



Arts Council of Northern Ireland

ART FORM AND SPECIALIST AREA POLICY 2007-2012

VISUAL ARTS



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Awarding funds from
 The National Lottery®

www.artscouncil-ni.org

Introduction

Visual expression is an essential part of human existence, communicating emotions, ideas and experience. In one moment, visual art can evoke intensely private and personal responses as well as part of a collective experience.

The term Visual Arts is difficult to define with precision and clarity. It defies rigid parameters and codification. It is not specific to certain media, techniques, place or modes of presentation. The 'traditional' elements of painting, printmaking, sculpture, photography and drawing are now located with a much broader spectrum of tools, methods and media. For over a generation artists have utilised film, sound, video and made performance. Visual arts are increasingly presented outside the gallery and can be ephemeral.

As with other art forms, the Arts Council's interest in a wide and diverse sector is particular and specific. It is concerned with contemporary visual arts and supporting work by living artists; work that is of the highest quality and is innovative, challenging and experimental.

This work must be accessible to a broad and developing audience in Northern Ireland and the Council supports an infrastructure of galleries and organisations which commission and present visual arts. There is an imperative to provide an educational function as part of their core activities and to aspire to an inclusive approach to building audiences.

Visual arts begin with artists and the Council remains committed to supporting individual artists throughout the development of their careers. It will continue to offer a range of funding opportunities that will encourage excellence in the creation of new work. It is also committed to improving the facilities for artists in Northern Ireland, particularly the improvement of studio and resource provision.

The Council recognises that its specific interest is not divorced from the broader cultural and historic context of visual arts. Council works closely with other organisations and agencies with a remit for, or interest in, visual arts, and is committed to the continuing development of these relationships. Most notably, the University of Ulster School of Art and Design and MAGNI build important bridges to the past and the future.

Visual arts are a driver within the creative industries, a key contributor to the arts environment and an essential part of cultural environment in Northern Ireland. The Council will work to ensure they are valued as such.

Funding Objectives

- develop an enhanced and sustainable infrastructure for the production, exhibition and dissemination of visual arts in Northern Ireland;
- work with organisations to develop new and existing audiences for contemporary visual arts;
- encourage appropriate, innovative and sustainable education and outreach programmes;
- encourage critical debate, analysis and archiving of visual arts in Northern Ireland;
- support new and established artists in the creation innovative, challenging and experimental work;
- encourage emerging artists and new curators to develop their careers in Northern Ireland;
- stimulate the market for visual arts in Northern Ireland;
- raise the profile of artists and visual arts from Northern Ireland internationally;
- create and support opportunities for artists, curators and organisations to work trans-nationally.

Additional Information

'Creative Connections' Five Year Arts Strategy, 2007-2012

www.artscouncil-ni.org/subpages/strategy.htm

Corporate Plan, 2007-2010

www.artscouncil-ni.org/subpages/strategy.htm

Art Form and Specialist Area Policies, 2007-2012

www.artscouncil-ni.org/subpages/aboutthearts.htm

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