

## SPARK CREATIVE RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

SPARK IS A NEW programme aimed at artists who are interested in working in new environments and companies who are interested in collaborating with artists and promoting creativity within their organisations.

Spark is partnership initiative of Leitrim County Council Arts Office and Leitrim County Enterprise Board with the support of the Arts Council of Ireland.

As part of Spark, artists take on the dual roles of 'artist' and 'creative collaborator' simultaneously over the course of six months spending an average of two days per week with the company over that period. In both roles, there are no pre-determined outcomes and the journey the residency takes will define its own path.

In their role as artist, the resident is provided with the opportunity to make work influenced by the environment, materials, staff or working practices of a company. This provides the opportunity to explore different methods of working, new influences, and the opportunity to produce art in a unique context that allows for greater participation in its creation. Artists are not necessarily expected to make work collaboratively; rather the artist is making work in a different place of work than usual. Quite

### Linda Shevlin



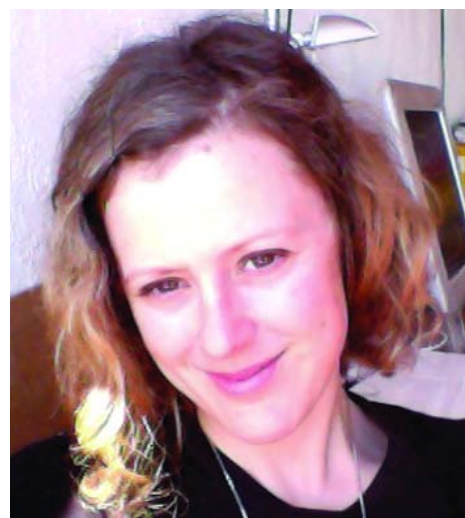
naturally however, the work is clearly influenced by the adopted environment, relating strongly to that context thus providing a greater interest and involvement in the work from staff. While the residency concludes with an exhibition of work, this may be documentation of a process undertaken by the artist rather than finished work in the traditional sense.

In their role as creative collaborator, the artist can propose new and different creative and innovative paths, and serve as a catalyst for new thinking within companies. The artist can address areas where benefit to the company could accrue such as changes in work processes; developments within existing or new products or services; developments within staff interrelations; adoption of new attitudes towards creativity in the workplace or adoption of new attitudes towards service users, customers or the wider society.

The two artists and companies selected to participate in the 2012 Spark programme are Playwright Jo Holmwood at The Bush Hotel in Carrick on Shannon in Co Leitrim, and visual artist Linda Shevlin at Leitrim Organic Centre, in Rossinver, Co Leitrim, Ireland.

One of Ireland's and Leitrim's oldest hotels, the Bush started life as an inn on the Bianconi Stage Coach route between Dublin and the Northwest. Today the tradition of inn keeping continues and is now an award winning boutique hotel steeped in history, charm and character with many memorabilia from the past.

At the Bush Hotel Jo Holmwood is exploring two strands of enquiry. Within her own work, she is drawing on the long history of the hotel to bring together a series of historical fictions or narratives, which may be presented in performative or written form. As creative collaborator, she is interested in exploring the notion of 'corporate memory', and how it can be documented. Through observation and creative documentation of the working practices within the hotel, she aims to



### Jo Holmwood

bring together the collective experiences and knowledge of the staff into a 'corporate memory' or 'organisational memory' document, which will have enduring value for the organisation.

The aim of Leitrim Organic Centre is to promote organic gardening and sustainable living through training, demonstration and the provision of information. Over 2000 people learn organic gardening through their courses and community gardens every year, and many more are inspired towards a more organic, sustainable and healthy lifestyle.

At the Leitrim Organic Centre, Linda Shevlin is working with the staff to explore the Super Natural qualities of plants. Linda, along with the Organic Centre staff, will be engaging with experienced scientific practitioners, researchers in biosustainability and nanotechnology. These findings will be located in a "lab" and will be documented and open to the public to explore. This lab will be used as a space for learning, sharing and engaging with the project participants. In parallel to the activities in the lab, Linda will be producing a film recording the findings. This film will be an account of the blurring of the lines between reality and fiction, science and nature, from the standpoint of an onlooker in the organic centre.

For more information about Spark, please go to: [www.leitrimarts.ie](http://www.leitrimarts.ie)