



# A Framework for Collaboration

An agreement between the Arts Council and  
the County and City Management Association

Working together to create great arts experiences for everyone



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ISBN: 978-1-904291-53-4

We believe the arts, because they encompass a diversity of human experiences in a variety of forms, contribute directly to building cohesive and sustainable communities and to enhancing quality of life.



*Trickster* by Jez Colborne in collaboration with That's Life and Mind the Gap, The Black Box, Town Hall Theatre, Galway 2014. Commissioned under IGNITE, a creative partnership between the Arts Council, Arts & Disability Ireland, and four local authorities. Photographer: Reg Gordon



## Nature of agreement

This is an agreement reached by the Arts Council /An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the County and City Management Association. Its purpose is to highlight the value and clarify the current position of the 30-year strategic partnership between the Arts Council and local authorities nationwide, and to set out a vision and broad goals for what we can achieve together over the next ten years. It has been developed by a collaborative process involving key actors in local government and the Arts Council. A further purpose is to provide a framework within which agreements, understandings and working relationships between the Arts Council and individual local authorities can be realised to mutual benefit and to the public good.

## Parties to agreement

**The Arts Council, An Chomhairle Ealaíon,** is the national government agency charged with developing and promoting the arts in Ireland. It works in partnership with artists, arts organisations, public policy makers and others to build a central place for the arts in Irish life.

**The County and City Management Association** is the “representative voice” of the local government management network. It is a non-statutory body that works to ensure that the influence of local authority Chief Executives is brought to bear on the development and implementation of relevant policy.

## Context / background

The first formal agreement between the Arts Council and a local authority took place thirty years ago in 1985 with the appointment of the first county arts officer in Clare. In the intervening years Ireland’s arts landscape has been radically transformed, leading to a rich and diverse national arts infrastructure that is supported by both national and local government. A key feature of this development has been that responsibility for arts policy, planning and implementation is now integrated into the corporate ethos and policy of local government in Ireland<sup>1</sup>.

The Arts Council and the County & City Management Association have enjoyed a fruitful relationship over many years. This was formalised by the creation of a mechanism for regular communication between the two bodies in 2009 – the Management Liaison Group. We have collectively acknowledged for several years that we are equal public partners in providing for and developing the arts. For example, in the 10-year period 2005–2014 we invested a combined sum of €1bn<sup>2</sup> in the arts. However, there is much more potential in our partnership and we would like to find the optimum way of working together to demonstrate what our collective efforts can yield.

Thirty years on, we believe it is necessary to reaffirm the centrality of our strategic partnership and outline a shared vision for a new era of arts development. We have produced this agreement to make clear our respective commitments to arts development and, in particular, to strive for equality of access to and engagement in the arts by all those living in Ireland.

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<sup>1</sup> Local authorities in Ireland are required to prepare and implement plans for the development of the arts within their functional areas, under the terms of the Arts Act 2003.

<sup>2</sup> From data collated annually by the Arts Council. 2005–2014 Arts Council funding of the arts totalled €623m, while local authority expenditure figures on the arts totalled €386m.



Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda.  
Photographer: Jenny Matthews

## Statement of Common Purpose

The Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaíon) and the County and City Management Association are committed to working together in partnership, to promote and develop the arts, in an integrated manner. We believe that by working more strategically together we can strengthen the arts, improve public participation in the arts, and secure and sustain a vibrant arts infrastructure.

We recognise the autonomy of the parties to this agreement and our distinctive roles, as defined in legislation and developed in strategy.

The Arts Council is the national agency for developing, promoting and funding the arts in Ireland. The Council's core functions under the Arts Act 2003 are: to stimulate public interest in the arts; to promote knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts; to assist in improving standards in the arts; and, to advise the Minister and other public bodies on the arts. The Arts Council has two policy priorities: The Artist and Public Engagement. Its investment and other actions to support the arts are guided by two primary goals: (i) that artists are supported to make excellent work which is enjoyed and valued; and (ii) that more people will enjoy high-quality arts experiences.

Local Government is the elected body with the closest relationship to person and place. Individually local authorities are responsible for the development of their administrative areas as vibrant places in which people can live, work and invest. The arts have had demonstrable impact across the three

key pillars of local development; culture, community and the economy. Local government investment in the arts is underpinned by their inherent potential to contribute to these three areas of development.

We also acknowledge that we have many common principles and values, in relation to arts development, at local, regional and national level. A central tenet of our shared vision for arts development is the citizen and her/ his right to enjoy and participate in the arts. We share a conviction about the *intrinsic value* of the arts and culture in people's lives and we acknowledge the distinctive and important contribution that artists and the arts make to society. We believe the arts, because they encompass a diversity of human experience in a variety of forms, contribute directly to building cohesive and sustainable communities and to enhancing quality of life. We also believe the arts can actively contribute to local economic development, whether in terms of attracting inward investment, improving opportunities for cultural tourism, or supporting indigenous creative industry. Above all, we believe a truly civic society values the arts and encourages artistic and cultural expression to flourish in the private domain, in community settings and in the wider public realm at local and national level.

A respectful partnership between the Arts Council and local government, and a shared approach where appropriate, to investment and development, will strengthen the arts in Ireland, to the benefit of its people.





## Goals of this Agreement

- To achieve a closer and more effective working relationship between the Arts Council and the CCMA.
- To provide an overarching framework of values, principles and strategic priorities that will guide and inform the creation of individual agreements between the Arts Council and local authorities countrywide.
- To collectively influence national policy on arts and culture and advance a shared agenda for development with relevant government departments and agencies.
- To make a unified case for continued and sustained public investment in the arts as an integral part of local cultural, social and economic development.
- To demonstrably increase the levels of public engagement in the arts throughout the country.
- To improve opportunities and supports for artists and those working in the arts.
- To optimise our shared investment in the arts at local and regional level and ensure we are applying resources in the most equitable and efficient way possible.
- To effectively integrate the key principles of this agreement into relevant future planning and development strategies of the Arts Council and local authorities.





## Principles

A shared set of principles will underpin and inform our collaboration at all times. These include a commitment to ensuring:

- Access to and engagement with the arts for all people and a determination to ensure that the returns on public investment in the arts benefit as many as possible.
- Value for the work of artists, which illuminates the present, nourishes our understandings of the past and inspires our visions of the future.
- Diversity of contexts and types of participation that constitute public engagement, most particularly social and cultural diversity.
- Quality of provision – defined appropriately according to context – so that the best possible artistic outcomes are secured within the wider contexts of cultural value and the public good.

## Working Together

A further set of values will inform our behaviours when working together:

- A conviction that by working together we can be more effective
- A public service ethos that has the citizen at its core
- A commitment to transparency and accountability
- A commitment to regular, open and inclusive communication
- A mutual respect for the distinct but overlapping remits and missions of both parties to the agreement in respect of the development and support of the arts



We have produced this agreement to make clear our respective commitments to arts development and, in particular, to strive for equality of access to and engagement in the arts by all those living in Ireland.





## Remit of this Agreement

### Term

The agreement serves as a commitment to working collaboratively in three 3-year cycles over a period of ten years, beginning in 2016. Three-year plans will be developed under the auspices of this agreement to give effect to a limited number of strategic actions in each 3-year cycle. The first such action plan will be for the years 2016–2018 inclusive. The partnership and the agreement will be fully reviewed in the final year (2025).

### Process

The Management Liaison Group (MLG) will select the strategic actions to be carried out in the first 3-year cycle and thereafter. These will be approved within the governance protocols of our respective agencies, the CCMA executive and the Arts Council. The Working Group will then undertake the actions as directed by the MLG and devise and implement action plans to address them. These three year programmes will be subject to monitoring and review, to ensure that our shared goals and desired outcomes are achieved.

Progress on the work programmes will be reported back regularly to the Management Liaison Group and in turn the respective agencies.

### Roles & Responsibilities

The parties to this agreement have agreed these structures to advance our partnership under this agreement.

#### Management Liaison Group (MLG)

The MLG is made up of representatives from the Arts Council Senior Management Executive, and nominees from the Housing, Social & Community and the Economic, Tourism and Development Sub-committees of the CCMA. The Management Liaison Group is responsible for steering this collaboration and agreeing strategic priorities.

#### Working Group (WG)

The Working Group is made up of representatives of the Arts Council executive and nominees from the CCMA, including Directors of Services and Arts Officers. The Working Group is responsible for developing and implementing a set of strategic actions, arising out of the priorities agreed by both parties. This group reports to the MLG.

Membership of the MLG and the WG will be subject to change over the course of this agreement.

### Review

There will be ongoing review of the progress of the work under each three year plan. At the end of each three year cycle a comprehensive review of its impacts will form the basis for the development of the subsequent plan.

The partnership and the agreement will be fully and independently reviewed in the final year (2025).



Cirque Mandingue, Cork Opera House, Cork Midsummer Festival  
Image credit: Provision





Cumann Lucht Bainistíochta Contae agus Cathrach  
County and City Management Association

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