

**More than £417,000 investment for Multistory to bring artsfestival to Sandwell**

**Funding for *Blast!* festival is part of the Arts Council England’s Ambition for Excellence Programme**Thanks to new investment from the National Lottery supported [Ambition for Excellence](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/ambition-excellence#section-2) programme, Multistory has been awarded £417,954 to host *Blast!* - a six month arts festival celebrating Sandwell, West Midlands.

*Blast!* will provide an ambitious programme of photography, digital media and spoken word performances in public spaces, community venues, pop-up sites and outdoor areas across Sandwell.

The festival will be developed over the next two years and will run from April to September 2019, with each month celebrating one of Sandwell’s six major towns; Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich.

New commissions from established and emerging young artists from across those six towns will bring the stories of Sandwell people to life. Student curators, with the support of internationally recognised artists, will create displays throughout the festival, using digital technology and resources from Multistory’s extensive photographic collection.

Multistory will work in partnership with creative organisations, colleges, libraries and community groups to develop local talent and connect the work of exceptional artists with Sandwell’s residents.

**Peter Knott, Area Director, Arts Council England, said:** “Culture plays a vital role in making the places we live vibrant and exciting and we’re delighted to be investing in Multistory’s ambitions to celebrate the Black Country’s art, culture, history and people. It will be great to see *Blast!* festival make a real impact locally and bring stories and experiences to life that showcase emerging and established artists.”

**Emma Chetcuti, Director, Multistory, said:** “We are delighted and grateful to be a recipient of Ambition for Excellence, which will support our continued ambition to make great art with, for and about the communities in Sandwell, in the Black Country. Our aim is to give local people the chance to create, see and access exceptional art where they live and - with thanks to Arts Council England and Sandwell Council – this project will achieve that.”

**For more information contact:**Binita Dave, Advocacy and Communications Officer at Arts Council England
0121 631 5773 / binita.dave@artscouncil.org.ukThe aim of Ambition for Excellence is to stimulate and support a programme of ambition, talent and excellence across the arts sector in England and in particular outside London. The fund supports organisations and partnerships with production, commissioning or creative development projects that demonstrate potential for significant impact on the development of talent and leadership, and the growth of an ambitious arts content infrastructure in England. This fund is Goal 1 focused.The aim of Ambition for Excellence is to stimulate and support a programme of ambition, talent and excellence across the arts sector in England and in particular outside London. The fund supports organisations and partnerships with production, commissioning or creative development projects that demonstrate potential for significant impact on the development of talent and leadership, and the growth of an ambitious arts content infrastructure in England. This fund is Goal 1 focused.The aim of Ambition for Excellence is to stimulate and support a programme of ambition, talent and excellence across the arts sector in England and in particular outside London. The fund supports organisations and partnerships with production, commissioning or creative development projects that demonstrate potential for significant impact on the development of talent and leadership, and the growth of an ambitious arts content infrastructure in England. This fund is Goal 1 focused.The aim of Ambition for Excellence is to stimulate and support a programme of ambition, talent and excellence across the arts sector in England and in particular outside London. The fund supports organisations and partnerships with production, commissioning or creative development projects that demonstrate potential for significant impact on the development of talent and leadership, and the growth of an ambitious arts content infrastructure in England. This fund is Goal 1 focused.The aim of Ambition for Excellence is to stimulate and support a programme of ambition, talent and excellence across the arts sector in England and in particular outside London. The fund supports organisations and partnerships with production, commissioning or creative development projects that demonstrate potential for significant impact on the development of talent and leadership, and the growth of an ambitious arts content infrastructure in England. This fund is Goal 1 focused.The aim of Ambition for Excellence is to stimulate and support a programme of ambition, talent and excellence across the arts sector in England and in particular outside London. The fund supports organisations and partnerships with production, commissioning or creative development projects that demonstrate potential for significant impact on the development of talent and leadership, and the growth of an ambitious arts content infrastructure in England. This fund is Goal 1 focused.The aim of Ambition for Excellence is to stimulate and support a programme of ambition, talent and excellence across the arts sector in England and in particular outside London. The fund supports organisations and partnerships with production, commissioning or creative development projects that demonstrate potential for significant impact on the development of talent and leadership, and the growth of an ambitious arts content infrastructure in England. This fund is Goal 1 focused.Our National Lottery funded Ambition for Excellence fund stimulates and supports ambition, talent and excellence across the country’s arts sector and in particular outside London.

**Notes to editors**

Read about all the successful projects to the Ambition for Excellence programme [here.](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/ambition-excellence#section-4)
The Arts Council’s Ambition for Excellence awards develop talent and leadership, help build cultural capacity and support work of increased ambition across the country. It is a £35m fund, of which the Arts Council aims to spend a minimum of £28m or 80-90% outside London to support our intention to ensure that a minimum of 75% of lottery funding is committed outside the capital by 2018.

Find out more about the Ambition for Excellence fund here: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/apply-for-funding/ambition-excellence/>

**Arts Council England** champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people’s lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2015 and 2018, we plan to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank%22%20%5Co%20%22http%3A//www.artscouncil.org.uk/)

**Multistory**

Multistory is an ambitious community arts organisation based in West Bromwich in the borough of Sandwell. Multistory is creating a body of photographic work and digital archive that documents life in Sandwell and the Black Country; they commission acclaimed photographers and writers to work with local people to tell their stories of every day life. Recent commissions have included projects by Martin Parr, Liz Hingley, Susan Meiselas and Mahtab Hussain.

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