



2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

As 2024 ends, the Irish Theatre Institute (ITI) celebrates a year of impactful achievements, guided by a commitment to fostering growth, innovation, and inclusion across the Irish theatre sector. ITI truly believes in supporting artists, preserving Ireland's rich theatrical heritage, and championing opportunities to elevate theatre practice both nationally and internationally.

Our Mission and Achievements

At ITI, we strive to:

- **Preserve Heritage:** Safeguarding the repertoire of Irish theatre, ensuring the rich tradition is honoured and accessible through Playography and Playography na Gaeilge.
- **Drive Change:** Collaborating with artists and strategic partners to catalyse innovation and provide critical support and mentorship.
- **Shape Policy:** Leading cultural and sectoral engagement to influence national and international theatre practice.
- **Empower Artists:** Offering tailored opportunities for theatre artists - at all stages of their careers - to develop their craft, resource their work, and establish sustainable careers.

Through over **610 artist information sessions**, ITI has supported theatre makers across Ireland with tailored advice, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. Working to break down barriers to access, we have fostered inclusivity and collaboration, working to create a thriving, connected arts community.

Artist Supports and Development

ITI's **Six in the Attic (SITA)** and **Virtual Attic programme** supported **13 artists** this year, offering bespoke year-long development opportunities. With over half of participants based outside of Dublin, this programme demonstrated ITI's commitment to geographic inclusivity, expanding access to artists across the island.

Participants benefited from bi-weekly online peer gatherings, in-person workshops, tailored mentoring and professional development sessions, and the opportunity to use dedicated desk space and rehearsal rooms. They also received a bursary of €1,300 to support their artistic practice, as well as networking opportunities that connected them with leading figures in the field.

2024 marked new partnerships with Galway City Arts Office, Leitrim Arts Office, Roscommon Arts Centre, Tipperary Arts Office and Wexford Arts Office. One artist from each of these counties was selected for SITA 2023/24.

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Guest speakers and facilitators for both the SITA and Virtual Attic programmes included internationally renowned theatre artists such as Taylor Mac and Tim Crouch, as well as workshops offered through Percolate.

The participants also had the chance to visit the Cork Midsummer Festival. Through the programme, they engaged with independent theatre and dance artists Clare Monnelly, Dan Colley, and Fearghus Ó Conchúir; dramaturg Tanya Dean; and met Jessica Stewart from Independent Agents, Deirdre O'Halloran (Head of Musical Theatre at Birmingham Hippodrome), and Tim Crouch once again. They also connected with Ruth McGowen (Head of Literary and New Work at the Abbey Theatre), Colm O'Callaghan (Executive Director at the Gate Theatre), and Lorraine Maye (Artistic Director of Cork Midsummer Festival), each of whom shared valuable insights and expertise.

Following a brief summer break, the group had the opportunity to meet additional esteemed guests, including lighting designer SJ Shields, Sharon Barr (Director of Culture Ireland), playwrights Nancy Harris and Sonya Kelly, creative thinker and artist Andrew Simonet, and Johanna Freiburg from the performance collective She She Pop. Together, these encounters and learning experiences ensured that SITA and Virtual Attic participants are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and networks essential for thriving artistic careers.

Residencies and Space

ITI provided **578 artists and groups** with free or subsidised access to hot-desking, workshop, and rehearsal spaces in the office in Temple Bar. In partnership with the Tyrone Guthrie Centre and CoisCéim Dance Theatre, ITI also supported **10 weeks of residencies**, with Offsite @ CoisCéim specifically prioritising under-represented artists.

Additionally, initiatives such as the **Phelim Donlon Bursary and Residency**, **The Pit Collective**, and the pilot **Across the Water** programme offered resourcing awards, mentoring, and cross-border opportunities to enhance the careers of participating artists.

National and International Platforming

This year saw the launch of the **ITI Ambassadors Programme**, an initiative designed to expand our artist mentoring and advisory services across the island of Ireland. ITI Ambassadors Deirdre Dwyer and Éadaoin O'Donoghue brought their extensive expertise in theatre-making, design, and playwriting to support artists in their local regions. In partnership with Cork Theatre Collective and The Everyman Theatre, ITI hosted a Creative Gathering in Cork, fostering connections among local theatre artists and offering tailored information clinics on project development, funding opportunities, and career sustainability.

A similar event in collaboration with Garter Lane Theatre in Waterford brought together regional artists for a workshop focused on sharing practices, exploring collaboration, and addressing challenges specific to their artistic and geographic contexts. These gatherings not only deepened ITI's regional reach but also reinforced our commitment to building supportive, artist-led communities across the country.

ITI's work extended far beyond the island of Ireland in 2024. Through partnerships with Culture Ireland and key festivals, ITI platformed **102 artists** to pitch and present their work to **249 delegates**. International programmers attended over **348 performances** of Irish theatre, reinforcing ITI's role as a bridge between Irish artists and global audiences.

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Highlights included:

- **New York Showcase and Networking:** Connecting Irish artists with leading organisations such as BAM and Lincoln Center.
- **Edinburgh Showcase:** Offering pitching workshops and facilitating key connections for **seven selected Irish artists**.
- **Intercity 2024 in Milan:** Following a successful 2023 edition, ITI supported the translation of Italian premieres of Irish plays, including works by Deirdre Kinahan and Thommas Kane Byrne, as well as touring productions from Fishamble.
- **Information Toolbox and International Theatre eXchange:** Key annual networking events saw over **70 national and international organisations engage with 79 Irish shows**, presenting new works and touring opportunities for work presented and work in development.

Advocacy, Diversity, and Inclusion

This year, ITI convened a **Diversity and Access Council**, which influenced application criteria and selection processes to ensure inclusivity across all programmes. **Across the Water** is now a new network of Producers of Colour, led by international partners and supported by ITI. WEFT artists from Dublin Fringe attended Toolbox for the first time. ITI hosted Town Hall meetings for mid-career artists, creating vital touchpoints that informed advocacy efforts with the Arts Council. The institute also fostered community through the new Producers Circle and supported key initiatives such as **Gap Day** and **ISPD's Explore Design** programme.

Additionally, ITI welcomed impactful guest speakers, including Andrew Simonet, author of *Making Your Life as an Artist*, a guide to building a balanced, sustainable artistic life, and Abdelfattah Abusrour, who toured Ireland through Apartheid Arts. Abdelfattah is the founder of the Beautiful Resistance philosophy, which uses performing and visual arts as a non-violent approach to counter occupation, violence, and human rights violations. His work focuses on the needs of the Palestinian community, particularly children, youth, and women.

Mapping the Road Forward

In 2024, the Irish Theatre Institute launched its **new Strategic Plan**, charting a path forward that reaffirms its commitment to equitable artist support, vibrant sector development, and broad national and international engagement. Building on extensive consultation with theatre practitioners, partners, and stakeholders, this plan emphasises sustainability, digital innovation, and the nurturing of diverse voices across all programmes. It outlines ambitious objectives designed to strengthen existing networks, foster new collaborations, and elevate Irish theatre on the global stage. By setting clear priorities and measurable goals, the new ITI Strategic Plan sets out a thoughtful roadmap, guiding the institute's efforts to support a vibrant, inclusive future for theatre in Ireland.

The redevelopment of **Irish Playography** and **IRISHTHEATRE.ie** in 2024 secured the future of these vital archives. With over **98,000 visits** this year, the enhanced platforms now offer greater accessibility and functionality, supporting the study and celebration of Irish theatrical heritage globally.

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ITI's **Artist Resource Toolkit**, which is being developed in collaboration with ISACS, Dance Ireland and ISPD will develop key resources and guidance on career development, funding, and sustainability.

This year, **Safe to Create** made a significant impact across the arts and creative sectors.

Mandated training with Screen Ireland saw **9,300 completions** of Addressing Unconscious Bias, **8,300 participants** in Tackling Bullying and Harassment, and **7,000 completions** of Being an Active Bystander.

Beyond training, we provided **2,500 hours of counselling** services and **700+ hours of 1:1 mentorship**. The Safe to Create website received **49,500 views**, offering valuable tools and resources to artists and arts workers.

Additionally, over **250 bursaries** supported freelancers in accessing training and CPD opportunities, and **74 masterclasses** engaged more than **2,000 participants** online and in person, including Active Bystander workshops, conflict management, and governance training.

These achievements highlight a transformative year, built on collaboration, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to fostering safer, more inclusive workplaces across the sector.

In early 2025, ITI will open callouts for the tenth **Phelim Donlon Bursary & Residency** for playwrights, and the second edition of **Gap Exchange** for theatre/performance makers.

Looking Ahead

Through tailored support, artist-centred programming, and sectoral advocacy, ITI continues to prioritise the needs of the theatre community. By preserving tradition, driving innovation, and connecting Irish theatre to the world, ITI remains committed to creating an equitable, sustainable future for artists at all stages of their careers.

To every artist, partner, and supporter who helped shape this remarkable year: thank you for inspiring us, collaborating with us, and believing in what we do.



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