

## **21 May 2007: Arts Council Launches Arts Debate 2007 and calls on new Government to Support the Arts**

The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon today (Monday 21st May 2007) published the first three in a series of pamphlets by a range of commentators and invited people around the country to join in a debate on the value of the arts. The pamphlets, written by Ian Kilroy, Arts Editor of the Examiner, John Burns, News Editor of The Sunday Times and John Waters can be downloaded from

**[http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/FAQ/value\\_of\\_the\\_arts.aspx](http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/FAQ/value_of_the_arts.aspx)**

The publication of these pamphlets is the first in a series of events organised by the Arts Council to highlight the value of the arts.

Speaking at the event, Olive Braiden, Chair of the Arts Council said, “We are delighted to be launching these pamphlets as part of the Arts debate 2007. The arts have done reasonably well over the past number of years. However, for the arts to reach the breakthrough we think they so richly deserve, we are pushing for funding of €100 million for disbursement to the arts community in 2008. This funding would be an excellent investment and would stabilise the arts sector in Ireland for the first time in its life. We call on the incoming Government to make this commitment to the arts in their Programme for Government.”

The pamphlet series has been commissioned to encourage consideration of the many ways in which the arts influence day to day life, albeit sometimes invisibly. It is hoped the varied opinions contained in the pamphlets will provoke discussion and focus attention on the crucial role the arts can and do play in our lives as individuals, as members of diverse communities and as part of our wider society.

“Arts Debate 2007 will continue with a programme of debate at local level,” said Mary Cloake, Director of the Arts Council. “We hope people will read the pamphlets and participate in this debate to highlight the value of the arts.”

Partnership for the Arts, the framework document drawn up as a collaboration by the Arts Council and the arts community, sets out a path for the arts for the next few years. For this to be fully implemented, Arts Council funding will need to reach €100 million in 2008 and grow on from there in future years. Investment in the arts will also help to develop and sustain employment in the arts. As reports have shown, many in the arts community do not make a decent living. Adequate funding will promote further interest in the arts and provide more potential for artists to make a better and more sustainable living. New policies are needed to create and sustain employment in the arts and these could come with the appropriate investment.