



Thursday 2 - Sunday 5 July 2026

*February 2026*

### **Attention Playwrights!**

**SCRIPTS: Ireland's Playwriting Festival, in partnership with Birr Theatre & Arts Centre, seeks new works for stage.**

### **Calling all Writers**

Scripts invites playwrights to craft stories that ignite, provoke and linger. The theme for **2026** is **DESIRE**.

**DESIRE...** What pulls us forward, and what holds us fast? Desire can be a spark or a storm - an intimate whisper or a force that reshapes entire worlds. It drives choices, fuels conflict and reveals the deepest truths we try to hide.

Whether it's longing for connection, power, escape, justice or transformation, desire shapes the stories we tell and the lives we lead. This year, we invite you to explore the many faces of desire with courage, imagination and emotional honesty.

Taking place in Birr, Co Offaly, **Scripts Ireland's Playwriting Festival** creates unique opportunities for playwrights to have their work developed, mentored and brought to life on stage.

Three scripts, most suited for development, will be selected through a rigorous shortlisting process.

These selected playwrights will receive a residency week of mentoring and script development under the guidance of Playwright and Screenwriter **Eugene O'Brien**, where the whole process of writing and rewriting is explored in a collaborative and supportive environment.

The residency supports three playwrights with a team of artists to mentor, develop and produce the emerging scripts for a rehearsed reading of the new works by professional actors at the festival finale. Industry professionals then judge the final versions and a winner is selected. We are excited that the 2026 panel will include a representative from The Abbey Theatre. (Other previous judges have included Jim Culleton of Fishamble Theatre, Phillip McMahon, David Horan (Bewley's Cafe Theatre) and playwright, director, and performer, Gina Moxley).

### **Conditions of Entry and How to Submit your Play:**

- Playwrights (both established and emerging) are invited to submit an original 15 minute play on the theme **DESIRE**.
- Plays should have no more than 3 characters
- Original plays (unpublished/unstaged) only to be submitted
- The link below must be used - no email/post submission.
- Plays must be in a .PDF or .DOCX/.DOC format and no bigger than 15MB
- Scripts are read blind by a selection panel - therefore **do not** have your name on your script file (our admin team will have your details with your submission form).
- Cost of submission is €10.
- Limited to one play per person.
- Playwrights must be available to be in Birr for the residency period - **Monday 29 June – Saturday 4 July 2026**, as well as attend the headline event at Birr Theatre & Arts Centre on **Sunday 5 July 2026** where the plays will be presented as staged readings.
- The judges' decision is final and Scripts will not enter into correspondence concerning the judging or merits awarded.
- Requests for feedback: due to the volume of entries received and demands on our evaluation panel, we are unable to provide individual feedback. Thank you for your understanding.

Deadline for submissions is **Tuesday 7 April 2026 @ 12 noon**

**Playwrights can submit plays through the online submission form at [www.scriptsireland.com](http://www.scriptsireland.com).**

There will be a prize for "*Best Play*" which includes:

- Dramaturgy support with the literary department at The Abbey Theatre;
- a scholarship with Fishamble, the New Play Company;
- a Theatre Residency at Birr Theatre & Arts Centre in 2027.

While the copyright of the play will remain with the playwright, **Scripts** and **Birr Theatre & Arts Centre** reserves the right to arrange the first performance of the

selected work, if deemed appropriate, and to use the play for publicity for the festival.

Any of the three finalists who go on to develop their play further are asked to acknowledge Scripts Ireland's Playwriting Festival and Birr Theatre & Arts Centre in their credits.

*For more information as well as the submission conditions, log on to [www.scriptsireland.com](http://www.scriptsireland.com)*

### **What is Scripts?**

This innovative playwriting festival features a host of exciting events for lovers of theatre - those who want to create, perform and watch live new theatre in beautiful surroundings. Since its establishment in 2013, by Jasango Theatre and Birr Theatre & Arts Centre, Scripts has established collaborative links with key organisations including The Abbey Theatre, Fishamble Theatre, Listowel Writers Week, Irish Writers Centre, RTE Drama On One, Culture Night, #Waking The Feminists & more. As well as winning a PPI Radio Award for Drama with Midlands 103, *Scripts* has created incomparable opportunities for playwrights, actors, directors & producers to continually strive for excellence in the craft of Playwriting & Drama. From workshops and panel discussions to children's theatre and site-specific works, Scripts constantly strives to expand the scope of the festival while keeping the ultimate focus on what *Scripts* is most passionate about - nurturing new writing.

*SCRIPTS is supported by Birr Theatre & Arts Centre, Jasango Theatre, Offaly County Council, Arts Council of Ireland, The Abbey Theatre and Fishamble*

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