

# [The learn. the galway arts festival takes place](https://assignbuster.com/the-learn-the-galway-arts-festival-takes-place/)

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The KeyCultural event of 2017 that I have chosen to write about is the Galway InternationalArts Festival.

I have Chosen this Cultural event because it is something that Ihave heard about in passing yet don’t really know what it involves, so I usedthis opportunity to properly learn. The GalwayArts Festival takes place in Galway, Ireland, which is a city in Ireland thathas an extremely rich culture varying from theatre to music, and hence thefestival covers a range of different art forms. In 2017, over the course of twoweeks, 200 events took place in 33 venues with an attendance of 210, 000. Thefestival has been running for 40 years and this year (2018) it will becelebrating their 41st year. The first ever Galway arts festival washelp between the sixth and twelfth of April, and was described by the GalwayAdvertiser as; ‘ Galway’s Art Society; week of craic.’According to the Galwayarts Festival’s website previous festival highlights include Brian Wilson, JoniMitchell, Bill Viola, The National, Grizzly Bear, Bon Iver, St. Vincent, JohnGrant, The Gloaming, Elvis Costello, John Gerrard, Hughie O’Donoghue, SophieCalle, Louise Bourgeois,  MarinaAbramovic, Steppenwolf, Royal Court, New York Theatre Workshop and Circa.

Thefestival is unique in the sense that it showcases various performers andproductions that are only new and upcoming but also well-known and widelyloved. GIAF also works regularly with leading Irish companies including Druid, an Irish Theatre company which was set up in Galway itself and has now gone onto achieve international and national success.” With regard to Theatre, Galway International Arts Festival also produces its own theatre, touringboth nationally and internationally.  Theorganisation has produced or co-produced 15 productions in the last five yearsand, with its co-producing partners, has toured to London, Paris, New York, Edinburgh, Chicago, Adelaide, Sydney, Hong Kong and Washington”.

In 2017, similar to allprevious years there was a wide array of events to attend of all differentcategories, one of the reasons why this festival is so particularly unique; asunlike other big festivals held in Ireland, such as for example: forbiddenFruit, St. Patricks day Festival, Dublin Film Festival, it offers attendees awide range of types of events to attend rather than just one main one forexample music, then with different acts. The Galway Arts Festival offers; comedy, talks, spectacle, Theatre &Opera, Music and Visual Art. TheOrganisation for the GIAF, by creating this festival has significantly putGalway on the map. Not only as a key hub for the arts and culture but also thisfestival has made Galway’s a prime spot for tourists to be immersed with allthings culture, on top of the beautiful scenes from the wild Atlantic way whichwas already a popular choice for tourists. In 2017, the Galway Arts Festivalproduced a variety of artists such as The Coronas, Saint Sister and The Powerof Words to name a few. GIAF’s Chief Executive is John Crumlish and itsArtistic Director is Paul Fahy.

With regards to funding, the Galway art festival is a non-profit organisation and a registered charityand hence all of the money generated from each year goes towards the productionfor the next year’s festival. This money would go towards the likes of bulbsfor a set, costumes and also flights for artists flying over internationally forexample, however in saying this, it is also to be noticed that over 25% of thefestival’s programme is free. As the aim of this festival is for there not tobe any restrictions for those who want to enjoy or get involved with the arts. It now looks forward to playing a central role in the European Capital ofCulture imitative as Galway was the destination for Europe’s Cultural Capitalin 2020. The funders and partners of GIAF are; NUI Galway, Ulster Bank, FailteIreland, Wild Atlantic Way, The Arts Council and Galway 2020. From the16-29 July 2018 the 41st year of the Galway International ArtsFestival will take place, where it was announces that Irish Alternative rockband Walking on Cars will play at Live at the big top, while more acts aregoing to be announces in late December or early January.  Withregards to policy I will be focusing on Culture Irelands strategy for the yearsof 2017 leading up to 2020 in relation to the Galway Arts Festival I will thentalk about the European Culture Capital Initiative of 2020 in relation toGalway also. Themission statement of the idea, in its most basic form is to promote Irish art, to increase career opportunities for Irish artists and to also cement andstrengthen Ireland’s global profile and reputation through the arts.

There areseven actions in this policy. The firstaction is to provide resources such as funding, expert advice and promotionalsupports to the different Irish Art and cultural events nationally. This actwould ensure for example that funding would be delivered to whichever platformnecessary in the event taking place. It would also make sure of maintenance andupkeep of social media sites. With regards to the Galway, as some platforms ofthe event could be in more need of funding that others as well this would behelpful as the more promotion the festival receives the wider of an audience itwill have. The secondact is to showcase uniquely curated Irish art, Irish artists and to providenetworking opportunities at key events, festivals, in Ireland and toprogrammers and providers. This act not only ensures effective promotion but italso means the ability to track and evaluate the outcomes of performances.

The GalwayArts festival is one of the many examples of this second act in Ireland, as it showcasessome of Irelands most unique and rich talent and talented Irish Artists. Similarlythis act makes it available for organisers to see what did well maybe in othersyears and what didn’t so in future years, the festival will be able to producewhat the target audience really like. The thirdact is to work with research organisations and to deliver key culturalobjectives by working closely with Ireland’s cultural hubs on an annual fundingbasis. This act enable the working with resource bodies such as Irish theatreinstitute, dance Ireland and music networks, all organisations which have globalreach and will further opportunities for Irish artists abroad. The fourthaction is to strengthen Irelands International profile through government andstate promotion. This act also means the engagement with government supportedcultural centres abroad and with Irish foundations and associations.

An exampleof government and state promotion is when Michael D. Higgins the president ofIreland, wrote a personal letter to The Galway Arts Festival which was featuredon their website.  In this letter he gavenothing but praise towards the festival, how they had gone from strength tostrength and how it has “…sought to give witness to the power of creativeexploration”. Through this letter (and the power of governmental promotion)anyone would be more willing to go to the festival, more so tourists. The fifthaction is to advise and assist the minister for arts, heritage, regional, ruraland Gaeltacht affairs in working with creative Ireland but to also to maximisethe government investment in the wider interests throughout the country. Action5 ensures close working with the arts council (one of giaf’s funding partners)with regards to grant funding and international promotion of the arts.

The sixthaction is to maximise and help promote international cultural relationships andresearch in new global opportunities. This act would include attending a broadrange of cultural industry events to evaluate trends, and to also measure and analyseaudience attendance to inform for future funding. In relation to the GalwayArts festival, many relationships internationally have been formed, as the Galwayarts fest is not solely a festival celebrating national arts but one alike manyfestivals which inhabits talent from all over. Examples of acts coming overinclude the New York Theatre, blah, blah. Similarly some of the productionssuccesses have led to theatre productions from the festival touringinternationally to places such as Sidney, Edinburgh. By touring internationallythis will help raise awareness of not only the success of the festival but alsomaking other countries aware of what we have to offer her in Ireland. The finaland seventh action is to make a global footprint through culture Ireland andcreating a digital presence for target markets. The Galway Arts festival has achievedthis in the sense that they have a main website which ranges in informationsuch as the history of the festival to the programme of the next festival.

Itis also referenced on many Irish tourist websites such as the Galway tourismwebsite, discover Ireland as well as triavgo. It also has an email which willsend frequent newsletters while also having an Instagram, Facebook and twitterpage which are all easily accessible and means that one could keep up with allnotifications and proceedings of the festival. This last action is extremelyimportant as now that we are in a digital era, most people are using theirphones and other devices to keep updated.

As Imentioned earlier on Galway has been awarded the home of the European Capitalof Culture for 2020 along with Rijeka (Croatia). The European Capital ofCulture Initiative was developed in 1985 and has since been awarded to overfifty cities who are members of the European Union. The Initiatives’ aims areto highlight the diversity and richness of culture across Europe, celebrate thecommon features shared in culture across Europe, and Increase the sense ofbelonging for European citizens to a common cultural area and to foster thecontribution of culture to the development of Cities. This isalso an amazing opportunity as it raises the international profile of cities, boosts tourism, breathes a new life into cities and enhances the city in theeyes of its own citizens.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and it ismost rewarding that Galway has been chosen to represent Ireland to showcase theworld its creative and cultural aspects. With regards to thoughts on being the awardeesfor this initiative, the GIAF, shares on their website that Galway is “…a place where people come for a week and stay for good, a place whereartists are inspired and people find their place.” With regards to theory then, realistically the basis of policy is ontheory. So fundamentally in this circumstance the theory is with regards tofunding, promotion, international profile and government involvement in thecultural spectre. The way I understand theory is as a sort of cycle withregards to policy, as without theory there is nothing for policy to rely on. Ihave focused this way of thinking in relation to my key event as I focused onmy key event in relation to policy. The Galway Arts Festival is unique in thesense that it has many diverse art forms which are both inclusive and exclusiveas well as creating an impressive cultural profile for Ireland. But what is thetheory behind this? Are we naïve enough to think that the theories of fundingand promoting of the arts is solely for the purpose of having a more diverseculture and to enhance Ireland’s Cultural profile? The theory which seems mostevident to me with regards to this and many other Irish cultural events isfinancial aid.

The theory that this is the funding that is given towards thelikes of the Galway arts festival will eventually pay off when tourism in thatset location boosts with a 50% increase for example as because at the end ofthe day by creating networking, and high end promotions and also havingIrelands international profile as a place with a ‘ deeply rich and uniqueculture’, you are turning Irelands culture into a commodity, a sales pitch for touristswho will then visit Ireland, boost the economy and hence the cycle will repeatagain. It is clear that really the theory of it all is on the basis and thestability of the Irish Economy. One of the reading, which I think further this theory was from thereading list; Whither Cultural Policy in Post Celtic Tiger Ireland. It talksabout how when the economy was flourishing during the Celtic tiger, the artscouncil and the government were able to fund the arts a lot more heavily thanin contrast to when the economy flopped and the levels of funding severallydropped.

The Celtic tiger was from 1994-2008 – “ Between 1994 and 2008, ArtsCouncil funding rose by 40%” (slabey), which was fantastic that the arts werebeing so heavily funded but then in contrast, as soon as things went south “…it was announced that the overall cultural expenditure would be reduced by justunder 10%, the Arts Council’s grant by 12% and the budget of the nationalcultural institutions by 20%”. From this reading it sounds as though, becausethe funding was reduced, it gives of the idea, that the government or whomever itwas who decided to make these cuts only saw the arts and culture as a leisure. Like in the sense I would only by myself coffee if I had the money to spend butnot if I was broke. So therefore it is my opinion that the theory behind these culturalevents in unfortunately to benefit the economy.