



Macrobert
Arts Centre

MAKING ACTIVE CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Journey 2019-2023





WELCOME

EACH OF THE AUDIENCE MEMBERS, PARTICIPANTS, TUTORS, STAFF, ARTISTS AND VISITING COMPANIES HAVE A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT THEIR INTERACTION WITH MACROBERT ARTS CENTRE MEANS TO THEM AND THE BEST WAY TO CAPTURE THAT IS TO CREATE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO YOU ABOUT IT.

Welcome from Team Macrobert

The past few years have been a journey unlike any other for Macrobert Arts Centre. As we reflect on the period from 2019 to 2023, we can't help but feel a sense of immense pride and resilience, from starting in a period of normalcy, to quickly entering one of the most challenging eras our organisation has ever faced.

When the pandemic struck in early 2020, we found ourselves in a position of uncertainty. With our venue closing and performances, screenings, and events cancelled we looked to explore new avenues to engage our audiences and participants. We pivoted quickly and embraced a digital norm by delivering online workshops and classes, and created our video- on-demand platform ensuring that our community could still experience Macrobert from the comfort of their homes. This period taught us the value and importance of staying connected and adapting to change, putting our audiences first.

As with many organisations, we experienced a significant hit to our income but were incredibly grateful to receive Covid recovery funding to help us navigate this difficult time. With a pause on funding from Creative Scotland and an increase in costs, we worked hard to ensure that Macrobert would be there for the community when restrictions were lifted.

As restrictions eased, we were gradually able to welcome people back to Macrobert; initially to our cinema, then outdoor activity and building up to our Christmas cabaret in 2021. The well-being of those who visited the venue was our utmost priority and we ensured that all measures were in place so everyone felt safe and welcomed as we started to return to our wider programme in 2022.

Since then, we have welcomed new faces to the venue, as well as our regular audiences and participants, developed new

productions, classes and the much-anticipated return of Panto with Maw Goose in 2022.

The stories and experiences you will read about would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of Macrobert staff, volunteers and Board members. We extend our thanks to those individuals who have made donations, the trusts & foundations that have funded our work, and our corporate supporters. We are forever thankful for the commitment and passion shown for the arts, especially during a difficult time.

As we move into a new era, waving goodbye to Julie Ellen after a wonderful eight years as Artistic Director/CEO, we hope to see you in the venue in the near future to join us as we welcome Ed Robson to this position. We are here for you 363 days a year, with a diverse, accessible and fun programme of activity, ensuring there is something for everyone.



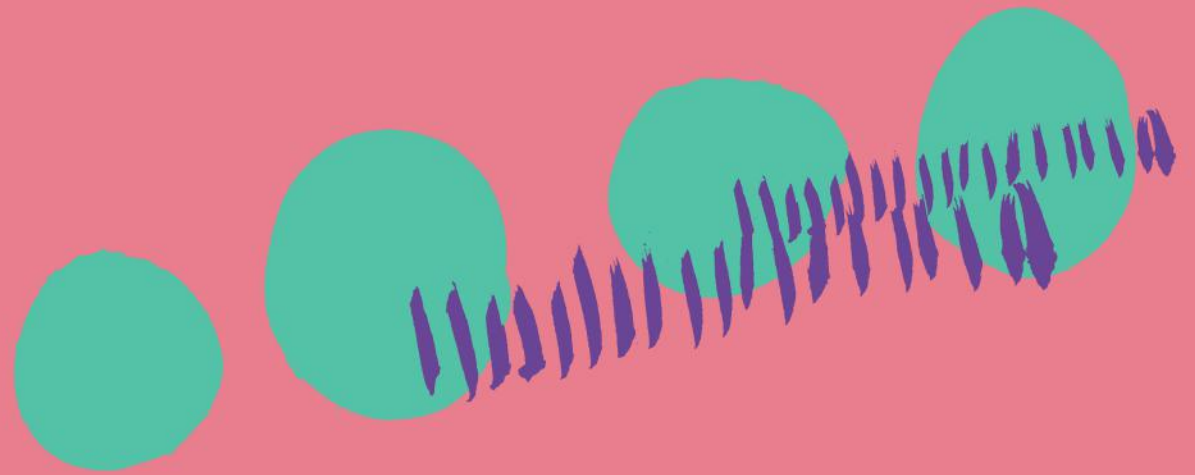
The last few years have been dominated by Covid which hit the performing arts sector particularly hard. As you read this Annual Report, I am sure that you will be amazed at the extent and breadth of work that has taken place in and around Macrobert over the past four years despite all the restrictions. Lockdown meant that theatres and cinemas had to close and all face-to-face social interaction was curtailed. Nevertheless, Macrobert worked hard to provide its usual meaningful and challenging artistic output whenever possible.

This was done by being as flexible as possible and using space in different ways such as dedicating the Mainhouse as a cinema so that people could watch films safely with appropriate social distancing. The need for a high-quality arts centre has been emphasised by the

pandemic due to its effect on mental health and wellbeing especially at a time when social media is narrowing people's exposure to contrary views. The necessity to reach out to all parts of the community to stimulate, challenge, entertain, educate or amuse is ever more apparent. Macrobert has achieved this with its varied programme of live theatre, cinema, dance and discussion.

There is no doubt that the past few years have been extraordinarily difficult and challenging for the staff as they have grappled with changing restrictions. I would like to offer a special thank you to Julie Ellen and her team who worked so hard to keep Macrobert as a vibrant, creative, tolerant and welcoming space that is reaching out to people from all parts of the community.

WE



BELIEVE

**IN THE POWER OF THE ARTS TO
MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE**

**IN SUPPORTING CREATIVE PEOPLE
AND IDEAS, TO BUILD A CREATIVE
SECTOR THAT IS MORE VIBRANT,
NOURISHING AND SUSTAINABLE**

**THAT AN ARTS CENTRE SHOULD BE
FOR EVERYONE**

01

WE BELIEVE

IN THE POWER OF THE ARTS TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.

At the heart of everything we do at Macrobert is our programme, bolstered by a deep understanding of the power of the arts. From compelling theatre to thought-provoking documentary films, exhilarating projects to captivating exhibitions, we inspire new ways of seeing the world and provide the opportunity for audiences and participants to challenge their own perceptions.

Throughout the Macrobert team, we have first-hand experience of how the arts can shape the world we live in, which led to the pursuit of a career in the creative industries. Our approach to connecting with audiences is constantly evolving; listening to our people for a greater understanding of the world around us, facilitating stimulating conversations and embracing the part we can play in people's lives.

OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, WE HAVE:

- Used an innovative cross-programme approach to initiate Conversations on topics including 'Yer Ain Voice', and 'What is a Family'.
- Partnered with community groups, organisations and artists to broaden and deepen our conversations - these partners bring specialist knowledge and unique insights to our creative programme.
- Developed our community engagement and presence by opening up our City Hub in the Thistles Shopping Centre and establishing Macrobert Moviehouse Pleas.
- Made the most of our location on campus at the University of Stirling - engaging with students and partnering with academic experts to develop unique research and ideas.



MOVIEHOUSE PLEAN

Frida Runnkvist | *Community Venue and Film Manager*

When I first heard of the Plean cinema project in July 2022, I immediately knew that it was something special and that it was something I would love to be a part of.

The prospect of working with a community to install a brand-new, fully DCI-compliant 20-seater cinema into an underused building to bring a full cinema experience into a village that may not otherwise have had easy access is so exciting. I was very fortunate to come on board as the Community Venue and Film Manager to help get the project off the ground, leading up to the cinema's official opening in October 2023.

Installing the cinema itself was a feat on its own – and I still can't quite believe that we did it. Another key aspect of this project has been to engage the local community with the cinema, and one of the first things we did was to host a free community consultation event in collaboration with Stirling Soup at East Plean Primary School where we answered questions and gathered thoughts and suggestions for what they would like the cinema to be. From this, two prevalent themes emerged: a wish to provide something for both younger and older audiences.

In response to this, we worked with the local primary school to engage students to programme a film screening, the local youth group, and a nursing home to enable residents to visit and enjoy the cinema. Another great part of the project was being able to build our excellent cinema team largely out of those local to the village and working with local community trust, Plean's Voice who we are hoping will take over the cinema in the future.

**WE OFFICIALLY OPENED
IN OCTOBER 2023, AND
IT WAS EXCITING TO
SEE IT TAKE OFF. ONE
OF THE BEST MOMENTS
HAS BEEN SEEING
YOUNGER AUDIENCES
ENJOYING THE SPACE
– ESPECIALLY THOSE
WHO HAVE NEVER
BEEN TO THE CINEMA
PREVIOUSLY.**



Robert McWilliam | *Chairman, Plean's Voice*

Councillor Gerry McGarvey | *Stirling Council's Community Wellbeing & Housing Committee*

MACROBERT MOVIEHOUSE WAS A HUGE BOOST TO THE PLEAN REVIVAL, BRINGING ADDITIONAL SOCIAL ACTIVITY FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AS WELL AS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

Plean's Voice was still in development when we first heard about the Macrobert Moviehouse project but we knew from the outset that we were going to make it a success. After the early hard work by Macrobert and Stirling Council, we were delighted to be invited to help with the ongoing planning and running of the project.

Macrobert Moviehouse was a huge boost to the Plean revival, bringing additional social activity for people of all ages as well as employment opportunities. There is ongoing work ahead but we believe that Plean can do it.

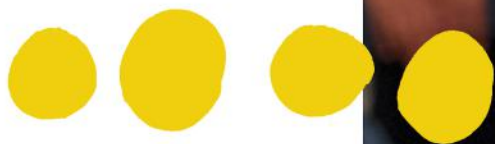
We were delighted to be at the forefront of this exciting project with our partners at Macrobert Arts Centre and Plean's Voice. Allowing local people access to the big cinema screen experience so close to home in the Balfour Centre is a real asset to Plean and its surrounding communities.



Photo credit: Eoin Carey

SPARKING FASCINATING CONVERSATIONS

MACROBERT IS A PLACE FOR SPARKING CONVERSATIONS, WHERE PEOPLE CAN COME TOGETHER TO DEBATE, SHARE, EXPERIENCE AND CONSIDER ISSUES OF RELEVANCE.



IN EARLY 2020 WE CURATED A CONVERSATION ABOUT 'YER AIN VOICE', LOOKING AT THE LANGUAGE WE USE, THE DIFFERENT SAYINGS, SLANG WORDS AND DIALECTS - AND THE PART THEY PLAY IN OUR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES.



Thick Skin, Elastic Heart – part of our 'Yer Ain Voice' Conversation

Photo credit: Jamie McFayden

Lesley McDermott | Artist

In early 2020, GOSSIP held an exhibition of artworks on the conversation theme where over 20 local artists responded with a wonderfully wide variety of Scottish words or place-related subject matter. This got a lot of attention and people talking during the months on show in the Gallery corridor! We also held an 'Alternative' Burns night with spoken word and storytelling generously hosted and funded by Macrobert; speakers included the then Stirling Makar and present Makar Laura Fyfe, music and swee'ies, (nae haggis), which proved extremely popular.

Audrey McMenemy | Artist

In 2020 I participated in the 'Yer Ain Voice' conversation at Macrobert. I was inspired by the connection of beautiful Scottish words and their meanings in crafts in the Scottish Textile Industry. As an artist and teacher, I set up an interactive experience called *The Cloutie Booth* where I exhibited samples of craftwork, fabrics art pieces and sketchbooks. The concept was to encourage people to use the space, interact with sketchbook work and take part in arts and



crafts activities. I created sketchbooks looking at clothing and playing with words like Goonies and baffies. These were starting points for conversations and sharing thoughts, ideas and images. We also set up some tutored art classes to provide a lovely, positive and creative space, which was enjoyed by many people. It was inspiring to work with the Scottish dialect and enjoy connections to childhood, and to my art school studies.





**PACKED TO
THE BRIM
WITH SCOTTISH
HUMOUR &
SENTIMENTAL
VALUE.**

David Hutchinson | *CEO, Selladoor Worldwide*

Bringing Oor Wullie to Macrobert Arts Centre was a wonderful experience. We were lucky to have an incredible creative team and cast – and the team at Macrobert did a stellar job of looking after us, supporting us and getting behind us launching a new musical title in Stirling. Launching Scotland’s most beloved comic strip character is no easy task – but the marketing and comms team at

Macrobert were creative, strategic and hard-working to develop a huge audience for this new work. It was great to play the raucous theatre production, packed to the brim with Scottish humour and sentimental value.





SPARKING FASCINATING CONVERSATIONS

IN SUMMER 2019, WE WERE INSPIRED BY THE NEW ADAPTATION OF JACKIE KAY'S NOVEL 'RED DUST ROAD', AND INVITED PEOPLE TO JOIN OUR CONVERSATION 'WHAT IS A FAMILY' TO CONSIDER WHAT MAKES US WHO WE ARE.

Kim Simpson | *Photographer*

My series 'Girls and their Mothers' consisted of 48 images of mixed race families. Instead of questioning their ancestry or scrutinizing their appearance, I chose to photograph girls and women of mixed heritage with their mothers with the intent of questioning the social perception of what families look like. The images display their relationships, linking these girls and their mothers together while at the same time conveying their individuality.

This project was a partnership between Street Level Photoworks, and South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture. With thanks to supporters Threads of Sound and Deadly Digital. After touring the exhibition continued to Macrobert in 2019, coinciding with Jackie Kay's Red Dust Road.



Photo credit: Kim Simpson



Red Dust Road

Our Conversation was inspired by Jackie Kay's *Red Dust Road*, Scottish Book of the Year 2011. Jackie graduated from the University of Stirling in 1983 and went on to become one of Scotland's greatest writers. Macrobert supported the National Theatre of Scotland in the adaptation of this award winning book for the stage and we were delighted that this soul-searching memoir by Scotland's Makar opened our conversation season in the Summer of 2019.

"I THINK THEATRE CAN SUDDENLY BRING SOMETHING INTO THE MOMENT, INTO THE PRESENT. AND I THINK THAT THEATRE'S GREAT STRENGTH IS THAT IT CAN MAKE AUDIENCES FEEL SO AFFECTED BY THINGS, LIKE THEY'RE PART OF THAT JOURNEY, THAT IT IS ACTUALLY SOMETHING THAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM."

Photo credit: Richard Davenport



EPIC ART

Each year, we're inundated with incredible pieces of work for our visual art competition, Epic Art Challenge. In the summer of 2019, young people were challenged to create a new piece of work focussing on animals affected by environmental impacts. Taking inspiration from Elmer the Patchwork Elephant, that visited Macrobert as part of that year's Conversation, Epic Art Challenge gave our younger audience members a chance to get involved.

During the period we were forced to close in 2020, Epic Art Challenge grew exponentially – we included a new category, allowing adults to participate as well as giving people the option to submit work digitally. This new way of collecting submissions meant that we could receive entries beyond Forth Valley.



Kinga Kowalik



In fact, as well as work from across Scotland and the UK, we received work from as far afield as Africa. Since then, we've continued to offer entry online and to take inspiration from the Summer Conversation, creating opportunities for our audiences to respond creatively to significant topics.



Evie Byford



ON CAMPUS ACTIVITY

**FROM PYJAMA
SCREENINGS TO
INTRODUCING A £2
DISCOUNT ON
CINEMA TICKETS,
WE DEVELOPED
VARIOUS
INITIATIVES TO
BUILD STRONG
CONNECTIONS
WITH THE STUDENT
COMMUNITY.**



Ben Fletcher | *Macrobert Board member*

We have made the absolute most of our location on campus at the University of Stirling by partnering with students and academic experts. Our innovative cross-programme approach has brought audiences together with artists, specialists, community groups, and charities to show that academic life and the creative arts can supplement each other for the benefit of all.

We are privileged to work alongside passionate students from different communities, ages and backgrounds. In the past few years, we have worked in tandem with the University to ensure that we are part of events such as Freshers Week and Open Days, to showcase our offering and how we are committed to providing creative and cultural opportunities for the student body at every level.



Ailis Foster | Student Life and Engagement Coordinator, University of Stirling

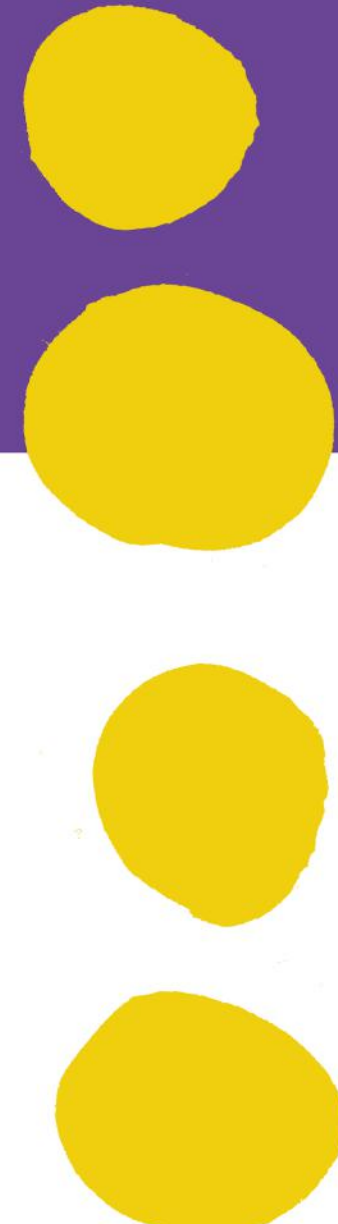
In line with the University of Stirling's **Be Connected** initiative (free community building activities for students and staff), we have worked closely with Macrobert Arts Centre team over the last year, to develop a programme of student-focused collaborative events. The concept of this has ranged from facilitating free screenings to organised movie popups on campus to promote Macrobert's creative activities, and inclusion within

the University's strategic events programme. This project has been a crucial development within the overall university's student life and engagement plan with a positive response from the student community.

Working with Macrobert has been extremely rewarding from a collaboration perspective and has helped to expand student experience offerings on campus.

Alongside standalone events, members of the Macrobert

team have also showcased at events that are targeted towards improving student mental health and wellbeing and assisting in life skills development. The partnership has been important in reminding students of what is available closer to home and has provided them with an additional safe space throughout the stress of coursework and exams. We are delighted to continue our relationship into 2024 as we develop and expand the Be Connected programme.



WORKING TOGETHER

**OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, WE
HAVE PARTNERED WITH A RANGE
OF ARTISTS, COMMUNITY
GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS
THROUGHOUT FORTH VALLEY.**

**COLLABORATIONS SUCH AS
THESE FOSTER OPPORTUNITIES
TO WIDEN OUR REACH, ENRICH
CULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND
ENSURE THAT THE ARTS REMAIN
RELEVANT AND ACCESSIBLE TO
EVERYONE.**



PJ Hurst | *Professional
Dance Artist*

Dr. Catherine Mills | *Snr. Lecturer in Modern British Environmental History*

In 2021, I sought to reimagine the Battle of Bannockburn, a pivotal moment in Scotland's history, through the power of dance and film. As part of the Vantage Point project, which was funded by Macrobert, I worked with a historian to uncover details about the sites where Robert the Bruce's forces trained and fought. Armed with this knowledge, I collaborated with a talented group of young dancers to choreograph and perform original pieces that would bring the sights and sounds of Bannockburn to life.

I WAS INVOLVED IN THE LANDSCAPE LEGACIES OF COAL PROJECT WHICH INSPIRED SOME OF THE VANTAGE POINT WORK. I ENJOYED THE PROJECT AND IT WAS GOOD TO REVISIT THE POLMAISE ROUTE WHICH WAS ONE OF THE FIRST WALKING ROUTES PUBLISHED ON THE LANDSCAPE LEGACIES OF COAL APP, IT ALSO MADE ME MUCH MORE AWARE OF THE COAL MINING LEGACIES AT BANNOCKBURN HOUSE.





MACROBERT CITY HUB



Claire Baker | *MSP for Mid-Scotland & Fife*

The location of the City Hub within the Thistles Centre was a great example of moving beyond traditional retail models and broadening the appeal of these spaces so that a wider range of people were encouraged to visit. The establishment of creative hubs like this can help revitalise our town centres and high streets as places for people of all ages to socialise and connect with others, take part in creative activities, and invest in the local community.

BUILDING ON THE AMAZING WORK WE DELIVERED DURING THE PANDEMIC AND THE RELATIONSHIPS WE HAD BUILT WITH PARTICIPANTS, OUR APPROACH TO MACROBERT SHIFTED – CONNECTING WITH OUR PEOPLE MEANS MACROBERT IS MORE THAN JUST A BUILDING. TAKING CREATIVE ACTIVITIES INTO THE COMMUNITY, CREATING ORGANIC INTERACTIONS WITH THE MACROBERT TEAM AND NEW, FREE-TO-ACCESS ACTIVITY WAS DRIVEN BY OUR PARTICIPANTS.

BUILDING MACROBERT CITY HUB WITHIN THE THISTLES SHOPPING CENTRE WAS BUILT ON AN EARLIER COLLABORATIVE PROJECT, WHEREBY WE CREATED A POP-UP COMMUNITY CINEMA SPACE FOR SHOPPERS. BRINGING THE CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM TOGETHER WITH CREATIVE ACTIVITIES ALLOWED US TO CONNECT WITH BRAND-NEW PARTICIPANTS AND AUDIENCES, MANY OF WHOM HADN'T ENGAGED WITH MACROBERT BEFORE, AFFIRMING OUR BELIEF THAT AN ARTS CENTRE SHOULD BE FOR EVERYONE.

PLAY IN THE PARK

IN THE SUMMERS OF 2022 AND 2023, MACROBERT TRAVELLED ACROSS STIRLING TO VISIT VARIOUS PARKS, WHERE WE DELIVERED ART ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE SUCH AS CLAY ORNAMENTS AND BUBBLE PAINTING. IN ADDITION, WE ALSO HAD A GREEN PROJECT USING OUR OLD MARKETING MATERIAL TO CREATE ECO POTS AND PLANTED FORGET-ME-NOT SEEDS PURCHASED FROM ALZHEIMER SCOTLAND.

Stirling Council

Stirling Council Creche, Play and OSC service has enjoyed working collaboratively with Macrobert Arts Centre over the past 2 years at our Play in the Park events. These events can attract up to 400 families in a day and working collaboratively has widened our reach to the number of families and communities who



have benefitted from free events such as concerts and Macrobert activities across Stirling in the Easter and Summer school holiday periods. This has been a very successful partnership which we look forward to continuing with in the future.

02

WE BELIEVE

IN SUPPORTING CREATIVE PEOPLE AND IDEAS, TO BUILD A CREATIVE SECTOR THAT IS MORE VIBRANT, NOURISHING & SUSTAINABLE.

An arts centre flourishes only as part of a much wider creative ecosystem. We contribute our resources – our time, energy and expertise, as well as our building and our funding – to strengthening this network. We support established and emerging artists, bring people and ideas together to create new work and play an active role in shaping the future of Scotland's creative sector.

Our new Artistic Director will build on this work, spearheading new ways of building and sustaining our creative community to ensure that Macrobert remains at the forefront of inclusive, cross-artform practice and creative exchange. We will continue to support the creation and presentation of mid-scale touring productions each year, working with sector-leading companies such as Scottish Dance Theatre, Visible Fictions, Raw Material and Scottish Theatre Producers. And of course, we'll be continuing to develop our annual Panto and Christmas show for children (oh yes we will...).

OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, WE HAVE:

- Presented 459 performances of 153 live shows. Highlights included working with nationally recognised companies such as the National Theatre of Scotland, Traverse Theatre Co., Raw Material Arts, Magnetic North and Catherine Wheels Theatre Company, with talented artists including Brian O'Sullivan, Christine Bovill and Johnny McKnight, and with much-loved productions including The Secret Garden, Oor Wullie and the Cheviot, The Stag and the Black and Black Oil.
- Produced and co-produced 14 performances, which toured throughout Scotland. This included work for children (including Roald Dahl's The Wonderful World of Henry Sugar), and adults (including a Mother's Song with Kate Taylor, and Ragnarok with Tortoise in a Nutshell).
- Presented 30 visual art exhibitions, showcasing the work of over 900 artists. We have worked with artists of national and international repute, those developing their careers, and with talented local children and young people. Since the pandemic, we also showcased our Epic Art entries via a virtual exhibition space.
- Presented 5,44 film screenings, welcoming 76,236 people to the cinema. We have increased the proportion of non-mainstream films from 66% to 72%. During the pandemic, we launched our video-on-demand service, 'Macrobert at Home', hosting a large back catalogue of films, as well as new releases, theatre productions and in-competition films as part of the Central Scotland Documentary Festival.



KID X

Feral Arts

Macrobert Arts Centre provided a central role in helping us to mount our production KID X which was a mix of street dance, ground-based circus and live music designed for family audiences. The organisation provided vital production space, mentorship from their Artistic Director and a host context for some of the first public performances of the work which received an overwhelming positive response from local audiences.

As a result of Macrobert's support and early belief in the project, we went on to successfully tour the production across Scotland and also undertook a Made in Scotland run at the Edinburgh Fringe. This would not have been possible without their support and investment in the early stages of development of the production.



A MOTHER'S SONG

Kate Taylor | *Co-Producer*

Macrobert holds a very special place for me. Working on *A Mother's Song* represented an important professional challenge and I was so grateful to have been supported so well by Julie and her team on the journey of making the show. I spent a lot of time in and around the office, I was made to feel welcome and enjoyed working alongside the venue staff. It was clear that there was a huge commitment to the venue from both staff

and the audience. The offer for audiences is carefully considered and it is a lovely theatre and space to be in. I look forward to continuing to work with Macrobert in the future. Watching the run of *A Mother's Song* was so special, it was amazing seeing the show on the Macrobert stage and realising that the audiences could see what Julie and I had been able to see.

Moira Lumby | *Audio Describer*

A special memory was being made to feel very much part of the team in general, but especially during *Mother's Song*. As Audio Describers, we often feel like an "add-on", but this is definitely not the case at Macrobert.



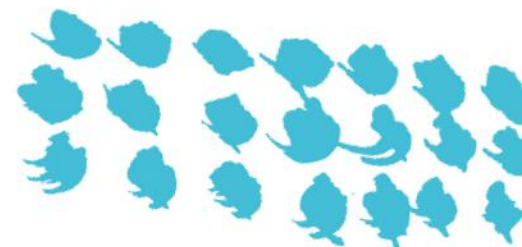


A MOTHER'S SONG

Finn Anderson | *Co-creator, A Mother's Song*

As a career musical theatre artist based in Scotland, the opportunity to mount a full production of an original musical on home turf is few and far between. As a country, we have a huge amount of talent to contribute to the musical theatre art form, and for those artists to thrive it's essential that we have cultural leaders with ambition and willingness to take a risk on new ideas. The world premiere professional production of *A Mother's Song* would not have happened without the support, ambition and championing of Julie Ellen at Macrobert, and all

of the Macrobert staff who worked hard to bring this story to the stage. I think this effort offers a really exciting example of how buildings and companies in Scotland can invest in the long journey of getting new musical theatre to the stage, and build genuinely fruitful relationships with writers. We loved rehearsing and building *A Mother's Song* on Macrobert's beautiful campus and being able to share this step of the show's journey with Stirling audiences, and we were delighted by the response we received from those audiences.



SUPPORTING ARTISTS

Petre Dobre | *BSL Director*

After completing my first year at Macrobert Arts Centre as Trainee Director in 2018, I performed both *Heartsore* and a reworking of *9/11* which I had performed as my showcase piece at the RCS.

In 2019, with support from Artistic Director, Julie Ellen, I was given the opportunity to be their Associate Director. The focus of my work was on theatre for young children and I spent two weeks learning the processes from different directors – Gill Robertson from *Catherine Wheels* and Dougie Irvine from *Visible Fictions*. After my learning, I started the creation of a performance called *'Squirrel'*. Whilst watching a squirrel outside my house, it inspired me to create a story of two squirrels, one red and one grey, and their journey. The performance was completely visual with one deaf actor and one hearing actor.

'Squirrel' was a research and development piece which received positive feedback. I hope with funding in the future that this performance will tour throughout Scotland for young audiences.





SHADES

“As a queer arts company, we had never seen something like this in Scotland and we were so proud to have made this happen with Macrobert by our side.”

Rhys Hollis | *Host and Co-Producer*

After working for so many years on this film, it was so special to see a different aspect of it come to life. We had always spoken about the project starting conversations and educating people, so to be able to put that on at Macrobert Arts Centre which is in the context of a learning space was wonderful. The venue and team were accommodating and helped make it into a show that felt unique and elevated. The film was about taking Black performance into outdoor spaces, and so Shades allowed us to bring these to a cabaret space.

Kheanna Walker | *Performer*

BEING PART OF THE FIRST-EVER SHADES CABARET SHOW WAS TRULY UNFORGETTABLE. THE CROWD WAS SO LOVELY AND SUPPORTIVE, THE TEAM WERE VERY ACCOMMODATING AND THE VENUE ALLOWED FOR US TO SHARE OUR WORK IN ALL OF ITS GLORY. I HAD A BLAST PERFORMING ON STAGE, DOING WHAT I LOVE.



Photo credit: Pollyanna and Andy Caitlin



Briana Pegado | *Performer*

Shades Cabaret was a seamless and important opportunity to play, experiment, and perform among a line-up of talented black queer Scotland-based performers. As an opportunity to showcase and further develop a piece of work I created the year before, the space to explore within a cabaret space led by and created for BPOC performers was second to none.

Adam Castle | *Producer*

Macrobert Art Centre's support of, and trust in, the artistic vision of Shades was impeccable. They helped bring a brand new, all-Black and queer cabaret to the stage for the first time and allowed the artists to share with the audience a journey of breath-taking performances from award-winning artists.

EXHIBITIONS



Vanessa Paynton | *Executive Director, Art in Healthcare*

I joined Art in Healthcare in Spring 2021 and had the pleasure of learning about the history of the charity from founder Matilda Hall. When she told me that she was one of the first members of staff at the University of Stirling and had been very involved in establishing its art collection I was immediately interested and excited since I had previously worked at Macrobert between 2015 and 2018.

As a charity, we were celebrating our thirtieth anniversary and Macrobert was approaching its fiftieth, so it felt like an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the contribution that Matilda has made to both organisations. We very much enjoyed working with the teams from Macrobert and the University of Stirling Art Collection to achieve an exhibition that worked well in the space and was well received by visitors.

Matilda Hall | *Artist*

This was a very real opportunity to demonstrate to all who saw the exhibition that the University from its earliest days had built a milieu full of art. Pictures from the Collection needed to be brought out and shown off again so people could see what we achieved between 1965 and 1974. Most of all we wanted to encourage the university now to continue the commitment to the visual arts that Tom Cottrell, the first Principal had considered so important.

THE BENEFITS SHOWED THAT THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MACROBERT WAS JUST THAT BIT MORE COLOURFUL, THANKS TO THE PRESENTATION OF WORKS OF ART FOR WHICH I, IN SOME FORM, HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE.



Orla Stephens | Artist

I am a local artist based in Callander and my work is rooted in painting, spanning across areas of fine art, design, illustration and community arts. Across all avenues, I look to use creativity as a way to connect people to natural environments and explore their self-expression. In September 2022 I had the pleasure of being hosted by Macrobert for a solo show, titled 'Northern Edgelands'.

This was my first solo show, and as a young emerging artist, it was a beautiful experience to be hosted by an arts centre that I'd grown up in and around; a place that introduced me to various art forms from an early age.

Janie Meikle
Bland

Stirling Photography
Festival Founder

A VALUABLE RESOURCE TO OUR COMMUNITY; AND A FABULOUS PARTNER IN THE DELIVERY OF STIRLING PHOTOGRAPHY FESTIVAL AS A HOST AND SPONSOR.



HUBBUB

ESTABLISHED IN 2020, HUBBUB IS AN ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF OUR LOCAL CREATIVITY, FEATURING ACTIVITIES, PERFORMANCES, TALKS SCREENINGS AND EXHIBITIONS, BORN FROM A DESIRE TO SHOWCASE THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND CREATIVITY OF MACROBERT CREATIVE ACTIVITIES REGULAR WORKSHOPS AND CONTINUING PROJECTS.

BRINGING TOGETHER ARTISTS AND PARTICIPANTS, IT'S ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME GROUPS FROM ACROSS FORTH VALLEY TO GET INVOLVED, INCLUDING STIRLING PHOTOGRAPHY, PAMIS, HAPPY DAYS PERFORMING ARTS, ALL OR NOTHING AERIAL DANCE THEATRE AND SIGN FORTH COMMUNITY CHOIR, PROVIDING A PLATFORM TO PERFORM, PARTICIPATE AND REACH NEW AUDIENCES.



Participant | *HUBBUB*

It was exhilarating, performing in front of my friends and family, but also people I didn't even know!



HUBBUB



All or Nothing Aerial Dance Theatre

WE WERE EXCITED TO BE PART OF HUBBUB 2023, A COMMUNITY EVENT THAT TOOK PLACE OVER A WEEKEND IN MARCH. WE BROUGHT OUR NEWLY FORMED DUNBLANE YOUTH PERFORMANCE GROUP, GIVING FOUR OF OUR TALENTED STUDENTS THEIR FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE, AS WELL AS RUNNING FREE TASTER SESSIONS IN AERIAL SKILLS FOR ALL AGES.



CREATIVE BREAKFASTS

Sian MacGregor | *Researcher, Freelancer & Local Parent*

As an academic researcher, freelance arts worker and local parent, Macrobert has played an important role in many aspects of my life; the lack of other arts provisions in the area, and the geographic challenges of rural Stirlingshire mean that it has been crucial to me and my family so that we can access arts experiences, positive interactions and at times employment otherwise unavailable to us. Apart from the chance to see high-quality shows, an important element most recently for me was the

opportunity to 'host' a Creative Breakfast. It was based on some of my current research, which focuses on young audiences – and once-young audiences. This was an ideal way to 'test out' some of my thoughts and queries and instigate a kind of knowledge exchange involving non-academics, which is also pivotal to the project and very much encouraged in academia.

Ken Elliot | *Artist*

The Creative Breakfasts were a good opportunity to catch up with the Macrobert team and meet other local artists and those interested in arts and crafts. The presentations were interesting and varied, and the informal discussions afterwards were an enjoyable chance to meet more artists who might potentially be interested in working with the Stirling GOSSIP artists group of which I am an events organiser.

HANDMADE

Elaine Petrie | *Antonine Silver Jewellery*

The Handmade event run by Macrobert Arts Centre provides a showcase for local makers, and I particularly value the opportunity to be associated with the wider creative arts.

Jane Knox | *More Ideas Than Time*

The unique format of Handmade is very different to other events I have participated in and allows me to show my products to a whole range of customers I would not have access to otherwise. The organisation of Handmade is excellent and the staff at Macrobert Arts Centre could not be more helpful.



MAW GOOSE

Brian O'Sullivan | Actor & Performer

Maw Goose was far from my first panto experience, but it was my first at Macrobert and the first time I had played the dame in nine years.

FROM DAY ONE, I FOUND MACROBERT TO BE A VERY WELCOMING PLACE.

It felt like the whole building was excited about the panto and wanted it to be the best it could be, so we as a company were welcomed every day with broad smiles and a helpful attitude from everyone we met. In terms of the show itself, while we worked from a great script from Johnny McKnight, undoubtedly Scotland's best panto writer, we had plenty of creative freedom and were always encouraged to find the funniest version of each part of the show.

The script was essentially a starting point, a springboard from which we could leap to whatever creative heights we could imagine. Surrounded by the very best designers and creatives, we were able to flourish.

Playing the dame, particularly when that dame is the title character, gives you a very special rapport with the audience, and the Macrobert audience arrives at the theatre eager to take part in the panto, to build that connection. Every show was different and there wasn't a single audience across the run that didn't engage fully with the show and become part of the action at every turn.



Brian O'Sullivan as the Dame in Maw Goose



Shortly after the run ended and the dust settled, I learned that I had been nominated for "Best Dame" at the UK Pantomime Association Awards. This came as a total shock as I hadn't realised our show was being judged by the association, so I was completely delighted. I did feel though, that any award Maw Goose might get would have to be shared between the entire company, on stage and off, because there is no way I could have been the Maw Goose that I was without the help and support of the full team.

To our delight, I did indeed win the award and in my speech made three honourable mentions - to the Scottish panto community at large, the entire team behind Maw Goose, and to the late Gerard Kelly, a Scottish pantomime legend, without whose influence, I wouldn't have been on that stage in the first place.

"IT IS MY STRONG HOPE THAT I CAN CONTINUE A LONG PANTO RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TEAM AT MACROBERT AND THAT I CAN RETURN SOON TO ENGAGE ONCE AGAIN WITH THAT BRILLIANT AUDIENCE."

Ciara Flynn | Actor

I made my professional acting debut after graduating college at Macrobert. It will always have such a special place in my heart and I would love to return to the Macrobert stage one day! The people I met on this specific job have become friends for life and I will never forget the feeling of performing with them every night on that magnificent stage. I loved every minute of every day at Macrobert and I'm so honoured and grateful to have made my debut there.

Rachel Matthews | Freelance Technician

When doing the summer musical when I was 12, I was in the wing about to go on and I asked Saint about how he managed to do some of the effects on the panto the year before and he told me all about it. I was so enthralled and excited by everything he said and last year he and I worked together to work out the effects together as colleagues.



Ciara Flynn as Fairy Liqui-Tap in Maw Goose

INVESTING IN YOUNG TALENT

Jennifer Dick | *Panto Associate Director & Senior Young Company Coordinator*

Each year we audition and cast a group of local young people, between the ages of 10 and 17, who form the Panto Young Company. They are an integral and essential part of the show, playing small supporting roles, acting as the ensemble in musical numbers and giving our Panto its wonderful scale and spectacle.

The enduring legacy of their involvement in panto has also been demonstrated repeatedly as we have watched the young people blossom into careers in related areas or return to Macrobert to be involved in other projects, or simply contact us to let us know how much they valued their Panto experience.

EVERY YEAR I AM IMPRESSED ANEW BY THEIR TALENT AND DEDICATION. THEY GET SO MUCH OUT OF THE EXPERIENCE, LEARNING AND GROWING AS PERFORMERS AND PEOPLE, AND MOST OF THEM CHOOSE TO RETURN TO AUDITION TO BE IN THE SHOW AGAIN AND AGAIN.



Hugh Bruce | Participant

Macrobert Arts Centre has played a huge role in my life since I was a very young age. Watching pantomimes when I was younger, I would always say how much I wanted to be performing on the stage. I jumped straight in when I got the chance to join the weekly drama classes. I was given help and support from the team when it came to auditioning and I've been lucky enough to be part of the Young Cast for three years now. It's such an amazing experience. It helps grow my confidence and gives me an insight into the world of live theatre. Working in a professional atmosphere has been the opportunity of a lifetime and I wouldn't be the person I am today without this experience or the people I have become acquainted with.

Julie Bruce | Parent

Hugh aspired to be part of the panto and perform on stage when he saw Fi-Fi and Foo-Foo at one of our first Christmas Eve Macrobert Pantos and said "I want to do that" - he would have been about 4 or 5 years old then. After attending drama classes at Macrobert Hugh also applied to audition for panto as soon as he was old enough. He was thrilled to be offered a place and has been lucky enough to be successful in auditions for the last 3 pantos and loves everything about it - learning dances and lines, performing, finding out about behind-the-scenes activities, and meeting new friends.

Ellie McFarlane | Young Cast Leader

My participation in the Macrobert Pantomime Young Cast is without a doubt the most memorable experience of my childhood. The Panto provided me with the opportunity to take part in a professional production, to continue my passion for performing arts, and to make great friends. I now have the opportunity to work as a Young Cast Leader within the production, and it is an equally enjoyable experience. It is undeniable that pantomime provides young people with an outlet for creativity, self-expression, and to develop their passions.





OUR AMBITIOUS AND EXCITING CINEMA PROGRAMME



OUR YEAR-ROUND CINEMA PROGRAMME BRIMS WITH A VARIETY OF ENTERTAINMENT, FEATURING BLOCKBUSTERS, AWARD-WINNING FILMS, AND THE FINEST INDEPENDENT CINEMA OFFERINGS. LIVE (AND 'AS LIVE') SCREENINGS OF THEATRE, OPERA AND BALLET FROM SOME OF THE UK'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS COMPANIES HAVE PROVED ENORMOUSLY POPULAR, AND A REGULAR RELAXED FILM AND BABY-FRIENDLY CINEMA PROGRAMME ALLOWS EVERYONE TO PARTAKE IN OUR SHARED PASSION FOR EXCEPTIONAL CINEMA EXPERIENCES.

NOW IN ITS 7TH YEAR, THE CENTRAL SCOTLAND DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL HAS CONTINUALLY GROWN AND EVOLVED. IN ADDITION TO ITS CAREFULLY CURATED PROGRAMME, THE FESTIVAL NOW INVITES SUBMISSIONS FROM FILMMAKERS AROUND THE WORLD WHO COMPETE FOR THE PRESTIGIOUS JURY AWARD AND THE AUDIENCE AWARD, DETERMINED BY THE PUBLIC'S CHOICE. BEYOND THE COMPELLING DOCUMENTARY SCREENINGS, OUR EVENTS FEATURE INTRODUCTIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND AN INDUSTRY PROGRAMME, ALL CONTRIBUTING TO OUR VISION OF ESTABLISHING CSDF AS A FESTIVAL OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE ON SCOTLAND'S FESTIVAL CALENDAR.



THE AULD GAME

Sam Andie
Bennett

Archive Film
Curator

Macrobert was my first time working in film curation and it offered me the rare opportunity to learn about working in cinemas and festivals in a really supportive environment. When my traineeship came to an end, Macrobert offered me the opportunity to work with them on an archive project. After some deliberations, The Auld Game was born and would focus on the history of Scottish football over the decades.

Not only did Macrobert allow me the creative freedom to create The Auld Game but they also supported me by pairing me with a mentor and helped me navigate managing a film tour. The Auld Game was an intensive learning curve but thanks to Macrobert, I felt supported and cheered on the entire way and I truly believe my experience with Macrobert and the knowledge and skills they shared with me are the reason I am still working in the industry today and have managed to move up in the new organisation I work for.

I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL TO THE TEAM AT MACROBERT FOR GIVING ME MY FIRST OPPORTUNITY IN FILM AND I AM ALWAYS IN AWE OF THE INCREDIBLE WORK THEY DO.

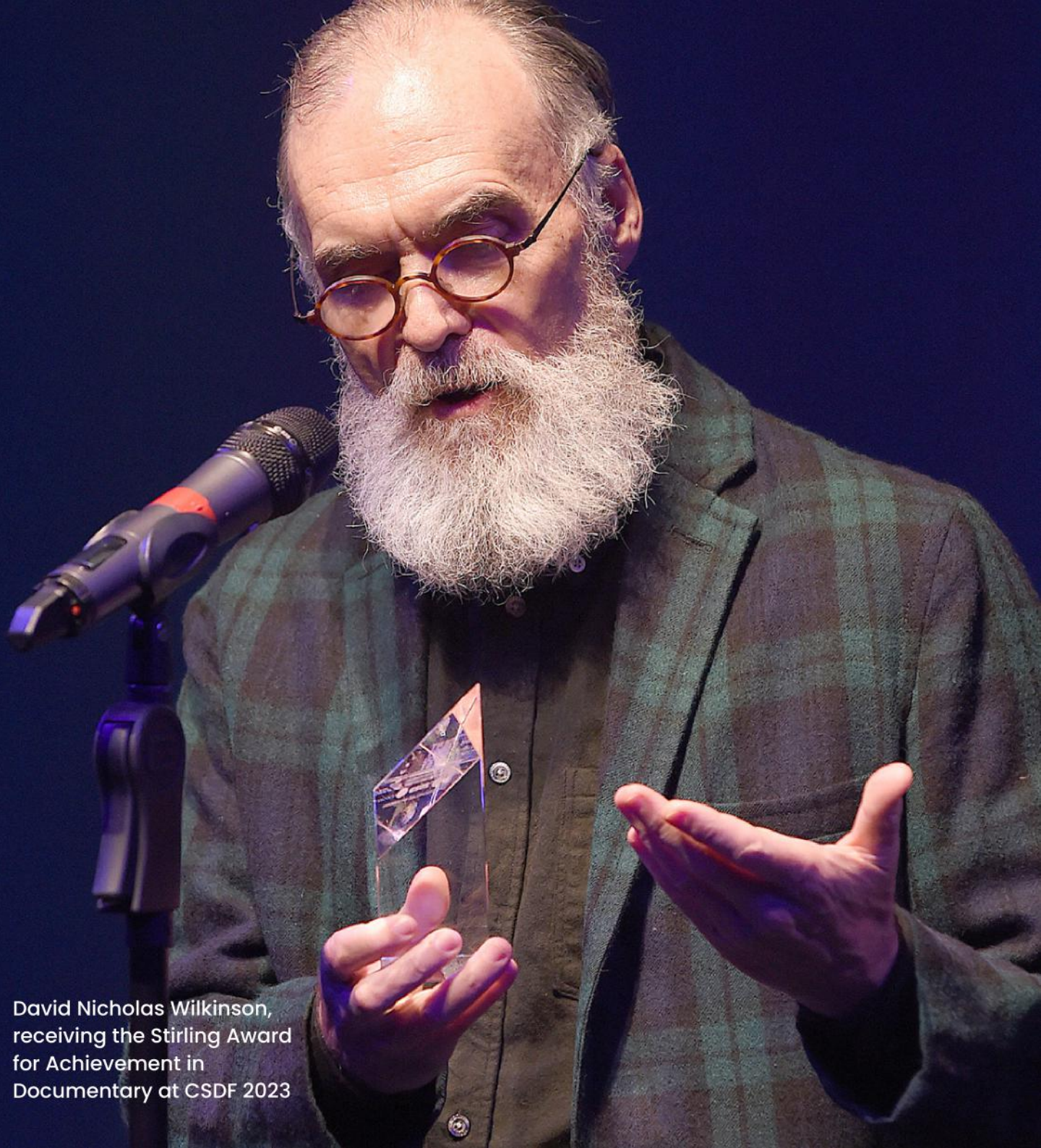
CSDF

Oliver Guy Watkins | *Filmmaker*

My experience with the Central Scotland Documentary Festival (CSDF) started in 2021 when I screened 'Who Is James Payton' and received the Jury award. This led to the film getting worldwide distribution.

As well as the fact the Festival and the recognition they gave us led to continued success, I also have to commend the programme - very few events that I have attended have had such a strong selection of films, in and out of competition, with a clear level of quality, diversity and subjectivity. The event has been a wonderful foundation on which to build, and it has been a pleasure to return each year. It has also introduced me to Stirling, a town I instantly fell for, and I am always excited to return to.

The team that runs the event have always been thoughtful, considerate, and engaged in the films they show.



David Nicholas Wilkinson,
receiving the Stirling Award
for Achievement in
Documentary at CSDF 2023



Zulilah Merry | *Merry Films*

My film, *No One Told Me*, shows a new mother in moments of sadness. Moments of despair. Moments of not knowing. Moments of grief. But there is also lots of laughter. There is space to release the tension that is felt when things are hard for Elise.

No One Told Me was selected by several festivals and I have to say that the Central Scotland Documentary Festival was by far the most professional and well organized. Online promotion of the festival was timely and looked great with a quality screening room screening DCP. All communication was straightforward and personal and winning the Jury Award was an amazing bonus.

03

WE BELIEVE

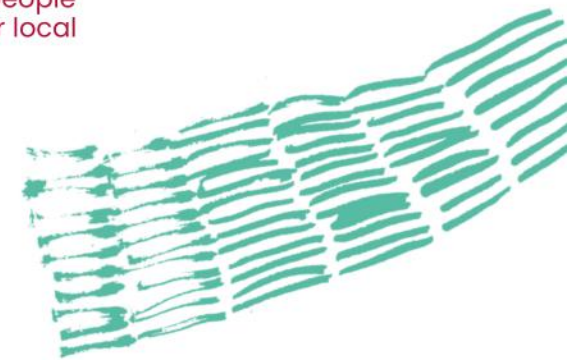
THAT AN ARTS CENTRE SHOULD BE FOR EVERYONE.

The most creative, vibrant, exciting environments are those where a whole range of people and ideas can come together. We take seriously our position as a publicly-funded arts centre and are passionate about widening access and removing barriers (both practical ones and those that are less tangible). We want everyone to be able to see great work, explore their creativity, and bring new experiences and perspectives to the future of our creative programme.

In the last few years, there have been substantial changes to our venue within the Campus Central redevelopment that houses our Box Office and Kiosk. Being closed during the pandemic meant we had to reimagine what it meant to be 'for everyone' without our beloved venue. We met online in various forms and, when it was safe to do so, we bustled together with our creative community to offer performance and workshop opportunities outdoors then in new (to us) spaces before gradually re-opening the venue.

Looking ahead, we'll be building on our relationships with D/deaf artists, we will continue to open our spaces to as wide an audience as possible which also means carrying on our activities outwith the venue in various community settings. Following on from the launch of Creative Quarter, we look forward to making connections with and between even more professional artists and creative hobbyists as well as continuing to take part in Fun Palaces and The Big Lunch.

We'll continue to host national theatrical productions, and local amateur performances, and we'll be popping up at all kinds of student-led and local community events to give people a taste of what they might expect from Macrobert and to keep asking what people would like to see from their local arts centre.



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We are dedicated to cultivating equal opportunities for all individuals. Our commitment extends to fostering quality productions, nurturing talent, and ensuring inclusion, outreach work and participation in all facets of our programming. Through our work, we aim to make art, culture and creativity accessible to all. We actively engage with a broad spectrum of audiences and endeavour to create inclusive opportunities for participation, regardless of age, ability, background, or circumstance, as well as introduce individuals to the transformative power of the arts.

OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, WE HAVE:

- Offered support to artists and companies including Bassline Circus, NTS, Company Chordelia and Gary McNair
- Introduced Gender Neutral toilets and ramp access and egress from our Workhouse space. Thanks to feedback from our audiences, we know that these access changes have enabled more people to share our physical space safely and comfortably.
- We presented at various events, including the FST emporium Accessible Touring Panel, the Deaf Heritage Collective, and the Stirling Culture Symposium to increase awareness of our EDI commitments.
- Supported Petre Dobre in his role as BSL Director Trainee with performances taking place throughout 2019.
- Increased our captioned film screenings to ensure more people can access and enjoy our cinema experience.



A VENUE FOR EVERYONE

Gill White | PAMIS

We hold our Clackmannanshire Friendship Club and our Forth Valley Multi-Sensory Book Club, 'The Story Squad' at Macrobert Arts Centre. These clubs, run at the same time, are for children with profound multiple & learning disabilities and their families and carers. Quite simply, we could not hold these events without a fully accessible building, of which sadly there are none in Clackmannanshire. Macrobert offers everything that we and the families need from a venue to enable us to hold inclusive, safe and fun events, with a Changing Places Toilet, flexible and comfortable spaces, easy access, quiet spaces and a beautiful outdoor space.



Freya and
Carolyne



Carolynne Hunter | *PAMIS & Freya's mum*

I work with PAMIS, which supports people and their families living with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities, as well as being the parent carer of 13-year old Freya who has a high level of medical need. I longed for years since the changing place toilet was opened in 2017 at Macrobert to create an out-of-school club for children with high levels of medical needs and disabilities living in the Forth Valley area. Along with others from the Without Exception team, I organised, with the support of

PAMIS, the first family fun day at Macrobert Arts Centre in September 2022.

Freya and I were aware that it was an accessible space with a variety of facilities and felt that other families would enjoy it too. When I went to view the accessible spaces we were able to use to facilitate our family fun days, I was completely, beautifully overwhelmed by the accessible ramp that had been built at the entrance to the

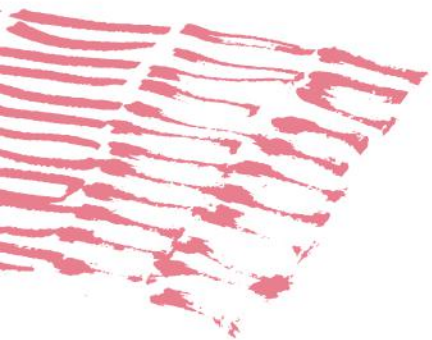
Workhouse. It was a very joyful moment for me knowing that Freya would be able to safely access the area where she would be able to have so much fun with her friends and family from the completely accessible car park.

I can only describe Macrobert Arts Centre as a safe space where we are among friends within a community environment and don't feel pushed away. It's also an opportunity for us to mingle with members of the

public who don't always see children with Freya's needs out in public. The dream is that one day we'll all mingle. Freya also attended the relaxed performance of the Christmas Panto, Maw Goose, at the performance after receiving free tickets via the Christmas Appeal, it was a great opportunity for Freya to have a lovely panto experience at her favourite accessible place.



THE PANDEMIC YEARS



Gary Cameron | Artist

During the pandemic, my remit was to form and direct the Macrobert Choir. We aimed to create a body of work entirely recorded in isolation by participants who had never met in person. Through this, we were able to bring respite and joy to those experiencing loneliness during the lockdowns. Our work, which included check-ins with one another, culminated in a 'performance' for family, friends and guests over Zoom to present our repertoire.

Participant | Veteran's Group

The group was a great help to me. I made a new group of friends, saw my confidence improve and participated in new exciting events. I performed in some small events in front of an audience and also our Christmas online Pantomime. The consequence of the restrictions imposed during the pandemic affected our face-to-face meetings so, while we couldn't meet up physically, the Zoom sessions were great.

Alyn Smith | MP for Stirling

The pandemic was extremely difficult for organisations across Scotland, and in Stirling this was no different. But businesses, charities and households really did step up to the plate, and Macrobert were no exception. I'm very glad to see a crucial cultural cornerstone of Stirling's creative sector pull through a very difficult period, now fully open and operational - and continuing to champion the arts and keep them accessible to all.



Unicorn Dance Party



All or Nothing | Swings

In 2020/21 All or Nothing was developing their new outdoor performance and installation piece, The Swings. Set on a larger-than-life giant 5m high swing set, an aerial dance duo performs a 15-minute piece then the swings are open to the public to swing high and free! Macrobert brokered the relationship with Fairview International School for a rehearsal venue. They funded the cost of an extra performer learning the show (due to Covid), and we then brought the work to Macrobert in August 2021 when we were touring thanks to Creative Scotland's Touring Fund.

Feral Arts

City Breakz is an outdoor pop-up hip-hop dance show featuring four dancers that take the classic scenario of the hip-hop throw-down and re-position it in unusual city locations. By placing the performances in everyday locations such as high streets we supported venues to tap into a demographic that wouldn't normally set foot in a traditional theatre setting acting as a stepping stone to deeper engagement with their broader programmes. We really enjoyed bringing City Breakz to Stirling City Centre in collaboration with Macrobert - hopefully helping them to reach a broader demographic out with the four walls of the theatre.

OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE, LEARN AND GROW



SINCE 2019, WE HAVE BEEN ON A JOURNEY. ENGAGING WITH ARTISTS AND PARTICIPANTS, WE DEVELOPED OUR VALUES, LISTENED TO THE NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE AND SPENT OUR ENERGY ON THE THINGS THAT MATTER TO THEM. CREATIVE LEARNING BECAME CREATIVE ACTIVITIES – A SEEMINGLY SMALL BUT DELIBERATE CHANGE, REMOVING THE WEIGHT OF THE WORD ‘LEARNING’ WAS PARTICULARLY NOTABLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, WHO SPEND THE MAJORITY OF THEIR DAILY LIVES IN EDUCATION.

DURING THE PANDEMIC WE DESIGNED AND DELIVERED AN AMAZING DIGITAL PROGRAMME FOR PEOPLE TO STAY CREATIVE FROM THE COMFORT OF THEIR HOME, THROWING OUR DOORS OPEN AGAIN WHEN WE COULD SAFELY DO SO. TAKING CREATIVE ACTIVITIES TO COMMUNITIES, EMBRACING ‘YOU CHOOSE’ PRICING AND COLLABORATING WITH NEW PROJECT PARTNERS ALLOWS US TO REMOVE SOME OF THE BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING. WE ALSO CREATED SPACE FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION THAT OUR ACTIVITIES OFFER, DEDICATING TIME TO CHAT, CHECKING IN WITH EACH OTHER AND SHARING WHAT CONNECTS US, OFTEN WITH A CUP OF TEA IN HAND.

CRUCIALLY WE CONTINUE TO SHARE OUR LOVE OF THE ARTS, BRINGING JOY TO THE LIVES OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATE. IN PARTICULAR, HUBBUB IS THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF OUR COMMUNITY, LAUNCHED IN 2020, BRINGING TOGETHER OUR PEOPLE WITH OTHER LOCAL GROUPS TO PERFORM, TAKE PART AND CELEBRATE THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS. EVERYONE CAN BE CREATIVE AND OUR MISSION IS TO GIVE AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO.



RS Macdonald

RS Macdonald Charitable Trust is delighted to support Macrobert Arts Centre by providing a programme of relaxed events and film screenings. We fund projects that empower people to lead better lives and be involved in their communities. By offering a cinema environment which has been adapted to be more welcoming and supportive, the relaxed programme is improving social opportunities and enhancing the quality of everyday life for people living with dementia and their carers.

Relaxed events participant

My Mum lost communication a few years ago, and today I saw her smile, clap along and make sounds with the music.

Town Break Stirling

I work with people living with Dementia. Many of the people our organisation supports were regular attendees at Macrobert Relaxed events. This type of entertainment, encouraging an element of joining in is so beneficial and lifts the mood of anyone feeling low.

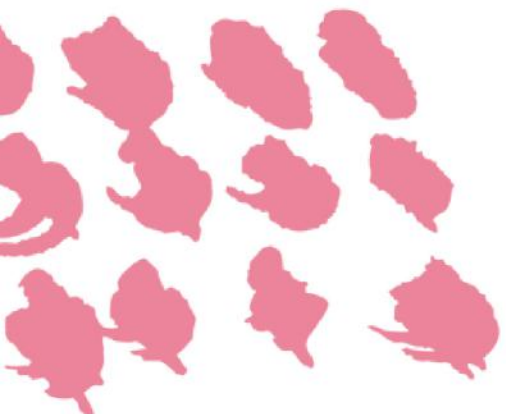
RELAXED EVENTS

Audience Member

IT'S LOVELY TO FEEL LIKE THERE'S A PLACE WHERE WE'RE WELCOMED, WEARING OUR SUNFLOWER LANYARDS, AND WE CAN ENJOY THE ARTS. IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO DO THAT TOGETHER.



DANCE FOR PARKINSON'S



Billy McEwan | *Participant*

At first, I was sceptical when Alexis suggested Dance for Parkinson's, but now I love the classes. I still can't dance, but I have great fun doing it. Moving to music helps my condition and I also really enjoy the social interaction with my Parky family.

Julie Symmonds | *Lead Artist (DfP)*

Dance for Parkinson's is an internationally acclaimed programme that offers research-backed dance classes for people with Parkinson's and their families/carers. Dancing makes me happy; it takes me to another space and place, and when I look at our participants in these classes, I see a mirror of myself; I see joy and love that ooze throughout the studio. And of course, we always laugh! To date, this has most certainly been my greatest achievement - to share the love of dance with those living with Parkinson's.

Alexis McEwan | *Volunteer*

The Dance for Parkinson's classes have given us hope, companionship, great new friends and above all fun. Being diagnosed with Parkinson's is frightening and isolating not just for the person with Parkinson's but also for their partner. DfP, for us, was a lifeline and opened the door to all the opportunities we now enjoy.



Kevin
Harrison

Director,
Artlink Central

Artlink Central has been delighted to work with Macrobert Art Centre's creative activities team on a joined-up approach to supporting young people experiencing mental health problems. In partnership with NHS Forth Valley's Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), we explored the potential for arts interventions to enable young people within this service to build up their emotional literacy, build peer bonds in a safe and creative environment and be imaginative and playful through a range of workshops.

Learning and working together has been a real strength of this partnership with artists Aya Iguchi-Sherry, Daniel Livingstone and others, taking a sustained approach to working with young people who often have more barriers to social opportunity than others and for whom educational settings can be challenging.

WORKING WITH CAMHS

The project uncovered lots of talent and ideas and we look forward to continuing to bring our organisations' experiences and resources together with the lived experience of young people to build a stronger and more sustainable range of offers for Forth Valley's young people in the future.

ACROSS OUR WEEKLY CLASSES, WE WORKED WITH THEM ON CREATIVE VARIOUS PIECES OF ART FOR AN EXHIBITION ENTITLED 'MAKE A START'. THIS EXHIBITION TOOK PLACE AT MACROBERT AS PART OF THE SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS FESTIVAL IN OCTOBER 2023.



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

“BEING INVOLVED WITH MACROBERT OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS HAS BEEN REALLY IMPORTANT TO ME, HAVING STARTED WITH THE DRAMA CLASSES AND THEN THE PANTO YOUNG CAST, IT WAS BEEN A HUGE PART OF MY LIFE, EVEN THROUGHOUT COVID IT FELT LIKE I STILL HAD THAT FRIEND GROUP I HAD MADE FROM DRAMA AND PANTO”

Weekly workshops

We have continued to deliver a range of weekly workshops including M-Drama, designed for young people to explore theatre, M-Dance: Adult, for those 18+ to develop their skills, and M-Dance: Plus, a low-impact class for adults over 50.

Holiday activities

Young people were able to get creative during school holidays, taking part in free/low-cost activities including Easter crafts, clay ghost-making Ghoullery, Play in a Week, Film in a Week and the research, design and delivery of our Community Cookbook.

Book Bug

From playing host, Macrobert began delivering in-house Bookbug sessions in Summer 2022. These free, fun events encourage babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers to explore stories, rhyme and song, build social skills and support speech and language development.

12 Days of Christmas

In the lead-up to Christmas 2020, Macrobert delivered a programme of free, online festive-filled activities for people to get creative at home. Since 2021, these in-person sessions also welcomed partner organisations and artists to get involved and get festive.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

EACH CHRISTMAS, WE DONATE HUNDREDS OF PANTO TICKETS TO LOCAL CHARITIES - HELPING TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE CAN BE PART OF THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS.

Panto Guest | *Barnardo's*

What a fantastic night. We all never stopped laughing at Maw Goose. The staff were friendly and helpful. All the cast were brilliant. The kids joined in singing and clapping. Thank you so much!

Danielle Denovan | *Doune & Deanston Youth Project*

Doune and Deanston Youth Project is a small charity in a rural area, and it is always amazing when we receive gifts from other charities. For the last 5+ years Macrobert has kindly given our young people free tickets for the Christmas panto, this means so much to the young people as they love coming along to the show.



MACROBERT

OUR PEOPLE AND THE PLACE THAT MAKES US WHO WE ARE

OUR PEOPLE

Our people make us who we are, and we are hugely fortunate to have benefited from the time, insight, expertise and energy of the many staff and volunteers who have shaped Macrobert Arts Centre over the past four years. With the difficulties we faced due to the pandemic and building changes taking place as part of the University's Campus Central update, our staff rose to the challenges thrown at them to ensure a warm welcome back to audiences, participants and supporters to the venue.

We continue to be an accredited Living Wage employer, committed to an hourly rate that is set independently and updated annually; we have provided work experience for 16 people, including one ASN Adult extended work experience; we have worked with a variety of local freelance artists and staff.

Between 2019 and 2023, the following individuals served on our Board of Trustees: Alan Simpson (Chair), Eileen Schofield, Kerry Bryson, Liam McCabe, Sally Dimeo, Andrew Panton, Neil Roden, Leo Doyle, Sara MacMillan, Abigail Ferguson, Lewis Hou, Jack Williamson, Rose Edwards, Karen Lawson, Barbara McKissak, and Ben Fletcher.

Alexander Stewart, MBE | *MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife*

The Macrobert Centre is an excellent facility for the people of Forth Valley. It is a local venue for local people which significantly punches above its weight in the sector. The calibre of productions and performances is second to none.

Lewis Hou | *Macrobert Board Member*

Ensuring that Macrobert is for everyone is such a driving passion of our work at all levels, from the staff to the board. Whether it's supporting People living with Parkinson's to dance, launching the Plean Community Cinema, to connecting socially isolated individuals through posted creative boxes as part of the Fun Palaces campaign for Cultural Democracy. We believe that culture can be such a force for social action, and committed that our programme is for, with, and by our local communities as much as possible.

COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, WE HAVE:

- Updated our Filmhouse lighting to more efficient LEDs.
- Replaced plastic cups and in-house packaged snack tubs with compostable and/or recyclable.
- Programmed a season around an Eco-themed conversation featuring live, film and exhibition events and discussions
- Embedded environmentally themed programming into our year-round offer.
- Continued to participate in the circular economy offering theatre curtains, furniture and equipment that we have no use for to other organisations or the public. We reuse and repair items when possible and have a dedicated second-hand 'Blind date with a Book'.

HAVING BEEN A MEMBER OF CREATIVE CARBON SCOTLAND'S GREEN ARTS INITIATIVE SINCE 2015 WE ACTIVELY WORK TO REDUCE THE CARBON EMISSIONS OF THE VENUE AND OUR OPERATIONS AS WELL AS USING OUR PLATFORM TO ENCOURAGE OUR CREATIVE INDUSTRY PARTNERS AND AUDIENCES TO CONSIDER GREENER OPTIONS.

- Featured upcycled items in our Handmade gifts range.
- Worked with industry partners including the UKCA on the Screen industry roadmap to Net Zero and the Green Arts Initiative for the Creative sector in Scotland.
- Been active members of the University of Stirling Green Champions, supporting awareness-raising events and hosting a cycle cinema event.
- Continued to encourage sustainable travel options for staff, audiences and visiting companies/artists.
- Developed our planning towards Net Zero to include thinking around digital emissions, sustainable procurement, Theatre and Arts Green Books, climate justice, and climate adaptation and are undergoing a Building Energy Audit.



OUR FUNDING & FINANCES

FUNDING FOR
THE ARTS
PROVIDES
SUPPORT FOR
THE COMMUNITY

We are proud to be a Creative Scotland Regularly Funded Organisation, and grateful for all their support. We are also proudly supported by the University of Stirling, and by several Trusts and Foundations, individual donors and companies.

Key funders since 2019 have included The MacRobert Trust, Children in Need, The Robertson Trust, The Foyle Foundation, The Backstage Trust, Garfield Weston, Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust, RS Macdonald, Misses Barrie Charitable Trust, Stirling Voluntary Enterprise, The Co-op, and the Royal Bank of Scotland Regenerate Fund. Thank you to all those who have supported our work.

Looking ahead, our ambition is as big as ever, and we have exciting plans to build on the successes of the past four years. We are in the process of applying to Creative Scotland's Multi-Year Fund and remain committed to providing a varied programme of high-quality work with a passion to widen access to the arts for everyone.

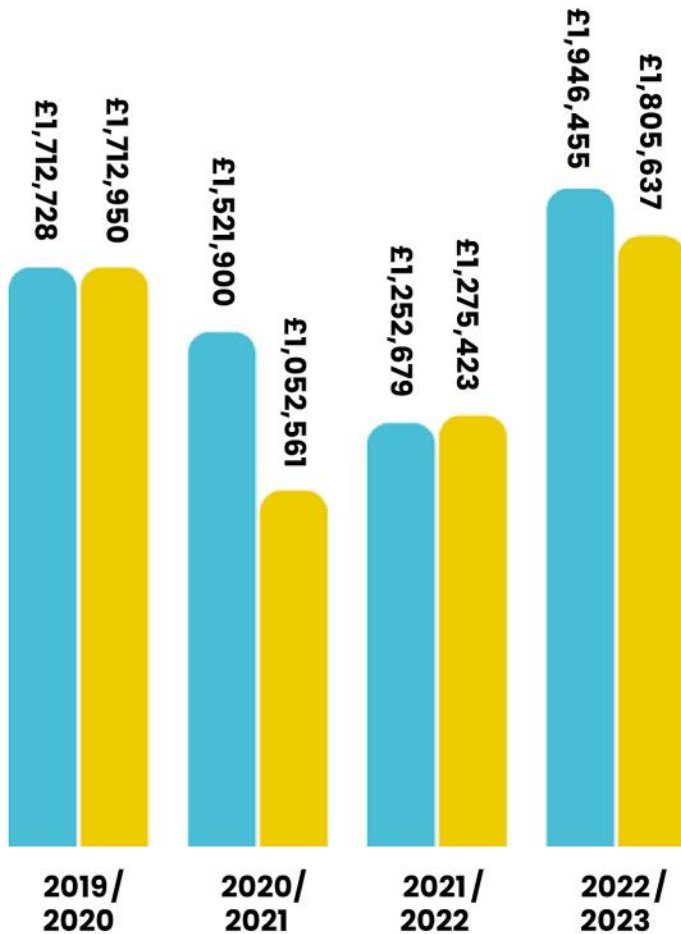
Alison Donaldson | *The MacRobert Trust*

The MacRobert Trust has been supportive of the University of Stirling since 1966 when a donation of £250,000 was made towards the first new University in Scotland for 400 years.

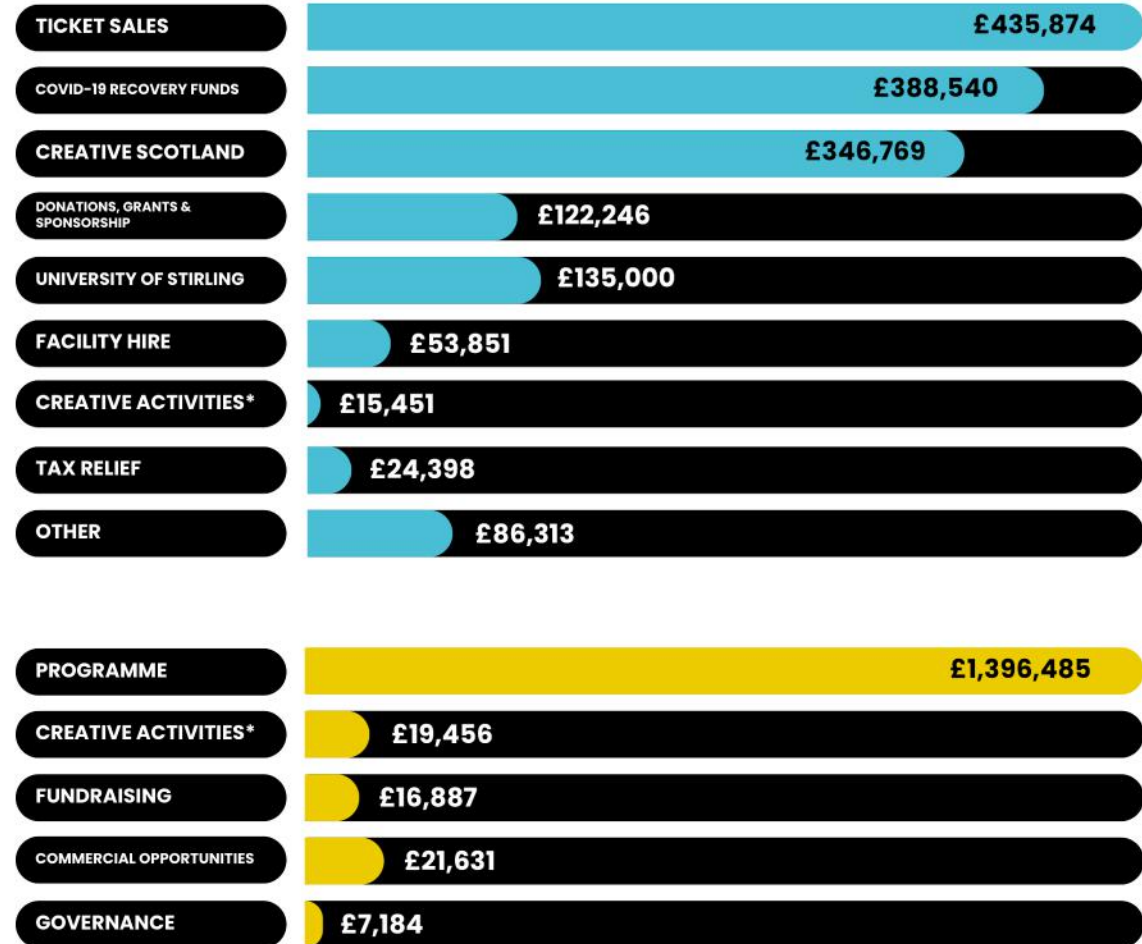
We are delighted to still be connected with MacRobert Arts Centre today, where their aims still align well with the MacRobert Trust's ongoing commitment to advancing education, supporting the arts and helping to bring communities together.



TOTAL INCOME/ EXPENDITURE



AVERAGE INCOME/ EXPENDITURE



■ INCOME
■ EXPENDITURE

*In relation to Creative Activities, each year we benefited from additional fundraised income that was spent on restricted projects.

WITH THANKS TO ALL STAFF WHO WORKED WITH US BETWEEN 2019 and 2023

Abbie Freeman
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Daniel Hippisley-Sinclair

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David Stainbank
Donna Kennedy
Edana O'Donnell-Webb
Elizabeth Drake
Elizabeth Fuller
Ellie McFarlane
Ellie Jack
Emma Hunter
Emma Razi
Esther Currie
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Mark Ritchie
Martin Doyle
Mathieu Monclar

Meara O'Donnell-Webb
Melissa Malcolm
Mia Eames
Naomi Egbon
Neil Simpson
Nick Findlay
Nicola Ould
Nikki Kalkman
Petre Dobre
Roslyn Scott
Rowan Berry
Sam Andie Bennett
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Zoe Arschavir

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Macrobert Arts Centre
University of Stirling
Stirling
FK9 4LA
01786 466666
info@macrobertartscentre.org
www.macrobertartscentre.org

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