

Salines Suisses SA and the Embassy of Ireland in Switzerland present:

The Sea Inside Us

Artist Ruth E Lyons with live musical performance by
Doimnic Mac Giolla Bhríde, Frances Morton and Aodhán Gavigan

Film and live sean-nós music unite deep underground for a one-off event,
connecting Ireland's arts with the industrial and geological heritage of Bex

Salines Suisses SA, Mines de Sel de Bex
Saturday 3rd October 2026



“Lyons's work encompasses the true definition of ‘awe.’”

– Julie Morrissy, writer

On Saturday afternoon 3 October 2026, Salines Suisses SA and the Embassy of Ireland in Switzerland host a landmark cultural event deep inside the Mines de Sel de Bex, presenting Irish artist Ruth E Lyons' acclaimed debut film *The Sea Inside Us* (2025), together with a live performance by the musicians who composed its original score. Ireland's Ambassador to Switzerland, Aoife McGarry, will address the audience to mark the occasion.

Held in the mine's purpose-built underground screening room, far beneath the Rhône Valley and surrounded by ancient brine wells, the event brings a large audience into direct, physical contact with the film's subject: the vast Zechstein Sea, an ancient body of salt water whose geological seam stretches from Ireland to Russia, and which Lyons has spent over a decade tracing through collaboration with salt mines across Europe.

This event at Mines de Sel de Bex, taking place as part of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2026, is one of two Swiss dates this year by Lyons and her artistic collaborators, following an evening event at Salina Helvetica's Schweizerhalle site in Basel-Landschaft on 1st October 2026. The tour is produced by Switzerland-based Irish curator Emer Lynch, supported by Salines Suisses SA, the Embassy of Ireland in Switzerland, Culture Ireland and Basel Irish Club.

“Ruth E Lyons is an artist of exceptional sensitivity and vision whose film *The Sea Inside Us* demonstrates the strength of contemporary Irish interdisciplinary practice. The live score is fundamental to the work, bringing extraordinary depth through musicianship grounded in traditional Irish music of the highest calibre. Together, the film and live performance create a powerful and immersive work.”

– Kate Strain, CEO and Artistic Director, Kunstverein Aughrim

What is food without salt? Food without flavour? Life without emotion?

The Sea Inside Us (digital film, 2025, 23 minutes) follows Lyons into salt mines hundreds of metres underground and across snow-capped alpine mountain ranges, using salt as a lens to explore deep time, industry and the human relationship to the sea. The film was shot on location across Northern Ireland, Sicily, the artist's home on Ireland's Atlantic coast, and at Salina Helvetica's own sites in Switzerland, including the mine at Bex itself, making this screening a homecoming to one of the film's principal locations.

The film's original score, composed by sean-nós singer Doimnic Mac Giolla Bhríde, will be performed live in the mine by Mac Giolla Bhríde alongside an ensemble of Irish musicians, in addition to new lyrical pieces created for the tour. Their music, rooted in traditional Irish song and drawn from the Donegal Gaeltacht, is integral to the film.

Further insight into the film's origins is provided by an artists' in-conversation taking place during the event, as well as pieces from Lyons' sculptural series 'Salarium' presented in situ. These abstract vessels, held within the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Ireland and Arts Council of Ireland, are the focus of the artist's new book of the same title. Hand-carved from rock salt sourced from European mines, the vessels make the ancient Zechstein Sea tangible—as an enduring connection that transcends modern borders and nation states. At the same time, while geologists contemplate the end of the Holocene, 'Salarium' (spanning from 250 million years ago to the present) reflects on human legacy and the transience of economic values throughout human history.

Event information

What: 'The Sea Inside Us' — film screening, live music and artistic exchange inside Mines de Sel de Bex

Who: Artist Ruth E Lyons, musicians Doimnic Mac Giolla Bhríde and ensemble

Presented by: Salines Suisses SA and the Embassy of Ireland in Switzerland, with Ambassador Aoife McGarry in attendance

When: 14:30 - 17:00, Saturday 3rd October 2026

Where: Mines de Sel de Bex, Route de Gryon 31, CH-1880 Bex, Switzerland, [Google Maps location](#)

Admission: Free event, booking required. To reserve your place, please contact berneRSVP@dfa.ie

Food and drinks: Light refreshments are provided to conclude the event

Safety statement: As this event takes place inside a mine on some areas of uneven ground, please wear suitable footwear and warm clothing. For safety reasons, visitors should be able to move independently around the mine. Access for non-electric wheelchair users is possible via a separate entrance. Unfortunately it is not possible to bring electric wheelchairs or strollers into the mine. Please let us know, when booking, if you require accessibility accommodations.

Language: The event will be in English.

The film *The Sea Inside Us* will screen with English and French subtitles.

Documentation Please note that the event will be documented using still photography and videography for archival and promotional purposes.

Press assets

High-resolution images, the film's trailer and more information on the artists are available from our press kit folder: <https://tinyurl.com/y2kpnv98>

For press enquires, please contact: touring@kunstverein.ie

Project funders and supporters

This event is kindly supported by Salines Suisses SA, the Embassy of Ireland in Switzerland, and Culture Ireland.



Notes to editors

About The Sea Inside Us

The Sea Inside Us (2025, Ireland, 23 minutes) is the debut film by artist Ruth E Lyons, made in collaboration with cinematographer Colm Hogan.

There is the remains of an ancient ocean under the countries of northern Europe, a bed of salt that extends from Ireland to Russia. For ten years Lyons has been tracing this seam making carvings from rock salt of various colours. The film follows the artist into mines 300 metres underground, and across the snow-capped peaks of vast mountain ranges. Against these epic backdrops salt becomes a prism through which she formulates questions that fathom the unknowable while reaching for the eternal. The film is shot in sites of salt production in Northern Ireland, Switzerland and Sicily and at the artist's coastal home in the west of Ireland.

Film credits

Directed and Produced by Ruth E Lyons and Colm Hogan

Editor: David Qualter

Written by Ruth E Lyons

Sound Design: Bob Brennan

Additional camera: Roman Bugovskiy and David Qualter

Underwater footage: Kevin L Smith

Original cello music composed and performed by Julia Kent

'Óiche réaltach' and 'Feilimí Cam' composed for the film by Doimnic Mac Giolla Bhríde, performed by Doimnic Mac Giolla Bhríde and Aodhán Gavigan on vocals, Daniel Bodwell on double bass.

The Sea Inside Us is funded by salt producers Irish Salt Mining, Salines Suisses SA and Sosalt in addition to the Arts Council Visual Arts Project Award and Kunstverein Aughrim. The project has been kindly supported throughout by EUsalt whom Lyons has been working with since 2014. ruthelyons.com/work

New book: Salarium

In July 2026, Ruth E Lyons launched *Salarium*, a new book about the poetry of salt. The book documents the artist's salt carvings that make manifest the Zechstein Sea, an ancient sea under Europe. It features text and script from her 2025 film *The Sea Inside Us* made in collaboration with Colm Hogan, alongside essays by poet Julie Morrissy and Dr. Urs Ch. Hofmeier, former CEO of Salines Suisses SA (2012-2025). Hardback, designed and edited by Alex Synge. ruthelyons.com

Artists' biographies

Ruth E Lyons is an artist based in Co. Mayo, Ireland. Creating sculptural and multimedia artworks inspired by landscape, the artist works on projects exploring geologic time and questioning humanity's place in the universe. Lyons makes works for galleries and public spaces, ranging from underwater to in the sky and underground. Lyons' work has been exhibited internationally and is included in the collections of the Office of Public Works, National Gallery of Ireland and Arts Council of Ireland.

Recent exhibitions include: 'Salarium', Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2026; 'Until You Become Weightless', Kunstverein Aughrim, 2025 - 2026; 'New Perspectives', National Gallery of Ireland, 2021; 'Shaping Ireland', National Gallery of Ireland, 2019; 'Borderlines', Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh and The Edge @ Bath Uni, 2019; 'The Necessity of Art', Grazer Kunstverein, Austria, 2017; 'Forecast of the Next Century', Broad Art Museum, Michigan, 2016; 'Riddle of the Burial Grounds', Extra City, Antwerp, 2016; and 'Follies of Youth', Hepworth Wakefield Gallery, Yorkshire, 2015. She recently realised two major public artworks, Wave Junction, 2023, Quantum Park, Dublin and SUPERUNIFICATION, 2022, Honeypark, Dublin. ruthelyons.com

Doimnic Mac Giolla Bhríde is a sean-nós singer who plays uilleann pipes, accordion and piano. He is also a composer and researcher of sean-nós. A native Irish speaker from the Donegal Gaeltacht, Mac Giolla Bhríde began singing at an early age and has gone on to achieve a highly acclaimed career, including winning the prestigious Corn Uí Riada competition in 2009. He has performed at numerous festivals and venues across Ireland, Britain, USA, Japan and Europe. With already five critically acclaimed albums, he has recently launched an album and book outlining the origins of sean-nós, *Gealach na gCuanta*. Mac Giolla Bhríde has also published three children's songbooks. www.doimnic.com

Frances Morton is a highly acclaimed flute-player from Glasgow. She has won several All-Ireland medals and has performed at concerts and festivals at home and abroad including Isle of Man Festival, Cambridge Folk Festival, Jura Folk Festival and venues across Italy, France and the USA. Living in Ireland, she has been active in the session scenes in Belfast, Galway and Donegal where she loves playing with local traditional musicians. More recently she has performed with sean-nós singer, Doimnic Mac Giolla Bhríde in concert, and for various TV productions including *Slí na mBeagloich* (with renowned musicians Seamus and Cormac Begley), and with Doimnic's singing group *Glorthaí Uladh* on TG4 and BBC. Frances has also developed her academic research into traditional music and place, gaining her PhD and teaching and researching at a number of institutions. www.francesmorton.com

Aodhán Gavigan is a music educator, conductor and composer, recently graduating from the TU Dublin conservatoire and Trinity College Dublin. He is also a solo classical tenor under the tuition of Emmanuel Lawler. He has studied musicianship and pre-instrumental programmes at the Kodaly institute, Hungary. A soloist with the Irish Youth Choir, Gavigan is no stranger to the choral scene, having been involved in national choirs from the age of 13. Recently, he won the Corn Cuimneacháin Mhic Cathmhaoi (Irish language singing competition) at the Feis Ceoil Summer Feis festival, Dublin.

Emer Lynch, Producer of the Switzerland-based tour of *The Sea Inside Us*, lives in Basel and is Touring and Distribution Manager with Greywax Dance Company in Bern. Her professional experience ranges from curating independent live event projects to supporting the development of multidisciplinary art and social organisations, including Disrupt Disability Arts Festival CLG (Development Officer, 2024 - present; Non-Executive Director, 2025 - present), AlanJames Burns Studio (Development Officer, 2024 - present) Clonmel Community LGBTQ+ Pride Festival (Committee Member 2022–2025), and aemi – Artists' and Experimental Moving Image (Audience and Programme Development Manager 2019–2023). Previously, she held curatorial roles at the Irish Museum of Modern Art and Project Arts Centre in Dublin. www.linkedin.com

About the partners

Salines Suisses SA operates Switzerland's state salt production, including the historic underground workings at Bex, where a labyrinth of tunnels more than 15 kilometres long today yields some 30,000 tonnes of salt a year; the site combines an underground museum with regular public tours and an active cultural programme. www.salina-helvetica.ch

The Embassy of Ireland in Switzerland is committed to promoting Ireland in Switzerland and to assisting both countries to gain in their knowledge and appreciation of each other. Led by Ambassador Aoife McGarry, the team promotes knowledge and appreciation of Irish culture across Switzerland and Liechtenstein through a regular programme of cultural events. www.ireland.ie