



# Spréacha Soar

## - Festival for Children & Young People -

23 Brand New Shows Inspired by Dublin 15 Stories

★ 11-16 March 2024 ★



Music | Theatre | Spoken Word | Dance | Visual Arts

## Finale Show Programme



**Art:2023 - Draíocht Awarded Open Call Project Funding for NEST**

Draíocht is delighted to deliver NEST, a visionary, artistically ambitious project of scale that will see 23 stories inspired by Dublin 15’s children and young people, aged just 8 weeks old to 22 years old, our youngest citizens, brought to life through collaboration with leading multi-disciplinary performance artists - playwrights, theatre makers, spoken word artists, dance artists, and music artists - to produce 23 new contemporary works that map our present through the eyes of our children and young people.

NEST's 23 new pieces of work were first performed in homes and schools across Dublin 15 on March 1st 2024 to peer audiences and families. Then the project culminated in the Spréacha Soar Festival for Children & Young People, from 11-16 March, when all 23 works took over Draíocht’s two stages.

Led by Artistic Director, Veronica Coburn, NEST is about citizenship, alongside the idea of home, both individual and collective, a single house, a familial place, a society. It will mark the Decade of Centenaries by exploring the ideals of our origin state, liberty, equality and equity in a contemporary context.

Draíocht also presents a new series of specially commissioned portraits and companion pieces from four of Ireland's leading visual artists Zsolt Basti, Sahoko Blake ARHA, Una Sealy RHA & Dorothy Smith RHA. **The Portrait Project** features the children and young people participating in NEST, curated by Sharon Murphy. In the First Floor Gallery is a photographic and text exhibition featuring portraiture and testimonials made by children and young people from Dublin 15 schools participating in NEST. **You, Me Us**, was created and led by artist Liadh Connolly.



“As we move into the third decade of the new millennium, it is incumbent upon us to think about the future. In line with our 10-year strategy, Making Great Art Work, the goal of ART:2023 is to support the creation of ambitious artworks that integrate our history into a compelling vision of contemporary Ireland; we’re excited to give a voice to those artists and organisations who are contributing to a new outlook on our society, giving us a glimpse of what our shared future could and should look like.”  
**Maureen Kennelly, Director, Arts Council**

"What better way to round out The Decade of Centenaries than with an artistic exploration of the ideals of our founding state through the lens of our youngest citizens. This interweaving of art and social politics, the intermingling of artist and citizen, the blurring of lines between art and action is deeply resonant.  
NEST is about reflection. It is about articulation. It is an artistic declaration about the state of Irish citizenship. And given the wonderful expanse of our collective imagination it is a celebration of our ability to laugh and feel hope and find joy."  
**Veronica Coburn, Artistic Director, NEST**



"Dublin 15 is a brilliantly diverse place, with both the youngest population of any local authority area as well as double the national average of new communities living in it. Draíocht has been proud to serve this area since 2001 through all of our programme elements. We are the only arts centre of its kind with a full-time dedicated Children & Youth Arts Officer and a planned appointment of an EDI Officer.  
Our acknowledged commitment to supporting artists to create exceptional work, while facilitating the meeting of artist and the public, makes NEST the perfect project for us at this time.  
We will give voice to our children and young people, give an exciting platform to our artists and by doing so, capture a moment in time that will have resonance for many."  
**Emer McGowan, Director, Draíocht**



E  
V  
E  
N  
I  
N  
G  
P  
R  
O  
G  
R  
A  
M  
M  
E

**Cloud on a Thread - A Show for Emily**

**Created & Performed by Little John Nee**  
**Directed by Wayne Jordan**

Emily is eight weeks old. What does she need to know? She needs to know that there's a cloud on a thread full of the names of people that she will one day meet. She needs to know that there are lullabies for days when she needs to sleep. And she needs to know that the birds in the sky are watching over her ready to show her the way to go.

**I Start Here - A Show for Rebecca**

**Created & Performed by Terri Jade Donovan**  
**Directed by Joy Nesbitt**

I look down into my own sketchbook, and see faces I love, faces I've found on the internet, faces I've thought up in my head. They don't mean much, but why is it supposed to mean anything? I Start Here questions what art can mean and what it takes to draw something real when the world is looking at you.

**Launch Day - A Show for Cameron**

**Created & Performed by Amy Conroy**  
**Directed by Wayne Jordan**

It's launch day and everyone's buzzing. Especially Cameron's Deputy CEO. Whoever thought that Cameron would grow up to be Dr. Cameron. The Dr. Cameron! Dr. Cameron B! It's a family affair, the Deputy's on stage and Frank is helping out. It should be a day of celebration but things keep going wrong. Who's to blame and who will save the day?

**Another Live Stream - A Show for Lee, Penny & Danila**

**Created By Paul Mercier**  
**Performed by Kate Stanley Brennan**  
**Directed by Joy Nesbitt**

A student at the Technological University Dublin takes time out from her lectures to tell us how she has been getting on with the launching of her new music video.

**Monaco - A Show for Amukela**

**Created By Dafe Orugbo**  
**Performed by Dafe Orugbo & Ryan McCann**  
**Directed by Joy Nesbitt**

Monaco is an experimental musical about the life of a young F1 driver named Henry who is about to face the greatest challenge of their career. The story unfolds at the most popular and dangerous track on the F1 calendar, Monaco. Will Henry win big or crash and burn in the process?



**Emily & Andreea**



**Rebecca & Terri Jade**



**Amy & Cameron**



**Penny, Lee, Danila & Kate**



**Dafe, Ryan & Amukela**





**A Note From  
Veronica Coburn  
Artistic Director, NEST**

I think we all have an image in our heads of what a nest looks like. An organic basket made of beautifully woven twigs and sticks, an occasional pop of green, a berry perhaps, a bud, balancing beautifully in the branches of a sun-drenched tree. The reality is a little less tidy. Branches and twigs tangled together, chunks of cardboard, little bits of plastic, a pebble, a bottle top, a scrap of traffic tape stolen from the nearby roadworks.

A nest is a home, a first home, designed to hold and nourish until such a time as flight is possible. NEST is a holding, a creative space where Draíocht's community, geographic and artistic, come together in an artistic endeavour. NEST is a nourishing, of new voices, new practice, new stories. And NEST is a clarion call as 23 stories inspired by D15's children and young people and shaped by some of Ireland's most exciting artists take to the skies.

See us. Ireland's children and young people. Hear us. For we have things to say.

And what can we glean from the pantheon of stories filling every corner of Draíocht for Spréacha Soar? What are our children and young people telling us? They are telling us that they are full of joy. Our children and young people love to laugh, they smile easily, their imaginations are full of creative lunacy, the best kind, and despite the relentless drone of bad news and grim forecasts, our children and young people have a great capacity for optimism.

But, of course, nothing is ever one dimensional. Our children and young people are also telling us that they are worried. About climate, about their ability to survive financially in 21st century Ireland – they fret about housing, paying bills, being able to live a fulfilling life. And they talk about being made to feel 'other'. Because of the colour of their skin, because of a family heritage reaching back to another place, another culture, another country.

Our founding constitution (1922) talked of equality, equity and liberty, for all Ireland's citizens and defined a citizen as being someone born in Ireland, or either of whose parents were born in Ireland or who has been resident in Ireland for not less than seven years. It seems as though there is much work to be done in achieving our goal of equality. And as for equity and liberty surely the answer in achieving those goals lies in prioritising a society with a functioning economy rather than an economy with a society in tow. And I think a good definition of liberty is the ability to live a fulfilling life in a safe and equitable world.

I like the phrase '*the end is in the beginning.*' And the thought that we are always at the beginning. On behalf of our children let's remind ourselves of the goals of our origin State. This is the beginning of their world. We need to reshape things now, while we can, to secure the ending that our glorious children and young people deserve.





**A Note From  
Emer McGowan  
Executive Director, Draíocht**



On the 1st March 2024, NEST saw 23 newly commissioned pieces of theatre, dance, spoken word and music, inspired by 48 children and young people who live in Dublin 15, all aged between 8 weeks and 22 years old, be performed 3 times in their homes and schools to their peers, family, friends and neighbours. 69 performances saw 2,417 audience members experience work, inspired by their lives, performed in their spaces, by incredible artists. Work that had meaning and resonance for them. Work that spoke to them of family and friends, of love and joy, of school, of hopes and dreams, work that recognised their concerns and challenges, reflected them and the complexity of their lives. Each piece a glorious gift.

This week, March 11th to 16th, 48 performances have taken place over a 6-day programme to an audience of 1,140 of our hosts' peers, extending the reach beyond their own class or school, facilitating more children and young people to attend work in their local arts centre, made with them in mind.

Our two exhibitions, integral to NEST, ran alongside the performative elements of the project. NEST: The Portrait Project and You, Me, Us, will end on 13th April and on that day we will formally bequeath NEST: The Portrait Project to Fingal County Council's Municipal Collection, where it will have a life beyond Draíocht and Dublin 15.

On paper, NEST was 2 years in the planning with the core project delivered over a 4 week period between 17th February to 16th March 2024. But in reality, it is rooted in Draíocht's ongoing and steadfast commitment to quality arts provision for children/young people and our commitment to supporting artists. It is rooted in our 2018-2022 and 2024-2029 strategies. For these, a wide range of stakeholders were consulted and from these conversations, we developed a roadmap that built on our history and articulated our vision and ambition for our future. An important element of our 2024-2029 strategy development was facilitating children/young people to have their say. The NEST exhibitions are a direct response to those voices. They wanted to see themselves on our walls. We commissioned 5 leading visual artists to work with them and do just that.

NEST was the perfect project to fulfil our ambitions for the artists and public we serve. Its structure facilitated individual participation, community involvement, artistic ambition and audience engagement. It clearly articulated Draíocht's commitment to our community and our capacity to deliver projects of scale. It has facilitated so many moments of connection and its impact has already been felt. We know that what has taken place will stay with us all for a very long time and in years to come, all involved will think about their '*NEST*'.

NEST is on a continuum of large-scale projects delivered by Draíocht. Others include: Hallelujah, Draíocht's Community Clown Choir (2013-2015), HOME Theatre (Ireland) 2018, Our Place, Our Stories (2019), The Playground Orchestra project (2021/2022), which saw Draíocht tour a 29-piece orchestra to Dublin 15 schools playing to 17,000 children/young people and the Dublin 15 Song Project (2023). All projects that had quality of engagement and experience at their core, all impactful. Martin Drury, the author of HOME Theatre's Evaluation Report, noted in same that '*Such an ambitious project would not be expected of Draíocht, but Draíocht expected it of itself.*' We will continue to expect it of ourselves so others can too.

I want to thank everyone who made this happen.

Draíocht's Board and the committed, talented Draíocht team. Projects like NEST would not be possible without their skill and passion.

I want to thank the Arts Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media for their support of this project. It wouldn't have happened without the funding made available to us through the Open Call/Decade of Centenaries funding stream. I want to thank The Mayor, Councillors, CE and Executive of Fingal County Council. Our collegiate and supportive relationship is one that is so important to us.

I want to thank our line producer, Paula Quinn, our design, production team. I want to thank our PR, documentary, and evaluation teams. Thanks to Liz Gillis and Colin Murphy. It took all of us. To all of the families and schools of our hosts. Thank you for agreeing to this, for allowing us in.

I want to thank our curator, directors, visual and performance artists. We asked much of you and what you created in such a short space of time, leaves us in awe.

To our hosts. Thank you for saying yes. You gave us a glimpse of your world and we are the richer and better for it. We think you may be too.

Finally, I want to thank Veronica Coburn. Her care, consideration and energy has allowed us all to be part of something very special. Under her watchful eye, her empathy, her support and the magic that she weaves, brilliant art and moments of great joy and connection have taken place.





As well as the five shows performed this evening, eighteen other shows were premiered this week as part of the Spréacha Soar Festival for Children & Young People. You can watch them all on our YouTube NEST playlist.

Feathers of Glory  
A Show for Séimí

Created & Performed by Luke Casserly  
Directed by Wayne Jordan

Meet Sé - a young magpie with a passion for collecting things. When he embarks on an adventure with his new friend Maurice the Messenger pigeon, he gets a once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet his hero. A heartwarming tale of courage, friendship, and avian-adventure that will leave you cheering for Sé and his feathered friends.

Sketches  
A Show for Ajla

Created & Performed by Fionntán Larney  
Directed by Claire O'Reilly

Sketches follows a day in the life of Ajla Ayubovic, a 16 year old student of Coolmine Community school. It's about her family, her classes, her hobbies, her art, and (most importantly) her cat Zuko. It's about her strength, her passion and her talent. Its outlines, images, tracings. Its moments in time. Sketches.

BAKING YOU EVERYTHING!!  
A Show for Kacey / 给方欣的表演

Created By Choy-Ping Ní Chléirigh-Ng  
Performed by Hazel Clifford  
Directed by Jim Culleton  
Mandarin Chinese translation and audio performance by Michelle Chan Schmidt

Join bubbly chef Bea on a quest to fulfill a special order for a new customer. Will Bea make it in time for the birthday party? An enchanting tale filled with fun, friendship and a sprinkle of stardust. Featuring English, Irish and Mandarin Chinese

Caveman  
A Show for Liam

Created & Performed by Matt Szczerek  
Directed by Wayne Jordan

Liam likes dinosaurs and eggs and big hairy blankets. The world is such an interesting place. What happens if I do that? What does that feel like? Does that make a sound? Caveman invites us to step back into the age of discovery. See our world afresh. Use our imagination to explore the extraordinary in the ordinary.

R0-be and Jo  
A Show for Cillian

Created By Darragh O'Donnell  
Performed by Emma Rose Creaner  
Directed by Jim Culleton

Jo Vantor is an inventor. The world is experiencing a climate crisis. Cork is a desert and chameleons are everywhere. R0-be is a robot who knows everything; well when he works he does. Can Jo fix R0-be in time to save the world and do two heads work better than one?

Tales of the Inventor and the Pirate  
A Show for Ben & Jacob

Created by Eimear Hussey  
Performed by Callum Maxwell  
Directed by Jim Culleton

This is a story about inventions, pirates, brothers, and cuddles! When the inventor's creations aren't quite working as he'd hoped, their pirate brother goes on a journey to find some answers on how to cheer him up. In true Ben and Jacob fashion, this show has songs, dances, lizards, drawings - and Woody of course.

Life is Ball  
A Show for Divine

Created By CN Smith  
Performed by Samuel Coyle  
Directed by Claire O'Reilly

Life is Ball shows a man's efforts to inspire a team of footballers to victory at half-time in a cup final. At this point, when their game and lives could go in any number of directions, how can he find the words to propel them toward the right choices? What can he say that will turn them into winners?

The Abbie that Saved Football  
A Show for Abbie

Created & Performed by Brigid Leahy  
Directed by Jim Culleton

Abbie and her friends love playing football. Gaelic football to be exact! But when a big mean cat comes to town and has plans to turn their pitch into a kitty palace, Abbie must come up with a way to stop him.

Sunshine in Portmarnock  
A Show for Adam

Created By Monica Munoz  
Performed by LA Feeney  
Directed by Katie O'Halloran

Adam loves the beach: the sand, the water, the wind, the bubbles ...This piece celebrates the sensory, tactile and playful. It takes ordinary objects and makes them extraordinary and magical. Bursting with dance, colours and textures to create a multi-sensory wonderland from a day on a beach; on Portmarnock beach where Adam and his family very often go.



**Skin and Blister**  
**A Show for Exaucee & Destinee**

**Created & Performed by Pippa Molony**  
**Directed by Katie O’Halloran**

Destinee and Exaucee are identical twins. Both are in Third class. Both have unicorn-ice-cream-sprinkle-school bags. Both love piggy backs. But despite their countless similarities, Des and Susay are not the same. For all the amazing things that make them alike, there are as many things that they do unlike each other. Or anyone else.

**Khadija’s Song**  
**A Show for Khadija**

**Created & Performed by Farah El Neihum**  
**Directed by Dominic O’Brien**

Sitting in on classes and spending lunchtime with Khadija and her friends; Farah & Khadija soon found they had a lot in common. Honouring their shared faith & celebrating their differences was key to the writing process, which takes us on a journey of all the motions that come with keeping your faith while growing up in a culture that’s different to the one you were raised with.

**Grub**  
**A Show for Grace**

**Created By Stephen Marriott**  
**Mentored by Davy Kelleher**  
**Performed by Sorchu Curley**  
**Directed by Claire O’Reilly**

Grace has every official Man U scarf since 2015. She has a Man U wheel on her chair. Saturdays are for dance class and kayaking. Wednesdays, midweek, is Carvery Day in the local pub. Tuesday is the best day though, the brightest day, because Tuesdays are when Grace goes dancing with her grandad.



**All Quiet in Coolmine**  
**A Show for Nilas**

**Created & Performed by Kwaku Fortune**  
**Directed by Katie O’Halloran**

Nilas is in 4th class. He loves history. Especially war history. His favourite film is “All Quiet on the Western Front.” This piece takes Nilas’s interest in war and brings it through the lens of play and imagination, whilst also exploring elements of the writer’s own childhood, and aims to discover what it’s like to be 10 years of age in modern day Ireland.

**Scrambling**  
**A Show for Alannah**

**Created & Performed by Madi O’Carroll**  
**Directed by Dominic O’Brien**

"To be a spider is to be misunderstood." - Peter Parker, maybe. We've all met a spider we didn't like. But have you ever met one you did like? Why did you like it? And what made you think to look long enough to like it? You're invited to find out.

**Get on with it**  
**A Show for Ameerat**

**Created & Performed by Clare Monnelly**  
**Directed by Claire O’Reilly**

Ameerat has a code of conduct. She was taught these things. Don’t be disrespectful, and don’t let anybody disrespect you. Don’t let anybody talk down to you. Don’t get in fights. But if you have to fight? Win. She’s not a troublemaker. She only talks back when someone is asking for it. But today, they're all at it.



**Freeze**  
**A Show for Patrick**

**Created & Performed by Jody O’Neill**  
**Directed by Katie O’Halloran**

Freeze is about a boy called Trevor. There are a few things you might want to know. It's his birthday today. He's just turned 12, which is a pretty big deal. He likes football, and Fortnite, and sometimes he gets frightened. Today, Trevor’s going to get a special present, but he doesn’t know that yet.

**Bongo the Birdwatcher**  
**A Show for Rang Éanna, Colásite Pobal Setanta**

**Created & Performed by Samuel Yakura**  
**Directed by Dominic O’Brien**

There's a curious Birdwatcher eagerly waiting for Ms Whomp Whomp's eggs to hatch! She is as curious as Bongo, wondering what's delaying their grand arrival. There is tension in the nest. Will they hatch? Will they ever fly? Prose and Poetry collide in this short burst of exciting bird-drama!

**Ruby**  
**A Show for Ruby**

**Created & Performed by John Doran**  
**Directed by Dominic O’Brien**

Trivia. Long multiplication. Cool dances. Popcorn and Frubes. This is Ruby's world.







**NEST Artists Alphabetically by Row**

Row 1: Luke Casserly, Hazel Clifford, Amy Conroy, Samuel Coyle, Emma Rose Creaner, Jim Culleton, Sorchá Curley, Terri Jade Donovan, John Doran, Farah El Neihum

Row 2: LA Feeney, Kwaku Fortune, Eimear Hussey, Wayne Jordan, Davey Kelleher, Fionntán Larney, Brigid Leahy, Stephen Marriott, Callum Maxwell, Ryan McCann

Row 3: Paul Mercier, Pippa Molony, Clare Monnelly, Monica Muñoz, Little John Nee, Joy Nesbitt, Choy-Ping Ní Chléirigh-Ng, Dominic O'Brien, Madi O'Carroll, Darragh O'Donnell

Row 4: Katie O'Halloran, Jody O'Neill, Claire O'Reilly, Dafe Orugbo, CN Smith, Kate Stanley Brennan, Matt Szczerek, Samuel Yakura

And Special Guest Commentator Colin Murphy.

**Production Team**

**Artistic Director:** Veronica Coburn  
**Creative Director:** Emer McGowan  
**Line Producer:** Paula Quinn  
**Production Manager:** Barry O'Donovan  
**Set & Designer:** Deirdre Dwyer  
**Lighting Designer:** Sarah Jane Shiels  
**Sound Designer:** Jenny O'Malley  
**Stage Managers:** Ruby Collin, Michaela Conley, Erin Fitzgerald, Eoin Harrington, Orla Kelly Smith, Sarah Mooney, Laura Murphy  
**Public Relations:** Sinead O'Doherty, O'Doherty Communications  
**Project Evaluator:** Noeleen Hartigan

**Technical Manager:** John McCabe  
**Technician:** Joshua Sex  
**Marketing Dept.:** Nicola Murphy & Emma Áine O'Leary  
**Front of House:** Andrew Carson & Philippa Cahill  
**Youth Arts Dept.:** Sarah Beirne & Paula Quinn  
**General Manager & Finance:** Teresa McCabe  
**Ushers:** Esther Campbell, Andreea Chituleanu, Naoise Corcoran, Kyle Laing, Nabilah Mohammad, Martyna Pawlak, Noah Quinn, Sanja Todorovic  
**Videographer:** Arcade Film  
**Photographers:** Declan Murphy, Stephen Quinn & Mark Stedman

**NEST Visual Artists**

Nest Portrait Project, Ground Floor Gallery: Zsolt Basti, Sahoko Blake ARHA, Una Sealy RHA & Dorothy Smith RHA & Curator Sharon Murphy  
You, Me Us, First Floor Gallery: Liadh Connolly

**Hosts**

Emily (8 weeks) | Cameron (3) | Liam (4) | Séimí (5) | Cillian (7) | Ben & Jacob (7 & 9) | Abbie (8) | Kacey (8) | Exauce & Destinee (9) | Nilas (10) | Adam (10) | Patrick (11) | Ruby (11) | Khadija (13) | Rang Éanna, Colásite Pobal Setanta (13-14) | Alannah (15) | Ameerat (15) | Ajla (16) | Grace (17) | Divine (17) | Amukela (18) | Lee (18), Penny (18) & Danila (20) | Rebecca (22)

**With thanks to all the families and guardians of our hosts and all our partners who welcomed us to their community locations:**

Ladyswell NS, Mary Mother of Hope NS, Pobalscoil Setanta, Luttrellstown Community College, Edmund Rice College, St John Bosco JBS, St Philip's SNS, Scoil Thomais, St Patrick's NS, Rathdara Community College, TUD Blanchardstown, Coolmine Community College, Danu Community Special School, Hartstown Community College, Homestart Blanchardstown, Ashleigh House

**With thanks too to the leading international and national artists and experts for their time in the early stages of the project:**

Liz Gillis, Historian & Author; Sarah Beirne, Draíocht's Children & Youth Arts Officer; Bodil Alling, Artistic Director of Gruppe 38, Denmark; Trina Haldar, Artistic Director of Mashī Theatre, UK; Anne Cradden, Sculptor, Set Designer and Educator; Paul Curley, Theatre Artist.

NEST is based on HOME THEATRE, an original idea by Marcus Vinicius Faustini (Brazil) and Kerry Kyriacos Michael (UK). Draíocht's iteration, HOME THEATRE (Ireland), took place in 2018.

NEST is funded by ART:2023, a Decade of Centenaries Collaboration between The Arts Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.