
Case Study: NI Science Festival x LUMI Programmers

Festival events programmed by Young People

About the Programme:

The [NI Science Festival](#) celebrates the wonders of science, technology, engineering, and the arts through a vibrant programme of events each February across Northern Ireland. As part of the programme, the festival collaborates with the [LUMI Programmers](#) group - a young film programmers group run by the [Queens Film Theatre](#) in Belfast for 18 - 26 yr olds.

NISF x LUMI is a series of film screenings and events, curated by young people, exploring a wide array of scientific topics with the aim of developing the festival's reach to young audiences. The programmers are provided a fee for any ideas pitched for the festival.

Age-range:

The programme is curated by young people aged 18 - 26 yr olds with the view to engaging all young audiences from children and families through to young adults.

Films:

The programme is rich and varied, exploring all elements of science through film via children and family titles, black comedies, essay films, documentaries and cult sci-fi. Previous titles include:

- Ice Age
- Wall-E
- Ghost in the Shell
- A New Leaf
- Paprika
- Ghost Strata
- The Last Angel of History



Successful Screenings:

[Ghost in the Shell - 30th Anniversary](#) screening. This was the best-selling event of the NISF x LUMI programme in 2025. It captured the best of both worlds of film and science for young people, tapping into a milestone anniversary of a much loved anime sci-fi. This event was aimed at exploring the theme of robotics and humanity that for the young programmers felt very contemporary in light of recent fears of AI.

[Ice Age screening + artefact workshop](#) run by staff from the Ulster Museum proved very successful with family audiences. The LUMI programmers do not regularly engage with this audience at QFT so they were very pleased with the success of this screening and will continue to reach this audience in future festivals. The workshop was a drop-in session that was incredibly popular with younger children and helped to contextualise the science element of the film screening with hands-on artefacts, activity sheets and fossil tracing.

Additional activity:

The young programmers are given creative control over their programme and deliver a series of films and events with lots of added value to engage young audiences.

Highlights include dressing the venue with ferns and botanicals for the screening of [A New Leaf](#); hosting a robotics workshop alongside [Wall-E](#) and curating an [exhibition with Irish artist Yvette Monahan](#).

The LUMI programmers also regularly provide introductions and Q&As with each screening that help to highlight the science with the films and give context to their curation.

Marketing insights:

In order to target young audiences, the LUMI programmers created this bespoke LUMI x NISF zine and generated written content for social media and the [QFT Blog](#).

They also ran dedicated YA social media content on @LUMIatQFT including a Paprika poster giveaway (made from paprika) and a dedicated trailer edited by young people for [Ghost in the Shell](#) and [Paprika](#).



Main challenges:

Timing is the biggest challenge. The LUMI Programmers are onboarded between September to December which is the busiest time of year for the QFT and a crucial stage for NISF. It can feel like a fast turnaround and hard work for the programmers. However, providing a fee to the young programmers for any ideas pitched has helped them to feel valued during this period and encourages them to contribute to each other's events.

Biggest success:

The collaboration between the festival and young programmers is hugely successful and the festival is proud to be able to support young people's creativity and see their ideas come to life. The LUMI x NISF screenings have proved to be the most popular screenings we have at the NI Science Festival.

Contact:

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