

Oileáin Iarthar
Chorcaí
West Cork
Islands

free

SEA & STONE

Creative Places West Cork Islands Year in Review 2023
Oileáin Iarthar Chorcaí Athbhreithniú ar an mBliain 2023

Bere island
Cape Clear
Dursey island
Heir Island

Long Island
Sherkin Island
Whiddy island

An tOileán Mór
Oileán Chléire
Oileán Bao
Inis Uí Drisceoil

An tOileán Fada
Inis Arcáin
Oileán Faoide





Creativity shapes *the land outside &* the worlds inside

Hello! I guess you're wondering what this is all about?

BY PETER PRENDERGAST

Creativity, culture and the arts have always been vibrant across the West Cork Islands long before Creative Places arrived. But support has been intermittent and the Creative Places programme is here to counteract this, bringing a strategic fund to address that imbalance; developing creative actions and working with individuals and groups with a long term vision at its

heart. With that in mind, a consortium of individuals from the 7 West Cork Islands and Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, with support from the Arts Council and Cork County Council came together to plan how actions could be realised. In early 2023 this collective put the organisation and processes in place, resulting in an eclectic mix of projects by islanders, groups and those looking to interact with the islands.

The resulting first year is chronicled in this newspaper, offering an insight and a chance to understand how you can develop your own project. Start a conversation with your island development office, or me as the Project Coordinator. LET'S MAKE SOMETHING HAPPEN!

What is this?

Creative Places West Cork Islands is an ambitious three-year culture-based community development programme for and about the West Cork islands. Creative Places aims to connect with people, artists and places, to allow ideas to develop into creative actions that are inspired by and enrich our island communities. Creative Places is about harnessing the power of creativity, culture and the arts to support and sustain the island communities of West Cork. www.creativeplaceswci.ie

Who is this for?

Everyone! We mean this. Whether you work on the bus or ferry, whether you're an artist, arts collective, a maker, a community group, resident or farmer, a business owner, student etc. Creative Places West Cork Islands is for you!!

Who are we?

Creative Places West Cork Islands is an islands' initiative led by Cork County Council and a consortium of local arts and development agencies such as Bere Island Projects Group, Sherkin Island Development Society, Comharchumann Chléire and Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre. Speak to your development office or drop me a line directly and we can take it from there. peter.prendergast@corkcoco.ie



Remembering Norman King

BY JOHN SIMPSON

I was a close friend of Norman King from the early 2000's. To give justice to him and his life in a few words is impossible. However in the Bob Dylan song "I contain multitudes" there is a line: "I am a man of contradictions, a man of many moods". That line almost sums up Norman!

He was born and raised in Dublin. He worked in business, was a corporal in the Irish Guards, played hockey, learnt classical piano, played in a skiffle band, worked as a DJ and as a street musician, among many many other things. His main claim to fame was as frontman in the Irish band "Wild Geese", and was on the road with them gigging all over Europe for the best part of 20 years. Sherkin Island became his base during that period, and there he remained.

He was a complicated character, writing poetry songs and stories throughout his life and performing them in public was the constant thread that linked up his many parts. As an entertainer he was exceptional.

I began working with him on illustrations for his book more than 10 years ago. From 2021 and with the help and support from his many friends and funding from Creative Places West Cork Islands, this final collaboration came to be completed in the Summer of 2023.

"Contradictions and many moods" are the essence of this book - an amalgam of seriousness, darkness, simplicity and humour.

Book launch & exhibition dates to be announced.

Sitting on the wall by Norman King

I'm sitting on the wall, doing bugger all,
only watching a beetle and a butterfly.
The missus has gone to town, to buy a dressing gown,
because the cat destroyed the old one having kittens
so I'm sitting on the wall, doing bugger all.

I'm sitting on the wall, doing bugger all
not thinking about the time when or the time to be
I'm just sitting on the wall, doing bugger all
in the sunshine and the rain.



Inaugural Bere Island Arts Festival – September 2023

A festival of visual art, theatre, dance, and literature celebrating the local and the national and offering a diverse range of events across scenic locations.

Launched on Culture Night by novelist and playwright, Cónal Creedon, highlights included an exhibition of 'The Hold' by Mary Sullivan, new work by Sarah Walker, a stunning performance by the local choir in collaboration with a visiting choir and directed by Eva Mullan, pinhole photography workshop with Harry Moore, workshops and talks with writers Adam Wyeth, Annemarie Ni Churreáin, Molly Twomey, Donal Ryan, and Bere Island's Seamus Harrington. Three of the country's finest traditional musicians Máirtín O Connor, Zoe Conway and Dónal Lunny headlined on Saturday night and the final day included a long table lunch, music, dance and storytelling - phew, what a weekend!

Image Credit: jedniezgod.com

From festivals to rope making, here are a few highlights from the last year

Much to see, much to do

As part of OILEÁN, the annual Irish language arts festival on Oileán Chléire, several local artists took part in a community exhibition. The exhibition featured: local exhibition featured the work of Duncan Harper, Pierce Hickey, Róisín Ó Chonáill, Kirstie Affleck, Doris and Ferdia O Liadáin, Simon Kidd, Catherine Ryan, Ruairí Ó Donnabháin, William Bock and Helle Helsner and Danny Stewart. This was an outdoor exhibition of contemporary works which wound its way through the island via a walking trail. Curated by Ruairí Ó Donnabháin.



Festival of Music on Heir Island took place in June 2023. FOMOH brought over 25 musicians, mostly doctors drawn from European and Irish doctors' orchestras, who met for a week of chamber and small orchestral music. Residents of the island enjoyed daily orchestral concerts and the all-island Céilí on the last day. The orchestra then travelled to Sherkin Island and performed a concert in the community centre. Artistic Director Dave Tomson.

A Green Rope for Sherkin revolves around an ever-growing Sugán rope. The rope is crafted outdoors by many hands using only green wild plants sensitively harvested from the landscape. The process is guided by hands, the natural material and conversations that arise from working together. The rope making outdoors gives space for Sherkin Islanders and Ukrainian newcomers to come together to explore experiences of island life, displacement, climate change, cultural heritage and ecology with artist William Bock and friends.



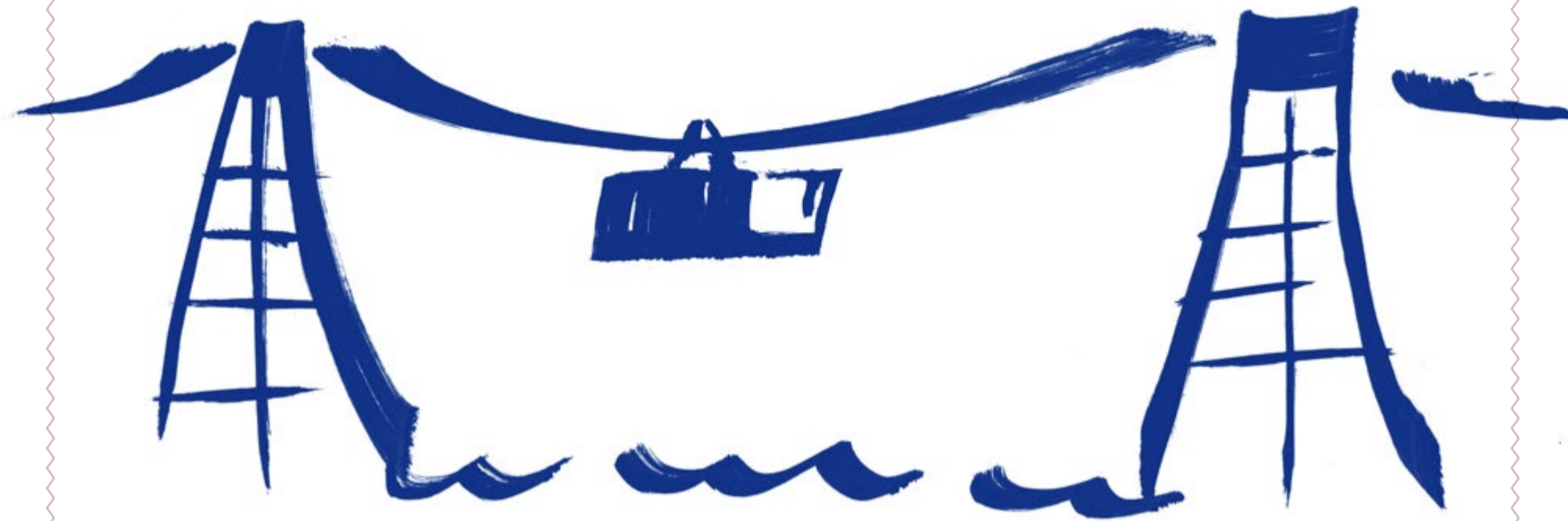
Faces of our islands

- Images from left to right:**
- Bere Island Ukés go Bere weekend
 - Bere Island festival committee: Caitríona Hanley, Pauline Hanley and Mary K Sullivan
 - Carina McNally, historian and writer Dursey Island
 - John Simpson, Sherkin Island
 - Michael Collins, Sherkin Island
 - Artist Catherine Reinhart



Poet Annemarie Ní Churreáin is our inaugural artist in residence on Dursey Island. This is a pilot project.

Dursey Island artist residency



TICKET 52062

The inaugural Dursey Island residency came into being in January 2024 as a pilot scheme. The residency is designed for artists who are looking for a remote location to recharge, make new work or interact with the island in some way. It is envisioned the residency will be a “dry” space for writers, musicians or visual artists who need time to reflect on their own practice, plan for new work and create a contextual frame in a place without interruption. We will also encourage artists who are interested in Dursey Island as a specific place to reflect on its history and contemporary life. Our first artist in residence is poet Annemarie Ní Churreáin who became known to the Creative Places programme via the Bere Island Arts Festival. Annemarie, coming off the back of a very busy 2023, says she is excited by the location, learning about Dursey island and being part of the community there. As the residency takes shape we will open up the opportunity to individuals from any of the other 7 inhabited West Cork islands. Many thanks for Ann Finch for helping us to get the residency off the ground.

ANNEMARIE NÍ CHURREÁIN is a poet from the Donegal Gaeltacht. Her books include Bloodroot (Doire Press, 2017) and The Poison Glen (The Gallery Press, 2021). She is a recipient of the Arts Council’s Next Generation Artist Award and a co-recipient of The Markievicz Award. Ní Churreáin has held literary fellowships in the U.S. and throughout Europe. She is the poetry editor at The Stinging Fly magazine. Visit www.studiotwentyfive.com

PETER: What is that draws you to a remote location like this, how do you think being on Dursey will impact your work?

ANNEMARIE: Poetry is all about discovery and what I love most about being here is the freedom to ramble, to observe, to find new surprises in the landscape every day. Dursey is a magical place, layered with folklore, legends, mythology and histories. The act of writing does not, necessarily, follow a logical or linear process and there’s actually great power in being allowed to slow down, to tread back and forth over the same ground, and to engage intuitively and instinctively with the natural world. The residency is going to nourish my writing for years to come.

PETER: Do you have any insights into Dursey from your short time here so far?

ANNEMARIE: Local tour guide Carina McNally gave me a marvellous tour of the island. In the small graveyard she pointed out the clay pipes coming up through the dark earth. Outside a rock face known locally as ‘the temple’ she described how brides-to-be once came from the mainland to slip through the temple passageway three times for good luck. Later, we climbed up the signal tower, a relic of the defences erected during the Napoleonic wars, and stood back to take in the extraordinary views of the bay. The landscape is packed full of stories and I’m newly amazed every day. The colours of the ocean seem to change hourly! Already the poems I’ve begun to write seem vibrantly awake and full of island imagery.

Bog Medicine by Annemarie Ní Churreáin

Drink these star-leaved nettles
and keep in your purse a fern.

To become invisible,
say your harm to the hill.

This hill is pagan. This hill is Hill.

It will answer in bog-tongue
and occasional fire,
burning back the earth
along the heather-stream

despite bald heels of rock,
despite the kissy mink,
despite a saintly air

until the stream runs dark
with what needs
to blacken out of you.



Bere island Arts Festival,
HOLD exhibition



Guesthouse arts Cork City, Oileán Chléire
residency. Artist Aideen Quirke

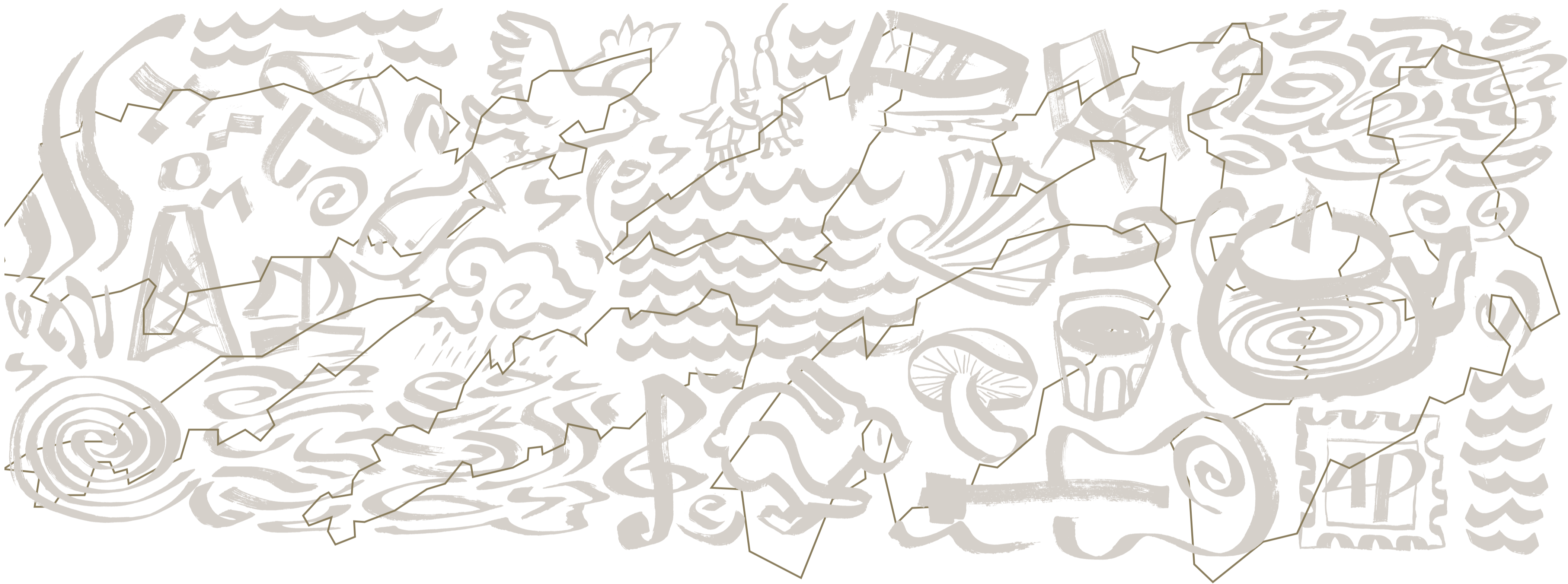


Simon Kidd,
Oileán Chléire residency

Art happens everywhere



Artist Michael Killen Bere Island



From the Inside Out and the Outside In

Mary O' Sullivan
Exhibition
Uillinn, West Cork Arts Centre

November-December 2023

This exhibition of new works by the artist shone a light on both the resilience and fragility of island life and island communities.



Kirstie Affleck

Artist/Maker
Oileán Chléire

Ongoing

Farmer maker and Islander Kirstie Affleck is working on a new body of work with her self-shedding sheep, developing her practice, of traditional wool spinning, knitting and multi-stranded colourwork to produce pictures and stand-alone art pieces.

An Sean Duine Og

Graffiti Theatre Company
Performance
Bere Island, Oileán Chléire and Rathmore NS Baltimore

November 2023

Graffiti Theatre Company's play for children 'An Sean Dhuine Óg' (The Old Young Man) took place at Scoil M. Naofa, Bere Island and Scoil Náisiúnta Cléire. The play contained English, Irish and Ukrainian languages.

Simon Kidd

Residency
Oileán Chléire

Ongoing

His work creates artefacts of place, dealing with the island's physical materiality, creating very pleasing casts (silicone moulds) of rock faces, before translating them into ceramic objects.



Basket Making with Martin O' Flynn

Bere Island Active Retirement Group
Artists/Makers
Bere Island

October/November 2023

Martin O Flynn, traditional master basket maker facilitated the Bere Island Active Retirement Group in late 2023.

Community Scoruiochtung & Map of Sherkin's Heritage Place Names

Mona O' Driscoll
Community gathering and map making
Sherkin Island

Research and development stage

Due to the changing environment of farming, fishing and ownership of lands on Sherkin Island, the need to record the names of local roads, and features on Sherkin has become important. This project, led by Mona will go deep into the heart of local identities to constitute a deeper understanding how people past and present make meaning on the island.

Expanded Island

Multiple artist
Artist Residency
Oileán Chléire

November 2023

The Guesthouse Cork City artists went to Oileán Chléire and opened up a dialogue through a multidisciplinary approach through readings, food and art making. Thanks to islander and artist Róisín Ó Chonáill who helped make it happen.

A Green Rope for Sherkin

William Bock
Rope making, film and community development
Sherkin Island

Ongoing

A Green Rope for Sherkin revolves around an ever-growing Sugán Rope. The rope is crafted outdoors by many hands using only green wild plants sensitively harvested from the landscape. The process is guided by our hands, the natural material and conversations that arise from working together.

The Museum of Birds and Beasts

Tess Leak and Sharon Whooley
Participatory arts project
All Islands

2024/25

The artists will work with islanders to develop a Museum of Birds and Beasts, exploring folklore and artefacts. Working with farmers, ferry drivers, islanders connected to fishing, bird enthusiasts etc to collect stories of bird, animal, and marine lore.

Norman King

Book and Exhibition
Sherkin Island

Ongoing

Never before published reflections on island life through poetry and songs by islander Norman King. A selection of work that gives voice to his unique personal lived experiences with wit and humour and some are pure flights of fancy and imagination, others connect with the natural environment and evoke a pure sense of joy with illustration by John Simpson.



Samuel Beckett Cascando

Aedin Cosgrove of Pan Pan Theatre
Féile 2023: Outdoor Theatre
Oileán Chléire

Summer 2023

Presentation of the internationally acclaimed work of a local artist Aedin Cosgrove of Pan Pan Theatre

Community Exhibition

Multiple Artists
Curated by Ruairí Ó Donnabháin
Féile 2023: Exhibition & walking trail
Oileán Chléire

Summer 2023

Community exhibition Oileán Chléire. An exhibition of local artists as part of OILEÁN the annual Irish language focused arts festival on Oileán Chléire.

Bere Island Arts festival

Festival
Bere Island

September 2023

The inaugural Bere Island Arts Festival. An island festival offering a wide range of events across the islands scenic locations. This festival celebrates the local as well as the national and brings a hugely talented field of creative people mixed with local voice.

Ukes Go Bere

Organised by Dr. Eva McMullan and assisted by Andrew Moran.
Music
Bere Island

June 2023

Ukes Go Bere is weekend festival suitable for complete beginners and accomplished ukulele players. The festival included drumming, vocal and ukelele workshops, brunchelle, KaraUke evenings, and a live, free performance.

Sherkin Island Community Exhibition

Community exhibition
Sherkin Island

Summer 2023

The annual community exhibition brought together over 30 artists in the annual showcase of island life and artistic endeavour.



Looking For The Light Within

Multiple Artists
Oileán Chléire

April 2023

Weekly workshops initiated by Tomasz Madajczak connected the community of Oileán Chléire through creativity sea journeys, weekly workshops, conversations, walks and artistic explorations to develop the possibility of place making in a contemporary context.

The Festival of Music on Heir Island

Artistic Director Dave Tomson
Chamber and orchestral music
Heir & Sherkin Islands

Summer 2023

FOMOH brought over 25 musicians, mostly drawn from European and Irish doctors orchestras, who met for a week of chamber and small orchestral music. Residents of the island enjoyed daily concert and the all island Ceili. In 2023 the orchestra travelled to Sherkin and performed a concert in the Community Centre.

Vocal harmonic workshops with Susan McManamon

Harmonic workshops (pilot project)
Sherkin Island

July and August 2023

Two vocal harmonic workshops with Susan McManamon, involving members of the church choir and other musicians and singers from the island.

Hedge School

Tom Keeley
Féile 2023: Photographic exhibition, art installation & performance
Oileán Chléire

Summer 2023

This multi-media performance explored the interconnected nature of island living, and what this can teach us about living together across borders today and in the future.

Catherine Reinhart

Collective mending
North Shore, Sherkin Island

December 2023

The Collective Mending Sessions was a series of socially engaged workshops centered on collaboratively mending a quilt. These workshops resemble a quilting bee where participants learn basic mending and textile care while building community in a warm, inclusive environment

If you have a creative idea that you'd like to express for and about the West Cork Islands, you can chat with your island development office or Peter Prendergast, Project Coordinator and we will help make it happen.

Peter.Prendergast@corkcoco.ie

It begins with *an idea*

www.creativeplaceswci.ie

Five things to look out for in 2024

The Festival of Music on Heir Island

European Doctors Orchestra
Heir, Sherkin and Baltimore

June 2024

The incredible classical music festival utilises spaces all over Heir island, including the gallery, the retreat and the boat house. FOMOH travelled to Sherkin 2023 and in 2024 it is hoped it will all happen again with some surprises.

Museum of Birds and Beasts

Tess Leak and Sharon Whooley
All seven islands

2024/2025

The artists will work with islanders to develop a Museum of Birds and Beasts, exploring folklore and artefacts. Working with farmers, ferry drivers, islanders connected to fishing, bird enthusiasts etc to collect stories of bird, animal, and marine lore.

Try it Tuesday

Various artists/makers
All seven islands

2024/2025

Participatory skill sharing project for and with islanders. Starting on Sherkin in 2024 we hope this project will extend across the islands. Music making, knot making, journaling, basking making, weaving and mending and any number of other skills to share and learn.

Quilt making

Artists: Various artists/makers
with Harriet Andrews
Bere Island

When: Early 2024

A Bere island workshop to create improvised contemporary quilt pieces facilitated by artist and Bere islander Harrett Andrews.

Dursey Island Festival

Various artists/makers
Dursey Island

Summer 2024

The Dursey Island Festival is a long standing gathering on Dursey. Facilitated by Ann Finch in years previous, this year it will be delivered a hop skip and jump up the road. This year will include a special performance of a new play by writer Carina McNally.

Creative Places West Cork Islands Project Partners



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council



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West Cork Islands



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Cumas Ceantar



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