



## **My Space- a collaboration between Arts & Science to create a suite of informal interactive public engagement initiatives.**

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A suite of informal interactive public engagement initiatives, entitled 'MySpace' was created, to promote the importance of Earth science and Space exploration, to ignite curiosity and discover new and engaging platforms for science in the Arts & in STEM Education, and to increase awareness of careers in Ireland's Space and Earth Science industries.

Site visits to research centres in Ireland & abroad, interviews with scientists, engineers, and former astronauts were conducted over a 6 month period. A suite of performance pieces emerged from this development phase, based on Dr. Shaw's personal documented journey and the dissemination of her research. These included:

1. 'To Space'- A live multimedia theatre performance aimed at the general public & young adult. Initially presented as a 'Work In Progress' event at The Festival of Curiosity, the full theatre show 'To Space' premiered at Science Gallery, Dublin as part of Tiger Dublin Fringe Arts Festival. Response to the piece was very strong, indicated by audience response, box office sales and theatre reviews in national press and online. A national and international tour is in place for 2015. To Space was performed a total of 10 times and was seen by 680 audiences.
2. An adapted piece for 13-17 year old students - 'ToSpace for Secondary Schools'- to increase awareness of Ireland's involvement in Space Exploration & to encourage school leavers to dream big. This show toured nationally as part of World Space week and Science week events in conjunction with ESERO Ireland, CIT Blackrock Castle Observatory, Cork, Armagh Planetarium & Dunsink Observatory. It was performed 12 times and was seen by 570 students.
3. 'My Place in Space', created for families from the very old (60+) to the very young (3yrs+), this highly interactive workshop highlighted the appeal of science through the wonders of our planet and its place in Space. Presented at Festival of Curiosity, the Mallow Science Fair and at Science week 2014, this workshop was performed 8 times with 420 participants in total.

An additional suite of 6 short career videos was created, using interviews from a number of Irish individuals and companies involved in the Space & Earth science industry, to promote STEM careers and Ireland's involvement in Space.

The creation of 'My Space' has shown that positioning science within story and placing the human at the centre of the narrative is a highly effective public engagement tool in igniting curiosity across many audience types. The nurturing and investment of artists working within these new cross-disciplinary relationships and the establishment of similar initiatives in other research centres warrants further investigation.