

New creative community sets up in old coachworks

A special loan for business start-ups who want an alternative to traditional finance has helped to establish a new creative community in Edinburgh.

Sparks are flying once again behind the doors of a former 19th century Leith coachworks that has been transformed into an open access workshop for artists and makers thanks to a £20,000 Start Up Loan from Transmit Start-Ups.

Woodworkers, metalworkers, props makers, designers and creative companies of every ilk are now making their home at Edinburgh Open Workshop where investment has helped turn the 10,000 square feet space at Assembly Street into a place of collaboration and creativity.

The open access workshop offers membership-based, pay-as-you-go workshop facilities with access to machinery, power tools, hand tools, workbenches, fabrication bays for hands-on work, craft bays for cleaner work, longer-term resident maker space, studios and office space.



Stuart Nairn, Natasha Lee-Walsh and Nicola Milazzo of Edinburgh Open Workshop

Edinburgh Open Workshop is the brainchild of Stuart Nairn, Natasha Lee-Walsh and Nicola Milazzo who hit upon the idea for a new type of co-working facility for creative talent in the city when they struggled to find a suitable base for sister company Big House Events.

Natasha said: "We needed a new home for the work Big House does, designing and building sets for events, exhibitions and theatre. We became aware of other creative businesses struggling for quality space too. While there is other co-working space in the city for desk work there isn't anything to accommodate you if you're noisy and messy!

"We've been testing the concept for about a year now and after establishing there is a real appetite for this way of working we applied for funding so we can make the investment we need to really go for it. It's very exciting."

29 makers already share the space at the workshop including furnituremakers, a boatbuilder, metal workers, blade smiths, textile designers, sound designers, theatre producers, theatre designers, crafters, textile workers and prop makers.

Natasha added: "Our workshop not only provides the right space

and facilities but flexible memberships also mean makers only pay for what they need and when they need it. By bringing together such a wide range of disciplines, the workshop allows makers to see how each others and develop new ideas together.”

Transmit Start-Ups is the UK’s leading provider of Government-backed Start Up Loans and has backed the business dreams of 1,091 entrepreneurs in Scotland with over £11 million in finance. Transmit’s loans offer entrepreneurs an alternative to traditional finance, with low interest repayments and high-impact mentoring.

Edinburgh Open Workshop will now work with Transmit Start-Ups’ Business Adviser Morag Kelly to maximise the impact of their investment.

Morag said: “This is an especially exciting Start Up Loan because it will ultimately help support the launch of an entire community of new creative businesses in Edinburgh.

“The city and its surrounding areas are home to a rich talent base and this facility provides an innovative way to equip, accommodate, support and nurture local creativity. I’m really looking forward to seeing the ideas and collaborations that will no doubt take shape in the coming months and years and congratulate Stuart, Natasha and Nicola on their inspired venture.”

Transmit Start-Ups is part of the Transmit Group of companies which offer funding, consulting, coaching and mentoring services to entrepreneurs throughout their business journey.

For more information about Transmit Start Ups visit transmitstartups.co.uk