



Cycle Arts Festival Renfrewshire

An Outdoor, Site-specific
Arts & Climate Change
Festival.

Report 2021



About the Festival

The first Cycle Arts Festival (23rd to 29th of August 2021) was an outdoor mixed arts Festival presented on the Paisley to Lochwinnoch Cycle Route. The Festival was developed by Place Partnership to push boundaries of creativity in linking an array of artists of mixed practice with Renfrewshire's unique biodiversity and environments and the enjoyment of cycling.

Commissioned artists working in various media delivered specific creative interventions tied to places along the cycle path routes working in collaboration with the local communities. The initial four outdoor arts commissions were offered during COVID restrictions in 2020 and the work then showcased in 2021. Teen Safari along the Dark gravel serpent and the Outdoor Crafts Workshops were then commissioned for the Festival in 2021. Additional touring work supplemented the programme with Bard in the Yard, Storywagon and Clydebuilt Puppets.

Using interesting buildings, views and unusual locations the Festival delivered a narrative of place for Renfrewshire linking to ideas of environmental sustainability, wellbeing, embedded local cultures, history of place, cycling and social change.



Images: Muriel Ann Macleod (left) & Jassy Earl (right)



Image: Paul Cameron

Aims of the Festival

- > To increase the use and value of Renfrewshire Cycle Routes by the wider public - linking communities in Paisley, Johnstone, Elderslie, Kilbarchan and Lochwinnoch.
- > To develop a strategic arts event which both delivers innovative outdoor arts experiences and promotes health and wellbeing in Renfrewshire, encouraging cycling for wellbeing.
- > Push boundaries of creativity in linking to Renfrewshire's unique biodiversity.
- > Change perceptions and understanding of environmental actions and the climate emergency.
- > Event established as key event in the calendar with multiple partners supporting its future development.
- > Quality of Artistic Output recognised as critical to the success of the event achieving against step change "Cultural Excellence"

Locations and Partners

The Festival was developed by Place Partnership at Renfrewshire Leisure in Partnership with Sustrans, Castle Semples Visitors Centre and Renfrewshire Council. Local groups like ReMode, Telfords Pub, West Church Elderslie, Kilbarchan Community Council, Elderslie Community Council and Lochwinnoch Arts Festival supported the events in their location. Promoters Renfrewshire Leisure.



Image: Muriel Ann Macleod



Locations

- 1 Castle Semples Visitors Centre
 - 2 The Ice Cave at Parkhill Woods
 - 3 Cycle route bridge at Johnstone
 - 4 Kilbarchan Old station platform
 - 5 Elderslie Greenspace
 - 6 Telfords Pub
 - 7 Saucelhill Park (Paisley Canal)
- & Other outdoor locations

Festival Events

Commissions for the Cycle Arts Festival



Image: Paul Cameron

Sightlines

A film installation in the ornamental cave in the grounds of the formal Semple House in Lochwinnoch. The film, by Kevin Cameron, features local gardeners reflecting on their gardens during lockdown. The film also looks at the garden of William McDowell, owner of Semple House, uncovering the dark history of slavery that financed it. Presented in the Ice Cave at Parkhill Woods.



Image: Jessica Ramm

Desire Lines

Desire Lines is a live event in which a group of BMX riders trace out printed pathways using a choreographed series of stunts. Their tyres are coated with a range of coloured chalk paints that leave the ground covered with the print of each person's individual journey, tracing the impression of many paths crossing in and out, following each other and diverging apart. Performed on the cycle path at Johnstone Bridge and at Telfords Pub at Paisley Canal Station. Concept created by Jessica Ramm
Stunt riders: Dan Banks, Jason Phelan & Matt Abel , Percussion : Alex Neilson.



Image: Angela Hamilton

The Lochwinnoch Whirligig

An oversized 'whirligig'-a simple child's toy that has a propeller or wheel that catches the wind which then powers simple mechanical paddles. A wind powered sculpture; it responds to the beautiful natural environment of Lochwinnoch. The spinning paddles feature Scots words describing movement & weather. Sculpture by Greg Grant, installed in the shallows at Castle Semple Visitors centre.

An Imaginary Field Guide to Renfrewshire Waterways

A family friendly audio and visual arts trail that re-imagines the plants, wildlife and animals that dwell on the Paisley to Lochwinnoch cycle path through a surrealist lens. Five authors, storytellers and artists have been invited to write and record a collection of audio field guide entries describing the lesser known, rare and fantastical inhabitants of Renfrewshire's rivers, lochs and burns. QR codes access stories and soundscape.



Image: Muriel Ann Macleod

Concept: Feral Arts
Illustrations: Bruno Gallagher
Sound Design: Robbie Gunn
Contributing Artists: Kirstin Innes, Raman Mundair, Mara Menzies, Sita Pieraccini & Bex Anson.



Image: Jassy Earl

Teen Safari Along the Dark Gravel Serpent

by Alan McKendrick. A Walking Theatre Performance along the Johnstone to Kilbarchan section of the Cycle route. The performance captured the importance of the cycle route to local people with a focus on place and folklore. A live performance event with, QR code soundtrack, soundscape among trees and an outdoor LED screen at the Old Station Platform at Kilbarchan. Performed by locally originated professional actresses and young people from PACE theatre in Paisley. Actresses included Rebecca Teirney Paula Nugent, Lauren Grace and Titana Muthei.

Outdoor Touring Work

Story Wagon

with Luke Winter: A unique touring space to share stories, this tiny outdoor venue hosts writing workshops, story sharing and performances.



Image: Luke Winter

Stories Just on case... Clydebuilt Puppets

Cautionary Comic Tales - short pieces of puppet theatre fun for family. Performers Steve Smart and Leigh McCalister.



Image: Clydebuilt Puppets

Bard in the Yard

An engaging one man performance presenting a moving and fun conversation between Shakespeare and the local Elderslie audience. Bard performers: Arron Greechan and Adam Morgan.



Image: Bard in the Yard

Workshops

ReMode Outdoor Craft Workshops

ReMode presented a series of four outdoor crafts workshops which look at using local plants and undergrowth to inspire organic artistic pieces. Each workshop focuses on different skills, Botanical Printing, Natural Dyes, printing from nature and Botanical embroidery. Led by artists Gillian Steel and Nikki Taylor.



Images: ReMode

- 725+ Visitors attended events during the Festival week
- 22 Performances
- 9 events in 7 locations and along the Cycle route
- 7 Festival days on the Paisley to Lochwinnoch Cycle Route
- 4 Outdoor Arts Workshops with ReMode
- 4 Children's puppetry performances
- 3 days of Film installations at Parkhill woods
- 2 days of walking tours Teen Safari along the Dark Gravel Serpent
- 2 Outdoor Arts Installations running though the week
- 2 days of Story Wagon
- 2 performances of Bard in the Yard
- 2 performances of Desire Lines
- 2 innovative BMX art event

Image: Jassy Earl

Audience Feedback

“I loved the actresses on the cycle track and the stories in the trees, this show is a little gem, reflecting on life and Kilbarchan and why our rural places matter. Also a brave action with the outdoor LED screen! Great to see artworks not just Paisley focused.”
Teen Safari Along the Gravel Serpent



Image: Jassy Earl

“Really unusual event to see at the bridge at Johnstone. Loved the percussionist and the BMX riders were cool despite the rain.”
Desire Lines.



Image: Muriel Ann Macleod

“Its exciting to place film in unusual landscapes and I loved the fact the film was so connected to the story of the landscape we were in.”
Sightlines

“There was something unique about learning new embroidery skills outside in a beautiful environment both relaxing and powerfully inspirational.”
ReMode Workshops

“Very entertaining, funny, interesting all delivered on the warmest day this year. Even offered Brollys and water because of the searing sun.”
Bard in the Yard

“Really interesting edgy event, great to see the paint unfolding in front of us with the rollers on the bikes despite the rain. Loved the percussion player and I enjoyed seeing the drone close up. More of this please!”
Desire Lines

“We really enjoyed it! Thank you for holding this event in Elderslie. It was lovely to wander down with the children, sit outside and enjoy the stories.”
Clydebuilt Puppets



Image: Muriel Ann Macleod

“This is a wonderful and inventive project. The wagon got people talking about their lives, the cycle route and what words they love. Really great! this should go everywhere in Scotland!”
Storywagon

Some Outcomes

- Local audiences were appreciative of the outdoor events in their local area, they did not have to travel too far.
- Local audiences were appreciative of the events being outdoors, they felt safer to attend at a time when local people were concerned about COVID infection as social activity was beginning again.
- The linking of Arts to Environmental awareness was recognised as an important part of the work of the festival and the outdoor arts commissions which were part of it.
- There was a change in thinking about what it was possible to do creatively outside, how to use our spaces differently, greenspaces that have been taken for granted have been given new value. Audience members were actively suggesting where events could happen next year.

Image: Muriel Ann Macleod

Partners

ONE
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LOTTERY FUNDED



Renfrewshire
Council



Clyde Muirshiel
REGIONAL PARK



Future Paisley is the radical and wide-ranging programme of economic, social and physical regeneration using the town's unique and internationally significant cultural and heritage story to transform its future.



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