

Macnas Dreams Beyond Initiations

Contents

History	02
Executive Summary	04
Who We Are	08
Vision	10
The Macnas Mission	12
Strategic Context	14
Strategic Objectives	15
Marketing Macnas	20
Artistic Plans	21
Intended Outcomes	22
Creative Programme Plans	24
Productions	29

Macnas (noun)

(n.) The frolicking behaviour of a young calf let out to grass for the first time after being kept inside all winter – joyful abandonment, dalliance and wantonness.

History

Macnas is a creative ensemble based in Galway, Ireland. It has blazed an artistic trail around the world ever since its founding in 1986. The company made its first big splash in the 1980s when it floated A giant 30 Foot Gulliver (a large scale puppet) down the River Liffey in Dublin City. Its next big bang was touring with U2 and celebrating at the MTV music awards in the 1990s, and it went on to celebrate the millennium by suspending A giant “20 foot long” baby over Times Square in New York. In the 2000s these street arts traders descended upon theatres and warehouses to deliver a series of award-winning shows, trading outdoor for indoor spectacle theatre. Since 2011 these guardians of the unpredictable have walked a 15-foot-tall boy explorer and his butterfly across Australia on a quest for brilliant ideas. They brought in the Chinese New Year in Beijing, amazed the public in London with a 20-foot-tall giant, and in 2016 became the first spectacle company in the world to premiere at the renowned South by Southwest (SXSW) Festival in Texas. Macnas continues to pioneer innovative work across the streets of Ireland and across the world.

“Neighbourhoods become mythologised, city centres are transformed into playgrounds of imagination.”

Executive Summary

Welcome to the Macnas Five-Year Strategy, covering the period 2016–2021. It sets out our mission and vision, emphasising our core values. Macnas’s remit is to make brilliant new work of excellence, innovation and vision. Our ambition is to deliver the highest quality work in large-scale theatre spectacle and interactive outdoor and indoor performance.

Macnas is renowned as Ireland’s pioneering company in street arts and spectacle theatre. It was the first company in Ireland to take theatre onto the streets, creating artistic shows on any site – football pitches, abandoned warehouses, community centres, rooftops, boats, and trucks, and eventually moving into theatres. The company’s unique and revolutionary art includes creative collaborations with musicians, sporting legends, playwrights, visual artists, counterculture performance artists, communities, actors, and dancers.

Over the next five years, Macnas will put itself on a secure financial footing as the premier theatre spectacle and performance company in Ireland by increasing support from existing funders and attracting new funders in order to deliver on its ambitious plans for the future. Currently the work of Macnas is presented free to the public and takes the form of large-scale shows for audiences of over 40,000. With limitations on funding due to public expenditure cutbacks over recent years, it

brings into focus the need to have leadership promoting the sector and the importance to explore alternative sources of finance. We need to develop new dynamic funding partnerships with existing national arts institutions and organisations. It is equally important that Macnas drive growth by creating alternative funding streams alongside existing relationships to create a sustainable proactive environment for spectacle theatre and the outdoor arts in Ireland.

Macnas has a strong commitment to continue and support the delivery of large-scale spectacle work nationally and internationally for future generations. Macnas has nurtured a new company of young performers and visual artists over the last seven years. This year Macnas delivered masterclasses in the UK at the Roundhouse in London, and in the US in partnership with Texas State University, San Marco, and the University of Texas in Austin. In Ireland, Macnas has students on placement from Dún Laoghaire Institute of Design & Technology, the Lir Academy and National University of Ireland Galway, enabling the company to develop the strength and depth of creative talent in the sector. Macnas also supports the development of creative talent through its weekly community and public engagement workshops. Macnas intend to encourage, in particular, new and emerging talent in the sector through its

Young Ensemble scheme, which operates weekly all year round. The goal is a vibrant future for artistic quality and excellence, developing the next generation of spectacle artist.

Macnas is recognised worldwide for its quality and innovation, promoting the sector and generating work for Irish artists. The work produced by Macnas reaches across every socio-economic divide and affords everyone the opportunity to experience high-quality artistic and immersive events that are free to the public. It creates economic and cultural value, generating engagement, employment and an awareness of the vital role the arts play in our lives. Macnas contributes to Ireland’s image as a dynamic and innovative country, and highlights our potential as an exciting, diverse, world-class arts culture in the 21st century.

Noeline Kavanagh

Artistic Director and CEO, Macnas Ireland



***“A sense of creativity
lurking around corners,
catching the Audience
unawares”***

Irish Times, 2014

“Unforgettable”

The Observer, 2014

***“Macnas, the ultimate
creators of fantasy”***

The Irish Independent, 2013

***“Simply
Spectacular”***

Huffington Post, 2014

***“Way larger than
life!”***

SXSW, 2016

madonas

Who We Are

Macnas specialise in making extraordinary interactive spectacle theatre for audiences, communities and festivals globally. Macnas is an award-winning, internationally acclaimed company that works across diverse art forms and landscapes, creating phenomenal worlds where epic stories emerge and journeys begin.





Vision

Macnas tells spectacular stories, designs epic creations and celebrates vast engagement, creating larger-than-life spectacle theatre, parades and street shows. The audience is at the heart of the art in a Macnas performance.

The company combine text, performance, large-scale design, mask, dramaturgy, kinaesthetic sculpture, music, dance and visual art. We unleash creative chaos, invention and imagination.

We engage vast audiences of over 40,000 people, where every site becomes a stage and a playground of imagination. Neighbourhoods are mythologised, city centres are transformed, the public walk amongst giants, young people become seers, bus drivers become warriors, and taxi drivers become beggars and kings.

“The audience are at the heart of the art in a Macnas performance.”

Inclusive. Open.

Diverse. Accountable.

Professional. Creative.

Communicative.

Supportive. Equal.

Ambitious. Fun.

Mission

The Macnas mission is to make brilliant new work of excellence, innovation, and vision. The company will to grow a dynamic company engaging new artists and collaborators. Over the next five years, Macnas will diversify the creative programme, developing dynamic artistic collaborations across a myriad of art forms, both indoor and outdoor. The company will pursue national and international creative collaborations and partnerships, and is committed to developing the next generation of world-class street and spectacle theatre performers, makers, and designers. Macnas will ensure the up-skilling, training and professional development of Macnas artists, thus enabling further growth and expansion for the company and the sector. It is also the company's ambition to expand and create innovative new public engagement programmes and develop new audiences.

Delivering on the Macnas mission by:

Providing artistic vision and direction, taking creative risks and connecting to artists and innovators.

Investing in the public and constantly striving to find new ways of engaging and collaborating with audiences. Working with stakeholders in cities and towns, encouraging collaboration from across all aspects of the organisations we engage with.

Promoting the continued evolution of our art form through collaborations across diverse creative platforms, and exploring possibilities for new forms of staging spectacle theatre.

Engaging with international festivals and producers, and developing sustainable touring models with our existing

repertoire to enable Macnas to reach a global audience.

Experiencing international work to afford new insights and collaborations for existing and emerging artists. As part of the company's core policy, Macnas runs a public workshop scheme facilitated by professional artists and has connections to educational institutions, identifying and collaborating with the next generation of Macnas artist.

Macnas Goals

Make brilliant new work of excellence and innovation.

Be recognized for a consistently high standard of work.

Reach new audiences.

Strengthen industry and community relationships.

Maintain a strong and balanced infrastructure for the company.

Increase funding and diversify programme.



Strategic Context

2016-2021

Promote, develop, and resource the company's artistic vision and commitment to creating work of excellence.

Maintain a financially strong, balanced company and diversify earning potential through new initiatives.

Operate sustainably, adding to community well-being.

Source new funding and renegotiate funding structures with existing stakeholders to address resourcing issues.

Foster creative succession by developing the next generation of artists in spectacle theatre and outdoor arts. Nurture professional progression by up-skilling mid-career spectacle artists in the company and the sector.

Diversify the artistic programme to ensure dynamic programming and creative innovation in the sector.

Key challenges for Macnas and our sector

Macnas is in the midst of a creative renaissance, which began in 2011. The company presented award-winning spectacle shows in Ireland in association with the Dublin Fringe Festival, and toured internationally collaborating with globally recognised festivals such as Womad in Australia, Wilderness in the UK, and SXSW in the U.S..

Spectacle theatre and outdoor arts are clearly valued and appreciated by audiences and festivals – what is needed is the framework to harness this momentum. The principal challenges and opportunities we need to address include:

Being a stronger voice for the sector as an art form in the cultural life of Ireland.

Raising awareness about the cost of staging spectacle and highlighting the value gained from this investment through the scale of the work and the access to large audiences.

Promoting the creative talent and diverse art forms in making spectacle and outdoor work of excellence, helping to identify, nurture, and promote creative talent to sustain the company.

Being recognised by partners and stakeholders as a stand-alone genre, as is the case with film and theatre.

Investing in up-skilling and training mid-career artists to aid growth and maintain standards of excellence in the sector.

Ensuring that Macnas has the required infrastructure in place to support large-scale epic productions.

Strategic Objectives



01

Expand revenue streams to fully support and resource an organisation that can realise the artistic vision.

Create new funding opportunities through network-affiliated funding programmes such as Creative Europe and In Situ.

Engage a title sponsor for the Macnas parade. Sustain strong artistic leadership. Apply for project-specific awards and bursaries through established funding agencies and partners regionally and nationally.

Restore Macnas funding levels with the Arts Council.

Identify new funding pathways and partnerships.



02

Support innovation and diversification of the artistic programme.

Identify co-producers and corporate partners to support new work in indoor spectacle theatre.

Discover new pathways by collaborating across various disciplines, including digital platforms, dance, theatre, text, visual art, fashion design, animation and film.

Collaborate with national institutions and organisations such as IMMA (Irish Museum of Modern Art) and Poetry Ireland.

03

Nurture relationships with key stakeholders.

Continue to present work of excellence, aligning with the Arts Council's aims and objectives outlined in the Arts Council's strategic plan. Update the Arts Council frequently on the work of the company.

Ensure that the Council sees all new work. Work on advocacy, brand identity and marketing to keep stakeholders informed and updated on all activities.

04

Embrace diversity and gender equality in all its forms.

Ensure the participation and representation of the full range of diverse voices in our work.

Enhance the skills and capacities of creative decision makers on diversity and equality issues.



05

Identify key additional resource requirements in order to support high-quality work and to achieve critical success nationally and internationally.

Increase the core staff to support the execution and delivery of high-quality work.

Specify activities that require particular expertise in the company that can be outsourced. Identify skills that will help the company engage with established international festivals and co-producers.

Identify opportunities to afford mid-career Macnas artists the platform to up-skill and continue their professional development.



09

Secure new strategic partnerships with national academic institutions to increase the potential to support the next generation of world-class street and spectacle artists.

Macnas to propose a national academy for parade and spectacle to the Arts Council, and explore revenue strands in government agencies to develop this concept. Continue to develop the work of the young ensemble and public participation programme. Build a portfolio of International workshop and master class opportunities for Macnas artists to deliver. Identify and formalise relationships with national academic institutions.

07

Ensure Macnas has a permanent home and storage facility.

Formalise our existing relationship with NUI Galway to ensure our permanent physical presence on campus.

Develop strategic relationships with the executive of the University to secure a mutually beneficial partnership that secures revenue for Macnas and a useful brand outcome for NUI Galway.

06

Develop new audiences.

Create a dynamic artistic programme.

Integrate branding into company philosophies and activities.

Continue national and international touring programmes.

Deliver creative experiences online.

Invest in the public and constantly strive to find new ways of engaging and collaborating with audiences.

Work with stakeholders in cities and towns, encouraging collaboration from across all aspects of the organisation (with whom) we engage.

Support early engagement between producers and collaborators, and create incentives that support early partnership.



10

Position the sector as a strategically important contributor to the cultural and economic life of Ireland.

Establish a partnership between Macnas and Galway City Council to develop a multi-annual funding model which allows for artistic development and growth. Engage in conversations with city planners on the role of spectacle and the use of public space and urban infrastructure. Work in collaboration with stakeholders and partners to make Ireland a key international destination where outdoor arts enthusiasts and professionals can engage in spectacle theatre.

08

Ensure all professional artists are remunerated and supported.

Macnas follows industry recommended rates for artists' remuneration, it is a very strongly held value of the company to safeguard the well-being of the artist in terms of pay and general conditions. Artists are paid in a timely fashion.



*“We
Release
Creative
Chaos...”*

Marketing Macnas

The following is the strategic direction Macnas wishes to take in marketing:

Build brand awareness

We want to build on current perceptions of Macnas as a provider of world-class theatre spectacle and performance. At the heart of the work lies creativity, inspiration and exploration with new and established audiences.

Engage audiences through digital media and new technologies

We are looking to identify highly engaged followers online, and have invested in activity to speak directly to this digital audience by implementing new e-marketing software, online videos, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. A number of our productions also involve digital technology, and the Macnas Parade has ongoing digital artistic exploration.

Develop social opportunities for audiences to connect with each other and with the company

Within programming we have launches, forums, discussions, and nights with the artists, sponsors, and partners.

Strengthen and develop partnerships

We aim to expand marketing contracts and promotional partnerships through longer-term sponsorship for better market positioning. We are also developing reciprocal activities with other entertainment, leisure, and tourism organisations.

Instigate and participate in audience and industry research

We plan to conduct further audience surveys to gauge audience satisfaction after each production, in order to better serve and enhance the public's experience.

Artistic Plans

Macnas will present great work to meet the needs of our audiences. This could be in Ireland or internationally and will include new approaches to spectacle, and collaborating with other art forms. The company will present work anywhere. We will not limit ourselves to traditional outdoor contexts, we will strive to diversify our programme to reach new audiences across indoor sites and venues. We will continue to stage work of innovation and excellence in outdoor parades, spectacle and street shows. We will build and develop partnerships with national and international festivals and organisations.

Re-imagining Parade

Develop new interactive, creative, and evolutionary ways of delivering parade performance in Ireland.

Incorporate dramaturgy to develop the parade, creating a complete narrative structure to realise a full, immersive theatrical experience out on the streets.

Collaborate with cutting-edge and next-generation artists in digital technology, visual arts, script writing, performance art, fashion design, music technology and choreography. These collaborations will keep the parade exciting, innovative and diverse.

Develop the annual Macnas parade in Galway telling audiences the story of a lead character over two years. The opportunity to grow and change a parade character alongside the audience as they themselves grow in age. The potential for an audience to invest in a character and get familiar with a story, leading to new ways of connecting, immersing and engaging with audiences and parade participants year on year.

Macnas intends to increase parade audiences and extend audience engagement by creating an interactive media experience that brings the physical parade into the digital world. The interactive experience will allow Macnas to draw both national and international audiences into the world of the parade in advance of the parade itself. We envision that from May 2017 audiences will be invited (via social media channels) to enter an interactive website, where the back-story and characters of the parade will be revealed across a specific timeline. The online media will be supplemented by a mobile app, which will use augmented reality to bring elements of the parade into the audience members' physical world, creating a magical overlap of the digital and the real.

Intended Outcomes

The parade narrative allows the story to be circulated in advance, incorporating the use of digital media and new technology platforms into the parade genre.

Locations around the city to incorporate elements of the parade story allowing the parade narrative to be grown into a multi-annual event across unexpected public sites in the Galway City and County.

Leading international guest artists can be invited to collaborate on the parade cycle, developing new sustainable partnerships with professional national and international artists who excel in the field of spectacle and street arts.

Our aim is to reach new audiences by creating a space to innovate, up-skilling the core artistic company, diversifying practice in the parade genre, and delivering excellent spectacle theatre to new audiences.

***“We Will Strive
To Diversify Our
Programme To Reach
New Audiences”***

*“Macnas aims
to grow dynamic
artistic opportunities,
developing creative
collaborations with
other artistic genres.”*

Diversify The Creative Programme

Macnas wants to develop innovative and creative ways of delivering spectacle theatre shows indoors as well as outdoors. Galway has been awarded the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2020. Macnas will present Gilgamesh (at) ECOC 2020. This will be a large-scale project that will re-imagine the art form of how spectacle can be presented. This project aims to shatter social, economic, and ideological barriers to create a moment of communion, ensuring that the art form maintains a freshness and energy and an evolution.

Gilgamesh

Gilgamesh will be a theatrical spectacle show taking inspiration from a literary epic a thousand years older than Homer. Gilgamesh will be staged as a show in three acts over one year. Each act is a self-contained show and fully complete.

Our ambition for this project is absolute, as we endeavor to engage the public working with 1500 volunteer performers across multi-disciplinary platforms in Galway City and County, making any site a stage. ECOC affords Macnas the opportunity to diversify its creative programme in presenting work in the genres of indoor theatre spectacle, performance art, public art, and installation and outdoor spectacle.

The Connemara bog and the Aran Islands, a disused factory, suburbs, mosques, churches, mountains, boats, and buses all become the stage.

The Crom Project

Working with choreographer Emma Martin, composer/saxophonist Sean Mac Erlaine, and dramaturgist Dan Colley, developing a theatre spectacle show.

Through choreography, narrative composition, and live music, large-scale images can be brought to life in a theatrical setting and context. Performed in one specific site, this show has the potential to tour to different disused buildings in cities and towns

Macnas Presents A New Work By Kevin Barry

Macnas will collaborate with acclaimed author Kevin Barry to create a street show which interacts with the city in which it is performed. It will bring an audience of 20-30 people on a journey where the city becomes the set for the show.

This concept merges the company's physical theatre and visual aesthetic with a script in a street context, whilst also using pop-up indoor venues to help animate aspects of the story.

IMMA

Macnas is keen to collaborate with IMMA to present work in a dynamic setting. Aligning Macnas's visual and kinaesthetic style to a contemporary visual art environment would be a new departure for the company. This innovative concept would be a very exciting approach; presenting a Macnas performance with large scale images on the grounds of IMMA as an interactive visual and visceral spectacle event in partnership with the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

Poetry Ireland

Macnas would like to partner with Poetry Ireland and work with a contemporary Irish poet to create a large scale theatrical interpretation of the poet's work, presenting this visual and performance spectacle show across a myriad of sites and landscapes in urban and rural settings.

National Horizons

Macnas will look at creating multi-annual parade opportunities for other cities in Ireland, engaging with local communities, increasing public engagement, and fostering a parade culture. Macnas will tour a repertoire of mid-scale and large-scale productions, the work created as part of the core annual parade, creating new possibilities for income, and exploring avenues to tour our existing repertoire in the festival network in Ireland.

International Promotion and Touring

Macnas will engage an international associate producer to promote the company's work around the world, maximise touring opportunities, and create new collaborations and partnerships for investment, commissioning and co-production. Our existing relationships and reputation in the Irish Embassy Network and international cultural agencies give us valuable connections and opportunities to perform at events and festivals globally.

The Macnas Board

In order to ensure that we meet our objectives, the Board will implement sub-committees to oversee each strategy and to meet formally each year to revise plans and revisit implementation goals.

The Board will review reporting structure to ensure there is a clear path of responsibility for implementation.

The Board will ensure rotation of its own members to ensure that all gaps are met.

The Board will oversee the development of a succession plan for the artistic direction of the company.



SAN JACINTO BLVD
600



Productions 2010-2016

2016

South by Southwest Festival, Austin Texas**
Crom St. Patrick's Day Parade, London**
Macnas 30th Celebration Parade, Galway
Maya the Elephant

2015

Maya the Elephant -Clifden Arts Festival
Alive! Arise!
Bram Stoker Festival
The Shadow Lighter
Macnas Halloween Parade Galway
Boy Explorer Tour
Taste of Cavan Festival
Westport Arts Festival
Whose kingdom is it Anyway?
Vilnius Culture Night, Lithuania**
Valentia Isle Festival
St. Patrick's Day Parade, Galway
St. Patrick's Day Parade, Londonderry

**** International**

2014

The Journey of Tilda
Woodford Folk Festival, Australia **
RUMPUS!!
Limerick City of Culture
Finale Procession and Performance
Wilderness Festival, UK **
Symphony for the Restless
Macnas Halloween Parade Galway
St. Patrick's Day Parade, Moscow**
St. Patrick's Day Parade Dublin
Boy Explorer Tour
St. Patrick's Day Parade, Londonderry
Aras an Uachtaráin
The Summoning
Bram Stoker Festival Dublin
Chaosmos
Culture Night Dublin
Waltzing Bear
St. Patrick's Festival Limerick

2013

This Fierce Beauty
Macnas Parade
Chaosmos 2013
Chaoyang Spring Carnival, Beijing **
Kilkenny Arts Festival
Dublin Fringe Festival
Cockroach and the Inventor Tour 2013
St. Patrick's Festival Cork
Shorelines Arts Festival
Life of Reilly Festival Cavan
Féile Iorrais Belmullet
Body and Soul Festival
Dundrum Arts Festival
Foynes Festival
Drogheda Arts Festival
St. Patrick's Festival Limerick
Boy Explorer Tour
WOMADelaideFestival, Australia **
St. Patrick's Festival Sydney & Brisbane**
St. Patrick's Festival Parade, Moscow **
St. Patrick's Day Parade, Dublin

2012

Cockroach and the Inventor
Big Day Out, St. Patrick's Festival Dublin
Terryglass Arts Festival
ABSOLUT Fringe Festival Dublin
RUMPUS!!
ABSOLUT Fringe Festival Dublin
Mallow Easter Festival
Drogheda Arts Festival
St. Patrick's Parade Moscow**
St. Patrick's Parade Cork
This Thunderous Heart
Macnas Galway Parade
The Brass Hound
Durham International Brass Festival

2011

Boy Explorer and his Quest for Brilliant Ideas
Four province tour Connacht, Ulster, Munster and
Leinster schools programme.
Fierce Beauty
Macnas Galway Parade
On the edge of things is a Fierce Beauty
Dublin Fringe Festival
RUMPUS!!
Cork Midsummer Festival
St. Patrick's Festival Dublin

2010

The Wild Hunt and the Sleepwalker
Dublin Fringe Festival

macnas

Macnas
Fisheries Field,
Salmon Weir Bridge,
Co. Galway
Ireland

Artistic Director
Noeline Kavanagh
noeline@macnas.com

✉ admin@macnas.com

☎ +353 91 568896 / 561462

🌐 www.macnas.com

f www.facebook.com/macnas

🐦 www.twitter.com/macnasIreland

16/21