

Press release – Thursday 31 October 2019

## MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL CONTRIBUTES £50M TO THE CITY

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This year's Manchester International Festival (MIF19), the second led by Artistic Director John McGrath, was the biggest yet, with more than 1,000 ticketed events - ranging from dance, theatre, music and visual arts, to site-specific performance and immersive installations - drawing record numbers and delivering an economic impact of £50m.

Over 18 extraordinary days Manchester welcomed the world, with the seventh edition of the biennial Festival attracting over 300,000 visitors, drawn from over 40 countries, as well as from across the city and rest of the UK.

Artists from more than 20 countries presented world and UK premieres and special events at venues and spaces across Manchester, including Laurie Anderson, Tania Bruguera, Idris Elba and Kwame Kwei-Armah, Philip Glass and Phelim McDermott, David Lynch, Ibrahim Mahama, Janelle Monáe, Yoko Ono, Maxine Peake and Skepta.

Underpinning the city's status as a major centre for culture and creativity, nine of this year's commissions are already confirmed to tour nationally and internationally in cities across the globe.

Closer to home, the number of volunteers increased to more than 500 and local artists and residents from across the city played a key role in the Festival in greater numbers than ever. Almost 6,000 people were involved in MIF19 engagement activities including workshops, skills development programmes and resident-led public conversations

A record number of commissions were participatory, placing the people of Manchester and beyond centre stage. Thousands of residents and visitors came together to ring out for peace at Yoko Ono's opening event *BELLS FOR PEACE*; 40 city centre businesses and residents hosted Rimini Protokoll's transcendent city tour *Utopolis Manchester*; and Cuban artist Tania Bruguera's *School of Integration* saw hundreds of members of the city's migrant communities become teachers to share their experiences, skills and knowledge with the wider community.

A revamped Festival Square, whose programme of good food and free entertainment attracted its largest ever numbers - 165,000 - also saw Manchester-based artists take to the hugely popular stage, alongside the likes of Nitin Sawhney, Horace Andy and Laurie Anderson.

Underlining MIF's commitment to enabling more people to experience the Festival, 35% of all tickets were available at £10 or less to Greater Manchester residents and a further 2,500 were given free via community groups around the city.

# MIF Manchester International Festival

## Headlines from MIF19

- MIF19 had an economic impact of £50m, with over 302,000 visitors and more than 1,000 ticketed events.
- MIF19 was truly global attracting artists from more than 20 countries and visitors from more than 40 countries, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Martinique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Yugoslavia and the USA.
- As ever, Manchester International Festival presents work that is made in the city and is shared with the world. At least nine MIF19 commissions will be presented across the globe, including *Invisible Cities*, *The Nico Project*, *Utopolis Manchester*, *Tao of Glass* and *Thank You Very Much*.
- Digital and online activity included more than 6.6 million views of MIF19 content.
- A new look Festival Square, featuring two Glass Houses with roof terraces and a specially designed covered stage hosting a packed, free programme of live music DJs and other entertainment, as well as great food from local suppliers, attracted 165,000 visitors - an increase of 15,000 visitors on MIF17.
- Local people and Manchester-based artists played a key role in MIF19, including a record-breaking 507 volunteers, who welcomed people to the Festival.
- The Creative Engagement team supported 5,900 people to get involved in in the Festival in a variety of ways. As well as volunteering, it included participation in seven commissions, including *Tuesday* and *The Anvil*, as well as skills development programmes, resident-led public conversations and creating events such as Festival in My House.
- 40 local organisations, businesses and city-centre residents hosted part of *Utopolis Manchester*, which was created by Rimini Protokoll and took people on a unique behind the scenes tour of Manchester's buildings, people and history.
- Tania Bruguera's *School of Integration* saw 104 city residents, hailing from 53 countries around the world deliver over 80 classes at Manchester Art Gallery covering a variety of subjects, including languages, food, customs, ethics and politics.
- 76% of MIF19 visitors attended free events.
- 2,531 free tickets for MIF19 shows were distributed to local youth and community groups- such as RECLAIM, Manchester Cares, and Salford Youth Justice Service – offering the chance for many people who had no previous engagement with the arts to see a Festival show.

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- The discounted ticketing scheme for Greater Manchester residents on a lower wage was reduced from £12 in 2017 to £10 this year, and 35% of all MIF19 tickets were available at £10 or less.
- MIF19 attracted over 100 sponsors and funding partners, whose support ensures that the Festival is able to take place and is able to attract some of the greatest artists in the world to Manchester.
- MIF19 generated record levels of local, national and international coverage across a wide range of national and international print and broadcast media.
- With MIF set to operate and create the artistic programme for The Factory, the landmark cultural space being developed in the heart of Manchester, three MIF19 works were presented as pre-Factory events: *Invisible Cities*, *Atmospheric Memory* and *The Fountainhead*. More pre-Factory events are due to take place in 2020, offering audiences the opportunity to experience some of the variety of work that will be presented at The Factory. People visiting Festival Square also had the opportunity to experience what The Factory might look like using VR headsets.

**John McGrath**, MIF's Artistic Director and Chief Executive, said: *"We're delighted by the success of this year's Festival, which brought to Manchester some of the world's greatest artists, who produced thrilling, sometimes challenging work across the city. More than ever before, local artists and residents have played a crucial part in making it happened and I'm very pleased that we've been able to support more young people to see and be involved in MIF19. As we start planning for MIF in 2021 and look ahead to the opening of The Factory, this year has been an extraordinary example of Manchester meeting the world."*

**Sir Richard Leese**, Leader of Manchester City Council, said: *"Manchester's cultural and creative credentials have never been stronger and this year's MIF is further proof that the city is not going to give up its place in the spotlight on the world's stage any time soon."*

*"With an economic impact this year of £50m there can be no doubt that MIF is good for Manchester."*

*"Its value is not just in drawing national and global audiences from outside the city in - and with them a level of inward investment we might not otherwise see - but also in creating real opportunities for local people to get involved, through jobs, volunteering, participating, and access to reduced price tickets for those on low wages."*

*"Cities need culture to thrive, as much as culture needs cities like ours that support and embrace it. And here in Manchester, as we look to a future with our unique ground-breaking new venue The Factory firmly centre stage, we're very clear that we're in it for the long haul."*

# MIF Manchester International Festival

*"Britain's most stimulating arts festival."*  
**Richard Morrison, The Times, 19 July 2019**

*"A showcase for homegrown and international art in this former industrial capital, it is unique in Britain for its interdisciplinary reach."*  
**A.J. Goldman, The New York Times 11 July 2019**

*"A festival for the creatively courageous."*  
**Will Gompertz, BBC, 6 July 2019**

*The production [Invisible Cities] is like nothing I have seen before and typical of the MIF tradition of defying genres. If it is a glimpse of what we can expect to see at The Factory, a new hub for MIF being built at the old Granada studios site, Manchester is in for a treat."*  
**Alexandra Rucki, Manchester Evening News, 14 July 2019**

The next Manchester International Festival will take place in July 2021.

## ABOUT MIF

Manchester International Festival (MIF) launched in 2007 as the world's first festival of original, new work and special events. It is an artist-led festival staged very two years in Manchester and presents new works from across the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture.

This year's festival took place from 4-21 July 2019. Commissioned artists included Laurie Anderson, Tania Bruguera, Idris Elba and Kwame Kwei-Armah, Philip Glass and Phelim McDermott, David Lynch, Yoko Ono, Maxine Peake and Skepta. Artists commissioned for previous festivals include Marina Abramović, Damon Albarn, Björk, Boris Charmatz, Jeremy Deller, Elbow, Wayne McGregor, Steve McQueen, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, Thomas Ostermeier, Punchdrunk, The xx, Robert Wilson and Zaha Hadid Architects.

These and other artists create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work, staged in venues across Greater Manchester – from theatres, galleries and concert halls to railway depots, churches and car parks. MIF works closely with venues, festivals and other cultural organisations globally, whose financial and creative input helps to make many of these projects possible and ensures work made in Manchester goes on to be seen around the world.

MIF supports a year-round [Creative Engagement](#) programme, bringing opportunities for people from all backgrounds, ages and from all corners of the city to get involved during the festival and year-round, as volunteers, as participants in shows, through skills development workshops and a host of creative activities, such as Festival in My House.

MIF will also run [The Factory](#), the new world-class cultural space being developed in the heart of Manchester, designed by internationally-renowned architects Rem Koolhaas' [Office for Metropolitan Architecture](#) (OMA). Due to open in 2021, The Factory will commission, present and produce a year-round programme, featuring new work from the world's greatest artists and offering them space to make work of ambition and scale they might not be able to elsewhere. Attracting up to 850,000 visitors, The Factory will add £1.1 billion to the economy and create 1,500 jobs. Its pioneering programme of skills, training and engagement will benefit local people and

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# Manchester International Festival

the next generation of creative talent from across the city, whilst apprenticeships and trainee schemes are already underway during the construction phase.

MIF's Artistic Director and Chief Executive is John McGrath.

MIF is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. [mif.co.uk](http://mif.co.uk)

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