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# Education and Outreach (Ed+O) Forum

Presented by the Irish Museums Association in partnership with NI Museums Council

16 May 2022, National Museum of Ireland: Decorative Arts and History, Dublin.

## Speakers' Bios and Abstracts

### Session One

#### *The GAA Museum – Pivot, pivot, pivot!*

Like all museums and cultural institutions, the GAA Museum has experienced a period of dramatic change and self-discovery. Driven by closures and staff shortages due to lockdown, the museum's small and close-knit team has worked together to diversify and discover new and exciting ways to deliver the education programme and introduce new ways of learning for stakeholders.

This presentation will outline the move to virtual school tours and the learnings from this experience. It will also examine the outcomes of new avenues of learning introduced, including the GAA Museum Book Club, online lecture series and curatorial videos. These positive moves offset a very bleak time for our industry and have challenged us to re-think our educational practices, making them available to a worldwide audience on many occasions. Consequently, the new virtual dimension to our museum's practices has allowed for greater input from all team members.

Finally, it will examine how our engagement with educational groups has changed once again following re-opening: having had to look at ways to re-engage school groups and ensure a museum experience that will both delight, surprise and encourage participation.

**Julianne McKeigue** is Events, Education and Retail manager at the GAA Museum in Croke Park. She holds a degree in Journalism from DCU and an MSC in Marketing from TU Dublin. She has previously worked in sports PR both in-house and at an agency level with O'Herlihy Communications, Setanta Sports and Aviva.

She has been with the GAA Museum for over 10 years working across a range of projects including the launch of the Skyline tours, the events programmes for both Remembering Bloody Sunday 2020 and 20 Years of the GAA Museum including the successful World Record involving 1772 children taking part in the world's largest hurling lesson in 2018! During lockdown, she launched the GAA Museum Book Club. On a personal level, Julianne enjoys reading and writing children's books and has self-published the picture book Andy Ash about a hurler who hates to lose!

### *Zooming through Hugh Lane Gallery: Enabling the creative potential of children throughout Dublin City.*

Zoom@HughLaneGallery is aimed at primary school children aged between 9-12. Initiated in 2018, it aims to enable the creative potential of children through looking at and discussing artwork in the gallery's collection and making art during an artist-led workshop arising from what the children have seen and discussed. To date, over 1,500 children have participated in this project.

This presentation will address the objectives of this innovative project in encouraging lifelong engagement between the Hugh Lane, primary schools and their pupils: the project concept, its geographical remit and ambition. In addition, it will present the structure of Zoom@Hugh LaneGallery, its innovative adaptation to a live online format and the benefits of the new subsequent blended approach of online pre-visit and in-person gallery visits. Illustrated with highlights from the superb artist-led workshops and examples of children's artwork and sketches, it will also highlight the innovative digital documentation and presentation of the project through green screen animation, short films and the development of an interactive map.

Finally, the importance of evaluating and engaging with the school after the project delivery will be explored, as well as the impact it might have on cross-curricular learning through additional artist-designed resources.

**Jane Fogarty** is an artist and art educator from Dublin and has been involved in art education since 2006 working in both museum and community contexts. Currently, she is the project facilitator for Zoom@Hugh Lane Gallery, a flagship education project at the Hugh Lane Gallery initiated in 2018.

### *Dancing out of Lockdown: An Embodied Response to Contemporary Exhibitions at LCGA*

MOVING WITH ART is a collaboration between Limerick City Gallery of Art (LCGA) and Dance Limerick, led by LCGA learning co-ordinator Brendan Egan and Dance Limerick's Philippa Donnellan, the curator of DL.BRIGDE (Dance Limerick's public engagement programme). The project acts as a site of research for Brendan's ongoing PhD study into gallery pedagogy as cultural institutions reconfigure their practice in the face of challenges and opportunities posed by social restrictions since 2019/2020.

Following varying levels of success engaging schools from a distance using digital replications of artwork via online platforms, this project launched in late 2021 to highlight the importance of engaging with the body as it physically responds to contemporary exhibitions in the gallery space. Groups from three local primary schools have responded to exhibitions by Mark Garry, Aideen Barry and Tom Fitzgerald.

The children explore ideas of physically embodying visual artwork through a process of developing somatic exercises and using dance techniques as a response to the exhibitions installed in the space.

For an overview of the pilot MOVING WITH ART project, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aptPsl7TaPw&t=6s>

**Brendan Egan** is an artist/teacher/researcher. He has exhibited work in a variety of exhibitions and has worked as a second level art & design teacher in Ireland, the UK and the Middle East. In 2019, he was awarded the Shinnors Scholarship at Limerick City Gallery of Art (LCGA). He completed a PME in art & design education and, currently his PhD research is ongoing, exploring gallery pedagogy in response to the challenges and opportunities faced by galleries and museums during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Philippa Donnellan** is an independent dance artist and is currently the Curator of DL.BRIDGE, Dance Limerick's public engagement programme. She worked with CoisCéim Dance Theatre as BROADREACH Director (2006 – 2020). In 2021, she and Olwyn Lyons became Artists in Residence in Care Settings at the invitation of Age & Opportunity/Creative Ireland. Recently, she co-directed an intergenerational performance project WOMEN & WORK, THE CONTRACT developed in association with Dance Limerick.

## **Session Two**

### ***Intergenerational practice and the museum: an education and outreach case study***

In June 2021 the Northern Ireland War Memorial (NIWM) was awarded a small grant from Linking Generations NI to deliver an online intergenerational project bringing together P7 pupils from Brooklands Primary School and residents from Towell House Residential Home in Belfast.

The aim of the project was to enable the children to undertake reminiscence work with the older people using objects from the museum's handling collection and give the residents the opportunity to share their memories of the Second World War.

During the sessions the different generations bonded together over their shared experiences of childhood and lockdown and the children had the opportunity to learn first-hand about a period of history they had been studying. The project was highlighted as an example of best practice for Positive Ageing Month and has led to further intergenerational engagement by the museum in partnership with Linking Generations NI.

In his presentation, Michael will advocate for museums undertaking intergenerational work and identify some of its potential benefits. His paper will outline how the NIWM has successfully brought together its education and outreach programmes as part of its intergenerational practice, connecting the generations and forging new partnerships between the museum and the wider community.

**Michael Fryer** is Outreach Officer at the Northern Ireland War Memorial, an accredited Second World War museum in Belfast. He joined the museum staff in 2017 while studying for an MA in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at Ulster University. He has long-standing experience of working with different audiences, including schools, older people and people living with dementia.

### ***Apollo Project: Exhibitions created by young people, for young people at the National Gallery of Ireland***

In this presentation, young people and Gallery staff will unpack learning from two co-produced exhibitions at the National Gallery of Ireland. The Apollo Project was launched in 2019 and is dedicated to sustainably connecting and engaging young people (16-25) with the Gallery and Russborough. Creativity, education and wellbeing are at the heart of Apollo Project, with an emphasis on collaborating and partnering with young people to co-create vibrant and fun experiences and ensuring that young people's voices are included in decision-making across the Gallery.

*Queer Mind, Body and Soul* (30 July – 17 October 2021), was created by Gaisce LikeMinded, a group of 16 young LGBTQIA+, gender non-conforming people and allies who worked with artist Shireen Short to express themselves artistically across numerous disciplines and media. Their artworks explored a variety of experiences and emotions felt by the group, which represented the experiences of many LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming young people.

*Boring Art?* (16 October 2021 – 16 January 2022) was the culmination of a year-long project with a group of seven young people from diverse backgrounds. The Apollo Project Young Curators created the first ever exhibition of the Gallery's permanent collection by young people. Mentored by Gallery staff they made all the key curatorial decisions, and their exhibition was both playful and provocative, bringing fresh perspectives to works that to some, at first glance, might appear 'boring', challenging the viewer to make up their own mind about issues important to young people in Ireland today.

**Catherine O'Donnell** manages the National Gallery of Ireland's programme for Teachers, Schools and Young People. She has over 11 years' experience spanning education, exhibitions and public programming and has

written extensively on museums and participation and has expertise in participatory methodologies, co-production, and working with challenging and contested history. An Associate of the Museums Association, Catherine holds an MA in Art Gallery and Museum Studies, University of Manchester, and a BA in English Literature and Art History, Newcastle University.

**Kate Drinane** has been part of the National Gallery of Ireland's Education Team for ten years. She has introduced and developed LGBTQIA+ programming at the Gallery, including the management of *OUTing the Past: Festival of LGBT History* in Dublin since 2019. Kate is the co-founder of the Queer Culture Ireland network and volunteers with ShoutOut and Gaisce LikeMinded. She holds a BA and MA in Art History from University College Dublin.

**Beth Stallard** (they/them) is a young artist from Dublin. A participant in the Gaisce LikeMinded project, their artwork 'US' was displayed in the *Queer Mind, Body and Soul* exhibition in the National Gallery, capturing the homophobia experienced by LGBTQIA+ young people in Ireland.

**Oisín Kenny**, Apollo Fellow and co-curator of Boring Art? Exhibition, National Gallery of Ireland.

### *Little Houses, Big Ideas*

Through a conversation style presentation, Johanna Visser, Helen Beaumont and representative of the young project participants (TBC) discuss the Little Houses project, an example of community engagement, under the theme of Cultural Democracy in practice. The Museum and Youth Services young service users, with artist Maria McKinney, collaborated in co-curating this exhibition of young people's artworks, created as responses to the Covid 19 Pandemic and their experiences of life in Lockdown. The conversation includes the programming around the exhibition, currently on display at Collins Barracks, such as events with Irish Architecture Foundation for Open House Festival, and a workshop for young people taking place on 21<sup>st</sup> May in Dublin with Dutch artists' group, Stoereloer.

The presentation aims to identify and share key learnings that might benefit others interested in initiating this type of project.

The presentation includes:

1. An introduction to the project, providing background and context.
2. Reflection on the Museum's relationship with young people in the community in Dublin 7 and on the impacts of the Little Houses project on this relationship.
3. What were the strengths of the project, and the weak points – where we might have done things differently.
4. Exploration of the challenges and opportunities this collaboration presented for the Museum and for the Youth Service.

**Johanna Visser** is a qualified Primary teacher, social worker and youth worker. She has been with Stoneybatter Youth Service in Dublin 7 for the past decade, having started her youth worker career in 2003 with City of Dublin Youth Services Board and Education Training Board. She is responsible for delivery and implementation of programmes to meet the personal and developmental needs of the young people. Johanna has undertaken several programmes with Eco Unesco and was awarded three times in the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmental Awards.

**Helen Beaumont** is Education & Outreach Officer at the National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Art and History. Appointed to this role when the Museum opened in 1997, she set up and subsequently manages this section of the Museum's Education Department. Her role includes on-going planning and provision of public and schools programmes; working on exhibition development; and working on a range of partnership projects. Before joining the Museum, she worked for eight years as a second level teacher. She is a graduate of the MA in Arts Management and Cultural Policy, UCD, and worked in the National Gallery of Ireland's Education Department.

## **Session Three**

### ***Enacting change: Hitting the ground running: Lisburn Museum's Shared History NI Centenary Quilt project.***

The 2021 Northern Ireland centenary presented Lisburn Museum with an opportunity to learn about different community perspectives. Through the creation of an archival piece for the collection, a NI Centenary Quilt Project was born.

In looking to the archives for inspiration, there were more questions than answers about how the process would evolve. One thing was certain, as keepers of donor's personal expressions we could not tell participants what 100 years should mean, it had to reflect personal responses.

The process began with devising broad themes as a loose structure. These were formed from previous engagements and helped guide participants in telling their own story. A textile artist was engaged and a call-out for participants was promoted through the Museum's social media platforms.

And they came! From nursery children to curious adults. Everyone brought their own ideas on what Northern Ireland meant to them. They created individual panels during museum workshop sessions or at home in their own time. We provided resources, support and encouragement...soon the panels started to form into something eclectic.

This presentation will talk through the process and the learning. I will let you guess how many cups of tea were required to keep the art flowing in our Centenary Quilt Project.

**Emma Breadon** began her museum career as a gallery assistant at Lisburn Museum. Unlike many other museums at the time, the role involved facilitating, helping to develop and deliver learning. She is now Assistant Education Officer, utilising her years of knowledge and skills of person-centred learning to continue to develop community engagement projects.

Emma has a passion for museum learning through participant-based practice. At Lisburn Museum she assists in the development of the pedagogy of the real: real staff working with real participants in a real museum setting working with real objects. She firmly believes in the power of this shared- authority approach to bring historical narrative to life and to create personal and institutional change.

Emma is happiest devising activities to connect learners of all styles and ages with Lisburn Museum's eclectic collection. She describes herself as a puppet wrangler for the museums under-fives mascot, Flaxie, and an advocate for museum community engagement which may be challenging but is paramount in illustrating that museums are truly spaces for everyone.

### ***Diversity Academy: Community, Creativity and Change***

*A community collaboration project partnership between Nano Nagle Place, Cork Migrant Centre, The Lantern Project, and PhD candidate Shauna Allen (UCC Museum Studies)*

Diversity Academy was a six week community craftivist art project hosted by Nano Nagle Place. Key aims of the project were to (a) Use as inspiration the story of Nano Nagle who empowered people through making; (b) Be participant led – granting creative agency through artistic expression; and (c) Promote a sense of community cohesion and kinship.

The project brought together women from two of NNP's diverse community groups, providing them with the creative space to express aspects of their cultures and issues important to them. Participants included members

of the Lantern Community which focuses on the empowerment of marginalised people and the Cork Migrant Centre which supports the integration of immigrants in Ireland.

They worked together on a communal craft project that brought together individual works of embroidery into a single interconnected art installation. They were guided by Cork-based textile artist - Ann Mechelinck, who incorporated the unifying themes of *home* and *belonging*.

In April 2022 the communal art piece will go on display at NNP, its exhibition the embodiment of community co-creation and co-curation.

**Shauna Allen** is a Canadian museum educator, experienced in developing and presenting engaging and inclusive learning programmes, and PhD candidate at UCC - Museum Studies. Her research - *Curating Change: a trans-atlantic study of activism in museums* reflects her belief in the global nature of museums and their potential to contribute to a more socially just world.

**Danielle O'Donovan** is the programme manager at Nano Nagle Place. She's been a driving force behind projects like *Diversity Academy*, which brought together a diverse group of women in creativity and community, and *Cork Playful Culture Trail*, which fosters exploration of culture and heritage through play. Her work is driven by the pursuit of learning in the historic environment which fosters diversity, inclusion, and cultural democracy.

## Session Four

### *From Megafauna to Minibeasts – Facing new challenges in museum education*

During a wider redevelopment of its learning offer, National Museums NI identified the need for an Education Officer to not only establish a new natural sciences programme at Ulster Museum, but to also take advantage of the extensive outdoor areas of the Ulster Folk Museum.

The past two years have presented new challenges to museum education and have brought pre-existing demands further into the spotlight. Over the course of the pandemic, opportunities for hands-on learning were limited and as restrictions start to ease the desire for tangible experiences outside the classroom will grow. There is also increasing demand for more sensory-focused workshops, especially amongst SEND audiences.

Outdoor education was already growing in popularity, but the pandemic has focused even more attention on forest schools and other outdoor learning experiences. For natural sciences in particular how can we use an outdoor setting to teach about challenging issues such as biodiversity loss and climate change?

This presentation will explore the development of the new NMNI natural sciences programme within the context of these challenges, as well as how the organisation's involvement in the Explore: Urban Nature project has fed into this process.

**Nigel Cook** is the Education Officer for Natural Sciences at National Museums NI, based across both Ulster Museum and Ulster Folk Museum. His BSc in Zoology coupled with his MSc in Museum Studies have equipped him with a background knowledge well-suited to developing science learning programmes for the museum environment.

After a varied career including various roles in universities, museums and galleries, Nigel would go on to work for the Natural History Museum at Tring. It was here that he discovered a love of museum education and gained vital experience in the planning and delivery of engaging workshops - including content specifically developed for SEND audiences.

He brings this combination of subject knowledge, past experience, and a passion for accessible education to NMNI in the form of new indoor and outdoor natural sciences education programmes, new online learning sessions, and involvement in the Explore: Urban Nature project.

### *Cool Fossils & Hot (Climate) Facts! A Case Study from NMI-Natural History*

Cool Fossils and Hot (Climate) Facts! was an online event for Earth Day 2021 run by the education team at NMI-Natural History with science educators from the Rediscovery Centre Ballymun. This was the first open online event we ran for schools, it became an online phenomena and the largest event ever run for school children by the National Museum of Ireland, attracting 27,000 pupils.

The huge volume of initial interest led to adapting plans for a nationwide event with our partner organisation whilst ensuring the intended aims of both organisations for the event, the learning outcomes for pupils attending and professional standards were not compromised.

This session will concentrate on exploring how to build sustainability into the planning and delivery of online events evaluating them, and ensuring a legacy. We will also explore the evaluation and learning from the event for us as educators at the museum.

**Siobhán Pierce, Geraldine Breen and Emma Murphy** are the educators responsible for programming for NMI-Natural History.

## *The Soil Project, and other climate actions at Butler Gallery*

The writing is on the wall, climate catastrophe is the most urgent issue of our time. As we moved to a dedicated building, Evans' Home in August 2021, the opportunity arose for Butler Gallery to begin dedicated programming, to make art together with our communities and audiences, that addresses environmental themes, and eco-anxiety. We recognize that societal change happens when social and environmental issues are made relevant to people's lives through creative approaches.

*The Soil Project* has emerged as an annual commission for artists to work with our audiences, to bring awareness to the value of the soil beneath our feet. Soil, which is rapidly being eroded and is the key to agricultural viability in the future. Now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year, curator Hollie Kearns will reflect on the building momentum of the project as a long term, participatory, awareness raising, climate action programme. Additionally, she will discuss a new commission *Magic, Moving, Living Thing*, by artist Mary Conroy which addresses river ecology, and the dedicated multi-year *Youth Ecology Art* project, produced by Hannah McCormick, alongside sustainability actions being undertaken by staff members as a consequence of new thinking about the impacts of our museum on the environment.

**Hollie Kearns** has been the Learning and Public Engagement curator at Butler Gallery since 2018, overseeing a multi-strand programme of interpretation and access programmes, artists commissions and residencies, learning events and creative workshops through a pivotal time as Butler Gallery relocated to a dedicated building for the first time in 2020.

She developed an independent curatorial practice through Commonage and Workhouse Union in Callan, Co. Kilkenny where she worked directly with artists to commission new works in public settings. In collaboration with her colleague Rosie Lynch at Workhouse Union, Hollie also curated public art projects such as *Landing Place* (2013) at Dublin's Pigeon House Precinct, gallery exhibitions such as *Pattern Exchange* at Temple Bar Gallery (2015) and events at art organisations such as *Leap Year* at National Sculpture Factory (2016). In 2017-2018 she was a project manager with the Irish Walled Towns Network, a Heritage Council of Ireland initiative.

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