

Launched on 26th September 2008, the Cultural Olympiad is a four year programme of cultural activity that aims to inspire young people, and to welcome the world to Britain during Games-time.

Leading the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad

The Cultural Olympiad has, so far, experienced some difficulties in terms of its management and leadership (the post of Director notably lay unfilled for over a year). Most recently, in January 2010, the decision was made to drop the moniker 'cultural olympiad' as it appeared to confuse the public.

However, with new Director Ruth MacKenzie at the helm, the Cultural Olympiad appears to be moving forward positively with a diverse range of events. MacKenzie is no stranger to either national level cultural policy (she was formerly an advisor on cultural policy to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport), or, indeed, to large-scale cultural events (she was also formerly General Director of the Manchester International Festival (MIF)).



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Events at the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad

So far, two 'Open Weekends' have already taken place, drawing over a million people between them. An Open Weekend is a UK-wide three-day celebration and is currently

planned to take place on an annual basis. Highlights of the most recent 2009 Open Weekend included Hip Hop Shakespeare at the Southbank Centre (featuring Ms Dynamite and Akala) and the launch of a new open air dance festival in Cumbria, called 'Dance Daze'. The Open Weekend (at the time of going to press) runs alongside two other current cultural events: the 'Artists Taking the Lead' project and the 'Stories of the World' project.

Artists Taking the Lead

This art event involves the commissioning of 12 artistic works by British artists. The project is developed in partnership between the Arts Council England, London 2012, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Scottish Arts Council and the Arts Council of Wales.

2,163 ideas were shortlisted to 59 projects by expert panels of artists and producers; and from that 59, 12 were announced as winners. Together they will create a national celebration of culture up to and through out 2012.

Stories of the World

Stories of the World comprises a series of innovative exhibitions that are scheduled to run in 2011/ 12. The exhibitions will feature collections that have been reinterpreted by young people, local communities, historians, artists and other fresh voices, in a bid to enhance and engender engagement of Britain's youth and other diverse audiences with the museum sector.

Young people will work with museum curators to develop 14 exhibitions that deal with thought-provoking topics that relate to the unique history of Britain (for example, empire, trade, and immigration). The exhibitions will be held in both traditional venues (e.g. museums) and unexpected locations (e.g. nightclubs) venues.

Inspire

The London 2012 Inspire programme officially recognises non-commercial projects and events that have been inspired by the Games coming to the UK. Therefore all programmes that wish to play a part in the Cultural Olympiad must be given the right to use the Inspire mark.

START THE DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the reasons for the re-naming of the Cultural Olympiad.
2. Consider the management and leadership issues that may have accounted for the lack of Director for over a year before Ruth Mackenzie's appointment.
3. Are you in favour of the Cultural Olympiad or do you think the money attributed to this would be better spent elsewhere, e.g. on sports events or in ensuring legacy goals are met?

FIND OUT MORE

Artists Taking the Lead

<http://www.artiststakingthelead.com/>

Department for Culture, Media & Sport:
Cultural Olympiad Information

http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/2012_olympic_games_and_paralympic_games/3430.aspx#

CREDITS

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