

Phoenix

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19



WELCOME TO PHOENIX

Phoenix is an independent centre for film and digital arts, at the heart of a thriving creative community in one of the UK's most diverse cities.

A registered charity, we aim to bring inspirational film and art to all and are supported by funding from our major stakeholders – Leicester City Council (LCC), Arts Council England (ACE), De Montfort University (DMU) and the British Film Institute (BFI) – as well as from income generated through

ticket sales, our Café Bar, business events and hires, and donations from customers and members.

We work hard to ensure Phoenix is a place where everyone can feel welcome and inspired.

Our diverse programme provides opportunities for all ages to explore, engage and create with film, art and digital technology, offering new ways of looking at the world around us and challenging us to think differently.

A YEAR IN NUMBERS



220,000 visitors



Almost 2,700 film screenings



355 films from 31 countries



14 major exhibitions and art events



447 business and community events



44 young people aged 7–19 attended Phoenix Film Camp



Nearly 24,000 people took part in learning activities



86 companies hired Phoenix for their business events



7,053 ice creams sold



16,393 pints of draught beer and cider served

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

2018/19 was an exciting and pivotal year for Phoenix as we completed an intensive programme of work to move our ambitious Phoenix 2020 expansion proposal – to create a larger more prominent digital gallery; two new cinemas; better spaces for learning and creativity; a bigger Café Bar; and much better facilities for our visitors – from a concept to a fully worked-up plan. This included working with architects, engineers and consultants, as well as wide-ranging consultations on the scheme.

The result of this work so far includes offers of £5.5 million investment for the building phase, planning permission, even higher confidence in our business plan, and much excitement and support.

Phoenix 2020 is a major investment in our region's culture that is of national significance to film, digital arts and diversity. Our purpose is to enrich lives and celebrate diversity and ambition in film and art, and we use these powerful mediums to inspire, educate, bring communities together, and to develop the next generation of artists and filmmakers.

We are tantalisingly close to raising the remaining funds that would allow building to start in 2020, and are very grateful to all the people and businesses who have already donated to the 2020 | Be Part of It campaign. I believe this ambitious project will inspire the support of business sponsors, individuals and private trusts and foundations – please do get involved and help us if you can!

John Rance

...AND OUR CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Phoenix is celebrating 10 years in Leicester's increasingly vibrant Cultural Quarter, and 30 years since it was first formed as a charity. Reflecting on this past decade, the development of digital technologies like artificial intelligence, virtual reality and drones has enhanced our film and art programme, enabling us to see and experience the world in different ways, while the ability to stream performances live via satellite allows us to attend – albeit virtually – events around the world. Subtitled films and assistive technologies, such as headsets for audio description, have improved accessibility, helping to overcome sensory impairment and language barriers.

Looking ahead, this is an exciting time for Phoenix as we are on the cusp of realising our Phoenix 2020 development, which will enable more growth and diversity in all aspects of our operation. This wouldn't be possible without the continuing support of our stakeholders – notably Leicester City Council, De Montfort University, Arts Council England and the British Film Institute – for which we are immensely grateful.

I also want to thank Phoenix's retiring chair Professor Sir Alan Tuckett OBE, who inspired our Phoenix 2020 ambitions, and I wish to express my gratitude to the board and Phoenix's newly appointed patrons – Amit Gupta and Ernest Edmonds – for their enthusiasm and commitment.

Finally, my fellow trustees and I offer our sincerest thanks to the staff and customers whose dedication and support make Phoenix such a welcoming and inspiring place.

Ali Sinclair

PHOENIX 2020

As a leader in digital culture, Phoenix is a forward-thinking creative organisation with Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation status.

Our programme of film and digital arts showcases new and innovative works by emerging and established filmmakers and artists working at the forefront of digital culture and employing cutting-edge technology in their creative practice.

Phoenix also has a key role in developing the filmmakers and artists of the future: we offer practical support to help young and emerging creatives develop their skills, create new work and engage with audiences.

To secure our future as the regional centre for digital culture we have embarked on our ambitious Phoenix 2020 project – which will see us grow to be a four screen cinema, with a larger and much more prominent art gallery and better spaces for learning

activities. This will enable us to engage many more people in our creative programme, learning activities and talent development opportunities.

Phoenix 2020 is a public investment of national significance in culture for the East Midlands. With major public backers including Arts Council England, the British Film Institute and Leicester City Council, we have raised 80% of the funding from stakeholders and some national, independent trusts and foundations. We need to raise £500K more to enable us to start building in 2020, and are looking for other trusts and donors who share our belief in the power of film and art to enrich lives.

As part of our fundraising activities, our *2020 | Be Part of It* campaign has proved a success with many customers and individual donors who have jumped at the chance to have their name on a seat, cinema door, or on screen.



“Phoenix is a massively important part of Leicester for me and I’ll carry on supporting you for the rest of my life!”
Silvia, MyPhoenix Friend

Give customers more choice, with a more ambitious programme offering more screenings of more films, more art, more events, more opportunities to create and learn.

Improve our support for artists and filmmakers, with new spaces for creativity and learning, and by providing more opportunities to showcase new work and talent.

Give us the physical space we need to **broaden our cultural programme so we can engage more people** from Leicester’s diverse communities.

Attract more visitors to Leicester, generating up to £5.4 million a year in visitor spending, creating jobs and supporting local supply chains and business.

Attract investment in Leicester’s creative industries economy, increasing the city’s share of national funding for the film and creative media sector.

Enable us to double participation over the next five years, with a strong focus on young people and disadvantaged communities.

PHOENIX 2020 WILL...

| MAR 2016 | OCT 2016 | JUL 2017 | SUMMER 2018 | OCT 2018 | FEB 2019 | APR 2019 | JUL 2019 | FEB 2020 | AUTUMN 2020 | END 2020 |
|--|--|---|---|--|-----------------------------|---|--|---|------------------------|---------------------|
| New Phoenix strategy approved, focusing on opportunity for venue expansion. Phoenix sets out business case for new development | Large capital programme application made to ACE, supported by LCC, DMU, LLEP and BFI | ACE offer Phoenix £4 million for Phoenix 2020, conditional upon a successful second stage application | Public consultations Stage 2 capital grant application submitted to ACE | LCC pledge £1 million support for Phoenix 2020 | Planning permission granted | ACE confirm award for £4 million for Phoenix 2020 | Launched 2020 Be Part of It fundraising campaign | Total funding pledged reaches just under £6 million | Final design completed | Construction begins |

FOCUS ON FILM

"2018–19 was a year of development and partnerships. The creation of a new role – cinema programme assistant – enabled us to increase our focus on original programming: our Spectres on Screen season tied in with the launch of Brit-horror *Ghost Stories*; we collaborated with DMU for the AI in Art festival; and Journey's Festival International explored the stories of refugees and asylum seekers. Overall we had 15 seasons and festivals across the year.

We saw audience growth for world cinema, with the French Film Festival UK, ¡VIVA! and the Japan Foundation, and we continued our strong partnership with local BAME-focused arts organisation Serendipity on programmes for Let's Dance International Frontiers and Black History Month.

We also renewed our commitment to Access Cinema, consulting with local community groups on best practice for screenings and working with the Alzheimer's Society to deliver dementia awareness training to our staff.

Audience figures remained high, with a record breaking month in January thanks to huge audiences for *The Favourite* and *Stan & Ollie*."

Jake Harvey,
Cinema Programme Manager



Phoenix has been awarded the BFI Screen Diversity mark of good practice, recognising our commitment to inclusion in four key areas: on-screen representation, themes and narratives; creative leadership and project team; industry access and opportunities; and audience development.

DIVERSITY IN FILM

We screened 355 films from 31 countries in 2018/19, reaching an audience in excess of 94,000 people. Many of these films were not shown anywhere else in the region, and included heritage film and locally-made work.

BFI COMEDY GENIUS SEASON

A nationwide three-month season of films celebrating film and TV comedy, from slapstick to satire via classic Hollywood and a Japanese spoof Western.

THE SHORT CINEMA

This annual festival of short film is a much anticipated event for filmmakers across the Midlands and beyond. Working with partners including the Iris Prize, London Short Film Festival and BFI Network, this year's Short Cinema presented its most diverse programme to date.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Programmed in partnership with Serendipity and De Montfort University, the season reflected on the theme "Seen and Not Heard: Black Women", with eight films across the month.

ARE WE THERE YET?

This week long season explored the concept of journeys and quests, and was organised in partnership with DMU Film Studies students as part of their degree course.

¡VIVA!

A season of Spanish and Latin American films, with new titles alongside much-loved favourites like *The Motorcycle Diaries* and *Buena Vista Social Club*, which screened in 35mm to mark its 20th anniversary.

ACCESS CINEMA

Our Access Cinema programme shows films in a range of specialised environments to suit people who may usually find it difficult to enjoy cinema, with descriptive subtitled and autism-friendly screenings.

In 2018/19 nearly 900 people engaged with Access Cinema across 61 dedicated screenings and many more accessed audio description on a wide range of films in our main programme.

A LEADER IN DIGITAL CULTURE

"This was the year of virtual reality in Phoenix's art programme. In August 2018 we brought a hopeful and poignant perspective on the Syrian civil war to Leicester's Journeys Festival International with the VR installation *Future Aleppo*, created by a teenage refugee from the besieged city.

In late 2018 we began a pioneering programme of virtual reality film screenings – Phoenix VR – curated by local VR expert Alex Rühl. And in February 2019 we hosted the hugely popular *VR Playground* – an immersive, interactive, kinetic experience that allowed visitors to swing through incredible, abstract virtual worlds.

Throughout the year we also supported Leicester-based artist Ben Fredericks to create the virtual reality thought experiment *Playing God* in our creative technology studio, which has since gone on to tour major festivals around the world.

This is just a snapshot of the breadth and diversity represented in the work we show, the artists we work with, and the audiences we engage – and we were thrilled that our art programme was rated **STRONG** in Arts Council England's 2019 Creative Case for Diversity assessment."

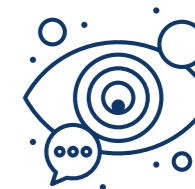
Chris Tyrer, Digital Arts Manager



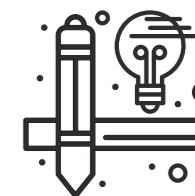
14 major exhibitions and art events



28,950 people engaged in our art programme



26 free creative workshops for children and families



8 commissioned works



19 artists engaged and developed



DEVELOPING TALENT

Phoenix aims to inspire, support and stimulate creativity through learning, and offers rewarding opportunities for people of all ages, including school events, volunteering, and short courses for adults.

We also offer creative opportunities for children, and this year ran nearly 30 free workshops at Phoenix, the St Matthews Centre and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, engaging young people from diverse backgrounds in activities including 3D printing, robot making, and computer coding.

We play a significant role in developing the film industry professionals of tomorrow, through our partnership with De Montfort University who base their Film Studies degree course at Phoenix. A key activity is the annual student film festival in March, which gives them invaluable experience in curating and producing a film festival for a public audience.

We also provide practical support for artists and filmmakers, helping them to access facilities and expertise, develop their skills and engage audiences. This year eight new films and creative digital media works were produced as a result of Phoenix's support.



"I've used the work from your classes in my university applications and have already received one unconditional offer! I couldn't have done it without attending your classes and learning so much in my time there."

Editing for Indie Filmmakers
course participant

SHORT COURSES

3,200 people took part in our adult education programme in 2018/19 – an increase of 23% on the previous year. Our tutors delivered 24 short courses exploring a wide range of film-related subjects, including screenwriting, film editing, the work of Pedro Almodovar, moving image and LGBT identities, and Ealing comedies.

SUMMER FILM CAMPS

44 young people aged 7-19 took part in our summer filmmaking courses. Participants worked in groups to make a short film from scratch in just five days, before a "red carpet" screening of their completed films attended by over 250 friends and family.

THE SHORT CINEMA

The 12th edition of this annual festival of short film featured work by local and international directors, giving emerging filmmakers a platform to engage audiences and raise the profile of their work.

ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOLS, COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Almost 16,720 people engaged in activities for schools, colleges and universities at Phoenix in 2018/19, including Into Film – a free, annual celebration of film and education for schools and young people across the UK.

SUPPORTING MAKERS

Our creative technology studio is equipped with computers, micro-controllers, VR kit and 3D printers, providing a dedicated space for learning, experimentation and creative collaboration. We run a scheme which gives makers access to the space and its facilities and a programme of support, including talks and group crits.

BUSINESS & COMMUNITY

Phoenix is a vibrant community hub, bringing together creative businesses, volunteers, staff, students and practitioners to network and collaborate. These partnerships and employment opportunities contribute directly to Leicester's cultural, social and economic prosperity.

We work with other organisations – including DMU and Leicester City Council – on initiatives to stimulate the city's creative industries, regenerate the Cultural Quarter, and benefit businesses city-wide through visitor spending.

Our longstanding community partnership with Everards enabled us to run our first annual beer festival (in August 2018) and in 2019 we worked with Everards to launch our Phoenix 2020 fundraising beer, which is proving very popular with customers.

MyPhoenix Members and Friends enjoy a wide range of events and benefits thanks to partnerships with independent businesses, such as Leicester's White Peacock restaurant who worked with us on our Oscars Gala event and created a unique themed cocktail specially for the occasion.



"We love hosting Phoenix's digital art workshops at the St Matthew's Big Local community centre, drawing culturally diverse groups together. The young people have a great time, while developing their skills and learning new things. There's a real sense of community at the sessions and it's a rare opportunity for families to interact and learn together."

Simon Johnson,
St Matthew's Big Local Manager

MyPHOENIX MEMBERSHIP

Sustained growth in our membership and loyalty scheme means there are now 5,242 MyPhoenix cardholders. In September 2018 we launched our new Membership Advisory Group, appointing eight MyPhoenix Members and Friends to represent the wider membership, engage with Phoenix management and act as a forum for consultation.

HIRES & CONFERENCING

Phoenix is a popular choice for private hires, with high demand for our micro-cinema for parties and special events. In addition to this, 86 different organisations hired our meeting rooms for conferencing, workshops and training in 2018/19.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

We engaged 300 young people from diverse backgrounds in a range of free, creative technology workshops at St Matthews Centre and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, with over 70% of participants from BAME communities.

PHOENIX COMMUNITY CINEMA

Regular film events across community venues throughout Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire, engaging almost 12,500 people who would otherwise have limited access to cultural services. A network of volunteers gave 5,220 hours of their time to organise and run these events.

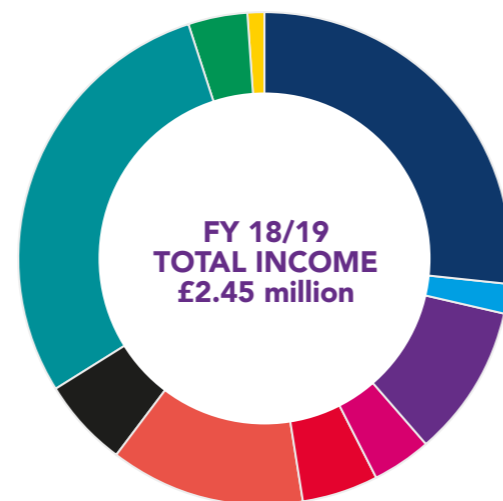
FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2018/19

Phoenix is a registered charity. We invest 100% of our resources and earnings in our mission to enrich lives and celebrate diversity through film and art.

The quality, diversity and reach of Phoenix's cultural programme continued to develop with the support of the British Film Institute and Arts Council England. The continuing support of our founding stakeholders Leicester City Council and De Montfort University underpinned our work in engaging an increasingly diverse range of people in film, digital culture, learning and creativity. Many other organisations and individuals also support us as MyPhoenix Members and Friends, donors and sponsors, by collaborating on events, or by working with us to engage an ever wider audience.

Total income in the year rose to £2.45 million, with expenditure of £2.26 million – 70% of income was from ticket sales, our Café Bar, business hires and member contributions. The other 30% comprised public grants, mainly from our stakeholders.

Much of the £260k increase in income was due to grants specifically for Phoenix 2020 – our ambitious plan to expand to create a larger more prominent digital gallery; two new cinemas; better spaces for learning and creativity; a bigger Café Bar and kitchen; and much better facilities for our visitors. We are grateful to LCC, ACE and BFI as well as Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership who supported and funded the intensive programme of work completed in 2018/19 to develop the scheme that subsequently secured offers of £5.5 million investment for the next stage.



- Cinema, education and festivals
- Community Cinema income
- Local Authority grant
- Arts Council England grant
- BFI grants
- Other grants
- De Montfort University
- Café Bar income
- Other operating income
- Membership and donations

Phoenix is run by a dedicated and passionate team who take immense pride in their work. Our board of Trustees, all of whom are volunteers, are leaders drawn from local business, education, arts, finance and legal practice organisations. Our talented creative and management teams work behind the scenes to develop our programme and steer us towards our goal of becoming a world class centre for digital creative media, while our exceptional front-of-house staff provide the excellent friendly and informed service that so many customers appreciate.

THE PHOENIX TEAM

PATRONS

Amit Gupta
Ernest Edmonds

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Alison Sinclair
Chair of Trustees

Suzanne Overton-Edwards
Vice Chair

TRUSTEES

Shobna Bazzaz
Ben Carpenter Van Barthold
Ruth Coalson
Bill Haley
Ellis Harris-Boulter
Lisa Jones
Catherine Kersey
Kevin Lacey
Azam Mamujee
Danny Myers
Surinder Sharma
Colin Sharpe
Jane Smith
Martin Underwood

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Richard Davis
Chief Finance Officer

Jake Harvey
Cinema Programme Manager

Ros Hill
Operations &
Customer Services Manager

Dindy Outen
Business Development
Manager

John Rance
Chief Executive Officer

Chris Tyrer
Digital Arts Manager

Sarah Vallance
Membership &
Communications Manager

Patrick Welsh
Marketing Manager

SUPPORTED BY



Phoenix is the trading name of the charity, which is called and registered as Leicester Arts Centre Ltd

Phoenix

Phoenix Square, 4 Midland Street, Leicester LE1 1TG

Box office **0116 242 2800** Enquiries **0116 242 2821**

www.phoenix.org.uk

Leicester Arts Centre Ltd

Company Registration No. 2276987

Charity Registration No. 701078

Vat No. 485739687

Registered Office – 4 Midland Street, Leicester, LE1 1TG