

# MINDSCAPES EVALUATION BRIEF

FEBRUARY 2021

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

We're looking for an evaluation specialist to work with us from March-May 2020 to:

- Work with the SICK! team and key project partners to produce an evaluation plan for the project, building on work already carried out by the team
- Lead qualitative evaluation of the project, focussing on the experiences of partners, artists, funders and commission participants
- Work with the team to explore and agree public-facing research methods to assess audience engagement for both public realm and online activities, including post event surveys and analyse findings
- Produce a series of at least 3 case studies that capture the experiences of artists and participants in the project
- Produce a short reflective report that outlines key successes and challenges of the project, how well it delivered on its aims and recommendations for future work and legacy

This contract will be offered on a freelance basis and the individual will be mainly working remotely. At present the SICK! office is closed to external visitors (subject to Government guidelines), so the majority of contact will be online.

Report deadline: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021

**Our budget for this contract is: £3000**

## 2. ABOUT US

SICK! Festival is a Manchester based, diversity-led arts organisation which shines a light on the complexities of mental and physical health. We give voice to the experiences of diverse and often marginalised communities by presenting an outstanding international arts programme, which encourages participants, audiences and partners to learn from and talk about difficult and challenging issues, so often hidden from public view.

Rooted in the local community while operating internationally, we commission powerful and engaging work by international, national and GM based artists, who make their work with, alongside and for local communities with lived experience, health professionals, charities and researchers.

Our activities include a biennial international festival which takes place across Manchester, an innovative cross-artform commissioning programme which brings artists together with local communities with lived experience, the health sector, community groups/charities and researchers and a growing year round programme of community engagement in local Manchester neighbourhoods.

### 3. MINDSCAPES

MINDSCAPES is a 2-year cultural cooperation programme, funded by DutchCulture in partnership with the Dutch Embassy in the UK.

Working with artists and arts organisations spanning performance, visual arts and digital media, the project explores the impact that our environment has on our mental wellbeing.

The project features 5 new commissions, produced by Dutch artists working with local communities in Manchester, to be presented in Spring 2021, alongside a conference and a range of additional public engagement activities.

The project (which had been due to complete in October 2020) has been significantly affected by the Covid pandemic - as well as the presentation being postponed by 6 months we have had to work closely with the artists and partners to ensure that presented activities will be Covid safe. Therefore, the work and public engagement will take place either in the public realm or online.

Although the project has evolved considerably, the original aims of the project still generally apply:

- Support the development of new projects spanning performance, visual and digital arts that contribute to the physical, mental and social wellbeing of cities
- Increase understanding of ways in which cultural and creative industries can contribute to the physical, mental and social wellbeing of Manchester and Cities in the Netherlands
- Stimulate dialogue, knowledge-sharing and network-building between organisations from across a wide range of sectors in Manchester and the Netherlands
- Establish links cultural links between Manchester and cities in the Netherlands facing similar challenges
- Lay the foundations for future collaborations, creations and sustainable partnerships

### Commissioned Artists:

- **Jan Rothuizen** will explore the diverse experiences of mental health and illness in 5 neighbourhoods across Greater Manchester, representing these experiences in his unique graphic style on large format poster sites across the TfGM tram network.
- Amsterdam-based theatre company **Theater Degasten** will create a Zine (both online and physical copies) based on in-depth research into how it feels growing up with other young people in care institutions, without the proximity of parents.
- **Merel Smitt** will develop an online project exploring how unemployment, job centres and the benefits system affect the mental health of the individuals involved.
- Two outstanding Dutch performance poets (**Elten Kiene & Sjaan Flikweert**) will work with Manchester-based poetry collective Young Identity and migrant communities in North Manchester. Together they will generate a collection of powerful new poems and use stencils to blast-clean their words into the landscape of the city streets.
- Sound Artist and composer **Yonatan Collier** will work with artists and musicians from North Manchester to create a soundscape, reflecting and shaping people's emotional experiences of Moston and Harpurhey. The composition will be accessed through a mobile app whilst walking or jogging in these neighbourhoods.

All the artists will work closely with local communities in the development of their commissions – with individuals generally referred through local partners. Sessions will take place online and be supported by SICK!'s Creative Producer.

### Conference/Public Engagement:

We will deliver programme of online engagement events during April 2021 which will include:

- **Conference:** A two-day online conference exploring the relationship between urban spaces and mental health, reflecting on the transformations that have occurred in these relationships in the wake of Covid. It will include 6-8 events combining panel discussions of 3-4 panelists with individual presentations with Q&A sessions. Events will include contributors from the UK and the Netherlands and will focus on a range of areas which explore mental health and the environment.
- **'The Great Debate' With Design Manchester:** Curators of Manchester's international design festival will deliver their annual 'Great Debate' in partnership with MINDSCAPES, exploring the relationship between urban design and mental health.
- **Welcome to my World:** Two artists from Manchester and two from Rotterdam will be commissioned to create a video tour of their own neighbourhood exploring its cultural history and personal significance for them. The 5-10 minute films will be premiered during the online conference programme, and then promoted through partner

organisations in the academic, community and cultural sectors, on our SICK! Digital platform and through social media.

- **Urban Psyche Workshops:** Urban Psyche is an online research project that takes a global perspective on the relationships between psychology and urban spaces. In their workshops, Urban Psyche Directors Chris Murray and Charles Landry, will work closely with geographically specific communities to apply psychoanalytic approaches, normally applied to people, to places. Exploring histories, relationships, power dynamics and perceptions, they will work with one group from Moston in Manchester and one group from Zuidplein in Rotterdam to gain a deeper understanding of the psychology of these places. In a final session, they will bring the two groups together to reflect on the shared and different personalities of the places they call home.
- **Commissioned Artists in Conversation:** The five MINDSCAPES commissioned artists will each take part in a live online discussion with participants that contributed to their project and 'expert' voices from academic, healthcare professionals or those who deliver health and social care services that were involved in the projects. These five events will be presented each week in the five weeks leading up to the showcasing of the commissions and the conference. They will also be recorded and promoted through partner organisations in the academic, community and cultural sectors, on our SICK! Digital platform and through social media.

#### 4. WHAT WE WANT TO EVALUATE:

We envisage that the evaluation will need to explore a range of areas and we have identified some questions and assumptions that we want to test through the evaluation process:

##### **Commissioned Artists:**

- We have worked with artists from a range of disciplines and experiences, from highly experienced artists to those with a more emerging practice. 2 commissions have been managed by external partners where the artists have been contracted and managed externally
- We'd like to find out what has it been like working with SICK! (and the partners) over the last 18 months and how would they characterise their journey through the project
- We want to explore how the project has impacted their practice, especially in the light of Covid and the need to deliver in a very different way
- What has it been like delivering sessions online and being unable to visit Manchester?
- What would they like to do next and how could SICK! support them?

**Commission Participants:**

- All the participants in commissions are either experiencing mental health issues or are living in circumstances that could threaten their mental health or emotional wellbeing more generally. We want to find out how the project has impacted on how they feel about the issues they live with and how the project might have helped them manage their own mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Engagement with the project will vary depending on the specific commission – we would envisage that a light touch feedback mechanism be developed for those with less engagement and something deeper for those who are working more intensively with commission partners. This process can be supported by SICK!'s Creative Producer

**Funders:**

- DutchCulture and Dutch Embassy have told us that this is a new way of working for them and we want to find out how they have found the experience, what impact they feel that the project has had on their priorities (eg supporting artist export, raising the profile of Dutch artists etc). They may also want to link us with the other Dutch art-form funders who have supported the project for feedback (eg Dutch Performing Arts, Mondrian Fund)

**Partners:**

- We have a range of partners for the project including commission partners (eg Brighter Sound, Young Identity), referral partners who have identified commission participants and presentation partners both in the UK and Netherlands.
- They will all have individual motivations for taking part in the project (eg interest in subject matter, creating new opportunities for artists and people they work with, the international nature of the project etc) and we want to understand how well the project has achieved what they were looking for)

**SICK! Festival:**

- As part of the process of reflection we would like the evaluator to speak to staff and freelancers to get their views on what the project has achieved and what has been learnt.

**Audiences:**

- We hope to understand the impacts that the commissions and contextual programme had on people's understanding of and relationships with the issues addressed. We're particularly interested in exploring how the project has affected how people feel about their own surroundings and how it might have built understanding about the lives of other people
- The audiences for this project are both public realm and online. We will need to agree mechanisms to assess public realm audience numbers, working with partners such as

- Transport for Greater Manchester and Manchester City Council. We would also like to explore how audiences might be able to give feedback on the public realm artworks (eg QR code feedback)
- Online audiences will include those who engage with the artworks through apps/websites and we want to find a way to capture feedback from them
- For the conference events, attendees will book tickets through a package such as Eventbrite and we are able to send post event questionnaires to attendees.

## 5. WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR:

We are looking for an individual who brings:

- Strong experience of delivering arts evaluation projects with partners from different fields
- A good knowledge of arts and health practice
- Experience of delivering research and evaluation activity in different contexts, including a range of research methods and tools
- Knowledge of mental health issues and how this might impact on evaluation practice
- Experience of working with vulnerable groups and safeguarding requirements in evaluation
- Ability to write concise and clear reports
- Ability to deliver effective online evaluation activity

## 6. OTHER INFORMATION:

- The consultant will have access to survey software (eg SurveyMonkey)
- They will also have access to anonymised audience data
- We envisage that SICK! staff/freelancers will lead in collecting quantitative data, with input from the evaluator around methodology

To apply, please send a CV/company profile, outlining who will work on the project, relevant experience and a brief outline of proposed methodologies to: [Celia@sickfestival.com](mailto:Celia@sickfestival.com)

**Deadline: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 5pm**