

# ARTIST RESIDENCY



## **PAA JOE GHANAIAN COFFIN MAKER MAY — JUNE 2013**

Paa Joe and his son Jacob have travelled all the way from Ghana, to embark on an artist residency in the 'City Arts Dome' within the stunning surroundings of Clumber Park.

He is building his trademark lion coffin, one of the most powerful and important symbols of Africa.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Paa Joe is a master craftsman and the Grandfather of the fantasy coffin trade. Since sixteen he has been crafting beautiful coffins that represent the lives of the people for whom they are made – a Coca Cola bottle for a street vendor, or a lion for the head of a family. He has produced thousands of coffins, the majority of which lie deep under the ground.

In 2008 Paa Joe was forced from his workshop located in the centre of Accra to his storage hut two hours away. His Ghanaian customers didn't follow and the tourists stopped passing by. But as his coffin making business is floundering, there is one last hope, a UK exhibition in celebration of his work.

A handful of Paa Joe's works have already exhibited internationally as examples of the Ga culture – from the British Museum in London to Brooklyn Museum in New York – but this is not enough for him. Paa Joe wants his work, and his name, to be seen and recognized the world over.

This project is also supporting the production of a debut feature documentary, Paa Joe & The Lion, from award winning filmmaker Benjamin Wigley following Paa Joe's journey from craftsman to artist.

For more information about this project visit:  
[paajoe.artdocs.co.uk](http://paajoe.artdocs.co.uk)



# WHAT'S ON

## **PAA JOE ARTIST IN RESIDENCE 1 MAY — 1 JUNE CLUMBER PARK**

Throughout the residency, members of the public can visit Paa Joe and watch him work. Usual entrance fees apply throughout May (£6/vehicle).

During the residency, City Arts will also be engaging local schools through a series of arts workshops including mask making with Stephen Jon and poetry with Panya Banjoko.

## **FREE ARTS WORKSHOPS SATURDAY 4, 11 & 18 MAY CLUMBER PARK**

A series of arts workshops inspired by Paa Joe's craft and delivered by local artists will also be happening during May. Workshops will include, fantastic mask making with Stephen Jon ([www.maskaviz.com](http://www.maskaviz.com)), poetry with Panya Banjoko ([www.panyabanjoko.wordpress.com](http://www.panyabanjoko.wordpress.com)) and drop-in arts activities.

## **FREE ARTS WORKSHOPS & SCULPTURE WALKS THURSDAY 30 MAY RUFFORD COUNTRY PARK**

Paa Joe will relocate for one day to Rufford Country Park. Visitors can watch him work and take part in creative workshops and an artist's walk in and around the sculpture garden within the country park.

## **GRAND FINALE & CELEBRATION SATURDAY 1 JUNE CLUMBER PARK DOORS OPEN, 5.30PM START TIME, 6.00PM**

Join us at the Grand finale, as the coffin is celebrated, transforming Clumber Park into a Festival wonderland, full of fun, colour and revelry. FREE arts workshops will run during the day.

At twilight, the celebration of the coffin will commence - a vibrant and dazzling display of dancers, African inspired percussionists, including Sabar Soundsystem ([www.sabarsoundsystem.com](http://www.sabarsoundsystem.com)), a colliery band and giant puppets. Watch, join in and be a part of the celebration as the lion coffin makes its journey around the grounds of Clumber Park and across the lake. The event will culminate in Ghanaian inspired food and drink.

The event will be filmed as part of forthcoming feature documentary film, Paa Joe & The Lion.

Please note. This is a ticketed event. For further details and transport please visit [paajoe.artdocs.co.uk](http://paajoe.artdocs.co.uk) - This event is open to all with no age restrictions.

## **INFORMATION**

For all enquiries about any of the events, please visit [paajoe.artdocs.co.uk](http://paajoe.artdocs.co.uk) or call City Arts on 0115 978 2463.

## **FOLLOW PAA JOE**

[facebook.com/PaaJoeAndTheLion](https://facebook.com/PaaJoeAndTheLion)  
[twitter.com/PaaJoeTheLion](https://twitter.com/PaaJoeTheLion)



# THE FILM

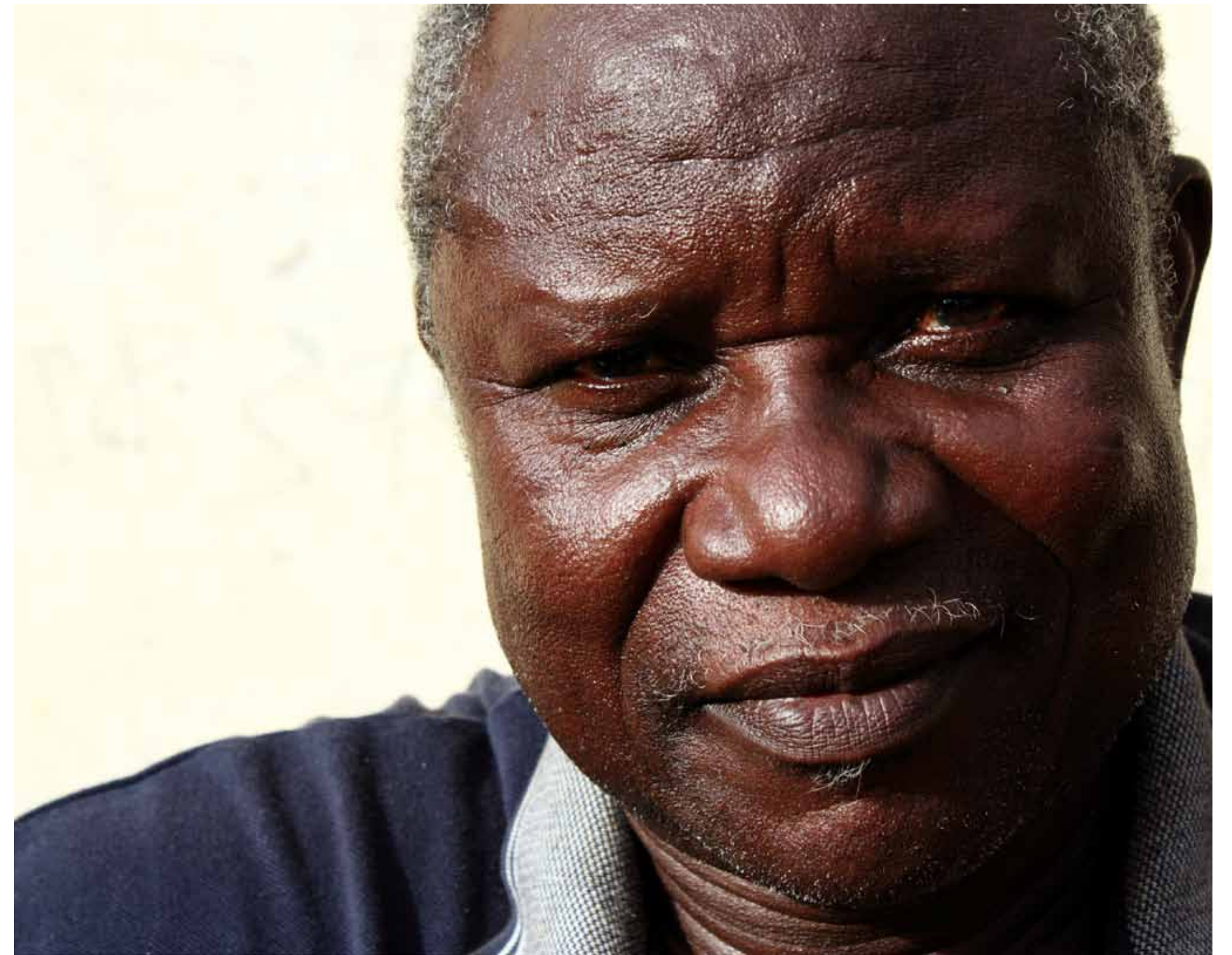
## PAA JOE & THE LION

Paa Joe & The Lion is an exploration into the vibrant history of the Ga culture, its attitude to death and the conflict between art and craft, told through the story of Paa Joe, the Grandfather of the fantasy coffin trade. Paa Joe is a world-renowned craftsman, but since 2008 his coffin business has been declining. Forced to move from his central workshop in Ghana's capital, Accra, he has been working from a dusty roadside shack with little passing trade and few visits from tourists. If business continues like this, his name, workshop and legacy will disappear like the thousands of coffins he has masterfully produced that now lay deep under the ground.

Together with his son, Jacob, Paa Joe is preparing to affirm his position in the Western art world. His residency in the UK, and the coffin, will be celebrated at Clumber Park. The juxtaposition between the English countryside and the unique craft and vibrant celebration will not only be visually stunning and challenging but act as a way of raising questions about the West's view on "ethnic" folk art/craft.

The film will showcase Paa Joe's past, present and future. In 1989 Jimmy Carter visited Paa Joe's workshop and bought two coffins, in 1998 Bill Clinton stopped by. In 2009, it was a different story - his present will be conveyed through the environment in which he now works; the busy roadside acting as the soundtrack to his working day, the empty logbook and the coffins gathering dust in his workshop. We will also focus on his family and community.

Paa Joe's mother encouraged him to become a coffin maker when he was 16 years old and sent him to work with the founder of the craft, Kane Kwei. She died in December 2012 aged 107 but we were fortunate enough to meet her in the summer and were invited back to document her funeral and Paa Joe making her casket. Through her death, we are given a rare and raw insight into the depths of the Ga community, the importance that they put on the funeral celebrations and how they prepare the deceased for their next chapter in the afterlife.



### Director

Benjamin Wigley  
Artdocs

### Producer

Anna Griffin  
Artdocs

### Executive Producer

Brian Hill  
Century Films

The film has been supported throughout development by Creative England, WorldView and was a participating project on 2012's Documentary Campus Masterschool.

[www.creativeengland.co.uk](http://www.creativeengland.co.uk)  
[www.worldview.cba.org.uk](http://www.worldview.cba.org.uk)  
[www.documentary-campus.com/v2/page/masterschool](http://www.documentary-campus.com/v2/page/masterschool)



# THE PARTNERS

The event is managed by Artdocs, supported by The National Lottery through Arts Council England in partnership with City Arts, National Trust in the Midlands and Nottinghamshire County Council.

## artdocs

Artdocs is a UK based independent production company specialising in artistic documentary – films produced in an artistic and experimental way about artists and their work.

The company's commercial work provides complete 360° solutions for the likes of BBC, Arts Council England, British Council, Tate Media and National Trust. Other clients include NGOs and charities such as Sight Savers, OXFAM and WaterAid.

PS. YOUR MYSTERY SENDER was the company's first and award winning independent short film (Soho Rushes Best Documentary Award) and toured many international festivals including SXSW, Hotdocs & Sheffield DocFest. Artdocs is currently developing its first feature documentary, Paa Joe & The Lion, with support from Documentary Campus Masterschool, Creative England and WorldView.

[www.artdocs.co.uk](http://www.artdocs.co.uk)



## National Trust

We're a UK conservation charity, protecting historic places and green spaces, and opening them up for ever, for everyone. We rely for income on membership fees, donations and legacies, and revenue raised from our commercial operations.

We have over 3.7 million members and 61,000 volunteers. More than 17 million people visit our pay for entry properties, while an estimated 50 million visit our open air properties.

We protect and open to the public over 350 historic houses, gardens and ancient monuments.

But it doesn't stop there - we also look after forests, woods, fens, beaches, farmland, downs, moorland, islands, archaeological remains, castles, nature reserves, villages – for ever, for everyone.

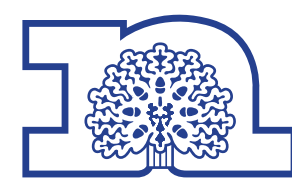
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)



City Arts Nottingham develops arts opportunities that bring people together, stimulate change and create stronger, healthier communities. We believe participation in the arts can enrich and transform people's lives and have been pioneering this approach for over 30 years.

A registered charity, we work creatively and collaboratively with communities and particularly target resources towards vulnerable groups. Our projects include music, performance, visual and digital arts and are all facilitated by artists particularly skilled in working creatively with people.

[www.city-arts.org.uk](http://www.city-arts.org.uk)



## Nottinghamshire County Council

Nottinghamshire is a place where people can enjoy life, be healthy, safe and prosperous; and where business is able to thrive. We are proud of our past and ambitious for our future.

We work throughout Nottinghamshire to promote, deliver and support cultural services that are high quality and accessible to all. We are guided by our communities and visitors to create, nurture and deliver a wide range of inspiring, fun and quality cultural experiences that will excite and engage them.

[www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk)



Supported by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.

We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, and crafts to collections.

Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better.

Between 2011 and 2015, we will invest £1.4 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1 billion from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

## Centuryfilms

Century Films create innovative, hard-hitting documentaries and dramas for all the major UK broadcasters, with sales to many international channels. Our work is distinctive, challenging and inventive and above all, compelling.

We are renowned for producing award-winning work that gives a fresh angle on difficult subjects. By applying an innovative approach to our films, we push the boundaries of documentary and drama production. We aim to relate intelligent, true stories that really grip and move audiences.

[www.centuryfilmsltd.com](http://www.centuryfilmsltd.com)