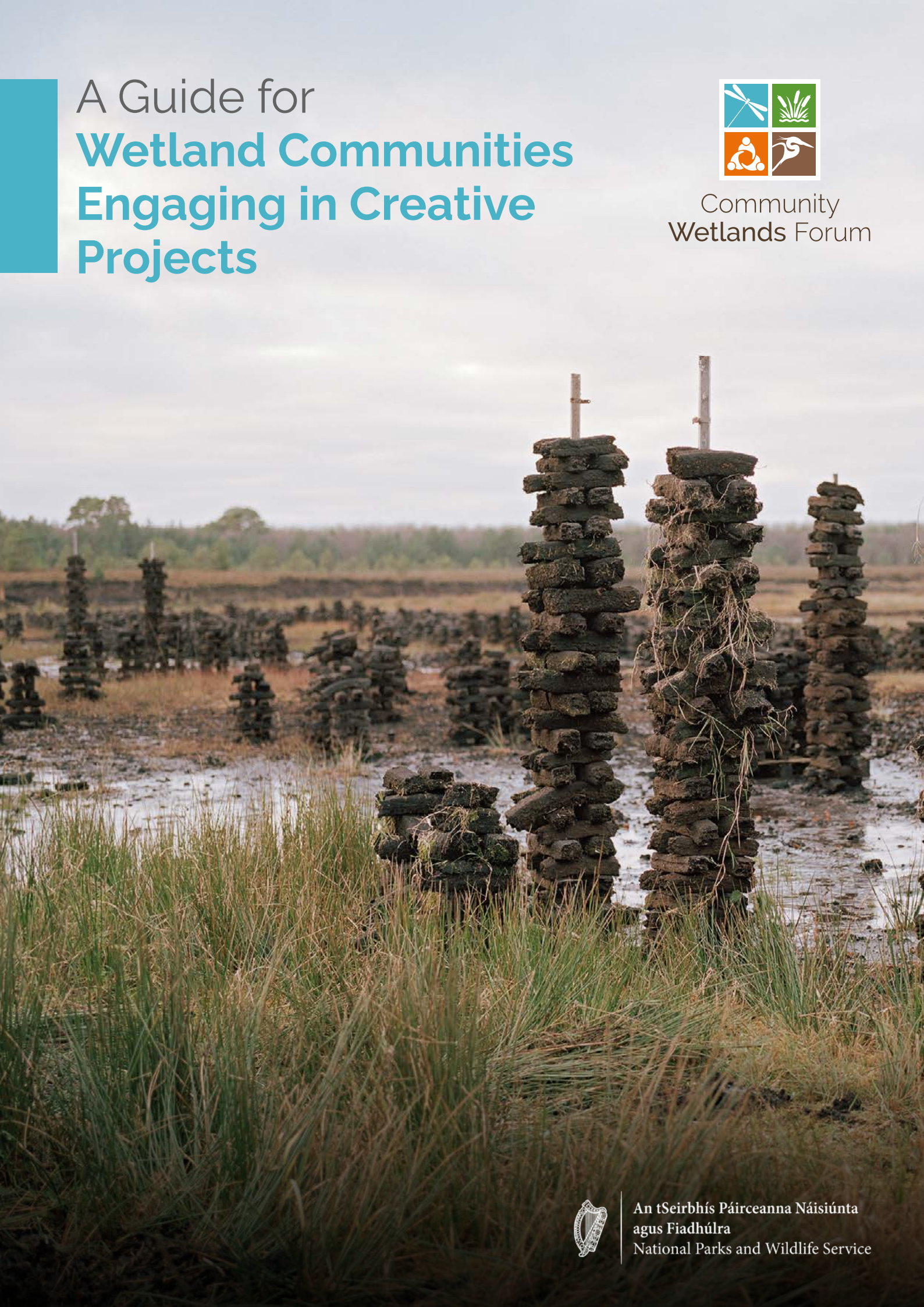
A Guide for **Wetland Communities Engaging in Creative Projects**

Community Wetlands Forum



An tSeirbhís Páirceanna Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife Service

Acknowledgements

Our Wetlands - Creative Community Action for Change is the result of conversations, field experiences and collaborative moments. It belongs to the communities who continue to imagine, protect and celebrate our wetlands through creative collective action.

This guide has been shaped by the collective wisdom, creativity and care of people who work at the intersection of art, ecology and community.

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Cover photograph by Shane Hynan.

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Photograph by Tina Claffey

About Us

The Community Wetlands Forum (CWF) is a member-led network that supports community-based conservation, restoration and sustainable management of Ireland's wetlands.

Our work is rooted in values of participation, inclusion, empowerment and collaboration. We believe that local communities are best placed to care for their surrounding landscapes and that their voices, knowledge and experiences must be central to decisions about wetland protection.

Creative and socially engaged practices, such as the arts, storytelling, heritage and cultural traditions and participatory citizen science, play a vital role in this. These approaches help people connect emotionally and imaginatively with their place, bringing new energy and visibility to local projects. They make space for many voices, build relationships, and can help communities reimagine a shared future for their wetlands.

Why We Made This Guide

Wetland communities sit within some of the most culturally rich and ecologically significant landscapes on this island. These places hold deep layers of memory and today are at the forefront of environmental change, climate policy and evolving identities of rural life.

Wetlands are emotionally and politically charged terrains—sites of climate transition, contested histories, livelihoods, restoration and loss. They are fragile ecosystems as well as living places and work in these environments must consider environmental impact, biodiversity and the cultural significance of the land. Creative projects can help make sense of these complexities, but without care they can also risk oversimplifying or misrepresenting them.

This guide supports communities—particularly those connected to wetland landscapes— collaborate with artists and other creative practitioners and develop work that is thoughtful, nuanced and grounded in local realities.

It offers guiding principles, practical checklists and examples to help communities explore creative approaches to conservation, and to shape projects that are inclusive, reciprocal, and reflect the richness of local identity and the importance of ecological care.

Principles for Creative and Citizen Science Engagement with Communities

These principles serve as a foundation for engaging with wetland communities through creative and citizen science practices. They align with the values of the Community Wetlands Forum (CWF) and draw upon best practices from Safe to Create's Code of Practice for Community Arts; the Arts Council's Public Engagement Strategy and the Social Practice Toolkit.

1. Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit

Engagement should be a two-way exchange, ensuring that both the community and the practitioners benefit. Projects must be co-created, valuing the knowledge and experiences of all participants.

2. Informed Consent and Transparency

Clear communication about project goals, processes and outcomes is essential. Participants should be fully informed and provide consent, understanding how their contributions will be used.

3. Inclusive Participation

Projects should actively create space for a diversity of voices and experiences, ensuring accessibility across age, gender, ability and cultural backgrounds. Creative processes should be designed to welcome a broad range of perspectives, acknowledge differences and tensions where they exist, and build shared ownership of both the process and the outcomes.

4. Respect for Local Knowledge and Voice

Recognise and honour the community's own knowledge, traditions and practices. Creative work should build on these foundations, not overlook, replace or misrepresent them.

5. Equitable Collaboration

Establish clear agreements outlining roles, responsibilities and expectations so that collaboration between communities and artists is ethical, fair and mutually beneficial.

6. Reflective Practice

Ongoing reflection is essential for both practitioners and community participants. Sharing feedback and adapting approaches helps ensure the project meets community needs, encourages meaningful participation and achieves its creative goals.

7. Environmental Stewardship

Engagements must prioritise the health and sustainability of wetland ecosystems, integrating environmental considerations into all aspects of the project.

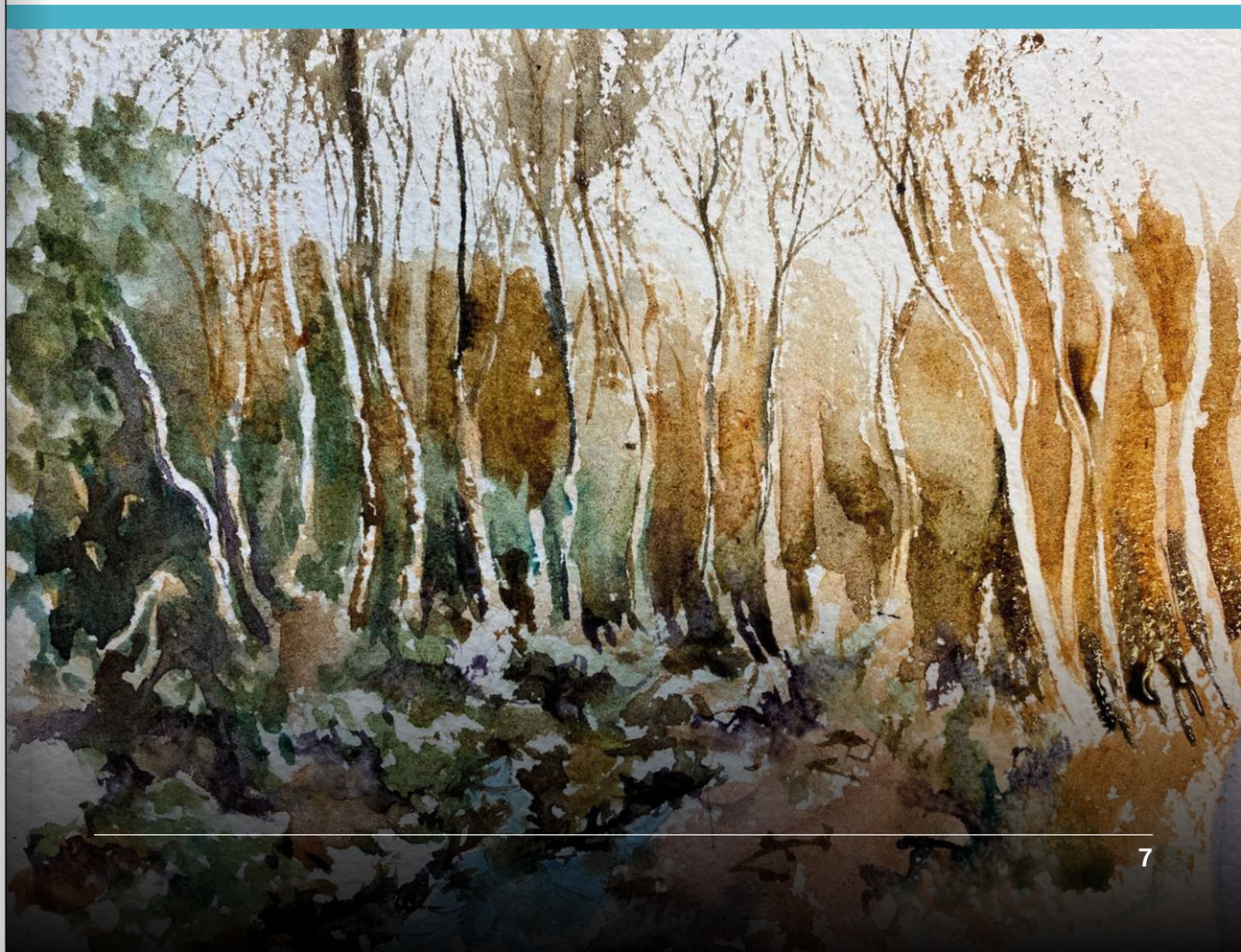
8. Sustainability and Legacy

Projects should seek lasting impact by nurturing ongoing relationships, strengthening community skills, and supporting the continuation of initiatives beyond the initial engagement.

Resources

Social Practice Toolkit
socialpracticetoolkit.com

Artwork by Mairéad Holohan



Checklist for Collaboration

Helping communities to articulate values, expectations and take an active role in shaping creative projects.

1. Reflect and Share Stories

- Host storytelling sessions or community conversations about the place and its meaning.
- Use creative prompts: photos, maps, poems, objects or songs.
- Record these sessions—they capture your community's knowledge and values.

2. Define Shared Objectives

- Ask: What do we want this project to achieve? (e.g. celebrate wetland heritage, connect generations, support biodiversity and land care…)

3. Clarify Values and Principles

- Identify guiding principles:
  - Respect for the land, the more-than-human and the humans who live on it
  - Inclusion of diverse voices
  - Transparency and fairness in decision-making
  - Recognition of local knowledge
  - Leave a legacy that matters

4. Select the Right Practitioner

- Align objectives
  - Choose an artist whose work resonates with your community's values and goals.
- Review experience
  - Look to artists' previous projects to assess their experience and approach (several case-studies are included in this guide).
- Discuss expectations
  - Ensure clarity on the artist's role, deliverables and the collaborative process.

5. Document Agreements

- Create a Memo of Understanding (MOU) or Contract/Agreement including:
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Expectations for artist and community
  - Communication
  - How outcomes will be shared or used

6. Plan Logistics Thoughtfully

- Coordinate schedules
  - Agree on timelines that accommodate both the artist's availability and community events.
- Arrange necessary resources
  - Ensure access to venues, materials and any other resources required for the project.
- Address accessibility needs
  - Consider transportation, accommodations and any special requirements to facilitate participation.

7. Build Reflection and Feedback

- Schedule opportunities to revisit values and expectations.
- Use visual diaries, post-it boards, informal conversations for feedback.
- Be ready to adapt the project if new needs or concerns arise.

8. Document and Reflect

- Capture the process:
  - Keep records through photographs, videos or written accounts to document the project's evolution.
- Ongoing evaluation
  - Assess the project's impact on the community and gather feedback for future initiatives.
- Share learnings
  - Disseminate findings and experiences to inspire and inform other communities considering similar collaborations.
- Consider what happens after the project ends. What's maintained? Community capacity? Legacy?

9. Celebrate and Share Achievements

- Host events
  - Organise exhibitions, performances or gatherings to showcase the project's outcomes.
- Acknowledge contributions
  - Recognise the efforts of all participants and collaborators publicly.



Photograph by Alec Moore

Funding and Budgets for Collaborative Projects

It is essential that a clear and realistic budget is developed for the project as this ensures transparency, supports ethical practice and helps both artists and communities collaborate with confidence.

1. Identify Funding Sources

- Arts funding bodies - Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Creative Ireland, local arts offices.
- Environmental and heritage funds - projects linked to wetlands, conservation or sustainability.
- Community and local development grants - LEADER, local authority or community foundations.
- Private sponsorship or crowdfunding - businesses, local trusts or online fundraising.

2. Align Budgets with Project Goals

- Ensure the budget reflects project ambitions: more ambitious or longer-term projects require realistic funding.
- Consider scaling the project to fit the available resources without compromising quality.

3. Allocate Fair Remuneration

- Pay artists fairly for their time, expertise, and preparation, in line with sector rates.
- Include fees for research, travel, planning, workshops and delivery.
- Consider paying for community participation where appropriate (e.g., workshops with young people or vulnerable participants).

4. Budget for Materials and Resources

- Include costs for art materials, equipment, technology etc.
- Consider environmental impacts and sustainable options for materials.

5. Consider Administration and Logistics

- Venue hire, travel expenses, catering for participants, insurance, risk assessments.
- Project management time for coordinating between artist and community.

6. Plan for Contingencies

- Include a small contingency (5–10%) for unforeseen costs like equipment failure, weather delays or extra sessions.

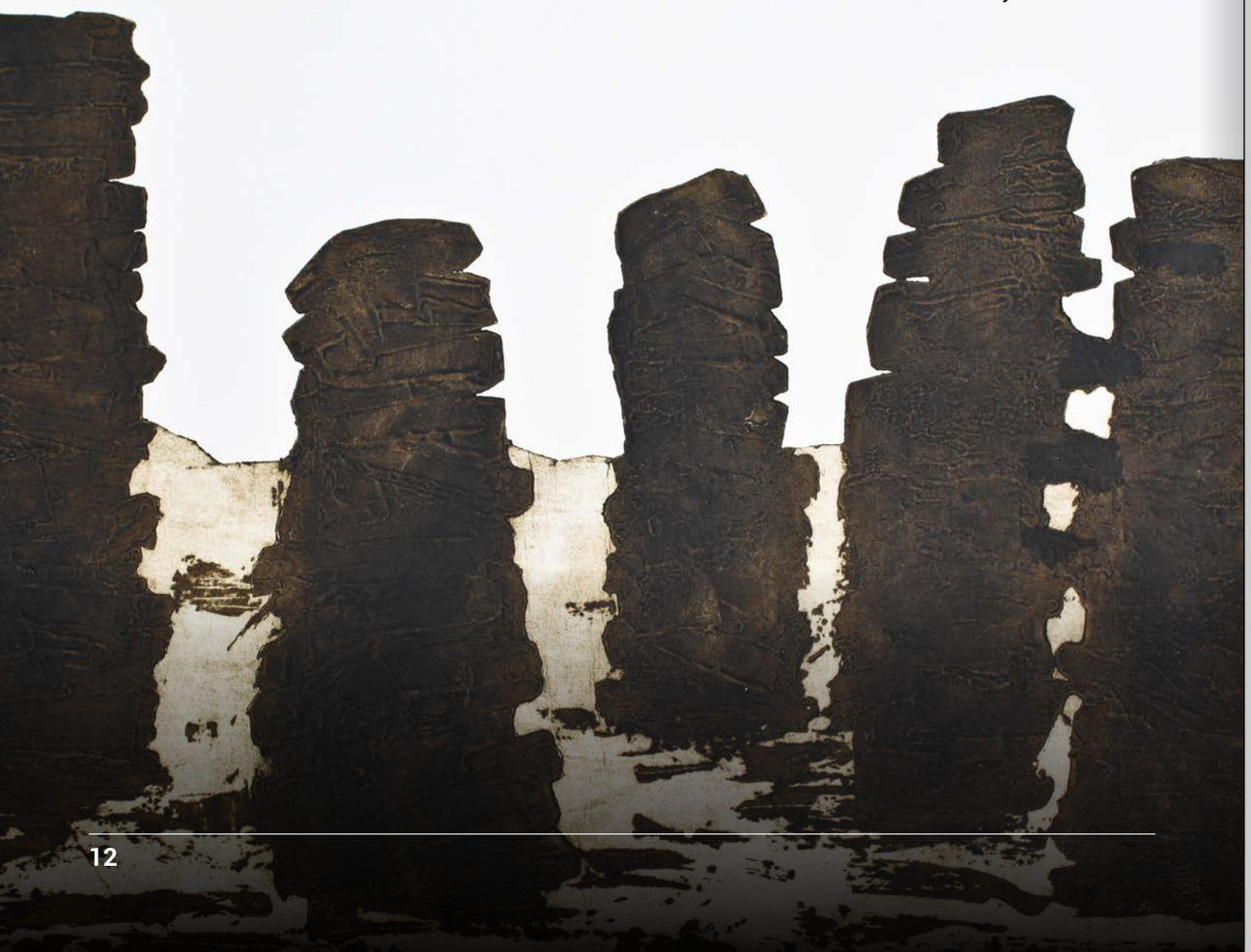
7. Funders' Requirements

- Understand reporting, evaluation and documentation expectations.
- Keep records of all spending and in-kind contributions for accountability.

8. Sustainability and Legacy Costs

- Budget for maintaining or conserving artwork or installations beyond the project.
- Include costs for sharing outcomes: exhibitions, digital documentation, printed materials or community archives.

Artwork by Pamela de Brí



Finding the Right Practitioner to Work with Your Community

Look for experience and sensitivity

Seek out practitioners who have experience working in community or environmental settings. The best partnerships come from those who listen deeply, understand the local context and work in collaboration with communities.

Ask for recommendations

Reach out to local arts centres, community organisations, environmental groups or your local Arts Officer or Climate Action Officer. You might also connect through CWF, Creative Ireland, the Arts Council's Creative Places Programme or local festivals.

Have a conversation

Before inviting someone in, have an open chat. What excites them about the project? How do they approach collaboration? Choose an artist whose work resonates with your community's values and goals.

Discuss expectations

To foster an environment where artists and the community communicate and collaborate effectively, it's important to ensure clarity on the artist's role, deliverables and the collaborative process, and what is fair and achievable within the project budget.

Build in time

Both for selecting the practitioner and for relationship building between the artist and the community e.g., hold early "listening sessions" to share community stories and expectations and to integrate local knowledge.

Why develop an MOU/ Contract Between the Artist and the Community Group

An MOU or contract encourages early conversations about values, ethics, inclusion, consent, decision-making and feasibility. By clearly defining what each party will contribute, it helps avoid misunderstandings by outlining responsibilities from the start and ensures everyone shares a common understanding of the project's goals and methods. It provides a reference point if things change, helping manage expectations and maintaining relationships even when things don't go to plan.

It supports creativity by creating a shared foundation of trust, clarity and respect, allowing the artist and community to take creative risks together with confidence.

What to consider:

1. Project Overview

- Title / Description of the project
- Purpose and goals (what both parties hope to achieve)
- Location(s) where the work will take place
- Key dates (start date, milestones, final delivery/exhibition/performance)

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- Artist's responsibilities (e.g. workshops, creating artwork, documentation)
- Community group's responsibilities (e.g. participant recruitment, venue access, liaison support)
- Decision-making process (who approves artistic decisions, changes, communications)

3. Remuneration and Expenses

- Artist's fee / payment structure
  - Total fee, hourly/daily rate, or commission fee
  - Payment schedule (e.g. 30% on signing, 40% mid-project, 30% on completion)
- Reimbursable expenses
  - Travel, accommodation, materials, insurance, subsistence
- Payment method and timeline (bank transfer, invoicing process, payment terms)

4. Copyright, Intellectual Property and Use of Material

- Ownership of the artwork
  - Does the artist retain copyright?
  - Does the community group own the physical artwork, but not reproduction rights?
- Licensing and usage rights
  - Can the community group photograph/use the work for promotion?
  - Can the artist use images/work for their portfolio, exhibitions or future projects?
- Permissions for using participants' stories, voices, images
  - Consent forms, safeguarding, GDPR compliance

5. Moral Rights and Credit

- Artist must be clearly credited in exhibitions, publications, social media, press releases
- Agreement on how the community will be credited or acknowledged
- Assurance that the artwork won't be altered without the artist's permission (moral rights)

6. Health, Safety and Safeguarding

- Insurance responsibilities (public liability, professional indemnity, employer liability if relevant)
- Risk assessments, access planning, working outdoors (e.g. wetlands), or with vulnerable groups
- Safeguarding procedures (especially with children, older people, people with additional needs)

7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- GDPR compliance: how personal data, photos, recordings will be collected, stored and shared
- Confidentiality clauses where required (e.g. sensitive community histories, personal stories)

8. Materials, Equipment and Space

- Who provides materials, tools, studio or workshop space
- Use of community spaces, opening hours, access to storage
- Maintenance or disposal of materials after project completion

9. Documentation and Evaluation

- Who is responsible for photography, filming, written documentation
- Permissions required for using participants' images
- How project outcomes will be evaluated and reported (to funders, community, artist)

10. Cancellation, Delays and Disputes

- Procedure if either party needs to cancel or withdraw
- What happens in cases of illness, bad weather, funding changes or force majeure
- Process for resolving disputes or disagreements (e.g. mediation, third-party support)

11. Legacy and Future Use

- What happens to the artwork after the project - stored, exhibited, gifted, archived?
- Plans for maintenance or conservation (if artwork is permanent or outdoor)
- Ongoing rights to use or develop the project in future (e.g. follow-up work, touring)

Resources

There is a Guide to Drawing up a Contract for Artists and Arts Projects on the National Youth Council of Ireland's website here:

youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Guide-to-drawing-up-an-Artists-Contract.pdf

Your local authority will have a policy about pay and contracting artists and practitioners, and the Arts Council's Fair Pay-Fair Practice policy can be found here:-

artscouncil.ie/developing-the-arts/resources-and-tookits/fair-pay-fair-practice

Ongoing Evaluation for Creative Projects

Ongoing evaluation helps creative community projects stay responsive, respectful and meaningful. Instead of waiting until the end to review what worked or didn't, continuous reflection allows both artists and communities to adapt as the project unfolds.

1. Start with Shared Goals

- Agree early on what the project hopes to achieve—creatively, socially, environmentally.
- Keep goals clear and simple so they can be checked against throughout.

2. Build in Regular Check-ins

- Short, informal conversations or reflection moments after workshops, meetings or events.
- Ask simple questions:
  - What worked well today?
  - What felt challenging?
  - Is anything missing or unclear?

3. Use Low-Tech Feedback Tools

- Quick written notes, sticky dots on a poster, voice notes, or a group discussion.
- For quieter voices, anonymous comment cards or suggestion boxes can help.

4. Reflect Together (Artist + Community)

- Create space to discuss progress, feelings and emerging questions—not just outputs.
- Encourage honesty and respect—evaluation is about learning, not judgment.

5. Adapt as You Go

- Use feedback to make small changes—pace, location, timing, approach, accessibility.
- Record what changed and why. This shows responsiveness and care.

6. Capture Stories and Moments

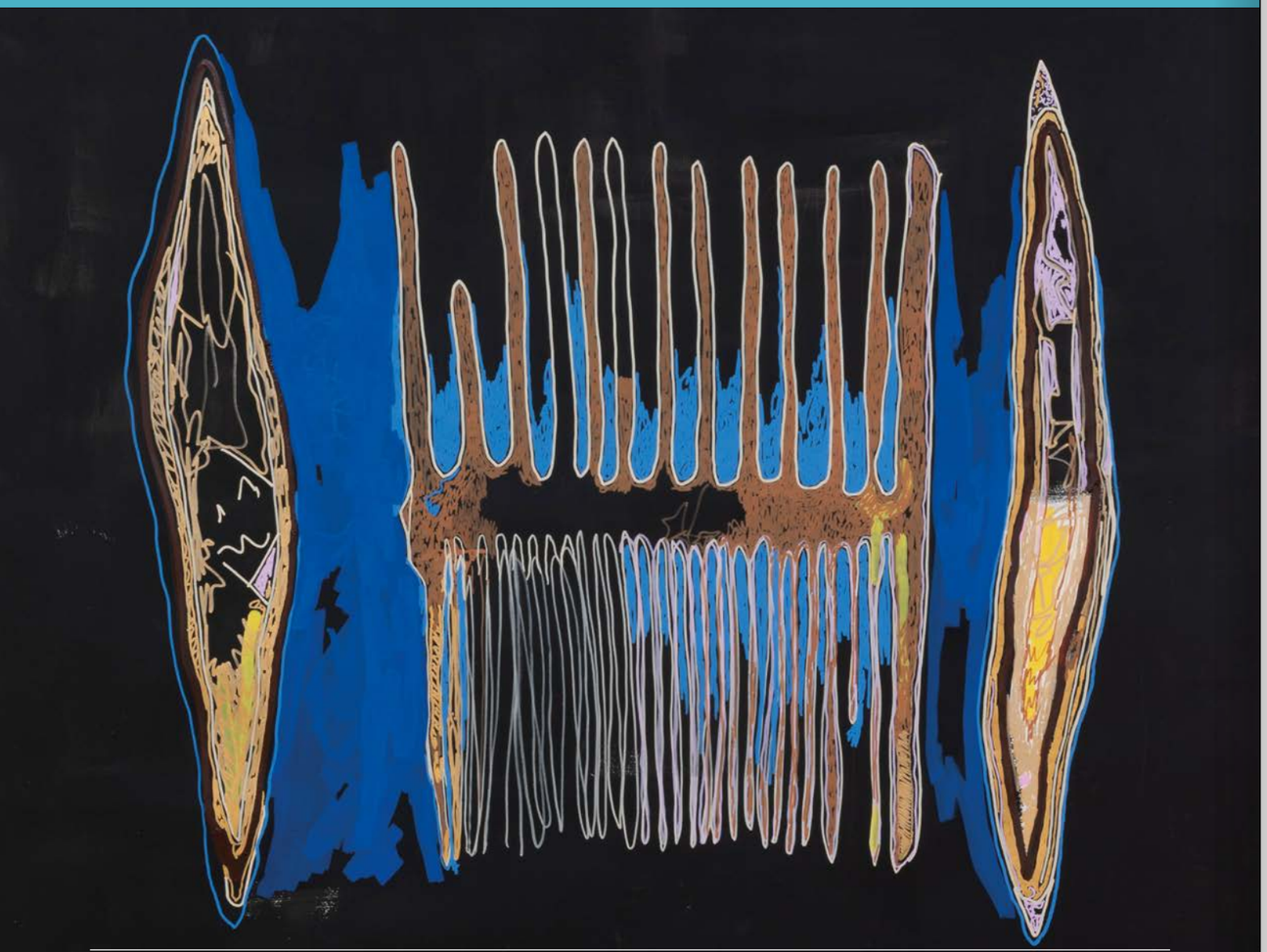
- Keep a simple record: photos, quotes, journal entries, drawings.
- These small fragments often show impact more clearly than formal reports.

7. End with a Shared Reflection

- Gather participants, artist(s) and organisers to reflect:
  - What did we learn?
  - What should continue or change next time?
  - What legacy or next steps do we want?

Taking the time to pause and look back helps your group celebrate what went well, learn from challenges, and plan for the future. It can also be useful when talking to funders, sharing your story with others, or preparing for the next phase of work.

Artwork by Laura Fitzgerald



Case Study

The Bog Café

A festival by and for the people of Ardee Bog, County Louth, involving Friends of Ardee Bog, schools, artists, local families and nature experts.

What Was It?

The Bog Café was a three-day mini-festival for all ages. It celebrated Ardee Bog through music, stories, art and learning. People gathered in a handmade 'Turf House' to share their love for the bog and learn how to care for it together.

What Happened?

- Local schoolchildren created drawings of their 'Dream Bog'
- Workshops included bog plant tea, mask making, sculpture and storytelling
- Guided walks helped people learn about the plants, animals and importance of the wetlands
- Live music and art made it feel like a real celebration of place

Why It Worked

- It was led by local people who know and care about the wetland
- Activities were hands-on, creative, and welcoming
- The festival was rooted in local history and nature
- It brought together schools, artists and neighbours

What We Learned

- Doing things together is powerful – it builds pride and connection
- You don't need big budgets to make a big impact
- Celebrating nature through art and stories helps people care for it even more

Case Study

Gnáthóga Nádúrtha - Natural Habitats

A cross-county initiative led by Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford Arts Offices and supported by the Arts Council's Invitation to Collaboration Scheme, the project explores the relationship between people and place through creative engagement with the natural environments of the southeast.

What Is It?

Gnáthóga Nádúrtha - Natural Habitats is a unique partnership between local authorities, artists and community members to work towards climate action. Key partners include the Drummin Bog Committee (Carlow), Girley Bog Meitheal (Meath), and Creative Rathangan Meitheal (Kildare), alongside artists Jules Michael, Monica de Bath and Kate Flood.

At the heart of *Gnáthóga Nádúrtha* is a commitment to community and ecology. The project offers time and space for people to reimagine familiar landscapes—not only as picturesque places, but as living, interdependent ecosystems. Artists work through listening and co-creation rather than imposing pre-formed ideas. Dialogue, shared authorship and respect for local knowledge guide the process. The project demonstrates how creativity can deepen environmental awareness and nurture a culture of care between people and place.

Why It Works

The project foregrounds the importance of inclusive, creative-led, ecological art practices to foster community conversations. Onsite activities inspire awareness and care for important natural heritage sites and foster a deeper understanding of inclusive environmental and social sustainability aims for climate and biodiversity action.

The project exemplifies the values of the Community Wetlands Forum:

- **Reciprocity:** Artists and communities benefit equally from the exchange
- **Informed Consent:** Engagement is transparent with clear communication
- **Listening First:** Local voices and ecological knowledge guide the work
- **Inclusion**: A wide range of people welcomed into the process
- **Respect for Land:** Natural habitats are treated as living entities, not blank canvases
- **Ethical Practice:** Artists work with care, reflection and accountability
- **Legacy:** The project strengthens relationships and inspires ongoing action

Case Study

The KinShip Project

A long-term public art initiative located at Tramore Valley Park in Cork City, initiated by artist collaboration Marilyn Lennon and Sean Taylor (as LennonTaylor) in partnership with Cork City Council and now led by The Council of Communities.

What Is It?

Tramore Valley Park in Cork, a reclaimed former landfill site, is home to the ongoing *KinShip* art project which offers artists and interested communities an opportunity to gather together to respond creatively and critically to the ecological and climate action challenges we face today.

The KinShip Project exemplifies how art can serve as a catalyst for environmental awareness and community engagement. By reimagining our relationship with nature and fostering a sense of kinship with the environment, the project encourages sustainable practices and collective responsibility for ecological well-being.

It embodies:

- **Reciprocity:** mutual benefit and knowledge exchange
- **Co-authorship:** community shaping the direction
- **Legacy:** a model that lives on and grows beyond the initiating artists
- **Shared ownership:** of space and ideas

Why It works

Durational Commitment: KinShip isn't a one-off event or short-term project. It spans multiple years, with the latest phase in year four, actively shifting leadership into community hands. This long-term investment builds trust, continuity, and deep-rooted relationships - essential foundations for lasting legacy.

Structured Transition to Community Ownership: The establishment of the **Council of Communities** in 2025 marks a deliberate and well-supported shift in agency. It moves the KinShip Project from an artist-led concept (LennonTaylor) to a model where the community itself becomes the creative force—shaping the project's vision, practices and impact. This is legacy not just as an outcome, but as a living infrastructure and process, ensuring the work can continue, evolve and remain meaningful in community hands.

Embedded Governance: community involvement in arts projects is often limited to participation or consultation. In contrast, KinShip embeds community governance into the project. The Council is not

symbolic; it is the leadership body for the next phase. This shift cements long term sustainability and creative independence.

Inclusive, Flexible Structure: By framing the Council as 'flexible and inclusive', KinShip creates space for new communities to enter and existing ones to evolve their role - allowing the project to stay open and relevant.

Social Practice Principles in Action: The Council of Communities reflects the best of socially engaged art practice, as outlined in frameworks like the Social Practice Toolkit.

The Artistic Process Continues: Importantly, KinShip's legacy is not a handover that ends artistic engagement, it sustains the creative process, now owned and adapted by the community. That's the ideal outcome for any socially engaged artwork.

Photograph by Annie Holland



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Shane Hynan

Shane Hynan is a visual artist whose practice is rooted in photography, while also incorporating experimental elements of sound, video, collage, and sculpture. He holds an MFA in Photography from Ulster University (2019). Hynan's work explores themes of place, land, and architecture, drawing on conceptual, performative, and subjective documentary approaches.

He has exhibited widely both in Ireland and internationally, and has received multiple awards from the Arts Council of Ireland, Creative Ireland, and Kildare Arts. In 2025, he was shortlisted for the AIB Portrait Prize at the National Gallery of Ireland and was selected for the FUTURES Photography platform. The same year, he received the Sidney Nolan Trust Residency and the PhotoWorks Digital Residency Awards as part of Earth Photo 2025 at the Royal Geographical Society, London.

In 2024, Hynan undertook residencies at the Centre Culturel Irlandais (Paris) and Roscommon Arts Centre. He was also awarded a Visual Arts Bursary and a Project Award from the Arts Council of Ireland in recognition of his continued contribution to contemporary visual practice.

shanehynan.ie

Shane's ongoing project, *Beneath Beofhód* (2018–present), investigates the cultural and ecological significance of the Irish midlands' boglands, particularly in relation to shifting perceptions, uses and values of peatlands. Selected works were shown recently in the RHA 'BogSkin' exhibition and the complete body of work will premiere at Photo Museum Ireland (Dublin) in May 2026.

He is also a member of the *Tóch | Dig* collective, a phased, collaborative initiative with artists Sheena Malone and Pamela de Brí. The project engages communities of place and interest connected to bogs in County Kildare, addressing the impact of climate change on these communities across time. This work was born out of the overlooked and unheard voices he encountered while making his 'Beneath | Beofhód' project.

He is also an active member of the Community Wetlands Forum and the Secretary of Carbury / Knockirr Bog Trust which owns and manages the local bog on behalf of the community.



'Tony's Footings', Carbury, Kildare from 'Beneath/ Beofhód series (2028-2025)' by Shane Hynan



Tina Claffey

Tina Claffey is an award-winning Irish nature photographer and acclaimed author, known for her stunning imagery capturing the hidden beauty of Ireland's bogs, wetlands, and eskers. Her work provides a rare, intimate glimpse into these ancient landscapes, celebrating their rich biodiversity and often-overlooked magic. In 2017, she published her first book, *Tapestry of Light – Ireland's Bogs & Wetlands as Never Seen Before*, which received high praise for its evocative and immersive portrayal of the natural world.

Building on this success, Claffey released her second book in 2022, *Portal – Otherworldly Wonders of Ireland's Bogs, Wetlands and Eskers*. This collection deepened her exploration, highlighting the surreal and enchanting qualities of these environments. Through her photography and writing, Claffey continues to inspire a deeper appreciation for Ireland's wild landscapes and the delicate ecosystems they support, positioning her as a leading voice in environmental art and conservation.

tinaclaffey.com

Tina Claffey specialises in macro and extreme close-up photography of the natural world, with a particular fascination for the flora and fauna of the raised bogs and wet woodlands of the Irish midlands. Her unique approach allows her to reveal the extraordinary details of these ancient ecosystems—capturing the textures, colours, and life forms that are often overlooked. Through the lens of her camera, Tina unveils a hidden world on the living, breathing carpet of the bog, drawing attention to its complexity and beauty.

Her distinctive photographic style has earned widespread acclaim both in Ireland and internationally. Tina has shared her work on prestigious global platforms, including the Wildlife Habitat Council Online Conference in the United States and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26). In these forums, she has used her images to passionately advocate for the protection of Ireland's bog wilderness highlighting its ecological importance and its critical role in climate change mitigation.

Tina's photography is more than visual art—it is a powerful form of environmental storytelling. Each image invites the viewer into a world of wonder, encouraging a deeper connection to nature and a greater awareness of the need to preserve it. Her work bridges the divide between art and environmental advocacy, offering a compelling visual testament to the fragile beauty of Ireland's natural heritage.



"The Peatlands Immersive Experience", Installation by Tina Claffey



Fionnuala McKenna

Fionnuala McKenna's engagement with boglands stems from formative childhood experiences in the richly diverse wetlands of County Leitrim. These early encounters cultivated a lasting appreciation for the ecological, cultural, and spiritual significance of Ireland's peatlands.

Later, during her time in County Mayo, the expansive Nephin Range - spanning over 15,000 hectares of uninhabited wilderness - became a profound source of inspiration. This landscape offered a space for curiosity, reflection, and research into the complex nature of bogs and their essential role within both environmental and cultural consciousness.

McKenna's artistic practice centres on the relationship between the body and the landscape, exploring the political, physical, philosophical, and spiritual ties that connect humans with the natural world. Now based in County Tipperary, she lives in Cloughjordan near the Scohaboy Bog Natural Heritage Area.

As a socially engaged artist, she collaborates with local communities on creative initiatives that foster a deeper awareness and appreciation of place.

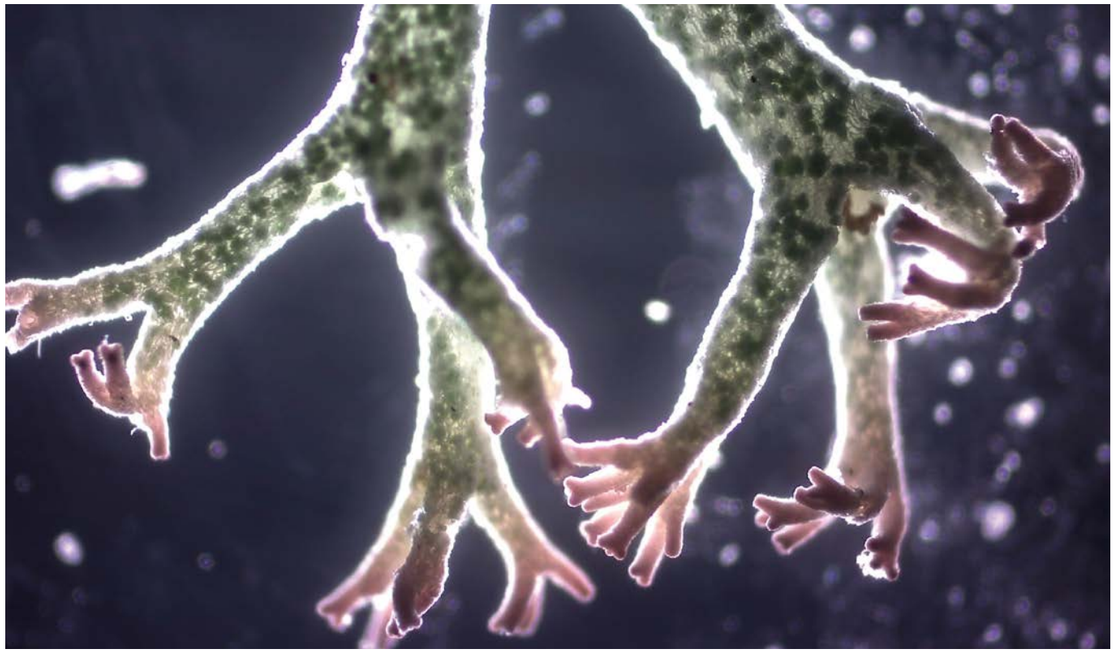
fionnualamckennaar.wixsite.com/fionnualamckenna-ar

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Now based in County Tipperary, she lives in Cloughjordan near the Scohaboy Bog Natural Heritage Area. As a socially engaged artist, she collaborates with local communities on creative initiatives that foster a deeper awareness and appreciation of place.

In 2023, McKenna partnered with the Cloughjordan Community Development Association (CCDA) on a project centred on Scohaboy Bog, supported by the Peatlands & Natura Community Engagement Scheme. Acting as both curator and artist, she organised a series of public talks featuring environmental experts and facilitated art workshops in local schools. These workshops encouraged students to develop visual narratives around human relationships with bogs, culminating in sculptural works depicting species commonly found within these fragile ecosystems.

Within her professional practice, McKenna created a multi-sensory installation combining microscopic studies of *Sphagnum moss* with a soundscape composed from hydrophone recordings beneath the bog's surface. This immersive work invites audiences to attune to the hidden life and rhythms of the bog, highlighting its vital role as a living organism - the "breathing lungs" of our planet.



Micro image of a "Bog Specimen", by Fionnuala McKenna



Annie Holland

Annie Holland is a multimedia artist based in County Laois with over 25 years of experience working at the intersection of art, community and storytelling. Her recent work focuses on environmental arts, particularly the celebration and conservation of Ireland's peatlands. Known for her inclusive, participatory approach, Annie engages communities through dialogue, active listening and collaborative creative processes.

Annie holds an M.A. in Visual Art from the University of Wales and she has exhibited widely on both national and international platforms.

Her recent film, '*25 Years On… Abbeyleix Bog*' (2025), created in partnership with the Abbeyleix Bog Project, commemorates the 25th anniversary of the local community's successful campaign to save the bog from peat extraction by Bord na Móna. The work stands as a powerful example of grassroots environmental action and community resilience.

In 2024, Holland received the Arts Council's CREATE Award for *A Forgotten Generation*, an exhibition exploring 100 years of rural life in County Laois through the history of personal artefacts and traditional farming tools.

Through her multimedia work, she continues to champion community voice, environmental stewardship and the preservation of Ireland's rural and peatland heritage.

anniehollandart.com

Annie Holland's practice is rooted in storytelling—environmental, social, and intergenerational. Her multimedia work often combines photography, film, drawing and audio with participatory art processes to create spaces for reflection, dialogue and creative connection. Whether documenting rural childhoods or the evolution of Ireland's bog landscapes, her work celebrates community memory while inspiring ecological awareness.

In 2024, Annie's project '*Peatland People*' documented the inspiring work of volunteers across the Midlands, capturing the human spirit behind peatland conservation efforts. So moved by their dedication, she went on to become a member of the Community Wetlands Forum herself. Annie places a strong emphasis on recording and sharing the voices of older generations, creating visual archives that preserve Ireland's rural and environmental heritage.

In 2025, she collaborated with Tóchar and a number of Midlands schools on bog-themed art projects, deepening young people's connection to local heritage through creative exploration. This inspired her upcoming multidisciplinary project '*Roots and Reeds*' - an ambitious, intergenerational initiative that brings together schoolchildren, middle-aged residents and older community members. Centred on Abbeyleix Bog, it combines creative arts, field-based learning, oral history and environmental education. The project will offer a dynamic platform for shared cultural memory and ecological custodianship. Through her work, Annie aims to foster pride in place, deeper intergenerational bonds and a long-term legacy of creative and environmental engagement.



Tommy Cunningham and his hand-made bog carts, by Annie Holland



Laura Fitzgerald

Laura Fitzgerald is a multidisciplinary artist working across video, drawing, painting, text and sculpture.

In 2025, she contributed a significant body of work to *BogSkin*, a landmark group exhibition at the RHA Gallery, Dublin. Curated by RHA Director Patrick T. Murphy, the exhibition explored the evolving relationship between contemporary art and Ireland's boglands over the past 50 years.

Laura's contribution responded to the bog as both physical site and metaphorical space, using her characteristically sharp wit and layered visual language to reflect on themes of identity, environment and land use.

Her work often draws on autobiography and absurdist humour, creating space for reflection on the personal and political dimensions of landscape. In *BogSkin*, she extended these concerns to consider the cultural and ecological resonance of the Irish bog, positioning it as a site of memory, mythology and environmental urgency. Her work continues to push the boundaries of how landscape is experienced and represented.

laurafitzgerald.ie

Laura Fitzgerald's art is both deeply personal and playfully expansive, rooted in the rural landscapes of Ireland while reaching toward a broader, international dialogue. Her work is steeped in wit, vulnerability and a kind of disarming honesty. Drawing inspiration from artists like David Shrigley—whose practice spans from major institutional shows to greeting card racks - Fitzgerald is equally at home contemplating a large-scale drawing as she is designing a card.

Fitzgerald's practice is conversational and inclusive. She invites viewers in like a gentle but eccentric doctor: "Tell me what's wrong with you and I'll write you a prescription," she suggests - though she can't promise it will help. If you're sad, she might offer you a ridiculous anecdote instead. Laughter is therapy too.

Her large-scale drawings act as satirical medicine for complex ailments: land disputes, inherited trauma, and the invisible weight of history.

In '*The Paps (As pointed out by Nevan Lahart)*', Fitzgerald turns her attention to the Paps of Anu in County Kerry. This artwork depicts a pair of breast-shaped mountains named after Anu, principal Goddess of pre-Christian Ireland and mother Goddess of the Tuatha De Danann, a legendary group of divine invaders. The Paps are believed to host neolithic chambers inside two cairns, which are situated atop each peak; thereby offering not just visual beauty, but an excavation of cultural and personal meaning.



'The Paps (As pointed out by Nevan Lahart)', Stormshield paint, oil paint, paint marker on paper, by Laura Fitzgerald



Jules Michael

Jules Michael is a visual artist based near Borris, County Carlow, whose practice spans painting, drawing, photography, printmaking and creative community collaboration. Her work centres on themes of peatland conservation, hedgerows, wild plants and the power of community conversation.

Living beside Drummin Bog—County Carlow's only raised bog and the last remaining in the South East - Jules creates micro-actions within nearby communities to spark dialogue and connection. She is currently rehabilitating the three-acre field she lives on, restoring it to native pasture.

In her community collaborations, Jules explores the idea of "old stories, new stories," using small, participatory actions to build relationships between people and place. She views peatlands as deeply interconnected with their surrounding hinterlands and integrates local food traditions, bog plants, hedgerow lore and dairy practices into her performative, site-responsive work. Whether it's tea on the bog or a springboard event linking scientists with locals, her aim is to support shared stewardship of these unique, wild landscapes.

julesmichael.com

Jules's paintings emerge directly from her deep engagement with peatlands, particularly through her community collaborations. Her creative process is rooted in walking the bog, taking photographs, making sketches and colour notations on site.

This embodied experience allows her to integrate elements of the landscape into her studio work, creating a circular relationship between fieldwork and painting. The resulting artworks are grounded in the living world and reflect the dynamic interplay between place, community and artistic practice.

Recent projects include *Gnáthóga Nádúrtha – Natural Habitats* (2021– 2025), a Creative Ireland and Arts Council-funded collaboration between artists Jules, Monica de Bath and Kate Flood across three peatland sites and county arts offices. This project included deep mapping with Dr. Anita

McKeown and ecoliteracy training with Dr. Cathy Fitzgerald and was presented at Earth Rising, IMMA (2024). Her current project, *The Lizard Mat* (Creative Ireland, 2025), explores bog-related customs through research in the Museum of Country Life.



Out on the Drummin Bog with Jules Michael



Kate Flood

Kate Flood is a researcher and socially engaged artist with a focus on participatory methods and collaborative practice.

For over ten years, she has worked with communities to highlight the ecological and cultural value of Ireland's peatlands, emphasising the critical role of both people and place in their conservation and restoration.

She is a longstanding member and volunteer with the Community Wetlands Forum and regularly facilitates immersive community events at Girley Bog, Co. Meath and other bog sites.

Kate studied Photography and Film at undergraduate and postgraduate level, beginning her creative engagement with Girley Bog in 2009.

Her photographic walks helped her slow down and record the unique biodiversity of the landscape. She has exhibited work at the Solstice Arts Centre, Mhuine Bheag Arts, Drogheda Zine Festival, Kells Type Trail and at Earth Rising 2024 (IMMA) with the *Gnáthóga Nádúrtha* project.

abogslife.com

Kate Flood's artistic practice blends art, science, history, ecology, herbalism and storytelling to explore and reimagine our relationships with peatlands.

Her current work with the *Gnáthóga Nádúrtha (GN)* project investigates the cultural, social, medicinal and ecological histories of the bog and native Irish plants. Through this work, Kate collaborates with fellow artists and communities to develop new ways of engaging with landscape and memory.

Her practice is rooted in participatory and place-based methods, using photography, creative writing, mapping, visual note-taking and sensory experiences such as botanical tea tastings to foster connection. She leads bog walks and workshops that explore the edible and medicinal possibilities of wild plants, drawing on traditional knowledge and emerging cultural practices.

Kate is particularly interested in how visual and performative strategies - such as zine-making, collage and experimental storytelling - can communicate the complexities of environmental issues. By creating space for reflection and imagination, her work invites audiences to consider alternative futures for bogs and to rethink how we live in relationship with these vital, yet often overlooked, ecosystems.



'Bog Subcultures Collage', by Kate Flood



Luke Casserly

Luke Casserly is a multidisciplinary performance maker from Longford, Ireland, whose work explores the intersections of ecology, autobiography, sound art, and place. Through his practice, he creates immersive experiences that invite new relationships between live performance and the physical landscape, often drawing on personal and environmental narratives to inform his work.

In 2023, he was awarded the Arts Council's Next Generation Bursary and selected for the Norman Houston Multidisciplinary Commissioning Award with Solas Nua in Washington DC. That same year, he participated in the prestigious International Forum at Theatertreffen (Berlin Festspiele).

Luke holds a BA in Drama and Theatre Studies from Trinity College Dublin and a Diploma in Art and Ecology from NCAD. In 2024, he was appointed as Dublin City Council's Biodiversity Artist in Residence, a role that further supports his commitment to artmaking grounded in ecological awareness and care. His work continues to engage audiences across Ireland and internationally.

lukecasserly.org

Often using autobiography as a starting point, Luke's work attempts to stretch out new conversations around our human impact on the environment. His artistic practice is rooted in creating gentle, subversive responses to the climate crisis—eschewing anxiety, greenwashing, and didacticism in favour of meaningful, lasting interventions. He is committed to producing work that leaves a positive environmental legacy beyond the live encounter.

His site-specific projects have taken audiences through city streets, back gardens, beaches, train stations and boglands. Notable works include *1000 Miniature Meadows* (2020–23), which seeded wildflower meadows across Ireland and the UK, and *Root* (2021), which led to the planting of 1,000 native trees in the Irish Midlands.

His acclaimed piece *Distillation* responded to the end of the peat harvesting industry, using scent—developed in collaboration with perfumer Joan Woods—as a medium for exploring human connection to boglands. It premiered at Dublin Theatre Festival 2023 and has since toured internationally.

In 2025, Luke was appointed Bog Bothy Artist in Residence with the Irish Architecture Foundation. His residency involves collaboration and research in Clara and Girley Bogs, culminating in a site-responsive soundscape performance in 2026 that reflects the complex human and ecological relationships embedded in Ireland's evolving peatland landscapes.



Distillation - Art Installation by Luke Casserly



Monica de Bath

Monica de Bath is an Irish visual artist who lives and works between the boglands of Kildare and the Donegal Gaeltacht.

A graduate of the National College of Art and Design, Dublin, she also holds an M.A. in Visual Arts Practices from IADT, Dún Laoghaire. Her practice explores the land not only as a physical site but as a space of dialogue, experience, and poetic resonance. Influenced by her deep connection to place, Monica's work engages with ecological, cultural and social themes, often reflecting the layered histories and sensory qualities of the Irish landscape.

She has received numerous awards, including support from the Arts Council of Ireland, Kildare County Council and Molkfabryk Arts Space in the Netherlands. Her work is held in both private and public collections.

She is also one of the lead county creative practitioners for the Gnáthóga Nádúrtha programme (alongside Jules Michael and Kate Flood).Monica continues to develop projects that invite reflection on how we experience and interact with land, community, and the changing environment.

monicadebath.wixsite.com/monicadebath

Monica de Bath's work *Léarscáil / Map* offers a poetic and political response to the history of mapping in Ireland, reclaiming the landscape from a colonial gaze. Created from a 1959 Bord na Móna map gifted by a retired mapper, the piece functions as a still life and a counter-narrative. Traditionally, maps reflected the perspective of the British Empire, erasing indigenous place names and stories. Monica's artwork reverses this process by retranslating place names back to their original Irish *logainmneacha* —storytelling place names—using Dinneen's dictionary. These names carry deep cultural memory. For instance, the local river known in English as "The Slate" is *An Tarae* in Irish, meaning "the Mill Race," revealing a lived history of work and place. In reframing the map through the lens of the colonised, Monica challenges inherited narratives and restores the poetic, linguistic, and historical depth of the land, reconnecting viewers with the stories embedded in place.

From Autumn 2022 to 2023, Monica participated in a collaborative, values-based learning programme through Haumea Ecoversity, led by Dr Cathy Fitzgerald and Dr Nikos Patedakis. As one of three lead county creative practitioners, she explored the Earth Charter's ethical principles and their role in community sustainability. Monica completed ecoliteracy training and mentoring to deepen her ecosocial art practice. She also took part in studio visits with fellow artists Jules Michael and Kate Flood, fostering collaboration and reflection. Together, they developed a successful NPWS Recording Project, delivering workshops to engage communities in wetland restoration and biodiversity awareness.



'Léirscál' - Map drawing by Monica de Bath



Alison McEvoy

Alison McEvoy is a visual artist whose work is rooted in the natural world, with a particular focus on landscapes and their transformations over time.

Based in Abbeyleix, County Laois, she draws continual inspiration from Abbeyleix Bog, which features prominently in her creative and community work. Alison is deeply involved with the Abbeyleix Bog committee, where she plays a leading role in artistic programming - organising art festivals, curating events and workshops and managing creative communications.

She has presented two solo exhibitions that centre the bog, its trees, and its shifting forms, with a recurring emphasis on birch trees as symbols of resilience and renewal.

Alison is also co-founder of *Anthology*, an art and design shop in Abbeyleix where she sells her original artworks, prints and cards. In addition, she is the curator of *Of.Hands Art Festival*, an annual event celebrating creativity in and around the Abbeyleix Bog landscape.

@ali_illustrates_stuff

Alison McEvoy's artistic practice is driven by an ongoing fascination with nature, particularly the dynamic qualities of bog landscapes. Abbeyleix Bog is her primary muse—a living, changing ecosystem that inspires her visually and emotionally. Her work captures the textures, colours, and lines of the bog as it shifts through the seasons. From skeletal winter trees to lush summer foliage, she documents the bog's quiet dramas in rich visual detail.

Birch trees often feature in her work, selected not only for their beauty but for their distinctive presence. Their textured bark—peeling, dappled, jagged—and their uniquely twisting trunks serve as metaphors for growth and persistence. These natural forms become recurring characters in her art, anchoring each piece in a deeply observed sense of place.

Alison's practice spans drawing, painting, and printmaking, and she extends this creative engagement into her community. Through her curation of *Of.Hands Art Festival*, she brings artists and audiences into direct dialogue with the bog environment. Her work invites viewers to slow down, notice subtle changes in the landscape, and connect more deeply with their natural surroundings. Whether through her own art or her curatorial efforts, Alison's practice is a celebration of place, process and environmental awareness.



Haze of Ferns, Watercolour on paper by Alison McEvoy



Siobhán McDonald

Siobhán McDonald is a visual artist whose research-led practice explores the intersections of art, science and the environment. Working with natural materials, she interrupts their cycles of growth and decay to reflect on humanity's place within deep geological time. Her work engages with ecological and philosophical questions, often allowing nature itself to play an active role in the creative process.

Through painting, drawing, film and sound, McDonald weaves scientific narratives into poetic visual languages that express intangible natural phenomena.

She has received numerous prestigious awards, including the European Commission's S+T+ARTS 4Water Award (2024) and the Ocean Memory Award (2022). McDonald holds an MA in Visual Arts Practice from IADT, Dublin and her work is represented in significant public and private collections.

Recent solo exhibitions include the Royal Hibernian Academy (2025), VISUAL Carlow (2024), and Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels (2022), alongside presentations across Europe and the United States.

siobhanmcdonald.com

Siobhán McDonald's connection to bogs runs deep—both personally and artistically. Growing up near the boglands of County Monaghan, she was drawn to these vast, seemingly quiet landscapes, sensing that beneath their surface lay something ancient and alive.

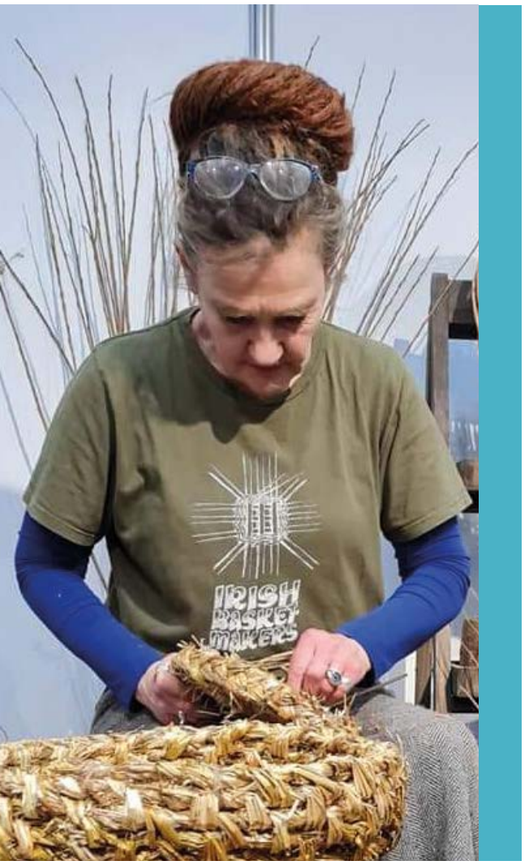
Over time, she came to understand bogs as living archives—places where layers of plant life, pollen and even human histories are preserved over millennia.

In her practice, McDonald returns to the peatlands repeatedly, gathering pigments, sounds and materials that embody the language of these fragile ecosystems. For her, bogs are more than ecological habitats - they are custodians of deep time, carrying stories about the Earth's past while warning of its uncertain future. Her work seeks to translate their slow, patient rhythms into forms that resonate with today's environmental urgency.



'Library of Smells' - Created for Bogskin exhibition RHA by Siobhán McDonald

In *A Library of Smells*, McDonald presents rows of glass shelves filled with bottled essences drawn from Irish bogs—both underground and above. "These smells are a connection with memory," she explains. Inspired by Professor Helen Sheridan's *Unlocking Nature's Pharmacy* at Trinity College Dublin, the work evokes sensory memory and extinction, inviting participants to reflect on vanishing plant life and the precariousness of the natural world.



Geraldine Smyth

Geraldine Smyth is a multidisciplinary artist based in County Kildare, specialising in sculpture, basketry, and heritage straw craft. Her work is deeply rooted in the boglands of Lullymore and Umeras—landscapes she describes as her "safe place" - which continuously inspire her creative process.

As an environmental artist and passionate teacher, Geraldine creates unique, tactile pieces using sustainably foraged natural and recycled materials from her local surroundings. Heather, birch, moss, roots, and willow are just some of the elements she weaves into her work, reflecting the textures and stories of the land.

Her practice celebrates a deep respect for nature, tradition, and the environment, blending old-world techniques with contemporary expression. Through both her individual artwork and her community-based projects, Geraldine fosters a connection between people, place and heritage. Her work not only preserves traditional crafts but also brings new meaning to Ireland's natural materials and folklore through modern artistic interpretation.

@gerriatrick

Geraldine's recent personal work is inspired by the local folklore of Brigid and the white wolf. Her sculptures are grounded in nature, with welded metal armatures covered in foraged bog materials such as heather, birch, moss and roots from fallen trees. Brigid's face is hand-cast and painted, while the white wolf is intricately woven from white willow, complete with life-like eyes.

Her recent collaborative work includes community art projects such as '*Mná Beoga*' in Ballykelly, Monasterevin. There, she guided local women through a series of workshops inspired by Brigid of Kildare, born in Umeras bog. The result was a vibrant fibre art tapestry now permanently displayed at Monasterevin Credit Union.



'Mossey Maiden', Mixed media sculpture by Geraldine Smyth

Another sculpture of Brigid by Geraldine can be seen along the Grand Canal Blueway near Umeras, supported by Kildare Arts and the Umeras Peatlands Park project. She also regularly engages with the public through live demonstrations and teaching, including workshops during Heritage Week at the Kildare Community Garden. Geraldine's work has also featured at major cultural festivals such as Electric Picnic and the Festival of Uisneach, where she brings her art, weaving and storytelling to wider audiences.

Her practice bridges ancient tradition and contemporary expression, honouring both nature and Ireland's rich heritage.



Mairéad Holohan

Mairéad Holohan is a three-time graduate of the National College of Art and Design, most recently completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Art and Ecology. This course deepened her exploration of humanity's relationship with nature, particularly the impact of human actions on non-human species in the context of climate change.

Her practice is grounded in the belief that we are not separate from nature, but part of it, and that mindful engagement can lead to environmental healing.

In 2022, Mairéad received funding to create a body of work focused on a small, local raised bog. This resulted in the publication of '*Slowtime on the Bog*', a booklet of plein air images made in Drummin Bog, St. Mullins.

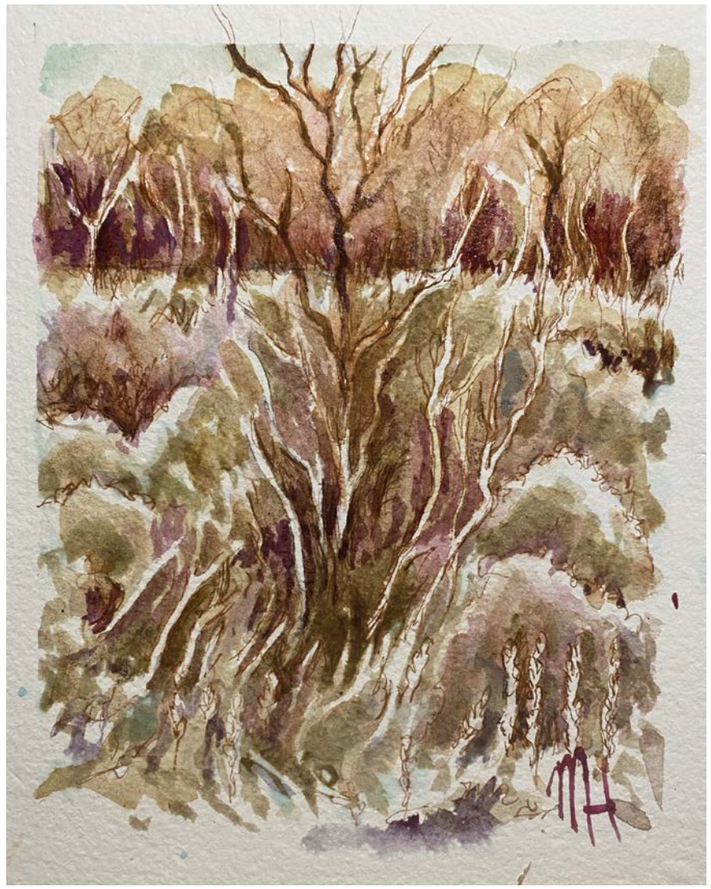
The artworks were created using materials either foraged and handmade by Mairéad from local plants and soil, or sourced from natural pigments. The Drummin Bog Committee generously granted her access to the bog, enabling this reflective and ecologically engaged project.

maireadholohan.wordpress.com

Mairéad's artistic practice is deeply rooted in quiet observation and a growing awareness of nature's intricate detail.

"The more she sees, the more she realises how much there is to see" and this realisation led her to spend nearly a year visiting a small, saucer-shaped raised bog near her home in South Carlow.

Unlike expansive bogs, this intimate landscape offered a space of stillness, where time seemed suspended. From its edge, she could see the hills above her home and across the valley to Kilkenny, grounding her in place and perspective.



'Winter on the bog' - Handmade inks and watercolours on paper by Mairéad Holohan

Her project, which began during lockdown and was further shaped by a residency at Cill Rialaig in Kerry, involves sitting in silence, sketching, listening, and absorbing the presence of the bog. Inspired by Sharon Blackie's words - "Time works differently in the bog" - Mairéad developed a reflective, immersive approach that prioritises slowness and attentiveness over production.

Using handmade materials from local plants and soil, her work celebrates bogs not just for their beauty but for their essential ecological role as biodiversity havens and carbon sinks. Mairéad now extends her practice to the fields and uplands around her home and plans to return to Drummin Bog to create 360° concertina books that continue this journey of connection.



Patrick Hough

Patrick Hough is an Irish artist and filmmaker based in London. Working across moving image, photography and installation, his practice explores the intersections of archaeology, geology and ecology through speculative and often mythic narratives. He is particularly interested in how history and material culture shape our understanding of the present and the future.

Hough is the recipient of several major awards, including the Jerwood/FVU Awards (2017) and the Film London FLAMIN Productions Award (2019). His works are part of the collections of Arts Council England and Arts Council Ireland and are distributed by LUX.

Blending fact and fiction, Hough's cinematic works often feature landscapes and artefacts as protagonists, exploring how the material world stores memory and transformation. His films have been widely exhibited internationally at major film festivals, museums and galleries, contributing to contemporary conversations around ecology, identity and posthuman narratives.

patrickhough.com

Patrick Hough's artistic practice delves into the entangled relationships between the human, the non-human, and the ecological. Working primarily through film and installation, his work speculates on the collapse of anthropocentric systems and the reconfiguration of the body as part of a larger, symbiotic assemblage.

His narratives often begin with archaeological or geological starting points—objects, landscapes, or bodies unearthed from deep time—and evolve into cinematic meditations on transformation, memory and the porous boundaries between lifeforms.

In '*The Black River of Herself*', Hough explores the mythic return of a bog body—an Iron Age human form naturally preserved in the acidic peat of Ireland's boglands - and the archaeologist tasked with excavating her. The film dissolves the line between subject and environment, exploring intimacy, ritual, and the ecological body. The bog becomes both preserver and devourer, and the archaeologist's physical and psychological immersion into the bog initiates a radical shedding of his petro-masculine identity.

Here, Hough imagines a world where the individual is not a closed system but a porous being—exchanging fluids, memory and meaning with its environment. His work offers a vital reimagining of identity, not as separate from nature, but as something formed through deep ecological entanglement.



Still from 'The Black River of Herself' by Patrick Hough



Pamela de Brí

Pamela de Brí is a multidisciplinary artist whose work is rooted in Irish heritage, history and language. Her practice reflects a deep engagement with the social and demographic changes shaping contemporary Ireland, particularly in rural areas. Originally from Dublin and now based in Prosperous, County Kildare, Pamela's connection to bogs and landscapes is both personal and longstanding, stretching back to childhood experiences of footing turf on the Dublin Mountains and later on Ballinafagh Bog.

Pamela works primarily through project-based research, combining oral histories, local knowledge, and historical investigation to produce work that explores identity, place and memory. She has led and contributed to several significant projects, including *The Broadstone Project* (2009–2012), *The Midland Project* (2012–2019), and *Life Goes On*, marking the withdrawal of the British Army in 1922. Her work weaves together documentation, narrative and collaboration, offering audiences a thoughtful reflection on the evolving Irish landscape and its communities.

pameladebri.com

Pamela de Brí's art practice is grounded in research and storytelling, shaped by a strong sense of place and cultural identity. Her work investigates how landscapes, language and tradition influence the people who inhabit them, with a particular focus on rural Ireland. She approaches each project with in-depth exploration— walking, cycling, photographing, interviewing, and documenting—to uncover the layered histories embedded in specific locations.

Her projects often begin with a single site or story and expand into a multifaceted body of work that includes photography, audio installations, text and community engagement. From abandoned railway sheds to forgotten bogland workcamps, Pamela brings overlooked histories into contemporary conversations. Her contribution to *Invisible Stories* (2017) saw her cycle across North Kildare, recording stories and producing photographs of the region's boglands and canal-side communities.

In *Tóch | Dig*, Pamela collaborates with artists Shane Hynan and Sheena Malone to deepen the narrative around the bogs of North Kildare. Her focus is on preserving traditional knowledge, work practices and voices connected to the landscape. Through this collaboration, she continues her commitment to documenting the cultural and ecological legacy of Irish peatlands—ensuring future generations can access the values and experiences that shaped them.



'That's it!', Photograph by Pamela de Brí



Sheena Malone

Sheena Malone is an artist and curator based in Allenwood, County Kildare, whose work explores rural life, local history and Irish folklore—particularly that of her home landscape in the Bog of Allen.

Her socially engaged practice centres on creating projects that foster dialogue, cultural exchange and alternative ways of storytelling through art. She is particularly interested in expanding the exhibition space beyond conventional venues, bringing art into closer contact with community and place.

Her solo exhibition '*Déin Chécht's Porridge*' at Riverbank Arts Centre examined folk medicine traditions in Ireland, combining research, interviews and material experimentation.

Sheena's short film *The All-Ireland Turf Footing Championships* won Best Short Documentary at JuneFest 2024. Her curated group exhibition *Irish Energy* was selected for Zeitgeist Irland 24 in Germany. She is currently co-leading *Tóch | Dig*, a community-based project with artists Shane Hynan and Pamela de Brí, exploring cultural heritage in the boglands of North Kildare.

sheenamalone.com

Sheena Malone's practice is rooted in folklore, oral history and the intersection of culture and place. Through a blend of research, storytelling and creative interpretation, her work examines how rural traditions and inherited beliefs continue to shape Irish identity today. Her recent projects focus on folk medicine, ritual practices and the cultural symbolism of landscape—particularly peatlands, which serve as both setting and subject in her work.

In '*Déin Chécht's Porridge*', Sheena drew on personal interviews and archival folklore to create a body of work exploring magico-religious healing traditions. Textile pieces dyed with medicinal plants gathered around the Bog of Allen were combined with drawings, objects and a film on the role of the *bean feasa* (wise woman or healer). This work expanded into *The Kildare Folklore Pharmacy*, a long-term project supported by Kildare Arts Service.



'The Well of Wholeness (Tipra Sláine)' , Mirror, metal, resin, dried flowers and plants, 70cm diameter by Sheena Malone

Her ongoing piece, *A Dose of Nature*, further explores the curative symbolism of Irish mythology, sacred textiles like the *Brat Bhríde* and healing systems like Ayurveda. Through community collaboration and artistic inquiry, Sheena's work uncovers the hidden knowledge embedded in rural landscapes. Currently, in *Tóch | Dig*, she works with local communities and artists to preserve intangible heritage and oral memory from the bog before it disappears.



Alec Moore

Alec Moore is a visual artist based in Ireland, working primarily with photography and moving image. His practice engages with the complex relationships between people and place, exploring how history, identity, class, and power shape the landscapes we inhabit.

With a focus on narrative, Moore's work often reflects on land through a post-colonial lens, investigating themes of displacement, ownership, and belonging.

His current body of work centres on Ireland's peatlands, highlighting their ecological and cultural significance while considering land not as a resource but as a living presence. This work began through collaboration with Friends of Ardee Bog (FAB), a community group dedicated to the preservation and restoration of Ardee Bog in County Louth.

Through both artistic inquiry and community engagement, Moore's work contributes to wider conversations about environmental care, memory, and our evolving relationship with the natural world.

alecmoore.ie

Alec Moore's artistic practice centres on the intersection of place, power and memory, using photography and moving image to reflect on how landscapes carry the weight of history and social structure.

Rooted in narrative, his work critically examines how identity, class and colonial legacies are embedded in the environments we inhabit. Moore is particularly interested in the layered meanings of land - its use, control and symbolic value - and the stories that arise from contested or overlooked spaces.

His ongoing project on Ireland's peatlands exemplifies this approach, drawing attention to these fragile ecosystems not just as sites of environmental concern, but as spaces rich with cultural resonance. By treating the land as a living entity with agency, Moore creates images that invite reflection, reverence and care.

His collaboration with Friends of Ardee Bog has deepened this inquiry, offering valuable insight into the historical and ecological narratives that shape these wetlands.

Engaging with community-led initiatives, local voices and sitespecific events, Moore's work offers a meditative and critical response to environmental degradation, encouraging a reimagining of our relationship with nature - one grounded in listening, preservation and respect.



Photograph by Alec Moore



Cathy Fitzgerald

Cathy Fitzgerald is an eco-artist, ecoliteracy educator and founder of *Haumea Ecoversity*, an international platform offering arts-based ecological learning. Based in County Carlow, she is a core member of the Drummin Bog Project - a community initiative focused on restoring one of Ireland's last remaining raised bogs in the South East.

Her background in filmmaking, combined with doctoral research into contemporary eco-art practice, informs her distinctive approach to creative education and environmental engagement.

Between 2022 and 2024, Cathy led the *Gnathoga Nadúrtha | Natural Habitats* programme across three counties, supporting artists and communities to explore biodiversity and restoration through creative practice. She also co-led the Irish translation of the Earth Charter, a global sustainability framework, now freely available for use in Irish educational and community settings.

In 2025–26, Cathy is developing new learning that explores cosmology and ecological awareness through *The Universe Story*.

haumeaecoversity.com

Cathy Fitzgerald's arts practice explores how creativity, when grounded in ecological values, can help communities reconnect with their local environments. Her work with the Drummin Bog Project - a volunteer-led restoration effort in County Carlow - is a key example of this approach, combining eco-arts and community engagement to raise awareness of peatland heritage and biodiversity.

Through *Haumea Ecoversity*, Cathy has developed and delivered ecoliteracy training for artists, educators and local authority staff. Her programmes emphasise ethical, inclusive approaches to sustainability, supporting participants to create meaningful, place-based projects that respond to ecological challenges.

Her leadership in the *Gnathoga Nadúrtha | Natural Habitats* initiative extended this work to neighbouring counties, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration through arts-based environmental learning. A strong advocate for the Earth Charter, Cathy uses this global declaration to frame her teaching and inspire values-led creative responses to climate and nature. Looking ahead, Cathy is developing new offerings that invite communities to engage with *The Universe Story* - a cosmological perspective that deepens understanding of Earth's history and nurtures awe and care for living systems. This new direction will support creative facilitators in designing *Deep Time* walks and *Dark Sky* experiences that reconnect people with both place and planet.



Haumea Ecoversity by Cathy Fitzgearld



Helen Flanagan

Helen Flanagan is a multidisciplinary artist and organiser based in County Louth. Her socially engaged practice spans writing, performance, audiovisual work and the creation of collaborative cultural spaces.

With a background in community-based projects and an interest in folk and vernacular culture, she works across disciplines to support creative participation and connection to place.

Helen is a founding member of *Friends of Ardee Bog*, a grassroots group focused on protecting the ecological, cultural and historical value of Ardee Bog. Her creative involvement has included projects with schools, community film-making and cultural events such as *The Turf House Project*, *The Bog Café festival* and the *Ardee Bog Deep Map Project*. Her work is frequently developed through collaborative methods and rooted in local knowledge.

Helen also co-created *Spooky Beore*, a radio series that aired on Dublin Digital Radio, exploring imagined bog mythologies and ancient rituals in Ireland's peatlands.

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Helen Flanagan's arts practice centres on collaboration, storytelling and imaginative engagement with place. Combining folk traditions, informal education and social art-making, her work invites communities to reflect on local ecologies, cultural memory and the systems shaping contemporary life. Her practice resists dominant neoliberal narratives by fostering joy, critical thinking and collective creativity in response to environmental and social challenges.

A central strand of her work is the *Ardee Bog Deep Map Project* - a community mapping process that reveals the many layers of meaning in the bog through DIY publishing, audio works and live performance. One key outcome is the *Ardee Bog Mummers*, a collaborative folk theatre group who mythologise the bog as the centre of the universe. Their play, '*The Turfman, the Devil and the Ditch Hag*', written by Helen, was performed at the 2025 IAF Bog Bothy Festival on Girley Bog.

Her projects often bring together artists, young people and local residents in socially engaged settings, such as *The Bog Café* and *The Turf House Project*, both of which celebrate peatland culture through creative exchange.

Through playful, people-centred approaches, Helen's work helps restore connections between people, land and imagination - always with a deep commitment to access, inclusion and ecological care.



'The Turfman, the Devil and the Ditch Hag', written by Helen, was performed at the 2025 IAF Bog Bothy Festival on Girley Bog.

Further Resources Appendix

- Wilderland
  wilderland.ie
- Sculpture - Lough Boora Discovery Park
  loughboora.com/sculpture
- WaterLANDS Artists-in-Residence | WaterLANDS:
  Water-based solutions for carbon storage, people and wilderness
  waterlands.eu/waterlands-artists-in-residence
- Earth Rising 2025 - IMMA
  imma.ie/whats-on/earth-rising
- BogSkin - RHA Gallery
  rhagallery.ie/events/exhibitions/bogskin
- Glucksman.org - Pool On The Mountain
  glucksman.org/content/files/Files_Education/POOL_ON_THE_MOUNTAIN_creative_activities.pdf
- Ecologies | The Bogs Are Breathing | The VAN & miniVAN
  visualartistsireland.com/ecologies-the-bogs-are-breathing
- Bog Bothy in Clara, Co. Offaly - IAF
  iaf.ie/events/bog-bothy-clara
- Kieran Tuohy Sculptor
  @kierantuohysculptor
- Tóchar Stories - Tóchar Wetlands
  tocharwetlands.ie/tochar-stories



Photograph by Tina Claffey

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communitywetlands.bsky.social

communitywetlandsforum.ie

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