

SMASHING TIMES NEWSLETTER

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Connecting citizens to the arts, human rights, climate justice, and gender equality

A chairde,

Welcome to the **July 2025** edition of the Smashing Times Newsletter. **Peace and Reconciliation** is our theme this month.

Peace, described as a state of harmony in the absence of hostility and violence, is one of those rare things that nearly everyone hopes for. It is widely regarded as a higher goal, one with an almost sacred standing. When people are asked what their one wish would be, many say 'world peace'. It holds utopian connotations. The word 'utopia', for me, conjures images of Edenesque, sun-kissed serenity, humanity living among nature, at one with the world, and, of course, at peace with one another, humankind at last restored to its tranquil beginnings.

One could argue that the overarching struggle of the modern world – since the fall of Nazi Germany especially – has been to foster 'peace and goodwill to all (wo)men'. The atrocities of World War II, and the Holocaust in particular, when the Nazis murdered two-thirds of the European Jewish population, have cast a long shadow on modern life. Specifically, it has instilled in us a painful awareness of two things: the cruelty that war enables; and the very real human capacity for persecution and genocide, especially when accompanied by notions of ethnic supremacy and the divinely ordained triumph of a single people or nation.

RÉAMHRÁ ÓN EAGARTHÓIR

INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITOR



Féilim James,
Smashing Times
Newsletter and
Tintreach Editor



Carmen Ortiz
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Of course, the above calls to mind the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people in Gaza (and increasingly the West Bank too) by Israel's racist, ultra-nationalist government, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, with the financial, military, and political support of the United States of America and many other western countries. (There is a soul-crushing irony to the fact that many of those who perpetrate the current genocide are descended from, or part of the same ethnoreligious group as, those who were murdered in the most well-known genocide in history.)

You would be forgiven for forgetting how peace between Palestine and Israel, in the form of a two-state solution, became a possibility with the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 and 1995. The Oslo Accords saw the creation of the Palestinian Authority, which allowed for limited Palestinian self-governance over parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The accords also resulted in international acknowledgement of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as Israel's partner in permanent-status negotiations. Many factors precipitated the failure of these agreements, with one particular act of violence to the fore: the assassination of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin (who signed the agreements with Yasser Arafat, leader of the PLO) by Israeli far-right extremist Yigal Amir on 4 November 1995, just under 30 years ago.



Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (left), United States President Bill Clinton (centre), and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (right) at the White House on 28 September 1995. Rabin was assassinated five weeks later. Photo credit: DOUG MILLS/AP

Considered one of the most successful political assassinations in history, it delivered a major blow to the ultimately unsuccessful peace process. Just over seven months later, a certain Benjamin Netanyahu (who was staunchly opposed to the Oslo Accords) became prime minister for the first time. In the run-up to Rabin's murder, Netanyahu had stoked ultra-nationalist hatred for Rabin for his role in the Oslo Accords, and had even led a mock funeral procession featuring a coffin and hangman's noose at a rally where protesters chanted, 'Death to Rabin'.

Today, in his third stint as premier, Netanyahu spearheads the most far-right government in the history of Israel, which is massacring and starving Palestinian civilians in Gaza who have nowhere to go, while furthering its expansionist goals through the violent establishment of settlements in Palestine's West Bank. 'War is peace,' writes George Orwell in his enduring novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. For Netanyahu, that is certainly

the case, as he strives to cement his grip on power, and therefore avoid possible jail time for corruption charges, by means of waging perpetual war – be it against Hamas, Hezbollah, or Iran. (The recent 12-day war with Iran saw an increase in Netanyahu's approval ratings, who is reportedly considering a snap election as a result.)

It is heartbreaking to think of all the lives that may not have been lost had the Oslo Accords paved the way for a genuine two-state solution and peace and stability. A key ingredient to achieving peace anywhere is the second word of our theme this month: reconciliation. Reconciliation can be defined as making different ideas, beliefs, or situations agree or exist together, often when they appear to be opposed – or, more simply, as the establishment of friendly relations.

Clearly, strides were made to this end in the 1990s, but the idea of Palestinians and Israelis emulating that in the present scenario is incredibly hard to fathom – and almost impossible with Netanyahu in power, who has displayed, through words and actions, his fervent opposition to the two-state solution. The first step towards peace and reconciliation is, of course, a ceasefire – but even if a lasting ceasefire is achieved, it is only reasonable to imagine that it will take decades for the traumatised and stricken Palestinian population to believe that any Israeli moves towards a sustainable peace are in good faith. The core obstacle, however, to a just peace in Israel and Palestine remains what it has always been:

Israel's subjugation of, and denial of self-determination and the most basic of human rights to, the Palestinians, and their insistence on pursuing an agenda of settler colonialism, apartheid, and, of course, genocide.

The utopia of world peace many of us hope for does not, of course, look like the Adam-and-Eve-prancing-jollily-through-the-fields image I described at the beginning of this introduction. Instead, it involves the following: a human looking another human from the other side of the divide in the eye, and seeing this person not as 'other', but as an equal to themselves.

Read on for **Quotes, Spotsolas: Smashing Times News, 10 We Admire, Opinion, News From the Network, and Grants and Opportunities.**

Féilim James

Sleachta

QUOTES



Photo credit: Rowan Heuvel

‘We say no to the peace that keeps us on our knees, no to the peace that keeps us in chains, no to the false peace that denies the values and contributions of our peoples.’

Rigoberta Menchú
(born 1959)

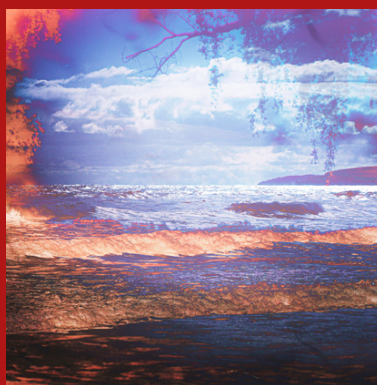


Photo credit: Maksim Šišlo

‘Without disarmament there can be no lasting peace. On the contrary, the continuation of military armaments in their present extent will with certainty lead to new catastrophies.’

Albert Einstein
(1879–1955)



Photo credit: Patrick Desloge

‘To sit with a dog on a hillside on a glorious afternoon is to be back in Eden, where doing nothing was not boring – it was peace.’

Milan Kundera
(1929–2023)

Má tá an nuachtlitir seo á léamh agat tríd an nasc inroinnte, agus más mian leat síntiús (saor in aisce) a ghlacadh lena fháil, agus na heagráin atá le teacht de Tintreach: The Smashing Times Arts and Literary Journal, díreach chuig do bhosca isteach, cliceáil anseo le do thoil.

If you are reading this newsletter via the shareable link, and would like to subscribe to receive it, and the upcoming editions of Tintreach: The Smashing Times Arts and Literary Journal, direct to your inbox, please click here.

SPOTSOLAS: SMASHING TIMES NEWS

Every month, in addition to bringing you the latest updates from Smashing Times, we also highlight a specific element of our work. This month, we're focusing on our European tour of *The Art of Trees*.



The Art of Trees

The Art of Trees by Mary Moynihan brings its powerful message to audiences across Europe this year. *The Art of Trees* is written by Mary Moynihan, directed by Carmen Ortiz Victorino, and performed by Fiona Bawn-Thompson, Abdelmonem Nassef, Ciara Hayes, and Carmen Ortiz Victorino, with Lisa McLoughlin-Gnemmi on violin.

Last month, it was performed at the Veikou Grove in Athens, Greece from 18–22 June as part of the Fallen Trees – The Agony of Existence festival. Later this month, it will travel to Frankfurt, Germany from 28 July–3 August, where it will form part of the Sommerwerft Festival. From 8–12 October, it will be performed in Seville, Spain, before returning to Dublin in October 2025 for the annual, international Irish Arts and Human Rights Festival.

The Art of Trees is an immersive performance blending theatre, poetry, movement, and live music to celebrate the beauty of trees and forests, the importance of biodiversity, and our deep connections to nature.

It beautifully intertwines performance art with environmental themes and Celtic traditions. Audiences enjoy a magical performance as they are regaled with storytelling, poetry, and music. Join us as we walk through nature and rediscover the magic of woodlands.



Guided by Brigid of Kildare, the audience embarks on a journey through Ireland's ancient forests, exploring the wisdom and mythology of sacred trees like oak, ash, and hazel. As President of Ireland Michael D Higgins has said, if we were coal miners, we would be up to our knees in dead canaries. Despite our green image, we need to do more. Ireland has lost many of its native woods. It is estimated that only 11% of Ireland is currently under forest cover, much lower than most European countries. Finland for example has over 70% forest cover, while Spain has over 35%. As Ireland faces a biodiversity crisis, *The Art of Trees* reflects on ways to protect our forests and reconnect with the natural world.

This performance is part of the European project TREES, funded by Creative Europe. **[Read more about the project here.](#)**



Creative
Europe

SPOTSOLAS: SMASHING TIMES NEWS



Smashing Times Arts and Human Rights Radio Show, 11 and 18 June 2025

The episode of the Smashing Times Arts and Human Rights Radio Show broadcast on Wednesday 11 June (repeated on Wednesday, 18 June 2025) features two interviews. The first interview is with Ciara Hayes, Producer of the annual, international Irish Arts and Human Rights Festival. The second interview is with celebrated actor, writer, director and acting teacher, David Scott. **[Listen back to the episode here.](#)**

Interview with Ciara Hayes

Host Freda Manweiler chats with Ciara Hayes, a producer with the annual, international Irish Arts and Human Rights Festival. Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality and Front Line Defenders, and a range of partners, will present the seventh annual, Irish International Arts and Human Rights Festival from the 10–19 October 2025. Ciara talks about the success and growth of the festival and the fact that the name has changed from the Dublin Arts and Human Rights Festival to the Irish Arts and Human Rights Festival. The festival has grown in size and the new name reflects the fact that this is an all-island festival featuring events from across Ireland, Northern Ireland, and internationally. Ciara also announces a series

of three open calls inviting artists and organisations to apply to present events at this year's festival. The calls are open to artists, arts organisations, civil society organisations, NGO's, community groups, business companies, environmental groups, libraries, arts offices, and all kinds of bodies both public and private. **[Click here for more information on how and what to submit.](#)**



Actor, writer, director, and acting teacher David Scott

Interview with David Scott

We then have our featured artist interview, in which Mary Moynihan speaks with David Scott, an Australian-born actor, writer, director, and acting teacher who has been living in Ireland for many years. David has worked as a professional actor, in both Australia and Ireland, in TV, film, and stage. Over a decade ago, David established The Actor's Wednesday Workshop and The Actor's Friday Studio, two part-time programmes

for advanced and developing actors. Since 2023, David has been the Director of The Foundation Diploma in Acting and Theatre at The Lir Academy in Dublin. David is also Artistic Director of Company D, a Dublin-based theatre company focused on promoting new work and new actors. David gives a unique insight into his approach to actor training, his work as an actor, playwright, and novelist, and his journey in self-publishing. He shares with us some fascinating insights into ways to create a more level playing field in the world of acting auditions, his views on the arts and human rights, and what changes he would like to see for theatre and the wider arts sector into the future. **[Click here to listen to this episode.](#)**

The Smashing Times Arts and Human Rights Radio show is broadcast every Wednesday 6–7pm with Dublin South FM, with each episode also available as a podcast. The show is hosted by Mary Moynihan, writer, poet, creator of art and photography, and Artistic Director, Smashing Times, along with co-host Freda Manweiler, Producer, Smashing Times. Enjoy an engaging hour of in-depth discussions focused on all things arts, culture, and human rights. Tune in to Dublin South FM 93.9, or listen online at **www.dublinsouthfm.ie**. **[All past episodes can be listened to here.](#)**

SPOTSOLAS: SMASHING TIMES NEWS

Smashing Times Arts and Human Rights Radio Show

Smashing Times Arts and Human Rights Radio Show, 25 June and 2 July 2025

The Smashing Times Arts and Human Rights Radio show broadcast on Wednesday, 25 June (repeated Wednesday, 2 July 2025 and available as a podcast), features lively chat and debate by co-hosts Mary Moynihan and Freda Manweiler on the arts and the environment, with a focus on the beauty of trees. The show begins with a poetry reading by Mary Moynihan, reciting her poem 'Meadow Woman', which is a reflection on the beauty of a wildflower meadow and the nature that is both around and within us. Following this are featured interviews with two Smashing Times artists, director Carmen Ortiz Victorino and actor Carla Ryan, who recently toured to Athens, Greece for a production of *The Art of Trees* by Mary Moynihan. Also included is a chat on the hosts' favourite trees, the fact that trees can 'talk', and what can be done to promote climate change. **[Listen back to this episode here.](#)**

Irish Arts and Human Rights FESTIVAL

Open Call: Irish Arts and Human Rights Festival 2025

Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality, Front Line Defenders, and a range of partners present the seventh, annual, international Irish Arts and Human Rights Festival from 10–19 October 2025. The festival features exciting and innovative events that promote equality, human rights, and diversity throughout Ireland, Northern Ireland, and internationally. We have three open calls for this year's festival, with a deadline of Friday, 1 August 2025. The first open call is for individuals or organisations who want to present their own event *in their own venue* and to have this event included in the official programme for this year's festival. The second open call is for organisations who want to present their own event at this year's Irish Arts and Human Rights festival and are *looking for a venue*. The third call is for artists, arts organisations, and environmental groups who wish to present at a major international eco-conference we are holding for this year's festival. **[For more information, please click here.](#)**

SPOTSOLAS: SMASHING TIMES NEWS



Smashing Times Attends Bloomsday Garden Party at Áras an Uachtaráin

Smashing Times Artistic Director Mary Moynihan, Company Manager Freda Manweiler, and theatre-maker Carmen Ortiz Victorino, along with friends of Smashing Times, attended the Bloomsday Garden Party at Áras an Uachtaráin on Sunday, 15 June 2025. Bloomsday (16 June) is the day on which *Ulysses* (1922), by Irish writer James Joyce, is set. Written partly in a revolutionary stream-of-consciousness literary style, *Ulysses* centres on three characters – Leopold Bloom, Molly Bloom, and Stephen Dedalus – on a single day (16 June 1904) in and around Dublin. 16 June has since become known as Bloomsday, when *Ulysses* is celebrated as a festival in cities around the world, most famously in Dublin. Each year, President of Ireland Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina host a special Bloomsday-themed Garden Party to celebrate the work of James Joyce.

Image: Mary Moynihan and Carmen Ortiz Victorino, along with friends of Smashing Times, with President Michael D Higgins at the Bloomsday Garden Party.



Edition Three of Tintreach: The Smashing Times Arts and Literary Journal

The third edition of *Tintreach: The Smashing Times Arts and Literary Journal* will be published on Thursday, 24 July 2025. Appearing quarterly online, *Tintreach* features work from across the artistic spectrum, and includes multiple artworks by each of the published artists. The four artists selected for the July 2025 edition of *Tintreach* will become Voices of Peace Artists at the Irish Arts and Human Rights Festival 2025 in October. [Click here to read previous editions of Tintreach.](#)

[Click here to receive Tintreach and the Smashing Times Newsletter for free.](#)

Deichniúr Thar Barr

10 WE ADMIRE

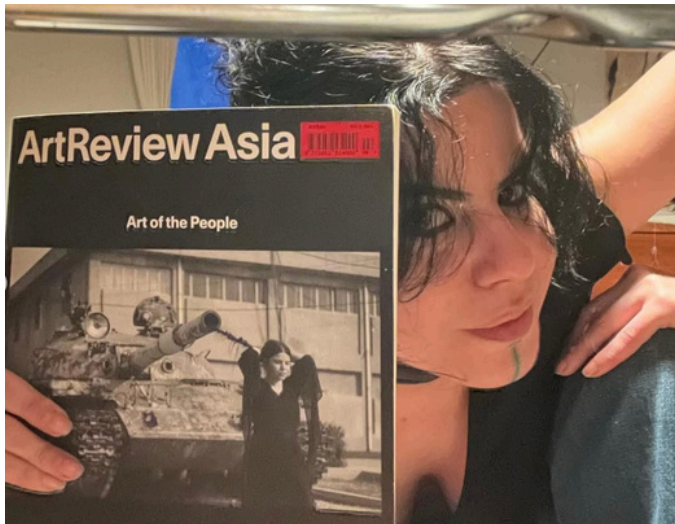


Rahima Gambo

Rahima Gambo (born 1986) is a Nigerian visual artist and photographer whose multimedia work blends documentary storytelling with surreal, poetic installations. Her ongoing series *A Walk* explores trauma and healing in post-conflict communities in northeastern Nigeria, particularly among students affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. Gambo uses walking as a meditative and narrative practice, allowing participants to reclaim memory through movement and collaborative images.

Art has long been a medium through which conflict is processed, justice is imagined, and healing begins. In a world fractured by war, oppression, and inequality, artists across the globe are using their creative tools to build bridges and mend wounds. This month, we highlight ten visionary creators whose work reflects the power of peace and reconciliation. Through visual art, music, theatre, and poetry, they confront histories of violence and imagine gentler futures. These artists remind us that peace is not just the absence of conflict, but the presence of care, courage, and connection.

In combining artforms, she creates immersive environments that invite reflection and shared presence. Her work honours the slow, non-linear rhythms of recovery. Her work is gentle, profound, and deeply rooted in both cultural specificity and universal themes of reconciliation.



Zehra Doğan

Zehra Doğan (born 1989) is a Kurdish artist, author, and political activist who creates powerful visual narratives about war, gender, and resistance. After being imprisoned by the Turkish government for a painting of hers depicting military violence, Doğan continued making art using food, scraps, and whatever else was available in prison. Her uncompromising commitment to telling the truth led to international recognition, but her focus remains on amplifying the voices of marginalised Kurdish women and communities. Her drawings, paintings, and performances often include stark imagery layered with calligraphic text, drawing connections between personal trauma and collective memory. Her art is both a form of witness and an act of defiance, demanding justice while holding space for grief, beauty, and hope. She reminds us that reconciliation cannot come without the courage to remember.



Khaled Jarrar

Khaled Jarrar (born 1976) is a Palestinian artist whose politically charged work confronts the everyday realities of occupation. A former bodyguard turned sculptor and filmmaker, Jarrar uses ordinary materials such as concrete, olive branches, and passport stamps to reveal the borders that divide lives. In his project *State of Palestine* (2011), he created an unofficial passport stamp as a gesture of resistance and symbolic recognition. His film *Infiltrators* (2012) follows people attempting to cross the wall between the West Bank and Israel, highlighting moments of vulnerability and resilience. His art resists erasure while imagining new possibilities for peace rooted in dignity, presence, and truth. Rather than sensationalise conflict, he seeks small openings for connection, where empathy can lead the way.



Raúl Zurita

Raúl Zurita (born 1950) is a Chilean poet and performance artist whose work responds to the traumas of dictatorship and exile. While he is better known in Latin American literary circles, Zurita remains under-recognised globally. His early works were written in blood and sky, literally, using his body and landscapes as canvases for protest. In his 1993 poem *Ni Pena Ni Miedo* ('Neither Shame Nor Fear'), he carved those words into the Atacama Desert as a monument to the disappeared. His art simultaneously mourns, remembers, and forgives. Through his haunting imagery and radical gestures, he imagines peace as confronting horror with grace. His work reminds us that reconciliation requires both sorrow and imagination, and that poetry can be used to mark land.



Mary Moynihan and Freda Manweiler

Mary Moynihan (born 1965), writer, poet, and creator of art and photography, and Freda Manweiler (born 1961), producer, have a long history of working together with Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality. They have both worked extensively in Northern Ireland, using the arts to promote peace-building, reconciliation, and positive community relations. Key work includes The Memory Project, which uses theatre and film to promote peace and non-violence, run in partnership with Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN) and the University of Ulster's International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE). Freda and Mary worked together on a Europe-wide cultural programme called EU4Dialogue, promoting conflict transformation through education and culture. The project took place in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova, and used creative methodologies to work on unresolved conflicts in these regions. As an artist, Mary's practice is rooted in activism, writing regularly about peace and the impact of war and displacement.



Lee Mingwei

Lee Mingwei (born 1964) is a Taiwanese American artist whose works centre on rituals of care, generosity, and vulnerability. His engaging installations, often involving strangers sharing meals, mending clothes, or exchanging stories, invite intimate acts of connection in public spaces. In *The Mending Project* (2009–2018), visitors bring garments in need of repair and have them stitched by volunteers while they converse, emphasising the relational labour of healing. Lee's projects unfold slowly, highlighting presence and attentiveness as counterpoints to fast-paced, fractured modern life. Through minimal aesthetics and poetic design, he transforms simple acts into meditations on trust, forgiveness, and belonging. His art proposes that peace begins in how we show up for one another.



Zohra Opoku

Zohra Opoku (born 1976) is a Ghanaian-German interdisciplinary artist whose textile work explores identity, trauma, and collective healing. Working primarily in photography, collages, and installation, she weaves together personal memory and cultural history to confront colonial legacies and contemporary struggles. Her work often uses traditional West African fabrics, especially kente and batik, as a metaphor in stitching together diasporic narratives. In her recent projects, she has collaborated with communities affected by displacement in Ghana and Berlin, hosting workshops that combine visual storytelling and textile making. Opoku uses fabric as a site of reconciliation between past and present, home and diaspora, self and society. Her art evokes the slow, layered processes through which healing might unfold.



Hasan Elahi

Hasan Elahi (born 1972) is a Bangladeshi-American artist whose conceptual and digital works investigate surveillance, identity, and misinformation. His art focuses on the social implications of technology and media in a digital age. After being mistakenly placed on an FBI watchlist, Elahi began an ongoing project of radical transparency, where he voluntarily published thousands of photos, GPS logs, and mundane details of his life online. In works such as *Tracking Transience* (2003), he turns surveillance into self-authored visibility, blurring the boundaries between safety and vulnerability. His practice calls into question what it means to be seen, trusted, and known in an age of paranoia. His art critiques the systems that generate fear and division, proposing that reconciliation might come from truthfulness, transparency, and an insistence on shared humanity.



Naaz

Naaz Mohammed (born 1998), known mononymously as Naaz, is a Dutch-Kurdish musician whose music combines vulnerability with resilience. Born to Kurdish refugee parents in the Netherlands, Naaz grew up navigating the complexities of cultural identity, inherited trauma, and generational survival. Her pop songs reflect on the emotional landscapes of displacement, family, and self-acceptance. In tracks like 'As Fun', 'Taped', and 'Azadî' (the Kurdish word for freedom), Naaz turns personal stories into anthems of gentle resistance. Rather than rage, her music chooses softness as strength, creating music where healing is possible. She often speaks about forgiveness as a path to peace within fractured communities and identities. Through her work, Naaz offers a profound vision of reconciliation that begins in the body through language, and imagines joy after survival.



Her signature figure is a faceless woman with flowing garments and a musical instrument, which recurred across Kabul's walls as a symbol of hope, freedom, and resilience – until the Taliban returned to power in August 2021, after which her work has largely been painted over and destroyed. Among the many Afghans displaced from their homeland, Hassani currently lives in exile in Los Angeles, where she continues to create art.

Shamsia Hassani

Shamsia Hassani (born 1988) is Afghanistan's first female street artist, known for her bold murals that bring colour and courage to war-torn streets. Hassani's work challenges the erasure of women from public spaces and invites viewers to imagine new futures beyond violence. Her work also confronts western stereotypes of Afghan women, including western perceptions of the hijab as a mere instrument of gender-based oppression. Her murals do not deny suffering, but stand over it, imagining cities where creativity is what lingers on the walls.

Gaza: An End to Genocide

By Mary Moynihan



We are currently witnessing a genocide in Gaza. I call on all people and governments around the world to come together to speak out and take action to stop the atrocities that are taking place. Since 7 October 2023, at least 54,607 Palestinians have been killed and 125,341 injured (the true figures are probably far higher). Intense bombardment from air, land, and sea persists across Gaza, with significant infrastructural damage and destruction of homes and shelters. It appears that the Israeli government's aim is to take over Gaza and wipe out the population as they continue to attack and kill civilians.

Multiple shooting incidents have occurred near Israeli and US-supported aid distribution points. People who are trying to find food are being slaughtered. UN experts are demanding independent investigations, warning that civilians are being drawn into deadly traps and are being murdered in their desperate attempts to find food and supplies. Indeed, certain Israel Defence Forces soldiers have recently revealed that they were ordered to shoot at civilians, all of whom were unarmed. The Israeli government are starving people and using food as a weapon of war.

Gaza is facing a serious food crisis; over 65,000 children are suffering from acute malnutrition. The international community must come together and put pressure on Israel to call a ceasefire and to let UN aid operations back in, to get peace negotiations going, and to recognise Palestinian rights. At the same time as calling for peace, governments have to stop selling weapons of war to Israel and other countries. It is hypocrisy for governments to call for peace when companies in those same countries are making profits from the sale of weapons.

I listened to an interview online with a young Israeli woman, who is a survivor of the Nova music festival massacre on 7 October 2023. The young woman recalls her traumatic experience of what happened and how she survived while

people around her were brutally slaughtered. It is harrowing listening. What happened on 7 October was a massacre of innocents. There has to be international pressure to have all the remaining Israeli hostages released and to have all civilians held illegally in any country in the world released, including in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

There has to be work towards peace and justice, and a commitment to self-determination and equal rights for both sides. The Israeli government have acted unlawfully in the subjugation – and, more recently, genocide – of the Palestinian people. They have to stop slaughtering and oppressing the Palestinian people and immediately end their genocidal actions and unlawful occupation, to stop using starvation as a weapon of war, and to stop the forcible displacement of civilian populations. They need to call an immediate and long-lasting ceasefire, support the return of aid to Gaza by the UN and other professional aid agencies, cease the creation of settlements, and withdraw from existing settlements. There has to be a political solution, with Israel and Palestine each having their own independent sovereign state with full self-determination and equal rights for all, including gender equality and an adherence to international law and free and fair elections.

There are no winners in war or in hat-

red. Everyone suffers. Hannah Arendt, the German and American historian and philosopher, said that 'the root of tyranny is making other people irrelevant. Without a "love of the world" we normalise evil. The answer is love – for ourselves and others.' The way forward is a cessation of all violence and negotiations for peace and justice. It is not about victory; it is about justice and peace.

Mary Moynihan (she/her) is an award-winning author of novels, poetry, films, and plays, and a creator of art and photography. She is Artistic Director of Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality and Artistic Curator for the annual Irish Arts and Human Rights Festival.

Bruce Springsteen Speaks Out for Democracy

By Mary Moynihan



Earlier this year, fake rumours circulated online claiming that the American singers Bruce Springsteen and Taylor Swift were doing a duet together, singing against Donald Trump. There were false posts doing the rounds on Facebook, with AI-generated images suggesting a joint performance between Springsteen and Swift. Fact-checking site Snopes debunked the claim, confirming that Swift and Springsteen did not perform together. Images used in the fake posts were taken from previous concerts by each artist.

The American president Donald Trump has criticised both artists. For example, he mocked Swift's looks, and wrote 'I HATE TAYLOR SWIFT' (capital letters very much his own), which made him sound like a petulant teenager – albeit a dangerous one.

Bruce Springsteen has intensified his criticism of President Donald Trump and the current state of American politics, using both his music and public statements to express his concerns. During the opening night of his current Land of Hope and Dreams Tour in Manchester, England on 14 May 2025, Springsteen delivered a scathing critique of Trump's administration. He accused Trump of leading the country away from its foundational values of freedom and warned of the dangers of rising authoritarianism. Springsteen said that 'The mighty E-street band is here tonight to call upon the righteous power of art, of music, of rock and roll in dangerous times.'

While acknowledging that America has faults, Springsteen described how America, his home and a beacon of hope and liberty for 250 years, is now currently 'in the hands of a corrupt, incompetent, and treasonous administration'. He said that in America they are 'persecuting people for using their right to free speech and voicing their dissent.' He described how the US is cutting aid to the poor, abandoning allies, rolling back civil rights protections, defunding universities, and deporting people without due process. 'A majority of our elected representatives have failed to protect the American people from the abuses of an unfit president and a rogue government,' Springsteen said. 'They have no concern. . . for what it means to be deeply American.'

With the other checks and balances to Donald Trump's power failing, Springsteen said that the last checks and balances are the people, and that people have to stand together to speak up and speak out in favour of democracy. He calls on people who believe in democracy to rise up, 'raise your voices against authoritarianism and to let freedom reign.' Springsteen quoted the American writer and civil rights activist James Baldwin (1924–1987): 'In this world, there isn't as much humanity as one would like, but there's enough.'

You can listen on YouTube to a live digital EP titled *Land of Hope & Dreams*, which was released shortly after the performance in Manchester. It features all of Springsteen's words against Donald Trump, along with songs such as 'Long Walk Home' and 'Chimes of Freedom', which contain themes of democratic resilience and civil liberties.

The response from Trump was swift, personal, and rude. He took to social media to mock Springsteen, referring to The Boss as highly over-rated, a dried-out prune, and dumb as a rock. Trump could easily be talking about himself.

Bruce Springsteen has constantly advocated for democracy and equality, and his latest political commentary is not new.

Springsteen's actions reflect his long-standing commitment to social justice and political engagement. His music has often served as a commentary on American society, particularly worker's rights and the way the country treats people in poverty. His latest endeavours continue this tradition, aiming to inspire unity and uphold democratic ideals.

Springsteen has been supported by a range of artists such as Neil Young, a Canadian-American singer-songwriter, musician, and activist, widely regarded as one of the most influential and enduring artists in rock music history. In his early career, Young played with Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (CSNY), before he enjoyed a successful solo career with his long-time band Crazy Horse. Young has always explored social issues, environmental concerns, and war in his work. He wrote protest songs like 'Ohio' (about the Kent State shootings) and 'Rockin' in the Free World' (a critique of American politics). He is an outspoken critic of war, corporate control, and right-wing politics, and has clashed with politicians in the past such as Ronald Reagan and George W Bush, and now with Donald Trump.

Young has criticised Trump's leadership and accused him of wasting time disparaging artists instead of focusing on humanitarian causes. **Young posted on his site, Neil Young Archives, on 20 May**, saying 'Bruce and thousands of musicians think you are ruining America.

You worry about that instead of the dyin' kids in Gaza. That's your problem. I am not scared of you. Neither are the rest of us. You shut down FEMA (the US Federal agency providing support for international emergencies and disasters) when we needed it most. That's your problem Trump. STOP THINKING ABOUT WHAT ROCKERS ARE SAYING. Think about saving America from the mess you made.'

Springsteen was also supported by the American singer-songwriter and musician Eddie Vedder, from the Rock band Pearl Jam, who commented that 'part of free speech is open discussion. Part of democracy is healthy public discourse. The name-calling is so beneath us. Bruce has always been as pro-American with his values and liberty, and his justice has always remained intact. And I'm saying this now to be sure this freedom to speak will still exist in a year or two when we come back to this microphone.'

Bruce Springsteen continues to use his 2025 Land of Hope and Dreams Tour in Europe as a platform for political commentary. Following his scathing speech in Manchester on 14 May, he delivered similar critiques across multiple shows, including at Berlin's historic Olympiastadion on 11 June.

Bruce Springsteen has the support of numerous artists and organisations, including all of us in Smashing Times.

We defend his right to political expression, and support his call for freedom and democracy across the world. In Ireland we had the powerful actions of the bilingual hip-hop trio Kneecap, who continue to speak out for an end to the genocide in Gaza and for freedom of expression, with over 100 artists voicing their support for them, including Damien Dempsey, Fontaines DC, Blindboy, Kae Tempest, and Massive Attack.

The work and voices of artists such as Springsteen can be a powerful call for people to support democratic action, reclaim democratic values, and to stand up for human rights for all.

Nuacht Ón nGréasán

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK



Tuairisc.ie: 16 Scannán i nGaeilge mar Chuid de Chlár Fhleadh Scannán na Gaillimhe 2025

Tuairisc.ie: 16 Irish Language Films Part of the Galway Film Festival 2025 Programme

Sé scannán déag Gaeilge a bheidh á dtaispeáint ag Fleadh Scannán na Gaillimhe i mbliana idir scannáin dhátheangacha, gearrscannáin, agus fadscannáin. Tá réimse seánraí san áireamh sna taispeántais, drámaí agus scannáin fhaisnéise ina measc. **Léigh an t-alt i dTuairisc.ie anseo.**

16 Irish language films will be screened at this year's Galway Film Fleadh, including bilingual films, shorts, and feature films. The screenings include a range of genres, including dramas and documentaries. **Read the article (through Irish) in Tuairisc.ie here.**



Laoch na nGael le Roghnú ag Tús Áite Raidió na Gaeltachta

Laoch na nGael to Be Selected on Raidió na Gaeltachta's

Cé hé nó hí Laoch na nGael, an duine beo nó marbh a rinne éacht ar son na Gaeilge nó na Gaeltachta? Sin í an cheist atá á cur ag an gclár *Tús Áite* ar RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta an Samhradh seo. Tá gearrliosta deichniúr fógraithe ag an gclár. Ag deireadh an tSamhraidh déanfar an deichniúr a rangú bunaithe ar vótaí na n-éisteoirí. **Léigh alt iomlán Chearbhall Ó Síocháin anseo ag RTÉ.ie.**

Who is Laoch na nGael, the person living or dead who has done the most for the Irish language or the Gaeltacht? That is the question being asked by the programme *Tús Áite* on RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta this summer. The programme has announced a shortlist of ten people. At the end of the summer, the ten will be ranked based on listeners' votes. **Read the full article by Cearbhall Ó Síocháin here at RTÉ.ie.**

Nuacht Ón nGréasán

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK



ENAIP Piemonte: Didactive Project

ENAIP Piemonte is one of the key partners in the Didactive project, funded by Erasmus+, which aims to strengthen digital and self-agency skills in vocational education and training (VET) across Europe. ENAIP recently participated in the second transnational project meeting in Athens, Greece, on 22–23 May 2025. This meeting, hosted by the Hellenic Open University, brought institutions across Europe together to review their progress and plan upcoming activities. The Didactive project seeks to empower adult learners with a comprehensive training course that includes modules on imagination, action, resilience, and adaptability. ENAIP is preparing for a Learning, Teaching, and Training Activity (LTTA) this fall in Patras, Greece, where trainers can share best practice and deliver the course to hundreds of learners across Europe. [Click here to learn more.](#)



DAH Theatre's Arts and Human Rights Festival

Our friends at DASH Theatre, Belgrade, Serbia – one of Smashing Times' frequent collaborators – recently held their annual Arts and Human Rights Festival from 10–13 June, under the theme of 'Thinking Peace'. They posed the questions: How can we think about peace in times of numerous conflicts, and what are the characteristics of a peaceful society that is not just the absence of war? The programme involved performances, films, artist installations, and exhibitions. Festival-goers joined in on round tables and talks that involved artists and peace-builders. This festival brought together creators from all over the world with a common goal: freedom, dignity, and human rights for all. The festival hosted artists from Montenegro, France, Croatia, Palestine, the Czech Republic, Israel, Ukraine, Russia, Serbia, and many more. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Deontais agus Deiseanna

GRANTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Irish Writers Centre: Programming Assistant

Deadline: 5pm Sunday, 6 July 2025

The Programming Assistant will provide administrative support to the Head of Programming and assist them in year-round programming and our calendar of events from initial concept to final execution and evaluation. They will help the senior management team build on the organisation's rich literary legacy, as well as continuing to support all writers at various stages of their careers and lay the foundation for future writers. **Apply via our Grants and Opportunities page.**



Communications Officer for ISACS

Deadline: Wednesday, 9 July 2025

The Irish Street Arts, Circus and Spectacle Network are seeking a dynamic and motivated individual to join its growing team and play a key role in the future growth of these collective artforms across the island of Ireland and beyond. This is an exciting moment in the development of the network and of the sector, which has seen unprecedented growth in recent times. **Apply via our Grants and Opportunities page.**

Deontais agus Deiseanna

GRANTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Show Programmes Editor for Dublin Theatre Festival

Deadline: 12 noon Wednesday, 9 July 2025

Dublin Theatre Festival is seeking a Show Programmes Editor to produce and project manage the production of festival show programmes. Duties and responsibilities include liaising on digital production; delivery of all show programmes on time and to budget; developing, sourcing, and/or commissioning editorial content for individual show and educational resource programmes; and more. **Apply via our Grants and Opportunities page.**



Draíocht Blanchardstown: Front of House Manager

Deadline: Friday, 11 July 2025

Draíocht Blanchardstown seeks a full-time Front of House Manager, with a minimum of two years' experience, a genuine passion for and demonstrated commitment to working in the arts sector, excellent leadership and team management experience, and a strong dedication to delivering outstanding customer and client service. This is a front-facing role which involves engagement with members of the public, artists, professional and community companies/performers. **Apply via our Grants and Opportunities page.**

Deontais agus Deiseanna

GRANTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Irish Theatre Institute: General Manager

Deadline: 12 noon Friday, 11 July 2025

Irish Theatre Institute (ITI), the national resource organisation dedicated to supporting and developing theatre in Ireland, is inviting applications for the role of General Manager. This pivotal leadership position will support ITI's financial management, governance, operations, and overall organisational effectiveness. The successful candidate will work closely with the Director/CEO and the wider team to oversee ITI's strategic and day-to-day operations, including management of staff, governance compliance, and programme delivery. **[Apply via our Grants and Opportunities page.](#)**



Creative Europe Media: Films on the Move

Deadline: 5pm (Irish Time) Thursday, 17 July 2025

The Films on the Move action shall encourage and support the wider distribution of recent non-national European films by encouraging sales agents and theatrical distributors in particular to invest in promotion and adequate distribution. Applications should present adequate strategies to ensure more sustainable and more environmentally-respectful industry, and to ensure gender balance, inclusion, diversity, and representativeness. **[Apply via our Grants and Opportunities page.](#)**

Deontais agus Deiseanna

GRANTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Sustainable Energy Systems: Community Fund Summer Call

Deadline: Friday, 18 July 2025

Is your community group looking to lower energy costs and reduce carbon emissions? The SE Systems Community Fund Summer Call is here to help! We support non-profits, charities, and voluntary organisations in delivering impactful energy efficiency and renewable energy projects that create long-term benefits for communities across Ireland. For Summer 2025, we are making €500,000 in funding available to help organisations future-proof their buildings through sustainable energy upgrades. **[Apply via our Grants and Opportunities page.](#)**



Arts Council NI: New Small Grants Programme

Deadline: 12 noon Friday, 18 July 2025

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's New Small Grants Programme, funded by support from the Department for Communities Northern Ireland, aims to encourage greater participation in the arts, and to increase equality of access to, and opportunities in, the arts across all Section 75 groupings. We welcome applications from the widest possible range of organisations, representing all categories under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and encourage first time applicants to our funding. **[Apply via our Grants and Opportunities page.](#)**

Deontais agus Deiseanna

GRANTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



dlr First Frames 2025/26 Scheme

Deadline: 12 noon, Monday, 21 July 2025

dlr First Frames 2025/26 is open for applications. Funding will be available to support two short films with awards of up to €13,500 (VAT incl.) each. Mentoring support as well as additional equipment and facilities will be provided by the National Film School, IADT. The Scheme supports emerging filmmakers to develop creative short films based in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. **[Apply via our Grants and Opportunities page.](#)**



MTU Crawford: Creativity & Change

Deadline: Monday, 14 July 2025

Applications are open for MTU Crawford's 2025/26 Creativity & Change intake. Creativity & Change is a broad global citizenship education programme funded by Irish Aid and situated at MTU Crawford, Cork City. This 20-credit, level 9 accredited Special Purpose Award programme runs one weekend a month and targets those who wish to develop skills in transformative creative processes useful for work in education and activism, and engage in critical learning on global justice themes. **[Apply via our Grants and Opportunities page.](#)**

This is only a selection of our listed grants and opportunities. For more, please [visit our Grants and Opportunities page here.](#)

Sin é don eagrán seo. Thank you for reading. The next edition of the Smashing Times Newsletter comes out on **Thursday, 14 August**, under the theme of **Arts and the Environment Part II**.

Beir bua agus beannacht,

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