

# MESHWORKS

## Annual Report and Unaudited Accounts

1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

MeshWorks is a CIO committed to advancing understandings about the social role of art and performance, through producing and promoting contemporary art for audiences around the world via artist residency, research and performance platforms.

**Charity Name:** MeshWorks

**Charity Number:** 1185702

**Registration Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**Trustees:**

Amanda Hill-Dixon (Chair)  
Peter Macdonald (Treasurer)  
Helen Nicholson

**Registered Address:**

3 Sovereign Crescent, Lexden Road, Colchester. CO3 3UZ

## Governance and Management:

With no paid staff, MeshWorks is a volunteer led organisation, currently run by a small board of trustees who receive no remuneration for their participation. The board of trustees are supported day-to-day by researcher and producer Dr Poppy Spowage.

Current trustees include:

Amanda Hill-Dixon (Chair)  
Peter Macdonald (Treasurer)  
Helen Nicholson

## Objectives and Activities:

MeshWorks' objective is to promote art for the benefit of the public by the production of contemporary East African performance and art projects but not exclusively in Sub-Saharan Africa and England and Wales. To advance understandings about the social role of art and performance, MeshWorks produces and promotes contemporary art for audiences around the world via artist residency, research and performance platforms. This has included collaborating with international partners and supporting the development and delivery of the artist residency, research and performance platforms, including East African Soul Train (EAST) and Lost+Found. As well as providing training opportunities for East African artists, MeshWorks activities have a range of benefits for the public, including connecting and engaging local and international audiences with international contemporary cultural practice and advancing understanding about the social role of contemporary arts and performance practice.

## EASTgoesSOUTH 2025

Between 01 April 2024- 31 March 2025, MeshWorks continued to provide in-kind support to OFF/TRACK (<https://www.off-track.xyz/>), a collective of artists from around the world which brings artists and people working in the creative sector together to explore their identity and collaborate, share perspectives, build networks, challenge their peers, take risks and create new collaborative work, for on and offline audiences. In-kind support primarily included production, administration and fundraising support for the development of a pilot of EASTgoesSOUTH – namely led by Poppy Spowage, with support from the board of trustees.

The pilot of EASTgoesSOUTH and its project activity took place between 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025, therefore cutting across year end. Financial reporting reflects expenditure 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, narrative reporting reflects the entire project spanning this reporting year and next.

EASTgoesSOUTH is a creative adventure bringing Indian, African and European artists together to explore the power of transdisciplinary collaborations, defying geographical boundaries and building inclusive networks.

EASTgoesSOUTH is inspired by EAST - a creative adventure that started on East Africa's historic railway in 2016 and looked to build connection and collaboration between artists working in different disciplines and from different areas of the world. Our experience is that the trust built through the journey and methodologies that facilitate deep peer-to-peer learning, leads to collaborative relationships, cutting-edge practice and finding new ways of navigating and reshaping artistic realities beyond the project. You can find out more about previous journeys here: <https://www.off-track.xyz/east>.

With a grant from Miller-Zillmer Stiftung, legacy funds from OFF/TRACK Collective which were transferred for EASTgoesSOUTH project activities and fiscal/in-kind support from MeshWorks we brought 6 artists, 4 producer-curators and 4 witnesses from three continents together for a week-long journey of creative rebirth March 27th-April 7th 2025. From Kochi to Kolkata, with stops in Bangalore and Delhi we spent a week imagining and making together on India's railways.

Whilst we anticipate that the impacts of the project will continue to reverberate for years to come, through the strong relationships, radical dialogue and networks built with a global collective of culture makers, this edition resulted in 12 new works in progress, which were performed/shared to an audience of 80+ at Urban Theatre Project in Kolkata on April 6th 2025 as well as a short documentary of our journey together. We are already looking forward to 2026, recognising that the world - now more than ever - needs connected and courageous artists and culturemakers to imagine new ways of living and being together.

This pilot programme demonstrated the importance of creating space for radical and honest conversations between creatives from different contexts. Being together physically supported meaningful exchange, catalysed new artistic work and lifelong relationships between artists, witnesses and the team. It reaffirmed the importance of processes that prioritise connection, trust and risk at a time of widening social, economic and political fragmentation and the uniqueness of the project format. We also learnt a lot. Curatorially - *the importance of a small curated intergenerational group and a diverse creative team*. In terms of production - *we are clear on what it takes to travel with a diverse group and the budget necessary, as well as importance of local partnerships, potential of community and communications*.

We have verbal confirmation of a second grant from Miller-Zillmer Foundation, new Indian production partners and a clear plan for raising additional income from community philanthropy via OFF/TRACK and a range of cultural events in India associated with EASTgoesSOUTH 2026.

## Reimagining Cultural Finance

Across the year, MeshWorks have also been supporting the development of a new strand of work around Reimagining Cultural Finance – this has included developing a business plan around harnessing income from the cultural and creative industries to redirect to arts and social justice work in sub-Saharan Africa. An initial draft of this was presented to the Board in September 2024 and has since been under development. This was used for the development of a multi-year research project, led by Dr Poppy Spowage, which is still under consideration. If successful, MeshWorks would act as a core delivery partner. The summary of the project is as follows:

How do we pay for the art the world needs? As evidenced in *Forces of Art* (Kouni et.al., 2020), embedded in fragile communities and committed to unlocking new forms of participation, imagination and critical reflection, artists are often uniquely positioned to challenge and reshape socio-economic inequalities and structures. Geo-political instability, climate crises, global pandemics and the rapid acceleration of AI technologies make the role of artists ever more necessary. Yet the financial systems that have previously supported socially ambitious work are broken. Government subsidy, philanthropic grants and aid are being slashed, with major cuts announced in 2025 by institutions which financed international arts-based development programmes including the British Council, UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and USAID. Over 15 years of collaboration with communities and artists in the Global South, I have seen firsthand how artists and activists with limited subsidies have taken the initiative, creating impactful work outside traditional funding systems, building social enterprises, community-led investment models and innovative partnerships that sustain arts and social justice practice.

At a time when arts and development funding is collapsing, the aim of this Research Fellowship is to investigate how models of cultural production in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) can inform new, sustainable models for financing

arts and social justice initiatives globally. Through co-developing, testing and evaluating new models of cultural finance with international partners, this Fellowship will advance theory, practice and policy around community-led cultural innovation.

## Continued Support to Arts Organisations and Artists from sub-Saharan Africa

MeshWorks have continued to provide in-kind support to a range of arts organisations and artists from sub-Saharan Africa looking to work in and with the UK cultural sector. This includes Santuri East Africa and Film Possible, who are aiming to produce Matatu Film Stage - a pan-African travelling film festival bringing original cinema from African and its diaspora to audiences across the Continent.

## Financial Review

Income in the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 from voluntary donations and other fundraising activities was zero. However, we used with £8,383.65 grant income from year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 from Miller-Zillmer Foundation for the pilot of EASTgoesSOUTH and its project activity took place between 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025, therefore cutting across year end. Financial reporting reflects expenditure 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, narrative reporting reflects the entire project spanning this reporting year and next.

## Statement of Financial Activities 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025:

<b>Income</b>					
	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>		<b>Restricted funds</b>		<b>Total Funds</b>
Fundraising Activities	£	-	£	-	£ -
Donations	£	-			£ -
Grants Income (Miller-Zillmer Foundation)	£	-	£	8,384.00	£ 8,384.00
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>8,384.00</b>	<b>£ 8,384.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>		<b>Restricted funds</b>		<b>Total Funds</b>
Project Activities	£	-	£	5,771.00	£ 5,771.00
<i>Artist &amp; Team International Travel</i>	£	-	£	2,500.00	
<i>Artist &amp; Team Accommodation</i>	£	-	£	1,014.00	
<i>Communications</i>	£	-	£	1,059.00	
<i>Production &amp; Equipment Hire</i>	£	-	£	225.00	
<i>Materials &amp; Sundry Goods</i>	£	-	£	441.00	
<i>Artist &amp; Team Travel in India (contribution)</i>	£	-	£	532.00	
Staff Costs	£	-	£	-	£ -
Infrastructure	£	-	£	-	£ -
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>5,771.00</b>	<b>£ 5,771.00</b>
<b>Net of Income/Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>2,613.00</b>			
<b>Total Charitable Funds 31st March 2025</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>2,613.00</b>			

The Trustees are satisfied that MeshWorks is entitled to exemption from the requirement to obtain and audit under Charities Act 2011, section 145. The Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for complying with Charities Act 2011 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

Annual Return and Financial Accounts Approved by Board on: 7th January 2026:



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Selection of images and testimonials from EASTgoesSOUTH 2025



## Receipts and payments accounts

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For the period  
from

1st April 2024

To

31st March 2025

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations and Legacies	-	8 384	-	8 384	8 384
Charitable Activities	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	-	8 384	-	8 384	8 384
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total receipts</b>	-	8 384	-	8 384	8 384
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Charitable Activities	-	5 771	-	5 771	-
Raising Funds	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	5 771	-	5 771	-
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	-	5 771	-	5 771	-
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	-	2 613	-	2 613	8 384
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	-	2 613	-	2 613	8 384

### Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period



Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Remaining Miller-Zillmer Foundation Grant for EASTgoesSOUTH	-	2 613	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	-	2 613	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
	Details	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Peter Macdonald	07.01.2026
	Helen Nicholson	07.01.2026