

Inspiring a passion
for the arts

Strategy 2018-2022

SPACE FOR THE ARTS

draíocht

SPACE FOR YOU

At Draíocht, our work goes far beyond our programme of events. Throughout the year, we help people of all ages to make space for the arts in their lives. Working collaboratively with artists of all disciplines, we journey with thousands of people to enhance their lives through arts events, projects and initiatives.

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

The opening of Draíocht in 2001 is testament to the tenacity of a local community whose vision of an arts centre for their area was supported and enabled by a forward-thinking local authority, Fingal County Council. Their collective ambition, realised in our fine building, means that now over 50,000 people, of all ages, from Dublin 15 and our surrounding areas have access to the arts of the highest calibre on their doorstep.

What could not have been fully anticipated as Draíocht was being conceived in the late 1990s was how our community would evolve over the next twenty years, becoming one of the fastest growing, youngest and most diverse in the country. These facts, as evidenced in the recent 2016 census, challenge and stimulate our thinking, demand our attention and action. Ultimately, they provide a compelling context and rationale for the focus of our work over the next five years as set out in this strategy.

If we are to be the cultural heart of this transforming community, as we aspire to be, we must not only engage and entertain the communities we serve but reflect, promote, empower, cohere and celebrate them.

As such, this new strategy, the first in recent years for our organisation, ensures that we continue to provide a breadth of activity in a vibrant and inclusive programme that appeals to all tastes and traditions, resonates with all ages and is accessible to all. It also affirms that we will work strategically, deeply engaged with particular communities of place or of people. We will do so knowing that arts centres, like Draíocht, are uniquely placed to bring people together and to create positive, meaningful experiences that can be shared. We will also continue our focus on children and young people, which are a distinguishing constituency within our community, with 23% of our population under 15 years old.

A critical enabler of our work since our establishment has been the relationships we have forged with key funding and artistic partners. In seeking to build on and progress our work we will seek to continue our close alliance with Fingal County Council and the Arts Council. Their unequivocal support has enabled much of our success to date and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for it. We will also have to forge new relationships and deepen other existing ones with those in the education, business, community and cultural sectors locally and nationally. By doing so, we will assert our value and build understanding of our contribution not only to the cultural life of our community but to its economic and civic well-being.

Over the next five years, the course of this strategy, our community will continue to grow and change. This is without question. What is also unassailably true is that we in Draíocht will stay committed to that community and true to the vision of our local founders.

Paul Reid
Chairman

INTRODUCTION

When I joined Draíocht just prior to its opening in 2001, I was inspired by the ambition of the community that had brought it about and was excited at the opportunities that lay before us. I was right to be.

We have achieved so much over the years and I am very proud that we have earned our place in the hearts and minds of very many people in Dublin 15 and its environs.

We have done so through a body of work that comes from and connects with the people we serve. Work like Hallelujah, Draíocht's Community Clown Choir, which began as a three year initiative to bring together adults who wanted to sing and play and is now ongoing as a stand-alone project. Or Create Dance, which parents tell us brings joy to their children with intellectual disabilities and delight to them as a family. Such original and exciting projects sit alongside a year-round programme in our theatres that welcomes our excellent amateur and community groups as well as presenting the best of national and international talent from comedian Jason Byrne to Slingsby Theatre Company from Australia.

Rather than rest on our laurels or simply keep going with more of the same, we decided that a 'stop and think' was necessary as was a plan to build on our success and secure our vibrant future. As such, we set about developing this strategy. We reviewed what we have achieved and the experiences from which we learned. We consulted widely with key internal and external stakeholders, using workshops, one-to-one interviews and a public online survey.

The process yielded rich findings, defined our ambition and laid out a clear set of priorities to achieve it. We would like to thank all those who gave their time and contributed their opinions so readily at this stage.

As part of our process, we also considered the strategic priorities of our principal funding partners Fingal County Council and The Arts Council. We noted the intent of Creative Ireland and Creative Fingal and were informed by two pivotal reports: National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making 2015 - 2020 and Arts and Cultural Participation among Children and Young People: Insights from the Growing Up in Ireland Study.

Our new strategy thus presents a vision which may be familiar - of an Ireland where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and be enriched by the arts. It is a vision shared by many organisations and individuals working in the arts and beyond, with each of us contributing to its realisation in different ways. How we work towards that vision stems from our name: Draíocht meaning magic. We seek to share the magic of the arts through presenting a year-round programme of work, by creating opportunities for participation and by close collaboration with artists, all the while bringing our values of welcome, fun, magic, belonging and nurture abundantly to life.

Despite diminished resources over the last few years we have punched above our weight in many areas. This strategy sets out where we will now focus our efforts and continue to distinguish Draíocht as one of Ireland's foremost arts centres, grounded in its community and a model of best practice in work for children and young people. That being so, our priorities over the next five years are with imagination and ambition, to develop our programme, respond to our community (people and place), create outstanding work with and for children and young people, build strong and effective partnerships and ensure our sustainability. A clear goal and set of objectives underpins each of these strategic priority areas.

In the course of the next five years Draíocht will turn 18. We will come of age. As such, this strategy takes Draíocht into a new phase of its life. I look forward to working with the Board, our funders and partners and to leading our committed team as our beloved Draíocht matures and serves its public and its artists better than ever.

Emer McGowan
Executive Director



'Conor at the end of the Universe'
Collapsing Horse - Draíocht Theatre Artists in Residence 2016-2018
Photo: Ste Murray



Horsehead, Meta Perceptual Helms by Artists Cleanly Connolly & McKenzie, Paris
Exhibited in Draíocht, 2017. Photo: Sharon Murphy

SPACE FOR VISION

Located in the heart of Dublin 15, Draíocht is an arts centre steadfastly committed to serving its local community and influencing arts practice far beyond. Its development was instigated by a passionate cohort of people from within this unique community, with its rich tradition of drama and musical theatre and fast-growing young and culturally diverse population. Their vision and determination was rewarded when Draíocht opened in 2001, a purpose-built space with two theatres, two galleries, an artist's studio, a workshop space and a café.



With an eclectic but high quality programme that includes performance, visual arts and music from both up-and-coming and established artists, we now welcome over 50,000 people of all ages, stages, interests and abilities a year.

We are delighted that some of those who visit us may be coming to an arts event for the very first time. Our belief in the transformative power of the arts means that we place a lot of emphasis on encouraging and enabling the participation of those who may not have had prior opportunity to see or experience the arts. Another key area of focus is children and young people as we seek to respond to and engage our community's distinctively young demographic. Our unique Children's Charter sets out our promise to the children and young people we serve.

We work closely and collaboratively with local, national and international artists and organisations who share our commitment to and ambition for these areas of work and ways of working. We nurture and support their practice and in doing so enrich our own. With a growing track record of success, we regularly share our experience of working at the heart of an urban community with others and take time to learn how others do it too.

OUR VISION

Our vision is of an Ireland where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and be enriched by the arts.

OUR MISSION

Draíocht means magic. Our name gives us a clear mission: to share the magic of the arts. We do so in three ways:

- by presenting a lively, year-round programme of events, making sure there's something for everyone to enjoy
- by creating opportunities for our local community, and particularly children and young people, to discover and love the arts
- by collaborating with artists to develop work specifically for our audiences



David Bolger & Midge Bolger in Cois Ceim Dance Theatre's 'Swimming with my Mother' by David Bolger. Photo by Jym Darling.

SPACE FOR MAGIC

OUR VALUES

A WARM WELCOME

Whether you've dropped in for a coffee, come to see a show, take part in a workshop or are working with us as an artist, you are sure of a warm welcome. We are open and approachable and treat everyone with respect.

A TOUCH OF MAGIC

Draíocht means magic and we are passionate about the transformative power of the arts. That's why we work hard to create those moments of magic that delight or inspire and may even change lives. It might be as simple as a great night out or as profound as discovering a hidden talent and having the freedom and confidence to express yourself.

A LOT OF FUN

We enjoy what we do and hope you do too. We get a thrill in putting together a lively programme of events and activities that appeals to all ages, stages, interests and abilities. We make working with us a positive experience too.

A SENSE OF BELONGING

We're proud to be part of the vibrant Dublin 15 community and are committed to contributing to and celebrating it. We support local artists and enable creativity to flourish within our locale. In return, we hope we inspire a strong sense of connection to Draíocht, so that you feel as much a part of us as we do of you.

A COMMITMENT TO NURTURE

We love the arts. And like anything you think is great, we want to share it. That's why so much of our work is about encouraging engagement with the arts and creating opportunities to participate. We support and develop the work of artists who share this ambition.

SPACE FOR GROWTH

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

We have identified five strategic priorities which support and drive our ambitions now and into the future.

PROGRAMME

Supporting artists

COMMUNITY

Reaching more people

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Giving children and young people a voice

PARTNERSHIP

Working together

SUSTAINABILITY

Securing our future

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Goal: To enable art for, by and with children and young people

Our belief in the value of the arts for children and young people as well as the demographics of the area drives this priority for us. We want to offer every child and young person ongoing access to the arts in a safe and stimulating environment where they feel free to be their creative selves. Our work will be informed by what we know but, more importantly, will respond to what the younger members of our community tell us is relevant and of interest to them. In doing so, we will uphold our position as a model of best practice in arts provision for children and young people.

What we are setting out to do to achieve this goal

- We will review our Children and Youth Arts programme and develop a cogent strategic plan which maximises our impact for children and young people
- We will present and produce an engaging, high-quality programme of work for, by and with children and young people throughout the year
- We will deepen and expand our relationships with local primary and secondary schools
- We will listen to children and young people and be influenced by their input
- We will sustain programmes that enable children and young people to be their creative selves
- We will strengthen our programmes to expand equality of access to more children and ensure the quality of their experience
- We will develop the practice of artists working specifically in the area of children and young people

How we will know we have achieved this goal?

- We will have maximised our impact delivering against key stated objectives
- We will have enhanced and increased our engagement with children and be recognised by the Arts Council, our peers and our public for the quality of our programme and its contribution to the art form
- We will have supported children and young people's experience of the arts in school settings, have provided professional development opportunities for teachers and have established a peer forum for ideas, knowledge and resource sharing
- We will have established a Children's Council and a Young People's Advisory Panel and have promoted best practice in inclusive decision-making processes
- We will have expanded Dublin 15 Youth Theatre, Create Dance and Toddler TakeOver and have explored and piloted further opportunities for long-term, developmental programmes
- We will have welcomed more children and young people to Draiocht by reducing barriers to participation through offering free access places and other initiatives and by programming with particular needs in mind
- We will have established a Children's Artist in Residence programme

PROGRAMME

Goal: To provide high quality arts experiences

At the heart of our work is a programme of theatre, dance, music, comedy, visual arts, work for children, young people and families, workshops and so much more. With careful consideration of all tastes and budgets, it blends Irish and international work, community and professional artists, work that is popular as well as that which may be new and unknown. Such a programme requires careful curation and takes time. We encourage our audiences and develop deep relationships with the artists, companies and networks which will serve us and them. In doing all this there is one constant that guides us: quality. We want only the very best for our audiences and our artists.

What we are setting out to do to achieve this goal

- We will animate our spaces with a high-quality, enjoyable and diverse programme of local, national and international work that will appeal to our current audiences and will attract new ones
- We will support the development and touring of new work
- We will sustain and develop relationships with artists and networks
- We will commit to equality in all aspects of our programming
- We will support our in-house and visiting artists to be the best they can be, so the work they deliver for Draiocht is the best it can be
- We will facilitate residencies which create meaningful connections between artists and the public
- We will engage artform expertise to provide the appropriate support for artists
- We will remunerate artists fairly and appropriately for all the work they do with us

How we will know we have achieved this goal?

- We will have maintained our current audience base and will have generated new audiences through specific development measures
- We will have collaborated to create and tour a body of new work
- We will be actively involved in venue networks and will have long-term relationships with a number of artists
- We will have developed an Equality Policy which will run through all of our programmes
- We will have a cohort of deeply-engaged, skilled artists who are well-known and highly regarded in both the arts and our local community
- We will have facilitated an increased number of short and long term residencies which have had proven outcomes for the artists and engagement with the public
- We will have a Visual Arts Advisor and a reputation for artist-led support
- We will be acknowledged by the Arts Council for our exemplary remuneration of artists

PARTNERSHIP

Goal: To establish partnerships which support our ambition

We believe that we can achieve more for the people that matter to us by working collaboratively with key organisations. Recognising that truly effective partnerships take time and are built on trust and respect, we will work over the next few years to strengthen the existing relationships we value and to identify and develop strong new ones with complementary or like-minded partners. As we seek to expand our reach and impact, we look forward to establishing these partnerships with all types of organisations within the arts, culture and creative industries, the business and education sectors and with statutory agencies and departments.

What we are setting out to do to achieve this goal

- We will continue to grow and develop our relationship with the Community and Leisure and other departments within Fingal County Council, working strategically to deliver on our mutual aims. We will expand our engagement with other departments as appropriate to support the achievement of local priorities
- We will continue to engage with the Arts Council and work together to deliver on the strategic priorities of Making Great Art Work
- We will strengthen our relationships with local agencies and providers and find points of connection where we can work together and deliver impact by doing so
- We will build valuable alliances with the business community in the area
- We will identify and engage with other potential statutory and non-statutory partners who may contribute to and strengthen our programme of work

How we will know we have achieved this goal?

- We will have an expanded programme of collaborative work which has had a positive impact on artists and the public within our local authority area
- We will have been acknowledged and supported by the Arts Council as a pivotal organisation within the arts infrastructure
- We will have piloted a number of initiatives with local agencies and have established on-going relationships with key partners
- We will have improved capabilities in certain areas of work, have accessed new opportunities and built relationships with a young cohort through our partnership with Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown
- We will have secured the support of a number of businesses in the area who champion and enable our work
- We will have expanded the scope of our activities through access to a more diversified base of funding partners

COMMUNITY

Goal: To reflect and celebrate our people and place

There's much to explore and celebrate in our community, one of the fastest growing, youngest and most diverse in Ireland.

We want to play a pivotal role in foregrounding and promoting all that makes it so unique as well as in appreciating our common ground. We want to provide opportunities for people to explore and express their creativity as individuals and as a community and to consider their relationship with the area, creating a proud, unassailable sense of place.

What we are setting out to do to achieve this goal

- We will undertake a pilot visual art project and longitudinal study in Mulhuddart, an area designated as 'priority' by Fingal County Council
- We will continue to support and programme the work of local amateur and community groups
- We will create connections with people in communities which have low levels of participation
- We will pilot programme strands that resonate with the lives and interests of young people aged 18 - 30 in our catchment area

How we will know we have achieved this goal?

- We will have facilitated an academic case study about art in the community and curated an exhibition that maps, reflects and records a distinct community within Dublin 15
- We will have strong relationships with local amateur and community groups who recognise our support in helping them achieve their artistic ambitions
- We will have developed programmes that take Draiocht out into communities (geographic, demographic or cultural) and have facilitated engagement with those with no prior experience of or participation in the arts
- We will have a deep understanding of what motivates a young adult audience and have established a new audience base of people aged 18 - 30 who are engaged by and actively participating in our work

SUSTAINABILITY

Goal: To develop our capacity and create a sustainable future

To support the delivery of this strategy and better ensure our future we need to review and strengthen how we work. We need to develop our capacity and capability in a number of key areas to keep abreast of regulation, uphold best practice and be ready to deal confidently with any new opportunities or challenges that may arise.

What we are setting out to do to achieve this goal

- We will refresh our Board with members whose knowledge, expertise, skills and influence advance our ambition
- We will review and revise our organisation structure, as appropriate, to ensure that it supports the effective and efficient delivery of our strategic priorities
- We will observe best practice and affirm Draiocht as a model of good governance
- We will research and pursue opportunities to diversify our income streams
- We will review and re-imagine the experience we offer our visitors in terms of our communication, physical environment, online and real world presence
- We will be a fair, inclusive and developmental place to work

How we will know we have achieved this goal?

- We will have delivered on many of the objectives of this strategy under the guidance of the Board
- We will have an empowered, cohesive team who are achieving beyond our expectations
- We will have robust corporate governance structures and best practice policies and procedures in place and we will be transparent and accountable in all aspects of our business
- We will have a realisable fundraising strategy and have secured additional, new sources of revenue
- We will have re-animated our building, strengthened our communications and amplified our presence to create an award-winning visitor experience
- We will have HR policies that adhere to best practice and live our values. We will have a Talent Management strategy that supports the professional development of each member of staff

SPACE FOR EVERYONE

Since opening in 2001, there have been 900,000 plus visits to Draíocht. People of all ages are entertained as audience members, participate in a wide range of programmes and create their own work, giving their voice a platform.

We engage and support local, national and international artists of all disciplines in the presentation and creation of work.

We bring the public and artists together and in that space, magic happens.

GET IN TOUCH

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Draíocht

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Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council

