



Walk the Plank leads one of the ten teams selected to develop UK-wide festival of creativity in 2022

Walk the Plank has won a significant commission to create a major national participatory event as part of Festival UK*2022, partnering with Siemens, National Parks UK, Extraordinary Bodies, University of Salford and Landscapes for Life: AONBs.

Salford-based Walk the Plank is one of the UK's leading outdoor arts organisations, behind memorable events such as the Liverpool '08 City of Culture opening, Pafos 2017 European Capital of Culture opening, and the closing ceremony to the 2009 Commonwealth Games.

In September 2020, Walk the Plank was chosen by Festival UK* 2022 to undertake an R&D process, working with STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) partners on ideas for a UK-wide moment of inclusive mass participation.

Following the R&D and a rigorous assessment process, the team's creative idea is being commissioned to be taken into full production for next year's Festival UK* 2022.

The project will be an experiment in lighting technology, environmental science, geo-tracking, mass participation, exploring the beauty of the UK outdoors and asking questions about access, taking part, landscape and the future of public spectacle.

Full details of all the teams' festival commissions are being kept under wraps until the festival programme is announced, along with a new name, later this year.

The creative team includes John Wassell, Walk the Plank Creative Producer; freelance Lighting and Special Effects Designer: Richard Babington; freelance Theatremaker and multidisciplinary Artist: Danielle Carbon Wilson; Siemens: Robin Phillips, Annabel Ohene, Engineer, Nathaniel Fernandes, Engineer; National Parks UK: Alastair Barber, Head of the Communications Unit; freelance Dance and Movement Specialist: Ruth Jones; freelance Creative Leader, Musician, and Facilitator: Pete Moser; Extraordinary Bodies: Jamie Beddard, Lead Artist.

The 10 major public engagement projects selected by Festival UK* 2022 are designed to reach millions and bring people together – both as participants and audiences. The festival is directed by Martin Green, who has an exemplary record leading major cultural events, including the London 2021 Olympic ceremony and Hull UK City of Culture 2017.

John Wassell, Creative Producer and Co-founder of Walk the Plank, said: *"We've been working in public space worldwide for thirty years, from our base in Salford, making work that connects artists and communities. This project offers an amazing opportunity to bring together the skills of artists and engineers, technicians, and thousands of participants across the UK. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Walk the Plank and our partners to create something amazing."*

"Our project will engage people of all ages and cultures in a celebration of our landscapes and the lives within them. It considers them as places worth enjoying and protecting, for everyone, forever."



Alastair Barber, Head of the Communications Unit at National Parks UK, said: *“We want to make our landscapes - nature relevant to as many people, and as many different types of people as possible. That’s exactly what this project does. We hope this project will reveal new truths about our relationship to land and what it means to us in 2022.”*

Robin Phillips, Siemens said *“We are delighted to have the chance to spotlight engineering and innovation as part of a nationwide event that will highlight the talents of a team that mixes young engineers with the experience and skills of a world leading company that is unafraid to research, develop and test bold new ideas. We first worked with Walk the Plank when employees from our Manchester HQ took part in the Manchester Day Parade in 2010, and we are excited about the scale of this new project which will reach across the UK in 2022. “*

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www.walktheplank.co.uk

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EDITORS NOTES

Walk the Plank is one of the UK’s leading outdoor arts organisations with an award-winning portfolio of work that spans nearly 30 years. Based at its Cobden Works creative arts hub in Salford, the company is a National Portfolio Organisation for Arts Council England and a registered charity. Apart from the events mentioned in the main body of this press release, Walk the Plank were creative producers for the opening and closing ceremonies of Liverpool ’08, European Capital of Culture; Derry-Londonderry, the UK’s first City of Culture 2013; the opening to Pafos 2017 European Capital of Culture and the fiftieth anniversary celebrations for Milton Keynes. In 2019 Walk the Plank collaborated with learning disabled theatre company Mind the Gap to stage the world premiere of ZARA at the Piece Hall in Halifax, bringing the stories of the challenges facing parents with learning disabilities to audiences of thousands. The company is currently working with Salford’s Working Class Movement Library on a podcast series exploring radical thinking for radical times, Begin the World Over Again.

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Festival UK* 2022 is a major UK-wide festival of creativity and innovation, is commissioning 10 major public engagement projects designed to reach millions, bring people together and showcase the UK’s creativity globally. It is backed by £120 million of new investment from the UK Government, including funding to the Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales devolved administrations. The festival will take place in 2022 and each project will bring new opportunities for creative people in sectors that have been significantly impacted by COVID-19.



The Festival UK* 2022 R&D Project ran from 16 November 2020 to 31 January 2021. 30 Creative Teams took part following an open call. A rigorous selection process considered 299 submissions, involving almost 3,000 organisations, freelancers and other creatives representing the five STEAM sectors. Each team received £100,000 to enable them to develop their ideas, with 10 being selected following panel presentations in February. The festival programme is due to be announced with a new name in late 2021.

From the 10 teams, one each has been selected for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with 6 UK-wide commissions. The strategic delivery bodies for the devolved nations are Belfast City Council, EventScotland and Creative Wales. Festival 2022 Ltd. is leading on the UK-wide projects and is the strategic delivery body for England.

A special purpose vehicle ("Festival 2022 Ltd") was established in Birmingham, overseen by an independent Board drawn from STEAM sectors and from across the UK, chaired by Dame Vikki Heywood CBE. Martin Green CBE is Chief Creative Officer for the festival, leading a team to curate, manage and promote the project, working with strategic delivery bodies within each nation to devise and deliver the programme.

Siemens AG (Berlin and Munich) is a global technology powerhouse that has stood for engineering excellence, innovation, quality, reliability and internationality for more than 170 years. Active around the world, the company focuses on intelligent infrastructure for buildings and distributed energy systems and on automation and digitalization in the process and manufacturing industries. Siemens brings together the digital and physical worlds to benefit customers and society.

Through Mobility, a leading supplier of intelligent mobility solutions for rail and road transport, Siemens is helping to shape the world market for passenger and freight services. In fiscal 2020, which ended on September 30, 2020, the Siemens Group generated revenue of €57.1 billion and net income of €4.2 billion. As of September 30, 2020, the company had around 293,000 employees worldwide.

Further information is available on the Internet at www.siemens.com.

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