

**PROFILE**

We recognise that the opportunity to work in an international context is crucial to many artists and arts organisations. In the past, international activity meant simply the presentation of work abroad and was regarded as a bonus or an extra. In the current environment, the international context informs all aspects of artistic activity.

International activity includes work undertaken abroad, collaborations with international partners, exchange programmes, participation in international networks, and presentation of international artists. Artists travel abroad for a variety of reasons: to learn new skills, to develop their practice, to be inspired, to find new publics, to collaborate with international peers, to create.

Operating effectively in an international context inspires artistic innovation and excellence, and the development of art form and audience. We support and value the international dimension of the arts, for the very important benefits which accrue to the artist and the art form. We also recognise that the impetus for developing an international dimension must stem from the artist. Not all artists have the same interest in working internationally and the decision to do so – to what extent and in what form – is the prerogative of the artist.

We recognise that the state and other agencies rightly consider the arts and culture as having value in the field of cultural relations and public diplomacy. We seek to avoid duplicating the efforts of such organisations. We advocate that the principles of artistic standards and artistic autonomy should always be respected. In seeking to support the international dimension of the arts, our priority is to facilitate the mobility of artists and their works.

**STRENGTHS**

- Increasingly, access to international networks both improves the ability of artists and organisations to operate internationally and also influences in a positive way work undertaken locally and nationally.
- The current travel and mobility award is an effective instrument in supporting the mobility of artists and arts professionals.
- The establishment of Culture Ireland in 2005 to replace the Cultural Relations Committee has the potential to greatly increase international opportunities for Irish artists. Along with the Arts Council, this agency may well be the most significant other player for Irish arts in the international arena. It is expected that Culture Ireland will publish its strategy in 2006.
- Several festivals and organisations present high-quality international work and provide an international platform for artists and organisations based in Ireland.
- Several artists and organisations have successfully built long-term international partnerships and an international profile.
- Changes in the EU legislative and regulatory environment, for example the directive on artists' resale rights, present increased opportunities for artists; currently, we are advising government on how this directive can be best implemented.
- Irish participation and representation at major international events has been instrumental in raising the profile of and increasing the opportunities for participating artists and has had a similar effect on Irish arts more generally.

## **CHALLENGES**

- The artist needs support for travel in order to avail of international opportunities, collaborate with international peers and build partnerships.
- Increasingly, the development of partnerships and the presentation of Irish work abroad depend on an ability to attract international peers to Ireland. The current form of the travel award, however, does not address the need for inward travel.
- In the current form, the travel award does not properly accommodate artists engaged in certain art forms and art practices.
- There are several agencies with an interest in the international dimension of the arts but there is lack of clarity around roles and policy complementarities.
- A serious obstacle to working in an international context is the fact that artists and organisations are unable to plan long term. This is because the current funding mechanisms, for both organisations and individuals, do not allow for forward planning, an absolute necessity when working internationally.
- Some legislation hinders the international dimension for the arts, for example VAT on foreign artists.
- The international arts arena is becoming increasingly competitive and increasingly sophisticated. Artists and organisations need access to information, training and international networks. They can no longer operate in isolation, even when their focus is on domestic practice.

## **PROPOSED RESPONSES TO THOSE CHALLENGES**

- A. Continue to support artists' mobility, in the main through the travel and mobility award and in order to meet the needs of artists, provide for inward mobility and make funding more flexible.
- B. Ensure that appropriate information and training needed to operate in the international arts arena is made available.
- C. Engage in direct international initiatives, on a case-by-case basis, to address gaps or to allow artists to take advantage of opportunities as they emerge.
- D. Explore how funding mechanisms can be modified to accommodate more flexible and longer-term planning and broaden funding criteria to allow for wider application of funding to international activity.
- E. Advocate that international policies that benefit the artist and the arts be adopted and implemented in Ireland.
- F. Continue to support Irish participation at major international events and endeavour to increase the number of events with Irish representation.
- G. Engage with other bodies and agencies interested in the international dimension of the arts, in particular with Culture Ireland, in order to pursue areas of shared strategic importance and intent.
- H. Engage with other bodies and agencies to connect minority cultures in Ireland to their own artistic heritage.
- I. Explore means of encouraging and supporting the publication of literature in translation into English and Irish.
- J. Ensure the availability of web-based information and advice services.