

# River Residencies Application Brief

Supported by the Arts Council of Ireland  
An Invitation to Collaboration Scheme



## Museum of Mythological Water Beasts: River Residencies

The Museum of Mythological Water Beasts (2017–) is a multi-year project bringing together artists and communities to learn about the River Shannon. In 2021, a programme of River Residencies will connect artists with rural communities who live and work along the river in Cavan, Clare, Limerick and Tipperary, to create new artistic projects.

The River Residencies are a collaborative initiative led by Limerick Culture and Arts Office and Ormston House in partnership with Cavan Arts Office, Clare Arts Office and Tipperary Arts Office, co-funded by the Arts Council of Ireland through An Invitation to Collaboration. The River Residencies are co-curated by Caimin Walsh and Mary Conlon from Ormston House.

### Overview:

The River Residencies offer a structured residency programme that will support artists to work with communities in rural locations along the River Shannon in Cavan, Clare, Limerick and Tipperary. One artist (or artist-led collective) will be hosted in each rural location for a total of four weeks. The selected artists will meet with communities engaged with the river through craft, environmentalism, leisure, industry, or simply through a life lived along its banks. Local participants will inform the artistic research in each county and will be invited to participate in the creation of artistic projects.

The residencies will be divided into two parts: two weeks dedicated to community engagement and research during Spring 2021, and two weeks dedicated to co-production and delivery during Summer 2021. The research residency will include a mix of programmed and self-directed activities. Artists will develop projects remotely between the residencies. There will be curatorial and logistical support during the research residency, the creative development phase and the production residency from project personnel in each county and the Ormston House team.

### About the River Shannon:

The River Shannon is the longest river in Ireland, flowing over 360 kilometres, touching eleven counties and all four provinces, and separating the country into east and west. It is the backbone of the island, subsuming a multitude of tributary rivers, feeding lakes and extending into a great number of streams. It is an important ecosystem providing habitat for a diversity of flora and fauna with many Special Areas of Conservation.

The River Shannon is named after the Celtic Goddess Sionna and has a deep history steeped in folklore. It has been a source of economic and infrastructural transformation in Irish society, with the remnants of former industries dotted along the many towns and villages that occupy its shores.



## Cavan: The Source

Set in the rural landscape of the prehistoric Cavan Burren, the Cavan residency will take place near the source of the River Shannon at the foothills of the Cuilcagh Mountain. Rising to the surface at the Shannon Pot, the river in this region flows primarily underground, travelling through a network of subterranean streams and caves. Formed over 340 million years ago, the Cavan Burren is of significant geological and ecological importance, and is designated UNESCO Global Geopark status. The region was once a tropical ocean, evidence of which can be found in the fossilised coral embedded in the limestone rock that covers the landscape.

During the Cavan residency, the artist will work with local Geopark guides and experts. They will support the artist's research and facilitate introductions to community groups. Due to the sparse and dispersed population, applicants are encouraged to consider how new digital technologies, such as VR, AR or interactive media, might assist community engagement or project delivery.

Potential areas of research: ecology, digital technologies, geology, natural heritage



## Tipperary: The Lough

The Tipperary residency will be located at Lough Derg. Known as the gateway to the heart of Ireland, Lough Derg is the largest of the three lakes formed along the River Shannon. The shores of Lough Derg have been settled since prehistoric times, the region has recorded thousands of archaeological sites and monuments including castles, medieval ring forts, neolithic tombs and places of religious pilgrimage.

In past centuries, the lake has been a key location for navigation from the Atlantic ocean to the midlands. It was a channel for commercial transport and important for industry development.

Recently, industry has given way to mostly leisure activities on the lake. Many of the surrounding towns still engage in traditions of fishing, sailing and boat-building. The artist will travel to towns and villages along the shores of the lake to engage with communities of interest and visit important sites.

Potential areas of research: archaeology, navigation, intangible and tangible heritage, traditional maker-skills





## Clare: The Estuary (North Shore)

The Clare residency will take place in the west of the county on the Shannon Estuary. This is where the river merges with the Atlantic ocean. Over 100 kilometers long, the area is characterised by the numerous small islands dotted along its shoreline. No longer inhabited, the islands were once an important part of life, acting as home to boatmen and their families, monasteries and more recently, reclaimed as farmland. The Shannon Estuary is one of Ireland's most important natural habitats, home to various protected species of avian and aquatic life, it has been designated a Special Area of Conservation.

For the Clare residency, the artist will meet with communities in the small towns along the estuary's north shore. For centuries, the region has been an active site of industry; the area had thriving fishing and traditional boating industries, which have declined due to environmental factors and changing infrastructure. Today, the estuary is one of Ireland's largest ports and an active shipping channel.

Potential areas of research: biodiversity, commemoration, conservation, river-based economies



## Limerick: The Estuary (South Shore)

The Limerick residency will be in the heritage town of Glin on the south shore of the Shannon Estuary. Glin is a prosperous and picturesque town with a celebrated history. The town is synonymous with the Knights of Glin and the FitzGerald family who have occupied Glin castle and surrounding lands for over 700 years.

The artist will work with the enthusiastic and knowledgeable Glin community during the Limerick residency, exploring the estuary and visiting sites of historical significance. Once a bustling market town and commercial port, Glin had a thriving salmon fishing industry employing

hundreds of people and developing infrastructure in the region throughout the 19th century. The commercial port of Glin ceased operations after the death of their longstanding harbour master Margaret Moloney in 1952. Affectionately known as 'the first lady of the estuary', she was the world's first recorded female harbour master.

Potential areas of research: craft, local industry, military history, women's history

## How to apply

This call is open to artists working in all artforms and areas of arts practice (including music, dance, visual arts, theatre, literature, circus and performing arts). The objectives would best suit artists with a track record of working with communities or in rural contexts.

## Objectives:

- To promote learning about the River Shannon through creative practice
- To strengthen connectivity in rural communities through creative practice
- To foster meaningful engagement between artists and community groups
- To support artists and communities in co-creating new collaborative artworks
- To create a new residency model focused on best practice in rural contexts

## Budget:

The artist fee is **€4000**.

The materials and production budget is **€4000**.

Travel costs (up to a maximum of **€1000**) and self-catering accommodation will be provided.

Curatorial support, local guides and documentation are also covered.

## Timeframe:

The research residencies will take place between February and April 2021.

The production residencies will take place between June and August 2021.

The exact dates of each residency will be decided with the selected artists and each Arts Office.

Between residencies, creative development of projects will be supported remotely by the Ormston House team.

## Conditions:

- Applicants must join the free Membership Scheme for artists at Ormston House <https://ormstonhouse.com/membership/>
- Successful applicants must provide their own Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance cover
- Residency locations may be far from public transportation. It would be beneficial for applicants to have their own transport. Car hire will be supported. Applicants availing of car hire must be in possession of a full clean driving license
- Successful applicants may be subject to Garda vetting
- Irish government guidelines on COVID-19 must be followed

## Submissions:

Submissions should be sent via email to [river@ormstonhouse.com](mailto:river@ormstonhouse.com) with 'River Residencies' in the subject line. Please attach a single PDF (max. 10MB) including the following:

- A current C.V. with your contact information and two named referees (max. 3 pages)
- A statement about your practice describing your interests, influences and motivations as an artist and/or describe a previous project (1-2 pages)
- Your preferred River Residency location and a short text on why this residency is of interest to you, how the call resonates with your practice (for example, in relation to a potential area of research, or the rural context, or community engagement), and initial ideas in response to the call (1 page)
- Examples of previous work with corresponding explanations. Formats might include images; audio links, video links including passwords; examples of writing; or a mixture of formats to best present your practice.

The deadline for submissions is **21 September 2020 at 12pm**. You will receive confirmation of receipt. A shortlist of applicants will be invited for online interviews in mid-October 2020.

Queries to [river@ormstonhouse.com](mailto:river@ormstonhouse.com)

## Criteria and Marking:

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Professional experience</b></li></ul> The assessment focuses on the applicant's relevant experience and testimony from referees provided	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Artistic statement</b></li></ul> The assessment focuses on the applicant's creative practice and relevance to the project objectives	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Artistic ambition</b></li></ul> The assessment focuses on the applicant's artistic vision and how they might respond to the project objectives	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Quality of previous work</b></li></ul> The assessment focuses on the applicant's previous artworks and projects	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>