

# Cork Printmakers

## Strategic Plan

### 2025-2027



## Introduction

This Strategic Plan was developed with the generous support of the Arts Council's Capacity Building Support Scheme. It followed a series of workshops and discussions with the executive team, board members, and a range of stakeholders. These sessions, facilitated by an external advisor, focused on exploring our strategic intent and ambition.

This Strategic Plan guides Cork Printmakers through to 2027.

## Who we are

Cork Printmakers is a professional print studio, gallery and resource organisation providing professional artists with the space, technical equipment, expertise & specialist materials needed to make works of excellence from conception to production to public presentation.

Printmaking is a universal language, a connected space in the visual arts world in terms of forms and methods. Cork Printmakers sits within national and international networks of printmaking organisations and studios, and of printmakers themselves.

The organisation was set up in 1991 to meet the needs of both established and emerging Cork-based artist printmakers without access to studio facilities. Cork Printmakers currently supports over 128 artists from Cork, Munster, Ireland, and beyond, offering a creative space at Wandesford Quay, Cork City. Here, artists can create, collaborate, experiment, and develop ideas, while making, teaching, exhibiting, and selling their artwork.

Although member-focused, the organisation has open engagement and creative strategic partnerships across the cultural and community ecosystem. Those creative partnerships exist with professional and community organisations, artist groups, international networks, and individual artists, including the Crawford Gallery, Cork Migrant Centre, Backwater Artists, Lavit Gallery, Glucksman Gallery, Sirius Arts Centre, MTU, Sample Studios, Print Network Ireland, and more. The organisation is a hub and a point of connection, social and professional, providing artists with access to a shared workspace and a vibrant network of peers.

Cork Printmakers is a registered charity, adhering to the Charities Regulator's legal obligations, as well as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG). Funders include the Arts Council of Ireland and Cork City Council. Earned income is generated through membership fees, education programmes, artwork sales, material sales, digital printing and so forth.

## What we do

Cork Printmakers empowers artists to create and promote high-quality contemporary prints, offering space, equipment, expertise, and materials. It fosters interdisciplinary approaches, including research, collaboration, and diverse art forms like installation, sculpture, film, and performance. As a community workspace, it supports creative freedom and professional growth.

The organisation supports every stage of the printmaking lifecycle, providing education, outreach, and professional development for artists through masterclasses, talks, residencies, and access to specialist equipment. It fosters audience and collector engagement through exhibitions, partnerships, and public displays while helping artists build sustainable careers via commissions, tutoring, lecturing, and sales promotion.

Members access specialist equipment for screen printing, etching, lithography, relief, letterpress, photogravure, and digital processes, along with materials, technical services, and expert guidance. This work supports Cork's visual arts sector, offering a vital platform for creating and selling artwork.

## Why we do it

Cork Printmakers is a 'Strategically Funded' organisation within the family of visual arts organisations supported by the Arts Council, recognising our role in Cork as providing vital infrastructure to artists and supporting them in achieving sustainable careers. As such, our core purpose of engaging with and supporting artist members and the making of art, runs in tandem with our ambition to engage with public audiences and grow the interest and knowledge of printmaking in the wider public. We strive for excellence in this work, and to drive forward the evolution of printmaking in Ireland. We also are deeply committed to both our artists and the people we engage with in our outreach work reflecting the diversity of the society we live in.

We are the leading organisation in Munster supporting printmakers at scale. We provide for printmakers at different stages of their careers – from the emergent to those working at an international level. We believe this places us as a key organisation driving the implementation of the **Cork City Council Arts Strategy 2022-2026**, whose vision is for Cork to be “a city where art and artists thrive, where arts and culture is for all to enjoy, alive on our streets and in our neighbourhoods, a vibrant expression of all that we are.” We provide a key space for the making of art in the city and provide valuable opportunities for artists to develop sustainable practices.

The objectives laid out in this Strategic Plan are developed and will be delivered in the context of the ambitions laid out in the Arts Council of Ireland's national strategy **Making Great Art Work 2016-2025** alongside their **Visual Arts Policy and Strategy** which both focus on the inter-dependent priorities of the artist and public engagement.

Over the next three years we will also further address the ambitions of the Arts Council's **Equality, Human Rights and Diversity Policy and Strategy** which strives to respect, support and ensure inclusion of all voices and cultures that make up Ireland today – from all sections of society, existing and new communities, from all social backgrounds, ethnicities and traditions. Our Young Print Collective programme, and outreach projects with Cork Migrant Centre are central to this work.

We work hard to provide income generation opportunities of substance for our members through our education and outreach, exhibitions, and commissions work, delivering on the values and ambitions of the Arts Council of Ireland's **Paying the Artist Policy**.

Cork Printmakers' members adhere to strict environmental processes and policies to reduce environmental impact and promote sustainability across the organisation. This includes protocols for handling materials and solvents. We will continue to focus on ensuring the reduction of our impact on the environment.

## Who we do it with and for

Our key stakeholders include our executive and board, members, artists, curators, critics, writers, teachers and tutors, academics, students, researchers, enthusiasts and collectors. Our funders include the Arts Council and Cork City Council. Partners include the Cork Migrant Centre, MTU, UCC, Crawford Gallery, Glucksman Gallery, Lavit Gallery, Backwater Artists Group, Sirius Arts Centre, National Sculpture Factory, Sample Studios, and collecting and exhibiting institutions around the county and country as well as a number of international partnership organisations.

Cork Printmakers alongside Black Church Print Studio, Limerick Printmakers, and Graphic Studio Dublin is a founder member of Print Network Ireland, a national network designed to advance the strategic position of printmaking in Ireland.

We regularly work with and support the family of incredible festivals and cultural organisations in Cork and provide somewhat of an arts hub with innovative public programming in Wandesford Quay, with our neighbour visual art organisations, Backwater Artists Group and Lavit Gallery.

# Our strategic Intent

## Purpose

Cork Printmakers is a membership-based printmaking studio providing artists with a dedicated space, expertise, equipment, and materials needed to make artworks of excellence in the medium of print, from inception to creation to public presentation.

## Vision

Our vision is to become a hub for the expanded practice of printmaking, serving as a centre for creativity, collaboration, idea exploration and knowledge dissemination, education, inclusion, production and exhibition within the visual arts.

## Mission

We will deliver on our vision by:

- providing a permanent space with the specialist equipment and expertise to support artists to excel in printmaking
- curating displays of printmaking practice that builds new audiences in the region
- partnering with cultural and academic organisations to ensure interest, growth and recognition of the importance of printmaking in contemporary visual arts
- providing high level, excellent, and inclusive education programmes
- utilising printmaking as a tool for outreach, community building, and promoting an interest in the arts.

## Pillars

In working to deliver impactful activities and programmes, Cork Printmakers operates under the following pillars:

- Facilitation and Art making
- Education and Outreach
- Dissemination
- Exhibition
- Organisation

## Goals

### Facilitation and Art making

- Goal 1 Resource and support accessible, safe, and well-equipped space that continues to provide relevant, appropriate, and challenging opportunities to members.

### Education and Outreach

- Goal 2 Consolidate our leadership in driving engagement through outreach and education by activating the full potential of pilot and development projects for growth in both new and existing communities across Cork.

### Dissemination

- Goal 3 Develop the reputation and profile of printmaking in Ireland, and become more effective communicators of what we do, focusing on audience development and stakeholder engagement across the city.

### Exhibition

- Goal 4 Provide a platform to showcase works, foster artist visibility, engage audiences, and promote the appreciation of printmaking as a vibrant, accessible art form.

### Organisation

- Goal 5 Establish and grow Cork Printmakers as a future-facing organisation with a focus on change management and the sustainability and accessibility of all practices and processes, underpinned by good governance.

## Objectives

### Facilitation and Art making

We will continue to be ambitious for our members and support their careers in a holistic way by resourcing and supporting accessible, safe, and well-equipped studio and experimentation space, and provide relevant, appropriate, and challenging opportunities that ensure they have what they need to make great art, strive for sustainable careers, and have pride in the work produced.

1. Regularly audit equipment and materials (condition and usage), and engage with members' needs and interests such as through regular surveys or dialogue to ensure we remain relevant to our members and a vital part of the cultural infrastructure in Cork and Munster.
2. Develop and promote timely and ambitious projects, residencies, and open calls that provide lucrative and profile-raising opportunities for existing members, as well as emerging artists.

3. Identify and provide relevant and continued professional development for staff and members to ensure our expertise continues to be valuable to our stakeholders.
4. Continued development of Print Network Ireland through active dialogue with the members, advancing the strategic position of printmaking in Ireland.
5. Keep Accessibility on the agenda to ensure new innovations (technology and other) that support inclusion are in our sights and on our wish list.
6. Begin the research on feasibility and business case for potential future expansions of the studio or taking on extra space in a secondary location, updating of facilities to bring in new processes and extra workspace.

### **Education and Outreach**

We will consolidate our leadership in driving engagement through education and outreach by continuing dialogue with members, participants, cultural and community partners to ensure sustainable, long-term and meaningful relationships that activate the full potential of projects for growth in both new and existing communities.

7. Review and write up case studies of our existing Education and Outreach pilots and programmes to ensure their continued relevance and sustainability. Continuously seek feedback from participants of all programmes on outcomes, and how we're doing.
8. Continue to identify and activate outreach programmes and pathways that create a stepping stone or pathway to membership.
9. Continued development of outreach programmes that ensure the diversity of Ireland is represented in the work we do.
10. Continue to innovate with masterclass programmes that keep members' skills fresh and up to date, and encourage skill-sharing among members.
11. Widen the pool of member-facilitators, and identify if there is capacity and a market for broader income-generation programmes, for both members and the studio, increasing our reach and impact.
12. Plan partnership and community projects with care, considering Cultural, Disability, and other types of awareness and training needed to ensure appropriate access and inclusion, and ensure our programmes inspire excitement and joy in the art of printmaking.
13. Develop conversations with potential new education and outreach partners – academic, community organisations, international networks, and interdisciplinary organisations. Consolidate our partnerships and relationships with Third Level institutions to ensure we can appropriately describe and measure our impact on the education system.

### **Dissemination**

We will further develop the reputation and profile of printmaking in Ireland, and become more effective communicators of what we do, focusing on audience development and stakeholder engagement across the city.

14. Develop and deliver a communications & marketing plan focusing on audience development and stakeholder engagement across the city, that builds the profile of printmaking and grows the diversity of audiences, collectors, and artists.
15. Continue to create and curate high-quality programmes and develop opportunities that push the artform to new places, including hosting conversations and forming partnerships that keep printmaking relevant to makers and audiences.
16. Identify and develop ways to promote and platform the work of members, outreach participants, such as through exhibition, publications, events, case studies, academic awards etc.
17. Consolidate our work promoting artists and printmaking to collectors, corporates, and institutional collections and activate those artists as champions and advocates for Cork Printmakers. As part of our communications structure with artists and members, we will engage regularly to gather qualitative as well as quantitative data on their experiences and outcomes of working with Cork Printmakers.
18. Focus on updating and creating more accessibility via our website – a resource to raise the profile of printmaking and of our member artists.

### **Exhibition**

We will provide a platform to showcase printmaking in all its forms, from traditional to contemporary and expanded print practice, showcasing a wide range of styles, techniques and voices to reflect the evolving field. We will foster greater artist & organisation visibility, actively engage diverse audiences, and promote the appreciation and understanding of printmaking as a vibrant, innovative, and accessible art form for all.

19. Curate diverse exhibitions highlighting contemporary printmaking and expanded print practices, showcasing a wide range of styles, techniques, and voices to reflect the evolving field.
20. Incorporate interactive elements, demonstrations, talks and panel discussions into exhibitions, allowing and increasing direct audience engagement with printmaking processes and techniques, deepening their appreciation and understanding of the art form.
21. Consider dedicating annual exhibition slot to MTU Crawford College of Art and Design students, offering them a platform to gain visibility and recognition while fostering a new generation of talent in the printmaking community.
22. Partner with local, national, and international organisations to co-curate group exhibitions, fostering cross-cultural exchange and expanding audience engagement.

### **Organisation**

We will establish and grow Cork Printmakers as a future-facing organisation with a focus on change management and the sustainability and accessibility of all practices and processes, underpinned by good governance.

23. Identify and implement the staffing model and income model we need to be relevant and resourced. Explore expansion on income generation through developing innovative



partnerships with local, national and international organisations, funders, sponsors and donors alongside staff capacity considerations to support this output.

24. Ensure a shared understanding of and focus on climate action, sustainability, accessibility, and inclusion in every element of our work – our people, our processes, our programme and the building.
25. To strengthen our advocacy work, we will map key networks across the city and beyond, identifying where we need stronger relationships, such as politically, culturally, academically, commercially, etc.
26. Create greater connection to stakeholders through clear governance structures and processes and well-defined and manageable organisational systems with realistic workloads.
27. Ensure regular updating of all policies and procedures to confirm they continue to be fit for purpose, with the goal of being fully compliant with the Charities Regulator Code of Governance by 2026.

## Implementation of our Strategic Plan

We believe the ambitions of this Strategic Plan are achievable and timely.

Cork Printmakers' Board will audit its work annually, to ensure progress in the implementation of this Strategic Plan.

Each year, we will create a yearly plan identifying which projects will be developed in that year, putting specific and measurable targets against each, to be reported on at the end of the year. This will ensure we keep on track and make progress.