



FIRST
FORTNIGHT
EUROPE

FIRST FORTNIGHT EUROPEAN MENTAL HEALTH ARTS & CULTURE FESTIVAL 2019

Family and child friendly events, music, sports, comedy, theatre, film, panel discussions, listening events, workshops and more

Over 150 events taking place in January

European mental health arts and cultural festival comes to Ireland for the first time with the aim of challenging mental health stigma

All event and ticket information can be viewed on firstfortnight.ie from November 22nd

Emmet Kirwan, Stefanie Preissner, Stephen James Smith, The Academic, Saint Sister, Emma Sheridan, David Gillick, and representatives from 16 countries across the continent will participate in the First Fortnight European Mental Health Arts & Culture Festival 2019.

Actor **Emmet Kirwan**, screenwriter and playwright **Stefanie Preissner**, musicians **The Academic**, **Saint Sister** and former athlete **David Gillick** will join artists from across Europe in challenging mental health stigma throughout Ireland this January as part of the **First Fortnight European Mental Health Arts & Culture Festival 2019**.

A first for Ireland, audiences will enjoy mental health-related music, theatre, film and spoken word from 16 nations (Ireland, Hungary, Scotland, England, Wales, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Belgium, Romania, Greece, Italy and Lithuania) as Europe aims to start 2019 by challenging mental health stigma and using arts events to create open discussion and understanding of mental health problems.

First Fortnight is a mental health arts charity that began as a kitchen conversation 10 years ago and has grown from one event to more than 150 events nationwide. In 2018 over 8,000 people attended First Fortnight festival events nationwide.

This year's highlights include the Irish premiere of **Beautiful Boy** starring **Steve Carell** and **Timothée Chalamet**, French, Belgian, Italian and German cinema, children's mindfulness workshops, positive mental health circus workshops for children living in direct provisions centres and a series of discussions on mental health and sport.

First Fortnight European Mental Health Arts & Culture Festival 2019 will also feature 12 works of theatre including German-based Gifty Wiafe's powerful ***It's In the Blood***, which will be staged in Dublin and Waterford, and ***Infinity***, winner of First Fortnight Award at the Dublin Fringe Festival 2018. *Infinity* will be staged at Smock Alley from January 8th to 12th.

Another highlight will be Irish artist **Emma Sheridan's** art exhibition ***Warpaint*** at the Science Gallery in Dublin. Sheridan put a callout through social media asking for people willing to have their portrait painted. She then spoke with them about their experience of mental ill health as she painted. The result is a powerful and colourful collection of emotive and inspirational paintings..

For further information contact:

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First Fortnight is also proud to collaborate with **Clowns Without Borders**, Ireland and The Dublin Circus Project for a special circus programme as part of the European Mental Health Arts Festival.

Clowns Without Borders Ireland is a group of professional street and circus artists who bring smiles and laughter to children and their communities who are in crisis in Ireland and around the world.

Working with Dublin Circus Project, they will be running the **Clown-Dalkin Project**, a series of positive mental health circus workshops in Dublin in Clondalkin Direct Provision Centre. Following on from **Clown-Dalkin Project**, Clowns Without Borders and their apprentice clowns will perform a showcase (**Fly Away With The Circus**) in Smock Alley on Sunday 13th January from 2pm – 4pm.

Two of Ireland's busiest artists, **Saint Sister** and **The Academic**, will curate our Dublin editions of **Therapy Sessions on January 4th and 11th**. Both nights will again this year be mc'd by spoken word artist, **Stephen James Smith**.

Following on from a string of sold-out shows across Ireland, **OutStraight and All Out Design** are teaming up once more to give you an unforgettable day of music, poetry, street arts and panel discussion. Featuring **Emmet Kirwan, Mango, Senator Aodhán O'Riordáin, Lewis Kenny, Colm Keegan** and many more. **All OutStraight Block Party** takes place on January 5th

Co-Motion a music and walking experience and huge hit at the 2018 festival returns to **The National Botanic Gardens**.

Elsewhere, **Marion Cotillard's** brilliant film **Two Days, One Night** will tour the nation with 15 screenings across Ireland from January 8th through January 17th. The film tour sees First Fortnight partner with IFI National, The French Embassy and the Belgian Embassy.

Co-founder JP Swaine says: *"The challenges mental health poses to society are set down in well-established patterns. First Fortnight is here at the beginning of every year to unapologetically disrupt those patterns and ask for more, better and different efforts to address and make better Irelands attitude and behaviour when it comes to mental health problems and those that experience them."*

This year's festival presenting partners include; **St Patrick's Mental Health Services; Mental Health Ireland, See Change and SpunOut.**

Paul Gilligan, CEO of St Patrick's Mental Health Services, said: *"St Patrick's Mental Health Services is proud to once again partner with First Fortnight Festival as part of our ongoing and shared commitment to highlight and advocate for healthier attitudes towards mental health. While Ireland as a society has made huge strides in raising mental health awareness, unfortunately a deep-rooted stigma still prevails and we must continue to work hard to overcome this."*

"Combating stigma is a challenge across the world so it is appropriate that the First Fortnight Festival, will play host to the European Mental Health Arts & Culture Festival, providing an opportunity to extend positive mental health messages beyond Ireland."

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Jill O'Herlihy, Mental Health Ireland: *"Mental Health Ireland's partnership with First Fortnight has grown from strength to strength over the years. Starting each New Year with a fortnight of cultural events with mental health at the heart of it is both uplifting and empowering. This year the team at First Fortnight secured the rights to host Europe's Mental Health Festival, bringing another dimension to the events for everyone to explore and enjoy."*

John Saunders from See Change, Ireland's National Mental Health Reduction Programme says: *"See Change is delighted to partner and support First Fortnight 2019. This is a unique opportunity to bring the important message of reducing mental health stigma and discrimination to a wide audience through the arts medium."*

First Fortnight European Mental Health Arts & Culture Festival will take place Thursday January 1st through January 30th 2019.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Stanzas taking place in Limerick is an event for emerging writers to express themselves and develop their craft.

Hosted by the Balor Theatre, Co. Donegal and co-ordinated by Comhcheol Arts and Wellness, **Ar an gCéad Dul Síos** is headlined by well-being Banarama guru, **Kevin McAleer** whose deadpan genius and anarchic Irish wit has earned him a loyal audience stretching three decades. The event blends local and national acts and will feature music, song, dramaíocht and comedy with short talks from local mental health advocates and video inserts from household names. This unique evening will also have a special visit from your favourite childhood superstar.

From poetry readings in Kerry, to the sublime **Teachers Spotlight (Art Teachers Masterclass)** at UCC on Jan 12th and **The Crossover** also in Cork. **The Crossover** is a multi-disciplinary art project initiated in 2018 in Cork City and featuring collaborations between Cork performance poets, rappers, musicians and visual artists.

In Wexford from January 14th, **BAD-MAN Oh Man** by Shane Keeling, artist in residence in the National College of Art and Design. Shane's work is laden with satire and strong social narrative. This exhibition explores the phenomena of loss and suicide and its relationship with masculinity

In Two Minds is an ambitious and affecting theatrical work that looks at the realities of living with bipolar disorder. The performance at Smock Alley on January 12th will be followed by a Q&A session

Some favourite events also return including **Banter** hosted by **Jim Carroll** and in conversation with former Co. Tipperary hurler **Seamus Hennessy** at The Workmans Club on January 16th, **Corinthian** hosted by **Irish Times journalist Ian O'Riordan** at The Sugar Club on January 12th and featuring athlete **David Gillick**, **Real Talks Live** (with mental health advocate, author and former Cavan GAA player, Alan O'Meara), **Conversation Salons** and of course **The Big Gig** on January 12th at Tramline Venue, already confirmed this year include **Paddy Hanna** (Irish Times has praised him for his Indie Rock showmanship), stunning singer songwriter **Molly Sterling**, and **Brave Giant**, with nine consecutive sell-out Dublin shows and over million spotify streams this Longford based four-piece has been making a mark on the Irish music landscape over the last eighteen months, and a must see live. **The full programme is now available on www.firstfortnight.ie**

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--Ends--

NOTE TO EDITORS

The organisers of the First Fortnight festival, the presenting mental health partners and a range of performers **will be available for interview** to discuss their passion for challenging the stigma of mental health problems through the arts.

About First Fortnight

Now in its tenth year, First Fortnight is an arts-based mental health charity that organises a festival in the first two weeks of the year aimed at challenging stigma. This is the first time it has staged the European mental health arts festival in Ireland. The charity was instrumental in founding the European Arts Festival model and helped stage Europe's first mental health arts festival in Athens, Greece in 2016. An awareness campaign in the First Fortnight of the year works because we are all a little raw that time of year and more likely to be open to an empathic response. First Fortnight has become a fixture in the cultural calendar and synonymous with mental health awareness, challenging prejudice and ending stigma. First Fortnight also runs a **Centre for Creative Therapies**, which provides an art psychotherapy and music therapy service to adults with experience of homelessness or at risk of homelessness. First Fortnight 2019 is grant aided by HSE NOSP (National Office of Suicide Prevention), Creative Ireland, The Arts Council, Dublin City Council, and Dept. of Justice and Dept. of Foreign Affairs <http://www.firstfortnight.ie>

About Mental Health Ireland

Mental Health Ireland promotes positive mental health and wellbeing to all individuals and communities, and through our network of Mental Health Associations, we support people who experience mental health difficulties on their journey of recovery. MHI's vision is for an Ireland where mental health is valued as being an essential part of personal wellbeing and the health of the nation. MHI will lead the way in informing Irish society's understanding of mental health and fostering a culture where people with mental health difficulties are respected and supported. <http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie>

About See Change - The National Mental Health Stigma Reduction Partnership

See Change is Ireland's national programme to change minds about mental health problems. Over 90 partner organisations and hundreds of volunteers and ambassadors from every part of Irish society have signed up to help end the stigma and discrimination of mental health problems. In May 2017, See Change brought us the fourth annual Green Ribbon campaign to get Ireland talking about mental health, sparking an increasing number of conversations about mental health. 500,000 green ribbons were distributed nationwide and free of charge in conjunction with hundreds of grassroots events and initiatives. Look out for your Green Ribbon next May. www.seechange.ie

About St Patrick's Mental Health Services

Founded by noted author Jonathan Swift, St. Patrick's Mental Health Services is Ireland's largest, independent, not-for-profit mental health provider and aspires to be the recognised leader in the provision of quality mental health care; the promotion of mental health awareness and the protection of the rights and integrity of those suffering from mental illness. www.stpatricks.ie

About SpunOut

SpunOut.ie is Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people.

We provide information to around 140,000+ active readers each month.

Established in 2005, our vision is help create an Ireland where young people aged between 16 and 25 are empowered with the information they need to live active, happy, and healthy lives. We aim to educate and inform our readers about the importance of holistic wellbeing and how good health can be maintained, both physically and mentally. We believe we should have easy access to relevant, reliable, and non-judgemental information and we are proud to provide our readers with a dynamic, responsive website full of up-to-date, factual information, free of any shame or bias. www.spunout.ie

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