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Bhaile Átha Cliath
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REPORT TO ARTS, CULTURE LEISURE AND
RECREATION SPC

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Item No. 6

ARTISTS' WORKSPACES IN DUBLIN CITY

Interim Report 2010-2019

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Colin Martin RHA 'Vinyl Factory' Etching 2016

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Scope of Audit:

This audit was commissioned by Dublin City Council's Arts Office with a view to quantifying artists workspaces in the city. Over the past five years there have been a number of closures of artists' workspaces, and it is important to quantify if their closure has been replaced by newly founded workspaces.

This audit of the quantity of artists' workspaces and their movement 2010-2019 will identify possible further areas of research, including legal structure and tenure of various workspaces, as well as identifying technical and capital requirements across different art-forms in the sector. This audit is to provide quantifiable data to assist in the strategic development of artists' workspaces and facilities in Dublin.

It is important to note that artists' workspaces are incredibly fluid, and artists are experts at re-configuring space to accommodate new needs. The numbers of spaces listed in the study are taken directly from workspace technical specs and websites, as well as 3rd party resource agencies and funders. However, a number of spaces have been recently modified, for example La Catedral converted its rehearsal space, The Back Loft into 8 individual studios in 2017, and Plexa who founded in 2019 took occupation of one space but have configured it into 5 pods containing an audio workspace, and 4 visual arts workspaces. A direct survey at a later stage would quantify this specific modification process.

The decade immediately preceding this report, from 2000 to 2010 was a period of huge economic growth in the city, and yet many long-term cultural venues closed due to pressure on leases, or a failure to secure enough revenue to continue operating. Notable closures in that period are ArtHouse, Temple Bar (closed 2002), THEatre Space@Henry Place (formerly The Mint) (closed 2002), The City Arts Centre, one of Dublin's key community arts hubs for 25 years (closed 2003), The Crypt (closed 2003), the SFX, one of Dublin's long standing music venues (closed 2006), Andrews Lane Theatre which had hosted many successful theatre world premieres, and ran a jazz club for a time in the 1990s (closed 2007).

The years 2000-2009 saw the loss of many of the city's theatre spaces. While the period of this audit 2010-2019 saw the loss of many artists' collectives, the audit illustrates there were many new workspaces founded.

What will the decade 2020-2029 bring, in terms of arts infrastructure in the city?

Phase One: Desk based research to quantify artists workspaces – the audit (Dec 2019-January 2020)

The audit was mainly desk based during December 2019 and January 2020, and its purpose was specifically to quantify artists' workspaces in Dublin since 2010.

The research collated an audit of Artists' Workspaces in Dublin, specifically the Dublin City Council geography.

The audit quantifies the number of individual artists' workspaces (primarily individual studios), and shared rehearsal spaces available from 2010 to 2019. The audit also includes artists' workspaces within public venues in Dublin. All of the workspaces are designed to specifically cater for the work needs of professional artists, across all art-forms, as designated by The Arts Council.

In order to collate the data for phase one, it was important to be specific on what defines an artist. Additionally the definition of an artist's or artists' workspace is also crucial. This is important so that the research may be correlated to other bodies of research on artists' workspaces, and other related data, in order to carry out meaningful analysis.

In order to define 'artist' and 'artists workspace' the report looked at previous large research projects carried out prior to 2010. Thanks are due to CHL Consulting for their report for the Arts Council: *Review of Visual Artists' Workspaces*, March 2009, which drew on a large consultative forum to define both of these terms, in a visual arts context. This audit works closely to those definitions, in order that a longer term analysis across some of the data might be possible.

The first phase of the audit is mainly desk based with assistance from arts resource organisations including Dublin City Council as commissioner of the study. Thanks also to The Arts Council, Theatre Forum, Visual Artists Ireland (VAI), Music Network, First Music Contact, The National Visual Arts Library (NIVAL), Irish Architectural Archive, and others.

Executive Summary:

Dublin has a thriving arts community, many of whom exist in temporary spaces, in short tenure arrangements.

This audit has identified 89 buildings which specifically constitute artists' workspaces.

The audit has focused on inward facing workspaces where artists make their work:

- a) Artists' Studios &
- b) Shared Rehearsal spaces for collective art making

The audit has also focused on:

- c) Venues in which artists engage with the public.

The audit identified **89 buildings** containing such artists' workspaces above.

Within those 89 buildings there are a variety of artists' workspaces, comprising inward facing workspaces, where artists carry out their process to make work (artists' studios & rehearsal spaces), as well as public facing workspaces (performance and gallery spaces).

Over the ten year period 2010 – 2019 the number of **artists' studios was 392**, and the number of **shared rehearsal spaces was 137**. The number of **venues was 36**, of which **10 contain public performance spaces**, **17 contain public galleries**, and **9 contain both theatre and gallery spaces**.

The Dublin postcodes with the highest concentration of artists' workspaces are Dublin 1, 2, 7 and 8.

The definition of an artist:

The Arts Council's definition of an artist. In '*The Living Conditions of Working Artists*', 2010, (LCWA) published by The Arts Council, and The Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the definition of an artist is more specifically:

Definition of an artist:

Frey and Pommerehne (1989) suggest eight possible criteria for defining artists:

- (i) amount of time spent on artistic work,
- (ii) amount of income derived from artistic activities,
- (iii) reputation as an artist among the general public,
- (iv) recognition among other artists,
- (v) quality of artistic work produced,
- (vi) membership of a professional body,
- (vii) a professional qualification in the arts, and
- (viii) subjective self-evaluation as an artist. Some or all of these criteria (plus a ninth: membership of an artists' organisation) are generally used to try to include relevant professional artists and exclude those pursuing the arts as a hobby.

Within the Arts Council's definition, there were just over 5,000 artists in the Republic of Ireland, as at January 2010, and 49% of all artists in the ROI live in Dublin (LCWA). Therefore we can surmise that there are in the region of 2,500 artists in Dublin (representing just under 10% of census 2017's creative workers figure).

Summary: There are just over 2,500 artists, (within a larger group of 27,300 creative workers), who require workspace in Dublin.

The definition of an artist's workspace:

For the purpose of this audit, the definition of an artists workspace is:

A dedicated workspace, customised specifically to provide the location for an artist to engage in their professional artistic practice. For visual artists, a dedicated studio in which to keep the materials and equipment to carry out the art process. For theatre and music workspaces, the report includes shared rehearsal spaces dedicated to rehearsal of performance practice. The audit includes spaces that are publicly advertised as artists' workspaces, in which vacant studios or rehearsal space rentals are available on the open market for professional artists to apply to use.

In order to succinctly quantify movement within Artists' Workspaces 2010-2019, this audit has focused specifically on three core Artists' Workspaces within the city's cultural spaces infrastructure, 1) **artist's studios**, 2) **rehearsal spaces** & 3) **venues**.

Summary Artists' Workspaces in the Audit comprise:

- **Artists' Studios** – including publicly funded, and private collectives used by professional artists.
- **Rehearsal spaces** that are enclosed enough to conduct artistic process away from public view – including publicly funded and private collectives used by professional artists.
- **Venues** – Public arts venues which programme arts performances, and gallery buildings where living art is displayed.

* A wider grouping of **venues** could include both commercial galleries and commercial music/comedy venues.

For this interim report, the scope needed to be narrowed for completeness.

The Audit – Process:

The research compiled data on individual numbers of artists' workspaces, as follows:

- a) Individual artists' studios
- b) Shared rehearsal spaces where collective work is made
- c) Venues where public engagement of artists' work takes place

The compilation of data on artists workspaces was compiled through desk based research from directories held by Dublin City Council, The Arts Council, Visual Artists Ireland, Theatre Forum Ireland and a number of resource organisations, as well as an extensive online search from mid-late December 2019. The inclusion of artists' workspaces from The Irish Architecture Foundation's Open House Festival, and the Open Studios project 'Visit', in which artists held open days, were compiled. For theatre, music, dance and circus, sources were drawn from Arts Council data, Theatre Forum, Music Network, and the Hot Press Directory of spaces.

Where workspaces had closed, many websites that were active during the years 2010-2014 had ceased, although a few enterprising individuals used online platforms to keep the stories of their workspaces live. Many artists' workspaces use Facebook to promote their facilities, events, and advertise open or available workspaces/studios for other artists to apply. There was a distinct pattern of artists setting up new workspaces in the face of difficult closures of previous spaces.

Data inclusion methodology:

The audit purpose is to quantify how many artists' workspaces existed in Dublin 2010-2019. By collating the annual number, and analysing the patterns of closures and newly founded workspaces, it would be possible to make assertions about the stability, and robustness of the sector. It would also indicate areas of further research that would be necessary.

A period of ten years from 2010-2019 is the subject data period. This enables a comparison with data from the immediately preceding 10 years in: '*Review of Visual Artists' Workspaces*', CHL, The Arts Council, 2009. One of the major findings of that nationwide study, was that 52% of artists' workspaces had only founded in the 8 years prior to the study.

In order to provide meaningful data around the closure of some collective artists workspaces, and the foundation of new ones, this study has taken the period of 2010 to 2019 and the existence of a workspace in that period. The workspace is included in the year it was founded (recognising it may not have been there for the full year), and similarly, workspaces are included in the data year in which they closed. For example if an artists' studio opened in May 2014, and closed in August 2018, it is included in the data for years 2014-2018 inclusive.

It should be noted that there is a huge variety of artists' workspaces in the city. The term rehearsal space can include major theatre spaces that are used for music or circus rehearsal versus a space that is effectively a board-room with no furniture therein. Further analysis of the technical facilities of Dublin's Artists' Workspaces is required.

National Cultural Institutions have been excluded. Further research would be useful to examine the role of National Cultural Institutions and the role of the living artist. The buildings that are occupied by National Cultural Institutions have an opportunity to provide much needed workspace, not only in the context of education programmes (which are a core part of National Cultural Institutions programming remit), but for provision of an opportunity for artists through festivals, and other events to access interaction with those spaces.

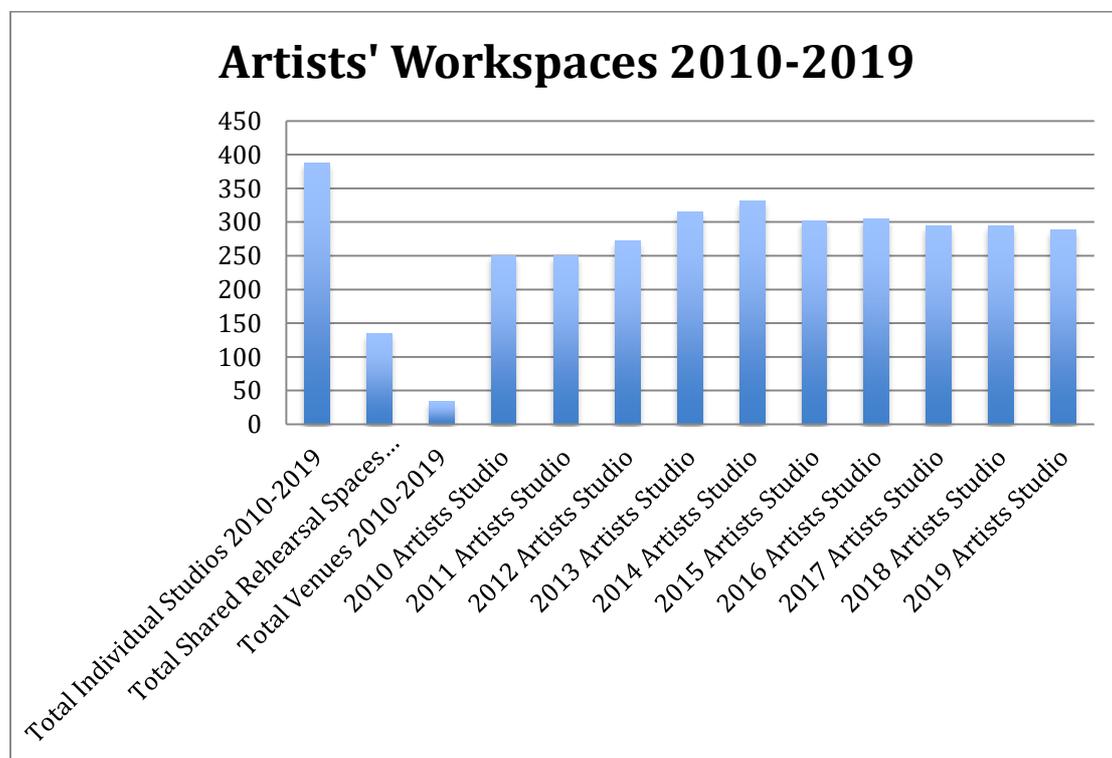
Audit Interim findings (desk based research):

The research took place during December 2019 and January 2020.

The study identified 89 buildings in Dublin city constituting artists' workspaces, which existed 2010 to 2019. Within those 89 buildings there are a variety of artists' workspaces, comprising inwards facing workspaces, where artists carry out their process to make work (artists' studios & rehearsal spaces), as well as public facing workspaces (performance and gallery spaces).

Over the 10 year period 2010 – 2019 the number of artists' studios was 392, and the number of shared rehearsal spaces was 137. The number of venues was 36, of which 10 contain public performance spaces, 17 contain public galleries, and 9 contain both.

Illustration 1: Total workspaces 2010-2019.



The audit identified a relatively steady number of artists' workspaces across the ten years, indicating that when one workspace closes, another is usually founded.

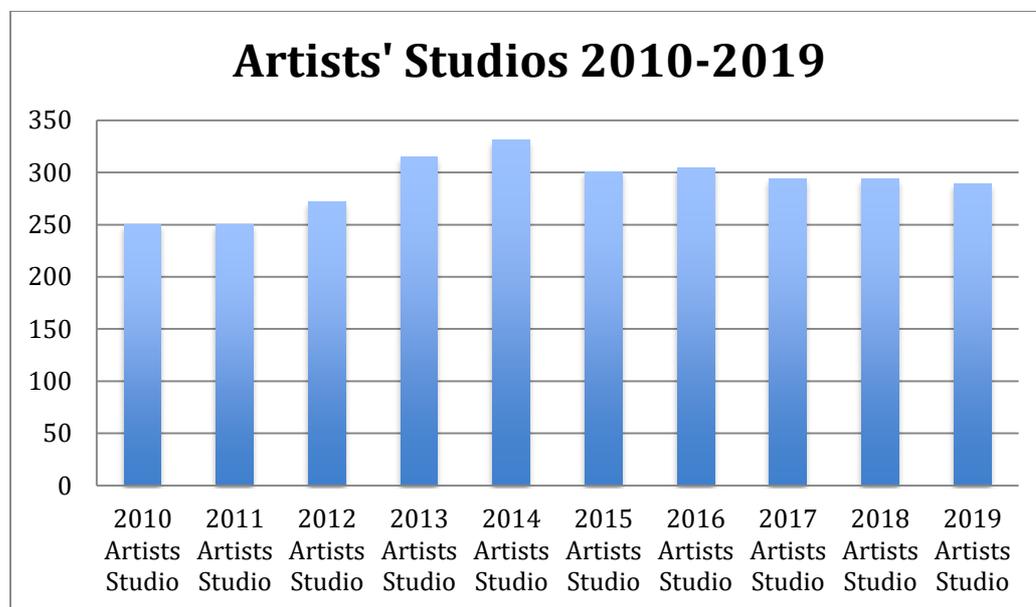
a) Artists' Workspaces – Individual Artists' Studios:

This type of workspace is mainly contained in a collective space in which a number of artists work. The buildings in which these studios are located, are often adapted or changed according to the demand of the group of artists at that time. They tend to be the workspaces which are the most fluid, with many only existing for a short period of time, or moving to another building within a short number of years.

It is interesting that the audit of the quantity of artists' workspaces shows that in the period 2010-2019, the period in which there were the highest number of artists studios (331), corresponds to the worst period of the economic recession. Further study is necessary to identify if private landlords who could not rent space for other enterprises, engaged more openly with providing artists' workspaces.

The average number of artists' studios 2010-2019 was 290 (from a total of 392 across the 10 years).

Illustration 2: Artists' Studios 2010-2019.



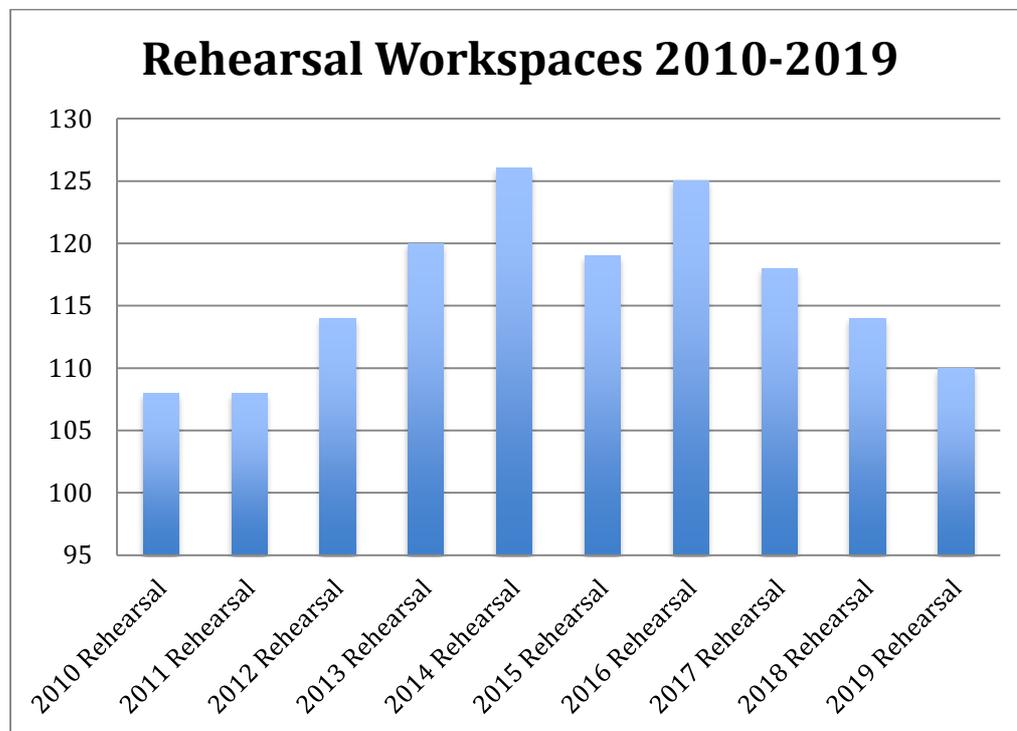
b) Shared Rehearsal Spaces where collective work is made

Shared rehearsal spaces constitute large rooms where theatre, dance, circus and other performance related arts process takes place. The data for the audit of these spaces came from the Arts Council, Theatre Forum Ireland, The Irish Theatre Institute and a search online of spaces to rehearse in Dublin. This is a type of artists' workspace that is relatively stable in terms of the quantity of spaces 2010-2019.

The average number of rehearsal spaces 2010-2019 was 119 (from a total of 137 across the 10 years).

As with artists' studios, it is interesting that there is a higher provision of spaces available during the recession. Part of this may be due to the fact that rehearsal spaces tend to be required for very short periods of tenure, ranging from days to a six to eight week theatre/dance rehearsal cycle.

Illustration 3: Rehearsal Workspaces 2010-2019.



c) Venues where public engagement of artists' work takes place

As expected, this is the most stable group of artists' workspaces, being located in buildings which have either been modified for artistic use, or having been designed and built as artists' workspaces including for public engagement of the arts.

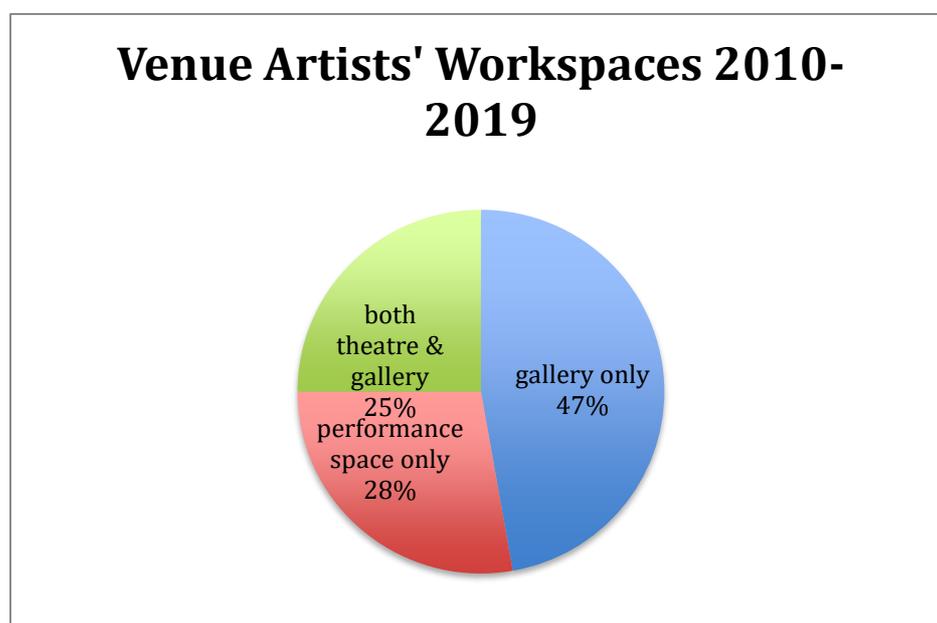
While there are a large number of buildings in the city that are used to showcase the arts to a public audience, the ones included in this audit are venues either classed as gallery, theatre, film or multi-disciplinary centres, as well as community centres where a large range of multi-disciplinary arts are showcased.

The number of venues in Dublin City 2010-2019 was 36, of which three are classed as community centres, but provide multi-disciplinary arts workspaces: St. Andrews Resource Centre, The Sean O'Casey Centre and Ballybough Community Centre. Three public facing venues closed during the period: The Talbot Gallery (privately owned), Red Stables (publicly owned) and Filmbase (publicly owned).

The breakdown of types of workspaces in venues is highlighted in Illustration 4, below.

It is important to note that while the audit specifies gallery spaces, the technical capabilities of these have not been analysed. In many cases they may be as rudimentary as a white wall in the building which is used to display 2-dimensional art. They have been included if they are identified as gallery spaces by the artists' workspace themselves.

Illustration 4: Types of public engagement spaces in venues

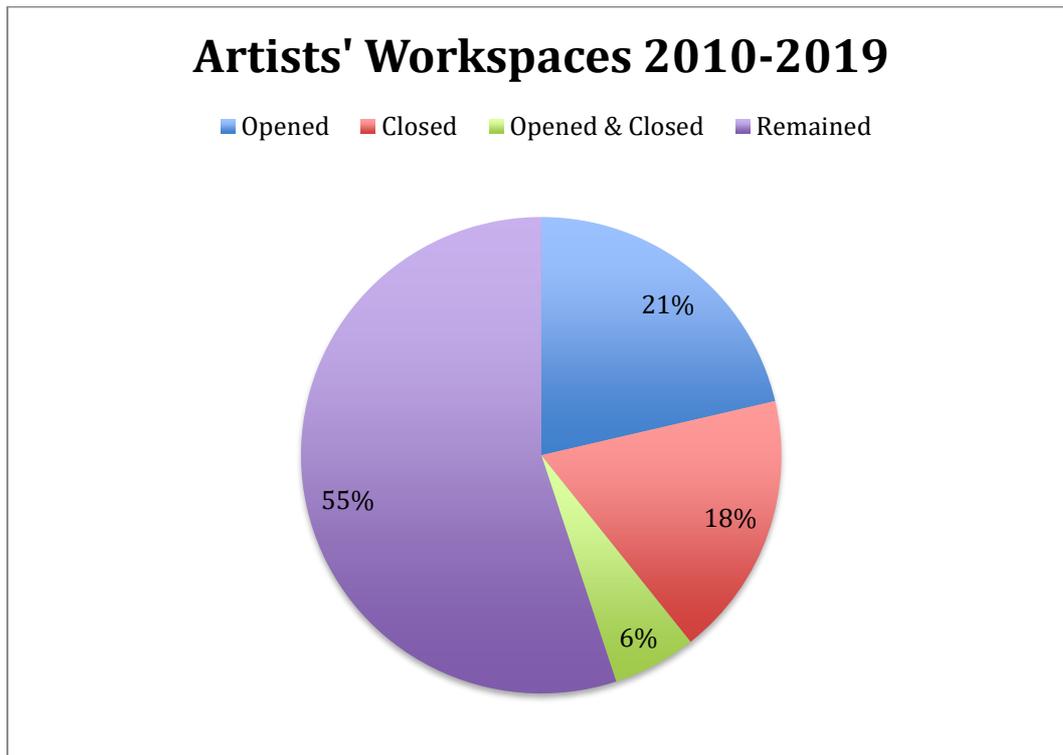


Artists' Workspaces: Openings & Closures 2010-2019

In the period 2010 to 2019 there were some high profile closures of large collective workspaces, including The Factory, MABOS, Broadstone Studios, Moxie, Block T, The Joinery, as well as longer term building based Filmbase and TEAM Educational Theatre Company (which was founded in 1975).

The closure of some of the largest artists workspaces caused huge disruption to the many artists who had been working there (many of whom had personally provided the capital costs of the conversion of their space). However, the period 2010 to 2019 also saw some considerable formations of artists' workspaces, such as The Complex, Bow Street Studios (artists from The Factory), and the successful growth of MART as an artists' movement of converting buildings for artists use. Many of the new spaces which opened were constituted by people who had been displaced in the closure of a previous workspace. An example of this is the formation of Damn Fine Print and The Darkroom from incubation spaces in BlockT in Smithfield, Dublin 7. Deeper consultative research is required to quantify the number of spaces which are formed out of previous collective artists' workspaces.

Illustration 5: Artists' Workspaces which have opened and closed 2010-2019



Artists' Workspaces by postcode 2010-2019:

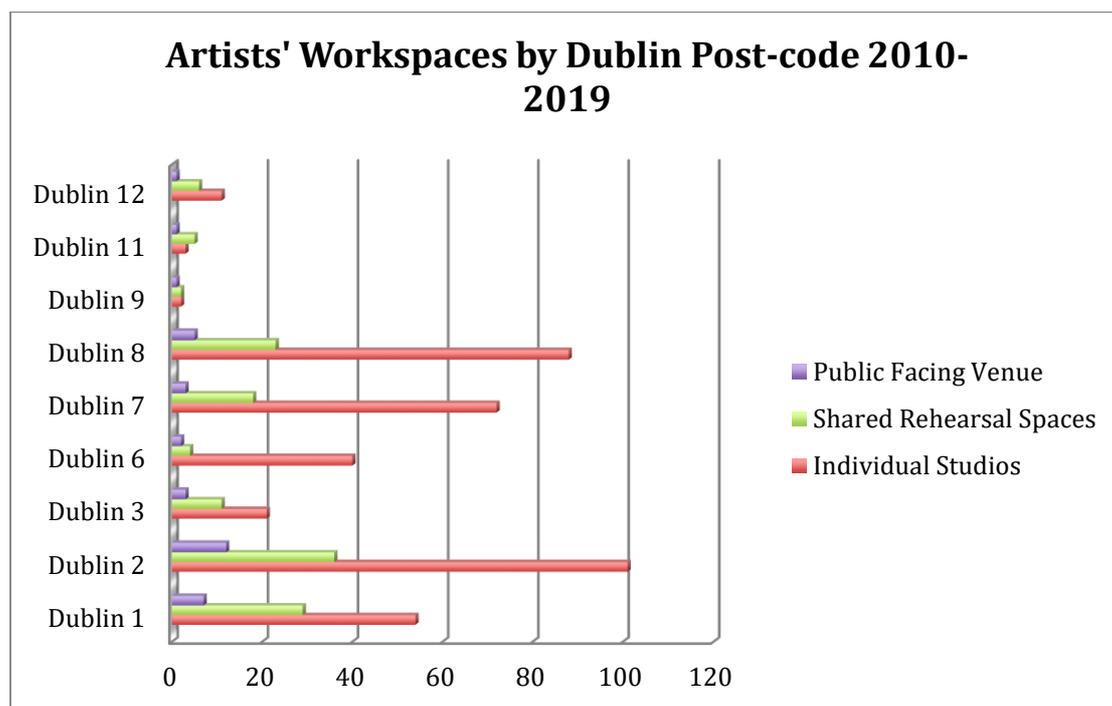
Across the city there are large clusters of artists' workspaces especially in Dublin 1 and 2, which one would expect as the heart of the city centre. However, there are also an exceptionally high number of artists' workspaces across Dublin 7 and Dublin 8. In Dublin 8 this may partly be due to the number of cultural organisations in Dublin 8 (IMMA, NCAD). In Dublin 7, it would merit a study of the importance of places like Block T who have spawned many new arts spaces from their existence in various locations in Dublin 7, prior to their closure from the former Tully's Tiles space in 2016.

Dublin 6 has a large concentration of artists' studios, which is directly related to the growth of MART in the area.

It is notable that Dublin 4's only artists' workspace The Factory, closed in 2014. Similarly there are no artists' workspaces identified in Dublin 5 or Dublin 10.

Dublin 11 is boosted by the 5 spaces provided through Axis Ballymun: (2 rehearsal studios, a recording studio, art room and conference room). It also gained new artists' studios in 2019, BKB Studios.

Illustration 6: Artists' Workspaces by post-code 2010-2019:



The Incubation Aspect of Artists' Workspaces:

This audit identified direct links between the closure of one workspace, and the opening of a new one. Ireland has had many successful examples of artforms incubating new companies and workspaces from existing ones – across all art-forms. Taking the model of fine art printmaking studios, the first of these incubated many more. Graphic Studio Dublin, (the first such studio, established in 1960) has spawned Leinster Printmakers, Blackchurch Print Studio, Stoney Road Press and Independent Studios among many others. More recently BlockT spawned multiple artists' workspaces in their own right.

It would be useful to look at **Customisation** – many studios get customised for a fraction of the price it would cost a commercial entity – is there a grant that could be provided annually for the temporary conversion of artists' workspaces?

ACME (UK) model – use the tenure of 3-5 years as a positive aspect. What can the Council and larger Govt do to ENABLE 3-5 year partnerships – which mirrors the tenure of most artists' studios?

Concluding Summary:

This Audit - interim report has opened a number of areas for discussion and further research around artists and their workspaces in Dublin city. One of the biggest challenges facing artists is to find secure, central spaces in which to work, and the funds to equip them as required. The findings of the audit demonstrate that the artists who leave one space are more than capable of starting again in a new space, but the provision of long term structures for renewal of tenure of artists' workspaces is a crucial part of the city's infrastructure.

Appendix 1: List of Artists' Workspaces in Audit 2010-2019

A4 Sounds	Damn Fine Print
Abbey Studio	Dancehouse
Albert Cottages	Digital Depot/ NCAD graduate Studios
Axis	Dublin Art Mill (Sofa Factory Site)
Ballybough Community Centre	Dublin City Gallery - The Hugh Lane
BKB Studio	Dublin Fringe
Black Church Print Studio	Dublin Theatre Festival/ Culture Box
Block T Smithfield - Tullys	Filmbase
Block T Basin Lane	Fire Station Studios
Bow Street Studios	Five Lamps Studios
Broadstone Studios	Gallery of Photography
Brunswick Mill Studios	Gate Theatre Studio
Clarendon House	Graphic Studio Dublin
Cois Ceim Dance Studios	Graphic Studio Gallery
Commonplace Studios	Helix
Cork Street Studios	IMMA Studios
D-lite	Independent Artists' Studios

Irish Film Institute
Irish Theatre Institute
JaJa Studios
La Catedral/Back Loft
Loom Studios - The Hendron Building
MABOS
Marlborough Studios
Mart – Lennox Street
MART - Casino
Mart Coach House
Mart Crumlin
Mart HX
Mart Kilmainham Studios
Mart Malpas Street Studios
Mart Parker Hill
Mart Rathmines
Mill Studios
Monster Truck Studios
Moxie Studios
New Art Studios
Ormond Studios
Outhouse
Pallas Projects
Pearse Centre
Plexa
Printblock Studio
Project Arts Centre

Red Stables Artists' Studios
Richmond Road Studios
Rough Magic Theatre Company
Royal Hibernian Academy
Sean O'Casey Centre
Seville Place (6)
Smock Alley Theatre
South Studios
St Andrews Resource Centre
Steambox
Stoneybatter Studios
St. Patrick's Lodge
Talbot Studios
TEAM Educational Theatre Company
Temple Bar Gallery + Studios
Temple Lane Studios,
Tivoli Theatre
The Ark
The Chocolate Factory
The Complex
The Darkroom Dublin
The Factory (contained NPAS)
The Hendron Building
The Joinery
The Lab
The New Theatre
The Market Studios
Visual Arts Centre