



## ACTON CARNIVAL XX EMERALD CELEBRATION PROJECT REPORT

# Acton Carnival 2023 Report

## XX Emerald Celebration

June 2023 – July 2023

**Title: XX Emerald Celebration**

### **A summary**

Performance platforms & structured activities to facilitate & encourage residents, creatives & communities to celebrate 20 years of Carnival arts in Acton.

### **The project.**

As an arts development programme supporting Acton residents, creatives, SMEs & organisations engaged in the production, practices & performances to celebrate 20 years of Acton Carnival. As a feature of the Ealing Summer festival programme, the Carnival was not just a portal to showcase creativity & artistry of the borough but through multi-disciplinary creative & educational activities, as precursors to the main event, the project successfully benefitted the creatives and communities that we targeted. Participants learnt, created & participated in the combined arts of Carnival (Mas, Music & Movement) designing, making, rehearsing & performing in costumes, mixing musical scores & choreographing movements to present as part of the street parade.

### **Benefit to people & communities**

Beyond a mere showcase, our multi-disciplinary approach resulted in extensive benefits. Heightened participation & attendance reflected the project impact. Beyond artistic mastery, our initiative touched Acton's larger community, fostering shared purpose & a vibrant cultural programme: from Master-classes, to film screenings, gallery exhibition & events, making workshops, music & dance rehearsals, Artist talks, Mas-making opportunities, public art & procession expression, through to festival & performance showcasing, photography & film, & a stronger visual presence.

Celebrating 20 vibrant years of Acton Carnival, our project cultivated collaboration among residents, creatives, SMEs, & organisations. Our creative programme amplified diverse cultural input, whilst engendering unity through Carnival arts mastery. Cultural engagement enriched identities, forged community bonds, & planted seeds for a lasting creative legacy.

Leading to the main event, our creative & educational activities built cohesion & engagement, transcending education into transformation. Participants became cultural contributors, amplifying community pride & establishing ongoing connections.





The successes resonated beyond the event, influencing art, inclusivity, & community bonds. Empowering through Carnival arts, our initiative ensured innovation in Acton's cultural future. Acton Carnival 2023 showcased its power on local & digital platforms:

- Inclusive Engagement: 17 Mas Bands, 370 procession participants, 200 engaged in Carnival Kids Day, & 60 at our film screening event.
- Nurturing Creativity: 73 Creative Practitioners, including 20 designers, 18 tutors, & 35 artists, who elevated creative excellence.
- Artistry: 60 workshop leaders, plus Art & Cultural Zone Creatives orchestrated 20 dynamic activities.
- Dedication: 120 Procession Stewards & festival Volunteers fuelled the event's execution.
- Reach: 4,500 festival attendees, 5,500 parade spectators, 789 streaming viewers, & 10,000+ online audiences were captivated.

In summary, Acton Carnival 2023's impact surpassed expectations. The unity forged; the creativity nurtured; & the engagement achieved: stand as a testament to our initiative's enduring influence. This demonstrates the vibrant community united through Carnival arts, enriching identities & inspiring the next generation.

### **The Activity**

**Activity dates:** June – July 2023

#### **The type of activity our project focused on**

- Developed new creative & cultural work with others.
- Developed organisation skills.
- Showed/Performed/Exhibited.
- Worked in a specific space (Acton).
- Developed our organisation.
- Worked innovatively/collaboratively.

### **PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS**

**Tippa Audio Sound System:** Award-winning Sound System provided music & entertainment for the street procession, Carnival main stage & 'Old Skool' sound system.







**Windrush19:** The Core members are artists, with affiliates from Windrush 19 group and from the Ealing Business Expo took part in the carnival procession and delivered activities in the Cultural Zone in the park.



**Kam King, Media production,** Videographer was engaged to create footage at workshops and at carnival. See the film here: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/9817877374919497>  
Post reach: **893**

**Drum Cam,** Mike McKenzie, Filmmaker, drummer, teacher produced a documentary on Russ Henderson "The Pan Man" & first performer at the inception of the Notting Hill Carnival. Mike screened his film as part of the Pan



& Mas film screening event in the run up to carnival at ACT-one Cinema. Mike introduced his film and participated in the Event Q&A. Mike also was one of the Video Team filming the XX Emerald carnival celebrations.



**Society Dance Academy & the SD Media Productions** were active at Acton Carnival events. Editing the History of Acton Carnivals past that were screened at ACT-one Cinema as part of the history and heritage of Acton Carnival. The media training afforded by SD Media Productions trained a team of 7 young people to film this year's event. See the film here:

<https://www.facebook.com/actoncarnival/videos/1474480573353921>

Post impressions. **810**. Post reach **719**. Post engagement. **92**

Live stream viewers: **789**

**Dance Carib** have been involved with Acton Carnival since it began. This year the group brought an intergenerational troop to the streets with drumming, arts, costume and performance to the streets. At the festival site, the group ran a drumming circle for people to try out drumming.







**Stardust Mas & Pan** launched the first carnival 20 years ago at Priory community centre 20 years ago. Sadly, Randolph Stardust founder, passed the year of our first carnival, but the family have continued to be a part of Acton Carnival ever since. As part of the XX Emerald celebrations, Stardust steel pan played at the carnival event at the ACT-one Cinema. They also exhibited costumes at the W3 gallery FIESTA exhibition. At carnival 23 Stardust played on the mainstage.



**Carl Gabriel, Mas man**, participated by exhibiting a huge mask he created in 2000, decorated by the community of APPLE Arts, at the FIESTA exhibition. Carl concluded the project with a special event at W3 gallery: 'Shape the Art' Carl Gabriel Talk. Internationally renowned master craftsman. Spoke about working in the traditional craft of wire bending over 20 years with Acton Carnival, at Notting Hill Carnival, and across the world.



# CARL GABRIEL TALK

"SHAPE THE ART"

W3 GALLERY  
185 HIGH ST, W3 9DJ

25/7/23  
7-8 PM



## SPECIAL EVENT

INTERNATIONAL RENOWNED ARTIST, CARL GABRIEL, WILL SPEAK ABOUT HIS ART FORM. HEAR FROM THE MASTER OF CARNIVAL ARTS.

[W3GALLERY@ARTIFICATION.ORG.UK](mailto:W3GALLERY@ARTIFICATION.ORG.UK)

W3 gallery



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**APPLE Play** ran community art workshops with children & young people in the run up to carnival. T-shirt printing, prop making, and face painting enabled access to carnival arts. The participatory drop-in sessions provided a route to easy inclusion in the procession for local families.





**The Art Box** designed and made art activities for the festival site. The Art Zone in the Festival site was created by The Art Box and connected festival goers with creative and cultural arts opportunities. The Art Zone made the Arts accessible to everyone, whether experienced or new to the arts. Arts packs and creative spaces were designed and brought together creativity and imagination with decorations & celebrations of carnival through workshops & the event. This year's main stage celebrated significant community members including Acton Carnival supporters: Eric Huntley from iconic Bogle L'Overture Books and media & music producer Jamal Edwards.

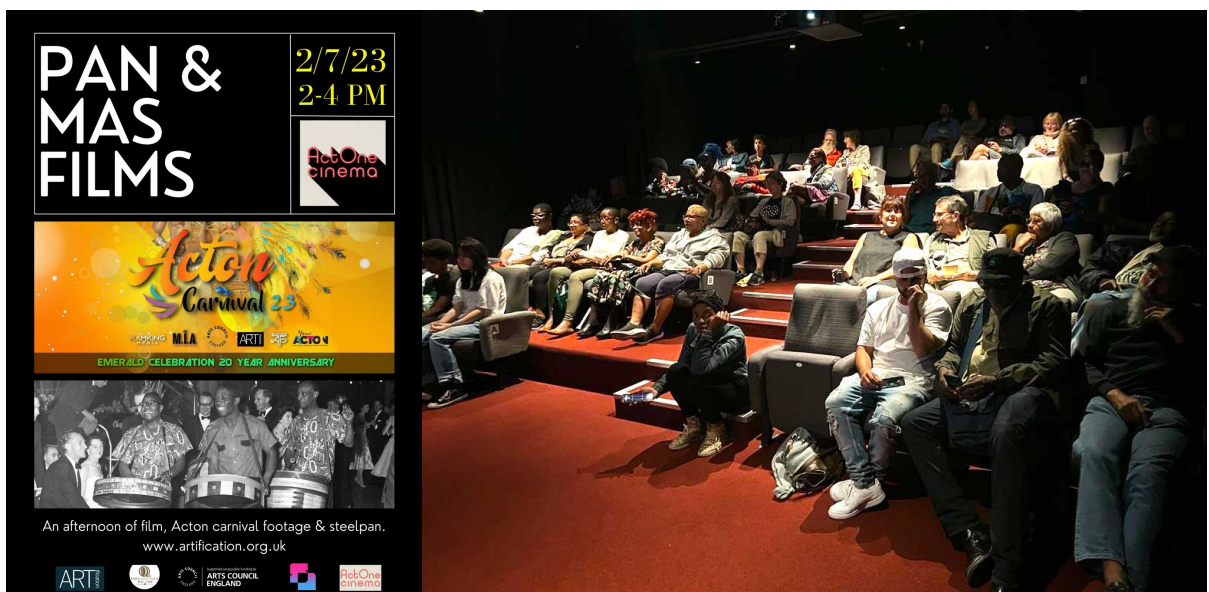




**London Transport Museum** took part for our XX Emerald celebrations. The LTM Acton Depot antique bus and stall created a focus for families at the festival with community engagement activities and the history of transport past.



**ACT-One Cinema** hosted the Pan & Mas Film Screening. A special event that incorporated footage of past carnivals, interviews with carnival artists and creatives from the world of carnival. The event also included the screening of Pan Man, as well as community Q&A with the creators, film makers, and the sharing of stories from past carnivals. A lovely event that connected people with carnival and the arts. ACT-One Cinema also provided Wi-Fi & a base for our live-streaming of the procession.





## W3 gallery



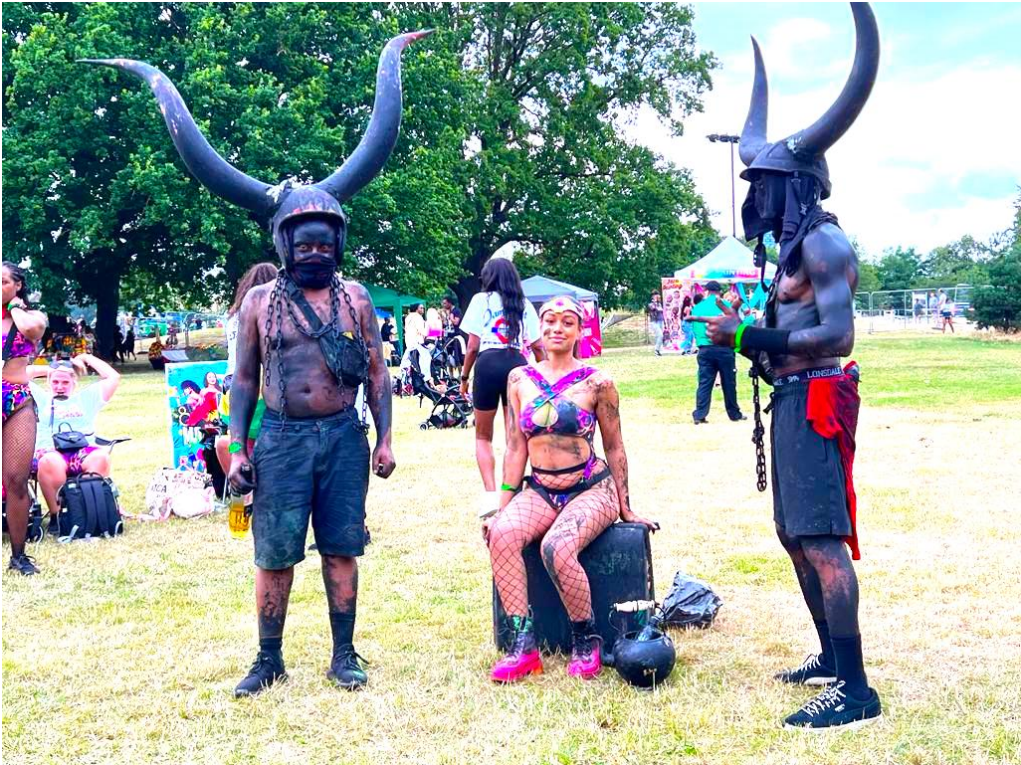
**United Anglo Caribbean Society.** Not only were we celebrating 20 years of Acton Carnival, and 75 years of Windrush, but it was also 50 years of the United Anglo Caribbean Society. Partners for many years, the group joined the procession for the first time, and had a stall at in the Cultural Zone. The elders had a wonderful day!



## Artistry & Innovation











**A Journey of Learning & Growth:** Our exploration into Carnival arts has been a positive journey, nurturing greater understanding & fostering growth. The project marked a celebration of achievements, overcoming challenges, & laying the groundwork for lasting transformation.

### **1. Lessons:**

- Community Harmony: We demonstrated the power of collective endeavour involving the whole community. This experience highlighted the potential of united efforts in fostering meaningful community engagement & celebrated carnivals creative skills.
- Adaptation: Navigating unexpected obstacles enhanced our adaptability & agility in responding to evolving circumstances.
- Digital Leverage: Successful digital reach emphasised the importance of expanding our online presence, revealing invaluable insights for future pursuits.

### **2. Measurable Progress:**

- Elevated Participation: We surpassed our expectations by setting participation & attendance records.
- Inclusivity: Extending our inclusion of diverse participants, from Mas Bands, Cinema audiences, Exhibition attendance, to Carnival Kids, Art talks & master-class engagement, promoted a sense of belonging.
- Nurturing Creative Talent: The pivotal role of Creative Practitioners & the range of creative opportunities afforded by ACE: Our gallery, cinema, pop-ups, & community venue opportunities, plus the Cultural Zone Creatives were instrumental in nurturing & showcasing artistic excellence.
- Volunteers: The commitment of Procession Stewards & Festival Volunteers ensured an event that was supported & grounded locally.
- Digital Expansion: Digital outreach achieved success, captivating streaming, & online audiences, transcending traditional boundaries.

### **3. Challenges overcome:**

- Procession timing: The departure time was delayed due to circumstances beyond our control. We kept all informed & were pleased to have our best procession yet.

### **4. Sustainable Change:**

- Collaboration: Proven collaborative connection & approach affirms the value of partnerships, a model we plan to develop for upcoming initiatives.
- Empowerment: The vibrant community involvement highlights the significance of engagement & empowerment. We're dedicated to ongoing opportunities for Creative practitioners' & fostering support for greater engagement in our forthcoming projects.

### **5. Lasting Legacy:**

- Cultural Significance: Carnival's resonance in cultural engagement reverberates within the community.



- Nurturing Creativity: The skills & artistic insights instilled in participants; Creative Practitioners, & Cultural Zone Creatives to navigate creative journeys going forward.

- Uniting Community: Established as an annual unifying force, this year strengthened social bonds & communal pride.

In summary, our experience was marked by an enhanced creative programme, more extensive achievements, & developed our adaptable strategies. As we reflect on our journey, we envision a future enriched by carnival artistry, creative community empowerment, securing Acton's cultural legacy going forward.

## **Project Delivery**

### **June 2023**

- Coordination: ARTification Executive weekly meetings; Production & Performances Committee meetings; All regulatory consent secured; Event Management Plan with LB of Ealing confirmed; Registration of participants & Conditions of Participation shared; Meeting with reps of performers/bands; MoU to all Service Providers; Order/Purchase/Rent materials & equipment.
- Creative Content: Performing Units agreed; Design & creation; Costume Production & Fittings; Mas Camps/Studios open; Rehearsals.
- Workshops: Fun & Recycling Mas; Thematic Anniversaries; Decorating Costumes & Printing T-shirts; Apple Play sessions; Kids Carnival costume making Event; Induction/training for tutors/volunteers re safeguarding/H&S/Spiking/Managing/vulnerabilities.
- Exhibition & Events: W3 gallery Fiesta exhibition; Opening event; Artist talks.

### **July 2023**

- Coordination: ARTification Executive weekly meeting; Production & Performances Committee; Mas Camps/Studios open; ACT-One Screening – Pan & Mas Film and Pan Man film screening, & Q+A; & Activities; Art Box design, fabrication & sessions held; Curated distressing of T-shirts (Final); Hosting costume & T-shirt distribution.
- Events: ACT-one Cinema screening event; W3 gallery Artist Talk.
- Acton Carnival: Carnival Parade with Acton Park Festival (8<sup>th</sup>).
- Review & Legacy: Evaluation Meeting & Celebration of Achievements; Photographic archiving of Carnival 2023; Social Media posts on achievements; Independent Review (Verification & Certification) of Project Report (Elimu); Report to ACE/Participants & Partners/LB Ealing.

## **BUDGETS**

**See Financial report on Grantium Portal.**

## **PROJECT & OUTCOMES**

### **CREATIVE PEOPLE**

ARTification's Acton Carnival contributes "to optimise the contribution of arts & culture ... bringing people & pride to the highstreets", supporting creatives to design, develop & increase their engagement in high quality creative activities with activity portals featuring art forms (music, mas, dance), learning & production (Mas Camps, Artist Talks, Photography & Film making) to foster understanding & connections between communities, experiment & take risks & celebrate 2 anniversaries (Windrush, Emerald).

We have created an environment of collective participatory learning reducing artistic isolation, encouraging shared learning & creating a platform for professional networking & genuine creative bridges to share skills, knowledge, materials & specialised equipment.

Performing units have engine rooms, communal hubs & social centres to entice children & young people to take part in creative activities outside school, parents & communities to road test activities (designing, creating, decorating, sewing), observe up close & sample a creative process (costume making, distressing a t-shirt/DJ'ing/choreography); all accessible & open ended in different areas throughout the borough. A plethora of opportunities for all creative people; even those with little interest in the arts who can feel at home & benefit from participation.

### **Cultural Communities**

Carnival's iconic status brings together constituencies & communities of interest from a diverse demographic & is a major contributor to the nation's economy, a tourist attraction & a unique platform for quality, excellence & innovation in the celebration of the arts, in the enjoyment of the arts & in the making of the arts.

Our collaborative approach to culture offers cultural communities & our targeted constituencies in Ealing enhanced, supportive opportunities to taste, experience, witness the combined arts of Carnival in safe environments (Mas Camp & at our pop-up events), to bring diverse participants from different cultural groups together in production & performance, to open access to residents & community organisations, to champion the benefits of creative activity & practices & to put a lie to the negative optics of Carnival as a riotous activity.

Our investment in music & dance, young creatives, reducing costs of participation in costumes, marketing participation as universal, having influencers & Carnival Ambassadors from different communities in Ealing, we hope to have mitigated any social, economic, geographical barriers to learning about & enjoying the street parade as player, audience or supporter.

As a post pandemic response & to celebrate Acton's 20 years of Carnival, weeks of these activities have brought individuals to a normality that has improved their mental health & wellbeing & taken that crucial first step to defining & shaping spaces in their locality to live, work & strive

## **INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES**

### **INCLUSIVITY & RELEVANCE**

#### **Communities**

We wanted to identify, reach and involve communities in the planning and creative process. The steps we took to make sure our project was open and accessible to people within the communities we planned to work with:

Acton Carnival is a spectacle open to all & easy to engage with. This year we aimed to increase on our base of partners by celebrating 20 years of Acton Carnival & reaching out to millennials & young people wanting a secure, safe & local experience in a small Carnival open & accessible to anyone by promoting participation in safe environments, up close exposure to the creative & technical processes & once engaged, experience a welcoming ambience where those new to Carnival or feel threatened by exclusivity are welcome, can contribute to/shape any activity, customise how they participate & see the rewards of their engagement taking home completed workbooks, decorated masques, maquettes & selfies; a reach/engagement that is diverse, widespread & inclusive, targeting all residents, intensely promoted with Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat to maximise digital audience reach & other Carnival Media platforms with the hype of the launch of Ealing's Creative Manifesto at the end of the month.

#### **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

Utilising innovative and community-friendly survey methods, we successfully gathered responses from **34 attendees (accounting for 95% of the total) at the pre-carnival event, and 116 responses on the day of the carnival itself.** The data reveals that **BAMER (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, and Refugee) groups formed a significant majority at both events, comprising 88% of attendees at the pre-carnival event and 76% at the carnival.** The Black/African/Caribbean/Black British community emerged as the largest ethnic group at both events. In terms of gender distribution, the data exhibited a relatively balanced pattern, with representation from several LGBTQI+ participants at both events and a majority of women at the pre-carnival event. The data also suggests that the events attracted attendees across a wide age spectrum. **At the pre-carnival event, over 68% of the participants were over 51 years old,** indicating a strong presence of loyal attendees who have been part of the Acton Carnival for the past two decades. Conversely, **the carnival itself attracted a younger demographic, with over 40% of attendees being under 21 years old.** This data suggests that the Acton Carnival continues to engage both long-standing supporters and a new generation of attendees, underscoring its enduring appeal and relevance in the community.

## Workforce

All individuals engaged in the staging of the Carnival are freelancers commissioned to deliver a time sensitive programme. The 2 Professional Managers are long standing Carnival consultants with the full 20 years' service. The involvement of community organisations as partners & as performing units, each with their own workforce all freelancers, engaged for this event only. We are a fully diverse workforce in age, gender, sexual orientation & ethnicity, fully representing young adults. During the delivery of the programme, our partners facilitated open access for all communities & individuals in Ealing to witness them at work & this open, collaborative, collective approach helped to professionalise Carnival art forms & encourage others to explore pathways towards a career in the creative industries.

## The Creative Case for Diversity

ARTification values the contribution arts, cultural activity & heritage make to the vibrancy of Acton & with support from the LA & 133+ community organisations, our projects provide a taste of how diverse & disparate communities can imagine & co-create a future together, developing relationships, imaginative experiences & uniting the area & it's people.

Carnival is genuinely diverse with **133+ organisations, & more than 32 partners, & 16 as performers**, from SMEs, Museums & Cinemas. A diversity also reflected in the arts with an equilibrium in design & aesthetics between Fun/Pretty/Fashionable Mas & the kinetics & grandeur of Theatre Mas. Street Fete v Street Art. Participants enjoy a variety of form, costumes & shape for any body size as Carnival is theatre in the public realm & our stage is Acton Park. Creative drivers in quality, excellence & innovation; with distinctive ways to reinterpret & diversify the arts & craft of Carnival with an innovative aesthetic, skills development, environmental considerations & experimental techniques. Seen as a Caribbean event, we marketed Carnival as a cross-cultural celebratory event & a creative bridge between communities creatively exploring ideas & narratives concerning the role of the arts in placemaking & shaping identity & belonging & reflecting the whole spectrum of creativity, diversity & communities of the 9 protected characteristics + class, social status & geography.

## Feedback

To gather additional feedback from Acton Carnival 2023, we circulated an online survey among volunteers, traders, and attendees who purchased tickets online. In total, we received **56 valid responses**. Among the respondents, 62.5% were female, **50% were aged between 36 to 55 years old**, and **70% identified as BAMER**, with 41.8% from the Black/Black British/Caribbean/African group.



When asked which **part of the carnival they enjoyed the most**, among the **48 qualitative responses**, the most frequent answers included **(1) music, (2) parade, and (3) children having fun and painting.**

In terms of **critiques and suggestions**, we gathered **40 qualitative responses**, the most frequent ones were **(1) lowering the ticket price or making it free, (2) providing more seats, and (3) enhancing local promotions.**

- Respondents expressed **considerable enthusiasm and satisfaction** for Acton Carnival 2023. **50% rated the experience as 10 out of 10, and 33% rated the experience as 8-9.**
- 78% of respondents strongly agreed that Acton Carnival 2023 fostered a sense of community. Nearly 80% of respondents felt that the carnival created a very friendly environment for local businesses.
- An overwhelming **94.6% of respondents confirmed** that they are looking forward to **the next carnival** and/or would like to promote the event.

### **Audience & Participants**

Over the past 20 years of staging the annual Acton Carnival, we have established benchmarks for public & community engagement. Celebrating 2 key anniversaries this year – Our Emerald milestone & Windrush 75 – we generated increased numbers.

1. People taking part in the project to deliver creative activity or directly benefitting from the project in their role as a creative or cultural practitioner - 73
  2. People taking part in or contributing to the project, going beyond being audience members. This might include taking part in a workshop, performing in a community show, or joining a class – kids day 8
  3. Those supporting or benefitting from the project in a voluntary role 370+
  4. Those who are present during the live presentation of a creative product such as a live show or an exhibition
  5. Those who experience a recording or broadcast of a live presentation through a digital platform
  6. Those who experience a creative product designed to be experienced through digital technology
- Mas Bands x 17 – UDM Samba, Mayors entourage, APPLE Play, Gempio Mas, Making Mas, Tippa Audio float, Elevate Arts, ARTi section, Djanomi, L'Amour Mas X Jamican Twist, Japanese Ukulele Kaze Canon and Himawari Dance, Dance Carib, West London Trade Union Club, Windrush 19, Ealing Business Expo and the United Anglo Caribbean Society, JabJab.

- Procession active participants x 370 taking part in the street procession.
- Creative Practitioners x 73. 20 x Designers & costume makers & creating decorative procession elements. 18 x Tutors on learning sessions + 35 x Artists working on the programme.
- Art & Cultural Zone Creatives x 60 over 20 different activities.
- Procession Stewards & Festival Volunteers x 120 (Info station, LAGER Can charity litter pickers, supporting festival activities, backstage, front of house)
- Live Audiences/Visitors/Public - Festival attendance of 4,500, with 5,500 spectators along the parade route with 5,000 accessing the event on the social media platforms of our partners – est 550/partner.
- Streaming Audiences – 789 on the Acton Carnival Facebook page (plus shares)
- Digital Audiences – 10,000+

### **How many of the people taking part are employed on a freelance basis?**

Est 73

### **How people experienced our project**

As Live Static events ..... at multiple spaces including: W3 venue @ North Acton Pavilion; ACT-one Cinema; W3 gallery; through Acton streets; & Acton Park; plus costume making/dance rehearsals/music practice/carnival arts across numerous venues across Acton, Ealing & West London.

### **Location**

Acton in London Borough of Ealing

Through the streets of Acton from Crown Street, High Street, East Acton Lane, East Churchfield Road, then into the park. Festival location: Acton Park, W3 7JX

### **Our experience**

ARTification has been staging the annual Carnival in Acton for 20 years now & our 2 creative Directors have planned & delivered these Carnivals in Acton successfully & worked on elevating the artistry & quality of the performances, increasing engagement across communities, achieving high levels of satisfaction in the borough & enhancing Acton's reputation equalling similar urban Carnivals.

Engaging local events are the glue that bring diverse communities together. Bridging the public and private, the industrial and the residential, celebrating the unique communities is key to building unity in the area. We occupy public spaces, creating engaging civic engagement experiences.

Festivals, carnivals and multi-disciplinary events are one of our notable achievements from coordinating the largest community carnival, or pop-up events, art walks, to park-based festivals. We also facilitate the celebration of diversity using interactive multimedia mechanisms that dynamically engage

people. ARTification plans to shape further public events to communicate and celebrate whilst reaching and engaging.



Acton Carnival 1897 7 Commemorative T-shirts 2023



[www.ARTification.org.uk](http://www.ARTification.org.uk)  
Acton Carnival Facebook