

PEACE III Programme 9b: *Cultural Fusions*

Press Release:

Peace III Funding Awarded to New Culture and Arts Programme – *Cultural Fusions*

An exciting new programme is coming to the North East! Cultural Fusions is a culture and arts programme which includes an interesting and diverse blend of cultural events between now and December 2010. Cultural Fusions is a creative fusion of different art forms, cultures and heritage around the North East. The process of delivery will involve a flexible combination of exhibitions, workshops, events and ongoing projects which will include taster sessions and large-scale events.

Cultural Fusions is an exciting opportunity for local culture and arts groups to develop programmes with the collaborative assistance of the Cultural Fusions consortium and a resource allocation meant to help groups promote a greater understanding and awareness of the rich cultural diversity of the North East, including ethnic minority and indigenous cultural traditions.

This project is financed by the European Unions European Regional Development Fund through the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the North East PEACE III Partnership.

Cultural Fusions, will provide local groups opportunities to explore a diverse range of local cultures and will run until December 2010.

Programme highlights include:

Exhibitions

- *Images of Ireland: The Politics of Culture, 1886-1914*

This cross cluster exhibition will explore this defining period of history and cultural debate in Ireland, with specific case studies drawn from the region. The theme of the exhibition is 'identity' – how ideas of Irish, British, Gaelic and Orange identity evolved over the period commonly referred to as the 'Gaelic Revival'. It will look in particular at symbols of identity and compare and contrast cultural expression at that time with how identity is viewed today. This resource will be explicitly designed to enable constructive discussion that is relevant to both indigenous and ethnic minority communities. Mid-Antrim Museum Service will develop this cross cluster project in partnership with the Causeway Museum Service.

- *The Art of the Troubles*

A special collaboration with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland drawing on its collection of art inspired by and responding to 'the Troubles' in Northern Ireland. This unique resource will be curated specially for the North East Cluster Peace III Culture and Arts Programme. It will provide a stimulating basis for creative engagement with issues surrounding the conflict and its legacy. This event will focus on how individuals have been affected by the Troubles and provide opportunities to explore this difficult subject and encourage community healing. The exhibition will include pieces by internationally recognised Northern Irish artists. A cross-cluster exhibition at the Braid and Flowerfield Arts Centre.

- *Divine Inspiration: Remarkable Objects Reflecting Faith*

A ground-breaking collaboration between the Mid-Antrim Museum at The Braid with the Chester Beatty Library which will explore local and global perspectives on religious identity. Taking as its starting point the 150th anniversary of the 1859 Revival, the exhibition will

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feature a range of rare religious books and manuscripts from across key world faith including Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. (October 2009–February 2010.)

Language and Poetry

Events, courses and talks exploring important traditions associated with language and poetry. This will showcase and explore Irish, Ulster Scots and ethnic minority cultures. This will proactively engage indigenous communities in a way that positively affirms their traditions and identity, but also proactively engages them within the wider discussion of cultural diversity in the region.

Performance events showcasing traditions of dance that exists within both indigenous and ethnic minority communities

Drama, dance, music and creative writing pilot workshops involving the indigenous community, ethnic minorities and migrant workers. The pilot scheme aims to explore and deliver to various age groups a series of workshops on types of dance and music that are traditional in this area e.g. Irish and Scottish country along with migrant and ethnic communities' traditional dance and music. Creative writers and Drama workshops will also be piloted, where participants from all the communities will write on/express visually their experiences and cultures. From these workshops will emanate performances and storytelling which can be offered in venues within the cluster area.

How to get involved!

This presents an exciting opportunity for local cultural organisations to get involved with an innovative programme to showcase the diverse cultural heritage of the North East. This exciting programme will look at a range of traditions and aspects of history and culture reflecting the area's indigenous and ethnic minority communities.

Cultural Fusions will provide local cultural groups an opportunity to develop cultural initiatives with the support of the **Cultural Fusions** team. Projects could range from bespoke theatre pieces, to dance or music performances or heritage activities delivered in local areas. Some groups may wish to develop new, innovative and exciting forms of media and technology including internet radio broadcasts linking the programme with communities locally and globally.

Cultural Fusions also involves cross-border programmes as well as opportunities to develop links with other groups in the NE area.

If this sounds interesting, then get involved!

Cultural groups from Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Larne, Limavady and Moyle areas are encouraged to register their interest in participating in **Cultural Fusions** by requesting an Expression of Interest form from either:

Dominique Bouchard
Mid-Antrim Museums Service
Tel: 028 2565 7161
Email: bouchard.mams@gmail.com

Gemma Reid
Causeway Museum Service
Tel: 028 7034 7034
Email: gemma.reid@colerainebc.gov.uk

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Programme objectives

The overall objective of the Peace III Programme is to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region. The North East Peace III Action Plan outlines how the Council areas of Coleraine, Ballymoney, Moyle, Ballymena, Larne and Limavady aim to address reconciliation and how they intend to contribute to a lasting peace in the cluster area.

Our cultural diversity is reflected in the distinct and shared cultural traditions within and across communities in the North East, and **Cultural Fusions** will support the exploration and expression of different cultures in the area through arts and heritage activities.

Programme 9b aims to enable groups and individuals to participate in the sharing, expression and experiencing of different cultures, including the indigenous and ethnic minority communities, across the North East. It's primary objective is to promote peace through a culture and arts programme which will explore different types of culture, arts, including new media, music, heritage, language, and drama in the North East area. The programme will offer special exhibitions, language courses and cultural workshops!

The programme aims to:

- To design and deliver a programme that will actively promote the sharing, expression and experiencing of different cultures, including the indigenous and ethnic minority communities, across the NE area
- To explore at least 10 different types of culture, arts, including media, music, heritage, language, drama or other cultural medium through a developmental programme
- To engage at least 100 people across the NE region

-Ends-

For more information contact:

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