



**St John's Theatre & Arts Centre, Listowel, Co Kerry
Curator in Residence
Call Out**

St John's Theatre & Arts Centre with the support of The Arts Council Audience Development Programme invite expressions of interest from Artistic Curators for a residency award at St John's Theatre & Arts Centre, Listowel, Co Kerry.

Curator in Residence Contract

The residency will run for six months, between May and October 2021.

Appointment will be via an application process which will be managed by St John's Theatre and assessed independently.

The Fee will be €12,000 Plus €3,000 towards project work.

The Curator in Residence will work on a freelance basis and will invoice the Venue in two stages, July and September, with a project review after stage one.

Working hours will be agreed with the Artistic Director and may fluctuate depending on project. The first phase will entail networking, research and meeting with relevant personnel and organisations to enable the integration of the curator into the artistic community.

The residency will enable St John's Arts Centre Theatre to nurture a deeper, enriched and socially engaged artistic and cultural practice in Listowel and its surrounding areas.

St John's Theatre now wishes to reimagine and reposition itself as a creative hub for North of the County. The appointed Curator will research and propose approaches that the arts centre would adopt to centre it and increase its connections and relevance to the people of North Kerry. These approaches may take the form of residencies, commissions, community-based development days, artist awards and conversations to bring this engagement to life. The curator in residence programme will, itself, provide time and space for a Curator to research at a grassroots level with a view to generating active creative, engagement, in the town and its hinterland of North Kerry.

We aim to appoint a Curator who has experience of and insights into the challenges of rural areas and accessing people in sparsely populated areas. The appointment will be for an initial period of six months during which s/he will work closely with the Centre Director.

St John's Theatre & Arts Centre

St. John's Theatre Listowel provides an intimate and dynamic creative environment that inspires and engages artists and nurtures audiences. The theatre receives and presents new artistic work across, music, theatre, film, literature, and visual art. We nurture and grow youth, amateur and community art by providing a beautiful space for workshops, rehearsals, and performances. Our aim is to artistically enrich the rural town of Listowel and its surrounding regional community through a spirit of partnership between all stakeholders, from the local to the national. We believe passionately that the arts are for every single person in our community and pride ourselves on a vibrant, dynamic creative environment that inspires and engages artists, nurtures a diverse audience, and is firmly rooted in and dedicated to the life of its community in the North Kerry market town of Listowel and its surrounds.

As 2020 has been as challenging a year for St John's as it has been for everyone in the venue sector. However, it has also been a time for reflection and closer consideration of a reshaped and reimagined future for St John's and its place in the town and county. We are currently preparing a new vision and strategic plan for the centre and we are working to build the capacity of the centre to change as we face an uncertain future.

At present the centre is staffed primarily by its Director who has brought with her a long and successful career at the helm at Listowel Writers' Week. At present the space at St John's Theatre is uniquely associated with performance, theatre, music, dance, and literature events in the main.

We now wish to consider if and how St John's can become a truly contemporary space, adapting its relationship with the public from that, solely, of performing arts space to a space in and out of which we engage with the interests, concerns, challenges, and everyday lives of the people of the town and North Kerry in 2021

We would like, at St John's, to hear and platform the stories and lives of the people of North Kerry in 2021 through the appointment of a curator who may work in a single or multi artforms. We would like to move out of the Centre and reimagine our role as a facilitator or creator of stories be that in film, visual arts or spoken word formats - or through interdisciplinary programming. We would like to engage with the farming and non-farming rural communities of the North Kerry area, we would like to hear from those who are 'new to the Parish' in North Kerry.

We would like to hear how our, now, diverse communities are coping with life here. We would like to know more about, to celebrate and to express the stories and lives of our communities through the lens and voices of artists. We would like to go on our own 2021 voyage of discovery and to push the boundaries of what St John's does and the potential of what it could do.

Description and role

St John's Theatre & Arts Centre is particularly interested in the work of curators who demonstrate a commitment to and interest in rurality, isolation, nature and the environment, afforestation, diversity in rural contexts and the connections and common ground that exist between people regardless of where their location.

This is a challenging time for artists and communities alike. St John's recognises the challenge posed to community engagement at a time of physical distancing, but we are also conscious of the urgent demands and increasing role of the arts in reducing isolation through creative provision and increased engagement.

We would like to play our role in creating opportunities for civic, social and community groups and individuals to grow new ideas and to stay active, engaged and connected and we firmly believe that a curator in residence programme will shape this role with and for us.

We are open to applications from curators of all disciplines and while the space does not house a dedicated gallery the curator could consider alternative and open space as sites in which art in the public realm can be realised in the town and throughout North Kerry.

Key objectives in creating this role for this period are as follows:

- To work with St John's Theatre to reposition it as a centre with relevance and connection beyond Listowel and into its rural hinterland.
- To research possible further dimensions and new perspectives including new approaches to public engagement, in consultation with the Artistic Director.
- To work and participate with the Directors on artistic projects as determined by grant allocations.
- To identify and connect with communities to participate and engage with St John's Theatre through expanded outreach initiatives and organisations and to reach new audiences.
- Highlight the uniqueness of Kerry and of St John's Theatre & Arts Centre and bring an ambitious contemporary approach that will acknowledge the past and now face the reality of contemporary living in the county.
- Research and develop in the tradition of the great local literary voices like John B Keane and Bryan MacMahon and more, the rich seam of contemporary life stories and experiences of the people of North Kerry, we would like to delve into farming lives - new and past, young, and old, those 'new to our parish', their experiences and this ever-changing place.
- Consider our own approach to rurality, isolation, nature and the environment.
- Shape a new curatorial programme for St John's Theatre & Arts Centre that forms part of our three-year strategy 2021-2024.

Eligibility

- Curators based in Ireland.
- Curatorial vision and track record with a knowledge of a range of media
- Demonstrable curatorial experience ideally – not essential, desirable - in an arts facility context with a strong participatory focus.
- Artists whose practice is collaborative or who have a strong interest in developing their collaborative practice.
- Strong working knowledge of the contemporary arts landscape and practice in Ireland and strong network with artists and arts organisations across the Country.
- Proven ability to build relationships with artists, communities, and existing and new audiences.
- Proven project management skills in planning and coordinating projects from curation through to delivery, with relevant experience of promoting and producing events and programmes.
- Knowledge of the artistic landscape in Kerry and outside of large urban centres e.g., access to LCGA, Art Colleges
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to work independently as well as part of a team.

Timeframe

April - advertisement and invitation to present for the position of curator in residence.

May - appointment of curator in residence based on a limited invitation followed by a research phase including meetings with communities and audit of spaces for use in creating and delivering programme - we anticipate that the curator will work all over North Kerry with St John's Theatre as the creative hub for the overall residency.

May-July - research and beginning of pilot projects. Review with Artistic Director after first two months of residency.

August - project work pilot continues, Curator in residence actioning engagement. Also, curator researching with Director, possible avenues of support for commissions and project development with St John's Theatre & Arts Centre.

September - curator pilot project continues working together, public 'moment' for overall project in planning. Second review of Residency and the possibility of its continuance.

October – Residency finish with presentation to the Board of St John's Theatre & Arts Centre.

How to apply and deadlines

Step 1

Expression of interest deadline date: Friday 23rd April 2021

You are invited to submit the following:

- Contact details, name, telephone, email, address.
- A statement which includes a summary of your curatorial arts practice – how you work with other people or communities – and an indication of why you want this Residency, why it interests you why you think your practice fits the purpose of the award and what your artistic goals and ambitions and how your Residency will engage and build audiences.
- A recent biography (up to 500 words)
- A selection of up to five recent projects with images and descriptions. If you have relevant links to videos, please include them.
- Motivation and outline work plan for the residency

** Only eligible applicants will be invited to the next stage of the application process **

Step 2

Presentation week commencing 3rd May 2021.

Applicants do a short presentation on their practice and reasons for applying to the award to a selection panel.

This is an opportunity for our selection panel to hear about your work, why you believe the residency will contribute to the development of and/or consolidate your practice and an opportunity for you to ask questions.

Due to COVID-19 it is anticipated that the presentations will happen via Zoom. If applicants can travel and following public health guidelines, all expenses incurred to attend the presentation day will be covered.

Step 3

Notification of award outcome: Mid-May

All applicants will be notified of the application outcome via email and feedback can be requested.

Step 4

The successful applicant will meet with Artistic Director of St John's Theatre & Arts Centre to discuss how the opportunity can be best tailored to their needs vis a vis space, accessibility, additional support, and logistics in terms of travel, accommodation, and subsistence.

Sending in your application

Completed applications must be sent to St John's Theatre & Arts Centre by either by email to maire@stjohnstheatre.ie or if there are big files please use 'We Transfer' (details below).

How to use WeTransfer

- Go to www.wetransfer.com
- Select 'Take me to Free'
- Enter recipient email address: maire@stjohnstheatre.ie
- Enter your own email address
- Add the file(s) you wish to send
- Add the message – **St John's Theatre & Arts Centre Curator in Resident** and your name.
- Click 'Transfer'
- You will get an email from WeTransfer to confirm the file has been sent and another email when the file is downloaded by St John's Theatre & Arts Centre.
- The upload limit is 2GB.

Any queries regarding the application transfer can be sent to maire@stjohnstheatre.ie

The open call is being advertised through usual arts channels, informal networks.