

Artlink 2005 Programme:

The following areas have been identified as programme priorities for 2005:

1. An increased focus on long term developmental projects with a concentrated range of groups, including previous and current partners – adults with dependencies/disabilities, marginalised people and young people and children living in isolated rural locations and border areas.
2. Building on existing partnerships and developing new relationships with appropriate arts organisations and cultural bodies, with the aim of developing collaborative projects and exchanges and the production of best practice case studies. Explore creative forms of documentation and monitoring, subject to available resources.
3. Research into site-specific locations as a basis for creating artwork in specific contexts, including the use of an exhibition space in conjunction with partners. Artlink has secured the use of an additional exhibition venue within the Inishowen peninsula for 2005, which will allow for the piloting of a contemporary space for innovative projects and artist led initiatives.
4. Maintain continuing interest and attract new community participants to classes and courses, development of areas such as darkroom based photography and ceramic sculpture. The database of artist facilitators to be revised and extended if possible, and research conducted into artists considering residency projects in the North West.
5. Strategic review of the organisation, aims, objectives, medium and long term planning. Areas for review will include infrastructure, resources and staffing, partnerships and collaboration, international networking and services for artists. The review will be undertaken internally, with current staff, artists and volunteers and Artlink Board Directors. The review will primarily be a function of the Board of Directors, and will be begun in 2005.

These areas of priority are a combination of the response to external demands made of the Artlink programme, and the subsequent wide ranging participatory activities, and the need internally within the organisation to develop our strengths strategically. Areas of practice encompass developmental programmes, partnerships and collaborations with artists and others, projects taking place within a public context, the contribution to national and international discussions around visual arts and socially engaged practice and our professional relationship with artists.

1. An increased focus on long term developmental projects with a concentrated range of groups:

Worklink, an organisation for adults with mental health issues, based in Moville, Letterkenny and Buncrana, have begun their second programme at the Artlink Studios. In 2004 the group worked with four artists over 20 weeks, culminating in an exhibition at Artlink and in their own premises. The 2005 programme will also run for 20 weeks and involve a number of artists and artforms, including painting, drawing, photography, textile and print, ceramics and sculpture.

St Johnston and Carrigans Resource Centre provides programmes for the rural community in this border area. Following a series of workshop programmes with young people aged 7 to 11 in 2003 and 2004, Artlink artists have facilitated a four week outreach programme in February 2005 in the Centre based on 'Dreams and Designs' of the young people involved, using photography, hand made slides, drawing and textile printing, all bound into simple individual books. The second programme with this group begins in March.

Cashel Na Cor is a centre for independent living for adults with physical and mental disabilities in Inishowen. Artlink has begun a ten week outreach programme in the centre, working with a small group, a number of whom have high dependency, including blindness, paralysis and limited speech. As with a previous project in 2003 the completed works will be exhibited.

Advocates for Personal Potential, a group of adults with visual impairment and blindness have recently completed an eight week programme of ceramics, facilitated by three artists.

The Pushkin Trust has again invited Artlink to facilitate a series of workshops during the Baronscourt Days in March and April, working with children from schools across the Republic and Northern Ireland.

2. Building on existing partnerships and developing new relationships:

All of the above groups and organisations have been involved in Artlink projects and programmes prior to 2005.

Following a successful application to Leargas/British Council, Artlink is collaborating with Wheelworks, a Belfast based organisation that engages young people aged 5-25 across Northern Ireland in creative projects using visual arts, animation, music technology and digital processes. The project will involve a rural national school and an urban primary school in an exchange based on traditional and digital art processes. The project will include an exhibition and publication. The Wheelworks team of artists will bring the 'Art Cart' a fully equipped digital imaging and sound recording studio, to Donegal for the first time for this project. Artlink will involve the 'Even Break' scheme

for National Schools in geographically isolated rural communities, in this project. (Dates to be confirmed)

3. Research into site-specific locations as a basis for creating artwork:

The research for 'Headland' an ambitious project planned for 2006, will continue in 2005, developing work already undertaken by the curators Francis McKee and Martha McCulloch in Inishowen and Glasgow. Artists curated for the project will make their initial visit to the area in 2005, and potential locations and sites will form part of their itinerary. Further funding for Headland will be researched and applied for in 2005.

'Signal' is the second project in the 'Beacon, Signal, Headland' programme that invites artists to respond to the social, historical and contemporary context of the Inishowen area, within their own areas of practice and concern. Artlink has made successful funding applications to IRDL and Donegal County Council for the Signal project, which will open on March 31 2005. The exhibition will take place in the converted military hospital that forms part of the complex of buildings at Dunree Military Museum. Following the success of 'Beacon' in this venue in 2003 Artlink has negotiated the use of this space for 2005, as a pilot exhibition venue.

4. Maintain continuing interest and attract new community participants:

When the refurbishment of the darkroom is completed in May Artlink will advertise a new photography course aimed at beginners and also catering for experienced photographers who wish to access the facilities.

Nightclasses for adults in oil painting, life drawing and painting the figure are continuing through winter 2005 and will resume again for the autumn season in October.

The school tour season will take place in April/May/June in the Artlink top and basement studios, attracting national schools from throughout the North West and Northern Ireland to workshops in printmaking and ceramics facilitated by local professional artists.

The summer programme for children will take place in July. Children will experience a number of artforms in themed visual arts activities, culminating in an informal display of artwork in the Artlink studios.

5. Strategic review of the organisation, aims, objectives, medium and long term planning:

The Director of Artlink will begin this process with the Directors of Artlink Board in 2005, at an initial meeting in March. It is hoped that a framework for the strategic review of the organisation and areas of programming can be timetabled over the year at this meeting, and we will update the Arts Council accordingly of our progress following these series of meetings.