

Live British Wrestling: History and Resurgence

Supporting, championing and promoting diversity and inclusivity within the wrestling community

'Live British Wrestling: History and Resurgence' at the Attenborough Arts Centre in Leicester was a live event, an experiment, an exploration and celebration of British wrestling history and practice, organised by scholars who were also fans. These scholars now run a theatre-led independent professional wrestling company, 'Wrestling Resurgence', that treats wrestling as an art as well as a performance and a sport.

'Wrestling Resurgence' produce monthly live shows that are streamed to viewers in the UK and around the world, produce original digital content including documentaries, publications and merchandise, support academic and artistic research, and promote wrestling within the wider cultural sector.

Their live shows have extended the reach and changed the demographic of the Attenborough Arts Centre, championing mixed gender wrestling and attracting new audiences that had previously felt excluded from arts narratives, including young men and people from LGBTQ+ communities. The 'Everything Patterned' project in 2019, curated by "Big Wavy" Roy Johnson and funded by the Arts Council, culminated in a live show during Black History Month, the first time a show of all Black wrestlers had ever been staged in the UK.

'Wrestling Resurgence' is also engaged in ongoing research at the intersections of history, sport, and current practice. Current projects include the Arts Council funded 'Combat Theatre: Wrestling and the Music Hall' (2020-21) and the British Academy funded 'Health and Wellbeing in professional wrestling' which has brought in the expertise of Loughborough University sports specialists (2020-21).

'Wrestling Resurgence' works with existing UK based professional wrestlers and wrestling companies to increase access and opportunities, build links and networks, and highlight safeguarding concerns. The team provided data and evidence to an All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry commissioned by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Wrestling, and are featured in the Inquiry report, published in April 2021.

“ We would not be doing this now without that seed funding, without the support of Being Human at the start.

— Dr Claire Warden



People:

- [Claire Warden](#), Senior Lecturer in English and Drama, Loughborough University
- [Sam West](#), PhD researcher, Loughborough University
- John Kirby, Programming Manager at University of Leicester Attenborough Arts Centre

Institutions:

- [De Montfort University](#),
- [Attenborough Arts Centre, University of Leicester](#)
- [Loughborough University](#)

Area:

- East Midlands

Being Human Festival year:

- Lost and Found, 2017

Learn more:

- info@wrestlingresurgence.uk
- [Wrestling Resurgence website](#)
- [Wrestling Resurgence YouTube channel](#)