

# MAKING PLACES

Universities, the arts & creative industries



**University Alliance**  
49 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2BX  
Tel: 0207 839 2757

**General enquiries**  
info@unialliance.ac.uk

**Press enquiries**  
press@unialliance.ac.uk

**www.unialliance.ac.uk**  
Follow us on twitter: @unialliance

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# Foreword

Think of a place.

It is more than a pin on a map. More than natural features or a group of buildings.

It is where communities of people live, interact and create. For places, therefore, art and culture is not a luxury but their very foundation.

The Alliance has the strapline “British universities for cities and regions” because most of us are formed from institutions – including Institutes of Art and Design – that were created to meet the needs of the industries developed by the first industrial revolution and the cities that grew up around them.

The Creative Industries are an even more important economic sector today. We still provide creative companies with talented graduates, access to resources and support for innovation. More than this, we recognise that if we want to attract students and staff to our universities, we must work with others to make our towns and cities exciting and vibrant places to live. Many of us sponsor arts organisations. Some have even taken over local museums and galleries. We all work with community arts groups and charities.

We hope the case studies in this booklet give an idea of the excitement we feel about the creative arts and design – and about using them to make places where everyone wants to live.



Maddalaine Ansell  
Chief Executive, University Alliance



## Designing the cars of the future

Earlier this year Coventry University unveiled plans for a new multimillion pound centre of design excellence – the National Transport Design Centre. It will support UK innovation in the transport industry and boost efforts to bridge a shortfall in essential creative skills.

The university also runs an Automotive and Transport Design Course which supports students to explore the cars, and transport systems, of the future.

Students on this course are working with the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership (LowCVP) to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases from vehicles.

They are developing feasible ideas and concepts for new-generation low carbon

vehicles. These take up far less road space, are much lighter than conventional small cars and are aimed particularly at young and urban users worldwide. They have the potential to improve the quality of life of everyone working and living in our communities.

The concepts the students produced were displayed at LCV CENEX 2015, the UK's annual Low Carbon Vehicle Event and seen by delegates from Industry and Government.

One of the designs, Sultan Lohar's 'Orb' (pictured), is for a 2-seater L-category vehicle combining a clean electric drivetrain and lightweight body to create the ultimate urban vehicle.





## Fixperts share solutions to everyday problems

A programme set up by a Kingston University professor shares design knowledge that gives people the insight and confidence to fix everyday challenges for others and for themselves.

Fixperts is a creative social campaign and design education programme that inspires designers (the Fixperts) to help people solve the problems they face (Fix Partners).

The Fixperts' creativity and knowledge of the design process allows them to apply ingenious, flexible and low-cost solutions to their Fix Partners' challenges, delivering immediate and positive impact on their everyday lives.

The whole process is captured through short films, which are shared on the programme's website for anyone, anywhere to watch.

To date, 250 Fixperts films from around the world have been uploaded to the website, offering a growing resource that contributes to design education. The films have been viewed over 400,000 times and have also featured in mainstream media from Berlin to Calcutta.

The programme also collaborates with schools, universities and colleges across the world to run Fixperts as part of their courses.



## Face-to-face with the latest facial depiction technology

Liverpool John Moores University's Face Lab is promoting, inspiring and supporting arts and culture.

LJMU's Face Lab Team is creating opportunities for members of the public to come face-to-face with the university's research activities. In the process, they are also generating extensive international media coverage.

Members of the public were able to have a go at identifying celebrity faces from plaster casts, practice basic facial reconstruction techniques, try out haptic 3D modelling software and learn about surface scanning and computerised facial depiction.

Children at St Nicholas Primary School, next to the University's School of Art and Design, were the first to see Face Lab's new reconstruction of the saint's face, on the Feast Day of St Nicholas himself,

resulting in worldwide media coverage.

Other historical figures brought to life for the benefit of the public include recreating the face of "Bernie", the 1,200-year-old bogman from Emden, "Leasowe", the Roman Britain who can be seen at the Museum of Liverpool and the head of King Richard III at the Richard III Visitors' Centre in Leicester.

Face Lab has also contributed to Cunard's 175th anniversary "Three Queens" celebration on Liverpool's iconic waterfront. Hundreds of images of faces of Merseyside people – sent in by members of the public – were beamed onto the city's 'Three Graces' – The Royal Liver Building, The Cunard Building and the Port of Liverpool Building. Face Lab also used these faces to create images of the "average" Merseyside man, woman, boy and girl.



# TITHE MAP OF WITHINGTON 1839-48

THIS MAP



LANDOWNER

OCCUPY

NAMES OF SMALL PLOTS

LESSEES

NOTES



WITHINGTON  
OLD HALL

WITHINGTON

LOWFIELD  
GROVE



Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University

## Peppered Moths illuminate the story of Manchester

Manchester School of Art's Outreach Team brought explorations of how pollution can affect wildlife populations to life for young people from across the city.

The Peppered Moth is a good example of how insects adapt to the changing city environment. During the industrial revolution, the white-winged Peppered Moth became less common than the black-winged variety, due to the vast quantities of soot in the air. In the 20th century, the white-winged population has recovered as pollution has reduced.

Manchester School of Art used this interesting fact in a series of interactive and creative workshops with children from a range of backgrounds. They created video installations and constructed giant insect sculptures which were later displayed in an exhibition alongside activities to encourage engagement from visitors of all ages.

For example, visitors made rosettes which they then awarded to the best examples in a "moth parade" of giant moth sculptures.

## Breaking down barriers to fashion

Nottingham Trent University's fashion knitwear students are designing stylish clothes for people with diverse needs.

The School of Art & Design at NTU is renowned for its fashion knitwear design expertise. Accredited by Creative Skillset the undergraduate course has more than 30 years' experience and an international reputation for excellence.

For their final year collection, fashion knitwear students are challenged to design to a brief of their choice, inspired by wide-ranging personal interests, experiences and influences. Recent collections featured well-being, social diversity and technical challenge as motivators for contemporary knitwear design.

The 2016 collections included Lisa Shawgi's "Fashioning a Heart Beat" which uses knit techniques, yarn selection

and garment structure to create added warmth to protect the body's core. This can be useful for Reynaud's sufferers, for example, as it encourages increased blood flow.

Sophie Neff created an accessible, functional knitwear line "Fashioning Identity – Inclusive Knits" (pictured). This collection, recognising the lack of fashion clothing tailored to wheelchair users, focused on contemporary design and identity for people with a variety of needs.

Kendall Baker was the winner of the 2016 Matalan Visionary Knitwear Award at Graduate Fashion Week, with a menswear collection based on modernising crochet and pushing boundaries. This was the ninth year a NTU student has won the prize, so coveted because of the opportunities it opens for students in the industry.





# OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

## Creating an 'OutBurst' in Oxford

For over five years, Oxford Brookes University has been taking their world-class, innovative research projects out into local communities in their popular, family-friendly OutBurst festival.

Oxford Brookes has a longstanding and creative partnership with local performing arts centre Pegasus theatre, which hosts the festival each year.

OutBurst gives researchers, other staff, students and alumni the opportunity to showcase their research and expertise through stimulating art installations, performances, lectures, workshops and interactive exhibitions.

These have included creating your own comic, using a simulator suit to better understand visual and mobility difficulties related to ageing, and inspirational lectures on topics such as how to save the lemurs of Madagascar. In 2016, Olympic gold-medallist rower and Oxford Brookes

alumnus Ben Hunt-Davis talked about what it was like to compete at the Olympic Games and the pressures and rewards of performing on a world stage.

Robotics is a growing strength for Oxford Brookes and regulars at the OutBurst festival are the university's resident robots, Artie the Humanoid and Robbie the Nao who are always a huge hit. Attendees get the opportunity to control Artie, make him sing songs and watch him enact extracts from famous movies. Robbie, who is a much smaller robot, walks, dances and tells jokes.

OutBurst also offers opportunities for students to get exposure to the professional community. For example, creative writing MA students can show their work to literary agents, publishers and best-selling authors, including Phillip Pullman, who is a Creative Writing Fellow on the course.

# SUCCEED WITH PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY

## Producing and promoting art in the South West

From Francis Drake to the Pilgrim Fathers, Plymouth has always had a spirit of discovery and adventure. This manifests today in the city's art, culture and creativity.

Plymouth's geographic remoteness can make it hard for its art and cultural activity to get the recognition it deserves. Through offering pump priming and advice and guidance, Plymouth has seen a re-emergence of a diverse and vibrant creative sector. Examples of activity include:

- The Plymouth History Centre, a major new attraction transforming the city's present City Museum and Art Gallery. It has attracted almost £15 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Peninsula Arts, a public arts programme which will showcase upcoming and established regional, national and international artists in the heart of the city
- Plymouth Horizon, which will develop four major arts festivals and events in

the city, support a talent development programme for artists and visual arts producers and enable communities to commission visual artworks. This has received £635,000 from Arts Council England's "Ambition for Excellence" funding

- Ocean Studios, which provides more than 100 affordable studio spaces in the iconic Royal William Yard. The university was an early investor and helped unlock a further £4.2 million
- Port Eliot Festival - Plymouth University was not only a key sponsor but also contributed to its programme of events, from arts and crafts workshops to taking part in their first ever "science-lab".

The university creates opportunities in the arts for a wide range of people through collaborations with local arts organisations. These include formal creative partnerships with four non-profit organisations, including Effervescent and the Media Innovation Network.





## Sheffield landmark rejuvenated after years of neglect

In early 2016, Sheffield Institute of Arts (SIA) moved into its new home – a restored city landmark.

The Head Post Office, a Grade II listed building known to generations of Sheffielders, had stood empty for more than 15 years. As the building fell into disrepair, the once-thriving area of Fitzalan Square in which it stood, also became forgotten and neglected.

Following a £9m regeneration project by the University, which retained as many of the original features as possible, the

former post office houses art and design courses including graphic design, fine art, metalwork and jewellery.

Now, the building welcomes hundreds of students through its doors every day and the square is rejuvenated with shops and cafés. The SIA's own café is also open to the public, giving local people, many of whom worked in and used the Head Post Office, the chance to reminisce in a building restored to its former glory.

## Exploring the role of 'the Useful Museum'

Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (mima), one of the UK's principal visual art museums, transferred from Middlesbrough Borough Council to Teesside University in 2014.

With this change came a new vision inspired by the idea of 'the Useful Museum', focusing on art as a tool for social change. Mima has shifted from exhibition making and collecting to public programmes, education and community action.

Recent projects included *Localism* (the works pictured here), through which researchers worked with the public to create a crowd-sourced history of culture

and its role in the building of the town and its identity. Another project, *Teesside World Expo*, responded to the closure of the Teesside Steelworks.

While archivists and historians explored ways to celebrate the past, Teesside University-founded start-ups pointed the way to a new future economy for the region.

Ongoing live projects with migrants and asylum seekers offer a counter to the negative narratives around migration, whilst supporting these groups to contribute to a better society.







## Revealing the talents of our 'hidden musicians'

An innovative new collaboration between the Open University and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance aims to open doors to amateur musicians.

The 'Practice of Music Making' Certificate is designed for students who wish to develop their musical practice but have not been able to take part in traditional programmes of higher education in music. These typically do not allow for study by distance and can be restricted in terms of the kinds of music that can be studied.

The programme was designed to accommodate the amateur, semi-professional and professional musicians who enrich community life.

Open to musicians studying any instrumental or vocal practice at any level,

it can be taken either as a stand-alone module or toward degree study with the OU.

Teaching takes place through online learning materials, personal interactions with tutors and other students online, and a one-week residential school held at the Trinity Laban Campus at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich. It capitalises on the increasing availability of digital recording technology to allow students to reflect on their musical practices and share them with others.

The programme continues a longstanding engagement at the OU with the musicians who help communities to thrive. This group of musicians was the subject of Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Professor Emeritus Ruth Finnegan's classic monographic '*The Hidden Musicians*'.



# University of Brighton

## Designing a house out of waste

'Sustainable Futures', an interdisciplinary research theme at the University of Brighton, is having a significant impact on the design of our world.

The Brighton Waste House is Europe's first permanent public building made with 90% discarded material. Built in partnership with the construction company Mears by over 360 design and construction students, the Waste House is also 'carbon negative', creating about 25% more energy than it consumes.

The project repurposes material generally sent to landfill. For example, 19,800 toothbrushes, 4,000 VHS videocassettes and two tonnes of denim form its low-grade wall insulation.

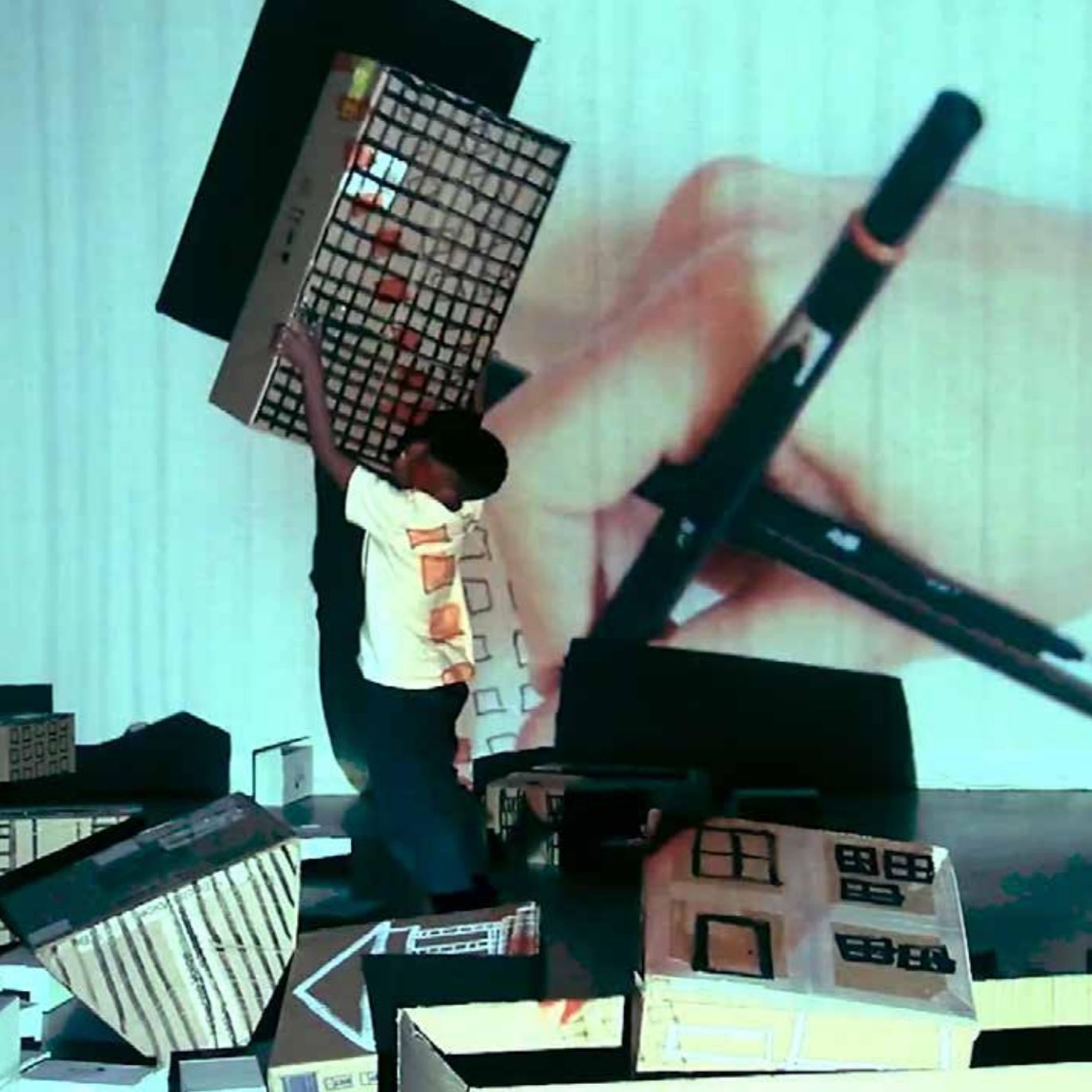
The Waste House's environmental performance continues to be monitored and is used regularly as an 'open studio' facilitating the university's work with local communities.

The university is also researching people's emotional attachments to objects to shift the values and practices of global businesses, to help cut waste and to enhance their product and brand value. They are exploring the development of new narratives from 'waste' materials to stimulate consumer interest in more sustainable products. For example, creating booties from breast milk to promote the NHS Milk Bank and World Breast Milk Donation Day.



MEARS

Toothbrush  
Section





# UNIVERSITY of GREENWICH

## A place about time

The University of Greenwich is using its Department of Creative Professions and Digital Arts to connect local communities with its teaching and research.

Greenwich has long inspired people to think about the relationship of place to time. The site of the university straddles the Meridian and occupies architecture that brings past and present into the same frame. From Wren's Naval Hospital to the university's new arts and architecture facility in Stockwell Street, time is encountered in many guises.

The Department of Creative Professions and Digital Arts (CPDA) has taken this opportunity to establish creative partnerships with a spectrum of local partners in reflective investigation of time,

and to build a community around this process.

For example, the project *Paper Cities* (2016) involved a video installation (pictured) created with pupils from James Wolfe Primary School in Greenwich. This project engaged local school children and teachers with digital film production technologies while exploring how communities change and develop.

It was part of an Arts Council sponsored project, run in partnership with Emergency Exit Arts (EEA), and designed to introduce the Greenwich community to the new neighbour on the block: the university's new building and facilities in Stockwell Street as well as the creative and academic work that takes place there.

## New horizons in mapping our landscapes

The School of Creative Arts at the University of Hertfordshire has used 3D printing digital data to create the first 3D printed landscape map of Welwyn Garden City.

The map can be used as a planning tool by projecting social, cultural and economic data over the map itself. It can also show the impact of new developments.

The process creates a physical model in which large geographic regions can be printed and visualised. The prototype emerges from research into Garden Cities and UK New Towns and its landscape space over time.

To create the model, Light Detection & Ranging (LiDAR) Data of the city has been captured using an ALTM Gemini LiDAR sensor. The data has been processed and 'solid modelled', as well as being hollowed out. Each print tile represents a National Grid 250m<sup>2</sup> square.

This could be the start of a revolution in 3D printing and mapping. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles, car mounted scanners and hand held devices mean that data capture and production is likely to be streamlined further. This could lead to the creation of ever higher fidelity models – deepening our understanding of the impact of development and a changing environment.





# *University of* HUDDERSFIELD

## Collaborating for greater impact

In 2015, as part of Arts Council England's Creative People and Places fund, the University of Huddersfield started working with Creative Scene to investigate the impact of their cultural activities on the local community.

Creative Scene works with residents, businesses and others in the community to create a place where people not only participate in the arts, but actually make them happen. They work together with professional artists, arts organisations and producers, to make art a part of everyday life.

The University's research team, led by Professor Steve Swindells, was embedded within Creative Scene and held regular meetings and consultations to measure the engagement of, and effect upon, local communities and artist development.

The team also helped conduct evaluation and support on arts commissioning and current and future event programming.

The Creative Scene programme helps both local and national artists to engage in creative activity with North Kirklees community representatives and audiences. Since Creative Scene events began, volunteers have donated more than 340 hours across 60 different events and reached an estimated 69,000 audience members. The programme has become a source of pride for residents.

This work has also led to explorations of the programme's relevance to other areas of community interest such as health and economic policy, and how cross-sector collaboration might be fostered to support further positive impact on the region.



UNIVERSITY OF  
LINCOLN

## Conserving our cultural heritage

The University of Lincoln has built an international reputation as one of the leading centres for conservation and restoration expertise in the UK.

Lincoln Conservation includes a commercial consultancy, Crick Smith, which specialises in the conservation of the decorative interiors of historic and listed buildings, undertaking pioneering historic paint analysis to uncover the truth behind previously concealed interiors. The consultancy, with support from expert academic teams and student conservators, has been involved in the restoration and renovation of more than 500 historic properties for a range of high-profile clients, including English Heritage, National Trust and Historic Royal Palaces over the last 40 years and, recently, the £150 million renovation of the St Pancras Hotel in London.

The University of Lincoln offers conservation programmes at

undergraduate and postgraduate level and has a growing team of PhD researchers. With access to purpose-built specialist facilities, students work alongside academic researchers and commercial experts, combining practical skills of conservation with scientific investigation and analysis.

For example, a team of staff, students and alumni worked with World Monuments Fund Britain and Coventry Cathedral to restore and put back on public display surviving pieces of medieval stained glass removed during World War II. Similar painstaking work was required when the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth commissioned the University to investigate the historic paint finishes applied to HMS Victory, which revealed that the original colour of the ship was quite different to what many had imagined.

Image: Replica Terracotta Warrior restored by conservators from the University of Lincoln





## Tackling social challenges through architecture and design

An ambitious architectural consultancy is helping to reinvigorate a Portsmouth charity which provides education, training and rehabilitation for disadvantaged adults.

The Beneficial Foundation was established in 1979 to provide education, training and rehabilitation to adults, particularly those with learning difficulties and other disabilities. The Foundation encourages the personal and social development of trainees, giving them the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications through City and Guilds. However, the services that the Beneficial Foundation offer are becoming increasingly strained due to changes in funding.

As part of the 2014 Autumn Research Week 'Live Project', the University of Portsmouth – through their Project Office – worked with the Beneficial Foundation to produce ideas and designs for income generation, social enterprise, branding and the holistic redesign of the charity's building, in order to meet the challenges

presented by a difficult funding environment.

The Project Office is a unique form of architectural practice set up within the School of Architecture that involves a small core team of Architects and Interior Designers providing traditional consultancy, innovative design approaches, knowledge transfer and research opportunities for a range of clients. It draws on the talent and expertise of staff and students within both the School of Architecture and the Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries. This gives clients the opportunity to connect directly to the next generation of designers; and helps students to experience 'real' projects in preparation for practice.

The Beneficial Foundation have since begun putting many of these ideas into place and the Project Office will be helping them to develop bigger and better long-term ideas to ensure they have a sustainable future.



University of  
**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

## Annual art festival reveals emerging talent

Create Salford festival showcases the best work from the University of Salford's School of Arts and Media students, presenting a series of events to inspire and encourage creative minds.

The 2016 event spanned 41 days and featured a diverse programme of performances, exhibitions and literary recitals, as well as industry networking and professional development opportunities.

With the majority of events free to attend, the festival drew its audience from a diverse mix of students and their

families, residents, cultural industry representatives and potential future employers.

Key to the success of this year's festival was cultivating new and existing relationships with a number of creative industry partners, supporters and venues, including Artworks Atelier, the Daily Telegraph and Imperial War Museum North. Meanwhile sponsorship for the inaugural Student Awards ceremony was provided by C&O Wines, Hub Fire & Security Systems and Asian Media Awards.





## Conjuring up dragons to support Wales' creative economy

A team of University of South Wales (USW) computer animation, 3D art and visual effects experts helped to bring the Welsh dragon to life in a stunning advert promoting the nation's castles.

The group of 12 students and graduates under the leadership of director Dominic Pugh, a 3D art specialist, put together the advert for Cadw, the Welsh Government's historic environment service.

USW was approached after Equinox, Cadw's marketing agency, saw a video made at the institution which mimics a scene from the classic film Jurassic Park – in which a T Rex smashes through the windows of the university's ATRiuM Campus.

ATRiuM – in the heart of Cardiff – provides opportunities for students to study a wide range of creative subjects including music,

film and animation.

Its latest expansion ATRiuM 2b will be opened in Autumn 2016 by Tony Hall, the Director General of the BBC. This is a further £15m development of professional-standard facilities in fashion, photography, dance and related disciplines alongside new fabrication workshops for media, performance and design courses, and model making facilities for animation.

As the Welsh dragon advert shows, USW is a rich resource for the UK's creative industries, from the major production studios and the BBC at Roath Lock in Cardiff to the rich ecosystem of smaller specialist creative businesses set up by graduates.



## Supporting collaboration in the arts and humanities

A partnership set up to help universities and the creative industry work together has resulted in more than 50 collaborations.

The REACT Hub – a partnership between UWE Bristol and the art and cultural cinema centre Watershed along with the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter – was awarded £4 million over four years by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

REACT established a dynamic network of creative practitioners, academics, businesses and other creative organisations to work on innovative products for sectors including heritage, publishing, documentary and children's products. It funded over 30,000 hours of work in 53 collaborations between 73 academics and 55 businesses.

Within its second tranche of projects – Books and Print – REACT funded Dr Tom Abba of UWE Bristol to work with the

artists' collective Circumstance to create a new kind of book. A hybrid digital/physical product – *These Pages Fall Like Ash* – launched three months later. Dr Abba and Circumstance went on to collaborate with award-winning writers to produce its next product, a *Volume of Circumstance*.

In 2016, this research trajectory was awarded an £800,000 AHRC grant for three universities – UWE Bristol, Bath Spa and Birmingham – to continue this work through the *Ambient Literature* project.

The project will commission original pieces of digital writing from cutting-edge writers and technologists, and curate a programme of research seminars and public events. It will also produce additional materials including a *Designing Ambient Literature* guide to impart the project's findings to the wider creative community.

Oska asked me . . .  
I don't know how  
to write this, my  
head is still  
aching from just  
thinking about it,  
Oska asked me  
where dad was,  
and when he was  
coming back . . .



### Functional

to manage both in context  
advised sections of separate  
buildings. Waterfalls inside  
recreation beyond transport  
methods. Outbreaks of  
waterborne diseases have led to  
many of the tunnels being used  
only by absents.

n. slang / a variety  
internal arches  
building is specifically  
to resonate certain frequencies  
usually those in the low  
of human perception.  
Etymology: was first called  
the artist Nate Orbis in the  
to his debut release "I  
'gonna drop this  
right through your  
gonna squeeze your  
teal you in my hum-drum

### Intersect

n. a temporal period during  
which two echos collide.  
It is based on one of the  
developments of coherence  
theory that theorizes the  
possibility of isomorphic  
environments existing  
simultaneously in emotional but  
not physical space.

### Handing

v. the exchange of an object that  
has an emotional resonance (one  
that cannot easily be passed on  
through a relay)



# About University Alliance

We are universities with a common mission to make the difference to our cities and regions. We use our experience of providing high quality teaching and research with real world impact to shape higher education and research policy for the benefit of our students and business and civic partners. We innovate together, learn from each other and support every member to transform lives and deliver growth.



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