



PRESS RELEASE

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PARTICIPANTS SOUGHT TO HELP 'MAKE THE FUTURE' WITH LAUNCH OF €1.82M CROSS-BORDER CULTURAL PROGRAMME

A new cross-border cultural programme, Making the Future, which will empower 5,000 people to use museum collections and archives to explore the past and create a powerful vision for future change, has launched today (Friday 18 January).

The regional programme is being delivered by a consortium of leading cultural organisations including the Nerve Centre, National Museums NI, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and Linen Hall Library, supported through €1.82m of EU funding under the PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

Making the Future will use significant objects, collections and archives as a stimulus to pose challenging questions about the past, 'take the temperature' of where we are at currently as a society, and create a manifesto for our future.

Participants from different communities, cultural and religious backgrounds will have multiple opportunities to get involved, to have their voices heard, to tell stories relevant to their lives, to be creative and to gain new skills.

Stories and creative responses will be dynamically curated in shared spaces and places – including high profile exhibitions and events, digital content and social media channels – throughout the project.

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the SEUPB said: **“Included within the PEACE Programme is funding with a specific objective of building positive relationships, and supports projects that have a regional-wide impact which will help challenge some of the misconceptions and prejudices that keep people apart.**

“This cross border project will help deliver upon that objective by bringing people together, on a cross-community basis, and giving them unique access to archived



documents, objects and records where they can gain a better understanding of the past. As a result the project will help to change perceptions, encourage the development of new and positive relationships and contribute towards the creation of a more cohesive society,” she continued.

Welcoming the funding from PEACE IV, David Lewis, Nerve Centre Project Lead, said: “Making the Future is an exciting new programme which will see the Nerve Centre, National Museums NI, PRONI and the Linen Hall Library offering creative opportunities to people from all walks of life across Northern Ireland and the border counties. Participants will have a chance to make a positive contribution, changing themselves and hopefully society for the better along the way.”

The programme was launched in Nerve Visual Gallery with the Troubles Art exhibition. Drawn from the art collection at National Museums NI, the Troubles Art exhibition provides a broad representation of responses to the Troubles by artists from Northern Ireland and beyond. Troubles Art at Nerve Visual is also funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Visitors will be able to view artwork from artists such as John Keane, Willie Doherty, Rita Duffy, Locky Morris, F.E. McWilliam, Ursula Burke, Donovan Wylie and Paul Seawright. The exhibition explores a range of themes which are universal to conflict – such as suffering and loss, violence and destruction, imprisonment, sectarianism, traditions, territory, and life in the midst of turmoil. The Troubles Art exhibition is accompanied by an events and community engagement programme and will run until April 28.

William Blair, Director of Collections at National Museums NI, said: **“National Museums NI is delighted to be working with the Nerve Centre and our other partners on this fantastic project. The Troubles Art exhibition brings a selection of works from National Museums NI’s collections to the north west for the first time. Through the unique perspectives of artists, the exhibition offers opportunities to consider the Troubles and its effects and provide avenues for exploring the legacy of our past in new and engaging ways which we hope will better inform our future.”**

Also coming up during 2019 are exhibitions at the Linen Hall Library and Public Record Office of Northern Ireland exploring Women in the Archives, as well as further exhibitions



with National Museums NI around issues of culture and identity. After launching, exhibitions will tour to locations across Northern Ireland and border counties encouraging new communities to get involved.

Michael Willis, Director of PRONI said: **“PRONI has enjoyed a close relationship with the Nerve Centre, NMNI and the Linen Hall Library over recent years. We are delighted with the opportunity to continue to cooperate through the Making the Future partnership and to build upon recent successes.**

“The three projects that we are contributing to include a thought provoking exhibition exploring the role of women in the archives. It will highlight and promote the experiences of ordinary women using their own words captured in diaries, letters and other records within PRONI’s unique collections. This will be accompanied by a programme of community engagement and two digital projects including 100 shared stories and the creation of an oral history archive.”

Julie Andrews, Director of the Linen Hall Library said: **"The Linen Hall Library is excited to be orchestrating the *Women in the Archives* strand of *Making the Future*. Comprehensive research into the female voice of Irish history will be undertaken and channeled through a variety of outputs such as workshops, exhibitions, walking tours and events. It will also empower participants from all communities and persuasions in basic skills such as research, journaling and story mapping. The initial stages of the project have already seen success and we look forward to rolling this out city-wide, province-wide and further afield."**

Match-funding for the Making the Future project has been provided by the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

For more information on *Making the Future* and how to get involved visit www.makingthefuture.eu

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For more information please contact Karen Friel, Nerve Centre, k.friel@nervecentre.org or 028 7126 0562.



Notes to Editor:

Special EU Programmes Body PEACE IV

The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland.

It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.

The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.

The PEACE IV Programme has a value of €270 million and aims to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.

For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu

Nerve Centre

The Nerve Centre is Northern Ireland's leading creative media arts centre with sites in Derry~Londonderry and Belfast. More than 120,000 people a year benefit from the Nerve Centre's wide-ranging programme of arts events, cutting edge projects, creative learning centres, training opportunities and state-of-the-art production facilities.

www.nervecentre.org

National Museums NI

National Museums NI is Northern Ireland's foremost cultural and heritage museum group and includes and include the Ulster Museum, Ulster Folk Museum, Ulster Transport Museum and Ulster American Folk Park. We are the custodians of the National Collection of 1.4 million objects which are multidisciplinary, diverse and span all time periods and reflect the creativity, innovation, history, culture and people of Northern Ireland and beyond.

www.nmni.com



Linen Hall Library

The Linen Hall Library is a truly unique institution. Founded in 1788, it is the oldest library in Belfast and the only remaining library in Ireland that still generates a proportion of its income from membership. The Library is free to enter and enjoy, and is housed in a stunning Victorian former linen warehouse in the picturesque Donegall Square, across from Belfast City Hall. It is renowned for its unparalleled Irish and Local Studies Collection, ranging from comprehensive holdings of Early Belfast and Ulster printed books to the 350,000 items in the Northern Ireland Political Collection, the definitive archive of the recent 'Troubles'.

www.linenhall.com

PRONI

PRONI is the main archive for Northern Ireland and holds millions of documents, covering a period from 1600 to the present day. These include valuable genealogical sources such as church registers, landed estates records, court records and wills.

www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni