

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

The Douglas Hyde is a unique public space to see and learn about contemporary art. We support Irish and international artists to create ambitious, inspiring and thought-provoking exhibitions. Through our programmes we build connections between artists and audiences and foster new ways of seeing and imagining the world. Our expansive Learning and Engagement Programme is focused on bringing artists' work to new, more diverse and existing audiences through talks, workshops, tours, and dedicated programmes for young people.

As an institution we value ambition, fearlessness, diversity, publicness and inquisitiveness. Our actions are guided by the principles; We are inspired by artists, responsive to their needs, and realise their ambitions; We value art as way to see and engage with the world differently from diverse perspectives; We push boundaries and take risks; and We learn and keep on learning.

Policy Statement

The Douglas Hyde is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and participation in contemporary art for all. The aim of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is to outline our commitments to achieving equality of access, participation and opportunity for all engaged with the organisation – from audiences, staff, board members, contractors, artists and programme participants. This policy, and associated implementation plan, seeks to ensure we are open, accessible and inclusive for all.

As an organisation, The Douglas Hyde believes that diversity of voices and perspectives contributes to the strength of the organisation and brings value to how we work, the work we produce and audiences we engage.

We believe the arts can play a vital role in everyone's life and that everyone should have equal opportunities to access art. Art deepens our understanding of ourselves and can provide us with new perspectives on the world around us. We aim to ensure that all persons employed or engaged with the gallery are treated equitably and as individuals, regardless of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller Community, social and economic background.

This policy and its accompanying implementation are structured across three key areas outlined in our Strategic Plan 2023–27 *Create and Build*:

1. Create Ambitious and Inspiring Exhibitions
2. Create New Audiences for Contemporary Art, Build and Expand Engagement
3. Build the Infrastructure for the Future.

The Douglas Hyde Gallery of Contemporary Art

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and associated Implementation Plan enables The Douglas Hyde to meet our statutory, regulatory and reporting obligations, while understanding those are only the essential basis on which we can build to go far beyond minimum requirements. These documents also outline how the gallery will raise awareness on diversity issues for both staff and public and ensure barriers are minimised.

This Policy has been developed with reference to the Arts Council's Council's *Equality, Human Rights and Diversity Policy & Strategy 2019* and their *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit (2022)*, Trinity College Dublin's *Strategy for Diversity and Inclusion 2014–19* and *Equality Policy (2016)*, and the Equal Status Acts 2010–2018 and the Equality Employment Acts 1998–2015. It covers the nine grounds detailed in Ireland's equality legislation, with the additional category of social and economic disadvantage, as defined by the Arts Council.

We are also conscious of the diverse and intersectional nature of the grounds and recognise the complex experience that artists, staff and audiences bring or may have. We value and recognise the importance of listening to and learning from those with lived experience from these categories: 'nothing about us, without us.' We recognise the pervasiveness of unconscious bias.

Inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we understand disability to be an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. We see the other grounds in the same way, and thus recognise that our work in building an equitable organisation is a process, rather than a fixed destination. We aim to be responsive to the needs of audiences, staff and artists, and through constantly learning will adapt and change to new issues in the field of equality and diversity.

The fulfilment of this policy is the responsibility of everyone employed, contracted or volunteering at DHG. This policy is also intended to benefit everyone engaged in activities at DHG – from audiences, staff, artists, programme participants, board members and contractors.

Anti-Racism and anti-discrimination

The Douglas Hyde is committed to anti-racism and anti-discrimination, in our working practices, our programme, our policies and our organisational ethos. We are committed to ensuring that no conscious or unconscious bias at play in all of our activities and as an organisation. Through our work, we are committed to exposing structural inequalities, systemic oppression and opposing racial prejudice in all its forms. The Douglas Hyde believes in the potential of artists and arts organisations to be active agents of change, and in actively working towards this, we aim to ensure that intersectional voices and perspectives inform all aspects of our work. We acknowledge that challenging systemic racism and discrimination is an ongoing process which involves listening, learning and dismantling. We will continue to challenge ourselves as staff and Board to understand and correct any inequities we may discover within our organisation and the work that we produce.

The Douglas Hyde

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Gallery of
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Comhaimseartha

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Baile Átha Cliath



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The Douglas Hyde is committed to being a safe space for everyone with no tolerance for disrespectful speech or behaviour. We want to challenge perceptions and behaviours relating to all the grounds, not just racism.

Improving accessibility & inclusion

As part of the development of the policy, and in line with our exploration of the broad concept of access, we have reviewed accessibility, communications and all programmes with reference to geography, demography, socio-economic background, gender and disability. We recognise the need to address perception, representation and accessibility barriers, achieved through meaningful collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and good practices. We recognise that there is a broad spectrum of access and access needs for audiences and staff alike.

Here, we set out our means to improve accessibility across our three key areas:

1. Create Ambitious and Inspiring Exhibitions

The Douglas Hyde works closely with artists on the production and presentation of new work. We present exhibitions and events, both onsite in the gallery and offsite. Through extensive research, the exhibitions programme seeks to represent the diversity of artists practicing today and to work with artists from a broad range of backgrounds. We create a supportive environment for artists to thrive and are responsive to their needs.

- We understand the importance of the exhibition programme as a space of representation and respect, support and ensure the inclusion of a broad range artists to reflect the diversity of Ireland and the world.
- We value and recognise the importance of listening to and learning from those with lived experience. We are exploring how best to introduce a meaningful feedback mechanism across all Exhibitions and Projects as part of our Implementation Plan.
- We will support artists, asking their access needs at the beginning of any working process and establishing a meaningful feedback mechanism throughout the working process.
- We understand the importance of vocabulary and will work with the exhibiting artists to ensure that words and definitions are agreeable in all instances. We also appreciate that language language is dynamic and changes over time.
- We place accessibility at the centre of exhibition/project development and deliver this through exhibition design, through audio transcripts of works and interpretive materials for all exhibitions. Providing content that, when presented to audiences with disabilities, conveys essentially the same function or purpose as other auditory, visual or theoretical content.

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2. Create New Audiences for Contemporary Art, Build and Expand Engagement

- We value and recognise the importance of listening to and learning from those with lived experience. We are exploring how best to introduce a meaningful feedback mechanism across all Learning & Engagement programmes as part of our Implementation Plan.
- We are exploring how best to consult with diverse groups about current barriers to engagement and to understand and implement changes that would make the gallery more open and attractive to them.
- We understand the importance of vocabulary and will work with participants to ensure that words and definitions are agreeable in all instances. We also appreciate that language is dynamic and changes over time.
- We will provide multiple access points and methods aimed at enabling people with diverse requirements to interact/engage with artworks in the ways which work best for them. We value and recognise the importance of listening to and learning from those with lived experience and work with people with diverse requirements to ensure that any innovations are appropriate and useful.

3. Build the Infrastructure for the Future

- We will address barriers that exist to, and within, visual arts and across all aspects of engagement by implementing findings from our accessibility review with Trinity College Dublin's Disability Services (2013 and 2022).
- Our current premises have stepped access from street level as well as an internal staircase. Step-free access to the gallery is available for those with reduced mobility and all staff are trained to accompany visitors via the step-free route. We will address the lack of internal lift in the gallery with TCD's Estates & Facilities and are working towards implementing universal access for all visitors by the end of 2023.
- The Douglas Hyde aims to provide equality and fairness for all job applicants, employees, whether part-time, full-time, fixed term or temporary, contracted artists and other collaborators. Through open and transparent recruitment processes, the aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant, employee or worker is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the Traveller Community, social or economic background.
- The Douglas Hyde will take a proactive approach in addressing the lack of diversity in the arts workforce by aiming to ensure that opportunities are advertised across a broad

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range of platforms and access needs are taken into account within the application process

- The Board of Directors ensures that our commitments under the Equal Status Act are implemented effectively.
- As an employer The Douglas Hyde has a moral and legal obligation to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote tolerance, fairness and diversity. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that visitors to gallery and participants in the programme are treated equally and with respect. Diversity is about learning from others who are not the same and about dignity and respect for all.
- The Board is committed and proactive in developing board diversity and to include individuals regardless of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller Community or social or economic background.
- We are aware that discrimination and disadvantage operates in many forms. We will be proactive in addressing barriers to equal participation in the organisation and the visual arts as either artists or arts workers through specific programmes as well as considering the question “Who is being excluded?” in all operational activities and working to reduce any barrier to inclusion on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation and Review

Evaluation forms an integral part of activities at DHG. This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, in order to keep up-to-date with changes in issues of access and inclusion, with the next review in June 2023.

The Board and team will develop an EDI annual Implementation Plan in October with detailed targets and timelines, to cover January – December 2023.

We will review the outcomes of the Implementation Plan annually and will, when necessary make decisions regarding any actions required to improve practice. The Implementation Plan will detail the actions and responsibilities associated with this Policy, in line with the DHG Strategic Plan 2023 – 27 *Create and Build*. In recognition of the desire to be both transparent and accountable, our first Annual Diversity Report will be published in January 2024.

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Complaints Procedures

Complaints related to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion should be reported to The Director, who must report any such complaint to the Board of Trustees. If the complaint is about the Director, this should be made through the Chair of the Board of Trustees. All incidents of direct discrimination are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. Incidents of indirect discrimination will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. Any member of staff found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on their actions and will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Standard Terms of Employment. Any member of any Committee or working group found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on their actions and may, where necessary, be asked to leave the Douglas Hyde.

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