

CREATIVE ENQUIRY

ARTIST RESIDENCY AND OLDER
PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Creative Enquiry is a strategic partnership between Cork City and County Council arts offices, the HSE, Age & Opportunity, Cork Midsummer Festival, MusicAlive and Sirius Arts Centre, with the support of the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon Invitation to Collaboration scheme.

INSIDE COVER

FORE WORD

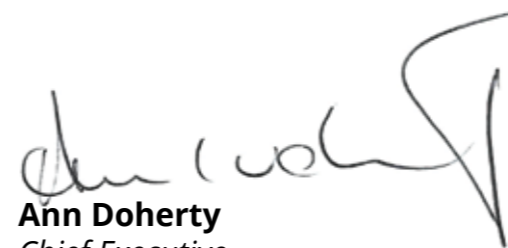
CREATIVE ENQUIRY ARTS AND OLDER PEOPLE

Our perceptions of age and the criteria we use to assess and then support our growing ageing population are constantly being updated. We know from 2016 census data (CSO) that the number of Cork citizens aged between 65 – 84 years is steadily increasing - by up to 14% - and that the highest increase, of 17%, is in the 85 + age range. Cork's city and county Age Friendly Strategies focus attention on the World Health Organisation interconnected themes that highlight the physical, economic and social needs required to improve our quality of life and wellbeing as we age.

Increasingly we are recognising creative activity and artistic endeavour as being key contributors to positive ageing. We have learned much from on-going arts, health and older people projects taking place within the Cork region, likewise with former programmes. Now the Creative Enquiry - Artist Residency and Older People Engagement programme offers a new, ambitious and dynamic approach to furthering our understanding of the barriers to accessing quality engagement and participation in arts and creative activity for our ageing Cork citizens.

This publication reveals a richly diverse evidence base of creative explorations within Cork city and north County Cork that took place over a twelve-month period during 2019. The ethos of the Creative Enquiry is one of collaboration and knowledge exchange at every level. Inter-agency co-operation is a crucial component. The qualitative data gathered and collated here, alongside an independent evaluation of Creative Enquiry, make a compelling case for embedding creative and arts involvement within and across headline themes set out in the Cork city and county Age Friendly strategies.

I commend all those who generously gave their time, commitment, creative input and reflection to the programme. With a special thanks to the Creative Enquiry consortium of partners, to the participating artists and individuals, special interest and community groups, health care workers, and local authority arts officers and staff and to our co-funders the Arts Council/AnChomhairle Ealaíon, Cork County Council and the HSE.



Ann Doherty
Chief Executive
Cork City Council

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INTRODUCTION

Creative Enquiry - Arts and Older People is an investigative collaborative venture that creatively explores fresh approaches to arts engagement with older people and advances best practice models.

The focus of the Creative Enquiry is three artist-residency and older-people-engagement projects, hosted by three distinct arts organisations: the city-based multi-disciplinary Cork Midsummer Festival; MusicAlive, a county wide organisation, specialising in participatory arts and health practice; and Sirius Arts Centre, an arts venue located in the heritage town of Cobh.

The Creative Enquiry - Arts and Older People programme draws on the creative inputs and specialist know-how of the different partners that make up the consortium. Creative Enquiry is an initiative of two Cork based local authorities, Cork City Council and Cork County Council arts offices; in strategic partnership with Age and Opportunity, the national organisation supporting people to reach their full potential as they age; and, the HSE Cork Kerry Community Healthcare-Cork South Community Work Department, facilitating community health and well-being initiatives; and, the three independent partner arts organisations.

VIEWPOINT #1

THE ARTS AND AGEING

While the World Health Organisation recently announced its recognition of Ireland as one of the best places in the world to grow old (December 2019), much remains to be done to ensure that older people are adequately supported to enjoy a rich cultural and artistic life.

We know that encountering a great book, exhibition, performance, or any artwork, is a deeply pleasurable experience for many of us. Through our intense engagement with art we can create a unique sense of internal 'flow' and stillness, while helping us reconnect with our personhood and interior lives. We also know that artworks contribute to our communicative capacity and social connectivity (expressing our thoughts and memories, bringing us together, producing empathy etc.).

It is because of these and many other harder-to-define 'intrinsic' benefits, that research has long demonstrated the significant contribution made by the arts to our health and wellbeing (or 'extrinsic' benefits that accrue from the 'intrinsic' ones). As such, the arts creates a double imperative to the state in terms of supporting lifelong access to the arts vis a vis state arts policy as a sui generis public good, while recognising its capacity to serve other more instrumental state agendas, in this case health. Since health can become a higher priority as we age, this double imperative creates significant possibilities across our lifecourse.

As the population of Ireland ages and older people increase their agency and societal influence, pejorative discourses of older people as 'frail' or 'vulnerable' will gradually recede as many of us live

longer, healthier and (some of us) more financially stable lives. This change in Ireland's demographics, including more diverse contexts in which older people live (i.e. residential care as well as supported homes), places more demands on the state for life-long access to the arts with wide implications for arts (and health) public policy and provision.

For a quarter century, the pioneering Bealtaine Festival, as devised by Age & Opportunity, has been celebrating the arts as we age. Each year and for the entire month of May, Bealtaine brings together the work of local authorities and voluntary partners all over Ireland to represent and honour the creative and artistic contribution of older people to our communities. The festival has also worked to ensure our right to access the arts as we move through later life. Perhaps more profoundly, Bealtaine has worked to subvert and re-create outdated models and understandings of ageing.

Through this work, Bealtaine has helped build a deeply committed arts and older people subsector in Ireland. Despite this commitment, however, this subsector remains a niche field of work in relation to the overall context of the arts. As such, much remains to be done in relation to how we create wider and more mainstreamed access to the arts for older

communities, how we ensure the quality of arts engagement and how we ensure the relevancy of arts programmes to older people without being prescriptive.

For this reason the Creative Enquiry has created a strategic partnership between organisations interested in creating greater access for older people to the arts and in generating more knowledge about the field of work: Cork City and County Council arts offices, the HSE Cork Kerry Community Healthcare-Cork South Community Work Department and Age & Opportunity. We look forward to discussing and applying the learnings generated.

www.bealtaine.ie
www.ageandopportunity.ie

Dr. Tara Byrne
Arts Programme Manager/
Bealtaine Festival Director

VIEWPOINT #2

HEALTH AND AGEING

Arts and health is the generic term that embraces a range of arts practices occurring primarily in healthcare settings, which brings together the skills and priorities of both arts and health professionals.

Arts Council's Arts and Health Policy and Strategy, 2010

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare - Cork South Community Work Department is delighted to support and participate in the Creative Enquiry; Artist residency and older people engagement project.

The Healthy Ireland vision (2013-2025) looks towards a healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential. Part of this is the impact of positive social interaction which cannot be underestimated. Social interaction and supporting social connectedness and involvement in community life are keystones to empowering people at the individual level and building strong communities for health and wellbeing.

Creative Enquiry through its collaborative process, looks creatively at exploring this statement for older people using arts engagement and looking at best practice.

Each individual project created a positive environment which allowed good quality work to flourish and enabled new relationships to develop into the future. Cork South Community work department under Cork Kerry Community Healthcare welcomes this opportunity to have been part of this collaborative project. The Creative Enquiry project poses a series of questions to look at how we can in partnership overcome the challenges

of using the arts to improve the health outcomes of the older person in a variety of community and voluntary settings.

Looking at and exploring the outcomes in each of the settings that participated in the Creative Enquiry project can enable us, from the perspective of health, to perhaps enhance and plan around the older person's needs and choices in the social and community context.

Projects like Creative Enquiry foster the values of Cork Kerry Community Healthcare of integrity, learning, partnership and respect.

This publication will give us the basis to move forward in a co-ordinated and creative way to the benefit of service users, staff, artists, arts organisations and the community.

I would like to thank the partners, project manager, artists, healthcare staff, volunteers who participated in the Creative Enquiry project.

Eleanor Moore

*Principal Community Worker
Cork South Community Work Department
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Health Service Executive*

CREATIVE ENQUIRY

ARTIST-IN RESIDENCE (AIR) AND HOST ORGANISATION RESPONSES

CULTURAL LORE

A CREATIVE ENQUIRY ARTIST RESIDENCY: ARTS, AGEING, ACCESS AND IMPACT

CULTURAL LORE – A SUMMARY

The artist residency Cultural Lore was led by visual artist Marie Brett in partnership with Cork Midsummer Festival (CMF), running between May and December 2019. It took the form of a creative enquiry into how older people might relate to and engage with the arts, particularly in a festival context. Marie proposed that cultural lore and knowledge can be lost from our collective consciousness as technological advances supplant more traditional manual methods (Lore as a body of cultural tradition and knowledge passed from person to person by word of mouth and action).

Her residency sought to explore and activate creative engagement with Cork older people to reveal and enliven such cultural lore knowledge and reposition its contemporary meaning as a vibrant and critical necessity - creatively mobilising what a new tomorrow can look like. With this in mind, the residency asked the fundamental question:

What does cultural lore offer people today as a way to (re)gain a healthier mind, body, land and home?

Marie's residency aimed to gather and creatively re-imagine rites, ritual, beliefs and customs of:

- the land (nature, animals, spirits, weather and almanac);
- the home (cooking, tools and pests);
- the body (medicine, cures, prevention and love); and,
- the mind (the supernatural, magic, telepathy and mediumship).



CONTEXT IN A FESTIVAL SETTING

Priorities for the CMF residency were to understand how best to meet the needs of older people in accessing quality arts experiences as well as building new relationships with older people's groups and communities in the city for future arts projects. The festival has a well established track record of developing participatory arts projects including participation from older people. Whilst the festival attracts older audiences, 51% of current audiences are aged between 25 – 44 years and just under 40% aged 45 – 64 years. What CMF sought was an artist's proposal that was innovative, creatively daring and experimental; a proposal that went beyond more formal or conventional modes of arts engagement. Marie Brett was selected for her residency vision and considerable experience in developing innovative, ethical, engagement projects.

PHILOSOPHY AND METHODS

The Cultural Lore residency methods were process driven, collaborative and reflexive where Marie invited older people to become embedded in a creative practice, led by their own investment.

The relational and dialogical (embedded in people's lived life experience) were dove-tailed with hands-on making and activation. Elder knowledge* was fore-fronted in a playful but meaningful way (but not as a social-history project) with plenty of tea, chats, recorded interviews and shared knowledge. A lotion/potion herbalist led collective making, plus self-entertainment and celebration in a Rambling House brought singing, dancing and a prize-for-everyone raffle. People involved included a group of celtic stickmakers, an apiculturist and a wood-turner, while others led in baking and hospitality.

People made floral button-holes and posies; combined medicinal herbs with

crochet, and collectively built timber planters for Aloe Vera succulents. Above all, amid this expanse of knowledge and skill-share, were massive proportions of person-centred hospitality, discussion and reflection.

Vision (leadership) wasn't imposed and relationships were horizontal (democratic) rather than vertically autocratic (top down) with inherent elements of an ethical 'risk and trust' on both sides. While 'the past' was acknowledged, the residency fore-fronted a re-imagined present and future. It combined the individual, the collective, the social and the political.

The topics of arts, ageing, access and impact formed the residency foundation and within this Marie selected and focussed on a series of questions either on a one to one or group basis. Timing was important in relation to choosing appropriate moments where people felt comfortable to discuss:

- What are the barriers to participation in the arts/attending the festival for older people?
- How can we improve pathways for older people to engage in more arts projects?
- How can we characterise quality arts engagement for older people?
- What do the arts offer us as we age?
- Do the arts offer something different from other types of social activity?
- What would older people like to see happen with CMF?
- How can the festival do more for older audiences?
- What would make you attend the festival (as an older person)?
- What topics and issues are particularly important to you as an older person?
- Are there any ways that the festival could be a forum for airing such topics?

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Significant data was gathered by Marie, particularly in terms of the barriers to participation, how we characterise quality arts engagement and what the arts offer us as we age. There was also plenty of discussion on how the festival can do more for older audiences, although less input on particular topics and issues that could be aired in a festival context. Key findings in relation to barriers in attending arts events were wide-ranging from the practical (access/booking, event time, lack of transport, energy levels, unknown venue, lack of time and affordability) to the psychological (not wanting to attend alone, lack of confidence, fear of the dark, association of daycare centres or age specific events as 'only for old people').

"a lack of companion, in first instance"

"Transport can be difficult and night-time is not always the best time as one ages"

"I'm afraid to take the first step, because of own fear of not having experience"

"Sometimes like the big gigs on, I find them, they can be very expensive"

"Like - It's only for the old ones; it'll do"

"I think a lot of people feel guilty allowing themselves me time"

In terms of characterising quality arts engagement for more participatory type activities, reciprocal knowledge exchange was highlighted as particularly important, and people being needed for their skills:

"For me it's interaction passing on your craft, just to show someone what you know without putting any stress or anxiety on anyone."

"That made me feel good and made him feel good. We all felt good."

The input of professional artists rather than a 'hobby artist' was also highlighted as important for quality arts engagement, as well as perceived good value for money (e.g. quality materials).

"He had great skill, we'll use that now well ourselves"

"Quality arts engagement would mean for me that I feel I am getting not only a good experience but that it was also good value for my money."

The sense of risk, experimentation, discovery and opportunity to try new things were also a big pull and factor in participating in the arts:

"I love trying new things"

"Actively participating in the arts gives me the opportunity to be creative - to realise I actually do have some creativity in me - as I didn't think I had!"



The benefits discussed by the older people Marie met in terms of what the arts offer us as we age were substantial, ranging from the personal and societal to mental and physical health benefits. There has been significant research in this area, particularly in relation to well-being and the findings would echo other research



already carried out. These are not only an important advocacy tool for the importance of the arts but also a potential promotional tool to encourage wider participation in the arts.

"Arts are definitely contributing to my well-being. It doesn't just 'occupy' and fill up some time for me... But to feel good at having made/completed a project.... Is a wonderful feeling"

Suggested improvements or things that might help people participate in the arts/festival ranged from access supports (companion schemes, transport, reduced price tickets), promotion (targeted free tickets, contact with community groups, a shorter summary type leaflet) and targeted activities (being invited to

contribute to something, flexible sessions, group activities, making something, an intergenerational focus, clustering activities in specific locations, choice of one-off workshops).

"I felt I should go, you couldn't waste the ticket"

"I'd prefer young and older together"

"Having a smaller brochure / leaflet"

"All the information is city based; so it'd be good to spread out to the community groups"

"if there's an entry fee keep it within a reasonable (price), so people can be able to afford to go to places"



CONCLUSION

There are a number of immediate positive legacies from participating in this project. With the ageing population in Ireland estimated to increase considerably, the festival is well-positioned through this project to grow the festival's older audiences.

This was also an opportunity to work in a more exploratory way and build up relationships with local people outside festival season. Through Marie's significant work carried out during the residency, making contact with over 20 Cork groups and many different individuals the festival has now widened its community contacts and relationships in the area of older people's services. The festival will be analysing the research findings more deeply this year and the festival team will be assessing what immediate adjustments and changes can be realistically made to

be more age friendly, along with longer term plans that may need more resources and time to introduce.

This type of residency was new territory for the festival, with an aim to more deeply interrogate, understand and better serve the needs of a particular section of society. This residency model is one the festival aims to use in the future and plans are already underway to develop future exploratory residencies with particular communities of interest such as the traveller community. The festival has also benefited significantly from being in the Invitation to Collaboration partnership, sharing knowledge, expertise and exchange between a range of cross-sectoral partners as well as artists, arts officers, arts organisations and specialist health and older people's agencies.

Marie Brett - Creative Enquiry artist
Kath Gorman - Head of Participation and Engagement,
 Cork Midsummer Festival

*Elder knowledge
 Jenkinson, Stephen. *Come of Age: The Case for Elderhood in a Time of Trouble*. Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books. 2018

Images: Marie Brett, Jed Niezgodna and Nic Piper.

Visit www.corkmidsummer.com/about/projects to view a short film, see a photobook and read more about this Cultural Lore project.

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WELCOME HAVENS

CELEBRATIONS OF SANCTUARY IN A CREATIVE ENQUIRY



A nursing home in north Cork County. A dancer, to bring lightness to their movements, hands out feathers to a circle of participants, residents of the home aged up to their nineties, while a musician plays a gentle lilting spacious instrumental on piano. These white gossamer-light float-away objects evoke laughter amongst the group as the dancer, giving each person one-to-one attention, demonstrates how they may be moved, caught, slid from hand to hand.

Such gestures open up the body more to the breath, encourage gentle movement, and awareness of the body.

Smiling, one lady turns to the person next to her and both gently swipe their feathers together, as if fencing playfully. At another remove, a blind lady gently rubs her feather between fingers and thumb to identify it, her touch thus connecting her also to the group activity.

One man smiles broadly, as the music plays on, and the participants, quite joyous now, tap the soft feathers against their hands and faces, tickling themselves and evoking the senses.

“I have a shake in my hand,” says another man; he cannot grasp the feather. With

utmost delicacy the dancer places the feather on his hand so he can feel it and raise it up so as to participate with the others. This contents him greatly.

At the end of the session, the dancer asks for a word for to summarise the participants’ experience of the session, and all of the residents are beaming:

“Sunshine,” says one. “Happiness,” says another. While another, simply, says:

“I look forward to this day coming every week.”

The reason we are all here every week is as part of a Creative Enquiry. Host organisation MusicAlive, is one of three professional arts organisations invited to participate. They have over ten years’ experience delivering participative and collaborative arts and health projects. A strong theoretical foundation grounds their work. As part of this enquiry, MusicAlive is interested in exploring further how the written word, the voice, movement and music can be fused together to inspire participation and possibly a process of shared ‘in the moment’ composition or co - creation.

To do this, a residency has been curated, which will be led by two artists – dancer and choreographer Helga Deasy and musician and choir leader Susan McManamon. Helga will be lead artist in Nazareth House – a nursing home in Mallow, County Cork; Susan in the Men’s Shed in Mayfield, North Cork City. My role, as witness writer, is to document the project and by doing so to gain further experience of how experienced artists work in such settings where the artists worked. The sessions in both these settings are rich and rewarding.

In the Men’s Shed, ‘Rose, Rose’, a beautiful traditional song, is introduced to the men participating, part of a choir group; the

song will be explored in detail over several sessions.

To begin, Susan sings the song through a cappella, in front of the circle of men, aged from their mid-sixties to their eighties. “Now try that,” she encourages, and the men the second time around follow her, Susan conducting the men, indicating the register changes with precise hand movements, pointing with a dart of a finger for a high, or more gently pressing with a down-turned palm for a low. The men respond quickly.

Then Helga introduces movements, encouraging the participants to place a hand lightly on top of the head so the spine lengthens, then to lift the hand off the head to create an elongated sense of lightness and spaciousness. Proper posture is demonstrated: feet parallel, the knees bent a little directly over the toes, the tail bone lengthened. The men lift and roll their shoulders to let the breath flow, then add further movements for the singing: this appears as a gesture similar to holding a large ball with both arms in front of the body and then gently lifting and dropping the hands.

The song is then sung in ‘rounds’, the men breaking into sub-groups and beginning the verses sequentially, staggered so that by the end they are, while still in perfect harmony, overlapping, interleaving the words and verses.

It is a beautiful and powerful performance, the men exuberant after, whooping in encouragement, and as one of them comments:

“It was fabulous.”

Another one of the men comments in a break between the singing:

“I have bad hearing. I can’t judge what level I’m at.”

This leads to a larger discussion of how older people can become isolated because of physical issues such as hearing impairment, leading to a potent discussion on access to the arts, extremely relevant to the work we are doing.

Talking to one of the men in the Men's Shed gives further insight: Liam C. O'Leary, a retired distillery operations manager, has been attending for three years, and his participation in the choir, where he sings and accompanies on guitar as well as composing new songs, has been an overwhelmingly positive experience: "It's a way to use my skills to develop others as well as myself; to give something back," he says.

In Nazareth House, General Manager and Head of Nursing Marie O'Malley and Activities Co-ordinator Daphne Carroll are also keen to engage with the broader notions the Creative Enquiry questions have brought up: barriers, engagement, offerings: there is a challenge to getting the residents to have more engagement with the arts, such as transportation, mobility, and access to expertise issues. This is why the Creative Enquiry project has been so welcome, as it has brought artists of the calibre of Helga and Susan into direct engagement with the residents. "When you are doing something like this," says Daphne, "You allow social inclusion, you allow everyone to be part of the group, to be seen. Your sessions have a mixture, there's a nice flow to it, you have the music element, you have the poetry, you have the personal contribution, you have the sensory, it does speak to different residents. I've seen the residents engage, they're talking about it, they're coming back, and they're having a good time." As Marie adds:

"Life is for living, right up to the day we leave this world, there is something we can do for people; it's about how we see

people, how we feel about people. I want people to live well and be happy."

The sessions recognisably contribute to this, and the participants themselves give feedback to the artists in confirmation, in Nazareth House the residents telling of how they find the movement element to be very good for them, and that they find the sessions very relaxing. They find the sessions to be a positive activity to be doing in winter, the social element beneficial, and want more such events. Back amongst Mayfield Men's Shed participants a common theme emerges of wanting arts events and opportunities to be more locally-based locally-run, and locally-funded. Cost is another factor, as concert prices are often too high for those on modest incomes.

The competing demands on time also influence participation and engagement with the arts of older people, but being able to attend with a group is seen as helpful. Also, one observation is that there is an over-association with the 'young' as being 'creative' and a consequential stigma around this idea being applied to the old. But when creative opportunities are available to the elderly they appreciate them.

What I have witnessed bears this out. The song that means the most to the men in the Men's Shed is 'Statio Bene' which has been written for them, with the help of two of his sons, by Liam. The song's title and theme derive from the city motto for Cork: 'Statio Bene Fide Carinis', which translates as 'A Safe Harbour For Ships'; over the song's three verses and chorus a narrative of safety, inclusion, and welcome is created, and as Liam notes:

"It's a metaphor for the people of the city and of the world."

In developing the performance of the song, the participants are encouraged



by the artists to demonstrate physical postures that reflect emotions, Susan asking:

"Think about a moment in your life when you were proud: now try it with your body."

The men move their bodies into postures representing pride.

"Now, hold onto that feeling and sing."

The men sing and respond about how this experience felt:

"We went in a wave together."

"We were actively listening."

Helga meanwhile guides the men through a movement exercise: they start walking through the space, and are gently encouraged to do so with a sense of lightness and weightlessness, then return to a sense of neutrality.

"By changing our attitude to gravity," she explains, "we can change how we feel."

The men agree:

"It felt like a dance."

"There was no tension."

Helga now leads the men in a meditative practice in preparation for the song.

"See how it comes out in the body," she says.

Then the men sing, keeping hold of the feelings of pride, of lightness, of meditation, producing a harmonious, gently powerful performance of 'Statio Bene'.

The men notice the effect the work on the song has made:

"You think you are on your own, then you hear the voices and there is a comfort factor, you are not in this alone."

Another comments on the song's conclusion:

"The togetherness was just remarkable."

Indeed, key responses to the Creative Enquiry questions to take away from the work in Nazareth House and Mayfield Men's Shed include that as people age participation in the arts becomes something to look forward to, and is a way of getting to meet other people or to get to know people in existing groups even better.

Regular participant Peter states: "We got to know the existing group in a different way. I felt we bonded better and got to know people better and on a deeper level."

Finally, practical issues such as mobility, weather, the time of year and indeed the time of day can also be a factor in influencing older people engaging with or participating in the arts.

Meanwhile, back in Nazareth House, a soundscape is emerging from a musical improvisation to evoke the seaside.

"Imagine your breath is a wave in the sea," Helga says, and then by adding a vocal sound as a first layer, the beach has begun to be visited in the imagination.

Layers are added: over time this builds up. The sound begins very quietly with the breath. One participant glides her feet in circles on the floor adding another layer of sound; fingers drum on the armrests of the chairs; hands clap against their thighs; the whole group is sounding in unison. Percussive instruments are handed out, a rain-stick, a triangle, a miniature xylophone, a string of shells, home-made rattles; participants take these and add further layers to the soundscape.

Joe has the chimes; Martin has the triangle; a nun, a sister new to the group, has the xylophone. The wind-sound begins with a 'Shhhhhhhhhhh' sound, the sea with a 'Hiiiiisssssss'. The feet shuffle to bring in the sound of the waves breaking on the shore. Helga directs and conducts this

soundscape, the participants eager to add and to follow.

The sounds get louder.

"I've never used one of these before," says the nun of the xylophone; she will conclude the performance with a chime. The sounds build up; there is a narrative evoked as the sound becomes thunderous; the participants drum on their bodies, their chairs, stamp their feet and the room fills with sound and movement; and then the room quietyens.

The sister, more certain now, has the xylophone and strikes its keys with its hammer. The notes ring out, fade and there is silence.

"I did it," says the sister, and smiles. The room is peaceful and relaxed.

All are smiling.

It is this sense of achievement through participation that is a signal virtue of the work created in both Nazareth House and the Men's Shed. Through their engagement with the artists, participants have broken down the barriers to participation, enjoyed quality engagement with the arts, and have seen and felt what the arts can offer as they age.

Arnold Thomas Fanning

Images: Richie Tyndall

Some names have been changed to retain the privacy of the participants.



FREEDOM TO FLY

THE MAKING OF CREATIVE SPACES IN EVERYDAY LIFE

12th December, 2019. There is a pensive mood in the MusicAlive studio this morning.

The news has just come in that Dennis died peacefully in hospital last night. To those who didn't know him, Dennis may have appeared to be an 'old man'; 'sick'; some 'body' who required help with self-care and medical interventions. This was at times true, but it is only part of the story.

Behind the outer shell of illness, lived Dennis the poet – the person who came alive when reading his favourite poems by Yeats or Shelley. Dennis also loved songs and singing, but it was poetry that seemed to transport him to a different place, far from suffering and the troubles of life to a place where words and song seem to make time stand still.

To see people change in this way, by expressing themselves freely and creatively without inhibition or fear, is something that continually inspires us in our work. No matter how many times it happens it feels like something magical and that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. Sometimes in some way it feels both sacred and mysterious. Not in a religious type of way, but in the sense of being temporarily free from our daily struggles.

During this project we have met many other creative people like Dennis; people who have shared their stories and their lives with us. People who have taught us the importance of taking time, of being

rather than doing, of allowing things to unfold without pushing too hard, and the importance of listening, really listening to each other. Not just with our minds, but with our bodies, hearts and souls. There were many special moments during these residencies, such as the energy and power of the singing of the Mayfield Men's Shed, where all are welcome and treated as people on their own terms, where a person with dementia could come to sing and contribute in their own way in their own community, amongst friends and familiar faces.

This illustrates how participating in the arts and meaningful activity contributes to health and well-being.



2nd December. There is chatter and banter as we are setting up in the dayroom in Larmenier at Nazareth House. Daphne, the activities coordinator is gathering the residents.

They welcome us warmly:

"It is great to see you. I have been looking forward to this all week".

Susan plays a gentle tune on the piano, as more people join the circle. I can see smiles, feet tapping, people swaying lightly to the music. I join in, picking up and mirroring movements from the participants and soon everyone is moving in their own, gentle way.

A serene focus settles over the room as we listen to Arnold reading a poem. Now we are here. We connect with our body, with our voice. We connect with each other. Stories and memories of the seaside are generously shared:

"We would tumble down the sand dunes when we were children". "I remember the sandy corn beef sandwiches". "I just love watching the waves, the big ones, the small ones, it is very relaxing".

The stories naturally inspire movement as people gesticulate as they talk. We focus on our breath ebbing and flowing like the waves of the ocean. The breath swells into whishing and whooshing, feet slide along the floor, fingers drum rhythmically, arms float lightly, carried by the sound.

"I think of sunshine and happiness" says one of the participants, "It does make you feel like you are in Youghal." "It cheers me up", says another, "Getting old won't be such a chore anymore".

Movement and sound are the most fundamental ways of human expression. For babies, movement, sound and touch are the only language. The power of the

artistic work lies in reconnecting to this primal form of expression. While dance and music are distinguished as separate art forms, movement, voice and rhythm are inherently connected as they originate in the body. Having worked in health care settings, we have learned that the combination of 'in the moment' dance and sound can provide a very rich experience, for us all.



What made the work so special was the true nature of the collaboration. Not simply adding movement to song or layering music on top of movement but interweaving the art forms. This was a process which involved regular meetings for planning and reflection as well as working in a constant creative dialogue, with each other as much as with the participants of both settings where the artists worked, the gents at the Mayfield Men's Shed and the residents at Nazareth House.

"What is the intention?" was the question that guided our process. "How does the movement change the sound of the voice?" "How does the voice affect our movement?" "How can we work with the breath as a source for both movement and sound?"

It is this interconnection of the art forms which makes the work not only very rich, but also accessible. It opens multiple channels of expression and offers different ways into creativity.



As one resident at Nazareth House simply puts it: "There is something for everyone."

Working with a focus on creative process and jointly facilitating the sessions allowed us to engage with participants on a more individual level and to truly listen and respond to their ideas, needs and creative offerings. The outside eye of the witness writer who fed back his detailed and sensitive observations was another immense asset in this process. Working collaboratively allowed us to foster a space for creative expression, a space that allows people to be seen and heard and to connect on the most fundamental level of what it means to be human.

26th September. The Millennium Hall Cork. We are at the Create National Networking Day for Collaborative Arts. The renowned Cuban installation and performance artist, Tania Bruguera is speaking about the very real challenge of duration in publically funded community arts projects:

"You ask about longevity, but I would change that word to commitment. It is not about the length of time or about durability or about preservation of the project. Rather it is about the time that it

takes to build and change something in a community. In my experience this is only achieved if the community not only feels represented in the project, but if they feel the project responds to their needs and if the project is useful to them."*

The term 'community' has many meanings and interpretations. It is different things to different people. Exploring creatively with two groups, in two locations, we have been struck both by their differences and by their similarities. One takes place in a residential care home with spacious, warm, bright rooms surrounded by lush rolling hills where horses run free. The other takes place in Newbury House Arts Centre and Family Centre in a densely populated area of Cork city in the midst of rows upon rows of terraced houses, pubs, churches and betting shops. A hive of activity and bustle, it is a place where small children laugh and play on their Montessori breaks, a Men's Shed of about thirty members, attendees of the various adult education and training programmes, youth community projects and more. But community is more than just a geography and its setting. Both Nazareth House outside Mallow and Mayfield Men's Shed have much in common.

Upon our first encounter in both places, we note an established, homely, safe and warm feel to both communities. These are places to escape isolation, places to belong, places where humans connect, share stories over cups of tea, create together, places where individuals are allowed to just be who they are in every moment they are here.

As Noel says in speaking of a song that we are working on, composed by a fellow Men's Shedder exclusively for the group: "It's all about identity; not about where I'm from, but where I am."

There is a clear, shared sense among us that we are blessed to be meeting and creating with these people in their own, well-established communities rather than trying also to create new communities. This allows us to focus and really go deep together with the creative collaboration at hand in a very short space of time. We are welcomed with open hearts and are quickly astounded by the openness, the honesty and the bravery that is shown to us, relative strangers.

Meeting these groups as they are, in their own communities has provided the richest of experiences. It has allowed us to explore, create and learn together. The residencies have also energised us. They have renewed our passion for the unfolding of creative spaces, in the communities where we are working. It is gratifying to hear, that when such a space exists, participants are given the 'freedom to fly' according to Director of Nursing at Nazareth House, Marie O' Malley.

Sláintecare, which is the governmental strategy for the reform of the Irish health care system, calls for a reconceptualisation of care as a concept to ensure the right care, in the right place, at the right time, for all citizens.

A recent World Health Organisation report,

by Daisy Fancort, points to a major role for the arts in the prevention of ill-health, the promotion of health, and the management and treatment of illness across the lifespan.

We have seen this throughout this Creative Enquiry.

We hope that our policy makers will see it too.

Director of MusicAlive Kevin O' Shanahan concludes: "It appears to have been a rich experience for many of the participants and the artists have learnt a lot from each other. The depth of the collaboration has allowed work of real engagement to happen. There have been opportunities for self - expression, or to become, as is said in Irish, *lán de cheol*, or 'full of music' and at the same time 'young at heart'. We are interested in reconceptualising what it means to be 'older' or 'ill' with new and creative approaches to ageing. Ultimately it's about the person. Through this Creative Enquiry, we have learned so much that will benefit our practice and those we work with, and we are excited about the possibilities for the future. We are all grateful to have been part of it."

Helga Deasy, Susan McManamon - Creative Enquiry artists
Kevin O'Shanahan - MusicAlive Director

*Kershaw, Alex. 2015. In *Interview with Tania Bruguera: Immigrant Movement International: Five Years and Counting. Field: A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism. Spring 2015, Issue 1. p22.*

Images: Richie Tyndall

Visit www.musicalive.ie/creativeenquiry to view a short film about this project

Acknowledgements:

With special thanks to John O'Mahony, all the Mayfield Men's Sheddars, Marion Power, Rosella Sheehan and the wonderful staff of Newbury House, to all the staff and residents of Nazareth House, especially General Manager and Head of Nursing Marie O'Malley and Activities Co-ordinator Daphne Carroll. Thanks also to the Arts Council and the Creative Enquiry committee.

EMBODIED KNOWLEDGE

OLDER PEOPLE AND PLACE IN A REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Sirius Arts Centre is a regional arts venue located in the heritage town of Cobh on Great Island in east county Cork. We welcomed the opportunity to host the *Creative Enquiry Artist Residency and Older People Engagement Project*, to explore with artist Colette Lewis new approaches to arts engagement with older people that are more accessible, innovative and engaging within a regional context.



Our objective in the enquiry was for the artist in residence to actively engage in and with the direct community and groups of older people in Cobh and its surrounds. Rather than having an emphasis on final outcomes, the organisation was interested in initiating and building meaningful relationships for the future, thereby shifting the emphasis to a process-based project. Working through a model of socially engaged art practice, Colette's interest was to research local place-based embodied knowledge through collaborative engagement and to utilise this artistic methodology to explore a more meaningful approach to arts engagement with older members of our community.

The focus of the artist residency concentrated the enquiry around two diverse contexts: a healthcare institutional setting in Park Road Day Care Centre, Cobh and a new community of interest formed through an open call around an arts project 'Local Know-How' with the wider Cobh and Great Island community. Both contexts offered some similar yet different insights and learnings for this enquiry.

The building of new relationships, developing local partnerships and the formation of a new community of interest with older members of the community for potential future collaboration was a primary focus of this residency. A barrier to arts participation among older people is sometimes due to a hesitancy to get involved in something new and unfamiliar.



A tactical approach was to form a social network of contacts through connecting with a wide range of local existing groups and organisations. Establishing and working with local contacts or 'ambassadors' on the ground, was a primary method of encouraging participation among older members of the

community, helping to build and establish a level of trust and friendship. This proved especially important to access and engage with those outside of existing groups.

In a day care setting, management along with staff, play a key role in encouraging clients to actively participate in an arts project. Their intimate knowledge of clients is an invaluable resource to work alongside an artist, supporting clients to take risks and engage with their creativity. Day care settings are strategic locations for older people with care needs to access an arts project. Feedback from participants stated their preference to participate in creative activities during the daytime in a location that is easily accessible to them. The incentive to develop the arts as an integral part of day care services is key, given the recognised health and wellbeing benefits active participation with the arts offer people especially as we age.

Developing local partnerships and working off-site in different community and home-based settings became vital to the creative enquiry process and engagement with older members of our community. Sirius Arts Centre currently does not have a dedicated space for workshops or social gatherings outside of the galleries and residency accommodation. Physical access to toilets in the building is restricted for people with mobility needs. Due to various healthcare and mobility needs of clients attending the Day Care Centre, it was necessary for all of the sessions to take place there, where the support from management and staff was of significant importance.

For the Local Know-How project a number of social gatherings were hosted onsite within the residency accommodation. The local community centre however was a key setting able to accommodate



a more suitable workspace and facilities for practical-based workshops. In addition to these healthcare and community settings, several home-based one-to-one visits became an important part of the engagement process between the artist and participants. The social encounter is a core component of a socially engaged artistic methodology.

The importance of maintaining social relations and connection with meaningful purpose is especially important as we transition from a professional working life into the retirement phase of our life.



Many participants spoke about the importance of being social and active for maintaining their health and wellbeing. Much time was invested in getting to know participants and undertake research to inform both art projects. Creating a friendly social environment in smaller group sizes proved to encourage more active participation in both contexts. Participants feedback demonstrated that they experienced a level of comfort and trust to be able to open up and explore aspects of their own lives through a creative and dialogical process.

Creating art projects that connect with the lived knowledge and experience of participants was a key consideration in

the artist approach to generate a more meaningful creative engagement and critical dialogue. 'Oral Heirlooms' invited participants in the Day Care Centre to bring an object or photograph that held personal meaning and value as a focus for conversation and creative exploration over eight sessions with seven participants. Artefacts were photographed, personal reflections and stories recorded and compiled in a book publication, revealing some of the hidden rich connections held within personal artefacts. Participants expressed that having a tangible outcome was an important aspect of their engagement with an arts project. For some participants their engagement with this project rekindled and sparked an interest in doing more creative writing and storytelling.

Ashton Applewhite in her book*, refers to how both modernity and ageism have *robbed society of an immense accrual of knowledge and experience* of older members of our society, through valuing economic productivity over humanitarian and communitarian ones. The 'Local Know-How' project invited older generations living in the area to share their wisdom to be resourceful, with many having grown up in times of limited resources. In our current ecological climate this 'know-how' form of wisdom has renewed value and purpose to recover more sustainable ways of living.



a current socio-ecological discourse and cultural frame. A socially engaged model of art practice, offers a type of social and creative activity that has the potential to be transformative, to challenge and influence attitudes towards ageing and older members of our society.



Through a series of coffee mornings, workshops, one to one sessions and a public repair café event, up to twenty participants shared and learned a range of know-how wisdom from baking with leftovers, making homemade tonics and preserves from wild foraged foods to reviving knitting techniques used by fishermen to make and mend their own fishing nets repurposed to make shopping bags and other items.

The repair café event organised in partnership with Cobh Zero Waste created a social and community platform within the arts centre for the exchange of knowledge and skill among an intergenerational demographic of our local community. Over thirty repairs were carried out by a team of eleven local volunteers. The performative enactment of making and repairing together stimulated the recovery and sharing of latent embodied knowledge that holds significance for the cultural heritage of a place. For some participants the doing and learning of new skills engaged them most because of how it stimulated their mental faculties. For others it was the social aspect of coming together and sharing their knowledge that gave them a sense of wellbeing, purpose and social inclusion.

Ageism is perhaps the most deeply embedded social barrier in our society as we age. This project endeavoured to adopt an ethical standpoint, elevating the value of embodied knowledge within older generations to reposition it within

The Creative Enquiry project provided the Sirius Arts Centre with a unique opportunity and support through funding to explore new pathways and strategies facilitating opportunities for local older people to access and participate in our community arts programme. A key learning from this enquiry is a recognition of the importance of the time that it takes to form, develop and maintain meaningful creative engagements with older members of our community. A model of best practice would be longer-term art projects that have the capacity to produce meaningful and critical engagement with participants, to include a consultation process foregrounding participants own creative interests and needs.

A second key learning is the importance to adequately fund and resource our community arts programme in order to provide quality arts engagement opportunities for older people. As a regional arts centre we are reliant primarily on community employment and public funding. Adopting a partnership approach with local organisations

and investing in resources to develop our community arts programme would be a key future objective.

As a result of this enquiry it is clearly evident there is a greater need and potential in our locality to invest much more in access to the arts and engagement for older people. As an ageing society with a diverse range of health, social and creative needs, our role as a regional arts centre will be to build on the learnings, partnerships and relationships from this enquiry to co-create future meaningful arts projects that are hugely beneficial for all involved.

Colette Lewis - Creative Enquiry artist
Claire Ryan - Education and Projects Manager,
Sirius Arts Centre

**Ashton Applewhite, This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism (2019)*

Photo credits: Colette Lewis and Claire Ryan

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Anne Rigney (Park Road Day Care Centre), Moggy Somers, Melanie O'Driscoll, Una O'Dea (Cobh Zero Waste), Mary Kidney, Maurice Kidney (Rankin Dinghy Revival Project), Stephanie Cadogen (Cobh Family Resource Centre/ Cobh Age Friendly Town), Cobh Men's Shed, Freda McDowall (S.W.E.L.S. Active Retirement), Great Island Community Centre, Veronica Stewart (Cobh Lacemaking Group), Tara Doyle (SECAD), Middleton Women's Shed, Jim Shealy, George Jeffreys (Molgoggers Sea Shanty Group), Eddie English (Sail Cork), Norman Allen (CH Marine Chandlery), John Smith (East Cork Cinema Club) Kieran Walsh (Cobh News), Trisha Goggin (Cobh Community Allotments), Clonmel Repair Cafe and Sirius Arts Centre Staff.

Project participants:

Kevin Jones, Ger McGrath, Sheila O Reilly, Mary Grannell, Pat Flynn, George Stockley, Mary Kidney, Carmel Kilcoyne, Mary Halligan, Mary Coleman, Eileen Foley, Eithne Twomey, Fiona Twomey, William T Aherne, Dymphna Collins, Jeremiah Kenneally, Phil Kilbride, Rita Lynch, Olive O Riordan and Phil O Riordan.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Creative Enquiry - Arts and Older People was an ambitious, complex and investigative undertaking that set about to look at barriers to participation in the arts for older people, using the collaborative art residency model with a range of different organisations and within different settings.

Managed by an experienced, part-time project manager, Creative Enquiry delivered short artist residency and older-people-engagement projects hosted by three distinct arts organisations - the city based multi-disciplinary Cork Midsummer Festival; MusicAlive, a county-wide arts and mental health organisation and Sirius Arts Centre, a primarily visual arts venue located in the heritage town of Cobh.

Creative Enquiry was an initiative of the two Cork based local authorities - Cork City Council and Cork County Council Arts Offices in strategic partnership with Age & Opportunity, the national organisation working to improve the quality of life of people aged 50, the HSE Cork Kerry Community Healthcare - Cork South Community Work Department, which facilitates community health and well-being initiatives, and the three host arts organisations listed above.

Creative Enquiry was primarily funded under the Arts Council 'An Invitation to Collaboration' scheme and financial support from Cork City Council, Cork County Council and the HSE.

Using the project as an opportunity for learning, the overall aim was to creatively

explore fresh approaches to arts engagement with older people specifically to:

- Place the enquiry in a context, gathering perspectives from policy, literature review and case studies
- Investigate and review the programme from the perspective of the project stakeholders - artists, participants, arts organisations and leading project partners
- Identify and draw together the findings based on the set of 12 questions identified by The Creative Enquiry consortium of partners (Appendix A)
- Develop a series of recommendations.

Methodology

The main methodological tool employed was qualitative in nature. This approach was considered appropriate and compatible with the ethos and timeframe of the project.

Findings

Both conscious and unconscious ageism exist and were evident. Ageism is the last acceptable prejudice. The experience of growing old can be better or worse depending on the 'ageism culture' that it takes place in. According to American anti-ageism activist Ashton Applewhite in her book *This Chair Rocks**: "Attitudes about age start to form in early childhood. Unless we challenge ageist stereotypes—'old people are incompetent, old people should be kept separate, wrinkles are ugly, it's sad to be old'—we may feel shame and

embarrassment instead of taking pride in the accomplishment of aging. By blinding us to the benefits of aging and heightening our fears, ageism makes growing older far harder than it must be. It damages our sense of self, segregates us, diminishes our prospects and according to research, shortens lives”.

The research concluded that although well intentioned, arts projects that are exclusively delivered for older people, might be feeding the ageist ‘unconscious bias’.

Despite the repeated evidence on the value of the arts to the health and well-being of society, especially in the context of ageing well, there was limited reference to this in the National Ageing Well Strategy, The Cork Age Friendly County Strategy or in the strategic frameworks at local level. This now presents as a strategic opportunity for ageing well in the context of the stakeholders of this enquiry.

The ‘Artist in Residence’ collaborative arts practice model employed in the Creative Enquiry was found to be a successful model of delivery. Ireland has a strong tradition and a breadth of expertise of collaborative arts practice which involves artists and communities working closely together, often over extended periods of time, to make art. Collaborative arts practice harnesses the experiences and skills of each person taking part to give meaning and creative expression to what’s important in their lives. By facilitating wider participation, collaborative art expands and diversifies public engagement with the arts, enriching its contribution to society. However for the purposes of this evaluation, the collaboration time-frame for this project might be considered modest for deep engagement.

County Cork has a wealth of experience and expertise in the areas of Arts in Health, Arts and Older People and Collaborative Arts Practice. This was

demonstrated in the two Cork case studies presented in the full report**. What was found to be missing was a lack of joined up thinking and missed opportunities to lever this knowledge and expertise at a strategic level.

Project participants described the Creative Enquiry workshops as a hugely positive experience and appreciated the opportunity they were offered through the project. Through these creative experiences people were given an opportunity to connect, which is an essential process in well-being and ageing well.

Participants spoke about feeling good, enjoying themselves, having a sense of worth, developing a sense of collaboration and camaraderie, working towards an end result, developing concentration and focusing skills, realising they have skills they never thought they had, and feeling respected and heard.

The participants spoke about a range of real and perceived barriers to their participation in the arts. The majority of interviewees spoke about arts facilitating being part of a social community, building relationships, breaking isolation, enhancing wellness through having fun, experiencing and expressing emotions in an accepting environment, feeling respected, heard and getting involved, respecting age, recognising resourcefulness and previously unrecognised skills and strengths, confidence - building and boost of morale, improvement in concentration and focusing skills.

All interviewed participants described their experience in the Creative Enquiry as a positive one. This does not mean however that all participants (both artists and older people) always enjoyed all aspects of every session. Some people for example spoke about struggling with interactions in a

group, or about some aspect of the work bringing up feelings of sadness and loss. However, they all appreciated the range of experiences they were offered through the Creative Enquiry.

A range of strengths and challenges were identified during the evaluation process which are listed in the main report**. Recommendations relating to policy development, advocacy, inspiration and practical ideas are also presented which are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound.

What next? - This was not the first ambitious project with a solid oversight partnership, curious host organisations, skilled and experienced artists, utilising a tried and tested person-centered collaborative model for engagement with older people. However, what this Creative Enquiry has demonstrated yet again is the value of engagement with the arts for older people. Unless there is commitment to deliver on the recommendations and learnings, there is a risk of this becoming another great case study for another great enquiry in a few more years.

Terre Duffy

Independent arts and culture consultant

**Ashton Applewhite, This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism (2016)*

***Evaluation report available in request from arts@corkcity.ie*

CREATIVE ENQUIRY

VALUE STATEMENT

There is a universal right to entitlement to participate in arts and culture. The arts have the potential to be transformative, to change and influence the attitudes and experiences of citizens. The arts can impact our wellbeing through the whole of our lives.

To sustain the arts we need to interrogate how arts are made accessible, innovative and engaging. We need to embed the accessibility to the arts in our values as organisations but also action those values in what we deliver. Sometimes this is about policy development, about advocacy, about inspiration, about co-creating and sometimes about addressing practical barriers.

Creative Enquiry Interrogative framework:

The Creative Enquiry consortium considered the value statement posing the following questions:

What are the barriers to participation in the arts for older people?

- How can we improve pathways for older people to engage in more arts projects?
- How can we assist older people to overcome barriers and increase their access and participation in arts projects addressing both creative and social needs?

How can we characterise quality arts engagement for older people?

- How can we facilitate meaningful opportunities of creative engagement and dialogue with older people?
- What do models of best practice look like in the context of your host residency organisation?
- How can we ensure the exploration and development of quality arts opportunities with older people?
- How can we create reciprocal relationships between artists, arts organisations and older people?

What do the arts offer us as we age?

- Do the arts offer something different from other types of social activities that contribute to the wellbeing of older people?
- Does the experience of actively participating in the arts offer something different to other ways of experiencing the arts?

ARTIST-IN RESIDENCE (AIR) AND HOST ORGANISATIONS



MARIE BRETT – AIR CORK MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL

A leading exponent of inter-disciplinary social arts practice; Marie's a graduate of Goldsmiths, London University, with MA (distinction) and BA (1st class) visual arts degrees. Current projects include an international global justice commission, soon to be exhibited at The European Parliament; a live work about capacity legislation with dementia carers and IMMA; and a collaborative project exploring modern-day slavery and cannabis grow-houses, with Cork Midsummer Festival.

www.mariebrett.ie



CORK MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL

is an annual multi-disciplinary arts festival that uses the city as its backdrop and inspiration. They provide high-quality arts events, both national and international, for audiences of all ages. Their programme provides opportunities for significant public participation and engagement, supports the development of emerging artists across all artforms, and provides a unique platform for work by local and national artists. The festival takes place each June.

Over the past 10 years Cork Midsummer Festival has built up a track-record of innovative, high profile and quality participatory work. This is an area of practice they are committed to as one of five core programming strands. Past projects include work with artists in specific areas of the city with local residents, such as the South Parish (La Cocina Pública, 2019), Knocknaheeny (I Can Colour Between The Lines, 2018) and Shandon (Be My Guest, 2016). Also working with specific communities of interest, such as mothers and daughters (Like Mother, Like Daughter, 2017) and young people (F*ck My Life). Three of the festival's collaborative projects have been used as case studies for different public platforms; F*ck My Life, Hungary Tea and Be My Guest. From 2020-2023 Cork Midsummer Festival will be participating in 10-partner country Creative Europe programme 'BE PART, Art Beyond PARTicipation. Towards a better understanding of the entanglements power, politics, place and publics in arts practice.'

www.corkmidsummer.com



HELGA DEASY – AIR MUSICALIVE

Helga Deasy (Ireland/Germany) dance artist, choreographer and teacher has received numerous awards and presented her work in Ireland, the UK, Europe and the US. Since completing a specialist training with Rosetta Life (2012), she has worked extensively in dance and health.

She holds an MA Creative Practice, a PgDip Community Dance, a Specialist Diploma in Choreology and a Degree in Social Work with a focus on Music and Movement.

www.helgadeasydance.com



SUSAN MCMANAMON – AIR MUSICALIVE

Cork-based musician, Choir Director Susan McManamon developed a love of music early in life. She completed her MA in Ethnomusicology at UCC with first class honours in 2015. Pianist with the Vespertine Quintet, she enjoys collaborating with other musicians and artists in a wide variety of endeavours. Susan believes in the power of music, music making and co-creation and the positive impact it can have on our wellbeing.



ARNOLD THOMAS FANNING – WITNESS WRITER MUSICALIVE

Arnold Thomas Fanning is a writer living in Co. Cork. His short stories, articles, and essays have been published in The Dublin Review, Banshee, the Irish Times, Crazyhorse Magazine, gorse, Longreads.com, Paper Visual Art Journal, The Lonely Crowd, and The Stinging Fly. *Mind on Fire: A Memoir of Madness and Recovery*, his first book, was published by Penguin Ireland in 2018 and shortlisted for the Wellcome Book Prize 2019.

www.arnoldthomasfanning.com

MUSICALIVE



MusicAlive was established in 2009 by musicians Kevin O' Shanahan and Caoimhe Conlon, subsequent to their participation in a European Music and Health exchange project, led by Waterford Healing Arts Trust.

Over the past ten years, it has initiated and managed a wide variety of participatory arts and health projects in mental health and older age settings. In 2014, a three year action research project Fuse was rolled

out across six diverse older age care settings around Cork city and county.

Current MusicAlive projects include *Benign & Beautiful*: a creative collaboration with Baylis Medical (Canada). *Listen*: a sequel to the award winning *An Open Door* made in collaboration with film maker Aoise Tutty Jackson and explorations in sound and light with *Gamelan Spréacha Geala* and visual artist Tomasz Madajczak.

www.musicalive.ie



COLETTE LEWIS – AIR SIRIUS ARTS CENTRE

Colette Lewis works primarily through a social art model of practice, researching forms of embodied knowledge and place through collaborative engagement. Over the past 17 years she has undertaken numerous art projects in social, healthcare and rural settings and the management and programming of artist-led spaces in Cork. Colette is a member of Cork Artists Collective Board, and co-founder of The Guesthouse Project.

www.colettelewis.ie



SIRIUS ARTS CENTRE

Sirius Arts Centre is a multi-disciplinary arts organisation in the Cobh-Glanmire municipal district of east Cork. Sirius is an arts centre that serves as an intermediary between art and the public that endeavours to raise public awareness of art.

It offers developing opportunities for both emerging and more established artists from both Ireland and abroad. The programme is dedicated to the facilitation and development of artistic expression, with additional community programming that encourages exploration through direct participation in the arts. This is achieved through a mix of activities including: visual arts programming and exhibitions, an international artist in residence programme, music performances, community arts programmes and workshops, all of which bring people to east Cork.

www.siriusartscentre.ie

CREATIVE ENQUIRY

CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

JEAN BRENNAN

Jean Brennan has over twenty five years experience in the cultural sector. She was most recently the Arts Officer with Cork City Council, following over ten years as Arts Manager with Omagh District Council, where she established Strule Arts Centre as one of the most vibrant arts centres in Northern Ireland. Previous achievements include founding The Garage Theatre in Monaghan, and developing the first Arts Plan for axis, in Ballymun.

Her interests are in creating sustainable arts and cultural policies and programmes in contexts that explore equality and diversity of access, celebrate co-creation, and embed into local authority practice. She is committed to the development of strong and robust cultural practices that place access to arts and culture, artists and practitioners, at the heart of citizens lives.

TARA BYRNE

Tara Byrne is Arts Programme Manager at Age & Opportunity, Ireland's national organisation that promotes positive attitudes to ageing, as well as Festival Director of Bealtaine, Ireland's national festival celebrating the arts and creativity as we age.

Over the past twenty five years, she has worked as an arts manager, curator, director, lecturer and consultant, completing a doctorate in Cultural Policy at the Graduate School of Creative Arts and Media at Dublin Institute of Technology (2013).

MAEVE DINEEN

Maeve Dineen was the Community Arts Coordinator with Cork City Council Arts office since her appointment in 2004 and has worked with arts organisations, community organisations and Local Authorities over the last 18 years.

She has informed Cork City Council's policy development in the arts and the community and established a range of strategic partnerships for arts programmes in the areas of Arts and Disability, Arts and Education, Arts and Older people, Early Years Arts, Public Art and Film development and has worked on developing three Arts and Cultural Strategies for Cork City Council. Maeve co chaired the Music Education Partnership Cork City which is the executive body of Music Generation Cork City.

Maeve is currently director of an architectural practice while on career break from the Council.

MIRANDA DRISCOLL

Miranda Driscoll was the Director of Sirius Arts Centre in Cobh, Co. Cork from 2014-2019. Previously she co-founded and directed the Joinery; a not-for-profit project space in Dublin 7 which she ran for seven years. Miranda's curatorial practice has an emphasis on the event, cross-disciplinary collaboration, improvisation and community; both geographical or ideological.

KATH GORMAN

Kath Gorman is the Head of Participation and Engagement for Cork Midsummer Festival. She is also the Advisor, Arts Participation for the Arts Council. She has significant arts management and strategic consultancy experience in the UK and Ireland with festivals, arts agencies, local authorities including producing new commissions with international artists and communities.

ELEANOR MOORE

Eleanor Moore is the Principal Community Worker, Cork South Community Work Department, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare. Eleanor Moore's role involves supporting and encouraging the community both individually and collectively to improve the health and lifestyle outcomes of the communities in which they live. Eleanor holds a Master's degree in Applied Social Science. She has a keen interest in arts and health.

IAN McDONAGH

Ian McDonagh is Arts Officer with Cork County Council. Prior to joining Cork County Council Ian worked in various teaching roles for Cork City VEC, Crawford College of Art and Design and the Cork County VEC School of Music.

KEVIN O'SHANAHAN

Kevin O'Shanahan graduated as a Bachelor of Business Studies from Waterford Institute of Technology in 1993. Since then, he has worked on a diverse variety of music/arts and health related projects, for which he has received awards from the Arts Council and other funding agencies. Kevin was awarded an MSc from University College Cork in 2013, for research into the benefits of participative music making to mental health recovery outcomes. He has published papers and presented at conferences in Ireland and abroad.

Also a registered mental health nurse, Kevin works as a specialist in recovery and the arts for Cork Mental Health Services. He is a co-founder (with colleague Declan McCarthy) and manager of 49 North Street – an innovative mental health and wellbeing initiative in Skibbereen.

<https://thewellbeingnetwork.ie/about-49-north-street/>

CLAIRE RYAN

Claire Ryan is an arts project manager, photographer and educator based in Cork. She studied at IADT, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin and Crawford College of Art and Design, Cork. She is Education and Projects Manager at Sirius Arts Centre, Cobh, Co. Cork, recent projects include *See You Tomorrow (2019)*, *One Here Now: The Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland Project (2018/19)* and *Sustainable Futures (2018)*.

EVALUATOR**TERRE DUFFY**

Terre Duffy is Senior Programme Director at Tangent, Trinity University Innovation Academy, Dublin Ireland. Prior to this, Terre led on the development of Dublin Docklands Regeneration in the areas of enterprise, culture, recreation and tourism development. Terre has held senior roles in the Public Service in the areas of Cultural Programming and Cultural Strategy Development, has spoken on the multiple values of creativity and is regarded as an innovation leader in the cultural field working both in Ireland and abroad. Terre has a BA in Theatre & Media, M.Sc in Sustainable Community Development, Prof. Diploma in Digital Marketing & Prof. Diploma in Innovation, Creative Leadership & Design Thinking. Terre has held several board roles including Chairperson the Centre for Contemporary Art Derry~Londonderry, and is currently a serving board member of The Irish Architecture Foundation.

CREATIVE ENQUIRY PROJECT MANAGER**MARY BRADY**

Mary Brady has a substantial track record in arts and cultural development working within Ireland, the UK and Europe, in a career that spans over forty years. While Artistic Director of the Institute for Choreography and Dance/Firkin Crane (1997 – 2006) Mary successfully pioneered the Older People in Dance programme OPID - introducing to Ireland companies such as: Nederlans Dans Theatre III - the older dancers' company; and US choreographer Liz Lerman - founder of 'Dancers of a Third Age' and Dance Exchange. She is co-founder of the European Dancehouse Network (EDN). Mary was the first member of the professional dance community to serve as a Member of the Arts Council (1998 – 2003). During the last decade she has worked closely with local authority arts offices in Plymouth and Islington, London and, more recently, as arts officer with Offaly County Council.

She is delighted to manage the Creative Enquiry project on behalf of Cork City Council.

CREDITS

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Age & Opportunity, Alchemy Music, Ballyphehane Day Care Centre, Ballyphehane Togher Community Development Centre, Bia Blasta Café, Civic Trust House, Cork Arts and Health programme, Cork City Council Arts and Library Services, Cork County Council Arts Service, Cork Flower Studio, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare, Cork Midsummer Festival, Create Ireland, Firkin Crane, Folklore and Ethnology (University College Cork), Knocknaheeny Community Garden, Niche, Cork Folklore Project, Healthy Cities, HSE Cork Kerry Community Healthcare – Cork South Community Work Department, Munster Literature Centre, Music Alive, Nano Nagel Place, The Lantern Project especially Aileen, Ann, Jean, Joan, Margaret, Mary, Theresa, Virge, The Friendship Group, Cork, The Fuse project team, Sirius Arts Centre, Skibbereen Arts Festival, Social and Health Education Programme (SHEP), St Marys Health Campus "Hidden Garden", Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre, Waterford Healing Arts Trust.

Design and layout: Jamie Hanrahan

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BACK INSIDE COVER

The background of the page is a light gray marbled paper pattern. The marbling consists of intricate, swirling, and cell-like patterns in various shades of gray, white, and dark gray, creating a complex, organic texture. The patterns are more dense and darker in the lower right quadrant, fading into a lighter gray towards the top and left.

BACK COVER