

Annual Overview 2024

Sliabh Beagh Arts had a successful year in delivering arts activity to the local rural communities of the Sliabh Beagh Area. We had focused Artist development and explored collaborations with new groups in Co Monaghan and Co Cavan. Through the 'Lasting Light 24' programme we have animated, fostered and promoted considerable contacts and collaboration on a cross community / cross border basis, using Visual Arts, Music, Sculpture, Environmental Arts, Photography, Literature, Digital Media, Ceramics, Performance and Exhibition to facilitate the growth of creativity. We are pushing boundaries, showing people that they can create and experience quality art within the rural environment. The S.B.A programme creates high interest value amongst the rural population providing innovative projects which are designed to inspire and enthuse. Our workshop strands are fun and attract participation from a diverse range of people.

'Lasting Light 24' offered creative vision as its content was an imaginative response to rural life. We engaged with an array of talented local artists who worked collaboratively to ensure our programme was of the highest standard. We continued our Public Artwork programme and outdoor event structure, taking art out of the gallery and into the landscape which created accessibility for all. Our rural initiatives are our greatest tool of engagement and are unique to the Sliabh Beagh Area. The response to our quirky offerings are amazing, increasing cultural tourism and increased community pride. We are improving the health and wellbeing of communities through quality arts engagement, creating the opportunity for social interaction and the development of creative skills.

We have received continuous support from the Arts Council of N.Ireland, The Fermanagh Trust & Monaghan County Council for which we are very grateful. We will continue to nurture the growth of the Arts within the Sliabh Beagh Region, creating opportunities for engagement and providing support to local artists and the wider community.



Aims

- Increase Rural Arts Engagement
- Improve mental health and well being...increased quality of life for rural communities
- Promote the arts through quality community arts activity, engaging with a wide section of the local community , in particular young people and rural men.
- Protect and preserve rural traditions and our distinctive natural environment.
- Encourage integration and acceptance of cultural difference
- Provide employment, training, equipped space and technical support to local artists
- Increase Cultural tourism by creating a unique artistic landscape
- Raise the profile of Sliabh Beagh Arts and the services we provide
- Continue to support and repair after the effects of the Pandemic.

Objectives

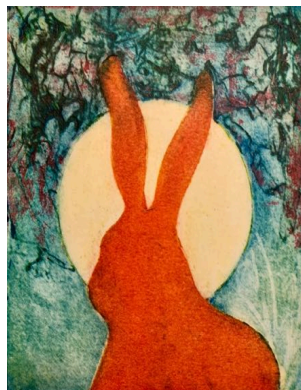
- Create Access to the Arts by delivering a range of outreach arts activity
- Provide opportunities for young people and men to express themselves creatively
- Increase training and employment for local community artists.
- Improve health and well being through arts participation outdoor rural initiatives.
- Promote tolerance and cultural diversity...by bringing communities from various cultural backgrounds together
- Promote the uniqueness of the Sliabh Beagh ecosystem and the need for preservation.
- Produce a comprehensive marketing campaign.



Activity Overview

Printmaking

Printmaker Fionnuala O'Neil facilitated a workshop program in St Mary's Hall Maguiresbridge with two groups and a total of 31 participants. The group focused on Lino and Collagraph printmaking with the introduction of China-collé. There were some fabulous results from the group of first time printers and everyone was inspired and excited about the possibilities of the medium. Printmaking is something that has worked extremely well in the area and is a successful tool in engaging communities in arts practice. Moving forward we hope to develop further printmaking programmes in the Sliabh Beagh Area.



The Arty Acre

Our pilot programme to create a piece of artwork on the surface of a field was challenging as so many conditions needed to be right and as always the rain caused hill farming issues in relation to grass growth and harvest. After a period of experimentation with paint formulas and equipment Artists Kevin McHugh and Kev Largey completed a large-scale Magpie on the surface measuring 70m sq . When all the elements aligned the piece came together and worked wonderfully . The sheer scale of the artwork was impressive, using string to grid out the field and map the image. The process was captured using a drone and a short piece of film has been created documenting the artworks creation.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/QQhvfXCWfGERri7J/> We will continue this project into next year and develop it further. An exciting addition to our rural initiatives.



In

Memory of Ash

The local landscape is dramatically changing due to the removal of dead or dying ash trees, some of which are hundreds of years old. Due to Ash Dieback disease these large structures are being taken down and a void exists in their place. Through this funding we began the process of documenting the majestic trees that have fallen. Artist Elaine Agnew produced a series of prints from the stumps to record the tree ring topography. Each ring structure is unique and the patterns themselves are very beautiful and intricate. These rings mark year by year chapters in the life of a living organism. Each tree cookie must be dried, planed, sanded, scorched, wire brushed and cleaned before printing is possible. A time consuming process resulting in very beautiful imagery. Local people have really embraced the project and stories are being gathered about connections and memories people have to the trees that are gone. This is an ongoing project which will continue to archive and inspire.



Thriftwood Sculpture

Artist Charlie Clifford created another epic sculpture from found wood waste and scrap metal. ‘The Fisherman’ sits proudly on Loch Lea in Co Fermanagh adding creative merit to the landscape. It is highly detailed yet its rustic nature fits in beautifully to the landscape without interruption. A team of local volunteers were instrumental in its installation to whom we are very grateful.

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Lilly Lanterns

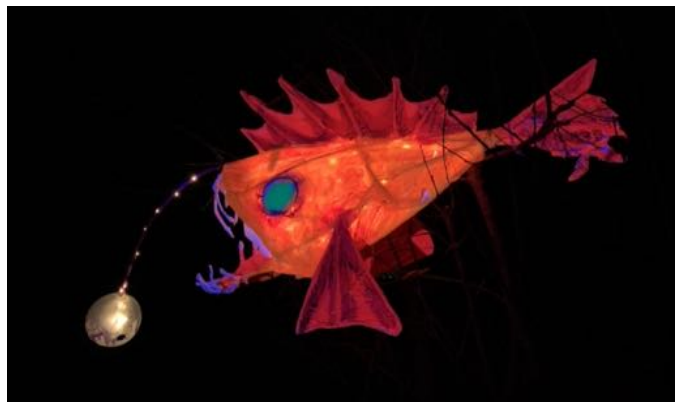
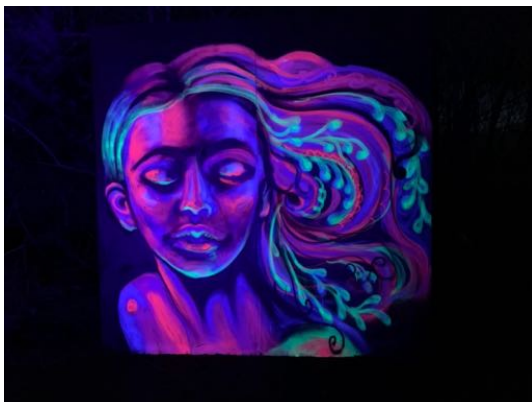
A wonderful community project in which 192 school children from 4 local Primary schools aged 8-11 years created floating lotus lanterns in the weeks prior to our Lakes of Light event. The children were instructed by artists Lisa McCabe and Kevin McHugh, expertly guided through each step of the origami process. Although the children found the folding difficult at first they soon became master folders. Each lantern was then placed on a bed of expanded cork in order to make them more robust for the lake .



U.V Artwork

A series of murals, cellograffs & sculptural fish lanterns were created by Artists Elaine Agnew & Jonny McKerr for display at our lakes of light event on 23rd March 2024

All of the artwork was U.V reactive and thematic of the Spring Equinox and Mother Nature. The large, vibrant pieces looked spectacular when illuminated by blacklight and were a very special addition to our event . The attendees at the event were in awe as darkness fell and the work began to glow.



Glow Stones

Artist Elaine Agnew worked in 3 different locations Newtownbutler, Donagh and Magheravelley to teach the Art of Mandala painting to people aged between 15 and 76 years old. Participants created a range of mandala stones with u.v reactive paint creating over 55 individual stones. A very therapeutic and mindful workshop which brought focus and joy to all the participants.



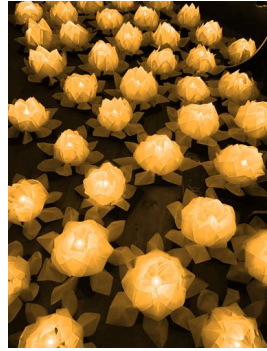
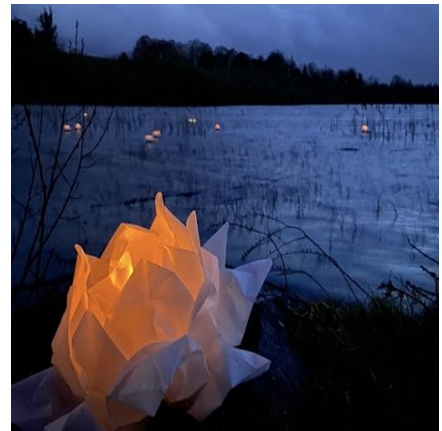
Singing Workshops

Sessions were guided by experienced musician and music practitioner Sinead Connolly, using a wide range of musical material. Songs are taught by ear, by call and response and no one is put on the spot. It offers a moment out of the rush of life and is empowering, uplifting and moving. The goal of the singing circle is to improve rhythm, improvisation, and pitch while also fostering motivation, excitement and self-assurance! The singing circle has provided the opportunity for a wide range of voices to gather and just enjoy the practice of singing together.



Lakes of Light Event

The Lakes of Light event was held on March 23rd at Killyfole lake with 241 people in attendance . A stormy day settled and as dusk fell the crowd made their way to the water's edge , launching 200 lanterns on the lake . The U.V artwork trail illuminated the pathway and the wonderful Tully performed to the crowd. We are so grateful to everyone who braved the weather to join us to celebrate the Spring Equinox. It was a wonderful demonstration of the strong sense of community that exists in the Sliabh Beagh area. A team of legends were once again working behind the scenes to ensure that everyone had an amazing evening. A massive thank you to Killyfole and Magheraveely Men's Shed for all the practical support and all of our volunteers without whom these things would never happen! Artists Kevin Mc Hugh Elaine Agnew Lisa McCabe Jonny McKerr did a fabulous job creating lanterns and U.V Artwork for the evening.



Art Shelters

Over the past 5 years we have created a series of 48 Art Shelters throughout the Sliabh Beagh area, engaging with a range of artists and community members in the process. The little green bus shelters are an integral part of everyday life in the region and are the perfect method of introducing local communities to quality artworks. The response to the work has been immensely positive and it has been a wonderful way to add artistic merit to the local landscape. This year we created 6 new artworks on the shelters engaging with a range of different artists including Elaine Agnew, Alexandra Demine, Jonny McKerr, Kev Largey and Kevin McHugh



The Arty Barge

Over two days the Arty Barge travelled around upper lough Erne delivering workshops to children in African Drumming, Samba, Singing, Botanical Printing and Pottery. The project was a great success and the children involved were engaged and excited about exploring the arts in an outdoor setting. The weather was challenging at times but a total of 74 Children participated over the course of the project ranging from 4- 15 years. . In addition to our public engagement workshops the artists involved had the opportunity to gather and express opinions in relation to local artist development and future community engagement workshops for the Sliabh Beagh Area. The conversations were guided by Arts Consultant Janie Crone. Moving forward we will use the information gathered to develop programmes and opportunities which will nurture the growth of artistic activity within our area.



Raku Pottery

The Raku Pottery programme was facilitated by Lisa McCabe and delivered to 16 people in total. Programme 1 was delivered at an intermediate level for those who had experience with ceramics and programme 2 was for complete beginners with no experience. Each participant made a range of vessels on day one during our make session and on day two the pieces were fired and exposed to a range of combustibles. A gathering of wonderful people who, together, experimented, laughed, encouraged and supported each other throughout the workshops. The process created high energy, nervous excitement and anticipation, resulting in some beautiful and unexpected pieces. A memorable set of workshops that inspired us all !



Graffiti Bales

Artist Kev Largey created another set of quirky character bales on wrapped silage. The Bales always receive positive attention within the community prompting great debate amongst the older generation of farmers. The silage bales are the perfect rural canvas for public artworks bringing quality works into the landscape for all to enjoy. They are also an effective tool in terms of bringing artwork on farms and engaging with local Farmers.

