

## News Release

### **Michael Pattison appointed Creative Director of Alchemy Film & Arts**

**News comes as the organisation is awarded three-year funding by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for *Film Town* initiative**

**The £88k grant will enable Alchemy to develop a long-term programme of community film making opportunities and open a community hub with access to a wide range of resources and expertise**



**Distinguished film critic and film-maker, Michael Pattison,  
who has been appointed Creative Director of Hawick-based Alchemy Film & Arts**

Michael Pattison has been appointed Creative Director of Alchemy Film & Arts, the Hawick-based arts organisation, it was announced today, 8 March 2019. A film critic, who joined the Alchemy team in 2016, Michael was Senior Programmer for the 2017 and 2018 Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festivals. He now takes over from Alchemy founder Richard Ashrowan, who stepped down after nine years at the end of January 2019.

*“The Board is delighted to appoint Michael to lead Alchemy into the next phase of its development, building on the strong foundations of founding Creative Director Richard Ashrowan,”* says Keith Alexander, Chair of the Board of Alchemy Film & Arts. *“As a distinguished film critic and film-maker who has been an active supporter of Alchemy, Michael brings vast knowledge and enthusiasm to the role and we look forward to working with him at this exciting time.”*

*"I'm delighted and honoured to be Alchemy's new Creative Director. It's equally a humbling and enticing prospect to succeed Richard Ashrowan, whose achievements in founding the organisation in 2010, and in building it to where it's now at, have been enormous,"* says Michael Pattison.

*"This is an incredibly exciting time for Alchemy. Not only has our regular funding from Creative Scotland allowed us to expand our increasingly popular exhibitions programme, it has also allowed us to confirm high-profile guests at the forthcoming edition of our festival in May."*

*"We want to build a positive and supportive community that is involving and involved. As its visitors will attest, our cosy new office inside Heart of Hawick is already testament to the achievements possible as a result of our ongoing partnership with Live Borders. We've always been a welcoming bunch, and now we can begin to display a bit of pride in our efforts to nurture new artistic talent while continuing to celebrate longstanding figures in the landscape of artists' moving image."*

Mark Thomas, Screen Officer at Creative Scotland said:

*"We are delighted at the appointment of Michael Pattison as new Creative Director for Alchemy Film & Arts. Michael has the vision to take Alchemy forward, and inherits a vibrant organisation and dedicated team, a strong legacy from Richard Ashrowan's nine-year tenure. We wish Michael and his team the best for the future maintaining Hawick as an international centre of excellence for Experimental and Artist moving image."*

The news was announced as it was revealed that Alchemy Film & Arts has been awarded a major grant by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for its community work. The grant, together with support from Creative Scotland and Regional Screen Scotland, will mean that Alchemy can now develop a programme of long-term community film opportunities and open a community hub giving people more access to film-making resources and expertise.

*"We are very grateful to Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for their support,"* says Alchemy Programme Manager Rachael Disbury. *"It means that we can build on the work of the festival and make sure that our community can get maximum benefit from the resources and expertise that Alchemy has to offer."*

The support will mean that Alchemy can put in place a programme of workshops to help develop skills, tailored training programmes running across the year, and special tours of events and exhibitions taking place during the annual Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival.

*"Through the workshops and training sessions we hope that more people will get involved in film making. We will be offering lots of different ways to participate from making the most of the technology*

*that most of us have at our finger tips, such as smart phones, to bringing together young people with older members of the community to collaborate and co-create new films,”* adds Rachael.

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation support will also mean that Alchemy can create a year-round community hub for filmmaking. **Common Room** will be a space offering access to resources and expertise. Initially it will be open two days a week

*“The Common Room will be a central location for community filmmaking and creative learning programmes, screenings and events,”* explains Rachael. *“Among the resources that we will make available are film editing facilities and a library of film and practice books, and we aim to have a range of equipment available for loan including cameras and sound recording equipment. Through the Common Room we will also support aspiring filmmakers through one-on-one personal and professional mentoring and specialised skills tuition, from basic to advanced level film and video editing.”*

The Common Room and Community Film-making project will begin in summer 2019. The 2019 Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival will take place in Hawick 2 - 6 May. Programme details will be released in the coming weeks. For full details of the work of Alchemy visit:

<https://alchemyfilmmandarts.org.uk>

Ends

**For further information and interviews contact:**

**Lesley Booth, 07799414474 / [lesley@newcenturypr.com](mailto:lesley@newcenturypr.com)**

## **Note for Editors**



Alchemy Film & Arts receives RFO support from Creative Scotland.

### **ABOUT CREATIVE SCOTLAND**

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