

Introduction

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Summary:

The introduction to Volume 7 of the *Irish Journal of Arts Management & Cultural Policy* reflects on the importance of voices from practice in this issue and the changing conditions Covid-19 has brought the sector.

Key words: practice; Covid-19; arts management research; cultural policy research; Ireland

It is now nearly three years since the *Irish Journal of Arts Management & Cultural Policy* revised its editorial policy to introduce a greater perspective and input from practitioners. While planning the 2019 – 2020 Volume, we had decided to recognise that changing orientation through this dedicated issue. Our goal in doing so is to draw more fully on the potential value and richness this interdisciplinarity brings, both for academic research and arts and cultural management and policy practice.

Of course, as we planned this Volume in 2018 and 2019, we had not yet seen the enormity of the change that the COVID-19 pandemic would bring. Much like those of us working to adapt our research and teaching in an unfamiliar environment, the whole of what we can broadly call the arts and cultural sector has been thrown into new territory with closures, lockdowns and cancellations bringing sudden, new, and altered ways of working. For some this change has brought new opportunities to experiment with different media and engage with existing and even new audiences. It has also brought sudden loss of work, livelihood, plans, and hopes for those working in the

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sector, particularly for those working freelance—on which all cultural and creative practice relies.

It is not lost on us that at least one of the perspectives featured in this issue (Bryonie Reid's reflections on Virtually There) explores a Kids' Own project that anticipated by more than a decade the virtual realm on which many of us are now relying. Another (Olwen Dawe's contribution on #WakingTheFeminists) traces the significant effects of a voluntary movement, born from within the creative workforce, while Katherine Ellis' research into bullying policies exposes the vulnerabilities that predated the current situation. On a more cautionary note, the review of Peter Campbell's book draws on his warnings about complacency in policymaking and the dangers of losing definition of what creativity is and does in our societies and economies.

From these contributions, we might speculate that the future can not only be changed but also be anticipated by the bringing together of practitioners and researchers and the sharing of knowledge and ideas. We anticipate that the global pandemic will inform and shape the knowledge that fills future issues of this journal for some time. We may hope this journal and others like it offer a space for us to work together to (re)imagine a future arts and cultural sector and an associated contemporary and relevant policy environment and research community. We may wish this time of restriction to be a moment in which we both reflect and debate together: on what kind of research and practice we want in a post-pandemic world, and what values, systems and processes need to be protected and jettisoned. Therefore, we invite you to consider how we shape this future exchange. What is future research to be or to scrutinise? Whose perspectives should be heard? Whose policies should be examined? What role does or could this journal play? The editorial board welcome your views and commit to a new and changed future.