

Clifden Arts Festival Visual Arts Exhibition Criteria and Policy

All proposals must follow the format and procedures laid out in this Policy document.

Proposals will be considered by the Visual Arts Curator and the Visual Arts Sub-Panel, whose decisions are final.

Composition of the Clifden Arts Festival Visual Arts Sub-panel

The composition of the Sub-Panel may include:

- The Visual Arts Curator
- Nominated and invited members of the local business and community with a special interest in Visual Arts who provide voluntary support, services and time to the Festival
- Invited artists with a background in selection processes
- The Creative Director and Director of the Festival

Exhibition Proposals and Submissions

Clifden Arts Festival welcomes exhibition proposals from practising professional* artists, designers and craft makers, living and working on the island of Ireland.

We are open a variety of proposals, including, but not limited to: creative proposals for outdoor spaces; projects which represent diversity of community; original concepts; works which can provide opportunities for immersive experience or audience participation; works which are sustainably produced; large works for our main concert venue; light installations; mixed media presentations.

The Clifden Arts Festival is a CLG with charitable status and predominantly funded by the Arts Council of Ireland, therefore preference will be given to non-commercial exhibitions.

For instance, preference for photography exhibitions would be 'photographic art' i.e. contemporary/fine art/conceptual photography and not watermarked with a logo; preference for craft exhibitions would be contemporary applied art/traditional craftsmanship, and not work from a commercial product line.

Applications are accepted for solo, group and collective shows.

The Visual Arts programme relies heavily on the donation of space by local businesses, municipal and outdoor spaces e.g. exhibition spaces in cafés, restaurants, hotels and other Festival venues which may lie outside of town. Applicants should be aware that we do not have solely dedicated gallery spaces, with the exception of the Leisure Centre our venues cannot accommodate large scale work.

Definitions

Definition of Solo exhibitions

Preference for solo exhibitions will be given to individual professional* practicing artists and recent graduates.

*Professionals are deemed to be those artists who have been educated to a third level in visual or applied arts/crafts subject area and/or hold professional membership to a recognised professional body eg. Visual Artists Ireland, Design and Crafts Council Ireland, RHA, RUA etc

For artists who do not meet the criteria of 'professional practicing', consideration for solo exhibitions will be based on individual merit: eg applicants must have a demonstrable high standard and quality of work, with a specialist skill set and original design within their chosen visual or applied arts/crafts/design** subject area AND be working consistently on a full time or part time basis within the visual or applied art/craft sectors for 3 or more years.

**Craft & Design is considered as those disciplines defined by the Design and Crafts Council Ireland (www.dcci.ie)

Definition of Group Exhibition

A group exhibition is defined as an exhibition by an unlimited number of professional artists, an art organisation or community group. We are open to group submissions with details for professional artists in the group provided on each participating individual in the same format as the solo submission. We also advise the group co-ordinator to provide each participating artist with a copy of the exhibition policy document for their understanding.

The Festival reserves the right to create a group exhibition by invitation of individual artists or community organisations to come together under a theme or for the sake of sharing space as artists with a shared medium or theme.

Definition of a Collective

The Festival recognises the work of a collective to be a body of work or installation created by a group of artists working conjointly in its creation and distinct from a co-ordinated group exhibition of individual artists working to a theme.

Definition of Community Art Exhibition

A Community Art Exhibition is defined as an exhibition by an unlimited number of amateur or hobby artists/crafts people or body of students/learners of arts/crafts.

The Art Trail

This is a Clifden Arts Festival selected group exhibition for professional and amateur artists of all disciplines, which is placed in the windows of participating businesses in the town.

A theme is set each year and a size limit to ensure work can be displayed in the windows available. adjudicated by the Visual Arts Sub Panel and/or by an invited artist. Applications are accepted by local, national and international artists who have exhibited previously in this event and the other exhibitions at the festival. Artists are responsible for their own delivery and pick up.

Based on excellent submissions to the Art Trail an artist can be invited by the VA Curator to participate as a solo exhibition in subsequent years. The Arts Trail has a separate and later submission process to the Exhibition Open Call. Artists can make submission to both Open calls but will only be accepted for one in any festival year.

Exhibition Selection Criteria

Note:

Artists who have participated in solo and group exhibitions in the previous year's Festival cannot be considered for exhibition for a minimum of 2 years, unless invited by the Visual Arts Curator to do so, and are asked to refrain from submission until that time as it will not be considered. This does not include participants of the Arts Trail who may participate annually within the Trail if selected.

Artists selected in any one year can participate only in ONE of the following:

A Solo Exhibition

A Group Exhibition

A Collective

The Arts Trail

It is incumbent on the Festival to provide our audience with a Visual Arts programme which is annually original and innovative and to give the fairest breadth of artist representation and distribution of Arts Council Funding.

Due to the high volume of interest in participating in the Festival, a shortlisting process will be applied to all proposals received, if required.

The shortlist will be made by the Visual Arts Curator and presented to the Visual Arts Sub Panel to review and select successful proposals for exhibitions based on the criteria below.

Artists may make only one proposal per round, either as a solo exhibition or as part of a group/collective exhibition or as part of the Arts Trail.

Artists who propose to exhibit with more than one group/collective per round will not be considered.

Scored criteria:

- Quality of artwork, a high standard of work with regard to artistic merit and presentation.
- Originality of work
- Quality of concept (theme) and content of proposed exhibition

Other criteria considered:

- Dates of previous exhibitions of the applicant and or/exhibitions of similar works or concepts previously exhibited at Clifden Arts Festival or within the local area within the last 24 months on date of application
- Works which will complement the diverse Festival programme
- Diverse media and disciplines
- Diversity of works by individual professional artists, recent graduates, emerging artists or groups/collectives of artists, community arts projects, local, national and international professional artists
- Relevance to exploration of contemporary issues and current events
- Community interest
- Special requirements, costs or requests associated with proposed exhibits
- Education and outreach potential
- Sustainability
- Significant national and touring exhibitions
- Preference given to original art work rather than mass produced work

Applicants should note that while careful consideration will be given to each proposal, it may not be possible to award every applicant with an exhibition even if all the criteria are met. This is due to the limited number of exhibition slots available compared to the high volume of applications received each year, and to ensure the exhibition programme includes a wide variety of disciplines, concepts and solo and group shows and community initiatives. Proposals may be held for consideration for the following year subject to Arts Council funding.

Works which are deemed to be potentially contentious, of an overtly political nature, offensive, of an overtly adult nature, or unsuitable for audiences of all ages will be considered on individual content/merit and where required will be referred to the Festival management team.

EXHIBITION SELECTION PROCESS

- Proposals received are logged, acknowledged and shortlisted.
- Shortlisted proposals are presented to the Visual Arts Sub-Panel for approval.
- Please be aware that the Panel meet annually and programme 6 months in advance, offering a balance of exhibitions addressing the interests of our audience and visitors, and that complement our festival arts programme.
- Successful proposals are allocated suitable venues and the applicants notified and issued with an Exhibition invitation and agreement.
- Privately organised exhibitions (exhibitions organised outside the Festival selection processes)/ such as artists arrangement with private galleries/premises, or exhibitions organised by private arrangement with a venue/ public space will be considered 'Fringe' events. Fringe exhibitions will be listed and mapped in the programme but will not receive equal prominence with Festival selected exhibitions in the programme.
- **Due to the high volume of proposals receive, we are unable to offer any individual feedback.**

Exhibitions Costs / Artist's Expenses

There is no submission fee to propose to exhibit at Clifden Arts Festival and artists are not charged a fee to exhibit.

The festival provides a venue, installation support where required, curatorial guidance, some invigilation support if requested, regional & national marketing/PR and a substantial audience. 2023 data show a verified Visual Arts visitor number of 7,391.

The festival claims 20% commission on any work sold during the festival.

Selected artists will be paid a fee dependent on the Arts Council funding allocation for that year, the nature of the exhibition, and the venue. We are unable to fund travel/transport arrangements/accommodation and expenses and/or other related exhibition costs, the artist is responsible for these costs.

*Exceptions are made for Festival commissioned specific bodies of work that are co-produced by the festival.