



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council

Report to Arts, Culture, Leisure  
and Recreation SPC  
25<sup>th</sup> July 2022  
Item No. 5

## **Dublin LGBTQ+Pride & Dublin City Council Arts Office**

Consultation Workshop on  
LGBTQ+ community Public Art  
28<sup>th</sup> April, 2022

### Notes

#### **1. Introduction**

Ray Yeates, Dublin City Arts Officer (DCC), opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and handed over to the facilitator. Following introductions, the purpose of the meeting was agreed as:

- (a) To give information on the process for commissioning a major piece of permanent, public art representing the LGBTQ+community in Ireland
- (b) To start the consultation on what is important about that piece of art

Eleven people attended (see list attached). The meeting was facilitated by an independent facilitator. These notes are taken from her notes of the meeting and are structured as follows:

- Informal Inputs from Jed, Ray and Ruairí
- Key Points about the process: consultation and commissioning
- Key Points about LGBTQ+ Public Art
- Next Steps and Close

#### **2. Informal Inputs**

##### **(a) The Journey so far: input**

Jed Dowling, Dublin Pride CEO and Festival Director, gave a short input on the history of this project. He recognised the role of the initial group leading this thinking and the initial proposal paper by Toni Walsh (Maynooth) in 2016 which focused on an Irish Aids Memorial. He outlined the developing discussion since then and the broader thinking, moving on from a commemorative piece focusing on the past only. Jed highlighted that there is nothing decided at this point other than it will be a major piece of public art representing the LGBTQI+ community and that this is the start of the consultation and discussion within the community.

##### **(b) The policy and process in commissioning this piece of Art**

Ray Yeates, Dublin City Arts Officer, DCC gave a short input on how public work usually gets commissioned within DCC. He highlighted the scale and complexity of moving projects through DCC from concept to delivery. He explained the budget process: the importance of how groups enter in an idea, the development of a concept, bringing people with you and the Brief. Public art of this type can be very expensive, other projects have cost anything up

€300,000. DCC may not be the only funders. Other funders could include the Department (TCAGSM) and less likely, the Arts Council. He highlighted the centrality of the role of elected representatives. He said it can be complex but it is critical to have a unified idea before entering into the more public process.

### **(c) Public Art: input**

Ruairí Ó Cuív, Public Art Officer, DCC gave a short input on public art and commissioning. He noted that there was accessible information on developing a Brief (sample content page attached) that could be useful for the LGBTQ+ community and the consultation. As it was highlighted that this process did not have to be an Open Process, Ruairí outlined the three approaches to commissioning and key advantages and disadvantages of each.

- Invited Competition
- Direct Commissioning
- Open Competition

### **3. Key points on the process: consultation and commissioning**

- A decision will need to be made about the type of commissioning being proposed for this piece (see 3 types listed above). Research shows the commissioning process impacts on the final piece. The point was made that open public competition, which was the main process highlighted at the meeting, does not necessarily give the best results or outcome.
- We could review how other pieces of LGBTQ+ art have been commissioned in other countries and the impact of the different types of commissioning on the outcome/piece: i.e. what worked (there is relevant research experience in the group to do this).
- It was clarified that there is no problem with artists who may have an interest in applying for the commission being involved at this early consultation stage in the process. However, when the process moves into the decision-making stage and forming the Brief they cannot be involved.
- We need to clarify whether this is a Dublin piece or a national piece located in Dublin. If it is a national piece to need to talk with organisations located outside Dublin now. It could be seen as a universal piece.

### **4. Key Points on this Commission**

The question was asked “*Is this worth doing?*” All participants answered yes to this.

One piece of public art is insufficient, it can't do everything, it can't be a memorial, a celebration, represent the past and the future and all the LGBTQ+ community. Therefore, we need to consider:

- Is this the first piece – will there be others?
- Could we have number of pieces (annual/bi-annual commissions)?
- Some process or space that could deliver more?

#### **(a) What is the purpose (or) why are we doing this?**

In discussing the purpose of this piece or why the LGBTQ+ community want to do this the following points were made:

- It is a visible representation of the community

- It is claiming of public space, claiming more space  
We don't really have any LGBTQ+/Queer public art in Ireland, for example Oscar Wilde memorial status celebrates him as an artist not as a gay man, the plaque/tree in Merrion Square etc.
- It is an acknowledgement of the community: past, present
- Recognition that we are here, always have been and always will be – permanency
- We have visibility, for example during Pride in June, but this is about more permanent visibility of the community
- It is a recognition of the LGBTQ+ community in Ireland (this is a better word than commemoration or celebration)
- Also for people who have left Ireland/had to leave
- We have no/very few spaces and not public spaces: The George, Panty Bar ...
- This could create an anchor for the LGBTQ+community
- It is like drawing a line – a line that says we not going back from this point, we are going forward only (noted progress is not only linear, it can go different directions including backwards, as in other countries .. )

### **(b) What form could it take ?**

- It could be a space
- We could create a space defined/delineated/blocked off by something – a framing device
- If we created a specific space we could develop pieces in it year on year
- It would be a tangible space for people to see/visit, with different things happening
- It could be a site to gather at, to visit on your own, a place of reflection, to celebrate and commemorate
- A queer space, but not exclusive but inclusive (look at how that was done with Pride)
- It is not just for our community, our charter is about human rights and inclusion, so it would be an inclusive space
- A circle, a wall/s, a triangle - so that we could place other art within it or there: permanent or temporary, new artists
- We could have events, performances there: reading, poetry - A Queer Amphitheatre
- But the piece of public art would also stand on its own (stand alone), exist on its own – as a piece of art in and of itself – not needing anything other
- Something that could be used every day – or occasionally
- A space and work of art
- There are complexities with this concept but we could manage them:
  - it will entail work and resourcing to have it so live i.e. a site with potential and different things happening
  - those funding it will want evidence that we can manage and maintain it

### **(c) What is important about the space/placement?**

- We are not always safe, so it needs to be somewhere that people feel safe/are safe in visiting it
- A place with lots of footfall
- Part of the civic architecture of the city
- It could be within the Queer Triangle (see the map attached). This would mean it would be safer, people would visit and use it because they are near to it, it would be in a familiar area
- There was a related discussion about Queering this whole triangle – claiming it in some way, street art, public art, pavements ....

- We don't want to be on the outskirts, we want to be in the center of things – core part of the city
- It needs to be somewhere that people can visit easily not have to go out of their way
- Some space in it, beside it or around it – for people to visit, space for related art etc.
- Without being too prescriptive at such an early stage (noted that it's not a good idea for the process to get prescriptive too early) some of the ideas about where this could be placed included:
  - Meeting House Square: Quaker involvement historically is a plus
  - Curve Street: but it is street
  - Bernardos Square: a plus as near City Hall, the potential of this space is not maximized as it is now (seats, cycle racks etc.) (an LGBTQ wall at city)
  - Temple Bar Plaza (too touristy)

### **Building and Space**

A related conversation took place about spaces/building in Dublin and two premises were mentioned (a) Eden in Meeting House Square and in particular Film Base. It was noted that there was a clearly defined process (easier 1<sup>st</sup> round and more difficult 2<sup>nd</sup> round) and timeline to express interest in Film Base.

### **(d) Principles we associate with this art**

It was highlighted that many associated principles emerged throughout the discussions: human rights principles, safety, inclusivity/not separating, communicating, visibility etc. Others were added:

- Joy ... (including joyful process) really important!
- Journey
- Transitional
- Acknowledgement (of an invisible sector)
- Recognition
- Forward looking
- All encompassing
- Claiming space

### **5. Next Steps & Close**

It was agreed as this was an exploratory early-stage consultation meeting. The next step is to engage more broadly with the LGBTQ+ community. It is really important to present this to a broader audience at this early stage. Next steps outlined are as follows:

1. Contact/brief some of the key NGOs informally to let them know about it at this early point
2. An event/Town Hall in June to give information and get feedback from a broader group (stream this)
3. A survey of some type to get to people who can't attend This could be a question or two within a broader survey around Pride
4. Then make the decision about whether further consultation is needed or if we can move on from consultation into a decision-making stage e.g. working group, develop a paper to inform the Briefing Document etc.
5. Parallel to this, consider the process within DCC and Ray's point about how to engage with the elected representative and potential funders.
6. The DCC September deadline was noted.

In closing, people said a substantial amount of work was done during the morning. The workshop had progressed well. Jed thanked everyone for giving their time and expertise.

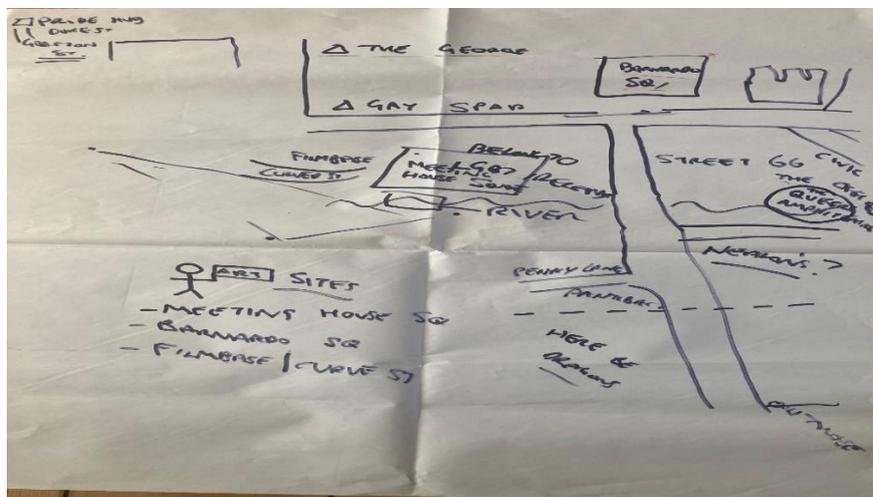
**Facilitator: Rita Burtenshaw**  
[Burtenshaw.rita@gmail.com](mailto:Burtenshaw.rita@gmail.com)

### (1) Attendance

James O'Hagan	LGBT Ireland
Lilith Ferreyra-Carroll	TENI - Transgender Equality Network Ireland
Sonya Mulligan	Independent LGBTQ+ Activist & Artist
Han Tiernan	GCN & Museum of Everyone
Kate Drinan	National Gallery of Ireland & Queer Culture Ireland
Greg Thorpe	GAZE Film Festival
Jed Dowling	Dublin Pride
Colm Molloy	Dublin Pride
Christelle Gebhardt	Dublin Pride
Ray Yeates	Dublin City Council
Ruairí Ó Cuív	Dublin City Council

### (2) Brief Document: Sample Content Page

1. Introduction and Invitation
2. Context of the Commission
3. Artform and Technical Information
4. Location
5. Finance
6. Selection Process
7. Briefing
8. Selection Criteria
9. Selection Panel
10. Time Scale
11. Submissions
12. Queries
13. General Conditions
14. Terms and Conditions
15. GDPR Compliance
16. Appendices:



(3) Map