

## Riverbank Arts Centre - Activity Report 2021



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*Image of artist-in-residence Dan Colley & company (photo Em Ormonde)*

# INTRODUCTION - WHAT IS RIVERBANK?

Riverbank Arts Centre is the county arts centre based in Newbridge, Co. Kildare, funded by The Arts Council and Kildare County Council. Riverbank Arts Centre works in partnership with international, national and local artists to deliver an accessible and consistently high quality arts programme in an intimate environment. We provide a multi-disciplinary programme which includes theatre, cinema, comedy, music, dance, workshops and visual arts.

With a dedicated children's gallery and programming of high quality theatre and workshops for younger audiences, Riverbank is also committed to promoting early engagement with and access to the arts.

Riverbank Arts Centre is a producer and co producer of new work. We work closely with visual artists and theatre artists to develop and present work, with a particular focus on arts experiences for young people. We commission exhibitions, host residencies and have presented world premieres of work by leading theatre companies including Theatre Lovett, Monkeyshine, Moonfish, Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Company, Branar Téatar do Pháistí, Collapsing Horse, and Super Paua.

**2021:** Riverbank Arts Centre presented an online programme of arts events and activities from January- August (due to Covid safety restrictions) and focussed on artist development and support as a strategic priority throughout the year. In line with Government guidelines and easing of restrictions, Riverbank Arts Centre **reopened our McKenna Gallery** in June and our venue **reopened for live events on 10th September, 2021.**

In 2021, Riverbank Arts Centre:

- ⇒ Presented live events including exhibitions & theatre, music, literary and family events
- ⇒ Produced/Co-Produced **two national tours - A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings** (12 venues & festivals - Sept to Dec) and **Pure Mental** by Keith Walsh, directed by Janet Moran (13 venues - Nov to Dec).
- ⇒ Presented a comprehensive programme for schools comprising an interactive **Whiteboard Programme** and **live events in the venue** which **6,000 school children** took part in.
- ⇒ Supported artists as part of our residency programme, ranging from Multi-Annual residencies to short term development residencies.

## PRESENTATION - MUSIC, THEATRE, CINEMA, LITERATURE

Riverbank Arts Centre presented an online programme of events from January- August and relaunched a live events programme in September 2021.

**MUSIC:** Live events included **Esposito Quartet**; world-renowned singer **Iarla Ó Lionáird** in a dynamic new trio featuring **Úna Monaghan & Kevin Murphy**; **Cassiopeia Winds**; **Eimear Crehan** (music bursary recipient); **Kit Downes' Dreamlife of Debris**.



Our streamed/online **music** programme included a partnership with **Music Network** on three concerts - **Cello Quartet**, **10 String Symphony** & **Patrick Rafter & Fiachra Garvey**.

**THEATRE:** The return to live theatre included the **World Premiere of Pure Mental** by Keith Walsh, directed by Janet Moran; **Fight Night** by Aonghus Óg McAnally, **Seven Ages of Mam** by Pauline O'Driscoll; **A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings** directed by Dan Colley; **Heather** by Liam Halligan; **Arán & Im**, a theatrical performance/installation by Manchán Magan.



**Online programme of theatre in 2021 included:**

Streamed/online productions including **Mustard** by Eve O'Connor (Fishamble), **Tom Crean - Antarctic Explorer** by Aidan Dooley, **Sister Black** by Maggie Hanlon and **Dalloway** by Dyad Productions.

We conducted exit surveys on all productions - we received 67 responses to Tom Crean survey and excellent feedback including:

- **Yes, I enjoyed the performance very much- 97%**
- **Yes, the streamed version is of high quality and works well - 92.4%**
- **Certainly interested in booking another online theatre performance: 80.3%**
- [Full Tom Crean Audience Feedback report here>>](#)

**CINEMA:** Riverbank's cultural cinema programme included **ANOTHER ROUND** which reunites Mads Mikkelsen with director Thomas Vinterberg, **NOMADLAND** Chloé Zhao's multiple award-winning feature starring Frances McDormand, **REDEMPTION OF A ROGUE** acclaimed new Irish cinema starring Aaron Monaghan, **ANNETTE** Leos Carax's madcap musical starring Marion Cotillard and Adam Driver, and **LIMBO**, Ben Sharrock witty and poignant portrayal of asylum seekers on a remote Scottish island.



**LITERATURE:** In person events included two LIVE network collaborations, Booker Prize winner **Douglas Stuart** in conversation with novelist/poet **Elaine Feeney; Republic of Shame with Caelainn Hogan** featuring Noelle Brown, Hally, Jess Kavanagh & Terri Harrison; in October Riverbank partners with **KILDARE READERS FESTIVAL** to present five live events including **The Alphabet of Birds with Sara Baume** and Luke Cassidy's **Iron Annie Cabaret**.



Online activities included hosting **Donal Ryan** as 'virtual writer in residence' with a book club based in Kilcullen (see Outreach section for details) and the support of NOMAD interview with novelist **Patrick McCabe**. In addition, we presented an in-person **outdoor poetry reading** and workshop in the Japanese Gardens with **poet Nell Regan**, from **A Gap in the Clouds** her a new translation (with James Hadley) of Ogura's 100 Poems by 100 Poets, one of the most important collections of poetry in Japan.

**COMEDY:** Our comedy programme at Riverbank Arts Centre invariably results in sell-out shows and provides an audience development opportunity to place Riverbank Arts Centre on the radar of Kildare audiences seeking a good night out - in addition comedy often brings a younger /first-time audience to the arts centre. Given covid safety measures/social distancing requirements, most comedy acts programmed for 2021 were rescheduled to Spring 2022.

**ONLINE WORKSHOPS** We presented a series of **online craft workshops** (via ZOOM) from January- May at accessible prices (€10/€20 including materials posted to people's homes) which proved particularly popular during the lockdown period - combining participants' need to connect with new people and their creativity at a challenging, isolating time. The workshops had capacity attendance - in most instances we added extra workshops due to demand:

- Introduction to Wire Sculpture with Glenn Gibson**
- An Introduction to Hand Weaving with Naoimh Larkin**
- Ceramic Art Inspired by Nature with Marta Golubowska**
- Crochet for Beginners with Helen Whiteley**

We conducted exit surveys for all the workshops - here is a sample of the feedback received:

- *Naoimh Larkin in particular was a great teacher, very patient and thorough and the fact that the workshop was over two evenings was a bonus as it gave us the opportunity to practice during the week and Naoimh answered any questions we had.*
- *The workshops were great value for money and the kits arrived in good time and contained everything I needed. It was like Christmas opening the parcels.*
- *Learning a skill I've always admired. Would definitely do more classes*
- *The interaction was great and it was lovely to feel part of a class again although it was virtual.*
- *Loved working with the materials and making something to be proud of.*

## VISUAL ART

**MCKENNA GALLERY 08/06-30/07**



We reopened our McKenna Gallery on Tuesday, 8th June to present **PORTAL** - an exhibition by **Tina Claffey**, award-winning nature photographer.

**“The title of my exhibition ‘PORTAL’ is a reference to the Irish for bog ‘portach’, and also for its reference as a portal or gateway to another world. I specialise in close up, or ‘macro’ photography, which forces me to slow down, and truly observe the tiny flora and fauna within the living carpet of the bog.”** TINA CLAFFEY [PRESS RELEASE HERE>>](#) [Video of PORTAL>>](#)

**MCKENNA GALLERY 01/09 - 20/10**

**Quarantine Project by Patricio Cassinoni with Nyree Yergainharsian**

***70 photos in 70 days, made entirely at home while in lockdown during a global pandemic.***

Quarantine Project is a time capsule from one of the most unique periods of recent history.

**Patricio Cassinoni** is an Argentinian visual artist based in Dublin since 2006. His main areas of practice are photography, videography, and painting. His work has been shown in numerous art galleries and festivals worldwide including Kronos Festival Barcelona, SO Fine Art Editions in Dublin and Galleria Fernando Pradilla in Madrid.

**Nyree Yergainharsian** is an Irish theatre maker and actor with Armenian heritage.

After graduating TCD BA Acting in 2008,

Nyree co-founded The Company theatre co, with whom she devised, produced, and performed award winning productions nationally and internationally to critical acclaim. Her latest work Lobsters is a fully hybrid theatre film about making connections. She has been an associate artist of Project Arts Centre since 2009. Quarantine is her first collaboration on a photography series.



[VIDEO of QUARANTINE PROJECT>>](#)




## Pop-up Gallery 06/09-30/09

### NOMADIC SERIES: CAPTURING MOMENTARY IMAGES

- an exhibition by Olga Anacka

This exhibition is a record of artist Olga Anacka's experience of the last 18 months, a time when the artist returned to her regular art practice. In this body of work, the artist expresses feelings and thoughts about experiencing the real. Perception is limited by the intellectual associations built upon societal codes and values. Olga Anacka attempts to establish such visual codes that are distinct to her, and the work is infused with references to nature and her Slavic heritage.

**Olga Anacka** was born in Poland where she studied visual arts specialising in painting, graphic, sculpture, and art teaching. She graduated from University of the Arts in Poznan in 2004, and later won an honourable mention in Olsztyn Art Biennial 2005, was shortlisted for Celeste Prize 2011 in Rome and 2012 in New York. Olga has lived in Ireland since 2006, she moved to Newbridge in 2017.  [Video of CAPTURING MOMENTARY IMAGES>>](#)



## Pop-up Gallery 22/10 -30/12

### KARE PORTRAITS by Claire Murphy

This exhibition is a result of a collaborative project between artist Claire Murphy and KARE, an organisation that provides support to people who have an intellectual disability and their families. Between May and June 2021, the artist met via video with 30 individuals who are supported by KARE. During the video calls, Claire chatted with participants and drew their portraits. The process was an enriching experience for both the artist and the participants. During the online sessions, the participants spoke to the artist about their lives, and their experiences through lockdown, they sang and laughed together, discussed music, hobbies, family, friends, relationships, pets, all the while enjoying watching their portraits being drawn.



**Claire Murphy** is a Kildare based visual artist. She studied Art Education in NCAD, and works in the disability sector. Her work includes portraiture, landscape and figurative painting and drawing. She is interested in using traditional drawing and painting skills to render form and capture likeness, and to catch some elements of the sitter's personality.

## MCKENNA GALLERY

### Beneath / Beofhód – an exhibition by Shane Hynan

5 November - 23 December, 2021

'*Beneath / Beofhód*' is an ongoing photographic series examining the degraded raised bogs of the Irish midlands, and the communities connected to them. This project contemplates peat harvesting and turf cutting from a local and human perspective, often lost in a polarised climate change debate. It documents the decline of Ireland's working relationship with bogs while contemplating what our modern landscapes say about us. *Beofhód*; an Irish word translating as 'life beneath the sod', allows our modern excavations on bogs, to be re-imagined as a metaphorical archaeology of knowledge and legacy, unearthing the histories and memories held within bogs and people.



**Shane Hynan** is a landscape and social documentary photographer. His photographic work is project based with a research and anthropological approach focusing on rural Ireland's dwindling connection with the land and the old ways. In 2020 Shane Hynan was awarded the Emerging Visual Artist Solo Exhibition Bursary Award, and the Gill Berry Visual Artist Bursary Award, through the Kildare Arts Service. He has also received Arts Council funding to continue developing his practice around bogs, rural Ireland and the built environment.

Riverbank Arts Centre hosted several events to coincide with this exhibition - a launch event, three artist tours of the exhibition and a panel discussion with **Shane Hynan**, **Nuala Madigan** (CEO Irish Peatland Conservation Council), **Eamonn Mulvihill**, (former Principal and teacher of History and English in Kildare with a keen interest in local history landscape and heritage) and Chair: **Lucina Russell** (County Arts Officer, Kildare County Council).



**Beneath | Beofhód** was supported by Kildare County Council Arts Service and Riverbank Arts Centre's 'Emerging Visual Artist Bursary Award', which Shane was awarded in 2020. The Emerging Visual Artists Bursary is a collaboration between Kildare County Council Arts Service and Riverbank Arts Centre which enables the first major solo exhibition by an emerging artist. Previous recipients include Brenda Kearney, Marta Golubowska, Noel Hensey, Michelle McBride and Isobel Egan.

## FAMILY PROGRAMME

Presenting work of excellence for young audiences is a strategic priority for Riverbank Arts Centre. In addition we work closely with visual artists and theatre/dance artists to create and develop exemplary arts experiences for young people.

In September 2021, we reopened for live events and the family programme includes the remount of **A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings**, with Riverbank as co-producers of the National Tour to 12 venues and festivals (see p.16 TOURING for more details), Kyle Riley's **Little Folk**, Ceol Connected's **TREEHOUSE**, three shows by Anna Newell in collaboration with the Network for Extraordinary Audiences - **Shimmer** (new), **My Smile has Fallen Down** (new) and the return of **I Am Baba**. Our final family show for 2021 is the new work by Paul Curley, **Polar Bear & Penguin**.



Our online programme for young audiences included: **A Piece of You** by award-winning composer and performer Greg Sinclair - a **live** interactive performance; a private concert over Zoom in which Greg turns children's thoughts and feelings into an original music score. **Shenanigans ZOOM** series with Paul Timoney and Kyle Riley, featuring songs, crafts and many jokes! **Workshops** with Marta Golubowska (Create a Mood Book) and Future Makers Collective (Eco-Mindfulness).

Riverbank Arts Centre partnered with Super Paua and axis: ballymun on **Opowiadania Super Paua** - a series of audio stories for young people (aged 6-12) written in Polish or about Polish culture and experiences.

**Eight writers were commissioned to write original stories** as part of this programme. In collaboration with experienced directors, sound designers, and performers, Super Paua breathe life into the stories, experimenting with playful sounds and silly voices as well as beautiful music and poetic language, to suit the needs of each story. Finally, the stories are released as a free podcast. Riverbank Arts Centre and axis:Ballymun collaborated on a series of launch events for **Opowiadania Super Paua** in June 2021.



Riverbank Arts Centre is an active member of **two networks** who programme year round and across artforms for children.

**Short Works:** The focus of Short Works is on children aged between 2-12 years.

Riverbank Arts Centre is a member along with The Ark: A Cultural Centre for Children, Draíocht, Blanchardstown, Co. Dublin; Linenhall Arts Centre, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

**The Network For Extraordinary Audiences** is seven Irish venues coming together to commit strategically and in the long-term to programming and developing high quality arts experiences for underserved younger audiences, including babies, Early Years and children/young people with complex needs as a key part of their ongoing year-round programme.



## Education Programme at Riverbank Arts Centre

Riverbank Arts Centre works closely with Irish and international theatre companies, artists and co-producing partners, to present work particularly suited to schools.

**In 2019, 6,500 children from 41 schools attended events at Riverbank Arts Centre as part of a school trip.**

**In 2020/21, we introduced our Whiteboard Schools' Programme to support access to professional arts activities and engagement during Covid lockdown.**

**To date 4,500 children have taken part in events and workshops from their classroom.**

**In September 2021, we launched a multi-platform schools programme for Autumn/Winter. It is estimated that 6,000 Primary & Post Primary young people took part in an online or in-person arts event/activity presented by Riverbank Arts Centre in 2021.**



### Riverbank Arts Centre is committed to providing:

- An exemplary programme for schools across key artforms - Visual Arts, Theatre/Dance, Literature and Cinema
- Arts engagement opportunities that are accessible in terms of artistic content, presentation and pricing
- Classroom resource materials, to enhance the experience for young people and their teachers
- A friendly, welcoming experience for school groups in our venue
- Inclusive events which are welcoming and support the diverse academic, social, emotional, and communication needs of students
- A regular evaluation of our schools programme and individual events - we actively seek feedback from teachers, students and the artists we work with.



*'Riverbank Arts Centre has been so great and supportive of our school and indeed all schools in the locality and beyond. We are blessed to have such a wonderful facility on our doorstep. The standard of programming for children is superb and the effect on our young children is immeasurable!'*

**Teacher, Scoil Mhuire, Newbridge**

## Summary of Education Programme in 2021



From January-June, Riverbank Arts Centre presented a **Whiteboard Schools' Programme** beginning with online arts events/activities that could be used in a classroom setting or shared through school communication software such as Aladdin, Seesaw or Google Teams. Writer **Patricia Forde** read from her book, *Mise Agus An Dragún* in Irish (for **Seachtain na Gaeilge**) and also two of her popular

English-language picture books *Imagine* and *Fidget: The Wonder Dog*, We celebrated **World Book Day** with *Go Animal Crackers* - an online event with writer **Sarah Webb** and illustrator **Alan Nolan**. We presented a musical version of *The Stories of Hans Christian Andersen* by Irish company Verdant Productions Composer/musician **Greg Sinclair LIVE** on zoom for *CELLO, Nice to Meet You!* – an interactive introduction to the cello and graphic notation.



Award-winning (and Newbridge-born!) writer **Pádraig Kenny** introduced his new novel *The Monsters of Rookhaven* and talked about

monsters and why they frighten us so much. Saoirse Schad from Future Makers Collective presented *EARTH ACTS* - video workshops about climate change and being kinder to our planet.

In September 2021, Riverbank Arts Centre launched a multi-platform (online, live broadcast and live events) Primary Schools' Programme. Three leading children's writers **broadcast live from Riverbank stage** into classrooms - Sadhbh Devlin *Geansaí Ottó* (bilingual), Pádraig Kenny read from *The Monsters of Rookhaven* and Graham Tugwell led an interactive storytelling adventure **Greetings, Heroes!**



We partnered with **Super Paua**, creators of *The Lonsdale Project*, to offer a series of online workshops for **#ScienceWeek** and also presented bilingual storytelling workshops based on **Super Paua Stories/Scéalta Super Paua**. We presented an ongoing series of free online **Fighting Words Creative Writing Workshops** led by Peirina Campbell.

## Post-Primary

Riverbank Arts Centre's post-primary schools programme included our partnership with **IFI schools Programme** to present three screenings **Gagarine** (France, 2020. Directors: Fanny Liatard, Jérémy Trouilh), **Night Forest/Nachtwald** (Germany, 2021. Directors Andre Hörmann & Katrin Milhan) and **Los Lobos/Wolves** (Mexico, 2019. Director: Samuel Kishi).



We presented **Fighting Words Creative Writing Workshops** for Transition Year Groups, facilitated by Peirina Campbell and zine-making /Science Week workshops with **Super Paua**. In live events, **Ger Carey's** interactive & popular comedy performance for TY classes returns to the theatre.

In September, we will recommence our **gallery visits/tours** for all school groups, but particularly of relevance and importance to senior cycle art students. In addition, we provide engagement materials for our exhibitions for use in a classroom context. for In 2020, we offered direct encounters - tours & workshops - with visual artists including Michelle McBride (The State of RoY) and we look forward to facilitating these direct encounters, tours and workshops with visual artists in Autumn 2021.

## Creative Schools

In line with Riverbank Arts Centre's focus on connecting young people with arts and culture from an early age and its commitment to deepening relationships with local schools, participation in the Creative Schools programme is an excellent opportunity to help achieve our goals.

Creative Schools is a national programme which aims to put the arts and creativity at the heart of children's and young people's lives. From 2019-21, Alex Rosiak was appointed to the Creative Schools panel as a Creative Associate for two Kildare schools: **Kildangan NS** and **Naas Community School**. Participating schools work alongside a Creative Associate who helps them in developing their own Creative Schools plan to understand, foster and celebrate the arts and creativity in their school.



Creative Schools artwork in Riverbank Foyer

Alex Rosiak has been working alongside school co-ordinators and local artists on projects involving animation, visual arts and performing arts with an aim of integrating arts into the schools' annual planning and connecting them to the local network of arts and cultural infrastructure. as well as in creating long-term sustainable arts engagement plans for their classroom environment.

## Outreach & Engagement Activities

### **Yours Sincerely, Donal Ryan - April & May, 2021**

Riverbank Arts Centre and LIVE Network presented **Yours Sincerely, Donal Ryan** in April & May 2021 - an innovative letter exchange programme between the writer and 15 people. The group who took part was an amalgamation of two book clubs with connections to Woodbine Books in Kilcullen, coordinated by Mary Orford. **Donal Ryan** became their 'virtual writer in residence' for six weeks. Donal wrote six letters to the group and received 54 letters in reply over the six week period. The programme culminated in a ZOOM between Donal and the book club members on Friday, 29th May.



[\*\*FULL REPORT HERE>>\*\*](#)

### **Let's Talk About Art - May 2021** (as part of Bealtaine)

This event was designed for people in nursing homes and care settings. The four stage Azure methodology for dementia inclusive art looking were used: Observation, Description, Interpretation and Personal Connection. These sessions support positive ageing in Kildare: exploring, discussing and considering artworks from the Kildare Municipal Art Collection, through gentle, but structured conversation. The sessions were presented online to two nursing homes, facilitated by artist Vera McEvoy.



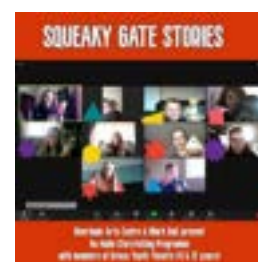
### **Connections Festival in association with National Theatre, UK - May 2021**

Riverbank Arts Centre partnered with NT Connections to showcase plays by three Irish youth theatre companies **Dramahouse, Kildare Youth Theatre and Ardclough Youth Theatre** from 27-29th May 2021. These plays were streamed online and were entirely free to access. **170** people booked to see the shows online and in addition young people took part in opening and closing zoom workshops.

[\*\*CONNECTIONS PROGRAMME HERE>>\*\*](#)

### **Squeaky Gate Stories: March -July, 2021**

Audio Storytelling with Mark Ball - six 90 minute long workshops were held with members of Griese Youth Theatre (aged 10-12) exploring, writing and recording an original audio story. A listening party was held outdoors in Ballitore in July, attended by family and friends of the young writers.





## LIMBO - screening and panel discussion

Riverbank Arts Centre partnered with Dublin International Film Festival to present a screening of LIMBO by Ben Sharrock on Monday 18th October, a witty and poignant film about wanting to belong. LIMBO tells the story of Omar (played by Amir El-Masry), a young Syrian musician stationed upon a fictional remote Scottish island, where he and a group of new arrivals await the results of their asylum claims.

The screening was followed by a Q&A - the panel included Zoryana Pshyk, Rosemary Kunene & Bulelani Mfaco all of whom had personal experience of Ireland's Direct Provision System and chaired by Liam Herrick (ICCL). Riverbank Arts Centre welcomed invited audience members from Eyre Powell DP Centre and also Hazel Hotel DP Centre (Monasterevin - bus provided) who took part in the discussions following the screening.



## GROOVE - a new show by Anna Newell Theatre Adventures

GROOVE is a 70's inspired theatre adventure for audiences of children and young people with complex needs created by Bray-based theatremaker Anna Newell. GROOVE is full of live harmony singing and immersive video and is for audiences of children and young people with complex needs. It has been designed to be very responsive to its audience members and so can accommodate a large range of ages and a diverse range of children and young people.

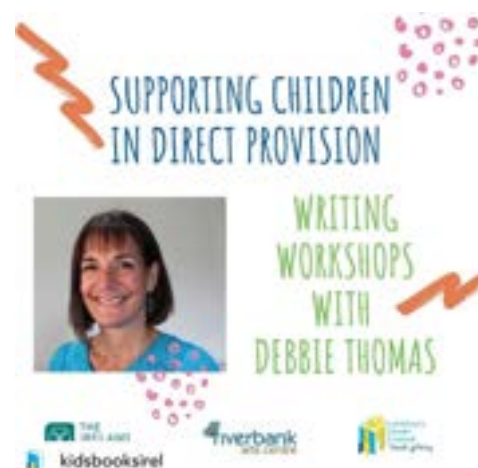
GROOVE was presented in [St Mark's School in](#)

[Newbridge](#) in late May/early June, supported by Riverbank Arts Centre and in partnership with [The Network For Extraordinary Audiences](#).



## Children's Books Ireland - Every Child a Reader Programme

Riverbank Arts Centre supported Children's Books Ireland to provide workshops and a library for Eyre Powell Direct Provision Centre.





## Artist Support Programme

Supporting artists and the creation of work is a strategic priority for Riverbank Arts Centre.

We offer a variety of artist-centred residency and bursary opportunities including:

- a multi-annual residency and bursary programme to develop artistic practice
- short term residencies (through Open Call)
- and once-off residencies for artists
- commissioning or co-commissioning of new work by individual arts or companies, for ongoing development, presentation, or touring.

These residencies and bursaries provide practical support to artists to make work but also serve to allow the venue to engage creatively with our audiences and wider community through workshops and work-in-progress sharings. In many cases, these residency programmes enable Riverbank Arts Centre and our artists to garner feedback from audiences which can shape the development of the work and enrich our audiences engagement with the artform.

### BURSARIES:

In May 2021 we announced the two recipients of the Riverbank Arts Centre Music Bursary - Kildare-based musicians **Eimear Crehan** and **Freya Monks**. The primary objective of this new bursary scheme is to provide opportunities for professional musicians to develop their practice and/or to create and develop new work. The two bursaries awarded as part of this programme comprise a cash bursary (**€5000**) and additional support-in-kind provided by Riverbank Arts Centre (space, mentorship etc). Following an open call in April, 40 applications were received from Kildare-based musicians and music artists. The standard was exceptionally high and Riverbank Arts Centre worked with an independent panel of music professionals (Cathal Synott & Farah Elle) to assess the applications. In addition to the bursaries, Riverbank Arts Centre will present Eimear Crehan in concert in 2021 and Freya Monks in 2022.



### COMMISSIONS:

Riverbank Arts Centre has commissioned Fizz&Chips to create ***Never Mind The Weather***, with the support of a commission award by The Arts Council.

***Never Mind The Weather*** is an outdoor performance for schools on the themes of adaptivity and resilience. The company developed the work via ZOOM in March and April. The creative team includes: Performers: LA Feeney & Orlaith Ní Chearra; Director: Martha Fitzgerald; AD & Dramaturg: Lindsey Woods; Sound Designer: Niall Clarke; Production Designer: Ellen Finnerty; Movement; Director: Niamh McGowan; Assistant Designer & Movement Director: Catherine Walsh and Producer: Orla Tubridy.



This new theatre work will be performed as an in-progress showing through the classroom windows of primary schools in Kildare.

## ARTIST RESIDENCIES

### Dan Colley - Multi-Annual Residency

Theatre-maker Dan Colley completed a 2-year artist residency hosted by Riverbank Arts Centre and at various locations in Co. Kildare which enabled:

- Research and development of three new theatre projects; **Lossless (now Lost Lear)**, **The Wren** and **Sugar Plum**
- Development of his own artistic practice through research and writing
- Development of the artistic practice of collaborating artists and providing paid employment opportunities for theatre artists and technicians throughout the residency period.

Speaking of his recent work on **Lost Lear** at Riverbank Arts Centre, Dan Colley says:

*“The process involves a lot of messing about with the source material in a rehearsal room with actors and musicians. We also have some of the more tactile elements of the design in the room with us; prototype puppets, costume, certain elements of the set and perhaps the video and lighting design. We call it playful exploration. Or serious play. It's a process that produces a lot of material - more than we could ever put in one play. Then, in a kind of parallel part of the process, we gradually hone that playfully created material into the final performance.”*

*This takes a lot of time and space - and that's what makes the Riverbank residency indispensable to the work. The residency was funded by the Arts Council, Riverbank and Kildare County Council. It buys space for me to do research, run community workshops, and time to work with collaborators on this playful exploration that eventually leads to new theatre being made.”*

Images from residency (photos by Em Omonde) :



## Theatre Lovett - Three week residency in August 2021

Riverbank Arts Centre supported **Theatre Lovett** in the creation of **The Teddy Bears' Picnic**, a new work for young audiences.

Cast and creative team included in this creation process included:

Writer – Louis Lovett (Joint Artistic Director)

Director – Louis Lovett

Cast – Julie Maguire and John Doran

Producer – Muireann Ahern (Joint Artistic Director)

Set Design – Molly O’Catháin

Lighting Design – Zia Bergin-Holly

Costume Design – Katie Davenport

Composer – Louis Lovett

Sound Design – Carl Kennedy

Stage Graphic Design – Kate Heffernan

Prop Maker – Sue Crawford

Theatre Lovett Associate Producer – Collette Haverty

Company Administrator – Aoife O’Beirne

Production Manager – Lisa Mahony

Stage Manager – Caoimhe Regan

Set Construction – Ger Clancy

Chief LX – Suzie Cummins

AV – Laura Rainsford



Photos by Ros Kavanagh

This residency period enabled the company to undertake a full tech of the new work, document/film the work in the theatre and present extracts live to a test family audience. This work will open at Riverbank Arts Centre in 2022, funding permitting.

## Darn Skippy Productions - September

Darn Skippy Productions were offered a short residency period to develop **Waterbirth**, a new play about motherhood and climate change. In addition Riverbank Arts Centre supported a work-in-progress presentation and creative workshop for audiences to engage with this new work and offer feedback to the artists.

Creative team for **Waterbirth**:

Written & Directed by Roseanne Lynch

Music & Musical Direction by Richard Lennon

Movement Direction by Rachel Ní Bhraonáin

Performed by Fiona Lucia McGarry, Rachel Ní Bhraonáin, Richard Lennon & Roseanne Lynch.



## LOCAL ARTS

Riverbank Arts Centre has a strong commitment to our local artists and arts organisations. While we were unable to host organisations such as Newbridge Drama Group and JuneFest in our theatre for live events, we found new ways of collaborating and connecting.

In June 2021, Riverbank Arts Centre presented **Songs From The Bridge**, an online series of Kildare musicians performing on the Riverbank stage as part of June Fest 2021. Curated by Stephen Connelly, the line-up featured Megan O'Neill, Roisin McAlinden and Appo and the musicians were interviewed by music artist, Tia Burke. **Songs From The Bridge** was presented over three nights on Riverbank Arts Centre's Facebook account, and then released on our YouTube platform - to date over 6,000 people have watched these recordings.



In July, we hosted a live broadcast of **Odd Theatre Company's** production of **The Last Five Years**, directed by Cian O'Dowd and performed by Keelin Kilduff and Daniel Ryan. Riverbank offered live broadcast expertise, marketing and box office support, and a short residency period in the theatre for the company to rehearse and tech the musical. The production received very positive feedback from audiences., many of whom were experiencing an online live broadcast for the first time.

In July we were delighted to welcome **PopUpArt Newbridge** and have 20 local artists exhibiting in our foyer. One of the artists was on hand each day during the exhibition. The PopUpArt Newbridge initiative is the brainchild of **Eilis Kavanagh**, a Newbridge-based landscape artist, who, in 2018, identified the need and provided an exhibition space for the wealth of talented Kildare-based artists to enable them to showcase their work to a wider audience.



## PRODUCERS/CO-PRODUCERS OF TOURING WORK

We were co-producers of **A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings** tour, Gabriel García Márquez’s darkly comic tale, brought to the stage for children and adults to share. Originally developed by the company as part of a residency at Riverbank in 2019, this award-winning production had sell out runs at Riverbank, Project Arts Centre and The Abbey Theatre.

The opening tour performances took place at Riverbank Arts Centre in September, followed by a tour to 12 venues and festivals.



[SEE TRAILER FOR TOUR>>](#)

Riverbank’s main role as co-producer was offering production support in the form of a full week in the venue technical rehearsals and financial administration/payroll services to the touring company for over **14 weeks**, supporting payments to 14 creative professionals and liaising with 12 venues hosting the performances.



for



## PURE MENTAL - NATIONAL TOUR



Riverbank Arts Centre produced and presented the **world premiere** of Keith Walsh’s debut play, **Pure Mental**, directed by Janet Moran, in November 2021, followed by a national tour to 15 venues across the country.

While Covid-related reduced audience numbers were inevitable, the tour received excellent feedback from audience members and significant national media coverage including RTE, Irish Examiner, Irish Times, Irish Mail on Sunday, Irish Independent.



[SEE VIDEO OF AUDIENCE FEEDBACK>>](#)

Quotes from reviews:

*“Walsh has an engaging personality & a fine stage presence...”*

*“an inspiring piece of positive thinking laced with humour...”*

*“Director & co-writer Janet Moran has a sharp eye for the comic potential in small details”*

## TEAM

**Acting Director & Programme Manager** Alexandra Rosiak (AD from August 2020)

**Marketing & PR Manager** Caroline Williams

**Box Office & FOH Manager** Theresa Davidson

**Technical Manager** Phil Jennings (up to Nov 2021)

**Technical Manager** Aidan Cooney (from Nov 2021)

**Venue Director** Linda Geraghty (Maternity Leave)



## BOARD

**Paul Davis - Chair**

**Maureen Bergin**

**Mona Considine**

**Thomas Hunter McGowan**

**Teresa Murray**

**Lucina Russell**

## NETWORKS

Riverbank Arts Centre is a member of Strollers, Nomad, Shortworks and the Network of Extraordinary Audiences touring networks.

## RIVERBANK ARTS CENTRE WORKS WITH THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL PROGRAMME

**PARTNERS:** Fighting Words, access>CINEMA, VMDIFF, Irish Writers' Centre, Words Ireland, Children's Books Ireland, The National Gallery, Laureate na nOg, Youth Theatre Ireland, First Fortnight, Culture Night, Music Network.

## FUNDERS

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Riverbank Arts Centre CLG Is a registered Charity (20074982) with Revenue Commissioners (CHY 19193)

