



Running Up That Hill: Arts Funding and Economic Sustainability in the 21st Century

**Conference Schedule 22-23 October 2025
University of Galway**

Sponsored by Research Ireland Laureate Awards and the University of Galway, including the College of Arts, Social Science and Celtic Studies, the Institute for Creativity, School of English, Media and Creative Arts, Arts in Action, and Drama and Theatre Studies

Supported by the Town Hall Theatre Galway and Moonfish Theatre

What if we started economics not with its long-established theories, but with humanity's long-term goals, and then sought out the economic thinking that would enable us to achieve them?

Kate Raworth, *Doughnut Economics* (2017, p. 10)

There is no conference fee but online registration is required, accessible here:
<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/universityofgalway4/1676763>

Day 1: Wednesday 22 October 2025

9.30-10.00: Welcome and Opening Comments

Dr Miriam Haughton, Dr Patricia O'Beirne
G010, Hardiman Research Building (HRB)

10.15 -11.45: PANEL 1A: Balancing Public Funding with Artistic Intention

Chair: Professor David O'Shaughnessy (English, University of Galway)
G010, HRB

Professor David Barnett (Theatre, University of York): 'Squaring the Circle: How Arts Council-Funded Theatres in Yorkshire Balance Their Public Mission with Financial Sustainability Through Programming'

Dr Charlotte McIvor (Drama, University of Galway): "I searched for my spark and I found it"(?): Remixing Creativity, Sustainability and/or the Decolonial in post-Decade of Centenaries Irish Arts Policy

Máiréad Ní Chróinín (Moonfish Theatre/Drama, University of Galway): 'The Price of Equity in Theatre-Making: A case-study from Moonfish Theatre.'

10.15-11.45: PANEL 1B: Creative Objectives, Creative Policies

Chair: Brendan Kennelly (Economics, University of Galway)
G011, HRB

Maeve Freaney, Fionnuala Brown, Eavan Cronin, Aogan Smyth, Anna Sheldon (Economics, University of Galway): 'Lights Out in Galway: Valuing a Recently Closed Cinema in a UNESCO City of Film'

Dr Mark Rainey and Dr Patrick Collins (Geography, University of Galway): 'Creative ecosystems in non-urban areas: cultural mapping as a basis for strategy and policy'

Osama Abu Shanab (Business, University of Galway): 'The Environmental Cost of Creating Art'

11.45-12.15 : Coffee

Foyer, HRB

12.15-1pm: Felispeaks Performance

Chair: Post-show discussion chaired by Professor Ríona Ní Fhrighil (Irish, University of Galway)

Bank of Ireland Theatre (located between O'Donoghue Centre and SULT)

1-2pm: Lunch

Foyer, HRB

2.00-3.15: PANEL 2: Commissioning and Funding New Plays

Chair: Jane Daly (Arts Consultant and Facilitator)

G010, HRB

Panellists: Paula McFetridge (Kabosh), Lynne Parker (Rough Magic), Matthew Zajac (Dogstar)

3.30-4.45: PANEL 3: The Economy of Producing Work for Children and Young Audiences

Chair: Dr Ali FitzGibbon (Arts Management, Queen's University Belfast)

G010, HRB

Panellists: Joanne Beirne (Branar), Marianne Kennedy (Drama, University of Galway), Tony Reekie (Catherine Wheels)

5pm: Refreshments

O'Donoghue Centre Foyer

DAY 2: Thursday 23 October 2025

10.00 -11.15: PANEL 4: Managing Budgets During Economic Crisis

Chair: Cathie Boyd (Cryptic/Sonica)

G010, HRB

Panellists: Lian Bell (Designer and Arts Manager), Gemma Reeves (Rough Magic), Alex Rigg (Oceanallover)

11.15 - 11.30: Coffee

Foyer, HRB

11.30- 1.00: PANEL 5A: Precarity and Performance

Chair: Dr Ian R. Walsh
G010, HRB

Philip Ryan (Nocht Studio): 'Open Cull.'

Emer Lyons (Psychology, University of Galway): 'PART(S)(W)HOLE: The personal is political is precarious.'

Tricia O'Beirne (Drama, University of Galway): Valuing art and performance in a neoliberal policy environment: funding structures of independent theatre production in the twenty first century'.

11.30-1:00: PANEL 5B: Economic Sustainability and Arts Funding: Global Perspectives

Chair: Dr Charlotte McIvor
G011, HRB

Lia Capotorto (Drama, UCD): "That New York State of Money: Responding to a Performance Sector in Crisis"

Eirini Polydorou (Theatre Studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens): The Public Funding of Independent Theatre in Greece during 2003-2023: Does Greek theatre funding policy reflect the concept of culture as a public good?

Finian O'Gorman (Drama and Theatre Studies, University of Galway): "The Best for the Most": How Arts Council Policy has Shaped Irish Theatre as an Industry and Artform.

1.00– 2.00: Lunch

Foyer, HRB

1.20-1.50: Performance by Alex Rigg (Oceanallover), the Burren College of Art MFA, Dr Liam Carr (Geography, University of Galway)
Venue TBC

2.00 – 3.15: Una Mullally: Keynote

Chair: Dr Miriam Haughton (Associate Professor, Drama and Theatre Studies)
O'Donoghue Theatre

3.15 – 3.30: Break

3.30-4.30: Arts Council Roundtable

Chair: Professor Pól Ó'Dochartaigh (History, University of Galway)
O'Donoghue Theatre

Panellists: Toby Dennett (Strategic Development, Arts Council Ireland), Ashleigh Lilley (Economist, Arts Council Northern Ireland), Jaine Lumsden (Theatre Officer, Creative Scotland)

Conference Ends.