



BOUNCE

ARTS FESTIVAL



Wednesday 30 September
to Sunday 4 October 2026



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Welcome Messages

Edel Murphy

CEO and Artistic Director



Welcome to Bounce 2026. In a year when artists and the disability community face ongoing challenges to be heard and recognised, our programme addresses the urgent theme of 'Arts and Activism'.

The arts are a mighty tool for change, and I would happily argue that intrinsic to our lived experience as disabled, d/ Deaf and neurodivergent people, is the internal activist.

Bounce represents a collective voice of d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists, where being disabled is the norm, centralised, empowering and powerful

driving high-quality arts experiences that are genuinely accessible.

Bounce 2026 brings you a formidable lineup from across the UK, Ireland and beyond, including Emer Maguire, Joe Kenny, Jenny Sealey, Alan James Burns, MakeyUppers, Quiplash, Stage Beyond, and Visually Impaired Creators Scotland.

In choosing Bounce, you choose inclusion, you add your voice to equity of opportunity, you encounter the energy and diversity of disabled-led arts and living activism.

As Bounce 2026 is my farewell to University of Atypical, this year's festival is personally poignant. I see the impact that Bounce has made since its inception and I have been proud to drive that forward in my time here. More than ever, I understand that the pursuit and manifestation of real change for disabled people lies within us, and the power of collective creative exchange,

making Bounce as important now as it ever has been.

Ciara Smyth

Chair of University of Atypical

I am delighted to welcome you to the Bounce 2026 programme, a vibrant celebration of the creativity, talent and powerful artistic voices of d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists.

This year's programme brings together an exciting range of artists, showcasing work that entertains, challenges and empowers. Through the theme of 'Arts and Activism', Bounce 2026 highlights the power of creativity to amplify voices, spark conversation and drive positive change.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I extend our sincere thanks to our funders, staff, volunteers and partners whose commitment makes this festival possible. Thank you also to our audiences, whose support and enthusiasm are at the heart of Bounce.

Patricia Lavery

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

**PRINCIPAL
FUNDER**



**arts
council**
of Northern Ireland

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is proud to support University of Atypical and the Bounce Festival, a vital platform for showcasing and celebrating the artistic work of d/Deaf, neurodivergent, and disabled artists.

This festival ensures that the arts sector in Northern Ireland is inclusive and reflects society, and it also helps to ensure that more people from all backgrounds can enjoy arts experiences.

Congratulations to University of Atypical on curating another impressive programme this year and I would encourage everyone to go along and enjoy this incredible festival!

The Lord Mayor of Belfast

Róis-Máire Donnelly



Belfast
City Council

Bounce provides a powerful platform to amplify and celebrate diverse voices

such as disabled, d/Deaf and neurodivergent artists. Is é an rud is annamh is iontach - there is beauty in diversity.

Belfast City Council is delighted to support the Bounce Festival which ensures that the arts are accessible to everyone - a vital aspect of Béal Feirste as an inclusive city.

Celebrating themes of identity, safety, activism and lived experience in a thought-provoking programme, I encourage everyone to come along and experience all that it has to offer.

Accessibility

We aim to make events accessible for everyone. Some access provisions are in place, and others can be requested.

You can request these access provisions when booking your ticket, or by emailing access@universityofatypical.org.

Please request services at least 2 weeks in advance. We will do our best to meet your request, but cannot guarantee that providers will be available.

All venues have the following:

- Step-free access
- Reserved spaces
- Assistance dogs welcome
- Loop system
- Free companion tickets
- Accessible toilet (not Changing Places).

- University of Atypical toilet has push-pad entry, adult changing table, mobile hoist, height adjustable sink.

Changing Places nearby:

- CastleCourt (400 yards from The MAC, 300 yards from Ledger Studio).
- Crescent Arts Centre, University Road (250 yards from Seamus Heaney Centre).

We also offer the following by request:

- BSL and ISL (if not already included).
- Quiet space
- Captioning
- Audio description and touch tours
- Large print, Easy Read, braille, audio formats
- Ear defenders

Tickets and Pricing

How to Book

Bounce tickets are available at the University of Atypical website:
universityofatypical.org/bounce

When you tap the booking link, you will be taken to TicketSource or to the venue website.

Some events are free, but may still be ticketed due to limited capacity. For free events, we welcome donations at the door or during checkout.

Free companion tickets are available for disabled people who require assistance to attend.

Pricing

Bounce is in part supported by our funding partners. However, your ticket price is essential for the festival to run.

We keep ticket prices as low as possible. The prices are set to ensure we can pay artists and access providers fairly. Most events have a limited number of free or discounted tickets for anyone for whom the ticket price is a barrier. If you want to attend an event but cannot afford a ticket, please email access@universityofatypical.org.

Ticket prices include booking fees.

Age Guidance

If an event is recommended for certain ages, this will be indicated in the programme description.

For more detailed event guidance or content information, please check our website or contact our office.

Venue Information

Atypical Gallery and Ledger Studio

- 109-113 Royal Avenue, BT1 1FF
- 028 9023 9450

The Black Box

- 18-22 Hill Street, BT1 2LA
- 028 9024 4400

The MAC

- 10 Exchange Street West, BT1 2NJ
- 028 9023 5053

Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's

- 38-40 University Road, BT7 1NJ
- 028 9097 1077

Event Listings

Comedy

Event Title: Emer Maguire's Perfectly Chaotic, supported by The MakeyUppers

Event type: Stand-up comedy and performance

Date | Time: Wednesday 30 September | 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Venue: The Studio at The MAC

Price: £19.50

Access Information: BSL



Northern Ireland's brightest comedy star, Emer Maguire (Strabane), headlines this night of laughs, blending musical comedy, razor-sharp wit, and Northern Irish charm. She is a 4-time TEDx speaker, and double Irish IMRO Radio

Award-winning BBC presenter.

Emer was nominated for the 2025 Channel 4 Sean Lock Comedy Award, and has been commissioned by Channel 4 to write sitcom *Socially Awkward*, based on her own life. Her debut show *Hilarious Humans* sold out Edinburgh Fringe in 2019. This October she brings her biggest tour yet across the UK with brand new show *Perfectly Chaotic*.



Our fantastic support act is The MakeyUppers (Derry): Sorcha Shanahan and Gemma Walker-Farren,

self-declared neurospicy ‘Serious Eejits’. The hilarious duo has spent 11 years making social issues accessible through comedic storytelling. This high-energy playful performance is touring Ireland and the UK, from theatres and festivals to allotments and church halls.

Talks, Workshops, and Networking

Event Title: Arts and Activism Symposium

Event type: Panel, Performance, and Networking

Date | Time: Friday 2 October | 10:30 am – 1:00 pm

Venue: The Studio at The MAC

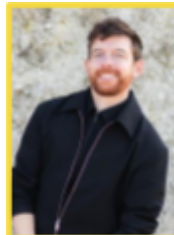
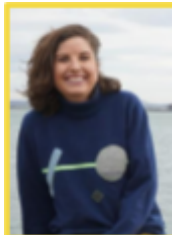
Price: £6.50

Access Information: BSL, audio description, live captions

This is a disabled-led networking, discussion and performance forum developed around the festival theme, 'Arts and Activism'. This discussion will focus on the importance of using art to challenge the status quo and promote social change.

- **Emma Campbell (Belfast):** Artist and activist, symposium chair

- **Jenny Sealey (London):** CEO of Graeae Theatre Company, keynote speech
- **Brigid O'Dea (Dublin):** writer and Gaeilgeoir, sharing works and writings on disability
- **Alan James Burns (Dublin):** exploring autism and his practice in climate arts activism
- **Kirin Saeed (Visually Impaired Creators Scotland):** Allies in Activism: perspectives from an Asian, visually impaired theatre maker.



Left to Right: Emma Campbell, Jenny Sealey, Brigid O'Dea, Alan James Burns, Kirin Saeed.

Event Title: Tender Ruins: Artist Talk with Susanne Horsch

Event type: Artist talk

Date | Time: Friday 2 October | 2:00 – 3:00 pm

Venue: Atypical Gallery, University of Atypical

Price: Free (refreshments will be provided)

Access Information: BSL

Susanne Horsch presents an artist talk on her work and experiences as Bounce Artist in Residence. Susanne is an Irish-based Swiss installation artist. Her practice investigates the relationship between mind and body, drawing on feminist, queer, neurodiversity and affect theories to explore how emotions, thoughts, and lived experience shape individual and collective identities.

Susanne is a graduate of Ulster University with a Masters in Fine Art, who uses textiles

and soft sculpture as metaphors for weaving together often invisible elements of human experience.



Event Title: Very Interesting Perspectives (VIPs): Blind Artists' Professional Network

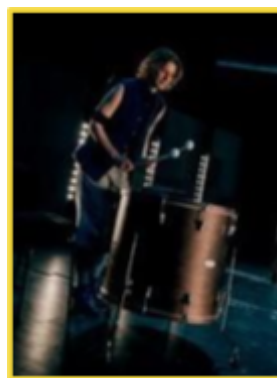
Event type: Panel, performance, and networking

Date | Time: Saturday 3 October | 11:00 am – 1:30 pm

Venue: The Studio at The MAC

Price: £5.50 (refreshments will be provided)

Access Information: Audio description



Very Interesting Perspectives: Blind Artists' Network, run in partnership with tanzhaus nrw and Quiplash CIC, aims to connect blind and visually impaired artists and arts

facilitators internationally. This in-person event follows two innovative online workshops facilitated by Amelia Lander-Cavallo from Quiplash and Fia



Neises (hosted by tanzhaus nrw).

Following a performance by singer **Victoria Geelan**, dancer and panel chair **Helen Hall** will present a snippet of her film '*Tales from the Mother*'. Helen will then be joined by Fia, Amelia and **Pádraig Naughton** (Arts and Disability Ireland) to discuss the VIP project, as well as their experiences as blind and visually impaired artists and arts facilitators. This will be followed by a networking event, tailored to blind and

visually impaired professional and aspiring artists.

Online workshops in the run up to the festival:

- **Saturday 5 September, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm:** The Radical Potential of Integrated Audio Description with Amelia Lander-Cavallo (hosted by Quiplash)
- **Saturday 19 September, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm:** Sounding Bodies with Fia Neises (hosted by tanzhaus nrw)

Online registration required for both events.

Funded by the Four Nations International Fund through Arts Council England, Arts Council Northern Ireland, Arts Council Wales, Creative Scotland and Wales Arts International.

Event Title: CAREAID: Disability aids, our friend or functional foe?

Event type: Talk and workshop

Date | Time: Saturday 3 October | 2:00 – 4:30 pm

Venue: Ledger Studio, University of Atypical

Price: £5.00

Access Information: Exercises will be supported by clear verbal and written prompts. Participants are welcome to observe.

Content Warning: Discussion of stigma and ableism. 18+



CAREAID is a talk and participatory workshop and discussion led by artist **Zofia Kuligowska** (Poland), whose own experience of neurodiversity has led her to rethink what a disability aid can be, and who gets to define it. Zofia's bike became her

disability aid and the focus of a creative project that she will share with you.

Disability aids take many forms, from guide-dogs to rollators, earplugs and assistive technology - and bikes! As disabled people, we find our own innovative solutions and devices to help us take our place in the world.

This is a quirky opportunity to explore things we use to make the world we live in more accessible to us, challenge how disability aids are perceived, and argue whether or not they belong to us as part of our identity.

You are invited to bring an aid, object, photograph, routine, practice, or your story on things that assist you in navigating everyday life.

Music

Event Title: Label Me Live: Joe Kenny, Andrea Begley and Future Her

Event type: Live music

Date | Time: Thursday 1 October | 8:00 – 11:00 pm

Venue: The Black Box

Price: £10.00 via the Black Box

Access Information: Audio description, sighted guides

Age Restriction: 18+

Three compelling artists from Northern Ireland, **Joe Kenny**, **Andrea Begley**, and **Future Her**, come together at the Black Box for an unforgettable night of raw, heartfelt songwriting, soaring harmonies, and bold, modern alt-folk textures. This special triple-bill brings these distinct artists with lived experience of sight loss to the stage, for one night only.



Left to right: Joe Kenny, Andrea Begley,
Future Her.

Film

Event Title: Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore

Event type: Documentary and post-film discussion

Date | Time: Sunday 4 October | 12:00 – 2:30 pm

Venue: Ledger Studio

Price: £5.00

Access Information: Subtitles for film | BSL for discussion

Content Warning: Frank discussions of ableism, domestic and sexual violence, language deprivation, drug abuse.



Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore is a celebrated documentary by Deaf filmmaker Shoshannah Stern (USA), which premiered at Sundance in 2025, to widespread critical

acclaim. The film highlights Matlin's barrier-smashing breakthrough in Hollywood as a Deaf actress in *Children of a Lesser God*, and features her advocacy work and life in her own words.

The film draws on decades of never-before-seen home footage shot by her longtime interpreter and producing partner, Jack Jason. Matlin reflects on her relationship with actor William Hurt, her place in the Deaf community, and her long fight for accessibility in Hollywood.

Interviews forgo interpreters in favour of subtitles, lending the film an added layer of authenticity.

Supported by Film Hub NI, part of the BFI Film Audience Network, awarding funds from National Lottery.

Theatre

Event Title: An Evening with Tito Bone, aka The World Is Burning So Please Enjoy My Drag Show

Event type: Drag king cabaret performance

Date | Time: Friday 2 October | 7:30 – 8:30 pm

Venue: The Studio at The MAC

Price: £16.50

Access Information: BSL, ISL, integrated audio description, relaxed performance.

Content Warning: Partial nudity, sexual content, strong language.

Age Restriction: Under 18s must be accompanied by an adult. Parental discretion is advised.

An Evening with Tito Bone is a joyful and heartfelt one drag king cabaret performance. Experience the wonder and campness of your average blind nonbinary bisexual drag king, **Tito Bone** (Sheffield),



as they guide you through their experiences of aging and ableism with a heap of queer disabled joy. Tito will guide you to smell the world through their nose, from humble drag beginnings to a majestic glitter-bearded sensation.

The performance features 60 minutes of songs, storytelling, integrated audio description, glitter-beard glamour and wonderfully epic dad-dancing. Tito invites you into a playful world full of queer disabled joy, pride and laughter.

Event Title: Four Out of Five - Presented by Visually Impaired Creators Scotland

Event type: Theatre performance

Date | Time: Saturday 3 October | 7:30 – 8:30 pm

Venue: The Studio at The MAC

Price: £11.50

Access Information: Integrated audio description. Touchable objects during and after performance.

Content Warning: Ableism, war and violence. Some audience interaction.

Four Out of Five explores how visually impaired people navigate the world using their four senses. This performance follows several people across one fateful train journey. Each shares a personal story, interspersed with recorded audio pieces from contributors from around the world.



Four Out of Five opens with an introduction to integrated audio description, and weaves visual descriptions into the dialogue. Each heartfelt anecdote sheds light on the small inconveniences that shape visually impaired people's daily lives. *Four Out of Five* demands radical empathy by asking what we all have in common, across disabilities, generations and continents.

Event Title: The Caucasian Chalk Circle

Event type: Theatre performance

Date | Time: Sunday 4 October | 3:00 – 4:30 pm

Venue: The Studio at The MAC

Price: £11.50

Access Information: Relaxed performance.

Stage Beyond Theatre Company brings its powerful production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle to Bounce, following a widely acclaimed regional tour at venues including The Playhouse, Derry, An Grianán Theatre, Letterkenny, and Hawk's Well, Sligo.

In the turmoil of a military coup, kitchen maid Grusha makes a life-changing decision to rescue an abandoned child and raise him as her own. Years later, when the child's biological mother returns to claim him, an extraordinary courtroom battle unfolds before the unconventional Judge

Azdak, who turns to the ancient test of the chalk circle to decide where justice lies.



Stage Beyond adapts Frank McGuinness's acclaimed translation of Bertolt Brecht's masterpiece. It is a compelling exploration

of love, justice, morality and belonging. This moving production asks a timeless question: what truly makes someone a parent?

The production, directed by Kate Guelke, combines epic storytelling with Stage Beyond's distinctive, multi-award-winning inclusive approach to theatre-making with adults with learning disabilities.

Stage Beyond is supported by National Lottery funding through Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Literature

Event Title: The Mighty Pen

Event type: Poetry, readings, script-in-hand performance

Date | Time: Friday 2 October |

3:00 – 7:30 pm

Venue: Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's

Price: £5 pass to all Mighty Pen events
(free to participants)

Access Information: BSL

3:00 – 4:00 pm: Concrete Poetry - New Writings from Brain Injury Matters



Concrete poetry uses letter arrangement in visual form to convey meaning. In this approach, how words look is as important as what they mean. Concrete poets often seek an international style, so even without

understanding the written language, meaning can be grasped through visual shape. These poems seek to ignite the imagination and challenge the boundaries of language and art.

4:30 – 5:30 pm: Open Pen Writing Group (Open Arts) - Readings based on Gulliver's Travels



This session presents writing from the Open Pen Group's 2026 workshops inspired by wordplay, the alphabet, and Gulliver's Travels.

The group explores language, communication, and identity, to reflect on how words connect, confuse, delight, and inspire.

6:00 – 7:30 pm: Off the Page Rehearsed Readings

A special edition of Seamus Heaney Centre's **Off the Page** script development programme, led by playwright Darcey Youngman.



Darcey and other theatre-makers support 4 writers to prepare scripts-in-progress for of this public performance. This event will include rehearsed readings from new activism-themed writings by disabled and neurodivergent writers:

- **Isaac Quinn** (Strabane): activism and theatre from a trans perspective.
- **Johanna Gallagher** (Belfast): immigration and activism.
- **Andrew McNeill** (Belfast): working-class perspective on conflict and social issues.
- **Alex Cregan** (Derry): disability rights and new writing.

Visual Arts

Event Title: Tender Ruins - Installation by Susanne Horsch

Event type: Artist in Residence installation

Date | Time:

- Thursday 1 October (Opening Night): 6:00 – 9:00 pm
- Friday 2 October: 10:00 am – 5:30 pm
- Saturday 3 October: 10:00 am – 5:30 pm
- Sunday 4 October: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Venue: Atypical Gallery, University of Atypical

Price: Free

Access Information: Artist statement and biography in audio format.

The Artist in Residence for Bounce 2026 is Irish-based Swiss and neurodivergent artist **Susanne Horsch**. Susanne will open her

installation of new work coinciding with Late Night Art in Belfast.



Susanne's residency runs from September until the end of October. *Tender Ruins* is an immersive soft-sculpture installation exploring

the tension between trust, care, and maternal indispensability. It reflects on single motherhood when a child becomes an adult, and parental roles begin to shift. Horsch draws on textile processes, reflective writing, and soft sculpture, weaving together often unseen emotional landscapes, excavating vulnerability, and the fragile process of building trust.

Event Title: Echoes of the Self by Brain Injury Matters

Event type: Pop-Up Exhibition

Date | Time:

- Wednesday 30 September - Saturday 3 October 9:00 am – 8:30 pm
- Sunday 4 October | 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Price: Free



What parts of us stay constant, and what parts evolve? This exhibition from **Brain Injury Matters** explores identity as an echo of past experiences, personal influences, and shifting emotions.

The exhibition creatively explores and investigates how memories, environments, intimate histories, and life experiences leave impressions that shape who we are.

Each piece experiments with different styles and techniques, developing a unique voice that lies within.

Support University of Atypical

Become a Volunteer

Our volunteer team, known as the 'Bouncers', is made up of disabled and nondisabled people. If you would like to volunteer for our year-long events programme, email volunteer@universityofatypical.org.

Donations and Sponsorship

We are a registered charity, and welcome donations through our donation stands in our Atypical Gallery or online at universityofatypical.org/donate. If you are in a position to become a sponsor and support us to create change, please get in touch.

Merchandise

You can buy our 'Atypically Fabulous' t-shirts, badges and totes at Bounce events or in the Atypical Gallery.

Bounce 2027 proposals are now open!

Do you want to be part of Bounce 2027, which is happening from **Thursday 30 September to Sunday 3 October 2027?**

You can request a proposal form by emailing applyto@universityofatypical.org with 'Bounce Proposal 2027' in the subject line or visit universityofatypical.org to complete the form.

We welcome proposals from artists and organisations that are disabled-led by **4:00 pm on 10 December 2026.**

Acknowledgements

Principal Funders

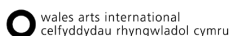
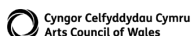


Belfast
City Council

Funders



Four Nations International Fund



Community Partners, Organisations Venues:



Staff

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Access and Inclusion Manager: **Jonathan Mitchell**

Community Engagement Manager: **Aoife Browne**

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Access and Inclusion Coordinator: **Nathan Elout-Armstrong**

Administrator and Gallery Coordinator: **Zara Lyness**

Volunteer Coordinator: **Louise Carey**

PA to CEO: **Rebecca Cullen**

Board of Trustees

Ciara Smyth (Chair); Peter Fleming; Miriam Bacon; Mave Dempster O'Neil (Treasurer); Aisling Doherty; Nicki Heptonstall; Christina Herdman; Adam Bradley; Hannah Slattne.

With thanks to:

In-kind support from The MAC, and the Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's.

Our partner venues: The MAC, The Black Box, and the Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's.

Our partners in the programme: Arts and Disability Ireland, Creative Scotland and Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's.

Thank you to all the access service providers. Our festival could not run without you.

Thank you to our festival support services, including Maurica Mackle (Marketing and PR), Rachel Kennedy (Creative Producer), Northside Graphics Limited (programme design and print).

Volunteer Recognition

Thank you to our volunteer team, also known as the 'Bouncers'. We couldn't do it without you.

Contact Information

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028 9023 9450

universityofatypical.org