

Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre

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Research Symposium 2026

Programme and Abstracts

28–29 April, Newcastle University Business School

Creative PEC is funded by



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

Tuesday 28 April - Newcastle University Business School

10:15–11:00 Coffee and Registration

11:00–11:40 Welcome and Opening Remarks

11:40–12:40 Day One Keynote

Beyond Nudge: The Arts as a Behavioural Policy Paradigm

12:40–13:30 Lunch Break

13:30–15:00: Parallel Session 1

Special Session 1: Valuing Culture and Heritage Capital

Ordinary Session 1: Creative Labour Markets, Precarity and Inequalities

Labour Markets, Cultural Policies and Social Support Systems: The Case of the 'Art Worker Status' in Belgium

Digitalisation and Structural Inequality in European Cultural Ecosystems: Evidence from Classical Music Sector Transformation (2020–2025)

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Developing Leaders in the Creative Industries: Skills Development and Labour Markets

The Role of Information, Advice and Guidance in Improving Skills Gaps in the Creative Industries

Music Education for the Real World: A Comparison of Secondary and Tertiary Education Routes in England

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Special Session 2: Developing Regional Innovation Ecosystems in the Creative Industries: Data, Methods and 'What Works' in Wales and Beyond

Ordinary Session 3: Culture and Welfare

Translating 'Culture and Health' Policy Idea into Practice Across Europe: The Case of Dance Well

Orchestrating Well-Being: How Guaranteed Income Improves Artists' Lives

Social Welfare and Cross-Cultural Place Perceptions

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Dynamic Mapping the Creative Economy for Policy: Lessons from Türkiye's INSPIRE Project

Navigating Borders: Tracing the Attributes and Variables Shaping Cultural Relations and Exchanges Between Singapore and Southeast Asia

Workforce Pathways and Sustainability in the Shared Island Creative and Cultural Economy: The Case of Youth Dance

17:00–17:15 Short Break/Transition to The Frederick Douglass Centre

17:15–18:15 Policy Panel: Place-Based Approaches to Unlocking Creative Industries Growth

18:15–19:30 Networking Reception

Wednesday 29 April - The Frederick Douglass Centre

8:30–09:00 Coffee and Registration

09:00–10:30 Parallel Session 3

Special Session 3: Emerging Video Game clusters Across European Regions. Insights from the GAME-ER Project

Ordinary Session 5: Intellectual Property: Motivations, R&D and Licensing Models in the Creative Industries

Content Superpower: UK Publishing and the AI Licensing Market Summary

Rethinking Motivations for Intellectual Property

Exploring Sovereign Cultural Archives as Strategic R&D Infrastructure: A Preliminary Framework for Contextual Accuracy in the UK Createch Sector

Ordinary Session 6: Technology, Creative Labour and Skills Development

Platform Strategies and Entrepreneurial Labour in Independent Music

Creative Talents at the GenAI Crossroads? Insights from the UK Advertising and Marketing Sector

AI, Time Poverty and Everyday Creative Engagement in Urban Life

10:30–11:00 Coffee Break

11:00–12:00 Day Two Keynote

Artists at Work with AI: Evidence on Creative Labour and Technology Adoption

12:00–12:50 Lunch Break

12:50–14:20 Parallel Session 4

Special Session 4: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Creative Industries

Ordinary Session 7: Creative Industries and Place

Geospatial Investigation into the Widening Gap Between Arts and STEM Uptake at Key Stage 5 in England

Cultural & Creative Industries and Place: Space and Configuration

The State of the Region: The Practical Implications of Fractured Creative Industry Funding and Governance in the Tees Valley

'Inspiring Capital': Literature and Cultural Policy in Edinburgh, UNESCO's First City of Literature

Ordinary Session 8: Innovative Practices in the Creative Industries

Embedding Environmentally Sustainable Practice in Temporary and Project-Based Organisations: The Role of the Freelancer in UK Film and High-End Television

Consumer Preferences and Cultural Value in Live Theatre: Experimental Evidence from Plays and Musicals in London and New York

Digital Cultural Heritage Visitors' Preferences Towards Immersive Technologies: A Choice Experiment Approach

Creative Pulsing: How Agile-Inspired Project Practices May Have Solved the Creative Industries' Management Problem

14:20–14:40 Coffee Break

14:40–16:10 Parallel Session 5

Special Session 5: Evaluating the Impacts of Liverpool City Region's Music Ecosystem

Ordinary Session 9: New Tools and Skills for the Cultural and Creative Industries

From Tools to Infrastructure: AI as Decision Support for Cultural Strategy, Place and Public Value

Beyond the Cluster Buzz: A Conviviality Toolkit for Evaluating Creative Industries Policy

New Methods for Mapping Financial Activity in the Culture Sector: Using Website Data to Predict Organisational Funding Mix

Ordinary Session 10: Place and Cultural and Creative Policies

Emerging Creative Economies: The Creative Industries in the Newly Devolved York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

From Policy to Place: Delivering Creative Industry Growth Through a Triple Helix Model

How Does a Public Policy Fail? Creative City Policy and the Tensional Space of Artist-Led Organisations

16:15–17:15 Parallel Session 6

Panel Discussion 1: Rural Creative Industries

Panel Discussion 2: Into the Light – Creating Connected Places. Collaborative Commissioning, Skills Development and Creative Ecosystem Building in County Durham

Panel Discussion 3: A Multi-Stakeholder Panel Proposing Embedding Care into Creative and Cultural Leadership Policy in an Era of AI

17:15–17:30 Brief Closing Remarks

Guidance for Presenters

Ordinary Sessions

Presentations should be approximately fifteen minutes long, with additional time allowed for questions and discussion. Slides should be prepared in PowerPoint and brought to your session on a USB stick for uploading to the symposium's computers, available in each room. If you are bringing your laptop as a backup, please ensure you have the cables required to connect your device. Those presenting are indicated in bold in the programme. The last presenter in each session will act as Chair, with responsibility for keeping time and managing questions.

Special Sessions

Special sessions vary in nature, with a mixture of presentations, conversations and audience discussions. Each session will be led by the Chair named in the programme. If you are intending to present, please check with your Chair regarding the expected nature, duration and sequencing. If you are presenting slides, please prepare these in PowerPoint and bring them on a USB stick for uploading to the symposium's computers, available in each room. If you are bringing your laptop as a backup, please ensure you have the cables required to connect your device.

Panels

Due to their discursive nature, panels are not required to have a specific structure. Each panel will be delivered by the presenting group as they prefer. If needed, presentations should be prepared in PowerPoint and brought on a USB stick for uploading to the symposium's computers, available in each room.

If further guidance is required, please contact the organising committee in good time (see end of programme for contact details).

About Creative PEC

The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (Creative PEC) works to support the growth of the UK's creative industries through the production of independent and authoritative evidence and policy advice. Led by Newcastle University, with the Royal Society of Arts and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Creative PEC comprises a core consortium of Newcastle University, Work Advance, the University of Sussex and the University of Sheffield. Find out more at pec.ac.uk

Foreword

On behalf of the Organising Committee and Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, I am thrilled to welcome you to Newcastle University for Creative PEC's Research Symposium 2026.

Creating space for rigorous, interdisciplinary and policy-relevant dialogue is a core aim of this event, and central to Creative PEC's mission. The Symposium brings together established and early career researchers from the UK and beyond, spanning academia, policymaking and practice – reflecting the diversity of the creative industry research community. Over two days, we have an intense programme of keynote speeches, research presentations, special sessions and panels, including a high-profile policy panel, all reflecting the dynamic landscape of creative industries evidence and policy.

The Symposium highlights the growing contributions of the creative industries to economic growth, place-based development and social value, while acknowledging the profound changes driven by technological change, evolving labour markets conditions and policy challenges.

I hope the discussions over these two days will spark new connections, inform future research and contribute to more effective creative industries policy – and that you will find the time to enjoy our beautiful city!

My most heartfelt thanks go to all speakers, chairs, panellists, session organisers and participants for making this event possible. As ever, I would like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Newcastle University and the Royal Society of the Arts for their support. I wish you all a stimulating and inspiring Symposium.

Giorgio Fazio

Research Director, Creative PEC

Tuesday 28 April

10:15–11:00 Coffee and Registration

Room: St James' View, 8th floor, Newcastle University Business School

11:00–11:40 Welcome and Opening Remarks

Room: St James' View, 8th floor, Newcastle University Business School

Welcoming statements by: **Giorgio Fazio** (Research Director, Creative PEC and Newcastle University), **Jo Fox** (Pro-Vice Chancellor, Humanities and Social Sciences, Newcastle University) **Cathy Kerfoot** (Programme Director for Creative Industries, Arts and Humanities, UK Research and Innovation), **Stewart Robinson** (Dean of Newcastle University Business School)

11:40–12:40 Day One Keynote

Room: 1.03, Newcastle University Business School

Beyond Nudge: The Arts as a Behavioural Policy Paradigm

Keynote Speech by: Professor Pier Luigi Sacco (Department of Neuroscience and BACH Centre, University of Chieti-Pescara)

Chair/Moderator: **Sarah Najm** (Creative PEC and Newcastle University)

What if the most effective behavioural policy tool we have is not a nudge, but a novel? Over the past two decades, behavioural economics has established itself as the dominant framework for evidence-based policy design. Choice architecture, default settings and framing effects have reshaped how governments think about regulation, public health and welfare. Yet the empirical record of nudge interventions increasingly reveals a pattern of small effect sizes, poor durability and limited generalisability: effects that decay once the contextual prompt is removed, that rarely transfer across domains, and that leave underlying cognitive and motivational structures untouched.

This keynote argues that this pattern is not accidental but structural. Nudge operates within a dual-process model of cognition (fast, automatic System 1 versus slow, deliberative System 2) that is now widely regarded as neurobiologically untenable. It works by manipulating decisional contexts rather than by developing the capacities through which individuals navigate complexity, regulate emotion and sustain adaptive behaviour over time. The result is a policy paradigm that is, by design, shallow: effective at redirecting momentary choices, but unable to produce the lasting changes in cognitive flexibility, emotional regulation and social functioning that complex societies increasingly require.

The arts offer a radically different paradigm. A converging body of evidence from neuroscience, psychology and epidemiology now shows that sustained engagement with the arts reshapes predictive models, builds tolerance of ambiguity, strengthens perspective-taking and prosocial motivation, and supports emotional regulation across the life course. Longitudinal data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing demonstrates dose-dependent protective effects on cognition, depression and mortality over more than fourteen years of follow-up. Metabolomic analyses of arts-based interventions reveal pathway-specific biological signatures, not a generic relaxation response. Performance art interventions have been shown to increase outgroup empathy and prosocial behaviour in face-to-face intergroup encounters across ethnic, national, religious and political groups. And experimental evidence demonstrates that literary fiction reduces the need for cognitive closure and increases tolerance of ambiguity, capacities critical for navigating complex information environments.

The mechanisms underlying these effects are now increasingly well characterised. Recent work on the neurobiological, psychological and behavioural pathways linking arts engagement to mental health and social functioning identifies interacting processes including reward-system activation, stress-axis regulation, neuroplasticity, emotional regulation training, meaning-making through narrative processing, and endorphin-mediated social bonding through shared aesthetic experience. Crucially, these pathways are not independent: they form a self-reinforcing cycle in which neuroplastic changes support improved emotional regulation, which enables deeper social engagement, which in turn reinforces the reward pathways that sustain participation. This cumulative, capacity-building dynamic is precisely what nudge, operating at the level of contextual cues, cannot produce by design.

Moreover, these effects are not a modern discovery. The arts have served precisely this function across most of human cultural history: as technologies for calibrating social cognition, managing collective emotion and transmitting adaptive capacities across generations. What behavioural economics claims to have invented, cultural evolution achieved millennia ago, with larger effects and greater stability.

This reframing also addresses the instrumentalism critique that has long shadowed efforts to justify arts policy through non-aesthetic outcomes. The capacity to reshape cognition, emotion and social functioning is not an external purpose imposed on the aesthetic experience: it is constitutive of what aesthetic experience is. The mechanisms through which the arts produce health, cognitive and social effects are the same mechanisms through which they produce their distinctive experiential qualities. Instrumental and intrinsic value are not in tension: they are two descriptions of the same underlying process.

The talk concludes by examining what this paradigm shift means for creative industries policy and for the evidence base that supports it. If the arts are not a complement to behavioural policy but a superior alternative for building lasting population-level capabilities, then the case for cultural investment rests not on economic returns or on adjunct health benefits, but on the recognition that the creative sector produces the most durable and generalisable behavioural infrastructure available to policy.

Pier Luigi Sacco, PhD, is Professor of Biobehavioural Economics, Department of Neuroscience and Director of the BACH University Centre, University of Chieti-Pescara; Senior Advisor to the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities; Affiliate Researcher at the metaLAB (at) Harvard and at Creative PEC, Newcastle University; and member of the steering board of the Jameel Arts and Health Centre, New York University. He is the Vice-President of Bourges European Capital of Culture 2028 and the Scientific Coordinator of L'Aquila Italian Capital of Culture 2026. He has been Interim Director of the Policy AP of EIT-KIC Culture and Creativity; Visiting Professor and Visiting Scholar at Harvard University; Faculty Associate at the Berkman-Klein Centre for Internet and Society, Harvard University; Special Adviser of the EU Commissioner to Education, Culture, Youth and Sport. He has also been a member of the scientific/steering board of the Foundation for the School of Cultural Heritage and Activities, Italian Ministry of Culture; the Europeana Foundation, Den Haag; the Jameel Arts and Health Centre, New York University; and of the Advisory Council on Scientific Innovation of the Czech Republic, Prague. He regularly gives courses and invited lectures in major universities worldwide. He works internationally in the fields of cultural policy, cultural diplomacy, culture and health, and culture-led development, and is often invited as keynote speaker to major cultural policy conferences worldwide. He has published more than 250 papers in international peer-reviewed journals and edited books with major international publishers.

12:40–13:30 Lunch Break

Room: St James' View, 8th floor, Newcastle University Business School

13:30–15:00: Parallel Session 1

Special Session 1: Valuing Culture and Heritage Capital

13:30–15:00 Room: 1.03, Newcastle University Business School

Measuring the economic contribution of the culture and heritage sectors is common practice. The Culture and Heritage Capital Programme goes further by assessing the impact of these sectors on welfare, sustainable growth and long-term living standards. This session covers three pieces of research that contribute to the objectives of the programme, which will ultimately provide a consistent, formal approach to measuring the costs and benefits of cultural and heritage assets in order to improve decision-making.

- Harman Sagger (DCMS) (Chair)
- Matthew Bezzano (DCMS)
- Adala Leeson (Historic England)
- Elizabeth Bennett (Historic England)
- Rob Dutfield (Alma Economics)
- Mim Andrews (UCL)
- Ricky Lawton (Ipsos)
- Siddhartha Basu (Alma)

Ordinary Session 1: Creative Labour Markets, Precarity and Inequalities

13:30–15:00 Room: 2.04, Newcastle University Business School

Labour Markets, Cultural Policies and Social Support Systems: The Case of the “Art Worker Status” in Belgium

Author(s): **Hélène Mariaud** (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

Working conditions in the arts have increasingly become a focus of political and academic debate, for instance at EU level in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis and its unequal impact on cultural workers. In Belgium, this debate often crystallises around a specific social protection arrangement, the 'statut de travailleur des arts' (art worker status), which offers cultural workers who fit the set criteria access to unemployment-based income continuity, though it remains politically contested and regularly reformed. This contribution examines how this status functions de facto as an indirect cultural policy instrument within a broader welfare architecture, and how it shapes the sustainability of artistic careers in the studied segment of the visual arts: artistic photography. Belgium provides an illuminating case because the funding and regulation of artistic work are fragmented between, on the one hand, cultural policies (communities and regions) that primarily operate through project-based subsidies, and, on the other hand, federal social policies that structure access to unemployment benefits, social support systems and the art worker status. While cultural policies tend to support projects, venues, institutions and some personal projects, they only marginally address income continuity for individual artists, leaving social protection schemes to absorb much of the economic risk of artistic work, while – in some ways – funding creation and allowing (to some extent) career sustainability. This raises questions about the implicit division of responsibilities between cultural and social policies, and about the normative constructions of 'the artist' and 'the unemployed person' that underpin these regimes. The contribution mobilises qualitative data from Hélène Mariaud's ongoing doctoral research project on the professional trajectories of artistic photographers in Belgium. The empirical material consists of forty-eight semi-structured interviews with self-identified artist photographers residing mainly in Brussels, whose legitimacy is established through exhibitions, grants and other forms of symbolic recognition, complemented by fifteen interviews with sectoral stakeholders (institutions, gatekeepers, curators, collectors). The analysis focuses on how these workers navigate mosaic careers combining artistic and non-artistic activities, the role of welfare instruments in their trajectories, and the blurred boundaries between the domains of cultural and social policy. Preliminary findings point to a widespread pattern of 'demonetised' professionalisation, in which artistic recognition and visibility are only weakly correlated with stable income, pushing many artist photographers towards multi-activity and heavy reliance on welfare systems to sustain their practice over time.

Keywords: creative labour; visual arts; labour market; cultural policies; social policy

Digitalisation and Structural Inequality in European Cultural Ecosystems: Evidence from Classical Music Sector Transformation (2020–2025)

Author(s): **Yana Tiefbenkel** (University of Latvia)

The rapid acceleration of digital transformation across European cultural sectors since 2020 has prompted significant policy investment in digital infrastructure, skills development and hybrid business models. However, the distributional effects of this transition – who benefits, who is left behind, and through which mechanisms – remain insufficiently evidenced. This paper addresses this gap through a systematic, indicator-based assessment of how digitalisation reconfigured capacities, resource flows and market visibility in the European live classical music sector between 2020 and 2025. The study draws on a documentary synthesis of twenty-nine European and international policy and sector reports. An analytical framework of thirteen indicators was developed and applied through systematic qualitative coding, covering digital infrastructure and investment; workforce skills, audience engagement; revenue models; hybrid formats; platform dependence; rights complexity; policy mechanisms; data capacity; and structural inequality patterns. This ecosystem-oriented approach enables analysis of interconnected changes beyond organisation-level perspectives. Findings indicate that digitalisation disproportionately benefitted large, well-resourced urban institutions, while smaller organisations, independent artists and peripheral venues faced compounding disadvantages. Infrastructure constraints in non-metropolitan contexts continue to limit streaming quality and digital audience development. Skill shortages in digital production, rights management and platform analytics restrict smaller actors' strategic capacity. Digital revenue remains limited and concentrated, with platform-based monetisation favouring established institutions. Platform dependence centralises gatekeeping power and reshapes discoverability, while fragmented governance and rights complexity constrain experimentation. Although emergency measures between 2020 and 2022 provided critical support, longer-term investment in equitable digital capacity-building has lagged behind structural market shifts. Overall, the evidence suggests that digitalisation has reproduced and intensified pre-existing inequalities across geographic and organisational dimensions. The paper concludes with policy recommendations focused on infrastructure investment in underserved regions, targeted skills development, support for shared digital infrastructure, strengthened platform accountability and embedding equity metrics in cultural policy evaluation.

Keywords: digital transformation; platformisation; structural inequality; live performance industry; classical music sector

Thirty-Six-Month Foresight Model as a Solution to Structural Freelance Precarity

Author(s): **Sam Collett** (University of Worcester), Iain Bennett (The Fifth Sector Limited), Jon Bains (Obsolete.com)

Policymakers currently rely on retrospective data to understand the creative freelance workforce. Official reports on geography and tax help us see the past, but they create a dangerous time lag. Because this research looks backwards, the self-employed often lose their livelihoods long before a problem is officially recognised by policymakers. The biggest issue is the gap between the supply of talent and the actual demand for labour. Current research suggests a crisis in recruitment of new entrants and provides evidence of young workers leaving the industry, but it cannot predict when universities are producing too many graduates for sectors where demand has already peaked. By the time reports are published, the findings are often several years out of date. This makes it impossible to prevent the skill mismatches that lead to unemployment. Our foresight model offers a different approach. Developed by The Fifth Sector, Obsolete and Eventus, it uses live data sources, such as company commissioning plans and analysis of LinkedIn, to look thirty-six months ahead. This allows us to trace the connection between investment and hiring before the jobs even exist. We have already used this to track the animation sector in Manchester and the VFX sector in Quebec. In both cases, our model saw demand falling two years before it was confirmed in official job boards or government surveys. This provides a window to act that traditional research does not have. The model works at three levels: it helps individuals choose better career paths; it helps universities see if their courses will still lead to jobs in the future; and it helps regions plan for growth. Instead of just recording what went wrong in the past, we use foresight to match the workforce to the actual future needs of the industry.

Keywords: skills; workforce; jobs; foresight; demand

Understanding Earnings of Creative Graduates and Earnings in Creative Industries: Rip-off University Degrees or Under-rewarded Careers?

Author(s): **Orian Brook** (University of Edinburgh)

Analysis of the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) dataset, which links data on individuals through their school, university and earnings trajectories, has found that creative graduates earn less than graduates of other subjects. However, little research has been conducted on the explanations for this. There are assumptions that the low earnings are associated with low quality degrees, and/or that they do not offer skills which are linked to employability. Education research would suggest that the graduates with lower earnings will be those from low participation backgrounds, who do not understand the employability of creative degrees (or do not have the social networks to capitalise on them). This presentation will explore the earnings of creative graduates, ten years after

graduation, using the LEO dataset. Are they low due to working within cultural and creative industries (CCIs), in education (a common destination for creative graduates) or elsewhere? It will explore social inequalities and differences by educational institution in earnings and career outcomes, and how they vary according to social class background, gender, ethnicity and university group. In addition, I will present analysis of the earnings of graduates within CCIs. Which graduates enter CCI employment after graduation, which ones are still in it ten years later, and what do they earn? What predicts which creative graduates become freelancers, and which become 'hybrid entrepreneurs'? What predicts graduate earnings in each of these destinations? I find that participation and earnings in core CCIs are strongly socially stratified, especially in relation to freelance work, where resilience to precarity depends on cultural and financial capital and social and educational networks.

Keywords: creative education; earnings; creative employment

Ordinary Session 2: Skills and Education

13:30-15:00 Room: 3.07, Newcastle University Business School

Developing Leaders in the Creative Industries: Skills Development and Labour Markets

Author(s): **Marcus O'Dair** (Kingston University)

Popular literature tends to depict creative leaders as senior managers in the creative economy, academic literature as senior managers facilitating the creativity of other people. This paper, by contrast, understands creative leadership as leadership that is creative – leadership that is an original and effective approach to producing collective change. In an age of technological disruption, such leadership is vital – in the creative industries and beyond. This paper outlines an approach to developing leaders in the creative industries, building on work by Herminia Ibarra and Teresa Amabile, as well as the author's own practice as a trainer and coach. At the core of the approach is the notion that we become leaders in much the same way as we become creative – through the gradual development of self-efficacy. This is an important topic, since the lack of leadership and management skills in the creative industries restricts the sector's contribution to economic growth and has a negative impact on diversity and inclusion. Yet leadership and management skills are neglected in the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy and accompanying Creative Industries Sector Plan.

Keywords: creative industries; leadership; creative leadership

The Role of Information, Advice and Guidance in Improving Skills Gaps in the Creative Industries

Author(s): **Samantha Broadhead** (Leeds Arts University), **Patsy Gilbert** (Leeds Conservatoire), **Nathen Kelly** (Bradford Cultural Education Partnership), **Alexandra Willans** (Skills House Careers and Technical Education)

This study explores how a deeper understanding and appreciation of creative skills can enhance information, advice and guidance (IAG) practice across the Yorkshire and Humber region. The research was co-designed with Skills House Careers and Technical Education (CTE) at Bradford Metropolitan District Council and contributes to the wider Yorkshire and Humber Policy Innovation Partnership, funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). A body of reports highlights the significant value creative skills bring to society, the economy and the cultural industries. This value is increasingly recognised at policy level, with the cultural industries identified as a priority sector in the UK government's Industrial Strategy. For the sector to thrive, it requires a strong pipeline of individuals equipped with the skills and knowledge needed for a wide range of roles. Yet Carey, Giles and O'Brien argue that the UK's education and skills system has contributed to a persistent mismatch between the capabilities of the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) workforce and the needs of employers. This project suggests that one visible symptom of this mismatch is a hesitancy within IAG provision to promote creative careers to young people. School subjects often map poorly onto creative job roles, and pathways into the sector can appear unclear. Learners at all stages need to understand that creative education develops a broad set of transferable skills valuable across many fields. Focus groups with stakeholders indicate that IAG professionals often feel under-confident advising on creative careers for three reasons: the complexity and diversity of CCS roles and entry routes; the reduction of arts provision in schools and colleges; and limited awareness of creativity-driven careers outside the CCS. The study argues that greater recognition of IAG professionals' role is essential to strengthening the creative skills pipeline.

Keywords: skills; creative industries; information, advice and guidance; careers; skills gaps

Music Education for the Real World: A Comparison of Secondary and Tertiary Education Routes in England

Author(s): **Darren Taggart** (Canterbury Christ Church University)

This thesis explores the extent to which music qualifications at Key Stage 4 and beyond in England (Levels 2, 3 and higher education) offer access to sustainable and identity-affirming graduate outcomes in today's creative labour markets. A critical-realist mixed-methods research design is applied, drawing on analysis of national participation data, curriculum case studies across Level 2, Level 3 and degree programmes, and twenty semi-structured interviews with learners, teachers and music industry professionals. The

thesis develops a five-lens framework (employability, self-worth, graduate reality, credibility and curricular relevance) for analysing the affordances and constraints of different qualification routes for graduate outcomes. It proposes a new theoretical lens of portfolio capital for understanding how music graduates sustain professional practice in post-digital, precarious labour markets through an assemblage of artefactual, networked, identity-based and situationally derived resources. Findings suggest that each route can carry variable weight across the five value lenses, with academic routes offering high credibility but potential misalignment with portfolio working lives, and vocational and applied routes offering more alignment with industry practice and early working lives but a weaker status in academic and policy contexts. Quantitative and qualitative analysis identifies significant socio-geographic and infrastructural inequalities in access to music education, as well as exclusion and boundary-work across styles and dual systems of gatekeeping by both institutional and subcultural arbiters of value. Qualification value is shown to be relational and contextually derived rather than absolute. Credentials are most likely to afford sustainable outcomes in the context of curricula which are aligned with learners' musical identities, labour-market conditions and institutional supports. This thesis concludes that the debate on future music education policy and practice should move beyond binary academic/vocational framings towards plural, hybrid and adaptive models that respond to creative practice in the twenty-first century by combining disciplinary rigour with identity development, reflective practice and long-term career sustainability.

Keywords: education; music; pedagogy; career sustainability

15:00–15:30 Coffee Break

Room: St James' View, 8th floor, Newcastle University Business School

15.30–17:00 Parallel Session 2

Special Session 2: Developing Regional Innovation Ecosystems in the Creative Industries: Data, Methods and 'What Works' in Wales and Beyond

15:30–17:00 Room: 1.03, Newcastle University Business School

This special session presents a research-led 'what works' perspective on how to build, govern and evaluate regional innovation ecosystems in the creative industries. It draws on eight years of evidence and data gathered through the Media Cymru and Clwstwr programmes (more than 300 industry-facing innovation projects in the creative and media sectors) and complements this with comparative research across the programme, and additional insights generated beyond.

The session will present diversified data insights (programme-level operational data, evaluation and monitoring datasets, project and partnership data, and comparative place-

based analyses across the UK) and discuss how these can inform new methods, research designs and future scholarly work on creative R&D and regional innovation ecosystems.

- Marlen Komorowski (Cardiff University, Media Cymru) (Chair)
- Justin Lewis (Cardiff University, Media Cymru) (Chair)
- Matthew Boswell (Cardiff University, Media Cymru)
- Mátè Fodor (Impactonomix)

Ordinary Session 3: Culture and Welfare

15:30–17:00 Room: 2.04, Newcastle University Business School

Translating 'Culture and Health' Policy Ideas into Practice Across Europe: The Case of Dance Well

Author(s): **Ilaria Foroni** (Ca' Foscari University)

Despite growing endorsement of 'culture and health' programmes in European policy frameworks, the modalities through which this policy discourse is translated into concrete organisational practices remain under-researched. The paper addresses this gap by investigating the organisational practices adopted by cultural organisations when they are called upon to implement projects at the intersection of art, community well-being and therapy. Empirically, the paper relies on a multi-site qualitative study of the Dance Well (DW) project, a community-based artistic initiative led by professional dancers and designed primarily for people living with Parkinson's disease. Originating in Bassano del Grappa, Italy, in 2013, DW was subsequently supported by the EU's Creative Europe programme (2022–2025) and implemented across Germany, France, the Czech Republic and Lithuania. Drawing on Scandinavian institutionalism and policy translation studies, the findings indicate that, while presented as a replicable 'best practice', the Dance Well project unfolds differently across countries and dance organisations, depending on the degree of institutionalisation of the national dance sector, the presence or absence of national 'culture and health' policy frameworks, and the organisational positioning of health-related activities. These preliminary findings contribute to debates in cultural policy and management by showing that artists' career conditions, organisational priorities and policy environments influence the interpretation and implementation of the 'culture and health' agenda. Thus greater attention should be paid to the situated organisational work through which policy ideas are translated into practice, especially in intersectoral collaborations.

Keywords: culture and health; policy translation; multi-site qualitative study; intersectoral collaborations

Orchestrating Well-Being: How Guaranteed Income Improves Artists' Lives

Author(s): Doug Noonan (Indiana University), **Joanna Woronkiewicz** (Indiana University and Copenhagen Business School)

Basic income pilots have increased interest in how cash affects well-being and welfare. We study Creatives Rebuild New York's Guaranteed Income for Artists, which paid 2,400 New York artists \$1,000 monthly for eighteen months, using a weighted lottery and surveys of participants and unselected applicants. We estimate causal effects on a multidimensional well-being battery – physical and mental health, meaning, agency, optimism, relationships and anxiety/depression symptoms – rather than single outcomes. Because 'making artists feel better' alone may not justify policy, we translate these gains into money-metric welfare, adapting and critiquing Ireland's Basic Income for the Arts cost-benefit framework for the New York context.

Keywords: guaranteed income; well-being; welfare; artists

Social Welfare and Cross-Cultural Place Perceptions

Author(s): **Martina Dattilo** (University of Turin), Matteo Caruso (University of Turin), Sarah Najm (Creative PEC and Newcastle University)

There is a growing literature on anti-migrant sentiment and its negative externalities on economic and social welfare. We contribute to this debate by examining the impact of migration shocks on place perception. To do so, we consider the opening of refugee centres in several Italian municipalities as a policy-induced immigration shock. We measure place perception using Tripadvisor ratings for arts, culture and heritage attractions over the period 2014–2021. In addition, we distinguish in our analysis between national and international Tripadvisor reviewers to test the extent to which this could mediate place perceptions. Moreover, we are able to explore heterogeneity in types of refugee centres: temporary ones and SAI (Reception and Integration System) project-dedicated reception centres. We hypothesise that integration-led centres that facilitate cross-cultural interactions, such as the SAI project, would improve place perceptions and thereby foster social cohesion. Our findings aim to provide policy implications for welfare policies and cross-cultural programming.

Keywords: migration; refugee centre; cultural tourism; place perception; Tripadvisor

Ordinary Session 4: Cultural Exchange and Collaboration

15:30–17:00 Room: 3.07, Newcastle University Business School

Dynamic Mapping the Creative Economy for Policy: Lessons from Türkiye's INSPIRE Project

Author(s): **Cangül KUŞ** (Izmir Development Agency), Laetitia Manach (Izmir Development Agency), Gökçe Dervişoğlu Okandan (Izmir Development Agency)

INSPIRE is a national capacity-building project designed to support the development of Türkiye's first Creative Economy Strategy (2025–2030). Implemented between 2023 and 2026, with co-funding from the European Union and in partnership with regional development agencies and national stakeholders, the project has aimed to move creative economy policy in Türkiye beyond fragmented initiatives towards a holistic, evidence-based framework aligned with green and digital transitions. At the core of this process lies dynamic mapping, applied for the first time in Türkiye as a permanent analytical function for policy design rather than a one-off study. Building on DCMS and Nesta's dynamic mapping methodology, the study uses linked TURKSTAT microdata, administrative records and labour-force data to identify creative occupations and to analyse the structure of the sectors by moving from occupations to industries, and from industries back to occupations. The analyses rely on both Nesta's original lists of creative occupations and on extended national lists of creative occupations, and calculations are carried out to test how methodological choices shape the evidence produced for policy. Depending on the list and approach used, within a registered workforce of 33 million people in Türkiye, approximately 445,000–455,000 people are employed in creative industries, while the number of workers in creative occupations, using a broader lens, ranges from about 770,000–950,000. This persistent gap between 'creative sectors' and 'creative talent' reveals a large reservoir of creativity embedded in non-creative industries, with significant implications for skills policy, innovation systems and industrial strategy. Using Nesta's thirty per cent creative intensity threshold, only fifteen of thirty-one candidate industries are classified as creative: photographic activities; television programming and broadcasting; newspaper publishing and film production activities sit at the core, while areas such as jewellery manufacturing; film exhibition; translation activities and museum services fall well below the threshold, prompting a re-examination of long-standing assumptions in Turkish cultural policy. The findings of dynamic mapping feed directly into the emerging Core Strategy for the Creative Economy in Türkiye, informing proposals for a national Creative Economy Coordination Council, regional creative industries touchpoints, new monitoring–evaluation–learning (MEL) systems and place-based creative hub models. The Turkish case illustrates a shift from mapping as descriptive evidence towards mapping as strategic infrastructure embedded in governance, stakeholder dialogue and policy cycles. The paper discusses this pathway from evidence to strategy and reflects on the transferability of the approach for countries seeking to align creative economy data, governance reform and investment priorities within an adaptive policy framework.

Keywords: creative economy; dynamic mapping; creative intensity; evidence-based policy; Türkiye

Navigating Borders: Tracing the Attributes and Variables Shaping Cultural Relations and Exchanges Between Singapore and Southeast Asia

Author(s): **Su-Fern Hoe** (Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Singapore)

Arts ecologies are embedded in, and composed by, thick networks of interrelationships and interdependencies that develop at the interpersonal, intra- and inter-organisational levels of analysis. The local arts ecologies in Southeast Asia are no exception. Five years after the Covid-19 pandemic, travel, touring and trade appear to be showing signs of recovery, with the return of arts workers and programmes touring to, within and from Southeast Asia through an increasing array of border-crossing trajectories, from cultural exports, performing arts markets and touring gigs, to new emerging models and mechanisms of cultural cooperation. This is despite significant challenges such as limited access to finance, insufficient policy support and prolonged political conflicts, which continue to limit the scale and scope of the growth of the creative industries in Southeast Asia. However, regional cultural relations and exchanges within and across Southeast Asia remain underexplored. There is a startling lack of sustained scholarship and cultural data that maps out the extent, nature and conditions of cultural exchanges in Southeast Asia, particularly the range of strategies adopted by arts workers to navigate local and regional networks at multiple scales. There is also a lack of understanding of cross-border linkages and shared 'sub-regional' connections between the cultures and practices of Southeast Asia. This paper seeks to address this gap by providing an initial overview of the nature of cultural relations and exchanges between Singapore and Southeast Asia. This paper draws upon an inceptive quantitative evidence base to derive a preliminary range of characteristics that depict the nature and evolution of Singapore's cultural exchanges and relations. The aim is to provide a precursory understanding of the rich and variegated tapestry of regional cultural relations within Southeast Asia, particularly the complex patterns of determinants shaping, and causal mechanisms underpinning, these cross-border exchanges. Ultimately, this paper seeks to advance critical conversations on the lived realities of sustaining cross-border cultural relations and exchanges in Southeast Asia, by providing evidence-based insights on how creative workers can be better supported to conduct cultural relations and flourish.

Keywords: cultural relations; cultural exchange; Southeast Asia; creative labour

Workforce Pathways and Sustainability in the Shared Island Creative and Cultural Economy: The Case of Youth Dance

Author(s): **Victoria Durrer** (University College Dublin), **Aoife McGrath**, (Queen's University Belfast)

The Shared Island Unit, an initiative of the Government of Ireland, advances all-island collaboration as a whole-of-government priority. Working in partnership with the Northern Ireland Executive and the British Government, it seeks to tackle common 'strategic challenges' and address the island economy's cross-jurisdictional potential. Recently, the Unit has increased its focus on the cultural and creative industries as an investment priority, both north-south (Ireland/Northern Ireland) and east-west (island of Ireland/Great Britain). Initiatives typically emphasise collaboration, creative exchange and capacity-building. However, while investment implicitly entails attention to the labour force, the development and long-term sustainability of that workforce has received limited direct consideration. Research commissioned under the Shared Island Initiative underscores that 'the skills acquired by children and young people in their path to adulthood are very important for labour-market opportunities'. Furthermore, there has been growing recognition of the 'professionalisation of services for young people', and the need for a skilled, remunerated workforce. These developments sit within a wider context which recognises that the creative and cultural workforce is interdependent and mobile across both islands, with youth and experienced practitioners navigating cross-border and transnational training and career development. Yet, youth-led and structured, out-of-school arts activities are frequently marginalised within policy discussions of education, training and career pathways in the cultural and creative economy in the UK, Ireland and further afield, receiving limited recognition as sites of career formation. Additionally, the workforce underpinning these activities (e.g. facilitators, directors, administrative staff) remain similarly overlooked. Greater attention is typically paid to instruction within formal education and further and higher education. Within this context, this paper examines the field of youth dance, drawing on findings from Youth Dance Matters (YDM), an interdisciplinary, cross-border study combining dance practice as research and social science methods. With evidence generated through youth-led creative methods with 103 dancers (aged twelve to seventeen) from six youth dance groups across Ireland and Northern Ireland (in ballet, contemporary and street dance), alongside interviews and focus groups with their thirteen facilitators, teachers and directors, we argue that youth dance groups serve not only as access points into the workforce, but also as a core element of the cross-islands, interconnected dance profession in their own right. We highlight the working conditions and mentoring roles involved in supporting young people's participation and progression, and the experiences and agency of young people. The commitment required to sustain these groups raises broader, critical questions of 'ethical accountability' for the development and sustainability of the cultural and creative economy.

Keywords: dance; workforce; youth; pathways; sustainability

17:00–17:15 Short Break/Transition to The Frederick Douglass Centre

17:15–18:15 Policy Panel: Place-Based Approaches to Unlocking Creative Industries Growth

Room: G.41, The Frederick Douglass Centre

This panel explores how place-based approaches can drive inclusive growth in the creative industries, drawing on local and global examples to consider what might be possible in the North-East of England. Combined Authorities in the region have set out ambitious goals for their creative industries, with skills, productivity and geographical disparities often highlighted as key issues. This panel of global policy experts will explore what effective place-based policy for the creative industries looks like, and the opportunities devolution offers for supporting local creative economies.

- Bernard Hay (Creative PEC) (Chair)
- Rachael Wadsworth (North East Combined Authority)
- Azadeh Fatehrad (Teesside University)
- Graeme Evans (University of the Arts London)
- Martha Bloom (OECD)

18:15–19:30 Networking Reception

Room: Foyer, The Frederick Douglass Centre

Drinks and canapés provided.

Wednesday 29 April

8:30–09:00 Coffee and Registration

Room: Foyer, The Frederick Douglass Centre

09:00–10:30 Parallel Session 3

Special Session 3: Emerging Video Game Clusters Across European Regions. Insights from the GAME-ER Project

09:00–10:30 Room: G.06, The Frederick Douglass Centre

This special session aims to present research outputs produced within GAME-ER (Gaming Clusters Across Multiple European Regions), a project funded by Horizon Europe and UK Research and Innovation. This project focuses on the analysis of the formation and development of emerging video game clusters beyond large metropolitan areas. Despite its growing economic and cultural relevance, the spatial organisation of the video game industry in Europe and the conditions that underpin the emergence and consolidation of regional gaming clusters remain underexplored in both academic research and policy debate. The project addresses this gap by adopting an integrated analytical framework that combines quantitative spatial analysis with in-depth qualitative investigation of selected regional ecosystems. The session brings together contributions from the project's distinct work packages.

- Enrico Bertacchini (University of Turin) (Chair)
- Cecilia Maronero (University of Turin)
- José David Gómez-Urrego (Abertay University)

Ordinary Session 5: Intellectual Property: Motivations, R&D and Licensing Models in the Creative Industries

09:00–10.30 Room: 1.17, The Frederick Douglass Centre

Content Superpower: UK Publishing and the AI Licensing Market Summary

Author(s): **Kapila Perera** (Publishers Association)

In March 2026, the Publishers Association, the trade body for UK publishing, released 'Content Superpower: UK publishing and the AI licensing market'. The report was the first comprehensive account of how publishers license their content for AI use. The report demonstrated that UK publishers are active in an established and maturing AI licensing market. It evidenced a licensing market of a scale and maturity far beyond previous estimates. This presentation will run through the context of the research, its questions, methods and findings. It will go through the main sections of the report to show UK publishers' content superpower status, the importance of content for AI development and

how publishers' content is used by AI. Then it will outline suggested policy recommendations to grow the market further.

Keywords: AI; licensing; publishing; academic publishers; content; data

Rethinking Motivations for Intellectual Property

Author(s): **Peter Evans** (Intellectual Property Office), Hannah Hodge Waller (Intellectual Property Office)

Intellectual property (IP) is often assumed to exist primarily as a mechanism to protect new creations, inventions, brands or designs. However, a closer look at IP application behaviour suggests a far more diverse set of motivations drive these filings. This session, presented by Peter Evans and Hannah Hodge Waller from the UK Intellectual Property Office's Forecasting and Business Insight team, explores these alternative drivers through new analysis of trademark activity in the computer games and music sectors. By reframing the central question – why do individuals and businesses file for IP in the first place? – the session invites policymakers, researchers and industry stakeholders to challenge their understanding of the drivers of IP demand and consider how IP systems can more effectively support the needs of the creative sector and beyond.

Keywords: trademarks; intellectual property; creative industries

Exploring Sovereign Cultural Archives as Strategic R&D Infrastructure: A Preliminary Framework for Contextual Accuracy in the UK Createch Sector

Author(s): **Eva Tseng** (University of Sussex)

This research explores the evolving definition of Research and Development (R&D) within the UK's creative and cultural economy, specifically focusing on the 'contextual uncertainty' inherent in generative AI (GenAI) applications. Following the 2025/26 updates to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) R&D tax relief guidance and the UKRI R&D Strategy, arts-based activities are increasingly recognised for their role in resolving technological uncertainties. However, this paper identifies a potential gap in current innovation paradigms: the reliance on 'data-agnostic' models trained on aggregated digital content. Evidence suggests that large-scale aggregated datasets often harbour inherent biases, leading to 'cultural dilution' or technical inaccuracies in AI-generated outputs. From a policy perspective, such inaccuracies represent a form of 'knowledge-based uncertainty' that challenges the distinctive value and technical reliability of the UK's createch sector. In response, this study proposes a tentative discussion framework: the Sovereign Cultural R&D Framework (SCRF). Rather than viewing cultural archives solely through the lens of heritage preservation, this framework explores their potential as a strategic R&D infrastructure. It suggests that the creation of structured, 'sovereign' archives – curated and verified at the source – could provide the 'ground truth' necessary to resolve complex

uncertainties in culture-specific AI training. The paper outlines three exploratory areas for dialogue: 1) Sovereign Data Infrastructure: The role of verified cultural data in establishing a robust, high-fidelity foundation for AI R&D; 2) Systematic Resolution of Uncertainty: The feasibility of identifying 'contextual-cultural verification' as an eligible R&D activity under current tax relief criteria; 3) Strategic IP Management: The potential impact of proprietary cultural databases on enhancing the UK's Intellectual Property (IP) landscape and global competitiveness. Utilising a qualitative, problematisation approach, this research seeks to invite discussion on how the UK innovation ecosystem might better integrate 'cultural determinacy' into its createch strategy. By aligning these preliminary concepts with the UKRI's focus on 'policy and evidence' and 'infrastructure', the study hopes to contribute to the understanding of how verified data can serve as a cornerstone for high-value, knowledge-driven innovation in the creative economy.

Keywords: createch; R&D; data sovereign; generative AI; creative culture policy

Ordinary Session 6: Technology, Creative Labour and Skills Development

09:00–10:30 Room: 2.16, The Frederick Douglass Centre

Platform Strategies and Entrepreneurial Labour in Independent Music

Author(s): **Paul Oliver** (Edinburgh Napier University), Luca Mora (Edinburgh Napier University), Lucy Bennett (Cardiff University)

This paper explores how independent artists in the UK music industry are adapting their creative practices and business models through direct-to-fan (D2F) and platform-based systems, such as Patreon, Bandcamp and Twitch. While recent research has pointed to both expanded opportunities and increased pressures associated with digital platforms, the experiences of working artists suggest a more complex set of conditions, affected as much by the absence of support as by the presence of new tools. The analysis draws on interviews with thirty-four self-releasing artists, most of whom work outside traditional label structures and earn income from a mix of sources, including teaching, live performance, streaming, grants, merchandise and subscription platforms. Platform strategies are employed to maintain control over release schedules, build direct relationships with audiences and diversify revenue streams. First, artists describe the pressure to be constantly visible, to maintain communication with paying supporters, and to deliver content that meets both artistic and economic expectations. Second, there is little room to step back, especially where income depends on visibility and consistency. Third, informal peer networks (WhatsApp groups, Discord servers, artist collectives) often fill gaps in institutional infrastructure. Recent work has shown how platforms reorganise labour conditions and monetisation in music, but less attention has been paid to how artists sustain these systems, both practically and emotionally, over time. Interviews indicate a high administrative workload, limited time for artistic development and unclear

pathways to career stability. There is a persistent mismatch between policy assumptions about entrepreneurial skills and the lived experiences of artists managing fragmented, often unsupported careers. Any effective support strategy will need to engage with these working realities without assuming the existence of either scalable models or transferable solutions.

Keywords: platform economy; creative labour; independent music; direct-to-fan; platformisation

Creative Talents at the GenAI Crossroads? Insights from the UK Advertising and Marketing Sector

Author(s): Mariachiara Restuccia (AI in Media Institute and University of Sussex), Dan de Lord (DDL Consulting), **Hugo Riley** (AI in Media Institute), Jack Spencer (Freeflexer)

Beyond hyped headlines and bubble warnings, generative AI (GenAI) is impacting the present and future of advertising and marketing. Since the launch of ChatGPT in 2022 and the general workforce awareness of fields like machine learning and deep learning, these creative sectors have been grappling with unprecedented disruptions across a growing number of activities, from content creation and workflows to personalisation and market research. In the ongoing debate about the relationship between humans and AI, marketing scholars and practitioners are questioning how GenAI reshapes the profession's very nature and the tasks performed therein. Hybrid intelligence approaches – combining AI's computational power with human judgment – are emerging as best practices for balancing efficiency with ethical oversight and creativity. Nevertheless, the diffusion of GenAI among marketing professionals gives rise to several paradoxes, with efficiency gains and cost savings coexisting with concerns about sustainability, authenticity and the dis/replacement of human talent. These issues are at the forefront of the concerns of industry bodies and regulators. To contribute to this debate, the AI in Media Institute is conducting a multi-method study to explore how UK advertising and marketing professionals view the present and future of their profession in the GenAI era. The first component of the study is a large-scale online survey on the future of creative talent in advertising and the creative industries. The survey was distributed to a convenience sample of 1,000 UK professionals in the advertising and marketing industry via the authors' professional networks. We aim for a response rate of twenty per cent. The second component of the study is a series of focus groups with high-profile executives in the advertising and marketing sector (ten confirmed participants at the time of writing). During the focus groups, we will be able to more deeply explore any tensions between the market narrative and the lived reality of GenAI in the sector. This will produce tangible, real-life data and usable insights as to what is actually changing for businesses, their people and creative outcomes.

Keywords: AI; creative workforce; skill; creative industry

AI, Time Poverty and Everyday Creative Engagement in Urban Life

Author(s): **Kasturi Hazarika** (Independent Researcher)

Time poverty is a common challenge in urban contexts, particularly for people juggling work, care responsibilities and fragmented schedules. Everyday creative activities can support well-being, imagination and social connection, but they often require sustained attention, hands-on engagement and unhurried time, resources that are frequently scarce. AI tools promise speed and efficiency, raising questions about what may be gained or lost when creative engagement becomes faster or more outcome focused. The paper treats creativity as something experienced, shared and embedded in daily life, rather than simply a product or skill. AI is approached not as a replacement for human creativity, but as a factor that may reshape how people allocate time and attention during creative activities, influencing effort, focus and the quality of the experience itself. The proposed research uses a qualitative, participatory approach in urban settings. Methods will include creative workshops run both with and without AI prompts, diaries in which participants record their everyday creative experiences, and reflective exercises exploring how participants perceive time, effort and enjoyment in creative engagement. This approach foregrounds creative experience rather than creative outputs. The analysis will examine three interrelated questions: how time poverty shapes access to and experiences of everyday creativity; how AI tools may be used to cope with or reshape time pressures; and what might be at risk when creative engagement becomes accelerated, automated or increasingly outcome focused. In particular, the paper considers whether AI-assisted creativity may feel efficient or anxiety-reducing, while potentially diminishing the slow, exploratory and social aspects of creativity often associated with well-being. By focusing on everyday creativity under conditions of time pressure, the paper aims to contribute insights for cultural organisations, community initiatives and policy discussions concerned with supporting meaningful, imaginative and socially connected creative lives in AI-rich urban environments.

Keywords: creativity; AI; time poverty; imagination

10:30–11:00 Coffee Break

Room: Foyer, The Frederick Douglass Centre

11:00–12:00 Day Two Keynote

Room: G.56, The Frederick Douglass Centre

Artists at Work with AI: Evidence on Creative Labour and Technology Adoption

Keynote Speech by: Professor Joanna Woronkowicz (Indiana University and Copenhagen Business School)

Chair/Moderator: **Hasan Bakhshi** (Creative PEC and Newcastle University)

What does it mean to be an artist at work in the age of generative AI? This keynote extends the central argument of *Artists at Work* – that artists are workers operating within distinctive labour-market conditions – into the context of AI-mediated creative production.

The talk reframes generative AI adoption as a labour-market outcome rather than primarily an attitudinal or ethical one. Drawing on new empirical evidence from a national survey of approximately 2,500 arts alumni from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP), it examines how AI use varies across creative workers and work contexts. The findings indicate that adoption is strongly associated with the technological intensity of tasks in current paid work, while the capacity to adopt is shaped by constraints such as time, financial resources and prior disruptions. Individuals with more technologically intensive work are more likely both to adopt AI and to use it more frequently, whereas those experiencing labour-market shocks are less likely to adopt or integrate it into routine workflows.

These patterns are consistent with broader features of artistic labour markets, including project-based employment, portfolio careers, and the individualised nature of skill acquisition and technological investment. Generative AI appears to diffuse unevenly across these contexts, with adoption reflecting both expected task-level returns and the ability to absorb fixed costs of experimentation. Concerns related to authorship, authenticity and creative control are present, but empirical evidence suggests they are more closely associated with variation in usage intensity than with the initial adoption decision.

The final part of the talk examines how these dynamics intersect with current policy discussions on AI and cultural production. Focusing on the concept of 'creator agency under AI', it considers how issues of transparency, consent, compensation and attribution are being framed in emerging policy agendas. The analysis centres on how information about AI systems – such as training use, licensing and downstream distribution – relates to creators' decision-making environments, and how different institutional and market arrangements may structure the distribution of value, control and risk in AI-mediated creative work.

Joanna Woronkowicz is a cultural economist who conducts research on labour, capital and technological investments in arts and culture. She is Professor at the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University (IU) and Visiting Professor at the Copenhagen Business School. At IU, she co-founded and is Faculty Director of the Centre

for Cultural Affairs, and is Co-Director of the Arts, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation Lab. From 2011 to 2013, she was Senior Research Officer for the National Endowment for the Arts. She is currently the Senior Research Fellow at the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP), where she leads the Pulse panel data collection initiative and the Career Lab. Joanna's research has covered topics including guaranteed income for arts, emerging technologies in the creative labour force, returns on higher education for artists, and cultural facilities investments. Her first book, *Building Better Arts Facilities: Lessons from a U.S. National Study*, was published by Routledge in 2015. Her most recent book, *Artists at Work: Rethinking Policy for Artistic Careers*, was published in autumn 2025 with Stanford University Press.

12:00–12:50 Lunch Break

Room: Foyer, The Frederick Douglass Centre

12:50–14:20 Parallel Session 4

Special Session 4: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Creative Industries

12:50–14:20 Room: G.06, The Frederick Douglass Centre

What's the current state of research and practice in equality, diversity and inclusion in the creative industries? This panel will present research and practice across the creative industries across audiences, workforces and leadership in a range of settings.

First, Nessa Keddo (King's College London) will present research on the experiences of racism among practitioners of colour in the advertising industry, comparing different national and temporal contexts, and highlighting the importance of both work-based and informal settings in implications for career progression. Mark Taylor (University of Sheffield) will summarise current quantitative research on audiences for arts, culture and heritage, focusing particularly on intersectional differences in different forms of engagement. Rowan Aust (ReelTime Media) will present research on high-end television and feature films in relation to job sharing as a scalable intervention to crises including mental health, discriminatory practice and career sustainability, and asking why it is not more widely in place. Finally, Hannah Curran-Troop (University of Manchester) will present research conducted in collaboration with Manchester City Council on the city's cultural leadership and the challenges associated with diversity.

- Nessa Keddo (King's College London)
- Mark Taylor (University of Sheffield and Creative PEC)
- Hannah Curran-Troop (University of Manchester)
- Rowan Aust (ReelTime Media)

Ordinary Session 7: Creative Industries and Place

12:50–14:20 Room: 1.17, The Frederick Douglass Centre

Geospatial Investigation into the Widening Gap Between Arts and STEM Uptake at Key Stage 5 in England

Author(s): **Joe Sharpe** (Birbeck, University of London), Shino Shiode (Birbeck, University of London)

This study addresses the inequality of opportunity for pupils in English schools to study creative subjects, in line with a significant drop in arts entries between 2012 and 2024. It explores the gap between STEM and arts uptake at Key Stage 5 – the STEM–arts gap – and potential factors influencing pupil choice. The study presents evidence that, since 2012, the STEM–arts gap has widened at significantly different rates in local areas, has become significantly spatially clustered, and has widened more rapidly in urban schools than rural schools. This study offers perspectives on factors that influence pupil choice locally through spatial regression analysis for local authority districts. The most significant factors are the ratio of people working in creative industries (reducing the STEM–arts gap), and ratio of households with degree, ratio of deprived households, ratio of pupils studying in selective schools and Asian population (all increasing the gap).

Keywords: creative industries; STEM–arts gap; Key Stage 5; school curriculum; spatial regression

Cultural and Creative Industries and Place: Space and Configuration

Author(s): **Graeme Evans** (University of the Arts London), Patrycja Kaszynska (University of the Arts London)

The presentation draws on the work of the Creative PEC-funded research network on the theme of Culture and Creative Industries (CCI) and Place, and is based on a series of webinars, workshops, research presentations and papers arising, including from international experts. These have addressed issues of scales of place, dataset construction/analysis and policy interventions, and configurations of how creative places best function in infrastructural terms, with intermediaries such as universities/ art colleges, area-based creative enterprise development agencies, CCI networks and workspace providers. This work addresses the symposium themes of interplay between the cultural sector and creative industries, R&D and innovation in the creative industries, and creative and cultural ecosystems through investigating the relationships between CCI innovation and intermediaries, location and growth, and the scale – micro/local, polycentric, regional – at which place matters, and at which policy interventions and investment are most effective. The findings highlight the role and relationship between micro-enterprises/clusters, local networks and institutions; how place factors and the value of

infrastructure can be better understood in policy models/transfer; and how less tangible forms of assets and infrastructure, e.g. human capital, creative skills and place factors, contribute to innovation systems, leading to sustained productivity and firm/cluster growth. The place-based lens through which CCI innovation and growth is considered is evidenced and contrasted through policy initiatives and area-based examples in the UK and overseas (e.g. South Africa), including firm-/network-led clusters, HEI incubation/innovation districts and Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ) designation in London, which is now in its third iteration, with area zones extended in several established CEZs. Finally, the presentation concludes with a summary of issues which may inform future research and policy consideration.

Keywords: creative clusters, Creative Enterprise Zones; place-shaping

The State of the Region: The Practical Implications of Fractured Creative Industry Funding and Governance in the Tees Valley

Author(s): **Nina White** (Teesside University)

Drawing on first-hand experiences of cultural sector leaders in the Tees Valley, this paper draws attention to the practical challenges and inequities that arise from the fractured local authority and Combined Authority models of creative industry policy and funding in the Tees Valley and broader North-East. Using examples of past projects funded through Arts Council England, Tees Valley Combined Authority, North of Tyne Combined Authority and European Regional Development Fund, the paper questions the compatibility of regional creative industry policymaking, its resulting funding models and programmes, and practical lived experience of creative industry workers. Underpinned by data and findings from Creative PEC's recent Arts, Culture and Heritage workforce research, the paper gives a picture of the fractured nature of the Tees Valley's creative industries and compares the region to the wider northeast region. The paper closes by drawing attention to pan-north creative industry initiatives like Screen Alliance North, which can help create a more unified approach to the region that reflects the lived reality of creative industry professionals and businesses.

Keywords: local creative industries; creative industries funding; devolution; Tees Valley

'Inspiring Capital': Literature and Cultural Policy in Edinburgh, UNESCO's First City of Literature

Author(s): **James Annesley** (Newcastle University)

This presentation will consider Edinburgh's role as UNESCO's first City of Literature, reflect on key aspects of the capital's literary culture, and reflect on the part literature plays in the city's branding, economy and creative ecosystem. For some, like Sarah Brouillette, UNESCO's Creative Cities programme needs to be read in the context of wider anxieties

about neoliberalism, processes that have 'conscripted literature into the project of supporting liberal cosmopolitanism' (2019). The approach taken here will test that thesis by considering where and how these macro forces might touch the ground. From there, it will work to add nuance to accounts of the relationship between the city's literary culture and the ambitions of local authorities and policymakers (both national and international). By focusing on the activities of the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust and reflecting on its ties to the Edinburgh International Book Festival, its support for smaller-scale activities linking literature with tourism, and its backing of projects orientated towards building what David McCrone calls 'Scotland the brand' (1999), the suggestion is that the Trust's work cannot be understood simply as a vehicle for neoliberal values. Instead, its work involves negotiating complex sets of priorities that reveal the layered and at times contradictory dynamics driving the city's creative ecosystem.

Keywords: city of literature; city branding; creative cities; creative ecosystem.

Ordinary Session 8: Innovative Practices in the Creative Industries

12:50–14:20 Room: 2.16, The Frederick Douglass Centre

Embedding Environmentally Sustainable Practice in Temporary and Project-Based Organisations: The Role of the Freelancer in UK Film and High-End Television

Author(s): **James R. Davies** (University of South Wales, Media Cymru), Richard Hurford (University of South Wales, Media Cymru)

The climate crisis has necessitated a rapid shift in all sectors to embrace more sustainable environmental practices (ESP). This paper explores the attitudes of individual freelancers working in the UK film and high-end television (HETV) sector towards ESP in one of the UK's biggest creative clusters: South Wales. Film and HETV production in the UK remains heavily operationally dependent on clusters, and there has been an increasing focus on place-based policymaking. Policy and governance therefore still play a vital role in negotiating greater compliance with studios, funders and production companies to recognise the value of ESP, both as a longer-term cost-saving measure, and for future-proofing the sector. Respondents demonstrated a variety of levels of awareness around the expectations, compliance and mandating of sustainability measures, and offer evidence supporting the view that, at present, the UK's film and HETV sector's approach remains fragmented, piecemeal and inconsistent. The temporary, project-based organisational nature of film and television production is broadly seen to deleteriously impact efforts to imbue the sector with appropriate standards and norms of environmentally sustainable practice within regional skills ecosystems. Drawing on the perspectives of regional stakeholders, the paper argues that effective integration of ESP within film and TV requires a delicate negotiation of tacit and explicit knowledge.

Additionally, the leveraging of the expert knowledge of a growing number of sustainability professionals within the sector, via the diffusion of knowledge throughout the freelance workforce, will expedite the assimilation of that expert knowledge into general practice and process.

Keywords: film and TV; freelance work; sustainability; temporary organisations

Consumer Preferences and Cultural Value in Live Theatre: Experimental Evidence from Plays and Musicals in London and New York

Author(s): **Dylan Thompson** (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Paul Crosby (Macquarie University), David Throsby (Macquarie University)

Theatre demand is commonly characterised by a tension between artistic merit and commercial appeal. Companies must select repertoire and production characteristics while balancing artistic objectives against expected box office returns. Although economic research has examined attendance, pricing and perceived quality, preferences for different expected theatrical experiences (e.g. emotional engagement, social enjoyment, intellectual stimulation) are typically treated as exogenous. This paper analyses how expected experiences, past experiential histories and perceptions of cultural value are associated with observable trade-offs in theatre choice. The analysis draws on four online stated-preference discrete choice experiments conducted among theatregoers in and around London and New York between December 2025 and February 2026, covering both plays and musicals. Participants completed repeated choice tasks between unlabelled theatre alternatives characterised by experimentally varied attributes, including genre, critics' ratings, expected experience and ticket price, with an opt-out option. The survey also collected measures of past theatre experiences, motivations and perceived cultural value. Descriptive results indicate substantial heterogeneity in experiential histories and motivations. Emotional engagement is widely reported, and respondents rank being entertained and emotionally moved as the most important theatre experiences, while social interaction is less important on average. Strong agreement is also observed with statements reflecting broader cultural value, such as the importance of physical co-presence with performers and the value of surprise. Differences between play and musical sub-samples are limited. Ongoing analysis employs mixed logit and latent class models to estimate heterogeneous preferences and willingness to pay for key attributes, and to examine how experiential histories and cultural value perceptions shape theatre choice. By embedding experiential priorities within observed trade-offs, the study advances empirical demand analysis in the performing arts and provides implications for audience segmentation, programming strategy and cultural policy.

Keywords: demand; cultural value; preferences; theatre; discrete choice experiment

Digital Cultural Heritage Visitors' Preferences Towards Immersive Technologies: A Choice Experiment Approach

Author(s): **Alice Fontana** (La Rochelle Université and Labex ICCA)

In recent decades, cultural heritage institutions have increasingly adopted digital technologies to enhance access, broaden audiences and explore new economic models. Among these innovations, immersive technologies have attracted growing attention due to their potential to transform cultural experiences. Despite widespread enthusiasm and the benefits highlighted in the literature, however, the integration of immersive technologies into everyday cultural practices remains limited. While a substantial share of the population has already been exposed to immersive technologies, participation in paid immersive experiences within cultural heritage settings remains relatively low. Recent evidence from France suggests that market adoption is still at an early stage, underscoring the need for a systematic analysis of consumer behaviour, willingness to pay and the determinants of demand for immersive museum services. Demand for immersive technologies in cultural heritage contexts has received little attention. This lack of empirical evidence constrains the development of data-driven cultural strategies and limits institutions' ability to understand audience preferences and anticipate the conditions for the inclusive, accessible and sustainable deployment of immersive experiences. Against this background, this study aims to: 1) estimate preferences for alternative configurations of immersive experiences among both visitors and non-visitors of cultural institutions; 2) identify the trade-offs individuals are willing to make across key experience attributes, including interactivity, content type and environmental impact; 3) analyse preference heterogeneity according to socio-demographic characteristics and cultural participation profiles. The research adopts a discrete choice experiment framework applied to an on-site virtual reality experience offered as an add-on to standard museum admission. By extending choice modelling to immersive cultural goods, the study contributes to cultural economics and provides policy-relevant insights into the conditions under which immersive technologies may complement traditional heritage consumption and support sustainable innovation in the cultural and creative industries.

Keywords: immersive technologies; cultural consumption; cultural heritage; choice experiment

Creative Pulsing: How Agile-Inspired Project Practices May Have Solved the Creative Industries' Management Problem

Author(s): **Jonathan Sapsed** (Newcastle University), Andrew Grantham (University of Bedfordshire), Juan Mateos-Garcia (Google DeepMind)

Creative organisations frequently struggle with the tension between autonomous creative work, which generates novelty, and the structured demands of project schedules, a challenge long recognised in creativity research. In the 2010s this issue gained policy prominence in the UK as the so called 'British management problem', with reports arguing

that 'creativity is not enough' and calling for greater maturity in project, budget and people management across the creative industries. Policy initiatives such as Creative Skillset and the Cox Review sought to enhance managerial capability, particularly in 'digital native' sectors such as video games development and animation. With strong ties to software engineering, these sectors increasingly adopted Agile management methods to reconcile creative autonomy with project delivery. Theoretically, Agile resonates with organisational becoming and improvisation, where task design and execution converge. Yet empirical understanding remains limited regarding how specific Agile practices – such as Scrum Teams, backlogs and early prototyping – shape creative processes and innovation performance. This study examines video games development, a high-growth screen industry that integrates art, design, programming and production management to create interactive digital content. Despite surpassing Hollywood in revenues, the sector continually faces technological and market disruption, resulting in a volatile competitive environment. Drawing on research with sixteen organisations and three detailed case studies, we analyse how teams employed extreme programming, Scrum and hybrid Agile–waterfall approaches to manage tensions between creativity and project delivery. Across more than eighty interviews with artists, designers, producers and programmers, we find that Agile structures often enhance creativity by granting autonomy and choice, but may also prompt over-iteration, create interteam dependencies and weaken innovation strategy. We propose a 'creative pulsing model', using an electrical circuit metaphor to show how Agile practices can prompt, steer and sustain creative work while avoiding destabilising 'creative surges' or managerial 'circuit breaks'. We conclude by considering implications for creative industry policy and capability development.

Keywords: Agile; video games development; creative industries management

14:20–14:40 Coffee Break

Room: Foyer, The Frederick Douglass Centre

14:40–16:10 Parallel Session 5

Special Session 5: Evaluating the Impacts of Liverpool City Region's Music Ecosystem

14:40–16:10 Room: G.06, The Frederick Douglass Centre

This year, Liverpool celebrates its tenth anniversary as England's UNESCO City of Music. While globally renowned for its rich musical heritage and ability to deliver large-scale events such as Eurovision 2023, the past decade has seen Liverpool and the wider city region gradually reframe and reposition its music sector and economy to establish its status as the UK's music super-cluster. This is demonstrated through the pioneering work of the Liverpool City Region Music Board and the 2025 launch of MusicFutures – a five-year £7 million UKRI-funded creative cluster, music research and innovation programme.

The Music Board's cataloguing of the City Region's ecosystem of 1,500 music-related businesses offers a case study in how developing granular sector mapping methodologies can catalyse third-party data sources, delivering new social, cultural and economic insights into the previously hidden impacts of the UK's regionally specific creative industries. This session offers four data-driven perspectives on Liverpool City Region's music ecosystem connected by the foundation in innovative sector mapping methods. This will be of benefit to combined and local authority policymakers; DCMS, DSIT and DWP civil servants, creative industries and night-time economy advocates; representatives from areas allocated Creative Places Growth funding; in addition to consultants, data companies and businesses operating in the music and creative industries.

- Mathew Flynn (University of Liverpool) (Chair)
- Richard Anderson (University of Liverpool)
- Jacob Simmons (University of Liverpool)
- Grace Goodwin (University of Liverpool)
- Iain Bennett (The Fifth Sector Limited)
- Alex Singleton (University of Liverpool)

Ordinary Session 9: New Tools and Skills for the Cultural and Creative Industries

14:40–16:10 Room: 1.17, The Frederick Douglass Centre

From Tools to Infrastructure: AI as Decision Support for Cultural Strategy, Place and Public Value

Author(s): **Rachel Farrer** (Farrer Consulting)

Across the UK creative and cultural sectors, policymakers, funders and local authorities consistently articulate a need for more 'joined-up' thinking between cultural strategy, place-making, funding, regeneration, skills and innovation. Yet despite an abundance of mapping exercises, datasets, strategies and evaluations, cultural decision-making is often shaped by fragmented evidence, time-limited resources and uneven access to analytical capacity. Institutions are expected to operate with increasing strategic sophistication, often across complex and competing policy agendas, but the systems and infrastructure available to support joined-up, evidence-informed decision-making have not kept pace. At the same time, artificial intelligence is beginning to enter cultural organisations and public bodies in fragmented ways, most commonly through ad hoc uses such as sense checking ideas, drafting funding bids and policy responses, or summarising guidance, rather than through shared, system-level decision support frameworks. Current policy and sector guidance on AI in culture focuses primarily on organisational governance, risk management, ethics and compliance. While necessary, this work stops short of addressing a more fundamental question: whether AI could function as strategic infrastructure to support cultural decision-making at the level of systems and places, rather than as a tool

for creative production or internal efficiency. This paper proposes a reframing of AI in the creative and cultural industries as decision support infrastructure for complex cultural ecosystems. Drawing on practice-based insight from cultural infrastructure projects, place-based cultural strategy and public funding contexts, alongside emerging literature on AI governance and public sector decision-making, the paper identifies a gap between existing AI discourse and the realities of cultural policy and place-making. It argues that the core challenge facing the sector is not a lack of data or ambition, but a lack of institutional capacity to interpret, connect and act on information in a coherent and transparent way. The paper develops a conceptual framework for understanding how AI could support cultural systems by assisting with strategic sense-making (for example, by helping institutions navigate competing policy priorities, funding opportunities, risks and long-term trade-offs) without automating judgement or displacing human decision-makers. It also sets out key governance questions, including where AI use may introduce new risks around bias, accountability or depoliticisation, and where human deliberation must remain non-negotiable. Rather than advocating for specific tools or platforms, the paper focuses on principles, use cases and boundaries, positioning AI as part of the cultural infrastructure that underpins public value creation. It concludes by outlining implications for cultural policy, evidence development and future research, suggesting that without system-level frameworks, AI risks reinforcing existing fragmentation rather than addressing it. The paper contributes to current policy debates by shifting attention from AI adoption within organisations to AI's potential role, and limits, in shaping how cultural decisions are made across places and ecosystems.

Keywords: AI; cultural infrastructure; place-based strategy; AI governance

Beyond the Cluster Buzz: A Conviviality Toolkit for Evaluating Creative Industries Policy

Author(s): **Paromita Saha** (Independent Researcher), **Anubha Sarkar** (City St George's, University of London)

Place-based creative innovation has become a central pillar of UK cultural and industrial policy, most notably through the AHRC Creative Industries Clusters Programme and the wider Creative Industries Sector Vision. These initiatives position creattech and creative R&D as key interventions intended to accelerate innovation, develop creative skills, and increase scalability and productivity through regional ecosystems that bring together universities, creative SMEs, freelancers and local partners. While these ambitions have generated significant institutional momentum, existing evaluation frameworks primarily emphasise growth-centred metrics and organisational-level outcomes. This paper introduces a Convivial R&D Toolkit as a holistic evaluative framework for analysing how cluster-based creative policy is enacted and constrained through everyday practice. Drawing on Ivan Illich's concept of conviviality alongside creative labour scholarship, commons theory and emerging work on AI as a potential convivial tool, we conceptualise creative clusters as sociotechnical infrastructures that shape how creative value is produced, shared and sustained. Rather than treating clusters solely as innovation

accelerators, we examine how governance, tool usage and institutional design shape creative autonomy, collective capability-building, shared management of creative resources and the labour conditions – including precarity – under which creative work takes place. Situated within a growing landscape of cultural and creative industries toolkits developed by public bodies and innovation agencies, this contribution advances a transferable approach that makes participation, labour conditions and governance structures visible and comparable across regional ecosystems. The Convivial R&D Toolkit offers a practical lens for assessing creative cluster policy beyond growth metrics alone from linking theory, evaluation and policy practice.

Keywords: innovation; createch; creative policy; conviviality; regional ecosystems

New Methods for Mapping Financial Activity in the Culture Sector: Using Website Data to Predict Organisational Funding Mix

Author(s): **Richard Woodall** (Etic Lab), **Alexander Hogan** (Etic Lab)

Understanding the funding models of culture sector organisations is vital for assessing the sustainability of the sector, but existing financial data only covers a limited number of entities nationwide. With a new combination of open web data and machine learning, however, it is possible to generate insights into thousands of organisations whose financial activities would otherwise remain opaque. This paper describes a neural net-based model developed for Arts Council England's 2025 Private Investment in the Culture Sector (PICS) report, which predicts the funding mix of culture sector organisations (i.e. what percentage of their income derives from commercial revenue, private donations and public grants) by analysing information contained in their public websites. This neural net was trained on the websites of hundreds of organisations for whom we had extant financial information, enabling it to recognise signals in the website data which are indicative of organisations' funding strategies. By registering the presence/absence of these signals, the model is able to predict with a high degree of accuracy how a given organisation is funded, based solely on information contained on its public website. This allowed us to produce estimates of the funding mix employed by around 10,000 organisations. This paper will set out the methodology we followed in constructing this model, including how we incorporated human expertise and oversight, both at the point of model design (e.g. shaping what signals the model looks for) and output (e.g. sense checking and interpreting the decisions it makes). Finally, we will share our findings, before setting out some future possibilities for how these tools can be developed to expand our knowledge of the structures and dynamics shaping the UK culture sector.

Keywords: funding; finance; machine learning; web data

Ordinary Session 10: Place and Cultural and Creative Policies

14:40–16:10 Room: 2.16, The Frederick Douglass Centre

Emerging Creative Economies: The Creative Industries in the Newly Devolved York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

Author(s): **Jay Harrison** (XR Stories, University of York), Rosario Neyra (XR Stories, University of York), Emma Brown (XR Stories, University of York) and Damian Murphy (XR Stories, University of York)

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority was established in February 2024. It is the largest Combined Authority by landmass, yet the third smallest by population, being distributed across a diverse mix of urban, rural and coastal geographies. In 2025, the creative industries were identified as one of five 'competitive advantage' sectors in the Combined Authority's Local Growth Plan. These developments highlight the need for new, locally grounded evidence that more accurately reflects the scale, structure and challenges of the region's creative economy and its workforce. As part of a wider programme of York and North Yorkshire creative industries data gathering conducted by XR Stories at the University of York, a Creative Economy Census was designed in partnership with the Combined Authority to establish a robust evidence base on the composition and conditions of the creative economy across the newly devolved region. The research aimed to map the distribution and characteristics of creative workers and organisations; examine employment patterns, business activity and sectoral overlap; and identify barriers, support needs and opportunities relevant to regional creative industries policy. Data was collected via an online survey in summer 2025, consisting of quantitative and qualitative questions capturing respondents' roles, working conditions and perspectives. It generated detailed information on 277 primary and secondary creative economy roles from a sample of 205 workers and identified a further 4,319 associated creative economy workers. Results revealed a geographically dispersed creative workforce, predominantly female, with most aged between twenty-five and fifty-four, with forty-six per cent based in urban communities, forty per cent rural and thirteen per cent coastal. Employment patterns highlight the prevalence of portfolio careers, with many holding multiple roles. Freelancers and sole proprietors accounted for over half of roles and nearly two thirds of respondents worked with freelance creatives, underlining their importance to the regional creative economy. Businesses were predominantly micro- or small enterprises, with sectoral activity primarily concentrated in music, performing and visual arts. Respondents also reported significant overlap between their work and the heritage sector. Three core priorities were noted: access to affordable creative space; better support for freelancers and microbusinesses; more small and flexible grants. Despite these constraints, respondents reported innovation activity, interest in collaborative R&D and strong engagement with environmental sustainability. Respondents also evidenced the value of creative spaces, networks and festivals as key parts of the

regional creative ecosystem, as well as the importance of place in relation to their work in the York and North Yorkshire creative economy. The findings provide a foundational evidence base to inform the Combined Authority's creative industries policy interventions, emphasising the importance of place-sensitive business support, affordable workspace provision and tailored skills development for freelance- and microbusiness-led economies. The study demonstrates the important role universities can play in generating new regional data and insights in devolved governance contexts and offers a replicable model for other local authorities seeking to address gaps in their regional creative economy evidence base.

Keywords: creative economy; regional creative industries policy; place-based economic development; creative workforce mapping

From Policy to Place: Delivering Creative Industry Growth Through a Triple Helix Model

Author(s): **Adam Morley** (Elstree Immersive Experience and Hertfordshire County Council)

Over the past decade, creative industry policy in the UK has increasingly emphasised place-based growth, skills development, innovation and inward investment. Despite this, many local and regional creative industry strategies struggle to translate policy ambition into sustained economic impact, resilient labour markets and investor confidence. Fragmentation between local government, education providers and industry remains a persistent barrier to delivery. This paper presents an applied case study of a production-led creative ecosystem in Hertfordshire, one of the UK's most significant screen and creative industry regions, to examine how a 'triple helix' delivery model, integrating local government, higher education and industry, can improve policy implementation and outcomes at place level. Rather than focusing on creative clustering as a purely spatial or sectoral phenomenon, the model is designed around coordinated delivery mechanisms. These include shared governance structures, aligned public-private investment, embedded workforce development and live production activity operating alongside skills provision, innovation and cultural infrastructure. The model brings together local authorities, universities, studios, production companies and innovation partners to reduce duplication, de-risk investment and create clearer pathways between education, employment and enterprise. The paper draws on delivery evidence from the development and early operation of this ecosystem; the coordination of public funding streams with private investment; the integration of skills bootcamps and workforce programmes directly into production and innovation; emerging indicators of inward investment attraction and sustained production demand; and governance and partnership designed to support accountability, transparency and sustainability. The model supports applied R&D through partnerships in vertical production, immersive technologies and AI-enabled workflows, embedding innovation directly within delivery rather than treating it as a separate policy stream. The paper concludes by outlining transferable lessons for policymakers and

practitioners designing place-based creative industry interventions, with implications for governance design, investment alignment, workforce integration and applied innovation.

Keywords: triple helix; place-based growth; creative governance; innovation ecosystems

How Does a Public Policy Fail? Creative City Policy and the Tensional Space of Artist-Led Organisations

Author(s): **Rebecca Prescott** (Northumbria University), Ziyun Fan (University of York), Ziad Elsahn (University of Lancaster), Tom Mordue (Northumbria University)

In this paper, we draw attention to the intersection between public policy and the spacing of organisations through Lefebvre's triad. Examining the materiality of space through a tension-centred approach, we explore the processes of spatial creation informed by creative city policy (CCP) within and through artist-led organisations. We draw on longitudinal qualitative and ethnographic data to explore the shifting interrelationships between a macro-public policy and its implementation on microsites, developing our understanding of the tensional nature of materiality in organisational space and adding vital detail to our understanding of how CCP can act as both a potentialising and limiting force in creative production.

Keywords: creative city; policy; artist-led; organisational space; Lefebvre; materiality

16:15–17:15 Parallel Session 6

Panel Discussion 1: Rural Creative Industries

16:15–17:15 Room: 1.17, The Frederick Douglass Centre

This panel brings together several approaches to rural creative industries with researchers who have been in discussion for several years, attempting to address the issue of how best to understand the intersections between practice, policy and creativity in the rural creative economy. The panel will focus on rural creative industries, and provides a platform for an open and discursive exploration of research that deals with various closely aligned topics relating to the sustainability of micro-enterprises in the rural creative economy, the intersections between practice and policy in rural artistic practice, and the relationship(s) between creative educational contexts and national policy interventions in rural and remote Scotland.

This panel serves as a waypoint on the ongoing growth of interest in rural creative industries research and seeks to better understand how globalisation and digitalisation are both mobilising the economic advantages of place-based rural creativity, as well as how individual artists and educational organisations are adapting and mobilising rural place and

heritage for sustainability. The focus on rural creative industries brings an explicitly interdisciplinary approach to creativity, local and national government policy, and to how individuals, micro-enterprises and communities respond to and mobilise the infrastructure, affordances and place of rural and island settings, as well as how these relate to civic, state and local authorities. The discussion seeks to welcome dialogue with different creative industries researchers, and open one with other participants, on the relationships between rural and non-rural industries, arts and education institutions, and on the differences and approach to rural policy development and research.

- Laurence Lasselle (University of St Andrews)
- Sara Maioli (Newcastle University)
- Simon McKerrell (Glasgow Caledonian University)
- Josh Siepel (University of Sussex)

Panel Discussion 2: Into the Light – Creating Connected Places. Collaborative Commissioning, Skills Development and Creative Ecosystem Building in County Durham

16:15–17:15 Room: 2.16, The Frederick Douglass Centre

This session explores how Into the Light, a place-based cultural regeneration programme in County Durham, is building stronger connections between cultural organisations, creative practitioners and the wider creative industries. Drawing on perspectives from programme leadership, commissioning practice, heritage skills development and evaluation, the session will consider how collaborative approaches can support artist progression, workforce pathways and long-term creative ecosystem growth. Rather than a traditional panel format, the session will use an interactive and reflective approach that encourages participants to bring their own experiences of place, creativity and collaboration into the discussion. Speakers will share concise insights and emerging learning from across Into the Light, highlighting the conditions that support meaningful partnership working, co-created processes, well-being, experimentation and sustained local impact. These reflections will address both the opportunities and the challenges involved in cross-sector collaboration, including questions about power, shared decision making and the sustainability of place-based cultural work. Participants will have space to explore these themes, considering how they relate to their own contexts and generating questions for collective reflection. The session will conclude by drawing together shared insights about the relationship between place, creativity and local creative development. The session will offer practical, evidence-informed learning on working together to strengthen local creative ecosystems. For more information about the programme, please see our website: www.intothelightdurham.co.uk

- Julia Handelman-Smith (Into the Light)
- Katy Milne (Northern Heartlands)
- Hollie Galpin-Mitchell (Beamish Museum)
- Alison Whelan (Into the Light and Durham University)

Panel Discussion 3: A Multi-Stakeholder Panel Proposing Embedding Care into Creative and Cultural Leadership Policy in an Era of AI

16:15–17:15 Room: G.06, The Frederick Douglass Centre

The foreword of Next Generation Leadership for a World in Transformation emphasises the necessity of rethinking leadership in the face of technological disruption, planetary boundaries and societal divisions. This is crucial for rebuilding trust in leadership and achieving positive outcomes for people and the planet (World Economic Forum Global Future Council on Leadership, 2026). The panel comprises leaders with diverse roles and experiences, all engaged in shaping creative and cultural policies. They recognise the impact of current governmental and organisational policies on various societal stakeholders. United by the Global Future Council on Leadership's strategic proposals, they advocate for a revitalisation of leadership through intergenerational and co-created practices. Yet, they assert that trust can only thrive on a foundation of care. This panel discussion will centre on care as an essential policy component – an evolutionary necessity in human-centred approaches. Care should be integrated as a fundamental pillar in both current and future policies, serving as both a soft and hard lever. It is crucial for addressing geopolitical tensions and the challenges posed by AI, emphasising that care for oneself and others is vital in universal systems thinking. Ultimately, care can enhance creative and cultural policies and foster community, connection and trust. The panel aims to initiate a conversation about the importance of care with both its members and the audience.

- Catherine Glover (Northumbria University) (Chair)
- Sandra Booth (CHEAD)
- Ve Dewey (Northeastern University London)
- Mary Udeze (Northumbria Students' Union)
- Sinéad Rice (National Gallery of Ireland)

17:15–17:30 Brief Closing Remarks

Room: G.06, The Frederick Douglass Centre

Closing remarks by: **Hasan Bakhshi** (Director, Creative PEC and Newcastle University), **Giorgio Fazio** (Research Director, Creative PEC and Newcastle University)

Papers Accepted But Not Presented

Navigating AI Art Between Commercialisation and Critical Practice

Author(s): Mika (Jaeyun) Noh (AI Culture Lab)

This research examines the tension between the commercialisation of generative AI in art and the emergence of critical, community-driven practices. As AI systems increasingly shape cultural production, they challenge traditional frameworks of authorship, value and curatorial authority. While commercial platforms prioritise scalability, efficiency and market value, critical AI art communities emphasise discourse, ethics and reflexive engagement with technology. Addressing a gap in comparative analysis, this study develops the framework of 'posthuman governance' to understand how power and decision-making are distributed across human actors, algorithmic systems and platform infrastructures. It also introduces the concept of 'differentiated cognitive decision-making' to describe how AI systems operate through statistical pattern recognition rather than human intentionality, thereby reshaping cultural evaluation and meaning-making. Using a comparative case study approach, the research analyses two contrasting models: a commercially oriented AI platform and a critical, community-based AI art forum. This comparison is situated within a broader global policy context, drawing on regulatory approaches from the United States, European Union and China. The study aims to contribute both theoretically and practically. It proposes a new analytical framework for understanding human-AI collaboration in cultural production and offers policy-relevant insights for developing more equitable and context-sensitive AI governance models. In particular, it explores how countries like South Korea can navigate between competing global paradigms to develop culturally grounded approaches to AI in the arts.

Keywords: AI art; cultural governance; posthumanism; platform economy; creative labour; algorithmic curation

Creativity and AI Skill Demand in the Post-ChatGPT Labour Market: Evidence from UK Job Vacancies

Author(s): Zihan Wang; (University of Sussex), Aniket Baksy (Department of Economics), Hasan Bakhshi (Newcastle University and Creative PEC), Josh Siepel (University of Sussex)

Drawing on over 182 million UK job postings from January 2017 to November 2025, we investigate how the association between demand for creativity and AI skills evolves across UK Occupational Labour Market Areas (OLMAs) following ChatGPT's release. Our findings reveal a strengthened positive association between demand for these two skillsets post-ChatGPT, particularly in local labour market areas with a higher share of high-skilled roles and the presence of creative clusters. We conclude by emphasising the need for place-sensitive, multi-level policy responses to mitigate the risk of widening regional inequalities in the era of generative AI and support workforce upskilling.

Keywords: skill demand; creativity; ChatGPT, Occupational Labour Market Areas

Venues and Getting Here

Newcastle University Business School

5 Barrack Road

Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4SE

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Organising Committee

Giorgio Fazio, giorgio.fazio@pec.ac.uk

Tom Cahill Jones, tom.cahill-jones@pec.ac.uk

Cecilia Mereghetti, cecilia.mereghetti@pec.ac.uk

Ingrid Fairfax McMaster

Sarah Najm

Emily Bullock

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