

# Live Art UK

the national network of Live Art promoters



December 15, 2010

Jeremy Hunt MP  
Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
London  
SW1Y 5DH

Dear Jeremy Hunt,

Live Art UK is deeply concerned about the recent cuts by DCMS to Arts Council England (ACE). At a time when artists and arts organizations are planning their futures and preparing for significant cuts to arts provision, we wish to collectively respond to the critical shifts being implemented by DCMS.

Live Art UK is a national consortium of venues, promoters and facilitators who collectively support and represent a range of innovative and experimental artistic practices. As such, we represent a diverse and vibrant ecology. We support the founding ambitions of the Arts Council and its current aims: "to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives".

The Arts Council originated as the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) in 1940. If the value of Government support for the arts was recognized in the midst of the Second World War, it is striking that such support is being so systematically undermined today.

The consequences of the funding cuts will almost inevitably lead to a centralization and clustering of arts activity among the metropolitan centres, a reduction in the diversity of voices expressing themselves, and a decline in the cultural richness of everyday life. Most importantly, the UK's capacity to encourage artists to take risks, to self-reflect and to see the world in alternative ways will be severely diminished.

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We are particularly concerned by DCMS's plan to cut ACE's administrative costs by 50%. ACE recently completed a major restructuring, which included significant cost savings, and is now implementing a considered strategy for the future of the arts in England. ACE is now a lean and efficient agency, whose administrative structure is appropriate for the critical challenges and opportunities it now faces. Further cuts to ACE will undercut and compromise ACE's capacity to implement and oversee this new strategy, and singularly fails to acknowledge its recent structural review. We hope you will acknowledge that beyond its basic function as a grant-distribution organisation, ACE should always play a crucial role in encouraging a rich and diverse creative ecology in this country.

We know that England, alongside many countries in Western Europe, will be increasingly dependent on the strength of the knowledge industries in the years ahead. Emerging economies are on course to outstrip our industrial and manufacturing capacity. Now, more than ever, we are reliant on the quality of our education, and our ability to communicate and think creatively. Leaders with the UK's long term interest at heart need to support the knowledge industries. This cannot be done without the nurturing of the arts and facilitating access to higher education.

The cuts to ACE, the cuts to the arts and humanities within Higher Education, and the proposed increases in university fees will not facilitate the growth of knowledge industries, and can only lead to a diminished society.

Sincerely,

**Live Art UK:**

**The Arches, Arnolfini, Artsadmin, BAC, The Basement, the Bluecoat, Chapter Arts Centre, Chelsea Theatre, Colchester Arts Centre, Compass Live Art in Yorkshire and the Humber, Fierce Festival, Forest Fringe, greenroom, Home live art, Inbetween Time Productions, LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre), Live Art Development Agency, Live at LICA (Nuffield Theatre Lancaster), New Work Network, Theatre Bristol, and Wunderbar**

cc:

Ed Vaizey, MP

Alan Davey, Chief Executive, Arts Council England

Dame Liz Forgan, Chair, Arts Council England

Andrew Nairne, Executive Director, Arts, Arts Council England

Moira Sinclair, Executive Director London, Arts Council England