

# A Deeper Shade of Green



**saolta  
arts**

**Saolta Arts runs the west of Ireland's leading Arts and Health programme as a means of improving the hospital experience for patients, staff and visitors. We believe that access to the arts promotes well-being and enhances the hospital environment. It encourages new ways of seeing and fresh dialogue – making the hospital a place of possibilities.**

Saolta Arts  
c/o Saolta University Health Care Group  
University Hospital Galway  
Newcastle Road  
Galway, Co. Galway H91 YR71  
Ireland

Tel: +353 91 544 979  
Email: [saoltaarts@hse.ie](mailto:saoltaarts@hse.ie)  
Website: [saoltaarts.com](http://saoltaarts.com)

Charity Number CHY17964



# A Deeper Shade of Green

Final report on an Arts and Health programme and strategic research supported  
by the National Creativity Fund from Creative Ireland

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>		6
<b>2</b>	<b>Introduction/ background</b>		8
<b>3</b>	<b>Outline of team and key participants</b>		9
<b>4</b>	<b>Outcomes and outputs</b>	Artist in Residence 1: Song/Music	10
		Artist in Residence 2: Theatre	16
		Artist in Residence 3: Intergenerational	22
		Artist in Residence 4: Visual Arts	27
		Artist in Residence 5: Poetry	35
		Strategy	43
		Summary of Agreed Outputs and Outcomes	46
<b>5</b>	<b>Public Engagement outcomes</b>		50
<b>6</b>	<b>Images</b>	Attached	
<b>7</b>	<b>Findings, evaluation and recommendations</b>	Supporting Artist Residencies and Engagements	53
		Duration and Timings of Artist Residencies and Engagements	55
		Outcomes and Expectations	56
<b>8</b>	<b>Breakdown of costs</b>	See Appendix II	
<b>9</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>		59

## 1. Executive Summary

Based in Galway, Saolta Arts runs a long-standing multi-disciplinary Arts and Health programme of events and activities including exhibitions, visual art, music, theatre, and poetry and *A Deeper Shade of Green* formed an early phase in extending this to sister sites in the Saolta University Health Care Group. Through a series of artist residencies which placed artists from a range of art forms in diverse clinical contexts, using a variety of collaborative, participative and public engagement methods, *A Deeper Shade of Green* provided rich testing ground in new territory to inform the development of *Part of the Fabric: Saolta Arts Strategy and Policy 2020-2022*.

Relaunched as Saolta Arts in 2019, the organisation became the dedicated arts service for Ireland's largest geographic hospital group following the creation of Saolta University Health Care Group in 2015. Having served Galway's 2 public hospitals since 2003, latterly it has provided an outreach service to a further 5 hospitals across the counties of Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo and Donegal. Together, the 7 hospital sites serve a population of 800,000 across 25% of the country, cared for by over 9,000 staff. Pending the arts personnel and core programming funds necessary to develop a comprehensive and balanced arts programme that connects the 7 hospital communities of the Saolta Group, a strategy was vital to guide the early stages of Saolta Arts' organizational development.

Recognizing that, as a desk-based exercise only, the strategy would fail to make an accurate assessment of the feasibility, pace and potential of this expansion, a process-based approach was incorporated as a measure of the working realities and challenges of cross-campus programming. For example, a new residency programme introduced artists and participative activities to Portiuncula University Hospital for the first time. Whilst this enhanced the hospital experience for participants, provided creative development opportunities for artists, and established demand for continued programming, it also demonstrated the considerable challenges that await Saolta Arts in providing consistent, high-quality Arts and Health experiences across Saolta's geographic spread with their current resources and localized team. Drawing from existing hospital-led arts initiatives at each site, Saolta Arts' 17-year experience at Galway University Hospitals, and *A Deeper Shade of Green's* diverse forms of engagement helped to identify requirements and guide the priority projects of the 3-year plan.

*Part of the Fabric* recognizes the need to increase and diversify funding paths, partnerships, and networks towards sustainable arts programming as well as actions to embed and integrate Arts and Health practice in health services nationally, so that the sector and all stakeholders can thrive.

*A Deeper Shade of Green* residencies pointed to a need for adequate onsite hospital support through hospital Key Contacts, Working Groups and Arts Committees informed by a suite of resources to help hospital staff and artists negotiate the potential of Arts and Health together. Yet they also reaffirmed that best practice necessitates specific knowledge and experience, highlighting the need for dedicated onsite Arts and Health expertise. The process of supporting the residencies inferred that Saolta Arts should prioritize engagement which nurtures the creative potential of the hospital community as well as the creative development of artists, and that any resulting artistic outputs should be suitable for sharing in the acute hospital context and associated networks. In this way, it will promote a wider understanding of the value of Arts and Health, encouraging a supportive ecology for the growth of the organization and the sector.

*A Deeper Shade of Green* supported people of all ages to explore their creative potential, to connect with others, and allowed the distinct voices of hospital communities to be heard. In giving artists creative and professional development opportunities, patients engaged in a way that distracted from worries and made the clinical environment feel more human, and staff found a space to re-evaluate and share their healthcare experiences. Ceara Conway's residency involved 'healing songs' workshops for staff, interviews with the hospital community, and a sound collaboration with a staff member which explored the adverse effects of

## A Deeper Shade of Green

hospital noise on healing. This informed the development of a subsequent vocal commission which was performed live for patients and staff, recorded as a CD for dissemination to Saolta's 7 hospitals, and is available online for the public. Similarly, *A Deeper Shade of Green* supported the vital exploratory stages of Sarah Fuller and Manuela Corbari's immersive theatre experience for young patients, developed through participative art workshops and bedside performances. Inviting feedback from their young audiences, the process shaped a commissioned theatre work which will tour to the 5 Paediatric Units of the Saolta University Health Care Group.

In addition, through the *OFFSET* intergenerational project at Galway University Hospitals and her residency at Portiuncula University Hospital, Aoife Barrett developed and tested custom-made mobile printmaking methodologies including a printcase-suitcase, a pasta-maker pasta press, and hand-carved rubber printing kits in a drive to make printmaking more assessible. Residency outputs were exhibited, sent through the hospitals' internal mail to lift someone's day, and gifted to loved ones and new friends freely. As Writer in Residence, poet Sean Borodale supported creative writing workshops, an open poetry call, and a discussion event which provided staff with an opportunity to think differently about the hospital, to voice their experiences, and a space for dialogue and sharing. In a series of individual conversations around his research themes, staff and patients found an opportunity to reflect and the writer found a new way to approach his writing. These informed a developing collection of poems which may also be configured as an audio work for national radio broadcast.

Collectively, the residencies engaged patients of all ages, and staff of all grades, across 4 hospitals, in diverse care contexts including Haemodialysis, Care for the Elderly, Bereavement, Clinical Engineering, Management and Administration, Pastoral Care, Chaplaincy, Cardiology, Chemotherapy, Medical Records, Stroke and Rehabilitation, Critical Care, Oncology, Paediatric Inpatients and Outpatients, Intensive Care, Palliative Care, Domestic Services, Reception, and Risk Management. By this means *A Deeper Shade of Green* embraced the pillars of Creative Ireland's programme in '*enabling the creative potential of every child*' and '*enabling creativity in every community*' and addressed its thematic areas of '*Individual and Collective Wellbeing*' and '*Connecting Communities*'. In developing a strategy and policy for Ireland's geographically largest Hospital Group through this process-based approach, Saolta Arts asserts its role in promoting best practice in Arts and Health and aligns with the Creative Ireland pillar of '*Investing in Creative and Cultural Infrastructure*'.

## 2. Introduction/background

*A Deeper Shade of Green* set out to develop Ireland's first Arts and Health Strategy and Policy for a hospital group in tandem with a series of artist residencies spanning visual art, poetry, music, and theatre. Engaging the patients, staff and visitors of Saolta's hospitals, the premise was to use learning from these residencies to

## A Deeper Shade of Green

inform strategic planning for the development of a comprehensive and inclusive Arts and Health programme across Saolta's geographic spread.

Initiated as an Arts Committee in early 2003 to develop an arts programme for University Hospital Galway and Merlin Park University Hospital, Galway University Hospitals Arts Trust was officially established as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status in 2007. Following the creation of Saolta University Health Care Group in 2015, it became the dedicated arts service for the largest geographic hospital group in Ireland and relaunched as Saolta Arts in August 2019.

Since 2016, it has provided an outreach service to an expanded remit of Mayo University Hospital, Roscommon University Hospital, Portlincula University Hospital, Sligo University Hospital and Letterkenny University Hospital. Together, the 7 hospital sites serve a population of 800,000 across 25% of the country, cared for by over 9,000 staff. As a small, localized team with limited resources and no cohesive Group-wide programming budget, a strategy was vital to guiding Saolta Arts' growth through a phased collaborative approach.

Adopting a process-based approach to developing the strategy offered a realistic assessment of the scope, pace, and potential for a 3-year plan with the resources currently available and a framework for building on these. To help guide the priority projects of the plan, Saolta Arts proposed working with artists from a range of art forms, placed in diverse clinical contexts, and employing a variety of collaborative, participative and public engagement methods to provide rich testing ground in new territory.

## 3. Outline of team and key participants

Margaret Flannery, Arts Director of Saolta Arts, was responsible for overall budget management and was key liaison between project partners, reporting to Galway City Council, Creative Ireland and Saolta University Health Care Group. She was the key contact for Portlincula University Hospital in the initial stages of setting up the PUH Artist Residency Programme and between the 7 Saolta hospital sites in the development of *Part of the Fabric: Saolta Arts Strategy and Policy 2020-2022*.

## A Deeper Shade of Green

Marielle MacLeman was appointed Project Co-ordinator to support the development of *Part of the Fabric: Saolta Arts Strategy and Policy 2020-2022* and, drawing on considerable experience in participative Arts and Health practice, to provide support and mentoring for 5 artist residencies.

The artists in residence of *A Deeper Shade of Green* were:

- Visual artist and singer Ceara Conway who engaged staff and patients at University Hospital Galway and Merlin Park University Hospital in a research residency to develop a commissioned vocal work.
- Theatre practitioners Sarah Fuller and Manuela Corbari who collaborated to transform the bed areas of University Hospital Galway's Paediatrics Department into miniature immersive theatre spaces.
- Visual artist Aoife Barrett who was the lead artist in the intergenerational printmaking project *OFFSET* involving older people at Merlin Park University Hospital and young patients and their families at University Hospital Galway. The artist used learning from this project to inform and develop her engagements with the hospital community at Portiuncula University Hospital as the inaugural Visual Artist in Residence there.
- Poet Sean Borodale who engaged staff and patients at Portiuncula University Hospital in his research to develop new work as the inaugural Writer in Residence at the hospital.

The above residencies involved the participation of staff, patients and visiting public at 4 of Saolta's hospitals. These engagements took a variety of formats in diverse public areas and clinical contexts. The residencies and the development of *Part of the Fabric: Saolta Arts Strategy and Policy 2020-2022* were supported by a range of Saolta personnel including the Management Teams, Patient Advice and Liaison Services, and Healthy Ireland representatives at each hospital site. The Portiuncula University Hospital Artist in Residence Programme benefitted from additional support from Sharon O'Grady, Arts Officer at Galway County Council.

## 4. Outcomes and outputs

### Artist in Residence 1: Song/Music





Setup for *Traditional Healing Songs* staff workshop at University Hospital Galway © Saolta Arts

Following a research trip to Georgia to learn techniques in Georgian polyphonic healing songs, Irish artist and singer Ceara Conway embarked on a 6-month residency at Galway University Hospitals which included singing workshops for hospital staff. Through a process of engagement with the hospital community, the research residency informed the development of a newly commissioned vocal work for Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture which was presented as a CD and online album and as a series of intimate performances in the wards, day rooms and corridors of Galway University Hospitals.

### Participants

---

- Staff of University Hospital Galway and Merlin Park University Hospital Galway.
- Patients at University Hospital Galway and Merlin Park University Hospital Galway.

### Aims

---

- To provide hospital staff of all levels of singing experience with access to workshops facilitated by a professional artist.
- To support an Irish artist in the research and development of a new vocal commission through engagement with hospital patients and staff.
- To create opportunities for sharing diverse cultural, healing, and health practices.
- To support the potential for innovative collaboration between a contemporary artist and members of the hospital community.

### Methods

---

Conway facilitated 3 artist-led singing workshops for hospital staff in May 2019. Exploring traditional healing songs from around the world, 1 workshop was held at Merlin Park University Hospital and 2 workshops at University Hospital Galway. All voices were welcome, and posters and information were disseminated widely through internal systems to ensure the call was open to staff from diverse disciplines and with all levels of singing experience. A total of 18 staff participated from a range of medical, nursing, clerical, and support roles.

## A Deeper Shade of Green

Participants heard and learned evocative traditional healing songs from Ireland, Africa, and Georgia, as well as learning techniques in the Sean-nós and Georgian style.

Based on a list of research areas defined by the artist, the Project Co-ordinator liaised with the Patient Advice and Liaison Service and other key contacts to brief staff and facilitate introductions to appropriate staff and patients. Through a series of one-to-one meetings, Conway engaged with members of two hospital staff choirs and consulted patients and staff from diverse care contexts and disciplines spanning Haemodialysis, Care for the Elderly, Bereavement, Clinical Engineering, Management and Administration, Pastoral Care, Cardiology, Chemotherapy and Medical Records. In addition to these curated introductions, an open call inviting expressions of interest from all hospital staff was circulated in staff rest areas and by email. This aimed to draw from Galway University Hospitals' broad multicultural demographic, inviting contributions of global healing practices and responses to working in the healthcare context from the 53 nationalities that work across the two hospital sites. The artist prepared a questionnaire to be sent for completion by nominating staff by return. By these means, her research was informed by the diverse perspectives of patients, doctors, nurses, porters, clerical staff and other allied health professionals.

Through these introductions to hospital staff, a particularly fruitful collaboration between the artist and a Senior Physicist evolved. This led the artist to explore the adverse effects of noise on healing in health care systems and the staff member supported the artist in accessing specific hospital equipment for recordings which were later incorporated in the completed vocal commission.

Monitor footage of hospital equipment being recorded  
© Ceara Conway

In line with her research interests, Conway was also invited to attend the Grand Rounds event *Principles of End of Life Care* presented by the Bereavement Officer and a Consultant in Palliative Medicine at University Hospital Galway.



development as a commissioned vocal work.

### Artistic Outputs

- 3 staff participative singing workshops
- A series of recordings for use in a commissioned vocal work.
- A body of artist's research for

### Evaluation Methodology

The artist completed a reflective journal and submitted project updates to the Arts Director on the progress of her residency. Staff were contacted for feedback on the participative singing workshops and the Project Co-ordinator undertook follow-up consultations with staff who had contributed to the research process. The residency was monitored through regular meetings and correspondence between the artist, Arts Director and Project Co-ordinator.

### Evaluation Outcomes

## A Deeper Shade of Green

The *Traditional Healing Songs* staff workshops at University Hospital Galway and Merlin Park University Hospital were attended by 18 participants with different levels of singing experience. Staff feedback was very positive and, based on their success, additional funding was secured to run the same workshop for staff at Roscommon University Hospital and Portiuncula University Hospital as part of a wider goal to roll Saolta Arts programming out across Saolta's 7 sites. Though fully subscribed, the dates for these workshops had to be postponed owing to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19.

*"I was nervous about the singing workshop as I'd not done anything like that before but was keen to try new things. Once I knew I didn't have to sing on my own I was happy out and it felt brilliant singing together as part of a group. I really surprised myself. It was good to meet new colleagues outside my own area of work".*

Participant, Merlin Park University Hospital Galway

Through her engagement with the hospital community, Conway was able to resolve the focus of her commissioned vocal work, narrowing down her broad research interests. Though the residency provided a wealth of material for her early interest in medical language and its barriers, as well as the failures of systems and their repercussions for the human spirit, these were considered too politically sensitive for the context and funding parameters of the intended commission. Instead the artist will use this material to develop subsequent works. Similarly, the residency provided the opportunity to engage with two hospital choirs and to explore the possibility of collaborating with them on a public performance. Through this process, the artist resolved instead to collaborate with the choir master of one choir for a recorded album and to develop a series of intimate live performances for patients. The residency period allowed the artist time to identify appropriate performance sites in consultation with the Arts Director and the Project Co-ordinator. Although a collaboration with the hospital choirs did not transpire in this instance, the research process established that there would be sufficient interest for Saolta Arts to explore this collaborative potential with other artists in future. Other collaborations that evolved from the residency included the artist working with a Senior Physicist to facilitate the recording of hospital equipment which was then innovatively incorporated in compositions on the completed album.



Ceara Conway with Anna Mullarkey sing from *Viriditas* to patients in St. Mary's Ward, UHG © Julia Monard

*"Music is something familiar to Mum, something from home, and that is really important whilst she is in hospital. It can be such a long day here, initiatives like this are brilliant for lifting the spirits. It was wonderful to see her smiling".*

Visiting relative, Merlin Park University Hospital Galway, in response to *Viriditas* live bedside performance by Ceara Conway with Anna Mullarkey, Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture



Conway's research residency as part of *A Deeper Shade of Green* informed the development of *Viriditas*, for the Saolta Arts programme for Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture. Including newly composed contemporary songs and traditional European healing songs and rhythms from Georgia and Italy, *Viriditas* takes the listener on a journey through songs inspired by conversations with staff and patients, and recordings of hospital equipment, plants, and the tools of sound healers. Recorded as a limited-edition CD and available online, the song cycle was made in collaboration with sound artists, sound healers, musicians, and herbalists, and adapted as a series of intimate live

performances over 4 days. It was performed in hospital corridors and in 8 units across University Hospital Galway and Merlin Park University Hospital including Stroke, Rehabilitation, Critical Care, Haemodialysis, and Care for the Elderly contexts, with audiences gifted a CD after each performance. Following this, Conway was invited to perform *Viriditas* in Berlin, though sadly this was cancelled owing to travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Above: Patients join Ceara Conway with Anna Mullarkey in song in a busy dialysis unit, MPUH © Saolta Arts



## A Deeper Shade of Green



Whilst the costs of developing and producing *Viriditas* came from other funding sources, the professional development opportunities offered to the artist, and the transformative experience that the final outcome offered to 268 staff, patients and their families, would not have been possible without support from the National Creativity Fund for the formative phase of the project.

Ceara Conway with Anna Mullarkey sing from *Viriditas* to a blind patient in Unit 5, MPUH © Saolta Arts

*“This was pure magic. What a fantastic programme organised by Saolta Arts. The absolute joy this brought to the patients was obvious on their faces, and speaking with them afterwards, there was a serenity and joyous wonder at having this beautiful performance in their Ward in a hospital setting. Pure magic. Well done to all.”*

Comment posted on social media after witnessing performance on the wards

*“I am always drawn to performing in specific sites and the experience of singing healing songs for patients, family and staff in the hospitals, for me, brought the intentionality of my work to a whole other level. It allowed me to connect with people in a very real and intimate way. The practise of singing to sooth and heal is ancient, and whilst *Viriditas* is a contemporary work, it is rooted in tradition, and performing it in a hospital felt like it belonged in the space. The songs and voice in this space were offered up for the purposes of creating moments of joy, fun and poignancy and to bring patients and staff together in new ways, outside their normal daily routines and patterns. It was one of the most beautiful projects I’ve ever worked on”.*

Ceara Conway, artist and singer



Ceara Conway with Anna Mullarkey sing from *Viriditas* to the patients, staff and visiting public outside lifts at UHG © Julia Monard



## Documentation & Dissemination

Feedback from the *Traditional Healing Songs* staff workshops was gathered internally, the Project Co-ordinator consulted staff and patients following the artist’s research interviews, and the artist provided written project updates and visual documentation of research materials. Given the sensitive nature of the healthcare context

## A Deeper Shade of Green

it was not appropriate to disseminate this information or to document participants. However, owing to the protracted timelines of other aspects of *The Deeper Shade of Green* project, it has been possible to witness the full realisation of the artist's research and to document these final outcomes appropriately.

The final performances of *Viriditas* were documented by professional photographers and are being used in an ongoing social media campaign to direct the public to the online version of the song cycle. A limited-edition of 1000 CDs was produced and disseminated to staff and patients of University Hospital Galway and Merlin Park University Hospital and will be further distributed to the other hospitals of Saolta University Health Care Group once the COVID-19 pandemic has eased. Considerable work was invested in securing press and media opportunities most of which sadly fell through owing to national emergencies. However, as the final outcome exists online, there will be future opportunities to promote the project and Creative Ireland's role in its formative stages. A case study on the full project will be submitted to Ireland's national Arts and Health resource [artsandhealth.ie](http://artsandhealth.ie) and it is our intention to disseminate the project to the international Arts and Health sector.

### Agreed Outputs:

- 3 group workshops for staff as agreed
- 19 of 100 proposed total project engagements with staff and patients to inform artists' research.

### Agreed Outcomes:

Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:

- enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.
- supporting Irish artists to make/facilitate exemplary works of art and arts experiences.
- promoting Ireland as a nation of excellence in Arts and Health practice.

Supporting innovation through:

- new collaborations and contemporary approaches to performance and song.

Informing sectoral development by:

- creating opportunities for work and professional development in the arts.

Connecting communities by:

- creating and promoting opportunities to share diverse cultural, healing, and health practices.
- contemporary artists researching/collaborating with the hospital community.
- Connecting contemporary and traditional arts audiences.

## Artist in Residence 2: Theatre



Puppet from Sarah Fuller and Manuela Corbari's residency in the Paediatric Department, UHG © Ruby Wallis

Theatre practitioners Sarah Fuller and Manuela Corbari collaborated to transform the bed areas of young patients during a residency in the Paediatrics Department of University Hospital Galway. The artists' engagements with young patients and their families included participative art and animation workshops and bedside performances. From this experience, the artists are developing a final theatre work for Paediatric settings which will tour to 5 hospitals of Saolta University Health Care Group as part of Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture.

### Participants

---

- Young patients attending the Paediatrics Department at University Hospital Galway as inpatients.
- The parents/guardians and siblings of young patients.

### Aims

---

- To provide young patients and their families with positive and shared experiences to enhance their experience of hospital and distract from anxieties.
- To invite young patients to actively participate in and inform the development of professional theatre.
- To support theatre practitioners to develop skills in participative Arts and Health practice.
- To support artists in the research and development phase of a new theatre work specially adapted for healthcare settings.

### Methods

---

## A Deeper Shade of Green

In April and May 2019, the artists facilitated 8 participative engagements in the inpatient waiting area and at children's bedsides. These were inspired by stories from the Italian children's storybook *Nine Stories About*



Young patient engages with a puppet through a hospital window at UHG © Sarah Fuller/Manuela Corbari

*Love* by Italian writer Giovanna Zoboli and Portuguese illustrator Anna Ventura. Responding to the individual needs of each child and their family, the participative engagements included puppetry, shadow puppetry, model and diorama making, drawing, interactive storytelling, and stop motion animation. Each session gave children the opportunity to contribute to the narrative and inform ideas for the artists' subsequent engagements. The artists were able to test out which stories worked best in the context and with different ages, and to build an initial sense of what theatre formats would work for a final resolved performance at University Hospital Galway.

Following a period of studio development, the artists returned to the Paediatric Unit, using vacant bedrooms as studios to test out ideas in preparation for a further 4 engagements which took the form of intimate bedside performances incorporating puppetry, storytelling, walkabout theatre, shadow play and soundscapes. Whenever possible, staff provided further access to vacant rooms either side of the engagements so that the artists could respond to context specific challenges as they arose. This level of access also allowed

the artists to encounter and address potential issues before the final touring phase of the project. For example, practical details like not all hospital beds having metal frames with which to attach magnetic props and scenes was a welcome discovery during this development phase.

Through this second series of engagements, the artists were also able to consider how they should adapt their approaches to engage young patients in isolation rooms which they were not permitted to enter. Exploring the use of bedroom doors as frames for shadow stories, they began using the glass door as the interface through which to communicate, introducing shadows and handwritten messages from a puppet. During one engagement they slipped a phone inside the room, so that the child was aurally immersed in the soundscape of the story. This led to experiments with speakers to develop similar audio-visual interactions. These innovative solutions to inclusion respected the hospital's vital Infection Control and Prevention standards.

The second phase was also an opportunity to devise diverse ways for children and their families to engage on their own terms and at their own pace. This included performing one of the central characters from the stories as walkabout theatre in the waiting area and corridors which encouraged the interaction of those who would otherwise not have welcomed a bedside visit and introduced a playful energy amongst passing staff, visitors and performers. In addition, the artists used the time to consider how they might bring families together for small performances in waiting areas.

Importantly, the engagements also helped the artists to experiment with equipment and minimise props whilst still succeeding to create transformative, immersive environments that transposed their mini audiences to another world. They discovered that a strong portable torch could work just as well as an overhead projector and began thinking about how they could improvise with equipment already in the rooms they visited. Responding to what can frequently be brief windows of opportunity for engagement in the clinical context, they also developed ideas for disposable props that they could leave with young patients as a memento of their time together but also minimised the time spent on cleaning props between engagements.

The Project Co-ordinator met the artists at the beginning of each day along with the unit's Play Specialist who provided a list of appropriate patients for them to approach. A designated whiteboard was installed and used



## A Deeper Shade of Green

by the artists to post the outcomes of workshops and details of forthcoming engagements. This encouraged a sense of expectation and excitement and also helped initiate some engagements through direct contact between the artists and parents. Nursing staff were available at all times in the event of any issues and the Project Co-ordinator met with the artists for a debriefing session at the end of each day of engagements.

### Artistic Outputs

---

- The young patients created animations, puppets, drawings, and dioramas which they could take home at the end of their hospital admission.
- The artists developed props, puppets, and costumes for a final performance.
- The artists refined a set of stories and story-telling methods suitable for presentation as theatre in paediatric contexts.

### Evaluation Methodology

---

Following all engagements the artists invited parents and children to complete evaluation forms, encouraging critical feedback from their young audiences. The artists were also meticulous in keeping a reflective journal detailing their learning from every engagement and any issues experienced on their residency days. Staff were consulted for feedback and the project was monitored through regular meetings, correspondence, and reflective practice with the artists, the Project Co-ordinator and Arts Director.

### Evaluation Outcomes

---

For young patients and their families, the artists' engagements presented a welcome distraction from anxieties and the opportunity for a positive shared family experience that broke the monotony of the long day in hospital. For the artists, their engagements and meticulous journaling provided a unique learning opportunity to develop work that was truly responsive and appropriate to the care context. This will be presented as *A Bird at my Window and Other Stories* during a tour of Saolta's 5 Paediatric Units when Coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

Group activities in the inpatient waiting room allowed young patients to engage with the artists at their own



Young patient experiments with shadow play at UHG © Sarah Fuller/Manuela Corbari

pace and to make friends with other children outside their bedrooms. This provided important social contact and humanised the clinical environment for children who were isolated from their siblings and peers. The public nature of these workshops generated interest and support from staff and parents, sometimes leading to unexpected participation.

Early in the residency it became clear that activities in both the waiting room and bedrooms were just as important for parents, who not only welcomed seeing their child positively occupied but themselves benefited from active participation. For all, the artists' engagements interrupted the monotony of admission, served as a distraction from anxieties, and gave the family a shared focus outside health issues. Often, the artistic outcomes served to

## A Deeper Shade of Green

connect families who were separated, photographs and animations shared via smartphones with a parent and siblings at home.

*“We’ll bring nice memories from the hard time in hospital”.*

Parent

Sarah Fuller experiments with light projections on the doors of isolation rooms, UHG © Manuela Corbari

The artists adapted their activities to suit the needs of each participant. This encompassed short engagements focussed on illustrated storytelling for those with little energy or focus, and more involved stop motion animation for older children who were able download an app on their phones to continue working independently after the artists had left. Similarly, one family planned to recreate shadow play activities at home. The artists personalised every shadow play experience by incorporating the toys of each child into their stories and began experimenting with the glass panels in doors as a surface for shadow play. Nurses observing



these experiments were captivated and suggested that the artists devise a performance for an oncology patient – something that had been previously discouraged owing to vulnerability to infection. The young patient and her mother responded well to the interactions and invited the artists to return the following week.

Using light to create colourful projections in rooms was an effective means to transport young audiences to another world, away from the clinical trappings that had been

their home for days. This was particularly effective when combined with storytelling and soundscapes to create an immersive experience. The soundscapes brought calming sounds of nature into the hospital context as a means to escape and one parent reflected on the importance of hearing an alternative to everyday hospital sounds.

## A Deeper Shade of Green



Experiments with light projections in Paediatric bedrooms, UHG © Sarah Fuller and Manuela Corbari

*“The experience was magical. My little girl forgot where she was, she was so invested in the story. She loved it. She got to decide how the story played out. It made her very happy”.*

Parent



Experiments with light projections on hospital bedsheets at UHG © Sarah Fuller and Manuela Corbari

Despite the many challenges they had to negotiate, the artists welcomed and deftly responded to these, whilst also discovering unexpected benefits in the hospital setting. The great variation in patient ages and needs kept them mindful of the necessity to be adaptable in their storytelling methods and remit. The intimate performances in small spaces allowed them to engage with far younger ages, and therefore a broader range of ages, than would be possible in a theatre. In response, the artists worked on variations of scripts for the

youngest patients. Noting that further variation in logistics and environment could be encountered at the other Saolta Paediatric sites, it was agreed that exploratory site visits should be conducted before resolving the details of the final performance work for Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture. These have been rescheduled for when Coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

## A Deeper Shade of Green

*“The artist was so animated but calm and soft. The lovely visuals under light – the garden and butterfly – it was all beautiful and memorable. My child is only one year old and has Down Syndrome. She was completely engaged as the story was short and captivating. She fell asleep almost immediately afterwards when I had been having trouble settling her”.*

Parent

*“I loved it.”*

Patient

### Documentation & Dissemination

---

The residency was documented by the artists in written reflective journals following each day of engagements and through photography and sound recordings. The artists also compiled a password protected blog reflecting on their experience. Where appropriate, the outcomes of each day were shared on a whiteboard in a public area of the unit. A report was compiled by the Project Co-ordinator at the end of both engagement phases and disseminated internally to all Paediatric staff. A professional photographer was invited to make a documentary series of the artists’ props for use as a promotional series on social media. An additional day of film and photographic documentation was arranged to capture the immersive worlds indicative of the final work for Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture but this was cancelled by the artists and awaits rescheduling.

#### Agreed Outputs:

- 12 of 16 participative artist engagements in UHG Paediatrics.
- 12 of 100 proposed total project engagements with staff and patients to inform artists’ research.

#### Agreed Outcomes:

Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:

- supporting the creative potential of children in hospital.
- enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.
- supporting Irish artists to make/facilitate exemplary works of art and arts experiences.
- promoting Ireland as a nation of excellence in Arts and Health practice.

Supporting innovation through:

- engaging children as critics, shaping the development of theatre made especially for Paediatric settings.

Informing sectoral development by:

- creating opportunities for work and professional development in the arts.

Connecting communities by:

- contemporary artists researching/collaborating with the hospital community.

## Artist in Residence 3: Intergenerational





Postcard made by young patient awaits delivery in the hospital post room, UHG © Ruby Wallis

*OFFSET* was an intergenerational print project in 2019 involving participants in Paediatrics and Care for the Elderly contexts at Galway University Hospitals and staff from the wider hospital community. Inspired by the exchange of tacit knowledge between generations it celebrated human connections in the clinical context and explored how experiences and knowledge can be shared from a distance.

### Participants

---

- Young patients attending the Paediatrics Department at University Hospital Galway either as inpatients or through outpatient clinics.
- The siblings of young patients.
- Older people in long term Care for the Elderly context at Merlin Park University Hospital.

### Aims

---

- To provide young patients and their families with positive and shared experiences to enhance their experience of hospital and distract from anxieties.
- To pilot creative opportunities for the siblings of young patients, who can also spend significant time in hospital.
- To support older patients in exploring their creative potential and to provide shared experiences to enhance their experience of hospital and distract from anxieties.
- To support artists' practices across the life course through opportunities for professional development and exchange.
- To engage with staff and stimulate exchange between diverse members of the hospital community.

### Methods

---

The project began with a visit by Aoife Barrett to the studio of Aosdána member Margaret Irwin West, both highly skilled printmakers of different generations. This was an opportunity for the artists to exchange skills

## A Deeper Shade of Green

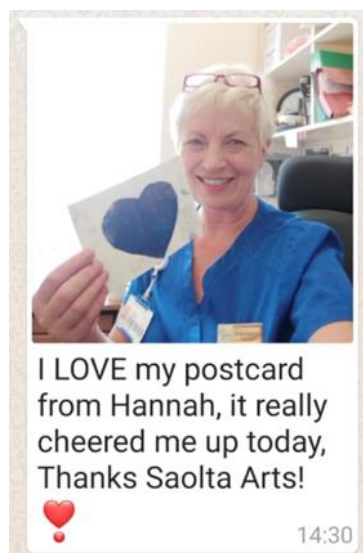
and their experiences of working with schools and communities of interest, both here and abroad. For example, Margaret Irwin West shared a printmaking technique she had used to explore pattern with a large group of Indian school children and Aoife Barrett shared her plans for developing a mobile print-case suitcase which included a modified pasta-maker printing press.

Barrett then facilitated a series of participative workshops with the hospitals' youngest and oldest patients using mobile, low-tech printmaking techniques to create handprinted postcards. Drawing inspiration from an extensive family archive of notebooks, letters, and cards from her grandparents, and in celebration of the way the post has connected communities, the artist reimagined this for the healthcare setting using the hospitals' internal mail to send the musings and marks of different generations between waiting rooms, offices, beds, and buildings. The postcards were sent to other patients to brighten up a long and isolating day or to staff as an unexpected thank you and a vital affirmation of a job well done. At times, the themes of artwork or messages on postcards prompted the recipient to write back with their own reflections.



Postcards made by young patient sent to her Staff Nurse and Consultant to say 'thank you' © Saolta Arts

There were nine workshops in total: two in Paediatrics Inpatients, four in Paediatrics Outpatients and three in Care for the Elderly. In the Inpatient playroom, children were able to explore repetition and multiple colours in longer workshops. Even in the fast-paced drop-in workshops of the Outpatients waiting room, young patients and their siblings were able to make multiple prints in a short time using the pasta-maker printing press - taking some home and posting others to the hospital community in the project's post box.



A message from a healthcare colleague © Saolta Arts

For older participants, the same techniques were not always appropriate for those recovering from stroke, fatigue or with limited strength. In instances where participants struggled to apply the pressure needed to get a good print, the artist adapted tools to support independent mark making. For example, printing rollers were covered with foam piping insulation incised with patterns. This meant that, with even the lightest touch, someone with little strength or fine motor function could roll patterns over the surface of paper with ease.

An exhibition documented the inspiration, artworks, messages, and interactions from the project. Grouped according to the recurring themes in workshops and alongside materials from the artist's family archive, the exhibition offered a privileged peek at people connecting from a distance and sharing what they know and love, from the right way to pick apples to the attributes of a 1990s Toyota Mini-van. It served as a reminder of the significance of sharing, even if we seem to not be saying very much, and of the role this has in making the hospital more human.

### Artistic Outputs

---

- A body of mini-prints circulated across two hospitals through internal post.
- An exhibition of artwork from a series of workshops took place at University Hospital Galway from August - September 2019.
- A limited edition set of hand-printed mini-prints made in response to the workshops.

### Evaluation Methodology

---

The artist completed a reflective journal. Staff, patients and parents were consulted for feedback, and an end of project report was prepared. The project was monitored through regular meetings and reflective practice with the artist and Project Coordinator..

### Evaluation Outcomes

---

Each setting and patient group had distinct parameters and challenges to respond to. In UHG's Paediatrics Unit, space was limited so the postcard-sized prints worked well in this context. Before being discharged, one young patient decided to send a postcard to every member of staff who had helped her during her stay, from her consultant, to a staff nurse, to an administrator in the Patients Accounts Department. The unexpected recipients of postcards said that their post was a welcome lift to what had sometimes been a challenging day.

Parents of young patients and their siblings valued that their children had a different focus, were positively engaged and distracted from their worries. Following the workshops in the waiting room of Outpatient clinics, one consultant reflected that all her young patients came into the consultation room full of pride and enthusiasm in place of the anxieties that are usually prevalent during appointments. For older participants, the printmaking activity and exhibition served as a catalyst for new conversations and storytelling.





To Eva  
Hi my name is  
Mia I am getting  
my peanut allergy  
tested. what are  
you doing?

Postcard made in Paediatrics, UHG, and sent to staff in a Care for the Elderly Context, MPUH © Saolta Arts

The day of skills sharing between Aoife Barrett and Margaret Irwin West proved an insightful and valuable opportunity for the artists to discuss adapting printmaking techniques to the ageing process and approaches that would and wouldn't work in the healthcare setting.



Mrs Sabina Higgins and Aoife Barrett at launch of *OFFSET* exhibition, Arts Corridor UHG © Andrew Downes

now being sent as postcards to inpatients admitted to Saolta hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when human connection and communicating from a distance in the clinical setting has never been more important.

The *OFFSET* exhibition was opened by Mrs. Sabina Higgins on Tuesday 6th August and superseded the original proposal to include the intergenerational exhibition in Galway International Arts Festival when, due to unforeseen circumstances, it withdrew from our longstanding partnership of 8 years. The heart-warming exhibition was extremely popular within the hospital community. To celebrate the launch of Saolta Arts, Barrett produced a limited edition set of mini-prints inspired by the postcards made by participants during her engagements. These are

*"Just love this exhibition – reminds us of the importance of small gestures"*

From visitor comments book



## A Deeper Shade of Green

The project was documented and disseminated internally with the outcomes publicly shared in an exhibition marking Galway University Hospitals Arts Trust's official relaunch as Saolta Arts. With consideration to Galway's July press competition, without the partnership of Galway International Arts Festival, the *OFFSET* exhibition was moved back to August 2019 to maximise publicity potential. This event attracted local and regional coverage including front pages of local papers and, importantly, extended to the county papers of our expanded remit, as well as national press like Health Matters magazine. A case study of the project was prepared is permanently accessible online on Ireland's national Arts and Health resource [artsandhealth.ie](http://artsandhealth.ie).

*"Love it- Simple idea - but big impact in connecting"*

From visitor comments book

### Agreed Outputs:

- 6 of 16 participative artist engagements in UHG Paediatrics.
- An intergenerational exhibition.

### Agreed Outcomes:

Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:

- supporting the creative potential of children in hospital.
- enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.
- supporting Irish artists to make/facilitate exemplary works of art and arts experiences.
- promoting Ireland as a nation of excellence in Arts and Health practice.

Informing sectoral development by:

- creating opportunities for work and professional development in the arts.

Connecting communities by:

- contemporary artists researching/collaborating with the hospital community.

Hi my name is Eda  
I hope you will feel  
better soon.  
If it is your  
birthday, happy  
birthday!  
Love Eda  
♡

## Artist in Residence 4: Visual Arts



'Tinned Stories', Aoife Barrett's hand-carved rubber printing kits in engraved tins, PUH © Aoife Barrett

As the inaugural Visual Artist in Residence at Portiuncula University Hospital, printmaker Aoife Barrett engaged the hospital community in diverse printmaking techniques over a 5 month period. Working across all ages and a variety of contexts, the residency allowed the artist to hone mobile printing techniques and public engagement skills towards developing her emerging Arts and Health practice.

### Participants

---

- Young patients attending the Paediatrics Department at Portiuncula University Hospital either as inpatients or through outpatient clinics.
- The siblings of young patients.
- Adult inpatients and outpatients of Portiuncula University Hospital.
- Staff and students working in Portiuncula University Hospital.
- The general public visiting family and friends at Portiuncula University Hospital.
- Staff and students working in Roscommon University Hospital.
- The general public visiting family and friends at Roscommon University Hospital.

### Aims

---

- To engage the hospital community in the arts.
- To create professional development opportunities for artists within the acute hospital context.
- To pilot an Artist in Residence programme with view to establishing an annual opportunity for artists.
- To introduce opportunities for the hospital community to engage with and participate in visual arts with view to establishing an arts programme at Portiuncula University Hospital.

### Methods

---

An open call was circulated through national networks in February 2019 and Aoife Barrett was selected through a competitive process involving partners Galway County Council Arts Office. The artist's proposal clearly articulated a plan for professional development, using her engagements with the hospital community

## A Deeper Shade of Green

to evolve mobile printing processes which she had tested at Galway University Hospitals as part of the *OFFSET* project. Moreover, as the residency at Portiuncula University Hospital was limited to 12 days of engagement and the hospital had no previous experience of participative arts programming, this previous involvement with the artist was considered to offer some assurances regarding outcomes and in gaining the support of hospital staff, which would ultimately strengthen the prospect of future programming.

Two Key Contacts were appointed at the hospital, one with administrative responsibilities which ensured an in-depth knowledge of hospital logistics and all personnel, and the other, a Patient Liaison and Advice Service (PALS) Officer who was an invaluable source of appropriate patient referrals. The Saolta Arts team met with the Key Contacts twice and the artist once prior to the residency commencing, in addition to preparatory emails and telephone correspondence. A guided tour of the hospital was provided by the Key Contacts on the artist's first day of engagement and either one was available on subsequent days to support workshop logistics and facilitate introductions with respective members of hospital staff. The Project Co-ordinator was on site to support activities on 5 days of the residency and was available via telephone and meetings for mentoring and debriefing following all other residency days.

Of the 12 engagements, 3 took place in the hospital's main foyer, 2 in the Outpatient Department, 1 in the Paediatric inpatient unit and 6 in a variety of adult wards including Oncology and Stroke Rehabilitation. The first two days were drop-in sessions in the main foyer which allowed the visiting public to engage in simple botanical and foam printing as well as printing with objects and rubber stamps. The artist had piloted these techniques in the public foyer spaces of Roscommon University Hospital during 2 days of engagement which had been organised when the start date for her residency was delayed. At Portiuncula, these sessions were also designed to introduce the artist to staff and to help them understand how her methods might work in their department. This had been well co-ordinated by the Key Contacts as a means of smoothing the transition onto the wards. The final day of her residency also took place in the foyer, the day-long drop-in workshop providing an opportunity to share the outcomes of her residency with patients, staff and visitors at the hospital.

The wards and waiting rooms of the hospital allowed the artist an unprecedented opportunity to test custom-made mobile printing equipment, including a custom made 'print-case-suitcase' which opens as a miniature print table and a pasta-maker printing press. The Outpatients waiting room supported a variety of engagement techniques. This included short drop-in postcard making sessions at a table in a play area for younger patients. Postcards which weren't taken home were sent to members of staff, whose names had been provided by the Key Contacts, to brighten the working day and provide another level on which the artist could engage the hospital community and raise awareness of the residency.

Posters and flyers for the Outpatient workshops were circulated on the days of engagements but it was agreed



that allowing the public to participate on their own terms would be preferable to approaching adult patients as they waited for appointments. Instead, in an attempt to integrate herself, the artist occupied a chair in the seating area and set up her print-case on a small stand, creating prints in response to her observations of the waiting room. This sparked curiosity, at times leading to adults and children making prints themselves or leading to significant conversations. Where those engaging with the artist did not make prints, the artist gifted them a print she had made in the course of their dialogue to acknowledge the generosity of the exchange.

Aoife Barrett working from her printcase-suitcase in the Outpatients waiting room, PUH



*'The Van and the Star', a young patient's handmade storybook made in Paediatrics, PUH © Saolta Arts*

The Paediatric Inpatient Unit supported longer one-to-one engagements allowing young patients to explore multiples and bookmaking using pre-carved rubber stamps as tools to create their own stories. Her interactions in the adult wards varied considerably – from a 4-bed ward which transformed into an industrious studio with all patients participating in a range of relief printing processes to individual engagements which focussed on storytelling. Between designated engagements with patients and staff, the artist spent time in the hospital's public spaces and waiting areas, observing, drawing, making notes and carving rubber stamps. The final day of the residency took the form of a drop-in printmaking and bookmaking session in the foyer informed by the artist's previous engagements. This was an opportunity for patients, visitors and staff to make a print or a book and learn about what had been achieved during the residency.

### Artistic Outputs

---

- A body of mini-prints circulated to staff by internal post.
- Sets of themed rubber stamp printing kits and 'tinned stories' inspired by patient engagements and for use in future workshops.
- The design of a laser cut woodblock printing plate for a book to be used in public printmaking events.
- Personal creative projects made by participating members of the hospital community.

### Evaluation Methodology

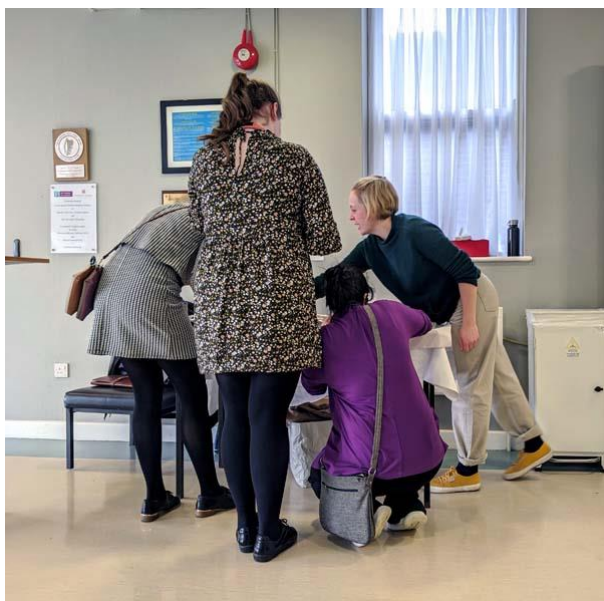
---

The artist kept a reflective journal and submitted a report on completion of the residency. Staff and patients were consulted for feedback. The project was monitored through regular meetings and correspondence between the Project Co-ordinator and the artist and with the Key Contacts. The Project Co-ordinator facilitated mentoring and reflective practice sessions to support the artist.

### Evaluation Outcomes

---





The residency began in September 2019, later than planned. Staff changes, leave, and other operational issues at Portiuncula University Hospital meant that correspondence encountered initial challenges but a very positive meeting and site visit in May introduced the appointed Key Contacts for the Artist in Residence Programme. Further delays at the hospital meant that the residencies could not commence until the latter half of July and it was apparent that the hospital did not have the capacity to support both artists at the same time. As the Writer in Residence was relocating to the UK in September 2019, the Visual Artist in Residence was scheduled after this, leading to further programming issues.

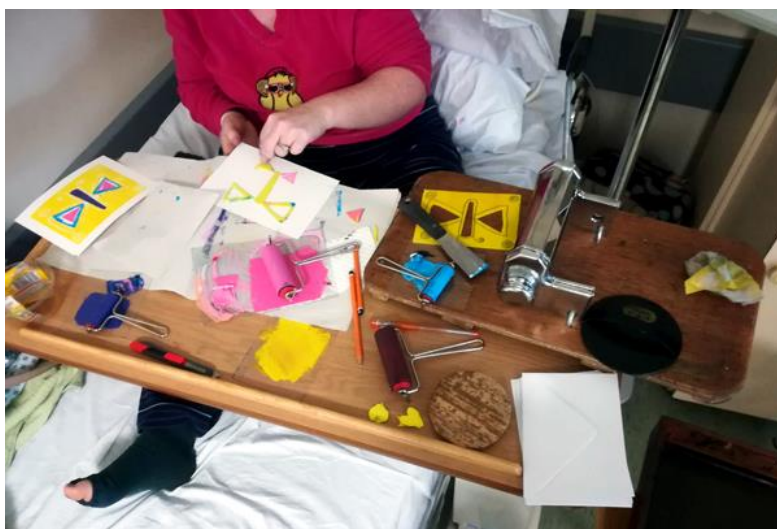
The hospital was unable to agree dates more than a few weeks ahead, partly because the residency did not focus on one specific care context. This led to issues with the artist's availability when her other freelance opportunities were able to programme further ahead. After the residency had started, the artist was awarded another more intensive residency funded by Creative Ireland. When a number of agreed dates had to be rescheduled by the hospital owing to restricted visiting during the winter flu season, these issues compounded to carry the Visual Arts Residency into 2020, with the final engagement at the hospital in mid-February. Another disadvantage of starting the residency later was that inclement weather prohibited the Print Van Go aspect of Barrett's original proposal. This is the artist's mobile printing studio which had been proposed as a workshop venue for staff and public participation, parked on hospital grounds. Despite these drawbacks, the protracted residency period was beneficial to the artist in developing ideas and outcomes arising from her engagements and in reconciling her understanding of these in relation to her practice.

Each context the artist worked in had distinct parameters and challenges to respond to. The drop-in nature of activities in the foyer meant that engagements were often fleeting but they allowed the artist to reach more people and gain a broad experience. When the Writer in Residence was prioritised over the Visual Artist in



A father makes a first artwork for the nursery of his new-born son in a drop-in workshop in the PUH foyer © Saolta Arts

Residence, Barrett was invited to pilot the techniques for her public drop-in sessions at Roscommon University Hospital so she was able to adjust and refine these for her time at Portiuncula. Here, the short engagements still allowed poignant moments like a father making a first artwork for his new-born son as he awaited his discharge, a grandmother making a card for a child, and tender family stories shared over the printing process whilst waiting for transport. For staff, the activities were the source of unexpected excitement and pride on their way to or from tea break. Moreover, they were an effective



Inpatient using the modified pasta-maker printing-press on her hospital bedtable, PUH © Saoita Arts

Aoife Barrett working with medical students on a small table in the PUH foyer © Saoita Arts

means of imagining their potential and value to patients, and therefore the catalyst for encouraging a supportive dynamic throughout the residency.

The waiting room of the Outpatient Department was a particularly challenging context for the artist in the early stages of the residency. For example, a workshop arranged to coincide with a Paediatric clinic involved an intensive run of very young children in a very small workspace. Though ultimately successful, this age group had not been

anticipated and, for subsequent engagements, the experience allowed the artist to make an

assessment and recommendation on the ages her techniques were suitable for. Among the older children who participated, one made postcards for each member of her family and another who did not speak English, used the activity as a way to communicate the things that she liked and to engage her father.

Feeling exposed in the Outpatient waiting room, the artist observed that adults were generally more reserved and initially she felt like she was invading their space with her creative invitation. However, in time, she became less self-conscious and reflected that, *“working in this space moved me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to experiment more”*. Through this experience she discovered that her own process of making could be a catalyst for meaningful exchanges where she would then gift an artwork, and that this form of engagement was just as valuable as a participant actively making a print. This became an important method she adopted throughout the residency. Indeed, working in the hospital’s waiting areas and public spaces in between designated engagements became an integral part of her process and helped her to develop confidence and skills for working in public..

*“These spaces and periods of reflection became a vitally important part of the residency for me. It was here I was really able to see and understand the day-to-day workings of the hospital. Later in the residency I was able to interact and work with patients in these spaces in a relaxed, informal way”.*

Aoife Barrett, PUH Visual Artist in Residence 2019

During one of these occasions the artist overheard a child say that she intended to draw a map to her house so her new friend in the waiting room would know how to find her again. This inspired the artist to develop a laser cut woodblock plate for a ‘how to’ booklet about the methods she developed throughout the residency. Her intention is to use this plate in future live printing events as a means to introduce new communities to both printmaking techniques and her creative process.

One of the artist’s intentions for the residency was to explore the practicalities of printmaking in the clinical setting, refining her experiments with mobile printing techniques. With unprecedented access to a variety of clinical contexts she was able to adapt and minimise equipment and processes accordingly. Whilst our Key Contact discussed the residency with appropriate patients in the days preceding engagements, the nature of the acute hospital context meant that it was impossible for the artist to know who she would be working with until she arrived. In the same way, activities needed to suit a single engagement as there were no guarantees

## A Deeper Shade of Green

she would see the same participants again. Her focus therefore became about finding processes that involved compact equipment that was easy to use and offered sufficient versatility and scope to respond to diverse needs and interests.

*“When it came to working on the wards each session was completely unique. It was through these sessions that I was really able to hone my mobile printmaking processes. At first, not knowing what to expect or who I would be working with, I packed as many materials and tools as I could manage. I would have the print-case and then another two or three bags packed full of objects, bookmaking tools, materials for rubbings and cyanotypes.... just in case! As I continued with the sessions on the wards I quickly realised that my bags and cases of materials were not practical and after each session I worked to reduce my materials. During busier times even the compact nature of the print-case wasn't compact enough. Sometimes I would have to pack everything up quickly and leave due to impromptu doctors' visits or infection control deep cleaning. It also wasn't practical trying to manoeuvre everything around corridors full of trolleys and bins and I felt conscious of getting in the way of staff. There were other days when I came prepared for one-to-one engagements but needed to set up in the foyer because patients were suffering from illness and fatigue. I became very conscious of the need to be flexible and being able to adapt to every situation. I needed an activity that could work in the foyer but not have so much that I couldn't manoeuvre around wards. I found the rubber stamps the most accessible, versatile technique and tools”.*

Aoife Barrett, PUH Visual Artist in Residence 2019

Easy to use, fast drying, and offering immediate results, the artist built on her collection of hand-carved rubber stamps and coloured ink pads in response to the themes of her dialogue with participants. These were used in a variety of approaches. For many people the urge to make gifts for loved ones often helped to overcome any reservations they had about 'doing art' and the rubber stamps allowed participants to make multiple cards and artworks to this end. At times the artist would work collaboratively with patients to create their desired outcome, and where patients were too ill or fatigued to physically make prints, their instructions and conversations guided the marks she made for them.

Organising the rubber stamps into metal boxes according to the themes of her residency conversations, the artist was able to draw together her interests in printmaking, bookmaking, and storytelling as kits for use with future participants. Each 'tinned story' included a selection of hand-carved rubber stamps and a handmade book which illustrated the story behind the set and suggested how it could be used. The engraved tins included *'The Sheep Farmer,'* with stamps inspired by sheep buyers from Tipperary and the myth behind the lucky penny, and *'Jennifer's Story'* about a lost star looking for its family. The 'tinned stories' were previewed and used by participants in a final public drop-in workshop in the hospital foyer.



Examples of Aoife Barrett's 'Tinned Stories', made in response to engagements with patients © Saolta Arts



## A Deeper Shade of Green

Despite the artist's determined efforts to make printmaking accessible to everyone, the residency proved that her innovative, custom-made equipment was not universally appropriate in the acute hospital setting. In response, the experience allowed her to evolve one approach which could be adapted to any public or private context and individual needs. Whilst the tangible nature of her visual arts practice made it easy for people to comprehend and to opt in or out in the first instance, a combination of the tins' handmade books and the artist's retelling of the engagements which inspired them, proved a captivating and practicable way to inspire participation.



Examples of Aoife Barrett's 'Tinned Stories', made in response to engagements with patients © Saolta Arts

By this means, the artist successfully reconciled participant-centred arts participation with her own professional development and artistic outcomes. It should be noted that this was due to Barrett's particular practice and approach and similar cohesion between patient-centred engagement and an artist's personal artistic goals could not be achieved in every artist residency. Indeed, realising any artistic outcomes in response to 12 engagements within the 3-month period initially proposed seemed a daunting task for the artist. Those that were achieved can be attributed to the protracted residency period. Whilst the delays and cancellations that forced this were unwanted, they in fact allowed the artist time to develop and resolve some artistic outcomes for presentation and practise within her residency. That said, the public printing event involving her 'how to' woodblock bookplate was not possible within the residency and her time at PUH will undoubtedly directly inform further creative development. The short 3-month timeframe was decided on in order to grant two residencies and therefore gauge the interest in and success of more than one art form at the hospital. Whilst these short residencies may be fitting for a particular artist and how they propose to engage the hospital community in their creative process, future residencies should consider what is feasible in terms of expected outcomes within the residency period as well as a methodology for tracking those which directly result from the residency but may take time to materialize.



A member of staff makes a handmade book for her family using 'The Sheep Farmer' tinned stories printing kit', in the PUH foyer on the final day of Aoife Barrett's residency © Saolta Arts



### Documentation & Dissemination

---

The project was documented for internal reporting mechanisms and a selection of appropriate images from workshops has been compiled for dissemination on social media. Given the sensitive nature of the clinical setting and our need to comply with confidentiality, documentation of such projects and its dissemination is an ongoing challenge associated with Arts and Health practice. It is intended that a case study of the project will be prepared for permanent access online on Ireland's national Arts and Health resource [artsandhealth.ie](http://artsandhealth.ie).

#### Agreed Outputs:

- 12 engagements with the PUH community

#### Agreed Outcomes:

Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:

- supporting the creative potential of children in hospital.
- enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.
- supporting Irish artists to make/facilitate exemplary works of art and arts experiences.
- promoting Ireland as a nation of excellence in Arts and Health practice.

Informing sectoral development by:

- creating opportunities for work and professional development in the arts.

Connecting communities by:

- contemporary artists researching/collaborating with the hospital community.

### Artist in Residence 5: Poetry



Staff share the poems they have written in response to the hospital during Sean Borodale's final engagement as the PUH Writer in Residence 2019 © Saolta Arts

As the inaugural Writer in Residence at Portiuncula University Hospital, poet Sean Borodale engaged the hospital community in a series of conversations aimed at exploring the meaning and experience of solace.

## A Deeper Shade of Green

Over a 7 month period, the residency provided a rich research process towards the development of a collection of new poems, and invited the hospital community to engage in their own creative writing.

### Participants

---

- Adult inpatients at Portiuncula University Hospital.
- Staff working in Portiuncula University Hospital.
- The general public attending an open poetry event.

### Aims

---

- To engage the hospital community in the arts.
- To create professional development opportunities for artists within the acute hospital context.
- To pilot an Artist in Residence programme with view to establishing an annual opportunity for artists.
- To introduce opportunities for the hospital community to engage with and participate in creative writing with view to establishing an arts programme at Portiuncula University Hospital.

### Methods

---

As with the PUH Visual Artist in Residence, an open call was circulated through national networks in February 2019 and Sean Borodale was selected through a competitive process involving partners Galway County Council Arts Office. Though the poet had no previous Arts and Health experience, he was an experienced educator and his submission demonstrated a capacity to develop high quality artistic outcomes following a period of engagement with communities of interest in sensitive circumstances.

Two Key Contacts were appointed at the hospital, one with administrative responsibilities which ensured an in-depth knowledge of hospital logistics and all personnel, and the other, a Patient Liaison and Advice Service (PALS) Officer who was an invaluable source of appropriate patient referrals and had a personal interest in writing poetry. The Saolta Arts team met with the Key Contacts twice and the poet once prior to the residency commencing, in addition to preparatory emails and telephone correspondence. The poet was given a guided tour of the hospital by the Key Contacts on his first day of engagements and either one was available on subsequent days to oversee introductions with staff and patients. The Project Co-ordinator was on site to support activities on 3 days of the residency and was available via telephone and meetings for reflective practice following all other residency days.

The writer's proposal, '*A Theatre for Landscapes of Solace*' sought to explore what solace means to us; and within the setting of a hospital, how we find or strive towards it, or help others to do so. From the outset, the Key Contacts assembled a display in the entrance foyer of the hospital which introduced Borodale and the residency and provided a box for anonymous written submissions on the theme. The poet engaged staff and patients in a series of conversations over 11 days from July to September 2019, returning in January 2020 for a final public event.

His engagements were conducted as conversations rather than interviews but, prior to each meeting, the Key Contacts introduced participants to the themes of his research and disseminated flyers with written information. These were generally one-to-one meetings though he met some staff in small departmental groups. An information sheet had also been widely disseminated in advance to help potential participants approach the subject. This offered prompts such as: How do we seek solace? Do you find yourself turning to books, to prayer or music; or do you turn on the TV or radio? Do you talk to a friend or relative? Does a listening ear or coaching voice enable solace? The poet's premise was that solace has a brief dictionary

## A Deeper Shade of Green

definition, and yet it must mean something vastly more complex and richer to most who engage with a need for it or a failure to reach it.

Given unparalleled access, Borodale met with patients and staff from disciplines and departments spanning Intensive Care, Bereavement, Intensive Care, Palliative Care, Medical Records, Chaplaincy, Domestic Services, Reception and Risk Management. Our Key Contacts at the hospital ensured an inclusive approach to this engagement, facilitating introductions to Hospital Management and Directors of Nursing, to Nursing staff at ward level, administrative, and support staff. The writer usually had 2-3 engagements each day, generally at the bedsides of patients and, with staff, in offices or the restaurant.

At Saolta Arts' request, the writer facilitated 2 staff writing workshops to grant access to arts opportunities, gauge the level of interest for future programming, and encourage other avenues for staff to contribute to his own research. The workshops used excerpts of short texts and objects at hand to discuss and write out definitions of and experiences from which it was necessary to draw out a space for solace as part of a healing or mediating process.

An evening public conversation between Borodale and acclaimed local poet Elaine Feeney was organised as a final engagement to discuss some of his methodologies and considerations for engaging the acute hospital community, and the value of the residency to both the hospital and the writer. At the request of our Key Contacts, staff were invited to submit poems about the hospital and their healthcare experience through an open call aimed at encouraging attendance at the public event. In the end, this resulted in two events on the final day – an afternoon meeting and reading for staff and an evening event open to the public.

### Artistic Outputs

---

- 24 preliminary drafts of new poems.
- A public poetry discussion event between two acclaimed poets.
- A collection of poems written by staff.

### Evaluation Methodology

---

The artist completed notes following his engagements. Staff and patients were consulted for feedback via the Key Contacts. The residency was monitored through regular meetings and reflective practice with the artist and Project Coordinator who documented these as notes.

### Evaluation Outcomes

---

As previously suggested, staff changes, leave, and other operational issues at the hospital meant that initiating the inaugural PUH Artist in Residence Programme encountered some challenges. Following a productive meeting with our Key Contacts in May, the poet's Garda Vetting Clearance experienced delays, and the residency was further postponed to July, when the hospital was in a position to best support it.

The residencies had been envisaged as regular, uniformly-spaced engagements on the premise that continuity would foster momentum and anticipation within the hospital community. Yet by the time the residency started, the poet's other commitments could not accommodate this and as our Key Contacts' involvement was additional to already demanding roles, they did not have the capacity to support his request to attend the hospital thrice weekly. Furthermore, as the residency developed it was clear that, in the acute hospital setting, there could be difficulties in finding sufficient numbers of staff and patients for multiple engagements in the same week. PUH is a small hospital, but in any acute care context this form of engagement has to compete with limitations in the time of staff and variations in the health and focus of patients. However, our Key

## A Deeper Shade of Green

Contacts were flexible and accommodated the writer's limited availability and, because of the particular nature of his engagements, the sporadic scheduling did not affect the outcome of these encounters. Despite initial reservations, at times they also managed to support more than one visit a week, though it should be noted that, for any artist, the intensity of this experience could not be maintained over successive weeks.

From the outset, our Key Contacts assembled a display and comments box in the entrance foyer of the hospital for anonymous written submissions on the residency theme. This method of contribution was seldom used but the display, along with posters circulated throughout the hospital, indicated the presence of the poet throughout the residency and helped to familiarise the hospital community with him. The inclusion of the poet's headshot was an important aspect of this. A thorough tour of the hospital, facilitated by the Key Contacts, included planned introductions to many staff and this proved another effective means to initiate engagements.

For the poet, rather than making work in-situ, the purpose of the residency was to create material to develop a new series of poems exploring what solace might mean. His process took the form of a series of conversations, engaging 54 individuals, 12 of whom were patients, across 5 distinct care areas including Oncology, Intensive Care and the Stroke Unit. Among patients, more men agreed to participate than women, and among staff, the majority of participants were women.

The emphasis was on *'gleaning essence'*, and not the details of life-stories or experiences of those generously contributing to the process. However, set against the measured and monitored routines of the institution, this open invitation without a defined goal seemed at odds with the prevailing clinical pace and, for some, roused initial suspicion. Here, the Key Contacts were instrumental in allaying fears, ensuring that people knew that their 'stories' would not be appropriated, and in laying the groundwork for introductions. Flyers with the poet's own written prompts were also essential in helping people decide whether or not to participate. Thereafter, at ease in the writer's presence, participants conversed freely, openly and, at times deeply, with this stranger. Some staff attributed this to the need for patients to feel listened to, acknowledging that their own role often no longer supported this, but the writer also reflected that admission to the acute hospital also presented an unprecedented period of time for focused reflection and that this may also have contributed to the ease with which some shared. The Key Contacts reported that, despite initial hesitations, some patients were visibly lifted and more animated following their discussions with the writer.

*"Being inaugural Writer in Residence with Portiuncula University Hospital has been a role of great privilege, and has been instrumental in helping me to gain footing with a theme I was beginning to research towards a body of new poems around the theme of solace... I recall on my last morning speaking with two patients in St Joseph's Ward, and we spent much time laughing, despite the severity of their conditions and their respective vulnerabilities; they showed me, as with every encounter I met with at Portiuncula, how remarkable people can be in such a traumatic life-situation, and that the hospital can also enable transient forms of camaraderie... Perhaps that in itself became a moment of solace: being able to talk to someone who is not in any professional capacity judging or checking or measuring."*

Sean Borodale

Creative Writer in Residence 2019, Portiuncula University Hospital

Staff also reflected on the value, and novelty, of sharing their experiences. The Key Contacts noted that staff who might usually perceive that their opinions were not valued in the hierarchical systems of the hospital appreciated having their contributions heard. For others, including upper Management, their conversations with the writer served as a reminder of how changes in practice left little time to reflect with their colleagues and, despite initial concerns about giving time to the residency, the experience had been to some degree cathartic.

## A Deeper Shade of Green

*"I will admit at first when I saw the poster up about Sean's residency in work I kind of just kept watch from a distance at the beginning. See I'm actually quite shy and nervous to talk to people sometimes or to express my feelings. I find it easier to write things down as I am definitely not a good speaker. I mumble my words when I get nervous. But after a while I would hear people talking about how nice he was and how therapeutic their talks were with him and they were so right. When Sean approached us at our usual spot that we always gather at for breaks it was as if we had known him for a lot longer. It gave us the opportunity to share our feelings with someone and to have them listen and the craic was mighty. That's all someone really needs, is just someone to listen and he did just that."*

Staff, Portiuncula University Hospital

The conversations also encouraged reflections on a change in practice for the writer. His initial proposal suggested the use of audio recording equipment which was not permitted by the hospital, but on his first engagement he immediately sensed that the use of any methods of recording, including pen and paper, was inappropriate, reflecting that the absence of it *"served to create a level space in which I and the patient/member of staff held equality in our exchange"* and that often the participant would then ask as many questions as he did. He would then write what he had retained from the encounter after leaving the hospital. This considered and protracted process was demanding, though perhaps a necessary approach for any artist-led research which engages a hospital community.

*"Giving all my attention at PUH to listening, these encounters reminded me that writing begins with real moments in which writing doesn't happen, where life is lived, and where lives meet for a moment, and something is exchanged. For this reason, I wrote nothing on site, but listened, and engaged as fully as I could, and wrote later in the evening after my day at the hospital was finished. This was an important learning point. My time at Portiuncula has in so many new ways been pivotal in changing my own relationship to my writing process."*

Sean Borodale

Creative Writer in Residence 2019, Portiuncula University Hospital

Following his series of engagements, Borodale wrote 24 initial drafts for poems which he has proposed to develop towards two strands: a series of poems for voice, and a voice work for radio. Whilst acknowledging that the research process has been, to varying degrees, beneficial to participants, the hospital is keen to see what comes from their commitment to the residency. As the proposed artistic outcomes will not be made distinctly 'for' the hospital, there may be issues around Saolta Arts committing programming funds to their continued development. In such cases, the organisation needs to consider methodologies for tracing the impact of residencies over extended periods of time. In addition, by not commissioning long-term artistic outcomes, the organisation would have little say in the final content. Whilst all artists engaged by Saolta Arts sign confidentiality agreements and the inaugural Writer in Residence was sensitive that *'the danger of working with real people is the transmission of personal material'* and his interest instead was in transgressing the biographic to *'discover what language itself is doing'*, future artist-led research residencies would need the same assurances for final artworks developed beyond an initial contract.

In his final report the poet suggests that *'a certain kind of respectful, social discourse can be an artwork in its own right'* and that it does not have to lead to *'artefacts'*. Certainly, Saolta Arts' has always prioritised the creative process in its established participative programme but, in the context of its expansion across Saolta,, tangible expressions of the creative process help new collaborators to understand the value of Arts and Health practice and, in turn, to offer support. Furthermore, despite a consensus that staff no longer get the same time to know their patients, Saolta provides additional patient support through PALS Officers and Pastoral Care, and when resources are finite, investment in artists must be understood to be more than providing 'someone to listen'.



## A Deeper Shade of Green

The 2 creative writing workshops led by the poet established a demand for future creative writing opportunities for staff. He considered these to be a success *‘in that they brought a positive response from staff to the idea of ‘creative’ writing as a mechanism for thinking about the hospital differently.’* Word of mouth following the workshops prompted notes of interest from staff who had been initially hesitant to participate and additional workshops would have been programmed if the schedule had allowed. In his final report, the writer also suggested that a writing toolkit could be useful, prompting people in the hospital setting to find ways to engage with creative writing, though this was not produced as part of his residency.

In response to this interest, and surmising that staff attendance at the final public poetry event would be low without an additional incentive, the Key Contacts proposed an open call for staff to write poems responding to the hospital for review by the writer. This received 9 submissions which were celebrated in an afternoon event for staff where the writer discussed the merits of each and invited staff to read their poems. This provided another opportunity for staff to voice their experience and perspectives of being at the frontline of healthcare, this time to each other. As the writer reflected, *“responses around the room indicated that this had been a moving and heartfelt experience, as it was for those reading too, as a moment of sharing between staff who would not normally interact in such a way.”* Though participating staff wrote their poems independently of support from the poet, a valuable experience came from providing a catalyst for important reflection, then a space for the results to be shared. Months after the event, as part of our ongoing project dissemination, an opportunity to showcase one of the staff poems through an online poetry series brought further benefits for that individual.

*“We got the amazing opportunity of writing our poem through the Artist in Residence Programme. It gave me the opportunity to express my emotions as sometimes we don't get to do that too often. It was like an overflow of emotions I share for the amazing people I work alongside each day and for their dedication to those who trust themselves in our care. I never took myself as a poet. My fiancé now calls me Yeats! I would like to say thank you so much for choosing my poem and for giving me the confidence to achieve something new in my life.”*

Staff, Portiuncula University Hospital

As suggested, the open call for staff poems was recommended by the Key Contacts as a way of ensuring staff attendance at a final public event where the poems would be shared alongside a talk by the poet on his residency experience. The Key Contacts later advised that staff were unlikely to attend an evening event, which was essential for sharing the residency outcomes with the public. As a result, the poet kindly accommodated both an afternoon event for staff and an evening public event on his final day of engagement. Ultimately, this granted an intimate and moving opportunity for staff whom may not have spoken publicly, to reflect in the earlier session.

Given the advice that staff attendance could not be guaranteed, the evening public event then evolved from a talk and presentation of work in progress by the poet to a discussion between him and another local, well-known poet. The open call for the Writer in Residence had been disseminated nationally but attracted a disappointing number of submissions and it was thought that inviting an influential writer from the West might raise the profile of the residency and encourage more submissions to subsequent opportunities. Having experience of working with communities of interest and due to launch a novel set in a hospital, poet Elaine Feeney accepted our invitation to participate.

Organising the public evening event presented a number of challenges. Construction work meant that the hospital did not have appropriate accommodation and there were few suitable venues in Ballinasloe to host it. The town's beautifully refurbished library was ideal but, having relocated to the UK, the poet was unavailable on any of the dates that the library was available. Sharing the residency outcomes publicly to promote a wider

## A Deeper Shade of Green

understanding of Arts and Health was an important goal, and yet feedback from the library and other arts professionals based in the town indicated that arts events were generally poorly attended. The event was initially organised for Thursday 28th November at Gullane's Hotel, but had to be postponed due to illness. Alternative dates were not possible in the approach to Christmas and the event was rescheduled for Thursday 23rd January 2020. A fire at the hotel on the morning of the event forced it to be moved, at short notice, to a classroom at the hospital. This change was well-circulated in local press and media and all attendees who had booked places through Eventbrite were advised. Though it is difficult to say if this prohibited public drop-in attendance, most audience members appeared to have some connection to the hospital.



Poets Sean Borodale and Elaine Feeney open their discussion up to the audience during the evening public event to celebrate the PUH Writer in Residence 2019 © Saolta Arts

The discussion began with reflections on Borodale's experience of engaging with staff and patients and opened out to explore the distinct and complex challenges, dynamics, parameters and social norms prevalent in the acute hospital setting. Though the writers had prepared readings of relevant work and works in progress as requested, this instead gave way to an extended audience discussion where people reflected openly on their experiences of hospital, as patient, relative, or member of staff. There was clearly an appreciation for how an artist could provide a space for people to feel heard, but perhaps more significant was the capacity of the event itself to hold a space for staff to reflect on their working relationships where there seemed few other outlets for this. Though, at first, attending the evening event after a demanding day seemed an onerous task for some staff, the audience discussion was clearly rewarding and significantly ran over time.

Much of the success of the residency engagements can be attributed to well-appointed Key Contacts whose broad connections throughout the hospital supported unparalleled access to staff and patients. Their own suggestions for methods to foster interest and participation generated unexpected and welcome results. Though they had been proactive in early attempts to set up a Working Group for the arts programme, this did not transpire. However, we are confident that now the impact of the artists' engagements has been clearly seen, sufficient momentum will be encouraged to form a Working Group for future series of the PUH Residency Programme.

### Documentation & Dissemination

---

## A Deeper Shade of Green

The project was documented internally with the material discussed in staff and patient engagements remaining confidential. Because of the nature of the writer's engagements there were few photo opportunities though images from the final staff and public events were circulated on social media. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, artsandhealth.ie set up a weekly online poetry series, *Poetry Prescriptions*. The staff poems submitted to the open call were sent for review and a poem by the member of the Housekeeping team at PUH had her poem selected for the series. In turn, this was disseminated widely on social media and was picked up by local press. It is intended that a case study of the project will be prepared for permanent access online on artsandhealth.ie.

### Agreed Outputs:

- 12 engagements with the PUH community

### Agreed Outcomes:

Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:

- enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.
- supporting Irish artists to make/facilitate exemplary works of art and arts experiences.

Informing sectoral development by:

- creating opportunities for work and professional development in the arts.

Connecting communities by:

- contemporary artists researching/collaborating with the hospital community.



### Strategy

Throughout 2019 and early 2020, Saolta Arts with their colleagues across the Saolta group, developed *Part of the Fabric: Saolta Arts Strategy and Policy 2020-2022*, Ireland's first Arts and Health Strategy for a hospital group. This incorporated a process-based approach to guide a realistic 3-year plan for the development of Saolta Arts' programming across a 5-county geographic spread.

#### Participants

---

- Saolta Arts board members.
- Hospital Management at all 7 Saolta sites.
- Hospital Healthy Ireland representatives.
- Patient Experience Committee representatives.
- Saolta Arts staff and artist team.

#### Aims

---

- To develop a 3-year strategy to guide Saolta Arts' organisational expansion across the 7 sites of Saolta University Health Care Group.
- To use learning from previous programmes and new Creative Ireland projects to ensure the plan is practicable.
- To engage Saolta Arts' colleagues and collaborators in the strategy development to ensure the plan is fair and feasible.

#### Methods

---

The initial phase of developing *Part of the Fabric* involved desk-based research, reviewing pertinent policy and strategy documents from arts and healthcare organisations and initiatives. A core team reviewed 12 documents from the arts or Arts and Health sectors, including *Making Great Artwork: Arts Council Strategy (2016-2025)*, and a further 13 from the health sector. The latter were selected for their reference points in the development of the Saolta University Health Care Group Strategy 2019-2023. As Saolta acknowledges and aligns with key themes emerging nationally in the reform and significant changes which the Irish healthcare system is undergoing, it is important that this next phase in Saolta Arts' organizational development follows suit. Key documents used to inform both strategies included *Sláintecare: Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Healthcare (2017)* and *Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025*.

In addition, in order to draw practical learning from Saolta Arts' past experiences, the team reviewed the last 8 years of project reports and evaluations from the Saolta Arts/Galway University Hospitals Arts Trust programme. This included long-term participative projects and stand-alone events at Galway University Hospitals and previous group-wide initiatives such as the 2016 environmental enhancement project *Passages* for a Healthy Ireland Staff Health & Wellbeing initiative. This learning was further enhanced by the concurrent participative and public engagement elements of the *A Deeper Shade of Green* residencies. Consultations with members of hospital Management, clinical leads, the Patient Experience Committee and Arts and Health practitioners further shaped the development of an initial draft.

Three drafts of the strategy were presented by the Arts Director to the Saolta Arts Board, which includes the Group's COO, and adapted according to feedback. Two drafts were presented to the General Managers of the

## A Deeper Shade of Green

7 hospitals and to the Group Executive Council and adapted according to feedback given. A final draft is awaiting ratification before being published (Appendix I).

### Evaluation Methodology

---

The Arts Director and Project Coordinator recorded and monitored all feedback and developments through regular meetings and correspondence.

### Evaluation Outcomes

---

The process of developing an Arts and Health strategy which considered the needs and expectations of 7 hospital sites and represented a balance of healthcare and arts perspectives was complex and protracted. Communicating across Saolta's geographic spread and competing with the priorities and challenges of healthcare remits took longer than anticipated. Though unprecedented, the delay in ratifying the strategy whilst our colleagues focus on combating COVID-19, epitomises the pace of Arts and Health development in the demanding terrain of acute hospital care.

Indeed, incorporating a process-based approach to shaping the strategy proved an effective means to guide a realistic 3-year plan for a multi-site programme. Working with artists from a range of art forms, placed in diverse clinical contexts, and employing a variety of collaborative, participative and public engagement methods, offered a rich testing ground to inform the priority projects of the plan. Though the residencies proposed as part of *A Deeper Shade of Green* had factored generous contingencies into project periods, introducing arts participation to sites for the very first time revealed how these contingencies had been largely based on experiences which had benefitted from dedicated on-site Arts and Health personnel and an ecology nurtured over 17 years of arts programming. This in itself helped to reconsider and redraft what was possible across 5 counties in the next 3 years.

Mindful of expansion without a corresponding Saolta-wide budget for programming or personnel, initial drafts focused on what was possible with the current resources and localised team, suggesting a gradual rolling out of tried and tested initiatives and touring projects. These drafts had favoured the '*we/our/us*' confident tone and 'call to arms' of other strategies but, in the context of multi-site partnerships, this language was misinterpreted as Galway-centric and, combined, these issues led to criticism of 'evangelising'. The structure and language of subsequent drafts was reworked accordingly and adapted to acknowledge hospital-led projects across the Group.

Language also proved problematic where the precarity and challenges of Arts and Health practice were plainly stated. This was regarded as disenchanted by some. Though selected text was revised in response, the core team felt it was important that facts were not glossed over so that the strategy would prove an effective guide to help navigate the difficult early phase of Saolta Arts' expansion, rather than a brochure promoting the value of their work.

Other feedback from healthcare colleagues considered early drafts to prioritize artists' needs over patients and therefore, despite opening with our guiding values, to be at odds with Saolta's patient-centred care. Responding to this criticism, sections were revised to ensure that the relationship between supporting artists and supporting patients was explicit. By investing in artists, Saolta Arts ensures the best practice necessary to support patients to realise their creative potential. However, it was also important that the strategy addressed the impact of the organisation's work for the entire hospital community – patients, and staff, and visiting public.

The final strategy sets out to guide Saolta Arts' growth through a phased collaborative approach, drawing from existing hospital-led arts initiatives across Saolta and the 17-year experience of an Arts and Health

## A Deeper Shade of Green

organisation. It acknowledges the limitations of a small, localised arts team and the pace and parameters of working in healthcare, striving to be a realistic plan for the next phase in Arts and Health development across Saolta. It addresses the absence of a cohesive budget for Saolta-wide arts programming by seeking to increase and diversify funding paths, partnerships, and networks. Working towards comprehensive and sustainable arts programming, it recognises the correlation between research and investment in core resources and supports, with the level of programming at each site.

### Documentation & Dissemination

---

Documentation from the residencies was incorporated in the design of the Strategy which is awaiting ratification by Saolta Management. This has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic but, once ratified, *Part of the Fabric: Saolta Arts Strategy and Policy 2020-2022* will be disseminated nationally and through international Arts and Health networks.

## Summary of Agreed Outputs and Outcomes

1	Agreed Output: 3 artist-led singing workshops with hospital staff.
---	--

	<p>3 artist-led singing workshops for staff of University Hospital Galway and Merlin Park University Hospital were facilitated by Ceara Conway on 16th, 22nd, and 30th May 2019. Based on their success, additional funding was secured to run the same workshop for staff at Portiuncula University Hospital and Roscommon University Hospital. These have been postponed owing to Coronavirus restrictions.</p>
	<p><b>Agreed Outcomes:</b></p> <p>Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Agreed Output: 100 engagements with staff and patients to inform artists' research.</b></p> <p>Through Ceara Conway's residency at Galway University Hospitals and the PUH Artist in Residence programme there were 165 engagements with staff and patients to inform artists' research. Ceara Conway engaged with 19 staff and patients in her research but returned to the hospitals in early 2020 to present her developed work to 268 patients and staff across 8 care contexts and public spaces. At Portiuncula University Hospital, Sean Borodale engaged with 54 staff and patients in the course of his research and Aoife Barrett engaged 92 staff, patients and public in her processed-based research.</p> <p><b>Agreed Outcomes:</b></p> <p>Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.</li> <li>Supporting Irish artists to make/facilitate exemplary works of art and arts experiences.</li> </ul> <p>Connecting communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>creating and promoting opportunities to share diverse cultural, healing, and health practices.</li> <li>contemporary artists researching/collaborating with the hospital community.</li> </ul> <p>Informing sectoral development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating opportunities for work and professional development in the arts.</li> </ul> <p>Supporting innovation through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new collaborations and contemporary approaches to performance and song.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Agreed Output: A group-wide Arts and Health Policy and Strategy for 7 hospitals.</b></p> <p><i>Part of the Fabric: Saolta Arts Strategy and Policy 2020-22 for the Saolta Group was completed and is pending ratification by the Management of the Saolta University Health Care Group. This final delay in ratification is due to the demands on the health service caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.</i></p> <p><b>Agreed Outcomes:</b></p>

	<p>Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.</li> <li>• Embedding the arts in the infrastructure of a hospital group.</li> </ul> <p>Supporting innovation through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the first Arts and Health Policy and Strategy for a hospital group.</li> </ul> <p>Informing public policy and/or sectoral development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engaging Local Authorities, Saolta University Health Care Group, CHO1, CHO2, and professionals in the arts, healthcare, and Arts and Health in devising policy and strategy, sharing this learning with hospital groups nationally.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Agreed Output: 16 participatory artist engagements in UHG Paediatrics.</b></p> <p>There were 18 participatory engagements in UHG Paediatrics as part of <i>The Deeper Shade of Green</i>, including 12 through Sarah Fuller and Manuela Corbari's collaborative theatre residency and 6 printmaking engagements through the intergenerational project <i>OFFSET</i>. The latter saw the introduction of activities for Paediatric Outpatient clinics for the first time.</p> <p><b>Agreed Outcomes:</b></p> <p>Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.</li> <li>• Supporting the creative potential of children in hospital.</li> </ul> <p>Supporting innovation through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engaging children as critics, shaping the development of theatre made especially for Paediatric settings.</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Agreed Output: An intergenerational exhibition as part of Galway International Arts Festival.</b></p> <p><i>OFFSET</i>, the exhibition of an intergenerational printmaking project at University Hospital Galway was opened by Mrs. Sabina Higgins as part of our official relaunch as Saolta Arts on Tuesday 6th August 2019. This superseded the original proposal to include the intergenerational exhibition in Galway International Arts Festival when, due to unforeseen circumstances, it withdrew from our longstanding partnership of 8 years. In consideration of Galway's July press competition, the exhibition was moved back to August 2019 to maximize opportunities for press and publicity.</p> <p><b>Agreed Outcomes:</b></p> <p>Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.</li> <li>• supporting Irish artists to make/facilitate exemplary works of art and arts experiences.</li> </ul> <p>Connecting communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• connecting the patient and staff communities of 2 hospital sites.</li> <li>• contemporary artists researching/collaborating with the hospital community.</li> </ul>



<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Agreed Output: Poet Doctor engagements at a minimum of 14 west-north west hospital and community sites.</b></p> <p>This output was not achieved. Resources were redirected towards the PUH Artist in Residence Programme and the Saolta Arts Strategy 2020-22, both of which commanded significantly more time to develop and support than expected. In developing the Strategy, we were able to establish the relationships necessary to support the Poet Doctor in future, but we were unable to complete it within the project period and resources available.</p> <p><b>Agreed Outcomes:</b></p> <p>Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals – by developing the foundations to support Poet Doctors in the future we met this outcome to some extent and funds reallocated to the PUH Artist in Residence programme achieved this agreed outcome.</li> </ul> <p>Supporting innovation through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>prescribing poetry to the public in unexpected places – in introducing a poet via the PUH Writer in Residence we met this outcome to some extent.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Agreed Output: 12 engagements with the PUH community in a 3-month Visual Arts residency.</b></p> <p>The PUH Visual Artist in Residence was awarded to printmaker Aoife Barrett who facilitated 12 days of engagements with the PUH community over a 5-month period. Participative workshops were delivered one-to-one and in small groups as well as drop-in public events, amounting to 92 participants.</p> <p><b>Agreed Outcomes:</b></p> <p>Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.</li> <li>supporting Irish artists to make/facilitate exemplary works of art and arts experiences.</li> </ul> <p>Informing sectoral development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>creating opportunities for work and professional development in the arts.</li> </ul> <p>Connecting communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contemporary artists researching/collaborating with the hospital community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Agreed Output: 12 engagements with the PUH community in a 3-month Creative Writing residency.</b></p> <p>The PUH Writer in Residence was awarded to Poet Sean Borodale who facilitated 12 days of engagements with the PUH community over a 7-month period. This took the form of participative staff writing workshops, meetings with staff and patients in one-to-one and small groups, a staff poetry reading, and a public discussion event, amounting to 86 participants. He engaged 54</p>

	participants in the course of his research, 12 staff attended the reading of staff poetry and a further 20 staff and public attended the evening discussion event.
	<p><b>Agreed Outcomes:</b></p> <p>Supporting the vision and objectives of the Creative Ireland Programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enabling and fostering creativity in our public hospitals.</li> <li>• supporting Irish artists to make/facilitate exemplary works of art and arts experiences.</li> </ul> <p>Informing sectoral development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating opportunities for work and professional development in the arts.</li> </ul> <p>Connecting communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contemporary artists researching/collaborating with the hospital community.</li> </ul>

## 5. Public Engagement outcomes e.g. levels of audience engagement and participation (if appropriate), media coverage, social media analytics, etc.

*A Deeper Shade of Green* introduced artists working across a range of artforms to 4 of the hospitals in the Saolta University Health Care Group. Employing diverse methodologies they engaged patients, staff and the visiting public through, group and individual participative workshops, discussion events, readings, interviews, exhibition, postal projects, and conversations. The table below gives attendance figures for public engagement during the programme, and where final outcomes have been developed and presented with additional funding, it also gives audience figures for the resultant events. Importantly, many of the projects in *A Deeper Shade of Green* were exploratory or pilot projects which are being developed as new artworks and experiences to further engage the hospital communities of 7 hospitals in the West/North West region in 2020 and 2021.

<b>Artist in Residence 1: Song/Music</b>	Staff singing workshops	18
	Staff/patient engagements towards research	19

	Final performances for Galway 2020	268
<b>Artist in Residence 2: Theatre</b>	Paediatric engagements - patients	49
	Paediatric engagements - siblings	4
	Paediatric engagements - parents	48
<b>Artist in Residence 3: Intergenerational</b>	Patient engagements Paediatrics	35
	Patient engagements Care for the Elderly	16
	Exhibition launch	300
	Exhibition run	14350
<b>Artist in Residence 4: Visual Arts</b>	Ward patient engagements PUH	33
	Outpatient waiting room engagements PUH	9
	Staff recipients of postcards	15
	Staff/public foyer engagements PUH	50
	Staff/public foyer engagements RUH	36
<b>Artist in Residence 5: Poetry</b>	Ward patient engagements	12
	Staff engagements towards research	31
	Staff writing workshops	11
	Staff afternoon poetry event	12
	Public evening poetry event	20

The sensitive and confidential nature of the hospital context and the exploratory, research-based processes used by some of the artists made much of the programme difficult to document for public dissemination and the media. Discrete photography for project reports and social media was made where it was appropriate but in intimate circumstances, where this could only have been carried out by the artists, this risked undermining the creative process or trust in a relationship, or the artist would simply be too busy and immersed in supporting the best experience for participants to oblige.

Instead, events like the official launch of the exhibition *OFFSET* by Mrs. Sabina Higgins were publicised by Saolta Arts and the Communications Department of the Saolta Group. This event attracted local and regional coverage including front pages of local papers the Galway Advertiser and the Connacht Tribune and, importantly, extended to the county papers of Saolta Arts' expanded remit, as well as national press like Health Matters magazine. Sample online links to coverage for *OFFSET* are included below.

Sabina Higgins speech for launch of Saolta Arts:

<https://president.ie/en/diary/details/sabina-launches-saolta-arts-and-summer-art-exhibition/speeches>

Online news website Galway Daily:

<https://www.galwaydaily.com/life-style/sabina-higgins-launches-saolta-arts-at-uhg/>

County Leitrim paper Leitrim Observer:

<https://www.leitrimobserver.ie/news/arts/436764/sabina-higgins-officially-launchessaolta-arts-a-new-programme-which-includes-sligo-university-hospital.html>

## A Deeper Shade of Green

News item on [artsandhealth.ie](http://www.artsandhealth.ie), Ireland's national Arts and Health online resource

<http://www.artsandhealth.ie/2019/07/31/offset-intergenerational-printmaking-project-and-exhibition-at-galway-university-hospitals/>

Health Matters, p78, staff magazine of the Irish Health Service p78

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/healthmatters/health-matters-winter-20191.pdf>

For other projects in *A Deeper Shade of Green*, the early phases of artists' research and engagement were not appropriate for wider dissemination, whereas the completed artistic outcomes arising from it will be. For example, documenting staff attending Ceara Conway's *Traditional Healing Songs* workshops would have upset the group dynamic of people singing together for the first time and her interviews with staff and patients in researching her commissioned vocal work were private. However, her performances of *Viriditas* were professionally documented and Saolta Arts will acknowledge Creative Ireland's early role as they continue to promote the online album throughout the year. Despite determined efforts to secure national press coverage of the performances, including a confirmed booking with RTE, this was cancelled in favour of covering Storm Dennis.

As suggested, it can take considerable time for the outcomes and impact of Arts and Health projects to fully materialise. Even when an artist's intimate engagements with the hospital community offer nothing suitable for press and publicity within an initial project period, opportunities can unfold long after the artist has gone. In these instances Saolta Arts will ensure that the preliminary role of the National Creativity Fund is acknowledged. For example, the intimate gathering organised to celebrate staff poetry submissions during Sean Borodale's residency at Portiuncula University Hospital seemed more appropriate for circulation throughout the Saolta community. However, a new poetry series on [artsandhealth.ie](http://www.artsandhealth.ie) in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, brought an opportunity for one of the poems to be shared on a national Arts and Health platform, and in turn shared by regional press including the Roscommon Herald.

PUH staff poem selected for Poetry Prescriptions on [artsandhealth.ie](http://www.artsandhealth.ie), Ireland's national Arts and Health online resource:

<http://www.artsandhealth.ie/2020/05/06/poetry-prescriptions-portiuncula-by-patricia-hodgins-and-her-son-tyler/>

Poetry Prescriptions link shared on Saolta Arts Facebook page with background project information and acknowledging Creative Ireland:

<https://www.facebook.com/saoltaarts/photos/a.924251367674027/2836019676497177/?type=3&theater>

## 6. Provide a selection of high-quality images (with permissions in place) and/or digital video content for promotional purposes by the Creative Ireland Programme Office

Attached. See note on documentation in section 5. Public Engagement outcomes.

## 7. Findings, evaluation and recommendations

*A Deeper Shade of Green* experienced many challenges on its course to meeting its objectives and, following best practice in Arts and Health, the valuable learning gleaned from this will inform Saolta Arts' growth across the Saolta University Health Care Group. Saolta Arts had anticipated that there would be some project development issues with cross-campus communication, bureaucratic formalities, and non-attendance and had accounted for this in their proposed project period, knowing there would be some delays caused by key partners having to prioritize clinical decisions for a population remit of 800,000. Drawing from 17 years experience at Galway University Hospitals, they had also factored in negotiating the strict parameters of Infection Control and Health and Safety at new sites, and with new artists, and knew that working responsively with communities with variable health and vulnerabilities would take time. Despite their experience in engineering 'Plan Bs' and the contingencies of time they had allowed, *A Deeper Shade of Green* was beset with unprecedented delays due to unfortunate and unforeseen circumstances. Each challenge presented a unique learning opportunity and allowed them to make adjustments to their strategy, ensuring a realistic arts plan for Saolta's geographic spread.

To ensure successful outcomes Saolta Arts had selected skilled, resourceful artists to engage hospital communities in participative and collaborative activities but also understood the importance of supporting artists with limited experience of working in healthcare in nurturing the growth and sustainability of the organisation and the wider Arts and Health sector in the West of Ireland. Providing adequate support to these artists, particularly in contexts which had no previous experience of arts programming, demanded greater resources than had been anticipated but reaped great rewards, contributing to the creative development of both artists and the patients, staff and public with whom they engaged.

Arts and Health projects can command considerable time, not only to support their development, but for their impact to fully materialize and for the realisation of tangible outputs that are appropriate for public



## A Deeper Shade of Green

dissemination. *A Deeper Shade of Green* supported the initial process-based stages of artists' research and an organisation's research into how best to implement organisational expansion across 7 sites. Simultaneously, it provided access to arts experiences and engagement for patients, staff and visiting public to significantly enhance their wellbeing and their experience of hospital. Despite the many challenges, in addition to engaging the public in excellent arts opportunities, the programme served as a series of valuable pilots and was instrumental in setting the foundations for the next phase of Saolta Arts' development. Though the confidential nature of working in the health context means that many intimate moments of *A Deeper Shade of Green* could not be publicly disseminated, in time, more tangible outputs and outcomes will be shared widely. Moreover, the following findings and recommendations are suggested to inform the continual and long-term development of Saolta Arts across the West North-West region, and the organisation's role in contributing to best practice in Arts and Health nationally.

### Supporting Artist Residencies and Engagements

---

The combination of a Patient Liaison and Advice Service (PALS) Officer and a member of staff with administrative duties who reports directly to hospital Management proved an effective team of Key Contacts at Portiuncula University Hospital. The PALS Officer was an invaluable source of patient referrals and introductions to Clinical Nurse Managers and ward staff. The other Key Contact balanced this with knowledge of clerical, services, and other support staff and was in a position to circulate residency information to the entire hospital staff. This complement of backgrounds worked very well in terms of access and is recommended as a model for Key Contacts for projects at other sites.

It should also be noted that supporting artist introductions takes time. Having two Key Contacts spread this responsibility and, with consideration to their other commitments, offered greater flexibility with residency dates. It is therefore recommended that each Saolta site has more than one Key Contact for arts programming to support more options and avoid contributing undue pressure to already demanding roles. During the initial project setup, the Key Contacts were in the process of setting up a Working Group for arts programming at the hospital. Although they were not able to establish this within the residencies, it is hoped that successive projects will build the momentum necessary to do so. It is recommended that Working Groups or Arts Committees are set up at each Saolta site to ensure inclusive, comprehensive programming that is not guided by the preferences of select individuals.

Appointing a Project Coordinator with an arts practice and extensive participative experience in Arts and Health proved invaluable in supporting the 5 artists involved in *A Deeper Shade of Green*, particularly where artists had no experience of working in healthcare or Saolta Arts were programming in places for the first time. Facilitating arts engagement in the acute hospital setting is complex and challenging, especially when hospital staff are unfamiliar with Arts and Health practice. In these circumstances, considerably more time was spent on vital reflective practice and on-site artist support than had been envisioned. Given that there are currently a limited number of Arts and Health programmes in the West of Ireland, and in the context of Saolta Arts' expansion across the Saolta group, it is important that the organisation provides opportunities and mentoring to artists with less experience in order to foster sustainability and growth in the sector.

Saolta Arts' existing artist guidelines for arts participation, *Making Time Fly*, were also considered to be useful in preparation for engaging with the hospital community. These should be reviewed with regards to learning from the new sites and approaches used in *A Deeper Shade of Green*, and multi-art form guidelines will need to be devised as the programme develops.

Communication is pivotal to the success of Arts and Health projects yet the distinct languages of arts and healthcare need careful mediation. Projects benefited from information being circulated to all relevant members of the hospital community in advance. This was most effective when concise and accessible, when

## A Deeper Shade of Green

expectations were made clear, and a photograph of the facilitating artist/s was included. Even so, without first witnessing the artists at work elsewhere, proposals made to care areas were occasionally met with hostility and Key Contacts had to be reassured that successful outcomes would come from allowing staff to understand the potential at their own pace. At PUH, introducing the hospital community to the Visual Artist in Residence through an initial drop-in workshop in the foyer proved an effective way for staff to witness her processes first hand and dispel reservations. The Key Contacts had made a concerted and well-curated effort to encourage staff to introduce themselves and this methodology is recommended for the start of similar initiatives in the future.

Language proved problematic where explanatory texts provided by artists were sometimes ambiguous, academic, or lengthy and time had to be given to distilling key points for the hospital community. Moreover, Key Contacts without arts backgrounds cannot be expected to articulate artistic intentions to patients and staff in the same way an artist would. Where this was highlighted as problematic, flyers and posters in patient areas were effective in giving artists control over how their engagements were 'pitched' and in giving patients time to process information and make informed decisions about whether to participate. To assist with creating information for dissemination in future residencies, Saolta Arts could consider using proformas with strict word limits in the application and set up processes.

When artists are working in Paediatric settings, it is recommended that they consider and communicate what age range their activities are suitable for so that measures can be made to limit inappropriate access. It should be noted that, even when a hospital provides information on patient ages, in the context of Outpatient waiting room workshops, the possibility of very young siblings can be problematic regardless of parental support. In such settings, where control over who participates is limited, artists should be advised to adapt their plans accordingly or to have alternative age-appropriate activities prepared, assuming these are sufficient distraction to avoid disruption to the core activity. That said, in the more controlled environment of the individual rooms of an Inpatients ward, the theatre artists at University Hospital Galway found that they were able to adapt their engagements to meet the needs of very young children in a way they would not have been able to in a traditional theatre setting.

### Duration and Timings of Artist Residencies and Engagements

---

Splitting the inaugural residency programme at PUH into 2 short residencies of 12 engagements proved an effective way to gauge responses to different art forms and methods in order to shape future activities. This approach clearly demonstrated a demand for participative workshops in both visual art and creative writing. The writer's engagements prioritised artist-led research towards the development of new work and, given the hospital resources required to support this, 12 engagements of this nature is the uppermost recommended for a hospital community of its size. Even then, it is advised that a proportion of this time should be given to supporting the creative potential of patients and/or staff. This balance was achieved when Sean Borodale's residency incorporated staff writing workshops and an open poetry call, and when Ceara Conway facilitated staff singing workshops at Galway University Hospitals in addition to interviewing staff and patients towards her research for *Viriditas*.

For future residencies involving patients in arts participation, 12 engagements are adequate if focused on one or two specific care contexts. The PUH Visual Artist in Residence 2019 worked with all ages across multiple clinical and public contexts and, with the expectation that these would then inform artistic outcomes, additional residency days would have been welcomed by the artist. As a small hospital, the artist was still able to find the threads and overlaps needed to achieve her own creative goals but this may not be true of a larger hospital. The focus of future residencies will depend on the practices and proposals of individual artists and, whilst it is important to keep an open mind to diverse approaches, concentrating arts participation or engagement in specific contexts might encourage greater and noticeable impact for those contexts and their

## A Deeper Shade of Green

patients. This in turn would foster support and promote understanding of Arts and Health among the wider hospital community.

In the case of patient-centred arts participation it can be advantageous to programme consistent, or weekly engagements, particularly if artists are working in the same care area. This was not possible at PUH due to the availability of both the artists and Key Contacts. However, given the residencies' focus on the artists' creative development, longer intervals between engagements proved useful for the Visual Artist in Residence. Though this ultimately saw the residency programme run beyond the projected project period, the longer residency period ensured the success of her artistic outcomes. Similarly, theatre practitioners Sarah Fuller and Manuela Corbari found that weekly engagements in UHG Paediatrics granted momentum and the familiarity and support of staff, but in separating their 12 engagements into 2 series they allowed themselves important creative development time between, adapting their processes for the second series from what they had learned in the first.

Where the theatre residency in UHG Paediatrics benefited from the continuity of booking a series of engagements in advance, this was not always possible at PUH. As suggested, this was sometimes because of a clash in availability between Key Contacts and the artists, but also because the lack of a set location for engagements limited how far ahead they could be planned in the acute hospital context. In a number of instances at various hospital sites, the difficulty for hospitals to sufficiently plan ahead countered the freelance nature of the artists' engagements. Often, by the time hospital contacts were in a position to respond to options, the artists were no longer available on the dates given. On several occasions artists requested to reschedule agreed dates and, whilst this was always accommodated, it generally led to delays and contributed to the further extension of the overall project period. Arts and Health practice demands flexibility from all stakeholders and, though differences in working patterns and balancing other commitments will necessitate continual negotiation, Saolta Arts must find ways to help each understand the other's perspectives if the organisation is to develop efficiently across 7 sites. Hospital staff must be supported to recognise the implications of scheduling delays when booking freelancers, and artists need to understand that despite the ceaseless nature of public hospitals, programming is subject to the inherent variables of each care area as well as the shift patterns, job-share, study leave, or multiple roles of support staff.

Broader observations relating to timings of residencies include the need to allow extra time for Garda Vetting in cases where artists have been based abroad or travelled continuously over a number of years. In addition, whilst closure owing to Infection Control measures is possible at any time, Saolta Arts' initial project plan had consciously avoided programming residencies to coincide with the winter flu season. Unfortunately, accumulative scheduling issues at PUH meant that the Visual Artist in Residence had to be programmed during the flu season and, consequently, the hospital had to cancel 3 of her engagements due to closure of wards. Whilst rescheduling was advantageous for the artist in developing ideas, this ultimately contributed to the extension of the overall project period.

### Outcomes and Expectations

---

All residencies in *A Deeper Shade of Green* aimed to support artists' research and creative development. Some achieved a favourable balance between patient-centred or responsive arts participation and the artists' own creative goals, as with the theatre residency in UHG Paediatrics and the PUH Visual Artist in Residence. Here, tangible processes and outputs facilitated easy access and required little mediation on the wards, whereas, setting up conversations between patients and the PUH Writer in Residence required more preparation. Though patients were quickly at ease in the writer's company and their time together undoubtedly enhanced the patients' hospital experience, the more abstract nature of these engagements, combined with the absence of an identified outcome, made some initially hesitant to participate and others query expectations or the use of their contributions.

Staff also gave generously of their time and experiences to inform artists' research. Again, the process itself often brought sufficient reward. For example, staff at PUH reflected on the cathartic nature of their conversations with the writer when little time is now available to them to reflect on their practice with colleagues. In addition, Ceara Conway's research at GUH gave rise to a collaboration with a Senior Physicist, looking into the adverse effects of noise on healing in healthcare systems through sound recordings. However, these exploratory processes are difficult to document or evaluate, and in the context of finite resources, if artistic outputs are not resolved within residency periods, there is little for Saolta Arts to use in promoting the value of Arts and Health and encouraging further investment. Whereas, by also facilitating creative writing workshops and an open call for poems, the Writer in Residence not only provided PUH staff with an opportunity to think differently about the hospital or to voice their experience and perspectives of being at the frontline of healthcare, but provided invaluable platforms for dialogue amongst the hospital community itself. Even so, staff who had given time to the writer's research are eager to see what results from their contributions. This provokes questions around expectations and responsibilities regarding the artistic outcomes of residencies.

Ceara Conway's engagement with staff as part of *A Deeper Shade of Green* had assurances of additional funding for the development and production of the resulting commissioned vocal work. Over time, this allowed her to incorporate the recordings of hospital equipment she had made with the member of staff into her finished album for Saolta's hospitals. The majority of her other engagements with hospital staff had informed a more political strand of her research which was incongruous with the commission's parameters and would have required a type of venue that the hospital did not have. Though she may develop this material separately, she instead focused on developing content and a format better suited to the commission themes and the context. Where Saolta Arts is unable to invest in the development and conclusion of artworks resulting from research residencies, mechanisms need to be developed in order to trace the impact of their initial investment. Indeed, given the resources needed to facilitate residencies and the pressures that hospital staff are under, Saolta Arts should query whether they can justify supporting research processes which result in works that are not suitable for sharing in the hospital context. It is also unreasonable to expect artists to be able to resolve artistic outcomes in response to short-term engagements with the hospital community. This format is most suitable for artists looking to develop their Arts and Health practice, as with the PUH Visual Artist in Residence. In summary, for the long-term development of Saolta Arts, in the absence of significant commissioning budgets, it is recommended that they prioritize artist residencies which support the creative potential of staff and patients as well as the creative and professional development of artists with an interest in Arts and Health practice.

It is important to note the time needed for artworks and the benefits of artist residencies to fully materialize. Though the research-based focus and sensitive contexts of *A Deeper Shade of Green* made documentation and dissemination during the project period challenging, the impact of the programme and its capacity for sharing continue to evolve. For example, Ceara Conway's research engaging the hospital communities of UHG and MPUH informed the development of a subsequent vocal commission which was then performed live for patients and staff across 8 care areas, shared as a CD with the other 5 hospitals of the Saolta University Health Care Group, and is available online for the general public. Her successful staff singing workshops as part of *A Deeper Shade of Green*, were later programmed for RUH and PUH with additional funding, though these are awaiting rescheduling owing to COVID-19. Similarly, Sarah Fuller and Manuela Corbari's immersive theatre experience for young patients which evolved during their exploratory residency at UHG, will be presented to Paediatric Units throughout the Saolta University Health Care Group. A set of limited edition mini-prints made by Aoife Barrett to celebrate the *OFFSET* exhibition in 2019 is being distributed to inpatients admitted to hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the 'tinned stories' printing kits and 'how to' woodcut bookplate she developed during her residency at PUH will be used in her future engagements in hospitals. Sean

## A Deeper Shade of Green

Borodale's research from his residency at PUH informed a developing collection of poems and, subject to funding, this may be configured as an audio work for national radio broadcast.

Finally, *A Deeper Shade of Green* served as a reminder that hospitals are not purpose-built for the arts and often there are few spaces suitable for public events or the sharing of residency outcomes which can offer a vital platform to promote a wider understanding of and support for Arts and Health practice. Where hospital classrooms are suitable for workshops and ticketed gatherings, bookings for arts activities have to compete with clinical demand. It is recommended that Saolta Arts undertake a survey of potential arts spaces at each Saolta site as part of their 3-year strategy and secure funds for the preparation of exhibition areas at each site. In an attempt to connect with the wider hospital community, the organisation of a public event during the PUH Artist in Residence Programme revealed a lack of suitable accommodation locally and a consensus that arts events in the town are generally poorly attended. Whilst Ballinasloe Library still presents an attractive venue for future gatherings, given its limited availability and the considerable resources required to mount events, it is recommended that the sharing of Saolta Arts' project outcomes are organised on-site at the hospital. Indeed, despite the challenges of finding suitable accommodation for arts experiences in the clinical setting, each Saolta hospital has the capacity to be its town's largest public arts venue and Saolta Arts should prioritise their role in bringing arts experiences to the people, and to the people who stand to gain most from it.

## 8. Breakdown of costs

See Appendix II



## 9. Conclusion

From their base in Galway, *A Deeper Shade of Green* allowed Saolta Arts to make important early steps in extending their long-standing multi-disciplinary programme of events and activities to sister sites of the Saolta University Health Care Group. Through a series of residencies, it placed artists from a range of art forms in diverse clinical contexts, employing a variety of collaborative, participative and public engagement methods. This provided rich testing ground in new territory to inform a process-based approach to developing a Group-wide arts strategy and policy.

*A Deeper Shade of Green* supported people of all ages to explore their creative potential, to connect with others, and the distinct voices of hospital communities to be heard. For patients, the creative processes introduced a more positive, productive use of their time in hospital, engaged in a way that distracted from worries and made the clinical environment feel more human. For staff, they created a space to re-evaluate and share their experiences. Initiating the PUH Artist in Residence Programme established a demand for continued Arts and Health programming and unveiled its potential in promoting health and wellbeing and in enhancing the hospital experience for everyone across the Saolta Group. However, it also demonstrated the considerable challenges that await Saolta Arts if they are to provide consistent high-quality Arts and Health programming across Saolta's geographic spread with their current resources and localized team. The process-based approach to developing a 3-year strategic plan therefore offered a realistic assessment of the scope and pace of this expansion, identified requirements, and helped guide the priority projects of the plan. Until comprehensive and cohesive Group-wide arts resources are established, Saolta Arts' programming across Saolta should assume a phased, collaborative approach.

The findings of *A Deeper Shade of Green* point to a need for adequate on-site support through hospital Key Contacts, Working Groups and Arts Committees. However, given that these roles will be facilitated on top of already demanding remits and that best practice necessitates specific knowledge and experience, additional dedicated Arts and Health expertise is required to provide effective arts programming for Saolta's geographic spread. Whilst guidelines can be developed to help hospital staff and artists negotiate the potential of Arts and Health together, and technology can facilitate a degree of satellite-assistance, *A Deeper Shade of Green* highlighted the need for on-site arts-based support. This cannot be maintained consistently by the current localised team. In addition, the programme drew attention to issues around retaining and scheduling freelance artists, which could be more complex in the absence of a local arts coordinator. Working with hospital colleagues at each site, Saolta Arts should therefore prioritise building a network of artists and local arts organisations in this early phase of its expansion.

With consideration to finances, a cohesive programming budget is required for an inclusive and balanced arts programme that connects the 7 hospital communities of the Saolta Group. The strategy process underlined the need to develop cross-campus core programme funding by diversifying income streams and partnerships, supplanting precarious resources to ensure comprehensive and sustainable programming. Furthermore, given the current financial climate and the considerable time and resources required to support artists in the healthcare context, Saolta Arts should prioritize methodologies which nurture the creative potential of the hospital community as well as the creative development of artists. Moreover, support should only be given where any resulting artistic outputs are suitable for sharing in Saolta's hospitals and associated networks, therefore granting further opportunity to promote the value of Arts and Health and encourage a supportive ecology for the growth of the organization and the sector.

