

NATIONAL ARTS IN EDUCATION PORTAL DAY 2026

In partnership with TU Dublin School of Art and Design

Saturday 7 November 2026
TU Dublin School of Art and Design
East Quad, Grangegorman Campus,
Dublin, Ireland

artsineducation.ie

ARTS IN EDUCATION
Na hEalaíona san Oideachas

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

9.15am	**Registration, tea & coffee**
9.45am – 10.15am	**Welcome Address** John Walsh, Head of the School of Art & Design, TU Dublin and Patrick Coffey, Arts in Education Portal Editorial Committee Member.
10.15am – 11.30am	**Keynote Event: Panel Discussion** Discussion with guest speakers: Jo Mangan, Director of The Performance Corporation; Nathan Geszczak, youth advocate and member of the AI Youth Juries; Kate O'Shea, a multidisciplinary socially engaged artist and Dr. Suzanne Little, Professor in the School of Computing at Dublin City University. Chaired by Phil Kingston, Arts in Education Portal Editorial Committee Member and Community and Education Manager at The Abbey Theatre.
11.30am – 11.55am	**Break**
11.55am – 12.45pm	**First Session** *Choice of 3 parallel sessions: 3 Short Format Presentations, 1 Presentation, 1 Creative Workshop* Short Format Presentations: Let the idea grow, AI Can Generate, But Can It Create? and Who Gets to Go to Space Presentation and Discussion: Portal Documentation Award Recipient Series: Orpheus in the Garden Creative Workshop: Soft Day
12.45pm – 1.30pm	**Lunch**
1.30pm – 2.20pm	**Second Session** *Choice of 3 parallel sessions: 1 Presentation and Discussion, 2 Creative Workshops* Presentation and Discussion: Portal Documentation Award Recipient Series: PlaySpaces Creative Workshop: Sustained! Creative Workshop: Houseplant Horror: Sound Foley as Creative Practice
2.30pm – 3.20pm	**Third Session** *Choice of 3 parallel sessions: 2 Presentations and Discussions, 1 Creative Workshop* Presentation and Discussion: See Hear Play: Technology, AI & Inclusive Creativity Presentation and Discussion: Eng-AGE: Young at art Creative Workshop: Poetry And Film: Embracing the Old and the New
3.30pm – 4pm	**Rapporteur Address** Seoidín O'Sullivan, artist, educator and interdisciplinary researcher

WELCOME ADDRESS

9.45AM – 10.15AM

John Walsh
Head of the School of Art & Design, TU Dublin

Patrick Coffey
Arts in Education Portal Editorial Committee Member

John Walsh, a Furniture and Product Designer, is winner of several international design awards and is a Past President of the Institute of Designers in Ireland. He is also founder of TU Dublin CreateLAB, an applied design research lab which supports industry in the development of new products.

Patrick Coffey is a National Coordinator at Oide Technology in Education where he leads the Scoilnet & Digital Content initiatives on behalf of the Department of Education and Youth. Based out of Dublin City University, Patrick has been centrally involved with the Arts in Education portal since the very start in 2015 and was a contributor to A Community of Practice, the five year strategy (2023-2027) for the Arts in Education Portal.



John Walsh



Patrick Coffey



KEYNOTE EVENT: PANEL DISCUSSION

10.15AM – 11.30AM

Panel discussion with guest speakers Jo Mangan, Director of The Performance Corporation; Nathan Geszczak, youth advocate and member of the AI Youth Juries; Kate O'Shea, a multidisciplinary socially engaged artist, and Dr. Suzanne Little, Professor in the School of Computing at Dublin City University.

The panel, chaired by Phil Kingston, Arts in Education Portal board member and Community and Education Manager at The Abbey Theatre, will explore this year's theme '*The Future is Creative: Why arts and creativity in education matter more than ever*'.


Jo Mangan


Nathan Geszczak


Kate O'Shea


Dr. Suzanne Little


Phil Kingston

Jo Mangan is Director and CEO of The Performance Corporation, makers of theatre, opera, festivals and immersive work in Extended Reality. Work includes the Fedora Digital Prize for the VR Opera Out of the Ordinary (Irish National Opera) and the live mixed reality project We Who Live Under Heaven at Kilkenny Arts Festival and Nemo Biennale, Paris. She founded The SPACE Programme, Ireland's longest running international artists residency, focused on arts and immersive technology. A keynote speaker on AI and creativity, she has presented at SXSW in Austin, and sits on the boards of The Gate Theatre and the International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts.

Nathan Geszczak is a seventeen-year-old with a strong passion for the arts, particularly performance art and music. He has been involved in his local theatre, performing and creating art for many years and is very passionate about issues that affect young people. He has been on panels for the Ombudsman for Children, AI Youth Juries and used to be a member of Comhairle na nÓg, and is a big advocate for correct AI usage and bringing awareness to its risks.

Kate O'Shea is a socially engaged artist working across printmaking, archiving, installation, performance, and publishing, with an emphasis on collaboration and building networks of solidarity. In 2026, she presented Mycelium at VISUAL Carlow, an immersive installation bringing together textiles, sculpture, sound and artist-made books, marking a significant point in her long-term project Mycelium: An Archive of Archives and Archivists. In 2025, she undertook a residency exchange between Irish Museum of Modern Art and Fremantle Arts Centre, on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar Country in Walyalup, Western Australia, developing JUMP CUTS with artist-architect Aideen O'Donovan. She is co-founder of transdisciplinary collective Broken Fields, Durty Books publishing house and mobile printmaking device FieldPress.

Dr. Suzanne Little is Professor in the School of Computing at Dublin City University and an SFI Principal Investigator at the Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics working in the area of media analytics, information access and retrieval across a variety of application domains. She is co-director of the SFI Centre for Research Training in Artificial Intelligence (CRT-AI) and a Funded Investigator in the iForm Advanced Manufacturing Centre. Her expertise is in video analysis, semantic search and data integration and current research includes projects examining bias in deep learning models for computer vision, safety in micromobility and personal transportation, improved medical image analysis, biomedical data and water desalination.

BREAK

11.30AM – 11.55AM

FIRST SESSION 11.55AM – 12.45PM

Short Format Presentations

Let the Idea Grow



Cristin Kelly

Cristín Kelly, Assistant Lecturer in Education at Marino Institute of Education, will present Let the idea grow, which explores what happens between an initial stimulus and the moment a child begins to create? Drawing on children's voices, this presentation explores the often-overlooked space between inspiration and making, and considers how time and opportunities to wonder, connect, explore and revisit ideas can support children's creative thinking.

AI Can Generate, But Can It Create?



Vlad Glaveanu

Vlad Glaveanu, Professor of Psychology in the Business School at Dublin City University, will then present AI Can Generate, But Can It Create? Generating content is not the same as creating. This presentation challenges claims about AI's creativity, examining how polished outputs can obscure the importance of meaning, material engagement, skill development and place. It concludes by exploring why craft and arts education matter more than ever.

Who Gets to Go to Space



Helen Flanagan

Artist Helen Flanagan will present Who Gets to Go to Space, a project created within the framework of Inchicore Children's Broadcasting, a child-led public service broadcaster in collaboration with school children in Dublin 8 and Ballyfermot. The project invited the participating children to consider the power of awe and wonder while trying to capture a view of the Earth from the edge of Space.

Presentation and Discussion

Portal Documentation Award Recipient Series: Orpheus in the Garden



Dee Isaacs



Sharon Rollston

Orpheus in the Garden, a Music Network production, brought together 34 pupils from two DEIS schools to collaborate with professional artists and musicians in an inspiring exploration of the biodiversity crisis through live music. Led by composer Dee Isaacs, the project engaged students in a series of creative and educational workshops over several months. The project culminated in the creation and performance of an original operatic work at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. Music Network's CEO Sharon Rollston and composer Dee Isaacs will share insights into their experiences from the development to the delivery of a large-scale artistic project working with schools.

Creative Workshop

Soft Day



Susan Leen

Soft Day will guide participants in exploring rain as a creative lens for engaging with climate change in education. In this work, artist Susan Leen will use rain as both material and subject, drawing on Irish weather lore, local language, observation and contemporary climate data to ask how our relationship with weather is changing. Through sensory observation, participants will experiment with mark-making, mapping and collaborative visual responses. The workshop emphasises inclusion and centres children's voices while integrating scientific, cultural and imaginative approaches. Attendees will leave with practical strategies, sample artworks and fresh ideas to inspire children and young people to connect with their local environment and climate issues collectively through art.

To read more about the first session please click here:
https://artsineducation.ie/en/2026-national-portal-day-first-session

LUNCH 12.45PM – 1.30PM

SECOND SESSION 1.30PM – 2.20PM

Presentation and Discussion

Portal Documentation Award Recipient Series: PlaySpaces



Chris Finnegan



Susan Holland

What happens when children are given real decision-making power over the spaces they use? PlaySpaces is a multi-year project in which children across Cork City have designed child-only play spaces, from early workshops at St. Vincent's Convent Primary School to a public play-trail launching at Cork Midsummer Festival 2026. Led by artist Chris Finnegan and curator Susan Holland, this session explores how genuine child-led design and collaboration works in practice: moving beyond one-off consultation, working across schools, afterschool centres and disability services, and returning ideas to children again and again. Participants can expect practical insights, stories from the process and space to discuss their own participatory practice.

Creative Workshop

Sustained!



Gillian Grattan

Sustained is a playful, practical drama workshop exploring sustainability through storytelling, imagination and performance. Award-winning playwright and screenwriter Gillian Grattan uses drama and comedy to engage participants in exploring the stories behind everyday choices and their impact on people, communities and the environment. Through drama games, movement, improvisation and devised theatre, participants investigate sustainability dilemmas, create characters and short scenes, and explore different perspectives and moments of change. The workshop encourages curiosity, empathy, critical thinking, communication and creative problem-solving. Rather than providing fixed answers, Sustained gives participants space to ask "What if?", imagine possible futures and explore how theatre can create meaningful conversations about real-world issues.

Creative Workshop

Houseplant Horror: Sound Foley as Creative Practice



Isabel Gill

Join art and design teacher Isabel Gill for Houseplant Horror, which introduces Sound Foley as a creative practice through roleplay, experimentation and sound. Participants become Foley artists and imagine what a houseplant might fear. In small groups, they explore everyday and unexpected materials such as soil, stones, water, bottles, beads and plastic to create sounds that communicate a short horror story from the plant's perspective. The workshop is tactile, collaborative and focused on storytelling without words. It gives participants permission to be noisy, messy and inquisitive

To read more about the second session please click here:
https://artsineducation.ie/en/2026-national-portal-day-second-session



THIRD SESSION 2.30PM – 3.20PM

Presentation and Discussion

See Hear Play: Technology, AI & Inclusive Creativity


Fidelma Morris


Karl O'Keeffe

Join primary teacher Fidelma Morris and assistive technology expert Karl O'Keeffe for See Hear Play Project (SHP), an Enable Ireland initiative that uses assistive music technology to support creative participation for pupils with physical and/or cognitive support needs. Drawing on two phases of project development and a newly developed EPV-approved teacher course, it shares key findings, participant feedback and practical examples of accessible music-making. The session also highlights how assistive technology and AI can support inclusive arts planning, teaching, learning and resource development in educational settings.

Presentation and Discussion

Eng-AGE: Young at art


Ciarna Hackett


Paula Mongey


Fiona Mason

What happens when teenagers and older adults create side by side? EngAGE – Young at Art brought Transition Year students from Kingswood Community College together with residents of TrustUs Senior Care through creativity, connection and shared experience. Multidisciplinary artist and arts educator Paula Mongey, artist Ciarna Hackett (Kiki na Art), music teacher Fiona Mason, students and residents will share the story of the project and what it meant to them.

Through art, drama, dance, song and poetry, a community grew. The project connected a care centre, school, artists, teachers and the wider community, creating opportunities for different generations to meet, share and make together. At its heart, this is a story about connection and community, and what can happen when we invest in the creativity of young people and create the links that allow that creativity to be shared. It is also a story of friendships formed across generations, some of which continue today.

Creative Workshop

Poetry And Film: Embracing the Old and the New


Jonathan Farrelly

In this hands-on workshop, writer and director Jonathan Farrelly demonstrates how traditional poetic craft fuses with visual media to amplify student voice. Participants will learn how classical poetry, rooted in emotion, rhythm and local identity, serves as foundational prompt engineering for modern visual storytelling. Through a step-by-step process, attendees will transform spoken word into a miniature cinematic narrative using accessible smartphone filming and free editing tools. Positioning digital media as a canvas rather than a replacement for expression, the session includes a micro-writing exercise and rapid storyboarding. Educators will leave with a practical framework to foster digital literacy, build aesthetic confidence and champion human creativity in an automated age.

To read more about the third session please click here:
https://artsineducation.ie/en/2026-national-portal-day-third-session

RAPPORTEUR ADDRESS

3.30PM – 4PM

Seoidín O'Sullivan



Seoidín O'Sullivan

Seoidín O'Sullivan is an artist, educator and interdisciplinary researcher whose collaborative practice brings communities together to protect and reimagine the commons. Grounded in socially engaged methodologies and Critical Ecologies, her work explores relationships between people, place and ecology amid the climate crisis. She lectures in Fine Art at NCAD, Dublin, where she co-leads the Postgraduate Diploma in Art and Ecology.





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