

Blogpost 21 July 2020 #antainartists

My name is Conor McGinnity, I'm a local of Dundalk and am now living in Inniskeen, ten minutes from town, the home of Patrick Kavanagh. I have long been a writer, it's something that I've always taken an interest in and something that I feel I am good at. To be honest, my life and the work I'm involved in would have to incorporate storytelling in some way. I wouldn't be happy otherwise.

I've been working as an independent radio producer for a few years now. Basically I create programmes for various broadcasters. I have made documentaries and dramas and a mixture of both. I'm leaning more towards the production of radio drama now. It's closer to writing and what I want to be involved in.

It was a call out for remote work that led to the initial contact with An Táin which in turn became an offer for me to be the Writer in Residence. I submitted a short script which I had intended to be a film told over a video call. Short film is a difficult medium to write in, you're always trying to get enough content in to tell a good story but you need to pull back a bit at the same time to maintain a healthy sense of intrigue. It's a tricky balancing act and one I'm not really comfortable with as yet.

The script itself didn't end up being made, but I did submit a play, which I am currently working on, which led to me being offered this position. It's a great honour and something that really goes towards validating the constant work, struggle and rejection that one encounters in life as a writer.

Several people have asked me to explain to them what a Writer in Residence does exactly. To be honest, I don't think there is one definitive answer. I'm sure no two writers are the same, so no two residencies could be the same either. My focus is to really try and produce something for the stage, whether it's finishing off the historical play that I'm currently working on or starting something new, I have a few ideas on the shelf that could really do with attention.

With everything that's happening in the world it doesn't feel like the most urgent thing, writing a play, but I suppose it's the arts that sustain us and a healthy arts scene is a sign of a thriving society. I can't promise anything to or from this residency but it's a great time and great opportunity, especially when the world feels like it's slumbering a bit, to spend some time focusing on your craft.

Conor McGinnty is An Táin Arts Centre's writer in residence. Conor will be in residence during July, August and September 2020. Follow his progress on @antainarts #antainartists