

Business to Arts Awards 2026

Information Pack

If you have any questions regarding this document, please contact the Business to Arts team by [email](#)

Share the story of your creative partnership

The Business to Arts Awards recognise businesses, philanthropists, artists, and arts organisations that develop creative partnerships. Shortlisted partnerships focus on arts sponsorship, commissioning of artists, staff engagement, CSR initiatives, philanthropy, creative access programmes, creative sustainability projects, and community engagement. Many of the collaborations are the result of long-term relationships. All of the shortlist demonstrate the importance of supporting the arts and the impact that can be made by quality partnerships.

It is more important than ever to champion partnerships that continue and are evolving. Nominate your partnership to join the prestigious list of winners, which demonstrate the very best models developed in Ireland.

The closing date for receipt of entries is **midnight, Thursday 16th April 2026**.

Our Sponsors

2026 will mark the 34th edition of the Business to Arts Awards, taking place at the National Concert Hall on Monday, 7th September 2026. Our supporters and sponsors include Accenture, Catapult, CBRE, Community Foundation Ireland, ESB, Irish Life, The Irish Times, TileStyle, and our venue partner, the National Concert Hall.

This year, Catapult will commission the award sculpture presented to the winners of the



Business to Arts Awards. In recent years, the artists commissioned have included Noel Donnellan (Limerick), Emmett Kane (Kildare), Kathleen Walsh (Dublin), Emma Bourke (Mayo), Ed Miliano (Dublin), Kevin Callaghan (Cork) and Cara Murphy (Down). The next commissioned artist will be announced in July 2026.

For the 18th year, we mark the memory of our good friend, and former Chair, Jim McNaughton with two awards that celebrate the commissioning process and emerging artists sponsored by TileStyle and the McNaughton Family.

 **accenture**

CATAPULT
We make brands human

CBRE

THE IRISH TIMES

 **ESB** Energy for generations

 **Irish Life**

NCH An Ceoláras Náisiúnta National Concert Hall

Community Foundation Ireland

 **TileStyle**
TILES | BATHROOMS | KITCHENS | WOOD



Award Categories

As well as arts sponsorship, the Awards seek to embrace and recognise examples of arts and business organisations working in areas such as commissioning artists, CSR initiatives, mentoring, training, staff development, philanthropy, etc. Projects must have taken place between **January 2025 and April 2026**.

Please bear in mind that your partnership may be eligible for more than one category.

CBRE Major Arts Partnership Award

- This award recognises outstanding large-scale partnerships between businesses and arts organisations or artists, with a value of €25,000 or more (cash or in-kind).

Winning collaborations will demonstrate ambition, strategic alignment, and meaningful impact for both partners, showing how significant investment can enable artistic excellence and deliver shared value.

Small Arts Partnership Award

- This award recognises exceptional partnerships between businesses and arts organisations/artists where the sponsorship is less than €25k in value, cash or in-kind.

Winning collaborations will demonstrate creativity, strong alignment between partners, and meaningful impact, showing how partnerships of all scales can deliver significant artistic and business value.

The Irish Times Long-Term Partnership Award

- This award recognises enduring and impactful partnerships that have been in place for three years or more and have demonstrated growth and evolution over time.

Winning collaborations will show how the partnership has deepened, expanded its reach, introduced new strands of activity, or developed innovative approaches to engagement and participation.



Irish Life Creativity in the Community Award

- This award recognises partnerships that work collaboratively with community groups to address specific social issues through creative projects and programmes.

Winning initiatives will demonstrate meaningful engagement, community voice, and clear social impact, using creativity as a tool to strengthen connection, wellbeing, and local resilience. Projects should align with the social impact strategies of both partners.

Community Foundation Ireland Arts Philanthropy Award

- This award celebrates an individual, foundation, trust, or corporate philanthropic organisation whose generosity and leadership have made a meaningful difference to the arts in Ireland.

Nominations must demonstrate how philanthropic support provided within the eligible period has enabled artistic ambition, strengthened organisations, or delivered measurable cultural or social impact. Submissions should reference a specific project, programme, or defined suite of arts funding active during that period.

Nominations may be submitted by the arts beneficiary, the philanthropic entity, or a third party with their knowledge and support.

ESB Creative Sustainability Award

- This award recognises creative partnerships that explore and highlight environmental and climate issues through artistic programming and sustainable practice.

Winning initiatives may raise awareness, open public dialogue, or encourage positive change around issues such as climate action, biodiversity, or the circular economy. Projects may also demonstrate leadership in environmentally responsible production and delivery.

This award honours the power of arts and culture in shaping a greener future.



Creative Access Award

- This award recognises partnerships that remove barriers and expand access to the arts for marginalised or underrepresented groups.

Winning initiatives will demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusion, representation, and equitable participation, whether through targeted programming, outreach, or practical supports that enable more people to engage fully in the arts.

Jim McNaughton/TileStyle Perpetual Award for Best Commissioning Practice

- This award is presented annually to a business or organisation that has demonstrated excellence in commissioning an artist in any artform.

Winning entries will evidence a transparent and well-managed commissioning process, clear communication, fair and appropriate remuneration, and meaningful engagement with the artist throughout. Successful collaborations will show genuine partnership from concept to completion, with a strong commitment to artistic integrity and the creation of a high-quality and engaging work.

Created in honour of Jim McNaughton, a tireless champion of the arts, the perpetual award is crafted by sculptor Jason Ellis.

Creativity in the Workplace

- This award celebrates partnerships that engage employees in the arts and embed creativity within company culture.

Winning initiatives may include artist residencies, commissions, workshops, performances, creative engagement programmes, or structured in-kind and pro bono collaborations involving staff. Successful entries will demonstrate how collaboration with the arts has strengthened employee engagement, fostered connection, and contributed to a more creative and inclusive organisational culture.



Jim McNaughton/TileStyle €10,000 Artists Bursary

- Now in its 18th year, our longest-running bursary awards €10,000 to an emerging artist in any artform seeking to expand and develop their practice, whether through a specific project or broader professional development. The bursary supports artistic ambition, experimentation, and growth at a pivotal stage in an artist's career.

Accenture €10,000 Digital Innovation in Art Bursary

- This bursary recognises artists whose work delivers on the promise of technology and human ingenuity. The €10,000 award supports artists who are exploring digital tools, platforms, or processes to expand creative practice and engage audiences in new ways.

Activities listed in your application to be funded by the Bursary should take place between October 2026 and September 2027.

All the categories above can be entered via the online entry form located at www.businessstoarts.ie/awards

Closing date for entries is **midnight, Thursday 16th April 2026**.

Two further Awards will be presented on the night which cannot be applied for and are decided by the judges on Judging Day :

Judges' Special Recognition

- Selected at the discretion of the judging panel from submissions across the main award categories, this award cannot be applied for directly.

It recognises a partnership, organisation, or initiative whose work in the year under review merits special distinction. The award may honour exceptional



collaboration, innovation, leadership, or impact that has made a significant contribution to arts and business engagement.

The Irish Times €5,000 Arts Award

- This €5,000 cash prize recognises an arts organisation whose project distinguishes itself through artistic quality, ambition, and impact.

Chosen from entries across the main award categories, the award highlights outstanding work and provides additional support to further its development. It cannot be applied for directly.



Judging Criteria

The Business to Arts Awards champion outstanding relationships between businesses, artists, and arts organisations. The Awards seek exceptional partnerships in areas such as sponsorship, commissioning, training and events, staff programmes, CSR initiatives, and community engagement. In their evaluation, the judging panel focuses on the level of success and creativity in achieving both the business and arts organisations (or individual artists') objectives, the history behind the partnership and how the partnership has been successfully activated.

Your entry will be judged on the following points:

- How the partnership came into existence, its evolution, and duration
- The key objectives and targets established for the partnership and the strategies used to successfully activate the partnership, e.g. marketing campaigns, bespoke events, branding, PR, staff engagement, etc.
- The factors that make the relationship both innovative and special for both parties
- An overview of the activation spend, including the cash and/or in-kind sponsorship budget allocated and its percentage of the overall project budget. (This must be included but will be treated in the strictest confidence). This will assist the judging panel in understanding if the return was commensurate with the spend
- How both partners measure the success of the partnership, and an overview of your main achievements
- The key impact and outcomes of the partnership

The judging panel will apply these criteria irrespective of the scale or financial value of the partnership.



Entry Procedure

To enter a project, event, or individual for an award, the business and the arts organisation/artist should complete the online entry form located via our Awards applications platform

<https://businessstoarts.awardsplatform.com/>

The online entry form consists of a series of questions, all of which must be completed and which relate to the judging criteria listed above.

This is an online entry system, allowing your nomination to be saved and amended before final submission ahead of the closing date of **midnight, Thursday 16th April 2026**.

Upon registering, you will receive an email confirming your log-in details. Once the entry deadline is reached, the system will automatically prevent any additional submissions.

If you have any questions on the entry process or if you have access issues and require support, please contact the Business to Arts team by email awards@businessstoarts.ie, and they will be able to assist you.



Rules

1. The **Business to Arts Awards 2026** are open to all businesses and organisations promoting, supporting, and working with artists (of whatever nationality) or the arts within the Republic of Ireland, and to all businesses promoting Irish arts or Irish arts organisations overseas. Heritage, craft, and design-related partnerships are also eligible for entry.
2. Nominated partnership activity should have taken place between **January 2025 and April 2026**. Your application will need to address the outputs and outcomes of the partnership, so please consider this thoroughly when preparing to apply.
3. Businesses, philanthropists, and other organisations that have engaged with more than one arts project, artist, or arts organisation may submit more than one entry.
4. In cases where an arts project, artist, or arts organisation has more than one partner, each business partner relationship is eligible to be entered, but a separate entry must be submitted and stands alone. This rule will not apply where two or more businesses have collaborated jointly on a single project or sponsorship.
5. In cases where an arts project is eligible for more than one category, separate entries can be submitted in **a maximum of two categories only**.
6. Activities listed in application(s) to be funded by the **Jim McNaughton/TileStyle €10,000 Bursary for Artists** and/or **Accenture €10,000 Digital Innovation in Art Bursary** should take place between October 2026 and September 2027.
7. **Jim McNaughton/TileStyle €10,000 Bursary for Artists** will be awarded towards the development of an artist's practice, body of work, or a project by an emerging artist(s) in any art form. Nominations must be made by a partnering business, arts or other organisation. The recipient(s) of the Jim McNaughton/TileStyle €10,000 Bursary for Artists will be asked to acknowledge TileStyle's support as appropriate, as a funder of any final output/project, and provide short interim and completion reports to TileStyle and Business to Arts to verify progress and completion of the agreed work.
8. All entries are eligible for the **Judges' Special Recognition Award for Portfolio of Partnerships**. The judging panel will be looking for businesses or arts



organisations that feature across several applications, showing evidence of an exceptional portfolio approach to sponsorship, the scale of their sponsorship, or longevity in supporting the arts.

9. Projects supported solely through a standard grant scheme, where the funder's involvement is limited to the provision of funding and routine reporting, are not eligible. Eligible projects must demonstrate an active partnership relationship beyond financial support.
10. The Community Foundation Ireland Arts Philanthropy Award recognises an individual, organisation or philanthropic initiative whose giving has made a significant impact on the arts. This award honours the donor, rather than a business–arts partnership.
11. All entries are eligible for **The Irish Times €5,000 Arts Award**. The judging panel will be looking to recognise excellence in delivery and innovative ideation. The recipient(s) of the Award will be asked to acknowledge The Irish Times' support as appropriate, as a funder of any final output/project; and provide short interim and completion reports to The Irish Times and Business to Arts to verify progress and completion of the agreed work.
12. Business to Arts reserves the right to publish the names of all nominated business sponsors and associated organisations, artists, or events.
13. Business to Arts reserves the right to use any content and attachments submitted through the entry process, except the monetary values provided, which shall be held confidential by Business to Arts and the judges, but aggregated to inform our annual Private Investment in the Arts Reports.
14. The decisions of the judging panel will be final, and neither Business to Arts nor the sponsors will enter into discussion or communication in respect of any entry or result.