



Creative
Europe
Desk UK

CREATIVE EUROPE

2014 -2020 IN NORTHERN IRELAND



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I. About this report

This report supplements the publication *The Impact of Creative Europe in the UK: A report by SQW with the support of Creative Europe Desk UK*¹ in order to highlight the impacts of the programme in Northern Ireland. In the report we have collated a compendium of all the projects funded and intend it to communicate and document the legacy of the programme in Northern Ireland. It has been compiled by the Creative Europe Desk Northern Ireland Manager with contributions from programme stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Creative Europe is the European Union's programme to support the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors. From 2014-2020, €1.46 billion was made available to support European projects with the potential to travel, reach new audiences and encourage skill sharing and development. The programme is divided into sub-programmes; Culture which provided funding for the cultural and creative sectors and MEDIA which invested in film, television, new media and video games.

Creative Europe Desk UK (CED UK) is a partnership between the British Council, British Film Institute, Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Welsh Government, and between 2014 – 2016, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. It is designated and supported by

the UK Government Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport and the European Commission. It promotes awareness and understanding of Creative Europe and provides free advice and support for applicants based in the UK. The Northern Ireland Desk sits within the British Council in Belfast and is one in a network of Desks based in the 41 countries that participate in the programme.

More detail on the Creative Europe programme and a comprehensive study into the impacts on the UK can be found in *The Impact of Creative Europe in the UK: A report by SQW with the support of Creative Europe Desk UK*.

1. <https://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu/publications>

2. Introduction

The Creative Europe programme has reached all four countries of the UK, including Northern Ireland, where we have seen many successes across both sub-programmes with impact on animation, games, film and television, theatre, visual arts, crafts, music, heritage, circus, festivals and urban place-making.

Projects funded in Northern Ireland have made a significant contribution to the cultural and creative sectors in regard to the six potential areas of impact set out in a framework published in the 2018 interim report on the impact of Creative Europe in the UK²:

- Networks, partnerships and internationalisation
- Creativity, innovation, research and development
- Financial and economic impact
- Knowledge, skills and capacity within the workforce
- Audience development and cultural impact
- Social impact

The context of the Creative Europe programme in Northern Ireland is different to the other UK countries. Northern Ireland has a unique political and social ecology and geographically is a place apart. Although part of the UK and Europe, Northern Ireland is at the edge, separated by the Irish Sea. Organisations and companies here experience that distance and it creates difficulties in connecting with peers, audiences and accessing opportunities across Europe. Northern Ireland is in some ways a paradox; it has strong international connections but also an intense inward focus on its own diverse communities. Our closest neighbour is of course Ireland and the strong ties, relationships and for some a shared culture, has been an asset to the international work of Northern Ireland companies. This has often resulted in fruitful

partnerships and a gateway into wider European connections and networks.

The course of the two sub-programmes has been quite different in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK.

Culture Sub-Programme

For arts organisations, capacity and structural issues were commonly cited by potential applicants as a barrier to accessing the programme. Cooperation Projects, the main scheme under the Culture sub-programme, are built on meaningful relationships with European partners that require staff time and travel budgets to develop and nurture. Most organisations in Northern Ireland operate at a low capacity with few staff members and limited budgets – in 2017 Arts Council Northern Ireland expenditure per head in Northern Ireland was over 50% less than of the equivalent arms-length funding bodies in the rest of the UK³. Private sector funding, especially for international work is historically extremely limited. It is therefore rare for organisations to have additional time to develop these relationships and they are unlikely to have budgets to travel, attend conferences, festivals, meet people and network. Sourcing match-funding was also considered a barrier to accessing the programme with limited local funding, usually provided on an annual basis, versus the multi-year approach

2. https://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu/sites/default/files/CE_ImpactUK_FINAL.pdf

3. <https://factcheckni.org/articles/do-northern-ireland-arts-need-a-660-uplift-in-government-funding>

of Cooperation Project funding. However, these constraints have made the arts sector resourceful and creative. There were seven organisations that were partners in Cooperation Projects over the course of the programme. This means that 3.3% of Cooperation Projects in which the UK have been involved included a Northern Ireland partner. This figure is in proportion to the size of Northern Ireland (2.8 % of the UK population)⁴. Considering the barriers to entry this is an achievement to be celebrated. The projects themselves are also a cause for celebration – they were innovative and ambitious and often transformative for the organisations, artists and audiences involved. They allowed artists to make connections, new work and progress their career in a way that they never would have been able to otherwise.

MEDIA Sub-Programme

Creative companies in Northern Ireland have been successful in accessing support under the MEDIA sub-programme. Mirroring the sector itself, the programme is more business focused and there is a greater variety of opportunities. Companies access the fund as a sole applicant, without the need to have partner relationships at the point of application, instead focusing on having co-producers involved. Animation has been a natural fit for the programme with three companies receiving funding. The sector employs a higher than average percentage of European nationals and European co-production (very often with partners in Ireland) is the prevalent financing model⁵. Video games has also been another area of success in the programme with the growing creative cluster of developers in Northern Ireland seizing the opportunity to apply for this funding. The funds awarded to these companies has also been bolstered by match-funding from Northern Ireland Screen. Producers in traditional film and television formats have been less successful in accessing the fund – international co-productions here are more common with North America and the European dimension less of a focus. Additionally, film and television productions in Northern Ireland tend to have more of an imperative to reflect local culture compared to their counterparts in animation and gaming.

Creative Europe Desk

British Council Northern Ireland hosts the Northern Ireland office of Creative Europe Desk UK which has been an important asset in itself. The office comprises of a manager who oversees both sub-programmes and provides free information and advice to Northern Ireland based audiovisual, creative and cultural organisations on Creative Europe projects, partnerships and applications. The desk also signposts to information on other EU funding programmes such as Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens and Horizon 2020.

The nature of the desk partnership has led to close collaboration between British Council Northern Ireland and colleagues working in Creative Scotland, Welsh Government and BFI. This has allowed for sharing of knowledge and the participation of Northern Ireland organisations in UK wide activity and networks. The desk in Northern Ireland also cooperates with the desk in Ireland (based in Dublin and Galway) and similarly, has provided opportunity for cross-border networking and collaboration.

Having the presence of a Creative Europe Desk in Northern Ireland has provided a European and international voice in the sector. This has been achieved through holding workshops and seminars featuring specialist speakers from Europe and by contributing to sector discussions and industry events, furthering the international cooperation agenda. The Desk has also been a conduit for connecting the sector with peers in Europe. For instance, by utilising the Creative Europe Desk network across Europe we have been able to facilitate partner searches and recommend speakers for industry events. We have also been able to keep local organisations up to date with EU policy developments and research projects of interest to them. The Desk has embraced a collaborative approach and has worked in partnership with many local organisations to deliver events such as with Belfast Film Festival, Northern Ireland Screen, Thrive and Arts and Business to name a few.

4. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/latest>

5. <https://www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Opening-Doors-Strategy-Doc-for-website.pdf>

3. Key Statistics

- 15 organisations directly received Creative Europe (2014 – 2020) funding in Northern Ireland totalling €1,927,707.

MEDIA

- €1,207,523 was awarded to Northern Ireland companies and organisations through MEDIA.
- This is 2.68% of the €45 million MEDIA funding awarded UK wide.
- 3% of MEDIA grants awarded to the UK went to Northern Ireland based organisations.
- 8% of the total amount awarded to UK production companies through the Slate Funding scheme went to two Northern Ireland based companies. Specifically, they were awarded 31% of the funding that went to the UK animation sector through this scheme.
- 18.5% of the total amount awarded to UK video game companies went to those based in Northern Ireland.

CULTURE

- €720,184 was awarded to Northern Irish companies and organisations through Culture.
- This is 2.4% of the €30 million Culture funding awarded UK wide.
- 3.3% of Cooperation Projects the UK have been involved in included a Northern Ireland partner.
- 1.1% of all Cooperation Projects in Europe included a Northern Ireland partner.
- Projects in Northern Ireland partnered with organisations operating out of 20 out of the 41 participating countries in the Creative Europe programme: Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and UK (England).

Northern Ireland Creative Europe Beneficiaries

SUB PROGRAMME	SCHEME	PROJECT	COMPANY	TYPE	GRANT TO NI ORG
Culture	Cooperation Project - Small	<i>Mysteries & Dolls</i>	Festival of Fools	Partner	33000
Culture	Cooperation Project - Small	<i>Future Artist-Maker Labs</i>	The Nerve Centre	Lead	78091
Culture	Cooperation Project - Large	<i>CORNERS - turning Europe inside out</i>	Arts Council of Northern Ireland	Partner	113796
Culture	Cooperation Project - Large	<i>EU Collective Plays!</i>	Prime Cut Productions	Partner	116093
Culture	Cooperation Project - Large	<i>European Orchestra LABoratory II</i>	Ulster Orchestra Society	Partner	65531
Culture	Cooperation Project - Large	<i>Ceramics and its dimensions</i>	University of Ulster	Partner	60619
Culture	Cooperation Project - Large	<i>European Creative Rooftop Network</i>	Urban Scale Intervention	Partner	253055
					€720,184
MEDIA	Development: Slate	<i>Slate Funding 2016</i>	Dog Ears	Sole	165000
MEDIA	Development: Slate	<i>Slate Funding 2015</i>	Sixteen South	Sole	173291
MEDIA	Development: Video Games	<i>Mona Lisa</i>	Italic Pig	Sole	122501
MEDIA	Development: Video Games	<i>The Infinite Hotel</i>	Italic Pig	Sole	125000
MEDIA	Development: Video Games	<i>Quest Quest: The Quest for Quests</i>	Italic Pig	Sole	150000
MEDIA	Development: Video Games	<i>Hortalius</i>	Brain and Nerd	Sole	150000
MEDIA	Development: Video Games	<i>Tax-Force</i>	Outsider Games	Sole	140000
MEDIA	Audience Development	<i>The Film Corner</i>	The Nerve Centre	Partner	12250
MEDIA	Film Education	<i>Shortcut - Small Stories, Big Issues</i>	The Nerve Centre	Partner	50013
MEDIA	Film Education	<i>The Film Corner Reloaded - A Cultural Approach</i>	The Nerve Centre	Partner	7100
MEDIA	TV Programming (partner)	<i>Gladiators. A Different World</i>	Dercan Media	Partner	*proportion distributed to partners not applicable
MEDIA	Development: Single	<i>Lugi: The Brodgar Boy</i>	Alt Animation	Sole	60000
MEDIA	Europa Cinemas Network	<i>Queen's Film Theatre</i>	Queen's Film Theatre	n/a	52368
					€1,207,523
					TOTALS €1,927,707

4. MEDIA Sub-Programme

The MEDIA sub-programme supports the EU film and audiovisual industries in the development, distribution and promotion of their work. It helps to launch projects with a European dimension and nurtures new technologies; it enables European films and audio-visual works including feature films, television drama, documentaries and new media to find markets beyond national and European borders; it funds training and film development schemes.

A. Video Games Development

This funding supports the development of narrative video games which are intended for commercial exploitation. Companies from Northern Ireland have been particularly successful in accessing this fund with 18.5% of the total amount awarded to UK companies going to those based in Northern Ireland.

Italic Pig – Mona Lisa (2015), The Infinite Hotel (2017) and Quest Quest: The Quest for Quests (2020)

Italic Pig has received the Video Game Development fund three times for developing narrative video games. In the UK, they are the only company to have received a grant three times and they have received the 7th largest amount Europe-wide over the duration of the programme. Italic Pig are known for their witty plotlines, quirky characters and snappy dialogue. Their success in accessing the fund speaks to the rich story telling throughout their games.

Mona Lisa is a heist and forgery game set in Renaissance Italy where the player is a robot and Europe's greatest art thief, breaking into 16th century strongholds to heist paintings from the other great masters.

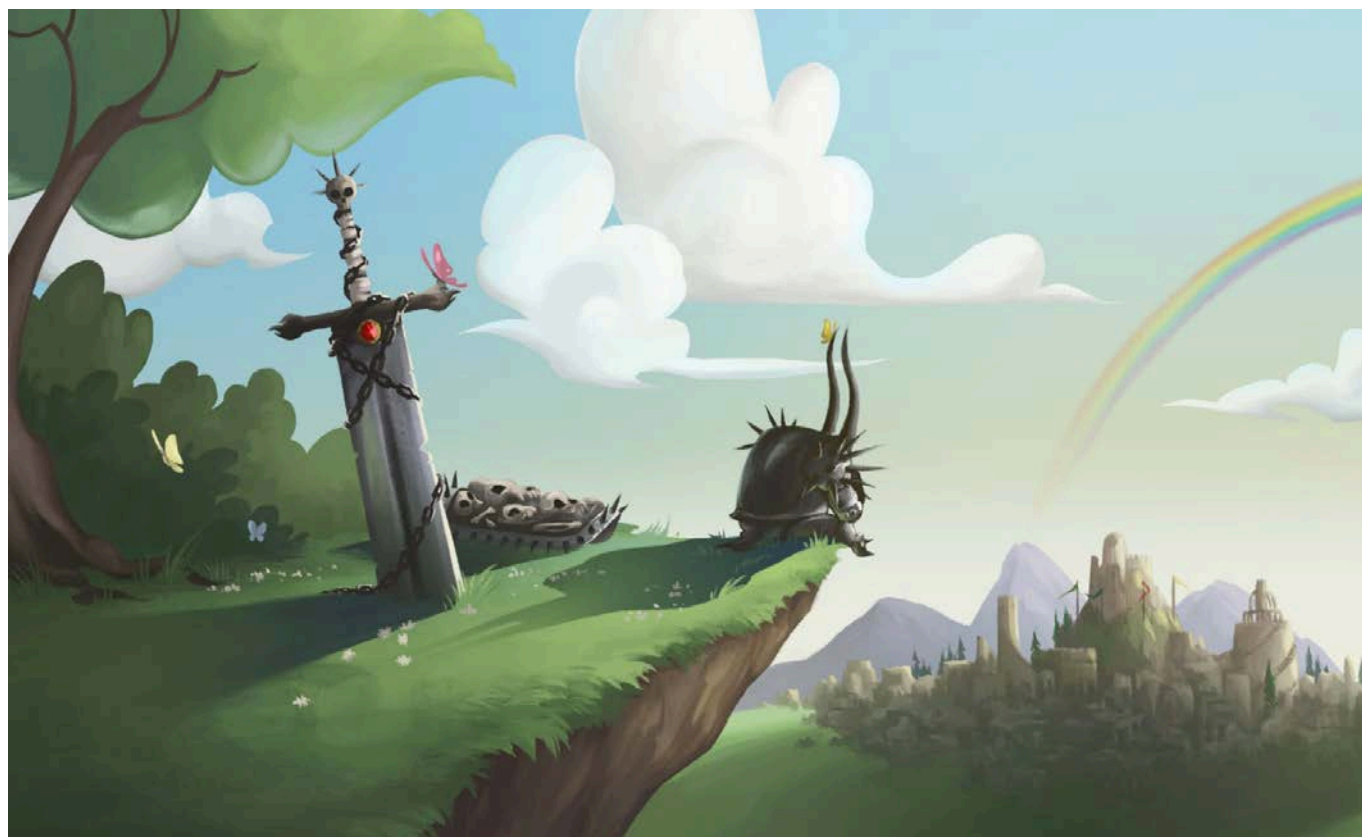
The Infinite Hotel is a character-driven, vertical VR narrative adventure, where you play an elevator operator of the Infinite Hotel - an infinite-star resort with an infinite number of rooms and an infinite number of floors.

Quest Quest: The Quest For Quests is a farcical and poignant fantasy adventure about an old time hack-and-slash hero in an enlightened new world, where the only quest left is to discover his own purpose.

“Creative Europe funding gave our small business creative freedom to explore ideas and development without being constantly distracted by scrounging for the next tiny funding opportunity. My company first received Creative Europe funding in 2015, then 2017, and just received it a third time in 2020. Because of this, our reputation has grown in the world game market, and business opportunities that would not have previously been available are now within reach. We have also grown from 4 people to 20 people in the past 5 years, making us one of the largest game development studios in Northern Ireland. Thanks Creative Europe!”

Kevin Beimers, Italic Pig

Still from the development of Italic Pig's
Quest Quest: The Quest for Quests.



Outsider Games – Taxforce 2019

Outsider Studios is a game development studio, established in 2011, that produces narrative-led projects with a unique comicbook aesthetic and are known for their crafted, hand-drawn story driven games. Work to date has included projects for the BBC and Lionsgate Films.

“Creative Europe has been essential to our Tax-Force project. We have been able to grow our small team and provide longer contracts to our core developers, providing security in an otherwise unsure time. The funding has provided us time to develop and explore the project’s potential, elevating every aspect of the game, from the art style and mechanics to a richer and deeper narrative.”

Stephen Downey, Outsider Games

Brain and Nerd – Hortilius 2020

Brain and Nerd is a small game development studio currently based within The Pixel Mill, the Northern Ireland Screen funded accelerator programme. *Hortilius* is a sandbox survival game with a narrative inspired by *Subnautica* and design inspiration from *Honey, I Shrunk The Kids*. In the game you play a shrunken scientist lost in a garden who must think on his feet to survive.

“Securing Creative Europe MEDIA funding will be instrumental in developing a really polished prototype of Hortilius, for which we’re hoping to find a publisher. In a very real sense, the award allows our small studio to grow and flourish, allowing us to remain competitive in the growing indie space – we’ve been able to expand to a team of ten as a direct result of securing this funding, including an additional programmer and larger art team.”

Brendan Drain, Brain and Nerd

B. Slate and Single Project Development

Development funding supports European independent production companies looking to develop a project or projects with international potential for cinema, television or digital platforms. Applicants either apply with a single project or for a slate of projects. Several companies in Northern Ireland have been successful in securing development funding, all working in animation.

Sixteen South – Slate Funding 2015

Sixteen South are a Belfast-based production company dedicated to the development, creation and production of original premium children's television for national and international broadcasters. They work in animation, live action and puppetry - and produce shows for pre-schoolers and kids. Sixteen South received the slate fund in 2015. None of the projects on the slate have yet to make it to production but the experience of developing them with broadcasters led onto other new ideas that were subsequently pitched at Cartoon Forum and were picked up and sold internationally.

Dog Ears – Slate Funding 2016

Dog Ears is an award-winning creative studio based in Derry~Londonderry. Their company was born from a desire to make beautiful engaging content for children – on paper, on tablets, devices and in living rooms. They have published picture books, released Ireland's first children's book app, and co-produced two series of the Emmy-nominated pre-school show, *Puffin Rock*, with partners Cartoon Saloon and Penguin Random House. They received funding from Creative Europe to develop a slate of projects in 2015, one of which, a brand-new animated TV series, is now in production and due for broadcast in 2023.

“Receiving Creative Europe funding gave us the resources to concentrate, to focus and be strategic about the development of our new IP. The substantial financial support enabled us to carve out time to push our projects creatively, to source and work with the best talent we could find and to pay those artists a fair fee. Being able to have access to development and market support, as a small independent company, offered a real life-line and ensured we were represented at events. It also allowed us to create quality content.”

Fionnuala Deane, Dog Ears

Alt Animation – Single Project 2020

ALT Animation is a collective of animation professionals based in Belfast who have joined forces to create an animation studio focused on delivering high quality animated content for a global audience. They received single project development funding for their feature-length animated adventure ‘*Lugi - The Brodgar Boy*’ set

in Neolithic times on the mystical Scottish islands of Orkney. The film, aimed at a family audience, tells the story of a young disabled boy who must unite his people in order to defeat the evil forces that threaten to cover his world in darkness.

Still from Alt Animation's feature-length animated film *Lugi – The Brodgar Boy*.



C. Film Education

This funding supports projects which provide mechanisms for better cooperation between film education initiatives. It helps develop new and innovative projects aimed at an audience of people under 19 years old. These projects require multiple partners from across Europe. Three projects have had Northern Ireland involvement, all with Derry~Londonderry's The Nerve Centre as a partner.

“The Nerve Centre has been involved in several film education projects through Creative Europe. These projects are really where we get to learn and share with some of the leading experts in film education across Europe. They have allowed us to innovate and test new approaches to embedding film in the curriculum here across a range of subjects, and to bring genuinely innovative approaches directly into classrooms in Northern Ireland. Creative Europe has allowed us to try new approaches and access knowledge that we would otherwise find much more difficult. The knowledge that we have gained from these projects will help to inform our work for years to come.”

John Peto, Nerve Centre

The Film Corner: New On and Off Activities for Film Literacy 2016

Partners: Fondazione Cineteca Italiana, Italy (Lead) / Jugoslovenska Kinoteka, Serbia / The Film Space, UK / Università degli studi di Milano – Bicocca, Italy.

During this project the partners developed an online platform for film education in order to raise the levels of film literacy of young audiences across the European Union. *The Film Corner* platform consists of

an interactive narrative-based layout with game-based learning resources, integrated as apps, the user can interact with. The learning resources on the platform are based on film literacy skills centred around a set of European films.

The Film Corner Reloaded - A Cultural Approach 2018

Partners: Fondazione Cineteca Italiana, Italy (Lead) / Jugoslovenska Kinoteka, Serbia / The Film Space, UK / Università degli studi di Milano – Bicocca, Italy / Georgian National Film Center, Georgia / Otok Institute, Slovenia

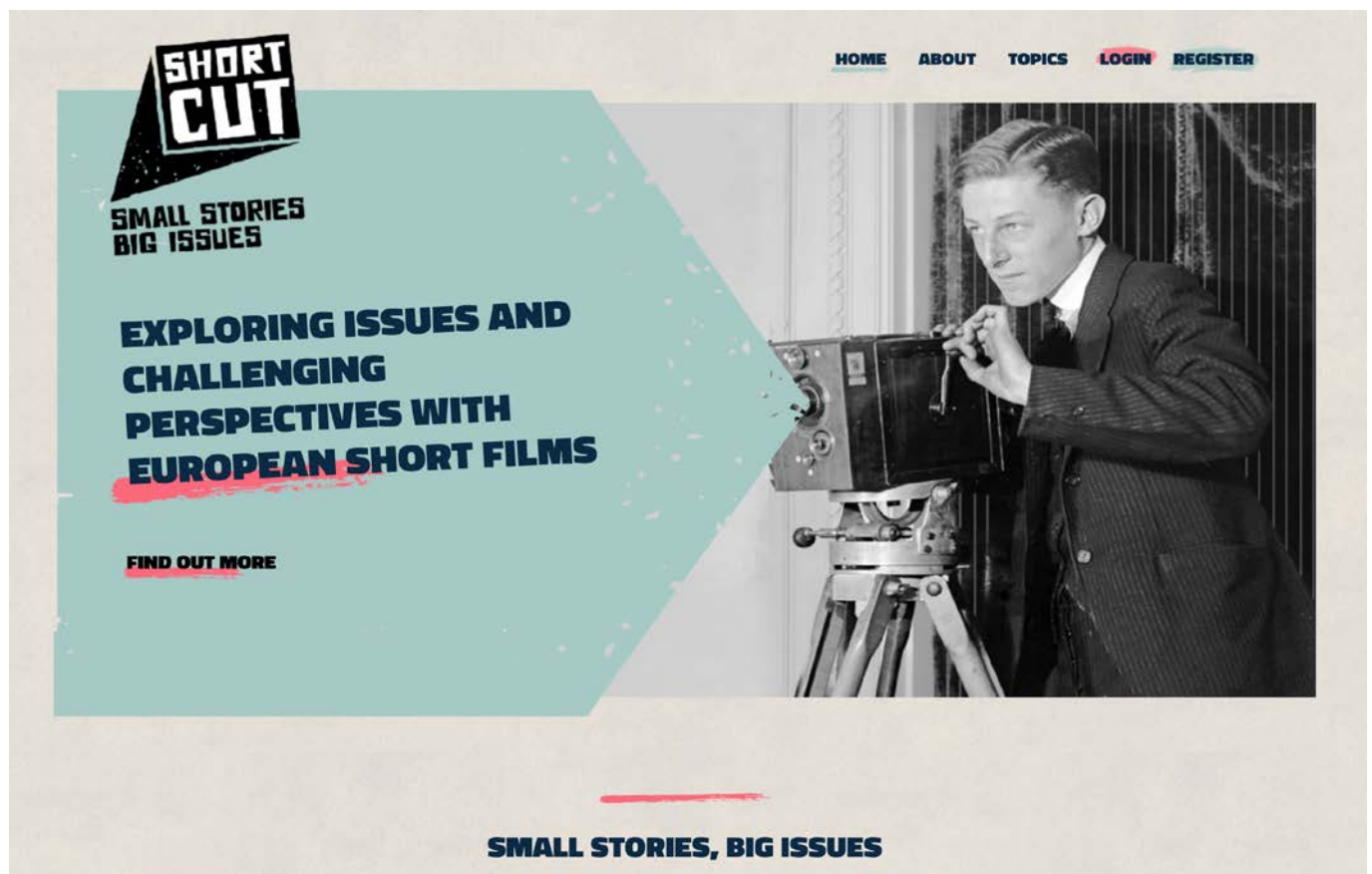
This was a second edition of *The Film Corner* reloaded project. It saw the development of the third section of this online platform. While the first two sections were dedicated to a critical approach to film language and to film as an art form, the third section of the platform was dedicated to an interdisciplinary and cross-curricular approach to film education centred on the main topic of film and its relationship with other subjects, arts and topics. The platform was created around a catalogue of EU feature films available for free on a VOD section of the platform.

Shortcut: Small Stories, Big Issues 2018

Partners: Fundacja Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej, Poland (Lead) / Člověk v tísni, Czech Republic / Os Filhos de Lumière, Portugal

This project aimed to identify, prepare, test and disseminate film based educational solutions that would combine fostering European values fundamental for democratic culture with development of students' film literacy and knowledge of European film heritage. The result was in a film-based education programme including short films (split by particular topics and disseminated among schools), a catalogue of full-length films, a toolkit of support materials to be used in classrooms, and national learning and networking events.

Screenshot from the Shortcut Website



D. Support for TV Programming

This funding supported the production and distribution of European television programmes with the potential to circulate within the European Union and beyond. One company in Northern Ireland was a co-producing partner on a project funded by the scheme.

Dearcán Media - *Wonderful Losers: A different World* 2014

Dearcán Media based in Doire/Derry in Northern Ireland produces Irish language documentaries for broadcasters such as TG4, RTÉ and BBC Gaeilge, and has also been involved in a number of international co-productions. Deaglán Ó Mocháin from Dearcán Media was a co-producer on *Wonderful Losers* alongside producers from Italy, Switzerland, Latvia, Belgium, Ireland and Spain. The documentary, directed by Arūnas

Matelis (Lithuania), is an insider look at the role of the domestique, the cyclists who work tirelessly to support their team leader, and who rarely achieve fame or accolades. *Wonderful Losers* has won numerous awards at international festivals.

Still from *Wonderful Losers: A Different World*



E. Training and Markets

The Creative Europe programme supports both training activities that are aimed at developing the capacity of audiovisual professionals and annual events designed to facilitate access to markets for European audiovisual professionals. Whilst no Northern Ireland festivals or screen organisations access the fund directly to deliver their own training scheme or market, many individuals and organisations in Northern Ireland have attended others across Europe.

For the animation sector in Northern Ireland, participation in the MEDIA funded Cartoon Media industry events have been vital in their development. In 2017, Cartoon Business, the conference initiative of Cartoon Media was held in Belfast with Jam Media, Dog Ears, Paper Owl and Sixteen South all achieving high visibility.⁶ Cartoon Forum, the pitching and co-production arm of Cartoon Media has also an important platform for animation studios in Northern Ireland.

“We presented many shows at Cartoon Forum, all of which except one have been successfully financed with European broadcasters as the lead. This represents many hundreds of jobs created and the raise of many millions of Euros. The benefit of being part of that market has been unmeasurably good.”

Colin Williams, Sixteen South

“Cartoon Forum provided us with the ability to easily showcase our projects to a wide variety of international partners. It gave us a fantastic opportunity to present our project to potential partners and investors and was a fantastic platform for us to build partnerships with international producers.”

Tim Bryans, Alt Animation



Panel at Cartoon Business 2017 in Belfast. Image Credit: CARTOON

Other training opportunities and markets that have been accessed by Northern Ireland based professionals include DOK Leipzig Co-Production Market, ACE Producers and Rotterdam Producers Lab.

“The positive impact for both our project and careers is already clear. The training prior to the meetings offered a strong foundation and helped us iron out any uncertainties we had in communicating the film and production framework. Over the 2 days we had productive meetings with sales agents, broadcasters, film funds and producers. The connections formed here will be invaluable during our progression as filmmakers.”

Ross McClean, Producer/Director selected for DOK Leipzig Co-Production Market

“As a Belfast producer with a strong European identity, ACE Producers will help me reach the next stage of my career, affording me the opportunity to not only develop my contacts with leading industry professionals particularly in the US and Europe, but also to have access to the collective experience of ACE Producers Network to expand my knowledge and reach the next level in my career, to become a truly international producer. Without the support of Creative Europe, this would not have been possible.”

Brian Falconer, Out of Orbit films, selected for ACE producers

“I was fortunate to be nominated by Northern Ireland Screen and sponsored by Skillset for my place at the lab where I made some great global contacts. The training included a schedule for networking and learning, as well as allowing us to enjoy aspects of the festival. The topics covered were incredibly useful and included an overview of production, from prep to delivery.”

Margaret McGoldrick, Causeway Pictures selected for Rotterdam Producers Lab at CineMart/IFFR

F. Europa Cinemas Network

The Europa Cinema Network was created by the European Commission and CNC (France) in 1992 and has been funded by the MEDIA programme.

Supported since its creation by the European Commission (Creative Europe / MEDIA Programme) and by the CNC (France), Europa Cinemas is the first network of cinemas focusing on European films. It was created in 1992 at the initiative of a group of thirty cinema exhibitors including the Queen's Film Theatre (QFT). It is now a network uniting more than 1,200 in 43 countries.

Local audiences will be very familiar with the Europa Cinemas ident preceding films in this much-loved cinema and being part of this network has placed this important venue in Northern Ireland in the context of European cinema-going. As a member of the network, the QFT has been able to benefit financially receiving a grant based on number of European titles screened as well as the opportunities and learning that comes from being part of the network.

“Our organisation exists as the only art-house cinema in Northern Ireland, the value of being part of an international network should not be understated. It is very easy to fall into isolation and detachment from the wider sector when operating in these conditions. Personally - without colleagues met through Europa Cinemas my own network would be very small, no doubt my career would have been harder to progress, and my expertise would have been harder to build.”

Joan Parsons, director QFT.



The Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast

5. Culture Sub-programme

The Culture sub-programme supports cooperation between cultural and creative organisations from different countries through project funding, supporting networks and the establishment of platforms to promote emerging artists.

A. Cooperation Projects

This funding opportunity supports the delivery of cultural and creative transnational cooperation projects across any art form for a maximum duration of four years and was the main funding stream under the Culture Sub-Programme with an annual deadline. Seven organisations in Northern Ireland have been partners in projects which have reached a diverse audience and engaged many different types of artists. Here are the projects funded under the programme:

Arts Council of Northern Ireland – *CORNERS: Turning Europe Inside Out* 2014 - 2018

Partners: Intercult Productions, Sweden (lead) / Fomento De San Sebastian, Spain / Consorzio Teatro Pubblico Pugliese, Italy / Drugo More, Croatia / Fondacija Fond B92, Serbia / Pogon, Croatia / CCI, Poland / D6 Culture in Transit, UK (England) / Exodos, Slovenia

CORNERS was a project that created opportunities for artists and researchers to produce multidisciplinary contemporary artistic and cultural collaborative projects designed and driven by cultural organisations at the edges of Europe. The objective was to enable exchange across geographical, political and economic divisions and to bring international artistic projects to those places of Europe that are outside of cultural,

social or economic centres. Seven artists were selected from Northern Ireland to collaborate with 20 other artists from across Europe which resulted in four projects all showcased at the Belfast International Arts Festival in 2015. The resulting projects spanned oral histories, mapping of folk songs and interactive installations with a common thread of rich community engagement and collaboration.

“As a result of being part of the CORNERS Creative Europe Project, ACNI extended its international networks and contacts and met new individuals and organisations across Europe who share our ethos and values. It has strengthened our belief in this type of socially engaged work which we know can lead to future collaborations for both the organisation and our artists.

Through the project, ACNI provided opportunities to a number of Northern Irish artists who would not have had the chance to work on such a large-scale international project before. It has proved a transformative experience for those artists whose work has excelled as a result and who continue to connect with international projects and artists bringing diverse work back to Northern Ireland. Projects of this nature which allow for collaboration, the making of new work and artists mobility across Europe cannot be over-valued.”

Sonya Whitefield, Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Bridging the Silence at the Lagan Weir as part of the Belfast International Arts Festival 2015



Ulster University - *Ceramics and Its Dimensions* 2014 - 2018

Partners: Porzellanikon - Staatliches Museum für Porzellan, Germany (Lead) / Aalto-Korkeakoulusaatio, Finland / Design & Crafts Council Of Ireland, Ireland / Eesti Tarbekunsti- ja Disainimuseum, Estonia / Fondazione Mic Museo Internazionale Delle Ceramiche In Faenza – Onlus, Italy / Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weißensee, Germany / Macromedia Gmbh, Germany / González Martí, Spain / Narodni Muzej Slovenije, Slovenia / Rigas Tehniska Universitate, Latvia / Umeleckoprumyslove Museum V Praze Czech, Republic / The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, UK / Staffordshire University, UK / British Ceramics Biennial, UK

This project connected museums, architects, designers, industry, and stakeholders from different European countries to explore ceramics. The project was ambitious and academic in intention, shaped by series of 'Modules' which included events, exhibitions, workshops, symposiums held in partner countries. The aim was to encourage knowledge in the field of ceramics and to develop an inter-cultural dialogue between European ceramics regions. Outputs included a travelling exhibition, a competition for emerging makers, development of an educational programme for museums as well as numerous collaborations and learning opportunities for participating organisations. The participation of the Belfast School of Art (Ulster University) in the project elevated the visibility of the thriving ceramics sector in Northern Ireland and provided opportunity for international collaboration.



Woodland Lamp and Tea Light Holders
by Northern Irish maker, Wendy Ward.
The pieces were part of Wendy's winning
submission to the Future Lights competition.
Image Credit: Norwood

The Nerve Centre - Future Artist-Maker Labs 2015 - 2017

Partners: University of Limerick, Ireland / Ultra-lab, Madrid

Future Artist-Maker Labs harnessed the creative power of three leading digital fabrication labs in Limerick, Madrid and Derry~Londonderry in an exciting international programme of art-making, exhibition, training, and networking. The Nerve Centre were the lead partner in this project which sought to build capacity in the artist-maker sector to operate transnationally and enable mobility of artist-makers and their work. Outcomes of the project included the creation of new collaborative artworks, a travelling exhibition, an accredited apprenticeship scheme, a student artist-maker bootcamp, an international artist-maker symposium as well as a programme of local engagement.

“Without Creative Europe support, the Nerve Centre artistic programme would have been much more limited in its vision, reach and impact. The project raised the visibility of art-making and the potential of new digital fabrication technologies and highlights this on the international stage. Concepts of what makes art, authorship and ownership and boundaries of artistic innovation and creativity were interrogated and explored, and new relationships and networks of benefit to the organisation and the communities that they serve were formed.”

Nerve Centre

Child participating in Fablabs workshop at the Nerve Centre



Prime Cut Productions - EU COLLECTIVE PLAYS!
2015 - 2019

Partners: Teatro Stabile delle Arti Medioevali- Società Cooperativa, Italy (Lead) / Aviso Legal - La Fura dels Baus, Spain / Foundation for the Promotion of Social Inclusion, Malta / Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Norway / Forteresse, Belgium / L'Associazione La Gramigna, Italy / Montenegrin Royal Theater Zetski dom, Montenegro

EU Collective Plays aimed to support the creation of plays which are the result of a collaboration of playwrights of different nationalities. As part of the project playwrights met and cooperated on a collaborative narrative structure that one writer then brought forward to a final draft. The result of each artistic process in a playwriting collective is the creation of an inclusive, polyphonic play. The project also supported the creation of transnational theatre groups for the staging of the productions. Through the project Prime Cut developed *At Arms Length*, a project that saw over 300 children in Northern Ireland take part in a

creative workshop exploring diversity and difference which led to a creation of a play performed in their school. Also produced as part of the project was Prime Cut's production *Removed*, a moving insight into the experience of a young man living in the state care system. *Removed* has gone on to play internationally and grew into an outreach campaign examining and highlighting issues dealt with in the play.

“Without Creative Europe support we quite simply would not have been able to develop and deliver two ground breaking innovative projects that are still ongoing and sustainable. They are universally acclaimed, have broken boundaries in terms of cross sectoral work and we were able to develop them in this way because of Creative Europe - end of story.”

Una NicEoin, Prime Cut Productions



Production shot from Prime Cut's *Removed* (credit Ciaran Bagnall)

Ulster Orchestra - *European Orchestra* *LABoratory II* 2016 - 2019

Partners: The Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, The Netherlands (Lead) / Halle Concerts Society, UK / Tinerimea Română” National Art Center, Romania / L’Auditori, Spain / Tonkünstler-Orchester, Austria

This project was designed to develop orchestra musicians’ leadership and project management skills as they devised innovative musical collaborations to reach out to new and diverse audiences. Viola players Jonathan Simmance and Philip Walton joined their counterparts from the other participating orchestras for regular training and sharing learning, and also worked in partnership with local ambassadors, practitioners and support organisations in Derry~Londonderry to create four innovative projects.

The projects included the creation of new work based around local histories and events such as the civil rights movement and a project working with electronic music producer Phil Kieran to produce a set of new music for Celtronic Festival.

The project also featured in the 2019 Association of British Orchestras conference hosted by the Ulster Orchestra which included talks about the project and a performance by the Čavorenge children’s choir from the Roma community of East Bohemia in the Czech Republic.



Roe performing with Ulster Orchestra at the Beyond the Walls project as part of EU Lab II. Image Credit Darron Mark.

Festival of Fools - *Mysteries & Drolls* 2018 - 2021

Partners: Comune Di Certaldo, Italy (lead) / Asociacion Cultural Maracaibo Teatro, Spain / Stowarzyszenie Kulturalne Pro-Scenium, Poland / Tempus Fugit Ev, Germany

Mysteries and Drolls is a project that explores historical circus practices such as Spanish Misterios, Fastnachtspiele, and Polish religious theatre. It involved historical and artistic research as well as showcasing elements and coproduced performances. In 2018 and 2019 Belfast's Festival of Fools ran a *Mysteries and Drolls* festival within the overarching festival. In 2021 they will host the second and final International Showcase of the project online, due to Covid-19. They will showcase 23 shows from European countries to an audience of international festival programmers.

“Participation in this Creative Europe programme has helped us to develop stronger relationships with programmers, performers, festivals, technicians and artists from the participating countries and much further afield. In turn this supports the mobility of artists and professionals from across the creative and cultural sector.”

Jenna Hall, Festival of Fools



Margaux Dub Puppeteer at Festival of Fools in Belfast. Image Credit: Simon Hutchinson

Urban Scale Interventions - European Creative Rooftop Network 2020 – 2024

Partners: Faro Town Hall, Portugal (Lead) / Coincidencies, Spain / Folkstadens ideella förening, Sweden / Frank Lee, The Netherlands / Stad Antwerpen, Belgium / Stadt Chemnitz, Germany / Stichting Rotterdamse Dakendagen, The Netherlands / Urban Gorillas, Cyprus

This project aims to imagine and create new uses for Europe's roofscape such as cultural venues, open community spaces, creative labs for climate adaptation and spaces where new social and economic projects can be piloted. As part of the project, Belfast will be part of a European-wide network of roofscape festivals and practitioners. The project will also allow for the artists residencies, the creation of new artworks, workshops and creative courses.

“It's never been more important to have public spaces that can support healthy, social lives. Belfast has a rich and diverse urban landscape. This grant will help us to explore how our underutilised rooftops can be better used for social, cultural and climate activities, while connecting us with other cultural cities across Europe.”

Jak Spencer, Partner at Urban Scale Interventions



Image courtesy of Urban Scale Interventions.

B. Networks

This funding strand offers support for European creative and cultural networks. These networks aim to support their members' capacity to better operate trans-nationally, to build their capacity to work across Europe and adapt to change. Networks encourage linguistic and cultural diversity, strengthen competitiveness, and promote skill-sharing and good practice. 28 networks have been funded by the Creative Europe programme that span different art forms and sector interests from music to cultural policy. Several organisations in Northern Ireland are members of networks including the International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts (IETM) of which Prime Cut Productions and Belfast City Council are members. The Beat Carnival are members of Trans Europe Halles who are a network of arts organisations and cultural centres who have re-purposed out of use industrial buildings.

“The Trans Europe Halles network of independent cultural centres has been a doorway to ideas, knowledge and long-term relationships that have sustained my local endeavour in ways that were not otherwise available when only looking around and connecting in my own small space.”

David Boyd, Beat Carnival

Participants from the Trans Europe Halles and Beat Carnival Arts Education Seminar that was held in Belfast March 2019



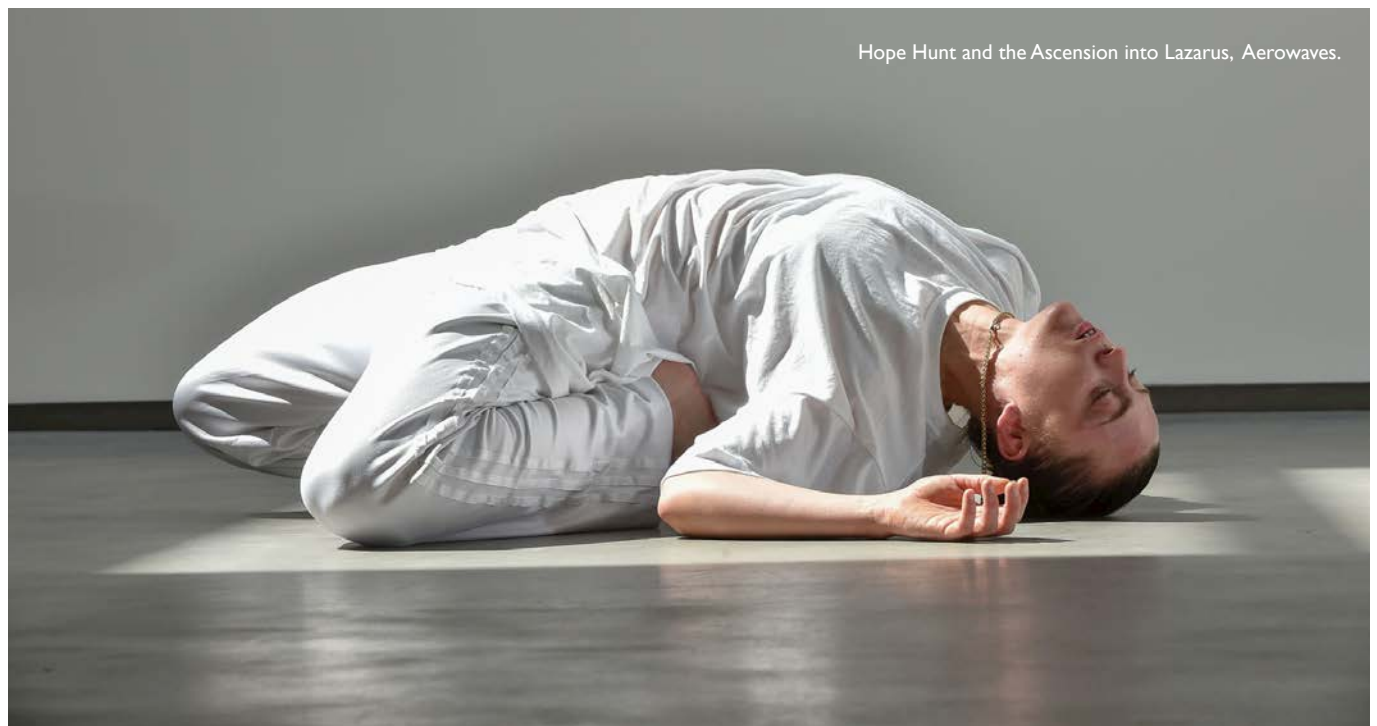
C. Platforms

This funding opportunity offers support for European Platforms which promote new and emerging talent through co-development, co-production and programming. Platforms consist of members which together make a commitment to presenting European-produced content and to provide visibility and mobility of new talent. Currently, 15 Platforms are funded through the Creative Europe Programme.

While there are no organisations in Northern Ireland that are members of platforms, individual artists have been able to engage with them. For example, dance artist and choreographer Oona Doherty was selected by the Aerowaves platform in 2017 as one of 20 artists – this selection represented some of the most exciting dance makers in Europe, who were supported for a year with promotion and performance opportunities around Europe.

“Aerowaves was a big lift off point for my career. It enabled my first show ‘Hope Hunt and the Ascension into Lazarus’ to tour Europe which has now been on tour since 2016. Aerowaves puts you in the European circuit - we met hundreds of festivals, venues, programmers, producers and performers. We learnt how to tour. I don’t think funding for my next larger shows would have happened without my European tour experience.”

Oona Doherty



Hope Hunt and the Ascension into Lazarus, Aerowaves.

This report was compiled in February 2021 by Rosie Le Garsmeur, manager of the Creative Europe Desk Northern Ireland.

Creative Europe Desk will continue to support the UK sectors to access the opportunities that exist between now and the end of the current programme and will close on 31 March 2021.

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