

CREATIVE HUB

JULY EDITION

Welcome to your monthly update on all things
creative in Exeter!

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.

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Willa Stark reflects on her Work Experience with the Exeter Phoenix Galleries Team

“Throughout the week, I have been working and shadowing gallery technicians and curators. Understanding the lifetimes of an art gallery, specifically one that is an installation. I did not fully understand or appreciate the amount of time and energy that goes into presenting artists’ work. I have also come to understand the thought that is put into how galleries are set up. While also learning the technical skills of how art is hung, and how spaces are prepped and painted to host the work. However, this is not the only new perspective I have gained from this experience of working at Exeter Phoenix.

After sitting exams and painting for months on end, I had become overly accustomed to my own presence behind a desk or easel. Or the presence of people like my friends who I am familiar with. I am shy, scared to ask questions, and often in my own world. While working with Matt and Erika I’ve felt my shell open up to new conversations and experiences. Being able to have more analytical conversations about art and the creative scene has also widened my perspective of how art can play into my career path and life.

I am from Washington D.C. where the art scene is huge, but often hyperfocused on artists that already have a massive following and influence. Art galleries didn’t feel personal since every artist presented felt so out of reach. The community based space that



the Phoenix provides intertwines art with the public and artists themselves. They don't limit the space to just galleries either, stages and workspaces fill up the building as well. Making it accessible for creativity.

Being surrounded by art and artists has also kick started a new motivation for my own art. I often work small, constrained, and with an underlying fear of failure. Never truly pushing my art to be what it wants to be. Seeing such a wide range of art while working has inspired me to start creating again, but without the worry of failure. And now, art has again become a necessity to my purpose as a person."

Willa helped us with the recent installation of Nicola Bealing's solo exhibition [Miserable Sinners](#) which is now open and viewable until Saturday 29th August.



A Q&A with Alex Robins

Alex Robins is a playwright, performer and game developer based in Exeter. His credits for theatre include 'Fireworks' (**** "Sparkling" - The Reviews Hub), '2021: A Cornish Space Odyssey' (**** "Inspiring and quietly devastating" - ReviewsGate) and 'Whey Down South' ("Brie-lliant" - British Theatre Guide).

This year, he was chosen for Pleasance Theatre's Edinburgh National Partnership programme, supported by partner venue Theatre Royal Plymouth. The opportunity allows him to bring 'Meet Mayor Max' to the Edinburgh Fringe. It's a documentary-theatre solo-show about community, healing and a very good dog.

What did you learn from presenting your work at Scratch Nights and has this changed the way you approach making new work?

I believe that Scratch Nights and R+D performances are invaluable for creating new work. Every show I have written or been part of devising has used these opportunities to share ideas with audiences in the early stages. I think theatre relies on that feedback loop, experimenting with what 'lands' with different people in the room.

For 'Meet Mayor Max', I presented a version at the beginning of 2025 following the R+D to a small invited audience as part of Elevate Seeds with Exeter Northcott Theatre. This allowed me to try out a lot of material (about an hour and a half!) then discuss afterwards about what resonated or could be clearer.

More recently, myself and Jon Nash performed a short version of a new play we are developing called 'Bone Caves' at the Exeter Phoenix Scratch Night. This was incredibly useful, not just to hear people's responses, but also as a deadline for us to get a version of the show ready by!



You did an MA in Creative Writing, and now work across performance, video games and immersive experience. How do you apply creative writing across these different artforms?

I completed my MA part-time during the pandemic while working as an educator / practitioner for theatres and schools. I went into it specifically looking to learn about forms of creative writing other than playwriting, so I took modules in Screenwriting, Nature Writing and Prose.

Around that same time, I started creating video games with my brother Max. Together we have created a number of short games, all available for free at <https://notalexrobins.itch.io/>.

Our most successful game is 'Mondays: a Sisyphian Typing Game' which has had over 100k players since its release and has been exhibited across the world at festivals. Creative writing is at the heart of this game. As the player you have to type out emails as prompted, like an autocue; this required me to write hundreds of emails which had to make sense in any order but also build a coherent world.

Immersive experiences are a way of bringing together my two favourite forms - theatre and video games. I definitely hope to make more of these in the future!

What are you looking forward to about taking your latest show to Edinburgh Fringe? How have you been preparing for it?

This is my first time going to the Edinburgh Fringe! It's a fantastic opportunity so I'm trying to make the most of it by connecting with as many theatres and theatremakers as possible.

I'm returning to 'Meet Mayor Max' after a short break as we start working towards our Edinburgh previews at Theatre Royal Plymouth on the 15th, 16th and 17th July. It would be great to see other South West artists there to discuss the show afterwards!

Find out more about Alex's work [here](#).



Exhibition callout: celebrating D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists who live and work across the rural South West | Deadline: 10am, Mon 07 Aug

Newlyn Gallery are creating their first group exhibition celebrating D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists who live and work across the rural South West. The exhibition will take place at Newlyn Art Gallery from Sat, 21 Nov 2026, until 1 May 2027. They expect to present the work of around 10 artists, working across a range of media.

[Find out more and apply](#)

New Voices: Step Up | Deadline: Tue 11 Aug at midday

The Watershed in Bristol are re-launching a mentoring scheme for working-class directors and screenwriters, in partnership with Bristol AF Productions. Mentees will benefit from three 45-minute online meetings with industry professionals over a four-month period with actions and notes provided. The team aim to inspire and motivate, and to provide tools, resources and plans for their next steps.

[Find out more here](#)

OPPORTUNITIES

Exeter Northcott Scratch Night in collaboration with Exeter Phoenix (Elevate Festival) | Deadline: 10am, Mon 28 Sep

Exeter Northcott Scratch Night in collaboration with Exeter Phoenix offers South-West based artists in need of an audience a chance to stretch their ideas and the opportunity to test their work in the Clifford Room at the Barnfield Theatre, along with £150 to help develop their idea and a small amount of rehearsal space before the Scratch Night.

This Scratch Night will be taking place at Barnfield Theatre during Elevate Festival on Mon 02 Nov, 7pm - 9pm.

[Find out more and apply](#)

Make Space - Open Call | Deadline: 14 Sep

Make Space unlocks spaces within arts organisations for artists to set up, test and reflect on their work. Through Make Space, artists can apply for space in partner organisations for focused periods of time. For the 2026 pilot, Visual Arts South West is partnering with KARST in Plymouth and Spike Island in Bristol.

[Find out more and apply](#)

OPPORTUNITIES

Networking

[Playwrights Cafe Exeter](#)

[DOCLAB](#)

[Little Scratch Night](#)

[Exeter Film Collective](#)

[We Animate on Tues](#)

Professional Development

[South West Dance Hub](#)

[Exeter Film Collective Writing Group](#)

Recommended Events

[Spork! Summer Special](#)

[Nicola Bealing: Artist's Talk](#)

[BBC Introducing South West Showcase 2026](#)

[Where We Land, a free gathering for South West Disabled Artists](#)

SUMMER SOCIAL | 6pm on Friday 7th August, Secret Garden
at Exeter Phoenix

EVENTS

IN EXETER

Have a piece of creative news or an opportunity you'd like to be shared? Send us a message on the [Creative Hub Facebook page](#) and we'll include what we can in future editions.



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