

Arts Council publishes 'The Value of the Arts' pamphlets by Emer O'Kelly and John McAuliffe

The Arts Council has published two pamphlets as part of the series 'The Value of the Arts'. The pamphlets have been written by journalist Emer O'Kelly and poet John McAuliffe.

Mary Cloake, Director of the Arts Council said, *'The pamphlet series was commissioned to encourage consideration of the many ways in which the arts impact upon our lives. We are delighted to issue another two pamphlets in the series, and we thank both Emer and John for sharing their views with us. We hope 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, and as part of our wider society.'*

In her pamphlet entitled **The Case for Elitism** Emer O'Kelly says, *'The Arts Council has a duty to elitism. This does not mean that it excludes people by its support for only the very best there is. It must trumpet and herald the best so loudly, and push it into the public consciousness so vehemently that the appetite for the best is whetted and the imaginative parameters are burst wide open.'*

John McAuliffe in his pamphlet, **The Siren Alps** states, *'The individual and the community are central to the arts, but the reverse is also true: the arts change lives and have the power to change a community's idea about itself. People of all ages see them as part of their daily or weekly life, and for many others they act as a resource or an escape at particular moments in their lives.'*

The prompt for the campaign was the publication of the study, *The Public and the Arts* in December of 2006. The study shows contradictory findings – people consider the arts to be important, even if they do not personally attend at formal arts event. This has prompted consideration of the many ways in which the arts influence day to day life, albeit sometimes invisibly.

The first pamphlets were published in May as part of the campaign to create awareness of the value of the arts. Throughout the summer there has been ongoing debate on local radio about the value of the arts and the various ways in which the arts make a central contribution to our society.

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 be increased by EUR20 million in 2008. Investment in the arts will also help to develop and sustain employment in the arts.
Further information

The pamphlets can be downloaded from the Arts Council website at:

http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/FAQ/value_of_the_arts.aspx