



# PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE IN SCOTLAND

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

2012-2017





## CONTENTS

3	1 Introduction
4	2 Development of Physical Performance in Scotland
6	3 Moving into the Future
7	4 Action Plan
10	5 Referenced Companies, Artists and Projects
11	6 Credits

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Note: all artists, companies, organisations and festivals (except for major Scottish venues) referenced in this document are listed at the end of the document with their website details. Individuals are listed only if they have a website.

# 1 Introduction

This is a strategy document for the development of physical performance in Scotland for the period 2012-2017.

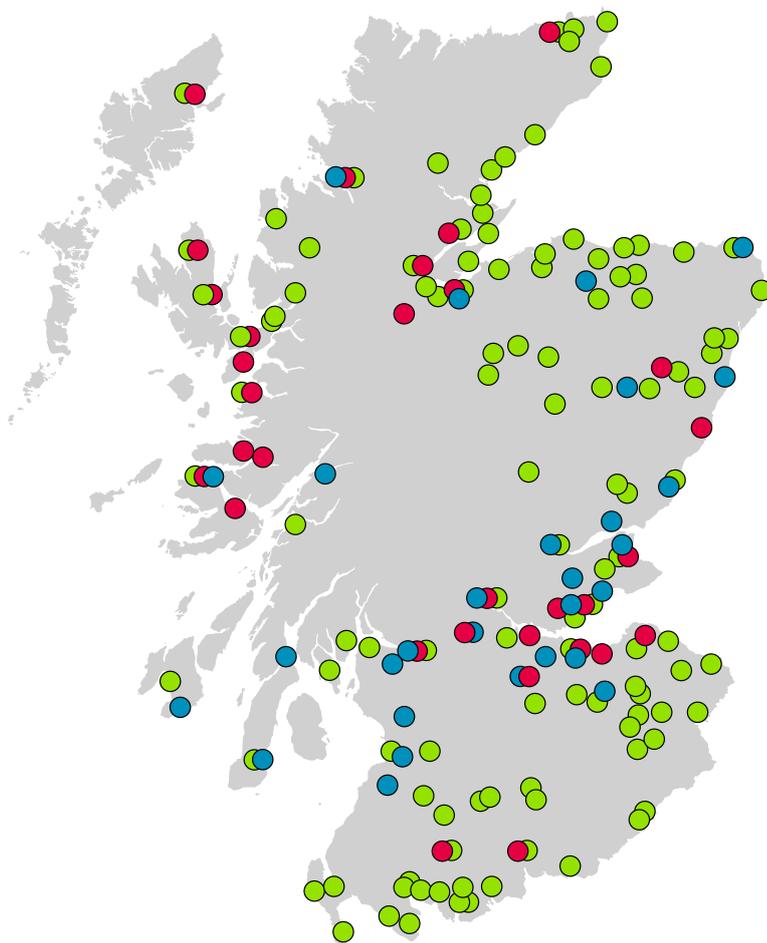
**articulation** and others in Scotland use the term 'physical performance' to broadly group together physical theatre, circus, outdoor performance and street theatre. Whilst each has its own specific characteristics, in Scotland there is much overlap between practitioners and resource provision; it has therefore been useful to consider the development of these separate artforms as a whole.

The scope of this document is not to go into the specifics of each artform. It provides an introduction to the sector and lists **articulation's** priorities for action and investment for the next five years. An overview of the main initiatives and organisations has already been published as "**Physical Performance Sector in Scotland**".

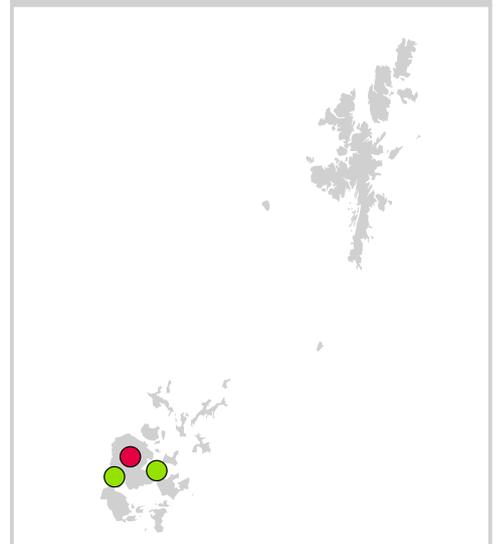
Circus and physical theatre are more easily identified as distinct artforms. Street theatre / outdoor performance is more problematic in that it is still essentially a context for work and covers a wide range of performance types, from street bands with a theatrical bent (known in Europe as *Fanfare*) and quirky, promenade dance performance and installations involving performers to large-scale spectacles using fireworks and cranes. Within this document, street theatre will be referred to as an artform to keep things simple.

As **articulation** has recently published a separate circus strategy for Scotland, "**Circus in Scotland: a Blueprint for Development 2012-2017**", please refer to this document for more detailed information about this artform. There is some overlap between this document and the circus strategy. In due course, **articulation** intends to prepare similar, separate strategies for physical theatre and street theatre / outdoor performance.

The above documents are available as downloads from the **articulation** website: [www.articulation-arts.org](http://www.articulation-arts.org)



Presentations of Physical Performance in Scotland since 2005



Map key

- INDOOR PRESENTATIONS:  
Circus / physical theatre
- OUTDOOR PRESENTATIONS:  
Street theatre / circus / community / parades etc
- SITE SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE /  
OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE

## 2 Development of Physical Performance in Scotland

The different artforms within physical performance have all seen remarkable growth over the past five years, a sharp contrast to the intermittent activity prior to this time.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the artists and companies who created physical performance in Scotland over the past twenty years. They were essentially pioneers, often working in isolation and without true recognition: Alex Rigg, Lindsay John, Jonothan Campbell, Chloë Dear, Al Seed, Sarah Jean Couzens, Boilerhouse Theatre Company, Mischief La-Bas, te POOKa and others.

Alongside these, there have been a number of festivals and events that have been significant programmers of physical performance. These include Street Biz (1988-1991), the first festival to introduce work in this sector; Big in Falkirk, Scotland's national street arts festival (2000-2010), Merchant City Festival and Edinburgh's Hogmanay. Additionally, the Edinburgh Fringe, whilst not curated, has provided presentation opportunities. Meanwhile, through programming at these festivals over the past two decades, Scottish audiences have been exposed to major international practitioners such as Plasticiens Volants, Collectif Organum, Transe Express, Companie Off, Derevo, Blackskywhite, Cirque Archaos and Circus Oz. This has resulted in growing appreciation of physical performance from indoor circus theatre shows to large-scale spectacles.

Another important influence on the growth of outdoor performance in Scotland is Edinburgh's Beltane Fire Festival. An old tradition reignited in 1988 by Angus Farquhar of NVA, this vibrant community celebration has been an important route into physical performance for many current practitioners and has brought artists together who have gone on to create some of the most ambitious outdoor productions in the last 15 years.

Also important has been the support from stakeholders. Creative Scotland (and previously Scottish Arts Council) has invested in companies such as Mischief La-Bas, In Situ (a pan-European commissioning body), projects such as ORNITHOLOGY and THE TIDE MACHINE, and hosting the Circostrada meeting in Glasgow. Scottish Government's Expo Fund has supported a number of physical performance projects including through its Made in Scotland showcases. There has been patchy investment from local authorities although there have been some significant projects such as Modo's large-scale community performances in small towns in northern Aberdeenshire.

The real growth of physical performance has been relatively recent and astonishingly rapid. Partly driven by a growth in numbers of experienced professionals and an increased awareness of the value of the sector, it has been galvanised by some significant initiatives that have not only signalled the sector's growing vitality but have contributed to it:

- **articulation** was created in 2009 to be Scotland's umbrella organisation for physical performance. The organisation supports the development of the sector through advocacy, strategic planning, facilitating partnerships and close involvement with infrastructural initiatives like the Briggait. It also plays a role in supporting high quality - in health and safety, in teaching standards and in the work itself. **articulation** provides a forum in which physical performance professionals can discuss and debate what the sector requires.
- **Conflux** - Legacy Trust UK / Creative Scotland funded four year project launched in March 2009 with the specific remit to develop and support a thriving professional circus, street theatre, and physical theatre community that will in turn be able to deliver an extensive range of education opportunities to young people in Scotland. It has a specific role in identifying and supporting emerging artists. Envisaged as a time-limited project due to cease in 2013, Conflux will continue as an independent organisation beyond this date.
- Conflux runs the **Surge Festival**, the principle showcase for Scottish physical performance. Surge takes place in Glasgow alongside the Merchant City Festival in July every year.
- **Adam Smith College** launched the first 30 week Diploma course in Physical Theatre Practice in

Scotland in October 2008. The course has quickly established a strong profile, is contributing strongly to sector growth and has attracted a wide range of cultural makers and practitioners, including physical performance artists who want to broaden their range of performance skills.

- The possibility for a circus and dance centre at **The Briggait**, an iconic Glasgow city centre building presented itself in 2008. A 12,000 sq foot space ripe for development, commonly known as the 'Shed' is now being used by Conflux and Aerial Edge for training, rehearsals, residencies and public teaching.
- The annual **Edinburgh Aerial and Acrobatic Convention** (EAAC), first organised in 2007 has grown into an intensive weekend of teaching activity attended by over 150 participants and is consistently the most successful event of its kind in the UK.
- The development of community and youth activities through many avenues particularly the work of **Modo Scotland, All or Nothing, Aerial Edge, Oceanalover** and **Bright Night International**.
- The establishment of **Scottish Street and Circus Arts Network**, an informal forum for professionals in the physical performance sector which now has over 250 members.
- Several small professional companies and solo artists have become established in Scotland, creating and touring high quality work both in Scotland and internationally with the support of Creative Scotland. These include **Strangebird Zirkus, All or Nothing, Plutôt la Vie, Room 2 Manoeuvre, Iron-Oxide, Ramesh Meyyappan, Adura Onashile, Vision Mechanics, Oceanalover, Company of Wolves** and others.
- **Feet First**, a 3 hour event funded by the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festival's Expo Fund and presented as part of Edinburgh's Hogmanay on 1 January 2009 was a major showcase of Scottish physical performance talent: 18 separate performances were commissioned from Scottish street / circus companies and artists involving 160 performers; it was attended by an audience of over 12,000.
- **Big Man Walking**, Vision Mechanic's 8m high puppet strode across Scotland in 2009 with emergences ever since.
- **CARGO**, an outdoor co-production between Iron-Oxide and the Edinburgh Mela was created in 2010 with the support of the Expo Fund. It provided a significant capacity building opportunity for performers, artists and technicians from BAME backgrounds.
- The recent presence of **Summerhall Arts Centre** with the space, ambition, programming opportunities and extensive international networks to support high quality production; the Centre has a specific interest in physical / visual work and already hosts such key organisations as Puppet Animation Scotland and **articulation**.
- **Roofless** is an outdoor/street arts programme created by UZ Arts to engage directly with geographically diverse communities through artist-led large-scale public participation events tailored to each location. It also aims to build an infrastructure between these communities and to build the capacity of regional producers.
- **In Situ** is a European network of outdoor arts producers and programmers established in 2003 to promote artistic creation in public spaces. Its current programme META (the Manifest of Europe for Transformation through Art) supports creation and presentation of work, hothousing of ideas, and mobility of work between EU countries. There are currently nineteen partners from fourteen countries; UZ Arts has been a key decision-making partner on behalf of the UK since the project's inception.

## 3 Moving into the Future

### Cultural Context

Creative Scotland published its Theatre Sector Review in July 2012 (commissioned from Christine Hamilton Consulting). The purpose of the review is to enable Creative Scotland to understand the sector's strengths and opportunities as well as the challenges and gaps and to respond to these in line with its corporate plan. The review includes a dedicated section on physical performance and, significantly, a suggestion that Creative Scotland "*invests in new areas where there is a clear artistic vision and leadership. An example of this is the area of physical performance*".

The Glasgow 2014 cultural programme offers unprecedented opportunities for public engagement and for the creation of high quality work. Physical performance is well placed to exploit these opportunities as much of its practice naturally contributes to the overarching themes of celebration, collaboration and participation and to the cultural programme values of Scotland's London 2012 and Glasgow 2014 Cultural Plan (Creative Scotland). This opportunity is exemplified by the role physical performance played in the Cultural Olympiad and 2012 cultural programme, mostly through Conflux and the Scottish Government/Glasgow City Council aerial dance commissions for the launch of the Games Legacy for Scotland in 2009.

### Vision

**articulation** has an overarching vision for a sustainable physical performance sector in Scotland, one in which high quality work is produced and presented, practitioners are able to have productive livelihoods and one that will engage the public across Scotland and internationally. Much progress has been made towards achieving this although there is need for support for key infrastructure and activity.

**articulation** has identified the following priorities for action and investment:

- Embedding and expansion of training and professional development opportunities with the emphasis on more focused activities that address key sectorial gaps
- Provision of resources for high quality creation
- Continued advocacy and strategic planning, particularly at a national level
- Establishment of specialist centres for physical performance
- Increase in the number of platforms for presentation and strengthening those that already exist such as SURGE, the only annual specialist festival
- Increase in access and participation activity
- Recognition of circus, street theatre and physical theatre as legitimate art forms by the cultural sector
- Development of international links

## 4 Action Plan

Overarching Vision: for Scotland to have a sustainable physical performance sector producing high quality work that will engage the public across the country and internationally

Aim #1 To support a sustainable physical performance sector in Scotland			
Outcomes	Objectives	Actions	SMART measures
Practitioners will have adequate facilities to create work and to train	To retain and develop talent in Scotland	Develop and instigate the Briggait and Cubed as physical performance centres Develop regional facilities as physical performance centres	Briggait and/or Cubed plans to be realised by 2015 Regular physical performance activity to be established in a minimum of four regional locations by 2014
Emergent practitioners will create links with the Scottish sector, helping sustainability of their careers in this country	To attract and retain emergent talent in Scotland	Create bursaries' schemes for emergent artists who undertook their secondary education in Scotland	Scheme in place by 2014 Minimum of five emergent Scottish-based physical performance practitioners by 2014, thereafter ongoing annual target
Practitioners will not need to leave Scotland in order to develop their practice	To retain and develop talent in Scotland	Provide opportunities for ongoing, regular and constant high level training in physical performance Provide residencies and masterclasses for physical performance practitioners (including riggers, technicians, designers and teachers working in youth, recreational and social spheres) as well as professional training and development	Regular annual residencies and master classes (equivalent of 8 weeks p/a by 2014) The number of Scottish-based professional physical performance circus practitioners to double by 2017 (baseline data determined through SSCAN census in 2012)
Talented individuals will be encouraged to become professional practitioners	To provide routes into the profession for talented individuals	Identify and develop routes into the profession, particularly for young people Create short, intensive courses designed to enable individuals to bridge the gap from keen amateur to professional Improve access to professional training outside of Scotland for talented individuals	On-line resource that provides information about routes into the profession by 2013 One annual intensive course by 2014 (minimum 8 weeks) Establish at least one regular youth circus school for committed youngsters

## Aim #2 To support high quality physical performance work

Outcomes	Objectives	Actions	SMART measures
High quality work is available to the public	To increase investment in high quality work	Disseminate information on resources available to the sector Provide support and guidance as appropriate to practitioners seeking financial support	Investment doubled in high quality physical performance productions by Creative Scotland (by value and by numbers of productions) by 2017 (baseline from physical performance work supported by Creative Scotland in 2011/12)
High quality work is available to the public; more effective delivery of work	To increase specialist support to facilitate the creation of high quality work	Develop and instigate Cubed and the Briggait as creation centres offering specialist support to physical performance practitioners	Briggait and/or Cubed plans to be realised by 2015
High quality work is available to the public; more effective delivery of product	To increase the number of physical performance producers	Provide training in physical performance production Develop a producer fellowship scheme for Scotland	Producer fellowship scheme in place by 2015 Minimum two short training courses to have taken place by end of 2013; thereafter minimum one p/a
High quality work is available to the public	To develop the talent and expertise in a physical performance context of professionals from other artforms (directors, designers, etc)	Provide training opportunities for non-circus practitioners to develop their potential to work in this artform	Minimum two training courses to have taken place by end of 2013; thereafter minimum one p/a
High quality work is available to the public; more effective delivery of product	To increase specialist support to facilitate the creation of high quality work	Develop a physical performance circus production house/talent hub	Minimum one sustainable production house/talent hub by 2014
High quality work, including participatory work, meets appropriate health and safety standards	To ensure best practice in health and safety	Develop and disseminate guidance on best practice on health and safety	Guidance to be developed and disseminated by end of 2012

### Aim #3 To support access and participation to physical performance

Outcomes	Objectives	Actions	SMART measures
Increased number of programmers, venues and festivals presenting physical performance	To develop programmers'/ venues' understanding of physical performance and its wide engagement with audiences	Run physical performance advocacy days and/or showcases for programmers and local authorities' officers	Minimum one physical performance advocacy day p/a
Audience access to increased number of physical performance productions, including internationally	To enable physical performance practitioners to create productions that generate sufficient income to ensure viability without public subsidy	Provide sufficient resource (sector specific and artistic entrepreneurial support) to physical performance practitioners to create high quality commercially viable shows	Baseline levels of relevant activity to be established in 2012. Targets to be determined by this.
Increased audiences for physical performance	To increase the opportunities for audiences to see physical performance	Encourage programmers, venues and festivals to present more physical performance through continued advocacy	Increased in physical performance audience numbers. Baseline data <i>TBD</i> .
Increased in physical performance audience numbers. Baseline data <i>TBD</i> .	To increase the opportunities for audiences to see physical performance	Encourage programmers, venues and festivals to present more physical performance through continued advocacy	One hundred physical performance performances to be presented annually from 2014 onwards Fifty venues/festivals to have programmed physical performance by 2014, thereafter fifty p/a
Increased number of venues and regional facilities hosting regular participatory physical performance outreach work	To develop understanding by venues, local authority officers, and schools of the benefits of physical performance outreach	Run an advocacy campaign on the potential of physical performance outreach targeted at local authorities, schools and venues	Campaign delivered by the end of 2012 Baseline levels of activity to be established in 2012 Statistical and geographical targets to be determined by this.
Increased numbers of young people engaging in physical performance	To increase the number of young people engaged in physical performance	<b>articulation</b> to engage in the response to the National Youth Arts Centre	Physical performance included within actions leading from the National Youth Arts Centre in Glasgow
Increased number of high quality physical performance teachers	To train new teachers and to increase the skill level of existing teachers, where appropriate	Run workshops for existing practitioners to develop their teaching practice Develop courses to train a variety of new teachers in a variety of physical performance skills	Five workshops for existing practitioners per year Recognised course to train new teachers by 2014

#### Aim #4 To support the strategic development of physical performance within an international context

Outcomes	Objectives	Actions	SMART measures
The sustainable development of the physical performance sector to the benefit of the public and the practitioners.	To recognise circus, physical theatre and street/ outdoor work as legitimate artforms within Scotland's cultural ecology	Disseminate existing academic work on physical performance to cultural commentators, activists and critics Develop opportunities for organised intense exposure to physical performance by critics	Dissemination of existing work by end of 2012, thereafter ongoing Physical performance referenced in key cultural ecology documents e.g. Creative Scotland Theatre Review
The sustainable development of the physical performance sector to the benefit of the public and practitioners	To recognise circus, physical theatre and street/ outdoor work as legitimate artforms within Scotland's cultural ecology	<b>articulation</b> to advocate for Creative Scotland to act on the suggestion for physical performance in the Theatre Sector Review	Increased Creative Scotland investment (support and resource) in physical performance (possibly including a strategic commission)
The sustainable development of the physical performance sector to the benefit of the public and practitioners	To recognise circus, physical theatre and street/ outdoor work as legitimate artforms within Scotland's cultural ecology	Continue <b>articulation's</b> strategic work and advocacy across the cultural ecology	Continued and increased representation of the sector at key cultural meetings e.g. FST, IETM
The sustainable development of the physical performance sector to the benefit of the public and practitioners	To recognise circus, physical theatre and street/ outdoor work as legitimate artforms within Scotland's cultural ecology	<b>articulation</b> to engage in the response to the National Youth Arts Strategy	Physical performance included within actions leading from the Youth Arts Centre in Glasgow
The sustainable development of the physical performance sector to the benefit of the public and the practitioners.	To recognise <b>articulation</b> as the national agency for the strategic development of physical performance	Continue <b>articulation's</b> strategic work and advocacy; to include circus strategy and physical performance strategy.	Dissemination of circus and physical performance strategies by November 2012. Continued and increased representation of the sector at key meetings e.g. Circostrada, In Situ Continued and increased strategic development activity eg annual advocacy days
Increased opportunities for the presentation of Scottish work internationally and collaborations	To instigate and develop international relationships within physical performance	For <b>articulation</b> to host a Circostrada meeting at Surge 2012 Ensure <b>articulation</b> is represented at all Circostrada and In Situ meetings and other key physical performance gatherings	<b>articulation</b> to represent the Scottish physical performance sector at all Circostrada and In Situ meetings and other key physical performance gatherings

## 5 Referenced Companies, Artists and Projects

Adam Smith Diploma in Physical Theatre Practice	<a href="http://www.adamsmith.ac.uk/student/courses/course/DIPPT">www.adamsmith.ac.uk/student/courses/course/DIPPT</a>
Aura Onashile	<i>see Iron-Oxide</i>
Aerial Edge	<a href="http://www.aerialedge.co.uk">www.aerialedge.co.uk</a>
All or Nothing Aerial Dance Theatre	<a href="http://www.aerialdance.co.uk">www.aerialdance.co.uk</a>
Articulation	<a href="http://www.articulation-arts.org">www.articulation-arts.org</a>
Beltane Fire Festival	<a href="http://www.beltane.org">www.beltane.org</a>
Briggait	<a href="http://www.thebriggait.org.uk">www.thebriggait.org.uk</a>
Bright Night International	<a href="http://www.brightnightinternational.com">www.brightnightinternational.com</a>
Circostrada	<a href="http://www.circostrada.org">www.circostrada.org</a>
Conflux	<a href="http://www.conflux.co.uk">www.conflux.co.uk</a>
Edinburgh Aerial and Acrobatic Convention	<a href="http://www.eaac.info">www.eaac.info</a>
Edinburgh Mela	<a href="http://www.edinburgh-mela.co.uk">www.edinburgh-mela.co.uk</a>
Inside Out Festival, St Andrews	<a href="http://www.byretheatre.com/about-inside-out-festival.php">www.byretheatre.com/about-inside-out-festival.php</a>
In Situ	<a href="http://www.in-situ.info/en/">www.in-situ.info/en/</a>
Iron-Oxide	<a href="http://www.iron-oxide.org">www.iron-oxide.org</a>
Merchant City Festival	<a href="http://www.merchantcityfestival.com">www.merchantcityfestival.com</a>
Mischief La-Bas	<a href="http://www.mischiefabas.co.uk">www.mischiefabas.co.uk</a>
Modo Scotland	<a href="http://www.theatremodo.com">www.theatremodo.com</a>
Oceanallover	<a href="http://www.oceanallover.co.uk">www.oceanallover.co.uk</a>
Plutôt la Vie	<a href="http://www.plutotlavie.org.uk">www.plutotlavie.org.uk</a>
Puppet Animation Scotland	<a href="http://www.puppetanimation.org">www.puppetanimation.org</a>
Ramesh Meyyappan	<a href="http://www.rameshmeyyappan.com">www.rameshmeyyappan.com</a>
SSCAN / Scottish Street and Circus Arts Network	<a href="http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/SSCANetwork/">uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/SSCANetwork/</a>
Strangebird Zirkus	<a href="http://www.strangebirdzirkus.com">www.strangebirdzirkus.com</a>
Summerhall Arts Centre	<a href="http://www.summerhall.co.uk">www.summerhall.co.uk</a>
Surge Festival	<i>see Conflux</i>
Tide Machine	<a href="http://www.thetidemachine.com">www.thetidemachine.com</a>
UZ Arts	<a href="http://www.uzarts.com">www.uzarts.com</a>
Vision Mechanics	<a href="http://www.visionmechanics.org">www.visionmechanics.org</a>

## 6 Credits

### AUTHOR

Written by Chloë Dear on behalf of **articulation**.

Chloë Dear was seduced into the world of outdoor performance and circus after an initial career as an agricultural development advisor in Nepal and Ethiopia and a life-changing experience playing Acid Rain Dame on the streets of Scotland. In 1999 she joined Boilerhouse and was instrumental in developing the company's large-scale outdoor work before becoming an independent producer. In 2005 she formed Iron-Oxide as a means of fulfilling her desire to create vertiginous performance and work in unusual locations. Alongside this, Chloë has been producing the work of many physical performance artists. Realising that there was much to be done to improve the circus ecology of Scotland, Chloë has been involved in strategic activity for many years.

### PHOTO CREDITS

Cover, left to right:

**SKEWERED SNAILS** by Ramesh Meyyappan and Iron-Oxide. Photo: Douglas Robertson

**USED TO BE SLIME** by Conflux for Surge 2012. Photo: Guy Veale

**ORNITHOLOGY** by Strangebird Zirkus. Photo: Rob Hoon

**THE PORT PARADE** by Modo Scotland. Photo: Robin Mitchell

**THE CLIMB** by All or Nothing Aerial Theatre Company. Photo: Chris Gilles

**FLIK FLAK** by Plutôt La Vie for Feet First. Photo: Marc Marnie

Ian Smith in **THE LOST SUPPER** by Oceanallover and Mischief La-Bas. Photo: Florencia Rigg

**THE TIMID VIKINGS OF REKNAESTUFF** by Mischief La-Bas. Photo: Andrew Blackwood

**JAMP** by Bright Night International. Photo: the company

**THE TIDE MACHINE** by Oceanallover with Centre Stage Youth Theatre. Photo: CSYT

**PERCH**, a work-in-progress collaboration by Legs on the Wall, Lume Teatro and Conflux by Anna Robertson

**101 WALKS** by Lindsay John. Photo: Brian Hartley

**HOPE'S LAST DANCE** by Danuta Ramos performed at Circoscotia 2012. Photo: McAteer Photography

**FISH OUT OF WATER**, a Conflux community project. Photo: Ian Watson

Contents page:

**SKEWERED SNAILS** by Ramesh Meyyappan and Iron-Oxide. Photo: Douglas Robertson

**ARTICULATION** Scotland's umbrella organisation for physical performance, it supports the development of the sector through advocacy, strategic planning, facilitating partnerships and close involvement with infrastructural initiatives.



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**Physical Performance - Overview of Development Priorities 2012-2017**

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