

LIVING ARTS PROJECT

Project Brief for Assistant Artists: Primary Schools Residency Programme

Wexford County Council (WCC) and Wexford Arts Centre (WAC) in partnership with the Arts Council invite applications from visual artists residing in County Wexford and working in all manner of visual arts disciplines for a Visual Artist Residency Programme commencing September/October 2024 and running to February 2025.

Background

The mission statement of the **Arts Department of Wexford County Council** (WCC) is to improve the quality of life for the citizens of County Wexford by enabling people to engage in high quality arts experiences and by stimulating and supporting standards of excellence among artists in their practice.

Arts in education is a key goal prioritised in Wexford County Council's Arts Plan 2023-2027 and the national "Creative Youth" programme being developed by the Arts Council, and Department of Education and Creative Ireland. One of the higher goals of the Arts Plan aims to:

'Improve educational fulfilment through the development of high quality, accessible, inclusive arts in education programmes that promote involvement and engage children and young people, placing their needs at the core.'

In the *Living Arts Project*, artists devise and implement an enlivened and experiential arts project in collaboration with students and teachers in schools throughout County Wexford. Schools will be asked to contribute 15% to the cost of programme. The additional 85% of the cost of the programme will be funded by the Arts Department of Wexford County Council and the Arts Council.

Wexford County Council, via the Arts Department, has provided funding to **Wexford Arts Centre** (WAC) to deliver this service. WAC has delivered a vibrant arts programme to the Wexford community since 1974. Recognizing the importance of the visual arts within its overall programming, WAC developed a clear identity for its visual arts activity and since 2006, an innovative strategy plan was implemented with emphasis on promoting contemporary art practice and participation. This led to the development of a visual arts policy which has enhanced WAC's profile as a leading visual arts centre on a local and national level, and has enabled the delivery of a multifaceted, high-quality exhibition and education programme.

Operating a three-tiered approach to deliver this programme, WAC showcases a diverse range of mediums and, through our auxiliary educational activities, offers audiences the opportunity to become acquainted with the various contexts in which visual artworks are generated. This approach involves providing exhibition opportunities for recent graduates, emerging and established artists, and originating and producing touring exhibitions.

WAC is acutely aware that today more than ever the arts are needed by young people as a forum for expression, communication, exploration, and cultural and historic understanding. Research confirms that arts education strengthens the child's ability to problem solve, enhancing critical reasoning skills with emphasis placed on using imagination and creative thinking to formulate and hone ideas. Learning through the arts can also serve as a crucial motivating tool for children who are not naturally inclined to more academic modes of teaching. Motivation is critical in terms of identifying and attaining both short and long-term goals.

Together with the collaborative nature involved in many art processes, there is potential for the child to develop essential skills in relation to decision-making, leadership and clear

communication.

Living Arts Project – Assistant Artist Strand

To further develop the Living Arts Project and offer additional opportunities for meaningful exchange and collaboration, the 2024-2025 project will see the continuation of the Assistant Artist strand. The primary aim of this strand is to provide an opportunity for graduates and artists with limited experience of workshop facilitation in a school environment to gain applicable skills and improve their career prospects in the field of visual arts education.

How the Assistant Artist Strand will work

A total of four assistant artist positions are available. Two of the positions will run for a fifteen-week period and a fee of €2,160.00 will be made available, and two of the positions will run for an eight-week period and a fee of €1,270.00 will be made available. The successful applicants must be flexible in terms of contact hours and will be required to work at least four hours per week. The project will start this September/October and run to February 2025. The culminating exhibition will take place between April 2025 in Wexford Arts Centre. The final workshop of the residency will be held in Wexford County Council and Wexford Arts Centre during the exhibition.

Throughout the residency, the role of the assistance artist is to support and assist in the preparation, facilitation and cleaning up of all sessions with the lead artist in accordance with any practice-based workshop. This role also includes undertaking tasks assigned by the lead artist ranging from workshop facilitation to technical support. There is an opportunity for the assistant artist to facilitate one workshop session with students in the school and one session with the students in Wexford County Council and Wexford Arts Centre through consultation with the lead artist. If the assistant artist's practice is appropriate to the nature of the project, he/she may be invited to present their work to the class groups; however, this is subject to direct consultation with the lead artist.

Mentorship

The Living Arts Project provides an opportunity for assistant artists to develop their own practice. This development will be supported with two mentorship sessions to each assistant artist over the course of the residency. This will provide the assistant artist with an opportunity to discuss their own practice and gain informed advice on future career developments. The mentor will be selected in consultation with Wexford Arts Centre.

Application requirements and guidelines for artists

To be considered for an assistant artist role please submit **one PDF file** with the following information:

-Full C.V. including qualifications, relevant experience and employment history, and contact details for two referees.

-A letter of application outlining how you feel the assistant artist position would enable the development of your practice and/or career.

In addition, please supply the following:

-8-10 Jpeg images of previous art works, exhibitions, workshops/projects which clarify the nature of your practice and support your letter of application. Please caption the images with relevant details: artwork titles, dimensions, medium and year.

All application information should be sent by email to catherine@wexfordartscentre.ie no later than **4pm on Thursday 2nd May, 2024**. Please include *Assistant Artist Application, Primary School Residency, Living Arts Project* in the subject box of the email. Please note, ONLY email applications will be accepted. Postal applications will not be considered.

Should you require any further information on the Living Arts Project please email catherine@wexfordartscentre.ie or alternatively you can visit www.livingartsproject.ie.

For further information on Wexford County Council's full arts programme please visit www.wexfordcoco.ie/arts-and-culture or call 053-9196441 / email arts@wexfordcoco.ie.



The *Living Arts Project* is funded by the Arts Department of Wexford County Council, The Arts Council and participating schools. The project is programmed and administered by Wexford Arts Centre.