



YOUTHFUL CITIES: **DIGITAL** **STORYTELLING LAB**

New Media to inspire change in Coventry & Nairobi

A British Council project in partnership with Coventry City of Culture

COVENTRY
UK CITY OF CULTURE

2021

INTERNATIONAL PARTNER



PRODUCED BY



YOUTHFUL CITIES: DIGITAL STORYTELLING LAB

Youthful Cities: Digital Storytelling Lab is a cultural and creative skills exchange programme for emerging digital artists, makers, storytellers and activists from Coventry and Nairobi.

Part skills exchange, part lab, part commissioning programme. Collaborate as part of international teams, supported by experts, to experiment with immersive and interactive digital storytelling tools, platforms and techniques, and co-create new artistic work to reach audiences online with stories that matter.



photo by Garry Jones

The Opportunity - Key Points

We are looking for 6 Coventry (UK) based and 6 Nairobi (Kenya) based creatives (artists, filmmakers, digital storytellers, YouTubers, and activists) aged between 18 - 25 years old.

The 12 selected artists will be invited to collaborate with one another, working in international teams to create digital, interactive and immersive stories inspired by the themes of the Youthful Cities Index (which explores what it means to be young in the world today and what life is like in cities across the world including Coventry & Nairobi).

We are looking for young creatives with a thirst for storytelling in new formats (immersive audio, interactive video and 360 video), who will use the insight from the [Youthful Cities Index](#) (data on employment, diversity, wellbeing and more) to inspire stories that may challenge differences, address inequalities, acknowledge commonalities or celebrate progression.

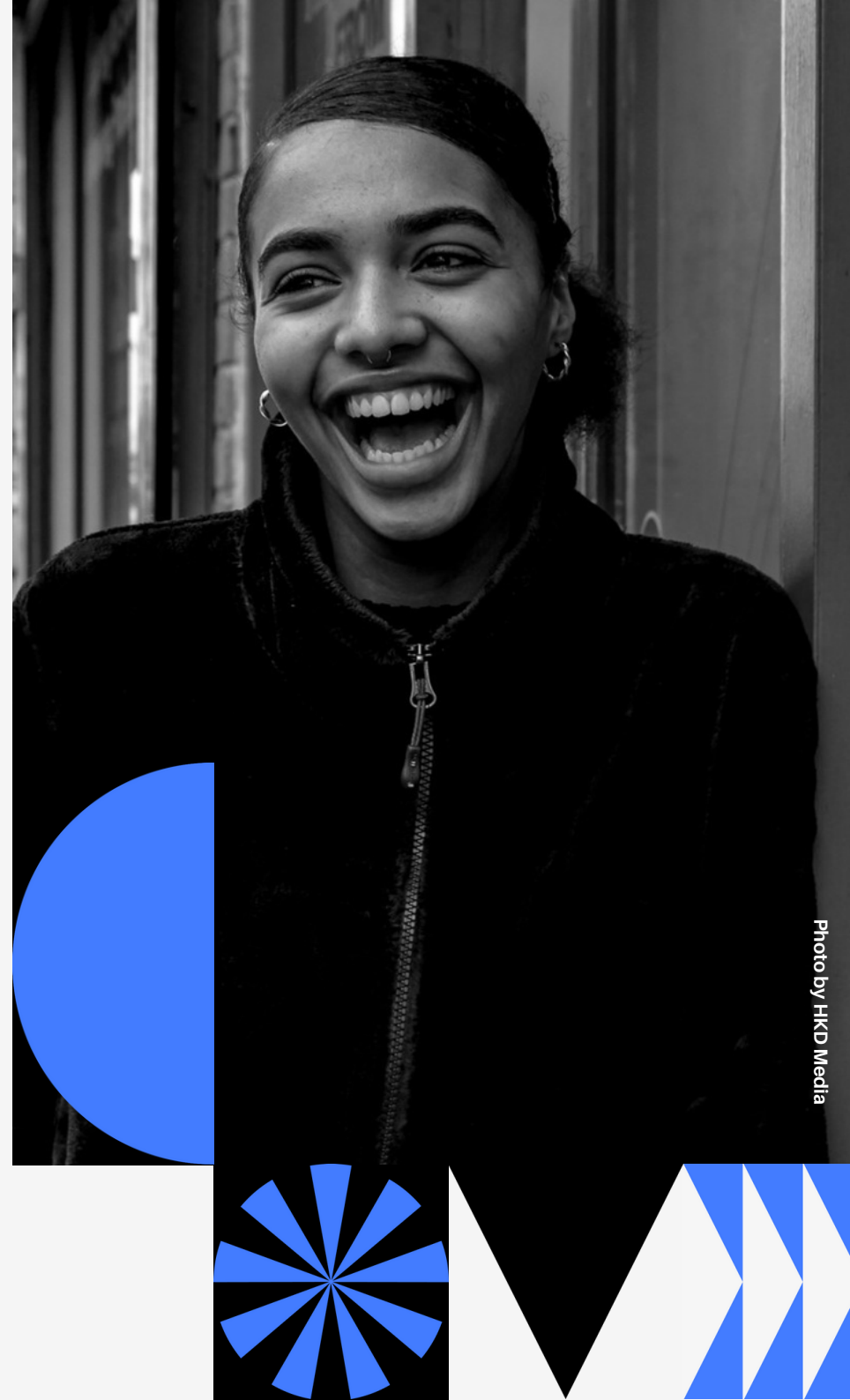
Through a 10-month programme from July 2021 - March 2022, Youthful Cities: Digital Storytelling Lab will take the 12 selected artists through a collaborative process to develop their work in international teams.

All artists will receive dedicated production mentoring and advice from [The Space](#) and [BBC R&D](#) in both countries and across all phases of the 10-month programme, including intensive Masterclasses, Prototyping and Cultural Exchange sessions.

You will also have an opportunity to network and share work with a wider group of artists from different cities at an online Global Youth Summit (11 – 13 November 2021).

All selected artists will receive a cumulative stipend of £3,400 or approximately 520,000 KSh (Kenyan Shilling) for committing to all creative development days and completing the programme.

Production budgets of up to £4,000 or approximately 612,000 KSh (Kenyan Shilling) are available and the work will be published and distributed online through BBC Taster and Google Arts & Culture platforms as part of Coventry UK City of Culture year.



The Opportunity

Through a unique partnership with [Coventry City of Culture Trust](#), [British Council](#), [The Space](#), [BBC R&D](#), and with support from [Google Arts & Culture](#), we are launching an Open Call for Artists (18-25yrs) - **6 in Coventry and 6 in Nairobi** - to take part in **Youthful Cities Digital Storytelling Lab** from July 2021 to March 2022, a cultural and creative skills exchange programme supporting artists to work internationally to explore new immersive and interactive storytelling tools before co-creating new artistic work with a purpose: to influence and inspire change.

We want young creatives with a thirst for storytelling in new formats (immersive audio, interactive video and 360 video), to use the data from the Youthful Cities Index (data on employment, diversity, fashion, public spaces, wellbeing, entrepreneurship, education, affordability, safety and more) to inspire stories that challenge the differences, expose the inequalities, acknowledge the commonalities and celebrate progression.

Through your ideas, voices and creative vision we want those stories to be told, that show how our cities can be made better. We want our Youthful Cities cohort to be filled with artists, creatives, activists, film makers, technologists, social disruptors, imagineers and storytellers from Coventry and Nairobi who are from different social and cultural backgrounds to come together to tell stories that can effect change in cities for artists, communities and also influence policymakers to reimagine the future.

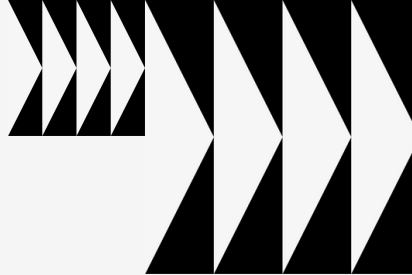


Photo by Charlie Shelton

Through a 10-month programme from July 2021 - March 2022, **Youthful Cities: Digital Storytelling Lab** will take the 12 selected artists through a collaborative process that is part cultural exchange, part digital storytelling lab and part commissioning programme, to create bold, playfully disruptive and thought-provoking digital stories that inspire change.



YOUTHFUL CITIES

The Digital Storytelling Lab programme is part of Youthful Cities, a series of four international cultural and creative exchanges between artists in Coventry and Nairobi (digital storytelling).

Bogota (visual and street art), Detroit (music) and Beirut (poetry and spoken word), developed by Coventry City of Culture Trust in partnership with the British Council. Each exchange programme will foster international collaboration to explore ways that different artforms and applications of art, culture, and storytelling can raise awareness of social and political issues important to young people in each city, based on research in the Youthful Cities Index.

The Youthful Cities 2020 Index: Coventry City of Culture edition, commissioned by Coventry City of Culture Trust and the British Council from the eponymous research organisation Youthful Cities, ranks five global cities across 100+ indicators from a youth perspective. This Index creates credible data for decision-makers, provides inspiration for urban innovation efforts, launches a network of young urban decoders, and creates international exposure for the five cities participating. We are working with 5 cities which have all been chosen because they are catalysts for change, curious, explorative and dynamic as well as activist spirit and civic innovation.



Why Coventry?

Coventry is UK City of Culture 2021. Every four years one city is awarded the title of UK City of Culture to deliver a city-wide celebration of art and culture in all its forms. From May 2021 to May 2022 Coventry City of Culture Trust is organising the largest arts festival in the country with a focus on the role of culture in local and global social change. We will be celebrating our city's diverse communities, incredible artists, and many links to different countries and cultures around the world.

Coventry is also a city of pioneers and activists – from Lady Godiva to the trade union movement and the founding of Europe's first 'green' party, the PEOPLE Party. Coventry has a long history of invention and innovation, second only to Cambridge in terms of the number of UK patents registered. Coventry and Warwickshire are home to two world-class universities with expertise across science, technology, design and engineering, as well as an internationally significant cluster of gaming companies responsible for some of the worlds' best-known mobile and console games. Coventry is also part of the UK's only multi-city 5G test bed programme which will enable the city to stay at the forefront of digital innovation – whether driverless cars or inventing new forms of mobile and immersive content for both gaming and storytelling.



Why Nairobi?

Dubbed Africa's Silicon Savannah, Kenya has a track record for recording high levels of innovation and has the highest smartphone and internet penetration rates on the continent. It is home to one of Africa's most established clusters of tech companies with expertise across digital marketing and content production, and a fast-growing immersive technology sector.

Home to four cultural properties and three natural sites on UNESCO's world heritage list Kenya is popular for its diverse culture and biodiversity and is home to Kenya's national museums, theatres, festivals and a burgeoning film industry. It is also home to a thriving independent and often political arts scene; many of the city's cultural programmes and festivals give a platform to those artists shining a spotlight on the most pressing issues for the continent and the world.



Who are we looking for?

We want to work with 6 Coventry based and 6 Nairobi based creatives aged between 18 and 25 who are familiar with some aspect of digital production, or have a strong desire to develop that from their existing practice. You might already be making films for YouTube, IGTV or TikTok, writing blogs or short-form fiction, using sound to reveal worlds, animating GIF's for socials, or playing with tech to create narratives that engage audiences and take them on a journey.

You might already have an artistic practice outside of digital but want to tell stories in new ways using technology. We are looking for people that have original ideas and are willing to experiment and develop these collaboratively within a small and motivated international team.

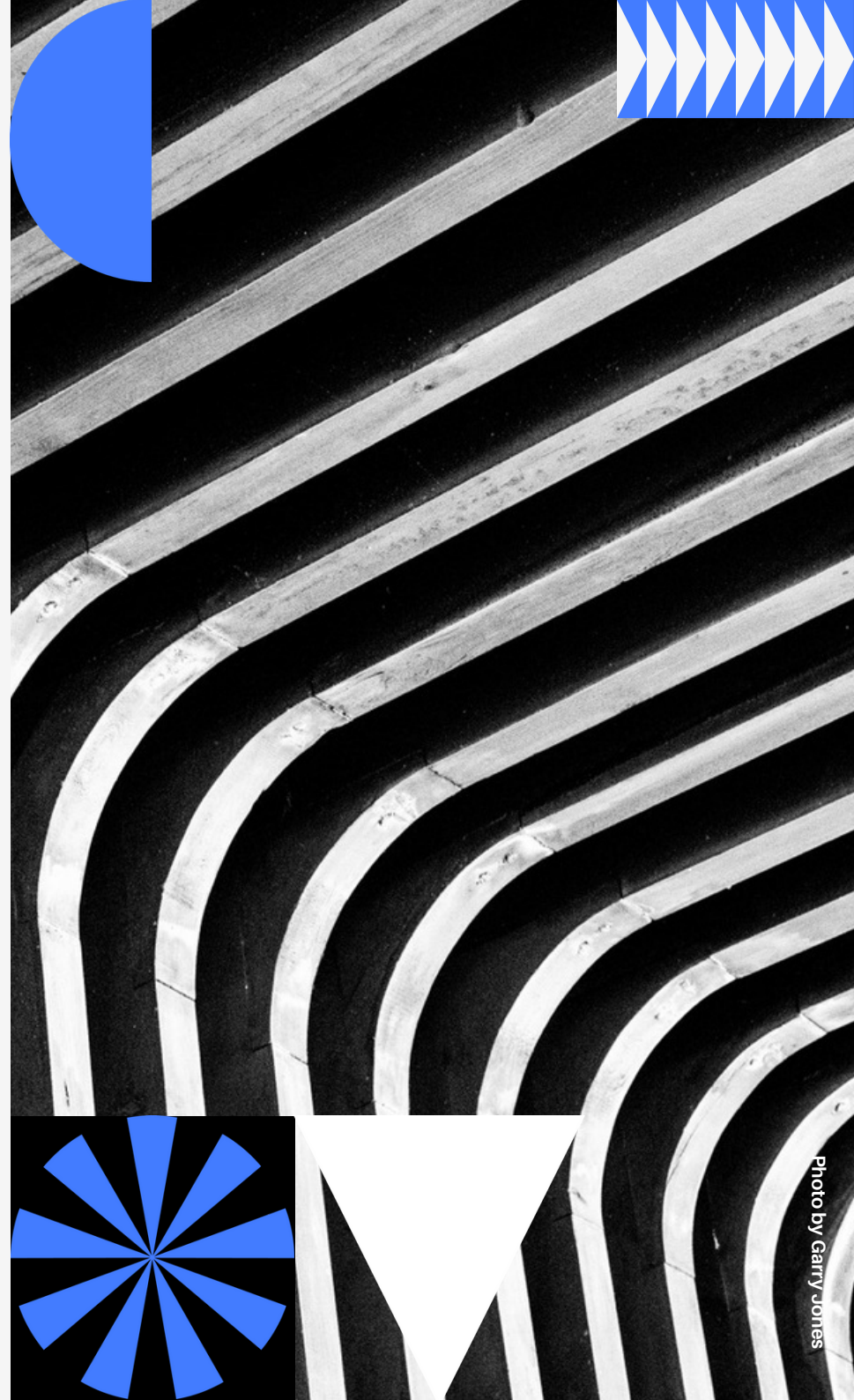
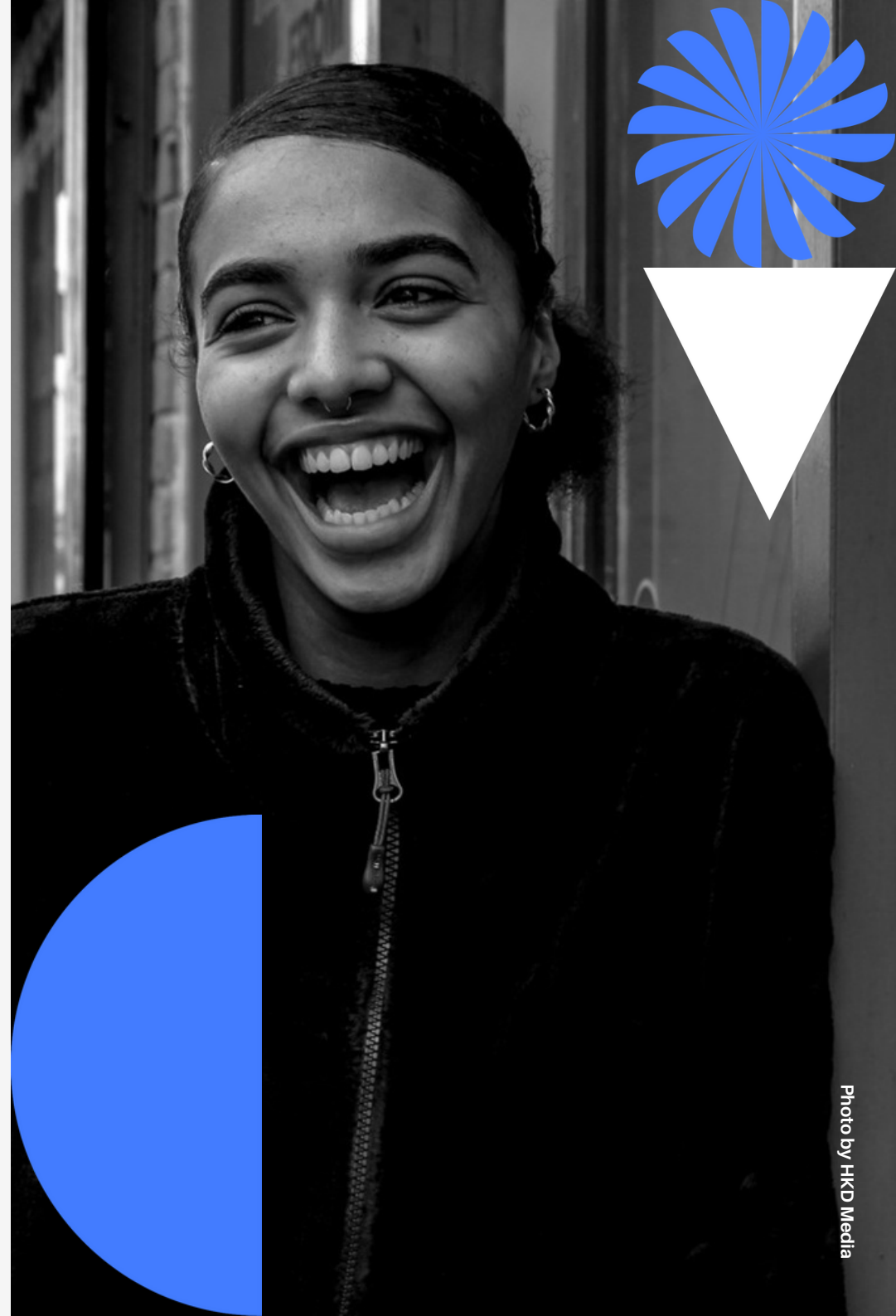


Photo by Garry Jones

What do I get?

- The chance to be a part of a cohort of 12, working and collaborating together internationally.
- The opportunity to experiment with new forms of digital storytelling using tools from BBC R&D.
- 2 half days on the Cultural Exchange sessions.
- 3 day intensive labs for Masterclasses.
- 3 day intensive labs for Prototyping.
- Networking with other artists from the Youthful Cities cohorts and industry professionals and a chance to showcase and test ideas for feedback at the Global Youth Summit.
- Dedicated production time at a venue in Coventry and Nairobi with producer support.
- Artist's stipend of £3,400 or approximately 520,000 KSh (Kenyan Shilling) to complete the whole programme and produce new work.
- A production budget of up to £4,000 or approximately 612,000 (KSh) Kenyan Shilling per team of 4 artists for the final production stage.
- Having your completed project published and distributed online through BBC Taster and Google Arts platforms as part of the Coventry UK City of Culture year.
- Opportunity for Nairobi cohort to travel to UK (subject to travel restrictions) for showcasing work in May 2022 (tbc).



ATTEND THE GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT

A virtual summit organised by young creatives, for young creatives, taking place online in November 2021. Cohorts from all four Youthful Cities exchange programmes will gather for this virtual summit to share their experiences, share work to date, and discuss the role of culture for social change and more youthful futures with invited speakers, experts and peers from around the world.

All selected artists must commit to a minimum of 20 days over the 10 month period. 5 days of which are for attending the creative development days which are the Cultural Exchange, The Masterclasses & Labs and The Global Youth Summit. 5 days are for prototyping and 10 days are for production. The total stipend per artist for completing the programme is £3400 (inclusive of VAT) or approximately 520 000 KSh (Kenyan Shilling).



TIMELINE

Application and Shortlisting (June - July 2021)

Applications open (2nd June).

Youthful Cities: Digital Storytelling Lab

Webinars with The Space and BBC R&D -

introducing the programme and the tools for digital storytelling (24th & 28th June at 12pm BST (UK) 2pm EAT (Kenya).

Application deadline 12th July 5pm BST (UK) 7pm EAT (Kenya).

Applicants notified by 22nd July 2021.

Creative Development Programme (July - October 2021)

Selected Artists will take part in:

Cultural Exchange: 30th July & 6th August 2021: exploring what it is like to be young in a different society and culture and finding out more about the Youthful Cities Index.

Masterclasses & Labs: 7th - 9th September 2021: a virtual series of Masterclasses from trailblazers in the field of digital storytelling and intensive workshops from BBC R&D and Google Labs introducing the cohort to a range of existing, cutting-edge storytelling techniques, tools, and platforms across immersive audio, interactive and 360 video. This will result in the development of initial project ideas in international teams.

Prototyping Phase: 21st - 23rd September 2021: working remotely and with additional tech support in each location, the cohort will work in teams to develop a "cardboard" or working prototype of their project.

Global Youth Summit 11 - 13 Nov 2021: join the other Youthful Cities cohorts to discuss the role of art, culture and activism in the future of global cities with international peers, speakers and experts.

Final Projects Selected for Production (Nov 2021 - Jan 2022)

Production Phase: Nov 2021 - Jan 2022: collaborating with international peers, through the Production Labs, in teams of 4 (2 artists from Coventry and 2 artists from Nairobi per team), 3 final projects will be taken forward to be scaled up into production.

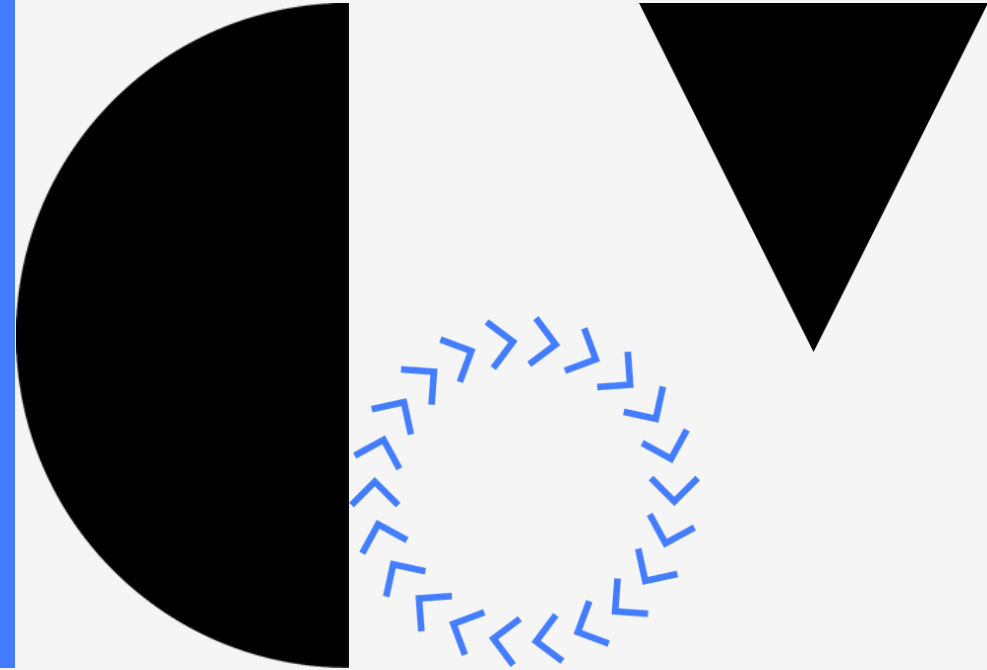
Publishing and Distribution (Feb - March 2022)

Publishing, distributing, and showcasing their projects as part of Coventry's UK City of Culture year in March 2022.

The programme will be delivered online and in host venues in both Coventry and Nairobi, subject to Covid-19 restrictions.

What do we mean by digital storytelling?

The way we consume and create content is changing all the time. We are all already a part of digital culture. Audience development and distribution are key to targeting who and where audiences see your work. We will support the cohort in thinking about how to reach audiences and where to distribute content in the initial Masterclass and Lab phases.



Digital Formats & Platforms

Digital storytelling is about telling stories on multiple platforms and channels and about using technology to create those stories. It could be films on Insta TV, 360 video on YouTube, Vlogs about daily life, GIF's on social media platforms, audio on SoundCloud, or community building on Discord. You might create your content on mobiles, edit on tablets and distribute your work in a variety of ways but you always want to tell a story.

Immersive

Immersive storytelling allows audiences to be absorbed in a new world that is revealed to them. This might be through immersive soundscapes and spatialized audio that brings new worlds to life or 360 video that shows new points of view to your audiences. Immersive experiences may intensify emotions, create empathy or change perceptions. Immersive content can be distributed in a range of formats.

Interaction

Interactive stories give audiences choice to decide how the story unfolds or the power to interact with an element of that storyworld. They are there with purpose, to participate and not just watch passively. Interactive experiences can also offer audiences agency - the ability to actively make choices with the story.

Existing digital storytelling work that communicates important messages in creative new ways include (for example):

- WORLD TOUR by Jessica Brillhart (2020)
- **Your Phone is Now a Refugee Phone** by BBC Media Action (2016)
- **Only Expansion** by Duncan Speakman (2019)
- What The Fuss by Melissa Achoko Allela (2017)
- African Digital Art Network by Jep Chumba (2012)

Working with a suite of tools from BBC Makerbox the selected artists will be able to test out ideas, prototype and scale up production to create completed projects in teams of four, using immersive audio, interactive video and 360 video.

The programme will also enable teams to gain an understanding of new forms of short-form immersive and interactive storytelling by learning from established innovators in this field, and by experimenting with existing digital techniques, tools and platforms.



WE ARE LOOKING FOR...

People who are enthusiastic and motivated about collaborating internationally and working within a team.

Those who want develop skills and experiences.

Creatives who want to make new, original work.

A diverse cohort, (across gender, heritage/ethnicity, ability and backgrounds), with a range of experience.

Artists who have consistent access to a computer/laptop and a stable internet connection for online sessions (selected applicants will be supported to ensure they can access the online sessions).

WE WILL BE ASSESSING APPLICATIONS ON THE BASIS OF:

Some previous experience in digital content creation.

Response to the creative brief.



HOW DO I APPLY?

Sign up for one of our Youthful Cities: Digital Storytelling Lab Webinars on [YouTube](#) to learn more about the programme:

24th June at 12pm BST (UK) / 2pm EAT (Kenya) - <http://bit.ly/YCitiesWeb1>

28th June at 12pm BST (UK) / 2pm EAT (Kenya) - <http://bit.ly/YCitiesWeb2>

You can apply online via the application form at: <http://bit.ly/YCitiesapps>

Or email us for an alternative format on: storytellinglab@thespace.org.

In order to help you with your online application you can see the application questions here: <http://bit.ly/YCitiesFormPDF>

FAQs

What is the Deadline for applications?

Monday 12 July 2021, 5pm BST (UK), 7pm EAT (Kenya).

Can I apply if I live outside of Coventry or Nairobi?

This opportunity is only open to people living in Coventry (or with a CV postcode) or Nairobi.

When will applicants be notified?

Successful applicants will be notified by 22nd July.

Will selected artists get paid?

Selected artists will be paid a cumulative stipend of £3,400 or approximately 520,000 KSh (Kenyan Shilling).

Is there a budget to make the projects happen?

There is a production budget of up to £4,000 or approximately 612,000 KSh (Kenyan Shilling) per team.

Who will own the project?

Artists in their teams will have shared IP. Coventry Capital of Culture, British Council, The Space, BBC R&D and Google Arts & Culture have the rights to publish completed projects across platforms in order to distribute and showcase the work and to promote and highlight the programme.



FAQs

How will I be supported?

All artists will have dedicated Producer support across the programme.

Can I apply if I'm a student?

Yes, as long as you are not in full time education and can commit to the compulsory programme dates outlined in the timeline above.

Can I apply if I can't attend all of the Programme dates?

You must be able to commit to all Programme dates when the cohort comes together for creative development. Special consideration will be made for those with additional requirements such as childcare or employment. Masterclasses and Lab days will be recorded and will be available.

There will also be self-initiated time for teams to work outside of the schedule to be agreed upon within teams and with the Producer. If selected artists have additional access requirements or need support to complete the programme please email us before you apply and if you are selected support will be provided. If you cannot make all dates due to childcare, employment or other reasons please email to discuss and highlight in the application form.

storytellinglab@thespace.org



FAQs

How much time do I need to commit to this programme?

There are **8 compulsory days** which are detailed in the schedule above. These are compulsory and all selected artists must attend these dates. We also expect artists to commit to a minimum of an additional 12 days of self-initiated idea, prototype and production development with their teams and contact time with the Producer to check project progress and complete their projects.

Who will be assessing my application?

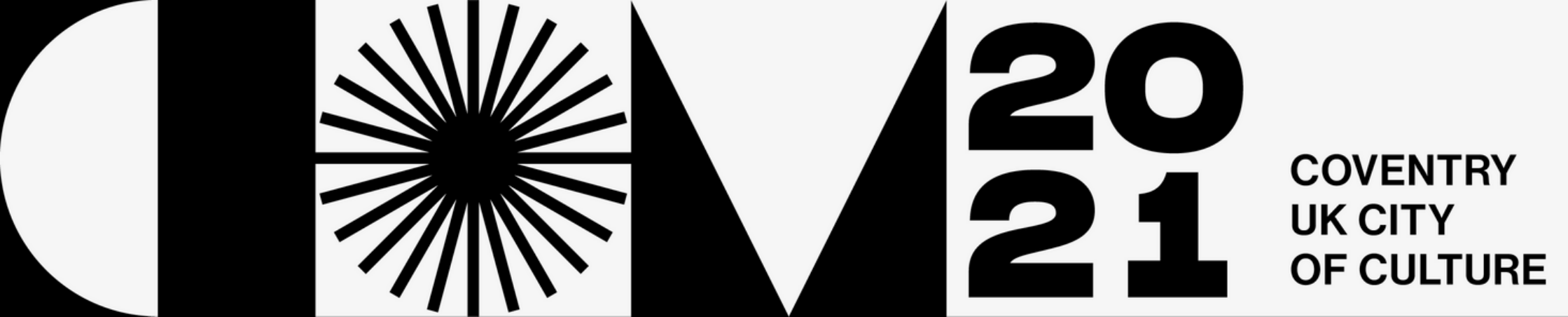
The Space, Coventry UK Capital of Culture, British Council/Producers in the UK and Kenya.

What if I have no experience in digital?

We want those who have some experience of digital content creation or storytelling. You might be making films for social media, creating animations, creating audio stories/mixes for Soundcloud or be vlogging about current issues and things that are important to you. If you can tell a story through some form of digital format then this programme could be for you. As this is a creative development programme we will provide technical support and mentoring with any areas that the selected artists are less confident in.

Email enquiries to: storytellinglab@thespace.org





ABOUT COVENTRY UK CITY OF CULTURE 2021

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 will commence on 15 May 2021, running for 12 months. The 365-day cultural programme will reflect Coventry as a diverse, modern city, demonstrating that culture is a force that changes lives. Coventry is known internationally as a city of welcome, a city of activists and pioneers, peace and reconciliation, innovation, and invention, and now a City of Culture.

Coventry is the city where movement began, from innovation in the transport industry to a history of welcome, it has moved people for centuries. For a whole year, Coventry will celebrate with events, music, dance, theatre, and large-scale spectacle. As well as these big celebrations, it will show its unexpected side, with more intimate experiences and ways to get involved in every neighbourhood. And it's not just Coventry. This epic celebration will also witness the entire region getting involved and benefitting from the opportunities that being City of Culture brings.

It will be co-created with the people of Coventry and bring about long-term social, economic, and cultural benefits.

<https://coventry2021.co.uk>



ABOUT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

We work in two ways – directly with individuals to transform their lives, and with governments and partners to make a bigger difference for the longer term, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world.

We help young people to gain the skills, confidence and connections they are looking for to realise their potential and to participate in strong and inclusive communities. We support them to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications. Our work in arts and culture stimulates creative expression and exchange and nurtures creative enterprise.

We connect the best of the UK with the world and the best of the world with the UK. These connections lead to an understanding of each other's strengths and of the challenges and values that we share. This builds trust between people in the UK and other nations which endures even when official relations may be strained.

We work on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2019-20 we connected with 80 million people directly and with 791 million overall, including online and through our broadcasts and publications.

For more information, visit our websites:

British Council Global www.britishcouncil.org

British Council Kenya <https://www.britishcouncil.org/east-africa-arts>

British Council England <https://england.britishcouncil.org/coventry2021>



ABOUT THE SPACE

The Space is a digital agency established by Arts Council England and the BBC to help promote digital engagement across the arts and cultural sector. We also work regularly with Creative Scotland, the Arts Council of Wales and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

We support artists and organisations by commissioning projects, building digital skills and capacity, and helping organisations reach wider audiences using digital content, media and online platforms.

<https://www.thespace.org>

ABOUT BBC R&D

Uniquely funded by the license fee BBC Research and Development is at the heart of innovation at the BBC and sits at the forefront of developments in broadcast technology. At the core of BBC R&D's success is an extensive network and history of sharing knowledge, opportunities, and insights.

As part of this work [Connected Studio MakerBox](#) provides free access to cutting edge tools and technology (both made in-house or licensed from commercial companies) as well as a community forum of makers and experts providing insight and conversation. And [BBC Taster](#) is the home of new ideas at the BBC, hosting experimental pilots and ideas that audiences can try, rate, and share.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd>



Research & Development

ABOUT GOOGLE ARTS & CULTURE

Google Arts & Culture is a non-profit initiative. We work with cultural institutions and artists around the world. Together, our mission is to preserve and bring the world's art and culture online so it's accessible to anyone, anywhere.

<https://artsandculture.google.com>