



FESTIVAL IMPACT REPORT

INVENT TOMORROW TOGETHER

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“It’s impossible not to be proud both of the work and of the city that makes it all possible.”

“We truly could not do it without all of you.”



JOHN MCGRATH

Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Factory International

Well, what an 18 days that was. Two-and-a-half weeks of showcasing the most creative talent from around the globe – from Pakistan to Benin, and Japan to Germany – alongside the magic that is being produced in our own wonderful, innovative city.

This year’s festival held a special significance for us, being that it was the first time that audiences were able to get a preview of our exciting new home. Speaking of firsts, nearly half of our attendees this year were encountering the wonders of MIF for the very first time – with a staggering 174,700 people coming along to our free events and happenings all across the city.

We’re always delighted to see new faces experience what we have to offer – and to see new faces show off what they have to offer too. As Artistic Director for MIF, I’m immensely proud that 178 artists benefitted from a development opportunity at this year’s festival – sharing the stage with international artists exploring some of the most important issues of our time.

Looking at the impact MIF23 had from a creative, community, economic and sustainability point of view – as well as its exceptionally good critical response – it’s impossible not to be proud both of the work and of the city that makes it all possible. And of course, the people – it’s always wonderful to witness the great range of communities and participants who get involved with each edition of the festival.

Once again I’d like to thank our supporters. Without you all and without our sponsors, we simply would not be able to bring you MIF every other summer. The scope and breadth of what we do here would not be possible without the volunteers, the Community Partners, the Neighbourhood Organisers, the artists, the performers and you, our audience and our community. Thank you all so much.



TOM BLOXHAM MBE

Chairman, Urban Splash
Chair, Factory International

As Chair of Manchester International Festival, I have come to expect the unexpected since I first took on the role in 2005 and this year was no different. I was blown away for 18 straight days by every exhibit and performance I witnessed.

Aviva Studios already feels like home to Factory International. I was really impressed by the kindness and work ethic of the volunteers who helped keep everything running smoothly, day-to-day and night-by-night overcoming any minor teething issues. The feedback we’ve been seeing instils us with so much confidence that setting up there was the right move.

This year I especially loved seeing the number of children from local schools being given an opportunity to experience MIF. Local kids immersing themselves in the wonderful world of iconic artist **Yayoi Kusama** is quite simply something I’ll never forget.

After an amazing two-and-a-half weeks, what else is there to say except thank you? From

the bottom of my heart, I want to extend my most sincere appreciation for all of you who make MIF possible every year and especially this year, with the big move to Aviva Studios, the new Festival Square by the River Irwell, and the grander scale of everything we set out to do.

Such an ambitious undertaking requires the best staff, the most dedicated volunteers, the most exciting artists and brings with it the most dedicated, generous and enthusiastic supporters. We truly could not do it without all of you.



MIF MEETS AVIVA STUDIOS

Yayoi Kusama's *You, Me and the Balloons*

Good things come to those who wait and MIF23 proved that Aviva Studios has certainly been well worth waiting for.

Since November 2015, when the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) was selected as the winner of an international architecture competition, anticipation has been building for our new home.

In the intervening eight years since OMA's Ellen van Loon took the project on, the countdown to opening has been a thrilling journey – from breaking ground to inviting the public for a sneak preview of our space during MIF23.

We were delighted to welcome Aviva on board as sponsors of the building in June of this

year, officially making Aviva Studios the new home of Factory International. And what better way to mark the beginning of our journey together than diving into **Yayoi Kusama's** psychedelic *You, Me and the Balloons* exhibition?

The iconic Japanese artist's jawdropping works took over the vast Warehouse space of Aviva Studios – as well as almost everyone in Manchester's Instagram feeds and stories for the duration of the festival and into Summer 2023.

But it wasn't just Kusama having all the fun. The Hall's stage was

graced by the likes of Alison Goldfrapp, Angélique Kidjo and revered Sufi singer Sanam Marvi.

Not to mention a collaboration between AFRODEUTSCHE and Manchester Camerata. Oh, and John Grant and Richard Hawley honouring the memory of the late, great country legend Patsy Cline.

Our new riverside destination was a hit this summer and immediately felt like home, channeling the exact energy, attitude, creativity and togetherness that have been longstanding staples of MIF. What has made the Aviva Studios move all the more special is seeing how much our visitors

embraced our new space at MIF23 ahead of our official opening. In fact, almost half of you let us know that wanting to see and experience Aviva Studios for the first time was the main influence in which events you booked to see.

This is truly a venue that MIF and Manchester can build our futures around.



Alison Goldfrapp at Aviva Studios

CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

MIF isn't just about attracting visitors. The festival has a long history of working with the people of Greater Manchester and MIF23 was no different. After all, culture is created by all of us, not only artists or institutions.

Through Factory International's creative engagement programmes, multiple pathways are offered to connect with residents across the city. For MIF23, Community Partnerships with organisations in Blackley, Wythenshawe, Patricroft and Ardwick alongside our flagship Neighbourhood Organiser programme ensured that hundreds of residents got to experience everything MIF had to offer.

Our creative team worked with a range of young people from Greater Manchester – from bringing a Yayoi Kusama-inspired fashion show to Aviva Studios to delivering workshops in schools. Their programme was all about celebrating young people's individuality and uncovering their uniqueness through creativity.



1,164
CHILDREN INVOLVED IN CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

At the Kusama-inspired fashion show, secondary school pupils shared their sustainable, art-inspired creations made from upcycled clothes and household waste. Overall, **1,164 children** and **25 schools** were involved in creative activities as part of MIF23.

Not only that, but *Balmy Army* – a movement for youth-led mental health forged by young people, artists, Mad Pride organisers, radical dreamers and disability justice doers – rolled art and activism into one for a common cause; mental health support that works. The work of 40 young people from Greater Manchester alongside artist the vacuum cleaner, *Balmy Army* brought together local luminaries like Kevin Edward Turner, Lizzie Chapman, Toni-Dee, Caz Hughes,

“What worked well was having the freedom to be out and about interacting, making new contacts and being able to take the bigger things into my areas.”

Neighbourhood Organiser

“It feels like MIF are listening to us.”

Neighbourhood Organiser

Evyn Seaton-Mooney, Rory Aaron, Rosalyne Norford, Gráinne Flynn, Cara Looij, Sascha Gilmour, Charlie Clark, HOME, Contact, 42nd Street, Gorse Hill Studios and the Hope and Horizon Wards at Fairfield Hospital.

And where would we be without our Neighbourhood Organisers? We cannot stress enough how integral they are to so much of what Factory International does. Our Neighbourhood Organisers facilitate communication and collaboration between Factory International and communities across Greater Manchester – representing a range of areas including Salford, Rochdale, Wythenshawe, Crumpsall, Gorton, Blackley, Longsight, Moston and Oldham.

80%
OF ARTISTS ON DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IDENTIFIED AS GLOBAL MAJORITY

178
Artists benefited from a development opportunity at MIF23

Similarly, our Community Partnership programme continued to flourish at MIF23. Designed to create more equitable relationships and meaningful collaboration between community groups from some of Manchester's most excluded wards, we worked with CDM UK, REEL Mcr, Patricroft Community Group CIC and Thrive Manchester. Awareness of Factory International and MIF increased in these communities, ensuring their voices were heard. During MIF, the Community Partnership programme focused on lifelong learning and encouraging the independent exploration and discovery of new skills and ideas, **engaging**

with 157 adults and 58 children across a number of sessions. All participants were also invited to enjoy Kusama's *You, Me and the Balloons* exhibition and explore the artist's creative world.

Developing the next generation of artistic talent in the city is central to what we do. With **6 Factory International Fellows embedded into the development of flagship commissions** across MIF23 and **8 Factory Sounds artists** given the opportunity to grace the stage at Festival Square to showcase their immense skills, Factory International's artist development programmes continue to cement themselves as more vital than ever this year and there's only

more to come in the future. An additional **43 Manchester-based artists** were invited to meet with **40 international promoters** during International Weekend as part of a networking opportunity. Throughout all our work, prioritisation of support to artists under-represented in the sector is one of our underlying principles. **80% of artists on development programmes identified as global majority artists.**



Yayoi Kusama's *You, Me and the Balloons*



Factory Sounds artist Prido



Balmy Army march



Community Partnership programme

“I enjoyed being a trusted face in the community. Knowing people across the organisation and having face to face access to the community and organisation was important. I can see the progress that FI is making in the community. Big steps.”

Shakar Hussain, Neighbourhood Organiser

OUR FORUMS: WIDENING PUBLIC AGENCY AND CO-CREATION

Factory International believes that embedding the widest range of ideas, opinions and suggestions into the creation of its work improves everything it does.

A key part of this is listening and responding to residents across Greater Manchester who volunteer their time to meet regularly and contribute to our Public Forums. Our Young People's and People's Forum comprise a diverse section of people from all boroughs of Greater Manchester – one of the things they suggested we do was to create an impact report to help them share the difference

they have made with Factory International across the city. We followed their advice! Our Forum members come from all over Greater Manchester, including Wigan, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside, Salford and Manchester.

Co-creating and making our major commissions with people who may not have been involved in arts and cultural activity before is part

of Factory International's DNA. In MIF23 this was no exception, with *Balmy Army* created with young people across the city and *We Cut Through Dust* designed with people who have lived experience of homelessness. Building on this track record, we handed over the keys for the whole building in November for nine days for residents to put on exactly what they thought should be on at Aviva Studios.

“The MIF People’s Forum has proved that grassroots can be involved in the democratic decision-making structures of international organisations and change them for the better. What has made that happen has been the philosophy of continuous improvement, critical friends and challenge that has been embraced and encouraged by the leadership, which has made me feel informed, involved, invaluable and included. The forum has been a safe space to voice my opinion, even if it was a different opinion from everyone else! I’ve always felt the difference was valued.”

Arlene, People’s Forum Member



86% of our Forums and community consultation group members surveyed rated their experience as excellent or good.

82% of our Forums and community consultation group members surveyed agreed that they'd developed or learned a new skill.

81% of our Forums and community consultation group members surveyed agreed that being involved in Factory Assembly activity has improved their health and wellbeing.



People's Forum and Factory Assembly



MIF23 HAD A RECORD NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER APPLICANTS

Volunteers are the heartbeat of every Manchester International Festival and this summer was no different. For MIF23, there were more applicants than ever, proving once again that our local communities are becoming more and more invested in the arts.

428 volunteers helped with MIF23 this summer. These 428 came from a record number of

applicants, completing over **2,753 shifts**, totalling a staggering **9,000 hours**.

Pretty mind-blowing numbers, wouldn't you agree? Our favourite stat is that **96% of volunteers rated their experience at MIF23 as 'excellent' or 'good'**.

From helping behind the scenes to greeting the public at our events, MIF23 volunteers bring a

relentless energy and enthusiasm to everything they do. This diverse team care about the events, the audience and each other, ensuring everything runs as smoothly as possible, learning new skills along the way.



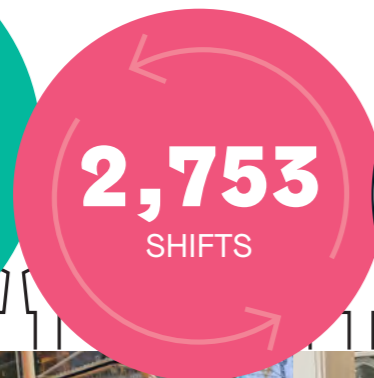
"Lovely volunteer whilst queuing for part of the exhibition. She stopped to chat to us and talk about the artwork which was appreciated."

"...excellent volunteers working there to support the audience with a happy face."

"The volunteers were all so friendly and it was obviously they were enjoying themselves."

"Your volunteers are amazing. I had so many random chats with people about art, life. I always knew where to go. Incredible."

We now have opportunities to volunteer in our new venue, Aviva Studios, and beyond. And of course, our festival volunteer programme will return for MIF25. So if you're 18 and over and live in Greater Manchester, check out what you can get involved in at factoryinternational.org/volunteer



96% of volunteers rated their experience as 'excellent' or 'good'.



FACTORY ACADEMY: INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S TALENT TODAY

29
RESIDENTS GAINED PATHWAYS INTO EMPLOYMENT

MIF23 was a celebration of all things ambitious, poetic, marginalised and mysterious, but it was arguably so much more to the Factory Academy students who worked tirelessly to create content, make new friends and immerse themselves in new experiences.

Factory Academy gives young people from Greater Manchester opportunities to learn new skills and get a taste for working in the creative sector, regardless of their background or previous experience. MIF23 gave Factory Academy students the opportunity to get up close and personal with the teams creating, curating and bringing the festival to life in the weeks leading up to and during the festival.

Highlights from the programmes delivered during this year's festival included Intro to Producing, Future Cultural Leaders and the return of Factory Academy's Future15 festival Intern programme and Future15 Facilitator Training Programme. These created direct **pathways into employment during MIF23 for 29 Greater Manchester residents** of whom **69% are from global majority backgrounds**.

Factory Academy's unwavering commitment to cultivating the next generation of cultural leaders from underrepresented backgrounds is epitomised by the Future Cultural Leaders programme. Through mentorship by Factory International staff, expert-led training, and valuable industry connections, students gained unparalleled exposure to the dynamic and diverse creative industries.

During MIF23, all 15 interns were guaranteed paid Front-of-House roles, providing them with an income while interning and an integral role at the festival. As part of their learning experience, they were also compensated for their time spent shadowing at a range of prestigious Greater Manchester organisations, including the Royal Exchange, HOME and Manchester Museum.

These hands-on experiences allowed them to gain insights into various facets of the creative sector and understand the different pathways and challenges faced by aspiring cultural leaders.

Through the Future Cultural Leaders programme, we are fostering a new generation of visionaries and advocates, who will not only shape the future of the creative industries but also champion inclusivity and diversity. Their journey is a testament to the transformative power of Factory Academy's initiatives and reflects our unwavering commitment to empowering individuals to make a lasting impact in their communities and beyond.

"Oh it's been fun, friendly, I think that everyone wants something different out of the course, but that makes it more interesting, and obviously the possibilities of networking."

"I think everybody has the power to inspire people because we all have our own lived experiences."

"It's invaluable in ways that I can't really describe, it's worth doing, even if you're not sure what you're going to do, you might find what you're going to do while you're doing the course."



INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS >

At MIF23, these prodigious talents were allowed to thrive. When Factory Academy launched in 2018, its aim was to deliver training for people looking to start new careers, diversifying the workforce in the creative and cultural industries. Five years on and the fruits of these labours are ripening in front of our eyes, especially this year.

Add to this that **18 local schools** brought a total of **500 pupils** along to *You, Me and the Balloons* or that **52 participants** got involved with the Kusama Fashion Show, and it's fair to say that

plenty of young minds have got a taste for a future in the creative arts this summer.

And Factory Academy will be waiting for them...

18
LOCAL SCHOOLS

500
PUPILS

ATTENDED YOU, ME AND THE BALLOONS

ARTISTIC HIGHLIGHTS: STATE OF THE ART

From established masters to up-and-coming icons of tomorrow, the breadth of this year's MIF programme was as impressive as it was creative.

Of course, the much mentioned, Insta'd and celebrated *You, Me and the Balloons* from **Yayoi Kusama** will always garner the headlines, with the Japanese nonagenarian showing some of her most awe-inspiring work within Aviva Studios' new Warehouse space. Understandably, Kusama's kaleidoscopic exhibit of blissful psychedelia would draw the biggest crowds of the festival, who were beyond passionate in their enthusiasm for so much of what was on display.



The tranquility of **Risham Syed's** *Each Tiny Drop* in Mayfield Park was the ideal level of zen required for the start of a blissful couple of weeks. A mesmeric experience that had festival goers marvelling at the beauty and peace brought forth by this celebration of South Asian river rituals in the heart of the city.



Adapting **Kay Dick's** rediscovered masterpiece *They*, Maxine Peake, Sarah Frankcom and Imogen Knight crafted a dystopian experience that feels more relevant than ever, over 40 years after the book's original 1977 publication.



Ryan Gander's *The Find*, a city-wide coin finding expedition was heralded "as a truly unique exhibition" by one repeat visitor, "that brought a lot of excitement every time we found a coin. This created a buzz that Manchester hasn't had in a while."



The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions was a radical statement of intent from composer **Philip Venables** and director **Ted Huffman**, who delivered a spellbinding queer retelling of world history in their 'fantasy meets liberation' kaleidoscope of musical theatre. Let's face it, who doesn't love their revolutions set to the backdrop of cheerleading, lute tunes and all night raves? Both vulnerable and provocative, the piece highlighted Philip and Ted as some of the most important creators and storytellers of their generation.

With *All Right. Good Night.*, the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 and the slow loss of a father to dementia entwined and entangled in a meditative performance from **Rimini Protokoll**, merging together one of the biggest mysteries in modern history with deep personal struggle. The award-winning German theatre group's co-founder Helgard Haug produced art from immense tragedy. Performed live with a haunting contemporary score from Barbara Morgenstern and arranger Davor Vincze, we were beyond proud that this poignant production made its UK premiere at MIF23.



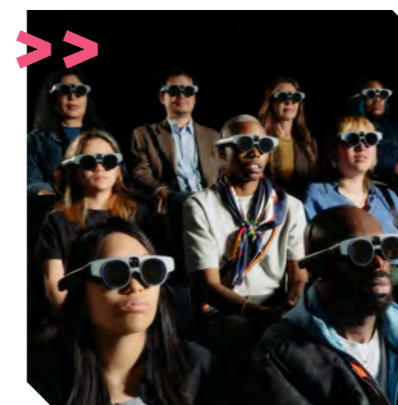
Also drawing on history was hip hop theatre pioneer **Benji Reid** with *Find Your Eyes* - an immaculate blend of Afro-futurist imagery and hard hitting tales from Reid's own life. It was a show that was both unique and universally adored at MIF23, with visitors from all walks of life declaring it "incredible and inspiring - nothing like anything I've ever experienced before" as well as wonderful, moving, exciting, challenging experience. It entranced me for 90 minutes and was one of the best things I've ever seen."



The magnificent New Century Hall was the home for four nights of *R.O.S.E.*, a celebration of the freedom, energy and intimacy that runs through club culture and dance, produced by choreographer **Sharon Eyal**, **Gai Behar** and London-based record label **Young**. The result was one of dark hedonism and supreme artistry of the dancers and the new music curated by Young, with club culture icon Ben UFO DJ'ing throughout, for both the dancers during performances and the audience between.



The gorgeous splendour that rippled through the late, great **Ryuichi Sakamoto's KAGAMI** was almost beyond words. The mixed reality concert, made in collaboration with Tin Drum was profoundly intimate, wowing everyone who was lucky enough to experience it in person. Visitors described the show as "mind blowing" as well as "moving and engaging", and we find it impossible to disagree.



INTERNATIONAL

Can you think of a better gift than giving Manchester to the world?
No, us neither.

We've always aimed to create a festival that brings Manchester and Manchester-made productions to every corner of the globe. At MIF23, the international vibe was bigger than ever before, with 55 cities from around the world being represented. Welcoming visitors and co-commissioning organisations from the likes of Berlin, Hong Kong, Perth, Goa, South Carolina, Kaohsiung, Warsaw, Paris and Sharjah was a huge reminder of the scope of our work with MIF23 and how visceral the impact of our festival can be outside of our own city.

MIF23 hosted the International Weekend for curators, presenters, artistic and executive directors, programmers and producers from across the world.

At MIF23 almost 150 international key players from across a range of artforms attended - experiencing the work created for the festival and creating and strengthening industry connections..

“From a German perspective, Factory International is now the great hope for aesthetic awakening and experimental adventure!”

International Weekend Delegate

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

34



NUMBER OF CITIES REPRESENTED

55

145
GUESTS

101
ORGANISATIONS

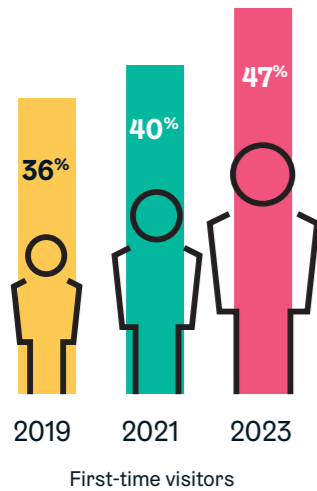
Another marquee moment for this year's international contingent was the partnership with British Council's 'BC Future Leaders'. Fourteen emerging cultural leaders from Turkey, Indonesia, Kenya, South Africa, Brazil, Egypt, Lebanon, Japan, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Uzbekistan and Argentina participated in a six-day programme in Manchester

designed to broaden their networks and introduce them to peers from around the world. This included participating in International Weekend and a series of bespoke workshops with key members of the Factory International team.

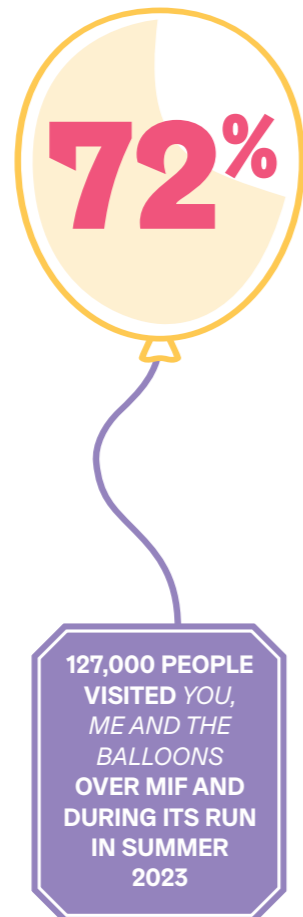
MIF23 IN NUMBERS

We could wax lyrical from now until MIF25 about how great MIF23 was, but sometimes you just need to let the stats and facts speak for themselves.

47%
OF VISITS MADE TO MIF23 WERE BY FIRST TIMERS



More than half the visits made to **Yayoi Kusama's *You, Me and the Balloons*** came from first-time visitors AND the same exhibition had the highest attendance at this year's festival. A mammoth **72% of visitors** attended the big balloon bonanza (our unofficial alternative title) with an incredible **30,434 total visits** made.



42%

WANTED TO SEE OUR NEW HOME

The big move to Aviva Studios was a huge selling point this year, as **42% of you wanted to see and experience our wondrous new home**, with the space influencing your choice of events.

88%

RATED THE OVERALL QUALITY OF EVENTS AS EXCELLENT OR GOOD

Our outstanding volunteers didn't let you down either, as **91% of you rated your experience as part of the MIF squad as excellent or good.**

MIF23 SAW OUR MOST DIVERSE FESTIVAL TO DATE

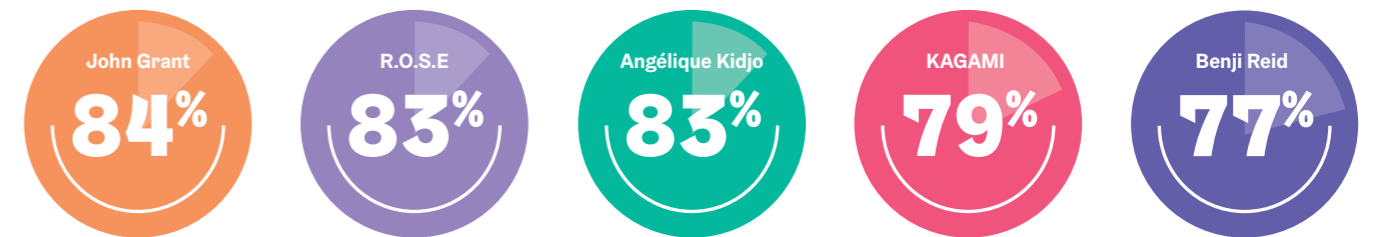
21%

OF VISITORS IDENTIFIED AS GLOBAL MAJORITY

700,000
WEBSITE VISITS

135%
INCREASE ON MIF21

We're also delighted to share that expectations were officially exceeded this year, with our audience survey confirming that...



...were even more impressed than they expected to be.

FUTURE FACTORY INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

86%
CLAIMED THEY WOULD DEFINITELY OR PROBABLY ATTEND A FUTURE EVENT

10%
HAVE ALREADY BOOKED TICKETS

PRESS

210
JOURNALISTS

“...an extraordinary
experience...”

140
MEDIA OUTLETS

“There is nothing quite
like this venue anywhere
in the world.”

Over the 18 days of MIF23 the festival welcomed a staggering 210 journalists from 140 media outlets across the globe; from international publications such as *The New York Times* (USA), *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany), *China Daily*, *Elle Italy*, *Nippon* (Japan), and *The Telegraph India* to national outlets with critics based outside the city such as *The Times*, *The Telegraph* and *Art Review*.



“Being able to watch the delicacy of the performer’s hands as he plays is an extraordinary experience, but it is his exquisitely haunting music which really dazzles.”

Guardian, 5-stars for KAGAMI



“A spellbinding VR performance by the late Ryuichi Sakamoto. The great Japanese film composer, who died in March, seemed to be there in person.”

The Telegraph, 4-stars for KAGAMI

“Often surprising, executed with mastery and worth repeated viewing as they travel in the coming months and years.”

New York Times, on *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions*



“Reid has taken his vulnerabilities and transmuted them into art. The metamorphosis is overwhelmingly moving.”

The Observer, 5-stars for Benji Reid: *Find Your Eyes*

“The venue deserves international attention... It is strikingly innovative in its modularity... There is nothing quite like this venue anywhere in the world, just as there is nowhere quite like Manchester. The city has long earned its place on the international cultural stage, and Aviva Studios deserves to succeed.”

Helen Barrett, The Critic



“[Daisy Dickinson’s visual artwork] captures *The Comet is Coming* music in a gripping way and one that really highlights the possibilities of Aviva Studios’ audio-visual arts space.”

MEN, 5-stars for *The Comet Is Coming* and *Daisy Dickinson Present Hyper-Dimensional Expansion Beam*



“It’s the artistic impulse at its least veiled. The bigness is a largeness of heart. You sense that, and feel happy, satisfied, alive.”

Guardian, 5-stars for *You, Me and the Balloons*



“This punchy, acerbic and acutely observed piece of theatre kicks ass as it highlights the dangers of cultural appropriation and takes an unflinching look at intergenerational trauma.”

What’s On Stage, 5-stars for *untitled f*ck m*ss s**gon play*



“[The] concert was something truly special. For one thing, the gig epitomised what makes MIF so wonderful, bringing different artists together to try something new and create magical experiences.”

Northern Soul, 5-stars for *John Grant Sings the Songs of Patsy Cline with Richard Hawley and Band*



“This powerful performance is a perfect representation of Manchester International Festival - an opportunity to experience the beautiful buildings the city boasts... witness new works of art.”

Manchester Evening News, 5-stars for *They*



“R.O.S.E represents the best of MIF. Ambitious programming that makes complete sense once it’s been produced. Artforms intersecting to reveal their hidden depths and expand their respective audiences. Something multi-sensory and emotional; something innovative. And something that the people of Manchester can go mad for.”

The State of the Arts, 5-stars for *R.O.S.E*

THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN

Stats are all well and good but nothing compares to hearing from your audience. And you certainly came out in force to let us know just how much you loved this year's festival.

“Festival Square had a fabulous, relaxed, fun and inclusive atmosphere.”

The hub of MIF23, Festival Square, was an absolute winner, bringing people from all walks of life together with the common bond of immersing themselves in different cultures, artforms and lots of fun.

“The atmosphere, music, food and drink created a great energy just on the edge of Manchester City centre which made you feel in the heart of the city.”

“For the first time, it felt like the festival had a core base which somehow added to its coherence.”

“It's quite amazing, I've never seen anything like this in Manchester before. It's incredible and it's all free, you can just wander in.”

“Hanging out with all the cool cats at Festival Square. Hilarious, colourful and fun. The authenticity of human connection rules.”

Safe to say, our new home at Aviva Studios has proven to be an immediate resounding success too...

“The building is amazing, it's great, really fantastic...I used to work at Granada Studios, about 20 years ago in the Bonded Warehouse, so it's weird to see how things have changed.”

“So it's been open for two weeks. It's already busy. We're talking about it being an important place that we're coming to a lot. We're just discussing gigs and events that we want to come to and I think really quickly it will be an unbelievably important part of the city.”

“It's a really cool event space, a really nice mix of people, free events, down the road, nice food, nice drink, nice atmosphere.”

Getting to hear about your memories is also something that we cherish every MIF. Hearing such passionate, enthusiastic feedback reminds us why everyone works so hard to put this festival together and this year we've been absolutely blown away by your responses...

“It had a profound impact on all the people I know who attended.”

“The anticipation of seeing an act like The Comet Is Coming was electric in the venue Hall.”

“Benji Reid, I thought it was a wonderful, moving, exciting, challenging experience. It entranced me for 90 minutes and was one of the best things I've ever seen. I'm still thinking about it now.”

“R.O.S.E was an incredible experience and totally unique, not necessarily something I would have chosen but definitely something I would go back to. Amazing.”

“Anna Meredith blew my mind. Stunning performance. And the evocative performance of 'They' by Maxine Peake – moving and thought provoking.”

These are the words that make it all worthwhile and we're so happy and grateful that you all came together to join us across every event, exhibition and performance. You help make MIF what it is and what it will evolve into in the future. We cannot say thank you enough.

ACCESS & SUSTAINABILITY

Platforming creatives from all walks of life, from all ages and cultures is at the forefront of what Factory International looks to achieve with every edition of Manchester International Festival. But we don't stop there – we also wish to make each MIF even more accessible and sustainable than the one that preceded it.

AVIVA STUDIOS AIMS FOR ZERO CARBON ACTIVITY BY

2028

In 2023, our work with under-represented communities was reflected not only through performances and exhibitions highlighting the LGBTQIA+ community, people with lived experience of homelessness and multiple diverse and international artists, but in our community engagement. MIF23 shows were made more accessible to local school children and residents from areas in Manchester living in wards ranked highest in the multiple deprivation index, for whom opportunities to get involved or employed in the creative industries are least accessible.

Online we received **700,000 web visits** throughout the festival period – a **135% increase on MIF21** – with **19,000 people reading and watching content on Factory+** from livestreamed talks to behind-the-scenes videos,

showing that accessibility online can be just as important as in-person experiences.

Our access team programmed over 50 access performances (captioned, audio-described, BSL interpreted and relaxed presentations) across the MIF23 programme. We piloted regular BSL-interpreted performances in Festival Square, provided detailed accessibility information about all MIF23 shows and venues, and developed *What To Expect* guides for our shows and spaces to support people coming to the festival and Aviva Studios for the first time.

As for sustainable victories, look no further than the e-cargo bikes that were used throughout the festival. The bikes, a pilot scheme for MIF23, proved to be a big, massive, green success. Volunteers pedalled coins for *The*

Find, artists' riders and marketing materials across the city, reducing our carbon footprint, another step in achieving zero-carbon operations at Aviva Studios. And of course, shout out to Electricity North West for the electric cars and vans they provided for the festival as well.

Speaking of the new Aviva Studios, we are on a path towards zero-carbon activity by 2028, and are working with industry partners to test and pilot innovative sustainability technology at our new home.

Our building materials reduce the amount of energy needed for heating and our fresh-air ventilation system closely monitors the air quality to adapt depending on how many people are in the building, also minimising energy consumption.

“

“The diversity of the staff including disability was a welcome surprise for someone who works in the disability sector.”

“[Most memorable experience of the festival:] The size of the place, how accessible it was, many wheelchair users which was lovely to see.”

“The staff at the Yayoi Kusama exhibition really made the experience for me. They were really kind and understanding about my mobility and walking stick and I was really impressed by how welcoming and helpful everyone I encountered was... Just want to thank all the staff for going above and beyond to make the event accessible and fun!”

“Inclusive, accessible, an amalgamation of everything wonderful about the North.”

“[Most memorable experience of the festival:] Realising everything was accessible, my daughter could get round everything with her wheelchair and even a changing place facility.”

”

50

ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES

10%

OF AUDIENCES IDENTIFIED AS DISABLED

ECONOMIC IMPACT

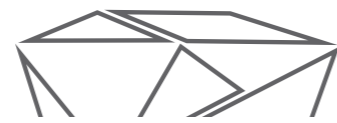
We know, when it comes to a festival dedicated to art, culture, poetry, innovation and togetherness, it feels a bit dry to discuss money and economics. But when it is able to be used positively to benefit our local communities and the arts and opportunities within those communities, then we'd say it's worth shouting about.

325,300

TOTAL VISITORS TO MIF23

174,700

ATTENDEES TO FREE EVENTS



83,000

VISITORS TO FESTIVAL SQUARE

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

£39.2m

The amount of money spent in the City of Manchester, by attendees and MIF.

Our new Aviva Studios home

While still in its early days, our new home is projected to generate a remarkable **£1.1 BILLION to the city's economy** over the next decade, creating and supporting up to **1,500 direct and indirect jobs** in the process.

GENERATING
£1.1 BILLION TO THE CITY'S ECONOMY

CREATING OR SUPPORTING
1,500 DIRECT AND INDIRECT JOBS

WITH THANKS TO

Principal Partner



Official Partners

Bruntwood
Electricity North West
Selfridges

Hotel and Travel Partners

The Edwardian Manchester
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Greater Manchester

Senior Supporters

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Turley
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Workshop Properties

Public Sector Funders

Manchester City Council
Arts Council England
Greater Manchester Combined
Authority

Trusts and Foundations

Bloomberg Philanthropies
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
The Granada Foundation
The Law Family Charitable
Foundation
Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Founding Cast

The Factory Trust, which leads on philanthropic capital fundraising activity to underpin the wider strategic efforts to deliver a world-class venue for all, would like to thank the below Founding Cast capital supporters for supporting the building of Factory International's new space.

The Beaverbrooks
Charitable Trust

The Garfield Weston Foundation

The Law Family Charitable
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The Black Family
Jo and Tom Bloxham MBE

Factory International Patrons

Jim Leaviss
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MIF Media Partners

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