

Press release

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[What's behind a renaissance in the Arts?](#)

We may be living in an age of austerity but the arts are refusing to be cowed into submission.

In defiance of dire warnings about lack of state subsidies and withdrawal of corporate sponsorship, individuals and artistic companies are providing a cultural backlash to the present economic downturn.

The [Manchester Salon](#) is hosting a discussion to look at why and how this phenomenon is taking place, and what the implications might be for both artist and audience.

All round the UK, those with a direct and indirect interest in the arts are finding new ways to engage in the arts – with the explosion of social media and web 2.0 technology allowing consumers of art the chance for real-time commentary on artistic shows.

Put simply, we are all critics now. But if we are, what becomes of the professional critic and what accepted standards should and can be used as artistic criteria for judging art.

The discussion will be led by four speakers with a direct interest in the arts: Tiffany Jenkins is director of arts at the Institute of Ideas; Billy Cowan is a Manchester-based playwright; Clare

Howdon is a freelance theatre director; and John Summers is chief executive of the Manchester Halle orchestra.

Even in an environment where talent seems to emerge only from shows such as the *X-Factor* and other phenomena such as slam poetry or flash fiction, all of which seem to exemplify a world that is steadily 'dumbing down', we find TV shows such as

The Choir

, bringing high culture to council estates, we have galleries, such as the Royal Standard in Liverpool, opening up to provide space for new artists, and new approaches toward art can find a hearing.

Date: Monday, 10 September, 2012, at 6.45pm, £5 entry.

Venue: Three Minute Theatre, Afflecks Palace, Oldham Street, Manchester

For further details on the event and Manchester Salon's activities, contact Simon Belt at events@manchestersalon.org.uk or ring 07809 669824.