

THE STINGING FLY



STATEMENT OF STRATEGY
2024 – 2025



Introduction

This document sets out The Stinging Fly’s strategic focus for 2024-25. The objectives that follow sit within the framework of our 2021-23 strategy, extending those priorities into the next two years as we consolidate our new company structure and widen the scope of our activities.

The last three years have been a period of development and transition for The Stinging Fly, but our core strategic commitments remain unchanged. All our work – as a publisher, an education provider, and an online platform – serves the same mission. We are committed to nurturing and developing new writers and new writing; to publishing and promoting literary work of exceptional quality; and to consolidating our own organisation to make this work as sustainable and impactful as possible.

In extending our strategy to 2025, we are acknowledging these enduring commitments and reasserting the purpose, vision, mission, and values of The Stinging Fly that have guided our development, with a mind to our specific ambitions in the years ahead.

This document recognises the persistence of our core mission: to seek out, nurture, publish and promote the very best new writers and new writing. It also recognises the work we have ahead of us in fulfilling that mission.

In reiterating our core values of quality, commitment, community, and social justice, we make plain our ambition to integrate these values even more deeply into our everyday work. We emphasise the urgency of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the arts, and we commit to making these ideals a reality through both policy and practice. This work can only be carried out by a sustainable, strong, and well-managed organisation, and that is what we strive to be.

This Statement of Strategy shows The Stinging Fly looking ahead with confidence. We are steadfast in our commitment to sustaining a lively, open, and accessible literary community. As ever, we are deeply grateful for the support of the Arts Council and of our other patrons, in particular the TS Eliot Foundation. We are equally grateful to the writers and readers who make our work possible. Everything we do is guided by a deep and unshakeable belief in the value of the arts – not only for our artists but for us all.

Sally Rooney, Chairperson
Declan Meade, CEO and Publisher
January 2025

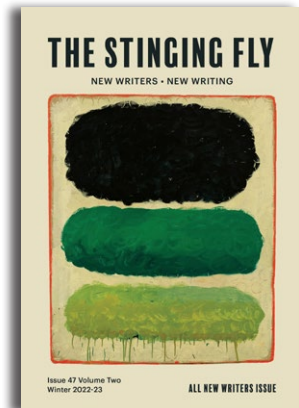
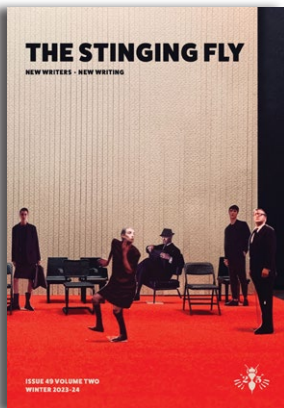
WHO WE ARE / WHAT WE DO

The Stinging Fly is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital. It is governed by a voluntary board of seven directors with Declan Meade, founding editor and publisher, as Chief Executive, leading a highly committed artistic and administrative team. **Together, we operate as:**



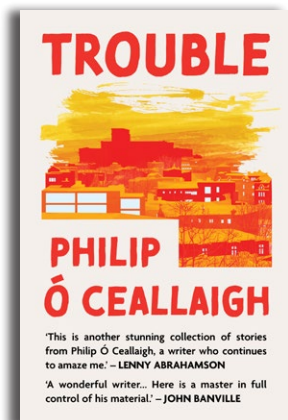
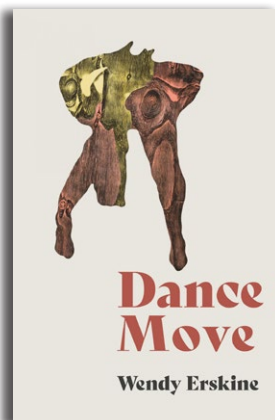
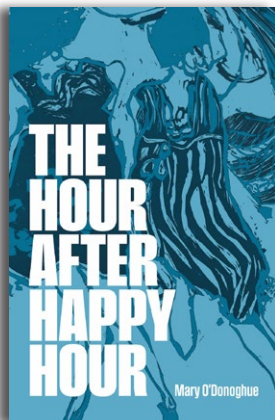
A magazine of new writers, new writing

We published the first issue of *The Stinging Fly* magazine in March 1998 and we continue to publish two issues every year. The magazine remains central to who we are and what we do. Open submissions are accepted, read and considered for every issue. We work with all our writers to edit their stories, essays and poems in preparation for publication. Our aim is to feature the best new writing from Ireland and beyond in each edition, offering readers an eclectic and enlivening mix of fiction, non-fiction and poetry.



A book publisher

Since 2005 we have published landmark, award-winning debut story collections by writers such as **Colin Barrett**, **Kevin Barry**, **Claire-Louise Bennett**, **Mary Costello**, **Wendy Erskine**, **Michael J Farrell**, **Nicole Flattery**, **Danielle McLaughlin**, **Cathy Sweeney** and **Mary O'Donoghue**. We have also re-issued key works by **Maeve Brennan**; published anthologies of contemporary fiction and theatre; and published masterful new work by **Sean O'Reilly** and **Philip Ó Ceallaigh**. We tend to work closely with our book authors over an extended period of time so that they can deliver the best possible book. We seek to connect all our authors with the widest possible readership within Ireland and do everything we can to help them establish relationships with agents and editors outside of Ireland.



An education provider

We organised our first one-day fiction workshop in 2007 and developed this into a six-month workshop programme that we have run in association with the Irish Writers Centre in Dublin for the past fifteen years. Our writer development programme now also includes an annual summer school, regular seminars and a mentoring service. We bring groups of writers together so they can learn to engage more deeply with their own work and the work of others.



An online platform

Our website **stingingfly.org** allows us to engage with writers and readers across the world. It is home to our magazine archive with all of the work we've published since 1998 and it also houses our online store. On the site, we regularly publish original new content, including in-depth book reviews, a new fiction series, and episodes of our podcast.



Everything we do is imbued with the spirit of **the fly that stings...**



'God has specially appointed me to this city, so as though it were a large thoroughbred horse which because of its great size is inclined to be lazy and needs the stimulation **of some stinging fly.**'

– Plato's *The Last Days of Socrates*

Policy Context

This Statement of Strategy responds to the priorities of the Arts Council's ten-year strategy **Making Great Art Work** (2016–2025) with its twin focus to support artists 'to make excellent work which is enjoyed and valued' while enabling more people to 'enjoy high-quality arts experiences'.

It attends to the following Arts Council policies specifically:

- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** policy, which is built on the foundation that everyone in Ireland has an equal right to engage with and participate in the arts, regardless of age, civil or family status, disability, gender, membership of the Traveller community, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status'.
- **Paying the Artist** policy which sets out a vision for 'an Ireland where artists and practitioners whose exceptional talent and commitment lead them to work professionally in the arts can have productive and rewarding careers' and which seeks to create 'an environment in which artists can make work of ambition and quality and be remunerated appropriately'.

We also recognise the requirement to respond to the Arts Council's pending Climate Action policy and will do so as appropriate over the 2024-2025 period.

OUR PURPOSE

TO ENRICH LIVES AND
DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING
THROUGH LITERATURE.

OUR VISION IS OF A
WORLD MADE MORE
COMPASSIONATE
THROUGH LITERATURE

OUR VISION

OUR MISSION

TO SEEK OUT, NURTURE,
PUBLISH AND PROMOTE
THE VERY BEST NEW
WRITERS AND NEW
WRITING.

VALUES

Community

We believe that literature has the power to bring people closer together. Through our work we create loyal and inclusive communities of writers and readers, within Ireland and beyond.

Quality

We believe that writers and readers deserve excellence. In all aspects of our work – our publishing, our teaching, our mentoring – we push for outcomes of the highest standard.

Social justice

We believe that writing matters and can be a force for positive change. We want to play our part in building a just society. We will start by ensuring an equality of opportunity for writers in all that we do.

Commitment

We believe that writing is a craft, a practice that demands discipline, dedication and time. We support writers at all stages and from all backgrounds, nurturing their potential and furthering their ambitions. We make space for them to produce their best work.

AMBITION

The Stinging Fly will remain at the heart of literary life in Ireland, playing a crucial role in developing and promoting new writing. We will be recognised nationally and internationally for the care and insight with which we identify and nurture new writers, supporting them to achieve their full creative potential, and for the generosity with which we share exceptional new writing with readers throughout the world in our exemplary publications in print and online. Through our ongoing commitment to social justice we will encourage writers and readers to engage more deeply with the world around us and with one another.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

We will maintain our focus on the following areas of work over the next two years.

1. Nurture and Development

Goal:

To encourage and enable writers to produce their best work.

2. Publication and Promotion

Goal:

To introduce exceptional new writing to the widest possible audience.

3. Consolidation and Impact

Goal:

To be a strong organisation, contributing to culture and society as leaders within the Irish literature sector

As well as these areas of strategic priority, in the coming period we will formalise our longstanding commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) through the development and implementation of a discrete EDI policy. The actions espoused by the policy will support and amplify the objectives here.

We also recognise the role that digital technology will play as a key enabler of our strategic ambitions. We will ensure our digital capacity to offer secure and effective learning and engagement experiences online.



Nurture and Development

We will encourage and enable writers to produce their best work.

We believe that writers at all stages and from all backgrounds, ethnicities and traditions are deserving of encouragement and support. We want to create an ecology in which a truly diverse range of writers and writing thrives. We aim to inspire writers to produce work that is ambitious, innovative and true. We want to enable writers to realise their full potential.

Objectives

1. Advance the culture and conditions that support writing talent.
2. Provide tailored support and activities responding to the needs of writers at different stages of their career and from all backgrounds.
3. Deliver a programme of developmental activities specifically to foster and enable new writing talent from all sections of society, from existing and new communities, and from all social backgrounds, ethnicities and traditions.
4. Encourage and support writing in translation.

Outcomes

- We are a vital part of an ecology that encourages and enables people from all backgrounds to achieve their writing ambitions.
- A diverse range of writers have benefitted from our bespoke supports.
- New voices are emerging from the inclusive opportunities we create.
- Increased recognition for work in translation, with a cohort of writers enjoying an enhanced profile.

Publication and Promotion

We will introduce exceptional new writing to the widest possible audience.

We believe that there is a wealth of writing talent in Ireland that deserves to be read – and which readers all over the world will want to read. We believe that writing can provide a mirror in which readers are better able to see themselves and the world they live in. We want to provide opportunities for writers to connect with readers everywhere, helping to build a strong, inclusive community of writers and readers.

Objectives

5. Produce and promote an excellent literary journal bi-annually (available in print and online) featuring ambitious and innovative new writing.
6. Publish in book form quality literary fiction by new, emerging or under-represented authors.
7. Further invest in our digital platform and online content to reach new and diverse audiences and drive deeper engagement.
8. Collaborate with others to programme events that advance interest in new writers and new writing.
9. Foster new connections in Ireland and internationally that expand the impact of our work.
10. Deepen our relationship with existing subscribers whilst also seeking to increase and diversify our subscriber base.

Outcomes

- Four issues of the journal have been produced, achieving recognition for the ambition and quality of the writing.
- We have furthered our standing as a publishing house by publishing at least one new work of literary fiction each year.
- We are reaching and engaging with an extensive, world-wide audience of writers, readers and industry peers through our dynamic, content-rich website.
- Writers we support are attracting new readers for their work.
- We have new alliances within the literary sector and with organisations who share our values.
- More people the world over are supporting our work and are enjoying their experience as subscribers.

Consolidation and Impact

We will be a strong organisation, contributing to culture and society as leaders within the Irish literature sector.

To achieve our ambitions on behalf of writers and readers, we need to ensure that The Stinging Fly as an organisation is the best that it can be. That means we need to be well-funded, well-managed and well governed. We need to sustain the valued support of the Arts Council and also strengthen and diversify our funding base. We need to build the capacity of our Board and team and develop the capabilities we need for a sustainable future. We must do so while safeguarding the culture and values that are at the heart of who we are and which are critical to our success.

Objectives

11. Achieve the capacity and capabilities we need to succeed as an organisation.
12. Effect best practice governance, welfare, equality and climate policies.
13. Animate our values as integral to who we are and what we do.
14. Develop and diversify our income streams, pursuing new fundraising opportunities available to us as a charity, while maintaining robust financial controls.
15. Work closely with the Arts Council and advance our shared strategic objectives.
16. Advocate for writers and for the development of an inclusive literary culture in Ireland.

Outcomes

- We have a board and team equipped to deliver this strategy and realise a sustainable future.
- We are a demonstrably fair and responsible organisation.
- The unique culture and ethos of the organisation are safeguarded and sustained.
- We have a broader funding base and we are compliant with all regulatory requirements.
- We are a valued partner of the Arts Council, recognised as being critical to the arts infrastructure in Ireland.
- There is greater respect and support for writers of all ages, stages and backgrounds.

Acknowledgements

This Statement of Strategy was developed following consultation with The Stinging Fly's board, executive and members of the wider editorial team; subscribers; writers and The Arts Council. The process was independently facilitated by Janice McAdam.

Chief Executive: Declan Meade

Magazine Editor: Lisa McInerney

Assistant Editor: Sara O'Rourke

Poetry Editor: Annemarie Ní Churreáin

Eagarthóir Filíochta: Aifric Mac Aodha

Reviews Editor: Gillian Moore

Programme Manager: Eoin Rogers

Contributing Editors: Dan Bolger, Danny Denton, Olivia Fitzsimons, Mia Gallagher, Roisin Kiberd and Nidhi Zak/Aria Eipe

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T. S. ELIOT FOUNDATION

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