

Press Release 7th May 2014

National Campaign for the Arts challenges Local Authorities to match National Spending on Arts and Culture

The National Campaign for the Arts is today calling on local authorities and candidates to commit to raise the amount spent on the arts and culture to €1 per person per week by 2019, matching that of central government. Currently, on average, local authorities spend 13c per person per week on the arts (compared with 98c spent by central government).

NCFA are encouraging all voters to ask their local candidates to make the arts matter. The decline in local spending on the arts over the last four years is almost double that of the national decline. If this continues it will have a catastrophic impact on local communities. All over the country, the arts have put towns and cities on the map, help people feel proud of who they are and where they are from, and bring proven economic benefits. In schools, the arts promote attendance, accelerate learning and build confidence; in hospitals and healthcare settings, the arts create opportunities for people to be creative, joyful, and strong, and where people are on the margins of society, the arts can help them find their voice, to be empowered, heard and understood.

The National Campaign for the Arts' (NCFA) wants to create a **Republic of Culture**, where the arts and culture can work to reestablish a sense of authentic identity both nationally and for local communities. In places like Galway and Kilkenny, where the entire locality is very much invested in the arts, there is enormous reward in energy, capacity, and international identity. This can and should be a nationwide aim, to help create a functioning, self-critical but also confident society.

This ambitious, change-making agenda, when realised, will animate local communities. It will enable artists to do their work and live with the reasonable expectation of at least some basic and essential funding. Most importantly it is one step, in a series of others that, together, can re-imagine Ireland as a Republic of Culture.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Please contact Jenny Sharif at Kate Bowe PR for more information.
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Available spokespeople for the campaign include:

- Dr Emily Mark-FitzGerald, UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy
- Dr Marian Fitzgibbon, Head of the School of Humanities at Athlone IT.

Statistics

National Arts Spending Trends:

2010 - €57.5m
2011 - €56.6m
2012 - €50.2m
2013 - €52.1m
Decline of 9.4%

Local Arts Spending Trends

2010 - €39.2m
2011 - €29.9m
2012 - €26m
2013 - €29.9m

Note – figures are averaged across Ireland. Arts spending by Local Authorities can range from 2c per person per week to 35c per person per week, depending on the Authority.

Whilst 2013 figures show a slight increase, the overall percentage decline in Local Authority arts spending since 2010 is 19%

About the NCFA

www.ncfa.ie

Established in September 2009 in response to a government public expenditure review known as the McCarthy Report, The National Campaign for the Arts is a volunteer-led, grass roots movement that makes the case for the arts in Ireland. It seeks to ensure that the arts are on local and national government agendas and are recognised as a vital part of contemporary Irish life, and has had considerable success in lobbying to protect funding for and safeguard the infrastructure supporting the arts.

The NCFA has four strategic areas of work. They are: a better evidence base for better policy on the arts; a more meaningful public conversation about the arts; building shared intention across the arts sector; and supporting the mutuality of the arts and education.