



# Public Art Policy for Kilkenny

(SUMMARY DOCUMENT)

Kilkenny County Council  
Public Art Management Group



*DERDIMUS* by artist Michelle Byrne

‘...the potential for **public art** to expose and respond  
to the encroachment of corporate interests on public space,  
to the diminishing opportunities for social cohesion and freedom of speech,  
and to the invisibility of the displaced and dispossessed in public life is considerable.  
...artists create the capacity for creative illusion  
– that is, the ability to think and act as if things were different.’

Claire Doherty

Introduction to ‘OUT OF TIME, OUT OF PLACE, PUBLIC ART (NOW)’ | 2015 <sup>1</sup>

## Contents

1	Introduction to Kilkenny's Public Art Policy.....	4
1.1	Policy Aims.....	4
1.2	Vision for Public Art in Kilkenny.....	4
1.3	Background and Kilkenny's Public Art Collection to Date.....	5
1.4	Public Art Management Group (PAMG) and Specialist Expertise .....	5
2	Kilkenny's Public Art Programme.....	6
2.1	Funding for Public Art in Kilkenny .....	6
2.2	Brief History of the Per Cent for Art Scheme.....	6
2.3	Per Cent for Art Scheme Budgets .....	6
2.4	Coordinated Funding.....	6
2.5	Pooling of Funding and Resources for the Public Art Programme.....	7
3	Best Practice and Guiding Principles .....	7
3.1	Guiding Principles.....	7
3.2	Community-Engaged Practice .....	7
3.3	Commissioning Processes.....	8
3.4	Selecting Artists and Panels .....	8
3.5	Scope.....	9
3.6	Encouraging Innovation.....	9
4	Systems and Supports for Public Art.....	9
4.1	Documentation .....	9
4.2	Evaluation .....	10
4.3	Dissemination.....	10
	Case Studies.....	11
	Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for the Public Art Management Group (PAMG).....	12

## **1 Introduction to Kilkenny's Public Art Policy**

Welcome to Kilkenny County Council's Public Art Policy. This policy was approved by a Full Council Meeting of Kilkenny County Council's Elected Representatives on (date to be added). This summary of the policy outlines the key points in the strategy and the full document is available on Kilkenny County Council's website in the Arts Office section.

Making this summary of the Public Art Policy available online acts as a first step in a forthcoming new phase of contemporary commissioning in Kilkenny. By exploring the topic of creative citizenship Kilkenny County Council as a commissioner intends to collaborate with professional artists in the research, development, production and evaluation of new public art projects. These new projects will consider creative ways to support and develop public engagement as ideas evolve.

### **1.1 Policy Aims**

This document outlines Kilkenny County Council's policy for the ongoing development and conservation of public art in the city and county. As a local authority, we wish to build on our experience of contemporary public art commissioning by continuing to encourage local input and to create opportunities for public engagement. The main aim of this policy is to outline a clear framework for future public art commissions, in collaboration with our stakeholders – from our staff and our Elected Representatives, to artists, arts organisations and local communities.

### **1.2 Vision for Public Art in Kilkenny**

Public art in Kilkenny aims to identify the uniqueness of the city and county and to celebrate local distinctiveness. Our vision is to ensure that people who live in and visit Kilkenny can experience captivating, challenging, culturally diverse high quality public art and public spaces.

Kilkenny County Council's intention is to engage and exchange local knowledge to build a Public Art Programme that is in line with Irish and international best practice.

As new infrastructure is developed in Kilkenny funding will become available through the Government Per Cent for Art Scheme and other sources. It is important for Kilkenny County Council to present a clear and confident policy position for future public art commissions, which ultimately creates opportunities for public engagement and interaction with contemporary art and ideas.

### **1.3 Background and Kilkenny's Public Art Collection to Date**

Since the early 1990's, Kilkenny County Council has worked with numerous partners and stakeholders to develop a diverse collection of public art projects. During this period, approximately forty permanent and thirteen temporary public sculptures have been commissioned and installed in a range of locations around the city and county. In recent years, socially engaged and collaborative art practices have become an increasingly prominent strand of our Public Art Programme, whereby selected artists work with local groups and communities of interest to develop context-specific art projects.

Kilkenny County Council's Arts Office has a history of commissioning new contemporary projects, which requires the ability to deal with the unforeseen, to have proficient attention to detail and to support artists and communities to take a creative risk. As a commissioner Kilkenny County Council looks forward to building on the Public Art Collection to date and creating new works in a range of artforms that engage directly with the citizens of Kilkenny.

### **1.4 Public Art Management Group (PAMG) and Specialist Expertise**

Kilkenny County Council's Arts Office will establish a Public Art Management Group (PAMG) to explore and support the potential for public art in Kilkenny. The work of the group will focus on the development of the following:

- Public Art Policy
- Public Art Programme including a new series of commissions
- Public Art Engagement

The Public Art Management Group will bring combined knowledge and expertise from diverse areas including independent arts practice, and from various departments within Kilkenny County Council such as Arts & Heritage, Landscape Architecture and Community Development. Members are occasionally invited to sit on public art selection panels if needed. See Appendix 1 – for Membership and Terms of Reference for the group.

**All decisions relating to the Public Art in Kilkenny City and County are the responsibility of the Public Art Management Group (PAMG).**

## 2 Kilkenny's Public Art Programme

### 2.1 Funding for Public Art in Kilkenny

One major source of funding for public art commissioning in Kilkenny is the Government Per Cent for Art Scheme. Through this scheme, Kilkenny County Council can apply for funding of up to 1% of the total construction costs of publicly funded capital infrastructure projects, for the purposes of commissioning original, context-specific art projects. As new infrastructure is developed in Kilkenny, public art funding may become available through a number of Government Departments, reaffirming the importance of the inter-departmental approach taken by the PAMG.

### 2.2 Brief History of the Per Cent for Art Scheme

Following a detailed review process in 2004, the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism published 'Public Art: Per Cent for Art Scheme – General National Guidelines'. The guidelines were developed in close partnership with key Government Departments such as the Departments of Environment, Health and Education and public bodies including the Arts Council of Ireland and the OPW.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.3 Per Cent for Art Scheme Budgets

The limits under the scheme are set to a maximum of 1% of the overall capital budget before VAT and subject to the various limits, as outlined in the National Guidelines on Public Art:

- Projects below €5,000,000: 1% of the cost to a maximum of €50,000
- Projects between €5,000,000 and €20,000,000: 1% of the cost to a maximum of €125,000
- Projects between €20,000,000 and €50,000,000: 1% of the cost to a maximum of €350,000
- Projects in excess of €50,000,000: 1% of the cost to a maximum of €500,000

### 2.4 Coordinated Funding

The Per Cent for Art Scheme supports the commissioning of artists across all contemporary art forms, including temporary and permanent art projects. Per Cent for Art budgets are ring-fenced, meaning that funding is only available for public art projects, and not for any other function, such as architectural improvement, design features or landscaping. In the case of Design Build or Public Private Partnership (PPP), Kilkenny County Council will ensure that the scheme is embedded in the specification and contract of all new infrastructure projects.

Within Kilkenny County Council, relevant department staff and budget holders will continue to ensure that the Per Cent for Art Scheme is included in the overall capital budget estimate and application for all new projects, in order to maximise the potential for public art in Kilkenny. This process is supported at a senior management level within the local authority. The Per Cent for Art Scheme applies to a wide range of capital programmes in Kilkenny including Housing, Urban and Village Renewal Schemes, Transport and Roads, etc. including any large-scale or long-term capital projects set out in the County Development Plan.

## **2.5 Pooling of Funding and Resources for the Public Art Programme**

The *National Guidelines on Public Art* state that:

*In order to allow greater flexibility in the use of funds under the scheme, the pooling of funds may be adopted. Funding may be pooled within an agency or on an inter-agency basis. Some public bodies may wish to gather funding from different projects in the one area to achieve a more substantial art project.<sup>3</sup>*

Kilkenny County Council will pool all available Per Cent for Art Scheme funding in line with Department Guidelines and requirements of projects, as appropriate. All decisions regarding the allocation of the central budget are the responsibility of Kilkenny's Public Art Management Group (PAMG).

## **3 Best Practice and Guiding Principles**

### **3.1 Guiding Principles**

The Kilkenny Public Art Programme will work under the same guiding principles of the National Guidelines on Public Art<sup>4</sup>. As a commissioner we intend to harness time and artistic advice to develop the programme and we aim to integrate artists and their ideas into infrastructure project projects as they develop.

### **3.2 Community-Engaged Practice**

Public art creates opportunities for artists to work directly with communities and to engage in dialogue with people from diverse areas. Public art commissions also have the potential to create new communities, which may emerge as projects evolve. Based on commissioner experience, Kilkenny County Council recognizes the importance of supporting artists through all phases of a project, from research and development, to production and evaluation. With this commitment from the commissioning body, artists working at a community level can expand preconceptions about the function and value of contemporary art. It can often prove challenging for diverse groups and multiple stakeholders to reach a consensus; however, it is important that marginalized groups are

also heard. Our experience shows that community engaged art practice has the potential to nurture social change through the empowerment of community members collaborating on projects with artists.

### 3.3 Commissioning Processes

The Irish public art online resource [www.publicart.ie](http://www.publicart.ie) describes public art commissioning as a 'dynamic process'<sup>5</sup>, which requires commitment from commissioners, artists and communities in:

- Setting out a vision
- Building good relations
- Being flexible with time
- Allowing for dialogue and discussions
- Being open to ideas and changes
- Addressing problems and issues as they arise

Public art projects can be developed through a number of commissioning options, outlined in the National Guidelines on Public Art, including:

- **Open Competition** – Commission opportunities are advertised publicly. The Commission Brief generally invites artists to submit proposals outlining specific information (e.g. early stage ideas, examples of previous work, budget outlines, proposed timeframes etc)
- **Limited Competition** – As above, but not necessarily advertised, with a view to assessing a smaller number of proposals. In consultation with public art specialists, Kilkenny County Council may identify several artists and invite them to submit proposals in response to the Commission Brief.
- **Direct Invitation or Purchase** – The commissioner may invite just one artist or artists' group to respond to a Commission Brief. In some cases, artists may have already developed or produced work that makes creative connections with the commission context. There is also the option to purchase existing work.

Kilkenny's PAMG will use the most suitable commissioning process, taking into account various challenges relating to budgets, resources, staff time, etc.

### 3.4 Selecting Artists and Panels

Kilkenny County Council aims to ensure that the procedures used to select artists are transparent and accountable. It is the responsibility of the PAMG to appoint final selection panels, which generally comprise members with expertise in the art form being commissioned, as well as other



relevant professionals with connections to the particular context or community. In the National Guidelines on Public Art<sup>6</sup>, selection panel members are advised to:

- Be aware of the scope of the capital project or region funding the Per Cent for Art Scheme
- Undergo briefing on the role, nature and potential of artists within projects, particularly for members who are new to public art commissioning
- Attend artists presentations, where necessary
- Review the commission aims and objectives
- Review criteria for Selection outlined in the Commission Brief
- Assess submissions and select project(s) for development and production
- Provide evaluation and feedback on the selection process to the commissioning body

### **3.5 Scope**

Projects commissioned under the Per Cent for Art Scheme can be temporary, permanent or of varied duration across **all artforms**, including Visual Art, Music, Dance, Theatre, Opera, Film, Literature, Architecture, Traditional Arts and Circus and Street Arts.

To date, Kilkenny County Council has commissioned projects across a range of art forms, public spaces and social contexts. We are looking forward to further broadening the range of public art projects that we commission, and to explore new ways of working with artists and communities.

### **3.6 Encouraging Innovation**

As a commissioner, we aim to encourage diversity and innovation within Kilkenny's Public Art Programme, while supporting the creation of new work by artists working across a range of disciplines. It is important that we create the right conditions for experimentation and dialogue to occur. We are open to providing supports for artists who wish to develop new aspects of their practice; collaborate in new art forms or revisit ideas explored in previous projects and in particular develop creative opportunities for public engagement.

## **4 Systems and Supports for Public Art**

### **4.1 Documentation**

It is important that professional documentation forms part of public art projects right from the start. In doing so, the evolution of projects and final outcomes can be recorded through good quality

photographs, films and written accounts. Provision for documentation will be allocated through the Public Art Programme budget.

The various strands of project documentation such as photographs, films and written accounts of commissions etc will be regularly archived on the Arts Office website, with digital links circulated online via mailing lists and social media. Printed matter will be disseminated through the Arts Office including invitations, publications and catalogues relating to larger commissions.

## **4.2 Evaluation**

The PAMG will devise an evaluation framework for future public art commissions, in consultation with independent evaluators.

The PAMG will apply a range of research methods (including annual reviews and surveys) to generate quantitative and qualitative feedback from collaborators, partners and communities on the value, scope and impact of particular projects.

## **4.3 Dissemination**

Kilkenny County Council aims to sustain dialogue between the arts community, wider communities of interest or place, local authority staff and our Elected Representatives. We also feel it is important to maintain contact with partners and the wider public, in communicating our expectations surrounding new projects, and offering updates on works in progress. Where possible, we aim to include input from commissioned artists in this dialogue.

### **For Further Information Contact:**

Kilkenny Arts Office

Kilkenny County Council

County Hall, John Street

Kilkenny

E: [mary.butler@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:mary.butler@kilkennycoco.ie)

W: [www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Arts/](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Arts/)

## Case Studies

Some brief examples of public art commissions and socially engaged projects commissioned by Kilkenny County Council.

### CASE STUDY # 1 – THE LAST LOT

Landmarks come and go. Sometimes the skyline changes so fast we don't get a chance to reflect on one view before it becomes another. We only realise it has changed after it's gone. There is however a little breather, right at the end of a building's life, when we can have a final look around and say goodbye. When we can consider the purpose of the building, and give some thought to those who used it. We need an excuse though, and in the case of Kilkenny Livestock Mart on Barrack Street, The Last Lot was that excuse. The audiences walk through the pens and auctions rooms was the result of collaboration between Kilkenny County Council Arts Office, artists, farmers, office staff and developers. There are many memories connected to this building, The Last Lot offered the space to unlock many more.

Text from: Talking Birds Theatre Company and Mary Butler, Arts Officer, Kilkenny County Council



The Last Lot  
Socially Engaged Theatre Project  
Produced to mark the closing of the Kilkenny Livestock Mart in Barrack Street – 2007  
Image shows Kilkenny Artist Alan Counihan acting as a participant in the performance

### CASE STUDY # 3 – WOODSTOCK PROMENADE

Artists Professional Development Project – Training for Real – 2009

This project was designed to address the need for specialist training for artists in public art skills and working to commission, with a focus on local rurally based artists who lack the opportunities for support which urban practitioners have. This proposal was also inspired by a visit to the Woodstock estate, which is managed by Kilkenny County Council, and the opportunity to link the proposal with the site and the ongoing restoration work taking place there.

Woodstock Promenade provided artists with a 'live' training opportunity, offering the opportunity to work on commissions within a structured training programme.

Artists gained experience of the public art process; from selection and development of design proposals to installation of a series of site-specific artworks and in each case a high quality public art product was delivered as the culmination of the project.

Throughout they dealt with local issues, undertook extensive research and public consultation, and participated in different community involvement processes.

Above all, they gained new skills and confidence, which have benefited their subsequent professional careers and has made them more skilled for local employment.



Above: *Any day here teaches proportion, any walk sketches infinity.* Carmel Cummins, Poet  
Below: Textile Dress by Caroline Schofield, Artist

## Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for the Public Art Management Group (PAMG)

All decisions relating to the Public Art in Kilkenny City and County are the responsibility of the Public Art Management Group (PAMG).

### Members of the Kilkenny Public Art Management Group (PAMG):

	Name	Role
1	Mary Mulholland – Chairperson	Director of Services – Housing, Community, Arts & Heritage
2	Mary Butler, Secretary	Arts Officer, Kilkenny County Council
3	Michael Leahy	Senior Executive Officer, Housing Department, Kilkenny County Council
4	Ronan Ryan	Estate Liaison Officer, Housing Department, Kilkenny County Council
5	Claire Goodwin	Landscape Architect, Parks Department, Kilkenny County Council
6	Eimear Cody	Senior Executive Engineer, Housing
7	Seamus Kavanagh	Senior Engineer, Roads, Kilkenny County Council
8	Evelyn Graham	Executive Architect, Kilkenny County Council
9	Cllr John Coonan	Member Kilkenny County Council
10	Cllr Martin Brett	Member Kilkenny County Council
11		Independent Curator + Collaborator

The main roles of the Public Art Management Group (PAMG) are to:

- A Maintain clear **Public Art Policy** for the county, outlining the principles and structures under which public art will be commissioned, managed and maintained.
- B Manage and monitor the implementation of this policy.
- C Coordinate an evaluation of this policy, making amendments and updating the document where necessary.
- D Work in line with the National Guidelines for the Per Cent for Art Scheme, in keeping with Irish and international best practice.
- E Develop and implement a **Public Art Programme** in Kilkenny.
- F Assist in the planning and financial management of the Public Art Programme.
- G Ensure that internal procedures are in place to support the programme, including maintaining a central finance code for the pooling of Per Cent for Art Scheme funding and staff dialogues etc

- H Ensure that Kilkenny County Council applies for all Per Cent for Art Scheme funding opportunities, and that the scheme is included in all future infrastructural and capital construction projects at the earliest possible stage. This will support the early integration of artists and ideas into these public development projects.
- I Provide support to the Kilkenny Arts Office and public art specialists (e.g. curators, external commissioning agencies etc) in the planning, selection and production of public art projects.
- J Ensure that the PAMG continues to draw on a broad range of relevant expertise
- K Maintain clear connections with relevant partners and stakeholders (e.g. elected representatives, Senior Management Teams, relevant Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), communities, artists and arts organisations, as well as Local Authority Departments where Per Cent for Art Scheme funding is available)
- L Ensure that creative opportunities for **Public Engagement** are included in the Public Art Programme from the outset.
- M Maintain responsibility for decisions regarding Kilkenny's **Public Art Collection**.
- N Meet at a minimum twice yearly to review projects, progress and budget.

---

<sup>1</sup> Claire Doherty, 'Introduction' from OUT OF TIME, OUT OF PLACE, PUBLIC ART (NOW), ed. Claire Doherty (United Kingdom: Art Books Publishing Ltd and Situations, 2015), page 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Public Art: Per Cent for Art Scheme – General National Guidelines* were published in 2004 by the Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism and outline best practice principles and commissioning options through the scheme. The guidelines can be downloaded from: [www.publicart.ie](http://www.publicart.ie)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism (2004) *Public Art: Per Cent for Art Scheme: General National Guidelines - 2004*, p.32

<sup>4</sup> Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism (2004) *Public Art: Per Cent for Art Scheme: General National Guidelines - 2004*, p.27

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.publicart.ie/main/commissioning/commissioning-process/> [Accessed: June 2016]

<sup>6</sup> Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism (2004) *Public Art: Per Cent for Art Scheme: General National Guidelines - 2004*, p.32