

Artist Spaces Dublin – Crisis & Current Context 2015

This report is framed in the context of the sustained growth in the Dublin property market which has seen a striking reduction in the availability of artist and other spaces across Dublin. This situation has been compounded by the closure of a significant number of long term and, in some cases, highly successful artist spaces (details below). This growing trend is having a direct impact on the availability of affordable studios for artists, the creative milieu of the city and the wider cultural offering in Dublin.

While noting that Dublin City Council is still the largest single provider of studio space in Dublin this report will also frame some of the opportunities that are presently being reviewed through the Arts Office.

List of Closures

Moxie Studios – Closed August 27, 2014

A resource organisation that provided technical training, consulting, event and exhibition space for makers, artists since 2005. From 2008 this was arguably the largest studio network and independent gallery space in Ireland. Moxie closed its doors as of August 27, 2014.

Mabos Project – Closed July 2014

Mabos was located on Hanover Quay (Grand Canal Dock) for the best part of two years. Despite many ups and downs, the space had overcome many challenges and put on a series of events as well as providing work space and contributing to the surrounding area.

The Complex – Closed in January 2012 - Re-located and re-opened with DCC aid 2015

A Theatre Company with a youth theatre strand, staging new plays and re-mounts classics. Formally based on Smithfield Square now re-opening in Keelings, with DCC support and advice. Space to include a small theatre and studio spaces for artists.

The Joinery – Closed December 2014

The Joinery, an arts and performance space in Stoneybatter, Dublin 7, closed its doors last December after seven years due to lack of funding. The venue has programmed over 400 visual art and music events and has given performance space to the likes of Thread Pulls, Lisa O'Neill, and Cian Nugent.

The landlord had verbally agreed to a letting by another arts and ecology organisation which had a sustainable business model but pulled out before the lease was signed.

Market Studios – Closed October 2014

The Market Studios was established in 2008 and provided affordable studio workspace for the professional visual artist, curator and arts project manager. Providing peer critique, professional development support, training and opportunities,

Broadstone Studios – Closed July 2015

Broadstone Studios, the workplace of 34 professional high profile visual artists, closed after 18 successful years. The studios were an independent, dedicated visual arts studio workspace that were founded in 1997 by visual artist Jacinta Lynch.

Bio Space – Closed May 2015

Bio space a small independent exhibition and incubation space which ran from 2010 – 2015 servicing artists and creatives with exhibition space, pop up shops, events, workshop and venue.

Pallas Studios had an arrangement to use Dublin City Council flats in Sean Treacy House from 2003 to 2007 as studios and gallery space prior to demolition. They had studios in Foley Street during this time but the landlord terminated their lease as the site was earmarked for development which subsequently didn't happen. They then moved to two sites in Grangegorman from 2007 to 2010. In 2010 they moved their gallery/project space to Dominick Street for a year before their lease was terminated. In 2012 they opened in the Coombe where they have a ten year lease with a private landlord. While their situation has always been precarious they avoided being wiped out by having more than one space at a time.

Current Artist Studios – Buildings provided by Dublin City Council or by Temple Bar Cultural Trust

Fire Station Artist Studios and Residential Space – Dublin 1

These spaces are let by DCC under an extended lease/licence to Fire Station Artist Studios. Located in north east inner city Dublin, the Fire Station Artists' Studios was established in 1993 to provide support for professional visual artists. Fire Station provides subsidised combined living and working studios for Irish and international artists, large scale sculpture workshop facilities and training opportunities for artists.

Temple Bar Gallery + Studios Dublin 8

These spaces are let by DCC under an extended lease/licence to Temple Bar Gallery + Studios. They are a contemporary art gallery and artists' studios complex located in Dublin city centre and the Temple Bar Cultural Quarter.

Basic Space – Dublin 8

These spaces are let by DCC under a short term lease/licence to Basic Space a Contemporary Art Practice Group based in Dublin and currently operating from its gallery and studio space at Marrowbone Lane. They offer space on a permanent basis as an open plan communal workspace and short-term work/exhibition space. Project Artists are appointed by invitation and Projects/Exhibitions are curated and developed by the Basic Space team. This studios model is open plan, rather than own door studio units. This space will close at the end of October 2015.

MART – Dublin 6

These spaces started with a former firestation in Rathmines let by DCC on a reduced rent under a short term lease/licence to MART. It includes studios, workspace, gallery and international exchange network. Mart also includes a local community strand in their work alongside TUS Community Placement Intuitive. They also have a number of additional properties acquired on lease from private landlords.

Steambox – School Street, Dublin 8

These spaces are let by DCC under a short term lease/licence Steam box formally Moxi Studios (see above). It has studios, galleries, classrooms and equipment and provides consultation services as well.

Independent Artists Studios Ltd – Dublin 2

These spaces are let by DCC under a long lease/licence to Independent Artists Studios Ltd. Formally Studio 16 Studios during the refurbishment of Temple Bar artist came together to lobby for low cost space in the area. Ten purpose built studios were finally established in 1988 at 11 Eustace Street.

Vacant Spaces Scheme

The Vacant Spaces Scheme continues to provide information and support to artists. Currently over 350 artist and organisations are listed on the vacant spaces data base as interested in new space. The Vacant Space Scheme has continued to provide a limited but extremely successful series of supports for artist and organisations wishing to access spaces. This facilitative model with, open call, independent adjudication and supports for artist is only limited by the availability of properties. Commercial spaces have not been offered into the scheme for a number of years and only one DCC space has been made available since 2014. Due to a re-allocation of service needs for the arts office, one of the two remaining developmental units, run under the scheme has recently been closed.

Opportunities

While it is possible that the Vacant Spaces Scheme might offer some solutions to the current loss of studio space, should suitable properties become available for disposal. A more strategic response, within the context of the City Council's priorities for the creative sector, should be considered. A mix of proposals that addresses not only the currently difficulties, but also the potential for sustainable growth are being progressed as follows.

Partnerships

- The Arts Office together with Visual Artist Ireland and with the support of the Planning Department, are currently developing a pilot project for long term sustainable artist studios spaces.
- The Arts Office is in preliminary discussion with the OPW in regard to the potential to partner on plans for artist studios spaces.
- CRA have supported the Complex Theatre Company in their ongoing attempts to create a Theatre and Studio space in the Markets Area Dublin 7.

City Development & Local Area Developmental Plans

Dublin City Council will continue to proactively advocate for additional suitable & sustainable artistic, creative & cultural space throughout the city, and as part of the local area development plans.

Vacant Spaces Scheme

A review of the Scheme looking at the potential of the process for the disposal of properties, the provision of the developmental unit for artists, the free toolkit and the ongoing advisory service provided by the arts office.

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