nofitstate
circus

Year 2023

january

Winter Programme

We ran lots of free circus and craft activities at Four Elms with our local community.

Winter Warm Space

In response to the cost of living crisis, we opened Four Elms as a creative Warm Space starting in January for families, carers, children and adults from the local area. The enthusiastic take-up and feedback from people confirms that we succeeded in creating a safe, warm and welcoming space for all.

New Adult Drop-in Classes

We started running weekly adult drop-in classes for both Juggling Club and Circus Mish Mash sessions on a free or pay what you feel basis.

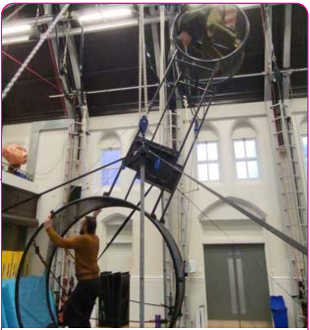
february

Park Light, 25 February

Park Light was an outdoor event in Brewery Park. It included a display of fire sculptures, showcased skills by participants, leading up to a celebration of fire and light. This event was attended by 300 local people.

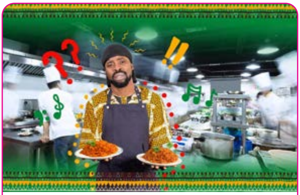
Clifton Street Festival Photo Trail

We displayed large-scale images from the Clifton Street Festival on public billboards at the junction of Clifton Street/Tin Street, in local businesses, shop windows, as well as in the STAR Hub in Tremorfa. The photo trail was a chance to remember and celebrate the diverse community of the area.



Circus Purposeless Experiment with New Circus Apparatus

Circus Purposeless used our space at Four Elms to experiment with their new circus apparatus, 'wheel of death' which they used in a show for Fool's Delight Circus later in the year.



Music Theatre Wales Rehearse The Jollof House Opera at Four Elms

Music Theatre Wales rehearsed and performed a work in progress showing of their new production 'The Jollof House Party Opera' at Four Elms. It was a live pop-up experience serving a Nigerian delicacy accompanied by a 15-minute hip-hop influenced operatic story.

march

Alf's Passing

We were shocked and saddened to hear that Alf, a long-time friend of the company and a performer in many of our early shows, hung up his hats for the last time. He is much missed, but his soul and memories are everliving.

The Circus Village

350+ Participants

7 Residencies

3 Nations

The Circus Village Programme

The Circus Village programme included three main phases:

1. Welsh Youth & Community Focus | 10 - 15 March
2. Challenging Your Creative Practice & Professional Development | 17 March - 2 April
3. The Circus Village Residencies

The Circus Village was completely free to attend with 249 funded participant spaces.

Phase 1: Welsh Youth & Community

During this phase, we welcomed 7 youth circus groups from across Wales. It was an opportunity for young people to come together, train, network and expand their skills. 48 Youth Circus participants took part, in addition to 16 Youth Leaders. We also welcomed teachers, community participants and non-professional artists looking to develop technical, teaching and performance skills.

Phase 2: Professional Development

The professional development workshops included participants who were invited to stay for 3-6 days focusing on a development area of their choice. It was an opportunity for professional circus artists to learn and train together.

Phase 3: The Circus Village Residencies

We supported 7 creative residencies as part of The Circus Village, providing them with funding and a space to work on their shows. Some of these residencies also performed at The Circus Village FESTIVAL.

Circus Zambia performers participated in The Circus Village Residency 2023 and performed in The Circus Village Cabaret Night.

Clare Crook - one of the residencies at The Circus Village 2023

april

Warm Space Extended to Creative Community Space

In response to the community demand, our warm space was extended until July to provide and support further creative opportunities for local people.

CELSA™
GROUP

Celsa Steel UK: Steel for the Big Top

Start of our new relationship with Celsa Steel UK, including a donation of steel to create new seating and palleting for our Big Top tent, as well as circus entertainment for Celsa's 20th anniversary celebration event in Cardiff Arms Park later in the year.

Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

Arts Council England Continued NPO Funding 2023-26

Renewed funding offer was received from Arts Council England as part of their 2023-2026 National Portfolio of revenue funded Organisations (NPO), enabling work benefiting audiences, artists and the circus sector in England and internationally.

Wider Impact of our Work - WISERD Study

Our new community programme and its impact was included as exemplary community development in a research study by the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD), a national, interdisciplinary, social science research institute: a collaborative venture between the universities of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, South Wales and Swansea.

ccha

Deepening our partnership with Cardiff Community Housing Association

Our local partnership with Cardiff Community Housing Association (CCHA) continues, co-creating circus activities with CCHA tenants in Adamsdown, Splott and Tremorfa.

The Circus Village FESTIVAL | 13 - 16 April

Sector Day - The biggest gathering of circus artists, companies and promoters in the UK, and an opportunity for us to bolster our artform and promote it nationally and internationally.

THE CIRCUS VILLAGE FESTIVAL

The Circus Village FESTIVAL

The Circus Village FESTIVAL was a 4-day circus festival delivered by NoFit State Circus and friends at the Recreation Ground in Swansea from 13-16 April.

Family Fun Day - tonnes of fun circus activities for kids, entertaining walk-about performances, and special guests!

The Wing Scuffle Spectacular by The Revel Puck Circus

Circus Village Cabaret Night

Bitchcraft by Kitsch & Sync Collective

SABOTAGE in Swansea | 7 - 16 April

The first performances of our 2023 SABOTAGE tour began in Swansea, Wales. SABOTAGE opened prior to The Circus Village FESTIVAL and continued to perform as part of the festival.

The Big Erection by Circus Purposeless

Smile by Leyton John

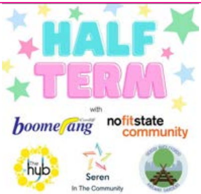
Turk(ish) by Poppy Plowman

Supported by The Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council England, The Garfield Weston Foundation, Creative Scotland, The Welsh Government. Special mention to Tiny Rebel for sponsoring NoFit State with their awescrafted beers, benefitting audiences in Wales. Thank you!

Partnership With Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru

In partnership with Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru, who support young asylum seekers, we brought 20 young people to the festival to see our Big Top show SABOTAGE in Swansea. For most of them, this was their first experience of watching live circus in the UK. Some had also helped us build a fire sculpture for our February Park Light event.

may



First Play Action Group (PAG) meeting

PAG is based on a community development model of bringing community organisations together to plan and deliver creative programmes collaboratively. The first PAG meeting was attended by Boomerang, STAR Hub, Railway Gardens, Seren in the Community and NoFit State.

Circus Trainer Exchange

Our trainee Inclusive Circus Arts Teacher embarked on a week-long placement with circus trainer Pete Duncan in the Midlands. In return, a trainee teacher from Brighton was hosted by NoFit State for a week in June. The aim of these placements was to widen experiences and support with talent development.

Arts & Business Cymru Awards Won

We won two awards at the 2023 Arts & Business Cymru Award Ceremony in the

SABOTAGE in Bristol, 13 May - 2 June

NoFit State circus returned to Bristol with our new show SABOTAGE for the first time in 10 years. Bristol marked the end of our performances in the UK for 2023, before packing our bags to mainland Europe.

‘Arts, Business & the Community’ category, as well as an overall ‘Arts Award’, in recognition for our transformative community work and our successful partnership with Cardiff Community Housing Association (CCHA).

THE METAMODERN
CIRCUS
26th May 2023

Hosted Kate Kavanagh’s ‘Metamodern Circus Symposium’

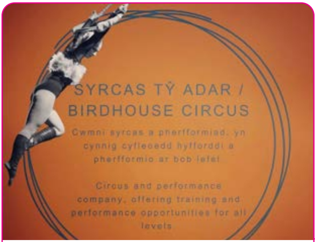
Inspired by the relatively uncharted territory of metamodern circus, a mini-festival that brought together circus practitioners and scholars of metamodern phenomena took place at Four Elms on 26 May.

Bamboo Circus R&D at 101 Outdoor Arts, 30 May - 3 June

Bamboo Circus is a work in progress project developing a new spectacular, high-impact, high-skill outdoor circus production using only UK-grown bamboo and human bodies.

Bamboo Circus R&D was created as a collaboration between Imagineer, Orit Azaz and NoFit State Circus, to explore what circus structures, stories and performance can be created with UK-grown bamboo. It is part of the Imagine Bamboo Is Everywhere 2023 creative enquiry.

june


SYRCAS TŶ ADAR /
BIRDHOUSE CIRCUS
Cwmni syrcas a pherfformiad, yn cynnig cyfleoedd hyfforddi a pherfformio ar bob lefel
Circus and performance company, offering training and performance opportunities for all levels

Bird House Circus in Four Elms Building to Trial New Classes

Bird House Circus is a new local circus and performance company set up by a group of NoFit State teachers. A new programme of classes for beginners, experienced students and practitioners was trialled in Four Elms, offering a range of circus skills, performance and movement classes.

Play Action Group (PAG) Half-Term Activities

We coordinated with a range of partners across East Cardiff, organising and delivering a week of community circus and other activities.

SABOTAGE
CIRCUS
BAND

Making our Way to Mainland Europe

After successful shows in Wales and England, the NoFit State touring company made their way to mainland Europe for the first time since Brexit with performances in Lyon (France), Antwerp (Belgium) and Prague (Czech Republic).

Celebrating Refugee Week

We worked with local community partners, including the Welsh Refugee Council, to celebrate Refugee Week by running activities in the local area from 19 - 25 June.

nofitstate

SABOTAGE in Lyon, France
22 June - 8 July

We kickstarted our shows in mainland Europe, performing first at the Festival Les Nuits de Fourvière, a multidisciplinary festival dedicated to the performing arts. SABOTAGE performed in Lyon to sold out crowds.

july

British Council Reception in Lyon to Celebrate Wales in France Year, 5 July

To celebrate The Wales in France Year in 2023, we hosted a British Council reception for Welsh and French Government representatives, arts organisations, friends and partners.

Free!
Summer Fun

Summer Holiday Programme - Extension of the Play Action Group

We worked with seven local partners to deliver a programme of free Summer Fun activities in 12 locations across Splott, Adamsdown and Tremorfa. From play sessions, singing and dancing workshop, to circus, free-running, wild arts and nature tales.

Bamboo Circus Summer R&D

The Festival of Communities Event

We were invited to showcase our work at the Festival of Communities Event, a community cohesion event at Cardiff City Hall, organised by the Ethnic Minority Welsh Women Achievement Association (EMWWAA) in collaboration with the Welsh Government, as part of their commitment to an Anti-Racist Wales.

Bamboo Circus R&D at Citrus Arts, Pontypridd from 17 - 28 July followed by a work-in-progress performance in Bedworth on Saturday 29 July as part of Imagine Bamboo Is Everywhere.

SABOTAGE in Antwerp, Belgium
20 July - 5 August

Antwerp was our second stop in mainland Europe. SABOTAGE performances in Antwerp started in July and we performed at Zomer van Antwerpen, an extensive and high-level festival that includes performance, music, film, circus and large-scale street arts.

Milltir Sgwâr / Square Mile Partnership

A new 18-month community partnership project begins. The Square Mile Partnership includes Adamsdown Councillors, freelance creatives, Cardiff Community Housing Association, Adamsdown Primary School, Green Squirrel, Llamau, local PCSOs, Oasis, Welsh Refugee Council and NoFit State.

This project is funded by an Arts Council of Wales Connect & Flourish lottery grant.

august

GREGGS
GREGGS

Wider impact of our work – new role as a community anchor organisation

- Safer Wales approached us to pilot activities with young female domestic abuse survivors, and those who are at risk of sexual exploitation in autumn 2023.
- Boomerang Community Centre in Tremorfa invited us to run sessions for young autistic adults aged 16-25 in their venue in September.
- Cardiff Community Housing Association invited us to work with Tiger Bay Boxing Club and young people from diverse backgrounds to develop a boxing/circus showdown event.
- CCHA invited us to deliver a community workshop at their AGM in September.

SABOTAGE in Prague, Czech Republic
17 August - 3 September

Prague marked the final destinaton for our performances in mainland Europe. SABOTAGE performances ran from 17 August to 3 September at the Letní Letná Festival. Letní Letná has been setting the trends of contemporary circus in the Czech Republic and we were so excited to have been a part of the festival again this year.

Bamboo Circus R&D showing in Liverpool

Bamboo Circus project development continues in Liverpool at MAKE North Docks. The work in progress was shown as part of an Imagine Bamboo is Everywhere event in Newton le Willows.

september

Gwledd Parc Feast, 2 September

Gwledd Parc Feast was an outdoor event in Anderson Fields in Cardiff to celebrate our community, its local arts and culture, for and by the people of Splott, Adamsdown and Tremorfa. Powered by the community, Gwledd Parc Feast brought people together to enjoy a day of free fun and entertainment. The day featured a wide range of food, music, crafts, activities and performances from local artists and community groups.

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

Arts Council of Wales (ACW) Announces New Arts Portfolio Wales

The Arts Council of Wales Investment Review was announced on 27 September. Renewed funding offer for NoFit State as part of the Arts Portfolio Wales 2024 - 2027.

october

October Half-Term Activities

During October half-term we worked in partnership with local organisations to deliver a series of free October half-term activities with our local community. The activities ranged from circus, parkour, arts and crafts to keep our local community busy and entertained over the half term holidays!

from
young people below
the age of 18 years

Alison visits Zambia for Artist as Activist Project

As a result of the deepening partnership with Circus Zambia, NoFit State Circus Executive Director Alison Wood visited Lusaka, Zambia to kick off a new partnership project, ‘Artists as Activists’, enabled by a grant from Wales Arts International.

Technical Flying Bootcamp for Sherman Theatre at Four Elms

Our riggers and technicians delivered a bootcamp to the cast of the Sherman Theatre’s new show ‘Peter Pan’. The bootcamp focussed on different flying techniques, including human counter-weighting and aerial fighting.

november

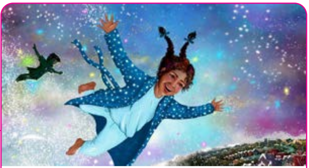
Week long Bamboo Creation
13 - 18 November

We held our first creation week for Bamboo Circus, our upcoming new outdoor show, at Four Elms. It was led by Director Mish Weaver and Bamboo Circus co-Artistic Directors Tom Rack and Orit Azaz, developing what we’ve learnt so far and starting to build bigger and bolder content.

december

AGM & Christmas Cabaret

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) happens each year, and is the event where we report to our membership about what we have been doing and what our plans are. This year the AGM was followed by the NoFit State Christmas party once again complete with circus cabaret and performances from our amazing community of class attenders and teachers.



Peter Pan Show Opened With Technical Support From NoFit State

Peter Pan opened at the Sherman Theatre featuring flying sequences designed by NoFit State Circus. The show was co-producted by Sherman Theatre and Theatr Iolo. NoFit State Circus trainer and performer Kevin McIntosh is cast in the show as Michael.

WNO
WELSH
NATIONAL
OPERA
CENEDLAETHOL
CYMRU

Welsh National Opera (WNO) Show with Circus Directed by Firenza Guidi

WNO collaborates with NoFit State and Firenza Guidi to stage Death in Venice in 2024, directed by Olivia Fuchs and featuring Mark Le Brocq and Roderick Williams. The show will include circus scenes directed by NoFit State's own Firenza Guidi.

Looking back at the impact of our work this year!

Community Programme

over 13,500

Number of people engaged in the local area this year with our NoFit State Community programme!

Number of activities we organised this year!

over 960

SABOTAGE

80	146,429	5000
Total number of performances	Total number of attendees	Total number of free and discounted vouchers given out.

the future

NoFit State as a Catalyst for Change

The transformation we have undergone over the last year and the impact we have made in this time has strengthened our commitment to being a powerful catalyst for change.

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

Noddir gan Lywodraeth Cymru
Sponsored by Welsh Government

Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND