



# Arts + Health: Check Up Check In 2023 Making Connections



presented by Réalta, the National Body for Arts + Health in Ireland  
at the Creative Life Hub, Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing (MISA)  
Wednesday 25 October 2023

TIME	ACTIVITY	FEATURING
9.00am	Registration & Networking Badgemaking	Tea/Coffee, sharing table Ciara Harrison, Artist
9.50am	Musical Opening	Musicians Emily Redmond & Luke Cosgrave
10.00am	Welcome & Setting the Scene	Roisin Nevin, Creative Life Co-ordinator, MISA Claire Meaney, Director, Réalta
10.10am	<i>Taking Care of Ourselves</i> Keynote Address	Daniel Regan, visual artist, consultant, and founder / director of the London-based Arts & Health Hub explores the myriad ways that we can care for ourselves in our work Q&A chaired by Claire Meaney, Director, Réalta
11.00am	Coffee break & networking	
11.20am	<i>Sticking Points: What to do when you get stuck</i> Four individual practitioners share challenges they have faced in their work/ practice and explore possible solutions	Dermot Reilly, Clinical Nurse Manager, Martha Whiteway Day Hospital Emma Finucane, Visual Artist & Educator Philip Cullen, Multidisciplinary Artist Alison Baker Kerrigan, Arts + Health Manager, Tallaght University Hospital Chaired by Fiona Smith, Arts in Health Programme Curator with Children's Health Ireland (CHI)
12.00pm	<i>In Two Minds</i> Case Study	Theatre artist Joanne Ryan presents her process of creating her extraordinary new ambitious and affecting play, exploring the realities of living with bipolar disorder; Chaired by Prof Brian Lawlor, Conolly Norman Professor of Old Age Psychiatry, Trinity College Dublin, and a Founding Director of the Global Brain Health Institute
12.50pm	Introduction to <i>Peer Exchange Workshop</i>	Emma Eager, Project Co-ordinator with Réalta, will outline the format for the afternoon's Peer Exchange Workshop
1.00pm	Hearty, Not Arty, Lunch	Provided by Soup Dragon
1.45pm	<i>Enhancing Collaboration between the Health and Arts Sectors</i> Peer Exchange Workshop  <i>This workshop is part of Expanding Arts in Healthcare, a national programme of work delivered by Réalta, in partnership with the HSE. The programme is supported by the HSE, the Arts Council, Creative Ireland and Healthy Ireland.</i>	This workshop seeks to promote mutual learning and collaboration, through the discussion of a number of key topics which emerged from a co-design process in 2022. Each workshop group will discuss the same topics. The workshop facilitators are: 1: Angela Rogers, Executive Director, Wales Arts, Health and Wellbeing Network (WAHWN) 2: Yvonne Cullivan, visual artist & educator 3: Tracy Breathnach, Programme Manager, WAHWN 4: William Nicholson, arts, health & wellbeing consultant

# Arts + Health: Check Up Check In 2023

## Making Connections

TIME	ACTIVITY	FEATURING
2.45pm	<i>Short break to change rooms</i>	
2.55pm	<p><b>What's My Practice?</b>            These workshops examine methodologies employed in collaborative/ participatory arts + health practice in Ireland, across a range of artforms.  <i>Workshops have been selected by attendees in advance</i></p>	<p><b>Workshop 1: Creative Pause</b>            With visual artist Catarina Araujo            Location: Davis Coakley Seminar Room A</p> <p><b>Workshop 2: Clinical Notes - Transforming the clinical environment into a creative space through musical connection</b>            With musicians Emily Redmond &amp; Luke Cosgrave            Location: Davis Coakley Seminar Room C</p> <p><b>Workshop 3: Making connections for mental health; making connections in research</b>            With researcher Saoirse Finn            Location: Davis Coakley Seminar Room B</p> <p><b>Workshop 4: Finding common ground</b>            With visual artist Ciara Harrison            Location: Creative Life Space</p> <p><b>Workshop 5: Giving voice to the self</b>            With writer Arnold Thomas Fanning            Location: MISA Seminar Room, 6th Floor</p>
3.55pm	Refreshment Break	Provided by Soup Dragon
4.10pm	Feedback on Peer Exchange Workshop	With workshop facilitators Angela Rogers, Yvonne Cullivan, Tracy Breathnach, William Nicholson. Chaired by Emma Eager, Réalta
4.25pm	<p><i>Arts + Health: Reflecting on our achievements and important next steps</i>            Closing Conversation</p>	With Saoirse Finn, Research Fellow at University College London and co-author of the 2019 WHO Report on the evidence of the role of the arts in improving health and wellbeing. Chaired by Prof Rose Anne Kenny, Regius Professor of Physic (Medicine), Chair of Medical Gerontology at Trinity College Dublin, founding Principal Investigator of The Irish Longitudinal study on Ageing (TILDA) & Director of MISA.
4.45pm	Wrap Up & Final Announcements	With Claire Meaney, Director, Réalta and Roisin Nevin, Creative Life Co-ordinator, MISA, joined by Tara Byrne, Arts Programme Manager, Age & Opportunity
4.50pm	Musical Farewell	The Bleeping Intern Choir Directed by Mr Michael McCartan



*Arts + Health: Check Up Check In 2023 is kindly supported by the Arts Council, the HSE and Creative Ireland*



Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme  
2017-2022



## Contributors | Keynote

### Daniel Regan

Daniel Regan works across the creative health sector as a visual artist, consultant, and founder and director of the London-based Arts & Health Hub, a not-for-profit organisation supporting artists and cultural producers in the arts and health sector to be the best they can be. Building on his own lived experiences and specialising in exploring complex and difficult emotional experiences, Daniel's practice focuses on the transformational impact of arts on mental health, and brokers dialogue around often taboo topics such as grief, self-injury, suicide and racism. Daniel delivers socially engaged projects and regularly exhibits and speaks at events across fine art, educational and clinical institutions in the UK and worldwide.



### Keynote Address | *Taking Care of Ourselves*

In his keynote address, Daniel Regan will consider the myriad ways that arts and health practitioners can be mindful of self-care within their work. Drawing on his decades-long art and socially engaged practice, which often involves complex subjects and vulnerable participants, Daniel will offer his perspective on this rewarding, yet sometimes heavy work.

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**Chair: Claire Meaney**, together with the Réalta team, has developed significant partnerships with national and international stakeholders to support the advancement of arts and health practice in Ireland. A passionate advocate for the sector, Claire has extensive experience of managing and delivering arts and health programmes in acute hospitals and community healthcare settings. She has been Director of Waterford Healing Arts (Trust) since 2017, prior to which she had been Assistant Director since 2007. Claire also project managed the national resource website [artsandhealth.ie](http://artsandhealth.ie) from its inception in 2011 until 2016. With a background in Fine Art, Claire also holds a Master's Degree in Arts & Heritage Management.



## Contributors | Sticking Points

### Dermot Reilly

Dermot Reilly is the Clinical Nurse Manager in the Martha Whiteway Day Hospital. Dermot and his colleagues look after people with later life functional and organic mental illness who reside in the Dublin South Central Mental Health Services for Older People. While they are based on the campus of St James's Hospital, their service is community facing. Dermot works as part of a multi-disciplinary team of nurses, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, social workers and admin staff. An artist has been part of the team for many years, and Dermot himself has worked for a number of years with Outlandish Theatre Platform, supporting them in their creative engagement with patients.



### Project Snapshot:

*"My sticking point is a reflection on the personal and professional challenges of developing a working relationship with Outlandish Theatre Platform, having had no experience of working with a theatre group, and no reference guides as to how to develop that relationship. I will explore the barriers to engagement with what was, to us, a novel discipline, and how at the core of developing a working relationship, we sought to explore our own strengths, culminating ultimately in the generation of a performance."*

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### Emma Finucane

Emma Finucane has been researching and making visual art in health contexts for over ten years. Most recently, Emma's art practice has led to a research residency in Crumlin Children's Hospital (2022/23), a new commission in Tallaght Hospital (2020), a residency with Other People's Practices (OPP) and the National Forensic Mental Health Service (2019). She has been commissioned and supported by the Arts Council, CREATE, Wicklow, Carlow, Fingal, Kildare, DLR and Cavan County Councils. Emma currently lectures in the NCAD School of Fine Art and in UCD on an Arts and Health Module that she instigated in UCD School of Nursing and Midwifery in 2015.



### Project Snapshot | FLOAT

*"FLOAT is an artwork that responds to time spent on Resort Residency Portrane 2020, building on research collected in 2019 at the OPP artist residency in Usher's Island, a community centre for recovered and recovering service users of the Central Mental Hospital (CMH). The CMH moved to Portrane in 2022."*

Please see pages 12-15 for further details of each of these projects

## Contributors | Sticking Points

### Philip Cullen

Philip Cullen graduated in Fine Art from Crawford College of Art and Design in the early 1990s. Having tested the water in a wide variety of occupations in Ireland and Australia, Philip set up a studio and home on his family farm in County Kilkenny. He has worked in participatory arts ever since and is a prolific multi-disciplinary artist. Philip delivers the Waterford Healing Arts programme in the Renal Dialysis Unit at University Hospital Waterford, and also works as an art therapist, having completed his MA in Art Therapy at Crawford. He also facilitates the Red Lead film group, which started as a drama group for men with acquired brain injury in 2014, and has co-ordinated their nine films to date.



### Project Snapshot

*“Working in a renal dialysis unit with chronically sick people is challenging. Relationships are developed with patients over many years and it is difficult when a person dies. Managing the requirements of the professional role and personal loss can be difficult and requires a variety of responses.”*

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### Alison Baker Kerrigan

Ali Baker Kerrigan is the Arts & Health Manager in Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin. Together with the TUH Arts Team, the diverse creative programme curates and delivers arts and health projects to improve patient care, promote the benefits of the arts in health and explore the therapeutic potential of the arts while building positive links with the local community. The programme focuses on three key areas: Participative Arts, Receptive Arts and Creative Arts Therapies, with a mission ‘to provide a creative arts and health programme specific to patient, staff and healthcare department needs, that improves the hospital experience by making arts accessible to all.’



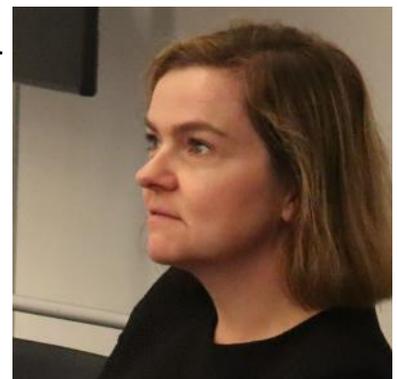
### Project Snapshot

*“The challenge of being both an organiser and a participant in an arts and health project like ‘The OsKaRs’ (for TUH healthcare staff) could be likened to a rollercoaster ride in a theme park. Approach with caution and strap yourself in. There will be highs, lows, fun, tears and laughter. But if you don’t try it... then you’ll never know.”*

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### Chair: Fiona Smith

Fiona is the Arts in Health Programme Curator with Children’s Health Ireland (CHI). She has worked in participatory and community arts settings in Ireland and the UK for almost 20 years. She has worked in CHI since 2018, with children and young people, healthcare partners, artists and arts organisations to plan and develop an integrated arts in health programme for the New Children’s Hospital and Out-Patient, Urgent and Emergency Care facilities. She is the current chair of the wonderful Arts + Health Co-ordinators Ireland network.



*Please see pages 12-15 for further details of each of these projects*

## Contributors | Case Study

### Joanne Ryan

Joanne Ryan is an award-winning Limerick-based theatre artist with a track record of making work that is inspired by lived experience, has a positive social impact and often sits at the intersection of arts and health. Joanne's theatre productions include *Eggsistentism* (2016), a multi award-winning solo, autobiographical show that charts her journey to a decision about motherhood while looking through the lens of Ireland's reproductive health history; *In Two Minds* (2023), an ambitious, affecting play inspired by her family's experience of bipolar disorder and informed by the experience of others; and the upcoming *We Are So Lightly Here*, which explores prescient issues around death and loss in Ireland. Joanne is currently Artist in Residence at Ormston House and Theatre Artist in Residence at Belltable | Lime Tree Theatre, both in Limerick. Joanne works as a mentor to artists across artforms with Minding Creative Minds. She is the recipient of the artsandhealth.ie Documentation Bursary 2023.



### Case Study | *In Two Minds*

*"There were thousands of them. They were so beautiful, blue, almost purple, and everywhere around me. I didn't know you had those stars here as well."*

For this case study, Joanne will outline her process of creating her extraordinary new play *In Two Minds*: the impetus for the project, her methodology, the intended and unexpected outcomes; And how she found herself facilitating conversations, some for the first time, among the spectrum of stakeholders involved in the world of bipolar disorder.



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### Chair: Prof Brian Lawlor

Professor Brian Lawlor (MD, FRCPI, FRCPsych, FTCD (Hon), DABPN) is Conolly Norman Professor of Old Age Psychiatry at Trinity College Dublin, and a Founding Director of the Global Brain Health Institute. A geriatric psychiatrist with an interest in dementia, depression, loneliness and brain health, Brian has worked for over 30 years on developing services and delivering care to people with dementia. His research interests range from early detection and prevention to evaluating new treatments for dementia.



## Contributors | Peer Exchange Workshop: *Enhancing collaboration between the health and arts sectors*

This Peer Exchange Workshop seeks to promote mutual learning and collaboration, through the discussion of a number of key topics which emerged from a co-design process in 2022. Each workshop group will discuss the same topics. This workshop is part of *Expanding Arts in Healthcare*, a national programme of work delivered by Réalta, in partnership with the HSE. The programme is supported by the HSE, the Arts Council, Creative Ireland and Healthy Ireland.



**Emma Eager** is a Project Co-ordinator with Réalta. She manages the *Expanding Arts in Healthcare* programme and has managed artsandhealth.ie, the national resource website for arts and health, on behalf of Waterford Healing Arts, since 2017. Emma has worked in the field of arts and health since 2011 with Helium Arts, the national children's arts and health organisation, with whom she developed an award-winning community film project for teenagers living with health conditions. Emma holds a B.Sc. in Communications: Film and Broadcasting and an M.Phil with Distinction in Popular Literature, both from Trinity College Dublin.



**Angela Rogers** is Executive Director of WAHWN (Wales Arts Health & Wellbeing Network) which she set up 10 years ago. WAHWN is now the national sector support organisation for arts and health in Wales with over 800 members, working collaboratively with the Arts Council of Wales, Welsh NHS Confederation and Public Health Wales to champion creative participation in arts and health. Angela is passionate about the role of the arts and nature in improving health and wellbeing outcomes. When not working, Angela can be found walking the coast paths and beaches of Pembrokeshire with her dog 'Spud' and nurturing tomatoes in her new polytunnel, recycled from an old trampoline!

**Yvonne Cullivan** is a visual artist and educator based in the west of Ireland. She has extensive experience in fine art practice, art education, public art, curation, arts management and consultancy. Yvonne's creative practice is underpinned by a strong process-led, collaborative approach. She works with a diverse range of communities, rooting the engagement in context-specific research, interdisciplinary knowledge and participation. Yvonne utilises a broad range of media including sound, video, photography, mapping, interview, writing and drawing. The outcomes of her work are reflective of, and shaped by the particular communities and places involved.



Originally from east Cork and living in Wales for 17 years, **Tracy Breathnach** works as the freelance Programme Manager for Wales Arts, Health & Wellbeing Network. She also works as an arts & health consultant and project manager across a range of projects in Wales. Tracy has worked as a participatory artist for over 20 years and in the last 10 years she has been making live art, weaving together her somatic and writing practice, particularly around themes of birth and the maternal. As Co-Director of Break Free & Thrive, Tracy delivers transformational workshops and 1 to 1 coaching.



**William Nicholson** is an independent arts, health and wellbeing consultant, passionate about the role that arts, culture and creativity can play in improving people's health and wellbeing. Will is currently initiating the development of a Creative Health Network for Northern Ireland. He has been involved in a wide range of arts and health work at local and national level in the UK, including supporting the development of a Creative Health Toolkit for Integrated Care Systems for the UK National Centre for Creative Health. Co-founder of the Southwark Culture Health and Wellbeing Partnership, Will is also a trustee of several arts and health charities, including the Northern Ireland Mental Health and Arts Festival.

## Workshops | What's My Practice?

### Workshop 1: Creative Pause | Catarina Araújo



Catarina Araújo is a Cork-based socially engaged visual artist. Her art practice researches and pursues mental and physical wellbeing by observing, with curiosity, the meaning of pausing and playing. Catarina graduated with an MA in Art and Process from Crawford College of Art and Design, MTU in 2021 and went on to secure a Postgraduate Residency Award from Sample-Studios. More recently, her awards and residencies have included the artsandhealth.ie Emerging Artist Bursary 2023, Studios of Sanctuary Residency 2023 from Tomar Trust and Sample-Studios, the Create Project Realisation Award 2022 and Waterford Healing Arts Artist in Residence 2022.

**Workshop Plan** | 'Creative Pause' is an imaginative workshop that promotes self-awareness and emphasises the value of taking time and space for oneself, using process-centred and hands-on methods. By creating a unique sculpture, participants are encouraged to explore their inner selves and express their individuality in a non-verbal creative and meaningful way. Take a moment to notice how you feel and join us on this journey of self-reflection.



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### Workshop 2: Clinical Notes | Emily Redmond & Luke Cosgrave

Emily Redmond is a musician and conductor living in County Wexford. A Music graduate of WIT, Emily taught violin/viola at County Wexford School of Music and was previously principal Conductor of County Wexford Youth Orchestra and the Gateway Community Orchestra. Emily was appointed Music Exploration Officer at Wexford Mental Health Association in 2016, under the Arts Ability Programme, a partnership between the HSE and Wexford County Council Arts Department. The Arts Ability programme celebrates the artistic and creative imagination of people who experience mental health problems and/or intellectual, physical or sensory disabilities. Inclusive and participatory, the programme explores the role of music in mental health recovery for individuals attending community mental health services and those in residential settings in County Wexford.



Luke Cosgrave is a composer, songwriter and violinist living in County Wexford. A past member of Wexford Sinfonia, Dublin Youth Orchestra and Cork School of Music Symphony Orchestra, he has travelled extensively as a musician, performing in Ireland, Europe and America. Luke has worked with Music Exploration Officer Emily Redmond as assistant artist and community musician since 2021. He co-facilitated a series of concerts in 2021/2022 at 12 different residential settings in Wexford Mental Health Services.

**Workshop Plan** | In this practical music workshop, participants will explore the importance of active participation, sensitivity to context and how to transform a clinical environment into a creative space. This workshop will be filled with engaging instruments and musical fun, and will hopefully provide some fresh and relevant music resources/skills for participants, which they can apply in their own practice.



## Workshops | What's My Practice?

### Workshop 3: Making Connections | Saoirse Finn



Saoirse Finn is a Research Fellow in the Social Biobehavioural Research Group at University College London (UCL), a designated WHO Collaborating Centre for Arts & Health. Saoirse's current role explores how leisure activities (e.g. engagement with the arts) affect mental and physical wellbeing in older adults, as well as the factors which facilitate or act as barriers to engagement (e.g., social inequalities). Her previous collaborative work has included exploring the role of online group dance for young people with lived experience of anxiety, group singing in individuals with lived experience of cancer, co-authoring the 2019 WHO report on the role of the arts in health, and the mechanisms by which engagement with activities, such as the arts, affects mental and physical health.

#### Workshop Plan | Making connections for mental health; making connections in research

This workshop will explore the ingredients of arts activities and the mechanisms they activate that affect mental health and wellbeing, focusing on social connections, complexity and interdisciplinarity. The workshop will also explore how making connections across research disciplines, research methods, and with individuals and organisations is fundamental to mental wellbeing and research.

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### Workshop 4: Finding Common Ground | Ciara Harrison



Ciara Harrison is a participatory artist working in the areas of arts and health, education, access, community, facilitation, outreach and creative ageing. Her practice focuses on visual art and making, with themes centering on play, gifting, education and the preservation and sharing of skills and knowledge. Concerned with topics such as the interplay of trust and risk, boundaries, negotiation, ownership of work and reflection, Ciara endeavours to create social change through invitation and collaboration with individuals, communities and institutions with an emphasis on the tactile, collective labour and co-operation. Since 2017, Ciara has worked with organisations such as the National Gallery of Ireland, Waterford Healing Arts, Helium Arts, Age and Opportunity, Dublin City Council Culture Company, Children's Health Ireland, Visual and Creative Schools.

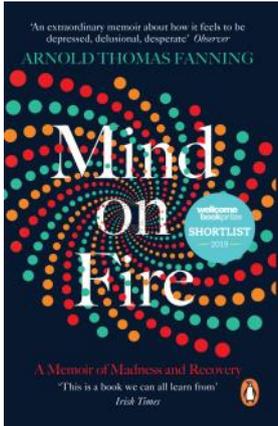
**Workshop Plan** | This workshop draws on Ciara's experience of delivering a project with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Waterford. "Most of the participants did not know each other and one of our objectives was to encourage social inclusion and conversation through play and curiosity. Different forms of prompts - visual, spoken, written - can be a useful approach to gently encourage interactions and to find commonality within a group. This workshop will have two parts: The first will be an individual piece of work and the second a co-production of work in small groups."



## Workshops | What's My Practice?

### Workshop 5: Giving voice to the self | Arnold Thomas Fanning

Arnold Thomas Fanning's work has been widely published and broadcast, most recently in *Show Your Work: Essays from the Dublin Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, and on *Keywords* for RTÉ Radio 1. In 2020 he was Arts Council Writer in Residence, University of Galway; in 2021 he was Writer in Residence in Carlow for the Arts Office of Carlow County Council, and in 2022 he taught Life Writing for The Lantern Project in Nano Nagle Place in Cork City. His book, *Mind on Fire: A Memoir of Madness and Recovery*, was shortlisted for the Wellcome Book Prize.



**Workshop Plan** | A practical creative writing workshop providing an introduction to the theory and practice of Life Writing. "Life Writing is one of the most rewarding, as well as one of the most challenging, of creative writing practices, a way to tell our stories in writing, express and understand ourselves, and ultimately to find our own voices." In this participatory session, Arnold will draw upon his own experience as a writer and facilitator in various community and adult settings to inform a practical and theoretical introduction to Life Writing, outlining key ideas, concepts, and approaches, including setting a writing exercise for participants.

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## Contributors | Closing Conversation

### **Arts + Health: Reflecting on our achievements and our important next steps**

#### **Saoirse Finn**

In this conversation, Saoirse Finn, Research Fellow at University College London and co-author of the 2019 WHO Report on the evidence of the role of the arts in improving health and wellbeing, will reflect on the day, and the wider arts + health context, and put forward her suggestions for actions going forward.

*(See page 9 for more info about Saoirse Finn)*



#### **Chair: Regius Professor Rose Anne Kenny**

Rose Anne Kenny is Regius Professor of Physic (Medicine) and holds the Chair of Medical Gerontology at Trinity College Dublin. She is the founding Principal Investigator of The Irish Longitudinal study on Ageing (TILDA) and Director of the Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing (MISA) at St James's Hospital, where she is also director of the Falls and Syncope Unit. Her recently published book *Age Proof – The New Science of Living a Longer and Healthier Life* was shortlisted for the Royal Society Science Book Prize 2022. In 2020, she was elected President of the Irish Gerontological Society. In 2022 she was nominated 24<sup>th</sup> Regius Professor of Physic at TCD (1637), the first female nominee.



### The Bleeping Intern Choir



The Bleeping Intern Choir is an initiative launched in 2017 by Professor Anne Marie O'Dwyer, which continued until 2019. Following a pandemic-related hiatus, with funding secured with Prof O'Dwyer's support, The Bleeping Intern Choir is active once again this year, under the guidance of Mr Michael McCartan, Choir Music Director. The choir has created a safe space where the interns get to have a bleep free hour, enjoy lunch, a little networking and the magic of music. This choir has had a significant positive effect on previous interns, including Dr Oana Deac, the current choir Executive Director, who was part of the 2018 class. In 2023, The Bleeping Intern Choir will be the opening act in the CROSS Cancer Charity Concert in The Trinity Chapel on December 5th, and will perform at Ground Rounds in St James's Hospital on December 15th.

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### Creative Life Co-ordinator Roisin Nevin

Roisin Nevin has been Creative Life Co-ordinator at Creative Life, Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing (MISA) at St James' Hospital since 2017. This role brings together Roisin's creative, production and clinical skills, and allows her to work with many different partners in organisations in Dublin and nationally, including NCAD, IMMA, the Arts Council and Creative Ireland, and many different departments at St James's Hospital. Roisin is inspired by her colleagues, the artists she works with, and the patients and families she comes into contact with, and she is passionate about the contribution that creativity can make across the life course.

The team at Réalta would like to express our sincere appreciation to Roisin for her tremendous partnership in planning and organising Arts + Health: Check Up Check In 2023 at the Creative Life Hub at MISA.



## Sticking Points 1 | Dermot Reilly

I have worked for a number of years with Outlandish Theatre Platform (OTP), supporting them in their creative engagement with our patients. This culminated most recently in the performance of *Destinations*, a collaborative piece between OTP, our team and our service users.

Working with depressed and anxious elderly people is a highly rewarding area. When our patients are together in groups, the artificial silence that illness brings to those moments is deafening. The arrival of OTP brought a cacophony of noise, movement and engagement from their first sessions. From our earliest engagements, therapeutic and professional barriers were explored and broken down, and given the intimacy of performance, in its very personal and bespoke expression. Much of our work together was about establishing boundaries and - crucially - trust, exploring the vulnerable aspects of our (patients and professionals) experiences in the service.

This is a reflection also on the development of mutual respect for each other's skills, and the surprising moments of similarity in the manner in which we work. Working with our patients also challenges us to examine the nature of the lived experiences of our patients, breaking down stereotypical views of ageing, and questioning and reflecting our manner of engaging with our patients.

Finally, I will also talk about the anxiety of performance, both in its delivery and reception, of the energy it brought to our contributors, and how working with OTP allowed us to be brave and bold, and to engage innovatively with all our stakeholders.



## Sticking Points 2 | Emma Finucane

FLOAT is a response to time spent on Resort Residency Portrane (2020), reflecting and building on research collected while OPP (Other People's Practices\*) artist in residence in Usher's Island (2019).

Resort Residency is funded by Fingal County Council and hosted by local business Lynders Mobile Home Park, which is located on this peninsula and situated between the Lambay Island and the former Psychiatric Hospital, St Ita's.



The Central Mental Hospital (CMH) Portrane, Co Dublin, part of the National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS), opened in November 2022 in Portrane to replace the former CMH Dundrum approved centre.

FLOAT is an artwork that invited the local community to participate. It considers the people of Portrane / Donabate, the patients and staff of St Ita's, past and present, and the existing and future patients and staff of the new National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS) Portrane. It attempts to connect people with place, past, present and future.

FLOAT, the event, took place on Sunday 3rd October 2021 at 11am, when the local community entered the sea at Tower Bay beach. The cold water held them as they floated, united in their thoughts and actions, to acknowledge and care for their individual and collective mental health. Documentation from this event was compiled and screened as an art film for the participants and wider community in Lynders Caravan Park on Friday October 9th 2021, for Resort Revelations.

I will discuss how the pandemic presented many sticking points throughout this project; however, on reflection, not new to, or unlike, the usual sticking points encountered in an arts and health practice, but magnified for a period of time. Learning from making work in the pandemic is now emerging as useful research and practice methodology in my work today.



\*Other People's Practices (OPP) is an artist residency and research project which brings socially engaged art practices to bear on the context of the National Forensic Mental Healthcare Service (NFMHS) in collaboration with current and former service users of the Central Mental Hospital (CMH). <http://otherpeoplespractices.com/future-happines/info.html>

## Sticking Points 3 | Philip Cullen

I have worked in the Renal Dialysis Unit of University Hospital Waterford (UHW) for Waterford Healing Arts (WHA) for 15 years.

Working in such a unit for chronically sick people is challenging. Those receiving dialysis can be exhausted, may suffer from depression and have to adjust to a restricted life. Sometimes the kidney problem is secondary to a disease like cancer. Some elderly or very sick people may not be suitable for transplant, therefore dialysis must be endured three times a week for the rest of their lives.

It is physically hard on the body. Beloved foods and drinks become toxic and must be avoided or seriously limited. People with kidney failure suffer great losses and can be in grief on multiple levels. Relationships are developed with patients over many years and it is difficult when a person dies.

Waterford Healing Arts has a code of ethics with clear guidelines for working with patients. However, when working with someone on a weekly basis for maybe a decade, a friendship within the boundaries of the professional relationship naturally develops. People can share quite deeply about their lives, families, beliefs, illness, successes and failures. Supporting and mentoring someone through an artistic process also creates a bond.

What does an Arts and Health worker do with their own sense of loss, which may activate their own fears, or echo losses of family or friends to sickness? I have developed ways of coping with these life events as best I can through necessity rather than planning.



## Sticking Points 4 | Alison Baker Kerrigan

A Night at the OsKaRs – TUH goes to Hollywood.

The Arts & Health Department proposed the OsKaRs event as a way for TUH staff to engage in a fun and creative project whilst celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the hospital. This was a unique opportunity for over 100 staff to act in iconic scenes from box office movies and TV series which were then showcased at a gala night for participants, colleagues, family and friends.

The TUH Arts Team collaborated with Kevin Rowe Events to develop the 'OsKaRs' project to take staff from dreaming about gracing the silver screen to actually playing a character in a role in a movie or sitcom. With both lead and minor roles, and speaking and non-speaking parts available, our hope was for this to be a fantastic opportunity for staff to get creative, learn new skills, and connect with colleagues in a fun and enjoyable way.

The project began with a staff information session, quickly moving on to the casting sessions and a Big Movie Reveal hosted in June in the hospital canteen. Staff found out what character they were playing and which of the seven movies they would be producing, including *Bridesmaids*, *Fr Ted*, *Calendar Girls*, *Forrest Gump*, *Golden Girls*, *Sister Act* and *The Snapper*. Actors were given a script to learn their lines from, and scheduled in for coaching rehearsals one day a week throughout July. (Some even attended over Zoom while on holidays.)

With the competition heating up, extra rehearsals were undertaken as everyone got involved in the production of their movie. Behind the scenes work, gathering and selecting costumes, props, finding ideal locations, and creating film scenes and backdrops—all were discussed and monitored under the direction of the assigned movie producer. All producers were staff members, some doubled as actors too. Before we knew it, it was 'Lights, Camera, Action' as filming got underway in August over two weekends. Each movie took six to seven hours to shoot. We moved from location to location, on site, off site, working under the skilled eyes and ears of the events production team to create the best movie possible for each cast.

Once filming was complete, it was time to launch the tickets for this Gala Night. The O'Reilly Hall, UCD was where this cinematic showcase would take place on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October. Another important element that made this event even more special was the purpose behind it. Not only did staff agree to try something new and step out of their comfort zone, but they also agreed to fundraise for each of their movies so that this project would have a positive impact on the lives of our patients and the community. We set a goal to raise €10,000 in funds to support two great causes: Firstly, Irish Therapy Dogs to visit our hospital throughout the year to provide much-needed comfort and companionship to our patients, aiding them on their road to recovery; Secondly to purchase an open piano for the hospital Atrium, thereby increasing the hospital's Live Music Programme. The healing power of music within a hospital environment cannot be overstated, and the feedback received from patients and staff about the benefits of having a live music programme motivated us to provide more opportunities for music on site.

Whilst this project required an enormous amount of commitment and enthusiasm from all involved, it delivered some of the greatest belly laughs, too. An unexpected outcome has been the genuine camaraderie shared and the number of new friendships and connections made between staff who never crossed paths before.

