



Sam M'Guffin's Kitchen. Artwork © Wilbert Garvin  
Front cover - Gearóid MacLochlainn, Writer

#### Further Information

Full details of all Council funding are available from:

arts council of northern ireland macneice house 77 malone road belfast bt9 6aq t:028 9038 5200 f:028 9066 1715 www.artscouncil-ni.org

## language arts

funding policy

## Strategic Priorities

The Arts Council will give a priority to artists, arts organisations, arts initiatives and partnerships which:

- A increase opportunities for creative participation in the arts;
- B develop new audiences for the arts and build on existing ones;
- C extend opportunities for artists to develop their work and practice;
- D strengthen the capacity of arts organisations to deliver quality experiences of the arts.

## Strategic Objectives

The Arts Council is committed to:

- 1 increase opportunities for artists working to the highest standards and in innovative ways;
- 2 strengthen the arts infrastructure;
- 3 engage with community arts to increase opportunities for creative participation, to develop new audiences and to expand the range of contexts in which artists work;
- 4 engage with voluntary arts to increase opportunities for creative participation, to develop new audiences and expand the range of contexts in which artists work;
- 5 increase the quality of access for disabled people to the arts;
- 6 enhance children and young people's access to creative expression through the arts, in contexts of their own choosing, and increase opportunities for participation as they grow and develop;
- 7 increase audiences for the arts.

# The arts: inspiring the imagination, building the future

## Language Arts Funding Policy

### Introduction

The Arts Council recognises Irish and Ulster-Scots language arts as living elements of Northern Ireland's cultural heritage. Both language communities have developed many distinctive forms of artistic expression, and both have the ability to adapt and reinvent themselves in an ever-changing world.

Despite pressures created by the widespread use of the English language in Northern Ireland, both Irish and Ulster Scots continue to flourish as spoken and literary languages. Recent years have seen a renewed confidence and interest in both Irish and Ulster-Scots language arts, and new levels of awareness and popularity. Both languages have also benefited from recognition under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Irish under Part 3 of the Charter and Ulster Scots under Part 2. The Council is aware of their importance in enabling self-expression, independence of thought, and expression of, and reflection on, Northern Ireland's senses of identity and diverse cultural life.

Through funding, advocacy and promotion of local language arts, the Council aims to strengthen the language arts infrastructure, provide support for writers and practitioners, increase audiences for, and awareness of these arts, and expand the language arts community. In partnership with other agencies, the Council has engaged in an audit and needs analysis of the arts in Irish and Ulster Scots. The findings of this major research project will feed into the policy making, strategies and activity development programmes.

The Council recognises the interdependence of language and literary arts – creative and critical developments in any language art do not take place in isolation. Many of Northern Ireland's finest writers working in the English language, for instance, admit the importance of the Irish and Ulster Scots languages and culture to their artistic imagination and development.

Writers and practitioners may apply for financial support, assistance with travel and research, and major awards. The Council encourages readership and audiences by assisting festivals, readings and publications. It also works with organisations in the Republic of Ireland to provide opportunities for writers and practitioners on an island-wide basis.

### Definitions

The Council assists writers, practitioners and organisations across a range of art forms – creative writing, drama, sean-nós and other forms of traditional singing, as well as storytelling in Irish and Ulster Scots.

The Council's interest and influence is greater in certain areas within the Language Arts spectrum, and its response to, and support of, aspects of the sector is targeted accordingly. It also recognises that there is overlap between Language Arts and Traditional Arts, and that practitioners in related art forms may regard themselves as working in the Language Arts. However, the Council tries to demarcate clearly its specific support for Language Arts.

The Council is also aware that 'language arts' can refer to arts produced in the languages of ethnic communities. Its Arts Development Officer (Social Inclusion) works with a number of organisations representing this sector. However, Irish language arts and Ulster-Scots language arts are at an advanced stage of development in comparison to language arts from Northern Ireland's ethnic communities.

### Funding

Language Arts are funded under a number of programmes:

- Support for the Individual Artist (to assist artists in the development of their practice)
- Annual Support for Organisations (for organisations with year-round programmes which include Irish language arts and Ulster-Scots language arts in their programmes)
- New Work (if it is the creation of innovative original work)
- Access to the Arts (aimed at addressing the needs of communities in areas of social and economic deprivation or supporting the involvement of children and young people)
- Awards for All (for projects under £5,000. Applicants should consult [www.awardsforall.com](http://www.awardsforall.com). Tel. 0845 600204).

## Funding Objectives

A concerted focus of attention on Language Arts enables the Council to realise its four Priorities and meet its seven Strategic Objectives.

Funding objectives are to:

- assist writers and practitioners by investing in their work and work in progress (1)
- support local literary publishing in order to increase the dissemination of, and readership for, local writing in the language arts (1, 2, 7)
- foster and promote our literary heritage in the language arts (7)
- ensure that the work of local writers in the Irish language and Ulster Scots language is showcased by assisting, and promoting, local organisations, festivals, summer schools and events which include language arts content (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
- assist in the commissioning, production and development of Irish-language and Ulster-Scots drama and performance arts (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
- utilise ongoing research into the arts in Irish and Ulster Scots in order to direct support in such a way that facilitates sectoral development (1, 2)