



OLLSCOIL NA  
GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF GALWAY

Ionad do Theicneolaíochtaí  
Cruthaitheacha  
Centre for Creative  
Technologies

# Annual *Report*

2024

University  
ofGalway.ie





Masterclass: “Shifting Perspectives: Exploring non-binary and trans identities in digital spaces”, facilitated by **Maggie Bain** and **Leah Kurta** (Co-Founder, Ida XR Studio, UK). November, 2024

Art-X Artists in Residence, Ruth Clinton and Niamh Moriarty presenting at the Cube Moss Arts Centre, Virginia Tech, US. October, 2024.



# Introduction

The Centre for Creative Technologies was established in 2023 to support and develop research and teaching exploring the intersections between creative practice and technology. Situated with the College of Arts at the University of Galway, it draws on the College's traditional strengths in the areas of creativity to develop the interdisciplinary approaches needed to tackle the key societal challenges we face today.

Building on the infrastructure and programme developments of its inaugural year in operation, 2024 has seen the Centre develop and strengthen its PhD research programme, expand its engagement with academic researchers, artists and the creative

industries, and attract national and international research funding.

Whilst the Centre fosters and supports research and teaching across a broad range of disciplines and areas of enquiry, it has brought a particular focus to issues of inclusion and sustainability in its masterclass programme, artist residencies, and funded research projects.

With the forthcoming launch of the Institute for Creativity, we look forward in 2025 to supporting and developing a vibrant community of researchers, students, artists and members of the public to bring creative and critical approaches to our understanding and uses of technology.

Conn Holohan,  
Director

# Building Awareness & Community

A key objective for this year was to build awareness of the Centre and its activities both within the University, and with external communities operating in the research, creative, cultural and technology sectors.

## Audience

across newly created social media profiles and mailing list

1811  
People

## MASTERCLASS SERIES & CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

» 13 Masterclasses

» 8 Creative Workshops

» 1 Community Meet-up

204

## Individuals attended

from across academia, creative practice, cultural & creative industries, public sector and the technology sector

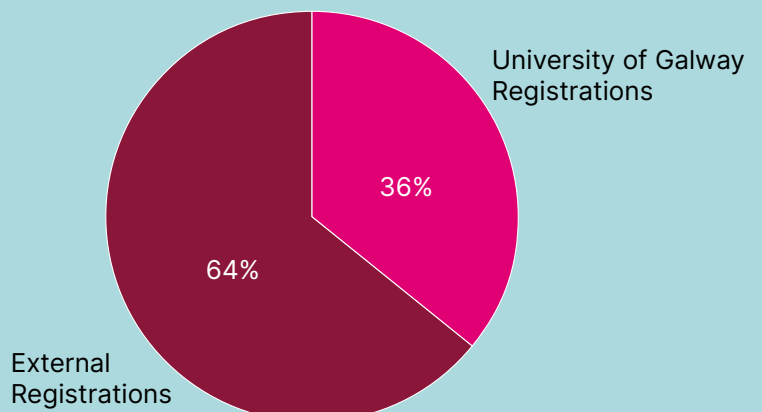
## Masterclass & Workshop Registration

University of Galway vs.  
Non-University of Galway Participants

377

## Event Registrations

of which 64% were from outside University of Galway



# PhD Research

The Centre has five funded research students all of whom are developing practice-based PhD projects in the area of creative technologies.

Their projects address areas including:

- Proximity and intimacy in virtual space
- Digital visualization of cultural heritage
- Failure and error in generative AI
- Citizen engagement and urban planning
- Audience attention and immersive media

All research students are co-supervised across multiple disciplines, including computer science, theatre and performance, geography, film and media studies, philosophy and political science.

To-date, the Centre's PhD student cohort have presented work at multiple national and

international conferences, contributed to a public policy report, and currently have 6 articles and book chapters accepted for publication. They have participated or been involved in organising international workshops and exhibitions, with one student having completed a 3-week artistic residency at Studio Quantum, funded by the Goethe-Institut in Karlsruhe, Germany.

A Centre reading group was established in 2024 to bring together research students and supervisors on a monthly basis to discuss scholarly developments in the field.

In March, 2025 the Centre will host a visiting PhD researcher from Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain, for 3 months.



PhD students at the Centre for Creative Technologies: (L-R) Hermano Luz Rodrigues, Lua Flannery, Rocío Romero Grau, Hua-Chun Fan (Fionn), Dr Conn Holohan (Director, Centre for Creative Technologies), Dr Máiréad Casey (Postdoctoral researcher with the MSCA-funded REBPAF project), Alaz Okudan. December, 2024.



Facilitators of the “Transforming Stagecraft Through Immersive Arts and Motion Capture” workshop: [L-R] Caoimhe Wandel-Brannigan, Guillaume Auvray, Jo Mangan.



Workshop participants during a collaborative session

# Capacity Building

The Centre continued in its objective to build capacity in creative technologies within the University and region through a number of ongoing and new initiatives in 2024.

## Masterclasses

The Centre hosted 13 masterclasses over 2 semesters in 2024, covering areas such as sustainable technological development, generative image manipulation, the neuroscience of creativity, and access and inclusion in digital spaces. This programme included collaboration with **Arts in Action** in the delivery of several performance-oriented sessions.

The Centre installed audio-visual equipment to ensure that all masterclasses will be available to attend online from 2025, thereby broadening access and participation.

## Workshops

In addition to the masterclass series, the centre ran a number of intensive workshops across 2024:

- “Creating Augmented Reality Experiences”, run in collaboration with the **French Embassy in Ireland**.
- “Transforming Stagecraft Through Immersive Arts and Motion Capture.” A two-day workshop aimed at academics and artistic practitioners, delivered by leading industry professionals.
- Virtual Production Creative Residency Workshops & Open Studios. A series of 6 short open studio sessions and workshops hosted in collaboration with Ardán and Galway Culture Company.

## Teaching and Programme Development

A programme proposal has been developed for a **Postgraduate Certificate in Creative Technologies**, targeting creative practitioners and media graduates, with the aim of launching in September 2025.

In addition, Centre staff have contributed to programmes across the University including the MA Advocacy & Activism, MA Journalism, MA Education, MA Environment, Society and Development, the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching & Learning and the Scientific Arts micro credential.

## Internship hosting

The Centre has developed a student internship programme that commenced in the summer of 2024 and will open to US undergraduate students in the summer of 2025.

## Equipment Loans and Access

Through access to its equipment, the Centre enabled research, teaching and learning, as well as innovative creative practice. Those making use of the equipment came from disciplines across the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, UrbanLab, School of Computer Science, School of Medicine, as well as creative practitioners who participated in our variety of artist residencies.



*Eirmersive, the representative voice of the Irish immersive sector, proudly supports the exceptional initiatives of the Centre for Creative Technologies in raising awareness, fostering skill development, and advancing the industry.*

*Throughout 2024, the Centre hosted a dynamic calendar of innovative workshops, talks, and sessions, which Eirmersive actively promoted and attended. Feedback from our members has been overwhelmingly positive. We are eager to continue our close collaboration with the Centre in 2025, championing its efforts and encouraging engagement among our members and the broader immersive ecosystem.*



Camille Donegan

CEO, Eirmersive



# Awards

## ENLIGHT Impact Award



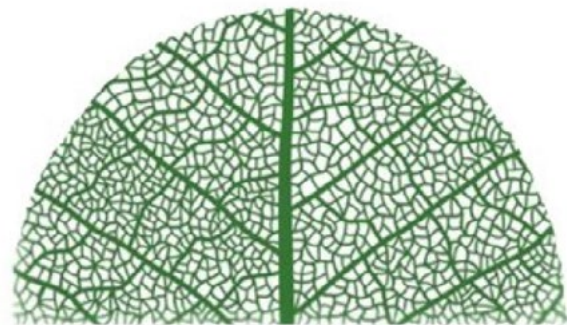
ENLIGHT Impact Award winners, including Dr Conn Holohan who collected an award on behalf of the Immersive Empathy project for societal impact in the area of culture and creativity.

## Heritage Week Award

September 2024 saw the Galway Traveller Movement awarded a Heritage Week Award for the project 'Reimagining Life on the Road'.

The project is a collaboration between Galway Traveller Movement, the Discipline of History, and the Centre for Creative Technologies.

Funded by the Heritage Council's Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2024, the project focuses on gathering and documenting the rich and beautiful oral history stories depicting Travellers' lives on the road, while mapping and sharing the traditional Mincéir camping sites in Galway City & County.



*Reimagining Life on the Road*





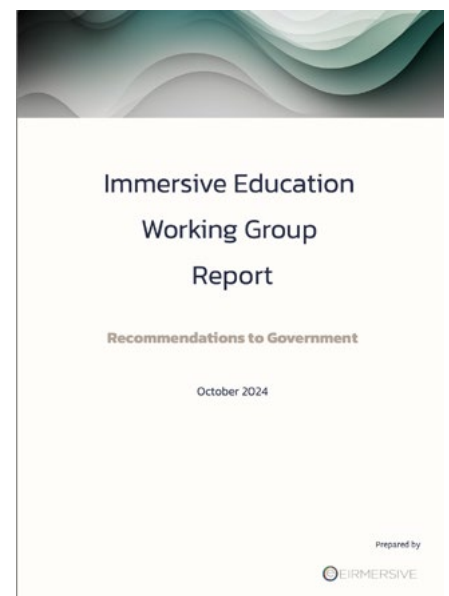
Participants at the Centre's Augmented Reality and Creative AI workshop during Galway Science and Technology Festival, November 2024.

# Community & Sector Engagement

Key objectives of the Centre include the fostering of collaborations and partnerships across academic institutions, industry and society, as well as addressing issues of inclusivity and access in and through creative technologies. The Centre has furthered these objectives in 2024 through:

## Policy development & contributions

- Member of the Immersive Education Working Group, coordinated by **Eirmersive**, which launched its report and recommendations to government in October.
- Contributed to Ireland's first AI Art assembly, hosted as part of the **Beta Festival**, which brought together stakeholders from AI research, industry, public sector, cultural institutions, and the arts to consider issues of policy and regulation.
- Presented on Centre research at conferences and symposia nationally and internationally.



## Youth Engagement

During the **Galway Science and Technology Festival** in November, the Centre hosted **60 primary and secondary school students** across 5 workshops on Creativity using Generative AI and Augmented Reality. Children worked in groups with interactive AI tools to create imaginary creatures, which were animated and then brought to life in the real-world using Augmented Reality technologies. As part of the festival, the Centre also hosted an open evening, where parents and children had the opportunity to try out a range of Virtual and Augmented Reality headsets.



Sean Burns, AR Workshop Facilitator. November, 2024

The Centre for Creative Technologies will launch a 6-week programme for secondary school students in February 2025 as part of the University of Galway **Youth Academy**, entitled “Intersections: Exploring the blending of art, artificial intelligence and the creative process.”



*The Galway Culture Company has the great pleasure of partnering with the Centre for Creative Technologies in the development and delivery of a number of exciting projects in the Digital Creative Industries, projects at the intersection of art, research, technology, and design, empowering creatives to innovate, embrace new technologies, and build global partnerships.*

*The Centre provides much needed research and innovation which is essential for the further development of the sector. We are particularly grateful to the Centre staff for their ongoing support and advice.*



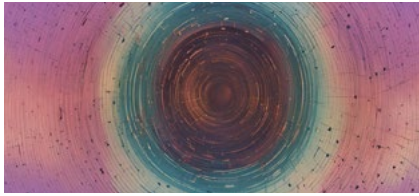
**Marilyn Gaughan Reddan**

Chief Executive, Galway Culture Company.

Member of the European Commission's European Capitals of Culture Expert Panel and a member of the European Urban Initiative Expert Pool

## Creative Residencies

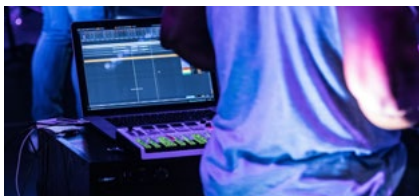
Throughout 2024 we partnered with local and international organisations to offer artist residencies to those interested in exploring the intersection of technology and creative practice.



### Art X Residency

INSTITUTE FOR CREATIVITY, ARTS, AND TECHNOLOGY AT VIRGINIA TECH

An artist exchange between Galway and the US which invites participating artists to explore new ways of engaging with digital technology in their creative practice. This year we welcomed Chelsea Thompto from Virginia Tech, while Irish artists Ruth Clinton and Niamh Moriarty visited the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology at Virginia Tech.



### Virtual Production Creative Residencies

ARDÁN AND GALWAY CULTURE COMPANY

The scheme utilises the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to connect Virtual Production practitioners from outside of Ireland and invite them to Galway to take up residency positions. Participating filmmakers came from Germany and Spain, and each spent 4 weeks in Galway working between the Centre for Creative Technologies, and off-site virtual production facilities.



### Cybernate Digital Arts Residency

CULTURE WORKS, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN IRELAND AND THE HACNUM NETWORK

Cybernate is a research residency collaboration between Ireland and France, supporting Irish and French digital artists to interrogate access to public space and to explore the significance of digital public art.



## Creative Residencies in 2025

In 2025 we will host artists as part of the Creative Ireland-funded “Air We Share” project, and will collaborate with the Arts Council on a Digital Artist Residency programme. In November, we will host a US expert under a recently awarded Fulbright Specialist Host Institution programme for the project: ‘Inclusivity by Design: Accessibility and Creative Technology’.





*The Centre for Creative Technologies has been very accommodating in supporting partnerships and facilitating opportunities that Culture Works has approached them with, regardless of scale. It has quickly established itself as a valuable resource for artists and creatives, providing access to equipment, space, and supportive conversations that engage artists, stakeholders, and audiences.*

*It is impressive what the Centre has achieved in such a short period, and I am curious to see how its ambitions and research objectives evolve. There is significant potential for the Centre to become a key resource for the region, and I look forward to exploring further opportunities for collaboration.*



**Denise McDonagh**

Director, Culture Works

Digital Arts Advisor, Arts Council

## Community Engagement

The Centre has continued developing impactful relationships with community organisations throughout 2024. Building on our relationship with **Galway Simon Community** we have participated in several outreach events with their commercial partners, including **Medtronic** and the **Hyde Hotel**, based on the co-designed Immersive Empathy project. The methods and outcomes of this project were presented during an Irish Oral History Network event for Heritage Week 2024 at Cork City Library.

The Reimagining Life on the Road project saw a collaboration on a Heritage Council funded project with the Centre, **Galway Traveller Movement**, and the Discipline of History. It focused on the collection and mapping of stories related to Traveller camps throughout the city and county. Collectors from Galway Traveller Movement were trained in Oral History approaches to interviewing to gather these stories.

New relationships were developed with **Concept Null**, a digital arts collective based in Limerick, which hosted its first community meet-up in Galway at the Centre in August. The Centre has established a relationship with the UK-based **Ida Network** for women, non-binary and trans people working within the immersive XR sector. Representatives of the organisation hosted a

workshop as part of the Centre's Masterclass series, and contributed to an application to the 2024 VP EDI Project Fund.

## Industry Engagement

Ongoing engagement with the commercial sector and policy-oriented industry bodies came in a variety of ways. The Centre's Director was appointed to the **Digital Creative Industries Regional Development Group**, and has been an invited participant to events including:

- A session on Artificial Intelligence policy hosted by **Meta's President of Global Affairs** at the US Ambassador's Residence in Dublin
- Contributor to the industry-focused **Game Changers Conference** at the Cairnes School of Business & Economics
- Spoke at **SALTO Digital Dialogues**, run by the SALTO Digital Resource Centre which acts as a knowledge hub between policy and practice in the implementation of Digital Transformation.

The Centre hosted a roundtable event on the "Immersive Technology Sector on the Island of Ireland", featuring representatives of **Eirmersive**, an industry body for the Immersive Technology Sector, and the Immersive Technology Lead at **Digital Catapult**, a deep tech innovation organisation.

Community outreach sessions in partnership with Galway Simon Community at Hyde Hotel (left) and Medtronic (right).



“The Centre for Creative Technologies has been a place for inspiration and a breath of fresh air for me here in Galway. I can’t express how wonderful it is to see workshops taking place here in the city that highlight Creative Tech and bring together people from diverse backgrounds who are interested in this sector.

As a theatre maker who sees huge potential in this field, and works with creative tech in different ways, the standout experiences for me were the “Transforming Stagecraft Through Immersive Arts and Motion Capture” workshop, as well as the “Shifting Perspectives: A Workshop Exploring Non-Binary and Trans Identities in Digital Spaces”. These workshops introduced me to tangible workflows and ideas.

The workshops fostered a welcoming and open space where participants could discuss various tools, access, funding and the realities of using technology in this way. The Centre makes me feel like I have access to a network of like-minded people, which is truly incredible to have.



Jess Harkin

Director & Producer,  
Creative Director of Hysteria Teatar



# Research Activity & Funding

The Centre led and partnered on multiple national and international funding applications within 2024, including applications to:

- SFI Research Centre and Infrastructure Funding
- Irish Research Council
- Culture Ireland
- Horizon Europe
- ENLIGHT Research Network funding

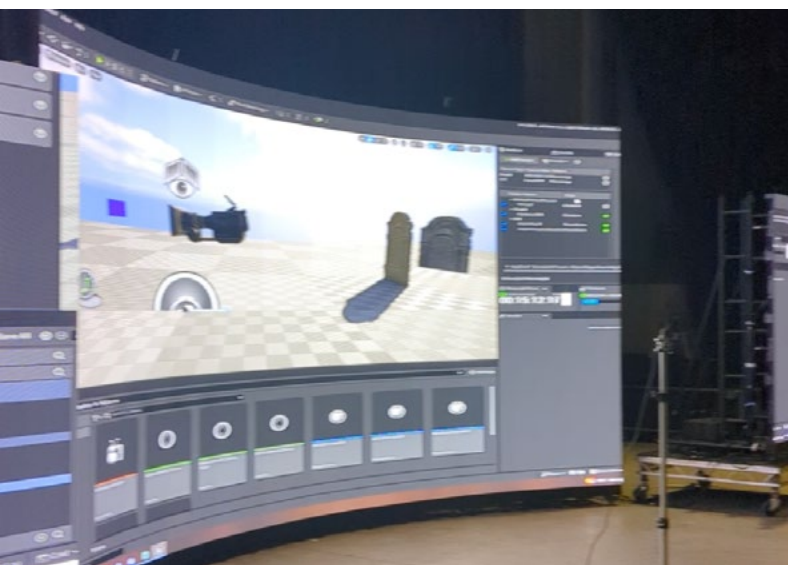
The Centre secured funding for ongoing research projects from the Fulbright Commission, Creative Ireland, Horizon Europe, the Galway Culture Company, the University of Galway EDI Project Fund and the College of Arts Research Incentivization Scheme.

These funding successes have enabled the Centre to develop its research activities exploring the intersection of creativity and technology, with a particular focus on questions of inclusion and sustainability. These include:

- “The Air We Share,” a citizen science project that brings creative practice into community settings to explore questions of air quality and environmental sustainability, run in

partnership with the Centre for Climate and Air Pollution Studies, Galway City Council and Westside Resource Centre.

- A creative case study exploring virtual production and sustainable media practices, in development as part of the Pacesetters Horizon Europe project.
- A two-day workshop on “Neurodivergent Design: Cultivating Inclusion with Creative Technologies,” run in collaboration with Neurodivergent Student Society (ND Soc) and the discipline of psychology.
- Artist-led workshops on the Irish immigrant experience, including creative engagements with the IMIRCE archives at the University of Galway (The Kerby A. Miller Collection of Irish Emigrant Letters and Memoirs from North America).
- An international conference on technology and sustainable film production, taking place in May 2025.
- The development of international networks of academic, industry and artist partners working towards further project development, including an application in 2025 for a Marie Curie Doctoral Network.





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Cover Image: Roundtable Discussion- “The Immersive Tech Sector on the Island of Ireland”. Pictured (L-R): **Conn Holohan** (Director, Centre for Creative Technologies), **Aisling Murray** (Founder & Director, Beta Festival), **Mark Roddy** (Programme Manager, Eirmersive), **Nigel McAlpine** (Immersive Technology Lead, Digital Catapult, Northern Ireland). October, 2024.