



IRISH
MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION

*Fostering Equality, Diversity,
and Inclusion in Irish Museums*

11:00—16:00, Tuesday 22 October 2024

Seminar information

SEMINAR IN BRIEF

Location: National Museum of Ireland—Decorative Arts & History
Lecture Auditorium
Collins Barracks, Benburb St, Dublin, D07 XKV4

Date: Tuesday 22 October 2024

This seminar brings together thought leaders, practitioners, and advocates from various institutions to engage in discussions and explore strategies for building more inclusive and representative spaces within the museums' structure.

It includes presentations on EDI policy development, case studies from institutions, and actionable takeaways that can help shape inclusive practices within your institutions.

SUPPORTERS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The IMA wishes to gratefully acknowledge the valuable support and assistance received from all speakers towards this seminar, along with the National Museum of Ireland.

The IMA additionally acknowledges the annual grant aid it receives from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, and The Heritage Council.



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



Funded by
An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

AGENDA

- 10:30 – 11:00: *Registration and Refreshments*
- 11:00 – 11:10: *Welcome*
Gina O'Kelly, Director, Irish Museums Association (IMA)
- 11:10 – 11:45: ***Policy and Priorities***
Aalia Kamal, Cultural and Inclusive Heritage Officer, Heritage Council of Ireland
Leon Diop, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Arts Council of Ireland
Open Q&A
- 11:45 – 12:45: ***EDI within the Sector***
Daniel Breen, Curator, Cork Public Museum
Melissa Ndakengerwa, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Executive, Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA)
Michael Fryer, Partnerships and Engagement Lead, Northern Ireland War Memorial Museum (NIWM)
Open Q&A
- 12:45 - 13:45: *Lunch (provided)*
- 13:45 – 14:45: ***Implementation Take Aways and Practice Toolkits***
Leon Diop, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Arts Council of Ireland
Gráinne Pollak, Project Manager, Safe to Create
Open Q&A
- 14:45 – 15:00: ***Closing remarks***
Margarita Vásquez Cárdenas, Programme Manager, Irish Museums Association (IMA)

SPEAKERS BIOS

Aalia Kamal is the Culture and Inclusive Heritage Officer at the Heritage Council of Ireland. Prior to her appointment in 2021, she was the Engagement Research Lead at Dublin City Council Culture Company, previously holding the role of Head of Engagement. An experienced researcher, she is a former Policy Manager with the Art Fund (UK), Qest Scholar at the Victoria & Albert Museum, and worked with the National Audit Office (UK) and Ipsos MORI.

Leon Diop is the new Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for the Arts Council of Ireland. He is responsible for implementing the Arts Council's EDI implementation plan 2023-2028 and leading on all external EDI initiatives such as research, campaigns and communications. He joined the Arts Council from Black and Irish, which he founded in 2020. His background is also in tech recruiting from Slack and Salesforce where he led on EDI initiatives. He holds a psychology degree from Maynooth University, serving two terms as Student President. Leon is also an author and podcast host.

Daniel Breen is Curator of Cork Public Museum, with over twenty years' experience curating, researching, and preserving the museum's extensive collections related to seven thousand years of human habitation in Cork. Under his stewardship, Cork Public Museum was awarded full accreditation in the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland in 2023. Daniel led the museum's involvement in the Cork City Council's Decade of Centenaries Programme 2013-2023, collaborating with numerous stakeholders across the city and county to explore and understand Cork's revolutionary past. He has also co-authored several books on Cork history.

Melissa Ndakengerwa is the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Executive – Public Engagement at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, where she and the team work to create meaningful workshops and events that resonate with diverse audiences and foster a sense of belonging within the museum's community. Having previously worked at the Bar of Ireland as the Events and Project Officer, Melissa excels in managing a variety of diverse events and creating inclusive spaces for engaging in difficult conversations. Melissa recently obtained a postgraduate Diploma in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Limerick, is a board member of the charity Aware, and sits on the Community Advisory Panel for Intel.

Michael Fryer is Partnerships and Engagement Lead at the Northern Ireland War Memorial, a museum in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter which tells the story of Northern Ireland during the Second World War. He is a local Area Rep for the Group for Education in Museums (GEM) and, until recently, was a volunteer with the LGBTQIA+ Heritage Project Northern Ireland.

Gráinne Pollak is Project Manager for Safe to Create, a Dignity at Work programme looking to transform workplace culture and practices and to provide safe and respectful working conditions for those working in the Irish arts and creative sectors. A multilingual arts producer and project manager from Dublin, she holds an MA in Arts Administration and Cultural Policy from Goldsmiths, University of London, and has produced new work and international tours for organisations, companies and festivals across Ireland and the UK, including ANU, Landmark Productions, MoLI, Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rambert, the Gate Theatre, LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre) and Dublin Fringe Festival. She has worked in arts administration roles in venues across Dublin, including Science Gallery International, Dublin Theatre Festival, Abbey Theatre, The Ark, and the National Concert Hall.

PRESENTATION BRIEFS

Session 1: Policy and Priorities

In late 2021, the Heritage Council appointed its first Cultural and Inclusive Heritage Officer with responsibility for fostering equality, diversity and inclusion across its cultural heritage projects, programmes and other supports. **Aalia Kamal** will provide an overview of the work that has been done so far in this area, with a particular focus on the development of the Heritage Council's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy and the National Traveller Heritage Strategy. This presentation will describe the fundamental ethos of these projects and describe some of the strategies used to embed and encourage EDI values.

The second presentation in this session will focus on the EDI priorities of the Arts Council. This will include the internal work that the Arts Council is doing in relation to EDI and an update on the EDI implementation plan. **Leon Diop** will share some of the research the Arts Council is undertaking regards EDI and campaigns that will be run in the future.

Session II: EDI within the Sector

Cork Public Museum has worked extensively with the Travelling Community in Cork for over 20 years, establishing the country's first permanent Traveller culture in 2005. From the start, the collaboration with the Cork Traveller Women's Network (CTWN), was set up to give the Travelling community an equal say in how the room was curated.

This partnership has grown and developed, helping to shape the museum's future out-reach and community programmes, as well as enabling the CTWN to become a leading advocate for Traveller issues in Cork City. In this presentation, **Daniel Breen** will explore this evolving relationship and how it has influenced the museum's interactions with other diverse community groups such as the LGBTQ+, The Cork Hebrew Congregation and Cork's African community. What had started as a temporary exhibition to mark Cork's role as the European Capital of Culture in 2005 has blossomed into an important and highly influential collaboration, that has had an impact on operations and the staff of Cork Public Museum.

In 2023, the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) created the new role of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Executive – Public Engagement, appointing **Melissa Ndakengerwa** to this position. In this short presentation, she will highlight how she is fostering collaborations with diverse audiences and communities and share insights from events held during the Summer at IMMA and Earth Rising programmes, as well as reflect on how this role has benefitted the organisation internally.

The Northern Ireland War Memorial (NIWM) has developed LGBTQ-themed programming since 2022, including tours of the museum, talks and social media posts telling the stories of queer people during the Second World War. Annual events such as LGBTQ+ History Month and Belfast Pride have become a regular part of the museum's calendar and have provided opportunities to engage with new audiences.

In this presentation, **Michael Fryer** will discuss how the NIWM has made efforts to increase the diversity of its offering, fostering its values of authenticity and showing respect for all. He will also share his thoughts on how the wider museum sector in Northern Ireland has recently engaged with LGBTQ+ history, reflecting a more inclusive approach to how this area is represented in museums across the region.

Session III: Implementation Take Aways and Practice Toolkits

In this presentation **Leon Diop** will discuss how the Arts Council aims to help organisations position EDI in their work to ensure this is a critical function of the organisation and impacts positively on both the capacity of the organisation and quality of the Arts.

Taking a deep dive into the Arts Council's EDI Toolkit for organisations, Leon will share the best ways to use the toolkit and answer any questions you may have to help it operate in your organisation.

Gráinne Pollak will present the context and learnings of the process involved in developing and launching the groundbreaking AMPLIFY: A Call for Transformative Action report, published by Safe to Create in July 2024.

AMPLIFY was undertaken to gather as much intersecting information as possible on the lived experiences of disabled artists and arts workers, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and artists and arts workers from a minoritised racial or ethnic background. A separate strand of research was undertaken to understand the experiences of intellectually disabled (ID) artists.

The research was developed in close, ongoing, and in-depth consultation with individuals and organisations from these communities over the course of 18 months, with more than 500 artists and arts workers participating in the study, from a diverse range of art forms, including visual arts, theatre, film, music, literature, and dance.