

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

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## Press Release

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**Images:** available [here](#)

**Listings:** [here](#)

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## Southbank Centre unveils first digital Unlimited festival programme accessible to global audience

Unlimited festival (13 - 17 January 2021) set to be the most accessible yet, with **33 online events, 32 of which are free**, and **16** events available on-demand.



Credit line: Insect Hands (credit: Alice Underwood), 111 (credit: Susan Hay), The Origin of Carmen Power (credit: George Day).

To coincide with International Day of Disabled Persons, the Southbank Centre today announces details of its first digital **Unlimited festival** programme, a five-day festival featuring dance, performance, comedy, film, talks, workshops and art that celebrates the artistic vision of disabled artists from 13 - 17 January 2021.

For the first time ever, Unlimited festival will be accessible to audiences around the globe. The festival and the Unlimited commissions programme together aim to help embed work by disabled artists across all art forms within the cultural sector, reach new audiences and change perceptions of disabled people. The festival is inclusive and encourages everyone to get involved. Alongside the digital programme, there will be an outdoor exhibition onsite at the Southbank Centre, 'Unseen' by artist Suzie Larke.

Born out of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad to coincide with the London Paralympic Games, the biennial festival was last held at the Southbank Centre in 2018, and was delayed in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The festival predominantly showcases works commissioned by Unlimited, an arts commissioning programme and one of Arts Council England's strategic diversity initiatives, delivered by the disability-led arts organisation Shape Arts and producing organisation Artsadmin.

### **Unlimited festival highlights include:**

#### **WORLD PREMIERES**

Second Hand Dance presents the world premiere of **Insect Hands** (16 Jan, free). Created by Rosie Heafford, winner of the Arts Foundation Children's Theatre Shortlist Award, this new work for ages 4 - 7 invites audiences to look a little more closely at the world around them. A new interactive online storytelling experience **The Origin of Carmen Power** (13 - 17 Jan, free) created by an 11-year-old girl, Carmen Power is set to be a festival highlight. Carmen invites the audience to join a superhero adventure where they get to meet Carmen herself, who, through this playful quest, shares her real-life experience of cancer five years ago when she was seven years-old. In this self-guided online experience, Carmen uses play and imagination to express the challenges she faced and overcame. Created for 7 - 13-year-olds with support from innovative theatre maker Toby Peach who experienced cancer as a teenager himself, this new work has been made with support from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH). Unlimited festival presents the first ever screening of **Instagramming the Apocalypse** (15 - 17 Jan, free), developed from the popular stage show created by Byron Vincent.

#### **DANCE**

Unlimited festival features a broadcast of the critically acclaimed powerful dance duet **111** (13 - 15 Jan, free), featuring Joel Brown (Candoco Dance Company) and Eve Mutso (former Principal Dancer of Scottish Ballet) as they explore their different strengths and vulnerabilities. 111 is the number of vertebrae Joel and Eve have between them.

**Artificial Things** (15 - 17 Jan, free), winner of a prestigious dancescreenaward is choreographed by Lucy Bennett and directed by Sophie Fiennes. Filmed on location in a derelict suburban shopping mall, featuring an ensemble of disabled and non-disabled dancers, the film explores human interdependence, strength, and vulnerability. Dancers Amy Butler, Laura Jones, Chris Pavia, David Willdridge and Dave Toole (who recently passed away), who devised the original piece, all appear in the film. The piece will be accompanied by a live Q&A with the creative team. Sonny Nwachukwu gives an interactive insight into his choreopoem in **Saturn Returns** (17 Jan, free), a live dance and spoken word performance which explores the psychospiritual clashes produced in Black people by the weight of history. Audiences experience a live excerpt. **Here / Not**

**Here** (14 - 17 Jan, free) is a new hip-hop film exploring British Sign Language, Krump street dance, football and Visual Vernacular; the choreographed and poetic form of sign language. This drama sees three rival groups; Deaf VVers, footballers and Krumpers; clash over who should use an abandoned warehouse space. The film, directed by award-winning film-maker and Deaf artist Bim Ajadi, written by Jonzi D, Artistic Director of Breakin' Convention, is a unique collaboration with the film's professional and non-professional, Deaf and hearing cast. The music is composed and produced by Torben Lars Sylvest. Second Hand Dance presents the world premiere of **Insect Hands** for ages 4 - 7 (16 Jan, free).

### **ONLINE EXHIBITION & MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE**

An online exhibition created by shortlisted BAFTA award filmmaker Justin Edgar, **Reasonable Adjustment - The Disabled Armed Resistance Movement** (13 - 17 Jan, free) showcases artefacts he has collected over 30 years which document the Reasonable Adjustment movement. A movement that took place in the late 1980s by a group of disabled activists who fought Margaret Thatcher's right-wing government and an oppressive medical establishment to gain rights for the disabled. Some might say it's as though Reasonable Adjustment (RAD) never happened at all. Multimedia performance **Within Sight** (17 - 19 Jan, free) is a filmed version of Ellen Renton's debut solo show based on her experience of living with albinism. The work is about running, disability and the Paralympics. Ellen's soft-spoken but hard-hitting poetry dismantles ableism, inspiration porn and the myth of the Paralympics. **The Microscope Sessions** (15 Jan, free) invites a live audience to witness a painting emerge through an evolving game of consequences, cross-pollination and contamination by artists Rhiannon Armstrong and Tim Spooner, who co-create a painting in real-time.

### **PERFORMANCE BROADCASTS**

Unlimited festival presents the first ever screening of **Instagramming the Apocalypse** (15 - 17 Jan, free), developed from the popular stage show created by Byron Vincent. In a post-satire age, Byron asks WTF is going on, and what's so funny about peace, love and understanding. A writer, performer, broadcaster and activist who has a diagnosis of PTSD and Bi-Polar, Byron is a social activist with lived experience of issues around poverty and mental health. The work is accompanied with a Q&A and DJ set. **I Was Naked, Smelling of Rain** (14 - 16 Jan, free) is a performance by Aidan Moesby, exploring wellbeing and weather. This intimate, connecting experience is an artistic response to the physicality of weather, dis/connectedness and being 'alone' or 'lonely'. The piece explores the impact of the external physical and social weather on our internal psycho-emotional weather and at a critical point of the climate change and mental health crises. **One Woman** (14 - 16 Jan, free) a broadcast performance by theatre artist Cheryl Martin, invites audiences to enter the mind of a woman living with mental illness through binaural sound. Binaural sound wraps each audience member in an individual, protective cocoon, as the performance allows the audience to interact with the material on their own

terms. This event includes an introductory talk and a Q&A. One-person show **Augmented** (13 - 15 Jan, free), written and performed by Sophie Woolley and presented as a streamed film, shares the joys and conflict of being welcomed back into the hearing world after going deaf in her twenties. Augmented brings Sophie's experiences to life and explores the impact of her 'activation' on her sense of self and on her very closest relationships. **Gods of Lockdown** (16 - 19 Jan, free) Brownnton Abbey Service Transmission (B.A.S.T) is beamed into homes around the world as four celestial beings from queer dimensions come together. In an Afro-futurist performance party, they hold a communion and share their journeys and prophecies for the future of this world during this era of cataclysm. Gods of Lockdown is created by and centering disabled queer people of colour, Brownnton Abbey features an international pantheon of performance artists.

### **LIVE PERFORMANCE & COMEDY**

Autistic green drag queen Oozing Gloop presents a one off adaptation of **GLOOPTOPIA** with NewfrontEars! (16 Jan, free), a live exploration into cultural stagnation and political hope. This new piece of work challenges the notion that people with autism struggle with social imagination. **A Crash Course in Cloudspotting** (14 - 17 Jan, free) is a theatrical invitation to pause, to rest, to listen. It includes the live element of an introductory sonic world created by the audience (no audience interaction is involved - the sound is triggered by showing up and logging in). The experience is conceived as a break from the screen, and invitation to connect with a small audience of 21. To close Unlimited festival 2021, **Abnormally funny people** (17 Jan, Tickets £10,£5) will perform live via Zoom. This live show is delivered by some of the cream of talented disabled comedians at the top of their game. Some sit down and stand-up, others stand on chairs and stand-up, others simply stand up and stand-up. They are all funny people. Featuring stand-up comedy, sketches, songs, a quiz show, celebrity cameos, and more.

### **WORKSHOPS**

Online theatrical workshop **Lesbian Pirates: Bringing History to Life** (17 Jan, free) presented by the writer and composer of *Freud the Musical* and *Lesbian Pirates!* uses writing exercises, group work and prompts to explore how to create a dramatic narrative around the audience members' favourite historical icon. **Colour Full at Home** (16 Jan, free) is a sensory, hands-on workshop led by JoAnne Haines for learning disabled adults bringing together dance, movement and music with art materials to make art using the whole body. **DYSCO** (16 Jan, free) is a neurodivergent-led space with live dancing and music, DYSCO with no teacher to follow. DJ DYSCOURSE (dance artist Aby Watson), leads a virtual, intergenerational and celebratory dance party. Aby is a dyspraxic, dyslexic and ADHD dance artist, performer and researcher.

### **FAMILY EVENTS**

Family events include an interactive self-guided online experience **The Origin of Carmen Power** (13 - 17 Jan), world premiere of Second Hand Dance's **Insect Hands** (16 - 17 Jan) and dance and move workshop **DYSCO** (16 Jan), all of which are free.

### **OUTDOOR EXHIBITION**

Alongside the digital programme, there will be an outdoor exhibition on site at the Southbank Centre, **Unseen** by artist Suzie Larke (13 Jan - 28 Feb, free & onsite). Suzie uses constructed imagery, digitally stitching photographs together in such a way that they present as a single, untampered image. She creates images that challenge the notion of reality – combining photographs to create images that defy logic. By using 'magical realism' to transform photographs that take the everyday and skew it, she creates images that interpret the subjective experience of struggle. This project aims to increase awareness and conversation about mental wellbeing.

### **INDUSTRY EVENTS AND TOPICAL TALKS**

Curated by Unlimited and the Southbank Centre, **Unlimited discusses...** (14 - 15 Jan, free) considers the burning questions for disability-led arts, from diverse and international perspectives, in a series of discussions and debates. Artists, arts practitioners and experts in their field discuss the issues, solutions and possibilities for disability arts in the post-Covid arts landscape. **Pitch and Mix** (14 - 16 Jan, free) offers audiences a sneaky insight into projects in development by disabled artists, and hear from disability-arts organisations, over three sessions. The sessions offer insights into work from several different art forms by independent creatives and companies. Artists are drawn from England, Wales and Scotland. There will also be a series of industry-only events for programmers, curators, festivals and organisers to find out more about Unlimited and the commissions. These events are open to [Unlimited Allies](#) and international delegates.

**Ruth Hardie, Senior Producer, the Southbank Centre**, said: "On International Day of Disabled Persons, we are absolutely delighted to reveal the Unlimited festival programme, and to be able to present the powerful artistic vision of disabled artists digitally, to a global audience for the very first time. The Covid-19 pandemic has hit both the arts and disabled communities hard, and I am incredibly impressed with and grateful for the artists who've been working hard, in the most challenging of situations, to adapt their work so we can present this festival online.

The concept of Unlimited festival remains unchanged since it was born as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad - the festival is about bringing ambitious creative projects by outstanding disabled artists to new audiences and challenging perceptions of disabled people. The festival remains an integral part of the programme at the Southbank Centre and we cannot wait to recreate the festival feeling in the living rooms of all who tune in."

# ENDS #

Tickets will go on sale to Southbank Centre Members on Thursday 3 December and to the general public on Friday 4 December [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk) To join Southbank Centre's free Access Scheme please email [accesslist@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:accesslist@southbankcentre.co.uk)

**Join the conversation:**

#UnlimitedFest

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About the Southbank Centre**

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre and one of the UK's top five visitor attractions, occupying a prominent riverside location that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. We exist to present great cultural experiences that bring people together and we achieve this by providing the space for artists to create and present their best work and by creating a place where as many people as possible can come together to experience bold, unusual and eye-opening work. We want to take people out of the everyday, every day.

The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as being home to the National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. It is also home to four Resident Orchestras (London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) and four Associate Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain). [southbankcentre.co.uk](http://southbankcentre.co.uk)

**Unlimited festival at the Southbank Centre**

The Southbank Centre works closely with the Unlimited arts commissioning programme, which is at the heart of the festival. Unlimited aims to embed work by disabled artists across all art forms within the cultural sector, reach new audiences and change perceptions of disabled people. Delivered by the disability-led arts organisation Shape Arts and arts-producing organisation Artsadmin, Unlimited is currently funded by Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, Creative Scotland and the British Council. Since 2013, Unlimited has awarded more than £4 million to over 330 ambitious disabled artists and companies, which have been seen by or engaged with more than 3.8 million people globally and online. [weareunlimited.org.uk](http://weareunlimited.org.uk)

**Shape Arts** is a disability-led arts organisation which works to improve access to culture for disabled people by providing opportunities for disabled artists, training cultural

institutions to be more open to disabled people, and through running participatory arts and development programmes. [shapearts.org.uk](http://shapearts.org.uk)

**Artsadmin** is an arts producing organisation that enables artists to create without boundaries, producing bold interdisciplinary work to connect with local, national and international audiences. At Toynbee Studios in East London, Artsadmin have established a centre for the creation and presentation of new work. Their advisory service supports artists at every stage of their development with free advice and opportunities. [artsadmin.co.uk](http://artsadmin.co.uk)