstone Arts projects.
- We have established regional and national connections with University partners and members of National Union of Journalists.
- Social action has been embedded across this project, inviting audiences to pledge messages of support for Ukraine and all those affected by war and oppression.
- The project has received positive PR coverage regionally, national and across Kurdistan media channels.

## Feedback

*"Incredibly striking, an important message that all humanity experiences the same in war wherever it may be."*

**Audience member, Durham University  
May 2022**



ITV filming the purchase of One Day Changes with Ako Ismail and Shaho Omar at Durham University

*"The purchase of our photography project by Durham University was one goal that made me happy. I find it very important the project is now available to all students and they can be used for research. Which is a great way for students to learn directly about war and its aftermath from our direct experience as photo journalists."*

*Working with Skimstone has been a very important career stage experience. Through this I created many doors, job opportunities and connections to spread my work further. What is most gratifying is that the beliefs I worked for were very much in common with Skimstone and working for humanity, coexistence and spreading peace. That made me very happy and they helped me to keep working."*

**Ako Ismail**



Shaho Omar with *One Day Changes* exhibition

# Impact Case Study: Refugee Week 2022

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Refugee Week 2022 is a national festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of people living with lived refugee experiences and people seeking sanctuary. The theme for Refugee Week 2022 was 'Healing'. This year we worked with communities with lived refugee experiences in Stockton to create a new performance piece called *Minds of Healing Hearts*. This premiered in the garden space outside the entrance to the Fine Art building at Newcastle University on Friday 24 June, and at ARC Stockton for a special takeover event on Saturday 25 June.

Visitors were also able to explore *One Day Changes*, a photographic exhibition by our Associate Artists and photojournalists Ako Ismail and Shahor Omar which documents refugee camps in Iraq and Syria. The exhibition was on display in Newcastle University's Long Gallery from Friday 24 June to Thursday 30 June.

There was also the opportunity to see our specially created film *The Smell of Apples*, directed by Claire Webster Saaremets, and hear specially commissioned music by international Kurdish composer Rzgar Hama Rauf broadcast within the university arches.

## Outcomes

- **3** performances of *Minds of Healing Hearts* by the Sun and the Soul Company at Newcastle University and ARC Stockton.
- **1** exhibition of *One Day Changes* at the Long Gallery, Newcastle University.
- **1** film screen of a specially created film *The Smell of Apples*.
- **1** sound installation by international Kurdish composer Rzgar Hama Rauf broadcast within the university arches.
- **1** radio broadcast (Podcast still available on Mix Cloud).
- **3** presentations and Q&A responding to the themes relating to the event by Skimstone Arts, Newcastle University, Newcastle City Council.
- **350+** live audiences.
- **359** radio audiences.
- **42** co-creators.
- **3** volunteers.
- **5** artists.
- **6** original artworks.

## Impact

- Audiences experienced an awareness and understanding of the Holocaust and other genocides and how persecuted people continue to suffer today.
- Exhibition, live event and radio broadcast respected persecuted communities and individuals' experiences through collaborating on story sharing.



The Sun & The Soul Company from ESOL cafe at St. Peter's Church, Yarm performing at Newcastle University for Refugee Week 2022  
Photo: Ako Ismail

- Residents of the city empathised and worked with our young people to create original songs about the theme of Ordinary People.
- Co-creators and audiences increased awareness and recognition of the attitudes and behaviours that lead to discrimination, persecution and genocide and contributed to Newcastle's status as a City of Sanctuary, encouraging tolerance and inclusion.
- Audiences pledged a response that is active and demonstrates empathy and understanding.

### Feedback

*"It felt amazing. It's a really unique experience. And I think it's really important in the building of confidence. And as you say everyone was focused. That's because everyone has a really amazing set of skills that is yet to be explored. And that's why it's amazing to have this company located near Stockton to have that space for everyone."*

*"For me is to feel confidence. Very confident, like power like before... with people, different people like friendly and I feel give me more power, confidence. I feel like mentally, wow. I did (it)."*

**The Sun & The Soul Company**

*"I can tell you what a triumph it has all been – thank you!! I have had so many people come up to me and say how moving the performances were, how they enjoyed the music, the films [and] the One Day Changes exhibition."*

**David Baines, Senior Lecturer in Media & Cultural Studies at Newcastle University**

# Impact Case Study: Where Do You Sit?

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Where Do You Sit? was presented as part of the National Holocaust Memorial Day Programme and also part of Newcastle City Council's Holocaust Memorial Day Events 2023. Our Where Do You Sit? programme included a free exhibition which was on display at Newcastle City Library from Friday 20 to Wednesday 25 January 2023, a special event which was hosted in Bewick Hall at Newcastle City Library on Wednesday 25 January, and a radio broadcast which shared highlights from the event was broadcast on Skimstone Radio on Friday 27 January.

## Aims

- To raise awareness and understanding of the Holocaust and other genocides.
- To enable persecuted communities to commemorate those who suffered and died during the Holocaust and other genocides and who continue to suffer today.
- To respect persecuted communities and individuals' experiences through collaborating and story sharing, resulting in an exhibition, live event and radio broadcast.
- To encourage residents of the city to empathise with their loss, and work with our young people to create original songs about the theme of 'Ordinary People'.
- To enhance awareness and recognition of the attitudes and behaviours that lead to discrimination, persecution and genocide, and to encourage appropriate resistance to them
- To contribute to Newcastle's status as a City of Sanctuary and encourage tolerance and inclusion.
- To encourage audiences to pledge a response that is active and demonstrates empathy and understanding.

## Outcomes

- **16** individuals from our diverse communities made creative contributions to our *Where Do You Sit?* programme, underpinning our core programming values of representation, inclusivity, quality and equality.
- **3** artists, our Artistic Director and two Associated Artists with lived refugee experience, captured the portraits featured in the exhibition.
- **29** people came to the exhibition opening at Newcastle City Library.
- **41** people attended the sold out event at Newcastle City Library.
- **168** listeners tuned in to listen to the Skimstone Radio broadcast featuring highlights from the *Where Do You Sit?* event.
- **10,121** people were reached with content about *Where Do You Sit?* In January 2023 via social media. This included 2,231 people via Facebook, 607 people via Instagram and 7,283 impressions on X (formerly known as Twitter).
- **161** users visited Skimstone Arts website, of which 70.8% were new visitors, in January 2023.



Claire Webster Saaremets and Kema Kay hosting *Where Do You Sit?* Event for HMD 2023 at Newcastle City Library



Ako Ismail – *Where Do You Sit?*



Irena Mujacic Carlton portrait for *Where Do You Sit?* Exhibition



Skimstone staff, artists and contributors at HMD 2023 at Newcastle City Library



Les Oliver and portrait for *Where Do You Sit?* Exhibition



Sanya's portrait for *Where Do You Sit?* Exhibition

## Feedback

*"Hugely moving, creative and informative. Human stories which reflected humanity in all its glories/horrors. Ordinary transformed into extraordinary."*

**Audience Member**

*"Great exhibition of life journey through difficulties, memories of love ones, touching stories, all need everyone's support with hold common value – kindness, love, freedom demands from situation of injustices. Keep it going!"*

**Visitor to Exhibition**

*"Powerful and thought provoking texts that will hopefully persuade others to reach out and work towards 'others' to enrich our lives and our country."*

**Visitor to Exhibition**

*"To date the world is still demonstrating divide and hate: I hope something changes through the understanding of unity and shared dreams."*

**Visitor to Exhibition**

*"Still trying to process today. So many emotions, sadness at what happened to ordinary people, anger that it is still happening, and joy that even in adversity survivors lived to tell their stories."*

**Audience Member**

*"A very thoughtful presentation which can inspire us and stir us out of our complacency. Really touched by the poems especially the one entitled It will never happen."*

**Audience Member**



Balsam Ahmed's portrait for *Where Do You Sit?* Exhibition



Kev's portrait for *Where Do You Sit?* Exhibition

# Impact Case Study: UNITY Festival

UNITY Festival 2023 took place at Preston Park Museum on 18 and 19 March and at Ouseburn Community Centre on 25 March. This *free* music and arts festival celebrated humanity, nature and social action, including: live music, performance, arts, exhibitions, creative workshops and outdoors trails. Festival-goers of all ages took part in a jam-packed programme of events.

Now in its third year, UNITY Festival 2023 built on the legacy of previous UNITY Festivals to lay a strong foundation for future creative activity in Newcastle upon Tyne. This year's festival consolidated existing relationships with artists, partners and organisations such as Action Asylum, the Natural History Society of Northumbria and Nii Kwartey Owoo, musician and choreographer, rapper and singer song-writer Kema Kay and photographer Kev Howard.

It also nurtured new relationships including those with: Ouseburn Community Centre, Hannabiell and the Midnight Blue Collective, Lawnmowers' Beat This, Circus Central, Ouseburn Trust, the West End Refugee Service, Preston Park Museum, RSPB, Tin Arts, an inclusive dance organisation based in Durham, dance artist and digital animator Jem Clancy and performance artist Yuvel Soria.

## Outcomes

- **181** diverse artists were commissioned and delivered **52** events throughout the day underpinning our core programming values of representation, inclusivity, quality and equality.
- **26** live performances, **16** interactive workshops and participatory events, **6** exhibitions and **8** talks took place throughout the day.
- **2062** participants took part in the festival. Of the sample data gathered 45% of visitors lived across Newcastle upon Tyne, 19.4% from Stockton-on-Tees, 16.1% from outside the region (including Glasgow, Bath and Malton in Yorkshire) 9.7% from North Tyneside, 6.4% from Gateshead and 3% from Middlesbrough.
- Content about UNITY Festival reached **36,604** people via social media in March 2023 - 27,861 people via Facebook, 1,472 people via Instagram and achieved 7,271 impressions on X (formerly known as Twitter).
- **410** users visited Skimstone Arts website to find out more about the festival in March 2023 of which 79.4% were new visitors.
- **32** volunteers from across the region worked together with the core team to support the effective event management of the festival.

## Impact

- Engaged young people and communities with: lived refugee experience, learning disabilities, poor mental health, social anxiety,



Artist and Tech Manager Nii Kwarty Owoo leads an all age movement workshop at Ouseburn Community Centre

those living with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and individuals from other disadvantaged backgrounds who feel marginalised by society in the creation, commissioning and delivery of UNITY Festival across co-collaborators and audiences.

- Celebrated diversity through the careful yet risk-taking programming of artists and events with, by and for the above target groups.
- Invested in artistic, creative and production skills of target groups and promoted confidence and visibility to new audiences.
- Supported our target groups to access regular workshops, events and production opportunities resulting in a festival featuring content relevant to them.
- Commissioned new work by diverse artists that responded to the themes of humanity, diversity and nature that encouraged positive social action and gave opportunities to perform, exhibit and screen live to a wide range of audiences from across the North East of England.

### **Feedback**

*“UNITY Festival 2023 was an opportunity for people from all walks of life to come together to be part of a community, explore the natural world and consider what we can do to make a difference. Created with diversity at its heart this playful, creative free festival was co-designed with community groups we work with across the North East of England.”*

**Claire Webster Saaremets, Artistic Director, Skimstone Arts**

*“I love how Skimstone Arts group made us do some good dances. It was really body warming and uniting. I am a 29 year old female from Namibia... I am a good dancer and actor. Found out through Action Asylum.”*

**Audience Member**



Audience member views Kev Howard's exhibition



Yahyah views his work in exhibition

## Feedback

*"The Music! The songs had important things to say and the music was complex and unified – great musicians!"*

### Audience Member

*"I had to come back today because yesterday was so much fun, We had to dance, to do some drums, doing singing. It was very fun. I meet up with people, many new ideas. My best thing was the exhibition, it opened so many perceptions of me, I was not expecting it to be so ginormous."*

### Audience Member

*"The overall programme being delivered by a diverse range of professionals and performers, who we would not have had the contacts or connections with. It supported our aims in creating a more varied activity programme. The sight was used differently, by different people."*

### Festival Partner

*"Taking part was important on a personal level. It was the first time in three years I'd written anything for display or performance and I'd suffered so much with loss of confidence that I'd cleared out everything I'd written before. Taking part was part of a process of regaining some confidence and a belief again in my creativity. Meeting up with people in the workshops in Byker was excellent and the support from Skimstone gave safety for small risks."*

### Artist



Circus skills for all



Artist Fran Thomas's drawing workshop



Yuvel Soria collaborates with Keith Hill Preston Park Museum



Talha Ozleblebici and Tugay Yalcin performing their music



Audience at Preston Park



Nii Kwarty Owoo's movement workshop



Volunteer Lucy Frain supports festival attendee



Activist Ho-Yin Wong introduces Citizen Science Project



Kema Kay performing his set at Preston Park

# Impact Case Study: Reality Boots

In 2013 Skimstone Arts' band Reality Boots, made up of a diverse and at risk group of young musicians, was formed. Made up of passionate voices each with unique experiences, the band have composed and released two albums *Louder Than Words* and *Void/Evolve*, and toured their music around the region, visiting schools and colleges to inspire the next generation of young musicians.

In June 2022 Reality Boots toured the North East of England on a six-date tour. Working with other like-minded young musicians and artists across the region, Reality Boots created a number of powerful new songs, each inspired by the world that matters e.g. humanity, peace and our environment, that were showcased as part of the tour. Partners included: Standing Upright (North Tyneside), Jack Drum Arts (County Durham) and Band Jam at Musinc (Middlesbrough) as well as musician, rapper and actor Kema Kay, who each joined Reality Boots to support a gig on their home turf.

Reality Boots new album *Breaking Barriers* was launched at a special event at Cluny2, Newcastle upon Tyne in September 2022.

## Outcomes

- This year Reality Boots have supported **31** diverse young people to gain experience of

working with and performing together as a band.

- **8** Associate Artists and musicians have been employed to mentor and nurture the vast talent of band members.
- Young people have learned skills in songwriting, performance, collaborative working, leadership, event management, and music tuition across a range of musical instruments.
- As part of the 2022 tour, Skimstone Arts supported Reality Boots to deliver **10** songwriting workshops with partner music groups, and co-create **4** new songs on themes of social action and environment.

## Impact

- Opportunities for paid artistic development and leadership skills.
- Gaining experience and understanding of different roles involved in managing a tour and planning an album launch, marketing, event management and stage management.

## Feedback

*"My favourite part was being with Reality Boots and working together to write a new song which we debuted on 24 June (2022)...I would like to do more workshops with them in the future because it was pretty fun, and everything was good. Well good."*

**Musician, Jack Drum Arts**



Reality Boots performing at their album launch, Cluny2. Photo: Ako Ismail



Tom records for the album

### Audience feedback

*"It gave performers (the chance) to express their feelings through music and a chance to do what they enjoy."*

*"Great to hear some great personal lyrics – fighting stereotypes and hearing a range of people."*

*"Showing young talent. Giving people opportunities to perform."*

*"Great performance."*

*"Lovely music and singing."*



Kema and Nicole at album launch



Cerys recording for the album at Blank Studios



Lead Musician Peter Saaremets and Music Leader Keith Hill support Reality Boots

# 06

## What We Have Learned

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- How exciting it is to see young people, people with different lived experience in leadership and Trustee roles contribute so positively, despite their own challenges e.g. their ideas in project managing for UNITY Festival, co-organising Youth Music sessions, managing our website and social media, and supporting our team with pastoral care.
- The value of building longer term partnerships in the region e.g. the positivity of working with all the staff at Preston Park Museum and Gardens, Stockton on Tees and Action Asylum in Stockton, Friends of the Drop In Sunderland (FODI); in the months leading up to the successful delivery of our UNITY Festival 2023, and Durham and Newcastle Universities, giving us new opportunities for visibility and debate.
- Being resilient, planning well ahead when key staff are faced with and working through life threatening situations, rethinking Board recruitment, taking opportunities that reduce overheads and open up new ways of working.
- Reworking our funding strategy to maintain and be flexible with core staff levels, in an ever more competitive and decreasing funding landscape, to work with those at risk and produce our annual programme; and diversify income alongside increasing capacity for new commissions.
- Ensuring we fundraise for resources i.e. staff time that support critical pastoral care for complex needs e.g. with our young people.
- The importance of integrating audience pledges in our programmes so that our artworks initiate positive action.

## What our Audience Tell Us: Pledge Highlights

*"To have a more tolerant caring society."*

*"To always fight discrimination."*

*"To do lots and lots of marbling,  
thank you so much."*

*"To take more time looking at fungi in the park."*

*"I wish this could be 3 times a year!!!"*

*"Learn Queen song on the piano with a hat and  
ask for money to donate to wildlife care."*

*"It's just so great to receive kindness and help  
from people, it's not easy to keep being nice to  
people when they are cold. I'll try my best to not  
be changed by the world."*

*"I love how music connects people and crosses  
barriers and brings so much joy and energy."*

*"I would like to act driven by anger, fear but  
most of all love. "*

*"Music heals the soul."*

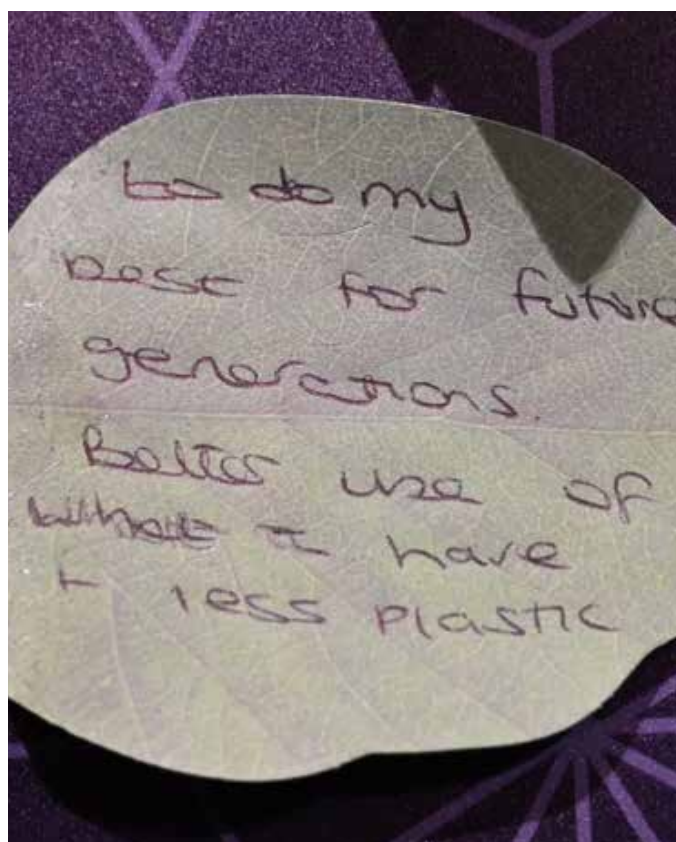
*"To share, to be kind, to welcome, to befriend."*

*"Spend time on my arts (age 7)."*

*I will seek out other opportunities to connect  
with new and diverse people.*



Volunteer Betty highlights the pledges made at UNITY Festival



One of the pledges from Preston Park

# 07

## Our Year Ahead

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### **This year has been one of vision and celebration, reflection, resilience and new leadership.**

I look back at this year and think... Wow!!! We exceeded our vision and planned programme of activity and events, producing some of the best highlights in Skimstone Arts 16-year history. UNITY Festival was such a memorable success, due to months of team and partnership work with an amazing diversity of people. Many times I tried to look beyond the names of the artists, presenters and audiences, and see how many 'should be visible' communities were being represented. How we were integrating and most of all laughing and learning together, about our themes of humanity and our environment. Please do watch the commissioned film by Elvis Katoko on <https://www.skimstone.org.uk>.

Other highlights include the purchase by Durham University of Shaho Omar's and Ako Karim, our Associate Artists', timely *One Day Changes* exhibition and film, featured on ITV and also on Kurdish TV with millions of viewers! National Holocaust Memorial events also brought for us new Bosnian and other war survivor collaborations of different ages, so we

could listen to and respond to their experiences with music, photography and poetry in our live and radio events.

I'm also very proud of our young peoples' band Reality Boots and their regional tour and album launch of songs that matter to them (please see Leadership Report) .

This year we've continued to deepen our partnerships with further commissions by Newcastle University to exhibit work created by lived refugee creatives, and a new 3-year project creating activism songs with St. Anthony's Day Services in Walker. We also achieved another 3 years of Youth Music Funding and NCIF (Newcastle Culture Investment Fund), and a further year of Garfield Weston core funding. We were grateful for a significant grant from Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grants for our UNITY Festival and Reality Boots tour.

We also adapted our trustee recruitment to ensure we replaced Board members who has served their terms, with those who have specific skills and lived experiences of those we work with. We wish to thank the previous board for their commitment to attending meetings, events and checking in with us during Covid/ post Covid; it was very much appreciated.



Claire with Musician Hannabel and members of The Sun & The Soul Company

We are excited about how our new board are supporting a clear sense of direction for us and opening up new funding streams.

I was also a speaker at *Localism: Re-Evaluating the Future of Culture*, as part of the Events and Tourism For Socially Engaged Arts & Culture Labour symposium at University of West Scotland; sharing and learning different approaches to what we understand as engaged arts practice.

It's also with sadness that two respected colleagues passed away during this time. Dr Cathy Bailey who gave us so many opportunities to learn from and develop our research and creativity work, concerning themes of living with ageing and dementia with Northumbria University and Elders Council. Also, associate artist/musician Hank Hays who worked with us and brought so much colour, humour and extensive musicianship to our projects.

So the year ahead is exciting for us, weaving together our communities creativity and leadership within our annual programme. We will be doing a special focus on national Holocaust Memorial Day events 2024, and planning for an even more inclusive and extensive regional UNITY Festival. Our diverse young people, artists, communities and Trustees will continue to help us to ensure their leadership influences Skimstone Arts activity... and most of all we continue to laugh, worry, support and celebrate life journeys through our songs, photography, radio and research *together*.

**Claire Webster Saaremets**  
Artistic Director

# 08

## Leadership Report

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### **Nicole Davis, Band Leader**

We've had a very busy, but such a fun year. We have worked with many different people to create songs that we believe in, and say something about the world, for example *Forest Fading* that speaks so passionately about climate change, and supported each other on these artistic journeys. As band leader and a member of the Leadership Team, my highlight was the last day of the tour at Bishop Auckland, as we all felt emotional about the songs. There was loads of energy with Jack Drum Arts' band Jazzy Dystopia, and all the audience were joining in.

This coming year we're excited about new opportunities to create songs for Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 and the theme of 'Fragility of Freedom'. Members of the Leadership Team are expanding their skills in music production, supporting other new band members, and also older people in Walker to explore creative ways of song writing. Our aspirations are for other band members to be able to solo on their instrument.

I really liked moving studios to NewBridge Project space as it feels much more community based, and we have more opportunities to collaborate with other artists and be inspired by the exhibitions.

### **Rafael Bagott, Assistant Project Manager**

My highlight was definitely UNITY Festival 2023... The feeling of going away to Stockton on Tees and being together with a group of young artists, production staff, and diverse Associate Artists. We created something from the ground up and brought it to a place like Preston Park, and made such a vibrant atmosphere. We showcased talented artists' work and their interactive workshops, our songs from the album, and talks from young activists about the environment and how to protect it.

Also, our Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) live event at Newcastle City Library in January 2023, was a great opportunity to see Associate Artists and contributors express their pain and also bring beauty from that pain, for example Tom Spence's piano piece and Curt Gardner's own experience during WW2, stemming from the love for his mother who is no longer with him. I found this event challenging and it made me think about how as citizens of society, we need to be aware of what causes genocide and what we can try and do to prevent it.

I'm also looking forward to HMD 2024 and to have the opportunity to organise and help



Nicole Davis, Peter Saaremets and Rafael Bagott, members of the Leadership Team

create an environment to share powerful stories, about the theme of 'Fragility of Freedom', and also work with new groups including older people in Walker.

### **Peter Saaremets**

This year has been great to watch members of the Leadership Team grow as they engage in the opportunities and events of our Annual Programme. This includes developing both their artistic and leadership skills and challenges. Examples include: creating a very powerful song, *Memories Lost*, that was a direct response to a real story from academic research; taking on key areas of event management for UNITY Festival including managing stewarding, and the busking schedule.

A special highlight was the success of the tour and album launch. This required a high level of commitment from all our young people to be well rehearsed, attend, and manage areas of the schedules for the regional touring and recording at Blank Studio, Newcastle.

The album *Breaking Barriers* is a testament to the hard work and talent of Reality Boots members and Associate Artists, and is available on streaming platforms including Spotify.

Next year, we are looking forward to further collaborations with other communities and artists for Holocaust Memorial Day 2024, Refugee Week, and of course a new, even bigger and brighter UNITY Festival 2024; and what we can learn and share together about what matters in the world.

# 09

## Structure, Governance and Management

---

### **Legal and Administrative**

Registered office address:  
Skimstone Arts, The Newbridge Project,  
Clarence Walk, Shieldfield Centre,  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1AL

### **Directors**

Carol Candler (Resigned 29/09/2022)  
Katherine Dixon (Resigned 11/04/2023)  
Sarah Drummond (Resigned 11/04/2023)  
Dr Liadi Mudashiru (Resigned 11/04/2023)  
Garry Robson (Resigned 28/04/2022)  
Wendy Scott (Resigned 11/04/2023)  
Rebecca Wilkie (Resigned 11/04/2023)

Simon James (Appointed 03/04/2023)  
Jessica Johnson (Appointed 03/04/2023)  
Angela Mortimer (Appointed 25/05/2023)  
Alida Vollering (Appointed 03/04/2023)  
Tahla Ozleblebici (Appointed 20/07/23)

### **Bankers**

Co-operative Bank



Amreen talks about her artwork at *UNITY Festival*

# 10

## Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The directors for the purposes of company law have pleasure in presenting their report and the unaudited financial statements of Skimstone Arts (The Company) for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

### Objects

Skimstone Arts is established to advance the arts, particularly but not exclusively, the visual arts, drama, music and film, by the production of plays, exhibitions, concerts, films and performances involving diverse groups of disadvantaged people for the benefit of the public.

### Statement of trustee's responsibilities

The directors for the purposes of company law are responsible for preparing the Directors Annual Report and Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and UK Accounting standards.

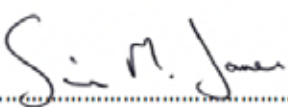
Company Law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the company for that year preparing the financial statements the directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in operation

The Directors are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within part 15 of the companies Act 2006.

On behalf of the board

Director Signature  Name Simon James

Date 6 July 2023

# 11

## Independent Examiner's Report

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I report on the financial statements of The Company for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

### Independent Examiners Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
  - i. To keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
  - ii. To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (the FRSSE) (effective January 2015);
- (2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable to proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Date 6 July 2023

Mark Thompson MAAT

*42 Lesbury Road*

*Newcastle upon Tyne*

*NE6 5LB*

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

# 12

## Statement of Financial Activities

### Statement of Financial Activities – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 2023 Total £	2021 2022 Total £
<b>Income</b>					
Donations and Legacies	2	1,615	525	2,140	2,558
Charitable activities	3	20,750	153,278	174,028	211,982
Other Trading Activity	4	3,922	520	4,442	10,812
<b>Total</b>		<b>26,287</b>	<b>154,323</b>	<b>180,610</b>	<b>225,352</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Raising funds			0	0	
Charitable activities	5	28,386	157,269	185,655	206,524
Donated services				0	
<b>Total</b>		<b>28,386</b>	<b>157,269</b>	<b>185,655</b>	<b>206,524</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before tax for the reporting period</b>					
		-2,099	-2,946	-5,045	18,828
<b>Transfers between funds</b>					
		30	-30	0	
<b>Net movement in funds</b>					
		<b>-2,069</b>	<b>-2,976</b>	<b>-5,045</b>	<b>18,828</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Adjustment to Opening Reserves				0	
Total funds brought forward		28,332	33,571	61,903	43,075
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>26,262</b>	<b>30,595</b>	<b>56,858</b>	<b>61,903</b>

# 13

## Statement of Financial Position

### Statement of Financial Position – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

#### Balance sheet

	Note	At 31 March 2023 £	At 31 March 2022 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	6	-	952
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		-	952
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	7	21,527	24,336
Cash at bank and in hand		64,186	55,250
<b>Total current assets</b>		85,713	79,586
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	- 28,855	- 18,635
<b>Net current assets/(liabilities)</b>		56,859	60,951
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		56,858	61,903

#### Funds of the Charity

Restricted income funds	30,595	33,571
Unrestricted funds	26,262	28,332
<b>Total funds</b>	56,858	61,903

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/03/2023 THE COMPANY WAS ENTITLED TO EXEMPTION FROM AUDIT UNDER SECTION 477 OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006 RELATING TO SMALL COMPANIES

THE MEMBERS HAVE NOT REQUIRED THE COMPANY TO OBTAIN AN AUDIT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 476 OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

THE DIRECTORS ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLYING WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACT WITH RESPECT TO ACCOUNTING RECORDS AND FOR THE PREPARATION OF ACCOUNTS

THESE ACCOUNTS HAVE BEEN PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO COMPANIES SUBJECT TO THE SMALL COMPANIES REGIME

Approved by the Board for issue on 6 July 2023

Director Name Simon James

Director Signature



# 14

We would like to thank all our funders and partners that have supported us this year.



# Thank You Funders & Partners

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**COUNTERPOINTS.**

**FODI**



**BLANK STUDIOS**



# The NewBridge Project



The NewBridge Project Art Centre. Home of Skimstone Arts.

## Skimstone Arts

The NewBridge Project Art Centre  
Clarence Walk  
Shieldfield Centre  
4-8 off Stoddart Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE2 1AL

## Online

[www.skimstone.org.uk](http://www.skimstone.org.uk)



@SkimstoneArtsEnsemble



@Skimstone\_Arts



@skimstonearts

Registered Charity: 1182284

All photo credits Skimstone Arts  
unless otherwise specified.

## Contact

**Artistic Director/CEO**  
Claire Webster Saaremets  
[claire@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:claire@skimstone.org.uk)  
07803670654

**Lead Musician/Operations**  
(Re: Reality Boots band, Young  
Artist Collective, young people)  
Peter Saaremets  
[peter@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:peter@skimstone.org.uk)  
07855674012

## Freelance Staff

**Creative Producer**  
Cristina Armstrong  
[cristina@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:cristina@skimstone.org.uk)

**Comms Manager**  
Claire Cockcroft  
[clairecockcroft@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:clairecockcroft@skimstone.org.uk)

**Finance Administrator**  
Julie Maxwell  
[julie@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:julie@skimstone.org.uk)

**Technical Manager**  
Nii Kwarty Owoo

## Assistant Project Managers

Verity Alderman  
[verity@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:verity@skimstone.org.uk)

Rafael Bagott  
[rafael@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:rafael@skimstone.org.uk)

**SKIMSTONE ARTS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1182284

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# Accounts

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# Skimstone Arts

## Skimstone Arts Annual Report and Accounts

April 2021 - March 2022



Audience take part in our *UNITY* Festival. Image: Ako Ismail



Jimmy at St Anthony's, Walker takes part in *The Garden Song*.  
Image: Claire Webster Saaremets



Joe Hodgeson, Assistant Project Manager/trainee Technician.  
Image: Claire Webster Saaremets



Band Leader Nicole Davis and Lead Musician Peter Saaremets  
Image: Shahor Omar



*One Day Changes* Skimstone radio broadcast. Image: Colin Davison



Young people make origami butterflies for social action at our *UNITY* Festival  
Image: Shahor Omar

# Skimstone Arts works with diverse artists and those at risk of isolation to create work with, for, and about the world that matters to them

## Reference and administrative details

Charity number: 1182284  
Company number: 06261728

Registered office and principal address:  
Skimstone Studios, Room 2.03, 2nd Floor, 14 Quayside,  
Albion Row, Newcastle Upon Tyne,  
United Kingdom, NE6 1LL

Independent Examiners: Connected Voice  
Bankers: The Co-operative Bank  
Artistic Director: Claire Webster Saaremets

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# 1

## Report from our Chair

“Be the change you want to see in the World” is a quote which encapsulates the spirit of Skimstone Arts.

Our amazing team continues to evolve, grow and challenge as creative artists working together with a diversity of people. We seek to enable every person we work with to find, use or amplify their voice, and to see themselves create change and move forward with their potential as they realise their own artistic possibilities.

Skimstone Arts works with so many organisations, artists and communities – locally, regionally and internationally. This was reflected in the first live-location Skimstone **UNITY Festival** weekend which celebrated those partnerships and connections. It was testimony to the inclusive and generous nature of Skimstone Arts’ approach.

At a time of global change we moved premises and started to recover from the intense constraints of working in a pandemic. We commissioned an independent organisational review which helps us reflect on our dual identity as an arts organisation and a charity. It is important for us to continue to learn and to see how we can become stronger and more resilient. It has been an enormously helpful process bringing fresh and external perspective on our impact, quality, and inclusivity.

The move to i4 Quayside during this last year and embedding our organization geographically into

some of the communities with whom we work has been so right for us. It has felt like “coming home” to be neighbours with so many partners and individuals.

We are committed to quality and diversity assurance, to be transparent and rigorous in the creation of projects and programmes that are co-created and reflective of the communities in which we work. We continue to support organisational maturity and the development of our teams. Our band Reality Boots was successfully awarded a National Lottery Arts Council England project grant to deliver a regional tour. The impact case study included in this report highlights the band’s achievements of which we are humbled. These musicians are our new leaders of the future and are skillfully continuing Skimstone Arts’ vital work with young people across the North East of England.

Reflecting on this year, we have many reasons to feel and share pride for Skimstone Arts. This report provides a summary of the highlights and it certainly feels like we are making a significant contribution to creativity, and social and creative expression. The Team has worked so hard to distil and prioritise our work to deliver the ambitions we hold in our Theory of Change. The process of applying to be an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation is one we relished and has contributed to our belief in the difference we make and will make to bring about positive change through the arts.



Chair Wendy Scott gives her report at our hybrid zoom and live AGM October 2021. Image: Claire Webster Saaremets

# 2

## About Us

### Our purpose

Skimstone Arts is established to advance the arts, particularly but not exclusively, **music, drama, film and the visual arts**, by the production of performances, plays, exhibitions, gigs and filming involving diverse groups of disadvantaged **artists and communities** for the benefit of the public. This is set out in our charitable objects. (Memorandum & Articles 2017)

### Our mission

Skimstone Arts supports diverse artists and those at risk of isolation to create work with, for, and about the world that matters to them.

Skimstone Arts is established as one of the North East's leading charitable companies for inclusive arts practice and social action and has dedicated expertise in high-quality work co-created with vulnerable young people, older people, and refugee communities.

We work in the sectors of arts, culture, wellbeing, health and personal heritage.

### Our beneficiaries

Our beneficiaries are all of the individuals and communities we work with to co-create artistic work, and the audiences who engage with these works. In our annual report we refer to our beneficiaries as *those we work with*.

### Our aims

Skimstone Arts aims to create collaborative music, performance and art with artists and researchers, and to develop high quality artistic practice with diverse individuals and communities which reflect challenges in society.

Our motivations are inclusion, collaboration, ownership and respect for anyone who has a social and political right to make artworks but may face barriers to do so.

The creativity of those we work with challenges and instigates debate around the role of the arts in civic change and wellbeing.

As we said in last year's annual report, the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement were not diversions, they are part of our development, growth, and sustainability.

We channel our collective innovation, resilience, creativity, and positivity to make work together (co-creation) with our participants in different parts of the world, by doing what we believe in — that the arts provide a powerful way of seeing, exploring and processing our worlds — and sharing provocations and activism to new and existing audiences.



Audience members from FODI (Friends of the Drop In) visit *One Day Changes* at PopRecs, Sunderland. Image: Ako Ismail



Photojournalist Shahor Omar speaks about his work at *One Day Changes*, Newcastle City Library for Holocaust Memorial Day Events. Image: Cristina Armstrong



Young Artist Collective member Emile creates pledge apples for *One Day Changes* Events. Image: Colin Davison



*Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future* performance. Image: Kev Howard



Presenters Steve Drayton and Claire Skimstone Radio for *UNITY Festival*. Image: Shahor Omar



Lead Artist Peter Saaremets works with young musician Maddie. Image: Kev Howard



Byker Commissioning Group work with North East Wilds to set up herb growing workshop for *UNITY Festival*. Image: Ako Ismail

# 3

## Our Goals & Ambitions

We use a Theory of Change (story of change) model to describe how and why our charitable objects serve those we work with, to evaluate our progress, track changes over time and show positive impact with our diverse communities.

**By:** working with diverse artists, people at risk of isolation and likeminded organisations

**To:** support them to create work that is with, for and about the world that matters to them and to share what we learn in the process

**We will:** engage increasingly diverse audiences in quality arts activities and stimulate debate and action around key social challenges

**This will:** help improve connectivity, confidence and wellbeing for the people and artists we work with and lead to greater skills and engagement in increasingly high-quality arts activity.

This model helps us to deliver our four key ambitions:

### Ambition 1: Artists

To create nationally recognised, quality artistic work, with diverse artists, about the world that matters to people and communities today.

### Ambition 2: Communities & audiences

To engage with people in diverse communities to produce artistic work that explores and shares engaging stories and is accessible and meaningful to a broader range of audiences.

### Ambition 3: The wider sector

To collaborate with researchers and arts, health, and social sector professionals, to challenge and instigate debate around the role of the arts in civic change and help find more effective ways to use quality artistic work to improve engagement and well-being.

### Ambition 4: Our organisation

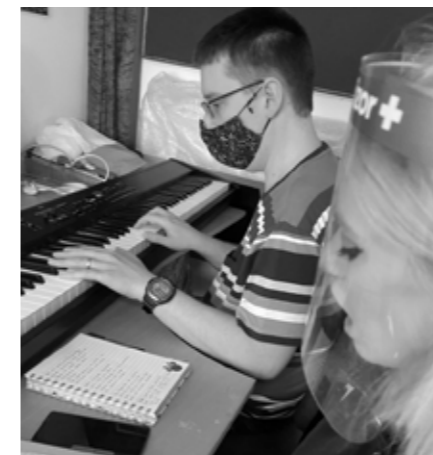
To ensure we are sustainable, with core funding and other grants in place to support diversity in all areas – Board, workforce, commissions, projects, performances, with and for audiences and participants, and in line with our Charitable objectives.



Cast and Crew filming *The Sea Part 1* for *We Cannot Walk Alone* May 2021  
Image: Kev Howard



Radio GaMashie working with women in Liberian Camp for *We Cannot Walk Alone*. Image: Samuel Lamptey



Tom Spence and Nicole Davis working on song for *We Cannot Walk Alone*.  
Image: Claire Webster Saaremets



Lord Mayor of Newcastle Councillor Habib Rahman speaks to audiences about *One Day Changes* exhibition at Bewick Hall, Newcastle City Library.  
Image: Colin Davison



Lead Musician Peter Saaremets presents Bronze Arts Award to Young Artistic Collective member Hadi Baraei.  
Image: Claire Webster Saaremets



Claire Webster Saaremets introduces the inspiration and social action for *UNITY Festival*



Nicole Davis from Reality Boots sings with Katie Grace and Brooke Pyle From Standing Upright at *UNITY Festival*. Image: Shahor Omar

# 4

## Our Activities

We make accessible touring music-based theatre and site-specific performances, exhibitions and gigs which reflect stories and themes relating to today's cultural landscape, changes in heritage and identity, and we explore together what we think about the world today.

### We have three core areas of delivery work:

1. Direct provision of weekly multi-arts opportunities with socially-vulnerable or isolated group of people. These take place at our Newcastle studio or in the places where people are, including Newcastle, Stockton on Tees, rural County Durham and the wider North East.
2. Production of professional touring, broadcast or screened artistic work, inspired by themes of: isolation and ageing, responding to Holocaust Memorial Day, and to Refugee Week. Our digital work has reached a global audience.
3. Contributing to national debates on social challenges, such as equality in diversity, inclusion, ageing, lived experiences of refugees, poverty, and hope. Our insights have been requested and featured at national and international conferences.

In 2021/22 we continued to adapt to the constraints and societal needs during the extended Coronavirus pandemic and its aftermath to co-create and support people by working in person in socially-distanced safe ways, and by innovating engagement and delivery in the digital-sphere.

Our actively-inclusive approach enables opportunities to work together for all less-represented groups including LGBTQAI+ identities, people of colour and across cultures, people who face challenges with struggling mental health, illness, poverty, and people with lived-experiences seeking asylum and refugee status.

This year we blended the needs and concerns of those we work with by creating artistic opportunities and platforming events which shared artworks with audiences. The art works and events created have been both uplifting and challenging. Here are four examples:



Exploring the theme of *We Cannot Walk Alone* in Heaton Park during lockdown. Image: Claire Webster Saaremets



Animator Sheryl Jenkins creates animated object with a young person at The Bostey for *We Cannot Walk Alone*. Image: Joe Hodgson

### We Cannot Walk Alone

Associate Artist Kema Sikazwe and Artistic Director Claire Webster Saaremets welcomed audiences live via Zoom to take part in a free interactive journey of discovery to explore songs, stories, spoken word and soundscapes created by diverse communities in response to ***We Cannot Walk Alone*** which was the theme for Refugee Week 2021.

Audiences were guided along an animated map and met artists and communities who shared the work they'd created – uplifting and thoughtful songs, films and stories, giving people opportunities to come together to understand refugee and lived experiences from across the globe, and to recognise the importance of shared humanity.

The collaborative process brought together many communities:

Skimstone Arts' Young Artist Collective and ECHO Artists, the Bosnian community in the North East of England, Friends of the Drop-In for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Sunderland, Neighbourhoods in Byker, the INSPIRE group in the West End of Newcastle, young people at The Bostey Community Centre in Walker, and partners working with refugee communities from Libya and Iraq. ***We Cannot Walk Alone*** was also broadcast on our online Skimstone Radio show.



Character Kathleen performs with her band in *Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future*. Photographer: Kev Howard



Photojournalist Shahor Omar talks to an exhibition visitor about his work. Photographer: Cristina Armstrong



Associate Artist David Stickman Higgins leads a movement and rhythm workshop inspired by nature for *UNITY Festival*. Image: Shahor Omar



Associate Artist Martim Dinis (Madame Teatro, Portugal) leads a warm up for *UNITY Festival*. Image: Shahor Omar

## Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future

As the pandemic social restrictions eased during summer 2021, Skimstone Arts' produced for touring a new version of the music-based performance, in partnership with ageing and housing research partners Northumbria University, Elders Council, and Care & Repair England.

Performances explored contemporary and critical decisions we make about housing and support networks as we grow older - encapsulated in the story of lone householder Kathleen. The performance, post show Q&A and research-led discussions with audiences were provocations to explore housing in later life, access to information, changes in policy, and how people decide where to live when they or a loved one grow older.

## One Day Changes

Reflecting and evaluating our journeys of collaboration, such as working with refugee communities for Refugee Week in June 2021, led to two Kurdish photo/video journalists, who have lived-experience of seeking asylum, becoming Skimstone Arts' Associate Artists.

They were commissioned to produce an exhibition displaying their images of war and refugee camps in Iraq and Syria while drawing out themes of hope and resilience. Their exhibition was launched at Newcastle City Library as part of Newcastle's Holocaust Memorial Day Events in January 2022, along with their new documentary *The Smell of Apples*. It tells the story of Azad, who now lives in England, and who survived the Halabja chemical attack in northern Iraq in 1988.

*One Day Changes* was a live-streamed event and radio broadcast involving artists with refugee lived-experience from Bosnia and Kurdistan, researchers with Holocaust and childhood war stories, as well as Skimstone Arts' Associate Artists, Young Artist Collective, and Reality Boots band exploring how humanity can share understanding, care and support that positively affect people's traumatic lives.

## Unity Festival 2022

*UNITY Festival* was a weekend of FREE live music, performance, arts, exhibitions, stories and workshops.

This year it moved to a new venue - the beautiful surroundings of Newcastle's Ouseburn Valley, Byker. Festival-goers of all ages were able to take part in a jam-packed programme of live events to celebrate community, nature and social action. We retained our online offer to people around the

world and those unable to attend in person. National and International diverse artists were commissioned to create new work and host a wide variety of accessible workshops. To support the development of the *UNITY Festival* programme, a new Byker residents commissioning group was established to co-programme and undertake event management.

Due to our September 2021 move to new studios in the East End of Newcastle, we created new partnerships and new hosting venues with Seven Stories The National Centre for Children's Books, St Silas' Church in Byker, and with Brinkburn Street Brewery, Kitchen and Bar. The Festival was attended by our neighbouring communities still navigating societal isolation; it opened up opportunities for festival-goers and performers to meet.

To find out more about these projects please go to our Impact Case Studies on pages 36-43.

# 5

## Participation

Our multi-generational work is with audiences, co-creators, and artists who are varied in their needs, lives, and isolation - experiencing poor mental health, poverty, social isolation and anxiety, disabilities and facing challenges when identifying as neuro diverse, LGBTQAI+ and/or with status as asylum-seekers and refugees.

We built on strong relationships which we have established with our at-risk communities in Stockton, Durham, Sunderland and Newcastle, and our contact ripples out nationally and internationally, such as with partners Radio GaMashie, in Ghana.

During the period covered in this report we worked directly with 261 beneficiaries and co-creators, with 103 artists, and we reached audiences of nearly 3,500 people. Together, artistic and co-creators originated 37 artistic pieces at or from 185 artistic events.

This year's change in reach is partly attributed to some moves back to in-person delivery while working with safe social-distancing measures, and to a change in our annual delivery cycle.

In our next three years, from our annual programme of Holocaust Memorial Day events, **UNITY Festival**, Refugee Week, touring original music and theatre, and exhibiting visual arts, we aim annually to reach 300+ participants in sessional activities, to produce 30+ projects, engage 300+ artists, and work with 400+ co-creators to reach 10,000 audience members.

In our annual programme of activities and creativity, we work together to express what matters to each person - individually and collectively - seeking to influence social understanding, compassion and positive change. We:

- **Produce** touring performances, online radio, exhibitions and festival events
- **Contribute** to social action and academic research with partners
- **Collaborate** with communities to create authentic and relevant artworks locally, nationally and internationally about humanity, environment and climate
- **Support** our Young Artists Collective, Echo Artists and their band Reality Boots to create work for our programmed events.



Associate Artist Kema Sikazwe (right) works with Daniel Hassan on his song in Blast Studio. Image: Claire Webster Saaremets



Filming scenes for *The Sea Part 1* for Refugee Week. Image: Kev Howard



Clare Matthews (right), member of Byker Commissioning Group joins the protest song choir at *UNITY Festival*.



Associate Artist Simon Tarrant works with Reality Boots member Arthur Vane on recording software. Image: Kev Howard



Song-writing: Associate Artist Kema Sikazwe (left), Byker co-creator Loretta Donnelly (right), and Assistant Project Manager Joe Hodgson (middle). Image: Kev Howard



Young Artist Collective member Emile Tarrant helps audiences to create their own origami butterfly at *UNITY Festival*. Image: Shahor Omar



Skimstone Arts sing songs with members of St Anthony's Care Services, Walker. Image: Lynda Watson

3473

Audience members reached

14 Projects  
Delivered

3 CPD

Regional and national Continuous  
Professional Development  
sessions for the sector

66 EVENTS  
In person / live / broadcast

103 ARTISTS  
Engaged or employed

37

ORIGINAL ARTWORKS

Created

185

Sessions

# 7

## What We Achieved & Learned

This year we've continued to measure what we do through consulting, collecting stories and gathering data from those we work with (including audiences, partners and Trustees) to help us better understand the difference we are aiming to make.

### Examples of recorded outcomes include:

- being proud of high-quality work that is recognised and responded to by audiences
- a shared sense of purpose, being visible and making a positive contribution
- supporting cultural, artist and community diversity
- providing creative, safe, inclusive, accessible spaces.
- feel listened to and nurtured.

We've continued to work with those at risk of social isolation in the North East of England, with existing communities (young people, Bosnian community, older people in day centres) and new communities such as the Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boaters (GTRSB).

### The Open Page

**The Open Page** project involved collecting responses from GTRSB communities exploring access and barriers to further education. A radio show called *The Open Page* broadcast these stories and songs and was co-hosted with Martin Gallagher (a Traveller with lived experience).



Live Broadcast of *The Open Page*. Pictured clockwise from bottom right: presenter Martin McNaughton, tech manager Nii Kwartey Owoo, lead musician Peter Saaremets, presenter Claire Webster Saaremets. Image: Claire Webster Saaremets

***"I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed The Open Page for Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month in June 2021 which helped Northumbria University to research how complexities of equality, belonging and identity affect access to higher education, and how places of learning can be respectfully and passionately developed for members of GTRSB communities."***

***"I felt it opened up your thinking (& ultimately others) & how we work together to reduce barriers & prejudice at all levels."***

- Martin Tom (living with Traveller experience)

### Organisational Resilience

As social distancing and travel opened up we were able to implement our ambition to work in person with more co-creators and beneficiaries in Stockton-on-Tees and Sunderland.

Success with Arts Council England's Cultural Recovery Fund allowed us to turn the pressure of losing our city-centre premises into a sustainable move to studios in Newcastle's East End. We continued to develop as an artistic and social action organisation with open access for local, regional and national co-collaborators and partners.

Our diverse professional artists also face risks of social isolation, partly for economic reasons, and in May 2021 we were able to research and align their fees to the nationally-recognised rates of The Musicians' Union and Artists' Union England.

We continued to revisit policies and action plans for health and safety, safeguarding, equality and diversity, and the environment and sustainability.

# 8

## Our Approach

We use a co-creation approach to be supportive to regional, national and international artists, who are diverse and under-represented - working with them in pathways from early-stage, through to Emerging Artist, and established Associate Artist.

Young people in our Young Artist Collective progress to established ECHO Artist and can join our Leadership Team.

We lead on training, delivering embedded practice in Silver and Gold national Arts Awards, and support independent freelancers in the cultural sector. Our years of established co-creation practice mean we engage people to work together as participating creators, promoting an ethos of equality and shared ownership.

This encourages creators to share stories and ideas, learn new skills and techniques and respond, challenge and co-create authentic, original, and innovative artworks - **with** rather than **by** professional artists. It also drives quality as artworks become part of our programmed public events and, to do so, must meet standards through the rigours of craft-building, rehearsal, recording, performance, and exhibition. Our creators AND artists are reflective of the diversity of underrepresented

communities. Our 'create with us' approach emphasises how making artwork together shares a new lens on the worlds we inhabit; it increases engagement and visibility and creates work to provoke thought, ownership and powerful responses through social action.

### The Garden Song

We worked at St Anthony's Day Centre creating a project called **The Garden Song**. Our Artistic Director Claire Webster Saaremets and Lead Musician Peter Saaremets worked with centre visitors to co-create a song a day with five groups inspired by their new garden area, exploring why green areas are important to our own lives and the planet.

***"The work you did [with the music and photography] was fantastic especially now that we can do some of this ourselves and I am hoping to purchase a couple of iPads."***  
- Claire Dodd (Day Care Manager) St Anthony of Padua Community Association



Claire Webster Saaremets and Peter Saaremets compose songs about the importance of gardens with resident Claire. Image: Claire Dodd

# 9

## Working Regionally, Nationally & Internationally

**Our inter-generational work is with co-creators, artists and audiences with varied needs and experiences of being at risk of social isolation.**

We brought together communities (young people and older people) from Tyne and Wear and County Durham with national and international artists, and built on our existing partnership with Radio GaMashie, in Ghana, to work with lived refugee experience co-creators in Liberian camps. All artworks created were shared alongside each other at every project event as part of our annual programme.

Our radio broadcasts, live and online events extended our audience reach and engagement to different parts of the world.

**UNITY Festival** brought together Associate Artists and audiences from Portugal, Ghana, Iraq and Kurdistan Iraq as well as live performances from London based band Asasaa and workshops by Associate Artists from Nottingham, East Yorkshire and Stockton.

This year's project delivery moved towards embedding an established annual programme of events that involved in-person delivery, safe social-distancing measures, online sessions and one-to-one tuition.



Volunteer photojournalist Shahor Omar, Associate Artist Ako Ismail and our long term partner originally from Bosnia, Smajo Beso meet to talk about ideas for *One Day Changes* Radio and Live Zoom event (Holocaust Memorial Day Events). Image: Claire Webster Saaremets



Volunteer photojournalist Shahor Omar films Azad and his story in Birmingham for *One Day Changes* Radio and Live Zoom event (Holocaust Memorial Day). Image: Claire Webster Saaremets



Nii Kwartey Owoo leads an African Dance workshop at *UNITY Festival*. Image: Shahor Omar



Associate Artist Cath Hodson works with co-creator Loretta Donnelly to create flags for *UNITY Festival*. Image: Ako Ismail



Movement Director Martim Dinis (Madame Teatro, Portugal) gives a live interview from the exhibition tent at *UNITY Festival*. Image: Shahor Omar



Radio GaMashie working with co-creators in the Liberian Camp, Ghana for *We Cannot Walk Alone*. Image: Samuel Lamptey



London based band Asasaa perform at *UNITY Festival*. Image: Ako Ismail

# 10

## Quality & Ambition

For 14 years we've created high-quality work with diverse artists, young people, researchers and communities, inspired by their lived experiences.

***"...I believe this organisation continues to make a genuine difference to the people they work alongside, rather than simply alleviating the symptoms or current problems, they successfully do this by: continuing to champion the arts as away of giving positive recognition, active voices, opportunities to those who have been forgotten, neglected, unpopular, addressing social injustice and isolation ... enabling groups to visit their accessible Studio space in the city ... and beyond."***

- Arts Development Officer, Newcastle City Council

***"It was very down to earth and real life. It was a real eye-opener and a lot of people go through this.... I loved all the songs. The acting was brilliant."***

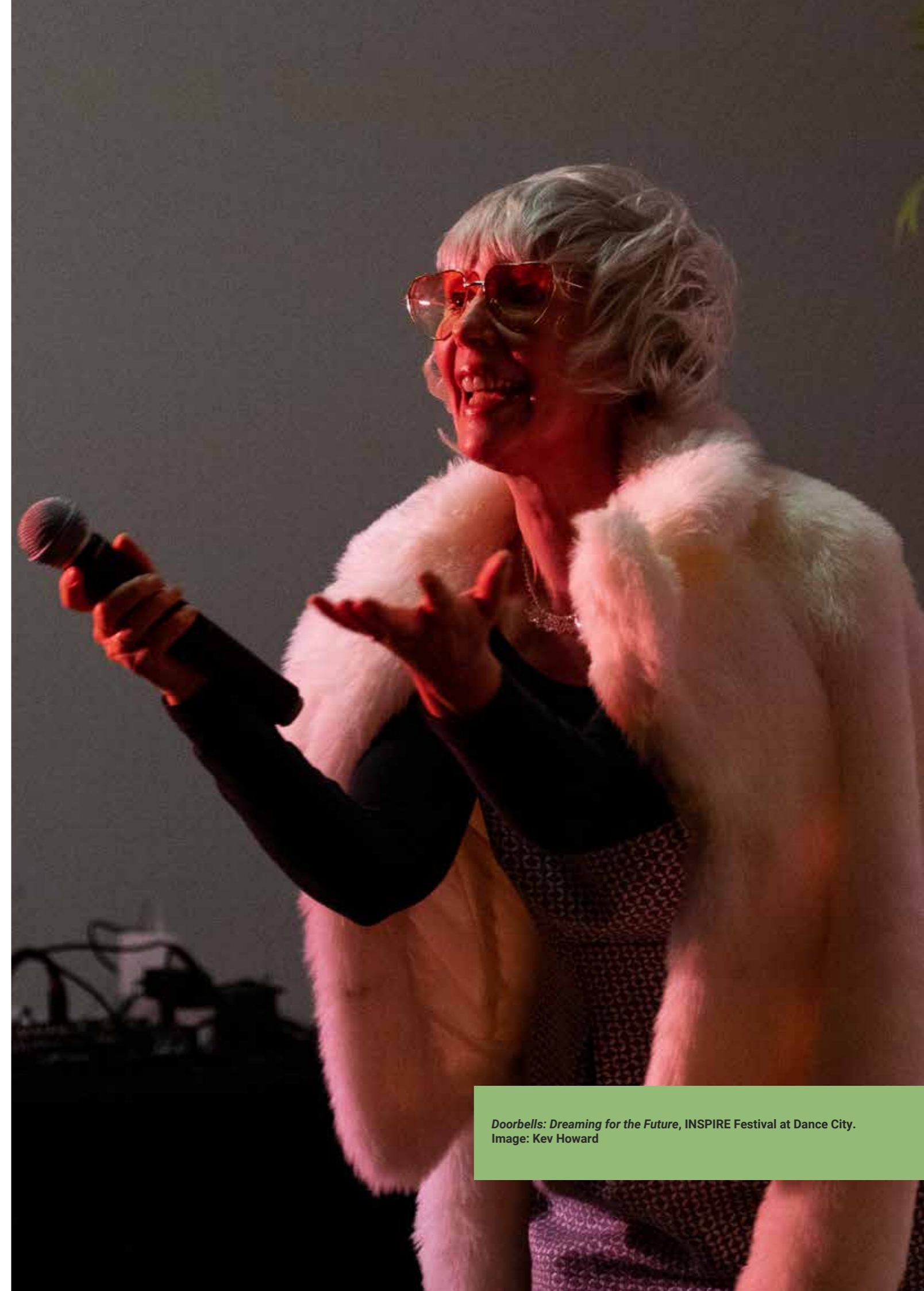
- Audience Member, ***Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future***, October 2021

***"It's made my day. What a fantastic and engaging audience today, clapping along with the songs ... & asking if we are making a CD of the songs!!!"***

- Audience Member, ***Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future***, October 2021

We have significantly grown, especially during the COVID pandemic and in response to the 2020 Black Live Matters movement, to build resilience and expand inclusivity and the quality of our work.

Quality is embedded in our approach where we constantly review and strive for excellence in the process of collaboration in making new work and in its production value.



*Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future*, INSPIRE Festival at Dance City.  
Image: Kev Howard

# 11

## Inclusivity & Relevance

**“An Artist-led organisation of such a diverse community of artists is one of the things that stands the organisation apart from many countryside”.**

### External Organisational Review, Spring 2022

We strongly believe in our work as a charity to address unfairness experienced by people who have a difficult start in life due to poverty, social injustice towards their racial identity and heritage, towards their personal LGBTQAI+ identity, and experiencing war and oppression.

People are labelled as ‘migrants’, ‘refugees’, ‘youths’, ‘benefits-seekers’, ‘old’. We want art to help change this narrative out of respect for each person’s right to express and own their personal story, and to learn about others by getting to know them, building relationships, and creating a cohesive society to directly overcome racism and other ‘isms.’

We believe art can change ways of thinking, to regard the world in new ways. We believe co-creative practices of writing songs,

creating radio broadcasts of real and reinterpreted stories, producing photographic exhibitions, building a UNITY Festival, touring performances, all help to bring a better way of saying ‘look at who we are as humans in our precious planet.’

So we plan projects to identify shared themes WITH our communities (we call people who work with us co-creators). There is no hierarchy of ‘we’ll do this for you’, instead there is a ‘journey we can go on together to explore the world.’

This change expands out into our co-creating communities and gives a different narrative and identity. We have included some of our new Impact Studies in this report to show what, why and how we work to create change.

**“We see how individuals and communities at risk of social isolation are as they struggle**

**to find energy and purpose, especially when waiting for a Home Office interview (feeling**

**life is on hold during a wait of three years), or being a young artist and mum of four children and needing to access a food bank, as well as emotional support for tiredness and depression.”**

- Claire Webster Saaramets, Artistic Director Skimstone Arts



Associate Artist Keith Hill teaching Reality Boots Member Arthur Vane clarinet technique whilst keyboard player Thomas Ewart works on his own piece. Image: Maggie



Evaluation Picnic. Pictured clockwise from left: Ako Ismail, Romans, ECHO Artist Maggie and Project Coordinator Annalisa Burrati.



Tech manager Nii Kwartey Owoo setting up tech process for our Radio broadcasts and live Zoom events. Image: Peter Saaremets



Researcher Dr Beate Muller records for One Day Changes Radio/Live Zoom event. Image: Claire Webster Saaremets



Member of Byker Commissioning Group Angela Mortimer featured in the Change of Life exhibition as part of UNITY Festival. Image: Ako Ismail

**“I got more confident. I feel more able to talk to people and less self-conscious”**

- Participant feedback from Refugee Week 2021

**“Heartwarming. At the end I felt I belonged more, developed friendships.”**

- Participant feedback from Refugee Week 2021



Associate Artists, staff and young artists reflect together at a hybrid evaluation session for One Day Changes with Peter Saaremets on Zoom with young people and partners in Ghana. Image: Cristina Armstrong

# 12

## Dynamism

**“I think you made something very important happen. I hope you managed to appreciate what was happening while it was happening.”**

**Steve Drayton,  
Co-Presenter Skimstone  
Radio**

We developed programme content for Skimstone Radio and podcasts online with presenters Kema Sikazwe (Associate Artist/actor), Smajo Beso (Bosnian Educational Trust), Steve Drayton (former BBC producer), and Claire Webster Saaramets (Artistic Director).

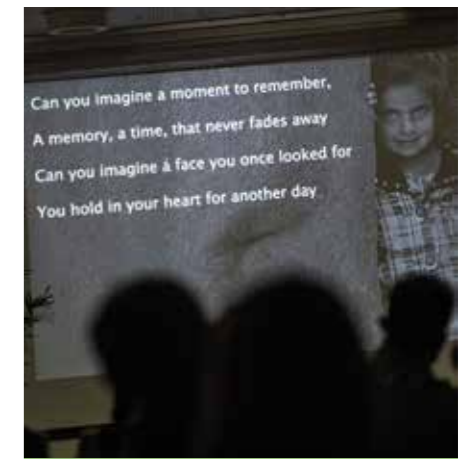
Utilising an accessible digital platform our free to access internet station Skimstone Radio saw us share important stories demonstrating the impact that the work created by Skimstone Arts and our co-creators has had.

***“The project really brought home the issues faced by the refugee community and local communities. Poetry, music, film and animation told the stories, wonderfully. They showed us all hope and a sense of belonging but also the pride increasing the work and openness in telling their stories which takes great courage to do so.”***

- Audience Feedback, **Unity Festival**



One Day Changes Radio Broadcast and Live Facebook Event, Bewick Hall Library for Holocaust Memorial Day Events. Image: Colin Davison



One Day Changes Radio Broadcast and Live Facebook Event, Bewick Hall Library for Holocaust Memorial Day Events. Image: Colin Davison



One Day Changes Radio Broadcast and Live Facebook Event, Bewick Hall Library for Holocaust Memorial Day Events. Image: Colin Davison



Participants taking part in an African Dance Workshop live/Zoom Image: Shahor Omar



Audience members view film *The Smell of Apples* from One Day Changes Exhibition at Pop Recs, Sunderland. Image: Ako Ismail



Member of the audience shares his Peace Pledge Flag from workshop with Cath Hodson at UNITY Festival



Taking part in Movement Workshop Live and on Facebook Live at UNITY Festival. Image: Shahor Omar

# 13

## Environment

“There’s definitely a hope when you see other artists. It doesn’t seem like a lot changes day to day, but when you get a load of artists who are like minded and believe in similar things come together and get the activist and creative juices flowing it instils a kind of hope and faith in humanity.”

– Skimstone ECHO Artist,  
UNITY Festival evaluation and  
reflection session

Our annual **UNITY Festival** celebrated community, nature and social action. Key environmental themes of climate change and environmental responsibility prompted social action across our Festival programme and specially-created artworks.

This free accessible Festival was underpinned by our core programming values of representation, inclusivity, quality and equality. Workshops included: nest building alongside commissioned music titled **For the Sake of Humanity, Dance of Colours, No to War**, music from Kurdish composer Rzgar Hama Rauf, and a live link presentation from President of the RSPB Miranda Krestovnikoff.

Skimstone Arts’ commitment to our Environmental Policy includes promoting lower emissions and encouraging and influencing others to do so; we operate a recycling programme for all studio users.

In September 2021 we moved premises to set up our new Studio at i4 Quayside, which is a Newcastle City Council-run building. This move supports minimising carbon footprint as studio users are encouraged to car-share, use public transport, and walk to our premises. We are planning to adopt Creative Green Tools to gain insights into staff, artists, board, community and audience carbon footprint, and for support with accessibility.



Co-creator and Byker resident Steven Office records his work about the importance of how we treat each other and our planet. Image: Ako Ismail

# 14

## Knowledge & Exchange

**“Exceedingly grateful engaged and enthused”**

**- Online participant**

In 2021/22 we were invited to lead on a number of knowledge and exchange seminars with regional and national partners. These included:

- Middlesbrough based Musinc exploring the theme ‘Differentiation and Working with Mixed Ability Groups’. We planned our input with Leadership Team members Nicole and Magpie who attended and took part.
- Culture Bridge, to lead on a session at their Arts Award Conference on our approaches to engaging young people who undertake Gold and Silver Arts Award. Artistic Director, Claire Webster Saaremets worked with one of our Gold Arts Award engagers Philip to co-create a video.
- At our Skimstone Arts UNITY Festival 2022 we also planned and delivered a session about how we approach song writing across our Youth Music projects. This was a joint presentation by members of Reality Boots and Standing Upright, and was led by Lead Musician Peter Saaremets. It finished with a song created on the spot by members of the audience!



Leadership Team member Phillip Melody records a video about his Gold Arts Award for Culture Bridge's Arts Award Conference. Image: Claire Webster Saaremets

***“Thanks Claire and Peter, really enjoyed the event and working with you...Here's a few comments from the chat function...”***

***“Hi, found this really useful and would be up for attending another”***

***“Thanks everyone, lots to mull over, and some really interesting ideas.”***

***“I'll be planning a programme for next year (22-23) and will keep in touch on this, there may be some interest in a repeat event.....always fab working with you”***

- Tim Coyte (Him/he) MUSINC Workforce Development Co-ordination Support Cultural Services

***“Just wanted to say thank you once again for being a part of today, and for the time and thought that went into your presentation, and***

***for really supporting the advisers and being your wonderful selves in the session. Please do pass on thanks and good luck to Phillip.”***

- Jane Gray, Freelance Arts Project Manager, Culture Bridge

Our learning from the Sector Development sessions is around continuing to co-create and deliver with our young people and this brings authenticity and new perspectives to the knowledge sharing, and embedding opportunities for sector development in our Annual Programme of events going forward. We are excited about extending this to other partners in areas of the volunteer sector including those supporting lived refugee experience, health and wellbeing alongside arts and industry.

# 15

## Impact Case Study Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future

*Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future* is a humorous and moving performance inspired by the latest research about national housing issues. Featuring live music and original songs, the theatrical performance explores the critical decisions we make about how and where we live as we grow older. Originally created in 2015 and featured as part of the Edinburgh Fringe, *Doorbells* has been developed and adapted in response to new research and global changes.

In 2020, in response to the pandemic and making the performance more accessible to audiences, *Doorbells: Covid 19* was developed and re-staged as a short film. It premiered as part of the Centre for Translational Research into Public Health FUSE seminar series and included two webinars with Q&A and discussion. In October 2021, a newly revised version of the performance toured to eight venues across Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead engaging 200 new audiences. Each performance was followed by a short Q&A and the opportunity to take part in a discussion about housing, access to information, changes in policy and information to help decision making about where to live when you or your loved one grow older hosted by Northumbria University and Elders Council.

### Outputs/Outcomes

- 9 performances in cultural and community venues reaching nearly 200 in COVID-19 safeguarding conditions.
- Provided an accessible and safe place to engage audiences in meaningful conversations around housing options as we grow older.
- Attracted support by Elders Council of Newcastle, Care & Repair England, Northumbria University, Rayne Foundation, Well Newcastle Gateshead and Arts Council England.

### Impact

Developed strategic partnerships with Elders Council, Northumbria University, and Care & Repair England to gain relevant research and to support vital messaging around national housing issues. Performances, touring and film screenings of *Doorbells* have led to us finding new and engaging ways to provide information for audiences, and to help inform and influence decisions around where they might live in the future.



*Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future* performing to audiences at Newcastle City Library. Image: Kev Howard



Barbara Douglas from Elders Council introduces performance of *Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future*. Image: Kev Howard

**“Covered a wide range of issues delivered in a clear and thought-provoking and imaginative manner. Covered practical issues. Music and singing excellent... The political backdrop broadcast on radio was very good and pertinent.”**  
- Audience Member



Claire Webster Saaremets performing at *Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future*. Image: Kev Howard

**“The performance made me realise that I am not the only one struggling to cope with the issues highlighted in the play and that someone out there recognises the difficulties that many people are faced with. Thank you Skimstone Arts. Thank you Elders Council. Thank you Northumbria University. Thank you Care and Repair England. Thank you Chopwell Community Centre!”**

- Audience Member

**“I think this film is a fantastic way to engage people in talking about age, loneliness and social interactions during lockdown. I think this film is far more powerful to people than a Powerpoint.”**

- Audience Member

# Impact Case Study

## UNITY Festival 2022

Skimstone Arts **UNITY Festival**, which took place from Friday 4 to Sunday 6 March 2022, was a weekend of FREE live music, performance, arts, exhibitions, stories and workshops.

Set across three locations - St Silas' Church in Byker, Seven Stories The National Centre for Children's Books, and Brinkburn Street Brewery Bar & Kitchen - festival-goers of all ages and backgrounds were invited to take part in a jam-packed programme of events to celebrate community, nature and social action.

In a first for the Festival, Skimstone Arts' young people in three bands - Reality Boots, Standing Upright, and Jazzy Distopia - came together to perform in a Youth Music Showcase of original songs, and gave a seminar called 'Youth Music approaches to song writing'. It particularly explored themes of Community and Environment to a large public audience.

Another first was our established Byker Commissioning Group (of residents) BCG, who organised their own events with their budget, and which gave a very positive contribution to the festival, along with an exhibition of photographic works by Associate Artist Ako Ismail.

### Outputs/Outcomes

- 41 diverse artists were commissioned and delivered 31 events over 2.5 days underpinning our core programming values of representation, inclusivity, quality and equality.
- 17 interactive workshops and participatory events, 6 live performances which attracted 726 unique attendances. Accessible venues for people attending in person, and accessible as livestreams via Facebook Live, and via broadcasts from Skimstone Radio online.
- 3 radio broadcasts were hosted with 684 listeners from the UK, Netherlands, USA, Belgium and Ghana
- 810 online attendees took part in the Festival via Facebook Live.

### Impact

The UNITY Festival external evaluation documented stories of how artists, Byker Commissioning Group, and audiences felt a clear purpose, felt valued and recognised. It has resulted in a new resilience, positive mental health and confidence for people when taking part in a positive festival with social action. In total UNITY Festival reached 2,220 people in person and virtually.



Associate Artist Bethany Ellen Coyle leads a positive protest song workshop at St Silas' for UNITY Festival. Image: Ako Ismail



Nii Kwarty Owoo, tech manager/dance artist at UNITY Festival. Image:Shahor Omar

**"It was just what was needed for my head. For other people's heads too. The spirit of love, compassion, acceptance, inclusion, excitement and creative enthusiasm was evident throughout with a few almost moved to tears moments."**  
**- Audience Member**



Claire Webster Saaremets chats with Miranda Krestovnikoff, Wildlife and television presenter about her experiences of exploring our planet and environmental change at UNITY Festival. Image: Shahor Omar

**"I'm really grateful to be perfectly honest because I don't think I would have come out of my shell so much if I hadn't done any of this..."**

- Byker Commissioning Group member

**"I'm grateful that I got to meet lots of lovely people. I think that's a thing we've all missed doing, what with Covid happening.."**

- Reality Boots band member

**"Such a diverse group of artists and audience members came together for the Festival, that is so unusual and such a great thing to see."**

- UNITY Festival Participant

## Impact Case Study Reality Boots

In 2013 Skimstone Arts' band Reality Boots, made up of a diverse and at-risk group of young musicians, was formed.

Comprising passionate voices, each with unique experiences, the band has composed and released two albums **Louder Than Words** and **Void/Evolve**, and toured their music around the region, visiting schools and colleges to inspire the next generation of young musicians.

They continue to co-write songs inspired by their own and others experiences and views of the world.

In June 2022 Reality Boots toured the North East of England on a six-date tour. Working with other like-minded young musicians and artists across the region Reality Boots created a number of powerful new songs, each inspired by the world that matters, such as humanity, peace and our environment.

Partners included Standing Upright (North Tyneside), Jack Drum Arts (County Durham) and Band Jam at Musinc (Middlesbrough) as well as musician, rapper and actor Kema Kay - each joining Reality Boots to support a gig on their home turf.

Reality Boots new album **Breaking Barriers** launches on Thursday 29 September 2022 at the Cluny2 venue in Newcastle upon Tyne.

### Outputs/Outcomes

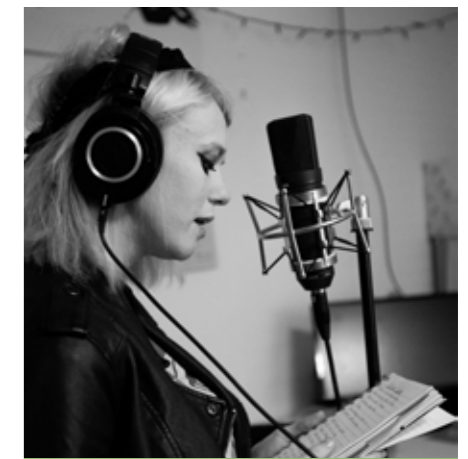
- Since launching Reality Boots, 26 diverse young people have gained experience with and performed together as a band
- 14 Associate Artists and musicians have been employed to mentor and nurture the vast talent of band members
- Young people have learned skills across songwriting, performance, collaborative working and music tuition across a range of musical instruments
- As part of the 2022 tour, Skimstone Arts will support Reality Boots to deliver 10 songwriting workshops with partner music groups to co-create 4 new songs on themes of social action and environment

### Impact

The project has supported young people to have opportunities for paid artistic development and also leadership skills. They have gained experience and understanding of different roles involved in managing gigs and marketing, event management and stage management.



Reality Boots member Arthur Vane performing at UNITY Festival. Image: Shahor Omar



Lead Singer Nicole Davis records her lyrics for *Memories Lost*, a song written in response to a real story from research by Dr Beate Muller. Image: Kev Howard

**"I really liked the song *Stronger Together* - the lyrics were powerful and her voice complimented them perfectly."**

**Ana Miron (new Young Artist Collective member)**



Reality Boots perform to a large live audience at UNITY Festival. Image: Shahor Omar

**"It gave performers (the chance) to express their feelings through music and a chance to do what they enjoy "**

- Audience Feedback

**"Great to hear some great personal lyrics - fighting stereotypes and hearing a range of people."**

- Audience Feedback

**"Showing young talent. Giving people opportunities to perform."**

- Audience Feedback

**"Great performance." "Lovely music and singing."**

- Audience Feedback

## Impact Case Study One Day Changes

**One Day Changes** is an exhibition by Kurdish Iraq photojournalists Ako Ismail and Shahor Omar who now live in the North East of England. The exhibition and film, **'The Smell of Apples'**, commissioned by Skimstone Arts, premiered as part of Holocaust Memorial Day 2022 at Newcastle City Library in January, and featured a location broadcast for a live audience as well as via Skimstone Radio and Facebook Live.

The broadcast featured original music, alongside film, poetry and spoken word - all inspired by real stories, research and lived experiences, exploring how we can build a better future, one change at a time.

In March 2022, **One Day Changes** toured to Pop Recs, in Sunderland, coinciding with the anniversary of the Halabja chemical attack. The exhibition toured to St John's College, Durham, in May, and to Newcastle University to coincide with Refugee Week 2022. **One Day Changes** is accompanied by compositions from international Kurdish composer Rzgar Hama Rauf, commissioned by Skimstone Arts.

The touring format is for the film, **The Smell of Apples** to be screened and followed by a panel discussion.

### Outputs/Outcomes

- Exhibition and film toured regionally to four high profile venues, and has received national expressions of interest to host the work
- Over 550 people have attended the exhibition and film screenings, live and online

### Impact

- Ako and Shahor are now established Associated Artists embedded in Skimstone Arts' practice and support project development, documentation and film production
- We have established regional and national connections with University partners and members of the National Union of Journalists
- Social action has been embedded across this project by inviting audiences to pledge messages of support for Ukraine and all those affected by war and oppression
- The project has received positive promotional coverage regionally, national and has featured on Kurdistan media channels.



The Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor Habib Rahman, meets Azad and his family and the Skimstone Arts film-making team. Azad's story inspired the film *The Smell of Apples* for *One Day Changes* for Holocaust Memorial Day. Image: Colin Davison



Audience view *One Day Changes* Exhibition at PopRecs, Sunderland. Image: Shahor Omar

**"Unless and until we get to hear these testimonies in unique and mesmerising ways will we learn, and once we learn we will say no... we must learn and in order for us to learn organisations such as Skimstone, it is absolutely vital for you to create the platform and the opportunity."**  
- Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor Habib Rahman, January 2022



Artwork from *One Day Changes* Exhibition. Image: Shahor Omar

**"I wanted to tell people about peace and working for humanity. I was a child and teenager in the war. I want to change things. I feel very good that you've helped me and everyone at Skimstone Arts to understand and make this film and exhibition."**

- Shahor Omar, Skimstone Arts' Associate Artist & Filmmaker, February 2022

**"Powerful, simple, truthful messages in film, poetry, song and images"**

- Audience member, January 2022

# 16

## Our Year Ahead / Artistic Director's report

As I reflect on the 2021/2022 year, so many highlights are remembered for how they opened up new worlds for our communities and for us, to change how we view life through the art and the people who help us to make it.

**One Day Changes** exhibition and film, alongside our Skimstone Radio broadcast, opened up opportunities to work with talented photojournalists from Kurdistan Iraq. Their striking and powerful images of capturing one day experiences in war-torn areas also spoke about humanity and this definitely resonates with me about a shared commitment to social action. Along with this, the chance to create a new film-short together that explores extensively the theme of surviving genocide has prompted many responses from audiences and listeners across the world.

This is one of our arts-led campaigns for recognition by us all to better-understand the world we continue to navigate, and to respect those whose lives are completely disrupted by war - including artists - totally beyond their choice. I also never thought Skimstone Arts would be featured on Kurdish TV!

Lockdown and moving to new premises also enabled us to move all our projects into a strong annual programme, giving equal visibility to the stories, songs, performances and research that our diverse communities and artists create together from across the world.

We were so excited to see this at UNITY

Festival 2022 where we were able to produce and host a live and online festival to those who may never have experienced or helped to programme diverse bands and workshops, talks and social action before.

I particularly want to thank the amazing team of staff and artists, young people and communities who have shown such resilience, innovation and artistic integrity throughout this year. It remains an honour to work with you. Thanks also to our continuing Board of Trustees who give of their time and talents so readily and to all our funders and partners regionally, nationally and internationally.

Going forward into 2022/23 we're excited about taking **UNITY Festival** to Stockton on Tees, and involving a new performance group based in St Peter's Church. Also, the tour and launch of a new and very exciting album by Reality Boots, and our continued commitment to touring and making new work that we hope, even in small but significantly positive ways, changes views of the world, including our own.

We continue to pursue stability, radical and risk-taking programmes and most of all, keep opening and welcoming artistic and event management, production and administration for all those who still should be better represented in society. We're excited about the future!

**Claire Webster Saaremets**  
Artistic Director



Skimstone Arts team with co-creating communities and associate artists at the Evaluation Picnic for *We Cannot Walk Alone*, June 2021. Image: Joe Hodgeson.

### Leadership Team Report

When we were doing **We Cannot Walk Alone**, we worked hard to get the balance right between face to face and online working. Meeting different faces from new communities brought new energy. Working in Heaton Park together to create new songs was a novel and invigorating experience.

**UNITY Festival 2022** was very inclusive and had a lot of energy and everyone doing the workshops were so positive. I felt it went very very well. There was so much to do but we also had space so you could go in and out and still feel included.

The songs we created for the radio broadcasts – Just one Day and Memories Lost for **One Day Changes** were very powerful and emotional and especially the way we came together.

Hearing refugees' stories helped us to shape our songs and how it affects people. **One Day Changes** is about giving positive energy in the world, **Memories Lost** is inspired by a real story and remembers the tragedies that happened, but moves forward in the hope to stop other tragedies from happening.

This coming year will be very interesting as we have Reality Boots Tour and Album Launch and will be working on Holocaust Memorial Day Events 2023. I'm really looking forward to writing new and special songs with more young people from across the North East.

I'm also very excited about our extended regional UNITY Festival in 2023.

**Nicole Davis**  
Leadership Team, representing  
Young Artist Collective

# 17

## Our Trustees

“Skimstone is inclusive and ambitious in its approach, considering both the people it directly works with and the impact its work can have on humanity...who has been encourage by a supportive board - to use art as a vehicle of change for those who are at risk of isolation.”

- Organisational Review 2022

For the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, the Board of Trustees is the Board of Directors of the charitable company and is referred to as “the Trustees” throughout this report. The Trustees of Skimstone Arts during the year and signatories to this report are as follows:

**Wendy Scott**  
Chair

**Carol Candler**  
Secretary

**Katherine Sargeant**  
Treasurer (formerly Katherine Dixon)

**Sarah Drummond**  
Vice Chair

**Dr Liadi Mudashiru**  
Trustee (appointed 2021)

**Garry Robson**  
Trustee (resigned April 2022)

**Rebecca Wilkie**  
Trustee



Wendy Scott (Chair) at the Organisational Review sessions. Image: Beckie Smith



Trustee Liadi Mudashiru attends Board Meeting at Skimstone Studios. Image: Peter Saaremets



Rebecca Wilkie and Carol Candler attend Organisational Review sessions. Image: Beckie Smith



Trustee Carol Candler taking part at Skimstone Arts' UNITY Festival with artist David Stickman Higgins. Image: Ako Ismail



Vice Chair Sarah Drummond talks with Associate Artist Ako Ismail about his exhibition at One Day Changes. Image: Cristina Armstrong



Chair Wendy Scott, Treasurer Katie Dixon and Secretary Carol Candler attend UNITY Festival. Image: Shahor Omar

# 18

## Structure, Governance & Management

### Structure

Skimstone Arts is a company limited by guarantee (registered number 06261728) and a registered charity (registered number 1182284) and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

A board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that the organisation meets all its statutory, contractual and social obligations.

Skimstone Arts currently has six Trustees who take decisions collectively. Trustees meet formally every quarter for full board meetings at which they review activities, finances, company performance, business management, public benefit, strategy, and the voluntary input of Trustees.

The Board also holds an Annual General Meeting, typically in September, where we celebrate and showcase our collaborative work with our artists, beneficiaries, funders and invited guests. Our annual meeting in 2021 took place compliantly as a blended-attendance meeting, in person at our new studio and online.

This year we had sub-committees for Trustees on equality, diversity and inclusion; policy and governance; strategic planning and impact; funding strategy and proposals; communications, marketing and knowledge-sharing.

We have no committees which take decisions on behalf of the full board. The rules for the authority and delegation of the Trustees are set in our governing document and terms of reference, as is the scope of our subcommittees.

### Appointment and Induction of Trustees

Our annual governance mapping exercise conducted by trustees this year integrated:

- our Theory of Change plan
- our externally-conducted organisational review, and
- the Arts Council England Let's Create strategy outcomes of creative people, cultural communities, and a creative and cultural country.

We identified areas of knowledge and experience which we need to change and develop in the Board within the next 12-month to 24-month cycles.

Skimstone Arts is committed to deliver a fair, open recruitment process and is expanding its outreach methods to raise awareness of our vacancies in a diverse range of communities, places and sectors.

In June 2021 we welcomed Dr Liadi Mudashiru who was appointed as a new Trustee at our AGM.



Vice Chair Sarah Drummond and photo-journalist Shahor Omar at One Day Changes exhibition, Newcastle City Library, January 2022. Image credit: Claire Webster Saaremets

New Trustees are typically inducted by the Chair and are provided with a range of resources and support to help grow their understanding of the charity's activities.

Trustees participate in an annual 'awayday' and attend Skimstone Arts events and performances, connecting with our artists, co-creators and beneficiaries. The Treasurer and Vice-Chair handle communication of updates from the Charity Governance Code, and Continuous Professional Development type training for Trustees.

### Management

Skimstone Arts' team of artists, executives and volunteers is led by Artistic Director Claire Webster Saaremets. There is an annual appraisals cycle for the core delivery team of Artistic Director, Lead Musician, Creative Producer, Financial Administrator, Marketing and Communications Manager, and Project Coordinators.

### Public Benefit

The Trustees understand and have discussed the implications of the provisions of the Charities Act 2006, which states that all charities must demonstrate that they are established for public benefit, and have had due regard to the public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

# 19

## Financial Review

For the year ended 31 March 2022 Skimstone Arts recorded a net surplus of £18,828 (2019-20: deficit £15,084).

Much of this surplus relates to grant income received in advance of project activities due to take place in 2022-23.

**Our principal risks and uncertainties:** The principal risks for Skimstone Arts are financial, social, and safeguarding of young and vulnerable people; these risks are recorded and monitored with all risks in our secure risk register which is monitored and reviewed quarterly by the Trustees.

**Financial risk:** Financial risks stem partly from the pandemic and post-pandemic economic conditions so many are facing - such as rising costs of premises, additional costs to achieve a blended delivery offer in-person, on location, and digitally.

**Societal risk and uncertainties:** Societal risks for us include the wellbeing and health of our beneficiaries, our artists, and our freelance staff. We work with health-sector and academic experts to understand and tailor our current and future work.

**Safeguarding risk:** we maintain a Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed annually by freelance staff and Trustees. All new Trustees, freelance staff and artists are inducted into the Safeguarding Policy.

**Reserves and going concern:** The Trustees have reviewed the charity's needs for reserves in line with the guidance issued by the Charity Commission. The Trustees aim to hold a level of Unrestricted Reserves to enable normal operating activities to continue for a period of up to three months should a shortfall in income or significant unforeseen expenses occur. This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees on an annual basis as part of the charity's budgeting processes. Skimstone Arts currently holds Unrestricted Reserves of £28,332 as at 31 March 2022 (31 March 2021: £25,710). The fundraising sub-committee continues to work with Trustees and funders to look for opportunities to build up our reserves to meet our target range of three to six months' average operating costs.

The Trustees have reviewed and considered relevant information, including the annual budget and future cash flows in making their assessment. Based on these assessments, given the measures that could be undertaken



Image: Shahor Omar

Young Artist Collective member John Paul Goossens shares the debut of his film *Boxed In* at *UNITY Festival*

to mitigate the current adverse conditions, and the current resources available, the Trustees have concluded that they can continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts.

**Principal source of funds:** We seek always to diversify our funding. Our Trustees are involved in face-to-face advocacy of the benefits to society from our work and are themselves donors to Skimstone Arts. We also receive specific funding in relation to the areas of work we have reported upon, and our funders include:

- Newcastle City Council
- Arts Council England
- Youth Music
- Community Foundation Tyne & Wear
- Garfield Weston Foundation

- Newcastle Fund
- Well Newcastle Gateshead
- Big Lottery Community Fund
- Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund
- Quaker Legacy Fund
- Wellesley Foundation

# 20

## Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The charity Trustees (who are also the directors of Skimstone Arts for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

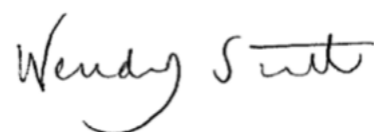
- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any

material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and

- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report was approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



**W Scott**  
Chair of the Board of Trustees

# 21

## Statement of Financial Activities

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	6	1,058	1,500	<b>2,558</b>	5,493
Charitable activities					
Grants and contracts	7	20,000	191,982	<b>211,982</b>	122,542
Donated services	8	-	-	-	7,485
Other trading activities	9	10,812	-	<b>10,812</b>	17,080
<b>Total income</b>		<b>31,870</b>	<b>193,482</b>	<b>225,352</b>	<b>152,600</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds	11	-	-	-	440
Charitable activities					
Operation of the charity	13	33,879	172,644	<b>206,524</b>	159,759
Donated services	12	-	-	-	7,485
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>33,879</b>	<b>172,644</b>	<b>206,524</b>	<b>167,684</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		<b>( 2,010 )</b>	<b>20,838</b>	<b>18,828</b>	<b>( 15,084 )</b>
Transfers between funds		4,632	( 4,632 )	-	-
<b>Net movement of funds</b>		<b>2,622</b>	<b>16,206</b>	<b>18,828</b>	<b>( 15,084 )</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		25,710	17,365	<b>43,075</b>	58,159
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>28,332</b>	<b>33,571</b>	<b>61,903</b>	<b>43,075</b>

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities

The notes on pages 53 to 62 form an integral part of these accounts.

## Balance Sheet As at 31 March 2022

Company No 6261728	Notes	£	Total 2022 £	£	Total 2021 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	22		952		1,428
<b>Total fixed assets</b>			<b>952</b>		<b>1,428</b>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	23	24,336		13,824	
Cash at bank and in hand	24	55,250		45,246	
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>79,586</b>		<b>59,070</b>	
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due within one year	25	<b>( 18,635 )</b>		<b>( 17,423 )</b>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			<b>60,951</b>		<b>41,647</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<b>61,903</b>		<b>43,075</b>
<b>Total net assets</b>					
			<b>61,903</b>		<b>43,075</b>
<b>Funds of the charity</b>					
Unrestricted income funds			28,332		25,710
Restricted income funds			33,571		17,365
<b>Total funds</b>			<b>61,903</b>		<b>43,075</b>

The company was entitled to an exemption from audit under s477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

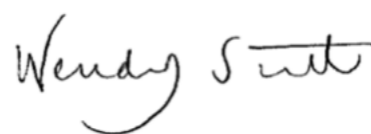
The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act with the respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with FRS102 SORP.

The notes on pages 53 to 62 to form an integral part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved by the Board on: 26 September 2022

and are signed on its behalf by:



**W Scott**  
Chair of the Board of Trustees

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 1 Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation or uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

### 2 Basis of accounting

#### 2.1 Basis of preparation

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) – Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011. Skimstone Arts meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

### 2.2 Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have reviewed and considered relevant information, including the annual budget and future cash flows in making their assessment. In particular, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trustees have revised their forecasts to take into account the impact on the business of possible scenarios brought on by the impact of COVID-19, alongside the measures that they can take to mitigate the impact. Based on these assessments, given the measures that could be undertaken to mitigate the current adverse conditions, and the current resources available, the Trustees have concluded that they can continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts.

### 3 Income

#### 3.1 Recognition of income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the resources, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is more likely than not that the resources will be received and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

### 3.2 Offsetting

There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses, unless required or permitted by FRS102 SORP or FRS102.

### 3.3 Grants and donations

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria of income recognition are met.

### 3.4 Donated goods and services

Donated goods are measured at fair value (the amount for which the asset could be exchanged) unless impractical to do so. Donated services and facilities are included in the SoFA when received at the value of the gift to the charity provided that the value of the gift can be measured reliably. Donated services and facilities that are consumed immediately are recognised as income with the equivalent

amount recognised as an expense under the appropriate heading in the SoFA.

### 3.5 Volunteer help

The value of volunteer help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the Trustees' annual report.

### 3.6 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when received and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

### 3.7 Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any purpose of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the Trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

## 4 Expenditure and liabilities

### 4.1 Liability recognition

Liabilities are recognised when it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

### 4.2 Charitable activities

Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of production of plays, exhibitions, concerts, films and performances and other activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.

### 4.3 Governance and support costs

Support costs have been allocated between governance and other support costs. Governance costs comprise all costs involving public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice. Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

### 4.4 Irrecoverable VAT

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

### 4.5 Creditors

The charity has creditors which are measured at settlement amounts less any trade discounts.

## 5 Assets

### 5.1 Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised at cost and are depreciated over their estimated useful economic lives on a straight line basis as follows: Fixtures fittings and equipment Straight line over four years A full year's depreciation charge is applied in the year of acquisition and no charge is made in the year of disposal.

## Analysis of income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
<b>6 Donations and legacies</b>				
Donations and gifts	288	-	288	613
Core grants	770	-	770	-
Community Fund High Sheriff Award	-	-	-	750
Care and Repair England	-	-	-	2,330
Newcastle City Council	-	1,500	1,500	1,800
	<u>1,058</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>2,558</u>	<u>5,493</u>
<b>7 Charitable activities</b>				
<u>Income from grants</u>				
NCIF Stabilisation Fund	-	35,000	35,000	-
Well Newcastle Gateshead	-	13,500	13,500	8,000
Big Lottery Community Fund	-	9,500	9,500	9,850
Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund	-	-	-	35,000
Youth Music	-	35,469	35,469	39,017
Arts Council England	-	75,513	75,513	20,550
Garfield Western	20,000	-	20,000	-
Newcastle Fund	-	13,500	13,500	10,125
Wellesley Charitable Foundation	-	9,500	9,500	-
	<u>20,000</u>	<u>191,982</u>	<u>211,982</u>	<u>122,542</u>
<b>8 Donated Services</b>				
Donated services	-	-	-	7,485
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,485</u>
<b>9 Other trading activities</b>				
Work with Young Artist Collective / Young People	-	-	-	14,000
Work with Elders (commissions)	8,000	-	8,000	3,080
Other commissions and sales	2,812	-	2,812	-
	<u>10,812</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,812</u>	<u>17,080</u>

Income was £225,352 (2021: £152,600) of which £31,870 was unrestricted or designated (2021: £25,928) and £193,482 was restricted (2021: £126,672)

## Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
<b>11 Raising funds</b>				
Fundraising costs	-	-	-	440
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>440</u>
<b>12 Donated Services</b>				
Donated services	-	-	-	7,485
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,485</u>
<b>13 Expenditure on charitable activities</b>				
Reaching Out	-	47,696	47,696	52,410
Youth Music	-	26,626	26,626	36,425
Peace Procession	-	-	-	5,842
Arts Council England	-	75,514	75,514	21,050
Work with Young Artists	20,000	9,533	29,533	6,069
Work with Elders	8,399	-	8,399	2,330
FOGO Fund	-	-	-	10,000
Newcastle Fund	-	13,275	13,275	10,125
Other projects	5,481	-	5,481	15,508
	<u>33,879</u>	<u>172,644</u>	<u>206,524</u>	<u>159,759</u>
<b>14 Analysis of charitable activities</b>				
Reaching Out	39,929	7,767	47,696	52,410
Youth Music	23,775	2,851	26,626	36,425
Peace Procession	-	-	-	5,842
Arts Council England	28,010	47,505	75,514	21,050
Work with Young Artists	15,386	14,147	29,533	6,069
Work with Elders	6,540	1,858	8,399	2,330
FOGO Fund	-	-	-	10,000
Newcastle Fund	10,450	2,825	13,275	10,125
Other projects	4,632	849	5,481	15,508
	<u>128,722</u>	<u>77,802</u>	<u>206,524</u>	<u>159,759</u>

#### Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities continued

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
<b>15 Support costs</b>				
Consultancy	1,000	32,865	<b>33,865</b>	1,650
Management activity	-	6,911	<b>6,911</b>	2,867
Governance cost	-	2,021	<b>2,021</b>	1,020
Finance and administration	111	12,587	<b>12,698</b>	1,452
IT costs	-	865	<b>865</b>	949
Depreciation	476	-	<b>476</b>	955
Rent and overheads	747	9,980	<b>10,727</b>	8,868
Marketing and PR	373	9,866	<b>10,239</b>	-
Other	-	-	-	311
	<u>2,707</u>	<u>75,095</u>	<u><b>77,802</b></u>	<u>18,072</u>

Expenditure on charitable activities and raising funds was £206,524 (2021: £167,684) of which £33,879 was unrestricted or designated (2021: £13,554) and £172,644 was restricted (2021: £154,130)

#### 16 Fees for examination of the accounts

	2022 £	2021 £
Independent examiner's fees for reporting on the accounts	<b>1,122</b>	1,020
Other accountancy services paid to the examiner	<b>480</b>	-
	<u><b>1,602</b></u>	<u>1,020</u>

#### 17 Analysis of staff costs and the cost of key management personnel

	2022 £	2021 £
Subcontract staff costs	<b>162,924</b>	122,435
	<u><b>162,924</b></u>	<u>122,435</u>

No employee received remuneration above £60,000 (2021: nil).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Artistic Director. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £49,945 (2021: £40,030).

#### 18 Staff Numbers

The average monthly head count was 6 staff (2021: 6 staff) and the average monthly numbers of full-time equivalent employees during the year were as follows:

	2022 Number	2021 Number
The parts of the charity in which the subcontract staff work were:		
Charitable activities - core work	<b>1.6</b>	0.7
Charitable activities - direct work	<b>2.4</b>	2.4
	<u><b>4.0</b></u>	<u>3.1</u>

#### 19 Transactions with Trustees

None of the Trustees have been paid any remuneration or received any other benefits from an employment with their charity or a related entity.

#### Trustees' expenses

The following detail the expenses paid directly by Skimstone Arts on behalf of Katie Dixon.

	2022 £	2021 £
Microsoft Office Licence	<b>33</b>	33
	<u><b>33</b></u>	<u>33</u>

#### Transactions with related parties

There have been no related party transactions in the reporting period.

#### 20 Defined contribution pension scheme

As all the staff are currently subcontracted the charity does not operate a pension scheme.

#### 21 Corporation Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objectives.

#### 22 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures fittings and equipment £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>		
Balance brought forward	4,974	<b>4,974</b>
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<u>4,974</u>	<u><b>4,974</b></u>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
Basis	SL	
Rate	25%	
Balance brought forward	3,546	<b>3,546</b>
Depreciation charge for year	476	<b>476</b>
Disposals	-	-
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<u>4,022</u>	<u><b>4,022</b></u>
<b>Net book value</b>		
<b>Brought forward</b>	<u>1,428</u>	<u><b>1,428</b></u>
<b>Carried forward</b>	<u>952</u>	<u><b>952</b></u>

23 Debtors and prepayments (receivable within 1 year)

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	24,336	13,824
	<u>24,336</u>	<u>13,824</u>

24 Cash at bank and in hand

	2022 £	2021 £
Cash at bank	54,794	45,118
Cash in hand	456	128
	<u>55,250</u>	<u>45,246</u>

25 Creditors and accruals (payable within 1 year)

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade creditors	18,074	16,403
Accruals		
Independent examination of accounts	561	1,020
	<u>18,635</u>	<u>17,423</u>

26 Events after the end of the reporting period

No events have occurred after the end of the reporting period, but before the accounts are authorised, that require adjustment to the accounts.

27 Analysis of charitable funds

Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds

	Fund balances brought forward £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Fund balances carried forward £
Unrestricted funds					
General unrestricted fund	25,710	31,870	( 33,879 )	4,632	28,332
<b>Totals</b>	<u>25,710</u>	<u>31,870</u>	<u>( 33,879 )</u>	<u>4,632</u>	<u>28,332</u>

Purpose of unrestricted funds

General unrestricted fund: The 'free reserves' of the charity.

27 Analysis of charitable funds continued

Analysis of movement in restricted funds

	Fund balances brought forward £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Fund balances carried forward £
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Well Newcastle Gateshead	-	13,500	( 13,500 )	-	-
Big lottery Reaching Out	-	9,500	-	-	9,500
Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund	-	35,000	( 28,050 )	( 1,008 )	5,942
Arts Council England	-	75,513	( 75,513 )	-	-
Newcastle Fund	-	13,500	( 13,500 )	-	-
Newcastle City Council HMD	-	1,500	( 1,500 )	-	-
Quaker Legacy Fund	4,333	-	( 4,333 )	-	-
Wellesley Foundation	-	9,500	( 9,500 )	-	-
Youth Music	13,032	35,469	( 26,748 )	( 3,624 )	18,129
<b>Totals</b>	<u>17,365</u>	<u>193,482</u>	<u>( 172,644 )</u>	<u>( 4,632 )</u>	<u>33,571</u>

Purpose of main restricted funds

Restricted funds represent income resources used for a specific purpose within the charity as identified by the donor.

Well Newcastle Gateshead	Reaching Out Project - support young people to be cultural leaders and create work with communities.
Big lottery Reaching Out	Reaching Out Project - support young people to be cultural leaders and create work with communities.
Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund	Reaching Out Project - support young people to be cultural leaders and create work with communities.
Arts Council England	Culture Recovery to sustain Skimstone Arts and core staff team and costs.
Newcastle Fund	Young Artist Collective - supporting the work of vulnerable young people in the region to make work and develop leadership.
Newcastle City Council HMD	Holocaust Memorial Day Events Create work to be part of national Holocaust Memorial Day Events.
Quaker Legacy Fund	Reaching Out Project - support young people to be cultural leaders and create work with communities.
Wellesley Foundation	This grant supports work with young people.
Youth Music	Continue personal and musical development of our Young Artists Collective, supporting high-quality music making by young people facing complex life challenges.



Associate Artist Bethany Ellen Coyle working with Skimstone Staff for UNITY Festival. Image: Ako Ismail

## SKIMSTONE ARTS

(A company limited by guarantee)

### INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

For the year ended 31 March 2022

I report on the financial statements of Skimstone Arts for the year ended 31 March 2022, which are set out on pages 51 - 62.

#### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees (who are also directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a Fellow of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

#### Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

#### Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102).

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Jim Dodds  
 Connected Voice Business Services Ltd  
 Higham House  
 Higham Place  
 Newcastle upon Tyne  
 NE1 8AF  
 Date: 26/09/22

#### 27 Analysis of charitable funds continued

##### Transfers between funds

	Reason for transfer	Amount £
Between unrestricted and restricted funds	The transfer represents a contribution to Core Costs from Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund and Youth Music.	4,632

#### 28 Capital commitments

As at 31 March 2022, the charity had no capital commitments (2021 -£nil).

#### 29 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	952	-	952	1,428
Cash at bank and in hand	21,679	33,571	55,250	45,246
Other net current assets (liabilities)	5,701	-	5,701	( 3,599 )
	<u>28,332</u>	<u>33,571</u>	<u>61,903</u>	<u>43,075</u>

# 22

## Thank You

Our supportive team of board members, staff, co-creators, artists, communities, partners and funders made 2021/22 a year of growth, development and shared creative highlights.

We would like to thank all our funders and partners who have supported us in this challenging year of lockdowns and emerging from COVID.

From strategic partners who commission our work including our friends at Northumbria University and Elders Council, to national and international arts organisations such as Counterpoints Arts in London, Radio GaMashie in Accra, Ghana and Madame Teatro in Portugal, and cultural venues such as the service providers, Newcastle and Gateshead Arts Development Teams, Holocaust Memorial Trust UK, Elders Council, Care and Repair England, Connexions Youth Service and Social Services, Universities of Newcastle, Durham and Northumbria, St Peter's Church Esol Café, Stockton, Bosnian Educational Trust and researcher Dr Beate Muller.

We would like to include community and arts venues across the North East of England including Seven Stories The National Centre for Children's Books, St Silas' Church in Byker, Ouseburn Trust, and Brinkburn Street Brewery, Bar & Kitchen.

Thank you to those venues who supported our tour of Doorbells; Dreaming for the Future including INSPIRE Festival at Dance City, Chopwell Community Centre in Gateshead, St Martin's Centre and St Anthony's Day Services in Byker and Walker.

Thanks also to Artistic Director/Choreographer in residence Dora Frankel for her work with **Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future.**

Thank you also to our other partnership networks in Youth Music Including Jack Drum Arts, Standing Upright, Musinc and community partnerships including Walker Workers.



Skimstone Arts team, associate artists and members of the Byker Commissioning Group at UNITY Festival 2022.

***"...this project has brought together so many more people and many more stories and to be able to be part of not just working on it, broadcasting it, but also hearing it and knowing many people who might have seen it will ..have a stronger connection...even if you don't speak the language, when you watch it or listen to it you got the idea of what we were trying to accomplish. It was universal."***

- Nii Kwartey Owoo, Technical Manager and Associate Artist

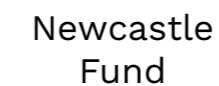
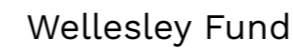
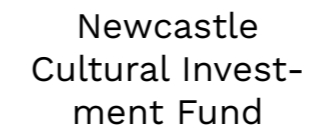
***"...when I was at Skimstone Arts I could sing I could dance all of these things that I would be a bit shy of doing, I was thinking it's really taken me out of my comfort zone..people just wanted to see you having a good time, it was lovely so I sang and danced all weekend, I'm a different person coming out of the festival... it's been brilliant for me."***

- External Evaluation Report UNITY Festival

# 23

## Funders & Partners

We would like to thank all our funders and partners that have supported us this year.





## Skimstone Arts


Skimstone Studios  
2nd Floor  
i4 Quayside  
Albion Row  
Quayside  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE6 1LL

### Online

[www.skimstone.org.uk](http://www.skimstone.org.uk)

 [www.facebook.com/SkimstoneArtsEnsemble](https://www.facebook.com/SkimstoneArtsEnsemble)

 [@Skimstone\\_Arts](https://twitter.com/Skimstone_Arts)

 [@skimstonearts](https://www.instagram.com/skimstonearts)

Artistic Director  
**Claire Webster Saaremets**  
[claire@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:claire@skimstone.org.uk)  
07803670654

Lead Musician  
**Peter Saaremets**  
[peter@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:peter@skimstone.org.uk)  
07855674012  
(Re: Reality Boots band,  
Young Artist Collective, young people)

Creative Producer  
**Cristina Armstrong**  
[cristina@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:cristina@skimstone.org.uk)

Comms Manager  
**Claire Cockroft**  
[clairecockroft@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:clairecockroft@skimstone.org.uk)

Finance Administrator  
**Julie Maxwell**  
[julie@skimstone.org.uk](mailto:julie@skimstone.org.uk)

**SKIMSTONE ARTS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1182284

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# Accounts

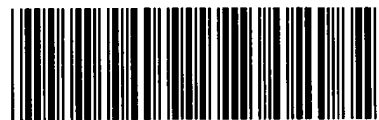
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**SKIMSTONE ARTS**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
For the year ended 31 March 2021

**Charity Number 1182284**  
**Company Number 06261728**

THURSDAY



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23/12/2021

#126

COMPANIES HOUSE



# Skimstone Arts Governance Report and Accounts 2020/21

**Skimstone  
Arts**

## Skimstone Arts Annual Report and Accounts April 2020 - March 2021

Skimstone Arts works with diverse artists and those at risk of isolation, to create work with, for and about the world that matters to them

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## **Reference and administrative details**

Charity number: 1182284  
Company number: 06261728

Registered office and principal address:  
Skimstone Studios 2nd Floor, i4 Quayside, Albion Row, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6QE

Independent Examiners: Connected Voice  
Bankers: The Co-operative Bank

## **Our Trustees**

For the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, the Board of Trustees is the Board of Directors of the charitable company and is referred to as "the Trustees" throughout this report.

The Trustees of Skimstone Arts during the year and to signing this report are as follows:

Wendy Scott - Chair  
Sarah Drummond - Vice Chair  
Carol Candler - Secretary  
Garry Robson  
Rebecca Wilkie  
Katherine Dixon – Treasurer  
Liadi Mudashiru - appointed June 2021

## **Chair's Introduction**

### **Wendy Scott Chair, Skimstone Arts**

In the context of the Coronavirus pandemic of which 2020/21 will long be associated, the cultural and arts sector experienced dramatic fallout, particularly for the many freelancers and self-employed practitioners. The precariousness of the sector was laid bare. It has been a challenging year for society and for us all on so many levels.

Through this last year, Skimstone Arts has remained strong, true to its core values and has quite literally been a lifeline for so many people who experience social isolation, now more than ever. We have continued to create the phenomenal projects in this report which connect people, communities and artists and our organisation has grown. We have successfully attracted significant funding to steer us through recovery and ensure the freelance members of our creative team continue with the vital co-creative work that is Skimstone Arts.

We developed a new 'business as usual' way of working and serving through the pandemic conditions. We drew on our collective resilience and innovation from our management and key staff and artists, and harnessed digital resources and technology to expand our outreach at the most challenging time in living memory. We ensured we continued to explore the changing world that matters to our at-risk communities.

We heartily thank all our funders for their recognition of our value to our beneficiaries, for funders' resources and their belief in our ability to overcome the challenges to deliver.

At a time when it has been hard to be together and celebrate our work in person, we have produced two projects that for me have encapsulated this year of human-digital adaptation to isolation and creativity, and have orbited Skimstone Arts into two new and exciting territories.

UNITY Festival online encompassed the connection we craved and the solace we received from nature and our environment and married them with the arts. In the eye of COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference, and in the context of a climate emergency, UNITY is an accumulation of many strands of work that can be explored and expanded.

The other project is Skimstone Radio online which has been the perfect way of bringing our work into homes and community spaces to reach people who would enjoy, benefit and be inspired to start their artistic journey. This gives us a platform that raises awareness of our work and grows new listeners and audiences in the North East, the UK and internationally.

What we hear loud and clear from people is the enormous value and impact our work has. We know there is substantial evidence to support this in the lived experiences and testimonies we have included in this year's report.

Our work – the Arts – drives creativity and expression to support wellbeing and skills progression. But it is the making of quality artwork itself that we nurture. Through a co-created model, we are supporting the artists and creative practitioners of the future.

We provide the conditions for this to happen, we have the privilege of experiencing their development and growth and then we support them to take off and create their own projects and opportunities. The work they go on to produce is the legacy of Skimstone Arts.

## **Trustees' Report For the year ended 31 March 2021**

Structure, governance and management Skimstone Arts is a company limited by guarantee (registered number 06261728) and a registered charity (registered number 1182284) and is governed by its memorandum and articles of association.

Skimstone Arts is directed by a board of seven Trustees who are responsible for ensuring that the organisation meets all its statutory, contractual and social obligations.

Our beneficiaries are all of the individuals and communities we work with to co-create artistic work.

### **Governance**

In the period covered by this report, Skimstone Arts had six Trustees. Trustees take decisions collectively. They meet formally every quarter for full board meetings at which they review activities, finances, company performance, business management, public benefit, and the voluntary input of Trustees.

The Board also holds an Annual General Meeting, typically in September, where we celebrate and showcase our collaborative work with our artists, beneficiaries, funders and invited guests. Our annual meeting in 2020 took place compliantly as a live Zoom video meeting online.

Between March and September 2020, the Board met virtually every month by video meeting to monitor operational and artistic risks and the changing societal needs presented by the Coronavirus pandemic.

The board assimilates updates to the Charity Governance Code. We have sub-groups for Trustees on fundraising, finance, risk management, and for trustee succession and board development. We have no committees which take decisions on behalf of the full board. The rules for the authority and delegation of the Trustees is set in our governing document, as is the scope of our sub-committees.

### **Appointment and induction of Trustees**

In March and April 2020 Trustees conducted a governance mapping exercise which was integrated with our Theory of Change plan and identified four areas of knowledge and experience which we seek to develop. In October 2021 the Board welcomed a new trustee in line with these aims. Liadi Mudashiru was appointed June 2021. The Board hopes to conduct another round of trustee recruitment by March 2022.

Historically Trustees were recruited and appointed to the Board based on outreach discussions and shortlisted recommendations offered by Trustees and external advisors to the organisation. Going forward, Skimstone Arts is committed to deliver a fair, open recruitment process and will use ever-wider outreach methods to raise awareness of our vacancies in a diverse range of communities, places, and sectors. Going forward, Skimstone Arts is committed to continuing to deliver a fair open recruitment selection process and will use ever wider outreach methods to raise awareness of our vacancies in a diverse range of communities, places, and sectors.

New Trustees are typically inducted by the Chair and are provided with a range of resources to support their understanding of the charity's activities.

In June 2021 we welcomed new trustee Liadi Mudashiru.

## **Objectives and aims**

Skimstone Arts works in the sectors of arts, culture, wellbeing, health and heritage; we are intergenerational, helping artists and those identified as being 'at risk of social isolation' including: children and young people, older and elderly people, refugee communities, people of colour and disability, and with the general public. We work with a range of freelance artists and producers on a project-by-project basis.

Our co-creation approach nurtures artistic expression through the equal process of sharing skills, stories and techniques to create new and original work together; we build relationships between established artists from around the world who work with our regionally-based emerging artists and with people at risk of social isolation in our North East communities. Together we express what matters to each person – individually and collectively – and seek to influence social understanding, compassion, and positive change.

In the period covered in this report we worked directly with 465 people, and calculate that we had a ripple-out audience of nearly 7,000 who engaged with the co-created work.

**We are one of the North East's leading companies for inclusive arts practice and social action and have dedicated expertise in high-quality work co-created with vulnerable young people, older people, and refugee communities.**

In April 2020 we consulted and created our approach to Social Connection in the Time of Social Distancing as our resilience and work with people at risk of isolation became more relevant than ever before.

It shaped the year ahead in which we used new platforms to plan, make and share existing and fresh work, and simultaneously increase wellbeing, for people to feel more connected and less isolated.

Our commitment to communities resulted in an increase in our reach and engagement of co-creators (beneficiaries) working with our emerging artists and established artists and lead staff.

Our reflections and response as allies with people whose lived experience is of racism and racial injustice resulted in new connections and artistic work with communities locally and globally.

## **Our purpose**

Skimstone Arts is established to advance the arts, particularly but not exclusively, music, drama, film and the visual arts, by the production of performances, plays, exhibitions, gigs, films and performances involving diverse groups of disadvantaged artists and communities for the benefit of the public.

**Skimstone Arts supports diverse artists and those at risk of isolation, to create work with, for and about the world that matters to them.**

## **Our aims**

Skimstone Arts aims to create collaborative music, performance and art with artists and researchers, and develop artistic practice with diverse individuals and communities to reflect challenges in society.

### **Our general aims include:**

- Creating a voice for our artists and promoting inclusion, collaboration, ownership and respect for anyone who has a social and political right to make artworks but may face barriers to do so.
- Making accessible touring music-based theatre and site-specific performances, exhibitions and gigs that reflect current stories and themes relating to today's cultural landscape, changes in heritage and identity, and we explore what we think about the world today.
- Adapting to the constraints and societal needs during the Coronavirus epidemic and lockdowns and post-lockdowns to co-create and support people via the digital-sphere and by working in-person in socially-distanced safe ways.
- Being actively inclusive and opening up opportunities for all less-represented groups including LGBTQAI+, people of colour and across cultures, people who face challenges with struggling mental health, poverty and illness.

### **Theory of Change**

We use a **Theory of Change** model to describe how and why our charitable objects serve our beneficiaries, to review our progress and to track and illustrate over time the resultant change to the people we work with and their communities.

#### **Theory of Change model:**

**By: working with diverse artists, people at risk of isolation and like minded organisations**

**To: support them to create work that is with, for and about the world that matters to them and to share what we learn in the process**

**We will: engage increasingly diverse audiences in quality arts activities and stimulate debate and action around key social challenges**

**This will: help improve connectivity, confidence and wellbeing for the people and artists we work with and lead to greater skills and engagement in increasingly high quality arts activity.**

The model helps us to deliver our four key ambitions:

#### **Ambition 1: Artists**

To create nationally recognised, quality artistic work, with diverse artists, about the world that matters to people and communities today.

#### **Ambition 2: Communities/Audiences**

To engage with people in diverse communities to produce artistic work that explores and shares engaging stories and is accessible and meaningful to a broader range of audiences.

#### **Ambition 3: Wider sector**

To collaborate with researchers and arts, health and social sector professionals, to challenge and instigate debate around the role of the arts in civic change and help find more effective ways to use quality artistic work to improve engagement and well-being.

#### **Ambition 4: Our organisation**

To ensure we are sustainable, with core funding and other grants in place to support diversity in all areas – Board, workforce, commissions, projects, performances, with and for audiences and participants, and in line with our Charitable objectives.

### **What does this mean in practice?**

Despite living with the Coronavirus pandemic, we have innovated and stretched our capacity and capabilities to fulfil our commitment to share a clear, high quality arts practice in a well managed and welcoming studio-based approach – adapted for digital and open-air delivery.

We continued to hold high aspirations and expectations and worked with compassion through the uncertainty and social isolation endured by all of our beneficiaries, volunteers, staff, associates, and stakeholders.

We engage those we work with to offer a participatory arts practice, promoting an ethos of equality. This encourages participants to be willing to share stories and ideas and to learn new skills and techniques, as well as to listen, respond, challenge and co-create authentic, original and innovative artworks with us.

We continued to offer opportunities to gain a national Arts Award and to be involved in company operations including business development, marketing of events, and assisting with business meetings and funding applications.

Participants may be encountering difficulties related to individual conditions – in or out of the pandemic – and we provide short term sign-posting and pastoral care to support them in creating work and working with others.

We continue to be inspired by participants’ aspirations beyond their practice with Skimstone Arts and the impact these may have on their lives.

We also present work, such as our film Doorbells, made in response to Covid-19, which encouraged online audiences to engage in meaningful debate about social change and policy concerning lack of housing choices and isolation.

Our Artistic Director was also invited by Counterpoints Arts in London to give input into two of their national slow conferences presenting our approach to working with refugee communities, as a stimulus for debate.

Outside the period of this annual report we have moved to new studios, again demonstrating our resilience to navigate a challenging situation - in this case as long-standing tenants of an NE1 city-centre building now to be sold and redeveloped. Our new NE6 studios, workshops and administrative space create fresh opportunities for Covid-safe ways of working together, co-creativity, and now with accessible outdoor green-space.

### **Our activities, achievements and performance**

In the year 2020/21 we have worked much more in the digital space but also committed to in-person delivery whenever possible and safe.

We have stepped-up to the crises facing our beneficiaries and the artistic community and have adapted the way we work and learn together to be effective and sustainable.

Our multi-generational work is with audiences, participants and beneficiaries who are varied in their needs, lives, and isolation - experiencing struggling mental health, poverty, social isolation

and anxiety, disabilities, living with Autism, and facing challenges when identifying as LGBTQAI+ and/or with status as refugees and asylum-seekers.

Pandemic living worsened the situations of people already at risk of isolation, confining them to homes or to bedrooms.

In response to the mandatory stops to in-person core work, we used more phone calls, safely distributed project packs, and moved to digitally-connective apps and software; we issued devices for those without other means to connect. Together we adapted to the changing and socially-distancing environment.

Digital technology has indeed played a big part, and so has the resilience of the people who are Skimstone Arts and who recognised the critical role we fulfil to support, join together, and enable self-expression with people at risk of even further isolation.

The recognition of our funders allowed us to adapt delivery of projects where necessary, and to invest in the IT equipment that we and our existing and new communities needed to stay connected.

We have innovated digitally with online radio, with animation, and with video conferencing to platform music, visual arts, performance, and innovative engagement programmes.

The year has presented some of the most challenging and unprecedented times, yet for Skimstone Arts it has been one of our most productive. The pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement are not diversions, they are part of our development and growth.

From April 2020 to March 2021 we produced five events – *Here's Your Seat, Imagine Your Seat, Who Holds the Torch?, UNITY Festival, and Whispers & Shouts.*

We delivered **164 sessions** with people which created more than **55 original artworks**. Our overall reach approached nearly 7,000 people, including close-contact with 175 at significant risk of isolation.

The year 2021 was also a year when more than ever before we played a part in bringing Newcastle to the world and the world to Newcastle.

In August 2020, and in response to the pandemic, our drama ***Doorbells: Covid 19*** was developed and re-staged as a film short. It was programmed as part of the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health FUSE Covid-19 Seminar Series.

It was screened and presented via Zoom-video conferencing across two webinars with Q&A and discussion.

Working in partnerships with academics at Northumbria University, ***Doorbells*** continues to be an evolving humorous story that asks questions about where and how we live as we grow older. It continues to initiate the use of the arts to support people to make well-informed housing decisions and produce evidence on how to improve older people's housing services and alternative housing options.

Throughout the summer we safely used our music and performance skills to 'busk' outside care homes at the request of St Anthony's Care while their residents and clients were unable to

socialise or receive visitors inside due to the lockdown.

We continued to create more accessible opportunities working across online platforms in video and audio, launching a new online service, **Skimstone Radio**.

The combination of live online radio, video conferencing, digital animation, and podcasts allowed us to innovate the delivery and participation of five significant projects: *Here's Your Seat*, *Imagine Your Seat*, *Who Holds the Torch?*, *UNITY Festival*, and *Whispers & Shouts*.

These achieved a combined audience reach of **nearly 7,000** and broke new ground for us as a platform; we engaged **new audiences** to experience and engage through Skimstone Arts.

*Here's Your Seat* is a compilation of musical and visual artworks created during the 2020 spring/summer lockdown; along with the radio shows, the visual works were projected from a community cafe window.

*Imagine Your Seat* is an international and intergenerational online radio show of songs and poems responding to the autumn/winter restrictions and a 42-minute film of them with photographs and animations along with the radio shows, the visual works were projected from a community cafe window to new audiences.

*Who Holds the Torch?* is a radio event in January 2021 to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 with songs and stories made with Skimstone musicians, Newcastle residents, refugee families, young people and artists from around the world; the theme of *being a light in the darkness* was chosen by the Holocaust-Memorial Day Trust.

The *UNITY Festival* in March 2021 is a three-day event of online 'stages' that unlocked digital performance and workshops. Music and story-telling explore community, nature and social action. This year's festival was headlined by British-Nigerian singer-songwriter Bumi Thomas, who presented her set from Nigeria, and the festival also featured international sound recordist and composer Chris Watson.

*Whispers & Shouts* is a collaborative project with Durham University which explores stories about equality, diversity, belonging and identity with staff and students, culminating as a radio programme on 30 March 2021.

### **Our beneficiaries**

As mentioned, we build relationships between established artists from around the world who work with our regionally-based emerging artists and with people in our North East communities who are at risk of social isolation. Their work is published to audiences in performances, events, exhibitions, films, animations, digital radio and podcasts, and online.

Co-creation takes place with people who have multiple life challenges — such as living with disabilities, poor mental health, poverty, homelessness, encountering racism and racial injustice, people who are displaced, who are refugees or asylum seekers, people with social anxiety — in their daily lives in our North East communities.

Making artistic work together is a life-changing act of bravery which we help people navigate - Skimstone Arts provides pastoral care, and signposts and refers when needed

We consider the co-creation of artistic work co-creates resilience for people with multiple life challenges – having the means or energy to participate, to join in – and to become part of an artistic community which they co-shape, and in which they experience equality of respect.

*“Skimstone is like a second home for us, especially for refugees and artists, always proud to be working with Skimstone Arts, humanity important part of the group. I meet many people at Skimstone Arts, it’s talent and happy to be part of this group and to make this film short. For my first experience in England it’s always supporting and helping us. Appreciate what it is doing.” – Co-creator, via WhatsApp.*

*“It’s great to see the breadth of activities that Skimstone Arts deliver, with all opportunities enabling young people to learn and develop a range of musical and social skills. With Skimstone’s emphasis on youth voice, young people are part of the process from design through to delivery. Their approach to navigating the pandemic, putting young people first and deftly transitioning to online delivery is laudable.” – Funding partner.*

*“The process used was designed to give voice to those who might otherwise feel rather marginalised, and the feedback indicated that people very much appreciated this. The process of creating songs, soundscapes and spoken word pieces also stretched people’s creative experiences. The work is very engaging and everyone who has listened to it has found it both challenging and inspiring.” – Partner organisation.*

*“Skimstone Arts are a vital part of the cultural ecology. Everything they do has their core beneficiaries at its heart. Skimstone are uniquely placed to provide quality, long term engagements for young people facing multiple barriers to accessing arts provision. And they do it with such a sense of ambition and fun! Furthermore it feels mutually respectful and there is always a sense that everyone is learning and growing together.” – Funding partner.*

*“I would like to thank you for today’s webinar. It was so thought provoking and evident that your approach to community engagement invests so much care and commitment into your co-collaborators.” – Partner-organisation.*

## **Public Benefit**

The Trustees understand and have discussed the implications of the provisions of the Charities Act 2006, which state that all charities must demonstrate that they are established for public benefit, and have had due regard to the public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

## **Achievements and performance**

We continue to work with people who live in some of the most deprived wards in England. Our immediate-term response to the COVID-19 pandemic was to deliver existing projects with our beneficiaries in the digital sphere, wherever possible, and, with their consent, sharing their work with the wider world.

Routinely, we use our Theory of Change model to map and track our work and the difference we help to make with our beneficiaries and in wider society. And we evaluate our progress and impact using qualitative and quantitative evidence from our beneficiaries and stakeholders.

**From this we can confirm that we continue to succeed as a charity to work with all of our categorised beneficiaries, and across all our stated art forms.**

Our wider benefits to society include the appreciation of shared work at events, festivals, and

online, and in helping to increase and shape knowledge in the health and academic sectors who work with and study: isolation, mental health, ageing, and artistic practice. In thirteen years we have reached more than 10,000 audience members, with a rich diversity of heritages, backgrounds, and lives. We have presented at international conferences on artistic and social action, sharing our knowledge and artistic outputs.

### **Financial Review**

For the year ended 31 March 2021 Skimstone Arts recorded a net surplus of £15,084 (2019-20: £16,240). This expenditure relates to grant income received in 2019–20 in advance of project activities that took place in early 2020-21.

### **Our principal risks and uncertainties**

The principal risks for Skimstone Arts are financial, social, and safeguarding of young and vulnerable people; these risks are recorded and monitored with all risks in our secure risk register which is monitored and reviewed quarterly by the Trustees. Since March 2020 the risk register has been reviewed on a bi-monthly basis due to the heightened risks presented by the COVID-19 outbreak.

**Financial risk:** during the pandemic we have successfully made cases for support with funders both to address our sustainability and to adapt and continue to work actively in communities. We have secured funding to meet new requirements such as the level and methods of pastoral care we deliver to our artists, freelance staff and communities.

We have reached positive understandings with funders of restricted funds on the delivery of community work remotely, and have found new funding streams to increase our digital assets in order to work in virtual and digital communities. Our longer-range funding plan is reviewed more regularly because of the pandemic and is developing in response to the emerging needs of our beneficiaries during and post pandemic. Our fund-raising sub-committee of Trustees and freelance staff is reshaping our fund-raising strategy to recognise this. We have found the Arts Council England guidance on business planning and managing our funds and reserves to be a useful navigational aid, as is the related ACE toolkit on managing and controlling finances.

**Societal risk and uncertainties:** we abide by the government's advice and legislation regarding social distancing and have adapted our work for the digital sphere, and we have been able to return to work physically in communities within social distancing rules if they are comfortable to do so.

Societal risks for us include the wellbeing and health of our beneficiaries, our artists and our freelance staff. We work with health-sector and academic experts to understand and tailor our current and future work.

**Safeguarding risk:** we maintain a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually by freelance staff and Trustees. All new Trustees, freelance staff and artists are inducted into the safeguarding policy.

### **Reserves and going concern**

The Trustees have reviewed the charity's needs for reserves in line with the guidance issued by the Charity Commission. The Trustees aim to hold a level of Unrestricted Reserves to enable normal operating activities to continue for a period of up to three months should a shortfall in income or significant unforeseen expenses occur. This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees on an annual basis as part of the charity's budgeting processes.

Skimstone Arts currently holds Unrestricted Reserves of £25,710 at 31 March 2021 (31 March 2020: £13,336). The fundraising sub-committee continues to work with Trustees and funders to look for opportunities to build up our reserves to meet our target range of three to six months' average operating costs.

The Trustees have considered the likely financial impact of COVID-19 on operations and have prepared a revised budget and cashflow forecast. We have sought additional funding to cover identified shortfalls and have worked with funders to agree alternative delivery methods wherever possible. Based on this information the Trustees have concluded that Skimstone Arts can continue to operate for the foreseeable future. The accounts have therefore been prepared on a going concern basis.

### **Principal source of funds**

We seek always to diversify our funding and our Trustees are involved in face-to-face advocacy of the benefits to society from our work, and are themselves donors to Skimstone Arts. We also receive specific funding in relation to the areas of work we have reported upon, and our funders include:

Newcastle City Council  
Arts Council England Emergency Fund, Culture Recovery Fund  
Youth Music  
Community Foundation Tyne & Wear  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
Newcastle Fund  
Well Newcastle Gateshead Blue Stone Consortium  
Big Lottery Community Fund  
Durham University  
Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund  
Quaker Legacy Fund  
Hadrian Trust  
East Durham Creates  
The Rayne Foundation  
Care & Repair England  
Wellesley Fund  
Fogo Fund  
High Sheriff Award

### **Partners:**

Youth Music  
Northumbria University  
Holocaust Memorial Day Events  
Elders Council  
Friends of The Drop In – Sunderland  
Sunderland Council  
St Anthony's Day Centre Services, Walker  
Counterpoints Arts  
Newcastle University  
MINE, North East  
The Bostey, Walker

Standing Upright  
Jack Drum Arts  
Switch It  
Walker Workers  
The Natural History Society of Northumbria  
Culture Against Racism

### **Plans for future periods**

Lockdown gave us the opportunity to reflect on our ways of working and find innovative new ways of delivering our work which we assimilate and carry forward.

We know from the lived experiences and artistic expression of everyone who engages and works together through Skimstone Arts that the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020/21 has exacerbated the inequalities already faced by our beneficiaries and we understand our role to be more important than ever.

### **Statement of Trustees' responsibilities**

The charity Trustees (who are also the directors of Skimstone Arts for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period.

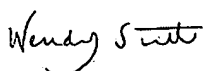
In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report was approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Name



Print

Wendy Scott 7th October 2021

## SKIMSTONE ARTS

(A company limited by guarantee)

### INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

For the year ended 31 March 2021

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I report on the financial statements of Skimstone Arts for the year ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on page 16 to 27.

#### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees (who are also directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

#### Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

#### Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102).

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Jim Dodds  
Ellison Services Limited  
Higham House  
Higham Place  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 8AF



Date: 17/12/21

## SKIMSTONE ARTS

(A company limited by guarantee)

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	6	1,363	4,130	5,493	15,610
Charitable activities					
Grants and contracts	7	-	122,542	122,542	151,836
Donated services	8	7,485	-	7,485	10,799
Other trading activities	9	17,080	-	17,080	3,654
<b>Total income</b>		<b>25,928</b>	<b>126,672</b>	<b>152,600</b>	<b>181,899</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds	11	-	440	440	17,744
Charitable activities					
Operation of the charity	13	6,069	153,690	159,759	137,116
Donated services	12	7,485	-	7,485	10,799
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>13,554</b>	<b>154,130</b>	<b>167,684</b>	<b>165,659</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) and net movement of funds</b>		<b>12,374</b>	<b>( 27,458 )</b>	<b>( 15,084 )</b>	<b>16,240</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		13,336	44,823	58,159	41,919
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>25,710</b>	<b>17,365</b>	<b>43,075</b>	<b>58,159</b>

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities

The notes on pages 18 to 27 form an integral part of these accounts.

**BALANCE SHEET**

As at 31 March 2021

	Notes	£	Total 2021 £	£	Total 2020 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	22		1,428		479
<b>Total fixed assets</b>			<b>1,428</b>		<b>479</b>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	23	13,824		2,180	
Cash at bank and in hand	24	45,246		56,805	
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>59,070</b>		<b>58,985</b>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	25	<b>( 17,423 )</b>		<b>( 1,305 )</b>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			<b>41,647</b>		<b>57,680</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<b>43,075</b>		<b>58,159</b>
<b>Total net assets</b>			<b>43,075</b>		<b>58,159</b>
<b>Funds of the charity</b>					
Unrestricted income funds			25,710		13,336
Restricted income funds			17,365		44,823
<b>Total funds</b>			<b>43,075</b>		<b>58,159</b>

The company was entitled to an exemption from audit under s477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act with the respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

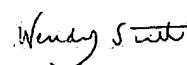
These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with FRS102 SORP.

The notes on pages 18 to 27 form an integral part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved by the Board on: 7th October 2021

and are signed on its behalf by:

Wendy Scott  
Chair



**SKIMSTONE ARTS**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

For the year ended 31 March 2021

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**1 Accounting Policies**

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation or uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

**2 Basis of accounting**

**2.1 Basis of preparation**

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) – Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Skimstone Arts meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

**2.2 Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis**

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have reviewed and considered relevant information, including the annual budget and future cash flows in making their assessment. In particular, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trustees have revised their forecasts to take into account the impact on the business of possible scenarios brought on by the impact of COVID-19, alongside the measures that they can take to mitigate the impact. Based on these assessments, given the measures that could be undertaken to mitigate the current adverse conditions, and the current resources available, the Trustees have concluded that they can continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts.

**3 Income**

**3.1 Recognition of income**

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the resources, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is more likely than not that the resources will be received and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

**3.2 Offsetting**

There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses, unless required or permitted by FRS102 SORP or FRS102.

**3.3 Grants and donations**

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria of income recognition are met.

**SKIMSTONE ARTS**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

For the year ended 31 March 2021

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**3.4 Donated goods and services**

Donated goods are measured at fair value (the amount for which the asset could be exchanged) unless impractical to do so.

Donated services and facilities are included in the SoFA when received at the value of the gift to the charity provided that the value of the gift can be measured reliably. Donated services and facilities that are consumed immediately are recognised as income with the equivalent amount recognised as an expense under the appropriate heading in the SoFA.

**3.5 Volunteer help**

The value of volunteer help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the Trustees' annual report.

**3.6 Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when received and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

**3.7 Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any purpose of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the Trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

**4 Expenditure and liabilities**

**4.1 Liability recognition**

Liabilities are recognised when it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

**4.2 Charitable activities**

Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of production of plays, exhibitions, concerts, films and performances and other activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.

**4.3 Governance and support costs**

Support costs have been allocated between governance and other support costs. Governance costs comprise all costs involving public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice.

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

**4.4 Irrecoverable VAT**

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

**SKIMSTONE ARTS**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

For the year ended 31 March 2021

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**4.5 Creditors**

The charity has creditors which are measured at settlement amounts less any trade discounts.

**5 Assets**

**5.1 Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity**

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised at cost and are depreciated over their estimated useful economic lives on a straight line basis as follows:

Fixtures fittings and equipment	Straight line over four years
---------------------------------	-------------------------------

A full year's depreciation charge is applied in the year of acquisition and no charge is made in the year of disposal.

## SKIMSTONE ARTS

(A company limited by guarantee)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

#### Analysis of income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
<b>6 Donations and legacies</b>				
Donations and gifts	613	-	613	610
Core grants	-	-	-	15,000
Community Fund High Sheriff Award	750	-	750	-
Care and Repair England	-	2,330	2,330	-
Newcastle City Council	-	1,800	1,800	-
	<u>1,363</u>	<u>4,130</u>	<u>5,493</u>	<u>15,610</u>
<b>7 Charitable activities</b>				
<u>Income from grants</u>				
Reaching Out	-	-	-	63,750
Well Newcastle Gateshead	-	8,000	8,000	-
Big Lottery Community Fund	-	9,850	9,850	-
Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund	-	35,000	35,000	-
Youth Music	-	39,017	39,017	55,101
Arts Council England	-	20,550	20,550	18,855
Arts Council England - Elevate	-	-	-	13,005
Newcastle Fund	-	10,125	10,125	-
Other	-	-	-	1,125
	<u>-</u>	<u>122,542</u>	<u>122,542</u>	<u>151,836</u>
<b>8 Donated Services</b>				
Donated services	7,485	-	7,485	10,799
	<u>7,485</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,485</u>	<u>10,799</u>
<b>9 Other trading activities</b>				
Work with Young Artist Collective / Young People	14,000	-	14,000	1,054
Work with Elders	3,080	-	3,080	2,600
	<u>17,080</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>17,080</u>	<u>3,654</u>

Income was £152,600 (2020: £181,899) of which £25,928 was unrestricted or designated (2020: £27,490) and £126,672 was restricted (2020: £154,409)

**SKIMSTONE ARTS**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

For the year ended 31 March 2021

**Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
<b>11 Raising funds</b>				
Incurred seeking grants	-	-	-	7,489
Fundraising costs	-	440	440	3,080
Marketing and communications	-	-	-	7,175
	<u>-</u>	<u>440</u>	<u>440</u>	<u>17,744</u>
<b>12 Donated Services</b>				
Donated services	7,485	-	7,485	10,799
	<u>7,485</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,485</u>	<u>10,799</u>
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
<b>13 Expenditure on charitable activities</b>				
Reaching Out	-	52,410	52,410	72,607
Youth Music	-	36,425	36,425	32,202
Peace Procession	-	5,842	5,842	15,065
Arts Council England	-	21,050	21,050	11,846
Work with Young Artists	6,069	-	6,069	2,263
Work with Elders	-	2,330	2,330	2,618
FOGO Fund	-	10,000	10,000	-
Newcastle Fund	-	10,125	10,125	-
Other projects	-	15,508	15,508	515
	<u>6,069</u>	<u>153,690</u>	<u>159,759</u>	<u>137,116</u>
	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
<b>14 Analysis of charitable activities</b>				
Reaching Out	48,342	4,068	52,410	72,607
Youth Music	33,086	3,339	36,425	32,202
Peace Procession	1,865	3,977	5,842	15,065
Arts Council England	16,902	4,148	21,050	11,846
Work with Young Artists	5,966	103	6,069	2,263
Work with Elders	2,330	-	2,330	2,618
FOGO Fund	9,500	500	10,000	-
Newcastle Fund	9,050	1,075	10,125	-
Other projects	14,646	862	15,508	515
	<u>141,687</u>	<u>18,072</u>	<u>159,759</u>	<u>137,116</u>

## SKIMSTONE ARTS

(A company limited by guarantee)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

#### Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities continued

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
<b>15 Support costs</b>				
Consultancy	-	1,650	<b>1,650</b>	3,080
Management activity	38	2,829	<b>2,867</b>	5,973
Governance cost	65	955	<b>1,020</b>	341
Finance and administration	-	1,452	<b>1,452</b>	5,707
IT costs	-	949	<b>949</b>	1,323
Depreciation	-	955	<b>955</b>	419
Rent and overheads	-	8,868	<b>8,868</b>	8,510
Marketing and PR	-	-	-	7,175
Other	-	311	<b>311</b>	1,555
	<u>103</u>	<u>17,969</u>	<u><b>18,072</b></u>	<u>34,083</u>

Expenditure on charitable activities and raising funds was £167,684 (2020: £165,659) of which £13,554 was unrestricted or designated (2020: £32,050) and £154,130 was restricted (2020: £133,609)

#### 16 Fees for examination of the accounts

	2021 £	2020 £
Independent examiner's fees for reporting on the accounts	<b>1,020</b>	720
	<u><b>1,020</b></u>	<u>720</u>
There were no other fees paid to the examiner (2020: £nil)		

#### 17 Analysis of staff costs and the cost of key management personnel

	2021 £	2020 £
Subcontract staff costs	<b>122,435</b>	110,785
	<u><b>122,435</b></u>	<u>110,785</u>

No employee received remuneration above £60,000 (2020: nil).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Artistic Director. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £40,030.

#### 18 Staff Numbers

The average monthly head count was 6 staff (2020: 6 staff) and the average monthly numbers of full-time equivalent employees during the year were as follows:

	2021 Number	2020 Number
The parts of the charity in which the subcontract staff work were:		
Charitable activities - core work	<b>0.7</b>	0.7
Charitable activities - direct work	<b>2.4</b>	2.4
	<u><b>3.1</b></u>	<u>3.1</u>

## SKIMSTONE ARTS

(A company limited by guarantee)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

#### 19 Transactions with Trustees

None of the Trustees have been paid any remuneration or received any other benefits from an employment with their charity or a related entity.

##### Trustees' expenses

The following detail the expenses incurred by the trustees.

	2021 £	2020 £
Microsoft Office Licence	33	-
	<u>33</u>	<u>-</u>

##### Transactions with related parties

There have been no related party transactions in the reporting period.

#### 20 Defined contribution pension scheme

As all the staff are currently subcontracted the charity does not operate a pension scheme.

#### 21 Corporation Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objectives.

22 Tangible fixed assets	Fixtures fittings and equipment £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>		
Balance brought forward	3,070	3,070
Additions	1,904	1,904
Disposals	-	-
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<u>4,974</u>	<u>4,974</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
Basis	SL	
Rate	25%	
Balance brought forward	2,591	2,591
Depreciation charge for year	955	955
Disposals	-	-
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<u>3,546</u>	<u>3,546</u>
<b>Net book value</b>		
<b>Brought forward</b>	<u>479</u>	<u>479</u>
<b>Carried forward</b>	<u>1,428</u>	<u>1,428</u>

## SKIMSTONE ARTS

(A company limited by guarantee)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

#### 23 Debtors and prepayments (receivable within 1 year)

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade debtors	13,824	2,180
	<u>13,824</u>	<u>2,180</u>

#### 24 Cash at bank and in hand

	2021 £	2020 £
Cash at bank	45,118	56,677
Cash in hand	128	128
	<u>45,246</u>	<u>56,805</u>

#### 25 Creditors and accruals (payable within 1 year)

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	16,403	549
Accruals		
Independent examination of accounts	1,020	756
	<u>17,423</u>	<u>1,305</u>

#### 26 Events after the end of the reporting period

No events have occurred after the end of the reporting period, but before the accounts are authorised, that require adjustment to the accounts.

#### 27 Analysis of charitable funds

##### Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds

	Fund balances brought forward £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Fund balances carried forward £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General unrestricted fund	6,052	25,928	( 13,554 )	7,284	25,710
Designated funds					
Garfield Weston	7,284	-	-	( 7,284 )	-
<b>Totals</b>	<u>13,336</u>	<u>25,928</u>	<u>( 13,554 )</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>25,710</u>

##### Purpose of unrestricted funds

General unrestricted fund: The 'free reserves' of the charity.

## SKIMSTONE ARTS

(A company limited by guarantee)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

#### 27 Analysis of charitable funds continued

##### Analysis of movement in restricted funds

Restricted funds	Fund balances brought forward £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Fund balances carried forward £
Well Newcastle Gateshead	3,639	8,000	( 11,639 )	-	-
Big lottery Reaching Out	-	9,850	( 9,850 )	-	-
Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund	-	35,000	( 35,000 )	-	-
Arts Council England	500	20,550	( 21,050 )	-	-
Care and Repair England	-	2,330	( 2,330 )	-	-
Community Foundation FOGO Fund	10,000	-	( 10,000 )	-	-
Newcastle City Council	-	1,800	( 1,800 )	-	-
Hadrian Trust	1,000	-	( 1,000 )	-	-
High Sheriff Award	615	-	( 615 )	-	-
Newcastle Fund	-	10,125	( 10,125 )	-	-
Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund	4,389	-	( 4,389 )	-	-
Peace Procession	5,842	-	( 5,842 )	-	-
Quaker Legacy Fund	7,000	-	( 2,667 )	-	4,333
Reality Boots Crowdfunding	337	-	( 337 )	-	-
Wellesley Foundation	1,061	-	( 1,061 )	-	-
Youth Music	10,440	39,017	( 36,425 )	-	13,032
<b>Totals</b>	<b>44,823</b>	<b>126,672</b>	<b>( 154,130 )</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17,365</b>

##### Purpose of main restricted funds

Restricted funds represent income resources used for a specific purpose within the charity as identified by the donor.

Well Newcastle Gateshead	Reaching Out Project - support young people to be cultural leaders and create work with communities.
Big lottery Reaching Out	Reaching Out Project - support young people to be cultural leaders and create work with communities.
Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund	Reaching Out Project - support young people to be cultural leaders and create work with communities.
Arts Council England	To support ongoing costs during the pandemic.
Care and Repair England	To support webinar and film about ageing.
Community Foundation FOGO Fund	Young Artist Collective - supporting the work of vulnerable young people in the region to make work and develop leadership.
Newcastle City Council	Holocaust Memorial Day Events Create work to be part of national Holocaust Memorial Day Events.
Hadrian Trust	Reaching Out Project - support young people to be cultural leaders and create work with communities.

## SKIMSTONE ARTS

(A company limited by guarantee)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

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#### 27 Analysis of charitable funds continued

##### Purpose of main restricted funds continued

Newcastle Fund	Young Artist Collective - supporting the work of vulnerable young people in the region to make work and develop leadership.
Peace Procession	Holocaust Memorial Day Events Create work to be part of national Holocaust Memorial Day Events.
Quaker Legacy Fund	Reaching Out Project - support young people to be cultural leaders and create work with communities.
Youth Music	Continue personal and musical development of our Young Artists Collective, supporting high-quality music making by young people facing complex life challenges.

##### Transfers between funds

	Reason for transfer	Amount £
Between unrestricted and designated funds	The transfer represents the balance of funds from Garfield Weston to pay for Core Costs.	7,284

#### 28 Capital commitments

As at 31 March 2021, the charity had no capital commitments (2020 -£nil).

#### 29 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Tangible fixed assets	1,428	-	1,428	479
Cash at bank and in hand	27,881	17,365	45,246	56,805
Other net current assets (liabilities)	(3,599)	-	(3,599)	875
	<u>25,710</u>	<u>17,365</u>	<u>43,075</u>	<u>58,159</u>