Tuesday 31 March 2026

More than 140 UK projects receive over £2 million in second Immersive Arts funding round

Over £2 million has been allocated to 142 artist-led projects across the UK in the second round of Immersive Arts funding - a scheme supporting artists of all backgrounds and experience to work with immersive technologies.

With three distinct grant amounts available - £5,000, £20,000 and £50,000 – the funding supports artists at different stages of their creative development: to explore, experiment or expand how they make work that uses technology to actively involve an audience.

Immersive Arts received over 2700 applications from across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – surpassing the number received in the programme's first funding round. The response shows a strong and continuing demand from the UK's artists to be able to develop brave, innovative, sensitive and challenging work using immersive technologies as an integral part of their creative toolkit.

The 142 successful artists represent a truly UK-wide cohort. They are based as far north as the Outer Hebrides, to Falmouth in the south, from the Llŷn Peninsula in the west to Margate in the east, as well as across the border regions of County Derry and Tyrone in Northern Ireland – reflecting the breadth and geographic diversity of immersive talent across the UK.

£2,060,000 has been awarded in this second round of Immersive Arts grant funding – nearly double that of the first round:

- 80 x £5,000 - Explore grants

- 48 x £20,000 - Experiment grants

- 14 x £50,000 - Expand grants

Funded artists are working across a breadth of artforms including sound, music, theatre, dance, game design, visual arts, sculpture, photography, animation, architecture and filmmaking. They will be working with a huge range of immersive technologies including virtual, augmented and mixed reality, 360º film, spatial sound, haptics and tactile interfaces, artificial intelligence, biofeedback and responsive environments.

Verity McIntosh, Director of Immersive Arts and Professor of Immersive Arts and Culture at University of the West of England (UWE Bristol), said:

> "We are delighted to be able to support so many extraordinary UK artists and projects through this latest funding announcement. Our thanks to the incredible partners and funders who continue to make it possible for artists to develop their practice and make bold new works with powerful cultural impact, connecting UK creativity with audiences around the world."

Commenting on behalf of the programme funders, the UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Arts Council England (ACE), the Arts Council of Wales (ACW), Creative Scotland and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI), AHRC executive chair Christopher Smith said:

> "The first cohort of Immersive Arts-supported artists have illustrated how immersive technology can fuel growth and innovation within the arts and culture sector. We are very excited to support an even larger cohort of UK artists through this latest funding round, and very much look forward to following their progress as the work evolves."

Further details of all funded projects can be found on the Immersive Arts website. Some of the funded projects include:

London, England: Sound and Fury by Pinny Grylls – awarded an Expand grant (recipient of Experiment grant in 2025).

Sound and Fury is a hybrid theatrical experience that reimagines Shakespeare's Macbeth within the virtual world of an online game. Performed simultaneously on stage and inside the game, it bridges physical and digital spaces. Audiences are not just spectators but 'players' – joining flashmob battles in-game, shaping scenes, and feeling the impact through responsive lights, sound, and haptics. Integrated BSL and creative captioning ensure access is woven into the performance's fabric, making this hybrid experience inclusive, immersive, and unpredictable.

Pinny Grylls is an acclaimed filmmaker and 2025 BAFTA Breakthrough recipient. Her debut feature Grand Theft Hamlet, co-directed with Sam Crane, won SXSW's Best Feature Doc Jury Award, two BIFA Awards, a Grierson Award and a BAFTA longlist nomination. Distributed by MUBI, it chronicles their Stage Innovation Award winning production of "Hamlet" performance within Grand Theft Auto. Pinny is a proud member of the deaf community.

Liverpool / London, England: The Distance Between Beats Is The Only Distance Between Us by Myra Appannah – awarded an Experiment grant.

The Distance Between Beats Is The Only Distance Between Us is an ancient and intimate rhythm game built from beats created with migrant communities, where players unlock worlds of migration, memory and myth by holding beat patterns. Through rhythm, the story of how people arrive and find each other in the UK becomes something shared, something felt. Created in collaboration with Asylum Link in Toxteth with support from Music Futures, Liverpool John Moores University and FACT Liverpool, creative sessions with migrant participants will generate beats, stories and mythic characters that will directly shape the prototype.

Myra Appannah is a self-taught artist and co-director of BRiGHTBLACK. A BAFTA-longlisted writer and Creative Lead of "one of the most influential UK immersive experiences of the last 20 years" (UKRI), her work spans and blends large-scale immersive experiences, interactive installations, XR, games, film, audio, AI and live performance.

Belfast, Northern Ireland: Becoming by Helena Hamilton – awarded an Expand grant (recipient of Experiment grant in 2025).

Becoming is an interactive installation about matrescence, the profound transformation of motherhood. It draws on qualitative research with 25 mothers, reflecting recurring themes including isolation, overwhelm and joy. Many participants described the ineffability of matrescence. In response, the work combines sound, haptics, image and interaction to communicate what language alone cannot.

Helena Hamilton is an artist working at the intersections of visual art, sound, and digital interaction. Their practice explores dynamic relationships between sound, image, and site, bridging the digital and physical to create experiences that evoke meaning rather than impose it.

Dundee, Scotland: The Game by Biome Collective (Malath Abbas and Andy Truscott) – awarded an Expand grant.

The Game is an immersive sound-walk artwork in Dundee by Biome Collective. Audiences are invited to download a mobile app, wear headphones, and walk through the city. The route, pace, and pauses trigger layered audio, chants, conversations, music, and field recordings. Each walk produces a different composition, shaped by how people move through place.

The work explores football as lived culture, centred on memory, ritual, and local identity rather than stadium spectacle. It draws from the memories of Andy Truscott's father, a lifelong Dundee United supporter living with dementia. It preserves everyday journeys and matchday routines as a public artwork.

The project will expand the current prototype through co-design with Alzheimer Scotland and local partners including Dundee United Community Trust, UNESCO City of Design Dundee, and V&A Dundee. This phase deepens accessibility and community authorship, moving toward a robust public release and a city-wide launch event rooted in Dundee's football heritage.

Newport, Wales: Becoming Monster by Connor Allen – awarded an Expand grant.

The award-winning multidisciplinary artist and former Children's Laureate of Wales, Connor Allen will bring the idea of 'Becoming a Monster' to life through an immersive XR headset experience that invites audiences to step inside a series of interconnected memories drawn from his poem Remove the Knot.

Allen invites people fully into his world – shaped by abandonment, anger and loss yet ultimately transforming into hope and self-acceptance. Through intuitive immersive technology, audiences don't watch these memories from a distance; they experience them from the inside.

Blending spoken word with immersive 3D environments, the work pushes his storytelling into a new dimension – exploring the limits of language, the power of memory and how stories evolve when technology opens new doors.

Strengthening representation in immersive arts

Once again, the Immersive Arts team is encouraged to see that artists with a broad range of backgrounds and lived experiences chose to apply to the scheme. Over a quarter of applications and awarded artists in this round are from the global majority, over 55% identify as a woman, transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, agender, or other marginalised gender, and over 45% identify as disabled, D/deaf, neurodivergent or having a long-term physical or mental health condition or chronic illness.

Professor McIntosh added:

> "Research suggests that each of these communities remain significantly under-represented in the arts and technology sectors, and we are delighted to see such strong representation from incredible artists across the cohort."

Asha Easton from XR Diversity Initiative, an Immersive Arts consortium partner, said:

> "In my dual capacity representing the XR Diversity Initiative and the Innovate UK Immersive Tech Network I am deeply proud of the fact that the Immersive Arts programme has attracted applications from artists from an incredibly diverse range of backgrounds and lived experiences from across the whole of the UK.

> "We are excited to see that diversity continues to be reflected in this cohort of funded projects, exceeding all targets for the second time in a row. I attribute this success to the level of care and detail the team has put into making the application process and programme delivery as inclusive as possible, while always being open and adaptable to the feedback from the artist community we serve."

To sign up to the [Immersive Arts newsletter](#) and for more details about Immersive Arts visit [immersivearts.uk](#)

ENDS

For further information, images or interviews, please contact the UWE Bristol Press Office on 0117 3282208 or pressoffice@uwe.ac.uk.

The UWE Bristol press release archive is available [here](#).

Notes to editors:

Additional comments available below.

ARTISTS:

Pinny Grylls (Sound and Fury) said: "Receiving Expand funding from Immersive Arts is a game-changer for Sound and Fury. This support allows us to push the boundaries of hybrid performance, blending the visceral world of Macbeth with the unpredictability of online gaming. It gives us the vital space to be bold, take risks, and refine a proof of concept that we hope will redefine inclusive, ground-breaking storytelling for both physical and digital audiences."

Myra Appannah (The Distance Between Beats Is The Only Distance Between Us) said: "Receiving this funding makes me feel very hopeful. It makes it possible for us to work with Asylum Link, who do critical work under tough circumstances with migrant communities. The project will bring together our collective creativity across stories, rhythm, oceans and experiences in search of what truly moves us and what truly matters.

"Words feel overwhelming right now, it's a very loud world and all that noise is breaking us down. This project searches for another way in, one that's been there all along. Through rhythm, play and being together, I think we can start trusting each other again."

Helena Hamilton (Becoming) said: "I'm really excited and honoured to be awarded the Expand Fund from Immersive Arts UK. Building on the prototype developed through the Experiment Fund last year, this support will allow me and the team to keep growing Becoming into a public-facing experience, showcasing at Belfast International Arts Festival 2026."

Malath Abbas and Andy Truscott (The Game by Biome Collective). Malath Abbas said: "We're proud to have secured Expand funding from Immersive Arts for The Game. For Biome Collective, this support recognises our ongoing work to push the boundaries of immersive arts and create experiences that extend beyond traditional screens into shared public space. It enables us to develop ambitious ideas with our partners and deliver innovative, accessible work for real audiences."

Andy Truscott added: "Being a part of the Immersive Arts programme is a huge step forward for our project. Fundamentally, The Game is about the rituals that define us. By weaving together personal memories of Dundee's football culture with the physical act of walking through the city, we're creating a living archive. This support allows us to honour stories, like those of my father, and transform everyday matchday routines into a shared, immersive experience for the whole community."

Connor Allen (Becoming Monster) said: "To be awarded an Immersive Arts award is a huge honour and one I'm incredibly grateful for. Not just because opportunities like this often don't come to kids like myself, but because it gives me the privilege of telling stories that resonate with people who share similar experiences.

"Plato once said 'The highest form of knowledge is empathy, for it requires us to suspend our egos and live in another's world.' That's exactly what this award represents to me … the chance to create empathy. The chance for others to walk in my shoes, even for a moment and hopefully feel a little less alone in this busy world.

"Exploring XR technologies gives this kind of storytelling a whole new lease of life and that's what truly excites me. It opens up new ways to share the world I've been building through autobiographical storytelling, allowing people not just to hear the story but to step inside it."

FUNDERS:

Director of Strategic Development & Partnerships, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Javier Stanziola said: "Today's announcement is welcome news and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland is delighted to co-fund Immersive Arts along with The Arts and Humanities Research Council and our arts funding colleagues across these islands. This investment will support artists in learning new skills to create art using digital and immersive technologies, and will help widen and diversify audiences, so that more people from all backgrounds can enjoy arts experiences.

"Our investment in digital arts reflects our commitment to creating a sector that is more supported to develop through experimentation and innovation. This Immersive Arts programme encourages innovative practices that cross artform boundaries and builds digital capabilities within our arts sector. We feel it is vital that artists are enabled to keep up with the changing pace of technologies and the changing needs and desires of audiences. Congratulations to all those awarded funding."

Joanna Wright, Innovation, Digital & Interdisciplinary Arts lead at Arts Council of Wales said: **"**Immersive Arts has brought focus and support to a broad spectrum of innovative immersive work in Wales. It's allowed vital entry points, risk taking and ecosystem-building for artists who may not have previously considered using immersive tools. It provides a clear funding pathway designed for artists, and support from dedicated producers who bring expertise and guidance to artists wanting to develop their practice in this space.We look forward to audiences in Wales and beyond experiencing this work in the future."

Tonya Nelson, Executive Director, Enterprise and Innovation, Arts Council England, said: "We are delighted to support Immersive Arts in helping artists develop new skills, build networks, and realise their creative ambitions through digital technologies. These latest awards come as Arts Council England formally recognises Digital Arts as a discipline across our funding programmes. Our investment in Immersive Arts reinforces this commitment to nurturing innovation, which remains vital to the future of the UK's creative industries."

Morgan Petrie, Creative Industries Manager at Creative Scotland, said: "Our congratulations to this round of funded artists whose innovation and creativity are truly inspiring. The power of Immersive Art's focus on technical and artistic innovation, balanced by a deep commitment to inclusion at all stages, means that we are developing a strong grassroots network of tomorrow's global leaders in the emerging fields of creative technology. Today's recipients will be key participants in the interdisciplinary networks of production and distribution needed for this ecology to thrive.

"Our support for this programme reflects our commitment to driving innovation across the creative economy. By investing together with partners from all four UK nations, we are helping to build a stronger network of people and organisations working in creative innovation. The new ideas and approaches supported through these awards will open up fresh ways for audiences to connect with culture, helping to shape how the arts continue to enrich people's lives throughout the 21st century."

What is Immersive Arts?

Immersive Arts is a UK-wide research and development programme, supporting over 200 UK-based artists and organisations to explore the creative potential of immersive technologies.

The consortium delivering the Immersive Arts project is led by UWE Bristol, with the lead hub at Pervasive Media Studio in Bristol, and Watershed as Executive Producer.

Working in close partnership with the University of Bristol and cultural organisations in Belfast and Derry (Nerve Centre), Cardiff (Wales Millennium Centre) and Glasgow (Cryptic), as well as Crossover Labs, Unlimited, XR Diversity Initiative and the Innovate UK Immersive Tech Network, Immersive Arts includes a rich programme of inclusive and accessible opportunities, breaking down the barriers for artists of all backgrounds to engage with immersive tools.

Artists have the opportunity to access training, mentoring, specialist facilities and vital funds, with at least £3.6 million in grant funding available between 2024 and 2027 to get ideas off the ground and further develop existing projects.

Boiler plates for all funders and partners are available here.