

The Big Arts Give Launch

Wednesday 26 May 2010

Museum of London

Colin Tweedy's Speech

Thank you all for coming today and a special thank you to our host Jack Lohman, Director of the Museum of London, who has allowed us in the day before the opening of the Galleries of Modern London – which are stunning.

George Osborne, when Shadow Chancellor gave Arts & Business a challenge - to put forward recommendations as to how private sector funding, through sponsorship and philanthropy, could be dramatically increased in these difficult times - and how the arts and cultural organisations could become more entrepreneurial and therefore more self sufficient.

Our recommendations were contained in our Private Sector Policy for the Arts, that in the spirit of the age, we circulated to all three major political parties, before the election was called.

The Policy was circulated to 4,000 people and organisations, as a consultation document. That consultation period ends on 28 May and after collating all the feedback, we will present the Policy to our new Culture Ministers, as a matter of urgency.

Only one key recommendation was not put forward for consultation. It simply could not wait and it is what we are launching today - the "Arts & Business Big Arts Give".

However, this is a one year pilot – we will monitor it closely – but it is designed to ensure that for every £1 that Arts & Business invests in the fund, an extra £8 of new philanthropic wealth goes to the arts. But Gavin Buckley will explain everything in detail and clearly after the formal speeches.

Philanthropy is a front line concern for this government – today we announce the first new front line service for the mixed economy that we now live in. If our culture is not only to survive, but thrive, initiatives, like the Big Arts Give are essential.

I will be introducing Alec Reed, entrepreneur and philanthropist, founder of the Big Give and our partner and patron, after the Minister has spoken. Suffice to say here is that Alec Reed's Big Give has been a phenomenal success already and the Big Give matching challenge raised £8.5million for general charities in just 45 minutes last year.

This is the first of three key initiatives that Arts & Business, with our philanthropic, business and public funding partners, plan to launch that will provide vital support to the embattled cultural organisations on the front line, that are contained in our Private Sector Policy.

This is the crucial moment when the arts and cultural sector's ability to raise additional source of funding cannot be weakened, nor can Arts & Business itself be weakened. The impact will be disastrous on them and us, disaster arriving fast and sure, falling on those least able to bear the pain in the arts.

Arts & Business has a wide brief and has concern for over 9,000 arts contacts, both professional and volunteer, who are on the frontline. Most are rarely, if ever, funded substantially from Government funds, but rely on earned income, philanthropy and sponsorship and volunteer effort alone.

Surely this, often hidden, and ignored, host of cultural endeavour is as representative of the Government's Big Society agenda as anything?

Philanthropy for them, the thousands of small and medium sized cultural bodies, is not a "nice to have", but a lifeline. This Arts & Business Big Arts Give is very much aimed for such organisations.

In the Private Sector Policy for the Arts, Arts & Business set a target of £1billion to reach by 2016 in private funding – that is a considerable, but we believe achievable challenge.

We thank the new Government for remaining strongly supportive of the work of Arts & Business, because we take as seriously as they do, their commitment to transforming philanthropy across the arts.

Today, Minister, ladies and gentlemen, Arts & Business invites you all to join us on this first step on the road to transforming arts philanthropy

Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome, our very new Minister for Culture, Ed Vaizey, MP.

Colin Tweedy

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