



visual artists ireland

the representative body for
visual artists in Ireland providing
practical support in all art forms

Advocacy Report – Visual Artists Ireland

Visual Artists Ireland is the primary organisation dedicated to the advocacy and representation of Visual Artists in Ireland at National, Local, and Community level. We take on the key issues that concern professional artists in relation to their status, rights and careers.

- We monitor policies and undertake research into issues that have an effect on the life and career of visual artists.
- We represent the interests of individual artists on a one to one basis in relation to specific, once-off, or on-going issues with a critically acknowledged confidential service that is provided through our Help Desk. This is available to all visual artists and is supported by industry specialists working in the area of law, finance, or mediation.
- We operate a programme of regional and international representation through appointed artist representatives and have a policy of building strategic partnerships with other organisations so as to be able to represent the broad ranging needs of individual visual artists in a comprehensive manner.
- We operate a series of special interest groups who take on key issues that directly affect the Status of the Visual Artist in Ireland. Key groups include consultation fora on topics such as:
 - The Social, Economic, and Fiscal Status of the Visual Artist in Ireland. This document continues to be a constant reference as it has baselined measurements for the effectiveness of initiatives to support artists in their lives and careers;
 - Social Welfare - Leo Varadkar TD and Heather Humphreys TD announced the details of new arrangements to make it possible for artists and writers to access social welfare supports. After a long campaign and detailed discussions with the Departments, VAI's definition of a professional artist (membership criteria) were agreed as the criteria to be used by Social Protection. Visual Artists will be required to have Professional Membership of VAI as one of the mandatory stipulations for accessing the Job Seekers Allowance Scheme;
 - Health & Safety Practices - With the increase of pressure from regulations and changes in the law surrounding Health and Safety, Child Protection, etc, Visual Artists are increasingly being asked to comply with a range of practices for which they have little or no preparation. VAI has worked with the HSA to develop a series of online tools that will facilitate

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[IE]; Dónall Curtin [IE]; Michael
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Mary Ruth Walsh [IE]

compliance. This, in parallel to our Professional Development programme, will be rolled out as part of our 2018 projects;

- Artists Rights & Justice: Censorship; Copyright, Artists Resale Right - VAI collaborates in the area of **Artists Rights & Justice** through our membership of Culture Action Europe, where we occupy a seat on the steering group. ARJ members represent around 30 EU and international associations, NGOs and networks from arts, free speech and human rights sectors. In 2017, we completed a published review of ARJ concerning Censorship in Ireland, and have made representation to the Department concerning changes required to Statutory Instruments which cover the Artists Resales Right. It is worth noting that in 2018 Ireland held a referendum which removed Blasphemy from our constitution. Seditious and Indecent remain as points of concern;
- Artists & Education, Arts in Education: STEAM – In 2017, we made a representation to the Royal Dublin Society Science Committee regarding a move from a focus on STEM to STEAM. This representation was made recognising their role in the promotion of Science subjects in schools. The decision to uphold our representation has been made with immediate effect. The first change will take place in March 2019 with the inclusion of the Arts as a strand in Science Blast, the rebranded Primary Science Fair in Dublin;
- Working Environment: Studios & Non-Studio – 2017 was our final year delivering the Arts Council Work Spaces Scheme. In 2017, we built upon our 2016 report regarding artists needs regarding workspaces and will initiate a project for 2018/2019 that will look at demand versus supply across Ireland. We are also working with At Home Studios Programme which supports artists without studios, and look to widening this engagement in 2018;
- Public Art Commissioning & Delivery – In 2017 we continued to monitor best practice in the advertising of public art commissions. We will keep this under review and have commissioned a research article on the topic for delivery in 2018;
- Payment Guidelines for Visual Artists in Ireland – In 2017 we continued to offer guidance in the implementation of the Payment Guidelines. Creative Ireland, a government agency for the promotion of culture has adopted as standard the right for artists to be treated equitably as a condition of their funding.



Noel Kelly
Chief Executive Officer / Director