



**MENTAL
HEALTH
ARTS FEST**

10 - 19 MAY
INCLUDING FRINGE EVENTS

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NIMHAF presents PAUSE 2024

WELCOME

A warm welcome to the 10th anniversary of our Northern Ireland Mental Health Arts Festival 2024. Our NIMHAF Festival coincides with Mental Health Awareness Week and runs from 10th-19th May 2024. We are delighted to present together with all of our Festival Partners, a regional programme of events across artforms that are diverse, eclectic and engaging across Northern Ireland, both virtual and face to face.

We have an extensive range of exhibitions too leading into and beyond our Festival dates.

Our theme this year is PAUSE, a time to stop, stand still, reflect upon the importance of our own and each-others mental health and well being. We encourage you to PAUSE with us, to reflect upon the pivotal role of creativity, arts and culture in helping us make sense of a chaotic world.

An invitation to embrace and celebrate your own creativity and self expression, participate, appreciate and celebrate the creativity of others in a Festival that is diverse, dynamic and inclusive.

NIMHAF presents Symposiums on Mental Health & Creativity Matters.

This year NIMHAF are delighted to present two major Symposiums between two cities, **Derry/Londonderry on May 10th and Belfast City May 16th** entitled "**Mental Health & Creativity Matters.**"

Featuring challenging, enlightening presentations and conversations with Guest Speakers hosted by The Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council and The Mayor of Belfast City Council in partnership with Ulster University.

We are delighted to welcome the NI Mental Health Champion along with speakers drawn from arts, health sport, education, community and voluntary sectors, with lived experience who provide insights that deal compassionately and intelligently with the stigma associated with talking about our mental health.

Both Symposiums highlight the pivotal role and

impact of creativity, self expression and the arts can have upon our mental health and wellbeing.

NI Mental Health Arts Festival Presents: PAUSE CASTS

This year NIMHAF are offering a series of regional PAUSE CASTS facilitated by Frank Liddy and Noelle McAlinden over the next months across NI, hosted by the Arts Managers of NI and Arts organisations as we continue to promote opportunities to create space to pause, connect and build upon compassionate conversations across communities, promoting mental health and well being through creative and innovative ways of working.

Acknowledgements:

We are indebted to all of Funders & Festival partners The Baring Foundation, Arts Council NI, Future Screens NI, The Mental Health Foundation, Derry City & Strabane District Council & Belfast City Council, Ulster University and The Nerve Centre.

We are grateful to all our Arts and Cultural Managers across Northern Ireland. Special thanks to all participating artists, activists, arts organisations, venues,volunteers, community and educational champions.

Special thanks to our dedicated NIMHAF Team, our past and present NIMHAF Board Members & Festival Coordinator.

We look forward to building upon the success of previous years and continue to embrace the lessons learned and reflecting upon how lived experiences may inform theory & practice in Mental Health provision.

Join us as we PAUSE and continue to make an exhibition of ourselves and each other, with creativity, compassion & dignity.

All registration for our free Symposiums through Eventbrite. Further details www.nimhaf.org

Noelle McAlinden
Chair NI Mental Health Arts Festival

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS



NIMHAF welcomes a host of local, regional and international artists. We are thrilled to celebrate our Cultural Champions across all art forms including visual and performing arts and welcome the support of all our Festival Hosts, Galleries and Cultural Organisations.

We celebrate artists of all ages & stages in life. Congratulations to all our Cultural Champions

Maurice Harron on his solo show *The Gathering* at Alley Theatre Strabane, celebrating a lifetime as an artist, sculptor, educator, mentor and advocate of Mental Health & Creativity Matters.

We acknowledge the Lifelong commitment of **Alistair Maclean & James King** on their role as artists, educators, advocates & commitment to the Arts and Cultural Landscape of Performance Art.

To celebrate the launch of her new single 'Cinema', ROE is bringing her sold out **ROE & Friends** show from Derry to Belfast at the iconic Strand Arts Centre/Cinema on May 17th for NIMHAF.

Special acknowledgement to **Mavis Thomson SRUA** on the launch of *Coloured Thoughts* an exhibition and accompanying book of her assemblages, paintings and poems. A personal response through a lifetime of observation and art reflecting personal and global themes.

In the words of Mavis Thomson's piece inspired by the artist George Braque, enjoy the exhibition and, "Rescue, Revive, Rejoice"!

Cover image: "Sea Rescue – after Georges Braque's 'The Birds Revival'", 2004 by Mavis Thomson.

Timeless

The Enthusiasts are a choir made up of singers from Brain Injury Matters, members of the Ormeau Community Choir led by choir leader Una McCann joined by Colin Reid and The Guitar Orchestra.

Everyone has met weekly in sharing a common interest in singing, having fun and enjoying a lot of banter with everyone leaving refreshed and energised.

For this year's Northern Ireland Mental Health Arts Festival and Brain Injury Week, the group will be singing selected songs that explore the theme of PAUSE.

From 2.00pm to 3.00pm on Wednesday the 22nd May 2024 'The Enthusiasts' are performing songs inspired by this year's theme.

Everyone is invited and 'The Enthusiasts' want to pass on the good vibes and everyone can join in however they wish to! In the Brain Injury Matters 'EveryBODY sings' concept, singers may sing, use instruments, move to the music or simply and powerfully provide the rhythm of their heartbeat!

'it flows with no electrics' is a performance that combines conversations, poetry, free-writing, and sonic illustrations in a series of audio visual compositions and improvisations.

A collaboration by Kathryn Clarke, Rene Boyd, James Stewart, Myrtle Shannon, Gary Wylie, Wendy Kelly, Stephen Gifford, Leah Batchelor, Lisa Forsythe from Brain Injury Matters, poet Natasha Cuddington, and sound artists Dr John D'Arcy, Isaac Gibson, Georgios Varoutsos, Fynn Baile, Andrew Lea from QUB SARC. Verbal and visual signs and signals are translated into sonic atmospheres in world-renowned immersive audio theatre Sonic Lab on Thursday 23rd May at 1.00pm.

This debut of the Brain Injury Matters x SARC collaboration is a rumination on the theme of 'pause' and its capacity to transform.

With support from SARC Centre For Interdisciplinary Research in Sound and Music, Queen's University Belfast.

NIMHAF MENTAL HEALTH ARTS FEST



The Baring Foundation



Belfast City Council



Derry City & Strabane District Council
Comhairle Chathair Dhoire & Cheantair an tSrátha Báin
Derry Clitáir & Strábane Districte Coimhisiúnaí



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Void



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