

THE VOID ARTS CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and activities

Void Art Centre is a civic-engaged arts organisation based in Derry~Londonderry, Northern Ireland. Alongside our focus on the distribution of art projects, Void Art Centre aims to address local issues and work with our surrounding community to develop collaborative experimentation. With process-based and site related projects, we support social inclusion by creating a sense of place through cultural engagement and civic imagination.

Void Art Centre works with local and international art practitioners to address critical questions, alternative pedagogy and shared imagination. Situated within Derry~Londonderry, we aim to create a generative culture where Derry~Londonderry and Northern Ireland can play the role of catalyst.

Our organisational structure and working process are based on Social Permaculture principles. Social Permaculture values co-existence and co-creation, as well as sustainable use of local resources (both monetary and non-monetary) such as public grants, voluntary commitments, mutual aid, sponsorship and commercial arrangements. Through embedded practices and institutional learning, we are a self-reflective organisation that addresses local issues as well as global urgencies in our civic engagement, programming as a whole and working practices.

Vision

To promote challenging contemporary art; to make it accessible to all, to encourage active participation and to position Void at the heart of the region's visual culture.

Aims

- To enhance and develop contemporary art locally, nationally and internationally.
- To support artists in the development of their own creative practices.
- To create programmes and provide facilities that encourage people to pursue art as a career choice.
- To be active in all aspects of visual cultural development in the city.
- To provide additional resources in order to engage a wider audience and make contemporary art more accessible.
- To encourage critical appreciation of and active participation in contemporary art practice.

Public benefit

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

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Achievements and performance

Throughout 2023/24 Void exhibited the work of:

Artist	Description	Dates
Locky Morris & Jaki Irvine	Re_sett_ing_s Film installation and outreach	4/3/23 - 3/6/23
Shezad Daewood	Film installation	17/6/23 - 19/8/23
Banu Cennetoglu	installation	2/9/23 - 28/10/23
Áine Mac Giolla Bhríde	installation	18/11/23 - 27/01/2024
Composting for the future	Thematic exhibition	23/3/24 - 08/06/24

The financial year 2023/2024 started with an exhibition that ran from the previous financial year: a collaboration between Locky Morris and Jaki Irvine, who were invited to expand on their exhibition RE_SETT_INGS, exhibited in the Complex Gallery, Dublin 2021. For this exhibition, Locky Morris and Jaki Irvine explored the digital realm and its absorption into our everyday lives. The slippage between the two worlds was explored through a layering of both film and digitally created works. It was an exploration of the endemic nature and potential of the digital age.

For this project we were awarded the Digital Evolution Award from Arts Council Northern Ireland. Jaki and Locky collaborated on the works which utilised digital technology in the form of CGI, sound, 3D models, and film works. The installation created an immersive layering of sound and digital works that was presented on flat screen monitors.

The digital works in the gallery coincided with a digital billboard off the Culmore Road and Garden City junction. This brought the digital works into real space. The digital world and fabrication of work was a new departure for both artists and the skills gained throughout can be seen in the execution of the show and offsite billboard alike.

During the final weeks of RE_SETT_INGS, Void Art Centre's new director Viviana Checchia began her tenure at Void Art Centre.

In June, Void Art Centre launched *Leviathan*, a solo show by artist Shezad Dawood. This project was programmed by former Director Mary Cremin, who returned to

Void Art Centre to host an artist talk during the launch. *Leviathan* is an ambitious multi-year interdisciplinary project that looks at the key issue of our day: how do we understand the intersection between climate change, migration and mental health in our shared ecosystems? The project comprised a ten part film cycle, a Virtual Reality trilogy, sculptures, paintings, neon and an extensive public programme and research archive bringing together scientists, philosophers, activists, anthropologists, futurists, trauma specialists, oceanographers and climatologists.

The 10-part film series envisaged a future eerily like our present, whose inhabitants are the survivors of a cataclysmic solar event. Each film presented in the exhibition was written from the point of view of an individual character, providing insight into their particular trauma and pathological traits and giving each episode its own personality, visual language and rhythm. The larger narrative followed a migratory journey across Europe, Asia, North Africa and beyond, encountering a series of idiosyncratic communities along the way. Taking a global and collective approach, *Leviathan* looked at what is increasingly not only a humanitarian crisis but a wider systemic crisis within our biosphere. As the protagonists' journeys progress and increasingly intertwine with others throughout the film, we see a shift from fragmentation to resilience in their methods for surviving, amidst competing visions for how the future might be shaped.

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Void Art Centre commissioned a new film, one of the chapters of this long term project. This film was screened in our galleries together with a series of tapestries.

Our Interim Head of Programme, Zoe McSparron, arranged various events during the course of this exhibition, such as a talk and sea swim with Easky Britton. For this specific event we were invited to learn about the blue mood and also to reconnect with our water - our surroundings and entangled bodily connection - both from a theoretical and literal approach. The sea dip at Ned's Point consisted of a diverse group of participants.

During this show, not long after our new Director's appointment, we learnt that Finance Officer Mary Cotrell would leave her position. She subsequently left the post on September 28th.

In July 2023, the new Director Viviana Checchia started the work of restructuring Void Art Centre, in consultation with the organisation's board and Art Council Northern Ireland. This entailed the creation of two new posts: Head of Sustainable Growth and Curator of Civic Engagement.

In August 2023, during the run of Leviathan, Void Art Centre's Press and Marketing Coordinator started maternity leave, with maternity cover Caolan Austin starting at Void in the same month.

In September 2023, we were joined by Banu Cennetoglu. Whilst programmed by Void's previous Director, new Director Viviana Checchia led on the curation, supporting the artist and overseeing the exhibition and public programmes. The project and new commission, entitled 'right?', represented our first collaboration with the CFA at NCAD. The project stemmed from an exploration of the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 10, 1948, three years after the end of World War II. According to the UN, it sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and has been translated in over 500 languages.

In our galleries we presented the 11th and 12th articles of the UDHR in bouquets of gold letter balloons. As the bouquets deflate during the run of the show, they will leave viewers to question whether any rights can remain without the labour of protecting, extending, and upholding them.

For this project and with the help of our Interim Head of Programme at the time, Zoe McSparron, we organised various activities focused on human rights and collaborated with Derry City's Halloween festival, Bounce Festival and Ulster University.

In November 2023, we opened '*son of*', a solo exhibition by Áine Mac Giolla Bhríde. Áine is an Irish artist working in the field of sculpture and this was their first solo exhibition in the UK. We secured a production grant from Foundation Foundation, marking the organisation's first time funding Void. Áine's work is materially driven and considers site and the situated body via staged sculptural arrangements. These materials reference domestic, urban, and commercial motifs and imagery via an abstraction.

The project was guided by Void Art Centre's galleries, and was site-specific. The artist's work saw subtle interventions interrogate the utilisation of space both in the private and the public setting. The intention with the exhibition at Void was to work across both the public realm and the gallery space to create a dynamic between how we occupy these two spaces.

The installation consisted of architectural interventions in the gallery space that created distinct areas, fragmenting the large gallery space. These areas were populated by domestic items and fabricated sculptural elements all of which are underpinned by research made prior to the exhibition. During the course of this exhibition, which was curated by Viviana Checchia, there was little public programming. This was in part due to the organisation going through a transformation.

Caolan Austin, our press and marketing coordinator (maternity leave cover) left the position due to excessive workload. Cecelia Graham replaced Caolan as maternity cover, and she still performs this role today.

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During the course of 'son of', Void Art Centre's new Head of Sustainable Growth Mitch Conlon and Curator of Civic Engagement Mhairi Sutherland began their roles. During this time, our Learning and Outreach Coordinator Zoë McSparron, left the organisation, beginning a new position at Waterside Theatre. This was due to salary considerations.

In January, Void's long standing Gallery Coordinator, Stephanie Gaumont, left the organisation. Stephanie's departure marked a total turnover of the team at Void Art Centre.

'son of' also marked the end of the former Director's programming, and with this, the new Director took time for observation and strategy implementation. The galleries did not host a show from the 7th of Feb up until the 23rd of March.

Composting for the Future (CFTF) marked the beginning of Void Art Centre's new strategy, which is based on the principles of Social Permaculture. The project was twofold, consisting of an element that looked to the past in celebration of twenty years since the organisation was first constituted, and an element that was future-facing, looking to Void's new strategy and team structure.

The element that looked to the past consists of:

- Archival research by Paola Bernardelli and Gregory McCartney
- Archival research by community selectors
- An exhibition of this archival research in the form of a timeline
- The presentation of work previously commissioned by the organisation, including work by Keef Winter, Forerunner, Alan Phelan and Invernomuto.

The element that looked to the future consists of:

- Internal team training with Dorian Braun
- Public training with Alfred Decker of 12P Design
- Internal team training with Stephane Verlet Bottero
- Reading groups and a library resource by Karla Sanchez
- A mural and textiles by Stephane Verlet Bottero
- Risographs of notes taken during Alfred Decker's training

A full description of CFTF will be included in the 24/25 Trustee Report, as it spans across two financial years.

Health & Safety

In November 2023 we were able to begin improvements to our spaces thanks to the Health & Safety Capital Programme. With the equipment we acquired, we have increased the organisation's accessibility, team safety and visitor experience. Examples of this include:

- Purchasing folding museum chairs that will aid visitors with accessibility needs in a discrete and agile way.
- Acquiring new folding tables for our Engage Space. These tables are more secure and spacious, providing a safer space and working environment for participants of workshops and Engage programmes.
- We commissioned an overhaul of our sound and projection system, installing new flight cases to house sound and projection equipment safely and allowing team members to set up equipment safely and more efficiently.
- We commissioned a local practitioner to design and install a barn style door for our Engage space, which was previously open plan. This will greatly improve visitor experience, creating a more secure, private and warm room.

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Job Start

Former gallery coordinator Stephanie Gaumont availed of an initiative funded by the Department of Communities Northern Ireland, 'The Job Start Scheme'. The scheme supports employers to offer paid employment for 18-24 year olds who are at risk of long term unemployment and to give the young person an opportunity for personal development and enhance their employability skill set for the future. Void was successful in securing a 9-month grant that allowed the creation of a new role, 'Front of House and Invigilator.'

We successfully recruited Alex Cregan. Alex, a former Void volunteer, is now managing our front of house with the aim to enhance our visitor experience, as well as this, they are assisting with day to day running of exhibition programmes, our bookshop, and the art centre facilities. Alex has become a valued team member and together with the wider team is dedicated to learning and developing their skill set in an arts organisation. Alex was initially line managed by the Curator of Civic Engagement. Sinéad Feeney, who now will be looking after the running of the scheme, has plans to apply again for 2024/25.

The Exhibition Programme for 2024/25 is as follows:

Artist	Description	Dates
Composting for the future	thematic exhibition	23/3/24 - 08/06/24
Adrián Balseca	site specific research and sculptural installation	22/6/24 - 21/9/24
Mikhail Karikis	installation	05/10/24 - 08/12/24
Deirdre O'Mahony	installation	11/1/25 - 08/3/25

The Engage Programme

Ongoing programme:

Open Mic Night/Silver Tongued Deviance – We have further developed this popular bi-monthly event hosted by Frank Rafferty as a collaborative project with the Waterside Theatre, allowing the event to take place monthly, alternating between each venue. This collaboration began in January 2024. The rationale for this development was the growing interest and audience at the event, and the potential to apply for funding support for outputs such as publications, invited guest contributors and an annual event. Making connections between the cityside and waterside venues and potentially new audiences was a key element in our planning. The recent sad news about the Waterside Theatre will impact these plans, but the potential for a partnership with a related organisation can still be researched.

Foyle Womens' Aid – Void Womens' Art Group – The group have been meeting regularly in Void Engage since 2022, facilitated by local artist Sinead Crumlish. An open, welcoming social session with this closed group explores a range of arts and crafting activities and approaches. Development included a visit to Ashley Wood House by Mhairi Sutherland and Sinead Crumlish on 13/03/24 to meet the women residents and invite anyone interested to join the Wednesday morning sessions in Void, which resulted in 4 new members, almost doubling the existing group. New and established members then worked on a collective wall hanging artwork, which was shown as part of the group exhibition *Stitching us together*. Mhairi worked with Sinead to create personal links between the Void archives/CFTF for the exhibited artwork, in addition to the women contributing individual artworks. The closed launch for the group was attended by Jo Corcoran of Foyle Womens' Aid/ Justice Centre on 10 April and was open to the public in the Void Engage space 11/04/24 – 20/04/24.

The group is supported by the Bank of Ireland Begin Together Arts Fund and the report to release the final tranche of £2,100 was submitted successfully on 27/02/24. This group has the potential for strong growth, working with new artists and through contributing their stories and experience to the civic programme, and continuity funding is to be sourced.

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FWA personal reflections:

"The Void is a great place to meet, we are well looked after. Learning new skills is a great boost for me when I'm there, feeling no pressure at all times. I hope future people get as much enjoyment out of these classes as I do." (Philomena)

"It is great for mental health and wellbeing as doing the art you get so lost in it you forget about your worries. It is a lovely wee class which I look forward to every week. From starting the class I have seen great improvement in my mental health, I am more relaxed and able to do more" (Bernadette)

Void Art Centre Life Drawing

Life Drawing is scheduled to take place once during each exhibition, (Aíne ni Ghiolla Bhríde – 07/12/24 + CFTF – 24/04/24) facilitated by artist Cara Donaghey and model Mel Bradley. Open to the public, widely advertised and bookable for a small charge of £8 pp, this popular programme attracts new people and regular attendees, including Void Visionaries and Visual Art Collective members. Void provides materials and refreshments and Cara facilitates this accessible session with energy and sensitivity, including a curated soundtrack themed to the current exhibition. Mhairi and Cara met in February to discuss how the programme could be developed to expand the programme, including a longer session with a reflective/feedback element and potentially an exhibition/open event scheduled for the Engage space. Currently there is no funding allocated to the Life Drawing programme and this would have to be sourced for development and increased artists' fees.

Void Visionaries

As a group with many members who self-identify as disabled, trans, queer and on an autistic spectrum, it has taken some time to adjust to the changes in staffing at Void. However, a Spring re-launch programme aimed at identifying areas of interest, ownership and getting involved with a refreshed phase of Void Visionaries has been successful and is gathering momentum. An animation programme over x 3 sessions was facilitated by Mhairi Sutherland and filmmaker/Northern Ireland Screen award recipient Brogan Wakeley. Sessions on Thursday 07 March, Saturday 09 March + Saturday 06 April creatively explored programming ideas through animation. A small group of 8 young people explored time-lapse, stop motion, Claymation and recorded their ideas using audio equipment. They have produced an artwork in progress, and their completed film will be available from the end of April. @voidvisionaries Instagram is being used to show outputs and engagement. Ideas creatively expressed have been drawn up as an Excel document and the next stages of the re-launch have been identified by the group to date as;

- Raise the age group to 15 – 24
- Open a call for new members through schools, youth groups and the wider community
- Re-introduce the WhatsApp group, (with restrictions on direct messaging)
- Pilot an 'Open Studio' / Summer Scheme Drop-in creative access in Engage space summer 2024
- Call for new/existing members to sign up to a Youth Forum / VV Leaders team
- Hold a launch event using the Animation as a form of recruitment
- Arrange a dynamic, possibly public arts workshop to attract new members/ encourage existing – Peaball Graffiti was suggested

Link to animation work in progress. Soundtrack elements are original compositions from Michael Devine, VV member.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/12MI7CFN8yKm3jouiy1a3MaouF0zlk4Jz/view?up=drive link>

NWRC & public Tours CFTF

In liaison with NWRC Tutors Ursula and Kerrie, Mhairi provided a bespoke presentation to a group of 19 students prior to CFTF opening to the public and a tour on 09/04/24. Students are warmly welcomed, encouraged to use the exhibition for their own course purposes and visit independently. Public Tours of CFTF designed and led by the Curator of Civic Engagement have been advertised as Drop-in events for Saturday 20 April and Saturday 04 May 2024.

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North South Visual Arts Network - NSVAN (Shared Island VV app)

The remaining funds of £1,523 were allocated to an online presentation with the current CFTF artist Stephane Verlet Bottero on institutional permaculture. This was scheduled for 27 March, before the Report to Funders Community Foundation was submitted on Saturday 30 March 2024. There was a poor response as this was during Easter week, and this presentation will now take place at a later date. The remaining funds £1273 were allocated to Void Art Centre overheads/core costs, with the agreement of partner DHG and as indicated in advance of Report submission to the allocated CF Officer.

Working with NSVAN partners Douglas Hyde Gallery Dublin and Galway Arts Centre, an application was submitted on 22 March for 179,700eu for Triangulate: A Trans-border Youth-arts Group (Working Title) a tri-parite cross-border new learning and engagement project for young people aged 15 - 24 to the Creative Youth in a Shared Island (2024) fund. Arising out of the relationship already established through the NSVAN and spearheaded by DHG, the project request for Void Art Centre and Galway Art Centre is to assist with core salary costs for engagement posts. DHG may create a dedicated p/t post to increase capacity if successful. Briefly, the project aims to;

- Establish through collaboration a new Youth Arts Council from members of Void Visionaries, the Redbird Collective in Galway and the Student Forum Project in Dublin and to subsequently design and organise a Youth-Led Art Biennale.
- Throughout the Operation Stage, the Youth Arts Council will meet regularly to discuss progress, address challenges, and make decisions collaboratively. Online collaboration tools will facilitate communication and ensure that all voices are heard.
- During the Implementation Stage, young people will play a central role in conceptualising and organising the Youth Arts Biennale. A comprehensive marketing and outreach strategy will be implemented to promote the Biennale to young people across the island of Ireland, emphasising its inclusive nature and opportunities for creative expression.

Decisions will be communicated in May 2024.

Void Art Centre 'Imaginative Futures' - Explorers and Families Creative Programme 2024 funded by Halifax Foundation NI

This programme was successfully applied for by Zoe McSparron, former interim Head of Public Programming at Void, and was awarded £5,000.00. The programme is aimed at providing a creative forum and opportunities for children aged 8 - 14 throughout the course of 2024 alongside the exhibition programme. Void has undertaken to work with our community partners (particularly The Women's Centre, Parents Of Children with Autism (POCA), Barnardo's Young Carers, The Service for Looked After Children, The North West Migrant's Forum and the Rainbow Project), to invite parents/guardians along to our active drop-in discussion sessions and/or to invite them to nominate their children to sit on our new children's advisory panel. In the selection process for this panel, we will select a diverse range of children from different backgrounds, abilities and ages to ensure the feedback we are working with is relevant and inclusive to all. The Children's advisory panel will input creative ideas and content for a series of drop-in sessions and workshops for children and families throughout 2024.

To date, all named potential partners have been invited to a group meeting in Void after Easter to discuss and also to meet the artist Eibhlin Morrison, who has been invited as the lead artist and who has created the current resource booklet for young people visiting CFTF at Void Art Centre. Coordinating diaries for a group meeting can be difficult and to date Mhairi has met in person with Catherine Barr, The Women's Centre, 18/04/24 discussed in a call with Sarah Logue, Bernandos (young carers, closed group) 19/04/24 and a Teams meeting with Nia Loughlin scheduled for 22/04/24.

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Ulster Graduate residency exhibition: Making connections with artist Zara Lyness

Initially selected by Zoe McSparron during the Ulster Graduate Degree shows 2023, Mhairi has liaised with Zara consistently since December and recently oversaw the Residency exhibition installation on 22/23 April in the Engage space. Zara is a member of performance group bBeyond and works with the University of Atypical in Belfast and has a strong interest in access and inclusivity. Her Making connections exhibition of ceramic jigsaws reflects this through a fully interactive process, accompanied by explanatory posters and postcards. This residency/exhibition has no allocated funding and all costs have been borne entirely by the artist, including the travel and installation of the artwork. This is not an acceptable position for our ethos of fairness and an organisation funded by the ACNI which recommends artists' fees and preparation should be paid for projects. It has been discussed within the team that Void may not take part in the Ulster Ulster Graduate residency scheme for 2024, unless funding can be sought and confirmed. Making connections is open to the public 23 April - 07 May 2024.

Visual Arts Collective / + Foyle Pride Void public work (August 2024)

A new grassroots organisation VAC (Visual Arts Collective) has been established and have met twice in the Engage space at Void, following an offer by Mhairi to host the group's Sketchpad Meet-up sessions. The organisers have links to both Void Visionaries and the life drawing programme and the group is developing well, with increased numbers attending the second session on Wednesday 17 April and gathering social media attention. As part of the initiative, the organisers discussed with Mhairi the potential for a public project taking place during Foyle Pride (15 - 25 August) in the city. From this a proposal was submitted and circulated amongst the Void team, accepted and a project involving a highly visible take-over of the Void windows will take place during the week. This was a first proposal submitted to an organisation by a young local queer artist and reflects and continues Void support of Pride in the city.

Civic Mapping / new relationships

Alongside continuing relationships with community organisations locally and regionally Viviana and Mhairi have discussed ways of involving and collaborating with potentially new partners as part of a permaculture approach to civic engagement. To date, Mhairi has attended the Foyle Repair & Care cafe and invited the organiser Caroline McGuninnes-Brookes to visit Void and work together on shared interests maximising the use of the Engage space. We are also in discussion with Stephanie Bradley, owner of Offing cafe, around food culture and the monthly Potluck event for the Void team and our neighbours.

Currently - research sources for Adrián Balseca

Adrián specified specific visual sources for his research trip to Belfast/Derry 02 - 18 May 2024. A research timetable has been planned with the assistance of Bernadadette Walsh, DCSDC Archivist, Clare Ablett, Curator of Transport and Industry and Stephen Weir, Picture Library National Museums NI, Stuart Temple, Libraries NI District Officer and Niall McCaughan, Director Donegal Railway Museum. Adrián will visit the Museum of Transport at Cultra, DCSDC Pennyburn archive stores and the Biggar and McDonald collection, Central Library, Derry.

Social media

This year, we have increased our amount of followers across our social media platforms - Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Our current followers are as follows:

- Facebook: 6,643
- Twitter: 1,666
- Instagram: 5,153

2023-2024 saw Twitter change to 'X' which has included many people leaving the platform for others such as Threads. This has impacted our Twitter statistics and use of the platform.

This year, we also looked at the financial sustainability of our social media platforms. This has resulted in several major changes: we have decreased the amount of paid advertisements in use across social media and we have ended our subscription to Sprout Social, a scheduling tool.

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This year, we have worked on ensuring our social media output aligns with our future strategy as an organisation that doesn't focus solely on exhibitions. Now we are taking a long term approach, seeking ways to accessibly communicate projects that span across several months, and even years. This work is ongoing, and we are in the process of learning how this can develop.

Social media statistics

Facebook:

- Engagement: 128,400
- Page visits: 11,200
- Followers: ,6643 (+350)

Instagram:

- Engagement: 41,900
- Profile visits: 8,000
- Followers: 6,643 (+952)

Twitter:

- Followers: 3,169

Press

This year Void Art Centre continued to maintain and develop strong relationships with press, nationally and locally. We particularly increased our connection with local press, strengthening relationships with Derry Journal, BBC Radio Foyle and Visual Artists' Ireland.

Visual Artists Ireland interviewed Director Viviana Checchia for a feature on the new strategy of Void Art Centre, which detailed the organisation as well as our future programming.

Outreach

This year, we have gathered data in partnership with Thrive as part of our desire to gain a deeper understanding of our audiences. This data has enabled us to understand that:

- The majority of our visitors are over 35, with 30% of them identified as 35-44 and 27% identified as 55-64
- 16% of our visitors identified as being d/Deaf, disabled, or having a long-term health condition
- 39% of people visited Void with friends, 30% visited alone, 21% visited with a spouse or partner and 15% visited with a young child (0-11)
- 52% of our visitors have children living with them in their household
- 63% of our visitors identify where they live as urban
- While the majority of our visitors are from Derry, we also had visitors travelling from Portrush, Portstewart, Donegal, Tyrone, Hull and Vienna
- 73% of our visitors marked their experience as 'Very Good' and 97% of people said they would recommend the venue to friends and family.

Offline publicity

This year, Void Art Centre continued to utilise physical promotional material including:

- Postcards
- Posters
- Gallery Guide

This material was distributed across the city and North of Ireland, and included in site-specific promotion at the gallery (such as our outdoor poster holders, which provide signage into the gallery.) Across the year, we have discussed ways of continuing this physical promotion, which can reach audiences such as those without access to the internet, phones for example, in a way that is sustainably responsible. For Composting for the future, we created bespoke postcards in collaboration with artist Stéphane Verlet Bótero which promoted the artist's work, alongside the project. We found these postcards to be particularly useful, and wish to continue the creation of specially designed physical material. In the future however, we wish to find a local printer to do this work in a cost effective manner, in line with the social permaculture principle to use local resources.

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Website

Void Art Centre's website has undergone some changes in the past year, which include different image specifications and some structural issues such as layout function. As a team we have been investigating problems for short-term solutions alongside Neil Doherty, a local website developer. It has become apparent that the current website no longer feels in line with Void Art Centre's ethos as a civic-engaged organisation, with team members highlighting the cold feel of the site and the logistical problems of uploading images.

To re-imagine our website, we have initiated a period of research into ways of integrating our web structure into a more civic-engaged, social permaculture framework. This includes understanding how to invite our local community into website development through community focus groups and the potential of working with a facilitator to lead on this work alongside Neil Doherty, who is also currently a Void volunteer.

To begin this research in a more sustainable manner and activate this project, we have applied to Fat Beehive foundation to establish a project looking at our website, working with the local community to co-develop a site that works for them and us. The result of this application is outstanding as of April 2024.

Building

Caring for our building and office space is a key part of the role of our Coordinator of Production and Dynamics. Sinéad, since joining in January, has liaised with the landlord regarding maintenance of the building and ongoing works.

Since our move to Waterloo Place we continue to adapt and react to the new space. The large glass windows create an accessible and inviting position for a contemporary art centre. However, this has brought challenges regarding heating the building.

Plans for the future period

In April 2024, we received assurance via an official email that ACNI will award Void Art Centre a standstill amount. However, allocations across the sector are still unknown, which has affected our ability to plan into the future.

Financial review

Total income for the year was £279,840, of which £254,396 was generated from charitable activities. Total expenditure was £314,678. The balance of total funds at the year end was £59,273, of which £52,273 was Unrestricted and £7,000 Restricted.

The Trustees consider it prudent to hold monies in reserve in the event that unforeseen circumstances should lead to financial difficulties which might jeopardise the future of charity.

The Trustees have examined the requirement for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation and established a formal policy, that £51,000 should be the target level for unrestricted reserves. The unrestricted reserves at the year end were £52,273. The Trustees are striving to attain and exceed this target, so that they will be able to continue the current activities of the charity.

Reserves policy

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

Structure, governance and management

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 15 December 2004 and accepted as a charity by HMRC under reference XR69455. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

THE VOID ARTS CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

S Birney	
A Kelly	
D McCall	(Resigned 17 November 2023)
E McCann	
H Quigley	
P Kealey	(Resigned 14 August 2023)
U McNally	(Appointed 17 January 2024)
D Greer	(Appointed 17 January 2024)
S Horshi	(Appointed 9 February 2024)
P Connolly	(Appointed 17 January 2024)
B Bridges	(Appointed 29 February 2024)
S Kissane	(Resigned 17 August 2023)

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



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H Quigley
Trustee

Date: 13/12/2024