

New Ballinrobe hub to open with four-day arts programme

Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo — 14 September 2026

A new social innovation hub opens in Ballinrobe today with a four-day programme featuring poems, plays, films and voices created by young people in Gaza, Palestine and around the world.

Slí Nua Nexus, located in the former **Ulster Bank** at the junction of Glebe Street and Abbey Street, opens from Monday 14 to Thursday 17 September with **GAUZE**, an artistic intervention presented with **The Hands Up Project** and curated by **Æcumene Spaces for Dignity** and **The Publishing Power of Place**.

The Hands Up Project **connects children around the world with young people in Palestine through storytelling, drama, creative expression and remote theatre**.

The programme begins on Monday when 14 poems and texts will be projected across the building's walls, windows and stairways. On Tuesday, members of the public can contribute words, memories and folded forms to a collective installation exploring fragility, wounds, memory and hope.

The exhibition opens throughout the building on Wednesday, with the former bank safe becoming a space for film, testimony and archive.

The programme culminates on Thursday 17 September, with an afternoon and evening of readings, conversation, performance, music and film beginning at 4pm.

At 4.45pm, **Nick Bilbrough**, founder of The Hands Up Project, will introduce its work with young people in Palestine. At 5pm, members of the Ballinrobe community will read poems written by Palestinian children.

At 6pm, Slí Nua founder **Liam Horan** will read from his forthcoming book, ***I Can See It Still***, about Mayo football and the county's road to its 2026 All-Ireland victory. **Singer Pat McGovern will follow with "A Pair of Brown Eyes"**. The documentary ***From Gaza We Speak*** will be screened at 7pm, followed at 8pm by a live link between the Ballinrobe audience and young creators in Gaza. **Pat McGovern will close the evening with the song "Palestine"**.

Slí Nua Nexus has been developed by **Insaf Ben Othmane Hamrouni**, who took over Slí Nua Careers in 2026.

"This is not conceived simply as a co-working space," she said. "It is an inclusive and affordable space for experimentation, collaboration and real-world testing. We want creativity to meet purpose here."

The new hub occupies the landmark cut-limestone former bank, built around 1875 and listed on Mayo County Council's Record of Protected Structures. It is part of Ireland's ConnectedHubs network and will provide space for work, learning, creative practice and community activity.

PRESS RELEASE

Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo — 10 September 2026 -www.thestudio.slinua.org/www.slinua.org

All four days of *GAUZE* are **free and open to everyone**, with no booking required for the exhibition. Those planning to attend Thursday's programme are asked to reserve a seat by WhatsApp on **087 431 7838**.

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