

Leeds 2023  
Artistic Programme  
Background Information

IMAGINE

PHOTO:  
Yorkshire Dance

Leeds  
2023

Leeds 2023 Our Bid to Become the European Capital of Culture  
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**Leeds 2023**  
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**Introduction**

Leeds 2023 is seeking artistically adventurous, high quality and ambitious ideas and projects for our bid to become European Capital of Culture.

We want to hear from artists, makers, companies, curators, organisations, charities, communities and individuals about programmes, art work, events and exhibitions that could contribute to 365 days of European Capital of Culture programme in Leeds in 2023. Ideas do not need to come from to artists and organisations working in the cultural sector. If you have a great idea we want to hear from you!

We are initially seeking between 40 and 50 extraordinary projects and concepts that engage with the Leeds 2023 themes, and will engage the city's residents and attract national and international visitors.

We must create an inclusive programme for the city. We welcome ideas and contributions – big or small – that reflect the communities in which we live.

**Our values**

**Ambition** – Leeds is an ambitious city, punching above its weight on a national and international stage

**Experimentation** – Leeds is an innovative and creative city, grounded in artistic excellence, creating its own rules for a new kind of place

**Openness** – Leeds is an international city welcoming cultures from across the world

**Inclusivity** – Leeds is an inclusive city, going beyond openness to include a genuine engagement with the whole city and its many communities

**Collaboration** – Leeds is a can-do city of collaboration, partnerships and good will where projects can be delivered and ambitions realised



## Leeds 2023 Programme Themes

Leeds 2023 will be curated and programmed around a distinctive series of themes. Our themes have been created following extensive consultation, research and collaboration with the city which started in 2014. The themes are to be interrogated and interpreted. Challenge them, test them, try to break them, put them back together again, explore the one you identify with most or go wild and explore them all.

### Our Themes

#### Fabric

The city's history of wool, textiles and clothing manufacture offers us a rich metaphor. Leeds 2023 will explore the very fibre and fabric of citizenship in a modern European city and consider how culture can knit together cities of inequality.

#### Fear and Belonging

There are many sources of fear in any society. War, economic uncertainty, hopelessness, and challenges to citizenship and identity in Europe have fuelled new levels of anxiety and unhappiness. To understand the mental health of cities we aim to use culture to create a sense of belonging - and to tackle fear by recognising it and exploring how we can live through it.

#### Voice

The voice of a city is heard in its words, music and thoughts but also in its movement, visual arts and architecture. Leeds' voice will take many forms and languages. Voice will help us to celebrate the many cultures of Leeds - to retrieve our cultural past, celebrate our cultural present and imagine our cultural future. The theme will explore the role of artists as a voice in Europe. Voice will embrace the role of communities as the new engines of place making, pride and identity.

#### Room

Leeds is a creative laboratory - a physical and virtual space within Europe. Our city is a place that gives people room to learn, room to grow and room to express themselves on a local and European stage. We will look at how ideas, movements and inspirational thinkers continue to influence cities, incubate talent and drive change.



## The Process

The deadline for submitting your idea is 5pm on 28 March 2017.

All ideas will be assessed by the Leeds 2023 Programme Team at Leeds2023, who are responsible for curating the artistic programme for the bid book. The finals selection will be made by the Leeds 2023 Independent Steering Group.

We're looking for great ideas with potential, so don't feel you have to have a fully worked up project proposal at this stage. This call out is the start of a process that will include meetings with the programme team, community consultation, further development and planning.

Decisions on which ideas we may want to take forward will be made by the end of the first week in April, at which point we will contact you about developing your idea further. Because of the expected numbers, we are unable to offer feedback on all ideas submitted.

Any ideas received will be treated with respect and confidentiality and credited accordingly.

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## Eligibility Criteria

- We welcome ideas from local, national, European and international sources. However, your idea must involve a Leeds artist, company or community as a partner or host (this can be prospective at this stage)
- Your idea must respond to one or more of our themes.
- The main body of activity and/or presentation of your idea must take place in 2023
- Our ambition is that every project will have a European/international dimension. Not all partnerships and details need to be in place, we can help you with that.
- We are looking for projects that will have a deep-rooted and wide impact on the city, great in scale, and inclusive in approach and audience.
- At this stage, we want you to think as big as possible. This is an opportunity to scale up, be ambitious, use your imagination and DREAM BIG.
- You can submit more than one idea.



## How to apply

Applications can be submitted in written, film or audio format  
– all responding to the questions on the Expression of Interest  
Form available to download at:  
[Leeds2023.co.uk/get-involved/collaborate/](https://Leeds2023.co.uk/get-involved/collaborate/)  
Audio files must be supplied as MP3 format.  
Video files must be supplied as MP4 format.

All files need to be named as:  
[Name/OrganisationEOILeeds2023]

Please submit your ideas to  
[programme@leeds2023.co.uk](mailto:programme@leeds2023.co.uk) with the title:  
[Name/Organisation EOI for Leeds2023]

