



Kevin Sharkey: Forget about the presidency ... I want to die rich, or die trying



By

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Kevin Sharkey's CV includes roles as a fisherman, chef, singer, songwriter, TV presenter, model, escort and artist and presidential candidate. He chats about his dogs, music – and where his money is.

You recently dropped out of the presidential race. No matter who is President, is a €250,000 salary, plus €320,000 in unvouched expenses per year too much?

Transparency is the only way forward. No wonder they did not want to discuss what the taxpayers' money is being spent on.

What was the toughest job? Fishing was certainly the most dangerous. Back in the day we would go to sea for five days straight. I could not swim so I spent most of my time saying Hail Marys, praying that we did not hit a rock.

The most lucrative? Art, even though it was very difficult in the beginning, my paintings change hands for €50,000 now. Artists are the worst people to price their own work.



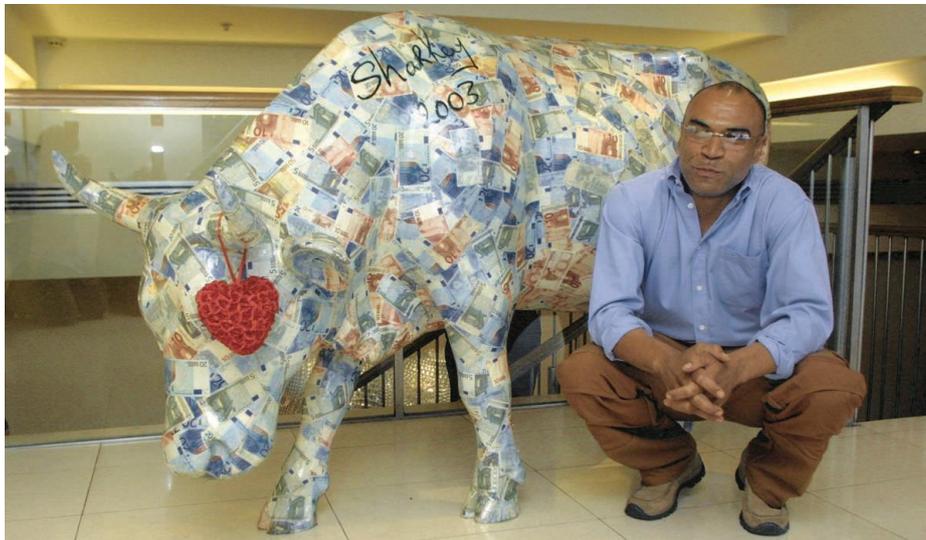
Kevin once wrote a single for 1980s supergroup Boney M Pic: Rex

And the most satisfying? Writing lyrics for Boney M? (Kevin wrote the 1989 single *Everybody Wants to Dance Like Josephine Baker*.) OMG! The best ever. Meeting them was amazing. In Donegal, back in the day, there was no black music and Boney M were the first non-white band I heard and loved.

You won 37 medals for Irish dancing and over 100 for athletics. What was your secret? While I was great sprinter, I think the sight of the wee black fella doing an Irish jig won them over every time.

How much does art sell for these days? While my larger art works are currently changing hands for €50,000 to €60,000, the smaller ones start at €5,000.

One of your art works – Moolah – is a cow covered in money created at the height of the Celtic Tiger. Were you trying to tell us something? Money had become so available it lost its real value. She had €26,650 on her! And it's missing! She was last seen in the AIB vaults but has disappeared. I would love to get it back, so if anyone has seen Moolah, call me.



Kevin Sharkey with Moolah the cow, which was created during the Celtic Tiger and covered in €26,650 Pic: RollingNews.ie

Any advice for budding artists? Avoid galleries, they take too much commission and treat you like a bad smell. Apart from [Gormleys](#). Sell your work direct, it's much better. You get to meet the clients and hear their stories. Often they want to hear yours and have you sign the work with a personal note. Be wary of art teachers who want to fill your head with examples of good and bad art. Art is expression, so go and express yourself. I exhibit on Merrion Square every Sunday, and it is a great place to see many Irish artists. And lastly, decide if it's a hobby or a job. If it's a hobby, enjoy it, don't change a thing. If it's a job, get off your arse and work on it.

Do you have a pension? No. I intend to die rich, or die trying. Not having one keeps me on my toes. But the older an artist gets, the more money you get for your paintings. While they're waiting for you to drop dead, your prices go through the roof.

What annoys you as a consumer? Bad service, bad manners and bored and racist staff.



Kevin Sharkey with one of his beloved pet dogs, Spooky Pic: Collins

You were homeless. What can be done to Solve it? Affordable housing is a term bandied about all the time, but affordable to a TD is still out of reach to ordinary people. There are 40ft shipping container homes in Netherlands that are beautiful, functional and perfect for young couples starting out, and they cost €25,000 to €30,000.

Best value purchases? My dogs, no doubt. I love them so much. They were worth every penny a million times over.

What do you do to unwind? Walking the dogs. I love the calming effect of nature. A glass of wine or two with my dinner. And I love to laugh, either with friends or watching comedy. I threw my television out 25 years ago, best thing I ever did.



Kevin Sharkey ditched his plan to run in the presidential election Pic: VIP Ireland

Craziest thing you've done? Where do I start? Becoming a full-time artist ranks highly. Running for the Presidency. I did believe we lived in a democracy until I witnessed the current presidential nomination farce.

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