

CULTURE NEWSLETTER

four



CLIMBING THE OCTOBER MOUNTAIN

We took inspiration from our client, the adventurer Neil Laughton, who has climbed Mount Everest three times and took a deep breath as we launched into a packed October. From intense discussions at the Cheltenham Literature Festival to cutting edge digital art in Lincoln and from rap battles at John Hansard Gallery in Southampton to Poptin Pete in Croydon, we've been spreading the word about culture and heritage across the UK.

Also in this month's newsletter you can find out about our MENA team supporting the premiere of *The Phantom of the Opera* in Riyadh and hear from our brilliant chief strategy officer, Megan Butler, about how on earth we are going about developing a new brand identity for England.

All the best,
Truda and Matt



PUTTING THE HEART INTO HERITAGE ACROSS THE UNITED KINGDOM

From the coastal paths of Torbay to the cultural hotspot of Glasgow and the rolling moorlands of County Durham, the first nine Heritage Places were announced by The National Lottery Heritage Fund earlier this month.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, County Durham, Glasgow, Leicester, Medway, Neath Port Talbot, North East Lincolnshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Torbay are set to benefit from a share of £200m, targeted to unlock the potential of their heritage. Heritage Places is a 10-year investment initiative to transform heritage, inspire communities, revitalise economies and build pride in place.

We worked alongside the Heritage Fund to create a media strategy designed to strengthen and promote local partnerships and to communicate a renewed and enduring commitment to place. We achieved significant coverage which reinforced this messaging, with over 80 pieces running across print, online and TV, with highlights including interviews with the Heritage Fund CEO Eilish McGuinness for national outlets such as *The Observer* and *BBC Radio 4 Front Row*.

The team secured 8 pieces of coverage in trade outlets such as *Arts Professional and Museums + Heritage Advisor*, whilst securing over 69 pieces for regional media in the nine places across the UK, including broadcast interviews for regional *BBC* and *ITV* shows, 18 print pieces and an abundance of online articles.

This is the first strategic initiative as part of the Heritage 2033 Strategy, which The National Lottery Heritage Fund announced earlier in the year. A further 11 Heritage Places will be considered as part of the development of the Heritage Fund's next three-year delivery plan, making a total of 20.



THE TIMES AND SUNDAY TIMES CHELTENHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL CLOSES ITS 74TH YEAR

Each year, October sees the return of The Times and Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival, one of literature's Big Three – and an evergreen landmark in the autumn public circuit. With more than 600 speakers from 46 countries across 500+ events, and tens of thousands of visitors – Cheltenham Literature Festival covered a range of topics from literature and politics to food and fashion – the festival offered a lens to society and culture, in the UK and globally.

The world's longest-running literature festival welcomed fresh talent and stars that graced the stages across Cheltenham including Ian McEwan, Zadie Smith, Brian Cox, Michael Palin, Andi Osho, Nicola Sturgeon, Nafisa Hussain, John Whittle, Andi and Miquta Oliver. Talent from the Voicesbox strand of the programme designed to uplift young voices included: Fats Timbo, Carly Cox, Sophia Kaur Badhan and Dr Soph.

Coverage was strong from the start, with the programme announcement generating widespread attention around the country via Press Association and in the key book trades, driving awareness ahead of ticket on-sale. Features, talent interviews and previews ahead of the festival to further drive ticket sales included Country and Town House, Vanity Fair, Another, Sky News, Monocle Radio, BBC Breakfast, BBC Radio 6 Music and BBC Radio 4 Loose Ends, followed by the usual wealth of news coverage to come out of the festival itself in the national newspapers.

In addition to a rise in ticket sales this year, there were also 12,000 schoolchildren present, a significant increase of a third on 2022. Notably the Festival also saw its largest on-site book sales figures to date, at almost £5million. Overall, another fantastic year in the books.



A TASTE FOR ADVENTURE

Adventurer and former Royal Marine Commando Neil Laughton's first book *Adventureholic* was published by Whitefox earlier this month, meaning the team have had a chance to learn all about what it's like to climb Mount Everest not once, but three times!

Laughton has completed over 50 expeditions so far, across all seven continents, all while raising money for charity, which led him to his most recent trip: a 400 mile cycle across Ukraine on a penny farthing in aid of Stobhan's Trust, which he wrote all about in a feature for *Country Life*, published just last week.

The audience at Isle of Wight Literary Festival were welcomed with a wealth of stories, from organising the world's highest dinner party (on Everest of course) to circumnavigating Easter Island on a paddleboard. He has also been chatting with the team over at BBC Radio Sussex throughout the month.

On October 12, Laughton hosted a fantastic launch party, marked by a speech filled with anecdotes and hilarious photographs, at the beautiful Royal Geographical Society. If you'd like to meet him, and are in the area, Staying Bookshop are hosting a signing on November 25th at 3pm, followed by a larger event in January (details to come!).

Adventureholic is a clarion call for all of those with an adventurous spirit. If you fancy learning the dos and don'ts of adventuring from the man who has done it all, pick up a copy of *Adventureholic* now on [Amazon](#).



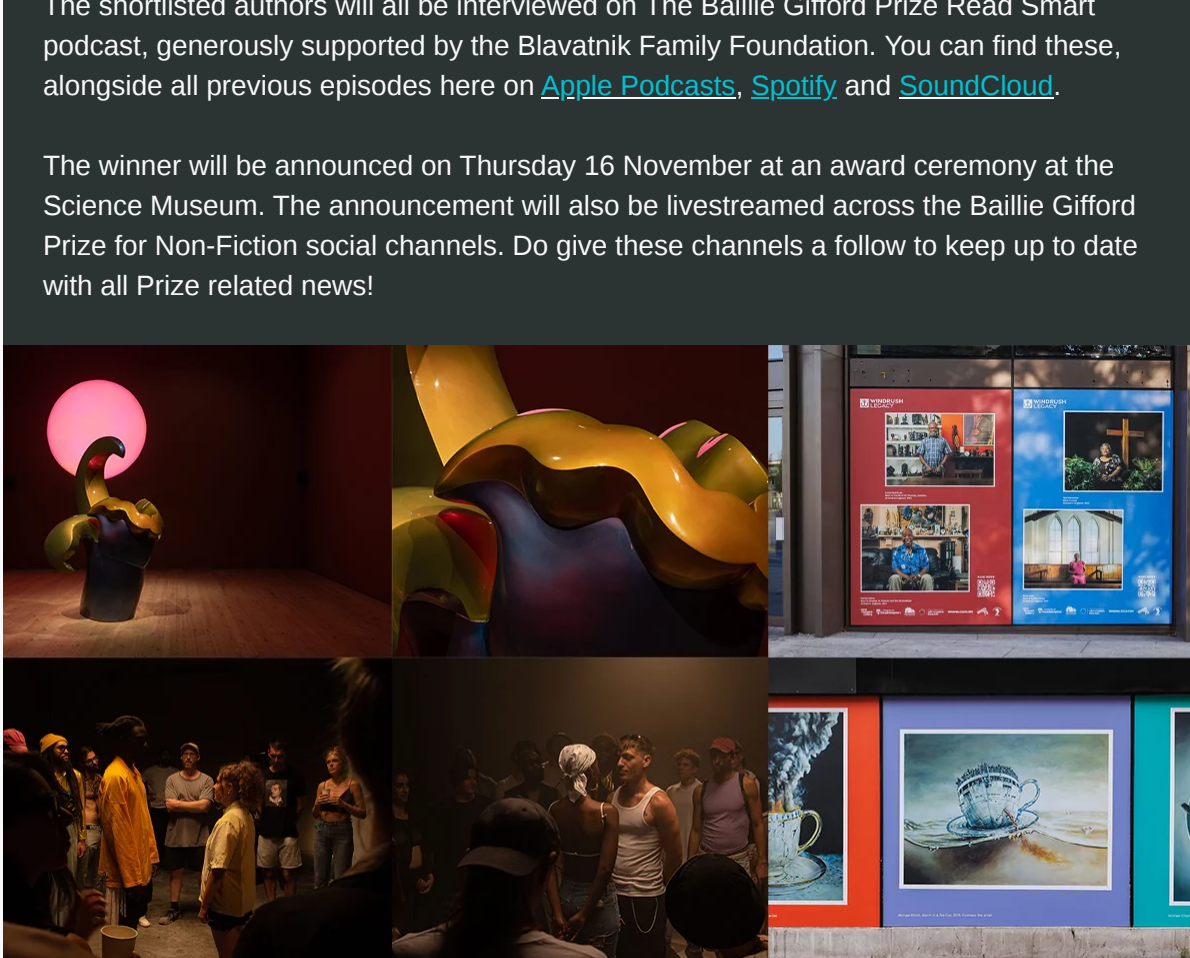
AND THE SHORTLIST IS...

On the 8th October, the team announced the 2023 shortlist for the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction. The list is composed of *Time to Think* by Hannah Barnes, *Red Memory* by Tania Branigan, *Revolutionary Spring* by Christopher Clark, *Time's Echo* by Jeremy Eichler, *Mr B* by Jennifer Homans and *Fire Weather* by John Vaillant. The shortlist was revealed by Chair of Judges, Frederick Stedemann, live from an event at Cheltenham Literature Festival. The list addresses major contemporary issues and topical themes including climate change and NHS scandal, and sheds new light on familiar histories, from the Holocaust to the Cultural Revolution.

The shortlist announced accumulated 226 pieces of coverage, including pieces in *The Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Mail Online*, and *The Independent*. The news was also seen by 205,420 people across the Baillie Gifford social media channels in the first 24 hours of online content being posted.

The shortlisted authors will all be interviewed on The Baillie Gifford Prize Read Smart podcast, generously supported by the Blavatnik Family Foundation. You can find these, alongside all previous episodes here on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#) and [SoundCloud](#).

The winner will be announced on Thursday 16 November at an award ceremony at the Science Museum. The announcement will also be livestreamed across the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction social channels. Do give these channels a follow to keep up to date with all Prize related news!



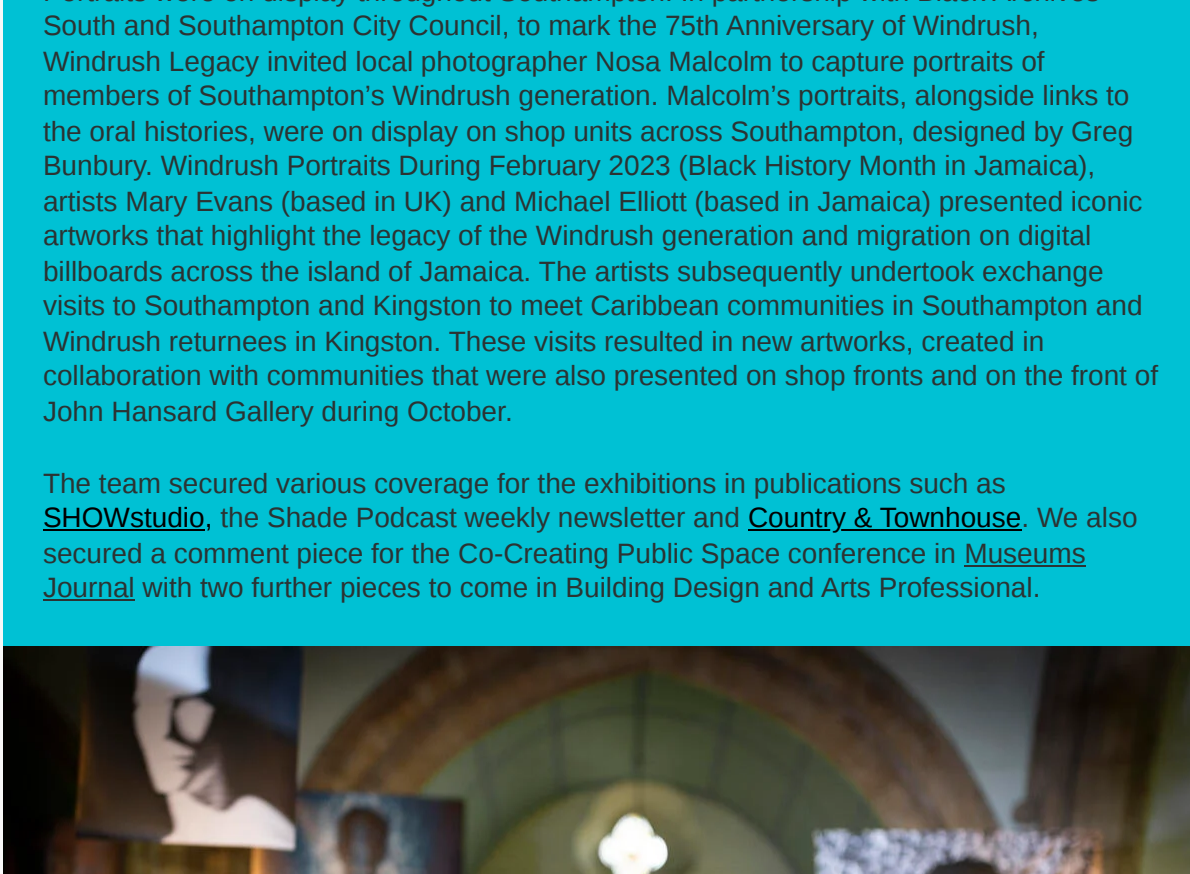
HIP HOP CULTURE AND THE CONCEPT OF NATIONHOOD AT JOHN HANSARD GALLERY

October has been busy for our client John Hansard Gallery, part of the University of Southampton, as we helped to announce its October programme, plus a conference hosted in partnership with UP Projects, 'Co-Creating Public Space: How Can We Thrive?' and two Windrush projects.

On 28 October, acclaimed Ukrainian artist Mykola Ridnyi's *The Battle Over Mazepa*, a newly commissioned work in partnership with Pushkin House opened at the gallery. Addressing codes of hip-hop culture, Ridnyi uses the form of a rap battle to collate two great works of world literature associated with Ivan Mazepa, Mazepa by Lord Byron and *Poltava* by Alexander Pushkin. Also on 28 October is *Confagration*, Jala Wahid's first institutional solo exhibition that presents a new body of work exploring the relationship between Britain and Kurdistan through the lens of oil. Wahid works with sculpture, film, sound, writing and installation. Her work touches on urgent issues in relation to identity, nationhood, diasporic living in the UK, intergenerational connections and cultural traditions.

Finally, throughout October, two Windrush projects, Windrush Legacy and Windrush Portraits were on display throughout Southampton. In partnership with Black Archives South and Southampton City Council, to mark the 75th Anniversary of Windrush, Windrush Legacy invited local photographer Nosa Malcolm to capture portraits of members of Southampton's Windrush generation. Malcolm's portraits, alongside links to the oral histories, were on display on shop units across Southampton, designed by Greg Bunbury. Windrush Portraits During February 2023 (Black History Month in Jamaica) artists Mary Evans (based in UK) and Michael Elliott (based in Jamaica) presented iconic artworks that highlight the legacy of the Windrush generation and migration on digital billboards across the island of Jamaica. The artists subsequently undertook exchange visits to Southampton and Kingston to meet Caribbean communities in Southampton and Windrush returns in Kingston. These visits resulted in new artworks, created in collaboration with communities that were also presented on shop fronts and on the front of John Hansard Gallery during October.

The team secured various coverage for the exhibitions in publications such as *SHOWstudio*, *The Shade Podcast* weekly newsletter and *Country & Townhouse*. We also secured a comment piece for the Co-Creating Public Space conference in *Museums Journal* with two further pieces to come in *Building Design* and *Arts Professional*.

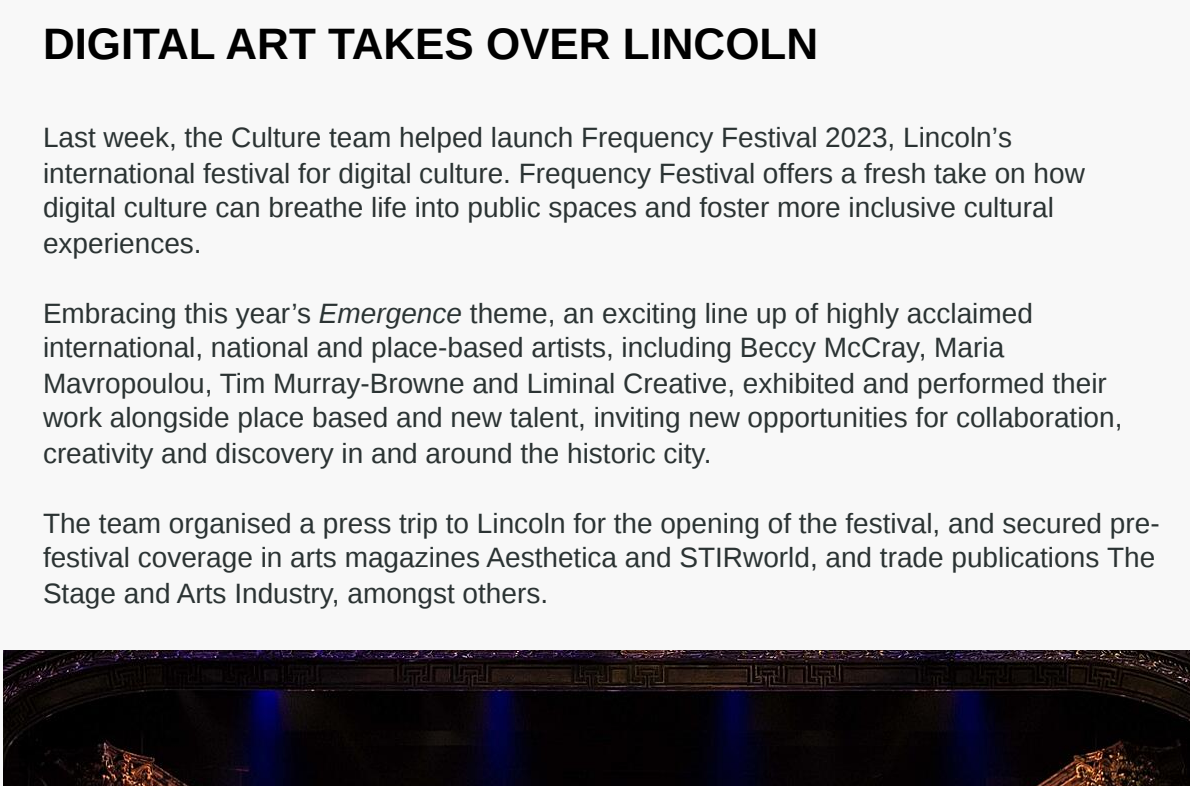


DIGITAL ART TAKES OVER LINCOLN

Last week, the Culture team helped launch Frequency Festival 2023, Lincoln's international festival for digital culture. Frequency Festival offers a fresh take on how digital culture can breathe life into public spaces and foster more inclusive cultural experiences.

Embracing this year's *Emergence* theme, an exciting line up of highly acclaimed international, national and place-based artists, including Beccy McCray, Maria Mavropoulou, Tim Murray-Browne and Liminal Creative, exhibited and performed their work alongside place based and new talent, inviting new opportunities for collaboration, creativity and discovery in and around the historic city.

The team organised a press trip to Lincoln for the opening of the festival, and secured pre-festival coverage in arts magazines *Aesthetica* and *STIRworld*, and trade publications *The Stage* and *Arts Industry*, amongst others.



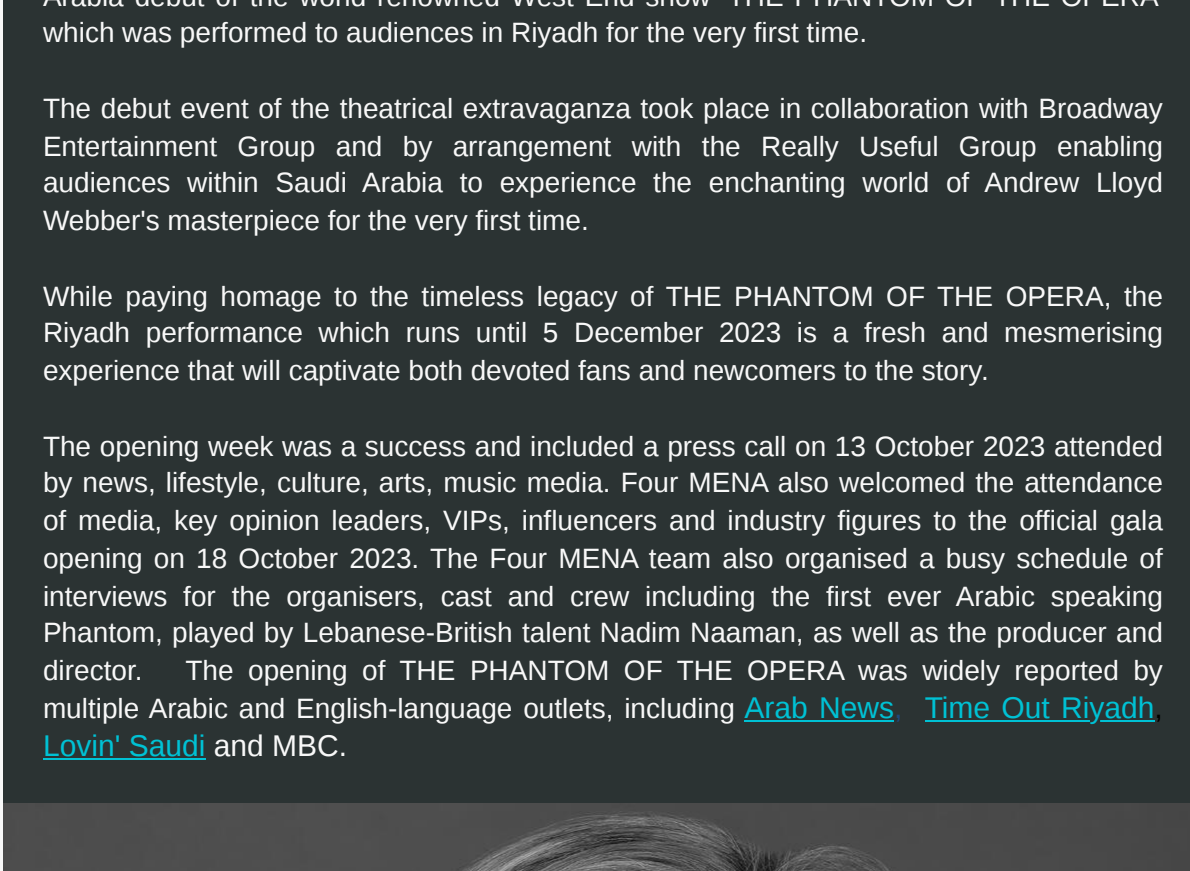
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA OPENS IN RIYADH

Members of the Four MENA team were in Riyadh last week for the opening of the Saudi Arabia debut of the world renowned West End show *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* which was performed to audiences in Riyadh for the very first time.

The debut event of the theatrical extravaganza took place in collaboration with Broadway Entertainment Group and by arrangement with the Really Useful Group enabling audiences within Saudi Arabia to experience the enchanting world of Andrew Lloyd Webber's masterpiece for the very first time.

While paying homage to the timeless legacy of *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*, the Riyadh performance which runs until 5 December 2023 is a fresh and mesmerising experience that will captivate both devoted fans and newcomers to the story.

The opening week was a success and included a press call on 13 October 2023 attended by news, lifestyle, culture, arts, music media. Four MENA also welcomed the attendance of media, key opinion leaders, VIPs, influencers and industry figures to the official gala opening on 10 October 2023. The Four MENA team also organised a busy schedule of interviews for the organisers, cast and crew including the first ever Arabic speaking Phantom, played by the Lebanese-British talent Nadim Naaman, as well as the producer and director. The opening of *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* was widely reported by multiple Arabic and English-language outlets, including *Arab News*, *Time Out Riyadh*, *Lovin' Saudi* and *MBC*.



CULTURE ACROSS FOUR – MEGAN BUTLER

Hello – I'm Megan Butler, Four's chief strategy officer. Arts and culture is a big interest of mine outside of work, so getting to work with Four's culture clients is really rewarding to me personally.

I'm currently working with VisitEngland to develop a new brand identity for England. That project alone shows the immense value that we as a nation derive from our cultural industries. We were struck by the importance of culture in driving visitation and positive sentiment among tourists, from Harry Potter to Hamlet and much in between. We are now developing a brand that allows us to talk about what sets England apart from other destinations and is motivating to tourists, and celebrating our culture and our cultural icons as a big part of that story. I also worked earlier this year with East Bank, the new cultural district in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park that brings together world-class experiences from the BBC, Sadler's Wells, UAL's London College of Fashion, University College London and the V&A. Getting to work with stakeholders from these cultural leaders alongside the London Legacy Development Corporation and the Foundation for Future London was a real highlight, in helping them to shape a vision for collaboration and engagement – including particularly the local resident community. Culture should benefit all of us, and in a similar theme our brand development project with Arts Council England's access scheme project is hugely important work.

Working with Four's proprietary insights methodology, *Mapper360*, gives us a real-time view of what's trending on social media and how popular culture is evolving. We had a lot of fun this month presenting our Triggers and Trends report alongside a panel of thought leaders and innovators. Rather than just present the trends in theoretical terms, we focused on the people driving and engaging with these trends, to make it more actionable but also to bring us back to the human behaviour that we need to understand. It drove a lot of lively conversation, and some great ideas for campaigns.

