



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

National Archives - Artist-in-Residence Programme

Artist-in-Residence

The National Archives, under the Decade of Centenaries Programme is seeking an Artist-in-Residence to creatively engage with, and produce original work inspired by its collections. It is anticipated that the residency will cover a 24 month period from the date of commencement. The residency will provide a unique opportunity for a professional artist of any discipline who has an interest in exploring the collections of the National Archives, working with archivists and staff to engage with our historical collections in the context of our commemorations programme.

The residency will provide the artist with the environment and resources to develop their own practice using the archives and the collections as catalyst and inspiration. The residency is designed for artists whose work would be enhanced by an immersive engagement in this context.

The residency will be hosted by the National Archives, Bishop Street, Dublin 8. The unique feature of this residency and its primary focus is that it will allow the artist to have on-site access to engage with the records and the collections (subject to Covid-19 public health guidelines). The residency offers a unique opportunity for an artist to engage with a community of archivists as curators, as well as researchers, historians and those who use the reading room.

The artist is expected to actively engage with the staff, resources and collections of the National Archives. It is anticipated that the residency will naturally lead to the artist engaging with and supporting the National Archives public engagement programme which may involve a range of exchanges or interactions with the National Archives community of users during the period. This could take the form of a talk or a workshop or other type of intervention that is appropriate to the artist's practice.

The National Archives is a part of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media which leads on the coordination of the Decade of Centenaries Programme and artists will be asked to reflect on the themes of that Programme as part of their work.

A final outcome of the residency in the form of an artistic production by the artist will be created. The form of which will be determined by the nature of their artistic practice. This will coincide with the opening of the new Archive Repository Project.

National Archives - Background Information

The National Archives was established on 1 June 1988 following the amalgamation of the State Paper Office (SPO) and the Public Record Office of Ireland (PROI).

The SPO was established in 1702 as a repository for records relating to the administrations of the various Lords Lieutenant (the English monarch's representative in Ireland) who until that date, had taken all of their records with them on leaving office. The SPO was situated in Dublin Castle until 1990.

The PROI was established under the Public Records (Ireland) Act, 1867 to acquire administrative, court and probate records over twenty years old. The PROI building in the Four Courts was seized during the Civil War. The repository building was destroyed by fire in June 1922, along with most of the records, some dating back to the 13th century.

Following the establishment of the modern Irish State in 1922, the PROI and SPO continued to function until the enactment of the National Archives Act, 1986, which transferred their functions and holdings to the newly established National Archives. Under this legislation, Departmental records and their agencies are transferred to the National Archives and made available for public inspection when they are 30 years old. Under the National Archives (Amendment) Act, 2018, this period can be reduced to 20 years by Ministerial Order.

In 1989, the Government assigned premises at Bishop Street in Dublin to the National Archives. The premises of the former SPO in the Record Tower at Dublin Castle was vacated in August 1991 and the headquarters of the National Archives moved from the Four Courts to Bishop Street in September 1992 although a significant facility is still occupied in the former PROI building at the Four Courts.

As part of Project 2040, the Government committed to building a new Archive Repository on the Bishop Street site with the ambition that it will be completed for the 30 June 2022, marking 100 years since the destruction of the PROI. This project will commence over the coming months.

State Records held in the National Archives

The National Archives is the repository for all State papers and holds records of government of the modern Irish State from its foundation to approximately 1990.

Departmental records include all records made, or received, and held in the course of business by all government departments, court offices and bodies listed in the schedule to the National Archives Act, 1986.

Our holdings also include a number of major collections acquired as a result of the amalgamation of the Public Record Office of Ireland (PROI) and the State Paper Office in 1988, following the establishment of the National Archives. These include archives of the British administration in Ireland from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, the largest collection of which is the Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers.

In addition, the National Archives holds the records dating from the foundation of the State including the Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921 and records from the period leading up to and following the establishment of the Free State in 1922.

In 2017, the National Archives, in partnership with the Irish Manuscripts Commission, began a survey of archival material salvaged from the Public Record Office of Ireland, following the destruction of the record treasury during the Civil War in 1922. This collection of 378 brown paper parcels had not been opened since they were recovered in the aftermath of the destruction. The material was assessed, documented and photographed. The documents range in date from the 14th Century to the early 20th Century. These are currently being worked on by our Senior Conservator and will be catalogued with a view to being made available.

Some archival collection of historical significance are the Dublin Metropolitan Police Movement of Extremists 1915-16, Property Losses Committee (1916), Court-martial Proceedings 1916, penal records (including records of convict transportation from Ireland to Australia 1788-1868), education archives, statute rolls of the Irish Parliament, Richard III–Henry VIII, hospital archives, business archives, family and landed estate archives.

The National Archives also holds the original 1901 and 1911 census returns as well as certain returns from the censuses of 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851.

A Programme of Commemoration

The National Archives holds the memory of the State, it preserves and protects records relating to the social, cultural and political history of the country. These records taken as a corpus document the building of a nation over 100 years.

It is therefore appropriate that the National Archives should present a programme of events to mark its role as the official repository of the records of the State, one hundred years since its formation as well as being so linked to the one of the most significant events of the Civil War, the destruction of the Four Courts.

It is also anticipated that the new Archive Repository Project will be completed for the 30 June 2022. Given that the Public Record Office of Ireland (PROI) was destroyed in the destruction of the Four Courts on the 30 June 1922, the unveiling of the new repository is a very poignant nod to history but also a recognition of the value placed by the State in preserving its records for current and future generations.

This proposed residency forms a core part of our Commemorations Programme in the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023 Programme.