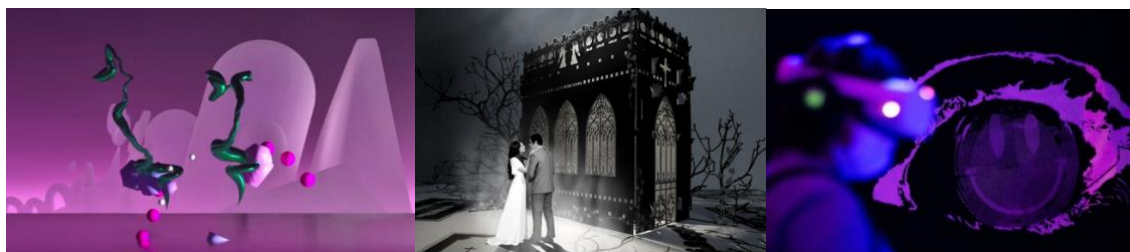




# FUTURE ART AND CULTURE



2023



PIONEERING UK ART AND TECHNOLOGY  
PROGRAMME 'FUTURE ART AND CULTURE'  
ANNOUNCES  
IMMERSIVE SHOWCASE FOR  
SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST INTERACTIVE 2023

SHOWCASE DEMONSTRATES UK AS WORLD LEADER  
IN IMMERSIVE ARTS

12 - 14 MARCH 2023: SXSW, AUSTIN, TEXAS, USA

[PRESS IMAGES](#)

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PRESS RELEASE: *27 FEBRUARY 2023*

**British Underground** and **Arts Council England** together announce the return of **Future Art and Culture** at the international festival of tech and innovation, **South by Southwest Interactive (SXSW)**. The seventh annual showcase of British talent focusing on work that explores the boundaries of art and technology, Future Art and Culture, which in 2023 receives additional support from the British Council, is presented through exhibitions, panel discussions, partnerships and networking events. It

takes place simultaneously at venues in Austin, Texas and in the metaverse, between **12 - 14 March 2023**.

From an animated augmented reality re-telling of Dracula, to a multisensory journey through an Acid House rave, and from motion capture performances that challenge the way the body is understood, to smartphone Artificial Intelligence that examines the use of facial recognition and surveillance technology, this year's programme of high profile presentations will include both US and international premieres of multidisciplinary commissions, including collaborations focused on dance, music, film and literature.

The diverse, interactive experiences will feature in the SXSW XR Experience track and include immersive AI (artificial intelligence), VR (virtual reality) and XR (extended reality) projects, together with panels on the future of the arts in the digital realm. The central digital art commissions to be presented as part of Future Art and Culture 2023, can today be revealed as:

**Darren Emerson** and **East City Films'** critically acclaimed [IN PURSUIT OF REPETITIVE BEATS](#), which will receive its US premiere at SXSW following its original presentation as part of Coventry City of Culture programme. A euphoric, interactive Virtual Reality adventure, In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats transports you into the heart of the UK's acid house movement, where finding the party is the only thing that matters. Taking audiences on a multi-sensory joyride into the past, it brings to life the stories of the promoters, police officers and rave-goers, whose rivalries and relationships drove a revolution in music and society. This multi-sensory space enables participants to feel the anticipation, trepidation, excitement and euphoria that was Acid House.

[FIGURAL BODIES](#), conceived by **Candoco Dance and Daniel Strut**, explores fantastical interaction and reimagines the ways in which the body is understood and represented through immersive technology. Seeking to challenge the absence of disabled bodies in immersive experiences, Figural Bodies is a motion-capture dance performance, which reimagines ableist representations, instead celebrating subversion and difference. Disabled dancers Kat Hawkins and Susanna Dye, located in Austin and London respectively, will be connected via a special motion capture tool and seek to find each other and communicate through virtual interaction. Audiences can watch in Virtual Reality (VR) as well as on screens, in live and pre-captured performance modes, in a powerful exploration of disability-centred design in immersive technology.

The world premiere of [THE INVITED](#): Created by Lead Artists and Directors Davy and Kristin McGuire of **Studio Maguire**, The Invited combines an exquisite fine art pop-up book with engrossing augmented reality animations to bring the story of Dracula to life as if by magic. Set in a dark, secret location, a physical book and a tablet dressed as a 'spirit detector' summon 1-5 audience members at a time, through a captivating 20-minute experience where each page turn reveals a new exquisite paper world and a new set of haunting animations to those who are invited to become part of Dracula's reincarnation.

Artist **Karen Palmer's** [CONSENSUS GENTIUM](#) (Latin for 'if everyone believes it, it must be true') is a powerful exploration into the implications of today's AI technology. It is an interactive, emotionally responsive film that integrates cutting-edge facial detection and AI, and transports audiences on a unique quest to discover what could happen if we succumb to unchecked surveillance. Through a smartphone, participants must visit their sick grandmother across a dystopian city. However, in order to do so, they are required to download a government surveillance based Global Citizen App. While Global Citizen measures their levels of dissidence and compliance, they receive

calls and messages from friends and rogue techno-activists who reveal the consequences of their choices. How will they navigate the line between compliance and dissidence in order to care for their loved ones? And at what cost? Consensus Gentium is an interactive experience designed to drive discussion about data privacy, unconscious biases and the power of technology.

**Singer Studio's** 40-minute interactive VR piece, [MRS BENZ](#) recently debuted at the Venice Biennale as part of Venice Immersive. Set in Germany in 1888, **Mrs Benz** dives into the perspective of a courageous woman who invested her reputation in her husband, Karl Benz, and his 'horseless carriage'. Bertha stole her husband's Motorwagen to travel 120 km with her two children —making his car world-famous in the process. Discover Bertha's fascinating backstory via a Quest 2 Headset, search for the blueprints of this revolutionary contraption, and learn how to assemble its engine as you drive the world's first ever car out of the Benz workshop, for the first ever time.

**Picture This Productions** has been nominated for a 2023 SXSW Innovation Award and presents [Time Investigators](#) (US title), the world's first multi-sensory augmented reality game. Aimed at engaging family audiences in diverse stories from history, the game turns players into time-travelling detectives. They must use their sight, sound and smell to investigate mysteries from the past.

Future Art and Culture also build on the success of its 2022 partnership with UK musicians [Miro Shot](#) who present a ground-breaking concert that uses virtual reality and live music, using technology they have developed through their UK startup: Mirocolabs described by the BBC as "at the forefront of bringing VR to music".

**Alongside these genre-defying experiences, Future Art and Culture in partnership with BFI and Immersive Futures Lab will also curate The UK Immersive Takeover at UK House in Austin, on 14 March. This series of panels and discussion events with the projects' creators, is focused on thought leadership and will explore the frontiers of these new creative technologies (please see further details in Editors' Notes below).**

**Crispin Parry, Founder, British Underground said:** *"Thanks to the continued support of Arts Council England and additional funding for 2023 from the British Council we have been able to support a record number of exhibitors and participants at SXSW this year. The quality and ambition of the VR, AR and XR projects being created in the UK today is exceptional and we look forward to sharing this work with the world during SXSW."*

**Simon Mellor, Deputy CEO, Arts and Culture at Arts Council England said:** *"With the support of Arts Council England, and under the expert leadership of British Underground, Future Art and Culture at SXSW has established itself as a major international annual showcase for artists and other creatives from this country working in the fields of VR, AR and XR. We are delighted to announce that we will be continuing our investment for another three years of Future Arts and Culture until 2026. For this fifth edition, we are joined by new partners British Council and BFI. Their support will enable us to present more projects than ever and enable more opportunities for a wider range of this country's creative talent to meet and work with their international peers."*

**Joel Mills, Director Music, British Council said:** *"Future Art and Culture creates opportunities for UK arts, music and tech practitioners, artists and producers to showcase exciting and innovative new work, develop new creative networks and share their ideas. It's vital that we collectively enable the UK creative sector, in the wake of the Covid 19 pandemic, to showcase talent and develop new international opportunities to secure its bright future."*

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**Editors' Notes:**

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Up to date programme information for 2023: [www.futureartandculture.com](http://www.futureartandculture.com)

Press images available to download [HERE](#).

**SXSW XR EXHIBITION 12 - 14 March - presented by Future Art and Culture:**

**Darren Emerson and East City Films: In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats**

Venue: Manchester Ballroom C - Fairmont

[Link to trailer](#)

**Candoco Dance and Daniel Strut: Figural Bodies**

Venue: Congressional Ballroom, Floor 3

[Link to trailer](#)

**Studio Maguire: The Invited**

Venue: Congressional Ballroom, Floor 3

[Link to trailer](#)

**Karen Palmer: Consensus Gentium**

Venue: Congressional Ballroom, Floor 3

[Link to trailer](#)

**Singer Studio: Mrs Benz**

Venue: Congressional Ballroom, Floor 3

[Link to Trailer](#)

**Ristband: Music Metaverse Stages**

Various locations

**SXSW Talks & Panels presented by Future Art and Culture:**

**Bring The Noise: an immersive revolution in music**

**13 March, 10:30-11:30, Venue: Room 18CD - Austin Convention Centre, Floor 4**

Dan Tucker, Executive Producer, East City Films

Darren Emerson, Director, East City Films

Max Cooper, Manager, The Wild Seeds

Hayley Popler, Senior Digital Producer, Factory International

A group panel focused on immersive events with musical roots or collaboration. Featuring 'In Pursuit Of Repetitive Beats' Director Darren Emerson (multi award winning XR filmmaker), Max Cooper (Immersive and Musical Artist) and Hayley Popler (Senior Digital Producer). The panel will discuss the new opportunities and affordances of immersive technology and how to use these to reach new audiences and create new forms of experience that unite, connect and inspire music lovers. Painting a hi-tech future for music IP that puts audiences at the heart of musical experiences in a more engaging and playful way than ever before.

### **Dance in the Metaverse: Tools for Accessibility**

**14 March, 09:00 – 10:00, Venue: Manchester A – Fairmount**

Daniel Strutt, Lecturer, Goldsmiths, University of London

Kat Hawkins, PhD Candidate, Coventry University

Ashley Noel-Hirst, PHD Candidate at Queen Mary in Artificial Intelligence in music performance

Clarice Hilton, PhD Candidate/ Research Assistant/ Creative Technologist, Goldsmiths, University of London

As the metaverse becomes the proposed next frontier for embodied connection, play, and performance, its current design, representation of bodies, and technological modes of interaction remain inaccessible to many. This panel will critically discuss the barriers to access and will give insight into practical design processes which centre disability. Focusing on dance performance, the panel brings together developers, performers and researchers to discuss sustainable and inclusive design practice; i.e. streaming tools for remote participation, and machine learning for adaptive modes of embodiment in virtual spaces. To fulfil the true potential of the cultural metaverse we must start to think about challenging its normative assumptions to reach for a concept of ‘collective affinity’.

### **UK Immersive Takeover – Presented by Future Art and Culture**

**14 March, 13.30 – 18.00, UK House, Cedar Street Courtyard**

In partnership with Arts Council England, British Council, Futures Lab, BFI, British Underground

**14 March, 13.30 – 14.00**

#### **In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats**

Director Darren Emerson in conversation with Mia Bays (BFI)

**14 March, 14.00 – 15.00**

#### **Exploring international collaboration in art and tech**

Joel Mills – Director, Music, British Council

Karen Palmer – Immersive Director and XR Exhibition Presenter

Claire Mera-Nelson – Director, Music, Arts Council England

Irini Papadimitriou – Creative Director, Future Everything

From intimate immersive experiences to large-scale spectacular events, music, art and tech production requires a breadth of cross-disciplinary working to bring together the best talent and skills. International collaboration offers an opportunity to explore and learn with global partners leading to new networks and ground-breaking creative frontiers. This discussion explores best practice in international working including research and mapping. We will also address approaches to collaborating across cultures including sources of funding and support.

**14 March, 15.00–16.00**

#### **Music Metaverse Performance**

With the explosion of experiential and immersive events across real and virtual worlds, UK band Miro Shot have proven themselves to be at the forefront of a paradigm shift in live music and technology, with their ground-breaking live virtual reality and augmented reality concert.

**14 March, 16.30 – 18.00**

#### **UK Immersive Takeover Party**

Meet the hosts and participants of the UK Immersive Takeover including producers, directors, curators, funders and collaborators for networking drinks and live music from Desta French and Folly Group.

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## **ABOUT FUTURE ART AND CULTURE**

Future Art and Culture is a major international showcasing initiative at SXSW. The project focuses on the boundaries of art and technology through exhibitions, panel discussions, partnerships and networking events.

Future Art and Culture is produced by British Underground funded by Arts Council England with additional support in 2023 from the British Council.

#### **ABOUT BRITISH UNDERGROUND**

British Underground (BU) curates and produces international showcase and streaming projects in music and the arts. BU is an Arts Council England NPO and PRSF Talent Development Partner working across culture from Stormzy to the Royal Shakespeare Company. BU has over 20 years experience producing significant showcases and events at South by Southwest, in Austin, TX (SXSW).

#### **ABOUT ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development agency for creativity and culture in England. ACE invests public money from Government and the National Lottery to support the arts and culture sector and to enable people across the country to enjoy a range of high quality cultural experiences.

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

#### **ABOUT BRITISH COUNCIL**

THE BRITISH COUNCIL is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. We do this through our work in arts and culture, education and the English language. We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2021-22 we reached 650 million people. [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)