

## **Kully Thiarai**

Kully Thiarai is currently Artistic Director/ Chief Executive of National Theatre Wales. From January 2020 she will return to Yorkshire to take up the post of Creative Director for Leeds 2023.

Kully has worked in the performing arts since the 1980s. An experienced Theatre Director and Executive, she has led a number of companies including being the founding director of CAST in Doncaster - a £22 million performance venue to act as the cultural living room for the town. She

was also responsible for the new artistic vision for Contact Theatre that relaunched the venue as a centre with young people at its heart in 1999.



Kully has also been Artistic Director for Red Ladder Theatre Company, Contact Theatre, Leicester Haymarket Theatre, Theatre Writing Partnership and worked as a freelance artistic with numerous organisations. She has created a diverse range of work that spans communities, cultures and performance styles and directed large-scale epics, new plays and made work in non-theatre spaces.

## **Nigel Hinds**



Nigel Hinds is Executive Producer for 14-18 NOW, the major UK-wide programme which commissioned extraordinary arts experiences connecting people with the First World War. Over five years 14-18 NOW created 107 arts projects engaging 35 million people with the heritage of the First World War. Nigel oversaw large-scale projects including Ryoji Ikeda's 'Spectra' as part of LIGHTS OUT in August 2014, the UK tour of the two ceramic poppies sculptures 'Wave' and

'Weeping Window', and 'PROCESSIONS' produced by Artichoke to mark the centenary of the first women in the UK winning the right to vote.

Before this Nigel was a senior member of the LOCOG Culture team, responsible for the successful planning and delivery of the London 2012 Festival and the Cultural Olympiad across half the UK.

He is an expert in the performing arts with particular skills in festival, venue and company management, creating artistic programmes and developing organisations.

Nigel chairs the board of Stratford Circus Arts Centre.

### **Rebecca Blackman**

Rebecca Blackman is Arts Council England's National Director for Engagement and Audiences and Area Director for the Midlands based in Nottingham. She has worked with the Arts Council for over ten years as a Senior Relationship Manager, Senior Manager Corporate Planning, Head of Development and Education and Learning Officer. She has also worked as an actor/teacher with various theatre companies in York, Leeds and Nottingham; as a project leader for a National Health Service advice and counselling project; as a Senior Manager for Advice Services in local government and as a teacher of English and Drama in a London Comprehensive School. Rebecca has also delivered training programmes for Age UK and worked in a voluntary capacity with Shelter and in youth justice settings. She is currently leading on both the Creative People and Places programme, which she has been involved with from the beginning, and the Celebrating Age programme, alongside working on a wide range of audience and engagement projects.



### **Martin Green**



Martin Green is Birmingham 2022's Chief Creative Office. Martin has masterminded some of Britain's most significant major events including the opening of The O2 in London; the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic opening and closing ceremonies and the opening ceremony of the 2014 Tour de France Grand Départ in Leeds.

Such success has earned Martin an international reputation. As CEO and Director of Hull UK City of Culture 2017 Martin delivered 365 days of transformative culture for the city to huge acclaim. He is an advisor to the Japan 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Dubai Expo 2020. Martin is also an inaugural member of the Circle of Cultural Fellows at King's College London. In 2018 he was awarded

an honorary doctorate by the University of Hull and made CBE in the Queen's New Year Honours list.

### **Chenine Bhatena**

Chenine Bhatena is the architect of the UK City of Culture in Coventry 2021. She has overall responsibility for developing programmes, co-creation, community engagement, capacity building through development of national and international partnerships. She is building a cultural movement, harnessing activism and creating initiatives that are joyful and celebratory, but with a strong social conscience and that not only spotlight local global issues, but make change happen.



Chenine comes to the Trust from the Greater London Authority where she led the Mayor's Cultural Placemaking Team and conceived, designed and delivered the Mayor's London Borough of Culture competition. As London 2012 Creative Programmer for the Olympics/Paralympics she led London's biggest ever outdoor festival and at Arts Council England (London and national offices) she led strategic programmes for Outdoor Arts, producers, local authorities, young people and disability arts. Over the last five years she has made the case for embedding culture across city policy and invited artists and arts to go beyond their sphere and collaborate on major high street, housing and transport development schemes, including making the case the Thames Estuary and The Royal Docks Enterprise Zone. She initiated and led a range of high profile arts initiatives for the Mayor including Lumiere London 2016 and the Illuminated River. Chenine is a Board Director for IF: Milton Keynes

### **Jo Verrent**

Jo believes that 'different' is delicious not divergent, embedding the belief that diversity adds texture, turning policy into real action.

Jo is currently the senior producer for Unlimited - the world's largest commissions programme for disabled artists, working to get



work seen, discussed and embedded within the cultural fabric of the UK with partners such as ACE, Creative Scotland, Southbank Centre, Spirit of 2012 and the British Council. Since 2013, Unlimited has provided nearly £4 million to 280 disabled artists through commissions, awards and support, making it the largest supporter of disabled artists worldwide.

Working with Sarah Pickthall, she runs SYNC, examining the interplay between disability and leadership in the cultural sector, having run programmes to date in: England, Australia, Korea, Singapore.

Jo has won Cosmopolitan's woman of achievement award, is a Clore fellow, is on the board of the Global Disability Innovation Hub and the Northern ACE advisory panel.

### **David Tovey**



David Tovey is a formerly homeless artist, educator and activist who works in a range of media. He is a photographer, painter as well as an installation artist and performance-maker. At the heart of David's practice is a very special quality - the ability to bring you to the subject in ways both beautiful and hard-hitting in equal measure in order to raise awareness about the social issues he tackles. David has exhibited internationally in locations such as the Atsa Festival Montreal, Somerset House, Tate Modern and Tate Liverpool and he is also the founder of the UK's first One Festival of Homeless arts. He speaks regularly at housing and homelessness events and teaches art to people experiencing homelessness at the Pilion Trust and Passage Day Centre.

His Man on Bench performances have earned him significant acclaim and have taken place on the pavement of the London's Southbank, The Mayfield Depot Manchester and the halls of Tate Exchange.

He is also the creative producer for the international arts and homelessness movement With One Voice.

### **Richard Watts**

Richard Watts runs 'people make it work' an organisation that helps cultural organisations clarify a mission for our times and support them to make the

changes happen that will bring that new and relevant mission to life in their organisations and communities. Passionate about enabling a cultural democracy that delivers resilience, impact and relevance, he brings 20 years experience of organisational change in the cultural sector to clients across the UK, across scales and cultural forms.

Richard also supports funders to develop their strategies, focus and impact as well as developing live projects at people make it work (such as [changecreation.org](http://changecreation.org)) and a new plan for democratic cultural sector training for everyone under their 'culture-people' label. Richard is chair of Peckham Platform, trustee at Libraries unlimited and Theatre AdInfinitum, a founder member of The House of St Barnabas, creator of The Everyone Foundation, Patron of intoart and ensures that at least 20% of people make it work's activities are pro bono for organisations committed to social inclusion, diversity and cultural democracy.