

The Rowan Trust

Overview of The Rowan Trust

The Rowan Trust is an independent foundation fighting for social justice with communities who have been pushed to the margins. We passionately believe that barriers to a life of dignity, respect and justice should be removed. We work to remove these societal barriers in partnership with community organisations who represent the most marginalised. We believe that real and lasting solutions to inequality and oppression must come from within communities who experience it.

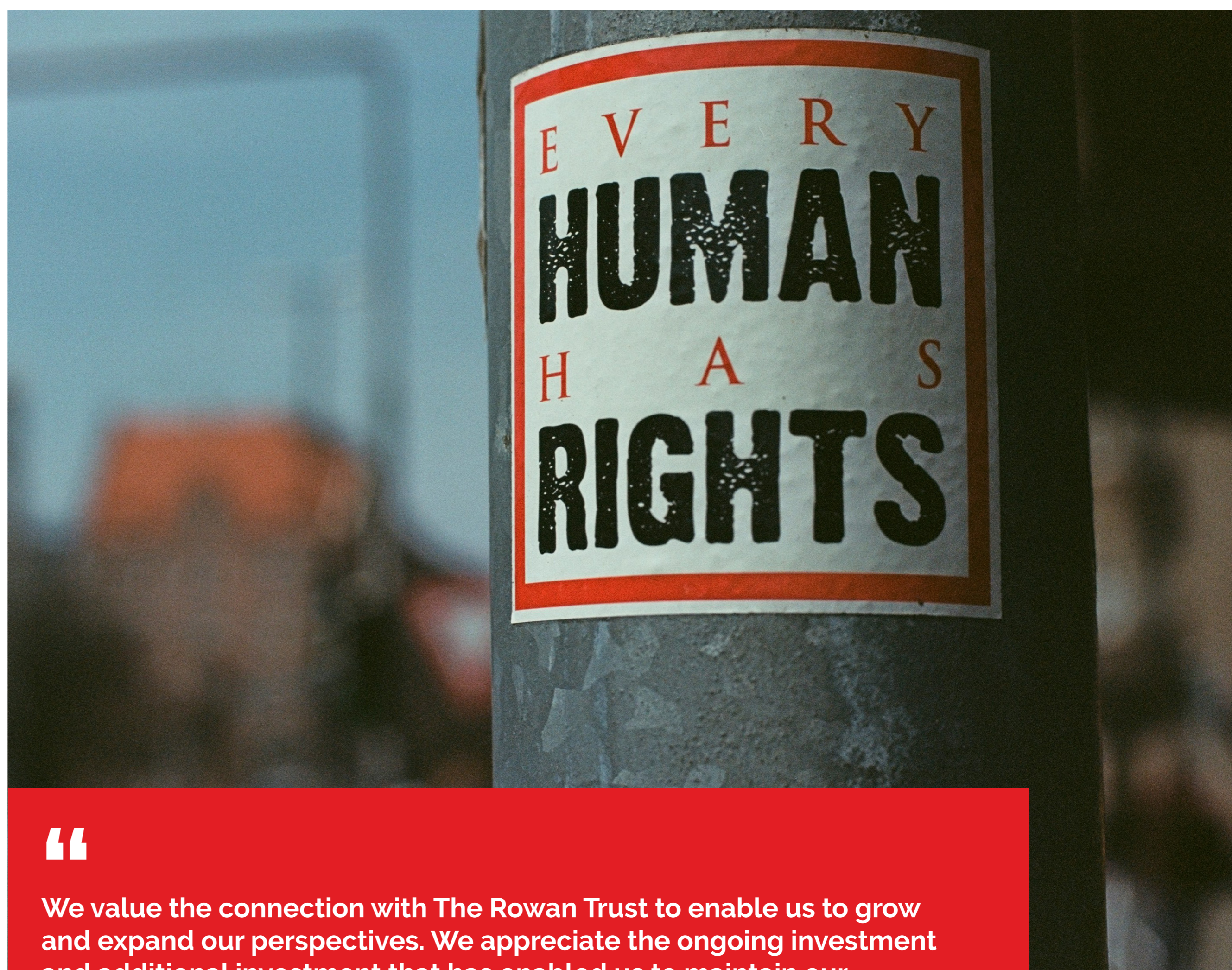
Overview of the Grant Initiative

The Rowan Trust have a partnership with Skein Press. Skein Press curates and publishes thought-provoking stories not commonly featured in the literary arts in Ireland. They are passionate about storytelling and counter-storytelling in all its forms and facilitate writers and artists to bring their work to the public through traditional publishing as well as other media. They invest in artists, reach out to new audiences, and contribute to building a more dynamic Irish literary culture and the cultural landscape as a whole.

We have provided Skein with €30,000 core funding for the last two years, and as our relationship has developed, we have been happy to increase this support to include project specific funding. For instance in 2023 we invested a further €30,000 in the expansion of the hugely successful 'Play it forward initiative'.

Impact Highlights

- This year our investment in the evolution of Skein Press' Play it forward' initiative has supported the mentoring of eight new writers from communities which have been marginalised - bringing two to publication. This initial proposal was to focus on three emerging authors, however Skein saw the potential to adapt and felt supported by us to do so, in effect having a much greater long term impact.
- Our further support of €10,000 to Skein Press via our CREATE Collaborative Arts fund, was instrumental in the distribution of the first of its kind memoir 'All this happened more or less' by Jayne A Quan, a queer, transmasculine, non-binary Asian American, to every secondary level Educate Together school in Ireland. This gifting was part of a more significant event 'Standing on the Shoulders of Giants' which saw the coming together of a number of our partner organisations. This involved TENI, Skein Press and CREATE collaborating on a prestigious cultural event as part of the International Literary Festival Dublin.



We value the connection with The Rowan Trust to enable us to grow and expand our perspectives. We appreciate the ongoing investment and additional investment that has enabled us to maintain our responsiveness in the sector, achieve our goals and hone our vision for the future. We are grateful also for the introductions and opportunity to work with other individuals and organisations actively championing social change and justice."

Gráinne O'Toole, Managing Director, Skein Press

Visit our website:



Learnings and Reflections from the Rowan Trust

- The main learning for us at the Rowan trust is that open communication, trust and flexibility are essential if you want a partnership to really thrive.
- For The Rowan Trust there is no us and them, we are all in the same boat, trying to make things better for everyone, sharing our resources to ensure that the best people are able to perform to their full potential, with dignity and respect.
- We believe, as a foundation, in the principles and values that guide Trust Based Philanthropy and we have been adapting them into an Irish context, our partnership with Skein is a prime example of how positioning ourselves as a partner rather than a "funder" has allowed us to be part of the journey and offer genuine support beyond the grant.
- While developing the relationship with Skein we were able to find the commonalities and align our values and beliefs that the arts and culture are a powerful conduit to social change and the breaking down of barriers facing marginalised communities; this has resulted in a genuine collaboration challenging the traditional power dynamics between grantee and funder.

