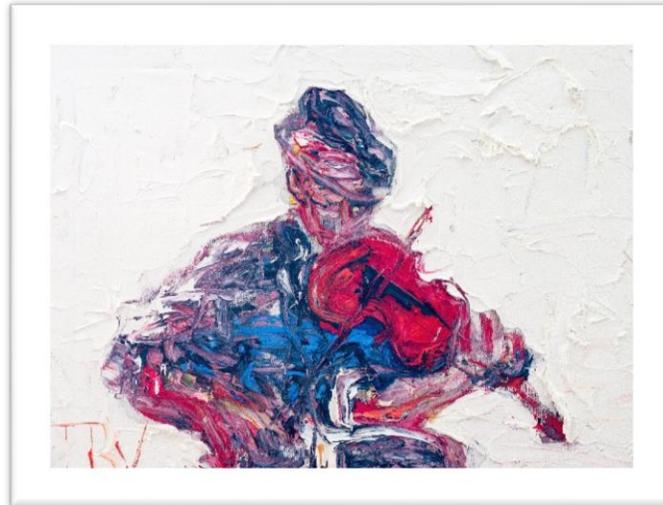


Green Curtain Theatre C.I.C.
Every Picture Tells a Story
Writing Competition
Presentation for contestants



Welcome

We welcome entries from non experienced and experienced writers

For how to enter go to <http://www.irishinlondontheatre.co.uk/every-picture-tells-a-story>



Have a go. Remember that: “Writing is only speech that has been written down”

And which nation has “talking” as its national pastime?

What do we mean by ‘inspired by’ a painting?

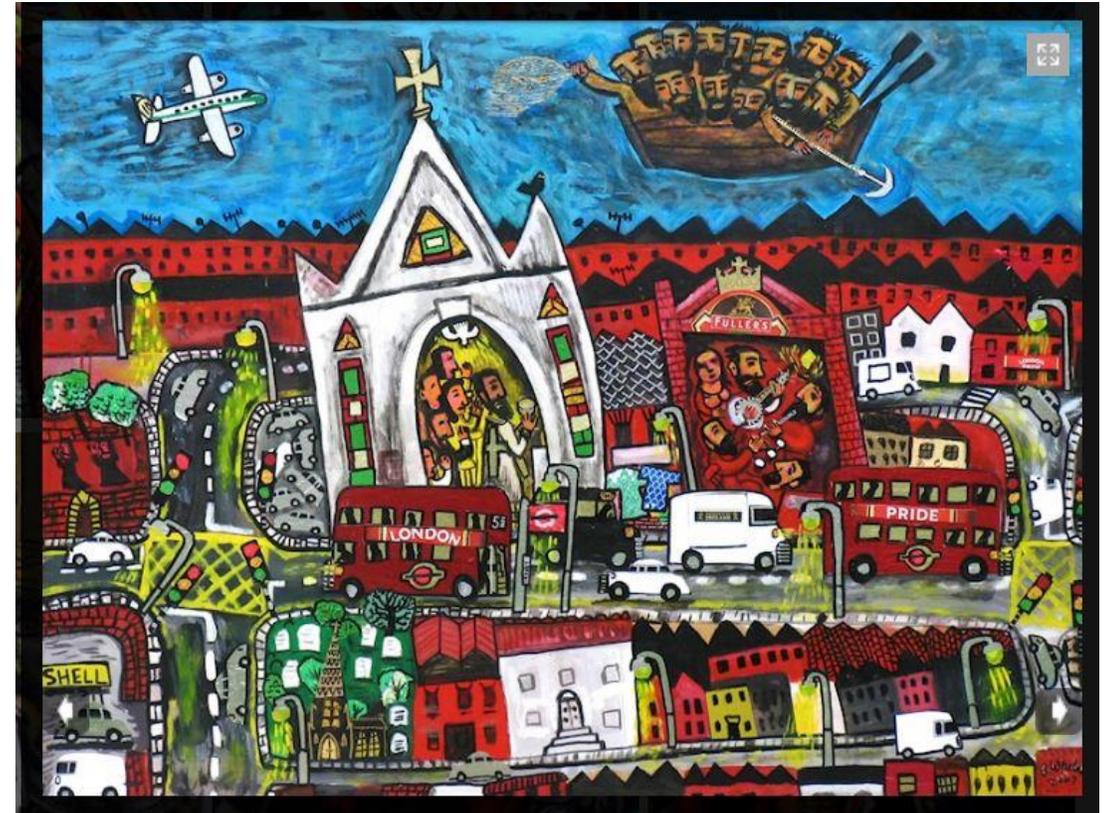
A clear connection must be made between the writing and the painting

- ▶ Some ideas of how to do this
 - ▶ Get one of the characters in the paintings to speak
 - ▶ Imagine the thoughts of an inanimate object or an animal in the picture
- ▶ Use the painting as a basis for a memory of something similar or something more abstract
 - ▶ Were you there?
 - ▶ Was someone you know there?
 - ▶ How does the painting make you feel?
 - ▶ Remember you must set your painting in the UK

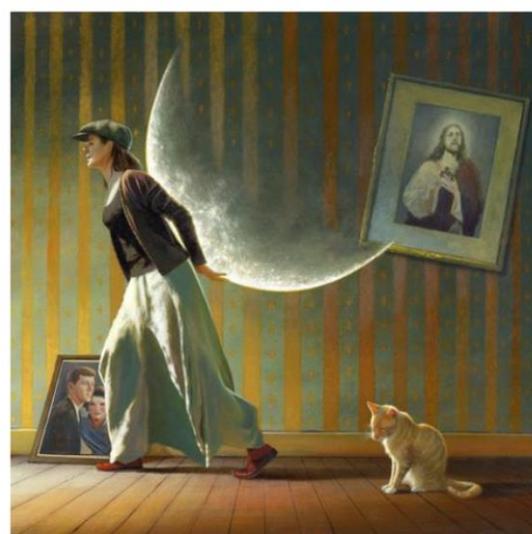
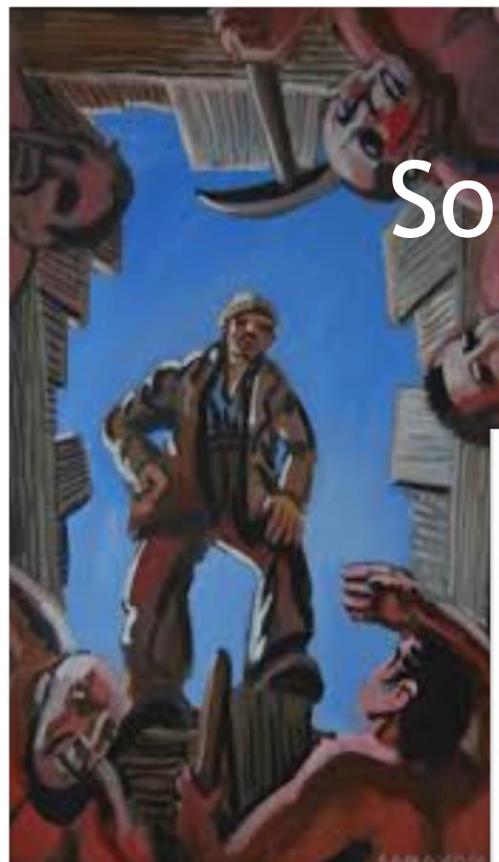


What are we looking for?

- ▶ Short plays or monologues based on a picture from our selection of Irish art.
- ▶ You will see some of the pictures on the next slide
- ▶ Entries
 - ▶ Must be 'stand alone'
 - ▶ Have a performance time of 3-10 mins
 - ▶ Reflect the experience of an Irish person in the UK. This can be current or historical, funny or serious
 - ▶ Must be set in the UK
 - ▶ Writers must be resident in the UK.
- ▶ Winning entries will be staged at our festival of new writing in Spring 2018



Some of the pictures on the list



What is a monologue?

- ▶ A monologue can also be called a speech
- ▶ The speaker is never interrupted
- ▶ The person speaking could be telling a story, revealing a secret or resolving an issue
- ▶ In a monologue the speaker could also be telling a story about someone else
- ▶ The best monologues contain thoughts, reflections, feelings and insights of their character
- ▶ A writer has great freedom. They can choose whether this speech is heard by someone or not
- ▶ Don't forget- you can make your audience laugh!



Before you begin

- ▶ Read examples of good monologues- we have put some examples on our website
- ▶ Jot down
 - ▶ What you did or didn't like about the piece
 - ▶ What worked and what didn't work



LOST IN THE WASH BY DERMOT CARMODY

- In the next few slides we will be giving an example of how you might start writing a monologue.
- In this example we will be looking at a painting by a London Irish artist Dermot Carmody.
- We will be considering the man reading the paper.
 - Who is he?
 - What could he be thinking?
 - What does he need to say?



Building Your Character



- ▶ **Knowing** your character is **key** to writing a good monologue. In trying to think about who this man is we could begin by asking the following questions to build up the picture of him:
 - ▶ Where does he live?
 - ▶ With whom does he live?
 - ▶ How does he get his money?
 - ▶ Who does he socialise with if anyone?
 - ▶ Why does he go to the laundrette at this time?
 - ▶ What do you think he does in his spare time?
 - ▶ What is his favourite time of the day or week and why?
 - ▶ What might his politics be?
 - ▶ Is he reading anything particular in the paper? e.g Lonely hearts column, Small ads, Rooms to Let, Horse Racing

Building Your Character _2



Having done this we could now go on and think about what is on this man's mind and what he might be hoping for .

- ▶ What would this man like to happen in the future?
 - ▶ In the next five minutes?
 - ▶ In the next five hours?
 - ▶ In the next five days?
 - ▶ In the next five years?
- ▶ What might he be hoping for:
 - ▶ For his family and their loved ones?
 - ▶ For the town/city they live in?
- ▶ Is there anything on his mind?
 - ▶ Anything he is looking forward to or afraid of?
 - ▶ Anything he needs to put right?
 - ▶ Anything he regrets?

Why and to whom does your character need to speak?



- If your monologue is to make sense in its own right, then it is important that your character has a real reason to speak. For example:
 - Do they want to get something **of great importance** off their chest?
 - Has something happened which they need to make **sense** of?
 - Has something **bad** happened?
 - Have they done something they **regret**?
 - Do they have a secret they wish to **reveal**?
 - Or a **story** they want to tell?
 - What about a **problem**? Do they need to think things through?
 - Are they talking **to someone else**, if so who? Or are they talking **to themselves**?

Structuring your monologue

Now you know more about your character you need to think about what your character is going to say. You are writing a monologue to be performed. This means that it needs to be easy to follow.

- ▶ Ensure that there is a good story or strong narrative for people to follow
- ▶ Decide on a beginning, a middle and end.
- ▶ Make sure you begin and end with a purpose
- ▶ Make an outline of the beginning, middle and end.
 - ▶ Jot down what happens at each stage
- ▶ Remember that the character(s) should have changed in some way by the end of the piece i.e. they should have learnt or decided something.

An Example: John's Banjo

Let's call our man reading the paper in the laundrette John. He is someone who was once in a ceilidh band.

Your piece could be structured like this:

- ▶ **Beginning:** John's been reading the small ads when he comes across a listing for a banjo. John used to be a good banjo player. Should he consider taking it up again?
- ▶ **Middle:** John recalls his time playing the banjo. The fun he had, the good and bad times and most importantly why he stopped playing the banjo in pubs and clubs.
- ▶ **End:** John decides whether he is going to ring the seller of the banjo or not



Your character's voice

It is important to think about how your character speaks.

- ▶ How do they express themselves?
- ▶ Do they sound well educated or not? How might this affect the way that they speak?
- ▶ Are there any phrases or words they use or over use?
- ▶ Do they always finish their sentences or do they have a habit of wandering off the point?
- ▶ Are they nervous, confident or somewhere in between? How does this effect their language patterns?
- ▶ Search 'Youtube' for example of people with different accents
- ▶ Listen to 'talk stations' for ideas

Bringing your monologue to life

- ▶ Think of yourself as a word artist. Use words to paint a picture
- ▶ Add descriptions that will bring your piece to life.
- ▶ Use as many senses as you can:
 - ▶ What can the speaker see or hear?
 - ▶ What can she smell or touch?
 - ▶ How does all this make her feel?
- ▶ Using adjectives effectively will help your audience create a picture in their own mind.
- ▶ Here is an example from a play called “Miss Julie” by August Strindberg. Notice how in a few lines you get a sense of the poverty that the speaker lives in which contrasts with the wealth around:

“I lived in a hovel provided by the state, with seven brothers and sisters and a pig; out on a barren stretch where nothing grew, not even a tree, but from the window I could see the Count's park walls with apple trees rising above them.”

Start with a great hook

- “Up to the day I killed my father, there wasn't a person in Ireland knew the kind I was, and I was there drinking, waking, eating, sleeping, a quiet, simple poor fellow with no man giving me heed.” From *Playboy of the Western World*- **J M Synge**
- I couldn't get to the church for the road blocks. I was standing out on the step there with my Mammy screaming at me to come in before I got my good white dress dirty from the rain **From *Bold Girls* by Rona Munro**
- ▶ “So what can I tell you about him? I can tell you that he knew all the words to 'Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms'. But what about the man that he was? What about where this man found his Joy? **'Believe' by Martin McNamara**
- ▶ **From Gemma Mills McGrath:**
 - When you have a secret it's like a bomb in your head ticking away, tick, tick tick.
 - The dead don't want stones, no they don't. Trust me, I should know. Did you ever hear us going that one - isn't that a beauty? It's a must-have if ever I saw one. Well, did you?
 - I know my letter is twenty-five years too late, but believe me, every word has cost me tears the likes you've never seen.
 - How do you carry the moon on your back? I mean how? And no, it's not a joke, it's a real question. So go on, you tell me, how do you do it?

End well

- ▶ Think of a good ending. A great monologue never fades out.
- ▶ If the monologue began with a question then ensure that you have answered the question by the end of the piece

“So what can I tell you about him? I can tell you that he knew all the words to 'Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms'. But what about the man that he was? What about where this man found his Joy?

This is how it ends: “It was only at the funerals; that was where he had been allowed to express his art and to live. That was where he found his Joy. Don’t try to rob him of that. Don’t you piss on that. (Believe- Martin McNamara)

- ▶ Ensure that the thoughts expressed in the monologue are brought to a conclusion.
- ▶ The character should speak with decisive action . They should accept something, overcome an issue or obstacle, or make a decision about a conflict.
- ▶ Don’t forget that the best monologues will contain the thoughts, feelings, desires and possibly the regrets of the speaker.

Ready to start writing?

- ▶ Remember that writing is an **iterative** process- you will have written several drafts before you finish
- ▶ Take your time. The closing date is not until January 8th 2018.
- ▶ Give your work time to 'breathe'. Don't submit until you have to as you may come up with a better idea or a better way of saying what you want.
- ▶ Tell that 'critical voice' in your head to go away.
 - ▶ Learn to love your work. Review each draft and highlight what you think worked- sentences, phrases, words
 - ▶ Forget about the 'teacher's red pen'- you are in control of your work

Before you submit your work

- ▶ Read your monologue out loud- or better still get someone else to do it for you.
- ▶ Ask yourself these questions:
 - ▶ Will the judges be able to understand the link between my monologue and the picture?
 - ▶ Is my monologue easy for a listener to follow?
 - ▶ Are there any places where it is too wordy?
 - ▶ Am I clear about what I am trying to say?
 - ▶ Have I included the right amount of information?
 - ▶ Would a listener find my monologue interesting?
 - ▶ Can my monologue be read out loud easily?
 - ▶ Is the punctuation in the right places?
 - ▶ Are my phrases and sentences of the right length?

Writing a short play

- ▶ Decide on the theme of your play
- ▶ Be clear about what you want to say or show in your playlet. You probably only have time to make one point
- ▶ Jump straight into the action
- ▶ Build up your characters in the same way as for a monologue
- ▶ Make a list of what each character wants or needs at a particular point in the play
- ▶ Decide on a point of conflict- you cannot have drama without conflict
- ▶ Decide where and when your action will take place. It must take place in the UK
- ▶ Read your work out or better still get a couple of friends to do it. Does your dialogue sound natural? Listen to people speaking.
- ▶ Time your work. It must take under 10 minutes to perform and that includes the actor's interpretation.

And finally.....

- ▶ Only online entries can be accepted
- ▶ All entries must be sent to competition@irishinlondontheatre.co.uk
- ▶ Entries must be received by 8th January 2018
- ▶ For more information go to www.irishinlondontheatre.co.uk

Good Luck!

