

Galway International Arts Festival announces its 2025 Programme

A Dazzling Celebration of Art, Big Ideas, Creativity and Culture

14-27 July 2025

Booking Opens from 10am Friday 9 May 2025

8th May 2025

Highlights announced today include:

- 8 new theatre, opera and dance world premiere productions and Festival commissions;
- NoFit State's circus spectacular Sabotage in the NoFit State Big Top at Nimmo's Pier;
- A double-bill from Druid celebrating its 50th Anniversary;
- A major new installation from one of the UK's most successful artists, David Mach;
- Congresswoman Parmila Jayapal, Fintan O'Toole, Máiría Cahill, Phillips. P. O'Brien, Lara Marlowe, Eman Mohammed, and Róisín Ingle as part of First Thought Talks.
- A new opera Mars from Jennifer Walshe and Irish National Opera;
- The Cave by Kevin Barry from Ireland's national theatre, the Abbey Theatre;
- Norwegian superstar violinist Mari Samuelsen with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.

Celebrating on a larger scale than ever across the city and county, Galway International Arts Festival 2025 announced its most ambitious programme to date featuring a programme of theatre, music, circus, dance, visual arts, comedy, street spectacle and talks over 14 exciting days and nights.

Sabotage, a roller-coaster ride of jaw-dropping circus from **NoFit State**, featuring outrageously talented performers, live music and stunning imagery; a newly commissioned installation from **David Mach**; a celebration of Druid's 50th anniversary, with a double-bill directed by **Garry Hynes**; a new opera *Mars* from **Jennifer Walshe** and **Irish National Opera**; new dance/theatre *Scorched Earth* from **Luke Murphy**; an enormous insect wandering the streets of Galway City; a stellar line up at the **Heineken® Big Top**; artists **Erin Lawlor**, **Richard Long** and **Arts Alive**; musicians **Bernard Butler**, **Richard Thompson**, **The Magic Numbers**, **Villagers**, **Mari Samuelsen** and a 40th anniversary celebration of Galway's **Mary Coughlan**; and **First Thought Talks** featuring **Congresswoman Parmila Jayapal**, **Fintan O'Toole**, **Eman Mohammed** and a host of speakers are amongst just some of the highlights of this year's programme.

Download the 2025 Galway International Arts Festival Programme [HERE](#)

A selection of photos can be downloaded [HERE](#)

Galway International Arts Festival Chief Executive John Crumlish said, "This year we wanted to present one large two-week celebration of the imagination. At a time when there are so many challenges in the world, we wanted Galway in July to be about great ideas, talent and skill. We hope people are attracted by that and can join us for what will be a great two weeks."

Artistic Director Paul Fahy said “*This Festival is a tribute to the transformative power of the arts, and to the spirit of collaboration - between artists and audiences, between tradition and innovation, and between Galway and the wider world. We are thrilled to work with such an extraordinary number of artists and colleagues from Galway, Ireland and around the world to deliver this programme. There is simply nowhere quite like Galway during the Festival, the city offers a special magical atmosphere every July.*”

Theatre, Opera, Circus and Dance

Performed in the **NoFit State Big Top** located by the banks of the River Corrib at Nimmo’s Pier, *Sabotage* is a breath-taking, spectacular from **NoFit State** is a roller-coaster ride of jaw-dropping circus skills, featuring outrageously talented performers, eye-popping entertainment, live music and stunning imagery.

Druid marks its 50th anniversary season with a double bill of **J. M. Synge’s *Riders to the Sea*** and **William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth***, directed by **Garry Hynes**.

Crime-drama meets dance theatre in a gripping exploration of ambition, land and legacy in **Luke Murphy’s *Scorched Earth*** a GIAF co-production; while *The Cave* is an unforgettable black comedy from the pen of one of Ireland’s most beloved writers, **Kevin Barry**. This **Abbey Theatre** production is directed by **Caitríona McLaughlin** and sees **Tommy Tiernan** return to the Galway stage.

Between dreamlike fiction and stark reality, **Focus and Chaliwaté’s *Dimanche*** paints a quietly witty and tender portrait of humanity surprised by the uncontrollable forces of nature in this stunning visual show, while the **Copenhagen Collective**, a new company of 17 acrobats from 14 countries, bring breathtaking and jaw-dropping aerial acrobatics celebrating the strength of the collective in *The Genesis*.

Performed underwater in the main tank of Galway Atlantaquaria, long time Festival collaborator **Mikel Murfi** performs his new solo show *Oh ...*, a GIAF co-production, while four astronauts and an AI software interface are cooped up in the cabin of a spacecraft for nine months on a mission to Mars, a new opera from **Jennifer Walshe** and **Irish National Opera**, both GIAF co-productions. *The Baby’s Room* is the 12th immersive theatre installation, part of an ongoing extraordinary series *Rooms* created by **Enda Walsh** and **Paul Fahy**.

What do we lose when the old stories disappear, and what do we gain when they are told again, is explored in *Why the Moon Travels* from **Moonfish Theatre**, devised with an all-Traveller ensemble, based on **Oein DeBhairduin’s** best-selling book of the same name.

Blue Water and Cold and Fresh and Sea Wall is a double-bill of plays by **Simon Stephens** from **Decadent Theatre** and **Galway Arts Centre**; **Branar and Galway Music Residency’s *Story of a Day*** is a music-filled story of one child’s day that turns the ordinary into extraordinary, with live music from the **ConTempo Quartet**; while the Irish language seeps into the searing beauty of the Beckettian imagery in **An Taibhdhearc** and **Company SJ’s *Beckett sa Chreig Guth na mBan – Footfalls, Rockaby and Not I***.

GIAF will also present two new musicals in development: *Dating Amber*, from **Landmark Productions** and **Galway International Arts Festival**, an alternative love story based on the film by **David Freyne**, directed by **Des Kennedy**, with music and lyrics by **Katie Richardson**; and **Rosa Productions’ *The House Must Win***, directed by **Julie Kelleher** and written by **Mick Flannery** and based on his album *Evening Train*.

Music

The Heineken® Big Top is back in full force at Fisheries Field once again with a line up featuring **Mogwai**, **Sophie Ellis-Bextor** and **Natasha Bedingfield**, **Mari Samuelsen** with the **RTÉ Concert Orchestra**, Galway favourites **The Stunning**, and a special night celebrating **Mary Coughlan’s** 40th Anniversary with special guests, are amongst the highlights.

GIAF’s live music programme features **Bernard Butler**, **Josephine Foster**, **Villages**, **Soda Blonde**, **The Blades**, **Glasshouse**, **HousePlants** and **Gonora Sounds** at the **Róisín Dubh** and **Biig Piig**, **BIIRD**, **Novalima**, **Richard Thompson**, **The Magic Numbers**. **Traditional Music Showcases**, and **Maverick Sabre** at **Monroe’s Live**, in addition to many others.

Visual Arts

Highlights of this year's Galway International Arts Festival visual arts programme include **David Mach**, who returns to the Festival with a new site-specific installation *Burning Down the House* at the Festival Gallery. Mach previously exhibited at the Festival with major commissions including *The Oligarch's Nightmare* and *Rock 'n' Roll*, both of which drew record crowds.

An innovative approach to climate change and ecology is a central theme across other major exhibitions, including *Funeral for Ashes* from **Conor Maloney** and **John Conneely**, an interactive immersive installation exploring ash tree dieback in Ireland; *This Too Will Pass*, a group show with multiple artists, including **Richard Long**, highlighting the cycles of transformation in nature at Interface Lough Inagh in the heart of Connemara; while **Kat Austen's** *Not Breaking - This Wave Drowns Hate* responds to the crisis of marine microplastic pollution at the Bailey Allen Hall, University of Galway.

Other shows featured at the Festival include **Erin Lawlor's** *divinity* at the Printworks Gallery, new sculpture from **Darran McGlynn** at the 126 Artist-Run Gallery; sculpture and installation from **Hazel O'Sullivan** at the Outset Gallery, an archival photo exhibition from **Joe O'Shaughnessy** celebrating Druid Theatre's 50th Anniversary at the Kenny Gallery; **Laura O'Connor** and **Leann Herlihy's** *pass the baton* at Galway Arts Centre; and Joan Sugrue at Engage Studios. **Jane Cassidy** and **Arts Alive's** *Tactile Tunes* is at the Aula Maxima, University of Galway [Arts Alive is a community based arts programme for adults with intellectual disabilities]. GIAF 2025 also presents two powerful photographic exhibitions, *What Lies Beneath the Rubble* from Palestinian photojournalist **Eman Mohammed** focuses on the atrocities of the war on Gaza, and *Through the Lens*, a celebration of key moments from **President Michael D. Higgins** public life, at Galway City Museum.

First Thought

The First Thought Talks series is the Festival's thought leadership platform that interrogates the world around us, exploring the big issues and challenges of the day. Guests will include **Congresswoman Parmila Jayapal**; journalists and broadcasters **Fintan O'Toole**, **Róisín Ingle**, **Lara Marlowe**, **Ciaran Murphy**, **Máiría Cahill**, and **Eman Mohammed**; historians **Phillips P. O'Brien**, **Diarmaid Ferriter** and **Gearoid O'Tuathaigh**; **Gillian McNamee** from COPE Galway, and **Catriona Crowe**, First Thought curator amongst a host of others. Topics will include the Trump presidency; Gaza and Ukraine; kindness in our health system; conspiracy theories, crisis in the GAA, political trauma and injustice; autism and talent; the nature of the world dealing with climate transition, and creativity.

Street Spectacle

Galway International Arts Festival's free Street Art Programme brings the city alive each year and this summer sees the incredible **Planet Vapeur** roam the city's medieval streets with a fantastic giant insect in *Microcosmos*; while **Guru Dudu** bring their ever-popular *Silent Disco Walking Tours* to town, and the spectacular Canadian company **Flip Fabrique's** new show *Six* will bring Eyre Square alive.

Festival Garden

GIAF 2025 also sees the return of the Festival Garden in Eyre Square, where artists and audiences can mingle, enjoy great food, cocktails and occasional sets from DJs and live sets from guest artists.

Fáilte Ireland Head of Festivals and Events, Ciara Sugrue said: "*Fáilte Ireland is pleased to support the Galway International Arts Festival again in 2025 with a spectacular programme of arts, theatre, music and dance in the city of tribes. Festivals and events play a key role in delivering brilliant visitor experiences, providing a unique reason for visitors to choose a destination and increasing footfall for local businesses, supporting jobs and revenue generation for Galway and its surrounding areas. Galway's rich heritage, vibrant cultural scene, and outstanding festival programming makes it a key destination for visitors seeking an authentic and unforgettable cultural experience.*"

The Festival also continues to move forward on its journey to be ever more sustainable and accessible, to continue to be a platform for debate, an opportunity for voices from across communities to tell their stories and share their experiences and to encourage everyone to be part of the artistic celebrations.

Galway International Arts Festival would like to acknowledge the support of its principal funding agencies the Arts Council and Fáilte Ireland; its Drinks Partner Heineken; and Education Partner University of Galway.

Booking

Booking opens 10am Friday 9 May at giaf.ie

Or in person from Wednesday 25 June at the Festival Box Office, 31.

Eyre Square

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