

Innovate UK Immersive Tech Network: Regional Hubs Showcase

28 September 2026

iuk.immersivetechnetwork.org



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IMMERSIVE TECH
NETWORK



Agenda

- Introduction to Innovate UK Immersive Tech Network and Regional Hubs Programme
- 4 Regional Hubs Presentations
 - West Yorkshire
 - Kent
 - Scotland
 - Northern Ireland
- Q&A
- Thank You and Wrap Up



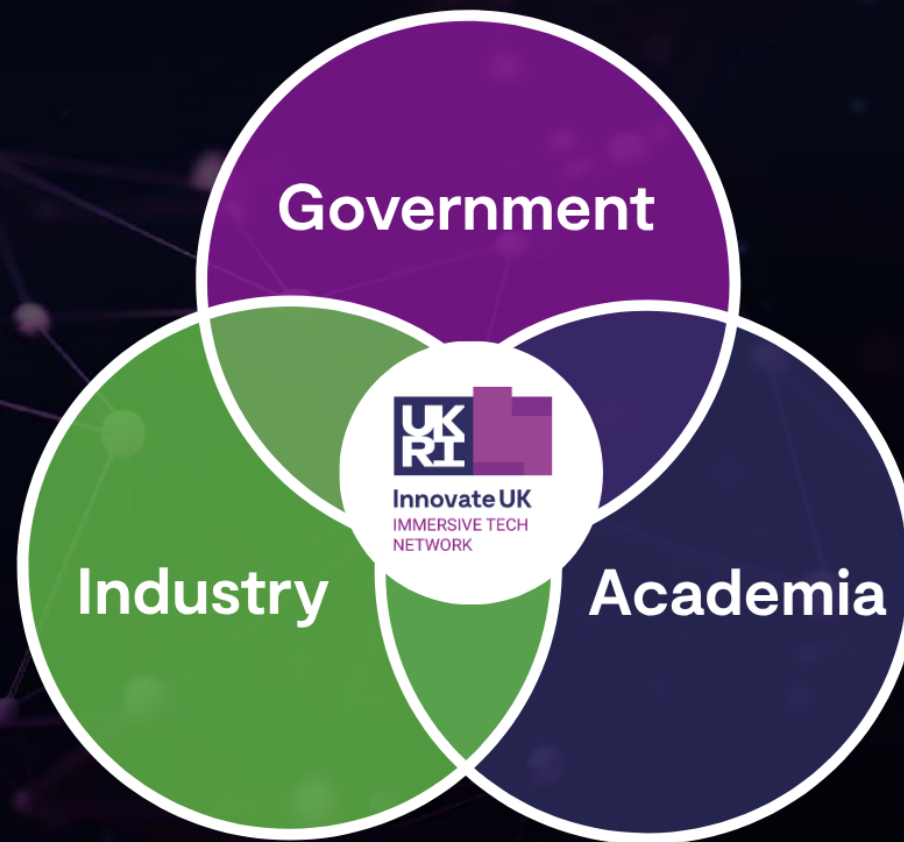
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The UK's Cross Sector Immersive Tech

NETWORK

Ecosystem

CONNECTOR



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WHY?

One of the UK's biggest immersive tech challenges is driving consistent, national, cross-sector community engagement.

Regional & national immersive funding programmes have built communities — but they remain disconnected by funder, sector, or region.

THE VISION

A network of networks driven by agile, grassroots-led activity — aligned to regional needs and a rapidly changing industry.



INNOVATE UK IMMERSIVE TECH NETWORK REGIONAL HUB PILOT



Network of Networks

Agile, grassroots-led activity aligned to regional needs & a rapidly changing industry



Hotspot Consortia

3–5 organisations per hub across industry, academia & public sector in immersive tech hotspots



Co-Funding & Delivery

Maximise collective resources by co-funding and co-delivering activities across the network



Knowledge Sharing

Creating opportunities for exchange across hubs — and internationally

B2Match

Accessing the platform will allow you to:

- Engage in networking opportunities
- Connect with experts
- Knowledge exchange
- Build brand/organisation awareness
- Post opportunities in the marketplace
- Explore new products and services

Register here:

b2match.com/e/immersive-tech-network-regional-hubs



Immersive Tech Network Hub

West Yorkshire

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Regional Map showing immersive businesses, events and communities working together in West Yorkshire.

The map illustrates the distribution of 150,000 people across Greater Manchester. The urban area is highlighted in green, while the surrounding rural area is highlighted in yellow. Major towns and cities are labeled, including Manchester, Salford, Bolton, Bury, Oldham, and Rochdale. The map also shows the distribution of 150,000 people, with a concentration in the urban area and a more dispersed distribution in the rural area.

CoSTAR Live Lab



- Funding, support and access to facilities for the UK's live performance industry
- Part of the £75m CoSTAR Network
- Enterprise & Commercialisation
- Pilots & Prototypes Programme
- Access Programme



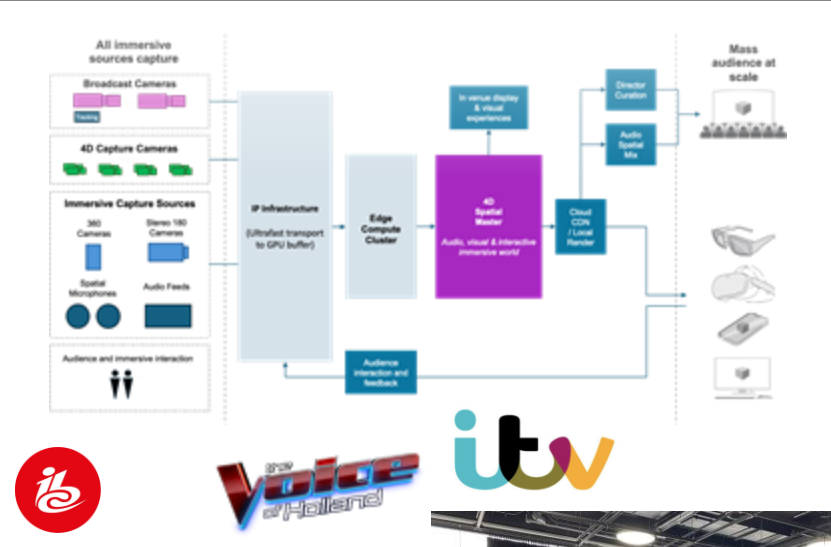
ROYAL ARMOURIES



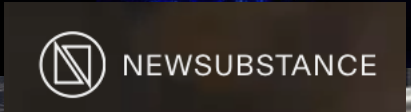


Other Immersive Activity in West Yorkshire

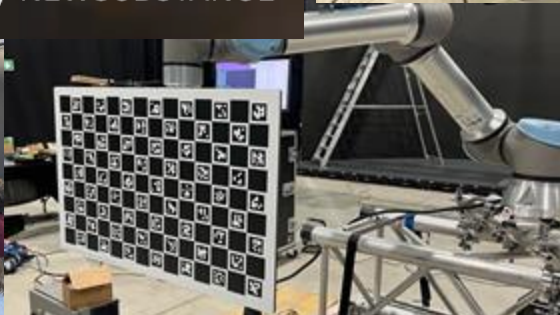
What's been happening over the last 6 months?



POPHOUSE



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



xplor



What opportunities are there?

Events

Immersive for Heritage and Cultural – 14th November

Upcoming opportunities



- CoSTAR Ideate – opens this year
- AI for Creativity (PPP) – opens this year
- PPP – current delivery ends January 2027, next call opens Spring 2027
- CoSTAR Accelerate – Summer 2027
- Access Programme – upcoming events



Opportunities

Creative Industries Cluster Action Plan for WY:

- <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s42613/Item10BackgroundDocWYCreativeIndustriesClusterActionPlan.pdf>
- Challenge: £2.2 billion to £4.1billion by 2035

Creative Industries Board:

- Currently developing a plan to distribute devolved innovation funding in WY.

Immersive Tech Network Hub

Kent

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A+E LAB

Innovate UK Immersive Tech Network, Kent Hub



A+E

LAB

Dance, XR and AI at Historic Dockyard
Chatham, since 2022

Engagement 2022-2025:

- **58** new projects at the A+E Lab
- **368 events & education sessions** in Medway
- Supported over **200** artists at A+E Lab
- Engaged **1034** participants in Medway
- Engaged **687 Medway** young people
- Engaged **16301** live audiences in Medway
- Engaged over **800,000** online audiences





Academic



Creative



Civic

Vision

Make Kent a place where
immersive tech is made,
tested and shared.



Docking Station

A new professional home for screen and digital creatives in Chatham, with production studios, offices and desks, opening early 2027.



Electric Medway Festival

The 2026 Electric Medway festival brings digital art activity across Medway, starting this October.



Screen South

Opening a new space in Dover for immersive arts, XR, spatial audio and film.



EXTENDED REALITY SUNDAY SOCIAL



A+E

LAB

Connect, Discover & Experience The Future Of XR

XR Sunday Social

All are welcome | Free | 18 Oct 2026 2pm - 5pm



**ELECTRIC
MEDWAY.**

University of
Kent | Institute of Cultural
and Creative Industries
iCCI

Medway
COUNCIL
Serving You

V
VISUAL ELEMENTS
CREATIVE TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS



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Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



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Immersive Tech Network Hub

Scotland

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XR Hub Scotland

Innovate UK Immersive Tech Network





University
of Glasgow



ARC-XR

**WORLD
CHANGING
GLASGOW**

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SOLUIS

**RAVISHING
THE SENSES**

**Building
Memories of
the Future**

Academia meets Arts meets Industry meets X

- Industry to Academia: real-world problems, data, deployment contexts
- Academia to Industry: methods, user studies, talent pipeline
- Arts to all: content, storytelling, public engagement
- Industry to Industry: shared tooling, subcontracting, joint bids
- Ecosystem: visibility, funding leverage, retaining XR talent in Scotland



Up next for us:

- Community-building
 - Consolidate, collect, connect.
- Expansion and visibility (other sectors, members)
 - Make sure everyone knows everything.
- Exchange with other hubs
 - Joint events, speaker swaps, shared bids, visiting researchers or artists.
- Events!



Save the date!

XR Hub Scotland – Inaugural Meetup



Date: Thursday, October 22, 2026



Time 18:00 – 19:30



Location: Advanced Research Centre, ARC-XR Lab
(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/8Vh4vRQh5VnrAKSD6>)

Want to visit? Sign up here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/xr-hub-scotland-inaugural-meetup-tickets-1999089658984>

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SONICA GLASGOW 2026

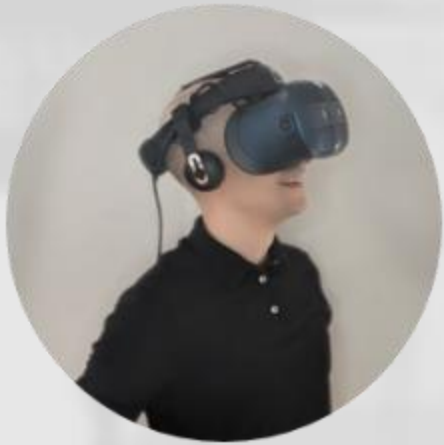
Artist - Over 170 artists

24 Sept 2026 - 4 Oct 2026

Venue - 11 venues across Glasgow

Get Tickets





Thank you!

www.florianweidner.de

hello@florianweidner.de

XRHubScotland@glasgow.ac.uk



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SOLUIS



Memories of
the Future

Immersive Tech Network Hub

Northern Ireland

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XR BELFAST FESTIVAL

Northern Ireland's leading festival dedicated to
immersive storytelling and creative technology.



Festival Overview

Founded in 2022, Belfast XR Festival (BXRF) is Northern Ireland's leading festival dedicated to immersive storytelling and creative technology. Our ambition is to establish Belfast as a significant international destination for immersive culture, connecting Northern Ireland's creative sector with artists, producers, festivals and industry partners across the world. Our annual, consistently sold-out festival showcases ambitious work spanning virtual and mixed reality, spatial audio, interactive storytelling and screen-based installations, bringing leading international creators together with emerging talent and local audiences.

Accessibility and participation sit at the heart of BXRF. We are committed to ensuring that innovation is not confined to established technology communities, creating opportunities for local audiences and new creative voices to experience, make and engage with emerging forms of storytelling. In 2026, BXRF significantly expanded its talent development role, delivering the £200,000 BFI-funded Amplify:XR Labs programme for emerging immersive producers across the UK.

As BXRF enters its next phase, our focus is increasingly international: building meaningful partnerships, creating opportunities for exchange and supporting immersive work and talent to move between Northern Ireland, the UK and international markets.



AMPLIFY:XR LABS

In 2026, Belfast XR Festival launched Amplify: XR Labs, a £200,000 UK-wide development programme for new and emerging Producers, supported by the BFI Creative Challenge Fund, awarding National Lottery funding in partnership with Arts Council Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Screen, Immersive Arts UK and Digital Catapult.

10 UK project teams of 3, led by an Emerging Producer, received a targeted support package to facilitate the development of new XR work.



Delivered by Belfast XR Festival, Supported by the BFI Creative Challenge Fund, awarding National Lottery funding. In partnership with Northern Ireland Screen, Arts Council Northern Ireland, Digital Catapult, Nerve Centre & Immersive Arts UK.

Programme Outcomes

10 producers developed 10 projects, which resulted in 10 high - quality prototypes and supported development packages. Our industry market day at BFI London opened access to new networks, increased shared XR capability across regions outside of London, with clearer routes to finance and production established.



XR BELFAST FESTIVAL

November 2026 Programme.



Escape The Internet

Lucas Rizzotto

November 2nd – November 3rd, 2026.

*'Escape The Internet' is presented by
BXRf in partnership with IDFA DocLab.*

Venue: The Black Box, Belfast

Dates & Times: Monday 2
November 2026 at 7pm; Tuesday
3 November 2026 at 2pm and
7pm.

Ticket Price: £15 (10% discount for
group bookings of 4 or more)

Run time: 2 hours

Director: Lucas Rizzotto





Lucas Rizzotto

A master storyteller & technologist, Lucas Rizzotto is an award-winning inventor & viral artist creating new ways to tell stories.

Whether he's crafting an immersive VR story, a movie made on social media 1 minute at a time or a narrative game designed to be played by a crowd of hundreds of people, his work consistently pushes boundaries while being consistently innovative, introspective & viral.

Online, Lucas's creations have been seen by hundreds of millions of people and covered by press worldwide, while also winning awards & premiering at the world's biggest film festivals. It's the rare case of art that is both boundary pushing *and* accessible to everyday people.

Escape the Internet

A massive multiplayer game, where you and over a hundred strangers are trapped on a mysterious island and must work together with your phones to escape the A.I. apocalypse. Created by legendary director Lucas Rizzotto and built with Pete Cybriwsky. Escape The Internet is a new gaming genre that shatters the 4th wall and takes audience interaction to the next level.

Experience wild interactive set pieces, uncover the secrets of the people sitting next to you and evade monsters in a deep mystery full of colourful characters. But move fast, because time is of the essence: every audience member is infected with terminal brainrot and can be possessed by an algorithmic demon at any moment. Your future, and the future of the entire internet, is at stake. You can't stream it. You can't play it at home. You have to be here. Bring your fully charged phone. Bring your friends. Escape the Internet.

BXRF: Future Audiences

A day exploring how immersive technology, new ideas and collaboration can shape the audiences of tomorrow. *BXRF 2026: Future Audiences* brings together artists, producers, cultural organisations, funders and creative technology practitioners to explore how immersive and emerging technologies are reshaping the ways audiences will experience, participate in and connect with culture.

Taking place at Digital Catapult Northern Ireland, the programme considers what it means to design for the audiences of tomorrow, from new forms of immersive storytelling and participation to the technologies, creative practices and partnerships that can broaden access and engagement. The afternoon begins with a welcome lunch and immersive showcases from Glasseye and Invizar, giving attendees the chance to experience cutting-edge projects first-hand, exchange ideas and connect with fellow creators from across the island.

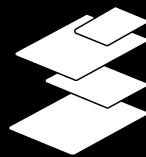
Following an introduction from BXRF Festival Director Deepa Mann-Kler, ITN will share insights into its work and the evolving relationship between audiences, storytelling and emerging technology. An Immersive Arts UK panel in partnership with Nerve Centre will then bring together Artist voices to discuss the opportunities and challenges involved in developing meaningful immersive experiences for new and diverse audiences.

The programme continues with the launch of SHINE, Eirmersive's Shared Island initiative connecting immersive creators, storytellers and creative practitioners across the island of Ireland. Connect with the Eirmersive community, discover new opportunities, forge new collaborations and have your voice heard as we shape the future of SHINE together. The day will close with an informal networking session, providing space for attendees to continue conversations, exchange ideas and develop new connections.

Venue: Digital Catapult, Belfast
Northern Ireland.

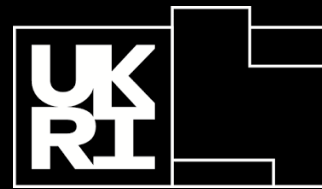
Dates & Times: Monday 2 November.
11am – 5pm.

Ticket Price: Free, reserve via
Eventbrite.



Eirmersive

**IMMERSIVE
ARTS**



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CATAPULT
Digital

XR BELFAST
FESTIVAL

The Baby Factory is Closed

Deepa Mann-Kler

November 2nd, 2026.

The Baby Factory is Closed is presented as Official Selection of Belfast Film Festival.

Venue: The Black Box, Belfast

Dates & Times: Monday 2
November 2026 10am – 4pm.

Ticket Price: £7

Run time: 20 mins (30-minute
slots)

Director: Deepa Mann-Kler



The Baby Factory is Closed

The Baby Factory is Closed is presented as Official Selection of Belfast Film Festival.

A multi-sensory VR experience that takes place inside Zoraan, a British Asian woman, reframing menopause admits climate change and colonial medical legacies. Funded by Immersive Arts UK, Future Screens Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Screen and supported by Digital Catapult.

Festivals and Awards: SXSW Official Selection 2026, Annecy International Animation Film Festival Official Selection 2026, Galway Film Fleadh Official Selection 2026, New Images Official Selection 2026, FIVARS Official Selection 2026, Manchester Animation Film Festival Official Selection 2026, ART VR* Official Selection 2026, Belfast Film Festival Official Selection 2026, V&A London Digital Design Weekend 2026.



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Find out more:

www.belfastxrfestival.com



Creativity x Tech

RENDRA®

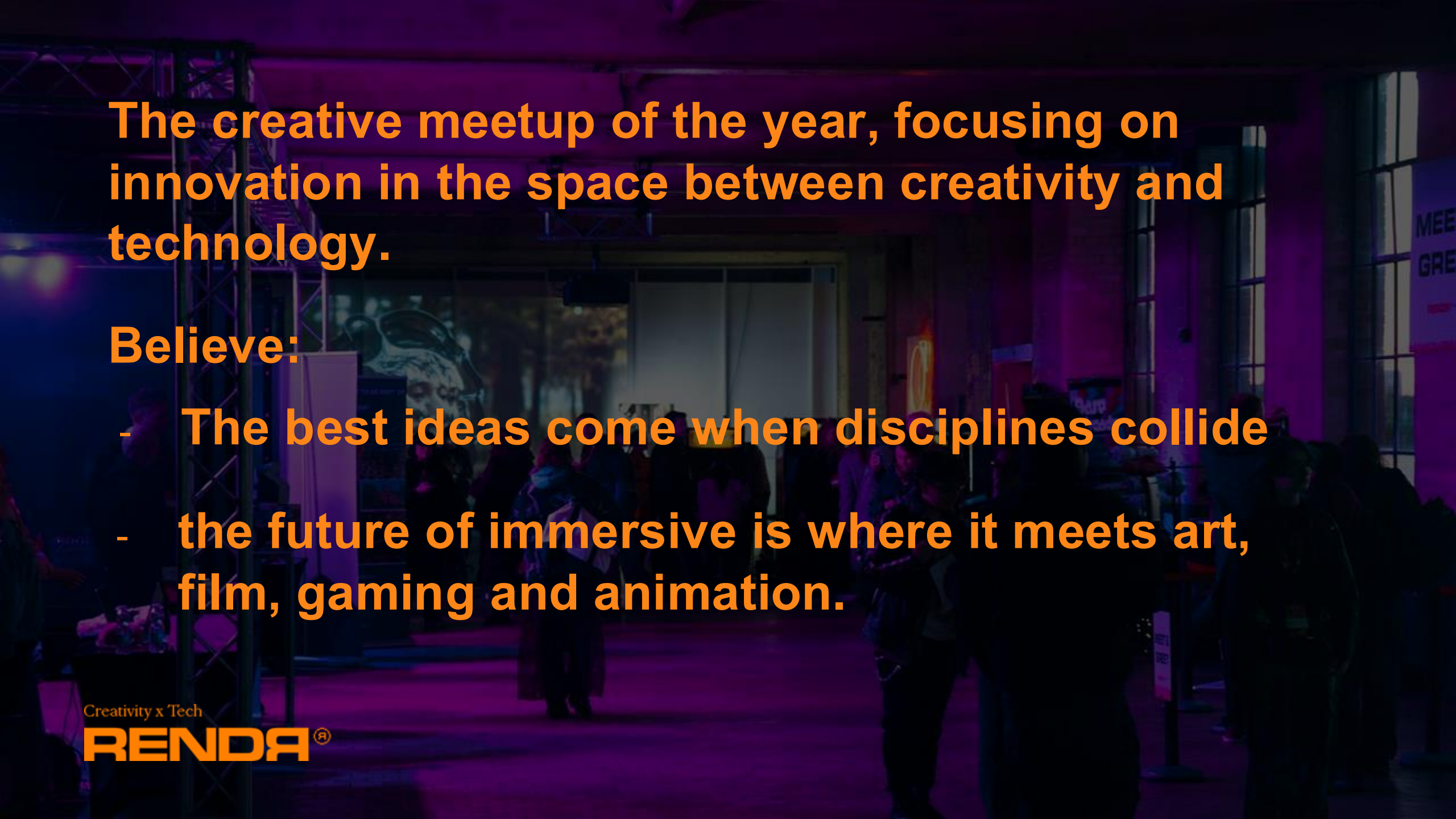
For enquiries, please contact:

michael@rendrfestival.com

+44 (0) 7791330654



RENDRA



The creative meetup of the year, focusing on innovation in the space between creativity and technology.

Believe:

- **The best ideas come when disciplines collide**
- **the future of immersive is where it meets art, film, gaming and animation.**

Creativity x Tech

RENDA®

We attract industry professionals, freelancers, educators, junior creatives and students from the immersive industries, alongside film, gaming, animation.

Attendees Per Year

2,500+





Hosted 30+ innovators in immersive / XR

AR / VR / Immersive Installations / Binaural Sound / Themed Experiences

Esteban Chacin (Moment Factory) Kath Duggan & Sacha Milroy (Punchdrunk) Eranka Weerasuriya (Studio Ulster)
Gavin Little (Echolab) Germán Diez (Nexus Studios) Germán Diez (Nexus Studios) Oisin O'Brien (Visual Spectrum)
Matthew Scott (Playhuman) Ronan O'Boyle (Lureo) Marcin Gawin (Immersive Arts UK) Helena Hamilton (Immersive
Arts UK) Josh McAvoy (Immersive Arts UK) Robyn Winfield-Smith (Stage, Screen & Immersive Director) Gary
Marshall (NantStudios) Dorothy Di Stefano (Molten Immersive Art) Victoria Eyton (Darkfield) Marko Martiskai
(ZOAN) Phil Morrow (Retinize) Kevin Largey (Artist) EMIC (Artist) John Macormac (Artist) Christopher Bauder
(DarkMatter) Merel Helsdingen (NXT Museum) Matthias Oostrik (Artist) Sarah Ellis (RSC)

RENDR FESTIVAL

RENDR Stage & BLOCK Stage

Hosts inspiring keynotes and talks by leading practitioners.



Digital Gallery

The home of immersive and interactive exhibitions.



The Network

Featuring company booths, with interactive tech demos.



Arcade

An entertainment space containing the latest indie and mainstream electronic games.



The Workshop

A space for sharing skills, expertise and providing personal development and guidance.



Food Village

Specially selected street food



Offerings:

- Inspiration
- Creative Research & Development
- Showcasing Opportunities
- Career Opportunities
- Business Networking
- Personnel / Industry Advancement
- Support for Students / New Entrants
- Sector Understanding

**Commission and
present immersive,
interactive installations
and live performances**

RENDR B2B

Brings the immersive, gaming and virtual production industries from across the UK together with international investors, producers, commissioners and distributors.

Opportunities:

- Showcase projects, share R&D capabilities and request industry support
- Pitch projects and meet one to one with leading investors, publishers, streamers and commissioners
- Get expert advice on funding, R&D, investment, exporting and scaling
- Find co-production and collaboration partners across the UK and Ireland
- Connect with studios, streaming platforms and production partners looking for immersive expertise
- Access international markets and supply chains across Europe, North America and Asia
- Explore crossover and IP opportunities with gaming and virtual production
- Tap into shared UK–Ireland incentives and support schemes
- Build lasting relationships through studio tours, drinks and dinners



Thank you for joining the first

Immersive Tech Network Regional Hubs Showcase

Stay up-to-date:

-  Website: iuk.immersivetechnetwork.org
-  LinkedIn: [@Innovate UK Immersive Tech Network](#)
-  Mailing list: info.iukbc.org.uk/p/2VFU-KCA/innovate-uk-immersive-tech-sign-up-form



Scan to sign up to our mailing list

asha.easton@iukbc.org.uk | amy.chao@iukbc.org.uk



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