

Leeds 2023 Explore  
Background



PHOTO: The White Whale by Slung Low  
Theatre Company and Leeds Inspired

Leeds  
2023

Leeds 2023 A Bid for the European Capital of Culture

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## Leeds 2023 Explore Background

### What's it about?

Leeds is bidding to become European Capital of Culture in 2023, celebrating the city's exceptional cultural offer, building a meaningful relationship with Europe, and creating a transformational change across all communities in the city. The competition seeks to build European and international links with cities across the world, using culture and the arts as a conduit for this. As the city continues preparations for its bid the Leeds 2023 Bid Team want to support artists, producers and cultural organisations from across the city to grow lasting international partnerships with a wider group of artists and arts practitioners from cities across the world.

Often British organisations fail to invest in building and nurturing relationships with their counterparts in other countries before developing a new project, where our European neighbours will invest heavily in networking and sustainable relationship building before embarking on joint projects and funding bids. In the UK we tend to identify the funding first and then look for partners.

The team has created a new capacity-building fund, Explore, which advocates turning this process around, and creating the right environment for ideas to move freely and spark spontaneously.

The Explore fund will allow Leeds-based artists and arts practitioners to explore new relationships with partners from across Europe and the wider world, adding a meaningful value to the international dimension of the Leeds 2023 bid for European Capital of Culture as well as their own work.

### What do we mean by 'Explore'?

During the Leeds2023 bid phase we are aiming to grow networks and capacity with international partners, tell the story of Leeds' arts and culture to a wide audience, add to existing work to turn good into great, and celebrate key milestones.

Explore is one of many opportunities to work with the Leeds 2023 Bid Team contributing to the bid itself and is part of the bigger, ongoing development of the Leeds 2023 bid for European Capital of Culture.



## How does the Explore Fund work?

Explore is £30,000 capacity building fund which will be allocated over six application rounds, awarded from January to October 2017, covering a range activities from month-long residencies and explorations in a particular place to specific visits and hosted meetings with potential partners to develop new relationships. Applicants can therefore choose between two different strands of funding, 'The Big Explorer' and 'The Small Explorer'.

As a **Big Explorer** you can apply for funding of up to £3,000 to spend up to one month in a particular place or region to scope a broad variety of contacts across any art form and make links with cultural leaders and opinion formers to develop programme ideas for Leeds 2023 bid for European Capital of Culture. The main objective for Big Explorers is to share their contacts and make introductions to the artistic community of Leeds and the Leeds2023 Bid Team. For this element of the fund we are looking for individuals who know Leeds' cultural community well and can act as ambassadors beyond their own art form.

**Small Explorers** can apply for up to £500 towards either a visit abroad of up to one week or hosting a meeting with potential partners in Leeds. The main aim here is to develop new international partnerships within your own art form or other counterparts with a view to potential programme collaborations, particularly in Europe.

Neither of the two strands is expecting projects to come to fruition during the bid phase, but they could build milestones towards 2023 or become part of the final artistic programme in the bid.

Applications will also be accepted in both categories from organisations wishing to host artists and organisations in Leeds, to explore partnership opportunities and potential collaborations.

