

Sinéad Smyth

Inishowen Artists Retreat



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Sinéad Smyth set up Inishowen Artists Retreat in 2023 after renovating a 19th century cottage on the grounds of her home in Trenbane on the picturesque Inishowen peninsula in north Co. Donegal.

The retreat provides a studio space for artists of various mediums, from writing to music and visual arts. An accomplished visual artist in her own right, Sinéad also offers visitors one-to-one and group painting classes, creative development courses and mentorship.

“When I bought the property, it was little more than a shed. Now it has two twin rooms, a kitchen and living area, and a small bathroom with a shower. The studio for visiting artists is attached to the cottage so it’s all of one piece,” says Sinéad.

“I offer different types of tuition depending on the experience of the artist. They can take a two-hour introduction to oil painting, for example, or I can work with the artist to help them incorporate different ideas into their work. I also provide monthly classes from the cottage, as well as bespoke week-long and one-day courses.”

Sinéad insists that the artistic tradition in Inishowen is a major draw for both domestic and international artists. “A culture of excellence in music, poetry, writing, storytelling, and visual artistry has built up over the years. That’s why the area attracts people from all over the world and we’ve been lucky enough to host some of them at our retreat.”

Bookings for can be made via the retreat’s website, a feature of the business which Sinéad leaves to her web designer husband Andy Smith.

She says the enthusiasm of her fellow ACORNS participants was infectious. “You see these young women coming in with their energy, and it rubs off on you. ACORNS helped me put the practical scaffolding around my ideas and helped me create a vision of where I was taking my business.”

Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.



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