

CREATIVE HUB

MARCH EDITION

Welcome to your monthly update on all things creative in Exeter! In this month's edition we chat to the artist making this year's Two Short Nights awards, talk to local band Haytor about their first tour, hear a reflection from IRIS Prize director on their 20 year anniversary, and find out more about the current Walkway Gallery exhibition.

What have you been up to this month?

Have a piece of creative news or an opportunity you'd like to be shared? Send us a message on our social media channels and we'll include what we can in future editions.

Want more updates, opportunities and creative news?

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Two Short Nights Awards Commission: Marson Wu

Exeter based artist Marson Wu has been commissioned to make this year's Two Short Nights Film Festival Awards. We caught up with Marson to find out more about her practice and the inspiration behind the awards.

Tell us about your practice - how did you get started?

I'm Marson, I am an illustrator from Taiwan, based in Exeter. After finishing my MA degree in Illustration at the University of Brighton, I started my small business. I love creating various quirky creatures by cutting paper, cyanotype, watercolour and risograph. I make them into greeting cards, art prints and wall hangings. I love trying different kinds of materials and enjoy the process of understanding them. These creatures could be seen as myself or someone else I have met before. I grab these facial expressions from different moments and put them into my work. Animals and plants are also the elements in my work. I like it when people see the creatures and say: "Oh! It looks a bit like me!" Or "It looks just like my friend!"

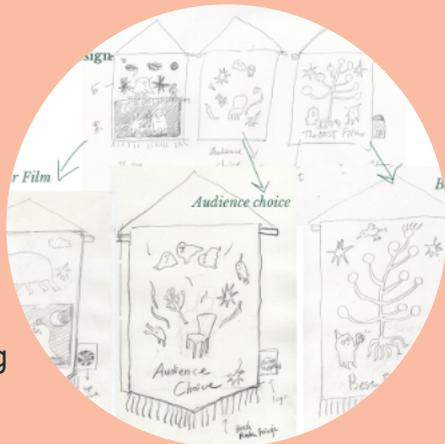
What has been the inspiration behind the design of these awards?

When designing the Two Short Nights awards, I started from the name of them. The 48 Hours Award was the easiest one to visualise. I used two suns and two moons to represent the 48 hours, with two beasts working hard day and night. The Audience Choice Award, for me, as an audience, we sit in our chairs, watching films and come up with various feelings, thoughts and emotions. The Best Film Award was more challenging. Then I imagined a great film is like a great tree. I made the the roots of

the tree as human legs like shape, representing the people behind the scenes. You won't see their faces, but they are the foundation of completing a film.

What are you looking forward to seeing/taking part of in Two short nights?

I am excited to see the 48 Hour Film Competition, as it's such an interesting idea and also a challenge for the filmmakers.



What do you enjoy most about being a part of the creative scene in Exeter?

Exeter is a great location for creative people. It has beautiful natural scenery around here, which is a resource of inspiration for my work and there is a creative community here. Maker Mart was one of the starting points for my business, and then St Thomas Winter Market, organised by an amazing team, and the lovely Map pop-up space, among others. It's not just that people create things here—local people are also willing to support local makers and artists. Many people are dedicated to making things happen in this area, I am not saying it's easy, but it's a great feeling that you know other people are doing the same thing here.

You can see Marson's awards at the 48 Hour Film Challenge Premiere with Award Ceremony + After Party at Two Short Nights **Fri 06 Mar, 8.30pm**. Find more of Marson's work [here](#).





A Q+A with Haytor

Concluding their debut tour with their biggest headline show to date, local lads Haytor are playing at Exeter Phoenix in March. Ahead of their show here, we caught up with them to see how their tour has been going so far!

What do you enjoy about the South West music scene?

The camaraderie of the SW music scene is awesome. I love that you're never more than two degrees away from someone else on the local scene, because everyone knows everyone, and that tends to foster this space of lifting each other up instead of crazy competition like social media leads us to believe.

What are you looking forward to on your first ever tour?

We've just finished our first two dates and, whilst we're all very sleep deprived, they've been bloody good fun and the crowds have been incredible. Looking ahead to the rest of the tour I think we're most looking forward to the buzz we get every time we step on stage and see there's actually people there who have come to watch us and sing our songs along with us. That and hitting up every single coffee shop within a 4 mile radius.

What's the best gig you've attended in the South West?

For me it's got to be seeing The War On Drugs at Eden Sessions in Cornwall, it was the perfect summer evening and the absolute perfect setting for their music. Other highlights have got to be Mother Vulture's sold out show here at the Phoenix last month which was just mental, as well as Everything Everything last year.

What advice do you have for aspiring musicians?

Try your best to ignore the constant comparisons and posturing on social media and just create. Write the music you want to write instead of what you think you should be writing and it will connect with someone. That's been something I've really struggled with since I started, and it's only in the last few years that we've really honed in on what we want to write, and since then our audience has just exploded. Writing the music for yourself is so important because then the reward doesn't come from stats and insights but from creating something you love. Also, buy that guitar, you deserve it.

Haytor will be playing at Exeter Phoenix on [Fri 20 Mar, 7pm - 11pm](#)





Blackout, part of Iris 2025: Best Bits

A Q+A with IRIS Prize Festival Director Berwyn Rolands

Exeter Phoenix Film Programme Assistant Robyn Lawrence asks Berwyn Rowlands (Iris Prize Festival Director) to reflect on 20 years of the IRIS prize.

This is a big year for the IRIS prize turning 20, looking back - are there any stand out wins or moments for you from the last 20 years? Whether it be the ongoing success of a commissioned filmmaker or prize winner or an audience reaction to an event?

The stand out moments to me over the past 20 years are all the little things. In Welsh we say "gwneud y petha bychain" (do the little things) which is attributed to Saint David. What I mean by that is observing and facilitating people helping each other. A useful introduction to talent, advice on funding; we talk a lot at Iris - about people joining the Iris family, a very supportive family, who I think are with you for life.

IRIS prize has been showcasing, developing and promoting LGBTQ+ Stories through festivals, commissioning and training, and one of the objectives is to challenge discrimination towards LGBTQ+ people and communities. How do you see the roll of storytelling in challenging discrimination?

Storytelling is the most amazing tool we have to encourage diversity and kindness. When you tell a story through film you become real - people get to see LGBTQ+ stories, the beautiful ordinary that the mainstream, sometimes ignores.

You can experience film as an audience and decide to be as passive as you like. But my experience is that excellent story telling can be so powerful in changing minds and attitudes.

What are you looking forward to for the future of IRIS?

I'm looking forward, eventually, to handing over the control of Iris to the next generation. I'm 60 this year and Iris will have demanded at least 20 years of my life. I want to protect and share the collective experience we have at Iris and work on a clear strategy for succession planning. Too many people have invested so much time and energy to allow Iris to grow and be successful.

I would like to think the best is yet to come, and I will do everything I can to help make the next 20 years even more fabulous than the first!!!

One Day This Kid, part of Iris 2025: Best Bits



As well as the festival and IRIS on the Move, you have a relationship with Channel 4 and Film4, could you tell us a little about how that came about and what that has meant for reaching new audience?

The relationship with C4 / Film4, as with all the other partnerships we have, has evolved over time. We've given ourselves time with Iris to grow and develop when we were ready. We had started the discussions with Tim at C4 about 3 years before we signed the first sponsorship agreement. Organisations can smell desperation a mile off, and we've tried never to over promise or lie about what we can achieve. But we are always a "glass half full" organisation and describe ourselves as a media organisation first who decided to focus on LGBTQ+ stories.

And lastly, do you have a go to karaoke song?

Yes, and I always fail to deliver " Don't Go Breaking My Heart"

Catch [Iris 2025: Best Bits \(15\)](#) on Sun 22 Mar, 5.30pm.

Y Tollyd, part of Iris 2025: Best Bits





CoLab Walkway Gallery Textile Banner Exhibition

Jeanie Lynch, Head of Service at CoLab Women began to imagine a new and critical Women's offer for Exeter, and about what some of the key factors in creating this might be. She commissioned artist Nic Kittle to create a participatory artwork that is currently displayed in our Walkway Gallery. We chatted with Jeanie to find out more about the project.

Tell us about the CoLab Women group and how the banner project came about?

CoLab Women has been in existence since 2017, supporting women facing multiple disadvantage in Exeter. We focus on what's strong, not what's wrong, providing holistic and wraparound support. Over the years we have developed our offer to bridge gaps in service provision, and to increase access to services, especially for those women who have traditionally experienced barriers to support. Many of the women that we have supported over the years have had a range of issues and we have worked together with partner agencies to ensure that their needs are met.

The banner project was created as part of a consultation to bring women together to look at what strength meant to them, to consider who they felt were strong women in their lives and together to create a series of images that would form a banner to install in a women's centre for the future.



What stories and messages arose from the process of stitching that have been portrayed in the banner?

Women from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures took part in the project, with each of them bringing images and stories from their lives together to create a joint vision that was inclusive of their stories and lives. We talked about families, food, growing up in different cultures, and about who inspired us. Each of us learned so much from one another, but our shared hope was for safer spaces for women, and about what those could feel like.

What do you hope people discover from seeing the banner in the Walkway gallery, and where is the banner going next?

We hope that people will see Exeter women's vision for future coming together to support each other and to raise their voices, whether through art, word or working with textiles. They will discover connection, difference and similarity and common threads that keep us all connected. The photos that depict the process of developing the banner show a range of women working individually but as one, to create this shared vision. The banner will be displayed in CoLab and the long term plan is to have it displayed in a women's centre for Exeter.

[Visit the exhibition in the Walkway Gallery until Thu 12 Mar](#)

Artist Commission Open Call | Mon 20 April, 11pm

Studio KIND is commissioning three artists to investigate the heritage surrounding our home at The Corn Store, in Barnstaple Pannier Market. The commissions will investigate the heritage of Barnstaple Pannier Market, concentrating on three key areas of research that we are inviting contemporary artists/researchers to respond to. We do not wish to be too prescriptive about the approach, only asking that heritage is at the centre of the research. Each historical event has interesting links to contemporary issues in Britain today, whilst exploring Barnstaple Pannier Market's role at the heart of the town.

[Find out more and apply here](#)

2026 Exeter Phoenix Short Film Commissions | Deadline: Sun 22 Mar, 5pm

For 25 years our film commissions have supported the development of filmmaking talent and film production in Devon and the South West. This year we are inviting you to submit your film ideas for 5 commission strands, with one commission being awarded in each strand. As well as being awarded money towards your production, each commission also provides mentoring, feedback and development opportunities as well as in-kind support in the training and access to space and equipment.

[Find out more and apply](#)

OPPORTUNITIES

Fringe Futures | Deadline: 25 March

Fringe Futures invites individual artists and early-career theatre companies to apply for a supported performance opportunity at Totnes Fringe Festival 2026.

This programme is designed for artists taking their first steps into professional practice — whether working solo or as part of a small company — and seeking a fair, supportive festival platform to present bold, independent work.

[Find out more and apply](#)

Freelance Time Odyssey Facilitator | Deadline: Fri 06 March, 12 noon

RAMM is looking to appoint 1 x freelance facilitator who will collaboratively lead the school KS2 pupils and teachers through the four activities of their Time Odyssey visit to the museum with the assistance of museum learning volunteers. Time Odyssey is an interactive gamified learning experience at museums across the UK designed for Key Stage 2 students.

[Find out more and apply](#)

OPPORTUNITIES

Networking

[Playwrights Cafe Exeter](#) | First Thursday of the month | Exeter Phoenix | £6 OTD

[DOCLAB](#) | Wed 11 Mar, 7 – 9pm

[We Animate on Tues](#) | A new monthly animation gathering!

[Exeter Film Collective](#) | First Wed of the month, 7pm - 9pm

[Little Scratch Night](#) | Wed 25 Mar, 5.30pm - 7.30pm

Professional Development

South West Dance Hub | Second Fri of the month, 12.30pm - 2.30pm | [Find out more](#)

[IRL: Cinema Curation Workshop](#) | For ages 16 - 25, FREE

Recommended Events

[Two Short Nights](#) | Thu 05 Mar - Fri 06 Mar

[The Museum of Roadside Magic](#) (as part of Two Short Nights Festival) | Fri 06 Mar, 11.30am - 6pm, free

[Iris 2025: Best Bits \(15\)](#) | Sun 22 Mar, 5.30pm

[Things Fall: in conversation](#) | Sat 11 Apr, 12pm, free

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