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Creative trio join Northumbria for Fuse project

Northumbria University has appointed new creative researchers as part of its role in a £4m Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project designed to develop and share talent within the region's creative, digital and IT sector.

Dr Emmanouil Chatzakis and Nate Sterling will be supporting the Creative Fuse North East project – a partnership between Northumbria, Newcastle, Durham, Sunderland and Teesside universities.

Based at the Northern Design Centre, the trio will be engaging with local

companies to establish how design skills and technology can be shared and applied to solve a variety of challenges.

Mark Bailey is the academic lead for Creative Fuse at Northumbria and said: “We’re really pleased to have Emmanouil and Nate on board to help us deliver the Creative Fuse project. They have complimentary skills and experience and a really strong creative energy which will be key when it comes to engaging with businesses and promoting different creative practices.

“To start with their role will be all about understanding what the creative, digital and IT sector looks like in the North East right now. That will help us develop ideas to promote the skills and talent we have, ensure we can retain that talent in the region and find ways to support collaborative partnerships to share talent and ideas.”

The aim of Creative Fuse is to encourage businesses to share best practice and adopt new innovative working practices to help the creative, digital and IT sector become more resilient and encourage growth, creating more and better jobs for the region.

The project will also look at how skills in the creative, digital and tech sector can be used to stimulate innovation in many of the regions’ other key sectors.

As Design Research Fellow for the project Emmanouil Chatzakis, known as Manos, will coordinate the team’s activity. With a product design background, including a Masters and PhD from Northumbria, he is interested in expanding the role of design and encouraging businesses to think more innovatively and apply design to all areas of their work.

He said: “Fuse is all about working together using multi-disciplinarity to solve problems which may seem too big to be tackled alone. We will be considering how design can be applied to a variety of sectors to improve the way businesses work. This is a very exciting and innovative project that we know will have tangible results for the North East.”

He is joined by Research Assistant Nate Sterling, a Northumbria alumni who recently completed a Masters in Multidisciplinary Innovation and is also involved in Innovate, Northumbria’s off-campus design-led innovation centre.

He will be organising workshops with local businesses to encourage creative collaboration. He said: “I’m really looking forward to seeing just what the region can do – there is so much creative talent in the North East and I’m excited to see how we can apply that to all kinds of challenges across a variety of sectors.”

Creative Fuse was launched in December last year by the former Minister of State for Culture and the Digital Economy, the Right Hon Ed Vaizey MP, who has been appointed Chairman of the Creative Fuse North East Advisory Board.

As part of the first phase of the project a comprehensive research study of the region’s creative, digital and IT sector is currently being carried out, involving thousands of businesses and individuals.

Data from the survey will be used to inspire the creative process of Manos and Nate at Northumbria, as well as their colleagues in the other universities involved. The findings will be used to inform and shape innovative research projects and professional development activities, designed to support the region’s CDIT businesses.

Jason Legget, Project Director for Creative Fuse North East said: “The great thing about all five Universities working together on this project is the ability to bring specialist teams and skills together to help address real challenges of the North East economy.”

Supporting Northumbria’s drive to grow creative, digital and IT innovation in the region, the University is currently investing £52 million in improvements to its city centre campus. This will include two brand new state-of-the-art new buildings, one housing the School of Architecture and the other home to the department of Computer and Information Sciences. This investment will support the university’s IT and digital courses.

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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