arts council of Northern Ireland

Arts Council of Northern

ART FORM AND SPECIALIST AREA POLICY 2013-2018

CARNIVAL ARTS

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Preamble

The Carnival Arts Policy has been developed in line with *Ambitions for the Arts*, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's five-year Strategic Plan for the Arts, 2013-18. The overarching priorities of the Plan – champion the arts, promote access, build a sustainable sector – are reflected across the set of the Council's Art Form and Specialist Area policies, 2013-18.

Introduction to Carnival Arts Policy

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland recognises and values the importance of Carnival Arts and the contribution it makes to our civic society. In Northern Ireland we enjoy a unique mixture of community-based and professional carnival arts practice that works in partnership to provide a platform for celebrating our culture, identity and creativity.

In Northern Ireland most towns and cities host at least one carnival procession per year. These are usually civic celebrations such as Lord Mayor's shows or seasonal events such as Halloween, Christmas or May Day. Many festivals now include carnival as part of their programming; this includes community-based festivals and therefore reaffirms carnival as being one of the most accessible art forms, both for participant and audience member. Carnival Arts supports tourism and has an important economic contribution to make; it is used as an effective tool for community cohesion, social inclusion and the celebration of diversity within our society.

The Arts Council supports our major Carnival Arts provider to produce creative carnival-based programmes through artistic excellence, community training, cultural collaboration and civic celebration. Innovation is key to Carnival Arts development and allows for a new sense of identity and expression. We acknowledge that the skills pool in Northern Ireland is relatively weak, with some notable exceptions, and that support for all-Ireland initiatives is essential for sustaining professional development.

The Council is committed to sustaining current excellence, while encouraging new growth and helping it develop through both organisational and individual funding streams.

Funding Objectives

- to assist new and inventive relationships between organisations working in Carnival Arts;
- to stabilise key Carnival Arts organisations through a range of funding schemes;
- to support initiatives geared towards raising the standard of Carnival Arts practice;
- to provide opportunities for individual Carnival artists to develop their skills and to raise the standard of Carnival Arts practice within Northern Ireland;
- to encourage the development of Carnival Arts outside of Belfast;
- to support our major Carnival Arts organisations to develop effective business plans and strategies for sustainability and change;
- to encourage projects which demonstrate a sharing of resources and which promote best value practices within the sector;
- to support creative exchange, shared planning and smarter ways of working to strengthen the Carnival Arts sector.

Additional Information

‘Ambitions for the Arts’ Five Year Arts Strategy, 2013-2018

www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/strategy

Art Form and Specialist Area Policies, 2013-2018

www.artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts

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