

Winter 2015, Volume 3

SPECIAL ISSUE: *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland*

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The *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland* conference was a collaborative initiative, jointly organized by Pat Cooke (UCD), and Kerry McCall (IADT), Dublin, Ireland. It took place on Wednesday 25th June 2014, 9-6pm, in the Fitzgerald Debating Chamber, University College, Dublin. Full details of the conference programme are included in this special issue, which publishes selections from the conference and reflections from its participants. See also: www.culturalpolicyconference2014.ie. For further information on the conference or any of the transcripts detailed here, please contact: kerry.mccall@iadt.ie or pat.cooke@ucd.ie.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland*

Organisers' Introduction

PAT COOKE & KERRY MCCALL

Mapping an Altered Landscape: cultural policy and management in Ireland since 2008 arose out of a need to reflect on changes in cultural policy and practice in Ireland since 2008.

In planning for it, we had a number of specific goals in mind: we wanted to bring together a diverse range of voices to debate the challenges thrown up by retrenchment and change in the cultural sphere during the years of recession; we wanted to facilitate a conversation about culture that ranged wider than the fields of art and heritage, embracing important cultural sectors, such as the media and local government, and other forms of contemporary and emergent cultural practice; and we wanted to provide an opportunity for wide-ranging critical reflection on current cultural policies and management practices. We also hoped to get people thinking about the links and overlaps between the arts and heritage and the wider landscape of cultural experience in the Ireland of 2014 – in other words, the wide range of elements that might conceivably form part of a genuinely comprehensive cultural policy.

The last such conference was convened by the School of Art History and Cultural Policy in UCD in July 2008. The intervening years have witnessed dramatic changes in virtually every dimension of Irish life, including of course the cultural field. Ireland's economy has moved from being a global success story to having one of the highest fiscal deficits in the Eurozone. Back in 2008, four-year-old Facebook had 145m users; today it has over a billion. Two-year-old Twitter had 1.5m monthly users; today it has over 300 million. Apple released its first iPhone in June 2007, and the Irish are now among the most prolific users of the device. Social networking technologies have become vectors of profound cultural change, transforming patterns of communication and cultural consumption in paradigm-shifting ways, all with challenging implications for cultural policy. These years have also been marked by sharp falls in government funding of public services, including culture. In 2008, the Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon's government funding amounted to €81m and the Heritage Council/ An Chomhairle Oidhreachta was €18.7m. In 2015, the Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon's budget is €56.9 (a fall of 30% since 2008). In 2014, the Heritage Council/ An Chomhairle Oidhreachta received €5.9m (a fall of 29% from 2008).

The steep decline in public funding has compelled cultural managers and practitioners to adapt their skills and practices in dramatic ways. Public funding of cultural projects now comes with much more prescriptive expectations relating to return on public investment. There is now an unprecedented emphasis on developing fundraising skills to match public funding or to compensate for its loss. Despite sharp declines in both resources and capacities, cultural organisations are expected to achieve more ambitious goals for expanding audiences and broadening access to their services, while at the same time demonstrating greater entrepreneurial spirit in generating a diversity of revenue streams.

Given all that has transpired since 2008, those attending the conference had much to reflect on, discuss and consider.

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The cultural policy challenge

The historic record of cultural planning in Ireland is very patchy and possibly more erratic than in many comparable European countries. The attempt to find the right segmented combination of cultural elements seems to have dogged efforts to form a 'department of culture' since it was first inaugurated in 1994 when Michael D. Higgins became the first Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht. An extraordinary level of turbulence has marked efforts to define what should be put into, or left out of a department of culture ever since. The following terms, shuffled and changed in 1996, 2002, 2010 and 2011, have been used in the five versions the department's title has taken to-date: *arts, culture, heritage, Gaeltacht, islands, sport and tourism*. In contrast, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in the UK has retained the same title, and broadly the same range of functions, since it was set up in 1997.

What might this turbulent nomenclature signify? It is surely indicative of some uncertainty about how to identify, and then organise, the valid dimensions of a cultural policy within a stable or coherent framework. It stems partly from a political culture that favours pragmatic, incremental and short-term fixes to finding solutions for organisational challenges. Our approach to constitutional and institutional design seems to lack consistent grounding in principles of citizenship, equality and collective purpose, embodying rights of access to certain public goods – including, of course, cultural ones. From this perspective, we might notice how shakily grounded in legislation some of our institutional arrangements for culture are. In terms of domestic legislation, for example, successive Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon policy statements have emphasised the centrality of the artist to arts policy – yet there is no explicit reference to the artist in the Arts Act – despite its being amended twice in 1973 and 2004. We also have a lackadaisical attitude to enacting international covenants we signed up to.¹ More philosophically, though we live in a republic, we often fail to take account of republican principles of government in designing institutional structures. In this context, it might be noted that whatever about the merits of creating and sustaining an academy for elite artists, Aosdána has no statutory basis of its own.

Historically, the field of arts and culture has been burdened by rhetorically high expectations in proportion to exceedingly modest inputs. In 1951, Taoiseach John A. Costello wrote a memo on section 2 of the Arts Bill, describing his thoughts on the advisory role of the impending Arts Council. He envisaged that the Council would give 'expert advice on the *wide variety of matters* arising in the course of Government administration'. He then listed the kind of things that advice might cover:

the formulation of plans for the establishment of national academies of music and painting; ancient monuments; town planning; advertising in furtherance of the development of tourism traffic; official publications, posters etc.; photographs and films; State buildings and their furnishing; and the designs of coins, medals, seals, postage stamps and uniforms.²

This is a very wide list, covering the fields of arts and heritage - things that weren't separated out until the setting up of the National Heritage Council of 1982, (which led to the inauguration of a statutory Heritage Council under the Heritage Act of 1995). More significantly, Costello's 'wide variety' of functions reveals how, from the outset, an arts policy was expected to bear the weight of a range of expectations. These expectations implicitly belong to a much more comprehensive cultural policy, embracing what would nowadays be recognized, as a cultural industries policy. It was expected to achieve all of this on a budget of £10,000 a year, a part-time unpaid Director and one secretary, working with a voluntary council that met about six times a year.

Thomas Bodkin (the main architect of the 1951 Arts Act), was strongly of the view that the

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new Arts Council should be directly answerable to the Taoiseach and not to the Department of Education, as Costello intended. The Arts Council, Bodkin insisted, should be linked through the Taoiseach's department to all departments of State. He was drawing, no doubt, from bitter experience, recollecting his time as Director of the National Gallery from 1927-35, when the national cultural institutions were directly answerable to the Department of Education. He was wary of allowing that department any extended scope to determine arts policy. 'The plain historic truth is that the senior officers of that Department have never had the slightest interest in or knowledge of the Fine Arts,' he wrote Costello, 'and were...indifferent or openly hostile to efforts made to further, through Art, the prestige and the material prosperity of our country.'³

A weak department, as Bodkin shrewdly recognised when advising Costello, would not provide a vehicle powerful enough to coordinate the complex manifestation of cultural issues across the many functions of government, nor would it be powerful enough to counter the tendency of politicians to treat culture as a marginal field of public policy. It is worth noting, that the department remains one of the weakest in terms of cabinet influence, and the only department recommended for axing in the McCarthy Report on reforming the public service in 2009 (McCarthy, McNally, McLaughlin, O'Connell, Slattery, and Walsh, 2009).

In the field of government, it is the misfortune of culture (notoriously elusive and difficult to define) to be high in complexity and low in political priority. To a greater or lesser extent, this remains true for all governments, but perhaps in Ireland the record is one of finding the means, and the language to deal with this complexity. We tend to settle, instead, for a rhetoric that serves to mask culture's true status as a subject of low political priority.

Exactly how low a prioritisation was illustrated by a controversy that hit the headlines in September 2014. John McNulty, a member of the Fine Gael Party, was appointed to the board of the Irish Museum of Modern Art as a device to qualify him as a member of the Seanad's Culture and Education panel, but had to resign within days due to the controversy aroused by the meretricious nature of the manoeuvre. The episode shone a glaring light on the gap between cultural rhetoric and the *realpolitik* of party-political place-hunting, and brought to mind Belfiore's pungent essay on 'bullshit in cultural policy' (Belfiore, 2009). The essence of bullshit is not deceitfulness or lies, she notes, but insincerity, 'humbug', 'mindlessness', 'hot air' and 'clap-trap'. It arises in the gap between rhetoric and sustained, meaningful support and resourcing of culture, and points towards the increasingly fractured disconnect between policy and practice in the cultural field in Ireland. Commenting on what it revealed about politicians' attitude to national cultural institutions, Fintan O'Toole observed that it was 'precisely because the stakes were so low' that so many fundamental principles of good governance were violated (O'Toole, 2014).

Is a national cultural policy possible?

Every so often the call goes out for a more 'coordinated' or 'integrated' arts and cultural policy. But it appears only fitfully to be pursued as a priority in its own right.

On 23 June 2014, two days before the conference took place, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Jimmy Deenihan, announced his intention to draw up a 'national cultural policy' for Ireland.⁴ This announcement provided a dramatic frame of reference for discussions about policy on the day. Many speakers referred to it, at least in the sense of wondering what it might possibly amount to in the end. For it was clear, that buffeted by the altered circumstances of five years of recession, many were wary that this striking declaration might amount to little more than a grand, rhetorical statement of intent.

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Heather Humphreys has succeeded Minister Deenihan in this cabinet post and she is progressing the commitment to proceed with 'Culture 2025', a national cultural policy for Ireland. From the perspective of the conversations had on the day of the conference, we can only re-emphasise how seductively tempting it is to talk about arts, heritage and wider culture in a celebratory, uplifting way, without applying hard thinking to the really knotty questions of cultural production, practice, management and engagement. Balanced, integrative thinking about culture is difficult. There is a tendency to talk in a formulaic way about 'arts and culture', which might be best represented as 'ARTS (and culture)'. That is, we fall readily into a default habit of thinking about the arts as a placeholder for culture in a wider sense. This blinds us to major challenges, such as the multi-cultural complexion of Irish society and other forms of cultural change that transcend the boundaries of an arts policy.

Another formidable challenge is to find a more stable administrative architecture for the way national government, local government, cultural agencies, and a host of civil society groups and organisations interact and communicate to make a national cultural policy a functional reality. Not only do we require deep and critical thinking to formulate and deliver on a meaningful cultural policy for Ireland, we also need to change the voices in the room in order bring a variety of perspectives, contributions and experiences to the formulation of the first cultural policy for this country. Providing a platform for just such a wider variety of voices was something we consciously made an effort to achieve with the conference.

As Alan Bloom once remarked, the effort to form a cultural policy is 'collective problem solving, animated by the need and desire to resolve the question of the common situation' (Blum, 2003). That policy should not only clarify the scope and objectives of the main arts and culture department in government but have sufficient traction among other governmental departments with significant cultural dimensions to their activities. It must also provide a compelling basis for engaging the public, and those professionally or vocationally involved in culture, in realising its goals and aspirations.

Mapping an Altered Landscape: cultural policy and management in Ireland since 2008

It has been noted that opportunities for academics to engage with cultural practitioners and producers on issues of research and collaborative concern were scarce, and that more were needed (Hazelkorn, Ryan, Gibson, and Ward, 2013). In providing such a space by way of this conference, we were kindly supported by seed-funding from both UCD and IADT, along with generous support from the Heritage Council/ An Chomhairle Oidhreacta and the Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon, we were able to create a much-needed opportunity to bring together a wide spectrum of voices from across the Irish cultural sector.

There were four plenary sessions during the day. The first focused on how well cultural policies, structures and practices have responded to disruptive change since the economic crash. The second queried the fitness of both national and local government structures for the effective delivery of cultural services. The third sought to identify forms of practice across the cultural field that have emerged in response to economic, social and technological change. In the final session, senior practitioners, including the chairs of both the Arts and Heritage Councils, attempted to distil conclusions from the day's deliberations, and reflect upon where the issues raised and ideas might lead us.⁵

Over 160 people joined us for an open conversation with speakers, moderators and audience members ranging from artists and arts managers, to curators, theatre-makers, cultural managers, social media experts, entrepreneurs, museum/heritage professionals, local authority officers, representatives from the Department, Arts and Heritage Councils, government min-

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isters, students and academics.

They had plenty to say.

Our overriding hope was that the collective wisdom of the participants would allow us to map the nature and extent of alterations in the Irish cultural landscape since 2008, so that we might begin to address some of the really knotty questions on contemporary cultural production, management and engagement.

This publication captures some of this thought and these ideas.

Pat Cooke has been director of the MA in Cultural Policy and Arts Management since 2006. Previously, he worked for Ireland's state heritage service for over twenty years, where he was director of both Kilmainham Gaol and the Pearse Museum. As a heritage sector manager, he pioneered the use of museums and historic properties in Ireland as sites for major art projects. His experience in the heritage field includes producing cultural and historical exhibitions and audio-visual presentations, and the management of historic sites in line with best principles of conservation practice. He was Chairman of the Irish Museums Association (2002-06), and chaired a Heritage Council committee charged with developing a Museum Standards programme for Irish museums. Currently he is an assessor on the implementation of that programme. Pat currently sits on the Board of the Hunt Museum, Limerick.

Kerry McCall is a Lecturer in the Dept of Humanities and Arts Management, Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dublin and Affiliate Faculty at Leap Institute of the Arts, Colorado State University, USA. She is a founder of the Cultural Policy Observatory Ireland: an all island research network with Dr. Victoria Durrer of Queen's University, Belfast- an initiative seed funded by the Irish Research Council under the 'New Foundations' scheme, 2014. Along with colleagues in the USA and Germany, Kerry coordinates the Arts Management Research Stream of the European Sociological Association, and with colleagues in University College Dublin and Queen's University Belfast, is a founding editor of the Irish Journal for Arts Management and Cultural Policy. Kerry's research interests centre on cultural participation, cultural project management and cultural entrepreneurship.

NOTES

1. Ireland ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in December 1989 and has been examined twice by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. For the Covenant, please see: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf>
2. Taoiseach's note on Amendment 4 to section 5 of the Arts Bill, April, 1951, National Archives, Taoiseachs File: S14922c.
3. Thomas Bodkin to John A. Costello, letter of 20 December, 1950. National Archives, Taoiseachs File: S15073a.
4. Ironically, conference organiser, Pat Cooke noted in his introductory remarks to the conference, that of the six people who had held that ministerial post since it was inaugurated in 1994, not one went on to hold another cabinet position subsequently. Minister Deenihan was reshuffled to a junior ministry position on 11 July 2014, adding his name to the following list: Michael D Higgins (Dec 1994 - Jun 1997), Sile de Valera (Jun 1997 - Jun 2002), John O'Donoghue (Jun 2002 - Jun 2007), Seamus Brennan (Jun 2007 - May 2008), Martin Cullen (May 2008 - Mar 2010), Mary Hanafin (Mar 2010 - Mar 2010), Jimmy Deenihan (Mar 2011 - Jul 2014)
5. Full information on all plenaries, videos of each session as well as the programme schedule and background information on the speakers and moderators, is available at: www.culturalpolicyconference2014.ie.

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Editor's Introduction

NIAMH NICGHABHANN

Mapping an altered landscape, held at University College Dublin in June 2014, brought together a range of perspectives and stakeholders in the Irish cultural policy and arts management sector. This special issue of the *Irish Journal of Arts Management and Cultural Policy* aims to reflect this conference, and, insofar as is possible, to capture some of the key ideas and questions which were part of the day. While it does not reproduce the contributions of all of the invited speakers, six papers have been selected for publication. Given the wealth of experience and expertise of all speakers on the conference programme, the process of selection was not an easy one, and this essay, together with that written by conference organisers Pat Cooke and Kerry McCall, aims to reflect the greater diversity of voices and perspectives represented on the day.

The six papers selected for this issue represent different perspectives and views on the processes of arts management and cultural policy formation and interpretation in contemporary Ireland. However, as Clare Duignan, Mary Carty and Gerry Godley all point out in their contributions, it is essential to consider the perspectives that remain absent, yet which are critically important. While this special issue includes contributions by those involved in art making, in managing county structures, in broadcasting, in entrepreneurship, in heritage and in education, it could also include voices from the voluntary arts sector, from urban planning, from sports, from those involved in the provision of healthcare services, as well as from those involved in landscape conservation, housing, community development and the creation of jobs and employment. It could (and perhaps should) also include the perspectives of those who consider themselves to be audience members for the kinds of work and activity that were discussed throughout the conference, as well as those who feel themselves removed from those activities for different reasons. The need for a greater plurality of voices and perspectives within the processes of arts management and cultural policy was evident throughout *Mapping an altered landscape*, forming one strand of the debate and discussion about contemporary challenges, opportunities and the shaping of the future.

The papers selected here include diverging and sometimes opposing views on several issues which are, and are likely to remain, central to arts management, cultural policy, art making and cultural life in Ireland. These issues centre on language, measurement and value, and on the role and agenda of the arts within society, and they range from the theoretical and philosophical to the practical and quotidian. Who is the artist in society now? What will be the conditions for art making and for engaging with arts and culture in Ireland in the coming years? What compromises will be necessary? What kind of conditions are people willing to accept? What challenges are to be faced? Is there an opportunity for change and for re-imagining the way that things can be done? To what extent are creativity and policy linked at all? These questions form a web of connections across the presentations reproduced here. They were also evident as key concerns throughout the question and answer sessions, in the words of the panel chairs, and reflected the keenly-felt need for a new, durable and sustainable national

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cultural policy.

The title of the conference implied a period of recent change and the need to create a working plan for the future. The changes most often referred to throughout the day revolved around austerity and a climate of diminished funding and practical support for the arts and cultural sectors in Ireland, as well as the changing circumstances for art makers, for audiences and for those working within the arts management and cultural policy sphere. While the word 'mapping' in the title referred largely to the future, it is also necessary to partake in some historical geography, and to understand the terrain of the past. Pat Cooke situated the present within the context of past by tracing the different places in which arts and culture have been located in government, tracking its various alliances with sport, tourism, and the Gaeltacht. This opening paper, together with his ongoing work on the history of the Arts Council of Ireland,¹ acted as an important reminder that, while a national cultural policy is only now in preparation, Ireland has not been operating in a policy-free environment in these areas, and that the institutional supports and official directions and priorities have been influenced by both implicit and explicit policies and strategy documents, as well as more broadly-held perspectives on the role and position of arts and culture in Irish life and Irish society.

The move to integrate arts with education in particular was outlined by Ruairí Quinn (Minister of Education and Skills between March 2011 and July 2014), and there were several calls throughout the day (by Mary Carty and others) for even greater flexibility, exploring the potential for collaboration in areas of technology, employment, the development of exports, and in areas such as tourism, health and community development. In drafting new directions for the future, however, it is essential to look carefully at past work and experience. The experience and expertise brought to past processes (often in a voluntary capacity) should be considered and incorporated into future planning, and the success and failures of past policy endeavours should be carefully considered. The appropriate financing of policy initiatives requires particular attention. It is crucial that the experiences of the past, both positive and negative, be taken into account in the development of a new national policy in order to avoid the creation of a well-meaning but ultimately unsustainable and unworkable master plan.

It is fair to say that, at times, the array of concerns and perspectives voiced throughout the conference felt overwhelming, reflecting a sector which is strained at best, and in several cases, in crisis. The impact of a lack of investment in human resources and the infrastructure for arts and culture in Ireland was particularly evident, with many MA-level graduates moving from unpaid internships to JobBridge schemes without the opportunity to develop professionally. While Grace Dyas described the importance of the time, space, mentoring and resources provided by the Project Arts Centre to her work, these serious obstacles in the development of creative working lives were mirrored by the creative artists present, who spoke about the lack of opportunity and the instability that they experience as a result. While the conference organisers are to be commended in bringing together a gathering where these different concerns could be outlined, it was clear that each individual issue raised requires space and sustained attention. It was, however, encouraging to see several members of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, as well as the CEOs and chairs of the Arts Council and the Heritage Council present on the day, and actively engaging with issues being raised by speakers and delegates.

The sense of urgency and of crisis around key infrastructural issues within this sector – from the future of the National Cultural Institutions (as explored by Sarah Glennie) to voluntary and youth arts organisations – resulted in an arena where different concerns were voiced, and revolutions called for, but little space could be dedicated to working out the ways in which

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these issues could be overcome. With each institution pared back to an almost unworkable operational base, and individuals dealing with an unsustainable sense of instability in their working lives, genuine collaboration and conversation can fall prey to defensiveness and the struggle to survive and stay open, fear around necessary risk-taking, and, ultimately, the emptying of this part of the cultural sector as those best able to create the future leave to find more sustainable futures elsewhere.

Parallel to the development of a national cultural policy, there is a clear need for a sustained space for conversation, research and collaboration throughout the sector, where ideas can be explored in contexts other than crisis management, an imminent policy agenda, a public event of political consequence (such as the forthcoming centenary of the 1916 Rising) or immediate advocacy concerns. While this role has, to a certain extent, been filled by gatherings such as the Theatre Forum annual conference, the various workshops and networking events provided by organisations such as Visual Artists Ireland, the Irish Museums Association, the National Campaign for the Arts and groups of local authority arts officers, as well as the many one-off, themed events held throughout higher education and cultural institutions, the recently-proposed all-island cultural policy research network could provide a space for sustained collaborative research. Indeed, the formation of this publication, the Irish Journal of Arts Management and Cultural Policy, has already played an important role in providing a shared discursive space, free to access and open to all. Similarly, the recent call for research into key policy areas by the Irish Research Council, which lists the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht as one of the participating government departments, may also add to the development of a reflective space for collaborative and interdisciplinary thinking and planning for the future, and learning from the past.²

The need for a sustained space for discourse and the sharing of data and research resources is mirrored in many ways by a need for greater transparency on a number of levels around funding. Like many of the speakers, Clare Duignan emphasized the need for diversified funding models and longer-term funding cycles, allowing organisations and institutions to develop more ambitious programmes, to build capacity, and in many cases, simply to survive. These practical issues around funding and organisational development opened a discussion on different models of work in contemporary Ireland, many of which challenge that of the state-funded institution and which engaged with the idea of artist as entrepreneur and of structural innovation and change within the arts, from Gavin Dunne's presentation on his own working practice as a musician and composer, to organisations such as Monika Sapielak's ArtPolonia, a lab for intercultural cooperation and exchange and Trevor White's new business model for a museum of Dublin. This juncture – between the discourses of artistic identity, art-making, entrepreneurship and innovation – was perhaps the most contentious throughout the conference. Some speakers felt that their work went unrecognized by the 'traditional' value structures of arts and cultural production in an Irish context, making it more difficult for them to access supports and recognition in order to continue to develop. This was particularly evident around relatively new media forms such as gaming.

While infrastructural inflexibility was viewed as a block to necessary growth and development in an Irish context, others voiced anxiety about the increasing pressure for artists to engage in entrepreneurial activity and the discourses of innovation, the culture industries, and creative innovation in order to continue to be valued at all. Alan Counihan's important paper – reproduced in this special issue – explicitly stated his identity as artist, and not as entrepreneur. This emphasis on the role of the artist in society, and the role of participation in the arts and in the cultural life of the country, was reiterated by several speakers, including Conor Newman, Sheila Pratschke and by Michelle Carew in her outline of the importance of the National

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Association for Youth Drama. It was very clear throughout the conference that a national cultural policy would need to engage with these parallel discourses in order to best enhance and support potential opportunities and synergies, and to avoid creating a competitive system privileging one above the other.

A note on the format of this special issue – *Mapping an Altered Landscape* was programmed and delivered by Kerry McCall and Pat Cooke. They asked me to make a selection of papers, and to write this short framing introduction from the perspective of an audience member present throughout the day. We decided to retain (insofar as was possible) the presentations as they were delivered on the day, giving contributors the opportunity to add a short addendum to their original contribution if they wished to include any additional information or clarifications. Editorial assistant Susan Kennelly has transcribed these relatively short papers from the recordings of the day, and I am very grateful to her for her hard work on this issue. Adding to my own framing paper, both Pat Cooke and Kerry McCall have also written an introduction, positioning this special issue within the original conference and its aftermath. Ruairí Quinn, who formally opened the conference in June 2014, has also contributed a response to the papers selected.

While all of the presentations, questions from the floor and contributions by session chairs were stimulating, and addressed key contemporary issues in arts management and cultural policy, these six papers have been selected to provide a wide range of perspectives and stakeholders. These range from the independent artist to the chief executive, in order to explore the ways in which their views converge as well as diverge, highlighting areas of common interest and shared values, as well as areas where their ideas and priorities clash and differ. The entire conference was filmed, creating a valuable archive of the day, the different presentations and comments and questions from the floor. I am grateful to each of the contributors to this special issue for their time and input in bringing it to fruition, and for sharing their insight and experience with a wider audience. I am also grateful to Pat and Kerry for inviting me to make this selection, and to the board of the *Irish Journal of Arts Management and Cultural Policy* for taking the decision to publish this special issue. I hope that this conference, and this publication, will take its place among many more as the national cultural policy for Ireland is developed.

Niamh NicGhabhann is the course director for the MA Festive Arts Programme at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick. Her research focuses on Irish studies, with an emphasis on the art and architecture of Ireland, concepts of public space, memory, performance and the body. She is particularly interested in exploring these concepts through visual images, built landscapes, poetry and prose fiction. Her current research also includes work on arts management, cultural entrepreneurship and innovation, and ideas of measurement and value in the arts and cultural sector. She is a member of the editorial board of Artefact, the journal of the Irish Association of Art Historians, and her monograph, Medieval Ecclesiastical Buildings in Ireland, 1789-1915: Building on the Past, was published by Four Courts Press in 2015.

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Gerry Godley

PRINCIPAL AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, LEEDS COLLEGE OF MUSIC

I'm delighted to be here today and to be part of this forum and I'm looking forward to everything that will unfold, particularly the perspective of artists who are among us.

I'm not an artist but I work primarily as a concert producer so I am positioned just downstream of the artists, and I guess my perspective is informed by them in many ways. I'm going to leave it to others here today who are eminently more qualified to parse what exactly has happened in the field of policy formation since 2008 and examine the chicken's entrails as to what will happen in the decade to come. I won't tell you the exact changes that have taken place in policy, structures and management practices as Pat and Kerry have charged us to do, but, in the words of the great song collector, Frank Harte "I am going to try and tell you how it has felt".

I want to be honest and forthright, and I think it's hard to talk about changes in policy when you feel you have been working in an area that has been devoid of one. But that's okay I guess, because, we are not the only ones. If this was a conference about housing policy and we were hearing from actors in that field, people like Peter McVerry, I think they would be saying the same thing. So housing policy and cultural policy, both essential to active citizenship and both fallen prey to the neo-liberal vocabulary that has infected the groundwater of our democracy, both characterised by an inertia over the last decade, the sad harvest of which we are now reaping. And they are symbiotically linked too, because artists, the overwhelming majority of whom earn less than the average industrial wage, need a roof over their heads just as much as the next citizen. But if not actually making policy, we have talked about it a great deal over that period.

In the National Campaign for the Arts, which I helped found in 2008, it often felt like we talked about little else other than the policy horizon. 2008 seems a long time ago now, full of apprehension but optimism too, as we felt the seismic change on the immediate horizon, which was characterised by the imminent arrival of the IMF [International Monetary Fund], was to be the catalyst of profound and positive change in Ireland and that the arts would play a central role in that.

In September 2009 after the first Global Irish Economic Forum in Farnleigh, that roll call of totemic figures like Dermot Desmond, Neil Jordan and Martin Cullen, then Minister of Arts, Sport and Tourism, were all avowing the importance of culture in the economic heavy-lifting to come. I was writing in the *Irish Times* about how culture might fix our ills. The sub-editor called it '5 Ways That Culture Can Save Us', which was a little bit histrionic but I wrote about its importance to our reputational capital, its place within the SMART economy and cultural tourism, how it can be a driver of employment and how it could help mend our broken national psyche. I believed in that then, and I want to believe it now, but six years of austerity later and I'm less convinced by my own assertions. I think that they were well-meaning but I think that they were naïve. As could be said of Minister Deenihan's statement (yesterday) re Culture

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Gerry Godley

2025 and the stall that it sets out, where it says: “The National Cultural Policy will illuminate the intrinsic value of the arts, creativity and our dynamic nation’s intellectual achievements. It will demonstrate how culture can expand and enhance an inclusive society by delivering arts education, providing career pathways and developing avenues for expression of our citizens, driving innovation and contributing to our economic wellbeing”.

I think it’s understandable because I think culture is like a sort political catnip sometimes. In a society as traumatised as ours, it’s kind of understandable and seductive to see culture as a panacea that can cure many of its ills. It’s what the UK academic Tom Fleming calls “the grease and the glue” argument. The grease that lubricates the economy and the glue that holds society together. It feels like culture groans under the weight of all this magical thinking, asphyxiated by expectation and the onerous task of actually proving that this is so is easier to talk about than making it a reality. For me, I’m increasingly drawn to Allen Ginsberg’s statement about the work and ultimately that work is about “easing the pain of living and everything else is a drunken dumb show”, and there has been lots of painful living here since 2008 and we do the drunken dumb show better than anyone else, I think.

The truth is that in the years since 2008 we have been living through a cultural policy interregnum and there is a profound cognitive dissonance between the rhetorical flourish of our cultural aspirations and our capacity to make them real. We have developed a culture of boosterism that is at odds with our ability to make a change in the light of the immense technological, economic, political and social change that we are living through. It’s like a hymn sheet that speaks to a deep insecurity about culture and it impoverishes us all; politicians and civil servants, but also academics, policymakers, artists and audiences.

I found myself reading Anthony Burgess’ fantastic forward to *The Dubliners* that was published in the *Irish Times* over the weekend. Burgess keeps returning to a theme of paralysis and that Joyce was trying to [...] something cathartic about writing about catharsis and I can’t help thinking that perhaps we are in another state of paralysis now. So writing in the *Irish Times* more recently, in February this year, in response to the latest brouhaha, The Abbey – because there is always one – and the cultural dirty bomb that went off in Limerick over Christmas, it was clear my fervour had dimmed somewhat, and I wrote as follows:

Now we are taking the policy edifice down, one stealthy budget at a time, our sector lacks direction and thought leadership, flapping in the headwinds of a crisis, there is dissonance between the cultural pieties and the reality on the ground. At every opportunity we proclaim the arts’ potency as an agent of change, we assert the artist’s inalienable right to speak truth to power, on cue our politicians intone the names of the artistic dead and the urgent societal change they forged. But 18 months out from a certain commemoration, it’s hard to identify a constituency as politically captured, as timorous, as the funded arts sector – either those supported through the Arts Council, such as the small organisation I run or those further up the food chain such as the National Cultural Institutions. We talk about the importance of the arts in the national conversation, yet the national conversation about the policy that would shape the arts themselves is barely audible.

So here we are convened again for that very conversation. We will push the policy boulder up the hill, we will try and unravel the Gordian knot of cultural policy and the myriad competing interests that it tries to serve.

We all know each other here, and we’ve all done this before. Perhaps we will be better served by being a little more realistic in our expectations. We could start by clearing out the Augean Stables of the debased language around cultural policy by acknowledging that we need to be more honest with each other, less hierarchical, less deferential and less authoritarian. We need to be more porous; we need more of the liberated thinking Mr. Quinn spoke about (a few moments ago).

And I just want to finish by telling you what I have been doing since 2008 – one of the things I

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Gerry Godley

have been doing is running a festival called 12 Points, a developmental festival for young European jazz ensembles. It's very small but it has proved very effective in its field. In the cultural scheme of things here, I think that abstract art-forms such as jazz, contemporary dance or visual arts exist in the shadow of our narrative traditions like theatre and literature. We have a distrust somehow of the abstract, and in the 1930s we went so far as to try and ban jazz. But 'over there' in Europe, they have been a little more receptive and our moderate Irish festival has enjoyed great success. So the location rotates: it is in Dublin in the odd years and in the even years it is in a host city and the most recent edition was held in April this year in Umea in Northern Sweden which is the current European Capital of Culture.

Previously, it has taken place in Stavanger in Norway and Porto. The next edition away from Dublin will be in 2016 and will shortly be confirmed and will probably be in Valencia, Spain - with Calatrava's extraordinary architecture that is the Palau de les Arts [...] I hope it comes up today, the infrastructural question. For example, when we brought the festival in to Porto in 2012 we were in Rem Koolhaas' Casa de Música [...] I'm full of conflict about these huge architectural programmes and in most places a lot of them are hitting the skids now because of austerity.

But I do think that while the rest of Europe has just been getting on with the business of 'refreshing', if you like, its cultural infrastructure after the post-war period, it strikes me that what we've been doing here is just bickering about what to do with the GPO. I think what's interesting about the 'infrastructural question' is that it is kind of a litmus test of the political ambition and sincerity around these big policy questions – because these are immensely challenging projects but the legacy implications of them are profound. So over the course of doing this I visited a lot of European countries, bringing young artists to them and going out and talking about the festival and it's been a great opportunity to do a kind of 'mystery shopping' of other people's cultural policy. I guess having done a lot of that I feel in a lot of things we are kind of languishing mid-table. We are not, for example, like Macedonia where the model looks extremely patriarchal and speaks to the way we did things in the past here. And we are definitely not like the Scandinavians where their model, as in many areas, is something we aspire to. And I'm not dramatising or glorifying what I see in those places – the cultural debate in those places is equally robust, it is equally competitive for resources and many of the same tensions play out between the old and the new. But what I do see, particularly in Scandinavia where we've hosted the festival several times, are clear rules about accountability, transparency, less double-speak, less dog-whistle politics, less patronage and clientelism, and less of the historical fetishism around the arts. Generally a climate of more candour and more openness.

And while I'm out there, like them, I marvel at our small island with its cultural resonance and amazing durability. It looks very beautiful when viewed from the continent – like many of us, I get to bask in the halo effect of being from here and I give thanks to the people who supported me along the way, agencies like the Arts Council and Culture Ireland. But when I come back I feel that slightly oppressive cloak of austerity and the nature of our discussion and the nature of our vocabulary and the nature of our dialogue around cultural policy and I wait to hear that term that I have grown so tired of, which is the bit about how culturally we "punch above our weight" because I think we punch beneath our weight and I would hope today that we engage in a really honest discussion about what is 'the right weight'.

Gerry Godley is Principal & Managing Director of Leeds College of Music, the most plural of the UK's nine conservatoires, offering intensive and specialised learning to 1200 students in jazz, pop, music business, music production, classical music, film music and new music. Prior to his appointment in Leeds, he was director of Improvised Music Company (IMC), a not for profit organisation for jazz and related music, established by Irish jazz musicians and supporters in 1991. Today, it is Ireland's largest specialist music producer and resource organisation with a hands on involvement in many aspects of music making throughout the island from festival programming,

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concert promotion, touring, recording, education and audience development. From 2007-2014, he was Artistic Director of the annual 12 Points! Festival for young European jazz ensembles. He has previously served as secretary of Europe Jazz Network, a 75 member organisation of jazz festivals, venues and national organisations active in 23 European countries. He is a co-founder of Ireland's National Campaign for The Arts, and is also active as a broadcaster, presenting Ireland's only national world music programme, Reels to Ragas on RTE Lyric FM.

Winter 2015, Volume 3

SPECIAL ISSUE: *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland*

Clare Duignan

INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR & BUSINESS ADVISOR

Thank you very much everyone and it's very nice to be here this morning. I am afraid I am about to lower the tone and talk about money and finance. In particular, I want to talk about public funding for the arts and the cuts that everyone has been living with the last couple of years.

In my review of what has changed over the last while, I am looking at change not as a working artist because I am not a working artist, but as somebody who has had a lot of experience with arts organisations over the years, both at board level as a board member working with the management in arts organisations, and specifically as a board member of Business to Arts and of the Dublin International Film Festival. I certainly know at very first-hand the rapid changes in technology, in demographics, in the economy and in government and public policy over the past five to six years, and how these changes have complicated the jobs of arts managers and the boards of arts and cultural organisations – people like all of you in the room today – as never before. The changes have been enormous, not least in the area of public funding for the arts, and I'm pretty certain we will not see a return to the pre-2008 levels of public funding.

It seems to me that how it is NOW is how it is going to be for quite some time to come. This is the new reality and we all need to get used to it. It's going to be even more difficult to make arguments for continued public funding or additional funding or new funding for the arts in the next couple of years.

I was lucky enough to be invited to partake in a think-in as part of the Arts Council's strategic review in the last month or two. It was most interesting, a fascinating mix of people in the room, people bringing very different perspectives to the debate about which issues the Arts Council needs to prioritise in its strategic review.

One of the observations that really stuck me, and struck a chord with others in the room, was one made by a representative from the ESRI. This was the fact that in Ireland at this time, without the intervention of progressive taxation, 50% of the population is at risk of poverty. And even after the impact of progressive taxation is taken into account, the figure still stands at 17%. That is a reality that underpins every decision that is going to be made by Government about public funding over the next number of years, and we all need to accept that. I believe that public funding for the arts is going to be well down the priority list of Government for a while. Not only that, but private funding for the arts has also really suffered over the last number of years, and even at a very basic level, ticket sales for arts events have also fallen significantly over the last number of years.

One of the really frustrating but interesting things that I experienced as Managing Director of RTÉ Radio concerns RTÉ's Performing Groups. The MD of Radio is responsible for the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra – and audience behaviour around ticket sales for their concerts changed a lot from 2008. Audiences didn't fall away

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in the sense that no-one was going to events – it was just that audiences were leaving their decisions about attending concerts until the very last minute. So you could have an event – you're all nodding – you have an event booked with great artists that you knew in 2005/2006 in the Concert Hall, you would have nearly sold two-thirds of the tickets two weeks out from the concert. But now you find that it's the day before the event and you have only a one third of tickets sold. So people are making their decisions very late; they are much more careful about the decisions they make about spending money; and decisions about ticket purchasing for arts and cultural events are getting weighed up in a way that they didn't before – they are no longer seen as a casual spend.

So I think that in recent years, there has been a lot less money about, and what money there is, is now coming with many more strings attached than previously. What this means is that in order to manage and adapt to this changed environment, the whole arts eco-system is being forced to become more business-like, and adopting more of the values and the language and the expectations of the business world. And while some of you may now take a sharp intake of breath, I don't necessarily think that it is a bad thing. I think that arts organisations and cultural organisations need to understand the new reality, and get to grips with it and skill up on it.

What it means for a start is recognising that in terms of making the case for public funding, job creation is going to be a key priority. As with other forms of public funding, the decision-making around public funding for the arts is increasingly factoring in what the return on the investment is going to be, and top of the list of desirable returns is going to be the creation of jobs. So the arts agenda is going to have to address the issue of job creation as part of its advocacy. The days of passively handing out of public funding grants with few if any strings attached – those days are gone! Accountability is now paramount and is a key component of the whole public funding process for the arts:

- What do you want to do with this scarce public money you are asking for? What did you do with the last money you got from the public purse?
- What return was given back to the taxpayer through the community? How many people participated in the event or attended the concert or visited the gallery?
- Did the public funding that we gave attract matching or part-matching private funding?
- Was there outreach into the wider community?
- How are you measuring the excellence of what was created or supported? What impact did it have and how did you measure your impact?

It's not about becoming more businesslike in any kind of crass way. It's about using a language that's appropriate for the arts but that also addresses these challenges of being more accountable in a businesslike way. I also believe that since the economic downturn, more and more arts organisations and cultural bodies, both big and small, are going to have to change their funding model. They will have to move towards a mix of public funding, philanthropic support and commercial/ticket income. With that mix will come the challenge of being more businesslike in approaching the management of and accounting for funding, while still preserving the integrity and the authenticity of the work, of the art. It should be expected, if not demanded, that arts organisations are able to manage their 'business' in a professional and business-like manner, and that they are well-run, well-governed, accountable and transparent. The issues that have arisen in the charity sector over the last number of months are going to have an overflow into other voluntary sectors including the arts. So, if they haven't already, arts organisations need to get their houses of governance in order and make sure that they are showing

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'best practice' as required by the Charities Regulator.

So with all of that change and disruption, and all that change in the language around arts and culture, and the new expectation and measurement going on, how can artists go on creating great art? And how can arts organisations enable the creation of great art from the artists that they support, when the very organisations themselves are struggling to remain sustainable because of the pressures and the disruptions we've just mentioned, and in particular because of the uncertainty around their funding?

I believe that much great art nowadays needs the support of well-run arts organisations, and a well-run organisation has to have some certainty around its funding. With some degree of financial security, an organisation can plan well and can plan better. So arts organisations need to be able to plan further ahead than they currently do which is, at best, around twelve months ahead. Business to Arts has done research in this area and has discovered that a lot of organisations in Ireland are working to a ten-month cycle which is driven by the annual funding cycle of the allocation of public funding. But it is impossible to be ambitious, to aspire, to improve and to grow if you can only plan for a maximum of ten months ahead. An arts organisation can't put in place genuine development programmes, or book renowned incoming artists, or start up outreach and engagement programmes, or plan programming of any real significance if it only has sight of and certainly for the next ten months.

Part of becoming more businesslike and part of finding new sources of funding and part of becoming less dependent on public funding and being freed from some of those shackles has to be about being ambitious and creative and being able to offer exciting, creative original programming to your potential patrons and engagers and stakeholders. So it seems to me that arts organisations are going to have to break out from the shackles of uncertainty around planning, and get into a position where they can put in place powerful, ambitious three- to five-year strategic plans. The only way to do that is if they have certainty of funding over more than ten months. And that means revenue diversification – finding ways to get your money from more than one source.

But the challenge of doing that, of finding new sources of funding from sponsors, from corporate donors and individual benefactors and patrons (as well as public funding, which is always going to be essential), is that arts organisations are going to have to take the first step and change how they do their business. For arts organisations to attract new funders, they have to become the kind of organisation that attracts new funding. It's kind of chicken and egg! And that is why programmes like the Business to Arts *New Stream* capacity programme, delivered by Business to Arts in partnership with the Devos Institute Management at the Kennedy Centre, are so crucial.

Through *New Stream*, Business to Arts has been working with a number of Irish arts organisations across the country, encouraging them to move to become the type of organisation that consistently produces good art and delivers a superior offering to their audiences, and that effectively markets who they are and what they do. *New Stream* teaches Irish arts organisations how to find out who their audiences (both current and potential new audiences) are, to understand what it takes to engage with them, to excite them, attract them and retain them. They learn how to create a 'family' of funders and 'friends' to support the organisation and fund it, and in so doing to transform the financial resource into a more stable income stream, which then goes into delivering a bigger and better programme the following year. This, in turn, attracts new audiences and supporters, who in turn are engaged and encouraged to join the 'family of friends', and to provide funding, which feeds into the programming for the following year and so on and so on...

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It's a different model of funding ... and I think people in Ireland have an innate resistance to it, in that it's an 'American model', and seen as being too dependent on philanthropy and patronage. But if we are asking ourselves what has changed in the last six years, to me this is one of the profound changes – in that we are going to have to move to a different funding model.

I just don't see it being possible to sustain the richness and the vibrancy and the breadth of arts activity and arts organisations which we want, while they are all solely dependent on public funding. So in the future so we are going to have to diversify the sources of funding for the arts. It is a new way of doing business and it is a challenge, and I am sure it is something that will come up later today. But that to me is probably the biggest change in the arts landscape since 2008. Pat also asked me to consider and reflect a little bit on broadcasting and the role of broadcasting in the arts. When I reflected on it, something struck me that I had never considered before, which was this – why are broadcasters so absent from the planning and debate around arts and culture policy in this country?

My former employer RTÉ is a public service broadcaster part-funded by the TV licence fee which, appropriately, gets spent on many activities of public value. RTÉ is probably the biggest patron of the arts in this country. It's certainly the biggest employer of musicians, actors and of writers across very many art forms. For example, RTÉ Lyric FM commissioned over seventy new music works in the last ten years. Who else is commissioning works by composers in this country? Lyric FM has published over twenty CDs by Irish composers and musicians. The RTÉ Performing Groups employ 134 full-time musicians as well as supporting two fantastic voluntary choirs, their administration and the provision of conductors.

Or take *Fair City*, which delivers 208 half-hour episodes of original television drama every year, and on which forty scriptwriters work. Or *Love/Hate*, the opening episode of Season Four attracted 970,000 viewers on RTÉ 1 and the season finale attracted over 1 million. And don't even get me started on RTÉ Radio One and Drama on One, Sunday Miscellany and all the writers and musicians who are used every week on that programme. Yet somehow, that engagement with the arts through those RTÉ services and through what TG4 does with drama and culture and TV3 has done recently in drama – that engagement and patronage from broadcasters somehow gets overlooked, or even forgotten. It's seen as a lesser engagement in the arts, somehow inferior, not recognised or acknowledged as a key part of arts support, funding and consumption in this country. Is it looked down on in some way? The person who watched *Love/Hate* in their living room and who experienced the actors performance and the writing through the script – is that experience somehow seen as inferior to the experience of the person who goes to The Abbey and The Gate?

If you take the thousands of people who listen to the Lyric concert five nights a week on Lyric FM – is that somehow a less valuable experience than that of the 1,200 who are the absolute capacity of the National Concert Hall for a sell-out concert? I think it's very strange, that it's a big elephant in the room that broadcasters are excluded when cultural policy is considered. I would say to the Arts Council and to the Department of Arts & Culture and to academia as well, why are you not seeing Irish broadcasters as key partners in the development of arts strategy in this country? If you want to broaden cultural engagement with particular artforms surely the broadcasters should be in the room as part of that discussion.

If we are talking about the provision of training and career paths for artists in this country, like writers, actors or musicians, surely their experience with broadcasters is going to be a key part of that career path. In fact, the reality is that these artists move back and forth between broadcasting and other platforms all the time. For example there are freelance musicians who could be in a recording studio playing backing music for a Damien Dempsey album one week,

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and the next week they are sitting playing with John O'Connor as part of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra in the National Concert Hall. And there are actors who are on set in TG4's *Ros na Rún* one month, and on stage in *The Project* the next.

Currently, Irish arts policy does not recognise that fluidity. However, I think the time has come to address that issue and particularly now after the announcement yesterday of a debate and consultation on arts and cultural policy. I would say to the Department and to the Minister and to the Arts Council to make sure that the broadcasters, the biggest spenders on arts in the country, are in the room and at the table when that debate starts. I think that these broadcasters would have interesting things to learn and interesting things to contribute.

Finally, I want to leave you with two thoughts. The first concerns the explosion in digital media.

One of the key changes in the arts landscape, even since 2008, has been the availability of spaces online which offer myriad forms of free arts content, places where we can all interact with the content, we can engage with it, we can experience it in our own living rooms, we can curate it for ourselves and contribute to it, and we watch and we add something to it and we in turn become a part of that arts creation. There are now 30-40% more 30-year-olds living in this country than there are either 15-year-olds or 45-year-olds. 45+'s are the biggest consumers of the arts actively in the country. So what implication is it going to have for all of you in this room when our current 30-year-olds who are so digitally savvy and who are experiencing their arts in quite a different way, turn 45? As they move up through the age profile – what impact is it going to have on how they consume the arts? And are arts practitioners thinking enough about it, are they building that into their strategic planning?

And my final observation draws on a different cut on the same set of figures – and it is that, in 1991, one in twenty people living in Ireland were born outside the country and in 2011, one in six people living in Ireland were born outside this country.

Do the arts in Ireland reflect this? No. I don't believe they do at all.

Should they? Yes.

So what are we all going to do about it?

Clare Duignan is an experienced executive and non-executive director, with over twenty-five years of CEO and senior leadership experience spanning broadcasting and communications, strategic development, digital (including social) media and traditional linear media, and organisational change. As a radio and TV producer she created compelling programming. As Director of Programmes, RTÉ Television, and Managing Director RTÉ Radio, she transformed home-produced content, leading her teams to deliver original, competitive programming, winning increased audiences and international recognition. In driving RTÉ Radio's Digital development, she ensured that this great content reached the widest possible audience through delivery across all platforms. Leaving RTÉ in 2013, Clare now works as a consultant and non-executive director. Clare serves on the boards of both public and private organisations and received the Diploma in Company Direction (Dip IoD) in July 2013. She is a board member of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, the Digital Hub Development Agency, Business to Arts, the Dublin International Film Festival and Women for Election. With a lifelong passion for the arts, she has also served as a member of the Arts Council and of the Abbey Theatre Advisory Council. With a strong track record of strategic leadership, Clare brings to her board work a deep understanding of consumer needs and behaviour, marketing, branding and social media, and many years experience in recruitment, leadership and performance management.

Winter 2015, Volume 3

SPECIAL ISSUE: *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland*

Peter Hynes

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL

It's great to be here. A previous speaker spoke about being intimidated by the quality of speakers, well you should stand here as a former County Manager – we've been rebranded since the beginning of the month – it's our first public address as the newly branded 'Chief Executive' of Mayo County Council.

Just before I start, I should explain, my background is as an architect and for those of you who don't know architects, there are two things you should probably bear in mind [...]

Firstly – all architects have a God complex. We know how to do everything better than every-one else and [...] secondly – we have a generous streak: we are very happy to share that knowledge with the rest of humanity at every available opportunity – so just bear that in mind.

I've been asked to talk a little bit about current cultural structures and how they are responding to change, particularly, from a local government perspective. I should say that, when we talk about this back at base, we talk about 'Culture' in the broader sense – culture as being inclusive of not just the arts and the creative arts but also the other things that influence and shape life in a particular place and at a given time. They would include everything from food, fashion and football at the moment before you even get into the area of horse-racing, religion and language and a whole lot of other concerns. Our understanding of culture is in that context and our interaction with our citizens and with our communities is also framed by that context. There is a view that the role of local authorities is to make, shape and bend places and to empower communities. And it is a view to which I, by and large, subscribe. To do that effectively we need trust and we need flexibility.

The changes that local authorities are going through – Clare talked about jobs, investment and enterprise – are extensive and challenging. There are four fundamental changes happening at the moment. Firstly we are moving away from our traditional role as utility providers. You will all be aware of Irish Water and the debate that's going on around that. Local Authorities are still involved as agents in delivering the water service but we are moving out of that space. We are also moving to new organisational structures. Town councils, as you will be aware, have been phased out and are being merged into new municipal districts, which brings changes and challenges to the traditional funding streams, particularly in respect of local arts programmes and local cultural centres. We are moving into the area of community development, and programmes like the LEADER programme will, if current government policy is followed through, be delivered much more closely through local authorities and there are considerable opportunities there. We are also moving into the jobs and enterprise space. County Enterprise Boards have been incorporated into local authorities under the banner of Local Enterprise Units. Many local authorities, including Mayo have also set up dedicated Local Investment and Enterprise Support Units.

That is just background to where we come from in our view on Arts and Culture. The 'making of place' and the 'making of vibrant community' are as much about the arts, creativity and

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Peter Hynes

quality of life as it is about utilities or the metrics of service delivery. Clare talked about accountability and people have talked about silos. We have a huge problem with over-prescription and over-stratification in a vertical sense in this country. No public servant has any issue with accounting for the proper use of public money – what goes in at the top has to come out at the bottom. But when the accounting and the reporting and the structures inhibit the way in which that public money is used then, we as a society do have a problem. We need much more integration and collaboration and we need the flexibility to do that at the coal-face. We think that local authorities are very well placed to be part of delivering a new way of doing business and delivering services.

There are many examples which point to what might happen if we were given the flexibility to be more creative in service delivery. Our current system is very risk averse and while there are rewards for success, there is little tolerance for the failures that are a necessary component of any innovative and creative system.

There are examples of successful integrated and collaborative service delivery, place making and community development out there and I am just going to run through a couple of examples. They come from Mayo, because that is the place that I know but there are many examples from all over the country that would equally illustrate the point.

- **Westport Town** – When you get twenty years of an integrated approach to arts, culture and with supportive thinking integrated into local government in a place like Westport, you end up with a fantastic town. It has taken twenty, if not thirty, years of hard work for Westport to reach its current state.
- **Belmullet Integrated Services Centre** – Where you get an integrated approach between agencies you end up with centres like Áras Inis Gluaire in Belmullet. Here the arts centre, community development centre, library, County Council offices, courts service, Údarás and employment centre all work out of the same place – a beautiful custom-built piece of modern architecture – with enormous synergies and benefits for the local community.

Other key projects which have resulted from an established integrated collaborative approach with strong local authority leadership include:

- **The Great Western Greenway** – The reuse of an old railway line with the approval, for no recompense, of one hundred and forty individual landowners. The greenway has become a framework not just for tourism but for cultural development and artistic expression.
- **Mayo Music Generation** – A collaborative effort between the arts, library service, educational sector and the new Employment Training Board. I would like to acknowledge the work of our Arts Officer Anne McCarthy on this and many other projects, we are very lucky to have someone of her calibre work with us in Mayo.
- **Mayo 5000** – A celebration of 5000 years of rural culture back in 1993. You may not know all of the projects which it sparked such as the North Mayo Sculpture Trail. But you will all know Riverdance, the genesis of which was the Mayo 5000 concert held as part of those Mayo 5000 celebrations. It was the first time that the key players including Jean Butler and Michael Flatley, all appeared together on the same programme and it sparked the idea/project when you ask them.
- **Spirit of Place** – A project which is ongoing at the moment. We are doing an installation Downpatrick Head, a signature discovery point, which is part tourism, part cultural

Contribution

Peter Hynes

expression and part artistic installation. The three aspects working together will reinforce the message on all three fronts.

Just to finish – my parting thought would be, that as we are going through these changes, the public service are given the flexibility and the freedom to develop synergies, to work collaboratively and to have a holistic vision for our places and our communities. In my view Local Authorities are a key part of delivering on this transformation agenda and should be charged with the responsibility to lead and given the flexibility to deliver.

If I could finish with just one last point, it is this, and I think that it is something that we need to do some work on. There is no good reason, in my view, that the Per Cent for Art scheme should not continue to be operated by Irish Water. Irish Water are not a private sector enterprise: they have been given control of a very considerable public resource, several billions of asset which was put there with a lot of local contribution, many hundreds of millions when you add it up. The asset is being transferred and there is absolutely no reason that the Per Cent for Art scheme should not be continued to be operated. In fact I would argue that the scheme should be extended and should be operated by all utility providers as part of a developed national policy on corporate social responsibility.

Peter Hynes was educated at Coláiste Éinde in Galway and studied Architecture at University College Dublin, and the University of Virginia, graduating in 1981. He worked in private practice before joining the Architects Department of Mayo County Council in 1984 and as head of the Department from 1989 he worked on a range of public buildings, urban designs, and arts and community based projects throughout Mayo. In 2001 he became Director of Services and Westport Town Manager where he was responsible for Housing and for the management of Council Services in the Mayo West region which included Belmullet and Westport Electoral Areas and for the Town Council of Westport. He was appointed Mayo County Manager in May 2010 – a role which became Chief Executive in 2014. He has worked consistently to support Enterprise and Investment in a drive to make a county which he describes as “Sustainable, Inclusive, Prosperous and Proud”. He has invested considerable energy in connecting with the extended Mayo global Diaspora and promoting Mayo as a base for Enterprise and Investment.

Winter 2015, Volume 3

SPECIAL ISSUE: *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland*

Alan Counihan

ARTIST

The comments and points I am about to make have been shaped and experienced as a maker of art, neither as a producer of product nor as an entrepreneur, over the past 25 years. Even where critical or questioning I hope that they will be seen as constructive; it is how they are intended. We have been invited to address the fitness of purpose of current cultural structures and their responsiveness to change. I do so in light of personal engagement with cultural structures in recent times – I do not claim that they are representative.

Responding to Emily's invitation, firstly in the context of public art – the art that we have to live with in our public and civic spaces. This is a field in which I have had much experience both nationally and internationally over the years. That experience includes a contribution to the development of the public art guidelines that seem to be frequently flaunted by local authorities and other commissioning bodies in this country. I won't bore you with an overly long history of unfortunate experiences in the field - and they are not confined to Ireland - but three examples might be illustrative.

A selection panel of which I was a member was warned in mid-process by a fellow panellist that selection of a particular work would not sit well with the Borough Council of which he was a member. When that work became the unanimous choice of the panel the commission was indeed withdrawn.

More recently, in a competitive process for which I had been invited to submit, my own design proposal proved the unanimous choice with the selection panel. Within a week I was advised that the local authority would not ratify the selection of my submission, nor award the commission. An FOI search revealed no obvious breach of protocols that might have led to the decision. Clearly unhappy with the result of their own process the Local Authority was prepared to waste €20,000 rather than accept the chosen work. Twelve months ago, using the same funding allocation, that authority sought submissions for a monument to local sporting heroes – a result they must have hoped for in the first instance. It will soon be installed.

Thirdly, last month I was made aware of a brief for a National School – I wish the Minister of Education was still here – that stated a preference for designs which included the construction of a shelter for the pupils and a screen for the school's waste bin.

Guidelines for the commissioning of public art are, as these instances show, clearly ineffective. They should now be replaced by conditions. Selection processes should be overseen by agencies such as Visual Artists Ireland or the National Sculpture Factory. Funding should only be released to a commissioning body upon due diligence reviews of process and protocols. Surely the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Department of the Environment, as legislative bodies, can tackle this situation.

Financial Support and Funding Challenges: For artists whose work takes place outside of commercial gallery contexts, and who prefer to avoid the public commissioning process,

Contribution

Alan Counihan

sourcing support for self-generated projects or events can be a taxing, time-consuming process. This is especially the case if attempted without the assistance of gallerists or curators. Those tugboats that pull our liners out to sea – or is it the other way around?

An example: In 2009 I initiated a creative process titled the *Townlands Project*, an exploration of the rural landscape I inhabit and of the community within which I live; a celebration of place in historical and contemporary contexts. The tools of exploration were to be those of drawing, photography, theatre and poetry while the process of engagement was to be community-based and collaborative. An approach was made to the Heritage Council seeking support but that body, quite understandably given the relative size of its budget, advised that the most appropriate funding source for a work to which art processes were central, was the Arts Council. A bursary application to the Arts Council to develop this work was unsuccessful. A New Work application was also unsuccessful.

Determined for this process to succeed, we went ahead without support. The reaction from the community was so positive that in 2010, the county's Heritage Office, and the Heritage Council, came on board to support the project as did the local Arts Office. Additional support was sourced through the county's LEADER Partnership Programme in 2011 and a Fund-it campaign in 2012. In all, the project entailed three exhibitions (to date), a theatre production, an oral history collection, a short film, a symposium and a major publication.

In 2012 I initiated another work, *Personal Effects: a history of possession*, based on the personal effects of dead or discharged patients from Grangegorman Mental Hospital. Once again support was declined for a bursary to research the archives of the institution and the social context of confinement of those deemed to be mentally ill in Ireland over the past two hundred years. Support for a Project Award to realize the work through installations and exhibitions was also declined. Nonetheless the project has come to fruition from my own resources, through another Fund-it campaign and, at the last moment, from the Health Service Executive. There will soon have been three installations of the work in 2014, a radio documentary with RTÉ is in progress and there will be a publication in 2015 based on the process and its research.

I did inevitably wonder why the Arts Council declined support for these projects? Perhaps mining the heritage of a rural landscape and community was deemed insufficiently contemporary in its process and expression, the subject matter too rural, the audience reach too parochial. Perhaps the exploration of institutional abuse of the mentally ill seemed too dark a subject or its proposed methods too conservative. Perhaps the quality of the applications was considered poor although the feedback from the Council suggested otherwise and, as the fortunate recipient of several large grants over the years, including two from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation in New York, I can effectively present process and practice.

I recount these histories not to air personal grievance but to answer a question asked earlier by Emily our moderator in correspondence prior to this conference: 'Are the aims and philosophical values shared, in your opinion, by working artists and those who fund their work?' Clearly, in my case, they are not shared. That said, the Arts Council working within a severely restricted budget, continues to support much remarkable work and many fine artists. Difficult choices have to be made in each funding round and I am hopeful that none of them are lightly made. Although my own projects have not found favour I have been privileged to participate as an invited artist in many residencies, performances and events that could not have been realized without the Arts Council's aid.

But I want to wrap up with some questions of my own. In a very small country where the network of production has a very tight mesh, is it not inevitable that a circle of familiarity exists

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Alan Counihan

between artists and arts administrators? Furthermore, if they are contemporaries and educated within the same institutions is it not inevitable that certain forms of art and arts practice will be favoured over others? Are the arts and the selective criteria of the Arts Council shaped by the same educative influences? Are these influences and the criteria they might foster self-perpetuating? Is it a policy of the Arts Council to support the work of emerging artists over older, more established or mid-career ones, even if serious artists of all ages consider their practice to be one of continual growth and emergence? Is there an unstated sentiment that the appropriate body to support more mature artists is Aosdána rather than the Arts Council's heavily subscribed funding streams? Is Aosdána itself in need of reform? Would a reduction in its numbers along with the numbers of years during which members can participate render the support more accessible to a wider number of artists? Would not the replacement of the present process of election or selection by existing members render the process and the academy itself less open to the charges of elitism, nepotism and, once again, the golden network? Is funding by the Arts Council for visual arts also measured by the same economic metric as that of its governing department? How is value for money return measured – in economic, in social or in cultural terms? Why is there not a more symbiotic relationship between the Arts Council and the Heritage Council, within the same department? Is today's contemporary art tomorrow's cultural heritage?

Please consider this: What needs to be done? But perhaps, more importantly, what needs to be undone?

Addendum:

Having been invited to make a presentation to the conference in the context of a working artist's engagement with cultural organisations and agencies it is only possible to respond honestly and with any conviction out of personal experience. After some years of unsuccessful applications to the Arts Council it is clear that the aims of my own practice and the values which inform it find no favour with that organisation or, more specifically, with the selection panels of my discipline – comprised of fellow artists and arts professionals – that clearly have preferred tastes for certain types of contemporary practice and practitioners. Given the reduction in funding streams of recent years my experience is hardly uncommon. While I make no claim to represent the opinions of others they have helped to shape the questions I have posed.

A working artist since 1990, much of Counihan's early work was created in the public realm in the USA, U.K. and Ireland. The exploration of places, communities and their histories has always been central to his practice. In works that engage with place, communities and the resonance of human habitation he creates site-specific responses primarily through the medium of sculpture in both public and private spaces, in wilderness or abandoned landscapes. He also maintains a studio-based practice creating works for exhibitions and installations in gallery and non-gallery contexts in Ireland and abroad. In 2009 he initiated The Townlands Project, an exploration of an Irish rural landscape and its habitation through exhibitions, installations, oral histories and film. The project is celebrated in the book Townlands: a habitation (Two Streams Press, 2012). In 2012 he initiated The Personal Effects Project, an exploration of the history of Irish institutional care for the mentally ill based on belongings of dead or discharged patients from the Richmond Asylum/ St Brendan's Hospital, Grangegorman, Dublin. Widely exhibited in 2014, this project's process of social activism and engaged citizenship has now expanded to include the legacy of five other asylums in the south-east of Ireland through the support of a 2015 Artlinks Bursary Award. He has been fortunate to receive several other substantial grants and awards over the years including, twice, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award. A radio documentary of the Personal Effects Project is currently being recorded by RTE for broadcast in September 2015. Alan Counihan website: <http://www.alancounihan.net> and <http://personaleffects.alancounihan.net>.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland*

Mary Carty

ENTREPRENEUR, ARTS CONSULTANT, AUTHOR

Thank you all for having me here today, it's an honour to be here. There are two points I want to talk about that struck me from listening to all the conversations today. The first one is, where do we put cultural products and what are they? The second one is about collaboration. We've talked so much about collaboration today and I have a few ideas around that that I'd like to share.

For those of you who don't know me, I've had a very strange career path, I suppose you could say. My start-out was sculpture in Limerick and then I moved on to arts administration and was Arts Officer for Meath County Council for a few years. One day, I decided to become CEO of a tech company – that was quite a departure. I thought I would never work in the arts again because I got so involved in technology: writing spec sheets and contracts, making sure we got paid and managing multiple international projects.

So now, where we are talking about collaboration and change, we are talking about technology and we're talking about policy. Two things strike me. If we are very cautious about how we describe things and where we put things, our language around us changes. I'll give you an example. If you work in craft, and I have had the pleasure of working with lots of craft companies, craft is very much in the bag of Enterprise Ireland and your local Enterprise Offices. So how do we talk about that, what is the concept around it? The concept is to do with export and job creation. And that's fine.

If you talk about games, for example, and games business, games in Ireland is very much structured along with technology and that's okay. It's not seen as a cultural product. If you look at the development of games and of companies like Brown Bag (which won three Emmy Awards this week for Peter Rabbit) and Boulder Media and many others, they are not really talked about as a cultural product. They are talked about in terms of economics and job creation and enterprise and technology.

On the other hand – if you move to Sweden, Denmark and Norway where I have worked a lot over the last couple of years – cultural products like film, games, animation and transmedia, where you create and disseminate different cultural products using different platforms through real world engagement and technology, they are talked about as cultural products. They come from culture and they are funded as such. And that means the conversations they have with the audience are different, it means that we can have a different kind of conversation based on the fact that games and transmedia and film are cultural.

So you can understand there is a little problem here, because our understanding of cultural products and practices is siloed. If I was writing an application for funding, what would I say I do? Where would I tick the box? Many of the projects that I have worked on over the last couple of years wouldn't fit in any box. Nor should they, because the element of collaboration, problem solving, making things happen, trying something new and, believe me, failing (and failing often) could not happen.

Contribution

Mary Carty

Failure is very hard. Working across disciplines is very difficult. Learning to accept, to listen to and understand where different people are coming from is crucially important. If we are to make this sector more alive, to invite new voices in, to help people along, then we need to be open. We honestly do.

My second question then is, what really is the nature of our collaborations? Are we truly open to what others have to say? Are we honestly inviting people in? Or are we actually keeping them away? Be honest, it's not an easy industry to get into. And I suppose I am looking at this from the outside in and the inside out again now that I am back working with cultural institutions.

It is difficult to listen to others' voices, but it also means that we have to believe in ourselves and in our vision. We also must believe in the vision that others have for the country we want to create. We are the co-creators of what we do. None of this happens on its own. And whenever I think about culture and the arts and creative people – and I like to call people creatives because I believe we all are, inherently – it means extending the invitation, welcoming people in and listening to see what happens. That is how great things get done. And that is how we facilitate change.

So I think we have to ask ourselves the question about collaboration: do we really want to listen to the voices and the discussions and the learning that will come about from these questions. If we keep everything siloed, nothing changes. So, there is fear of change, and that it will be hard to negotiate, but that's okay. In other places and in other institutions like this and other universities everywhere in the world right now, everybody is struggling with this question. And it is those people who are open to taking on new ideas and to have conversations that will help forge a new way and a new path. We won't get it right all the time. We can't. It's difficult but it is also fun and rewarding.

Finally, the last thing I'd like to say... We need everyone. In technology, people argue all the time that we don't have enough programmers. I say we don't have enough of people thinking creatively. If we enable people to think creatively, they will solve whatever problems need to be solved. They will write the right code. And I know, I've paid for enough of it over the years!

We need everyone, we need everyone present, bringing all the skills that they can bring to this table, and others.

We have to be willing to work across disciplines, to work with each other in many different ways. The fact that I, as a sculptor, can end up working in technology is absolutely fine and more and more of this will happen. I believe more problems will be solved by creative people getting together with others from diverse disciplines. That, for me, is the future. Thank you for listening.

Mary Carty is an award winning entrepreneur with a background in the arts, education and technology. Over the past decade, she has founded and managed two successful start-up companies and been nominated for an interactive BAFTA. She has worked extensively with academia, the public and private sector and non-profits as an advisor, programme developer, speaker and lecturer. Mary is the co-founder of Outbox Incubator; the first Incubator for young women in STEM in the world. Outbox was launched in April by HRH Princess Anne in London, in partnership with WISE UK funded by the Salesforce Foundation. An invited "Dragon" at Nordic Game with investors Doug Richard, Ian Brunswick and Paul Heydon; Mary is regularly invited to write and lecture on the intersection of creativity, technology and innovation. In 2009, she was awarded a place on the first Enterprise Ireland, Internet Growth Acceleration Programme (iGap) where she was mentored by Sean Ellis, Dropbox; Oren Michels, Mashery; and Jonathan Dillon, Yahoo. Previous to her career in technology, Mary worked as County Arts Officer at Meath County Council and Arts Officer at the Millennium Court Arts Centre in Portadown, Co. Armagh as well as teaching in formal and non-formal contexts at primary, secondary and adult education.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland*

Conor Newman

CHAIR, IRISH HERITAGE COUNCIL

Thank you very much to the organisers for inviting me to be here. I'm not going to speak from the perspective of the Heritage Council, per se, because this is about cultural policy; it is not about any one particular group of people.

I'm going to divide my talk into three parts. The first part I will describe as tweets – my colleague Pat Collins (beside whom I was sitting) said to me there is no point in trying to summarise, just read the tweets – I don't have a smart phone and I couldn't read the tweets over his shoulder, but people in this room and outside this room were tweeting about the conversation as it went along. So I did the old-fashioned thing and I wrote down a few quotes. So I'm going to start with a couple of quotes. They are in no particular order and I don't necessarily agree with all of them as will become obvious as we go along. The second part is going to be a rant, and it will take up exactly where Sheila [Pratschke] took up as well, which is that there is something seriously wrong with Irish society right now that we need to repair. We need a revolution. And it has to happen. And people in this room and our associates are where it is going to have to happen because it is not happening anywhere else. Then, finally I am going to top it off with some 'asks', as it were, in other words, things that I would like to see featuring either in the policy or in the philosophy of the policy itself.

Let me start with the tweets. As I say, these quotes come in no particular order... 'The right to make art is in tandem with the right of people to have culture'... 'Luck is not policy'... 'Culture is like political catnip' ... 'They [Scottish Dentists] are not cultural people' (as an aside, I don't know what a cultural person is, or that everyone isn't one)... 'An audience of citizens who wants to access culture'. The Minister who was here today wants to create one of those. Which is great; it is good news for us. And I paraphrase the final one because I couldn't write it all down, but it is that notion that somehow or other the creative edge of culture and arts can 'bob around like a flotilla of tugs and brightly painted boats in the wake (or in the slipstream) of the great big established liners'. Well, we all know who populates liners!

So now for the rant. The collapse of the banks and of those who in concert with them in the body politic, ran them, has created a power vacuum that has been filled with conservative, grey-suited bean counters whose neo-liberal agenda is finishing off the job that our delinquent bankers and their political acolytes started. Bureaucracy has replaced not just policy but also imagination, creativity and bravery in public life. We need to stop this. So to those speakers already today who railed against the stranglehold of administrati, I applaud you. Business and culture are not incompatible but to those who have suggested that our collective, that is, the arts, culture and heritage, needs to man-up to the new reality and language of metrics and job creation, output, bums-on-seats, blah blah blah... We've all heard it before. I quote back at you a news report from this morning where the President of the European Science Foundation said that the reason why Irish scientists are not as successful as they should be in ESF funding is because their submissions focussed too much on job creation and not enough on pure science. What in the past would be called alchemy, the joy of experiment and new uncharted

Contribution

Conor Newman

waters, the very things that make art and music and drama and literature and design and so on... magic. Once again we are behind the emerging zeitgeist.

We had a minister here this morning in the room and we missed the opportunity to speak to him directly, to plant a clear and simple message in his receptive head. The message that investment in culture is investment in society. That value is not measurable in pounds, shillings and pence. It's much more precious than that. It is good social policy because culture, the arts, heritage, you name it whatever way you want to, is how and where society self-critiques, self-creates and self-loves. Moribund culture is the sign of a society in a death spiral. Irish society is in a crisis not because the banks have failed but because in our efforts to save the beloved banks we have sacrificed our society and we have sacrificed what one speaker referred to as 'polis'. The years and years of general neglect of social wellbeing by successive governments has made us particularly vulnerable to the economic crisis because the creative sparks that we need to reinvent how we do things are too tiny and too disparate. Those creative sparks derive from the smithies of cultural self-generation. So it is clear that we need to be much more forceful in asserting the vital and the existential importance of heritage, of the arts and of culture. A society without these is not a society – a society that does not hold a mirror up to itself is not a society, it is a club, and an exclusive one at that.

The crisis in the arts, in heritage and in culture is also playing out in the universities, by the way. I work in a university. We feel acutely the stabbing nibs of the bottom-line bureaucrats who've lost sight of what education is for and have replaced the true meaning of education with utilitarianism. It's a kind of grubby, greasy-fingered version of education as a commodity. So the same problem exists here too, and I find myself angered, I have to admit, by the complicit giggles accompanying Aidan Pender's remarks on the existence of 'academic literature' on tourism. Why should that be funny? You know, in this distinctly anti-intellectual society of ours real, dispassionate, expert knowledge is trumped by seat-of-the-pants flying. Poor knowledge is like poor art – it's meaningless. We can no longer afford to allow ourselves to be governed by poor knowledge.

So, here are my 'asks': We need a policy that is about 'polis', in the traditional Ancient Greek sense of the word. We need to grow up as a society and speak openly about the importance of culture and the importance of maintaining culture. Benign neglect as a modus of parenting culture is no longer good enough. It never was. We need a policy that champions culture and that champions the principle of fostering and supporting cultural activity and cultural thinking as essential, routine and normative social governance. We clearly need a policy whose nucleus is trust. Artists of all types need to be left to do what they do. To be the awkward moment. To be the discordant voice, the magicians that shake us all out of cultural complacency and ward off today's tendency not just towards cultural amnesia but also towards cultural ignorance.

The anarchy of cultural creativity is not to be feared, even by the government and the civil service. We need, as the Minister says, a policy that has, as a core value, cultural education, contexted in an envelope of active, engaged, reflective, culturally-astute citizens. Which is to say, a real society, a cogent society. Which is why I button-holed him after he spoke, before he left the room with just one suggestion which I will share with you. Yes, we need a National Cultural Policy, because we need government to step up to that plate. They need to start looking after society. Not just us, not just artists and sculptors and writers and musicians but actually this is for the whole of society. I said to him that the policy will be great but actually a really positive step would be for the government to openly and publically sign up to the Faro Convention (Council of Europe, 2005). The Faro Convention, for those of you not familiar with it, is a convention which preserves and declares the right of the public to participate in culture

Contribution

Conor Newman

and in cultural heritage. That is something we have studiously ignored in the country. Finally, we need a policy that encircles culture in its fullest sense and doesn't try to negotiate any traditional divides between arts, heritage, crafts etc. It's all culture. A policy that recognises that culture is all of these things, and is at its most creative and inspiring when these worlds, when these 'silos', these separate disciplines, collide. Silos and culture are like oil and water, they don't mix because culture is mix. We need a wider definition to allow for what is happening now and what will be happening in the future. In other words, we need to make sure that we let the future happen.

Conor Newman is a senior lecturer in archaeology at the School of Geography and Archaeology, NUI Galway, and acting director of the Centre for Landscape Studies based at the Moore Institute. He directed the Discovery Programme's archaeological survey of Tara and has published extensively on the subject. He was visiting professor of Celtic archaeology at the University of Toronto on three occasions, and in 2011 was awarded the British Academy's John Coles Medal for Landscape Archaeology. He is the chairman of the Heritage Council.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland*

Postscript: Reflections on the Cultural Policy Conference, Belfield, UCD, June 2014

RUARÍ QUINN

Where do we begin, in the second decade of this century? Do we start to look for renewed directions for an Irish cultural policy that fits the contours of Ireland today? The answer must be yes.

It is clear that the State is the main – but not the only – patron of culture and the arts in Ireland today. This we easily take for granted in our modern state, but it wasn't always so, and perhaps we should reflect on that.

In 1897 the Parliament of the Grand Duchy of Finland (then within the Russian Empire) voted Jean Sibelius, the father of Finnish classical music and an icon of Finnish national identity, a life pension at the age of thirty so that he could devote himself to composition and performance. The Free State government also decided to use public money to make a significant cultural statement about Irish national identity when it granted the Abbey Theatre an annual grant in 1925 – making it the first theatre in the world to receive financial support from the state.

Since the foundation of the Irish State, culture and the arts have received both attention and support from the government. From the establishment of the Arts Council by the first inter-party coalition government in 1951 to the recent Arts in Education Charter launched in 2013 by Minister Jimmy Deenihan and myself, successive governments have continued to take an interest in culture as an integral component of our identity and self-expression as a people.

When I was elected to Dublin City Council in June 1974, I was not aware that the Corporation, as it was then known, had a cultural committee, answerable to the monthly city council meetings and responsible for the administration of the public libraries, the Hugh Lane Modern Art Gallery and other related matters as well.

Since his election as President of the Republic in autumn 2011, Michael D. Higgins could be seen as the very embodiment of culture in Ireland. This is similar in a way to the role played by Vaclav Havel as the democratically elected President of the Czech Republic, following the collapse of Soviet communism in Europe.

The 1994 Labour/Fianna Fáil government established the first full cabinet government department with Michael D. as Ireland's first Minister for the Arts, Culture & the Gaeltacht. His legacy and that government's achievements, continued by the Rainbow government up to 1997, saw a dramatic transformation and improvement in the provision for the Arts in all their manifestations.

The economic collapse of the country, which started in 2008/9 and led to the loss of our economic sovereignty with the arrival of the Troika in 2010, has understandably obscured many people's memory of what had been put in place before the crisis, going back to Michael D. and his unique vision, enthusiastically supported by myself and other cabinet colleagues.

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on the Cultural Policy
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June 2014

Ruairí Quinn

We saw the roll-out of a new cultural infrastructure within which the Arts could flourish. The combination of newly built public libraries and arts centres in our growing urban areas is one example. The Museum of Country Life outside Castlebar became the long sought-for home of much of the work of the Folklore Commission in the early decades after independence. The proposed sell-off of Collins Barracks was abandoned and is now a major addition to our national institutions. TG4 and the relaunch of the Irish Film industry through creative tax incentives brought innovation and considerable cultural activity which otherwise would simply not have happened.

There are many other examples to which I could refer. All of them have come from successive Irish governments, ably helped in most cases by supportive and enthusiastic public servants. These observations need to be restated now because the impact of the economic crisis upon cultural funding has been so severe and so recent that too many people are still suffering. It is therefore understandable that people are highly critical of things at present.

There is frustration among some, and anger from others who, while passionate about their role in cultural activity within the country, fail to see or recognise the financial transformation that the collapse and crisis has brought about. In that regard, Clare Duignan's insightful contribution to the conference deserves careful reading.

I share her view that the previous levels of public funding are most unlikely to return. Yet there remains a considerable amount of public funding for a wide variety of cultural resources: the arts, heritage, broadcasting etc. The recovering economy will see some increase in commercial advertising revenue. But the media world is also changing. Online communication and selective access to visual entertainment on other platforms than traditional television will reduce the volume of commercial advertising revenue.

Private philanthropy was identified as an alternative source of financial support for cultural activities. The US is often cited as an example that Ireland could follow, but this is far too naïve, if not highly simplistic. There is a long and extensive culture of philanthropy in the US but it is underpinned by an elaborately supportive taxation system for both individuals and business. The tax incentive donation schemes that I introduced as Minister for Finance (1996) have been severely squeezed and tightened to the point that most of their effectiveness has been blunted.

Any review of funding must include concern for the earnings of artists and performers. Traditionally this has been a poorly-paid sector where the high profile, well-paid performers are the exception. Here again, the role of the public broadcaster is the mainstay of so many of our artists and performers and that should never be ignored.

Interfering with levels of public funding is politically fraught and we have seen so many examples of that in recent times. Public awareness, amplified by the media and radio in particular, distorts perception and also the political room for discretion of any government. Let me give an example: the total cost of funding Special Needs Education in our schools system is the same as it costs to run the Garda Síochána, or is similar to the amount that the State contributes to fund third-level education in Ireland. The competition for public funds is intense, particularly at times of economic difficulty, from which we are slowly emerging at last. That competition is complicated by the compelling and emotional demands from some sectors.

Yet despite this pressing debate about cultural funding for the arts, which was heard clearly at the conference, a lot of money does go directly from Irish citizens into many well placed and well attended events across the country. The challenge facing us now is how we can develop that spending of money into a wider variety of events and type of artistic ideas. If smaller pub-

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lic grants could be distributed to different cultural activities, a wider and artistically curious and experienced public would be prepared to pay to participate.

Most people, in my experience, acquire an appetite for the arts either at home or in school. In many cases it is a combination of both. But the role of our schools, in developing and sustaining an interest in and involvement in the arts, is critical.

The curriculum of the primary school system is creative, interactive and open to exposure and immersion in arts and culture. Until I was Minister for Education and Skills, I did not realise just how creative and arts-rich our primary schools were, even though I have children and grandchildren throughout the system. This is not accidental. Our primary school teachers, who now take a four year degree in education before they are qualified to teach, are well educated specifically in the arts and aspects of culture. This is not the norm in many other European or OECD countries.

The State primary certificate examination was abolished in 1967. While our primary school pupils are frequently tested and continuously assessed by their teachers to measure learning, they no longer face, at twelve years of age, a formal State exam. At post primary level, the picture and the practice is different. The present junior cycle curriculum requires a young student to sit the State Junior Certificate Examination at the end of the year when typically the student would be fifteen years-old. For many schools and parents that low stakes exam is a rehearsal for the Leaving Certificate exam three years later. This is certainly a high stakes situation because the third-level college entry points are based upon the results obtained in the Leaving.

This education examination penetration right through from the Junior Certificate to the Leaving Certificate means that activities that are not measured and tested by the State Examinations are simply not counted as being equally important as the classroom-taught activities. For example, the school show or musical is ignored. Group work of any kind, such as Formula One modelling or competitive debating is excluded.¹ Major educational events such as the Texaco Art Competition or the Young Scientist Exhibition do not feature in the exams and so are left to the enthusiasm of students, teachers and parents. In addition, the whole world of sport is equally ignored.

The educational and cultural impact of this distortion stunts the potential growth and participation in culture and the arts in our post-primary schools. I am confident that the new Junior Cycle Student Awards which will replace the state Junior Certificate Examination will have a positive impact upon the cultural development of our young people. In addition, the proposed changes in the points system by the state examination commission for the Leaving Certificate will create a positive space for culture and the arts in our Post Primary Schools. The implementation of the charter will help to consolidate this development.

Education has the capacity to attract and sustain young people's interest in culture and the arts. This should lead to a lifelong participation as adults. Growing the strength and the depth of a young adult audience for culture and the arts of all kinds is a way of sustaining and increasing support, and thus viability for a wide variety of artistic activities. The reform of the Junior Cycle, recently negotiated by Minister Jan O'Sullivan, is therefore good news for culture and the arts in our post primary schools.

The other good news for cultural developments in our education system is the progress being made in the implementation of the Arts in Education Charter. Prior to its signing in 2013, there had been little or no structured cooperation between the day-to-day operation of the Department of Education and Skills (DES), including its 3200 primary schools and 730 post

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primary schools with their nearly 900,000 pupils and 100,000 teachers, and the national cultural institutions.

Of course there was, and still is, a lot of informal student activity led by enthusiastic school principals, teachers and parents. But all that has been given a real structural framework that will transform the relationship between education, culture and the arts. The November 2014 newsletter of the work of the Charter Implementation Group, chaired by Professor John Coolahan, outlines a wide and impressive array of activities. Their very existence demonstrated the widespread demand for, and active participation across, the country.

Finally, one good example of a philanthropic initiative which now has been embraced by the DES is Music Generation. Launched and funded in part by U2, it will be fully funded by the State by 2016. This is a county based programme and so far it has been rolled out progressively to eleven counties. It is intended to extend to the entire country when completed.

I believe that a culturally informed population, exposed to and participating in all kinds of artistic activity in the schools environment from an early age until they reach young adulthood, is the best foundation for a vibrant and well supported cultural sector in our country.

With more than a million of our people currently involved in full-time education, there exists a real opportunity to establish a cultural environment and potential adult audience that will sustain and develop our world of artistic creation, endeavour and participation. The brave and visionary decision of the State to invest in the Abbey Theatre, less than a hundred years ago, led inexorably to the development of Irish dramatic writing and ultimately towards such cinema classics as *The Field*.

The Ireland of that time was insular, impoverished, isolated and driven by a narrow nationalism. The Catholic Church controlled much of our education and set social and behaviour standards for nearly all our people.

We were not alone. Across Europe, many countries, both big and small, had similar structures, particularly if industry was weak, as in Ireland. Yet that same Ireland, for all of its inconsistencies and prohibitions, nurtured our cultural activities in such a way that we have emerged to the point we are at today. The same constraints were clearly not present when the Irish Republic became the first nation state in the world, to vote by Referendum for Marriage Equality.

Today a very different Ireland faces the future. Ten percent of our population are newcomers. Public Citizenship Welcoming Ceremonies introduced by former Minister for Justice Alan Shatter, are very moving events. Irish citizenship is formally granted to people from all over the world who have lived and worked in this country for many years. Our schools now are multinational communities where as many as thirty different languages are spoken at home by young people born in Ireland. Today just over twenty percent of people living in Ireland were not born on this island. This is a new and potentially rich resource, both economically and culturally.

Finally, the word culture has been central to this debate and even in this essay. For clarity and consistency, I am strongly of the view that we should have a 'Minister for Cultural Affairs', and a 'Department of Cultural Affairs', with no additional words or suggested responsibilities.

In many respects, Michael D. Higgins's five years as Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht (1993-97) did something very similar. In this task he had the help of Colm O'Briain as his programme manager. O'Briain was one of the founders of the Project Arts Centre, before he became director of the Arts Council. The energy and creative dynamism of those five years were lost when Bertie Ahern became Taoiseach. The role of the Department seemed to drift,

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and it became, in my view, a second division player.

France was the first country in the world to have a Department for Cultural Affairs when President Charles de Gaulle appointed Andre Malraux, the internationally renowned French writer, as Minister for Culture in 1958. During Malraux's ten years in office he transformed and reinforced many aspects of the French cultural landscape.

The next government should, I think, reconfigure the existing Department. The Minister, whoever he or she is, should have the title 'Minister for Cultural Affairs'. The Department should be named simply, 'Cultural Affairs'. This wording would implicitly bring together all the existing activities of the existing Department.

I would also seek to have structural agreements with other Departments, such as Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation on the one hand and Agriculture, Food and the Marine on the other, to give just two examples.

The creative arts from an Irish perspective have the potential to be jobs rich and strongly rooted on this island. For example, the one area of industry in the United State of America that will never be relocated to Asia is Hollywood! In the United Kingdom, every major film/ TV production studio is booked up for the next five years. Belfast's Titanic Film/TV studio production facilities are another example we should follow. I hope that the Limerick announcement of a similar new use for the former Dell factory is successful.

The future of agribusiness in Ireland has profound cultural implications for the Irish landscape. Environmental planning expert, Conor Skehan, has suggested that the changes in the European Common Agricultural policy will transform the physical appearance of rural Ireland over time. Our farmers are not only food producers but they are also the nation's gardeners. According to Skehan, north of a line drawn approximately from Clare to Monaghan, modern commercial farming as we know it will disappear. Marginal land in particular, will revert to a more wild and uncultivated landscape.²

A 'Department of Cultural Affairs' in Ireland would have a central role to play across every government department if we want to develop and maintain a sustainable economy and a well-functioning society. This will require each department to engage with the DCA and establish areas of mutual concern and legitimate interest. For example, if the EU changes in agricultural policy have a major impact on the appearance of the Irish landscape, then some assessment of that impact must be shared by both departments. Conservation and preservation principles, which apply to some parts of urban Ireland should or may be applied to large sections of rural Ireland as a result if we want to maintain certain images of rural Ireland.

The other major cultural dynamic which confronts us is the changing nature and composition of the people now living in our State. The conscious migration of so many people from so many other countries into Ireland is a phenomenon that we have never had before. They are making very positive contributions to our society but we must be careful to observe the experiences of other Northern European countries. The previously tolerant cultures of the Netherlands and Denmark have been challenged with some very unpleasant outcomes.

Today, twenty-percent of our population is Irish born but to parents who were born elsewhere. Our schools, both primary and secondary are full of them. In some schools, as many as forty different languages are spoken in the homes of these young students. While this is a potential great economic resource for Ireland, it does pose a range of profound cultural challenges.

'When do the 'non-national' become more Irish than the Irish themselves?' That question alone demands the establishment of a Department of Cultural Affairs.

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Ruairí Quinn, T.D., was appointed Minister for Education and Skills in March 2011 and served until July 2014. He has been a public representative since 1974 and a T.D. representing the people of Dublin South-East since 1977. Ruairí Quinn has broad political experience, having served as a Minister in six different Departments, including as Minister for Finance from 1993-1997. He has also held several positions within the EU. His political memoir, Straight Left - A Journey in Politics, was published in 2005. Before entering public life, Ruairí Quinn was an architect and town planner.

NOTES

1. The F1 in Schools competition was founded fifteen years ago to promote interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects, by encouraging students to use their knowledge to create 1/20th scale Formula One cars.

2. Skehan, Conor (2008, 1 July). *The Future of the Irish Landscape*. Presentation at the Sixth World Archaeological Congress, University College, Dublin (29th June- 4th July, 2008), Ireland.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland*

Conference Programme

The *Mapping an Altered Landscape: Cultural Policy and Management in Ireland* conference took place on Wednesday 25th June 2014, 9-6pm, in the Fitzgerald Debating Chamber, University College, Dublin. The conference was designed as a series of short speaker presentations with significant time allocated for discussion and audience participation. There were 4 plenary sessions during the day that addressed issues of policy, structure and management practices and processes across the cultural field in Ireland, followed by a film screening. See also: www.culturalpolicyconference2014.ie. For further information or any of the transcripts detailed here, please contact: kerry.mccall@iadt.ie or pat.cooke@ucd.ie.

Plenary Session 1: Mapping an altered landscape: accounting for changes in Irish cultural policies and practices through the years of recession

In the first of our 4 plenary sessions, panellists identified key changes that have taken place in policies, structures and management practices across the cultural field since 2008. Which changes have been for the good; which for the bad; and what's been working well?

Ruairi Quinn T.D., Minister For Education And Skills

Gerry Godley, Artistic Director, Improvised Music Company

Aidan Pender, Director, Strategic Development & Secretariat, Fáilte Ireland

Clare Duignan, Independent Director And Business Advisor

Moderator: Mary Wilson, RTÉ

Plenary Session 2: Structural issues: identifying challenges and difficulties

Plenary 2 examines the fitness for purpose of current cultural structures and their responsiveness to change: asking is the full range of cultural expression and production adequately captured by current policies and institutional structures?

Sarah Glennie, Director, Irish Museum Of Modern Art, Deputy Chair, Council Of National Cultural Institutions

Peter Hynes, Chief Executive, Mayo County Council

Christine Sisk, Acting Director, Culture Ireland, Dept Of Arts Heritage And The Gaeltácht

Alan Counihan, Artist

Michelle Carew, Director, National Association For Youth Drama

Moderator: Dr. Emily Mark-FitzGerald, University College Dublin

Plenary Session 3: Process issues: identifying and embracing change

This conversation identifies the ways in which culture is produced and consumed under the processes of rapid economic and technological change. New forms of cultural practice and mediation have emerged that have implications for the way public policies and institutions understand and engage with change.

Trevor White, Director, The Little Museum Of Dublin

Mary Carty, Entrepreneur, Arts Consultant, Author

Gavin Dunne, Music Producer And Songwriter, The Man Behind Miracle Of Sound

Grace Dyas, Founder Of Theatreclub, An Activist, Theatre Director, Writer, Producer

Monika Sapielak, Director, Centre For Creative Practices; Director, Artpolonia: Lab For Intercultural Cooperation & Exchange

Moderator: Andrew Hetherington, Business To Arts

Plenary Session 4: What should be done?

Reflecting on the issues prompted by the preceding plenaries, session 4 panel members endeavour to lead a way forward by identifying what needs to change in policy, practice, structures and thinking.

Mary McCarthy, Director, National Sculpture Factory

Sheila Pratschke, Chair, Arts Council

Conor Newman, Chair, Heritage Council

Willie White, Artistic Director And Chief Executive, Dublin Theatre Festival

Moderator: Sean Rocks, RTÉ

Screening: *Skin in the Game*, dir. Donald Taylor Black. Cinema, Student Centre, UCD
Award winning feature documentary on the recession in Ireland, considered through the work of a number of artists who are using it as subject matter.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Dr. Niamh NicGhabhann, Course Director of the MA Festive Arts Programme in University of Limerick, for her meticulous work in curating the conference contributions and putting shape on the capture of a day full of ideas and stimulating presentations. Thanks also to Susan Kennelly, transcriber, who spent many hours working on the speakers' presentations with Niamh.

We would also like to thank a number of others who helped us in shaping the programme for the conference. For their advice on the design of the conference we would like to thank Michael Starrett and Beatrice Kelly of the Heritage Council of Ireland, Val Ballance and John O'Kane of the Arts Council of Ireland, Sen. Fiach MacConghail of The Abbey Theatre, Stuart McLoughlin, Rowena Neville, and Andrew Hetherington from Business to Arts, Paraic McQuaid and Jenny Haughton of IADT, and from South Dublin County Council, Tony Fegan and Victoria Durrer.

For their assistance in organising and delivering the conference on the day we would like to thank, Jenny Haughton, Dara Lynne Lenihan, Shauna Blanchfield, Jan Schneider and Joe O'Sullivan. Grateful thanks to Donald Taylor Black (IADT) for allowing us to screen *Skin in the Game*, a documentary film on Irish artists & the recession.

Finally, the invaluable support of Dr. Emily Mark-FitzGerald (UCD), and Prof. Peter Robertson (IADT) deserves a special mention. With sincere thanks to you both for your support and guidance in the process of developing and delivering this conference.

Pat Cooke & Kerry McCall
December 2015

