

LIVING ART PROJECT

Project Outline for Primary Schools: Artist Residency Programme

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Wexford County Council (WCC) and Wexford Arts Centre (WAC) in partnership with the Arts Council invite applications from interested Primary Schools to partake in an innovative Artist Residency Programme commencing September 2013.

The mission statement of the **Arts Department of Wexford County Council** (WCC) is to improve the quality of life for the citizens of County Wexford by enabling people to engage in high quality arts experiences and by stimulating and supporting standards of excellence among artists in their practice.

Youth Arts is a key context for investment and is prioritised in Wexford County Council's Arts Strategy 2011 – 2015:

'Youth Arts provides opportunities for young people to explore issues of significance and to experience high quality art practices in a safe and appropriate environment. It provides a platform to enhance a young person's development by cultivating individual expression regardless of background.'

Consequently, Wexford County Council has led a pro-active approach to the development of youth arts within Co. Wexford. Programme supports include youth drama, youth film, youth dance and thirteen years of an Art in Education programme called *Art Alongside*.

Following a phase of critical research of its programme, the Arts Department of Wexford County Council is delighted to roll out a new Art in Education programme called the *Living Art Project*. Via the *Living Art Project* an artist devises and implements an enlivened and experiential arts project in collaboration with students and teachers in schools throughout County Wexford. Schools will be asked to contribute 15% to the cost of programme and WCC will invoice for this amount at the commencement of the project. The additional 85% of the cost of the programme will be funded by the Arts Department of Wexford County Council and the Arts Council.

Wexford County Council, via the Arts Department, has provided funding to Wexford Arts Centre to deliver this service. **Wexford Arts Centre** (WAC) has delivered a vibrant arts programme to the Wexford community since 1974. Recognizing the importance of the visual arts within the overall programming of the arts centre, WAC developed a clear identity for its visual arts activity and since 2006, an innovative strategy plan was implemented with emphasis on promoting contemporary art practice and participation. This led to the development of a visual arts policy which has enhanced WAC's profile as a leading visual arts centre on a local and national level, and has enabled the delivery of a multifaceted, high quality exhibition and education programme.

WAC is acutely aware that today more than ever the arts are needed by young people as a forum for expression, communication, exploration, and cultural and historic understanding. Research confirms that arts education strengthens the child's ability to problem solve, enhancing critical reasoning skills with emphasis placed on using imagination and creative thinking to formulate and hone ideas. Learning through the arts can also serve as a crucial motivating tool for children who are not naturally inclined to more academic modes of teaching. Motivation is critical in terms of identifying and attaining both short and long-term goals. Together with the collaborative nature involved in many art processes, there is potential for the child to develop essential skills in relation to decision-making and clear communication. Regular participation in the arts also develops self-discipline and the knowledge that to undertake and produce work requires sustained effort and in many cases, multiple revisions.

In order to further develop existing education programmes, WCC and WAC has consolidated their existing partnership to create the *Living Art Project* which will launch in September 2013, and will be an

The *Living Art Project* is funded by the Arts Department of Wexford County Council, The Arts Council and participating schools. The project is administered by Wexford Arts Centre.

important step in the advancement of the arts in educational contexts.

The ***Living Art Project*** presents a real opportunity for children/adolescents to fully engage with processes of contemporary visual art practice while specifically utilising the progress of a practicing visual artist's work as the catalyst for this engagement.

In order for a school to meaningfully engage with the project and artist/s, and to allow the time needed for the artist/s and children to develop their practice, under the structure of the *Living Art Project* an **Artist Residency Programme** will take place in four primary schools in the County beginning September/October 2013.

Primary schools are invited to submit expressions of interest in participating in the Artist Residency Programme by providing an overview of work undertaken in the area of visual arts education and outlining potential areas of investigation.

Visual artists will in turn be invited to apply to the project detailing their work practices and experience in the appropriate area of engagement.

Based on the expressions of interest received from each school, artists will be short-listed and selection will be determined by the schools needs and areas of interest. The content of the work with the school will be determined by the artist, in accordance with the needs outlined by that school.

During the school residency, the selected artist will work for four hours a week for a total of fifteen weeks over the school year. It is intended that a gallery visit to Wexford Arts Centre and a tour of Wexford County Council's Art Collection will be integrated into this time frame. These visits will include a talk and/or workshop on the artwork in-situ and will serve to instill a sense ownership in these public venues. In order to work with schools in areas of economical or geographical disadvantage, visits may also be facilitated at alternate cultural venues in the County.

In addition to the residency and in order to monitor the effectiveness of the *Living Art Project* on an ongoing basis and ensure the artist's practice is developing and that the methods and content of engagement are relevant to the students, a mentorship programme whereby an established artist/curator will critique the artist's engagement with the school will run alongside each residency.

The programme will culminate in an exhibition of work from students and artists from all participating schools at Wexford Arts Centre in March/April 2014. This is of particular importance as not only do students have the opportunity to benefit from the detailed guidance of such a programme, they also will see their work realised and exhibited in an art gallery context.

The establishment of the *Living Art Project* provides a valuable educational opportunity for primary schools in County Wexford. If you feel the project is something your school would like to participate in please fill out the attached expression of interest form as fully as possible and return it no later than **5pm Friday 10th May 2013**. School selection will be based on the response to project brief and the geographic spread.

Should you require any further information on the *Living Art Project* please contact Catherine Bowe, Visual Arts Manager, Wexford Art Centre on 053 9123764 or email catherine@wexfordartscentre.ie. Alternatively you can visit the website www.wexfordartscentre.ie in order to learn more about the centre's visual art programme.

For further information on Wexford County Council's full arts programme please visit www.wexford.ie/arts or call 053-9196441 / email arts@wexfordcoco.ie.

