

Rose Fenton

Co Founder and Director LIFT Festival 1980 - 2005; Director Free Word 2011 - 2016, Co-Founder of The Festival Academy – UK

*The Turning World : Stories from
the London International Festival of
Theatre*

Festivals in Transition

Tipping Point

Clore Leadership Programme

Dance Umbrella and Aerowaves

*London International
Festival of Theatre*

Free Word

Rose Fenton began her professional life in Festivals. She co- founded the London International Festival of Theatre – LIFT in 1980 and was its Director for 25 years. She subsequently worked as an international freelance producer and arts adviser (2005 – 11) on projects including the pan- European Festivals in Transition (FIT) an initiative by 8 festivals to develop the role of international theatre festivals within the cultural landscape of an evolving Europe; and co authoring an Arts Culture and Creativity Strategy for the Olympic Park post following the Olympic Games in 2012.

From 2011 - 2016 Rose was the Director Free Word, an international centre for literature, literacy and free expression that explores and celebrates of the power of words to change lives.

Rose is co- author *The Turning Word, Stories from the London International Festival of Theatre*. In 2010, she co-wrote *International Cultural Leadership – Reflections, Competencies and Interviews* for the Arts Council and British council. She is also on the Advisory Board of Tipping Point, an organisation that brings together scientists and artists internationally in responding to the challenges of climate change.

She is a mentor for the Clore Leadership Programme and is on the Board of a number of arts organisations including Aerowaves - Dance Across Europe and the live literature producer and independent publisher, Penned in the Margins. Rose holds an Honorary Doctorate from De Montford University and an Honorary Fellowship from Dartington College of Arts. In 2005 she was awarded an OBE for services to drama.



'If I have to highlight the vital qualities for Festival Directors and Managers I would include a personal passion to walk in other worlds and listen to and share others' stories and perspectives; a strong commitment to freedom of expression and the belief that through the arts you can create a space for the important and difficult conversations about our society; the understanding of the need to develop a community of support and collaboration from across a wide spectrum of civil society with artists at the heart of the conversation; and the belief in the importance of building with your team of a strong set of values which infuse everyone's practice. At LIFT our set of values included trust, generosity, hospitality and respect. We also set up a permanent learning culture and acknowledged the need to be always open to taking risks, to experimentation and new ideas. I have tried to apply these values and approaches to whatever job or project I have been involved in ever since'

Rose Fenton, during the 2009 Varna Atelier