

SOLAS NUA

Program of Events
July – December 2023



DIRECTOR'S WELCOME



I am delighted to launch the second half of Solas Nua's 2023 program, which highlights all of the multi-disciplinary offerings that we have in store for you over the coming six months.

The inaugural Norman Houston Award winner, Niamh McCann, joins us again this summer to showcase her visual art exhibit—*someone decides, hawk or dove*—which delves into the complexities of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland during The Troubles and the ongoing consequences of partition. We are also delighted to once again partner with the Dublin-based theatre collective, Murmuration, to bring audiences a unique audio installation experience, *One Moment Now*; a piece which spans across genres and disciplines, weaving together storytelling, meditation, and theatre through a beautiful tale about family, love, and loss.

It is our pleasure to continue bringing Irish artists and their work to Washington D.C. through events like the World Premiere of Leo McGann's *The Honey Trap* and our upcoming poetry reading with Jane Clarke. We also continue to offer monthly online book groups discussing Irish poetry, fiction, nonfiction and classic novels.

Our motto is 'New Irish Arts' and we are proud to share all that is inspiring about globally diverse Ireland—a culture and identity that is shared across borders, ethnicity, and economic lines.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our partner venues!

Andrew Dolan
Executive Director, Solas Nua

JULY

SOLAS NUA PROGRAM

DISTILLATION LUKE CASSERLY

Luke Casserly



PERFORMANCE ART

WHEN: Monday, July 10th at 2pm, 5pm, and 7pm.

WHERE: STABLE Arts
(336 Randolph PI NE, Washington, DC 20002)

PRICE: Free, donations welcome

STABLE and SOLAS NUA invite you to join us for a work-in-development sharing of Performance Maker Luke Casserly's latest project: *Distillation*—a performative journey which takes you to the Irish bog landscape through scent.

Distillation is a response to the recent cessation of the peat harvesting industry in Ireland. Over the past year, Luke has collaborated with renowned perfume maker Joan Woods to create a unique distillation of the Midlands bog—the place where he grew up—as the starting point for an olfactory encounter which looks at our human relationship to place. Dedicated to the future of our broken landscapes—in the hope

that by listening to them, we might be able to better understand them.

Luke is the recipient of the Norman Houston Multidisciplinary Commissioning Award 2023 with Solas Nua. He is currently working from STABLE Arts in Washington DC as part of a research residency towards the development of the project which will premiere later this year.

Created by **Luke Casserly**

Perfume by **Joan Woods**

Sculpture by **Ger Clancy**

Dramaturgy by **Rex Daugherty**

Please join Artistic Director of Theatre Rex Daugherty for an audience discussion about the workshop immediately following the sharing.

ONE MOMENT NOW MURMURATION

AUDIO EXPERIENCE

WHEN: July 22nd to August 31st,
September 20th to October 7th

WHERE: Baker's Daughter and
Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

PRICE: Free, donations welcome

"Some people find it hard to sit in a café. Alone. With just their thoughts. Don't worry, we're going to keep you company this next while."

One Moment Now is a brand new table-top audio-experience commissioned by Bewley's Café Theatre, now making its North American premiere with Solas Nua. Through headphones, you'll hear fragments of a story—about memory, about grandsons and grandmothers, about coffee shops and hospital visits—and be invited to participate as it plays out on the table in front of you.

Solas Nua's Artistic Director of Theatre Rex Daugherty shares, "I've been watching Murmuration for a few years now and have admired their singular approach to theatre making. They create intimate, private experiences that occur in public spaces, and it has been capturing the imagination of audiences, as well as forging new grounds for where theatre takes place. There's a special magic when immersed in this setting, and I'm eager to share it with DC audiences."

This highly inventive approach to theatre making, combined with years of experience producing in non-traditional spaces shows why Washington City Paper has acknowledged Solas Nua as "Washington's finest purveyor of site-specific theatre."

Solas Nua is thrilled to be back at Eaton DC, which previously hosted their critically acclaimed, sold out run of *The Smuggler*. Starring Rex Daugherty in this solo-performance, the show was picked by *The New York Times* as one of the best productions of 2019. Eaton DC was named by *Time Magazine* as one of the top 100 Places to Visit on Earth. *One Moment Now* will be hosted inside of Eaton's resident coffee shop, Baker's Daughter, which is a boutique café from 101 Hospitality, the team behind Gravitas and Michele's. With three locations in Washington, D.C., the all-day café offers breakfast, coffee, baked goods and prepared foods. Chef Matt Baker owns and operates Gravitas, which received one star in the 2020 and 2021 Washington, D.C. MICHELIN Guides.

We are also delighted to be hosted by the Tony-Award winning company, Woolly Mammoth, for a three week run of *One Moment Now*. Woolly has a national reputation for their courageous and innovative productions, and Solas Nua is honored to be invited by this esteemed company to present our work in their season.

Murmuration's *One Moment Now* in Washington, D.C. is supported by Culture Ireland

and will be part of a larger North American tour for the production. Future dates and locations will be announced at a later time.

ABOUT MURMURATION

Murmuration is a Dublin-based collective of theatre artists, making live, narrative sound installations in nontraditional spaces. They create rich, intricate soundscapes with the aim of fostering new ways of listening in our audiences. Their work is all about big-hearted close listening.

Through their work they seek to reposition audiences in relation to their surroundings, creating vivid imaginary worlds. They have performed in bars, shopfronts, glass-walled galleries and public squares, without physically augmenting any of those spaces; aiming to find the extraordinary in ordinary and unlikely locations. They believe this approach to be particularly urgent now, when cultural spaces seem to be shrinking and becoming less accessible. They remain resolutely optimistic about Dublin, and are committed to finding performative potential in its existing spaces, through the transformative power of sound and live performance.

Murmuration formed in 2018 to present Summertime at Dublin Fringe Festival where it was nominated for a Judges Choice Award, before being shown at Drogheda Arts Festival and at the Abbey Young Curators' Festival the following year. In 2020 their second production, *Will I See You There*, premiered at the Gallery of Photography in Temple Bar as part of Dublin Fringe Festival, and in 2021 they were commissioned to make their third show *You're Still Here* at Dublin Castle, co-presented by Dublin Fringe and the Abbey Theatre, Ireland's national theatre. They have presented work-in-progress sharings of two other pieces: *One Moment Now* (2022), presented while inaugural Artists-in-Residence at Bewleys Café, and *so close i noticed my breath on the glass* (2020), presented as part of Corcadorca's SHOW Festival.



AUGUST

THE PERFECT IMMIGRANT

BY SAM YAKURA
FEATURING JAMIL JOSEPH
DIRECTED BY REX DAUGHERTY

PLAY READING

WHEN: Sunday, August 6th at 6pm.

WHERE: St. Thomas' Parish
(1517 18th St NW, Washington, DC 20036)

PRICE: Free, donations welcome

Too busy trying to be an adult, leaving Nigeria and settling in Ireland, he has to find a way to hold on to both worlds.

With a story woven through prose and poetry, you will shift in your seat as you are teased with the discomfort of this immigrant settling into a new land. Take sides as loyalty to home is torn by the promise of the new.

SOLAS NUA PROGRAM

But the real question is, where do you buy a hot pepper in Lucan?

Join us for an afternoon with a new play read by some of DC's most talented performers, followed by a post-show discussion with Artistic Director of Theatre, Rex Daugherty. Chatting with audiences about the new scripts in the Play Reading Series is one of the most direct ways our community informs what shows we choose for full production. This is your invitation to be in the room where it happens!

'This witty and carefully crafted confessional show, sliced up via fervent spoken word poems, centres on family dynamics, the experience of emigrating to a foreign land, and the feeling of being an outsider for the first time.'

★★★★ BUZZ.IE

'As a Nigerian in Ireland, Levi is being constantly othered: his reciprocal othering of Irish culture is effective and funny.'

-THE IRISH TIMES



The Perfect Immigrant

SEPTEMBER

SOLAS NUA PROGRAM

SOMEONE DECIDES, HAWK OR DOVE NIAMH MCCANN

VISUAL ART

WHEN: September 7th to 30th, Thursday through Sunday from 12pm to 6 pm.

WHERE: STABLE Arts
(336 Randolph Pl NE, Washington, DC 20002)

PRICE: Free

Multimedia Exhibition from Solas Nua, DC's premier Irish arts organization, and Inaugural Norman Houston Multidisciplinary Award Recipient, Niamh McCann.

Washington, DC (Aug. 1, 2023)—Solas Nua, Washington DC's premier contemporary Irish arts organization, in collaboration with DC artist studio and gallery, STABLE Arts, announced *someone decides, hawk or dove*, a new body of work by Dublin-based mixed-media artist Niamh McCann as the inaugural recipient of Solas Nua's Norman Houston Multidisciplinary Commissioning Award.

Someone decides, hawk or dove, seeks to subvert the assumed perspectives of social, political, and geographical landscapes. The work responds to the 1922 institutionalization of the Northern and Southern borders of Ireland and the ongoing consequences and reverberations of this partition. It combines sculpture, collage, and video, to examine the struggle between Northern and Southern Ireland during 'The Troubles'.

"Making is a form of challenging narrative," states McCann, "and *someone decides, hawk or dove* is a way of instinctively involving myself with subject, materials, and scale to a degree that risks and reinstates a reality more truthful than the fragmented, messy and disjointed nature of life, than 'fact.'"

McCann mines deep seams of colonialist atrocities and historic legacies to speculate on what language, story and imagery might be missing from accepted colonial narrative(s) or obstructed by its in-built global systems of naming, ownership, political power-play and cultural displacement. Concerned with acts of

Confetti, 2022

remembrance and reflection, this work draws from territory borders, architecture, street names, flags and ceremonies to convolute history and to allow for elucidated slippages and the emergence of complex, non-linear narratives.

Work from *someone decides, hawk or dove*—or iterations of same—has been shown at the Rudolf-Scharpf-Galerie, Ludwigshafen, Germany (hosted by Wilhelm-Hack-Museum), at Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris and at The Boyne Valley Visitor Centre, Ireland.

ABOUT NIAMH MCCANN

A recipient of the 2022 Norman Houston Award from Solas Nua, McCann lives and works in Dublin. She is a recipient of the 2021 Stephen McKenna Fellowship from the Royal Hibernian Academy and is represented by Green On Red Gallery, Dublin. McCann's work is housed in the collections of The Irish Museum of Modern Art; The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon; Limerick City Gallery, Swansea City Council; The London Institute; Hiscox, London and Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane.

Her work is supported by Solstice Arts Centre, Meath, Creative Ireland, Culture Ireland, the National College of Art and Design (Ireland) and the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

ABOUT THE NORMAN HOUSTON MULTIDISCIPLINARY AWARD

The Norman Houston Project was initiated in 2022 by Solas Nua in Washington D.C., dedicated to the memory of Norman Houston, the former Director of the Northern Ireland Bureau (NIB), in the United States. It includes the Capital Irish Film Festival's Award for the best short film from Northern Ireland, and the Norman Houston Multidisciplinary Commissioning Award. This exciting opportunity was open to artists working in any discipline on the island of Ireland. Individuals or small collectives are both eligible. McCann engaged in a six-week research and development residency at STABLE Arts in 2022 and is now presenting *someone decides, hawk or dove* as the culmination of her two year commission.

Ambition, 2022

Trajectory, 2022





Jane Clarke

POETRY READING WITH JANE CLARKE

LITERATURE

WHEN: Friday, September 29th at 7:30pm.

WHERE: NYU Abramson Family Auditorium
(1307 L Street, NW Washington, DC 20005)

PRICE: Free

Join Solas Nua and NYU's John Brademas Center for an evening of poetry with Irish poet Jane Clarke. Jane's recently released third collection is far-reaching and yet precisely rooted in time and place. Her poems explore how people, landscape and culture shape us. Voices of the past and present reverberate with courage and resilience in the face of poverty, prejudice, war and exile and the everyday losses of living.

Ron Charles, book critic with *The Washington Post*, will host a public interview with Jane about her new collection.

ABOUT THE POET

Irish poet Jane Clarke is the author of three poetry collections and an illustrated poetry booklet. Her three collections were published by Bloodaxe Books, *The River* in 2015, *When the Tree Falls* in 2019 and *A Change in the Air* in 2023.

A Change in the Air is shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best Collection 2023.

In 2016, *The River* was the first poetry collection ever shortlisted for the Royal Society

of Literature Ondaatje Award, given for a distinguished work of fiction or non-fiction evoking the spirit of a place. *When the Tree Falls* was shortlisted for the Pigott Poetry Prize 2020, the *Irish Times* Poetry Now Award 2020 and the Farmgate Café National Poetry Award 2020 as well as being longlisted for the Royal Society for Literature Ondaatje Award 2020. 'Copper Soles' from *When the Tree Falls* is one of the highly commended poems in the Forward Book of Poetry 2021.

All the Way Home, an illustrated sequence of poems in response to a family archive of First World War photographs and letters held in the Mary Evans Picture Library, London, was published by Smith|Doorstop in April 2019.

Jane received the Ireland Chair of Poetry Travel Award 2022. In 2016 she received the Hennessy Literary Award for Emerging Poetry with three poems from *The River*. She also won the inaugural Listowel Writers' Week Poem of the Year at the Irish Book Awards 2016.

Originally from a farm in Roscommon, Jane now lives in Glenmalur, Co. Wicklow. She gratefully acknowledges the Arts Council of Ireland Literature Bursary Award 2021, Covid-19 Response Award 2020 and Literature Bursary Award 2017 and also the Wicklow County Council Artist Support Award 2019 and Culture Ireland support for readings in the UK and US.

ABOUT THE CRITIC

Ron Charles (Critic, Book World) writes about books and publishing for *The Washington Post*. For a dozen years, he enjoyed teaching American literature and critical theory in the Midwest. Before moving to the District, he edited the books section of the Christian Science Monitor in Boston. His wife is an English teacher and the cinematographer of their satirical series, "The Totally Hip Video Book Review."

Honors and Awards: Louis Shores Award for reviewing, American Library Association; Arts & Entertainment Commentary, First Place, Society for Features Journalism; Nona Balakian Citation for Excellence in Reviewing, National Book Critics Circle; Veritas Media Award, Romance Writers of America

OCTOBER

DISTILLATION AT DUBLIN THEATRE FESTIVAL

LUKE CASSERLY

PERFORMANCE ART

WHEN: Friday, October 6th to Saturday, October 14th.

WHERE: the Goethe-Institut Irland
(37 Merrion Square E, Dublin)

PRICE: €18

A performative journey that takes you to the Irish bog landscape through scent.

Distillation is a response to the recent cessation of the peat harvesting industry in Ireland. Over the past year, Luke Casserly has collaborated with renowned perfume maker Joan Woods to create a unique distillation of the Midlands bog—the place where he grew up—as the starting point for an olfactory encounter which looks at our human relationship to place.

SOLAS NUA PROGRAM

Dedicated to the future of our broken landscapes—in the hope that by listening to them, we might be able to better understand them.

Created by **Luke Casserly**

Perfume by **Joan Woods**

Sculpture by **Ger Clancy**

Video by **Robert Higgins**

Dramaturgy by **Rex Daugherty**

Costume by **Doreen McKenna**

Additional Costume by **Síofra Caherty**

Coproduction: Abbey Theatre and Solas Nua.
Commissioned by Solas Nua.

Supported by Goethe-Institut Irland and IMMA.
Developed with the support of the Druid
FUEL Programme

Developed through the support of an Arts
Council Theatre Project Award.



Luke Casserly

NOVEMBER

SOLAS NUA PROGRAM

THE HONEY TRAP (WORLD PREMIERE)

BY LEO MCGANN
DIRECTED BY MATT TORNEY

THEATRE

WHEN: Thursday, November 2nd to
Sunday, November 19th.

WHERE: Atlas Performing Arts Center
(1333 H St NE, Washington, DC 20002)

PRICE: PWYC — \$45

When two off-duty British soldiers go for a drink on the outskirts of Belfast in 1979, they meet two local girls. What seems like a typical night at the pub turns into something much darker. Decades later, reliving that night for an American oral history project, Dave reopens old wounds that send him back to Belfast in search of answers and revenge.

FEATURING

Jonathan Holmes, Rebecca Ballinger,
Jordan Essex, Jared Graham, Emily Erickson,
Mallorie Stern, and Lise Bruneau*

*Member - Actors' Equity Association

CREATIVE TEAM

Matt Torney (director), Nadir Bey (scenic design), Alberto Segarra (lighting design), James Garver (sound design), Heather Lockard (costume design), Katherine Offut (props), Adrien Alice Hansel (dramaturg), Rex Daugherty (producer/choreography), Charlotte La Nasa (assistant producer/community engagement).



The Honey Trap



OFF THE BOOKS

BY LEO MCGANN
DIRECTED BY CHARLOTTE LA NASA

PLAY READING

WHEN:	Sunday, December 3rd at 3pm.
WHERE:	St. Thomas' Parish (1517 18th St NW, Washington, DC 20036)
PRICE:	Free, donations welcome

How far will people go when the only way to get by is to get ahead? Padraig is a bartender in New York City and a man of principle, until he comes face to face with corruption. He has to make a decision: break the rules to secure his life in the states, or lose everything. In Leo McGann's unflinching new play, Padraig realizes too late the insatiable greed of an ailing society.

Join us for an afternoon with a new play read by some of DC's most talented performers, followed by a post-show discussion with Artistic Director of Theatre, Rex Daugherty. Chatting with audiences about the new scripts in the Play Reading Series is one of the most direct ways our community informs what shows we choose for full production. This is your invitation to be in the room where it happens!

**CAPITAL IRISH FILM FESTIVAL
& CIFF@HOME**

SAVE THE DATE

WHEN:	Capital Irish Film Festival: Thursday, February 29th to Sunday, Mar 3rd 2024
CIFF@Home:	December & February
WHERE:	Online
PRICE:	Free with registration

Solas Nua Capital Irish Film Festival's CIFF@HOME bi-monthly film series presented in partnership with NYU DC Dialogues, returns with a selection of free online screenings and discussions for the Fall season. Watch the best of contemporary Irish film and engage with compelling Irish filmmakers from the comfort of your home with an on-demand film link that allows you the flexibility of viewing on your schedule, in your own time. The screenings, curated by Festival Director, Maedhbh Mc Cullagh also include a live Q&A conversation with selected filmmakers. The series also features the work of artists being presented in the annual Capital Irish Film Festival that runs every March, in partnership with AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, and includes a sneak peak of future festival titles and events.

Additional performances and other one-off events will be scheduled throughout the year, please keep an eye on our website for up to date information!

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

(SUMMER)



Luke Casserly is a multidisciplinary performance maker from Longford, Ireland. His work weaves together environmental research, documentary, sound art, and site as a way of carving out space for new possibilities to emerge between live performance and physical landscape. Often using autobiography as a starting point, his work attempts to stretch out new conversations around our human impact on the environment. This work has led to the creation of a network of Irish wildflower meadows across Ireland (1000 Miniature Meadows, 2020) and the planting of 1000 indigenous trees in the Irish Midlands (Root, 2021).

Luke holds a BA in Drama and Theatre Studies from Trinity College, and is Associate Director of PAN PAN Theatre Company. He is currently a Six in the Attic Artist with Irish Theatre Institute.

Luke was selected for Solas Nua's 2023 Norman Houston Multi-disciplinary Commissioning Award; comprised of a six-week residency at STABLE Arts in Washington D.C., travel and accommodation provided (in 2023), followed by a presentation of the new work produced for the commission (in 2024).

MONTHLY BOOK GROUPS

WHEN: Sunday, December 3rd at 3pm.

Free monthly book groups in four categories: Fiction, Non-Fiction, Poetry and Modern & Contemporary Classics. Activities go beyond monthly discussions of a book, the group regularly collaborates with the Solas Nua team, giving valuable input into programming ideas.

There is no membership, anyone is free to join!



DC Mayor's Arts Award for Innovation in the Arts

HELEN HAYES AWARD-WINNING COMPANY

"It exemplifies the international art scene as surely as any one country can."

MARK JENKINS, THE WASHINGTON POST

"Sheer energy...exciting performances"

CHARLES ISHERWOOD, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Best of the year"

THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Solas Nua has become a hugely important organization. They've made DC a critical stop on the circuit for Irish writers and the events they organize are second to none."

KEVIN BARRY, AWARD-WINNING WRITER

"The mix of cutting-edge events and ingenuity combines to present a dynamic image of Ireland"

THE IRISH TIMES

"Their productions are always smart, thoughtful, and genuinely entertaining."

DC THEATRE ARTS

Our activities are possible because of the generosity of our donors and volunteers. There are many ways to support—from joining Cáirde (Friends of) Solas Nua, a special group of patrons and supporters of contemporary Irish arts, to volunteering on specific projects.

To find out more or to donate directly just scan this QR code. Thank you!



To volunteer please email
contact@solasnua.org

SOLAS NUA