

Speech: Celebrating the Creative Industries Federation's 3rd anniversary

It's fantastic to be here tonight; thank you to the Creative Industries Federation for inviting me this evening.

I've been privileged enough to start my new year with a new job and I'm delighted that this is my first speech as Secretary of State at DCMS.

And what a fantastic place to do it, here at the Natural History Museum – featuring one of the world's finest collections of artefacts, from the T-Rex to the woolly mammoth.

And I see only one mammoth. And that's the mammoth that is our creative industries.

The creative industries are one growing faster than ever, contributing almost 100 billion pounds to the UK economy every year.

John, I want to give credit to you and the CIF for helping to give the creative industries a powerful voice over the past three years.

This includes the work you have done with DCMS on the Sector Deal, which is due to be published in the next few weeks.

Your input and insight is really important to us and I'm thrilled that we can continue working together now that I am Secretary of State.

Greg Clark and I were both really keen to come here tonight to underline the Government's commitment to this fantastic industry and the exceptional work that you all do.

Looking back

Tonight, of course, is about celebration. And we have lots to celebrate.

Of course there were difficulties and moments of uncertainty last year. Not least for me...But 2017 really was a year of remarkable creative success.

The thought I really want to leave you with today is that the UK's creative industries are getting their mojo back.

And I'm not just talking about London. Across the length and breadth of Britain, the power of culture and creativity is bringing people together like never before.

Just look at Hull's landmark year as UK City of Culture. It not only led to a boost of around 60 million pounds to the local economy, but also saw nine out

of ten residents taking part in a City of Culture event. I know that city and it changed it for good.

And Hull won't be just a one hit wonder. The cultural legacy that has been left for the region will inspire future generations and foster waves of new talent.

We were also able to give much-needed reassurance to the creative industries when we reached an agreement on the first phase of Brexit.

I know that the issue of citizens' rights is very important for everyone in this room tonight. EU citizens enrich every part of our economy, our society and our cultural life.

We have now reached a deal that protects the rights of EU nationals in the UK and UK citizens in the EU, which I hope will provide valuable certainty.

This agreement has shown that as a country we can strike a good deal with the EU. This means we can forge a strong future with our cousins across the Channel but also remain open to the wider world.

I believe Britain's future is bright, and that we can be an open, gregarious, optimistic nation, engaged with the world. Culture transcends boundaries and we have a strong track record of working with other countries to produce artistic brilliance.

But I know that sometimes things get in the way. For example, we want to support the industry in its fight against rogue ticket touts.

I was lucky enough to see the phenomenal Hamilton last week and I was impressed at the measures they are taking to put real fans first.

And I'm also immensely proud of the work we did together with the music industry to persuade the Met Police to abolish Form 696.

Looking ahead

As I said earlier, 2017 was a year of success. The creative industries have their mojo back – I have great optimism that they will motor on in 2018.

The creative industries give a massive boost to our economy. Everyone deserves to be able to access them – regardless of your ethnicity, gender, background or taste.

I am committed to doing this, whether it's through lifting restrictions on performing that could hold back the next Skepta, or making sure that fans are being treated fairly and get to see the artists they love.

You may have noticed the blue whale skeleton above us in this magnificent room. She's called 'Hope' and she was installed as a symbol of humanity's power to shape a sustainable and positive future.

Numbers of blue whales had been declining for centuries, until there were

just 400 left in 1966. Since then, enlightened people worked hard to protect blue whales and helped to restore the population to 20,000. It's the perfect backdrop for tonight's celebration.

It shows that through concerted action and creative solutions we can create a better future.

The same applies to culture. The passion, creativity and talent here in this room will help ensure a positive future for our creative industries and for our country.

Let's take our inspiration from Hope and not the dinosaurs and embrace the opportunities that lie ahead in 2018.

Thank you and have a fantastic evening.