



A THEATRE WITHOUT WALLS

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

April 2023 – March 2026

April 2023

INTRODUCTORY CONTEXT

This plan sets out a strategic framework for the period 2023 - 2028. It was developed in 2022 through extensive consultation with a broad range of stakeholders including board and staff, independent artists, companies, venues, and community groups. It has been developed and written as restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic are being lifted and as audiences are beginning to return to live theatre. It is published against the backdrop of the climate emergency, widespread poverty, significant economic uncertainty across society and within the theatre community, and international political instability.

This plan sets out National Theatre Scotland's strategic direction. It provides a flexible and responsive framework that builds on our achievements, and against which we will develop our programmes of work. It will be supported by an annual Business Plan establishing a robust model for delivery between 2023 and 2028.

Jackie Wylie, Artistic Director and CEO, Autumn 2022



Jackie Wylie. Photography by Kirsty Anderson.

VISION

A theatre without walls, for everyone, that sparks connection between people, between communities, and between Scotland and the world.

MISSION

To make extraordinary, relevant theatre by, with and for contemporary Scotland.

VALUES

Inventive – we want to innovate around how theatre is made, by whom, and who gets to experience it.

Collaborative – we recognise our roles as both collaborators and leaders in the culture sector, the richness of collaborative working, and our responsibilities to individuals and companies working across Scotland and around the world.

Ambitious - we want to make a positive difference with everything we do, setting high standards for the work we create. We will make bold choices and seek constantly to evolve and adapt our working practices to meet the needs of artists, audiences and communities.



How The Earth Must See Itself. Photography by Beth Chalmers.

WHY WE DO IT?

We have a renewed and urgent understanding that the live and communal nature of theatre has a particular power to spark joy, make our hearts race and connect us directly with those around us. We believe in the power of stories to bring people together in uncertain times. We want:

- To create a greater sense of connectedness throughout Scotland.
- To catalyse connections between people from across the country and around the world.
- To make an impact for more people - as communities, audiences and artists – through relevant and representative theatre making.
- To expand those who feel National Theatre Scotland is for them, through the opening-up of safe and welcoming spaces for dialogue.

HOW WE DO IT?

- We will take a leadership role in changing the way theatre is made – who makes it, who it is for and how it is defined.
- We will make extraordinary theatre, governed by bold artistic choices, to expand beyond our current audience.
- We aim to become an exemplary cultural institution for current times, growing our international reputation for excellent work and working practices.
- We will represent Scotland on the world stage, forging new international partnerships and ways of working.





PRINCIPLES

Our work over the period of this Strategic Plan will be guided by the following five principles:

1. CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

We understand that if we are to be truly national then we need to involve more people across the nation.

- We will seek a broader range of views as we develop our programmes and the working practices that underpin them.
- We will expand who influences our artistic decision-making, our knowledge, and our sources of inspiration by building new dialogues and taking action.
- We will involve more diverse voices to influence what we programme, by whom, and where it plays.

2. EQUITY, IDENTITY AND ACCESS

We celebrate the many identities of Scotland and commit to widen out who and what is part of the stories we tell – people and communities, geography and place. We understand how vitally important it is for audiences, artists and communities to recognise themselves in the stories that we tell.

Our work will always express a relevance to and take the cultural pulse of Scotland. We have a role in shaping the narrative of the nation and leading the debate, whilst making a vital creative contribution to Scottish society.

- We will work with others to make lasting commitments to positive change around equity and continue our own anti-oppression journey.
- We will offer leadership and amplify best practice for the sector.
- We will work with experts to create safe and welcoming spaces that enable us to work in new ways to include everyone.
- We seek to forge a working culture that thrives on every individual bringing their best selves to their roles.
- We will uphold a commitment to fair work and the welfare of our workforce including our freelance workforce.
- We will elevate the stories that feel relevant to Scotland now so that our audiences feel seen and included in our work.
- We will endeavour to make our work and working practices as accessible as possible to audiences, participants and artists, and by ensuring our hybrid and digital offer extends the reach of our work.

3. CLIMATE EMERGENCY

NTS recognises that we are living in a climate emergency. To tackle this:

- We will mitigate our climate impacts through every decision and action we take including in the way we make work.
- We will adapt our work and by our adherence to the principles of the Theatre Green Book.
- We seek to take an active leadership role in sustainable theatre practice and will use the power of storytelling to help imagine a positive future for the people of Scotland.
- We will work towards a zero waste and zero carbon future.
- We will consider the intersectionality of issues around the climate emergency and climate justice, and we will learn from the knowledge and experiences of those who are already at the forefront of these crises.

4. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Our partners and collaborators are venues, communities, freelancers, artists and companies. We recognise the challenging economic climate facing our entire sector. Strategic partnerships are more important than ever, and we will seek to work beyond our own sector including in the spheres of health, wellbeing, education and science.

- We will forge partnerships that amplify and support our aim of expanding who feels that theatre practice in Scotland is relevant to them.

- We will work collaboratively with agencies, organisations and communities to develop diverse talent in Scotland across all aspects of theatre-making, supporting and developing pathways from participant to early career to established artist, and providing employment opportunities to support artists to sustain their careers.

5. SCOPE AND SCALE

We will use our resources to amplify what Scotland can achieve in its theatre culture: the scale of productions, the scope and reach of tours, and the number of freelance artists, creatives and workers employed. We seek to reach more people – through our live, digital and pioneering hybrid work – and aim to maximise our impact through considered use of our resources.

- We believe in the leadership role of artists both within our own company and in wider society.
- We will support the extraordinary theatre talent in Scotland to make their most exciting, most daring work.
- We will seek new answers to the question of what international now means – moving beyond the Covid pandemic, post Brexit and within the context of the climate emergency.
- We will forge a resilient, sustainable and flexible organisational base from which to create our work.



ARTISTIC AND AUDIENCE PRIORITIES

To realise our vision for a theatre without walls, for everyone, we will adopt the following programming and audience development priorities over the five years of this Strategic Plan:

- Large scale popular programming, unmissable cultural events.
- Work by, with and for those that are not regularly served by the current theatre infrastructure, including rural touring across the nation.
- Pioneering site-specific and landscape work.
- Co-created socially engaged practice.
- Screen work, hybrid work and digital.
- Work by, with and for historically and currently excluded groups.
- Work by, with and for schools and within education contexts.
- Work for younger people (18- 35) who attend other forms of entertainment and not theatre.
- Work that celebrates all Scottish languages and those spoken in contemporary Scotland, including (but not limited to) Gaelic, Scots and British Sign Language (BSL).
- International touring and partnerships.





Photography Credits

Page 2: *How the Earth Must See Itself* featuring Petra Söör, Keren Smail, Jo Hellier. Photography by Beth Chalmers

Page 3/4: *Thank You Very Much* featuring Claire Cunningham and Tanja Erhart. Photography by Sven Hagolani

Page 7: *Burn* featuring Alan Cumming. Photography by Tommy Ga-Ken Wan

Page 8: *Little Amal* at COP Summit Glasgow. Photography by Colin Hattersley.

Page 18: *Coming Back Out Ball* featuring Jamie Rea. Photography Tiu Makkonen

