



- Are you curious about making meaningful connections with other artists in Europe?
- Would you like to have the opportunity to share your practice with artists based in Belgium, the Netherlands, and England and learn about theirs?
- Would you like to take time to get to know their local arts community, and invite them to visit yours?
- Are you based outside of the capital, or have you strong connections with an arts community in an area outside the capital?

If so, read on!

What is Gap Exchange?

It's a way for contemporary theatre artists to share their practice, learn from international peers, and develop an international network. It will be practice-centred, informal, egalitarian, and thoughtful, and will have a focus on taking time and offering hospitality. This is a pilot programme to bring six artists based in Ireland in contact with six international artists, two in Belgium, two in England and two in the Netherlands. Each artist will be paired with one other artist and visit them in their homeplace. They'll also all meet collectively online. The focus is on theatre artists based, or with strong creative communities, outside of capital cities.

Who is running it?

Gap Exchange is being run by Irish Theatre Institute (ITI) and Creative Facilitator Lian Bell, in partnership with [SPRING Performing Arts Festival](#) (Utrecht, Netherlands), [Arts Centre VIERNULVIER](#) (Ghent, Belgium), [Bluecoat](#) (Liverpool, England), and the Department of Foreign Affairs. There is more information about these organisations below.

The idea originally developed out of [Gap Day](#), a programme run by Lian Bell and Mermaid Arts Centre since 2016. There will be local Irish partner organisations involved, who will be confirmed when the Irish artists are selected. The programme is funded by the Arts Council's International Residency Initiatives Scheme.

Why are we doing this?

This is an experiment to see how ITI can support arts practice exchange internationally between theatre artists. We are interested in supporting artists in their locality, while helping them network internationally. We want to see what kind of results we get from an informal, hospitality-centred, thoughtful, and slow engagement. We want to make sure that artists have a voice in the process of developing their support programmes. We want to put value on working slowly, on creative thinking time, and on sharing process and practice rather than just finished productions.

What will happen?

ITI will work with the international organisation partners to pair each of the six Irish artists with a relevant and interesting international peer artist. As well as meeting online, each artist will also be a host. This means that each artist will welcome their international partner to their homeplace, and will also visit that partner in their homeplace. For example, an artist based in Limerick may be paired with an artist in Ghent, Belgium. The Belgian artist will come to Limerick for a five-day visit, and the Irish artist will visit Ghent for five days. The focus of the visits will be on sharing practice and process, and offering an insight into, and a connection with, the local arts community.

What will happen on the visits?

Each visit will be shaped with the input of the hosting artists. The focus will be on taking things slowly, sharing practice, and getting to know the local arts community. We imagine a visit will include things like:

- a practice sharing workshop by each visiting artist, attended by the local host artists, and open to other local artists
- a creative thinking walk for the participants, also open to other local artists
- a social/informal gathering over a meal
- introductions by the host artists to things that are important to them including the local area, including arts facilities and other artists
- visits to see local work if possible
- a Gap Day for each visiting artist in an arts space for them to take time to dream, think and create.

What will participants get?

Artists will receive up to €3,300 for their time (approx. 10 days contact time commitment), and we will cover travel, accommodation and per diems. They will get an insight into other artists' work practice and community. They will have a chance to both lead and participate in workshops. [Access](#)

costs, if any artist requires additional supports, ITI will ensure a separate budget for access costs available in discussion with the artist.

When will it happen?

Applications will open on 5th January and close on 23rd January, and we aim for decisions to be made by 16th February 2023. The online gatherings will start in March and we will work with the artists and international partners to plan the schedule of visits. The visits will take place between the start of April and the end of June 2023, and will be scheduled to fit around the artists' availability.

Who can apply?

We are interested in supporting theatre artists making work outside of capital cities, so priority will be given to artists based outside of Dublin. We will also consider applications from artists based in Dublin who can demonstrate a strong arts practice and community in a particular place outside of the capital. The paired international artists will also be from/working outside of capital cities.

We are interested in getting applications from artists who

- Have a lead creative role in the making of work – whether as director, writer, or other lead theatre artist
- Have a compelling, original, contemporary theatre practice that they want to share
- Have an established practice and track record of at least 2 full-length productions professionally produced/programmed by an established production company, festival, or independent producer
- Are resident in Ireland
- Are connected to their local arts community in the place where they will host
- Have availability to travel and to host within the period of April-June 2023
- Hold a current passport that allows them travel to the Netherlands, Belgium or England. (We can also help you if you need to organise a visa.)

If you are interested in the programme, but you are not sure if you are eligible to apply, please don't assume you're not. Get in touch with us to check by emailing Leigh Hussey, Programme Manager, lhsussey@irishtheatreinstitute.ie.

How can I apply?

You will need to fill in [this form](#). Applications open on 5th January and the deadline is 23rd January 2023.

You will need to include:

- A CV (2 A4 pages max), including at least 2 professionally produced plays

- A short outline of your creative practice and why you'd like to be involved in this programme. (400 words max)
- Where you are located. If that is Dublin, where you propose hosting outside of the capital, and what your connection there is.
- What places, and people, you would like to introduce a visiting artist to. (400 words max)
- Your availability from the start of April to the end of June 2023.
- Confirmation of your travel status to EU/UK and that you have a passport that is in date.

You will receive confirmation from the form when it has been submitted.

Applications will then be read by a panel of ITI, the Gap Exchange Creative Facilitator, and the international partner organisations. We aim to let you know the outcome by 16th February 2023. Six artists based in Ireland will be selected, and we will then work with them and our international partners to pair them with international peers. Once the pairs are confirmed, we will work with everyone to plan the timing of the visits.

Any other questions?

Contact Leigh Hussey, Programme Manager, lhussey@irishtheatreinstitute.ie

Further information

About the partner organisations

SPRING Performing Arts Festival (Utrecht, Netherlands)

SPRING Performing Arts Festival and SPRING in Autumn are international performing arts festivals. Their programmes form a plea for art that is concerned with the state of the world, that derives its urgency from taking a stand, that is not afraid of experimenting and tries to find new forms to provide adequate responses to new problems, that has the guts to seduce and challenge, to conquer and confront. SPRING is a plea for art that tries to find contemporary forms to ask contemporary questions, for art that isn't only about pleasing but instead is brave, raw and beautiful, rich and confronting, art that has queries for society instead of serving it. SPRING is for open and inquisitive audiences.

<https://springutrecht.nl>

VIERNULVIER (Ghent, Belgium)

Arts Centre VIERNULVIER - an official Flemish Arts Institution since 2017 - is the beating heart of the arts neighbourhood in Ghent, together with the nearby Minard Schouwburg, Ghent's city library De Krook and Capitole. 350,000 visitors pass through our doors each year for performance art, music, literature, theatre, debate and so much more. The VIERNULVIER Café, located in an impressive centenary monument, functions as an important meeting place in the city.

www.viernulvier.gent/en

Bluecoat (Liverpool, England)

Bluecoat is Liverpool's contemporary arts centre, a working home for artists, and a place where audiences can experience art in new ways. With a city centre location and striking, Grade I listed building, the Bluecoat offers a dynamic programme of exhibitions and events, an award-winning programme for families and children and a bustling café serving delicious homemade meals.

www.thebluecoat.org.uk

Department of Foreign Affairs

The role of DFA and their relevant Embassies and Consulates throughout the exchange programme will be support and advocacy. Their Heads of Mission and their teams in the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands will be able to advise on local context and help broker connections with local cultural partners, adding to relationships which ITI has already in place. Their support will assist the 12 artists with the development of their own creative practice while promoting Ireland's international cultural engagement and engaging with artists and audiences in each of the partnering countries.

<https://dfa.ie>

Irish partner organisations

Irish partner organisations will depend on the location of the six artists selected, and will be confirmed once the selections are made.

More information

For more about Irish Theatre Institute see www.irishtheatreinstitute.ie

For more about Lian Bell see www.lianbell.com

For more about Gap Day see www.gapday.ie

General Data Protection Regulation

The purpose for processing your data is to process your application to Gap Exchange. Your information will be retained for five years if you are granted a place on the programme, and for one year if your application is unsuccessful. If you do not furnish the personal data requested, ITI will not be able to process your application.

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