



From l-r Executive Director and Joint CEO of Live Theatre Jacqui Kell, Director of Cultural Partnerships at Northumbria University Neil Percival, and Director of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM) Keith Merrin.

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New North East cultural partnerships announced

Northumbria University has announced partnerships with two of the North East's largest cultural organisations in a move that will cement the region's reputation for excellence in the cultural and creative industries.

Northumbria has joined forces with both [Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums \(TWAM\)](#) – the regional museum, art gallery and archives service which manages spaces such as the Discovery Museum and Laing Art Gallery;

and [Live Theatre](#) – one of the few UK theatre venues outside of London dedicated exclusively to new work.

The partnerships will support new research addressing some of the key challenges of our times; linking culture and creativity to health and wellbeing, and exploring the benefits of participation in the arts by young people from more diverse backgrounds.

They also open up new real-world learning opportunities for students in subjects ranging from creative writing and theatre, through to occupational therapy and early years education.

Northumbria already has successful partnerships with New Writing North, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art and the British Film Institute (BFI), and the addition of TWAM and Live Theatre will further strengthen the region's cultural prominence.

[Neil Percival](#), Director of Cultural Partnerships at Northumbria, said the new agreements grew naturally out of the University's established commitment to partnership working.

He explains: "Every cultural partner we work with is different, but we collaborate with each one to find mutual benefits in teaching and learning, and in research, to make a difference to the communities we both support.

"These partnerships bring particular opportunities to explore the ways in which culture and heritage play a part in supporting health, wellbeing and social care; and to understand how young people from all backgrounds can be drawn into creative activity, such as theatre and performance, to boost their aspirations and broaden their choices.

"We are also developing plans with all our partners to collaborate on outreach activities – looking for new ways to tell the region's stories and bring creative opportunities to more young people from all ages and backgrounds.

"Through these new partnerships, and our existing work with cultural organisations in the region, we want to boost the region's future creative strength by identifying and nurturing the next generation of talented young

artists, writers, curators and creatives.”

The partnerships will also support new teaching and research. Academics from Northumbria will [work with colleagues from TWAM across a variety of areas](#), including social care and wellbeing, digital collections management, history and heritage, social mobility, and creative and cultural sector resilience.

Northumbria's partnership with TWAM also includes placement opportunities and student projects in venues across Tyne and Wear, which are mutually beneficial to both organisations and to student experience. The University aims to embed experiential learning into all its programmes – connecting the theory and knowledge learned in the classroom to real-world situations.

Speaking about the partnership and the opportunities it will provide, Keith Merrin, Director of TWAM, said: “We welcome the resource and capacity this partnership will bring to help us demonstrate the power of the collections we hold, and the stories they tell, to make a positive difference to people's lives.”

The [partnership with Live Theatre](#) will involve engagement with students on Northumbria's Theatre and Performance and Creative Writing degree programmes, including workshops, modules, and work experience, as well as the unique opportunity for students to observe rehearsals for Live Theatre productions.

Collaborative research bids are already being developed focusing especially on the opportunities and benefits provided for young people from all backgrounds by Live's highly regarded Youth Theatre.

Discussing the new partnership with Northumbria, Executive Director and Joint CEO of Live Theatre Jacqui Kell said: "Live Theatre has had a relationship with Northumbria University for some time, but we are thrilled this has been formally recognised.

“We share a commitment that everyone should have access to the best possible creative opportunities whether as a career, to build skills and confidence or enhance quality of life.

“We look forward to working with the university on research opportunities as

well as being involved in teaching and learning and broadening student's perspectives."

Northumbria already has a successful [partnership with New Writing North](#)(NWN), established in 2012, which delivers a wide range of teaching, community engagement and research activity. Northumbria is sponsor and host of NWN's annual [Northern Writers' Awards](#), currently in its 25th year, which recognises, supports and rewards new and emerging writing talent in the region; and the two organisations are also in the second year of a ground-breaking [MA Publishing](#), which is co-delivered with NWN and global publishers, Hachette.

The University has also worked with the [Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art](#) for over a decade, through the [BxNU Institute](#), which aims to develop new academic opportunities, create applied postgraduate training programmes, contribute to the cultural sector, evidence the value and impact of contemporary art, and support research bidding and collaboration.

And Northumbria has recently [joined forces with the UK's biggest screen body, the BFI](#) (British Film Institute) in a partnership which involves projects such as live briefs, masterclasses and curriculum development for arts and humanities students. As part of the collaboration, all Northumbria students and staff are also able to access critically acclaimed classic, cult and archive films online, including specialist collections curated by the BFI.

[Find out more about Northumbria University's cultural partnerships.](#)

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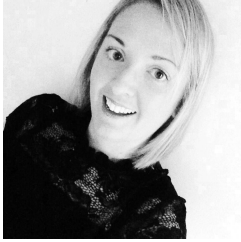


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