

SUBSET is a catalyst for artistic, social and cultural activities throughout Ireland. We engage in projects, initiatives, trials and tribulations through public art and placemaking.

*"We need to think about who has had the power to define what art is and who an artist is, and to really think about that from a bottom-up grassroots perspective rather than from a top-down, market-driven one."* – [Federal Art Project](#).

This has and will always be the very essence of SUBSET.

In his 1938 book, "Art As Experience", John Dewey argued that art, exiled to museums, had become disconnected from the daily experience of life. He believed that aesthetic experience was the basis of art and that it is present in every part of human life. Public art is unique in the sense that if you attend a gallery you are prepared to see art. When you stumble across public art it can act as an intervention to the monotony of daily life. It encourages people to think about how their cities should look and feel. It promotes citizenship, civic engagement and community participation. Public art is a reflection and expression of the city's life and culture.

Public art is a visible and visceral medium for people from various demographics and disciplines to express themselves. It enhances individual and community empowerment, skills development, social integration & inclusion. Murals are an integral part of public art and can greatly improve our cities visual environment, as well as greatly supporting placemaking. Sydney Australia, Auckland New Zealand and Denver Colorado (amongst many many others) are prime examples.

We believe the committee mediated method to public art can be overly proscriptive. An organic and grassroots approach is more often a truer representation of the public's values, whilst at the same time protecting the position of public art as a driver for change.

As it currently stands planning permission is required to paint a mural as per the Planning & Development Regulations and the Planning & Development Act. We believe this legislation and the associated process and procedures are questionable at best, and in our opinion require scrutiny and subsequent revision. The framework is outdated. The unofficial policies are ill-conceived and ill-equipped to support the progress and development of the art form and its associated activities.

Murals are an integral part of a healthy, cultural and democratic society. They create avenues for discourse and important conversations which can take place and shape outside of the political polarisation of different areas. They provide a platform for diversity and inclusivity and showcase imagination at scale and prominence. They inspire children and adults alike. They shine a light on our past and place a spotlight on our future. They open our eyes and minds. They give rise to change, something sorely needed in Dublin and throughout the island of Ireland.

We see public art as art for the public by members of the public. Local Government seem to see it as art for the city as a bureaucratic function. This co-optation by local authority ultimately works to subvert the medium for its own ends. As long as permissions and purse strings are at the whim of bureaucracy very little will change.