



School: Bath School of Music and Performing Arts

Researcher: Dr Helena Enright

Project Title: 100 Years Later: RISING

UOA: 33 - Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies

300-Word Statement

100 Years Later: RISING is a creative practice-based research project formed around a theatre performance created by Dr Helena Enright, in collaboration with Tom Creed and members of Dublin Youth Theatre, about young people's social and political activism in contemporary Ireland. Commissioned and funded by Dublin Youth Theatre to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the 1916 Rising, the piece, *RISING*, explored through performance practice what motivates young people to become socially and politically active in Irish society today, investigating theatre and the arts as a form of activism and propaganda.

Enright conducted interviews with young politicians, activists, and artists as well as conducting historical research on the 1916 Rising. The youth theatre members received training in testimony gathering and conducted interviews with their family members and friends around their experiences of protest and active citizenship.

The contemporary lived experience, alongside materials from the archive, protest songs, and movement, were explored with the young people in rehearsals to develop a dramaturgical framework which could pose questions about democracy, citizenship, religion and politics in twenty first century Ireland. Through this project Enright used her model of 'theatre of testimony' as an analytic to deepen understanding of what motivates young people to become involved in political and social causes. Collaborations were established between youth theatre, activists, politicians and arts practitioners and historical research was integrated into artistic creation through practice-based performance research. Through this model, *RISING* produced meaningful performance material that deepened collaborators' and audience's understandings of the perceptions of young people and political and social activism, in both the past and the present.

The piece was performed in The Peacock Studio of The Abbey Theatre in Dublin for five nights in August 2016. A post-show discussion was held following the matinee performance on the Saturday afternoon.