# Exploratory review

## Innovation and resilience capacity of the Atlantic Creative & Cultural Industries to address the Covid-19 crisis

**2023**

# Introduction

The 4HCREAT project aims to strengthen cooperation and knowledge transfer between the Creative and Cultural industries (CCIs) and actors of the quadruple helix model (partnership approach) to mitigate the existing imbalances in the competitiveness and innovation capacity of companies in the sector. It also seeks to generate synergies and foster collaborations.

In addition, the project aims to tackle new needs and demands from the CCI sector, taking into account its resilience capacity and covering several topics of particular interest in a post-Covid digital economy. In particular, new habits not only from Generation Z, but from cultural consumers as a whole: new business models, EU next generation and resilience and recovery plans opportunities for the sector, monetisation of digitization processes, etc.

In this context, the objectives of 4HCREAT are:

- Boosting innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in CCIs to improve their competitiveness and resilience in the aftermath of the pandemic crisis.

- Designing strategies to adapt CCIs to new technologies, facilitating the adaptation of their services and products to new consumption and creation trends, in particular the digital consumption of cultural products.

- Strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs in the CCI sector through collaboration with authorities, academic institutions, other companies and social entities, (concept of "quadruple helix").

The Covid crisis has damaged the CCI in a devastating way. The Cultural and Creative Industries have suffered directly from these public health measures that they have resulted in the postponement or cancellation of activities. A physical presence and social interaction is essential to the cultural experience, the loss of which caused profound effects: loss of turnover, loss of value, loss of jobs… Faced with this impact, the intensification of the consumption and production of digital cultural content is one of the most widespread adaptations in the sector. This reality presents both opportunities and challenges for the Cultural and Creative Industries.

We would like to observe the rebound, the innovation and resilience capacity of CCIs to address this crisis and the impacts on their business models.

## Cutural & creative industries ?

*Creative industries are those that have their origin in creativity, skill and talent. They also include industries that have the potential to create wealth and jobs through the development, production or exploitation of the intellectual property.  Cultural industries can be defined as those industries which produce tangible or intangible artistic and creative outputs and which have a potential for wealth creation and income generation through the exploitation of cultural assets and production of knowledge-based goods and services:*

- Advertising
- Architecture / industrial design
- Fashion design
- Video / audio / film
- Music
- Photography

- Dance / Ballet
- Theatre
- Orchestras / conservatories
- Broadcasting (TV and radio)
- Apps development

- Digital arts
- Social media influencers
- Gaming / animation
- Virtual reality
- Web design / multimedia

- Fine arts / antiques / sculpting
- Museums / galleries
- Crafts
- Creative cooking
- Events / festivals
- Tech design

Boost Cultural & Creative Industries in your region: A policy toolkit; 4HCREAT 2020.

# The methodology

## The objective

To carry out an exploratory review of qualitative "case studies" on the Atlantic Area to observe changing trends in the CCI sectors caused by Covid pandemic and the way they fought to rebound and recover.

## Description

A case study is a research method in which the researcher explores the topic in depth. Within this deliverable, the spirit is more a sharing feedback note. In fact, it is a story to tell and an experience to share on the impact of Covid-19 on the sector. We would like to highlight the facts but also the perception, the feelings of the interviewees especially using their own words.

Each partner identified two organisations at least that met the following criteria:

- an organisation from subsectors of CCI (cinema/audiovisual – architecture – library – visual arts – art craft – music – performing arts – photography – fashion – heritage…)

- an organisation who has implemented something new and significant (new product, new activity, new approach, new target, new business model...) to address the problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The idea was to have a wide range of profiles in terms of coming from different creative and cultural subsectors, a range of locations (urban / rural area) and different status (not-for-profit organisations, public authorities, freelancers and private companies).

13 case studies were achieved thanks to qualitative interviews (~ 45 min / 1h max) based on a shared interview instrument. The interviews took place from March to the beginning of May 2023.

The interviews were semi-structured and qualitative based on open-ended questions.

The question grid was divided in 5 parts:

- Background to your organisation
- Operations Before Covid
- Operations During / post Covid & broader impact
- Planning for the future
- Broader Impact on CCI sector

# Contents

# The Creative & Cultural industries: Covid & post Covid context

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic quickly spread everywhere and strongly impacted the CCI sector. They have been among the most negatively affected sectors.

The pre-Covid crisis, the cultural and creative economy was an European heavyweight: *"With a turnover of €643 billion and a total added value of €253 billion in 2019, the core activities of CCIs represented 4.4% of EU GDP in terms of total turnover. Their economic contribution is greater than that of telecommunications, high technology (€140 billion), pharmaceuticals (€122 billion) or the automotive industry (€107 billion)."* (Rebuilding Europe, 2021, EY).
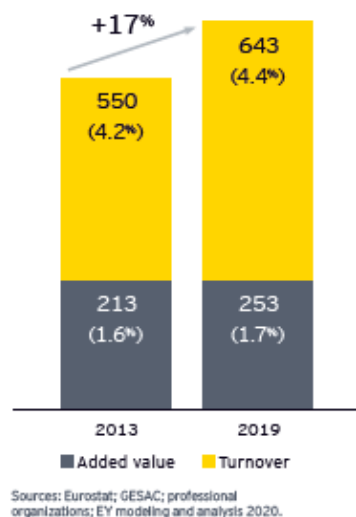
At the end of 2019, they employed more than 7,6 millions people in Europe. *"In six years, creative businesses and organizations, producers, developers, distributors, creative agencies, editors, broadcasters and museums created around 700,000 new jobs in Europe. At the end of 2019, CCIs had a much larger workforce than other leading sectors of the European economy: for example, 6.3 times more than chemical industries."* (Rebuilding Europe, 2021, EY).

All the players pointed out the explosion of digital technology and demand for online content. There was in fact differing realities: video games were the big winner in comparison with press or visual arts. In addition, we have to mention that the sector was already characterized by a fragile structure: fragmented sector, freelancers strongly represented with some of them in precarious situation, unsecure revenue models, unsecure IP models…

The Covid crisis has damaged the CCI in a devasting way. In 2020, the cultural and creative economy lost approximately 31% of its revenues. (Rebuilding Europe, 2021, EY)

The Cultural and Creative Industries have suffered directly from public health measures that they have resulted in the postponement or cancellation of activities: loss of turnover, loss of value, loss of jobs.

Turnover and added value in 2013 and 2019, and share of GDP (in € billion and %, EU-28)



+17%

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 643 (4.4%) | |
| 550 (4.2%) | | |
| 213 (1.6%) | 253 (1.7%) | |
| 2013 | 2019 | |

■ Added value  ■ Turnover

Sources: Eurostat; GESAC; professional organizations; EY modeling and analysis 2020.

Total turnover generated by CCIs in the EU-28 (in € billion)



-31%

643 — 2019

444 — 2020 (estimate with the impact of the COVID-19 crisis)

Sources: Eurostat; GESAC; professional organizations; Oxford Economics – *Global Industry, Second Wave Scenario*, as of 7 September 2020; EY modeling and analysis 2020.

# The impact of the Covid-19 Crisis on the CCS - A chain of effect

**March 2020**
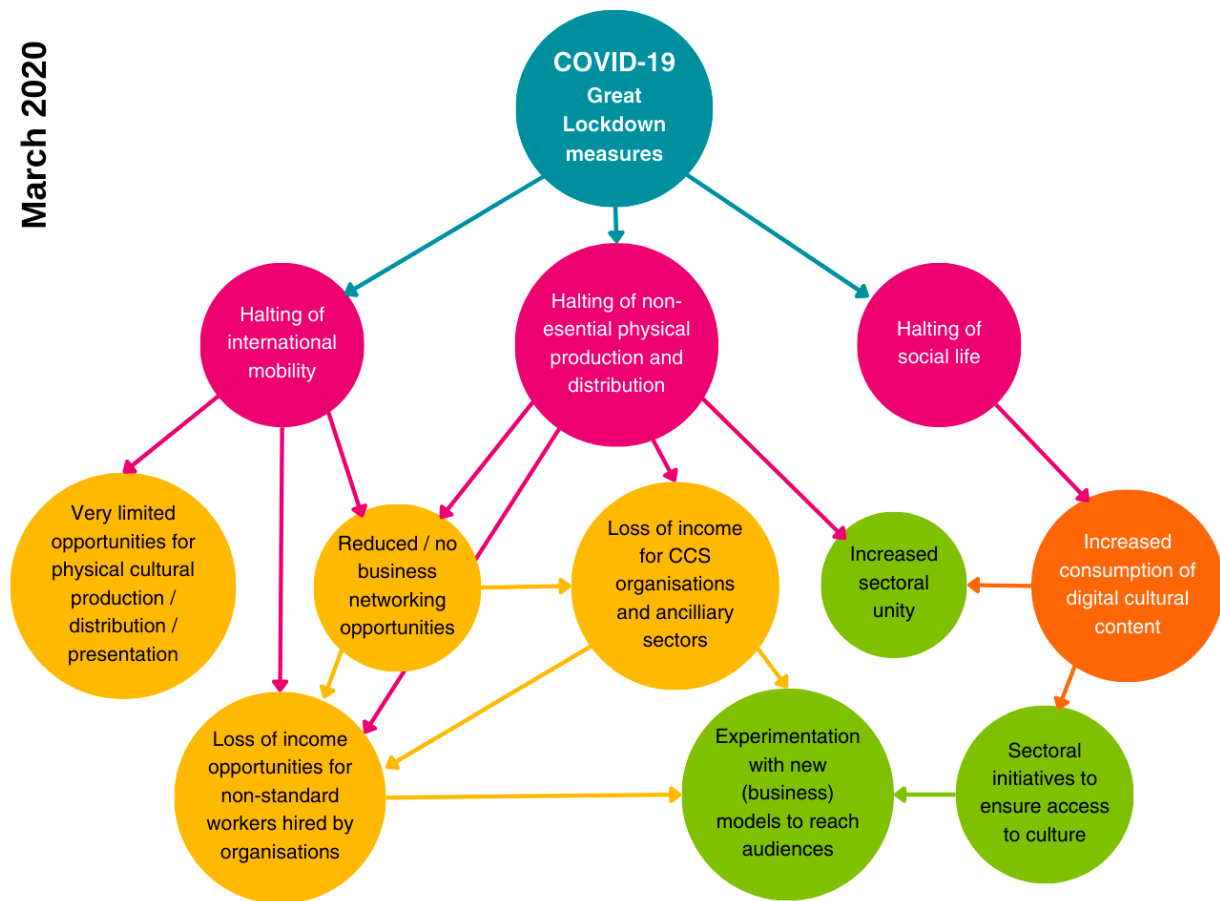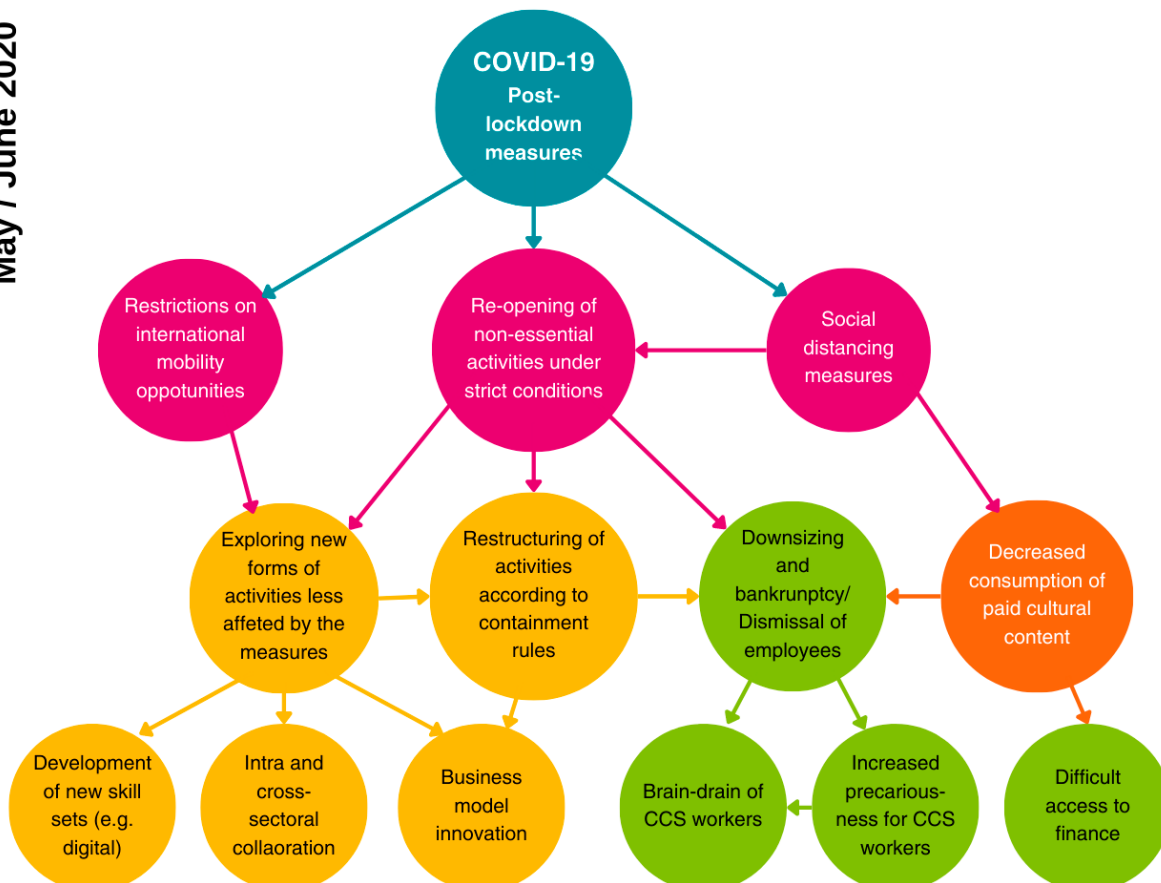
COVID-19 Great Lockdown measures

- Halting of international mobility
- Halting of non-essential physical production and distribution
- Halting of social life

- Very limited opportunities for physical cultural production / distribution / presentation
- Reduced / no business networking opportunities
- Loss of income for CCS organisations and ancilliary sectors
- Increased sectoral unity
- Increased consumption of digital cultural content

- Loss of income opportunities for non-standard workers hired by organisations
- Experimentation with new (business) models to reach audiences
- Sectoral initiatives to ensure access to culture

**May / June 2020**

COVID-19 Post-lockdown measures

- Restrictions on international mobility oppotunities
- Re-opening of non-essential activities under strict conditions
- Social distancing measures

- Exploring new forms of activities less affected by the measures
- Restructuring of activities according to containment rules
- Downsizing and bankrunptcy/ Dismissal of employees
- Decreased consumption of paid cultural content

- Development of new skill sets (e.g. digital)
- Intra and cross-sectoral collaaration
- Business model innovation
- Brain-drain of CCS workers
- Increased precarious-ness for CCS workers
- Difficult access to finance

Cultural and creative sectors in post-COVID-19 in Europe – crisis effects and policy recommendations – European Parliament

## Figure 14: CCS sub-sector assessment of post-Great Lockdown effects

| Key effect-indicators | Audiences/ clients accessibility | Revenues | Employment | Income non-standard workers | Income adjacent sectors | Prospective business networking | (Early) career development |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Performing arts | (red) | Public – private | Public – private | (red) | (yellow) | (red) | (red) |
| Music | Recorded – Live | Recorded – Live | Recorded – Live | (red) | Recorded – Live | (red) | (grey) |
| Visual arts and crafts | Online – Physical | (yellow) | (grey) | (red) | (grey) | (red) | (red) |
| Cultural heritage | (red) | Public – private | Public – private | (red) | (yellow) | (grey) | (grey) |
| Film | Online – Physical | Online – Physical | Public – private | (red) | (yellow) | (red) | (red) |
| Book publishing & press | Online – Physical | Online – Physical | (yellow) | (red) | (grey) | (red) | (grey) |
| Radio and TV | (green) | Public and SVOD services – Commercial | (green) | (grey) | (grey) | (green) | (grey) |
| Games and animation | (green) | (green) | (green) | (green) | (green) | (green) | (yellow) |

Source: Figure developed by the study authors

Cultural and creative sectors in post-COVID-19 in Europe – crisis effects and policy recommendations – European Parliament

90% of museums were temporarily closed at the height of the pandemic. One visual arts and crafts event on three were cancelled. Freelancers and the self-employed, strongly represented in CCI areas have been the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic within the cultural and creative workforce. (UNESCO, cultural and creative industries in the face of Covid-19, 2021).

The financial viability of CCI players in the private and public sectors was compromised by rising costs, successive delays, tight cash flow due to interruption of activities, and the uncertain return of acceptable economic and public health conditions.

The intensification of the consumption and production of digital cultural content, which is mainly explained by the inability to bring together audiences and physically occupy cultural spaces during the pandemic, is one of the most widespread adaptations in the sector. Online consumers, users did not always compensate for the loss of revenues generated in physical sales (of books, video games, newspapers, etc.) and events in most sectors.

The CCI sector faces a challenging time. We are convinced by the power of culture, its dynamism and its contribution to the EU's global influence, now the post Covid crisis paradigm is to be invented. Through these qualitative "case studies", we can observe the different ways that the creative and cultural structures have found to adapt and to develop.

**Enjoy the discovery !**

# Sharing feedback notes

# Tipperary Museum of Hidden History

Marie MCMAHON, Managing Curator

## Background of the organisation

Journey into Ireland's Ancient East! This is a state-of-the-art visitor experience in the civic centre of Clonmel, Co. Tipperary in the heart of Ireland's Ancient East. Completely re-imagined and redesigned, the new Museum brings Tipperary's rich hidden history vividly to life through characters, stories and is one of the largest museum collections in Ireland.

Tipperary Museum's collection was first founded in the 1940's and was the first purpose-built Local Authority County Museum in Ireland.

Expect to be surprised and intrigued by what you find! Immerse yourself in stories of castles and conquests, courage, superstition, murder and death. Explore tales of two worlds, from rural life in 19th century Tipperary to the Big Houses on the Suir Valley. Come face to face (literally) with Oliver Cromwell. Learn about one man and his boat and meet a host of heroes from the world of sports and entertainment. This multi-sensory experience is a must-see on your journey into Ireland's Ancient East.

This award-winning Museum is dedicated to education and lifelong learning through engaging inhouse and visiting exhibitions, workshops, schools and community projects. Our mission is to bring our services out to our diverse communities and support cultural programming across Tipperary.

In average, 15,000 – 20,000 persons per year visit the museum. The targets are:

- Tourists
- Researchers from colleges
- School groups
- Local public

The dwell time now is between an hour and hour and a half compared to before (15-20 min).

*"People are getting a better quality of experience in the museum. That's our Unique Selling Point".*

A team of six staff manage the museum. They are in the Cultural Department in the County Council structure with the library service, the Arts office and the heritage.



The Tipperary-Museum

# The territory concerned

The Town of Clonmel (Irish: Cluain Meala, meaning 'honey meadow') is the county town and largest settlement of County Tipperary, Ireland. The Latest National Census (3 April 2022) determined that Clonmel had a population figure of 17,008. The town is built in the valley of the River Suir. To the south, the town is surwrounded by the Comeragh Mountains and Slievenamon to the northeast. To the north, east and west is some of Ireland's richest farmland, known as the Golden Vale. The town covers a land area of approximately 11.59 km².

**Clonmel**
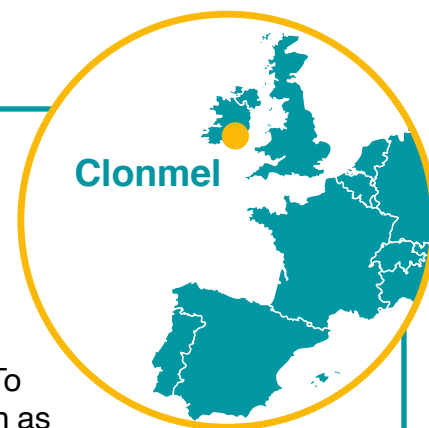
# Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

*"We obviously had to close in March 2020. We had to pivot, we had to change our service delivery basically and change how we managed it."*

After one year of redevelopment and re-imagination (€500,000 investment), the launch of the Hidden History Initiative was literally opened in the October 2019 and then they closed in the March 2020.

They had to find new propositions to develop & keep a link with the audiences:

- Lecture series on line would be in house either here or else over in County Hall in the Council Chamber,

- Colouring Competitions: People could physically give them into us or send them in digitally. They printed them off and I put them on the windows. So they tried to have a kind of presence that people could come down and have a look at it locally

- Architectural Trail: they had devised an architectural trail around Clonmel. They put that out online and they invited people to do this themselves with their families, just as something different to do along the streets, rather than just going for a walk. It made it more interesting. It was promoted it again the following month on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

They devised a new active website. They published podcasts on Facebook (Quakers, mining in Tipperary…). "*We just more aware of access to social media and all that area.*". Since then, the receptionist is also responsible of social media.

TIPPERARY MUSEUM OF HIDDEN HISTORY

Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

COVID-19    Conservation    Our Team    About    Things To Do    News    Contact

Home    What's On    Exhibitions    Collection    Education

Collection > Artefact

## Hogan Jersey

The Bloody Sunday Hogan Jersey takes centre stage in the Museum's new gallery. This jersey was allegedly owned by Tipperary Gaelic footballer Michael Hogan who was killed on the 21st November 1920 by British forces while playing against Dublin in the GAA Great Challenge Football Match in Croke Park, Dublin. He is forever remembered in The Hogan Stand at Croke Park, when in 1924 a new stand was built named in memory of Michael Hogan. A new 2 tier stand was opened in his memory on 7th June 1959.

The Government funding was asking for more digital access for people and they are asking for the inclusion of a lot more diverse communities. A lot of communities like the Ukrainians have come into the space and are using the cultural services here. *"From the time of Covid we've had a lot of people being displaced, so they're coming into the community and we want them to be involved in the projects."*

*"Since lockdown, our numbers are only 2,000 per month."* They have proposed several hands-on stuff to encourage visitors to come back: wearing costumes, pulling out drawers a lot more interaction with the exhibits.

They started doing quizzes for staff with their families and then buying vouchers, for local businesses that were opened. Just to support local business. So they provided five vouchers out every week, and after two years, it's gone down to once a month. It gives people a bit of activity, but a different method of accessing heritage and culture.



Tipperary Museum of Hidden History is a state-of-the-art visitor experience in the centre of Clonmel,

# Key factors of success to pivoting

- **Worktime optimisation**
  - ◊ Time to train (digital…)

    *"It wasn't expensive for us to up our skills set either. Because we had time. We were all able to do courses. So there's a huge amount of training"*

  - ◊ Time to sort & refinish items

    *"We bring them up to the different conservators, whether it's textile conservator or wood conservator, paint conservator."*

- **A constant support by funders**



Refugee Sponcership Programme in Tipperary

# Challenges faced to rebound

- **Increasing cost related to Covid & Brexit**

Cost wise, everything became more expensive. Trying to get material, archival material or fabrics or anything to do with conservation or display was a nightmare to get and everything was doubled in cost especially with the Brexit. All the export costs and extra costs then from Britain as well just aggravated the Council account system. It was complex because only suppliers were in England. Since then another company is set up in Ireland.

- **Bring its audience back**

*"We definitely haven't got the numbers back And they won't, because people have had two years of a different routine. Normally, they would go to the library, go to the museum or do something interactive. That was taken away from them. For almost two years they didn't need it, they felt they were able to get it online and things like that. It's important to encourage people back in now."*

## Further thoughts...

*"We've definitely more value on culture and our heritage. So I think we're not fighting a losing battle with people. I think we've won them over on that. But it's just to get going on things and to keep keep it going and keep it and keep it moving."*



Collection > Painting

Snow in Clonmel by Lilla Perry

Life

Painting Snow in Clonmel by Lilla Perry

**Links**   www.hiddenhistory.ie
www.tipperary.com

# Museum of Pont-Aven & Fishing Museum of Concarneau

Sophie KERVRAN, Managing director

## Background of the organisation

The Museum of Pont-Aven (MPA) was formed in 1985 from a citizens' initiative strongly associated with the Painter Paul Gauguin's visit to Pont-Aven. Their aim is to showcase the artistic life of Pont-Aven, from the 1860s and the establishment of the first colony of American artists, through to Breton painting in the mid-20th century. In 2012, management of the museum was transferred to the Intermunicipality of Concarneau. MPA underwent a major renovation project, and opened its doors again in 2016. It features several exhibition rooms and a store area. Until 2020, attendance was between 90,000 and 100,000 visitors per year, half of them from Brittany, and around 16% from abroad. The museum offers self-guided and guided tours, as well as activities dedicated to specific target audiences (schoolchildren, young people, family tours....).

The management of MPA is shared with the Fishing Museum in Concarneau (FMC). Established in 1961 and located at the entrance to the walled town, it is the oldest museum in France dedicated to fishing techniques from around the world. The arrival of the Hemérica, a semi-industrial trawler that could be visited onboard, at the end of the 1980s, marked a turning point in the museum's development. Initially run by a not-for-profit organisation (NPO), the museum's management was transferred to the local authority. Visitor numbers may have reached 50,000 in the 2000s, but visitor numbers reduced by 2019 where they were hovering around 35,000 (16% foreigners, 38% regional audience).. The museum regularly hosts exhibitions, educational workshops and animated tours for children.

Both of the museums are managed and run by a team of 21 people. They have been awarded the "Musée de France" label by the French Ministry of Culture, subject to scientific and technical control by the French government. Diversifying the museums offering to the public is one of the key areas of development.
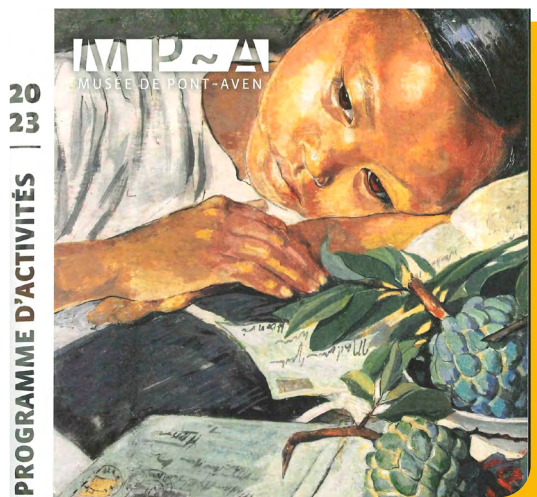

Museum of Pont-Aven

## The territory concerned

Pont-Aven is located in the South West of Brittany. It is nicknamed the "city of painters" frequently visited by plenty of painters whose Paul Gauguin. This small rural town has just 2,830 inhabitants. Thanks to an exceptionally rich cultural heritage and history, the town benefits from being a strong tourist attraction.

**Pont-Aven & Concarneau**

As third municipality of the Department of Finistere (extreme West of Brittany) has 20,760 inhabitants, Concarneau was formed in the Middle Ages from the walled city, located in the Moros estuary. Its location on the coast and its historical heritage make it a leading tourist destination in Brittany today. Concarneau is also a fishing port which is one of the 10 leading fresh fishing ports in France.
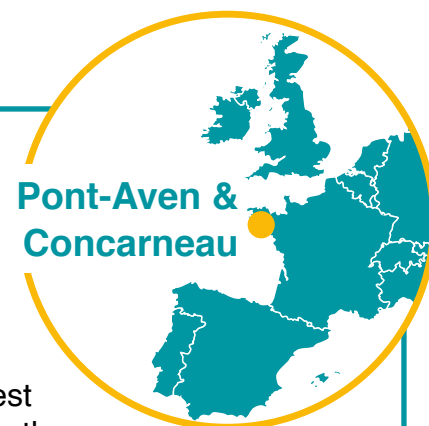
## Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

Museums have been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Suffering from long periods of closure, subsequent reopenings subject to strict health rules, has meant revenue has fallen by 80% since 2019. Both of the museums of Concarneau and Pont-Aven are without exception in relation to Covid-19 impact. Attendance at the Pont-Aven museum fell to 44,000 admissions in 2019 (i.e. - 53%) that of Concarneau 22,000 (i.e. - 51%).

This reduction in visitors did not lead to a reduction in the size of the team however or the scope of the projects. The budget cut also corresponded with the time the museum was closed. However, the local authority through its public service mission, continues to support and make the museum's activity sustainable.

The most visible impact on the activity of museums is directly linked to their educational and social work. However, many measures have been taken to ensure that they continue their dissemination activities, either by setting up new systems or by using other media, and above all by developing digital tools. The museum knew how to make themselves accessible via original operations. Nevertheless, the pandemic has had a digital acceleration effect within both museums.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, the Museum of Pont-Aven wanted to stay connected with their

public and launched the initiative "Reserve, Open Yourself". On the occasion of the 35th birthday of the museum, internet users chose the 35 exhibited paintings, drawings,… These came out of the archives and were exhibited to the audience, sometimes for the first time !

*"Participatory curating is presented as a means of promoting collections and makes it possible to rethink the very concept of collection. Far from the tradition of the art historian, the exhibition curator, the curator, the 'knowledgeable' since this will be the choice of everyone" on works already selected that they wish to see taken out of storage and hung in the museum. A civic, inclusive and collaborative museum of a 21st century that is already 20 years old."*



Museum of Pont-Aven

Pont-Aven was one of the pioneer museums in terms of involving the public in the decision-making process, particularly during these periods of confinement, this operation has made it possible to demystify the museum and its functioning and its backstage.

As for the Fishing Museum, 2020 could not see the physical celebration of its 60th anniversary. However, the museum bounced back by proposing the production of an artistic object that can be used online and on social networks: a documentary opera that mixes collections of testimony from inhabitants and an operatic statement by the first curator of the Museum.

The digital deployment continued. The team grew their digital support by proposing a digital museum on the site of the Museum of Pont Aven, which continues today with a web-series on all the tables (video of 1 min on works), podcasts or by being part of Google art & culture which presents virtual exhibitions from more than 2,000 museums around the world. Hence, a person is a referent on digital resources internally. A database of works and documentary resources is accessible. An online ticketing system was set up at the 2 museums. In 2021, visitors were reluctant to return to public places ( health measures…), today we see their real return in situ. 2022 was a record year in terms of attendance at the Museum of Pont-Aven with 111,000 visitors and a turnover of more than €1 million with the ticket office and the shop. For the fishing museum in Concarneau, the figures remain stable as before Covid (more than 36,000 in 2022).

## Key factors of success to pivoting

- **The creativity:**
  Museums have never been more present or more inventive online during the pandemic. This unprecedented situation led them down a new path. With new ways of communication and dissemination, addressing all types of audience, the museum exemplified its social role and has shown continued creativity during this time. They were able to bounce back and offer a range of extensive and diversified offerings to the public during the times of lockdown or restrictions, showing that art and museums are a possible refuge in the face of crisis.

- **Management of the museums by a local authority with financial support:**
  this has facilitated the transition during crisis face of the crisis.



Fishing Museum of Concarneau

## Challenges faced to rebound

- **The lack of digital skills**



Museum of Pont-Aven

Fishing Museum of Concarneau


Museum of Pont-Aven

**Links**

museepontaven.fr
facebook.com/museedepontaven
musee-peche.fr
facebook.com/museepeche

# Cultural Factory of Avilés

Anabel BARRIO, Director

## Background of the organisation

During the IV Conference on Contemporary Cultural Creation Spaces in Aviles, in 2007, "Cultural Factory" was presented as a project for the future, targeted at meeting existing deficiencies in terms of training and cultural creation, adding to the activities already developed by other public or private institutions and providing the city with a unique space that would facilitate the professional and labour development of all kinds of artists.

The Cultural Factory is located in the El Carbayedo district of Aviles, in a former shirt factory, "Confecciones Camino"; that had begun its trajectory in 1950 with the aim of contributing to the development of textile activity in the Asturian region. However the shirt factory closed its doors in 1995, during the textile crisis, accelerated by the competition of textile products from Asia.

The Cultural Factory consists of a three-storey building with a four-storey attached building. The total space of 4.500 m2 houses four multi-purpose rooms, two exhibition halls, an administrative area and offices, a new technologies room, modelling and sculpture classrooms, painting and engraving classrooms, a kiln room, a warehouse, a library, a dance room, four rehearsal rooms, a 100-seat stage area for small theatre performances, concerts and conferences, etc.

This Cultural Factory stands out as a centre for multidisciplinary artistic creation. It acts as the cornerstone and backbone of the former Municipal School of Ceramics of Avilés. The students of the former Municipal School of Ceramics were the first tenants of the new building, followed by those of the "Universidad Popular" (adult education centre). Given the complexity of its construction, it took several years and three phases for the Cultural Factory to become fully operational in 2015. A variety of different sources of funding supported development of the Cultural Factory, such as the agreement signed with the Institute of Youth, various regional and state plans (plans A and E), European projects, etc., with a final investment of around €3.5 million, and the donation by the Camino family, former owners of the building, of part of its machinery.

### The Municipal School of Ceramics

In its beginnings, pottery was the main formative axis of the School, evolving progressively towards the field of contemporary ceramics. From 2018, the Cultural Factory of Avilés, has had its objective of promoting and encouraging new artistic and cultural initiatives for children and young people. This has involved coming up with a new educational proposal aimed at all types of students (from child to high school), associations and entities called "Discovering art". The proposal consists of the possibility of developing three artistic disciplines: Engraving and printing, Theatre, Ceramics.

## The "Universidad Popular" of Avilés

In 1901, in Avilés, at the same time as in other towns in Asturias, the "Universidad Popular" began delivering courses with the aim of disseminating culture among citizens. They arose as an initiative of the Extension of the University of Oviedo, conceived in the spirit of bringing culture to the people. This programme is being reborn with the priority objective of designing, planning and carrying out a municipal educational offer, centred on a set of heterogeneous, interdisciplinary, decentralised activities, developed in public educational, cultural, social and training centres, through courses and workshops aimed at the entire population over the age of sixteen. These classes include: artistic and craft skills, new communication technologies, cultural and artistic heritage, languages and social communication, new image technologies, literacy and training for immigrants, nature, health and environment (63 courses and 563 places on offer).



The craft of illustration 2022

## School Children

The educational offer aimed at school children is of great importance in the day-to-day running of the centre, focused at the beginning on a single artistic area, ceramics (75 pupils per year), has now expanded to include new disciplines in 2022 (photography, theatre, choral singing, hip-hop, circus techniques, fashion) reaching a total of 365 enrolments during this academic year.

## As a Centre for Artistic Creation

Every year they award eight grants for artistic production (two for plastic arts, two for graphic arts, two for performing arts, one for new technologies and one at national level). Each grant is worth €2,000 and includes a stay at the Cultural Factory with all the facilities available to the artist for the production of their work.



The Cultural Factory

The Cultural Factory has a wide annual programme that is well established in the cultural, social and artistic life of the community, with projects such as White Night and Black Night, a free cultural event open to all citizens; Factoría Sound (Cycle of rock, folk, heavy music concerts...); San Agustín Ceramics Competition; exhibitions; workshops; etc.

A team of five people works in the Cultural Factory, supported by external trainers and collaborators to implement the different projects.

## The territory concerned

Avilés is a spanish city located in the Region of Asturias, 25 km from Gijón and 27 km from Oviedo, on the edge of the Cantabrian Sea is an important port.

Avilés has experienced significant expansion since the 1950s thanks to the steel industry and today has 79,514 inhabitants. It is experiencing a dynamic cultural development: Factoría Cultural, Palacio Valdés Theatre seasons, Oscar Niemeyer Cultural Centre, folk and contemporary music festivals, fantasy literature and comics festivals, etc.



Avilés
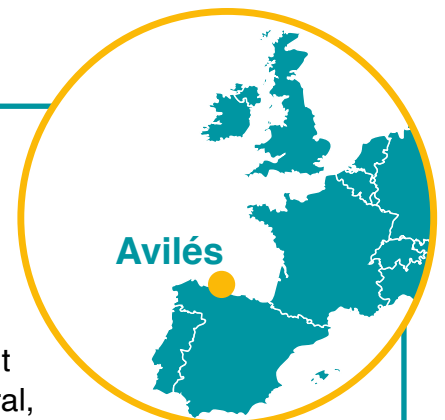
# Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

How to reach our users so that, from the confinement of their homes, they could continue their training activities as well as possible ? The centre's teaching staff developed tutorials and prepared online classes until such time as the centre could resume its normal activities, which were initially limited by the health measures and restrictions imposed by the competent authorities.

While the usual activity of the institution was suspended, and with economic availability, they considered equipping the centre with new technologies, it was in fact an implementation of an old project. They acquired two 3D printers, a ceramic 3D printer, a resin 3D printer, a laser cutter, a Riso, a vinyl plate, a vinyl cutter and an LED screen for the outside window of the Cultural Factory.

*"This was a great opportunity to equip and facilitate the artistic and cultural development of our centre being the germ of the Fablab of the Cultural Factory."*

They faced challenges:

- on users: they "*had an 'imperious' need to participate in all kind of activities, regardless of their subject matter, responding to a need for social contact, with the demand for activities surpassing the offer that was usually programmed at the centre.*"

- on infrastructure: It became necessary to enable the network and computer equipment to be able to connect from home, from one day to the next.

- on methodology: The projects were mainly face to face so far. Working remotely led to communication and customer service difficulties. *"Communication problems were a direct response to a work methodology that required learning new tools for synchronisation and collaborative work."*

Teleworking has become a viable option for the centre, offering the possibility to resolve and manage the planning and production of projects without the need to be present at the centre.

*"This action is constantly being evaluated to see if it is efficient for the centre's specific processes."*

Some Impacts of change:

- The expansion of the target audience. Developing projects with remote audiences has allowed them to establish relationships with more distant local authorities, maintaining a digital programme with a regular frequency.

- The expansion of programming including participatory activities: *"the generation of strategies and projects of collective social impact that we now develop at the centre and that we could not previously visualise because we did not have the specific need to do so. Projects such as the critical reflection colloquia on artificial intelligence in the field of creativity allow us not only to work with an artistic group but also to reach different and varied sectors of society. This example allows us to offer a more inclusive vision and establish closer relations with the community participating in the centre's projects."*


Women workshops 2022


Musicians in the Factory Cultural

# Key factors of success to pivoting

- **The implementation of a creative thinking methodology based on solutions:**
  Which has allowed to develop diverse strategies and projects based on specific situations such as those caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- **New technical tools:**
  That have allowed us to implement this type of community social projects, developing new strategies that provide solutions to the most varied problems and demands of our users. *"Without these technical tools, some of these projects would remain just ideas."*

- **The involvement of the teachers and the rest of the centre's staff:**
  *"This commitment, together with the spirit of transformation and resilience in the face of a situation such as the one we lived through, which affected not only the work environment but also the personal lives of our collaborators, has been key to the resuming normal development of the cultural, educational and artistic programming of our centre."*

- **The new skills in the use of new technologies acquired by team:**
  These skills can be put into practice both remotely and through face-to-face. *"In the same way, for project management we can now establish a more efficient way of working that does not involve one hundred per cent face-to-face work."*

- **The links with public and private stakeholders.**

# Challenges faced to rebound

- **The lack of knowledge of strategies and programmes that were developed 100% online:**
  Both for internal projects and communication related to the way of working, as well as for dissemination projects or those aimed directly at the users.

- **Change management:**
  *"there was a learning curve that affected the centre's teaching and administrative staff, who were sometimes reluctant to implement certain changes due to the uncertainty generated on the one hand by the pandemic situation and on the other hand by the use of new work strategies that had not been considered before. It is important to mention that users, too, have shown some resistance during and after the pandemic to implement and/or maintain some practices that were developed during this health crisis."*

# Further thoughts…

*"Sometimes, instead of relating to each other as a community or creative industry with similar objectives, we relate to each other through competition or even rivalry. We could take advantage of programmes and create networks of alliances to establish collaborative projects, which, although they require greater organisation, we could resolve with new strategies of collaboration and work in a non-presential manner."*

**Links**    aviles.es/factoría-cultural-de-avilés

# Air Up Arts Center

## Background of the organisation

Air Up is a Scottish arts and community centre located in an area of multiple deprivation. They offer a year-round programme of cutting-edge performance, music, visual arts and participation (music classes, art classes, drama classes, a singing group, a knitting group and a cultural program where they have paid ticket events). The organisation views culture and creativity as a 'bedrock of a healthy and inclusive society'. Their work is rooted in their location and engages directly with their audiences. Despite having a small team of nine employees with key positions from the Artistic Director and Arts & Communities Lead to Marketing & Communications Manager, they achieve considerable impact in the communities that they serve and lean on a wide network of volunteers. They work with a range of local and national partners to bring together communities and artists. For example, 10,510 meals were distributed through their children's holiday food programme, 42 performances were delivered in school playground and care home car parks and 2,007 art packs were distributed, one for every school pupil at six local primary schools to advance education through the promotion of the arts.

The Arts Centre is located in an unique and award-winning building shared with the city's local authority for culture and sport. The city's local authority for culture and sport runs the library side, a swimming pool, and they also have a local further Education College.

Air Up offers a variety of ways to get involved:

- They work with communities outside of their building. Air Up takes a dynamic programme of performance, projects and activities directly to partners based in a diverse range of venues right across the city and beyond. They create possibilities for communities and artists to come together to shape their programme and voice their creativity.

- Air Up's "Taking Part" programme provides a wide choice of regular sessions for children, young people and adults looking to develop their creative skills, including music classes, artists' talks and their performance and visual art workshops.

- Artists provide the creative spark. Air Up commissions and co-produces with a range of artists. They are keen to support artists at all stages of their careers to develop their work, particularly those working within a participatory or socially engaged setting.

- Partnership is central to their work: from statutory service providers to third sector organisations and public housing providers. Their creative partners include artist collectives, production companies, festivals and cultural venues.

They receive regular funding from Creative Scotland. However, their core funding is from The City Council, they also generate income from hiring out their venue space, and with additional fundraising raised from smaller trusts and funds. Other sources of income gained from bringing art and performance and music to that local area.

# The territory concerned

Located in the Northeast of one of the largest Scottish cities, this suburb has an 11km² area and a population of around 9,000 people.

The organisation serves a community which faces multiple deprivation, this means the population has a lower life expectancy, higher poverty and poorer health and wellbeing. It is located between two rivers and was built during an expansion of the Scottish city before the Second World War.
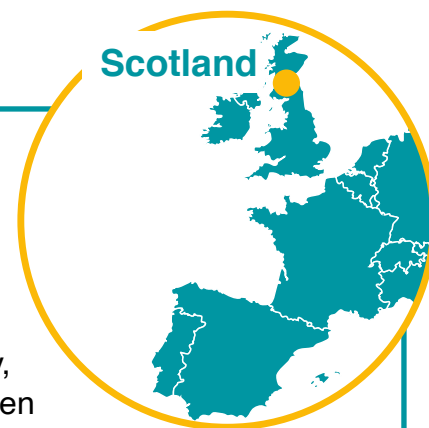
# Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

With the lockdown, the majority of the team were furloughed. *"Because the building was closed, there was nowhere for us to work. It was very rushed, but everyone was kind of divvied up and given a laptop, and then kind of sent home"*.

Due to their holiday food program providing much needed meals to the community, the building was accessible during the summer of 2020, so that the organisation also took the opportunity to provide activity packs and art packs. In addition, the Arts Centre works a lot with quite vulnerable adults with no access to digital devices or are quite digitally poor, with no opportunity to learn to use technology.

Air Up tried to put everything as much as possible online, successfully, particularly with the younger groups. They did a film program workshop online and a weekly Saturday Art Club. As the organisation realised that a lot of their users were just not online, they started a post art project with a newsletter (including drawings, sharing jokes and sharing short stories) in every two weeks.

*"Before Covid, a lot of our taking part (activities) you had to pay for. It's very heavily subsidised. Some of the art sessions are free, and the drama was payable, and we would encourage people to come to us if that was a barrier on a case by case basis. But, as soon as it went online everything was free because we just didn't know whether it'd be good or not. I think it was just a need to connect people, particularly the adults."*

After the Covid-19 crisis, there has been a big increase in the wants and needs from the community. When in person events restarted, with still restrictions still in place in terms of social distancing, they changed the format to meet this and have kept much of this new format since, as it felt better. The organisation has not continued to run all of their digital events, for capacity reasons, as their team is not big enough to deliver both in person and online sessions.

# Key factors of success to pivoting

- **The strength of the artist community to adapt and be resilient:**

  The sector is well connected, they worked together to find news ways to work.

- **The public funders support:**

  *"We are stable because we make it work, and we have really good partnerships and really good relationships, and are keen to build on partnership working to expand funding opportunities and different things."*



# Challenges faced to rebound

- **The change in people's behaviour who have been isolated during Covid:**

  *"It's just a lot of reminding people of how to be in a social setting again, especially when a lot of the people we work with are on their own quite a lot, and don't have that in their life."*

- **The balancing act is a pressure:**

  The scarcity of funds, sometimes competition between organisation to get funding and the increasing needs of citizens & local residents especially in an *"area that has poverty, and the challenges that are then associated with low income."*

- **The gap between the support of artists during the pandemic and now post-pandemic where they are receiving limited funding:**

  *"There's a real tension around what value you put onto artists and their art"* and the work of artists is undervalued, and this includes a lack of appreciation of the contribution the creative sector provides to their communities.



Free food program

# The Tron Theatre Ltd.

Andy ARNOLD, Artistic Director, and Theatre Director

TRON THEATRE

## Background of the organisation

The Tron Theatre Ltd is an internationally respected and critically acclaimed arts venue and registered Scottish charity based in the centre of Glasgow. The Tron became a theatre in 1981, starting out as the Victorian bar and then became a new theatre club. Over the last 20 years, it has become a significant player in Glasgow's cultural scene. Producing and presenting an eclectic collection of new writing, reinvigorated contemporary classics, dance, comedy and music, the Tron occupies a place in Glaswegian hearts as unique as the building that houses it – the 16th century Tron kirk, survivor of over 500 years of cultural change and social upheaval.

The Tron specialises in staging new and contemporary classic theatre across their two theatre spaces - the main House theatre and the smaller Changing House studio - curating an eclectic programme of work throughout the year which responds to the cultural interests and needs of the diverse community of Glasgow and beyond. The Tron's Christmas pantos have achieved something of a cult status and each May they present Mayfesto, a 'festival within a theatre', which packs in three weeks of agenda-led new and provocative work.

The status of the organisation is a company limited by guarantee, which means it is without shareholders or shares and it is a charity, so their profits go back into the organisation for public benefit.

The theatre is unusual in that it only has 230 seats, which means that for any professional production which has substantial costs involved such as the crew, the actors and production costs, that even if it is completely sold out, it still needs subsidised and so this makes it challenging to operate. However, Creative Scotland currently provides funding, with 75% of the income for the theatre coming from grants.

The Tron Theatre is a Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) with over 50 employees. The Tron's Participation team also take the arts out into communities, partnering with local schools and groups to deliver workshops, courses and master-classes, as well as presenting a host of classes that run in the Tron's Education Suite every week for adults and young people of all levels.

The aim of the Tron is to engage the talent, primarily of the Scottish-based theatre community, to present exciting new and contemporary classic theatre of the highest quality for the people of Glasgow, the West of Scotland, and on an international scale. As part of this aim are three key missions:

- To continue to be a point in Scotland for developing new and emerging talent

- To become a key contributor to the Scottish touring infrastructure

- Respond to the very special theatrical interest not only in Glasgow but throughout the West of Scotland.

## The territory concerned

Scotland has had a thriving theatre scene that is recognised internationally. The Tron Theatre is located in the corner of Trongate and Chisholm Street in the city centre of Glasgow, Scotland. Glasgow is in West Central Scotland and is the most populous city in Scotland, with a population of over 1.8 million people. Glasgow grew from a small rural settlement on the River Clyde to become the largest seaport in Scotland.

During World War I, Glasgow became the centre for British shipbuilding. However now the leading industries in Glasgow City Region are public administration, education and health, distribution, hotels and restaurants, banking, finance and insurance and transport and communication. Meanwhile Glasgow's digital and creative technology economy is now the largest in Scotland and one of the fastest growing in the United Kingdom, with almost 34,000 jobs and a turnover of more than £1bn.

## Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

The Tron Theatre was closed for 18 months (unlike English Theatres which opened earlier) and reopened in Autumn 2021, However, when they were able to reopen, it was announced that theatres had to implement two metre social distancing. However, this was not realistic to operate under these restrictions. *"We worked out that in our 230 seats theatre children's 30 seat theatre we could get 12 people in on the two metre basis."*

The Tron's education team rapidly started providing classes and youth groups online on zoom, with a busy program of meetings with artists. Tron's Artistic Director sought opportunity during this time and sent out an invitation to unemployed young actors from the west of Scotland. They were legitimate actors and they were people he had never auditioned or met before. He asked them to send him a two minutes self-tape at home. He got 400 responses. And then he met 40 of them online. When the theatre reopened and the Tron did their first theatre production, he invited a few of these actors to be in the production. He saw this as a way to give young graduates from drama schools an opportunity to work.

It was being challenging to get used to doing theatre performances online, especially as *"the whole ethos of what theatre is, that lived experience, the audience not only just watching something but becoming a part of it, that congregation of people sitting together, and the actors being in front of you, in the same room, performing something, that special thing. Some people were saying, well, maybe after Covid it will all change, and you know, because we use digital work. And I thought that's nonsense. That lived experience has never changed for 2,000 years."*

Covid was very demoralising for the Tron team with staff at home in isolation, and having to have team meeting on zoom. There was also the issue that some staff, such as technicians, box office staff etc. couldn't work from home, unlike the administration and public marketing staff.

# Key factors of success to pivoting

- **Realisation of the Power of Social Media to connect public audiences:**

  The first day when they were closing the building on March 24th 2020, the Artistic Director went into the theatre and and he filmed himself "*come, join me in the theatre. I'm an audience of one… no more laughter, no more tears, no more actors with their first night fears, no more.*" And this went onto Twitter and about 8,000 people saw it. This was a big success, he would never get 8,000 people to watch a theatre show. *"It would take several months of sold out performances."*

- **Pivoting their skillset and becoming filmmakers:**

  The National Theatre Scotland commissioned them to create short five minute pieces called "scenes for survival". *"So suddenly, we were becoming filmmakers, which is quite a new experience. But, obviously for me, it was just really a means to occupy ourselves and a means to give work to actors."*

- **Solidarity in the sector:**

  It was identified that the Scottish Theatre organisations had very little to do with each other before Covid-19 and that the pandemic has brought them together. They meet on zoom to talk about survival and tactics to address to the government. The solidarity has been of benefit to the organisations to support each other through the challenging times.

# Challenges faced to rebound

- **Inability to reopen the theatre bar:**

  *"Because we financially thought we couldn't afford it, and it felt like, even though we're running a theatre program at night it felt like we were half shut, really the place was empty during the day, and then really quite depressing".*

  The Tron now have a bar company who are running the bar.

- **Funding cuts are detrimental to theatre survival:**

  There is concern over funding for the theatre in 2023-25 as they will have run out of their funding provided to them during the pandemic. They like many other creative sector organisations, have lost their Glasgow City Council funding this year.

  *"In real terms, it's like a 25% cut . So you know the danger is, and it happens to theatres sometimes that all you can do is pay your staff, and the building costs. You've got no money to put the work on stage."*



The Tron Theatre



The Tron Theatre

- **Delay in getting audiences to return:**

  A lot of theatres have struggled to get audiences back. Statistically, Scotland has been worse than England in audience return levels, with some of their customers nervous about attending, whilst other were desperate to return.

- **A challenging time for actors:**

  There is change in the theatre sector post-covid, with fewer work opportunities for actors. A reason being due to financial restraints, the main theatres are putting on shows with two or three actors on stage and there are very few touring companies. At the same time there has been a proliferation of acting courses and so people come here with the expectation that they are going to find work but there is no acting work for them. In addition, it's noted that the tragedy is that the main theatre schools, end of year shows have mainly American accents, that the real challenge is that it is now much more expensive to attend theatre college.

**Links**     tron.co.uk

# Almaclara

Beatriz GONZÁLEZ CALDERÓN, Director and a Profesional Violoncelist

## Background of the organisation

The Almaclara Ines Rosales project was born in 2008 as a permanent tribute to all those women who were fundamental to the history of music but who did not receive the deserved recognition.

*"It's not because of their lack of talent, but because of their own status as women. Our Orchestra and other groups linked to us, not only are composed exclusively by women, but also we strive to deep and disseminate the musical pieces composed by women."*

The main activity consist of giving classical music concerts, with different formations depending on the programme they are interpreting. They are still provided with different compositions such as Almaclara String Quartet, Almaclara Trio of violin, piano and cello, Amaclara4Cello Quartet, Almaclara Cello Duo, Almaclara Cello… and the full Orchestra.

At a business level, this orchestra does not make a profit, *"The turnover we make and the sponsorship we receive is used to pay the salaries of the performers in the concerts we give and for the expenses we may have for the purchase of materials."*

The audience is mostly people between 30-70 years old.

*"This music style is not so popular among young people. In any case we are focused on gaining reputation among adult audience, and also on creating a regular clientele, who come to our concert for the first time and want to come again."*

They use a newsletter and social media to stay in touch with the audience. Word of mouth is also a tool to gain new audience.

With regard to the main source of income, this was the ticket sales, but also the sponsorship. The ticket rates they had set were not too expensive, to gain a larger audience, and the best way for achieving this at the first years was via competitive prices. In addition, they received also subsidies from different authorities.

The city of Seville is the main place to host concerts, specifically a theatre called "Sala Cero" at the city centre, besides they have held performances in Sevillian villages.

## The territory concerned

Seville is the country's fourth-largest city, it had a population of 684,234 in 2021, out of a total of 1,535,379 in its urban area. Located at the center of a rich agricultural region, crossed by the Guadalquivir River and connected to a major communications network, the city is the economic, political and cultural heart of Andalusia, and is one of the most important cities not only in Spain, but also in Southern Europe with a remarkable historical heritage.

**Seville**

## Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

Social distancing measures associated with the lockdown particularly affected the creative and cultural sector, with effects throughout its value chain, further weakening the situation of cultural professionals, mainly workers in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and artists and freelancers, many of them informal. The cancellation of live concerts was the main challenge for Almaclara Orchestra, as it was for the major part of those entities whose main activity consisted of playing live music.

*''Despite having to cancel live concerts for a long time, most of artists managed to survive thanks to streaming platforms, such as Spotify or Youtube, however in our case, due to the kind of music we play and because we are not a band with much renown, we considered that it was not going to be a great solution, however, is something that we could consider for a future''.*

Covid-19 especially affected to their target groups due to the caution and even fear to the pandemic developed among this range of age, and therefore affected also to their sources of income (such as public funding, entrance fees, product sales, etc.), *"when we came back to 'normal life', it took many months before we managed to recover similar audience figures to those of 2019".*

Thus, they adopted a new way of organization to face this adversity, mainly a new way of carrying out the concerts according to the sanitary measures which were in force. They developed concerts in new venues, outdoors or with smaller audiences in large spaces, doubling the number of performances. They also devised new ways of promotion, such as celebrating ticket drawings in different social media, being one of the requirements to participate, sharing the post with followers, thus making them known to more people.

*"I would say that this is a tool which really generates results, as is used in a lot of companies belonging to many different sectors in face of the public."*



Orchestra´s violins wearing masks during a concert at Covid time

# Key factors of success to pivoting

- **Thinking to the audience** (their needs, their fears, their aspirations) had to be at the heart of events organisation in order to better adapt to them, basically trying to apply all the regulations and precautions regarding the virus:

  *"We pretended to transmit that we were a conscientious group respectful of the situation: for instance leaving one or two empty seats between each attendee, sterilising all the seats, distributing several bottles of disinfectant gel throughout the room, and of course, leaving the required distance from the stage."*



Cello quartet *Almaclara4Cello*

# Challenges faced to rebound

- **The effort to win back audiences,** especially with the fear regarding public and crowded events: *"We are not a group with a very large audience, therefore we did not have regular customers who were going to come back to our concerts for sure after the pandemic".*

- *"The pandemic has forced us to think of new artistic proposals and to double our efforts, but fortunately, we are beginning to see the results, with more crowded concerts (maybe around 80/100 persons), more followers more activity on social networks, and in the end seeing our incomes growing."*

In that sense, they have tried to expand their line of musicological research, for example mixing their classical style with more contemporary and innovative pieces, in the attempt of attracting new audiences.

- **The increasing of the feeling of uncertainty among the sector:**

  *"The cultural sector was already a professional field that was seen with employment uncertainty, with a high probability of failure unless you really stood out and, as a result of pandamic it has appeared even more insecurity, thus many people are retiring from the cultural industry and fewer and fewer people are daring to join it."*



The Chamber Orchestra during a concert of the Almaclara Classic Cycle

# Further thoughts...

*"There is an attempt to return to the traditional model in terms of the performing arts, as nothing can replace the live experience in this field. However, technologies are nowadays a considerable part of our daily lives, and the easy and quick accessibility to all kinds of content they offer, is certainly attractive, being this fact an advantage to many artists who achieve to take advantage of this, but on the other hand we find for example the film industry, really undermined due to the online movies platforms."*

*"I would like to take the chance to encourage everyone to invest in cultural plans, to go to the theatre, to the cinema, to museums... and of course to live concerts, because in our country we have a great and rich variety and artistic and cultural talent, which should be more valued and used."*



Banner for the latest edition (2022-2023) from the Almaclara Classic Cycle
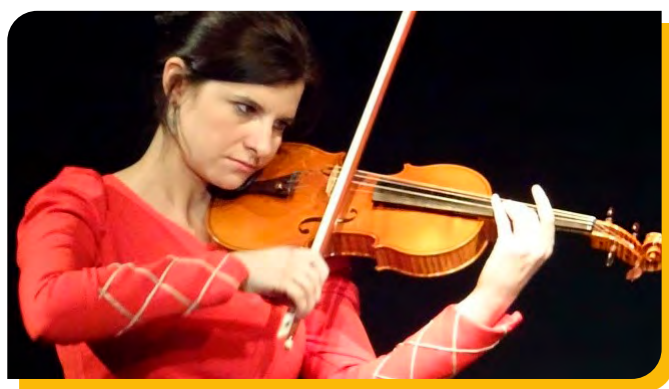


The orchestra's violinist Irene Fernández

**Links**   almaclara.es
facebook.com/orquestademujeresAlmaclara/

# Fifty-Fifty Festival

Gonzalo SUÁREZ, Vice-President

## Background of the organisation

The Fifty-Fifty Jazz & Poetry Festival is a unique event in the current musical and literary scene, that aims to organise a series of small format events (for between 50 and 300 people/event) each year in Avilés throughout 4 days in November. The event is intimate, elegant and fun, including recitals, readings, conferences, workshops or masterclasses and, of course, concerts, where the encounter between jazz and poetry is not "forced", nor systematically mixed (fusion is not compulsory, but pairing is good ...).

It offers between 15 and 20 events per edition, giving priority to quality over quantity.

The spirit of the festival:

*"Fifty-fifty*
*45% Jazz, 45% Poetry,*
*45% Women, 45% Men,*
*45% Recognised, 45% Emergent,*
*45% National, 45% International,*
*45% Dizzy's trumpet angle,*
*10% whatever ...*
*100% Fun !"*

It must be highlighted here that at first the ethos of the festival is not very inclined with the current digital trends: "we think above all in analogical events (real encounters), when everything invites digital consumption (but without forgetting the digital world...)."

The festival aims to promote cooperation with cultural and educational institutions and public-private collaboration. As well as linking the event to entities of recognized national and international prestige (e.g. Berklee College of Music, Loewe Foundation and its Poetry Prize, Montreux Jazz Foundation, etc.).



Jazz Concerts (credit: Asociación Cultural Fifty-Fifty – Photographer: Manuel G. Carranza)

The festival is organised by a non-for-profit cultural association (Asociación Cultural Fifty-Fifty), created in 2020. It aims at having public-private financing, achieved through grants, business supports, sponsors, benefactors and ticketing.

The not-for-profit organisation (NPO) doesn't have full-time staff but counts on four founding members who collaborate throughout the year as volunteers. During the four days of the festival, it gives work to some 70 artists and technicians and external collaborators.

The first editions of the festival took place in Avilés in November 2021 and 2022, respectively.

## The territory concerned

Avilés is a spanish city located in the Region Asturias, 25 km from Gijón and 27 km from Oviedo, on the edge of the Cantabrian Sea and is an important port.

Avilés has experienced significant expansion since the 1950s thanks to the steel industry and today has 79,514 inhabitants. It is experiencing a dynamic cultural development: Factoría Cultural, Palacio Valdés Theatre seasons, Oscar Niemeyer Cultural Centre, folk and contemporary music festivals, fantasy literature and comics festivals, etc.

**Avilés**
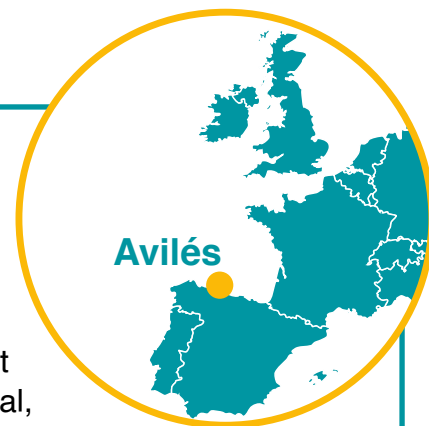
## Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

*"This is with no doubt a very special case, as the festival was created 'thanks' to the lockdown."*

It was an old idea that its promoters who finally found time to design and implement it, established the Association, formed partnerships and created all the necessary materials (presentations, benchmarks of other festivals, plans, budgets, etc.) to put the project in place. They kept in mind the potential end of the Covid-19 pandemic, thus aimed at having their first festival in the Autumn of 2021.

This festival did not generate enough income through ticketing alone to cover their costs, it was important for the organisers to ensure its funding through other routes. While they found certain facilities in getting some public support, mainly from the local and regional authorities, but also from the Ministry of Culture, the period and unknowns made it particularly difficult to secure the support and sponsorship from private investors. *"Usually, drinks trademarks support these kinds of festivals, but at that period it was forbidden to serve any kind of consumption…, and the low expectations in terms of attendance didn't make the festival so attractive for private investments."*

At this time, trends of digital or hybrid events were observed. However, FFF did not have the technical and financial means to promote these kinds of formats, and avoided them in the first edition of November 2021.

The 2nd edition of the festival took place in November 2022. During this period, the Covid-19 was not affecting audience attendance. It was a great success: 450 people attended on average for the concerts in the theatre, from 30 to 50 people participated in the poetry readings and debates…

Most of events took place at Cultural Factory of Avilés that had invested in some new digital equipment, including a better and safer Internet connection for digital events. They have also successfully tried an hybrid encounter with a rewarded poet from Latin America (Cuba), who couldn't travel to Avilés to attend the event *in situ*, whilste interviewers and another poets were on stage in the theatre. Thanks to this successful test, FFF will keep hybrid encounters in the future.

*"They also allow us to save time for participants and their corresponding travel costs."*



Hybrid event (poetry talk an recital with 2022 winner of Loewe Poetry Prize connected from Cuba).

FFF also plans to start streaming some events in future editions, but progressively and taking into account different key issues/factors: production costs for high-level quality streaming, versus their limited expectations in terms of incomes for digital diffusion; artistic rights to be taken into account; and communication efforts/investment to promote the streaming events, versus their communication capacity and priorities (which are to promote the in-person events).

As a young and new organisation, *"we are building our model, taking into account the different trends, but without failing to [follow] our core purposes."*

## Key factors of success to pivoting

- **The strong engagement of funders and volunteers**

- **Public-Private partnerships (PPP) are key elements of success to make the festival sustainable:**

  *"It is important however to underline that when we refer to PPP, such collaborations are not only in terms of financial supports (of course of great importance), but also in terms of contents, exchange of knowledge, networking, etc."*

- **Betting on the hybrid format** combining the strength of digital to seduce new generations in enjoying jazz and poetry and utilising the power of face to face delivery:

  *"We are aware that our audience is an ageing one, and particularly think that digital communication and events should contribute to attract new generations."*

## Challenges faced to rebound

- **The difficulty to encourage audience to come especially as a new event,** promoting minority cultural expressions (jazz and poetry are clearly not as popular as other Creative and Cultural Industries):

  Despite this, they managed for the first festival to have a high-level programme, an impressive press coverage, the satisfaction of the participating artists, excellent institutional collaborations and supporters.

- **As a small organisation, human and financial resources are the main barriers to developing new solutions:**

  *"The organisation of the festival depends on voluntary contributions in terms of planning and coordination, and the time available for such purposes is thus limited. While the implementation of streaming and hybrid solutions generate between 1,000 and 3,000 euros extra income per event to do it properly, so far online ticketing or adverts, cannot generate similar direct incomes."*



Poetry recitals (credit: Asociación Cultural Fifty-Fifty – Photographer: Manuel G. Carranza)

- **The necessary additional financial supports to afford high quality digitalisation of festival:**

  They intend to keep price of tickets relatively low to make the events accessible, when it comes to online ticketing, it would be important as well to be able to reduce the commission of intermediary organisations/platforms, that increase the final costs for the audience and can make online paid events less attractive, especially taking into account the large offer of free-of-charge music and videos available on Internet.

## Further thoughts...

*"In our case, the Covid-19 hasn't reduced our activities but the opposite, as it has been a source of motivation to create new ones and keep on developing and improving our project."*

*"The direct collaboration with a telecommunication and/or audiovisual platforms for the retransmission of events might also be a model of interest in the future. Last but not least, we believe that we shall be able to generate alternative sources of funding through the implementation of crowdfunding campaigns and, eventually, through the future coproductions of marketable digital products to be created with our network of collaborating artists (i.e. NFTs - Non Fungible Tokens)."*



Jazz Concerts (credit: Asociación Cultural Fifty-Fifty – Photographer: Manuel G. Carranza)



Music and poetry workshop for kids
(credit: Asociación Cultural Fifty-Fifty)

**Links** fiftyfiftyfestival.com

# Clonmel Junction Arts Festival

Cliona MAHER, Artistic Director

## Background of the organisation

Clonmel Junction Art Festival (CJAF) was founded in 2001 to celebrate touring theatre and live music. The festival has been described as punching well above its weight for a town with no committed performing arts venue.

Founded by Galloglass Theater Company, it has grown so much during three years that it was necessry to transform it as its own company in 2004.

Today with an average audience of 26,000 visitors, it is the pre-eminent arts organisation in Clonmel, providing a platform for regional and national artists, the infrastructure to develop a body of professional arts workers in the town, and a hub for national and international artists to share space and ideas with a large urban town at the heart of a rural hinterland.

A multi-disciplinary Arts Festival taking place each year at the beginning of July, Junction celebrates the town of Clonmel and the talented artists who live and work here. The 'junction' of the title refers to bringing people together: audiences and artists, local and international companies, town and country.

CJAF is a curated festival, with a series of open calls for artists of all disciplines to perform and create with the festival. We proudly champion artists living and working in Tipperary and are interested in anyone with a professional arts practice who wants to discuss their development with us.

Governed by a voluntary board of management, it leads by an artistic director as permanent full time employee and a bookkeeper as part-time. Then, they hire people in on short term contracts (production marketing, social media managers…). Originally, theatre was always very much at the heart of the festival, but that celebratory idea of having music as well was always very strong. The idea of doing Street Theatre and Circus became part of the festival's identity.

Targets with two focus:

- developing the careers of artists here on the ground, because of the difficulty to have a full-time as professional career in the arts when you're living outside the city.

- developing audiences, for particular art forms from youth to ageing.

The festival is mainly supported by public funding both through the Arts Council & the local authority. The funding from the Arts Council had dropped back over the change in director period. It had been funded by strategic funding from the Arts Council, which is guaranteed year-on-year funding.

They have a very supportive business community and regular partner organisations in trying to develop a strong & confident relationship with them and their staff.

Then the third leg of funding is box office. It's significant in that you need to show that you have public support and you can do it by ticket sales. As funded arts organization, 70% of events were free last year, they had a very low price point on a lot of events. The top ticket price was €15.

## The territory concerned

The Town of Clonmel (Irish: Cluain Meala, meaning 'honey meadow') is the county town and largest settlement of County Tipperary, Ireland. The Latest National Census (3 April 2022) determined that Clonmel had a Population figure of 17,008. The town is built in the valley of the River Suir. To the south, the town is surwrounded by the Comeragh Mountains and Slievenamon to the northeast. To the north, east and west is some of Ireland's richest farmland, known as the Golden Vale. The town covers a land area of approximately 11.59 km².

**Clonmel**
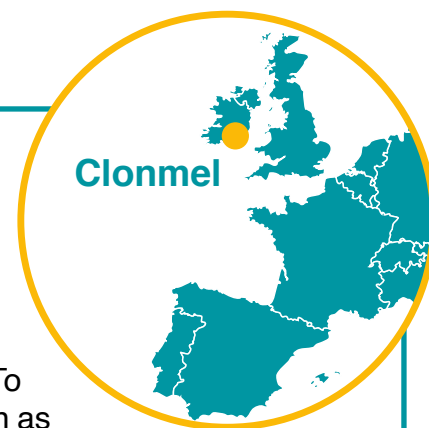
## Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

*"The trauma. All that firefighting was happening."*

The planned festival, like everyone's, was cracked open and fractured. The re-imagined festival took on many of the aspects of its original, but at a remove from the audience and sometimes the artists. Despite these challenges, there was also a certain level of freedom. Artists and production staff responded imaginatively to the questions of "What can we do? What do we want to do?"

*"We were all communicating with each other from different platforms, she was using WhatsApp, somebody else was using text, somebody else was using Facebook Messenger. We all realised that nobody had the broadband width necessary for what we were doing."*

Some activities were stopped. Two productions based on local stories that they had planned for 2020 never happened. But, diverse propositions have been done with a lot of test events:

- A "Poetry Day Ireland" as a spoken word event where number of different Poets and Writers who work with them simply read a poem that they liked, that they found comfort from over the last couple of months. To read them into their phone to broadcast it out.

- A "Clonmel super band": they used every spot in the building to keep them playing and apart, obviously.

- A project with music generation to do a number of junior rock band ensembles. They auditioned kids online, they did teaching by zoom and a regular band meet up by zoom. The kids went off and they were rehearsed. They made a music video for them the first time they all met. They had gone in to record their pieces one by one. So the first time they actually met was when they were making their rock videos.



https://www.musicgeneration.ie/

*"It was a really great learning and maybe we should just have said 'let's close the doors on the 2020 festival". But fools that we were, we decided to go ahead. But we decided we needed to have a more formal setup.So we basically used a music shop in Clonmel Street and converted it into a studio and set it up with Covid restrictions in place. A lot of deep cleaning and spraying of things and separation of people and we pivoted the festival programme into an online version of itself. So instead of having a music trail in pubs at night, we invited local bands to come in and do a set".*

The digital plan was originally a Plan B. We wanted to present some placeholder events digitally in July, at the planned time, and to produce live performance events in the autumn. However, the strictness of the lockdown and the uncertainty around safety issues raised concerns around the logic of holding live events later in the year. They decided to do as much as possible of the original programme digitally and to programme all our activities during the original festival time period.

The audience in 2020 was really fantastic. They decided to put things out completely for free and really Open Access. 72,000 people watched part of Junction Festival in the 10 days of the festival. Digital approach enables to enlarge the targets and to give a broader scope.

*"You see 2020 was a reaction. Where there was a plan and we made a plan for the phase we were supposed to be at, and then the phase would change, so we'd replan, and everything was replanned so often. 2021 was like torture by pivoting. Obviously, this year will still have Covid restrictions in place. It would be unwise to plan the programme without an eye on audience size, location, a permanent Plan B for any live event."*

Celebrating 20 years of creative place-making in 2021, the Junction Dome, a geodesic dome acted as a livestreaming venue for the festival on a square in the center of town.

## Key factors of success to pivoting

- **The engagement of cultural players, artists and their resiliency capacity**

- **A constant support of funders:**

  90% funding for the artists who had already been commissioned to do work, to be paid... even thought the work would not be performed

- **The close link in the core team and the time of the festival's production manager** who was demobbed from his job in UK.



Junction festival committee

# Challenges faced to rebound

- **The lack of technical equipment & skills to face to new digital challenges**

- **The number of funding bodies and their different policies:**

  It takes time, energy and know how with an anticipatory capacity. *"The Arts Council don't care about the size of the audience. If you're supporting more diverse art forms. The County Council very deeply do"*

- **Free/not free events ?**

  We can observe a consumer trend of audience for free events. People can register and don't come, can forget the event (impact on organisation…). *"It's definitely really important to have certain elements within the programme that are still free and that are 'Open Access' and that are a door into the arts for people, they're curated."*

  One thing that seems counterintuitive, and it's something that people have tried over the years, but people value something more if they have to pay for it.

- **Adaptation of digital for performing art:**

  It's difficult to perform in a vacuum. Particularly for music and theatre, the presence of the audience is integral to the work. For visual arts and literature, it's perhaps easier, although work presented in a digital way is easier to skip away from than work you experience in a physical space. The interaction with the audience can be quite superficial. A mix between purely live, blended events and purely digital is possible, and with more time and experience, we can be more creative.

- **Change of professional culture:**

  Many people left the sector and particularly in areas like production management, sound engineering technicians. It is difficult to get a production manager at the moment and costs have risen massively. In addition, the pandemic has changed working life and generated new aspirations generally and in the cultural sector (better balance between private & profesional life, more security…).

The Junction dome

Links    junctionfestival.com

# Laval Virtual

Anne-Sophie CLAYER, Event Project Manager
Maud OUKALTOUM, Event Manager

## Background of the organisation

Laval Virtual is a not-for-profit-organisation (NPO) founded in 1999 with the objective of organising the Laval Virtual show in Laval every year.

Before Covid, Laval Virtual had different types of organisations. In addition to Laval Virtual show, they organised different events such as the Laval Virtual Days, which are one-off events throughout the year consisting of thematic workshops with conferences and an exhibition section. From 2017, they also organised the Laval Virtual Asia exhibition in China, in Qingdao. This was achieved through establishing a partnership with one of the districts of the city of Qingdao to organise a fair on new technologies in China. In addition, Laval Virtual were also co-organisers of an event called VRDays which took place in Amsterdam.

The NPO had several support departments:

- Production,
- Community Relations which was aimed at staying in contact with the Extended Reality (XR) community in the world and maintaining the relationships that we had with this community,
- A Consulting Business Solutions department which was intended to see what was happening in the world of technology and which did a lot of monitoring of these themes in order to propose either magazines or articles on new technologies,
- A Communication department that allows us to promote all of these activities,
- An Administrative department,
- A Training centre.

The targets group was very broad: the customers on the event side could be exhibitors, sponsors and visitors. However, above all, the consultancy arm provided support for all companies that can use virtual technologies. There were from very small businesses to big companies from the CAC 40 (Paris Stock Index), to public bodies such as city councils.

The NPO has developed a strong communication strategy to make themselves known, to build loyalty and which allows them to consolidate their position as market leader every year: *"Laval Virtual was really the first event in the field since 1999. There were no others. And that also created a sort of community, a kind of habit"*.

Laval Virtual is supported by different institutions: the local & regional authorities. Income was also generated through sale of entrance tickets, sold to Vitual Reality (VR) professionals or the general public. There has also been income from the sale of exhibition booths, guided tours, with potential for additional sales for other services, such as providing cocktails at the exhibition or different mini events during the final event. Finally, income is also gained from company sponsorship of the exhibition.

Because of their status as an NPO (an association under the law of 1901, they must not make a profit), and because they were experiencing increasing activity which was not well controlled, restructuring the organisation became necessary: in addition to the NPO, they have created a company.

## The territory concerned

Laval is located around 300 km West of Paris. With about 50,000 inhabitants, the city is on the axis linking Paris to Brest, on the A81 highway and on the train line. It has a rich and competitive economic fabric, combining leading companies in traditional fields (such as the agri-food and automotive industries) with centres of excellence in emerging sectors (such as virtual reality and composite materials).

**Laval**

# Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

The Covid crisis: *"we are in the event business and we were forbidden to set up our own exhibition. we were a month and a half away from the event when Covid really arrived in France with the first lockdowns".*

Laval Virtual transformed the whole format of their event to be delivered fully in a virtual way, which was a world premiere for them. They started to operate virtual events. With this first one in 2020. they were asked by companies and by other event agencies to help them set up their remote events. This was an opportunity to handle virtual events.

The target audience has now grown, they gained notoriety with their first virtual event, especially to be able to serve as "testers" for many people. *"It created a huge media buzz which brought us more clients."*

The management of the cash flow was very complicated: some expenses were committed to service providers and the exhibitors for the most part, had not yet paid for their stand. *"This weakened the financial structure of the association considerably."* They did get the support of the local authorities, who increased their subsidies on an ad hoc basis. They are however still impacted today by the damages caused during that period. They have had to reduce expenses as much as possible. The team was reduced because they divided the structure, their new virtual event activity led to them establishing a new legal company called "Komodal". The new company Komodal required a review of their staffing levels linked to the event and new structure of the organisation. From almost 41 employees, they are now nine in the association of Laval Virtual & 17 in Komodal.

The two editions of 2021 and 2022 were hybrid with online conferences and exhibition because some of exhibitors from the Laval Virtual community where Japanese were not able to travel yet.

They took advantage by developing close relations with foreign Hubs so that they would broadcast the virtual event on their premises: incubators, associations specialised in the sector of virtual reality (from countries such as Brazil, Argentina…). Some of whom will be present in the future events.



*Laval Virtual 2016*

They have created a virtual art gallery, which also gave them impact.

In 2020, 11,000 people attend the event remotely.

*"At any given moment, there could be up to 6,000 people connected at the same time. It was a challenge. On the first day, we were afraid that the servers would fail."*

*"With the community we had, we brought together a group of enthusiast people. So there were 60 people from all over the world and we did tests in about 20 or 30 virtual worlds for more than a week."*



Laval Vitual online 2020

# Key factors of success to pivoting

- **The cohesion of the team:**

  *"Our strength is that we had a team that had known each other for many years and had done many editions of events together. So for the event department it was very smooth. Everybody was comfortable with remote-working."*

- **The flexibility of the team:**

  *"It's really about adaptability. All the personalities that he had in the team understood very quickly that we had to get out of the box and go and explore what was around, and that's what helped quite a lot."*

- **The acceleration of technologies:**

  *"It is clearly Covid that has accelerated things and that has also helped people to open up a little more to the virtual world. It has raised awareness of the uses of virtual reality, and as a result, it is increasing the virtual reality market."*

- **The support of stakeholders, not only financial but also social:**

  *"I had a flash of memories of the Japanese community, who were also very supportive and even created support groups that is still running, "Courage Laval Virtual".*

# Challenges faced to rebound

- **The administrative and legal barriers and the relationships management with customers and providers:**

  *"There were big gaps from an insurance point of view on the risks of a pandemic, because it was a specific clause. But normally, there are cases of 'unforseen circumstances'. But 'unforseen circumstances' did not cover the pandemic."*

  There was the need to save the association, financially speaking. They couldn't afford to pay everyone back (visitors, exhibitors…) and, on the other hand, they had to make sure there was enough money to cover the expenses. *"Everybody wanted to save their own skin. We had to make different financial risk plans. We had to deal with crisis management."*

  This changes needed a specific and perilous communication.

- **Working remotely could be not comfortable for some employee to manage both professional and personal issues** (such as caring for children…)**:**

  even if, the new practices such as online meetings become widespread and have reduced the need to travel.


Recto VRso festival 2023

# Further thoughts…

*"Maintaining the links, the network and the exchanges with all the communities around the world, so that the event in Laval is sustainable."*


Laval Vitual online 2020

# INOD Solutions

Anthony HACQUES, Co-manager & Customer Relations Manager

## Background of the organisation

INOD Solutions is a company founded in 2016 in Laval, France. It was initially involved in virtual reality for the building and real estate industries. They were three business partners working full time. Until 2020, they were doing everything related to project reviews for real estate developers, etc. They did many applications related to the virtual reality world for companies who commissioned them to do so because they were participating in physical exhibitions like other specific building trades. Then they created virtual reality showrooms, thanks to a virtual reality helmet, that could be used by participants during trade fairs, on exhibition booths, to be able to show all of a company's offering and their services. The customers were mainly property developers.

They have a Business to Business (B2B) model as a service provider. The team draw up specifications with their customers and they deliver tailor-made products.

Today, they see themselves as a production studio for applications and 3D content with industry players as targets. Research and Development is a key resource for INOD Solutions. *"As a customised service provider, we tend to have big projects but few (in quantity)."* That can weaken our business model if orders are postponed by the customer or cancelled, it goes down commercially and there is no processing for a certain period.

Now they are a team of six people.



Inod Solutions at Laval Virtual on 2021

## The territory concerned

Laval is located around 300 km West of Paris. With about 50,000 inhabitants, the city is on the axis linking Paris to Brest, on the A81 highway and on the train line. It has a rich and competitive economic fabric, combining leading companies in traditional fields (such as the agri-food and automotive industries) with centres of excellence in emerging sectors (such as virtual reality and composite materials).

**Laval**
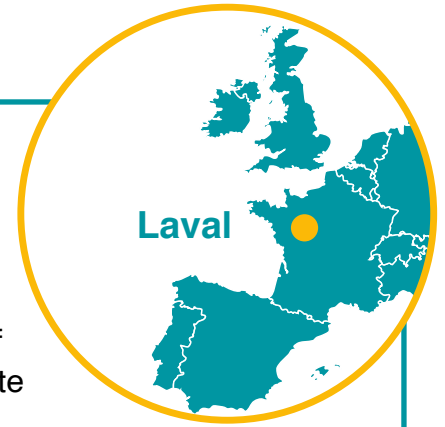
## Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

*"2020 was a 'rollercoaster' year. We went from an order book that would keep us busy for three or four months to zero. Our cash flow had been strained."*

INOD Solutions relied on state aids during this time, especially with part-time unemployment.

The took the opportunity to redo the website.

*"We tried to hold on and keep up."*

They did the Laval Virtual Awards, the first virtual exhibition that allowed them to have some contacts that paid off in June. They had projects that were being designed with potential customers.

They negotiate with banks.

*"Then within a fortnight we had a full order book until the end of December. And among all the orders we received, we got the first one for a virtual exhibition."*

A US solution called VirBela was used during the Laval Virtual word. This proposed only impersonal, bland meeting rooms. Apart from the little avatars moving around, the exhibitors had no visibility, that is a nonsense for a fair. As a result, INOD Solutions decided to create 3D environments. They have launched the 3D virtual showroom, which is accessible online in a browser.

Virtual show solution

Being successful in these challenges of moving into 3D, has allowed them to gain more customers. *"Our added value is in the creation of the 3D universe."*

*"The pandemic has allowed us to increase our skills and our capacity, it is a new string to our bow. From Covid, for instance, we have developed and we are developing all the training applications in virtual reality or everything that is escaping from Virtual Reality."*

Professionally, they keep a hybrid working environment with the team, with a mandatory face-to-face requirement of two days per week in the office. *"It's quite an efficient organisational scheme that satisfies everyone: energy, costs savings, simplicity. We manage to maintain the human link by seeing each other two or three times a week, while bringing a little more autonomy to the organisation of the week."*

This value proposition is a new channel for external communication, but also for internal communication. In terms of logistics, it is very difficult to bring 5,000 employees together physically in the same place for a big company with several entities. Virtual spaces enable them to offer a more interesting experience in making it possible to provide an experience that will be different and to aggregate several contents and the possibility to do animations.


Virtual show solution

# Key factors of success to pivoting

- **The responsiveness and the ability to respond to customers:**
  During the first virtual exhibition of Laval Virtual with 10,000 attendees, *"you have to be hyper, hyper reactive and be able to restore the system in two hours. You can't give up and you have to put it back into service. Not everything was 100% functional, but we managed to isolate the problem and we were able to continue."*

- **A good organisation with a felxible and proactive sales force:**
  They stopped calling and relied on distributors.

# Challenges faced to rebound

- **The short deadlines and the necessity to go fast**

- **The customer readiness level is not mature yet:**

  *"There is a cultural brake on immersive technologies. Virtual reality and augmented reality are still a niche market, but it's evolving fast."*

- **The need to innovate, to launch new products with new uses:**

  *"Today, we can't be satisfied with staying in one [product area] and the same expertise."*



Virtual show solution

**Links**     inod.solutions
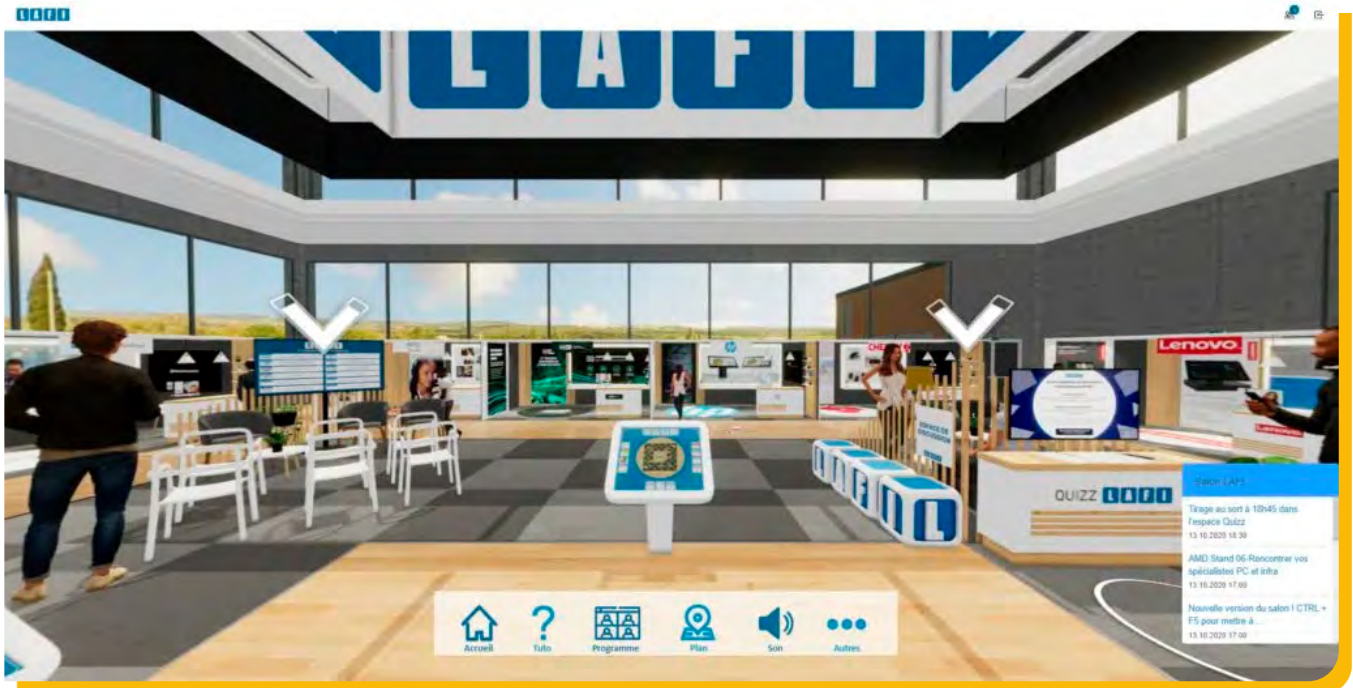
# AR[t] Studio

Chloé GUENNOU, Co-founder

## Background of the organisation

Founded in 2021, AR[t] Studio is a design and development studio for mobile applications, web, games and virtual experiences, dedicated to the world of art and culture. One of the applications that this start-up has developed is BavAR[t]. A real Pokémon'Go application incorporating art and culture. BavAR[t] offers a map of augmented reality experiences close to your location. It offers a similar principle to the famous game of capturing small Japanese monsters, except that the player is collecting virtual artworks. This allows the user to collect points, exchangeable then for vouchers or offers for cultural products.

BavAR[t] is also a B2B platform, allowing art and culture professionals such as galleries or museums to quickly and easily create an augmented reality experience for their target population. This format encourages all players in this sector to develop their innovation, offering them a new source of income, and allowing them to focus on the content itself, and on their marketing strategy rather than on the inherent technical difficulties, often associated with setting up an augmented reality.

A team of three people are involved in this project.

## The territory concerned

Tregunc is located on the coast on the South west of Brittany, 22 km from Concarneau. It's a small town with 7,058 inhabitants.

**Tregunc**



# Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

According to an annual survey published in 2021 by the Art Newspaper, the 100 worldwide most popular art museums welcomed about 230m visitors in 2019. In 2020 this number dropped to 54m with a dramatic loss of revenue, and despite significant efforts to reignite the cultural sector in the post-covid era, they still haven't recovered from their usual traffic. New works and learning habits have emerged, and the public is more sensitive to entertainment. Cultural institutions and museums are now eager to target a broader audience and to have visitors returning more like in the past. Facing a time of continued flux, they are constantly changing their approaches, to improve the quality of their customer experience.

The art and culture sector, such as museums, galleries, theatres or creative businesses, is facing another major challenge: an indisputable gap in cultural practices according to social categories and income. Only 40.1% (> 16 years old) with the lowest income took part in cultural activities during the 12 months prior to the survey. Therefore, one of the main concerns of cultural institutions and businesses today is making art and culture available and understandable to all generations and broadening their audience.

Reinforced by the Covid crisis, digital technology provides an opportunity for cultural institutions by allowing them to be ubiquitous, to engage with new audiences, to help people to prepare and share their visit and to forge new relationships with their visitors. In particular, Augmented Reality (AR) has proved to bring something new to existing collections and attract wider audiences. However, developing an AR app is complex, costly and time-consuming for creative industries, museums or galleries, that don't often have the skills and manpower to manage these projects efficiently.

In this context, as mentioned, AR[t] Studio has developed BavAR[t], as an augmented reality platform for AR[t] & Culture & a game :

**The game:** BavAR[t] is a Pokemon Go-like game, but instead of catching the famous Japanese monsters, the players are catching artworks near him/her. For each catched artwork, players collect points exchangeable for vouchers for cultural goods, such as theatre tickets, opening reception invitation or coupons for online booking. In a nutshell, BavAR[t] allows users to move from one AR experience to another, based on its location, while offering lively, high quality 2D and 3D content varying according to whether it is used in exhibitions, festivals or events.
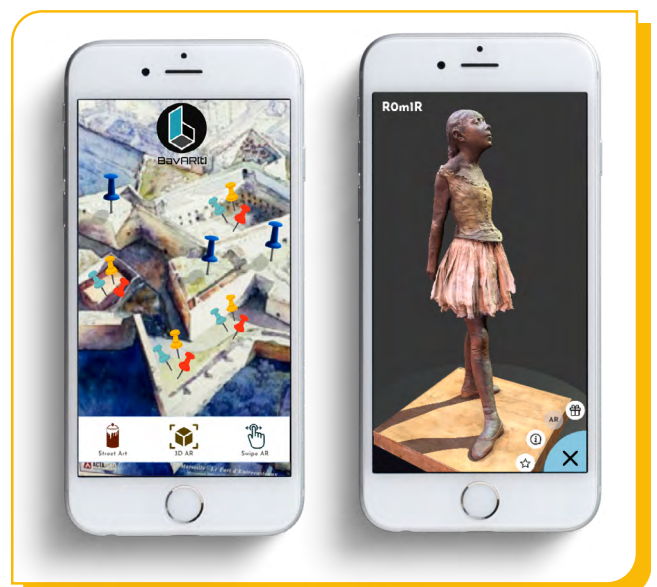


BavAR[t]

**The B2B platform:** Acting as a reference hub for art & culture AR, BavAR[t] also allows professionals to easily create an AR experience for their visitors, public or potential clients by simply injecting their own content and dropping it onto the map to create fun and unique experiences such as treasure hunting, quizes, exclusive rewards, etc. BavAR[t] hosts various types of art such as sculptures, paintings, drawings, archeaological material, photographs, street art, 3D models. Sensitive contents, such as historical or archeaological pieces, requiring specific conservation environments, can easily be exhibited at no risk. *"A democratisation of art by the gamification and the use of new technologies!"*

Players are mainly individuals, including teenagers, gamers, art lovers, but also families, or simply technology aficionados. Professional users are cultural institutions, creative industries, galleries or artists, and are using BavAR[t] to promote themselves to the audience of BavAR[t], i.e. the players.

AR[t] Studio sells their content management, content creation and the online deployment of their AR experiences:

*"We provide various services, from content creation, i.e. 3D modelisation for instance, content optimization, i.e. adaptation of their existing digital content for mobile, artwork digitalization through photogrammetry, or multiple content online deployment".*

*"The Covid and the acceleration of digitalisation constituted an opportunity for us. The public is increasingly demanding interactive mediation devices. We have modelled about 250 artworks, and dropped them on nearly a million points of interest mapped in 31,000 towns in France. Now, we have more than 3,000 users & around 15 professionals, and 600 artworks."*

# Key factors of success to pivoting

- **The ability of the studio to develop internally and lead its own R&D:**

  *"I lead and choose all the technologies, I can make the infrastructure evolve. It allows to reduce by five the R&D costs"*

- **Experimentation and user feedback:**

  *"We achieved 15 experiments with cultural institutions and museums thanks to government subsidies. This is crucial to first, debug the billion of unexpected bugs, and second, to understand players and customers' needs, and skills. For instance, we learnt that augmented reality is absolutely not democratised in the general public. We had to completely review the ergonomic and the pedagogical approach of the app for our Minimum Vital Product. Based on one year of data, we are now developing a totally new interface, mainly based on our user needs and feedback, for having a strong first version. This one year of data is priceless, and allows us to conceive something tailor-made for our players and our customers."*

# Challenges faced to rebound

- **Visibility:**
  "It's a key factor to development. we're lacking skills and resources in terms of marketing and communication. We can be competitive enough for the moment"

- **Communication:**
  "It is a full-time job that for now we cannot afford. Therefore we are doing everything by ourselves, and even if we improved a lot, this is not our core competency."

- **Their particular business model:**
  based on B2B art and culture actors using BavAR[t] to promote themselves to the audience of BavAR[t]. The B2B2C model is complex to start and grow, since the number of BavAR[t] players determine the attractivity to their customers.

- **Apple store and Play store requirements :**
  "They are requesting more and more technical details to comply with. For a small structure such as AR[t] Studio, it is extremely difficult to always update accordingly, since we have a limited amount of human resources, and a simple production pipeline. Additionally, the unpredictable publication delays (for one hour to a few weeks) or random rejections are really killing us, since it is extremely difficult to guarantee to a client a new feature on time."



**Links**     bavart.io
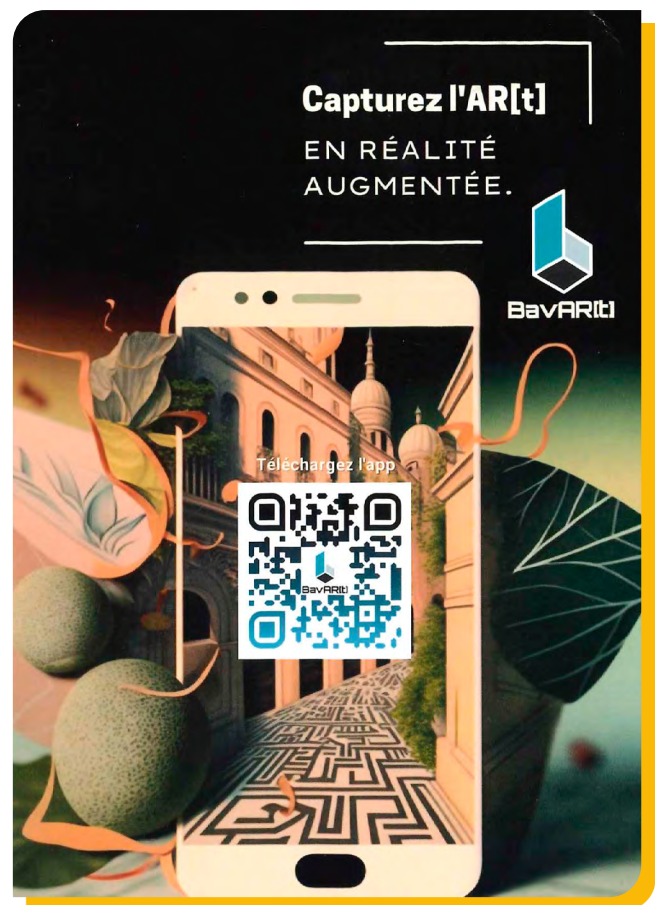
# Peacock & The Worm

Neil CORALL, Marketing Manager / Print Technician
Caitlin DICK, Creative Practitioner

## Background of the organisation

Peacock & The Worm started in 1974. They are an independent open access printmaking facility, with an exhibition space and are part of Scotland's workshops network. They have always engaged with education and have links with schools including the local art school. As a not-for-profit organisation, any money that is generated through the workshop users or their print publishing program gets reinvested, and they are funded mainly by Creative Scotland. They also received funds from Aberdeen City Council. Peacock & The Worm have a team of 8-9 people and they take on different educational projects. For example, they have been running one-to-one sessions and group sessions on budgeting, for vulnerable young people, this involves looking at creative activities that they are interested in and working from there.

They operate as an open access service and their target group is not particular to any demographic: hobbyists, artists, people who just fancy a little dabbling and trying to do bits and pieces *"our printing presses can produce work that will hang in the art gallery. But the same presses will be used by someone who just wants to come in and learn how to do a wood cut or a screen printing, etc."*

The mission for Peacock (a workshop for art) and the Worm (a space for art) has been to activate spaces where artists and citizens are prompted by artworks to congregate around ideas and practices that interrupt everyday routines.

Their exhibition program is mainly contemporary art focused. Peacock and the Worm have a published prints program where they have been co-publishing prints with artists since their inception, available for the public to buy and used to create revenue.

Peacock sees their organisation as an important part within the city for retention of people. The project engagement that they do with the education team provides a facility for people who have studied, for example art design, communication design, or fine art. If they want to carry on in the city, this means they can get access to their facilities and Peacock is really the only place for them.

Having such a small team of under 10 people, means that they often require volunteers to help with all aspects of their organisation.

## The territory concerned

Peacock (an open access workshop for art) can be accessed nestled in the backstreets of the Castlegate area and the Worm (project space and gallery) is on Castlegate in the heart of Aberdeen City, on the North East of Scotland. This location is at the east end of the city's main thoroughfare, with nearby historic features of the Mercat Cross (built in 1686) and the much-loved Mannie Well.

Aberdeen is the third most populous city in Scotland and the 37th most populous urban area in the United Kingdom, with a population of approximately 214,000 people  and growing 0.22% annually. The city is home to two major universities and has strong gas, oil, tourism and bioscience industries.

## Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

The pandemic brought many challenges to the culture and creative sector however, Peacock did not close their doors and instead in March 2020, they sought opportunity by working with CFINE (a local charity food bank) to produce and deliver free creative activity packs for young people and families. They called these activity packs the Boredom Box, aimed at supporting young people aged 8-26 to improve their mental well-being, reduce loneliness and to participate in creative activities, this proved to be extremely successful. The plan for the Boredom box came out of the struggle to engage online with the young people who usually visited them on a weekly basis for one to one or group sessions. This enabled them to get creative activities out to the public who needed them.

Peacock's funding stream was through Creative Scotland which is decided every three years. However, Creative Scotland froze the decision for a year or so whilst Covid was going on.

*"I think for our mental health we decided to carry on working because it gave you a bit of a purpose or something to do."*

They started delivering around 15 to 20 boxes per month and over the past couple of years, up until now it has slowly grown larger and larger, and now there is still demand for people receiving boxes.

*"So from originally 20 boxes we're now putting out 156 boxes every second month. It was every month, but due to demand and quantity of boxes that we're trying to organise, we've had to reduce it to every second month to give the practitioners enough time to create these activities."*

They are now delivered across Aberdeen. These came at a time when it was difficult to engage with some groups online. Peacock have reached a large population of people that would not have been able to come into Peacock's studio. They created a postcard with a stamp, so this allowed people who received each box to send personal feedback about their experience with it, with each month's box.

The Boredom boxes took a lot of planning. The idea behind the boxes was to include £10 worth of materials and create activities that can be used as a guide to using materials in the box, but also give the user the freedom to experiment, and not to follow the instructions. They also had to be careful that the materials provided were suitable for the age group receiving them (aware of chemicals, child safety scissors, sharpeners etc.)

Communication methods did not change for Peacock during the pandemic with most of their focus continued to be done through social media.

# Key factors of success to pivoting

- **During the pandemic their print sales in their online store increased:**

  because of people being locked up at home with nothing to do, they found that people had more opportunities to browse the internet and spend money. They managed to generate an income with their print sales.

- **Getting time to think about changes to their business model:**

  they had spoken for years about having a membership system because they are open access and as certain workshop users might benefit from a membership system: a member would be able to present the work that they produced. They also looked into the opportunity of holding digital exhibitions (although aware that this does not beat looking at art in a gallery space).

- **Working with new audiences:**

  They now engage with other charity organisations who contacted them about the boredom boxes, and they now provide boxes to organisations such as Aberdeen South Community Mental Health and Aberdeen Foyeur, Cfine, Aberdeen North's food banks, and Ukraine community hubs.

  *"The Education Boredom Box project has really opened up a different audience that we might have not worked with to that degree..."*

  The main legacy from the Boredom boxes is that people were keen to go and do stuff again when things were opening up again. Peacock gained a new audience of people who found them during lockdown. They also have more workshop users now than pre-lockdown.

  *"So yeah, I guess that's a lasting legacy from it as well… the organisation's been made more visible."*



Lithography in Peacock studio



Relief printing in Peacock studio

# Challenges faced to rebound

- **The effects of inflation and the cost of living going up** is having more of an impact on the creative and cultural sector, than Covid had or has:

*"I think now it's struggling, not because of Covid, but as a result of the cost of living. You know, most cultural organisations will be struggling because of energy bills. I think that's having a far bigger effect than Covid."*
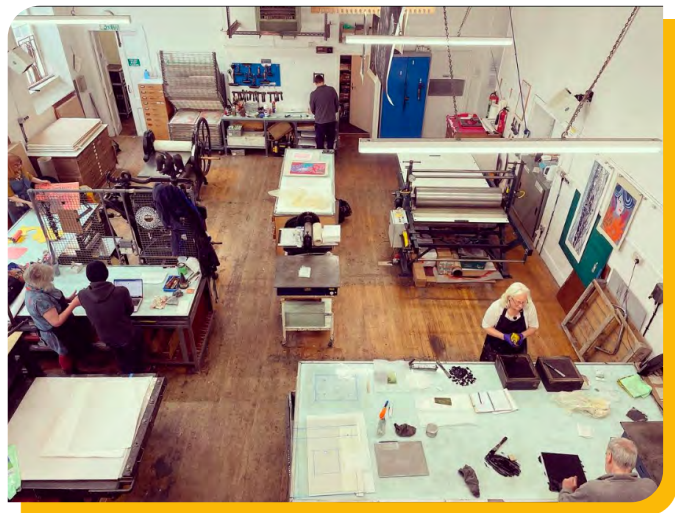


Peacock studio

- **The funding to sustain:**

Peacock illustrates a story of opportunity out of times of adversity and being able to stay open and delivery their innovative project of The Boredom Box, has enabled them to impact their local communities. Now that the funding is finished for this project, they have decided to keep it on and fund it from their own core funding. However, although recovery from the pandemic looks bright for their organisation, they comment on the challenges for others in the sector. Aberdeen City Council had made cuts of up to 100% across the whole cultural sector. Many of the local libraries are closing. Peacock are lucky that their main funders are not the Council. However, they noted that organisations in the Central Belt of Scotland have more competition.

*"We're the only print workshop like this here. Further north is Inverness, and further south is Dundee. So we're not fighting for funding with many others, whereas if we were in Glasgow or Edinburgh, then we would be. So that would be a different story."*

This paints a picture of a bleaker outlook post-pandemic for other creative and cultural sector organisations.

**Links**   peacock.studio

# Cherry Massia

Irene ROMERO, Founder and Professional Designer

## Background of the organisation

Cherry Massia is an online brand established in 2018. It reinterprets the urban luxury codes by combining them with an underground aesthetic and strong conceptual meanings. The brand develops its own vision of fashion, empowering individuality whilst exploring several social and vital considerations. They design unique and exclusive pieces: *"our production volume is limited so as not to contribute to the unnecessary massification characteristic of the current fashion industry. Furthermore, we do not use animal materials."*

They don't have a physical store, so they offer garments for sale online, however, they don't work internally in an office, especially when it comes to drawing up the designs.

The customers were women between 16 and 35 years old, however it is true that *"our customers daring and groundbreaking women, who seek to make a difference and a style of their own, different from the majority."*

The prices are elevated (exclusivity of the designs, the quality of our materials) enough to generate profits despite the fact that both production and sales are not massive.

*"One of our collection dresses, was worn by a Spotify model appearing at Times Square´s panels in New York, so this implied a different and significant source of income to the brand."*
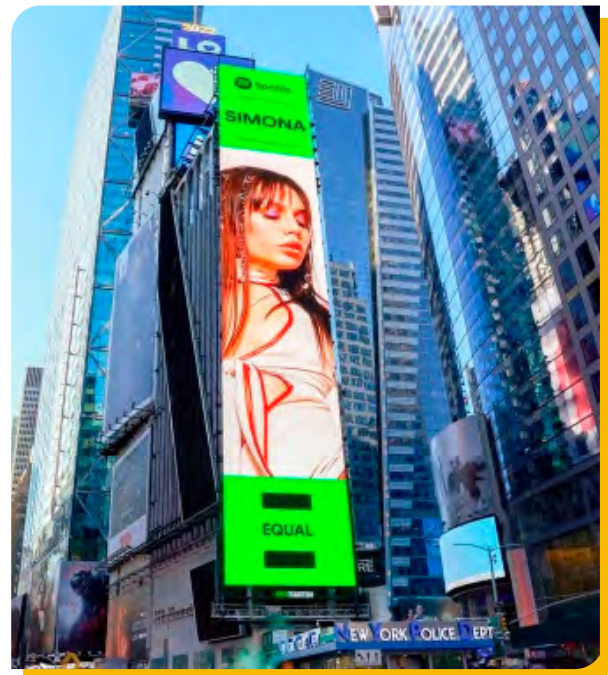


Cherrymassia´s dress worn at Times Square´s pannels

They currently have an online shop and stockists outside Spain, although after the Covid-19 it has been very difficult for them to sell at the same rate as before, they balance their expenses thanks to the production of costumes for events, classes, etc.

## The territory concerned

Sevilla is the country's fourth-largest city, it had a population of 684,234 in 2021, out of a total of 1,535,379 in its urban area. Situated at the centre of a rich agricultural region, crossed by the Guadalquivir River and connected to a major communications network, the city is the economic, political and cultural heart of Andalusia, and is one of the most important cities not only in Spain, but also in Southern Europe with a remarkable historical heritage.

**Seville**

# Focus on the Covid pandemic experience

Covid-19 has brought about a very strong global economic disruption, in all sectors from finance to hospitality; in the particular case of the fashion industry, sales fallen by almost 40% between the beginning of January and March 2020. Therefore due to the uncertainty generated, consumers were unsure of their economic situation and they tended to want to save money.

*"Some data mentioned that after the pandemic, 65% of the consumers said they would reduce their spending in fashion, compared to a 40% reduction in all other kind of products, as people felt real economic uncertainty, so they tended to save money.It shocked me"*

For Cherry Massia, the main challenge has been related to the impossibility of continuing parading physically, and on a personal level it has caused creativity blocks, due to the general uncertainty. *"For instance, for the collection I was working in 2021, I needed more months than usual for finishing it and for getting adapted, me and the business, to the new reality we were living."*

As a fashion designer, Irene had to start diversifying and began designing for external projects, not only through her own firm but also building on the impact of her own designs and her background as a creative. The production process was particularly impacted with government restrictions and lower sales



Cherry Massia Fall-Winter´ 22-23 Collection

because online via our website. Therefore, they started to carry out work in a much more connected way, through computer software and using digital tools to make online designs and to streamline certain processes; however, unfortunately many of their suppliers had to close down, so they also had to look for new partners.

# Key factors of success to pivoting

- **The boom of digitized communication:**

  it's more direct and rationalized. *"In the fashion sector, it is true that people used to shop online years ago, but maybe they did not trust it as much or preferred to stick to the traditional model. Today, the volume of online sales is much higher, although this in turn has led to an increase in returns, as people buy without being able to see or try on the product."*

- **Receiving provided a funding source**

- **Gaining public attention:**

  "*As an opportunity, I would remark the launching in 2022 of one of my latest post-Covid collections, 'Zenith', which received an unbelievable reception from the public, both on and off the catwalk…".*

- **The ability to continue maintaining external income** as a fashion designer, in order to keep the brand afloat

- **The ability to keep the brand image alive through social media, fashion shows and celebrities** and to sell cheaper and more affordable pieces for both the business and their customers



Cherry Massia at MBFW



Cherry Massia 20-21 collection

# Challenges faced to rebound

- **The uncertainty of the context:**

*"The biggest impact has been on a personal level, due to the mental toll of the situation and the uncertainty. It also happened at a time when the brand was making a lot of noise and COVID brought everything to a standstill, so it was a bit difficult. However, once it was over, I found a way to find new clients by carrying out projects for event wardrobe and thanks to this I have been able to start to resume the firm's activity with a certain degree of normality."*

At a personal level, the mental toll and the feeling of uncertainty

- **Making the right choices as an entrepreneur:**

*"I had to stop because I could not afford the costs involved in producing a clothing collection, but I was able to stay relevant by selling T-shirts and designer masks".*

- **Assuming the difficult situation and the standstill in the whole sector** at a moment that was going very well for the firm**:**

*"at a time when the brand was making a lot of noise, Covid brought everything to a standstill, so it was a bit difficult".*



Cherry Massia Fall-Winter´ 18-19 Collection

**Links**   cherrymassia.com
instagram.com/cherrymassia

# Conclusion

Thanks to these inspiring testimonies, this exploratory review highlights key factors of success to pivoting and challenges faced to rebound.

## Factors of success

New technologies Responsiveness
Adaptability Team
Technology acceleration Commitment
Time Creativity Cohesion
Solidarity Flexibility Abilities
Engagement Public-private partnership
Social media Public support

## Challenges

Change of professional culture
Innovation Lack of knowledge
Change management Financial restraints
Go fast Uncertainty Visibility
Rising costs New business model
Change of user's behaviour Lack of digital skills
Audience mobilisation

Cámara
Sevilla

GCU
Glasgow Caledonian
University

LIT
LIMERICK INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY

Technopole
Quimper-Cornouaille

LAVAL MAYENNE TECHNOPOLE
LMT
INNOVER & RÉUSSIR

Fundación
Municipal
de Cultura
Ayuntamiento de Avilés

Technopole
Quimper-Cornouaille

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