

AR

annual review



Arts Council of Northern Ireland - 2022-23
www.artscouncil-ni.org



THE NATIONAL
LOTTERY



arts
council
of Northern Ireland



Our Vision

Our vision is to ‘place the arts at the heart of our social, economic and creative life’.

In ‘Inspire, Connect, Lead’ ([Our Strategy | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](#)), our five-year strategic framework for the development of the arts in Northern Ireland, 2019-24, we identify the main themes covering what we believe needs to be done to achieve this vision.

In this Annual Review 2022-23 you will see the progress that has been made in these areas, including an award-winning year for local theatre and opera, and the further development of funding programmes to support Minority Ethnic Artists and artists based in rural areas.

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Cover image: Prime Cut Productions presents ‘Removed’, a drama reflecting the struggles of living in the care system, at the Arts Council/NI Executive Office’s Brussels Platform showcase of arts and culture from Northern Ireland (February 2023)

Artist and facilitator Leona Devine works with a group from the rural village of Lettershandoney, participating in an Arts and Older People Project. Photo: Brian Morrison

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Welcome

Welcome to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Annual Review 2022-23.

This calendar-style review of our combined Exchequer and National Lottery-funded activities covers many of the artistic highlights of the last (financial) year, expanding in greater detail on some of the most significant events.

A summary of our Accounts for the financial year is included at the end of the report. The complete sets of audited accounts for our Exchequer and National Lottery funds are available on our [website](#).

Bringing great art within the reach of everyone

What we do

The Arts Council is the development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland, providing the main support for artists and arts organisations throughout the region through a range of funding opportunities. We distribute public money and National Lottery funds to organisations and people who develop and deliver arts programmes across all of society.

Our Arts Officers offer specialist guidance on funding and project development to artists and organisations working across the spectrum of arts activities in Northern Ireland.

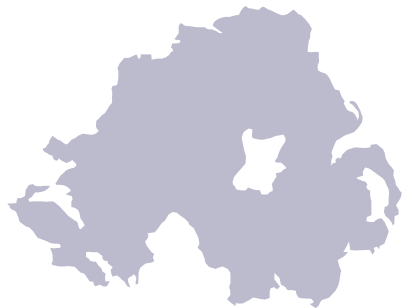
- Arts and Disability
- Arts and Health
- Arts and Older People
- Circus Arts
- Carnival Arts
- Comedy
- Community Arts
- Crafts
- Creative Industries
- Dance
- Drama
- Intercultural Arts
- International Arts
- Literature
- Music
- Public Art
- Traditional Arts
- Visual Arts
- Young People Wellbeing & Arts
- Youth Arts

Distinguishing us from other places

Northern Ireland Opera's production of Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's 'Into The Woods' wins Best Production at The Irish Times Irish Theatre Awards for 2022 (March 2023). Photo: Philip Magowan, Press Eye

At a Glance - Arts Council funding 2022-23

Annual Funding Programme



£14,716,490

maintaining 95 arts organisations central to the arts infrastructure in NI

National Lottery (NL) Project Funding



THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

£2,041,447

supporting 66 outstanding arts projects

NL Digital Evolution Awards



£78,744

developing 9 highly-innovative digital arts projects

NL ARTiculate, Young People & Wellbeing Arts Programme



£190,522

24 projects addressing health and wellbeing issues for young people

NL Support for Individual Artists Programme



£1,349,610

supporting 361 professional artists

NL Rural Engagement Arts Programme



£499,868

73 projects in rural communities

NL Creative Industries Seed Fund



£194,982

8 projects to grow NI's creative industries

Health & safety Capital Programme



£699,625

helping 56 organisations to safely reopen their spaces

NL Small Grants Programme



£556,537

107 projects by arts and community groups

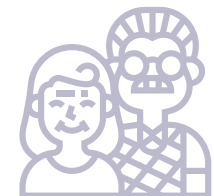
NL Commissioning Programme



£200,000

creating 21 exciting new works

NL Arts & Older People Programme



£209,743

29 community-based projects for older people

Overview: 2022-23

“A significant funding differential exists on these islands, with Northern Ireland’s arts at the bottom of the league table. And still, here we have yet another year in which our artists and arts organisations have excelled and been recognised nationally and internationally for the excellence of their work. They continue to raise Northern Ireland’s global reputation and to create unique opportunities at home for our communities to come together through shared enjoyment of the arts. Just Imagine what we could achieve on a level playing field.”

Liam Hannaway, Chair.

Major achievements in the Arts

Artists and arts organisations from Northern Ireland achieved a number of highly notable successes in 2022-23. The Lyric Theatre, for example, won ‘Theatre of the Year’ at the Stage Awards and Northern Ireland Opera picked up ‘Best Production’ at the Irish Times Theatre Awards for their adaptation of ‘Into The Woods’. The Belfast International Arts Festival celebrated its 60th anniversary edition with a powerful programme of events addressing the current and future role of arts and culture in society. The Playhouse and the Lyric Theatre produced major new productions to mark the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, with ‘HUME – Beyond Belief – The Life and Mission of John and Pat Hume’, and ‘Agreement’ by Owen McCafferty. The year ended on the most positive of notes possible, with the local film, ‘An Irish goodbye’, winning the Oscar for Best Live Action Short Film at the 2023 Academy Awards. The film received support in its development stage through NI Screen’s Short Film Development Support, which is funded through the Arts Council’s National Lottery funds. We were delighted to provide one of the central actors, James Martin, along with an accessibility support worker, with a travel grant to enable him to attend the ceremony and receive the award in person.

A new cost of living crisis

Following the upheaval caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, we looked forward to the return in 2022-23 of something resembling ‘normal’ times. However, the Arts Council’s annual survey of major arts organisations revealed a troubling picture of a weakened sector which, over the course of the pandemic, lost one-third of its workforce and whose earning capacity had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels ([Annual funding survey results 2021-2022 | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](#)). The sector had not had sufficient time to recover before finding itself facing, as a consequence of global economic events, escalating energy bills and inflationary costs. In the absence of a sitting Executive, the Arts Council, alongside the Arts Collaboration Network – an informal group of representatives drawn from across the arts - presented evidence to the All-Party Group on Arts at Stormont. The evidence highlighted the gravity of the impact of rising cost of living expenses on an arts sector which receives the lowest level of government investment across the UK and Ireland. We argued for a doubling of the Arts Council’s annual baseline grant to bring us into closer alignment with our counterparts on these islands. An uplift of this order would be required to unlock the sector’s full contribution to Government agendas and to the delivery of a proposed new 10-year Culture, Arts and Heritage strategy by our sponsor body, the Department for Communities.

As we approached the end of the 2022-23 financial year, the prospect of any immediate lift disappeared with the Department's announcement of a five percent cut to the Arts Council's annual budget in 2023-24. The Arts Council continues to petition for the reversal of this decision, at the very least, and for government to reinvest in the arts.

International Opportunities

Art and culture have always thrived on international collaboration and creative exchange, and artists from Northern Ireland have a distinguished history of international touring, especially across the island of Ireland. Artists and organisations wanting to tour work, now face a new set of challenges, largely as a result of the restrictions on freedom of movement following the UK's departure from the EU, plus the cost-of-living crisis and related costs of travel, transport, freight and accommodation. In response, the four UK Arts Councils continued taking steps in 2022-23 to ensure that our artists stay connected to the wider European arts scene and participate – and shine – at international festivals and events. The 'Four Nations' initiatives include the 'Four Nations International Collaboration Fund', which provides a lifeline and a platform for Northern Ireland's artists to engage with artists across the UK and Europe, as well as supporting touring opportunities within the Republic of Ireland; the 'Cultural Bridge' German bilateral; the 'Magnetic' French Visual Arts bilateral; and Arts Infopoint UK, which provides information on practical issues relating to artist mobility.

Creative Industries

Talent acquisition, retention and development remains a challenge. The Arts Council worked with the Department for Communities and key partners on developing an employability and sectoral skills programme to ensure talented creative practitioners have the opportunity to develop and thrive in the creative sector. Consequently, Future Screens NI, a collaborative partnership between University of Ulster, Queen's University Belfast and local industry partners, opened the new three-year 'Art Work' funding programme in 2022-23, creating employment opportunities for individuals, from across all age ranges and backgrounds, to work in a recognised arts organisation. This will in turn support organisational and sectoral growth. Art Work is one of five strands of the Covid Recovery Programme 'Employment and Skills Initiative' established by the Department for Communities to assist and stimulate recovery in the arts, heritage, sport and voluntary sectors.

Rural Engagement

The Arts Council is aware of the challenges faced by rural communities and the need for further development of the arts in these areas. We supported 73 projects over the course of the year, with just under £500,000 assigned through our new Rural Engagement Arts Programme to improve the regional and rural reach of arts funding and strengthen arts activity in areas of low engagement.

Rural Engagement and Minority Ethnic Arts Deliberative Fora

The Rural Engagement Arts Programme has benefitted from the knowledge and expertise of the Rural Deliberative Forum, established in 2021 alongside the Minority Ethnic Forum, with both fora acting as an interface between Arts Council partners, freelancers in the arts sector, wider community, voluntary and statutory sectors.

Following input from the MEA Forum, in 2022-23 the Arts Council incorporated the Minority Ethnic Artists Mentoring and Residency Programme into the suite of support schemes provided through our established Support for Individual Artists Programme. Thirteen MEA artists were awarded grants of up-to £5,000 each, plus access to specialist training, research, cultural exchange, networking and learning experiences.

Obituaries

We said goodbye this year to a number of significant personages associated with the arts in Northern Ireland, including visual artists Conrad Atkinson, Gordon Woods and Hugh O'Donnell, playwright and theatre-maker Jo Egan, and former Principal Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra, Kenneth Montgomery.

Empowering people



Stage Beyond, the theatre company for adults with learning disabilities based in Derry, returns with its first live theatre production since the COVID-19 pandemic, to shine a light on how people with disabilities and learning difficulties have been persecuted in the past, with their unique take on Chaplin's 'The Great Dictator' at the Millennium Forum (June 2022).

A Year in the Arts 2022-23

A flavour of the year's activities by the hundreds of artists, arts organisations and venues that are supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland through our Exchequer and National Lottery funds.

April 2022



Sound artist Una Lee takes unique approach to storytelling

Combining music, sound, performance art and digital interaction, Una Lee, recipient of an Arts Council Minority Ethnic Artist award, draws on her Korean-Irish heritage in her performance at the 2022 Sonorities biannual festival of music and sound in Belfast.



Working class voices in literature celebrated in new publication

'The 32', an anthology of short stories by established and new writers from across the island of Ireland, edited by Paul McVeigh and published by Unbound, celebrates Irish working class voices in literature.



Sound artist Una Lee

May 2022



High Points Youth Ballet

Young ballet dancers en point for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee

A group of young dancers from High Points Youth Ballet in Belfast mark Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee with a special performance of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake at the Theatre at the Mill in Newtownabbey.



Digital Horizon programme to improve digital technology skills in disability arts sector

The University of Atypical for Arts and Disability opens Digital Horizon, a new three-year, £150,000 professional development programme to support the disability arts sector to pursue new ambitions with the use of digital technology.



Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival presents 100+ live events

One of Northern Ireland's most dynamic arts festivals, the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival, animates Belfast city centre in an 11-day celebration of live music, comedy, theatre, spoken word, literature, eclectic performance and street art.



Enriching our lives

Ulster Touring Opera receives an Arts Council National Lottery Small Grant to tour Rossini's comic opera 'The Barber of Seville', featuring an international cast of artists, to Armagh, Letterkenny, Belfast and Cavan in spring 2023. Mezzo Soprano, Carolyn Dobbins.

June 2022

'Four Nations' performance art explores how the pandemic changed people's lives

An international collaborative art project developed through the Four Nations International Fund concludes with a public performance in Belfast of 'Tairsearch'/'Threshold', by D/deaf, Disabled and Neurodiverse performance artists Sinead O'Donnell (Northern Ireland), Selina Bonelli (England), and Marta Bosowska (Poland).

www

Sheila Llewellyn wins Gordon Bowker Volcano Prize

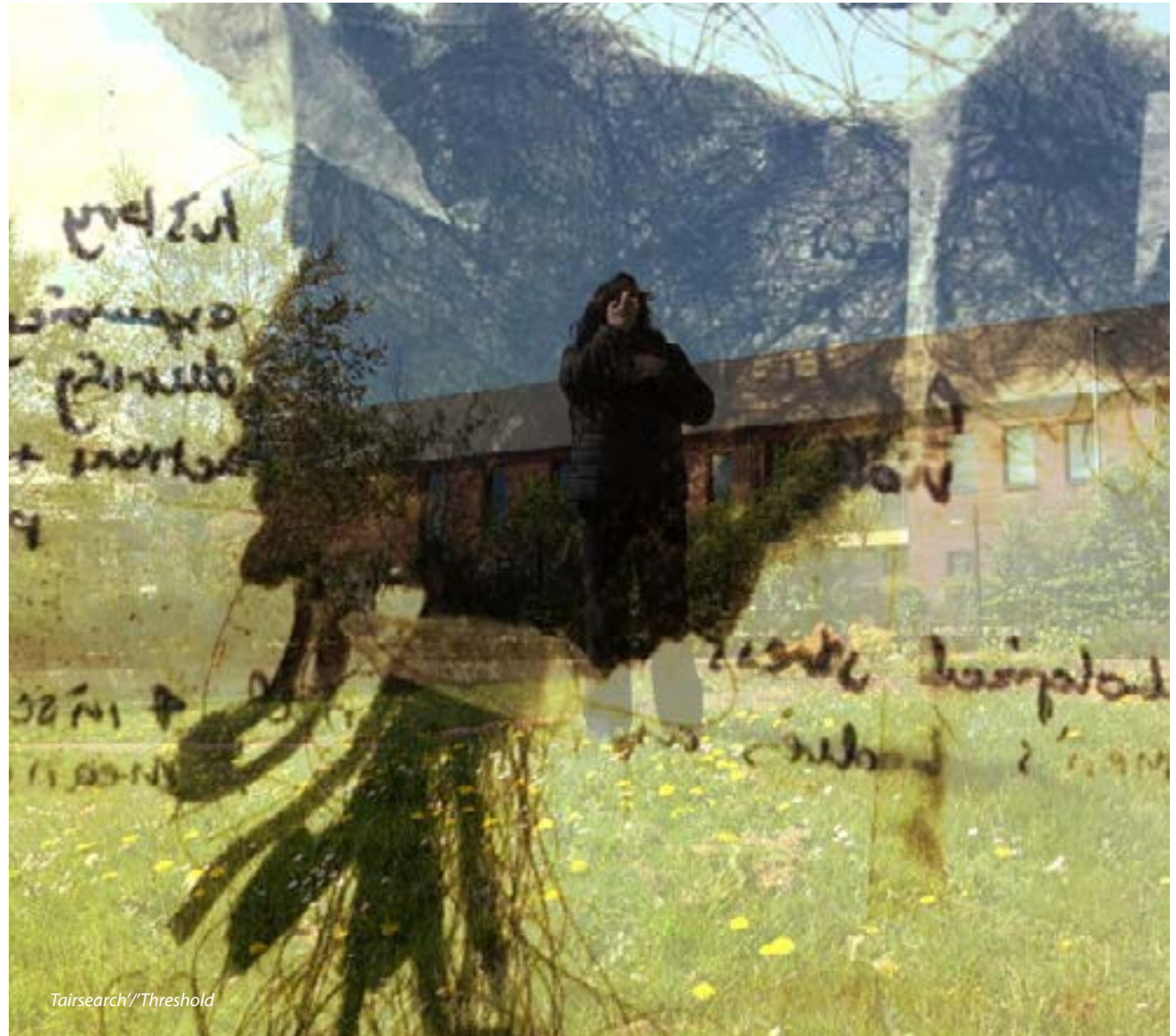
Arts Council of Northern Ireland ACES awardee Sheila Llewellyn's book, 'Winter in Tabriz' (Sceptre, Hodder & Stoughton), wins the prestigious Gordon Bowker Volcano Prize at the 2022 Society of Authors Awards.

www

Arts Council joins world-leading Harkin Summit to lead discussion on Arts and Disability

The Arts Council chairs a panel on 'Arts and Disability and the Pandemic – a Creative Response' at The Harkin Summit in Belfast, only the second time ever that this leading conference has been delivered outside the USA.

www



Tairsearch/'Threshold'

July 2022

BAFTA-nominated chiptune composer, Niamh Houston, reveals videogame installation project

Chiptune Musician and Composer Niamh Houston launches TieYourLaces, an immersive digital art game developed with £25,000 from the Creative Industries Seed Fund, which combines laser-tracking technology and original music in a video game installation designed to encourage users of any ability to become more physically active.



Composer Niamh Houston

Arts Council presents to the House of Commons Select Committee

Arts Council gives evidence to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee about the impact of the Creative Cluster initiative on NI's Creative Industries.



Mental Health podcasts help St Cecilia's bounce back post Lockdown

Working with professional artists from Bounce Culture, students from St Cecilia's College in Derry-Londonderry have written scripts, conducted interviews, learned technical skills and even created their own music soundtracks for their Creative Schools Partnership project, involving 24 year-8 students in creating a series of inspirational podcasts which addressing mental health issues and the impact of the pandemic.



Bringing communities together



Northern Ireland's largest multi-cultural festival, ArtsEkta's Belfast Mela, takes place over eight days in August 2022 and features more than 40 cultural groups. Photo: Carrie Davenport Photography

August 2022

YouthAction NI dazzles audiences with performances of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Leading youth work charity, YouthAction NI holds a series of sold-out performances of the hit musical. The shows are presented by The Rainbow Factory School of Performing Arts, a subsidiary of YouthAction NI, which offers young people aged 10-25 years, of all backgrounds and abilities, the opportunity to access high-quality performing arts training and coaching from industry professionals.

www



Young podcasters from GSCA create podcasts to promote positive mental health and wellbeing

Popular youth-led podcast series 'Spill the Tae', created by young people in Derry-Londonderry along with Greater Shantallow Community Arts' Studio 2, responds to the declining mental health of their peers, with the aim of promoting positive mental health and wellbeing.

www

Carnival of Colours hits the streets of Derry City

In Your Space Circus brings its flagship Circus, Arts and Music Festival, 'Carnival of Colours' back to the City Centre for the 15th edition of one of Derry's favourite headline arts events.

www



Youth Action NI

August 2022



Eastside Arts Festival celebrates 10th birthday

EastSide Arts Festival celebrates its 10th birthday with a packed festival programme featuring over 100 artists across more than 80 events taking place in a range of venues in east Belfast.



Clandeboyne Festival offers a special celebration of chamber music

Camerata Ireland's annual Clandeboyne Festival features 13 concerts of world-class music by international artists and creates unique opportunities for young homegrown talent to learn from the best in masterclasses with visiting artists.



Craft Month shines a spotlight on talented craft makers

The annual August Craft Month brings Craft NI, the Design & Crafts Council Ireland and Cork Craft and Design together to promote craft-making across the island, profiling makers, venues, arts centres and craft retailers.

September 2022

Third RSL Writers Day in Northern Ireland

The Royal Society of Literature (RSL) and the Arts Council host a special collaborative event at the Lyric Theatre, shining a spotlight on the art of writing for stage and screen, providing a platform for discussion, sharing industry insights and celebrating the work of local writers.



Jane Hirshfield appointed Seamus Heaney International Visiting Poetry Fellow at Queen's University

The fellowship is part of the Arts Council and Queen's University's joint ten-year Seamus Heaney Legacy project and is supported by Atlantic Philanthropies. The appointment is worth £20,000 annually and made to a distinguished poet of international repute.

WWW

New performing arts studio opens as Bounce celebrates 10th anniversary

The University of Atypical for Arts and Disability opens the Ledger Studio, a new performing arts space as part of its celebration of the tenth anniversary of Bounce Arts Festival.

WWW



RSL Writers Day

October 2022



Internationally-acclaimed Poet Lemn Sissay OBE lights up the Spread the Word Literary Festival

The Waterside Theatre's inaugural literary festival, 'Spread the Word' sets out to engage all members of the North West's multicultural community, from the mainstream to the marginalised, with a wide range of professional writers from across Ireland, the UK and beyond.

Northern Ireland's newest live music venue opens its doors in Bangor

Following seven years of fundraising, lobbying, planning and extensive refurbishment by Open House Festival, The Court House on Bangor seafront finally opens its doors to the public.



Arts Council highlights cost of living crisis for NI arts sector

The Arts Council presents evidence, alongside the Arts Collaboration Network, to the All Party Group on the Arts at Stormont, highlighting the impact on the arts sector of rising energy and living costs.



Spread the Word Festival

October 2022

10th City of Derry International Choir Festival welcomes performers from across the globe

Audiences of over 16,000 people enjoy exceptional music from more than 100 choirs and 5,000 participants, bolstering Derry's reputation as a world-class centre of choral music. Pictured: Guest artists Rajaton (Finland) at the Millennium Forum.

Winners unveiled at the Arts & Business NI Awards 2022

The ceremony brings together the cultural and private sectors to celebrate the best in creative partnerships. The acclaimed Arts Organisation of the Year 2022 award, which comes with a £3000 cash investment from Forestside, goes to Belfast Exposed.

www



City of Derry International Choir Festival



Nurturing home-grown talent



The Arts Council presents National Lottery Major Individual Artist Awards of £15,000 to five of NI's leading artists: dance maker Eileen McClory, visual artist Jennifer Trouton, opera singer Giselle Allen, poet and performer Alice McCullough, and composer Greg Caffrey (November 2022). The annual MIA Awards are given in recognition of the contribution each of the artists has made to creative life in Northern Ireland. Photo: Brian Morrison.

November 2022

Twelve ACES in the pack

Twelve exceptional artists are announced as the 2022 recipients of the Arts Council's National Lottery Artist Career Enhancement Scheme (ACES), a professional development programme which provides funding and mentoring to support Northern Ireland's most talented emerging and mid-career artists in the development of their artistic careers.



16th Outburst Queer Arts Festival supports cutting-edge queer arts

Outburst Arts and the annual Outburst Queer Arts Festival supports the development of queer arts in Northern Ireland and ensures that local LGBTQ+ artists, audiences and communities are at the heart of transforming Belfast into an international hub for queer arts.



ACES recipients



Giving everyone a voice

The John Hewitt Society announces the publication by Blackstaff Press, Belfast, of a new edition of John Hewitt's 'Selected Poems', first published in 2007 on the centenary of the poet's birth. The new edition is edited by acclaimed poets, Michael Longley and Frank Ormsby, photographed at the launch with Chair of the Arts Council, Liam Hannaway (November 2022).

December 2022

High-octane circus at Belfast Big Top

Tumble Circus perform their 'Winter Circus' family show, featuring death defying aerialists, hardcore acrobats and mind bending jugglers, in their iconic Big Top in Belfast City Centre. Photo: Neal Campbell.



Tumble Circus

Children's Writing Fellow shares his passion for reading with children attending Special Education Schools in Mid Ulster

Celebrated children's author Paul Howard, appointed in 2021 as Children's Writing Fellow as part of the Queen's University and Arts Council's Seamus Heaney Legacy programme, delivers an illustration and story workshop which aimed to promote visual literacy as an alternative, fun and accessible gateway into literature and help children, of all literacy levels, feel confident enough to engage with reading and use drawing as a springboard to create their own stories.

[www](#)

First apprentice joins Arts Council Board

Tanya English becomes the Arts Council's first Board Room Apprentice through a programme designed by the Department of Finance to give people over the age of 16, from all backgrounds and abilities, a unique board learning and development opportunity, with the aim to diversify boardrooms in the third and public sectors. Tanya is one of 54 candidates appointed to host boards this year, with other arts organisations taking part including The Playhouse and Verbal Arts Centre.

[www](#)

Lyric Theatre wins 'Theatre of the Year'

'Agreement' by Owen McCafferty. A Lyric Theatre production in March 2023, marking the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Photo: Carrie Davenport.

The Lyric Theatre in Belfast wins 'Theatre of the Year' at the Stage Awards 2023, which celebrate the best of the UK theatre industry.

January 2023

Six exceptional musicians awarded BBCNI and Arts Council Young Musicians' Platform Awards

Six talented young musicians from Northern Ireland are awarded Young Musicians' Platform Awards, designed to support their development through training, mentoring and showcasing opportunities at home and abroad. The six award recipients are: classical awardees, tenor Owen Lucas, soprano Rebecca Murphy and tenor Andrew Masterson; traditional folk music awardee and fiddle player Méabh Smyth, contemporary singer-songwriter awardee Eve Belle-Murtagh, and Jazz awardee, drummer Andrew McCoubrey.

[www](#)


Belfast writer represents NI at 'Greatest Literary Show on Earth'

Belfast-born author Elaine Canning represents Northern Ireland with her debut novel, 'The Sandstone City', at the Jaipur Literature Festival, which annually hosts the world's most prominent writers, thinkers, politicians and creatives.

[www](#)


Beyond Skin and DU Dance collaborate with leading German arts organisation

[www](#)

Funded by the Cultural Bridge programme, which supports partnerships between UK and German-based organisations that promote socially engaged arts and cultural practice, Beyond Skin and DU dance develop 'Ode to Earth', bringing young people from Belfast and Leipzig together to experience art as a medium for political expression and activism. Cultural Bridge is an international collaborative programme created by the four UK Arts Councils, British Council, Fonds Soziokultur, Goethe-Institut London.



Young Musicians' Platform winners

Inspiring, Educating, Entertaining

Big Telly Theatre Company. Rhodri Lewis in Frankenstein's Monster is Drunk' returns to the Lyric Theatre in February 2023 following a sell-out run off Broadway. Photo: Neil Harrison Photography

February 2023



Rendr Festival

RENDR festival explores nexus between creativity and tech

This two-day festival sees creative minds from across the global film, gaming, animation and immersive tech industries converge in Belfast to explore the space where creativity and technology collide, with 30 speakers, including the longest-serving writer and producer of *The Simpsons*, among the line-up.

www

Tackling loneliness one note at a time

Glenlough Community Choir, based in rural North East Antrim, calls for people of all abilities and ages to join their new Pick-Me-Up Choirs, a project presented in partnership with the Northern Area Community Network and supported by the Arts Council's Rural Engagement Arts Programme, which aims to address the social isolation and loneliness that can often be experienced by people living in rural areas.

www

Belfast TradFest Winter Weekend celebrates our shared traditional music traditions

Some of Ireland and Scotland's finest traditional singers, musicians and dancers take to the stage for an extravaganza of jigs, reels, strathspeys, sean nós dancing plus the very best of traditional singing.

www

Telling our stories



The Playhouse in partnership with The John & Pat Hume Foundation present 'HUME - Beyond Belief - The Life and Mission of John and Pat Hume', a major new musical drama written by Damian Gorman, marking the 25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. The production features Conor O'Kane and Naoimh Morgan and premieres in The Guildhall before being live-streamed globally (March/April 2023). Photo: Kieran Griffiths

March 2023

Spark Opera develops new music project with students at Ardnashee School

Students from Ardnashee School work with professional artists from Spark Opera to devise a new musical work, entitled 'Tribe', as part of the Arts Council's ARTiculate Young People and Wellbeing Programme. Workshops are tailored to meet the complex needs of the students, with a focus on promoting positive mental health and self-expression.

www

Arts & Business NI Blueprint investment programme

The first round of Blueprint investment grants, totalling £765,000 over the next two years, supports 17 organisations in a long-term approach to growth and generating income, developing new projects and building skills.

www

New Opera, 'Nobody/Somebody' premieres at Belfast Children's Festival

Northern Ireland Opera premieres a powerful new teen/young adult opera, 'Nobody/Somebody', written by award-winning playwright Fionnuala Kennedy and composed by Neil Martin, at the Belfast Children's Festival. The opera is designed around the involvement of young people in the production and performance of the work.



www



Putting us on the world map



'An Irish Goodbye' wins Best Short Film at the 96th Academy Awards in Los Angeles (March 2023).
Alison McCrudden, Arts Council Head of Literature & Drama, with star of 'An Irish Goodbye', James Martin.

Funding Programmes & Research Publications, 2022-23

Introduction

The Arts Council's annual programmes of funding and research for 2022–23 reflect a return to more normal circumstances, following the extraordinary upheaval caused in the preceding years as a result of the pandemic. That serious challenges remain for the sector is evident, due to, for example, the legacy of the pandemic, the implications of withdrawal from the EU and the significant additional pressures associated with the current cost of living crisis. Despite the many challenges, artists and arts organisations nevertheless continued throughout 2022–23 to demonstrate their resolve and ambition, inspiring audiences throughout Northern Ireland with great art.

Arts Council Funding programmes, 2022-23

Organisations Digital Evolution Awards (April 2022)

Arts Council awards £40,000 National Lottery funds to support arts organisations in the creation of four innovative arts projects.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-announces-40000-funding-to-support-digital-art>

Creative Industries Seed Fund (April 2022)

Arts Council, in collaboration with Future Screens NI, awards £100,000 National Lottery funds to assist arts organisations, entrepreneurs and creative businesses to undertake projects that contribute to the growth of the creative industries and unlock future income generation.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-announces-recipients-of-100000-digital-arts-programme>

Small Grants Programme (Rolling' applications)

Arts Council provides professional arts organisations and community groups with National Lottery-funded grants between £500–£10,000 to support projects in any art form. 107 awards totalling £556,537 made in 2022–23.

WOMEX Bursaries 2022 (July 2022)

Arts Council provides bursaries of £650 for three artists to attend the WOMEX world music expo in Portugal.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/womex-world-music-expo-2022-bursaries-now-available-to-attend>

Annual Funding Programme, 2022–23 (July 2022)

Arts Council awards £14,716,490 (largely standstill funding) through its Exchequer and National Lottery funds to 95 arts organisations to support the core and programming costs of organisations that are central to the arts infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/acni-announces-annual-funding-programme-awards-22-23>

Lottery Project Funding, 2022–23 (July 2022)

Arts Council awards grants totalling £2,041,447 to 66 projects supporting the development of high-quality arts activities across Northern Ireland.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/new-play-on-life-and-work-of-john-hume-among-arts-council-awards>

Beyond Borders (July 2022)

PRS Foundation's 'Beyond Borders' co-commissioning and touring programme opens for applications from organisations, music groups and composers, supported by the five arts councils on these islands.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/prs-foundations-beyond-borders-opens-for-applications>

ARTiculate Young People and Wellbeing Arts Programme

(September 2022)

Arts Council re-opens the ARTiculate programme with National Lottery funding of £170,000 for youth, community and voluntary groups to develop arts based projects, targeted at improving the health and wellbeing of young people.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-announces-funding-targeted-at-improving-young-peoples-health>

Minority Ethnic Artists & Residency Scheme (October 2022)

Arts Council announces National Lottery awards for 13 artists, worth a total of £50,000, to support the work of minority ethnic artists and creative practitioners living in Northern Ireland.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/13-minority-ethnic-artists-awarded-funding-to-support-their-careers>

Rural Engagement Arts Programme (October 2022)

Arts Council announces the first round of funding through its new, three-year, £1.5 million programme, offering grants of up to £10,000 through its National Lottery funds to support the delivery of arts projects benefitting rurally-based communities. £500,000 is awarded to 73 rurally-based arts projects across Northern Ireland.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-announces-funding-to-support-73-rurally-based-arts-projects>

Major Individual Artists Awards 2022 (October 2022)

The Arts Council recognizes the contribution of four acclaimed artists to the arts in Northern Ireland with awards of £15,000, through its National Lottery fund. Opera singer Giselle Allen, composer Greg Caffrey, poet and performer Alice McCullough, dance maker Eileen McClory and visual artist Jennifer Trouton, receive the highest value honour bestowed on artists in Northern Ireland each year.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/leading-ni-artists-honoured-with-major-awards-by-arts-council>

Support for Individual Artists Programme (November 2022)

Arts Council awards £985,000 through its National Lottery funds to support 262 artists working across all disciplines.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/262-artists-receive-national-lottery-funding-to-support-their-work>

Artists Career Enhancement Scheme (November 2022)

Arts Council awards £84,000 of its National Lottery funds to support 12 exceptional emerging and mid-career artists in creating new work and developing their careers.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-announces-funding-to-support-12-exceptional-artists>

Individual Artists Digital Evolution Awards

(December 2022)

Arts Council awards £40,000 through its National Lottery funds to five individual artists to support the creation of high-quality arts projects using innovative digital technologies.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-announces-40000-for-innovative-digital-arts-projects>

Commissioning Programme for Organisations

(December 2022)

Arts Council awards £200,000 of National Lottery funding to support 21 arts organisations in the creation of new, high-quality, innovative works.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-commissions-21-new-works-thanks-to-national-lottery>

Organisations Digital Evolution Awards (December 2022)

Arts Council awards £40,000 through its National Lottery funds to support four arts organisations in the creation of four innovative digital arts projects.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/quotidian-big-telly-theatre-armstrong-storytelling-void-to-share-in-40000-l>

Arts & Older People Programme (December 2022)

Arts Council awards £209,743 of National Lottery funding to support 29 arts organisations across Northern Ireland in delivering a series of community-based arts projects benefitting older people.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/older-people-to-benefit-from-209000-national-lottery-funding>

Young Musicians' Platform Award (January 2023)

BBC Northern Ireland and the Arts Council through its National Lottery funds support six exceptionally talented young musicians, with funding awards of up to £5,000 each, plus showcasing and mentoring opportunities.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/six-exceptional-musicians-awarded-young-musicians-platform-award>

Creative Industries Seed Fund (February 2023)

Arts Council awards £95,000 of National Lottery funding to support four arts organisations in the creation of new innovative digital arts projects.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/creative-industries-seed-fund-announcement-feb23>

Arts Council Research Publications, 2022-23

Arts Council Business Plan 2022-23 (June 2022)

Arts Council publishes its Business Plan for 2022-23, setting out the organisation's strategic objectives and corresponding actions for the financial year.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-publishes-business-plan-2022-23>

Annual Funding Survey, 2021–22 (September 2022)

Findings from the Arts Council's Annual Funding Survey show how the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have a significant and long-lasting impact on arts organisations in 2021–22, from planning and programming through to staffing and finances.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/resources/annual-funding-survey-2021-2022-headline-report>

Consultation Report on Access Scheme for Disabled Audiences (February 2023)

Arts Council publishes the findings of its consultation on the potential introduction to Northern Ireland of a UK-wide Access Scheme for disabled, D/deaf and neurodivergent audiences members buying tickets for creative and cultural events and venues.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/resources/disability-access-research-report>

Evaluations of Arts Council Covid Recovery programmes

(February 2023)

Arts Council publishes survey-based evaluations of its two Covid Recovery programmes, co-designed with the Department for Communities to help the creative sector re-establish itself following the relaxation of coronavirus pandemic restrictions in 2021.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/resources/creative-individuals-recovery-programme-cirp-evaluation-3>

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/resources/covid-recovery-programme-for-arts-organisations-crpa0-evaluation>



Expanding young people's horizons



Students from Mercy College take part in an art project supported by the Creative Schools Partnership. Twenty-two students work with artist Karen Kinghan to produce a film reflecting on the school's 60th year. The project works across key curriculum subjects including Drama, Art, History and English and focuses on building student resilience, confidence and self-esteem. Photo: Brian Morrison

The Board of the Arts Council

The Board of the Arts Council provides leadership for the executive body, in particular in defining and developing its strategic direction. It monitors performance in order to ensure that the Arts Council fully meets its aims, objectives and performance targets, and acts in a way that promotes the

highest standards of public finance. The Council is made up of the Chairperson plus members, providing a broad cross-section of expertise and including representatives from the arts and culture sector.

Biographies of board members are available at <https://artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/our-people/our-board>



Mr Liam Hannaway
Chairperson



Mr William Leathem
Vice Chairperson



Mrs Lynne Best



Mr Paul Boyle



Mr Paul Brolly



Mr Joe Dougan



Mr Sean Kelly



Mrs Laura McCorry



Dr Gearóid Trimble



Mr Ray Hall

The Executive of the Arts Council

Chief Executive



Roisín McDonough

The Chief Executive sets the direction and oversees the operations of the Arts Council. She is responsible for the development and implementation of the strategic plans and policies established by the Board.

Arts Development



Noírín McKinney,
Director of Arts Development
(job share)



Gilly Campbell,
Director of Arts Development
(job share)

The Arts Development Department provides funding support to artists and arts organisations through its Exchequer and National Lottery funds. It is responsible for the development of the art form genres supported by the Arts

Council. Funding is available through dedicated funding programmes which are linked to the Arts Council's strategic plan. The Arts Council's art form officers provide specialist expertise and advice. This department is also responsible for corporate communications and media relations.

María Lynch,
Director of Operations

Strategic Development



Karly Greene,
Director of Strategic
Development & Partnerships

Strategic Development is responsible for developing the Arts Council's strategic, corporate and business plans. It is in charge of research, policy and advocacy; for ensuring the Arts Council's compliance with statutory requirements such as Equality and Freedom of Information; and for inter-agency co-operation with other government departments and local authorities.

Finance and Corporate Services



Geoffrey Troughton,
Director of Finance &
Corporate Services

Corporate Services provides the core administration for the Arts Council. Its main areas of responsibility are finance, personnel and training, IT support, Reception, Registry and general office services.

Full staff list is available at:
<https://artscouncil-ni.org/contact>

Financial Summary 2022-23

The Arts Council is the official funding and development organisation for the arts in Northern Ireland. We support the vital contribution that the arts make to the region through our broad range of funding opportunities. Our Exchequer and National Lottery funding programmes reflect the aims and objectives of our five-year strategic plan.

The complete sets of audited accounts for our Exchequer and National Lottery funds are made available on the Arts Council's website, <https://artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/annual-reports>

The Arts Council invested £21.89m to support the full range of creative activities across Northern Ireland in 2022-23*

*Based on the Exchequer and National Lottery Accounts for 2022-23

Arts Council Exchequer funding 2022-23[†]

Artform	Number of Awards	Value of Awards (£)
Circus/Street Theatre/Carnival	8	181,748
Combined	40	3,356,998
Craft	3	154,704
Dance	5	50,570
Drama	19	1,953,927
Film	1	4,207
Literature	5	121,711
Music	22	2,895,995
Opera	2	1,012,886
Other	4	444,172
Traditional Arts	12	145,133
Visual Arts	28	1,245,791
Grand Total	149	11,567,842

Local Authority Area	Number of Awards	Value of Awards (£)
Antrim and Newtownabbey	1	6,081
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	4	60,749
Belfast	95	9,791,325
Causeway Coast and Glens	3	149,833
Derry and Strabane	22	998,010
Fermanagh and Omagh	4	44,602
Lisburn and Castlereagh	2	18,466
Mid Ulster	3	62,576
Newry, Mourne and Down	5	47,647
North Down and Ards	6	181,242
Other	4	207,311
Grand Total	149	11,567,842

The Arts Council awarded funding of £11.567 million through its Exchequer fund. These funds were awarded through a set of programmes designed to support the full range of activities of artists and arts organisations across Northern Ireland, including:

- Annual Funding Programme
- Arts Development Fund
- Cathedral Building Fire Fund
- Health & Safety Capital Programme

[†] The figures on pages 40-41 represent grants awarded directly to artists and arts organisations. The complete investment picture is available in the Exchequer and National Lottery Accounts, published to the website.

Arts Council Lottery funding 2022-23

Artform	Number of Awards	Value of Awards (£)
Circus/Street Theatre/Carnival	20	577,204
Combined	102	3,258,070
Craft	36	156,854
Dance	29	454,714
Drama	73	935,907
Film	4	3,022
Literature	79	712,838
Music	191	1,800,461
Opera	16	112,745
Other	15	105,842
Traditional Arts	30	598,395
Visual Arts	165	1,185,623
Grand Total	760	9,901,675

Local Authority Area	Number of Awards	Value of Awards (£)
Antrim and Newtownabbey	21	124,453
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	52	509,333
Belfast	353	5,399,155
Causeway Coast and Glens	31	242,174
Derry and Strabane	92	1,786,639
Fermanagh and Omagh	38	309,747
Lisburn and Castlereagh	17	182,500
Mid and East Antrim	18	88,064
Mid Ulster	29	242,028
Newry, Mourne and Down	52	511,428
North Down and Ards	42	290,562
Other	15	215,592
Grand Total	760	9,901,675

The Arts Council awarded funding of £9.9 million through its National Lottery fund. Lottery funds supported arts projects throughout Northern Ireland.


Funding programmes included:

- Annual Funding Programme
- Arts and Older People
- Arts Development Fund
- Creative Industries Seed Fund II & III
- Commissioning Programme
- Individual Artists Digital Evolution Programme
- National Lottery Project Funding
- Organisations Digital Evolution Awards
- Rural Engagement Arts Programme
- Support for Individual Artists Programme
- Small Grants Programme
- Young People and Wellbeing Arts Programme

Note on funding patterns

Funding patterns in Belfast and Derry/Strabane reflect the high concentrations of artists and arts organisations living and working in these areas, as well as the location of several major 'umbrella' arts organisations whose services extend to Northern Ireland as a whole.

Building new audiences for the arts



Belfast International Arts Festival celebrates its 60th anniversary programme (October 2022). Teiya Kasahara 笠原貞野 in *The Queen In Me*, co-presented by the Canadian Opera Company, Amplified Opera, Nightwood Theatre, and Theatre Gargantua, as part of Belfast International Arts Festival's 2022 focus on artists from Canada. Photo: Gaetz Photography

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply for funding?

The Arts Council offers a range of grant programmes that you can apply to for funding. Some programmes are specifically for organisations and others are for individual artists. For full information on all the programmes that we offer, the criteria for each programme, application deadlines and how to apply, visit the Funding pages of our website, <https://artscouncil-ni.org/funding>

When can I apply?

Most grant programmes take place in funding rounds with specific dates when we will accept applications. Some programmes are open all year round. For information on funding deadlines, visit the Funding pages of our website.

How long will it take to reach a decision?

This may vary with each programme, although we would generally aim to make a decision on applications from individuals and organisations within three months.

Where can I get help with my application?

The guidance notes for each programme provide information on the assessment criteria, eligibility and application process. Our Arts Development Officers can also offer **advice** and assistance before you submit an application. Contact details are available in the **About Us** section of our website, or you can contact the switchboard and you will be directed to the most appropriate person.

How do I complain to the Arts Council?

The Arts Council has a Service Charter which outlines the standard of service our clients should expect from us. We operate a Service Complaints Procedure to handle general complaints about our service. In addition, we operate a Funding Review Procedure for those who want to appeal a decision about a grant application. These documents are available on the website.

Arts Council
E: info@artscouncil-ni.org



For further information please contact:

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

E: info@artscouncil-ni.org

W: www.artscouncil-ni.org

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Alternative formats of this publication may be available on request.

For further information,
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