



# FLATPACK PROJECTS

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR  
1ST SEPTEMBER 2023 – 31ST AUGUST 2024

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: CE005084 (ENGLAND AND WALES)  
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1162754



Image credit: Katja Ogrin

**"I WENT TO FLATPACK AND...  
LIFE IMPROVED."**

- FLATPACK 2024 AUDIENCE MEMBER





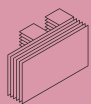
## SUMMARY

Putting together this report offers a brief opportunity to pause and look back over what we've been up to during the past year. Once again I'm stunned by the expertise, passion and openness of Flatpack's small team, and the sheer variety of connections forged with audiences, artists and partners.

Whether it be audiovisual spa treatments, community film histories or lighting up a local park with David Bowie and his puppet pals, the work contained within the following pages is as gloriously eclectic as ever. United by the following ambitions:

- Bring people together
- Show amazing work
- Illuminate place
- Nurture Creativity

**- Ian Francis, Flatpack Director**



# FLATPACK 2023-24: THE HEADLINES



**COMMISSIONED AND CHAMPIONED NEW WORK, BRINGING  
70+ ARTISTS AND FILMMAKERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO  
BIRMINGHAM FOR THE EIGHTEENTH FLATPACK FESTIVAL**



# FLATPACK 2023-24: THE HEADLINES



Image credit: Katja Ogrin

**SPENT OUR SUMMER TRANSFORMING OUTDOOR SPACES  
INTO AL FRESCO CINEMAS FOR 10,000 FILM FANS**



## **FLATPACK 2023-24: THE HEADLINES**



Image credit: Sharonjit Sutton

**PRESENTED 310 SCREENINGS AND EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION  
WITH 84% SAYING THEY LEFT FEELING CONNECTED,  
MOVED, HAPPY AND INSPIRED**

# FLATPACK 2023-24: THE HEADLINES



Image credit: Brian Harley

**PRODUCED TWO NEW FILMS ABOUT LITTLE KNOWN  
MOMENTS OF CINEMA HISTORY IN  
BIRMINGHAM AND SHROPSHIRE**



## **FLATPACK 2023-24: THE HEADLINES**



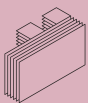
Image credit: Katja Ogrin

**SPEARHEADED A PROJECT TO PROTECT AND CELEBRATE THE HERITAGE OF THE ELECTRIC - THE UK'S OLDEST CINEMA - IN THE CONTEXT OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR STATION STREET**



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**"I'M ALWAYS INTRIGUED TO SEE WHAT  
FLATPACK, WHICH IS COMMITTED  
TO SHOWING FILM IN ALL SHAPES  
AND SIZES, HAS ASSEMBLED FOR ITS  
ANNUAL FESTIVAL. THINK CRAFTY  
CROSS-CULTURAL INVENTION WITH  
NO MANUAL RATHER THAN FACTORY  
READYMADES."**

- SIGHT & SOUND MAGAZINE

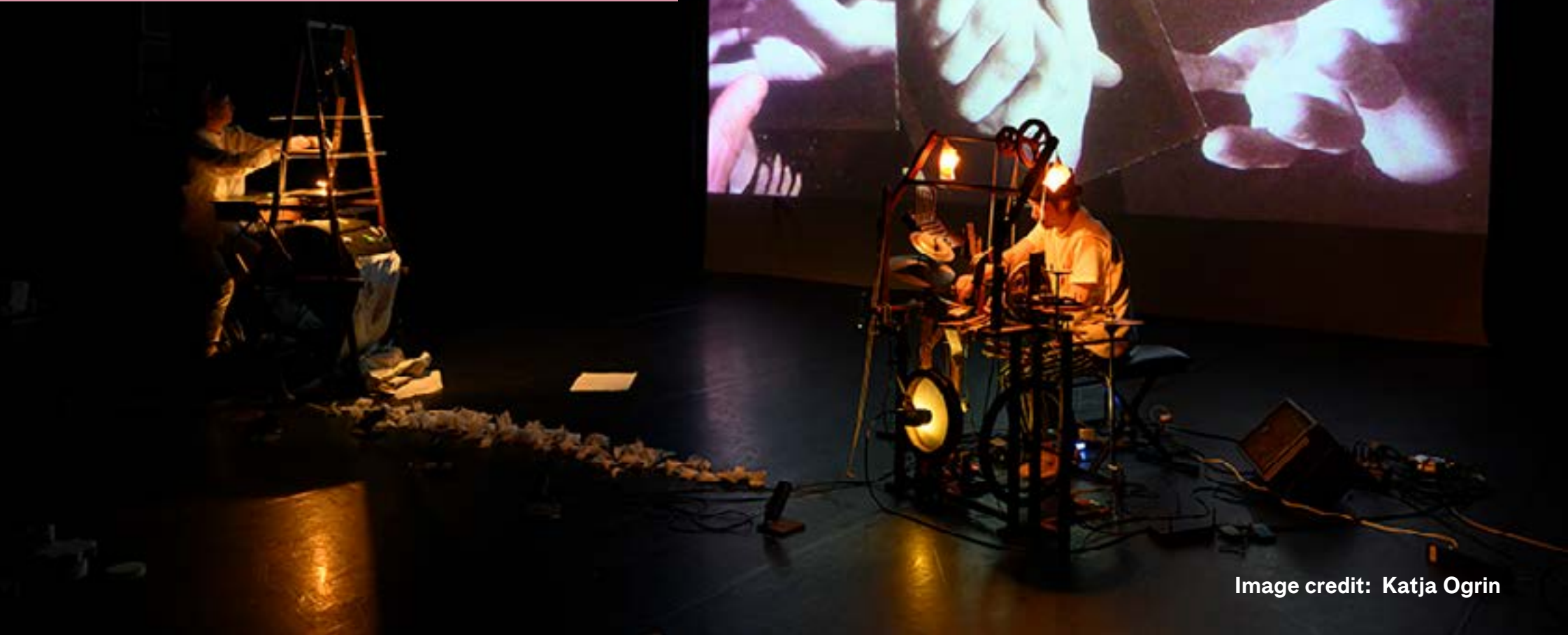
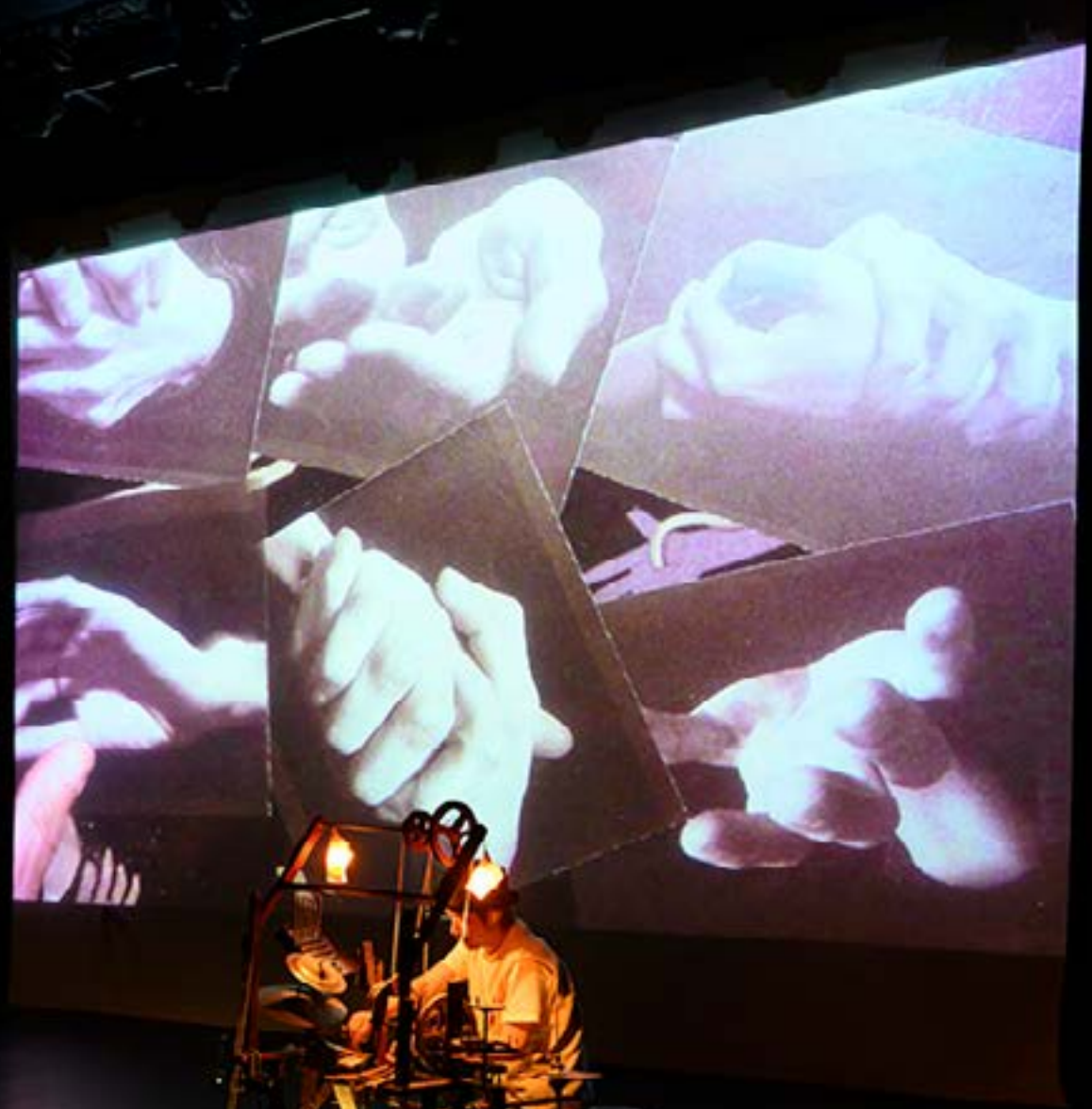


Image credit: Katja Ogrin





# FLATPACK FESTIVAL

## FLATPACK FESTIVAL 2024

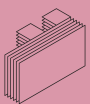
The 18th Flatpack Festival was a joyous feast of cinematic treats that (in the words of our audience) “expanded the mind” and “refreshed the soul”.

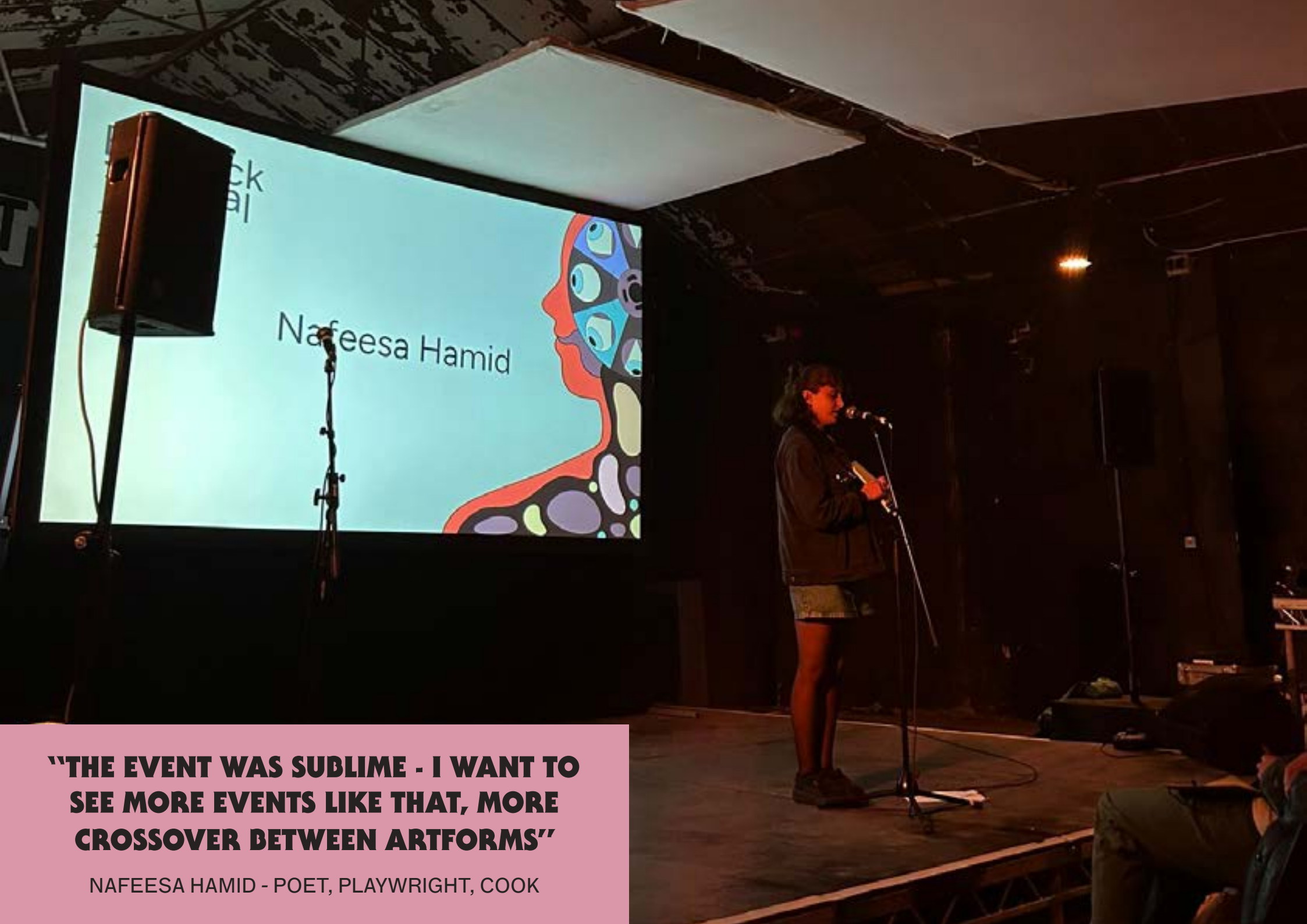
We commissioned new work from international and local artists, and hosted UK and world premieres that wouldn’t otherwise have been seen by a Birmingham audience.

Our imaginative, multi-disciplinary approach to programme continues to cement us as one of the UK’s most ambitious and creatively programmed festivals.

## NIGHTS TO REMEMBER

- Ukrainian experimental band Protreba Group’s new live score programme led us through 40 years of Ukrainian animation
- Poetry and film came together with four brilliant spoken word artists performing creative responses to short animations and archive material
- Texan composer and sonic adventurer Graham Reynolds stole hearts and blew minds with his first solo EP
- We were given an afternoon of audiovisual magic courtesy of Japanese AV-performance duo Usaginingen





**“THE EVENT WAS SUBLIME - I WANT TO  
SEE MORE EVENTS LIKE THAT, MORE  
CROSSOVER BETWEEN ARTFORMS”**

NAFEESA HAMID - POET, PLAYWRIGHT, COOK



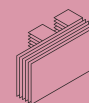
## PREMIERES INCLUDED

- Birmingham-produced *Booty* (world premiere)
- Peter Mettler's *While the Green Grass Grows* (UK premiere)
- Alison O'Daniel's *The Tuba Thieves* (UK premiere)
- 4K restoration of Bridgett M Davis's *Naked Acts* (UK premiere)

## CINEMATIC EXPERIMENTS

- Trailblazing filmmaker Jan Kulka brought his opto-mechanical projecting apparatus the Archeoscope to Birmingham from Prague, exploring the essence of film
- Visual artist Marco Broeders and sound artist Julian Edwardes delivered a transformative 'spa' experience that stimulates the brain by projecting patterns and colours directly into your eyeballs
- Our opening night saw film used as a medium to create new work, as audiovisual artists People Like Us and The Light Surgeons harnessed digital and analogue methods to produce new narratives, taking us on a journey through cinema

**1/3 OF ALL FESTIVAL ATTENDEES CAME TO SEE  
SOMETHING THEY WOULDN'T USUALLY SEE**



**“WHAT A TRIP! BIRMINGHAM IS  
SUCH A COOL CITY AND FLATPACK  
FESTIVAL IS A TRULY AWESOME  
EVENT WITH PLENTY TO SEE.”**

ARTIST JAN KULKA, ON VISITING BIRMINGHAM  
FROM PRAGUE



Image credit: Katja Ogrin





# FLATPACK ON THE ROAD

We worked with organisations across the Midlands to deliver film events to local audiences.

## THE RANDHAWA STORY

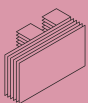
During 2023 we worked with a Hindu mandir in Sparkbrook to mount a series of Sunday afternoon screenings of Indian classics, in a nod to the building's previous life as the Waldorf cinema.

Out of this collaboration emerged a new documentary about the Randhawa family who ran the Waldorf during the 1970s, made by Sima Gonsai and Joseph Potts - two local filmmakers with their own personal connection to this story. The film premiered at the mandir during Flatpack 2024, alongside a programme of live music and dance.

## IMPERIAL REVISITED

We took a trip back to the golden age of Hindi cinema as part of Moseley Road Bath's Balsall Heath Living Room project, with classic songs from the likes of Mohammed Rafi and Asha Bhosle along with two rarely-seen BBC films, both from 1973:

A Touch of Eastern Promise and Bombay Superstar.



## AL FRESCO CINEMA

We spent our summer travelling across the Midlands and beyond with our outdoor cinema kit, spreading our al fresco cinema magic.

Highlights include:

- A sell-out screening of cult favourite *The Lost Boys* at Dudley Castle
- A free family day of film, live music, spoken word, arts and crafts stalls, games and workshops at Calthorpe Park in partnership with Säheli Hub, South Asian Arts Collective and Fruit and Nut Village
- Writing With Light, a new film and literature festival in book-lovers paradise Hay-On-Wye
- A weekend of outdoor film at Birmingham's Botanical Gardens, including a screening of *Labyrinth* complete with masquerade ball

**"JUST A GORGEOUS EVENT! THANK YOU SO MUCH.  
FAVE CINEMA EXPERIENCE OF THE YEAR"**

- Botanical Gardens attendee







**"CAN WE DO THIS EVERY YEAR?!"**

HIDDEN RIVER FESTIVAL ATTENDEE



# NURTURING CREATIVITY

## NURTURING CREATIVITY

### **BUILD YOUR OWN FILM NIGHT**

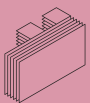
We partnered with Phoenix Cinema in Leicester and two Midlands universities (Coventry and Nottingham Trent), offering valuable industry insight and practical programming skills to young people interested in film exhibition. Participants went on to host sold out film nights and make their own mini movies.

### **COLOUR BOX**

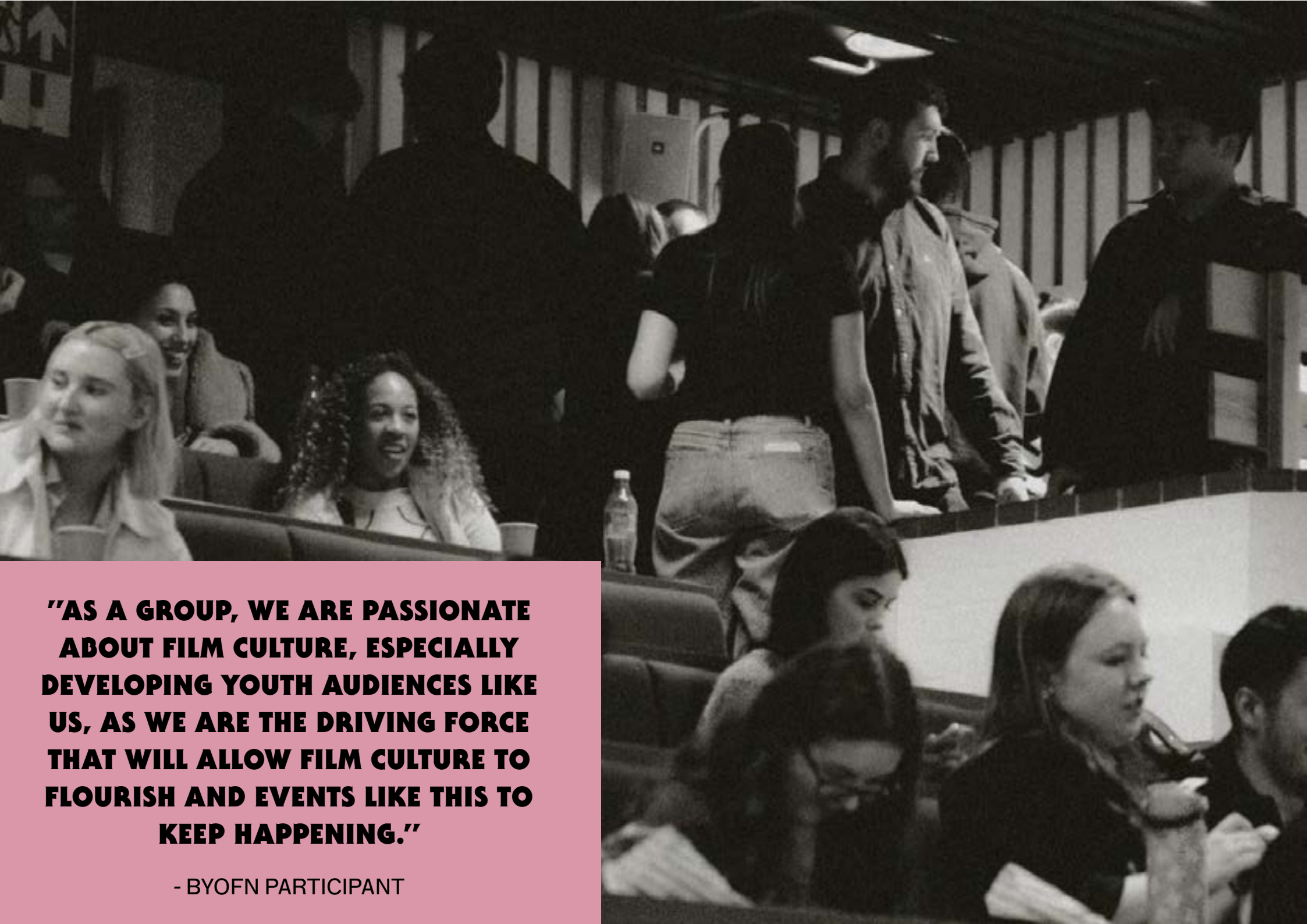
Our monthly family screenings at Midlands Arts Centre continue to thrive, with the first Sunday of each month becoming a popular fixture for families across the region. Combining creative workshops with screenings of classic and international films, we introduce young audiences to diverse cinematic experiences, encouraging deeper engagement through a playful approach to film criticism.

### **OVER THE COUNTER CULTURE**

We supported the graduation project of Curator Joseph Wallace on a programme of four film events exploring consumerism through the prism of abandoned shopping malls.







**"AS A GROUP, WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT FILM CULTURE, ESPECIALLY DEVELOPING YOUTH AUDIENCES LIKE US, AS WE ARE THE DRIVING FORCE THAT WILL ALLOW FILM CULTURE TO FLOURISH AND EVENTS LIKE THIS TO KEEP HAPPENING."**

**- BYOFN PARTICIPANT**

## GUEST CURATION AT FLATPACK 2024

- Yifan He's film programme 'Chinese Queers; Diasporic Dykes' explored Chinese diasporic lesbian identity
- Sound artist Bint Mbareh gave a moving performance as part of Maria Paradinas' screening of R21: aka Restoring Solidarity about the Japanese solidarity movement with Palestine
- Ahfiwe Cinema (a "live archive" focused on Black women's cinematic contributions) shared Julie Dash's acclaimed Diary of An African Nun and 1930s silent Hellbound Train by Eloyice Gist
- Birmingham-based Radical Exhibition Collective hosted an evening of South Asian Solarpunk with audiovisual artist Seema Mattu
- Film historian and professor Valentina Vitali presented a selection of award-winning short films from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Myanmar



**NURTURING  
CREATIVITY**





**"FLATPACK'S SUPPORT HAS BEEN INVALUABLE  
IN BRINGING A DIVERSE RANGE OF FILM  
SCREENINGS TO OUR RURAL DISTRICT,  
EMPOWERING LOCAL VENUES AND  
ORGANISATIONS TO CONFIDENTLY HOST FILM  
EVENTS. THEIR COMMITMENT HAS TRULY HELPED  
ENRICH THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF OUR  
COMMUNITY"**

- SARAH BIRD, OUTSIDE ARTS



## SPOTLIGHT ON STAFFORDSHIRE

From 2023-2026 we're working with partners and exhibitors across Staffordshire on a jam-packed programme of screenings and events designed to grow film audiences across the county.

Our mission? Supporting anyone who shows or wants to show films in Staffordshire to develop a connected, thriving film scene.

This is the latest in a series of 'Spotlight' interventions carried out by Flatpack in their work as co-lead of Film Hub Midlands together with Broadway Cinema in Nottingham. Since 2018, the hub has championed and facilitated film activity in key areas where there is a significant lack of provision, building ambition, expertise and infrastructure.

In 2023, this work inspired a UK-wide initiative led by BFI Film Audience Network investing in culturally underserved communities across eight local areas. Spotlight has gone national! Next, the world...





**"THE PUBLIC RESPONSE SINCE THE CINEMA CLOSED ITS DOORS HAS BEEN STAGGERING. PEOPLE LOVE THE LAYERS OF HISTORY IN THIS PLACE, AND IT HAS GIVEN AUDIENCES SOMETHING DIFFERENT IN A CITY WHERE THE FILM OFFER IS QUITE NARROW CONSIDERING THE SIZE AND DIVERSITY OF OUR POPULATION."**

**- IAN FRANCIS, FLATPACK DIRECTOR**



## THE ELECTRIC CINEMA

The 2024 Flatpack Festival took place without the Electric Cinema, following the venue's closure at the beginning of the year. It's a building which embodies the city's rich cinema history in its many chapters, from silent films in 1909 through newsreels, cartoons and arthouse double-bills to the boutique sofa offer of more recent times.

Losing the Electric would be a huge loss to Birmingham and the UK, and in the light of redevelopment plans for Station Street we've been working with a range of partners to ensure the best possible outcome for the city and its independent film scene.

The results of our feasibility work will be made public in spring 2025.

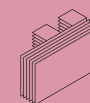
## ECHOES OF THE SOIL

As part of the BFI's UK-wide Powell and Pressburger celebrations we commissioned and produced a short documentary about the shooting of the Mary Webb adaptation *Gone to Earth* in Shropshire in the summer of 1949. We tracked down three Shropshire locals who were child extras in the film, and screened it for a sell-out audience in Much Wenlock's Priory Hall.

This approach - using film as a tool to explore the story of a place - is integral to what we do at Flatpack. We'll be building on this work and delving further into Shropshire's film stories as part of a BFI-funded project in 2025.



# MIDLANDS FILM EXHIBITION







# MAKING IT HAPPEN

## WHO WE ARE

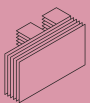
Flatpack is a mobile arts organisation born out of a monthly film and mixed-media night in Digbeth. Every May you'll find us taking over venues across Birmingham with the "magnificently eclectic" Flatpack Festival, while throughout the year we pop up across the Midlands with everything from family activities to al fresco horror. Our mission? To enrich people's lives through imaginative film events.

## FILM HUB MIDLANDS

Flatpack is a lead partner in Film Hub Midlands, an initiative as part of the BFI Film Audience Network to develop a thriving film culture in the Midlands. Among other things this means working with partners across the region, sending out monthly Filmwire bulletins and breeding the next generation of exhibitors through Build Your Own Film Night.

## THE TEAM

Everything that Flatpack achieves is done so with a core team of six staff members alongside a pool of freelancers and volunteers. The Trustees want to thank Team Flatpack for all that they do and congratulate them on a fantastic year.





**“WORKING WITH FLATPACK WAS  
AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY,  
NOT JUST IN GETTING HANDS-ON  
SUPPORT FROM A RENOWNED  
ARTS ORGANISATION,  
BUT IN ESTABLISHING NEW  
CREATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL  
PARTNERSHIPS IN THE REGION.  
THEY GAVE FULL CREATIVE  
CONTROL, HELPED PROMOTE  
THE EVENT AND FACILITATED  
A JOYOUS ENVIRONMENT  
THAT EXTENDED TO AUDIENCE  
EXCITEMENT.”**

JOSEPH WALLACE



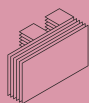
# THANK YOU

Flatpack Projects is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, reg no 1162754

Our core funders are Arts Council England and the British Film Institute.

In partnership with Broadway in Nottingham, Flatpack also co-lead Film Hub Midlands as part of the BFI Film Audience Network. Along with core funding and earned income, Flatpack's work would not be possible without the support of a huge range of partners, trusts & foundations and cultural institutes. In 2023/24, these included:

- The British Council
- Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- John Feeney Charitable Trust
- The University of Birmingham
- Sasakawa Foundation
- Saintbury Trust
- The Daiwa Foundation
- Blakemore Foundation
- William A Cadbury Foundation
- The National Trust
- Birmingham City Council
- BFI Network
- Doc Society
- National Film And TV School
- Saheli Hub
- West Midlands Combined Authority
- Outside Arts
- The Barber Institute of Fine Arts
- The Birmingham Botanical Gardens
- Mockingbird Cinema
- Midlands Arts Centre





## PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

## SUMMARY OF THE OBJECTS OF THE CHARITY SET OUT IN ITS GOVERNING DOCUMENT

1. To promote appreciation of and education in the arts and their associated technologies, especially but not exclusively those of the cinema, film and other forms of moving images, through the production and performance of festivals, workshops, seminars, projects, events, online resources, new media and in any other ways as the CIO may decide from time to time.
2. To advance the education of the public in the history, culture, aesthetics, practice and theory of arts, cinema, film and other moving images.

## STATEMENT OF THE CHARITY'S POLICY ON RESERVES

*It is the policy of Flatpack Projects (CIO) to retain sufficient reserves to cover the organisation's overheads for a 3 month period should there be any unexpected costs or delays in receiving any funds owed.*

The trustees have regard to the guidance issued by the charity commission on public benefit.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 3 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Dan Lawson - Chair of Trustees

# CHARITY INFORMATION

