

LIVING ARTS PROJECT

Project Outline for Primary Schools: Artist Residency Programme CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Wexford County Council (WCC) and Wexford Arts Centre (WAC) in partnership with the Arts Council invite applications from interested Primary Schools to partake in an Visual Artist Residency Programme commencing September/October 2024.

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.'

Consequently, Wexford County Council has led a pro-active approach to the development of youth arts within Co. Wexford. Programme supports include youth drama, youth film, youth dance and thirteen years of an Art in Education programme called *Art Alongside*.

Following a phase of critical research of this programme, the Arts Department of Wexford County Council rolled out a new Art in Education programme called the *Living Arts Project* in 2013. Via the *Living Arts Project* an artist devises and implements 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 and WCC will invoice for this amount at the commencement of the project. 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 to deliver this service. **Wexford Arts Centre (WAC)** has delivered a vibrant arts programme to the Wexford community since 1974. Recognizing the importance of the visual arts within the overall programming of the arts centre, 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.

In order to further develop existing education programmes, WCC and WAC consolidated their existing partnership to create the *Living Arts Project* which launched in September 2013 and was an important step in the advancement of the arts in educational contexts.

LIVING ARTS PROJECT

The **Living Arts Project** presents a real opportunity for children and teachers to fully engage with contemporary visual art practice while utilising the progress of a visual artist's work as the catalyst for this engagement. It also offers a unique and invaluable opportunity for class teachers to gain experience, confidence and ideas for visual, creative workshops within their schools once the project is finished. On a practical level, teachers will gain useful insight into how to approach visual arts classes

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

with larger groups, while learning with the students how to experiment with a diverse range of materials, skills and techniques. The *Living Arts Project* has the potential to be an incredibly active learning experience for all involved and can be of great benefit to many other programmes and initiatives which take place during the school year.

Structure of Residencies

In order for a school to meaningfully engage with the artist and to allow the time needed for the children to develop work, under the structure of the project, the residencies will take place in four primary schools in the County beginning this September/October.

This year we are offering two fifteen-week residencies and two eight-week residencies. To apply to the eight-week residency you must provide a statement/rationale detailing your school's need for this specific time-frame. The fee for the fifteen-week residency is €900.00 and the fee for the eight-week residency is €450.00.

During the school residency, the selected artist will work for four hours a week for a total of fifteen weeks or eight weeks (depending on length of residency) over the school year.

The programme will culminate in an exhibition of work from students and artists from all participating schools at Wexford Arts Centre in April 2024. This is of importance as not only do students have the opportunity to benefit from the detailed guidance of such a programme, they also will see their work realised and exhibited in an art gallery context.

It is suggested that interested schools have a suitable space within the school to facilitate the workshops; ideally, access to a multi-purpose hall at different times during the project would be of benefit to the artists and students. Successful schools will be notified in June and meetings will take place in September to allow time to coordinate access and use of additional space for the workshops.

Application Process

Primary schools are invited to submit expressions of interest in participating in the project by providing an overview of work undertaken in the area of visual arts education and outlining potential areas of investigation.

Visual artists will in turn be invited to apply to the project detailing their work practices and experience in the appropriate area of engagement.

Based on the expressions of interest received from each school, artists will be short-listed, and selection will be determined by the schools needs and areas of interest. The content of the work with the school will be determined by the artist, in accordance with the needs outlined by that school.

The *Living Arts Project* provides a valuable educational opportunity for primary schools in County Wexford. If you feel the project is something your school would like to participate in, please fill out an expression of interest form as fully as possible and return it no later than **4pm on Thursday 2nd May 2024**. School selection will be based on the response to project brief and the geographic spread.

Should you require any further information on the *Living Arts Project* please contact Catherine Bowe, Wexford Art Centre on 053 9123764 or email catherine@wexfordartscentre.ie. Alternatively, you can visit the website www.livingartsproject.ie.

