



IRISH THEATRE INSTITUTE

creating opportunities abroad **strengthening resources at home**

27 January 2022

The Board of Irish Theatre Institute is delighted to announce the appointment of Niamh O'Donnell as the new Director of ITI.

Niamh will step down from her current position as Director of Poetry Ireland to take up her new role in April 2022. The appointment sees her take on the position previously held by Co-Directors Siobhán Bourke and Jane Daly.

Damian Downes, Chair of ITI's Board of Directors, said:

"Founder and Co-Directors Siobhán Bourke and Jane Daly have been a dynamic force in Irish theatre over 30 years. Having built ITI from a part-time annual event to a vital all-island resource organisation with international reach, they are without doubt two of the most highly regarded arts leaders in the country. ITI is their legacy, and the sector as a whole will greatly miss their leadership, dedication and passion."

Niamh has 29 years professional experience in the arts sector, she has worked with many leading organisations including: Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre as Director, Project Arts Centre as Executive Producer, The Gallery of Photography, Black Church Print Studio (an artists' resource organisation for Fine Art Print), and Arthouse Multimedia Centre. A passionate advocate for the sector, Niamh is presently Chair of the Board of Dublin Fringe Festival and has served on many boards over the past years, including: CoisCéim Dance Theatre; Theatre Forum Ireland; and The National Campaign for the Arts.

Commenting on the new appointment, ITI Chair Damian Downes said:

"We are delighted to have secured Niamh to lead ITI through the next phase of its development. Her credentials speak for themselves. Her drive and dedication to supporting artists and building audiences has impressed us greatly. Her professional reputation, depth of experience, and extensive connections and networks will ensure ITI continues to be well-placed and relevant in the years to come."

Niamh O'Donnell said of her appointment:

"While it's with regret I depart Poetry Ireland, where I have felt great kinship with poets, the team and Board, I am delighted and deeply honoured to be taking the reins of Irish Theatre Institute."



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It's impossible to consider this position without first acknowledging the extraordinary legacy of Jane and Siobhán. They have been loyal guardians of the tradition, robust and dedicated mentors, generous collaborators, and impassioned advocates for so many artists and makers. They will be greatly missed.

I believe in the vision and in the vital role ITI plays in the sector. This Directorship represents an opportunity for me to enhance the role that theatre plays in contributing to the image, identity, reputation and – most importantly – the health and cultural wealth of our country. Theatre, before it is a place, is a verb, an act, and I firmly believe that theatre as an artform has vital social, economic, and civic consequences.

The past two years have represented a prolonged period of professional trauma for our artists and for the sector. Through these challenges, through the loss of opportunity and the damage sustained to livelihoods and communities, theatre artists and theatre workers have demonstrated immense resilience. In the face of the challenges we've experienced, this resilience is the proof that a flourishing cultural sector is foundational to a civil society, to active citizenship, to economic prosperity, and to social cohesion.

In ITI, I will work with the Board and team to continue its important work as a key resource for independent artists and the sector. We will continue to demonstrate leadership through the excellence of our programmes, while nurturing partnerships and audiences across demographics on a regional, national, and international level. Post COVID, through this exciting period of renewal and restoration, ITI will truly value our theatre artists and workers – championing their lives, their work and their ambitions”.

Irish Theatre Institute is core funded by the Arts Council /An Chomhairle Ealaíon.