



Making Great Art Work:

International Arts Policy & Strategy

General Description and Context

In its ten-year strategy [Making Great Art Work](#), the Arts Council sets out its commitment to recognising the value of international practice and supporting those who pursue such opportunities. The Arts Council recognises that many artists and organisations work in an international context – developing arts practice abroad; initiating and creating projects with international partners; presenting completed works on the international stage. Such initiatives are valued and encouraged as they benefit the development of practice, capacity and reach. The Arts Council is primarily focused on the development of artists, arts practice and the creation of projects with an international dimension, rather than on the presentation of work abroad. However, it acknowledges that the delineation between ‘developmental’ and ‘presentational’ can be fluid and is predicated on the particular needs of artists and artforms.

The Arts Council currently facilitates international practice through direct supports to artists, such as the [Travel & Training Award](#), and by providing co-funding to Ireland’s representation at the [Venice Biennales](#). It also fosters international practice through grant funding to organisations whose work has an international dimension (e.g. through participation in networks and training programmes, residencies and artist-exchange programmes, and collaborative projects and partnerships). The Arts Council operates the [Creative Europe Desk](#) and provides a [Co-Funding Award](#) for successful Creative Europe Programme projects. It also co-funds the [Beyond Borders Scheme](#) (music commissioning and touring); the [Jerome Hynes Fellowship](#) (Clare Leadership Programme); while its [Laureate for Irish Fiction](#) and [Laureate na nÓg](#) initiatives have a significant international dimension.

The Arts Council recognises that international arts practice also includes the presentation of international work to audiences in Ireland. Through its [Strategic Funding](#) and [Arts Grant Funding](#) of organisations it provides increased opportunities for the public to critically engage with international arts, in all artforms and arts practice areas, at venues, festivals and events throughout the country.

The Arts Council is one of a number of agencies with an interest in the area of international arts. It recognises the need to engage and co-operate with other stakeholders and to provide clarity to the arts sector regarding the remit and role of the Arts Council in this area.

Additionally, as arts practice in the international arena becomes increasingly complex, a comprehensive understanding of how international activity manifests itself in different countries, and in different artforms and arts practice areas, is required. The prospect of Brexit adds an additional layer of complexity and presents many challenges, but may also offer opportunities in the area of international arts.

In articulating priorities under International Arts Policy it is acknowledged that the practice and work of an artist cannot be seen as either ‘national’ or ‘international’, as both elements feed into each other and are interlinked. In addition, the individual needs of artists to develop their practice and extend the reach of their work internationally are influenced by their specific artform or arts practice areas. The Arts Council as an expert agency is uniquely placed to support the developmental needs of artists working in an international context and to build capacity in the sector.

Developing International Arts Practice

The Arts Council recognises that those artists and organisations operating at an international level require a strategic, long-term approach to developing partnerships and leveraging opportunities, so that individual artists and organisations have the time and resources to strategically develop their international practice. It is critical that support for international arts practice is embedded in the Arts Council's current funding programmes so as to enable artists and arts organisations to engage more fully in international practice through their activities.

While Irish arts organisations face challenges in relation to participating in the [Creative Europe Programme](#), the Arts Council recognises that enabling such organisations to lead and partner on Creative Europe Projects develops capacity within the sector while also providing enhanced opportunities for artists.

In the area of funding supports, over the next three years the Arts Council will:

- Explore opportunities to support artists and organisations to strategically develop their international practice – e.g. through multi-annual funding opportunities.
- Embed support for international practice into the Arts Council's various funding programmes. In this regard, the Arts Council will also review the [Travel & Training Award](#) to ensure that this award, or a new iteration of it, appropriately responds to the differing needs of artists in each artform and arts practice area.
- Explore potential development supports to enable organisations to devise project applications for the [Creative Europe Programme](#).

Through its [Strategic Funding](#) and [Arts Grant Funding](#) programmes, the Arts Council fosters international practice by supporting organisations whose work has an international dimension. The provision of structural supports for artists looking to develop their practice and promote their work internationally is critical to enabling more artists to operate effectively in an international context.

The ecology of international arts is complex and differs according to artform and arts practice area. An understanding of international arts needs to be embedded within all artforms and arts practices within the Arts Council. While the Arts Council recognises that there is often no clear or absolute delineation between the development of art and its presentation, there is currently little support for the international dissemination of work outside of the presentational model. Greater and enhanced opportunities for artists across all disciplines are necessary in order to develop and extend the reach of their practice in an international context.

In the area of structural supports, over the next three years the Arts Council will:

- Devise methods to incentivise resource organisations to further support the international practice of artists and promote their work – e.g. in the form of logistical support, access to networks and contacts, and advice.
- Explore opportunities to support the developmental aspects of international dissemination outside of the presentational model.

- Ensure Arts Council staff members are supported to develop their knowledge and understanding of international arts, as appropriate to their artform or arts practice area.

Public Engagement

The Arts Council recognises that international arts practice also includes the presentation of international work to audiences in Ireland. This provides Irish audiences with increased opportunities for critical engagement with the arts while also increasing opportunities for artists to platform their work and develop their profile in an international context.

In further supporting public engagement, over the next three years the Arts Council will:

- Develop methods to encourage and support critical engagement with the arts – e.g. through the development of bespoke programmes that profile international arts practice.
- Map our support of international arts practice in Ireland with a view to gaining a better understanding of the range and nature of international work that is available to Irish audiences, and a deeper knowledge of the level of critical engagement with this work.