



KILKENNY
ARTS
FESTIVAL

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Director & CEO
KILKENNY ARTS FESTIVAL



Kilkenny Arts Festival

Background Information

- ▶ Founded in 1974, KAF is Ireland's oldest multi-disciplinary arts festival. Runs for 10 days in August each year.
- ▶ Grew from core of excellent classical music and literature programming. Now encompassing ten distinct 'strands.'
- ▶ Driven by local artistic expertise e.g. classical musicians, visual artists, writers, craft and design sector.
- ▶ Expertise with strong international connectivity through professional practice. Programme over 39 years has always had a strong international context
- ▶ Programming model has evolved but core offering remains constant: intimate experiences of excellent, innovative arts. Unique experiences of both established & emerging artists and arts practice. The place is a core aspect of what is created.
- ▶ 20,000 visitors, 400 artists, 135+ events, 35 venues and spaces across small medieval city.
- ▶ Kilkenny is unique: home to The Crafts Council of Ireland, The Heritage Council, National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny Castle etc.



Programming Model

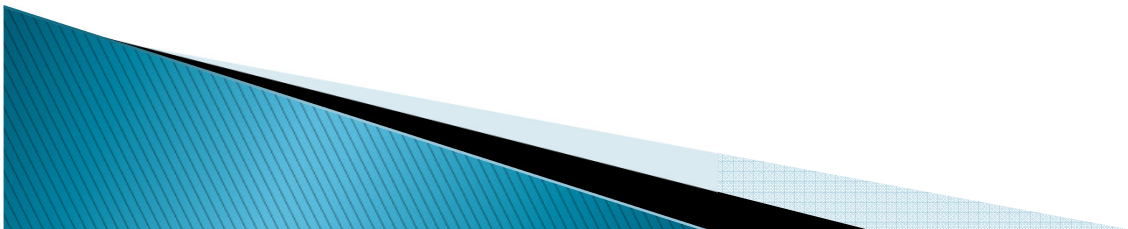
- ▶ Director & CEO works with team of Specialist Curators
- ▶ Music (jazz/world/trad) – Gerry Godley
- ▶ Music (Classical) – Susan Proud
- ▶ Music (WIRED) – Matthew Nolan
- ▶ Literature – Until recently Colm Toibín now Cormac Kinsella
- ▶ Visual Art – Josephine Kelliher
- ▶ Craft – Angela O’Kelly
- ▶ Theatre/Dance/Opera/Street/Children/Film curated by Director





Programme successes

- Literature – artist-led, broadened programming spectrum to include history, economics, current affairs. 2012 ‘Hot Potatoes.’
- 3 Music Strands!! – Classical, JWT, Wired developed specifically to draw new audience, younger demographic to festival e.g. *Spiritualized* in St. Canice’s.
- Craft programme with National Craft Gallery – high-quality craft and design synonymous with Kilkenny
- Theatre programme developed by Tom Creed – new ways to experience theatre, platform for exciting new voices in theatre making, role for the audience, lasting memorable experiences.





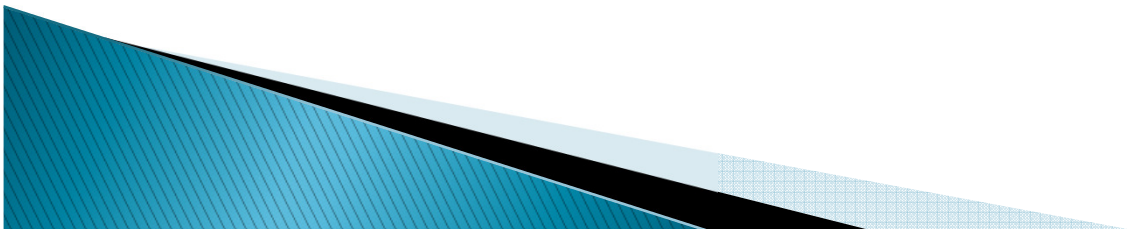
Why it works

- ▶ Credibility and specialism of curators
- ▶ Professional trust and camaraderie within the team
- ▶ Excellent connectivity with arts practice both emerging and established
- ▶ High level of trust between curators and audiences
- ▶ Specialist, high-quality programmes in each artform area
- ▶ Value for Money – professional goodwill within artforms/art sectors
- ▶ Excellent model for large festival with limited operational resources and lean business model



Challenges

- ▶ Reducing resources and competing ambitions
- ▶ Interdisciplinary programming
- ▶ Projects of scale





Other experiences

- Music programming in publicly funded MDA venues
- Local authority arts services – role of Arts Officer in ROI is broad and multi-faceted. There is no blueprint.
- Delivery of services that are bespoke, developed organically locally and respond to local resources and needs
- Louth: Strong professional theatre base and visual arts community.