

**IRELAND  
EXHIBITION  
VENICE  
ART BIENNALE  
2026**



**Cultúr Éireann  
Culture Ireland**



**CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN THE CURATION OF  
IRELAND AT VENICE 2026**

*Ireland at Venice is an initiative of Culture Ireland in partnership with the Arts Council*

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## INVITATION

Culture Ireland, in partnership with the Arts Council, invites Expressions of Interest to curate the Irish representation at the 61<sup>st</sup> International Art Exhibition at La Biennale di Venezia 2026.

Compelling, ambitious and imaginative proposals are sought for consideration from Irish artists, curators, or teams with expertise in the visual arts. Proposals from individuals, collectives and/or organisations will be considered.

Please engage with this opportunity, if you are interested in:

- presenting Irish Visual Arts practice to an international audience;
- using this international platform to stimulate discussion on visual arts in and from Ireland;
- raising the profile of Irish artists, curators and commissioners, and developing their practice and increase their international opportunities;
- gaining international profile and creating future international opportunities for Irish artists;
- touring the exhibition nationally in 2027.

## DEADLINE

Submissions must be received in the format outlined in Stage I on page 9, by noon on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

## BACKGROUND

National representation at the Venice Biennale is a Government initiative led by Culture Ireland, in partnership with the Arts Council. The aim of supporting Ireland's representation at this event is to raise the profile of Irish artists, curators and commissioners, and to develop their practice and increase their international opportunities.

The Venice Biennale remains the most important international showcase for contemporary arts. It offers a unique opportunity for Ireland to showcase Irish contemporary visual art on a global stage. The Venice Biennale serves as a prominent platform for Irish artists, curators and commissioners to engage with international audiences, curators and gallerists, to gain international profile and to generate new opportunities. The previous Biennale for Visual Arts has had attendance of over 800,000 visitors.

Culture Ireland in partnership with the Arts Council is committed to supporting Ireland's representation at La Biennale di Venezia / Venice Biennale in 2026.

### **2026 Theme**

At the time of publishing this invitation, the overall curatorial theme has not been announced.

It is the preference that the national representation of Ireland respond to the overall curatorial theme, when available. Should the theme be made public by the closing date it will be found on La Biennale di Venezia website

### **Ireland's Pavilion**

Subject to confirmation, it is intended that Ireland will reserve the space currently used in the Arsenale for 2026 (in the same location as Ireland's national exhibitions over the last decade). Images and maps are available in Appendix 1.

The 61<sup>st</sup> La Biennale di Venezia / Venice Biennale will be held from April to November 2026 and Ireland's Pavilion must be open throughout the full exhibition period.

### **Irish Tour**

Following the presentation at Venice, the Ireland at Venice exhibit will subsequently return to Ireland for an Irish Tour in 2027, for the benefit of Irish audiences. Consideration must be given to this tour in the development of proposals.

## ROLE OF CURATOR FOR IRELAND'S EXHIBITION

The Curator will be responsible for the delivery of Ireland's exhibition at the Venice Biennale 2026 and the subsequent Irish Tour in 2027. The Curator will lead on:

- commissioning the artist and creative team
- project management
- budget management
- fundraising
- arrangements with venue
- communications and press
- liaison with the Biennale office and
- provision of administrative and production support
- liaising with Culture Ireland the Arts Council

The Curator may take on the role of exhibition curation or may choose to work with another individual, an institution or as part of a collective. All those involved should be identified and be party to this initial expression of interest.

## DETAILS OF THE OPEN CALL

This call for Expressions of Interest is open to:

- Individuals, collectives or organisations based in Ireland or of Irish citizenship.
- The curator and the artist/s proposed by the curator must be based in Ireland or of Irish citizenship.
- The curator and / or any institution involved may not be the proposed artist.
- The, curator and / or any institution involved may not have a commercial relationship with the proposed artist.
- Representation will be by a solo artist or collaborative practice. Only in exceptional circumstances will a group show be considered.
- Representation is open to artists or a collaborative practice at any stage of their career.
- The proposed presentation of work must be not have been exhibited prior to its showing at the Venice Biennale in 2026.
- It will be an advantage for the artist/s to have had a solo exhibition in a publicly funded venue in Ireland and / or abroad.
- The artist must not have had a solo exhibition at the Venice Biennale previously.
- Retrospectives will not be considered.

## BUDGET

A core budget of approx. €520,000 may be used as a guideline, comprising €340,000 from Culture Ireland and €180,000 from the Arts Council.

The space, provisionally reserved by Ireland in the Arsenale for 2026, has a venue rental estimated to be €180,000. This rental cost is included in the overall budget of c. €520,000 and paid directly by Culture Ireland to La Biennale. Therefore, the estimated net operating budget is €340,000. It has been the experience of previous representations at Venice that fundraising was required to supplement the budget to meet the scale of their ambition for the projects.

A separate budget of up to €100,000 will be made available by the Arts Council for the Irish tour in 2027. This will require a separate proposal to the Arts Council in 2026.

## EXHIBITION BRIEF

Within the operating budget, the successful applicant must cover:

- The design, development and production of their concept;
- The delivery of all appropriate exhibition graphics, images, equipment and materials as needed to communicate and mediate the exhibition to a public audience, internationally and nationally;
- All shipping, installation and de-installation and return costs of the exhibition;
- All travel and accommodation in Venice for the curatorial team, installation team, participating team and invigilators;
- Costs associated with the promotion of the exhibition;
- The delivery of an opening launch event in Venice in April 2026.

The successful team will be required to set up a project management plan, including a financial management and reporting structure, and agree this with Culture Ireland and the Arts Council when signing the Grant Agreement.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Expressions of Interest will be assessed and selected on the basis of the following criteria:

### Artistic Quality

- The quality of the proposed artist and idea as representative of visual arts practice in Ireland;
- The artistic track record of the applicant and the artistic personnel involved in the project as evidenced in their CVs and other supporting materials submitted;
- The ambition, originality and competency demonstrated in the proposal.

### Meeting the Objectives

- The ambition, innovation, quality and appropriateness of the proposal to represent Ireland to an international audience in the context of the Venice Biennale;
- The relevance and compatibility of the proposal to represent contemporary Irish visual arts practice in the international context of the Biennale, taking account of current trends and issues in contemporary practice;
- The ambition and capacity to deliver the Irish tour in 2027.

### Feasibility

- Curatorial experience on large scale visual arts projects and / or exhibitions;
- Experience in project management of significant projects and evidence of producing and delivering projects internationally bearing in mind the need to meet significant time and travel commitments;
- Experience, expertise and success in mediating, communicating and delivering visual arts exhibitions to diverse audiences including networking skills and international connections;
- Experience in budget management and fundraising capacity, working with large scale budgets;
- The extent to which the proposal demonstrates the provision of equitable conditions and remuneration for participating artists.



## SUBMISSION

Proposals outlining the applicant's ideas, approach and capacity to deliver a presentation of the scale required to represent Ireland in 2026 should:

- Include a completed cover sheet (please use the template provided at Appendix 2);
- Include a working title;
- Identify the full team and their individual roles;
- Include a detailed outline of your creative vision for the proposal and the artwork to be exhibited;
- Explicitly address all criteria outlined above;
- Include an outline plan for the national tour of the exhibition in Ireland in 2027 (where and why);
- Include a life-cycle sustainability plan for the exhibit;
- Not exceed **5 x A4 pages in PDF format** (excluding the cover sheet);
- Be accompanied by all relevant biographies
- Include an outline budget

Additional information to include: CVs of all personnel proposed for the project (institution/curator/artist(s)).

**All applications must be submitted by email to [IrelandAtVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie](mailto:IrelandAtVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie) by noon, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

## SELECTION PROCESS

### THE SELECTION PROCESS WILL COMPRISE TWO STAGES:

- Stage I: Expressions of Interest
- Stage II: Shortlisted candidates invited for interview.

#### STAGE I

All proposals will be evaluated by Culture Ireland and the Arts Council according to the Evaluation Criteria outlined above (page 8). Shortlisted candidates will be invited to Stage II of the selection process.

Applicants must submit an Expression of Interest no more than 5 x A4 pages in PDF format including all items listed at Submission above (page 9).

#### STAGE II

Stage II will be an interview by a panel. The interview panel will be led by an independent Chair and be comprised of:

- Representative of Culture Ireland
- Representative of the Arts Council
- Two panel members of international standing with visual arts expertise

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to present a more detailed proposal and visual presentation based on their Expression of Interest in Stage I.

The exact date of the interview has not been set yet, however, it is envisaged that it will take place in mid-October 2024. The successful applicant will be notified shortly thereafter.

## DEADLINE FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Submissions should be emailed to [IrelandatVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie](mailto:IrelandatVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie) and must be received by **noon** on **20<sup>th</sup> August 2024**.

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This call for Expressions of Interest is open to individuals, collectives, organisations or teams with an expertise in the visual arts. Applicants should be based in Ireland or hold Irish citizenship.

The Arts Council and Culture Ireland makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities or access requirements who wish to submit an application. If you have a requirement in this area, please contact the Arts Council's Access Officer by email ([access@artscouncil.ie](mailto:access@artscouncil.ie)) as early as possible before the deadline.

Culture Ireland and the Arts Council reserve the right to appoint an individual or team to curate Ireland's national representation at the Venice Biennale in 2026 if the open submission process does not lead to a successful outcome.

The receipt of each proposal will be acknowledged by email.

All applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application following each stage of the process they participated in.

No fees will be paid for either submission stage.

Submissions will not be returned.

The selection panel's decision is final.

## EVALUATION

All those who submit Expressions of Interest will be informed if they are shortlisted following Stage I.

Those that progress to Stage II will be informed of the selection panel's decision following the interviews. Written evaluation will be provided to all shortlisted applicants based on the criteria outlined.

## SELECTION TIMELINE

Submissions must be received by noon on **Tuesday 20th August 2024** and should be sent to **[IrelandatVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie](mailto:IrelandatVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie)**

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All proposals will be acknowledged by Culture Ireland.

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Successful short-listed applicants will be notified in September. Shortlisted applicants will be provided with details of Stage II submission requirements at that time.

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Stage II applicants will be required to present at an interview at a date in mid-October 2024. It is currently planned that interviews will take place during the week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

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Announcement of the successful proposal will follow completion of Stage II

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## CONTACT

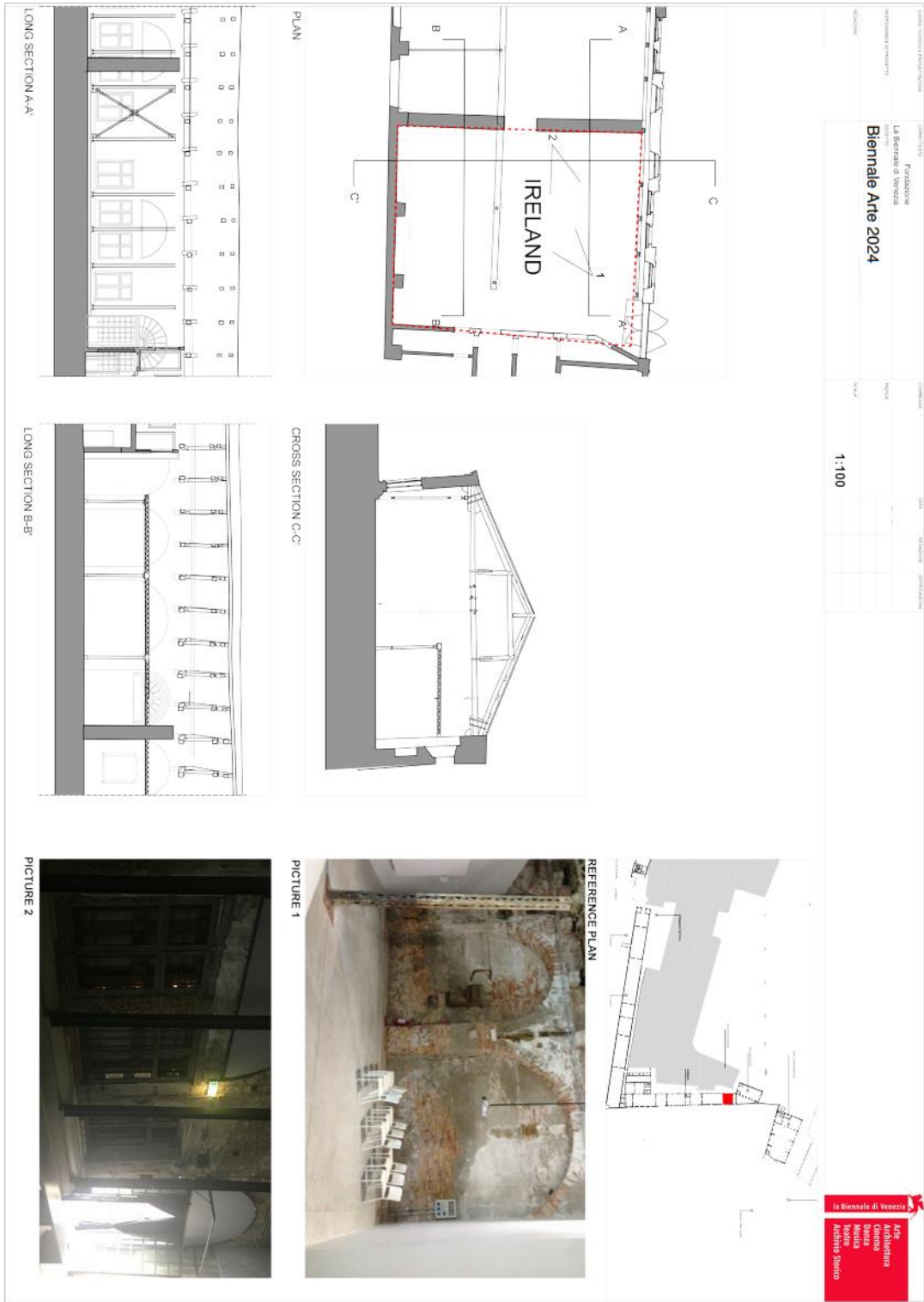
Any enquires regarding submissions should be sent by email to:

[IrelandatVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie](mailto:IrelandatVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie)

An Access Officer, should you need one, can be contacted by email

[access@artscouncil.ie](mailto:access@artscouncil.ie)

**APPENDIX 1: IMAGES AND MAPS**



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APPENDIX 2: COVER SHEET FOR SUBMISSION



**EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN CURATION OF  
IRELAND'S REPRESENTATION AT  
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2026**

Title of Project:	
Lead Applicant / Curator:	
Proposed Artist(s):	
Contact Details:	
Other Participants and their Roles:	



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