

Draíocht's Spréacha Soar Festival for Children & Young People & NEST Project

Biographical Information for Artists & Makers

NEST Performance Artists & Makers:

Artistic Director: Veronica Coburn

With artists: Amy Conroy (lead artist), Little John Nee (lead artist), Luke Casserly, Terri Jade Donovan, John Doran, Farah El Neihum, Kwaku Fortune, Eimear Hussey, Fionntán Larney, Brigid Leahy, Stephen Marriott, Paul Mercier, Pippa Molony, Clare Monnelly, Monica Muñoz, Choy-Ping Ní Chléirigh-Ng, Madi O'Carroll, Darragh O'Donnell, Jody O'Neill, Dafe Orugbo, Matt Szczerek, CN Smith, Samuel Yakura.

And Special Guest Commentator Colin Murphy.

Artistic Director: Veronica Coburn

Veronica Coburn was a founder member of Barabbas Theatre Company with whom she toured to, amongst others, New York/Next Wave Festival BAM, Washington/Kennedy Centre, and New Zealand/Wellington International Arts Festival. She is the author of *Clown Through Mask - The Pioneering Work of Richard Pochinko As Practised By Sue Morrison*. Written in collaboration with Sue Morrison it is published by Intellect Press. Veronica was Artist in Residence in Draíocht Arts Centre for three years, 2012 – 2015. The focus of her residency was the building of Hallelujah! Draíocht's Community Clown Choir. Ranging in age from 18 to 80, the members of Hallelujah! developed and performed original work that spanned vocal chorus and red nose performance. Veronica is programme director of Tenderfoot, The Civic Theatre's apprentice theatre programme for transition year students, now in its tenth year. Tenderfoot provides young people in South County Dublin with the opportunity to learn about theatre by making theatre. A book, *Tenderfoot – Plays By & For Young People*, was published in 2015 in association with South Dublin Library. Veronica received an Arts Council YPCE Bursary in 2016 to work on a book, provisionally entitled *ARTiculate*, focusing on working with drama in a school setting. Produced work includes *Bernarda's House* - a red nose retelling of Lorca's classic play for Dublin Fringe Festival 2014, *Mayday* for RTE Radio Drama - winner of Prix Europa/Radio France & Twentyseven, also for RTE Radio Drama - Gold Medal New York. Veronica recently directed Dublin Youth Theatre's 40th anniversary show, *this is a room...*, in collaboration with Dylan Coburn Gray for Dublin Theatre Festival 2017. She was Artistic Director on Home Theatre (Ireland), an innovative project that saw thirty original plays performed in people's homes in Dublin 15, for Draíocht Arts Centre Autumn 2018. She was commissioned to make a new participatory art piece for South County Dublin, an In Context 4 initiative, featuring spoken and sung choral text with projected visual design, performed in May 2019.



Maker/Performers:

Amy Conroy (lead artist)

Amy will next be appearing as Donnelly (Warder 1) in the Abbey Theatre's all female production of *THE SQUARE FELLOW* directed by Tom Creed. Amy recently filmed *WRAPPED* directed by Mia Mullarkey for RTÉ Storyland, and performed Duncan Macmillan's single-hander *EVERY BRILLIANT THING* directed by Andrea Ainsworth for the Abbey Theatre, Ireland's National Theatre. This was a return to the role due to popular demand following the successful 2022 run of the show. In 2022 Amy filmed the role of Fagan in the TV series *BODKIN* for Netflix; and appeared in *GUESTS OF THE NATION* directed by Pat Kiernan for Corcadorca Theatre Co. Just prior she filmed the role of Florence Ross alongside Brenda Fricker, Helen Behan, Siobhán McSweeney, Conleth Hill, and Charlene McKenna in the TV series *HOLDING* directed by Kathy Burke. Amy plays a main role in the series, which is an adaptation of Graham Norton's first novel for ITV. Further credits include the feature *THE CELLAR* alongside Elisha Cuthbert, directed by Brendan Muldowney; the role of the Skalde of Kattegat in *VALHALLA* for MGM; the role of Liz in *THIS BEAUTIFUL VILLAGE* directed by David Horan for the Abbey Theatre; *THE SOUTH WESTERLIES* directed by Simon Gibney for Deadpan Pictures; and *CITYSONG* written by Dylan Coburn-Gray, directed by Caitriona McLaughlin for the Abbey Theatre, the Soho Theatre, and Galway International Arts Festival 2019. Amy was nominated for an Irish Times Theatre Award for her role in the production. Amy was also part of the Rough Magic Ensemble cast of *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN* and *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*, winning the Best Ensemble prize at the Irish Times Theatre Awards 2018. Her further credits include *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW* directed by Caroline Byrne at Shakespeare's Globe.



Little John Nee (lead artist)

Little John Nee is an award-winning writer and performer based in Galway in the west of Ireland. He has developed a unique style of musical storytelling; best known for his critically acclaimed theatre shows and use of intriguing instruments his live performances are mesmeric, funny and at times heart-breaking.

Nee was born in Glasgow in 1959. He returned to Letterkenny, in County Donegal, with his family when he was twelve. It was here that he began performing in punk bands, such as Joe Petrol and the Petrol Bombs and Hemlock. He lived in London during the late seventies where he continued to perform, taking inspiration from the growing punk movement. Nee returned to Ireland in 1982, and since then has employed a variety of media, including street performance, theatre, radio, poetry, music, live-streaming and installation art, to pioneer his own unique style of story-telling. He is the author of a book of haikus "The Apocalypse Came on a Friday", as well as numerous one-man shows, including "The Derry Boat" (1998), "Limavady My Heart's Delight" (2006), "Dead Rooster Blues" (2008) and "Radio Rosario" (2017). In 2016 Nee was elected a member of Aosdána. He works both as a solo artist and collaboratively.





Luke Casserly

Luke Casserly is a multidisciplinary performance maker from Longford, Ireland. His work weaves together environmental research, documentary, sound art, and site as a way of carving out space for new possibilities to emerge between live performance and physical landscape. His projects have brought audiences through city streets, back gardens, train stations, beaches, and a bog in the Irish midlands. He was recently selected for the Norman Houston Multidisciplinary Commissioning Award with Solas Nua in Washington DC, in addition to being chosen to participate in the International Forum as part of Theatertreffen (Berlin Festspiele) 2023.



Terri Jade Donovan

Terri Jade Donovan is a Disabled, Hard of Hearing and Neurodivergent Actor and Writer from Stockport. They graduated from the BA Acting course at the Lir Academy in 2021 and has since worked across theatre, radio and screen in Ireland and the UK. They are currently developing a new one person show "DOG DOG DOG" with the support of Pentabus' 2023 National Young Writers Programme and CRIPTic Theatre's 2023 Reach programme. In 2021 they were also a Creative Associate Artist at the West End's Jermyn Street Theatre where they are now a member of their Advisory Board. They are an advocate for deaf and disabled artists in the creative industry, and are currently a Mentor for the charity Open Door. They are represented by Divergent Talent Group.



John Doran

TV/Film credits include:

Chris O'Dowd's *Small Town Big Story* (Sky TV), *Northern Lights* (Lionsgate/Deadpan), *Unhinged* (Virgin Media/On Heritage), The Scratch's *Cheeky Bastard* (On Heritage), *Dash* (Screen Ireland), *Something Doesn't Feel Right* (BAFTA winning Director Fergal Costello/Irish Film Board). Rachel Lavelle's *Let Me Unlock Your Full Potential* (Bob Gallagher), *Mustard* (RTE), *Locus of Control* (Amazon Prime).

Theatre credits include: *The Fall of the Second Republic* (Abbey Theatre), *Me Michael* (Abbey Theatre), *Romeo & Juliet* (Gate Theatre), *Everything Not Saved* (Malaprop/Summerhall), *It Folds* (Broken Talkers/Abbey Peacock Stage), *Romeo & Juliet* (Corcadorca/Cork Opera House), *Duck Duck Goose* (Fishamble/Dublin Theatre Festival), *My Name is Language* (Dublin Theatre Festival). But who cares about any of that, his instagram's hilarious @dohnjoran



Farah El Neihum

Libyan-born Farah El Neihum - also known as Farah Elle, began composing music at the age of 10. In 2022, Farah Elle released her debut album Fatima, named after her mother - marking the culmination of a near decade of work. Weaving traditional Arabic melodies into the tapestry of her music, Farah's compositions meld her combined North African and Irish heritage to create a sound that is thoroughly contemporary and completely her own. Reflecting on her debut, Farah describes this introduction as a "coming of age record", one across which she hears herself "unfolding in the songs".

To date, Farah has played numerous prestigious venues and festivals in Ireland including Vicar Street, The Sugar Club, Electric Picnic, and All Together Now. In November 2021, Farah collaborated with renowned Irish folk musician Liam Ó Maoláí for a performance commissioned specially for the RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Awards. As well as working as an artist, Farah dedicates time to humanitarian aid work and working with young people from ethnic minorities on creative expression through music. She also gives music and wellness workshops to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Kwaku Fortune

Kwaku is an Actor and Playwright. As a writer, he recently completed the The Baptiste Programme with Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin and has had a reading of his first play: *It's Cool In The Shade* in the Dublin Theatre Festival. *The Black Wolf-tone*, Kwaku's second play, was performed in New York, LA, and San Francisco as part of the *Transatlantic Commission* with the *Irish Repertory Theatre* in New York and *Fishamble: The New Play Company*, in Dublin. Kwaku is also a member of the Screen Writers Guild (WGI) and is working on his first feature film, *Title Unknown*.

Kwaku's acting credits includes a recent appearance as Josh Ola alongside Angeline Ball, Peter Coonan and Simone Kirby in *HIDDEN ASSETS* directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan; *REDEMPTION* directed by John Hayes for ITV; and *BURN IT ALL* opposite Toni O'Rourke, directed by Jack Hickey. He has most recently played the role of Gary in *YOU BELONG TO ME*, written by Rory Nolan and directed by Lynne Parker for Smock Alley Theatre; Ray in *THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE* directed by Rachel O'Riordan for the Lyric Hammersmith & Chichester Festival Theatre, and as the voice of Gael in the Skydance / Apple+ animated feature *LUCK*.

Further screen credits include *LINE OF DUTY* for the BBC; *NORMAL PEOPLE* directed by Lenny Abrahamson and Hettie Macdonald for BBC 1, BBC 3 and HULU; and *ANIMALS* alongside Holliday Grainger and Alia Shawkat, directed by Sophie Hyde.

Stage credits include the role of Eli in *ASKING FOR IT* at Birmingham Repertory Theatre; *PEAT* directed by Tim Crouch; and the role of Dara Mood Cairiona McLaughlin's acclaimed production of Marina Carr's *RAFTERY'S HILL* directed for the main stage at the Abbey Theatre, Ireland's National Theatre. Kwaku trained at the Lir Academy, Dublin (in association with RADA).





Eimear Hussey

Eimear Hussey is a Dublin-based writer, designer, and costume maker for theatre. Recent writing credits include *Like We Were Born to Move* (Peacock Theatre, 2023) - a commission from Youth Theatre Ireland to write for their 2022-2023 National Youth Theatre ensemble. As a designer she has worked with emerging companies including Gifthouse Theatre and Lemonsoap Productions. Recent work includes stage and costume design for *It Is Good We Are Dreaming* (The New Theatre, 2022), stage design for *Dog Shit* (The New Theatre, 2023) and stage design for *Harvest* (Smock Alley Theatre, 2023). She is a former member of Dublin Youth Theatre, National Youth Theatre (2019), and was a member of the Royal Court Theatre's Script Panel (2021). She's most interested in new and collaborative writing, theatre for young audiences, and design-led devising practices. She currently works as a costume assistant and dresser at the Abbey Theatre.



Fionntán Larney

Fionntán Larney is a writer and performer from Dublin. His first show, *BEAT*, was included in The Sunday Times' list of 'Ten of Ireland's Greatest Theatre Productions' and received numerous 5 star reviews, including from the Irish Times.

He has been nominated for numerous awards including the Fishamble New Writing award and the Stewart Parker Award, and was recently awarded the Rough Ideas bursary for development of his next show.

As an Actor he has performed in *The Alternative* (Fishamble), *The Lost O'Casey* (ANU), *Let The Wrong One In* (Conor McMahon), and *Not To Be Demanding* (Dir. Conor Ryan).

His next project, *Houses*, is a series of short films about how we live now.



Brigid Leahy

Brigid is a Vietnamese-Irish-American actor & writer originally from California, based in Dublin. As a writer, she has showcased an early development presentation of her debut play *DADDY ISSUES* with Weft Studio, in association with Dublin Fringe Festival, for which she has received Arts Council Theatre Project Award funding to write the full-length play. She is the winner of the 2022 Virgin Media Discovers Short film competition as co-writer of the script "Good Chips". She is also the recipient of the 2023 The Actor as Creator scheme supported by Screen Ireland.

As an actor, Brigid has appeared in Disney's *Disenchanted*, HBO's *Avenue 5*, *As Luck Would Have It* (Hallmark), *Smother* (RTE/BBC Studios), and *Can't Cope Won't Cope* (Deadpan Pictures). She is also the voice of "Segiri" in Nintendo's popular video game *Xenoblade Chronicles 3*.

She holds a Master's in Public History and Cultural Heritage from Trinity College and a B.A. in History from UCLA.



Stephen Marriott

Stephen Marriott has been involved in Draíocht's D15 Youth Theatre since 2022. He is interested in writing, acting, photography, dance and film. Last July, he played the role of *Lee* in D15's production of *Cactus*, an original piece devised by the cast with Eimear Morrissey and Alexandra Conlon. Stephen is a senior student in full time education. He is Draíocht's selected artist for NEST's mentorship programme.



Paul Mercier

Paul Mercier is a dramatist and film-maker. He was the founder-member and artistic director of the Passion Machine Theatre Company, with whom he wrote and directed twelve plays - *Drowning*, *Wasters*, *Studs*, *Spacers*, *Home*, *Pilgrims*, *Buddleia*, *Kitchensink*, *Native City*, *We Ourselves*, *Diarmuid & Gráinne* and a site-specific work entitled *P*. He has written four plays for the Abbey Theatre, *Down The Line*, *Homeland*, *The Passing* and *The East Pier*. He wrote the play *Strangertown* for Draíocht's Home Theatre Ireland project in 2018. His film and television work includes *Before I Sleep*, *Lipservice*, *Tubberware*, *Studs*, *Aifric*, *Pursuit*, *We Ourselves* and, most recently, *Prospect House*.



Pippa Molony

Pippa Molony is a multidisciplinary artist from Dublin. She is a filmmaker and theatre-maker, and has made music videos for artists such as Aby Coulibaly, Ahmed, With Love, EFÉ and Khaki Kid. She has won a number of awards for her writing, producing and directing work, and last year, her short film 'Clara's Room' was the September spotlighted BFI Film Academy film and premiered online via Nowness 'Picks'. Pippa also works as an Actor, Musician, Drama facilitator and Intimacy Coordinator. As an artist, she is interested in making work that challenges audiences and addresses questions of identity, community and transgression.

Clare Monnelly



Clare Monnelly is a writer and actor. Her first play *Charlie's a Clepto* was nominated for two Irish Times Theatre Awards (Best New Play, Best Actress) and the Stewart Parker New Playwright Bursary. Her second play *minefield* premiered at the Dublin Fringe Festival 2019 and was nominated for three Fringe Awards (Best Design, Fishamble New Writing Award, First Fortnight Award).

Her play *The Shed* is currently in development with *Livin Dred*, *Pavilion Theatre* and *Droichead Arts Centre*. *Funny Story* had a staged reading as part of the *Belfast International Arts Festival* in November 2019 while Clare was a participant in the *Lyric Theatre Belfast's New Playwrights Programme*.

In 2020, Clare took part in *Corcadorca's SHOW* programme and began development on *Iceberg*, a site-specific piece for *St James' graveyard Dublin*.

As an actor, she is best known for her portrayal of *Fidelma* in *Sky One's Moone Boy* and *Mary* in *RTÉ's Nowhere Fast*. She has worked with *Druid*, *the Gate*, *the Abbey* and *Livin Dred* among others and on screen for *Element*, *Doubleband Films* and *TG4*. She is an alumna of *Irish Theatre Institute's Six in the Attic* programme.

Clare is currently developing a comedy pilot for *Deadpan Pictures*.

Monica Muñoz



Monica Muñoz is a dance artist originally from Barcelona and based in Dublin since 2014. She graduated at the *Folkwang University of the Arts* in *Essen/Germany* under the direction of *Pina Bausch* and completed an MA in *Dance Education* from the *Frankfurt University of performing Arts*. As a dancer she worked for over 25 years throughout Europe and performed across the globe with choreographers and companies such as: *Cie Toulalimnaios*, *Rui Horta*, *Joachim Schloemer*, *Helgue Musial*, *Public in Private*, *Cie Drift*, *Tabea Martin*, *Konstantinos Rigos* among many others. She was a long standing member of the *Tanztheater Heidelberg-Freiburg* under the direction of *Irina Pauls*. She was selected from the international dance magazine *Ballet International/Tanz Aktuell* as "Young Dance to Watch".

In Ireland, she has collaborated frequently with *CoisCéim Dance Theatre* as a dancer, teacher and assistant. For the past years she has focused in creating dance experiences for and with children. She received the *Docklands Arts Funds from Business to Arts* to bring access to dance to schools from the *Docklands* area. She created *Groovy Movers*, a dance participation program of intergenerational dance supported by *Dun Laoghaire County Council*. Her dance show for young audiences, *Princesses Can Be Pirates*, toured nationally to 12 venues supported by the *Arts Council*, and to *Germany* and *Spain* supported by *Culture Ireland*. In 2019 she was selected by *The Ark* to participate in their *Creative Europe Project PUSH +*. In 2021 Monica received a commission from the *Tipperary Dance Festival* to create a new pop-up dance work for school audiences: *UP-CLOSE* that tour nationwide in the *Autumn 2022*. She received a *YPCE Commission Award* to create *Connect the Dots* a dance piece in close consultation with children from *Dublin 15* in collaboration with *Draocht*. Her dance work *FALL* and *FLOAT*, premiered in the *spring 2022* and has been presented at *Dublin Theatre Festival* and internationally in *Malta*, *Germany* and *Norway*. Monica has recently finished her *John Coolohan Early Years Residency* at *The Ark 2021-2022*. She is a *Meitheal Artist*, *Meitheal* is a creative supports initiative committed to the development, creation & presentation of performing arts for young audiences across Ireland. Devised and initiated by *Branar*.

Choy-Ping Ní Chléirigh-Ng 吳彩萍



Choy-Ping Ní Chléirigh-Ng 吳彩萍 is a Hong Kong-Irish writer, director, performer and designer of set, costume and video. Ping was a recipient of the *Next Generation Award* in 2022. As a *Linbury Prize-winning* designer, they have worked at the *Abbey*, *Bristol Old Vic*, *Singapore Repertory Theatre* and the *West End*. In their own theatre making, Ping is primarily interested in examining queer and racialised identities, cross cultural experiences and all things surreal. Ping presented *WINDOW A WORLD* at *Dublin Theatre Festival 2022*, co-produced by the festival and *BUDA Belgium* as a *European Art Commission*.

Madi O'Carroll



Madi O'Carroll (she/they) is a theatre-maker with a creative focus on how personal and collective identity shapes experience and relationships. Madi was 1 of 6 creators to participate in the *Bewley's Café Theatre* premiere writing programme *Percolate*, presenting an excerpt of her work at *Dublin Theatre Festival 2022*.

Notable theatre credits as an actor include *The Everyman Palace (Letters of A Country Postman)*, *Cork Midsummer Festival (Humans: A Robot Musical; theatre for young audiences)*, *The Lyric Theatre, Belfast (Dubliners Women, national tour)* and *Dublin Fringe Festival (MOOP by Game Theory)*, nominated for *Fringe Best Ensemble*.

Madi has great passion for and experience in making theatre for young audiences with *Graffiti Theatre Company*, *foldable theatre*, and *Game Theory*.



Darragh O'Donnell

Darragh O'Donnell is a 25 year old playwright from Limerick. In the past he has performed with the National Youth Theatre as well as being a member of the ARTiculate and ARTiculate: Brief playwriting workshops. Darragh is also a strong advocate for young people being involved with the arts, in the past he has given speeches reflecting his experience in Youth Theatre for Youth Theatre Ireland as well as being a member of Youth Arts Live, a project where young theatre makers voiced their hopes for the future of the arts for young people in Ireland. Darragh hopes that his work in NEST will be a continuation of his bridging the gap between the arts and the young voices of Ireland.

Jody O'Neill

Jody is an autistic writer, performer, creative producer and disability advocate, based in Dublin. She has spent the past five years researching and developing making inclusive theatre that promotes acceptance, accessibility and social change. She wrote and co-produced (with The Abbey Theatre) the award-winning play, *What I (Don't) Know About Autism*.

She is currently Theatre Artist-in-Residence at UCC and Cork Opera House, received a 2022 Markievicz Award, and was shortlisted for the Virgin Media Discovers Award 2022.

She is actively engaged in artist development. She offers dramaturgical input, mentorship and practical support in developing work (including advice on applications, development opportunities, etc.) to other artists. She recently founded The Working Group, an online work and peer support space for neurodivergent artists and creators. She facilitated the Abbey Begins programme for the Abbey Theatre in 2021. She was co-founder and curator of Project Brand New – a multidisciplinary new work platform at Project Arts Centre for several years.

Jody advises and supports various organisations, including The Abbey Theatre, National Concert Hall, Cork Opera House and The Everyman on accessibility and relaxed performance. She was a keynote speaker at the 2021 Middletown Centre for Autism conference.

In 2023, Jody co-produced Neurofestivity, a festival of neurodivergent art as part of her residency at UCC and Cork Opera House.

Other recent theatre projects and engagements include: *The Selfish Giant* (commission for The Gate Theatre); *Grace* (Graffiti Theatre Company); *Home Sweet Home* (Suisha Arts/Cope Foundation with Cork Midsummer Festival); *Out of the Ordinary* – A VR community opera with Irish National Opera; *Seaside Conversations* – a project with Enable Ireland, funded by Dublin Theatre Festival's Futures initiative, exploring the responses and experiences of adults with disabilities to the pandemic; *what the telly saw* - a commission from Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre, funded by the Arts Council. In addition to theatre work, she has been working with Cartoon Saloon and Little Moon Animation, writing for pre-school animation series, *Silly Sundays* and *Fia's Fairies*, and has original animation work in development, funded by Screen Ireland.

Jody is the recipient of a 2023 Arts Council Literature Agility Award to fund the development of a collection of short stories.



Dafe Orugbo

Dafe Orugbo is a multidisciplinary artist with a dynamic artistic practice coupled with years of industry experience. He is particularly interested in art that centers the audience experience, as seen in his work with the Dublin Fringe or the Word Up Collective. One of Ireland's most creative and forward-thinking musicians, Dafe Orugbo has achieved international acclaim as one half of hip-hop duo Tebi Rex, releasing two albums and touring Ireland, UK, and Europe. He writes on topics ranging from modern-day Ireland to Greek mythology and is an experienced public speaker, live performer, writer, spoken word artist, and podcaster. With an MA in Critical & Creative Media, he has become a leading cultural commentator and a respected mentor to young people.

Matt Szczerek

Mateusz Szczerek is a Dublin based dance artist and professional member of Dance Ireland. Matt is an artistic director for Irish based company Human Collective and choreographer for International Circus/Dance company Kundle Cru. His recent work includes END. - climate conscious dance production (granted HATCH Award 2022), residency at CSS Theatre in Codroipo, Italy - making new work with Kundle Cru, RSS Digital Commission 2022 at The Civic as a lead artist creating mix media piece using animation, dance and VR technology. Currently developing full version of the piece supported by Arts Council Ireland. Matt has choreographed dance/circus production called Blame Game produced by Crying Out Loud, premiered at Bristol Circus City in October 2021 touring in 2022/23. Matt also continues to curate Dance2Connect LAB, a 5 days development program for dancers with International mentors.

Matt toured Ireland with over 50 performances of "Up-Close" in 2022 choreographed by Monica Munoz. In 2019 he was selected to be part of The Lir's LIGHTING DESIGN FOR DANCE mentored by Liz Roche. In 2018 Mateusz choreographed FABLE for Dublin Fringe Festival nominated for best ensemble award. Same year he was selected as an artist in residence for Rua Red gallery. Matt worked with CoisCeim Dance Theatre performing as a principal dancer in THE WOLF & PETER (2017 Sydney Opera House). In 2017 he was selected by Far From The Norm dance company as a lead Irish artist in international production UNION BLACK, funded by Creative Europe touring UK, France, Sweden, Ireland.





CN Smith

CN Smith is a playwright and director from County Louth. He was a recipient of The Lir Academy's Patricia Leggett Playwriting Scholarship for 2020. His play *Spear* was a Dublin Fringe Festival commission for 2022, and was presented at Smock Alley. An excerpt of his play *Corktown* was presented as part of the 2023 Trans-Atlantic Commissions readings in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.



Samuel Yakura

Samuel Yakura is a Nigerian Born Poet, Playwright and Performing Artist resident in Ireland. He's a multiple-time Poetry Slam Champion both in Nigeria and Ireland, having won Slam competitions like the Abuja Literary Slam, OxFam in Nigeria, and Talkatives in Dublin in 2019. He was one of the 6 Poets shortlisted by poetry Ireland in 2019, an initiative for emerging Poets in Ireland. He is currently the Leinster Regional Slam Champion and will be representing Leinster at the All Ireland Poetry Slam in Derry in December 2023. He's a member with the Wearegriot Poetry Collective based in Dublin who host Poetry Slams, make theatrical productions and facilitate literary workshops for students, Artists and Performers. He has done commissioned works for Summer in the city, Poetry Ireland, Abbey Theatre, Dublin Fringe, Adrian Brinkerhoff Foundation, IMMA, MOLI, Gaisce Awards, amongst many others.

His sold out debut Poetry Play; "The Perfect Immigrant" received multiple nominations and 4 Star reviews as part of Dublin Fringe Festival 2022, went on to a sold out run at Smock Alley and is now doing an Autumn 2023 Irish Tour. His work reflects heavily on observing the human condition, interpersonal relationships and our interaction with and within society and culture.

Special Guest Commentator Colin Murphy



Colin Murphy is a writer for stage and screen. He is also a journalist and documentary maker. He is currently commissioned by the Abbey Theatre and TU Dublin.

Recent plays include The Asylum Workshop (TU Dublin/ Grangegorman Histories), A Day in May (The Pavilion Theatre/ Once Off Productions), based on the book by Charlie Bird, The Treaty (Fishamble/Irish Embassy, London), Miasma (Anu) and The United States versus Ulysses (The Pavilion Theatre/Pat Moylan Productions). He has a long association with Fishamble, the new play company, which has commissioned his many political dramas. Haughey / Gregory opened at the Peacock Theatre in 2018 and toured Ireland. Inside the GPO was written and performed as part of the 1916 centenary of the Easter Rising. Guaranteed! and Bailed Out! produced by Fishamble, were subsequently adapted for screen as The Guarantee which was nominated for an IFTA and The Bailout. Both were broadcast by TV3/Virgin Media TV.

Further screen writing credits include State of Flux (Loosehorse), Bonfire (Fine Point Films), Trial of the Century, a landmark historical drama for TV3/Treasure Entertainment and Leave To Remain, a film for RTE/Treasure Entertainment and winner of RTE's Storyland drama competition.

Performers:

Hazel Clifford, Samuel Coyle, Emma Rose Creaner, Sorcha Curley, LA Feeney, Callum Maxwell, Ryan McCann, Kate Stanley Brennan



Hazel Clifford

Hazel Clifford is an actor and writer from Dublin. She graduated from The Lir in 2018. Her credits included 'The Snapper' at The Gate Theatre, 'Playboy of the Western World' at The Lyric/The Gaiety; 'Walls & Windows' at The Abbey; 'You're Still Here' at Dublin Castle; 'Kinder Egg Spirits' at Smock Alley Theatre; 'Our little world' and 'Next Please' at Bewleys Cafe Theatre.



Samuel Coyle

Samuel Coyle is an actor based in Dublin. He is a theatre Studies graduate of ICFE. Samuel played multiple roles in Emerald Isle Theatre Company's European tours from 2018 to present. Samuel has worked as a performer on multiple projects with Freshly Ground Theatre including the Fringe award nominated 'Ode to a Postcode' in 2019, multiple digital pieces for Criunniú na nÓg 2020, and more recently on 'This is a Blank Page' In 2021. He played Sean in CN Smith's 'Spear', directed by Martha Knight, performed in Smock Alley as part of the Dublin Fringe Festival 2022. He played Brian in CN Smith and Dominic O'Brien's 'Decameron', directed by Dominic O'Brien, performed in Smock Alley, 2023. He most recently donned the jumper of Geansaí Sweeney in Hugh Brown's 'Trees of Our Taine', performed in multiple locations across Dublin.



Emma Rose Creaner

Emma Rose is a professional actor and performer based between Dublin and London, graduating the Lir Academy's BA in Acting in 2020. This is Emma Rose's first time working with Draíocht and she is beyond thrilled to be involved with NEST. Most recent credits include Hope Street (TV, 2024); Tartuffe (The Abbey Theatre, 2023); Peter Pan (The Gate Theatre, 2023/24).



Sorcha Curley

Sorcha Curley has been acting professionally for over 2 years. She was a student at The Gaiety School of Acting from 2016 to 2018. She had the honour of being a part of Dublin Theatre Festival where she played Ursula in Christian O'Reilly's 'No Magic Pill', which won the audience choice award at the Irish Times Theatre Awards. And more recently she finished her first feature film TWIG which premiered at the Dublin international Film Festival 2024.

LA Feeney

Building on a scholarship to the Millennium Dance Complex, Los Angeles, USA (*hip-hop dance, 2016*), LA Feeney learned his craft training and performing with Avant Garde Dance Theatre Company (UK), Fly Dance Company and Dance2Connect (Ireland) and dance residencies with Dance Ireland and Shawbrook Dance as well as mentorship from pioneering dancers from Ireland, UK, Europe and USA (*Nikkipop (Ukraine), Robozilla (USA), Harry Barnes (UK), Kerrie Milne (Ireland), Matt Szczerek (Ireland) and Max Revell (UK)*).

LA's recent dance work and performances include "Fused..." (*blending hip-hop dance with non-hip hop music such as "West Coast Cool Jazz" and "Classical" music at the Irish Youth Dance Summer Festival and Winter Gala, 2023*), Dancer Delight Showcase, 2022 (*London, UK, choreographed by Kerrie Milne*), "Never Mind the Weather", 2021/2022 (*Dance Theatre performance for young audiences with Fizz and Chips Productions*), "RACECAR", 2021 (*performed at the Lasta Festival, glór, Ennis, choreographed by Kerrie Milne*). He also introduces kids to performing through teaching with Denise O'Brien's "Dizzy Feet Performing Arts School." LA is also immersed in the hip-hop battle scene across Europe travelling and "battling" regularly with increasing success. LA is honoured and delighted to have the opportunity to be involved with Draíocht's NEST Project and working with Monica Muñoz.



Callum Maxwell

Callum is an actor and writer from Meath. He graduated the Gaiety School of Acting in the class of 2021. Some notable credits include : PETER PAN (Gate Theatre), Philadelphia Here I Come (Cork Opera House), Cloudspotter (Dublin Region Touring Comp) and his self penned show 'Oh, Brother' which he produced through his company Raggad Ruin.



Ryan McCann

Ryan McCann is a Dublin based music producer and instrumentalist who spends most of his time playing around with alternative guitar tunings and digging through obscure media outlets to find wild samples to generate new ideas off the back of strange music otherwise lost to the world. Ryan is mostly Influenced by the likes of Kenny beats and modern pop producers such as Umru, Underscores and Dylan Brady.

So far Ryan has released many tracks with Irish artist JMUTobi and has produced multiple tracks for the award winning FILMORE! Ryan has also started releasing singles under the alias "racecarbed" which are over the top pop songs mixed with some experimental production techniques and with a lighthearted approach to song writing.

Kate Stanley Brennan

Kate Stanley Brennan is a performer and emerging writer/director from Dublin. She is also a THISISPOPBABY associate artist and co-founder of Deadly Films.

Theatre work includes *Conversations After Sex*, Irish Times Irish Theatre Awards nomination for Best Actress, *RIOT*, and *Shit* (THISISPOPBABY); self-penned show *Walk For Me* (Project Arts Centre/Fishamble); Work for the Abbey Theatre includes *The Quare Fellow*, *Somewhere Out There You, Girl on an Altar*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Risen People*, *Terminus*, *Saved*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, and *The Plough and the Stars*. *The Treaty* (Fishamble); *Restoration* (Shaun Dunne); *Evening Train* (Everyman Palace), *Crestfall*, (Druid); *Invitation to a Journey* (CoisCéim Dance Theatre/Fishamble/Crash Ensemble); *The White Devil* (Shakespeare's Globe), *The Night Alive* (Lyric/Gaiety); *Tiny Plays* (Fishamble); *Wuthering Heights* and *Salomé* (Gate Theatre); *Witness*, *Best Man*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, *Love and Money*; *Yerma* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); and *The Sanctuary Lamp* (Arcola Theatre London). Film work includes *TWIG* (Blue Ink, Janey Pictures); *PANTO* (also writer, director, Screen Ireland/Bow Street/Deadly Films); *Kin* (Townsend Film/AMC); *Burn It All* (CopperAlley); *Cherry* (also writer, director CopperAlley/ Deadly Films); *Float like a Butterfly* (Samson); *Fading Away* (Filmbase); *Inspector Jury* (IJ Prods); *Chasing Green* (Hallmark); *Doll House* (winner of Best Ensemble Acting Odessa Film Festival, Visit Films); *Raw* and *Fair City* (RTÉ); and *The Tudors* (HBO). Kate makes music under the name 'MissKate'. She directed her last three music videos for singles, 'Get Me', 'In The Place' and 'Took The Life'. Other releases include 'Walk For Me' (EP MissKate/MathMan), 'Mkx: A Collection of Remixes' (EP), 'MissKate and the Higher State' (EP) and 'You Come Back' (Likeminded).



NEST Theatre Directors:

Jim Culleton, Wayne Jordan, Joy Nesbitt, Dominic O'Brien, Katie O'Halloran, Claire O'Reilly

Jim Culleton

Jim Culleton is the Artistic Director of Fishamble: The New Play Company, for which he has directed productions on tour throughout Ireland, UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the US, including 11 transfers Off-Broadway. His productions for Fishamble have won Olivier, The Stage, Scotsman Fringe First, and Irish Times Best Director awards. Jim has directed for the Abbey, the Gaiety, the Belgrade, 7:84 Scotland, Project, Amharclann de hÍde, Tinderbox, Passion Machine, the Ark, Second Age, Dundee Rep, CoisCéim/Crash Ensemble/GIAF, Frontline Defenders, Amnesty International, Little Museum of Dublin, Fighting Words, Scripts Festival, Dirty Protest, Draíocht, Baptiste Programme, Audible, BBC, RTÉ Radio 1, and RTÉ lyric fm. He has also directed for Vessel (Australia), TNL (Canada), Solas Nua, Mosaic, and Kennedy Center (Washington DC), Odyssey (LA), Origin, Irish Arts Center, New Dramatists, Irish Rep, and 59E59 (New York), as well as for Trafalgar Theatre Productions on the West End, and IAC/Symphony Space on Broadway.



Wayne Jordan

Wayne Jordan is a theatre artist and writer. He has worked as a director in many of Ireland's major theatres including creating new plays, new versions of old plays, devised projects dance and music theatre. He has also worked as a performer and deviser in Ireland and in the Czech Republic (where he studied at an experimental puppet school for a few years). He has written his own original plays and adaptations of classic drama that have been performed in The Abbey, The Gate, Project Arts Centre and The Ark. He works frequently as a dramaturg on text and non-text based or dance projects and has worked as teacher and speaker in universities and institutions at home and internationally. Recent work includes *Somewhere Out There You* by Nancy Harris and *Luck Just Kissed You Hello* by Amy Conroy at The Abbey Theatre, *Root*, devised with Shanna May Breen and Luke Casserly, Dublin Theatre Festival 2022 and dramaturgy on *Yes* and *Yes* by Liz Roche (Project Arts Centre, New York Arts Centre 2023, Dublin Dance festival 2024). He is currently preparing developing projects with environmental artist Shanna May Breen and choreographer Emma Martin of United Fall.



Joy Nesbitt

Joy Nesbitt is a director, writer, and musician originally from Dallas, Texas. Joy is inspired by stories of Black Femininity and postcolonial imagination. She has been named on The Irish Times and Sunday Times' lists of "Ones to Watch in 2024." In 2022, Joy attended the Theatre Directing MFA at The Lir National Academy of Dramatic Arts. She is a 2021 recipient of the Louis Sudler Prize in the Arts for the sum of her artistic activities at Harvard University. Joy is a Director SEED for Rough Magic Theatre Company and a member of the 2023 cohort of the Rachel Baptiste Programme at Smock Alley Theatre.

Joy's selected directing credits include *Listen*, *A Black Woman is Speaking* by Marlow Wyatt (2023, Project Arts Centre), *The King of All Birds* by Martha Knight (2023, Project Arts Centre), *endings.* by Fionntán Larney (2023, Project Arts Centre and Smock Alley Theatre), *Appropriate* by Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins (2022, The Lir Academy); *God of Carnage* by Yasmina Reza (2020, Harvard University); and *Dreamgirls* by Henry Krieger and Tom Eyan (2020, American Repertory Theatre).





Dominic O'Brien

Dominic O'Brien is a theatre-maker from Dublin. He studied Drama and Classics at Trinity College, graduating in 2020, and has recently been appointed Associate Director of Rough Magic Theatre Company. He enjoys working collaboratively to make theatre that questions the cultural legacies we've inherited. Directing credits include *Horse Play* (Glass Mask Theatre), *DOLL* (Smock Alley), *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.* (Beckett Theatre), and *Beat.* (Dublin Fringe Festival), and he has been the assistant-director for productions from Opera Collective Ireland, Rough Magic, and Sugarglass Theatre. Writing credits include *Decameron* (Rough Weekend) and *Wild One* (Players Theatre), and his new play *Echo* premiered in Smock Alley Boys' School last month.



Katie O'Halloran

Katie is a Dublin-based, interdisciplinary director from Minneapolis, Minnesota. She has worked with Druid (*Druid O'Casey*, *The Last Return*), Irish National Opera (*Fidelio*, *Don Pasquale*, *Der Rosenkavalier*), Volya Theatre (*Revolutionary*; Norway), Dublin Youth Theatre (*Chatroom*), Aon Scéal Theatre (*Tír na nÓg*), dlr Mill Theatre (*Hamlet*), Dublin Fringe (*Eleanora Salter & the Monster from the Sea*, *The Perfect Immigrant*), the Lir Academy, Minneapolis Children's Theatre Company and the Guthrie Theater (Minneapolis). She was the recipient of Druid's Marie Mullen Bursary in 2022 and a studio director with Irish National Opera for their 2023 season. Katie holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from The Boston Conservatory and an MFA in Directing from The Lir Academy.



Claire O'Reilly

Claire is an Irish theatre director based between London and Dublin. She is the director of the award-winning, internationally touring, new work collective Malaprop Theatre. Recent projects include *A Family Business* by Chris Thorpe (Staatstheater Mainz, Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg 2024), *Talking About the Fire* created with Chris Thorpe (Royal Court Theatre 2023), *Hothouse* (Malaprop, Dublin Fringe 2023, winner of Best Production at Dublin Fringe Awards), *This Solution* by Shaun Dunne (Dublin Theatre Festival 2023), *Bulrushier* by Eisa Davis (The Lir Academy 2023), *Accents* by Emmet Kirwan (Dublin Fringe 2022), *Christine* by Jennifer Jonson (Peacock Theatre Dublin 2022), *Where Sat the Lovers* by Carys Coburn (Dublin Fringe 2021). Associate director credits include *A Streetcar Named Desire* (dir. Rebecca Frecknall, Phoenix Theatre 2023), *Dr. Semmelweis* (dir. Tom Morris, Harold Pinter 2023). Assistant director credits include *Uncle Vanya* (Sonia Friedman Productions 2020) and *Translations* (Royal National Theatre 2019), both dir. Ian Rickson. Claire is a former Resident Director at the Abbey Theatre (2022-2023). She has a Master's in Drama Directing from the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (2019) and is a graduate of Film and Theatre at Trinity College Dublin (2015). She is currently developing a drama for young people for RTÉ.

NEST Visual Artists:

Ground Floor Gallery: Zsolt Basti, Sahoko Blake, Una Sealy, Dorothy Smith.
Curator: Sharon Murphy



Zsolt Basti

Zsolt Basti is a Hungarian painter who has been living and practising in Ireland since 2005. He employs personally familiar subjects as his central focus, before altering and abstracting their appearance as a commentary on the revising of disintegrating memory.

Basti's engaging use of colour, composition and the prominence of the uncanny core subject resonate deeply with onlookers, often provoking a subconscious examination of one's own memory or flashback.



Sahoko Blake

Sahoko Blake's practice in the main revolves around oil paintings, charcoal drawings and detailed pencil works.



Una Sealy

Una Sealy is an award winning artist, a member of the Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts, and the Professor of Art at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Her work is held in many public collections including NUI Galway, DCU, Waterford County Council, Galway County Council, and Fingal County Council. She has held 11 solo exhibitions to date, as well as numerous group exhibitions in Ireland and abroad. In 2019, she was one of ten artists invited by the Department of Foreign Affairs to represent Ireland in China. She was the judge on both series of RTE's Painting the Nation programme, and is a tutor in Painting, Drawing and Anatomy at the RHA School.



Dorothy Smith

Dorothy is a visual artist whose practice is concerned with the built environments in which people live and work and in particular the construction and lived experience of public space. Her particular interest is drawing is in how drawing can interact with contemporary places and concerns. Her practice involves studio based work and publicly engaged projects. Dorothy is an Associate member of the RHA. Recent exhibitions and projects include; solo shows, Land Marks, RHA Ashford Gallery and Made and Considered in dark space, Dublin; Drawing Time in the RHA gallery; Women Artists and the RHA, National Gallery Of Ireland; An Post commemorative stamp commissions; Arts Council funded public art projects Dalymount – Mapping a unique Architectural Space and Spatial Stories. Her most recent public art project This is Our Place A Survey of Dalymount Park, The Home of Irish Football a limited edition map and publication celebrating the community and material culture of Dublin Stadium. She is currently Curator in Residence in Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda.



Curator Sharon Murphy

Sharon Murphy is a visual artist whose practice is lens-based incorporating photography, video and text. Her work investigates the boundaries between the seen / unseen, fictive / real, conscious / (sub)liminal. Drawing on a background in theatre and informed by concepts in magic realism and psychoanalysis, recurring motifs in her work include: theatre curtains; carousels; circus tents, performative sites; embodied / disembodied staged spaces. Her works address uncertainty, the uncanny, the 'there / not there', linked to an investigation, quintessential to both photography and performance) of what it is the viewer is shown or is seeing.

First Floor Gallery: Liadh Connolly

Liadh Connolly

Liadh Connolly is a visual artist born and based in Dublin, Ireland. After graduating with a first class honours degree in Photography from the Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dún Laoghaire in 2016, she spent a year in New York which hugely influenced her photographic practice - its people and streetscapes becoming a huge inspiration to her work. Upon her return she discovered a similar connection with Dublin's streets and people which became both a driving force and an ongoing backdrop behind much of her images.



Working both artistically and commercially, you will find portraiture, fine art, editorial, fashion and documentary style image-making at the forefront of her practice. Liadh's passion lies with meeting new people and exploring their stories and personalities through photography.

In 2021, she worked with designer Zoe Redmond on a project entitled 'Lady of the Northside'. This led to the pair receiving an Agility Award from the Arts Council and funding for a further project on which they are currently working, through textile design and photography.

More recently, she has carried out a number of residencies through the Teacher and Artist Partnership and BLAST initiatives, in primary and secondary schools across Dublin and Wicklow which has brought a refreshing new approach to her practice. This work includes collage, image making and studio portraiture. Working with young people of the Dublin 15 area for the NEST project has been an amazing, eye-opening experience and has reinforced her strong belief of how important visual art is for students in education.

Her images have been published by Image magazine, Totally Dublin and The Irish Times, among others.

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