**THIS WAY UP 2017**

**Annual Film Exhibitor’s Conference**

**(Hull Truck Theatre, 7-8 November)**

**Keynote, Themes & MC Announced**

[www.thiswayupconference.com](http://www.thiswayupconference.com)

Cementing its ambition with a revamped programme of timely discussion themes, the fourth edition of THIS WAY UP (TWU) – the annual film exhibitors’ industry conference – returns this Autumn (7-8 November), hosted by **Hull Truck Theatre**, in **Hull UK City of Culture** 2017.

As the landscape for the **BFI’s Film Audience Network** changes, along with renewed support measures for UK film exhibition, TWU will tackle the big questions and set out the case for culture in uncertain times. With attendance doubled since its first edition, the growing conference will build on three successful previous events, laying down new challenges and opportunities for the independent exhibition sector, and inviting delegates to explore, debate and discover new ways to move the sector forward.

Themes, conference MC and two of the three keynote presenters are now confirmed, with further names and other significant sessions will be announced in September:

First keynote speaker to confirm is **Jenny Sealey MBE**, winner of the Liberty Human Rights Award and co-director of the London 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony, who has been CEO/Artistic Director of **Graeae Theatre** since 1997. A force for change in world-class theatre, Graeae is the original disabled-led theatre company which boldly places D/deaf and disabled actors centre stage. Challenging preconceptions and leading the way in pioneering, trail-blazing theatre, Graeae’s signature characteristic is their compelling creative integration of sign language, captioning and audio description. Their work engages brilliantly with both disabled and non-disabled audiences, champions accessibility and provides a platform for new generations of artists. A recognised authority in accessible aesthetics, Graeae works closely with client organisations to inspire and lead best practice - creating, supporting and advising on the development of accessible environments for all theatre lovers, everywhere.

Second keynote speaker is **Moira Sinclair,** CEO of the **Paul Hamlyn Foundation** (PHF), one of the UK’s largest independent grant-makers, which aims to help people overcome disadvantage and lack of opportunity. PHF has a particular interest in social justice and in supporting young people and has a strong belief in the importance of the arts. Previously, as Executive Director London and South East for Arts Council England, Moira oversaw a portfolio of 322 funded cultural organisations and contributed to national policy development, with a particular focus on the resilience and sustainability of the cultural sector and workforce development. She played a key role supporting the cultural programme for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and is currently Chair of East London Dance and Vice Chair of the London Mayor’s Cultural Strategy Board. She is also a member of the British Library Advisory Council, of the Investment Committee for the Arts Impact Fund and of the Governing Council for the European Foundation Centre

The conference will be MC’d by **James Mullighan**, previous director of the 58th - 61st editions of the Cork Film Festival, and the 65th Edinburgh International Film Festival. Following working for Shooting People, RESFEST, Cinelan and HBO Europe, James also serves on the Board of Encounters Short Film and Animation Festival.

The 2017 edition of the conference will discuss key questions, setting debate and practical sessions against a backdrop of four over-arching themes, which are:

***The Power of Culture*** *–* this year’s framing for the conference, in what feels like a period of increasingly dramatic and rapid change; in the film industry, in the country and across the world, where we’ve seen seismic shifts in politics, culture, society and business. The power of culture is colossal, its ability to be transformative, to inspire individuals and connect communities is essential. Held at the end of a hugely transformative year of cultural celebration in Hull, TWU will also examine the practical and wider potential for cultural activity to transform, renew, shape and even displace.

***Technological Change*** *–* a running theme since 2014, the conference will once again examine disruptive influences affecting the sector, new forms of exhibition and ways independents can capitalise on ever-increasing digitisation and accessible tech. The new techno-industrial giants - Uber, Netflix, Airbnb – have developed so fast we’ve yet to fully understand their impact. How do we harness new technologies for good, and how do we use design-led thinking and embrace ‘disruptive innovation’ to suit our needs and those of our audiences? Delegates can expect practical demonstrations and the exploration of future trends.

***Ethics and Resilience*** *–* in the tumultuous 12 months since TWU16, TWU17 will ask where cultural organisation’s responsibilities lie in representation, programming, and inclusivity? With increasing pressure on arts to be ‘sustainable’ how do we preserve cultural values from the erosion of commercial pressure? From Silicon Valley to Nauru, how do we make the case for organisations to take risks, to ‘fail forward’ and to try new ideas? Whether it’s the chronic under-representation of women in the sector, or the #OscarsSoWhite movement, there is still a long way to go when it comes to the morals and ethics of our own industry.

***Places, Spaces and Global Community*** *–* cinema is at its heart a collective experience, and one of the art forms with the widest reach. As content proliferates across smaller and ever more portable devices, how does urban infrastructure make space for culture, and places that people can come together? Is there opportunity in digital space and how can we work with collective digitisation to create meaningful, communal experiences? Is a space made up of the people who inhabit it, or do we need to reinvest in capital to ensure future generations connect with culture?

**Hull UK City of Culture 2017**

Building on Hull's City of Culture year, which has included one of the largest programmes of film activity ever seen in the UK, TWU will examine the place of film and digital arts in wider cultural programmes and the power of film to reach and connect to diverse audiences. Having overseen hundreds of events across the city, **Hull 2017 Director Martin Green** will talk about the 365-day cultural programme, offering delegates an insight into the important role that culture has to play in transforming cities and the ambition to create a sustainable legacy for Hull.

Martin Green, Director Hull UK City of Culture 2017, said: "Film has been an important strand of our cultural programme. Thanks to BFI Film Hub North, Hull Independent Cinema and our other partners we have seen a vast array of film related activity, which has entertained us, offered commentary on society and a mirror on our lives. It has also opened up opportunities for people wanting to be involved in this vitally important sector. This Way Up is a wonderful opportunity to share some of the things we have learned as a result of Hull being UK City of Culture and to look at the critical role that culture has in shaping our cities and benefiting the people that live in them."

2017 Conference partners include: **British Council, Creative Europe** and **Screen International** (media partner).

Tickets are on sale now. Further programme details to be announced in September. [www.thiswayupconference.com](http://www.thiswayupconference.com) @thiswayupcon #TWU17

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**Editors Notes:**

**THIS WAY UP** is the UK film exhibition innovation conference that promises to inspire and enlighten, provoke and challenge, connect and share. With audience behaviour changing at an accelerating rate it’s more crucial than ever that film exhibitors come together to discuss the pressing issues, to hear about new models, new thinking and new opportunities and to meet each other to share our experiences. TWU offers a unique space where these questions can be addressed and answers found. The event is organised and delivered by three hubs within the BFI’s Film Audience Network: Film Hub North, Film Hub North West Central & Film Hub Scotland

**BFI Film Audience Network** The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) was set up in 2012, using funds from the National Lottery, to support a stronger and more connected approach to growing audiences for British and international film on the big screen.

**Transformative Film Culture for Hull 2017** is funded by the BFI as part of its National Lottery-funded BFI Film Audience Network and led by its lead partner BFI Film Hub North. Delivered through Hull 2017 and by Hull Independent Cinema and a unique partnership of film festival, educational and archive partners from across the north, the film programme will bring a packed programme of more than 400 screenings, one-off events and film festivals throughout the year to Hull and the region. The programme reflects the BFI’s activities across the UK to bring film to audiences where there is less opportunity for them to experience and engage in film, and to support local film networks and audience initiatives.

**British Council Film** is the link between UK films and filmmakers and new international audiences. Together with the British Council’s global network overseas, the film team works to profile the innovation, diversity, creativity and excellence of British film around the world, and work to find opportunities for creative exchange between UK filmmakers and international counterparts

**Creative Europe** is the European Union's programme to support the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors. From 2014-2020, €1.46 billion is available to support European projects with the potential to travel, reach new audiences and encourage skill sharing and development. Launched in January 2014, Creative Europe brings together a [Culture sub-programme](http://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu/funding-opportunities/culture-sub-programme), which provides funding for the cultural and creative sectors, and a [MEDIA sub-programme](http://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu/funding-opportunities/media-sub-programme), which invests in film, television, new media and games. **Creative Europe Desk UK** promotes awareness and understanding of Creative Europe, and provides free advice and support for applicants from the UK. Creative Europe Desk UK’s team of specialists is based across the UK (in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast) where they organise workshops, seminars and industry events.

LOGOS

Ends.