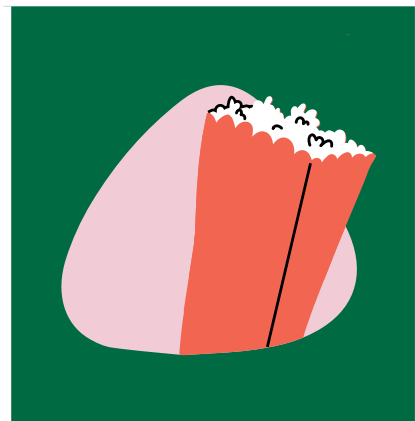
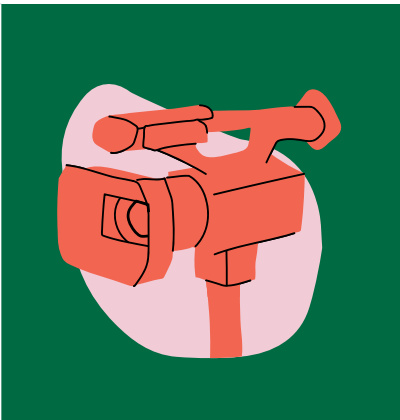
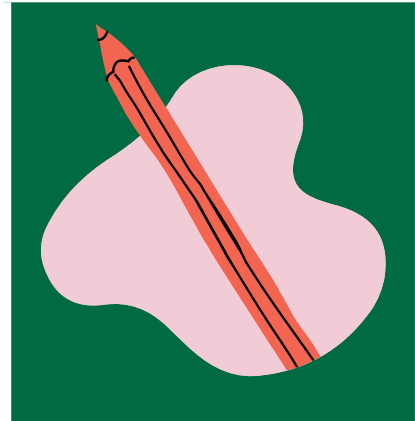
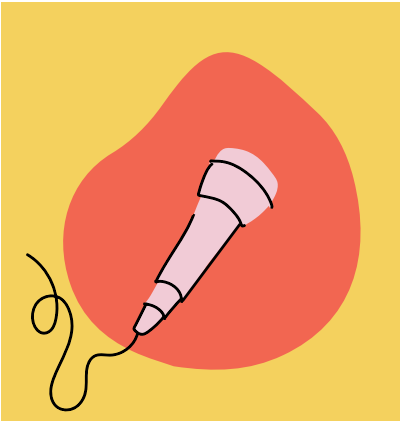




SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS FESTIVAL



2023 Summary Report
mhfestival.com



Introduction

The Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF) aims to use the arts and creativity to explore how we can help to prevent mental health problems and support people to live mentally healthier lives.

The 17th Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival took place from **4-22 October 2023**, exploring the theme of 'Revolution'.

It featured over **240 events** in **14 local authority areas** across Scotland. It reached estimated live audiences of over **15,000 people** and digital audiences of over **2,000 people**.



Zine Making Workshop – Photo © Ingrid Mur

Highlights

'Revolution'

Our 'Revolution' theme was a catalyst for creativity and community engagement. In the midst of political and economic turbulence, the festival confronted the impact of economic barriers and social inequality on our mental health, and asked 'how we can do things differently?'

Manifesto

SMHAF 2023 opened with Manifesto, an ambitious day of music, theatre, performance and participatory workshops to explore the questions: What does a mental health revolution look like? And how do we start one?.

Moving Minds

A kaleidoscope of artists, musicians, and organisations showcased their talents at this annual family-friendly event, produced in collaboration with Glasgow's diverse communities.

Artist Commissions

We commissioned five diverse artists to create new artworks inspired by our 'Revolution' theme, encompassing live performance, film, printed materials, and audio art.

Writing

We hosted our 10th annual Writing Awards to celebrate new writing exploring mental health. Host Hannah Lavery introduced our shortlisted writers to read excerpts from their work.

Film

We presented four powerful screenings in cinemas and community venues, inviting guests including acclaimed director Carol Morley, emerging talent Etienne Kubwabo, and visual artist Melanie Manchot to join us in conversation.

Regional Programmes

The festival featured over 200 events in urban and rural locations all across Scotland – from Thurso to Hawick – spanning music, film, theatre, visual art, discussion, creative workshops and more.



'We Depend on Each Other' – Photo © Ingrid Mur

Impact

Impact for Audiences

SMHAF has a big impact on its diverse audiences, with its innovative creative programming, and the opportunities it creates for people to gain insights and resources that help them better support their mental health.

98% of respondents to our audience survey described their experience as Good or Very Good with the overwhelming majority saying Very Good.

“I intend to find more creative ways of expressing myself and being more honest when I feel “unwell.”

Audience Feedback



Audience at Moving Minds – Photo © Ingrid Mur

Impact for Artists

SMHAF is a unique platform for artists to create and share work about mental health, providing a safe and welcoming environment to explore their own lived experience and the issues they care about through their work.

93% of respondents felt that their involvement with SMHAF positively impacted their mental health.

“It felt significant for me to be recognised as an artist and as someone with lived experience. It is not often I feel confident disclosing my disability and in a way that felt comfortable and in such a supportive environment.”

Artist Feedback



Sonia Killmann performing at Manifesto

Photo © Ingrid Mur

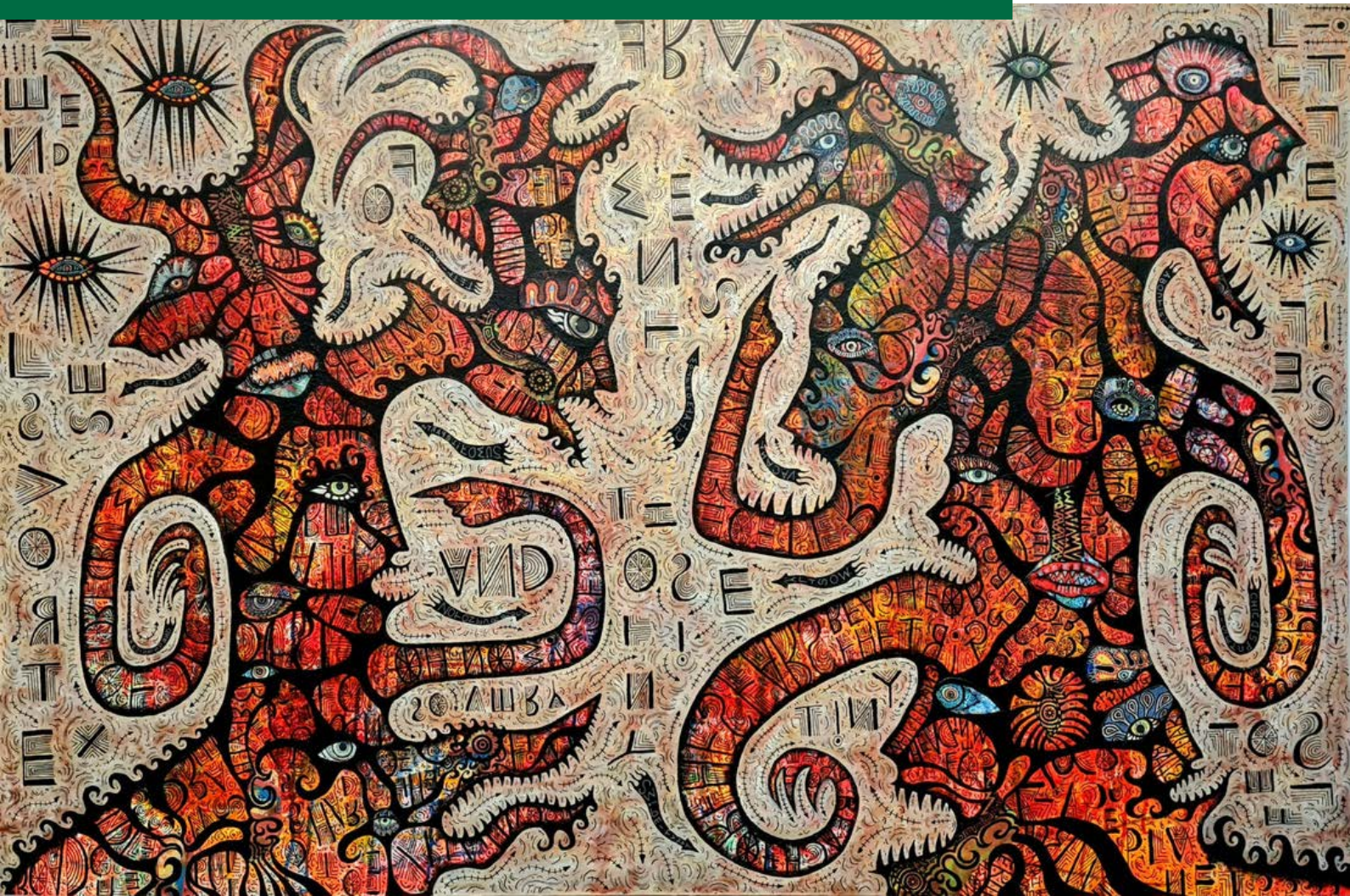
Regional Impact

Arts and mental health activity has an important role in communities across Scotland. Engaging in SMHAF enables this vital work to reach wider audiences and challenges mental health stigma in local communities.

“I think it’s [SMHAF] a wonderful thing. It’s about connecting people and breaking down these barriers...it brings that authenticity to the arts rather than you’re just going along and actually looking at something. You don’t just look at something like that. You’re actually part of something and that’s how you build communities.”

Regional Coordinator

Never the Twain Shall Meet from Inside-Outsider
Artwork © Greg Bromley




Thank you to our partners and the hundreds of organisations, communities, and individuals who participated in the festival this year.





SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS FESTIVAL


Get in Touch


For more information about the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival and how you can support our work in 2024, please get in touch:

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