



European Creative Hubs Network

New Partner – Roco

Roco joins the EUROPEAN CREATIVE HUBS NETWORK consortium of partners, to deliver the 3rd European Creative Hubs Forum in Sheffield, UK.

The partners consortium of the **European Creative Hubs Network (ECHN)**, a project co-funded by the European Commission through the Creative Europe programme, are very pleased to announce **the Roco Creative Limited (Roco) will be an official partner in the consortium** as of 14 August 2017.

Project background

The European Creative Hubs Network (ECHN) is a € 1.2m project co-funded by the EU's Creative Europe programme. It is led by the British Council in partnership with a consortium of 6 European creative hubs – Bios, betahaus, Creative Edinburgh, Kulturni Kod/Nova Iskra, Factoria Cultural and Roco – and the European Business and Innovation Centres Network. ECHN aims to enhance the ecosystem that supports the development and growth of the creative and cultural sector by supporting the subsistence and growth of creative hubs in Europe.

Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) play a leading role in national economic growth policies, and in Europe they provide more than 12 million full-time jobs (7.5% of the EU's work-force), creating approximately €509 billion in value added to GDP¹. Creative hubs have become new models for creative enterprises to grow, and invaluable mechanisms of change and assets to the creative sector. Creative hubs are uniquely diverse in structure, sector and services, qualifying them as a great driver for growth, competitiveness and innovation in the creative industries.

New partnership

Roco is a Creative Hub based in Sheffield set up to support the growth and development of the cities burgeoning creative industries. A unique model for the sector Roco is a BenCom (community benefit company) – it is owned by its shareholder members, and as a social enterprise all profits are put back into the business.

Founded by designer and creative business 'experimenter' Andrea Burns and social and community property developer Chris Hill, the pair raise £1.2m through community shares and social lending to develop 7 Georgian listed town houses to become home to creative studios, co-working space, creative bookshop and design store, café bar and galleries.

¹ A coherent EU policy for Cultural and Creative industries -
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A8-2016-0357+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>



Autumn 2017 sees the final phase of Roco come to life with the opening of 26 new studios and the launch of We Make Works their tools, tech and education space.

Next steps

Roco joins the ECHN consortium at a critical moment, when research and the strategic plans for the future of the Network start intersecting with the already well-known face-to-face activities (fora, workshops, P2P). **Roco will be the organisers and hosts of the 3rd European Creative Hubs Forum, which will take place on 29-30 November & 1 December 2017, in Sheffield, UK.**

The team at Roco have had an active role in the project's activities to date; Andrea Burns has contributed to our dynamic inquiries into the sector across Europe, participating in our Leadership Group workshops, meetings and research along with fellow ECHN partners to shape and define the current role and future of the European Creative Hubs Network.

The 3rd European Creative Hubs Forum in Sheffield comes after hugely successful forums in Belgrade (September 2016) and Athens (January 2017), it is an opportunity for the Creative Hubs community to come together and explore the next steps for the Network's future.

Roco: *"We are hugely excited about joining the ECHN network. As demonstrated through our partner research there is a clear social and economic need for the role of creative, innovative and proactive community hubs in our local regions and our international networks. We look forward to building on the strong themes of understanding and synergy expertly defined by our Nova Iskra - Serbia and Bios - Greece colleagues.*

We very much look forward to welcoming you all to Sheffield - UK in November as we work to explore and amplify our cities growing creative industries"

British Council: *"We are thrilled to be able to work with Roco in the formal context of this EU-funded project. The ECHN project enables the peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge and expertise, and since February 2016, it has brought together more than 500 Creative Hub Leaders from across Europe, in various locations (Belgrade, Athens, Berlin, Madrid, etc.). We are delighted that with Roco's help, the newly formed community of Creative Hub Leaders will also get a chance to explore the creative hubs and CCI environment in the UK.*

We are very eager to join everyone in Sheffield and plan the future of the Network!"

More information will be made available in September on the ECHN website.

www.creativehubs.eu
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<http://www.theroco.org>
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