

The Outdoor Arts Year

An overview of key events and festivals in the outdoor arts year in the UK, Ireland and beyond.

All info is subject to confirmation, so check outdoorartsuk.org for the latest listings.

Longer events are listed in their start month and biennial festivals are listed with a (B).

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Arts uk

JANUARY

Bexhill After Dark • World Busker's Festival, New Zealand • Canary Wharf Winter Lights Festival • Chinese New Year Parade, London • Gravesend Winter Lights Festival • Internationale Kulturbörse, Germany • Light Festival at Battersea Power Station • Maidstone Lunar New Year Celebrations • Spectacle of Light, Leicestershire • Sydney Festival & Fringe, Australia

FEBRUARY

Bristol Light Festival • Cirkus-Mania, Sweden • Copenhagen Light Festival • Illuminate Oldham • Light Night Worcester • Medway Light Nights • Nottingham Light Night • Perth Festival, Australia • Reykjavik Winter Light Festival, Iceland • Spectacle of Light, Warwickshire • Spectacle of Light, Suffolk • Spectra, Aberdeen • StrtFstvl Showcase, Netherlands • Tunbridge Wells Winter Lanterns Parade • UEL: After Dark, London

MARCH

Adelaide Festival, Australia • Bourne in Lights • FarGo Spring Up, Coventry • Mostra Igualada, Spain • Spilsby Light Night • St Patrick's Day Parade, London • St Patrick's Festival, Dublin

APRIL

Atmosphere, Worcester • Brighton Open Air Theatre • Festival of Fools, Belfast • Now Northwich • Moving Parts: Newcastle Puppetry Festival • Streets of Rother • Sandbach Transport Festival • Sismògraf Dance Festival, Spain • Vaisakhi Dublin Mela

MAY

Bath Fringe Festival • Bell Square, Hounslow • Brighton Festival • Brighton Fringe • City Encounters, Salisbury • Devizes International Street Festival • Festival de Teatre al Carrer, Spain • Festival Les 3 Elephants, France • Fira de Titelles, Spain • Fira Trapezi, Spain • Geronimo Festival, Northwich • Hidden Door Festival, Edinburgh • Imaginarius Festival, Portugal • International Festival Teatro Y Artes de Calle, Spain • Inter-nationale Straßentheater Festival, Germany • Le Street Art Fest Grenoble, France • LightNight, Liverpool • Luton Carnival • Lyme Regis Fossil Festival • Norfolk and Norwich Festival • Penlee Park Open Air Theatre, Penzance • Preston Caribbean Carnival • Tête à Tête

Straßentheaterfestival, Germany (B) • Umore Azoka, Spain • Whitley Bay Carnival Day • Wye Valley River Festival (B)

JUNE

Ashbourne Festival • Basingstoke Festival • Bedlam Fair, Bath • Birmingham International Dance Festival • Blue Sky Festival, Corsham • Bradford Literature Festival • B-Side Hip Hop Festival, Birmingham • Carlow Arts Festival, Ireland • Corby Pole Fair • Cork Midsummer Festival • Corn Exchange/101 Outdoor Arts, Newbury • Cranleigh Carnival, Surrey • Deighton Carnival, Huddersfield • Eden Festival, Lockerbie • Farnham Carnival, Surrey • Festival Tweetakt, Netherlands • First Light Festival, Lowestoft • Glasgow Mela • Glastonbury Festival • Godiva Festival, Coventry • Hebden Bridge Handmade Parade • Holmfirth Arts Festival • Irish Aerial Dance Fest, Ireland • Kensington+Chelsea Festival, London • La Strada, Germany • Leicester Riverside Festival • Manchester Day Parade • Manchester International Festival • Northampton Carnival • Terschellings Oerol Festival, Netherlands • Offbeat Festival, Oxford • Physical Fest, Liverpool (B) • Picnic in the Park, Devizes • Preston City Mela • Regent's Park Open Air Theatre • Sånafest, Norway • Sibiu International Theatre Festival, Romania • SO Festival, Skegness • Somerfest, Taunton • Taliesin Dance Days, Swansea • Thorington Theatre, Suffolk • Unity Festival, Cardiff • Unwrapped Festival, Eastleigh • Viva Cité, France • Wandsworth Arts Fringe • Zwolle Unlimited, Netherlands

JULY

Altitude, Devon • Anhad Festival, Hounslow • Bakewell Carnival • BaLaCo (Bangladeshi, Latino & Cockney) Festival, London • Beverley Puppet Festival • Big Dreamers Festival, Worcester • Big Splash, Newport • Bradford Eid Festival • Bridgwater Quayside Festival • Bristol Harbour Festival • BST Open House, London • Buxton Festival Fringe • Camden Mela • Camp Bestival, Lulworth • Carnaval Sztukmistrzów, Poland • Certain Blacks Ensemble Festival, Royal Docks • Chalon dans la Rue, France • Chelmsford Carnival • Colours of Eid, Luton • Cowley Road Carnival, Oxford • Cratère Surfaces, France • Derby Caribbean Carnival • Deventer Op Stelten, Netherlands • Eastleigh Mela • Enchanted Leonardslee • Exmouth Festival • Festival d'Avignon,

France • Festival of the Sea, Grimsby • Fleetwood Festival of Transport • Garden Theatre Festival, Bath • Happy Streets, London • Hartlepool Waterfront Festival • Hat Fair, Winchester • Henley Festival • Imagine Watford • Isle of Wight Carnival • Isle of Wight Mardi Gras • Kendal Calling, Lake District • Lambeth Country Show, London • Latitude, Suffolk • Liverpool Brazilica Festival • Manchester Mega Mela • Merchant City Festival, Glasgow • Milton Keynes International Festival (B) • Miramiro, Belgium • Mouth of the Tyne Festival • National Children's Carnival Week • National Theatre River Stage, London • Old Town Carnival Week, Hastings • Passagefestival, Denmark & Sweden • Sandown Carnival, Isle of Wight • Sheffield Family Mela • Southampton Mela • Splendour Festival, Nottingham • St Leonards Festival • Summer (Bash) Streets Festival, Dundee • Summer in Southside, Birmingham • Summer Streets, Sunderland • Surge Festival, Glasgow • TILT Festival, Birmingham • Timber, Leicestershire • Tunbridge Wells Mela Festival • Unity Festival, Bangor • Wells Carnival • Whirligig Festival, Weston-super-Mare • Willenhall Sucha Mela • Worcester Carnival • World Living Statues, Netherlands

AUGUST

Art in the Park Festival, Leamington Spa • BD: Festival, Bradford • Big John's Birmingham Mela • Birmingham Weekender • bOing! Festival, Canterbury • Boomtown Fair, Winchester • Camp Bestival, Shropshire • Carnival of the World, Reading • Colour Rush and Confetti Battle, Devizes • Electric Medway • Exeter Street Arts Festival • Festival Mirabilia, Italy • Freedom Festival, Hull • Gloworm, Newark • Green Man Festival, Wales • Greenbelt Festival, Boughton • Greenwich+ Docklands International Festival, London • Hereford River Festival • Journeys Festival International, Leicester • Just So Festival, Cheshire • Leeds West Indian Carnival • Leicester Belgrave Mela • Leicester Caribbean Carnival • Leicester City Festival • Luton Mela • Middlesbrough Mela • Nairn Book & Arts Festival, Inverness • National Eisteddfod, Wales • Newcastle Mela • Notting Hill Carnival • Nottingham Carnival • Reading Mela • Sandwell & Birmingham Mela • Shambala Festival, Northamptonshire • Spoffin Festival, Netherlands • Spraoi Festival, Ireland • Stockton International Riverside Festival

• StrtFstvl, Netherlands • Sziget Festival, Hungary • The Big Feast, Stoke • Theater op de Markt, Belgium (B) • Theaterfestival Boulevard, Netherlands • Totnes Festival, Totnes & Bridgetown • Wilderness Festival, Oxfordshire • Worthing Carnival

SEPTEMBER

All in the Mind Festival, Basingstoke • Arts by the Sea, Bournemouth • Arts Fresco, Market Harborough • B-Side, Portland • Cardiff Mela • Cotton Carnival, Stalybridge • Derby Festé • Devizes Carnival • Festival of Thrift, Billingham • FiraTàrrega, Spain • Full Shebang, Mansfield • Journeys Festival of Dance, Hastings & Bexhill • IncludFEST, Sedgefield • Inside Out Dorset (B) • La Mercé, Barcelona • Lancashire Encounter, Preston • Maidstone Mela • Out There Festival, Great Yarmouth • Totally Thames, London • Saltaire Festival, Bradford • Vintage by the Sea, Morecambe

OCTOBER

Bloomsbury Festival • Canterbury Festival • City of Codes & Light, Milton Keynes • Dance Umbrella, London • Dartford Festival of Light • Fira Mediterrània de Manresa, Spain • Fun Palaces • Galoshans Festival, Inverclyde • Hastings Storytelling Festival • Leeds Light Night • Lightpool, Blackpool • Paisley Halloween Festival • Seoul Street Arts Festival, South Korea • Tunbridge Wells Puppetry Festival (B) • Winter Drovng, Penrith

NOVEMBER

Bridgwater Carnival • Carnival of the Baubles, Ashford • Christmas at Kew, London • Devizes Winter Festival • DN Festival of Light, Doncaster • Edenbridge Bonfire Night • Gravesham Festival of Light • Lanterns at Chester Zoo • Light Up Lancaster • Lightopia Festival, London & Manchester • Lord Mayor's Show, London • Lumiere Durham (B) • National Circus Festival, Ireland • Poole Maritime Light Festival • Shepton Mallet Carnival • Somerset Illuminated Carnivals • Wokingham Winter Carnival • Yuletide Festival, Dorset

DECEMBER

Dunster by Candlelight • Festive Fabuloso, East Lindsey • Glow, Maidstone • IlluminoCity, London • Leonardslee Illuminated • Lightwaves, Salford Quays • Night Fall, Middlesbrough • Sparkle in the Park, Eltham

Outdoor Arts Glossary

Throughout the sector, you'll hear various acronyms, terms and organisations used, which we know can be a little confusing. While not exhaustive, here's a list of some of those words, phrases and companies.

101 Outdoor Arts

The Corn Exchange Newbury's creation space. Based on Greenham Common, it's a National Centre for Arts in Public Space which provides many opportunities for the sector, including creative residencies. @101OutdoorArts

ACE: Arts Council England

A government-funded body dedicated to promoting the performing, visual and literary arts in England. Funding is available via Project Grants, Developing Your Creative Practice Grants and the National Portfolio Organisations. @ace_national

Arts Council of Ireland / Chomhairle Ealaíon

The Irish government agency for developing the arts. It works in partnership with artists, arts organisations, public policymakers and others to build a central place for the arts in Irish life. @artscouncil_ie

Arts Council of Wales / Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru

Helps people to make, present and exhibit the arts. It works with artists and organisations to reach as many people as possible. And it researches ways to protect and sustain creative activities in Wales. @Arts_Wales_

AIF: The Association of Independent Festivals

The UK's leading non-profit festival trade association and organisers of the Festival Congress. Created to represent and empower independent festivals. @AIF_UK

AONB: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

An area of countryside in England, Wales or Northern Ireland that has been designated for conservation due to its significant landscape value. Many have cultural programmes attached. @NAAONB

Articulation Scotland

An organisation for the support and development of circus, outdoor arts and physical theatre in Scotland.

Articulture Wales

Supports the development of innovative, high-quality outdoor arts and diverse engaged audiences in Wales. @Articulture_

AIE: Attitude is Everything

An organisation that works at connecting disabled people with music and live event industries to improve access together. @attitudetweets

BAFA: British Arts Festival Association

The leading network and development agency for UK arts festivals. Its membership includes a broad variety of organisations across the UK. @BritArtsFests

BID: Business Improvement District

A business-led and business-funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area. Many support cultural programmes, particularly around developing high streets and commercial areas. @BritishBIDs

Carnival

In the UK this largely indicates the Caribbean Carnival tradition, exemplified by the scale of the Notting Hill Carnival. It also refers to the South American Carnival tradition, such as the Rio Carnival; older carnival and fairground side-show work in the UK and USA; and the Illuminated Carnival movement, best seen in Somerset in the autumn.

Circostrada

A networking organisation based in France that works to develop and structure the fields of circus and street arts in Europe and beyond. @circostrada

CPP: Creative People and Places

An Arts Council England funding programme that focuses on parts of the country where involvement in creativity and culture is significantly below the national average. It has been running for over a decade.

Creative Scotland

The public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits the country, enabling people and organisations to work in and experience the arts. @CreativeScots

EMCCAN: East Midlands Caribbean Carnival Arts Network

Created to support and encourage best practice artistic and management delivery for four major East Midlands Caribbean Carnival Arts organisations and to provide leadership to the sector.

Fool's Paradise

An international street performance agency founded in 1991, which supplies the best UK street theatre and outdoor arts to regional and worldwide audiences and champions the most inspiring talent. @FoolsParadiseUK

GDIF: Greenwich+Docklands International Festival

A large outdoor arts festival in London, which includes Greenwich Fair and Dancing City, managed by festival.org @GDIFestival

Global Streets

A 12-partner national network that presents international outdoor arts events in communities living and working in places which are underserved by the arts, managed by festival.org @festivaldotorg

IPSO (formerly SSO): Investment Principles Support Organisation

An Arts Council England-funded organisation that receives regular funding, similar to an NPO, but its role is to provide support to its sector to help them deliver the ACE investment principles.

Investment Principles

Four principles created by Arts Council England to help deliver the Let's Create strategy for 2020-30. The four principles are 'Ambition & Quality', 'Dynamism', 'Environmental Responsibility', and 'Inclusivity & Relevance'.

ITC: Independent Theatre Council

Represents, supports and develops the professional performing arts in the UK (NB: OAUK members get discounted ITC training). @itc_arts

ISACS: Irish Street Arts, Circus & Spectacle Network

An organisation dedicated to supporting, encouraging and empowering the street arts, circus and spectacle art forms in Ireland and Northern Ireland. @ISACSIreland

LA: Local Authority

An organisation that is officially responsible for all the public services and facilities in a particular area. Most have cultural and community engagement programmes. @LGAComms

Let's Create

Arts Council England's strategy for the next decade: 'By 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish. A country where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences'.

LUTN: Light Up the North

A network of northern light festivals which share their collective expertise to support both the development of the partner festivals and the wider sector. @lutnorth

Mela

Mela originates from the Indian subcontinent. The word comes from the Sanskrit 'to meet' and is related to 'milana': to tune. It is commonly used to describe a large gathering of people celebrating artistic, religious or political events, a fair or festival.

Mela Partnership

A national membership organisation, managed by Nutkhut, which supports the development of the sector and supports and mentors the next generation of Mela makers. @melapartnership @nutkhutuk

NASA: National Association of Street Artists

A networking community of artists and makers who create and perform outside, run by a volunteer Steering Group (Mission Control). @NASAUK

NPO: National Portfolio Organisation

An organisation that receives regular funding from Arts Council England, traditionally for four years.

OAUK: OutdoorArtsUK

The national membership and strategic organisation that aims to bring together the many diverse parts of the outdoor arts sector. @OutdoorArtsPRO

Out There Arts

An independent arts development organisation based in The Drill Hall in Great Yarmouth which collaborates with circus and outdoor artists worldwide, delivering creative opportunities for artists and communities. @outtherearts

SIRF: Stockton International Riverside Festival

A long-running festival in the North East, which has a strong national and international programme. @SIRF_Stockton

UKCCA: UK Centre for Carnival Arts

A dedicated organisation and centre promoting excellence within carnival arts. @carnivalukcca

Walk the Plank

A producing company, based in Salford, with a vision and ambition to bring their highly spirited outdoor arts experience to all points of the compass, as well as provide training and development for the sector. @walktheplank

Without Walls

The UK's leading consortium of festivals and organisations dedicated to raising the profile of the UK outdoor arts sector. @WWconsortium

XTRAX

Based in Manchester, one of the UK's leading specialists in national and international outdoor development, providing networking, information and training to all parts of the sector. @XtraxArts