
MASTERS OF
ARTS IN
ART & DESIGN

SOCIAL
PRACTICE
AND THE
CREATIVE
ENVIRONMENT

transformative conversation



LIMERICK INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY
LIMERICK SCHOOL
OF ART AND DESIGN

Foreward

We welcome and invite you to enjoy this publication which documents the pioneering work of students completing the very first MA SPACE programme at Limerick School of Art and Design, LIT. The MA in Social Practice and the Creative Environment programme was developed in 2009/10 and the programme began in September 2010. We wish to pay tribute to the Course Team who developed and delivered this highly experimental and innovative programme over the past two years and the dynamic group of students who through their vitality and engagement have brought the course structure alive and are making history through their approach to art and design through social practice.

The vision for this new programme arose by taking cognisance of many leading contemporary artists and designers who have embraced social practice as a means of responding to the demands of the world we share and how the art education institutions must respond to that shift in practice by creating the conditions for students to develop their knowledge and skills within this new complex conceptual terrain which is led by ideas and issues.

Sense and sensitivity are the hallmarks of socially engaged practice, taking on complex tasks, being willing to listen, willing to help, willing to go beyond the easy wins, so as to make rounded judgements and statements about the situations we find ourselves.

We encourage you to study the enclosed documentation of the projects, processes and thinking that has developed over this past intense and busy year.

Mike Fitzpatrick,

Head of School

Limerick School of Art and Design, LIT

Tracy Fahey,

Head of Department

MA in Social Practice and the Creative Environment

MEETING THE DEMAND FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CONVERSATION.

The Limerick School of Art and Design (LSAD) MA programme in Social Practice and the Creative Environment (MA SPACE) begins with conversation. The programme recognises that the realm of Art and Design holds expressive possibilities which allow existing forms of cultural production and distribution to be reconfigured in order to generate and make visible egalitarian aspirations. It recognises the relationship between creative production and contemporary structures of social production.

The programme facilitates dialogue by building creative networks which position the practitioner in social situations. The ensuing work in these spaces is contracted under the term communities of interest and formulated through processes that use expert and lay knowledge in partnership with a broad range of stakeholders.

Historically the democratisation in creative practice that MA SPACE draws from includes strands of new genre public art, cultural activism, and postproduction. This Limerick based programme resources the LSAD family of Fine Art and Design disciplines but is not led by, nor does it exclude, any creative practice. It's cohort share a variety of disciplines and collectively are encouraged to expand individual interests through current theory and best practice in areas of social practice. Candidates also may be led by their second semester self-initiated project to learn new skills in designing and visualising research. These opportunities are supported by staff who in their own interests and research engage with concepts, methodologies and materials, as social practitioners themselves.

The programme references the integrated remit outlined in national and local organisations such as CREATE, the national development agency for collaborative arts and the National Sculpture Factory (NSF). MA SPACE also recognises the demand for practice-based research manifested in the contemporary trend in independently curated work undertaken by social creatives in the areas of art and design.

MA SPACE candidates are context providers. As individuals and in groups they seek to expand and question the boundaries that exist in situations for transformative debate. Through research they recognise that the 'site' does not 'pre-exist' but, following the words of social practitioner Marysia Lewandowska, 'the site is a place that is threaded together by the transactions and exchanges found in distributive social networks'.

In the programme fine art candidates often investigate a topic of a socially engaged nature that may have arisen through positioning undergraduate work in the public arena. Similarly candidates may use the MA SPACE platform to explore lateral directions suggested, but not realised, in prescribed community work. In terms described by the artist and activist Suzanne Lacy, 'practitioners begin to reposition themselves', they question the primacy of separation as an artistic stance and undertake the consensual production of meaning with the public. MA SPACE recognises that these are the 'flexible personalities' who the critic Brian Holmes refers to as those who 'struggle for the aesthetics of everyday life'.

Throughout the duration of the programme the candidates engage with a significant volume of critical group work. This has led to self-initiated off campus collaborations with artists working in the arena of 'slack spaces' in Limerick and elsewhere. MA SPACE maintains active contact with organizations such as Creative Limerick and the National Sculpture Factory who mediate development in these areas. It is intended that graduating candidates be seen as a future resource in these emerging dialogues.

MA SPACE is committed to developing its academic programme by accessing the resources of visiting lecturer/specialists in best international and local practice. Candidates on the programme receive feedback and direction from recognised Social Practitioners such as Wochenklausur (Austria) and Superflux (United Kingdom and India). The input from the many international visitors is balanced with national projects such as, the 'What's the Story?' Collective (Dublin), the Northside Learning Hub (Limerick) and the expanded socially engaged work of artists and curators such as Sarah Browne, Michael Fortune, Cliodhna Shaffrey and Annette Moloney. The current external examiner to the programme is Sean Miller from the University of Florida at Gainesville, Florida, USA (www.jema.us).

In its inaugural year collaborations between MA SPACE and city space facilitated two notable public talks in Limerick for 2010. Artist and academic, Suzanne Bosch of the Social Sculpture Research Unit at the University of Ulster spoke in Faber Studios in the city centre. The international film maker and Professor of Film at Aberystwyth University, Gideon Koppel screened and discussed his award winning film 'Sleep Furiously' at the Storm Cinema.

In this current cohort of postgraduate students, what unites diverse practitioners from diverse backgrounds and creative/social practices is the acknowledged primacy of the negotiated project in relation to an audience. Projects will always vary in size, visibility, use value, transience and designed impact, but each in their own way address, develop and interact with an engaged and not a normative public. Within each project undertaken the intention is that audience continues to be the rationale in both the making and reception of the work.

Participants engage in work that questions and positions their practice in the following; the common structure, frameworks of exchange, sustained processes of collaborating and doing, consultative collaboration, collectivity, networked collectives, different publics and their rules, peer exchange, cultural geography, social interventions, and mutual purpose. The theoretical and critical grounding delivered from the programme equips candidates responsibly for a multitude of possibilities in social engagement.

The contracts negotiated by MA SPACE candidates recognise that there is a contested difference between the public sphere and private space, and that the dialectical conditions of social engagement are not based on constants but must be visualised in what Michel de Certeau describes as 'a practiced space'. Flexible personalities will decide on their own use of time, modulate their own activity, collaborate and host many conversations on many subjects relevant in the new economies of service and culture.

Paul Tarpey, Marilyn Lennon, Sean Taylor
MA SPACE Programme Co-leaders, 2011

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Edel Bartley

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Edel Bartley is a visual artist working in the mediums of photography, painting, video and audio. A graduate of both GMIT and LIT. Edel's work has explored various aspects of social practice and has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

CITY TOUR BUSES

The city has the ability to be a place where we can work on building new patterns of social relations, public and private interactions and to also obtain preconceived ideas of what a city space is or can become. Urban users share in a commitment to these daily structures, to the ordinary and the infra-ordinary, to the beliefs that none of us give enough attention to what is truly 'everyday' in our daily lives, to the eclectic habits, settings and events. The cities of Limerick and Paris demonstrate this palpably and by attending to these ideas expose the banal everyday journeys of the *City Tour Buses*.



Rachael Butler

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Living in Urra, Co. Tipperary. Working as a graphic designer in Limerick.

Graduated from Limerick School of Art and Design in 2005 with a BDes in Visual Communications. Practice to date has been working as a media developer specialising in high end flash animation. As an undergrad, Rachael's work had been described as having tones of social agendas. After a period in the fast paced deadline driven vis-comm industry, Rachael welcomes the return to creatively exploring the depths of this social conscience.

INTERSPECIES COLLABORATION

Most humans grow up with a dog as an addition to their family and for as long as I can remember I have had a real love for these particular animals. Inspired by the companionship of my Rhodesian ridgeback cross, 'Rua', I wanted to engage with canine enthusiasts, to examine the relationship between a dog and it's human owner. The pack mentality conscience of the animal is an area of great interest to me. This social hierarchy can be found across several species in the animal kingdom but also holds psychological similarities to characteristics found in human civilised society.

The manoeuverability and strength of my own dog I find particularly fascinating to watch, and stemming from this I began to study more, the physical and mental traits of other dogs. All dog owners are aware of the importance of physical exercise for their companion's well-being, but mental exercise and stimulation are all too often overlooked.

Collaborating with an established working community of dog handlers in Tipperary, I observed how the handlers interacted with their dogs and also with the other members of the group. Constant communication is a key element to the group's obedience training, and movement and sound are the fundamentals to this communication. Highlighting this communication and bond between handler and dog, I explored movement and sound through the inter-species understanding of verbal and visual commands. Working with my own dog and other handlers in the community, I designed a performance routine using commands and gestures commonly found in canine obedience training. The outcomes of the choreography will be determined by the relationship between the dog and its handler. The pack instinct is a dog's strongest natural motivator. Dogs always follow the pack leader.



Betsy Carreyette

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Betsy Carreyette (aka Zaynab Hassim) has a background in ceramics, poetry, Saharan travel and activism. Betsy is presently establishing a centre for cultural engagement in Siwa Oasis, Western Desert of Egypt.

WITHIN THESE WALLS OF KARSHEEF

Within These Walls of Karsheef should be regarded as a cross-section of an ongoing community engagement based in the remote Berber oasis of Siwa, in the western desert of Egypt. The work sets out to explore notions of Siwan cultural identity and the extent this is compromised due to the sweeping tide of globalisation.

The work is composed by the lifting of audio soundtracks recorded by the artist during previous engagements with the women potters of the oasis on the theme of tourist-led development, and placing them 'within the Karsheef Walls'. Depicted through video, the Al Salam house; a semi-derelict traditional building of salt brick and clay located in the Al Salam neighbourhood. This house is to be renovated towards the establishment of an interactive community practice within Siwa, and with a view to extending further into the Sahara Desert.

Contained within the walls and open yards of Al Salam house, the soundscape flows through the light, shadow and debris of previous occupancy, highlighting the juxtapositions and complexities of a changing way of life. This demonstrates the emergence of space re-contextualized, whilst reiterating the necessity for longevity and continuity within the field of cultural practice.



Mary Conroy

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Mary Conroy graduated from Limerick School of Art and Design in 2004 with a degree in Ceramic Product Design.

In 2006 she moved to London where she worked in education with SEN artists and students. Mary has spent time working in Warlukurlangu Aboriginal Artist Association in Yuendumu, Australia as an art co-ordinator.

After extensively working with stencil and spray paint Mary realised it was time to stop poisoning herself and our environment and has now switched to a greener working ethos using recycled and sustainable materials.

Her work outside of the mainstream, gallery-orientated art scene has hugely influenced her decisions as an art practitioner and led her to this MA in Social Practice and the Creative Environment.

DESIGN LABORATORY

'We don't have time to do environmental art that's not functional.'

- Brent Bucknum, founder of Hyphae Design (USA)

Wildroutes is a participatory, Limerick-based, urban eco-art project that aims to encourage inhabitants to rethink and reform the city's public spaces while increasing biodiversity thereby creating a healthier living environment. Wildroutes does this by informing and enabling users of urban spaces to grow more ecologically beneficial plants and trees. On maturity, these plants and trees become homes, stepping stones, and food sources for the city's wildlife.

This is achieved through an on-going series of interactions with users of Limerick City's spaces, resulting in interventionist actions by individuals around the city.

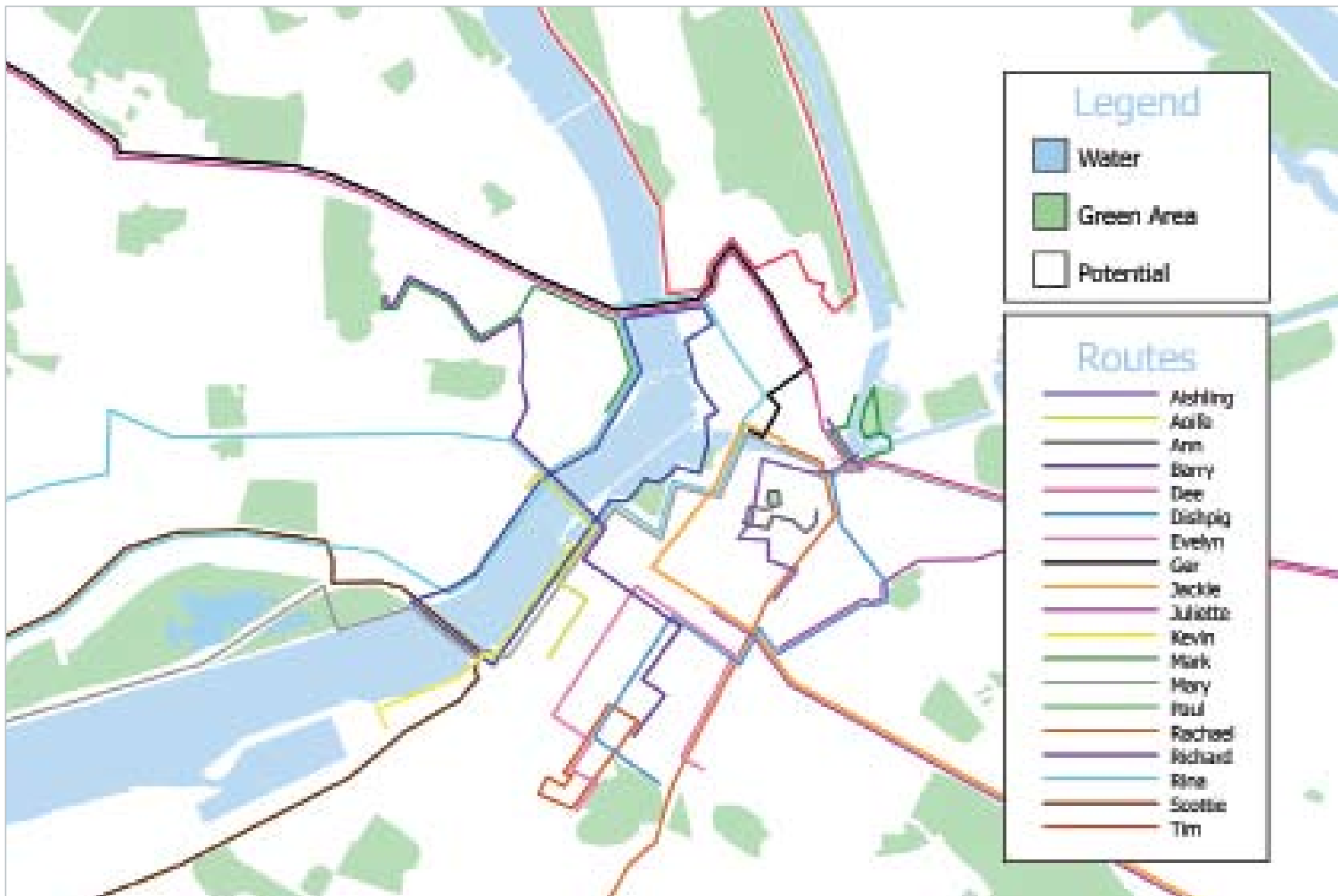
An example of one of these interactions is an on-going 'seed bombing' campaign. In June, participants were invited to a free 'seed bomb-making' workshop and picnic in Russell Park, Condell Road. Afterwards, all participants took home a map of Limerick and a bag of freshly made 'seed bombs'. They were asked to disperse the 'seed bombs' along a route they use regularly keeping within the city boundaries, and then mark this route on the map.

Not only will this be of benefit to the ecological and aesthetic aspects of the city, but it will also allow users of these public spaces to become more aware of their environment and make a personal connection with the city.

Although this action may seem like a small gesture it does have the potential to change the eco-system of the city and empower those who wish to contribute to positive ecological change. Given time, these plants will re-seed and relocate to other areas in the city, connecting one space with another to form a network of new routes for urban wildlife.

This increased environmental awareness and biodiversity on a grassroots level allows for a healthier environment for all inhabitants of these shared spaces, not to mention opportunities for the public to stop and smell the flowers.

For more information and documentation of the project go to www.wildroutes.weebly.com and check out Wildroutes on Facebook.



Aoife Cox

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Originally from County Mayo, Aoife is a recent graduate of Limerick School of Art and Design where she received a BA Honours Degree in Sculpture and Combined Media. Her practice has included object making, painting and film production. Aoife has been involved as a participant in various public performances.

Aoife has taught life drawing classes and childrens art workshops. She also has experience in dance and theatre.



LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

This project is an exploration of community engagement and systems of community functionality, formation and communication.

I chose to work within the Diabetic Community, of which I am a member and therefore have personal experience and understanding of what the lifestyle of living with diabetes entails

Long-term illnesses tend to manifest in society as hidden communities, as illness is not a casually discussed subject and members are not easily identifiable in some cases such as diabetes. Many members may consider their condition an isolative circumstance and not realise that they are members of a community which is defined not by space or location but by lifestyle and personal experiences.

Consequently, community formation does not develop naturally and requires conscious effort.

The intention of this project is a social intervention which cultivates a sense of community within the diabetic populace by utilising various methodologies to stimulate communication and dialogue such as poster campaigning, online social networking, setting up local support groups, organising social events, national activity days, and performance events.

Working from within a community of which I am a member I explore various roles, such as artist, group leader, group member, facilitator and community representative and the process required to distinguish my position in each role.

Through these events and actions I have provided spaces of social cohesion, affiliation, discussion and environments in which expression of opinions and collective reflection can take place.

Using these methodologies on a local, national and international level I intend to create networks of communication which are accessible and available to all diabetics.



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Aisling Guider is an artist currently working in Limerick City. She previously graduated from Limerick School of Art and Design with an honours degree in Fine Art (Painting). Her interest lies in creating art that is related to the general public and not solely those from the artistic community.

HATCH ZERO

Many people presume a community is a group of people that share the same values whether they are social, religious or political. The community of the state's social welfare office however is comprised of people from a variety of backgrounds and interests sharing a common space and is comprised of both staff and clients.

Hatch Zero (or 'Hatch o'), is a temporary hatch in the social welfare office with no official presence. Instead, the artist has created it as a temporary space of dialogue where members of the community are invited to discuss issues that are relevant to them primarily relating to the space they share together.

It became apparent through conversations that the social welfare office or 'dole office' is a space controlled through/by information. Clients cannot receive welfare payments without first producing information regarding their means and other personal data. Employees cannot complete their tasks without requesting said information. Even navigating the space involves processing various pieces of information. The entrance hall is filled with different types of visual data from official notices, advertisements for services and courses, to simply printed rules and instructions, yet it never seems to be what a person needs. There is a conflict between lack and an overload of information.

The 'Hatch o' booth was conceived as a result of this research. It provided a role or semblance of a tourist office and information service to users of the space. A brochure with clear instructions about making a claim and navigating the space was developed as well as a '2 Minute Tour' which reflected a creative and playful attitude. The intention was not to create a realistic or applicable solution but to encourage dialogue about what they want and what they as a community, could create or initiate.



Jacki Hehir

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Jacki was based in Dublin, where she studied BA in Photography, graduating in 2009 with a first class honours degree from Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art and Design. Jacki has worked on a body of research this year, which has been influenced by the socio-economical relations that have evolved here in Ireland in recent years. Her work looks at both the ideological and repressive state apparatus, a theory mapped out by Louis Althusser when investigating Ideology and The Ideological State Apparatus.

FOR SALE

'It is vital to understand how the uncommissioned intervention is a reflex against the hegemony of public space by the interests of a few over the psychological well-being of the many.'

- *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art*
Edited by Ethel Seno, Taschen 2010

On March 9th 2011, a new government was formed and with it came the hysteria of a media coverage that had followed each and every one of its promises and pacts. Amongst everything that glittered on that day, there were doubts and fears of the overbearing weight of an agreement made by the preceding government, on the financial bailout of the Irish by the ECB and the IMF. One of those fears was the sale of state assets to seal the deficit caused by our financial rescue package. On our behalf, the foregoing government had socialised a private debt leaving the nation scarred and sceptical of almost anyone in a suit making promises.

FOR SALE is a project that was provoked by the lack of communication practiced by both governments, past and present. As a republic that has yet to celebrate its centenary, we find ourselves now pressured economically from an external higher power and trusting the care of our national heritage, along with our forest lands, into the commercially orientated hands of the State's brainchild, Coillte. Working in collaboration with *The Woodland League*, the objective of this endeavour is to maintain our relationship regionally with our native woodlands and to accentuate our basic right to access public lands that are all around us. Availing of a recognisable method of communication, *For Sale* is a public intervention that aims to highlight the issues that are being evaded by the semi-privatised state company.



Joanna Hopkins

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Joanna Hopkins is a Limerick and Mayo based artist. Her work explores mass media and digital technologies. Her artistic process involves digital video, drawing, film photography and installation.

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YOUR VIDEO HERE

Your Video Here exhibition explores 'remix' culture and the control and authorship of online and digital work. Remix culture utilises the Internet's ability to appropriate, share and edit content from multiple online and digital sources.

Traditional copyright laws protect authorship, yet it deems many of the acts of creation we use to communicate online today to be illegal: downloading, sharing and editing digital files. *Your Video Here* explores alternative copyright laws and their relevance to the modern digital age.

Your Video Here intends to create a dialogue about the ownership of creative works, and to initiate a conversation about copyright and creative commons law.

www.yourvideohere.com



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Bernie Kavanagh

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Bernie Kavanagh is a contemporary artist with a BA in Fine Art Painting which she received at Limerick School of Art and Design. Her current research is based on ideas around 'utterance' and 'other' in social space in Limerick city with reference to the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, Grant Kester, Henri Lefebvre and Nicolas Bourriaud

'UTTERANCE' AND 'OTHER', SOCIAL SPACE LIMERICK

Everyday spaces are filled with the debris of social interaction. Boundaries are set up and broken; silent statements are made and often a silent response is offered. An awareness of the 'other' is sometimes evident, and sometimes it is obvious that the 'other' is not taken into consideration at all.

As social creatures we tend to gather in selected spaces in order to interact with one another. These social spaces, whether designated or appropriated for the purpose, are used by individuals or groups in different ways. By drawing attention to these spaces and to the 'utterance' and 'consciousness of other' that are communicated in them, through objects and graffiti left thereafter the social interaction has occurred. By not taking the position of judge or critic, I am not endeavouring to promote, endorse or defend; I am simply observing and presenting the non-verbal conversations and conflicts that exist there.





Lorna Kincaid

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Lorna Kincaid was born in the UK in 1983. She moved with her family to County Westmeath in 1996 where she still lives. Lorna attained a BA Honours Degree in Fine Art specialising in Sculpture and Combined Media from Limerick School of Art and Design in 2006. She went on to complete a Post-Graduate Diploma in Adult and Community Education in 2007.

She works in film, photography and installation focusing on participation and social engagement. Her work explores notions of place, the local, space and environments. She is interested in creating networks, interrupting the everyday and using art as intervention.

MAKING SPACE

Making Space Public Art Event 2011 was an experimental art project curated by Lorna Kincaid, founding member of the Making Space Collective (MSC). This event was organised to address the lack of accessible contemporary art in Athlone town. By organising this event MSC created networks of local businesses, artists, art groups and other organisations. This network plays a fundamental role in extending the art community in Athlone.

The public art event addressed feelings of isolation felt by artists living in small towns and rural areas. By situating art in a public square we challenged the traditional place and space for contemporary art such as the cities and galleries. *Making Space Public Art Event* gave local artists and art groups the opportunity to showcase their work and meet other artists. It also made contemporary art accessible to a wider audience and created dialogue between contemporary artists and the public.

The *Making Space Public Art Event* 2011 showcased work by visual artists working in a multitude of disciplines such as performance, dance, sculpture, design, sound and film. The Civic Square was transformed into a hub of activity where audiences contemplate the work exhibited, met and talked with artists and had the opportunity to participate in workshops. A night time film screening in the civic square showcased work by local, national and international artists.

The event itself is an artwork that brings people together momentarily to form a temporary community during its two day duration. This community is defined by the collective experience of participating and sharing which started with the organisation and preparations for this happening continuing through to the audiences who took part on the day.



Brid Lyons-Ryan

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Brid completed an Honours Degree in Applied Social Studies in Social Care at the Limerick Institute of Technology in 2007. Since graduation she has been working in the community as a project worker.

LIVING THE DREAM

Living the Dream; the essence of being for motor bikers.

I live my life-dream in motor biking, the open road, freedom, getting away. As an artist, I wanted to capture the essence of what being a biker feels like on a motorbike.

The concept embraces the theory of the meaning of language in a social and practical context. A universal language unites all bikers worldwide. To demonstrate the theory of language, my methodology encompassed the use of mail-art, postage stamps, letter writing, bike parts, email correspondence, blogging, Facebook, You-Tube, phone texting and pennants/flag painting. I researched copyrights for using music and the legal issues to cover all permits needed.

With a core group of motor bikers interested in collaborating I proceeded with a plan to interview, photograph, film and email many bikers and want to be bikers worldwide. I filmed bikers getting on and off many different makes of bikes and chatted informally about the concept of living the dream. On a month's camping trip in very wet weather through Northern Europe, I photographed and documented bike events. The question I asked 'why endure the rough elements when you could be cozy travelling in a car?' Many bikers compare themselves to latterday cowboys, gearing up in strong armoured leather and helmet, riding through the open prairie roaming free, living the dream. Camaraderie and kudos appears to flow naturally in bikers who sometimes only know each other through biking.

The outcome of the project attempts to demonstrate that the post-war (WW2) baby-boom generation makes up a large number of bikers who in retirement get to realise a dream.



Timothy Noonan

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Timothy was born in 1960 in Manchester, England. Initially on leaving school he worked in the building trade before becoming a community worker with Sheffield City Council.

Moved to Ireland and Co. Clare in 1995, where he worked on sustainable building and garden projects.

Completed his initial B.A Hons. Degree 2004 in Ceramic Design at Limerick School of Art and Design, attained H. Diploma in Adult and Community education at NUI Maynooth 2005.

Timothy worked on the Artist in Prison scheme in Limerick and Castlerea Prisons. Also taught in Art and Design with Limerick City and Co. Clare VEC, visiting lecturer LSAD. He is also a practicing artist and teacher with several community schemes and professional practices across Limerick City.

(UN) UTOPIA

In our modern landscape some people can be defined by their experience of not having a permanent residence either by choice or circumstance, and having been identified as such by charitable organizations and government agencies and the people themselves, the label they are given is 'homeless'. What would a group of people sharing a similar circumstance and unique experience have to offer through creativity for themselves and possibly a wider audience?

My purpose was to instigate a series of meetings where homeless people could choose to gather and create a space for themselves, where they can participate in a discursive and artistic process. We agreed to operate an open door policy, people chose to participate or not.

My role as artist would be to create this space for people to gather and to provide practical and theoretical support in the form of:

- Acceptable premises that are accessible and safe. Suited to the needs of an artistic group. Including tea facilities, toilets and a smoking area, chairs and a large table. Also within easy access to the city for the purpose of exploration and creative mapping.
- Facilitate this space where all the actors in the process are equal and have a shared learning pedagogy.
- Put into action a practical plan of artistic methodologies and exercises to stimulate an open dialectical approach by the group toward creativity. Activities include exploring art galleries and museums to engage with how culture is managed. Giving everyone the opportunity to become a tour guide for the day using photography and dialogue. Engage in Seed bombing as a collaborative exercise with another artist. Using aspirational mapping as a form of psychogeography.
- Document group activity whereby the group can reflect and use the experience to give themselves clear and practical evidence of artistic intent and achievement.



Ger O'Brien

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Ger O'Brien was educated in Fine Art Sculpture at GMIT, Cluinmhuire Campus, Galway and at the Limerick School of Art and Design. She has exhibited at Eva and The Claremorris Open and many group exhibitions. Her earlier work explored the communication of human emotions using video and photographic installations. She now has extended her practice into the use of social media as a means of engaging a more contemporary audience away from the gallery.

She aims to communicate social concerns through this medium. She has worked for many years as a lecturer at GMIT, Letterfrack Campus, Co. Galway. She has facilitated many community video projects with unemployed groups and schools in Galway.

IRELAND'S FIRST FAILED HAPPINESS PROJECT

This online project engages a web based community in a uniquely Irish take on a happiness project with a difference - *Ireland's First Failed Happiness Project*. I have chosen this project because I believe in the value of happiness. In late capitalist society we have been driven by consumerism and personal monetary gain. The media both in Ireland and globally are predicated by the communication of bad news. The context therefore sets the project within the environment of capitalist collapse in Ireland and the worst recession in 50 years. People's lives and former sense of security promised in the era of the Celtic Tiger has now vanished.

Many happiness projects which have been initiated recently around the world project happiness as a focus for countries to improve well-being and better mental health. *Ireland's First Failed Happiness Project* plays on the innuendo that we may have failed economically but we can be happy with less or nothing. The strategy is to use parody, irony and paradoxical situations to communicate humour in an environment of national disillusionment, whereby the act of laughing at ourselves is intended to be cathartic in the context of such prevalent doom and gloom.

irelandsfirstfailedhappinessproj.weebly.com



Deirdre Power

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Deirdre Power graduated from Limerick School of Art and Design in 1985 with an NDAD in Painting and continued studies in Painting & Photography at State University of New York in 1994. She has exhibited widely and is represented by the Phatory Gallery in New York. The artist will install two large photographs in the green area of Castletroy View and Chesterfield for the duration of the communities campaign.

BROKENLAND

The central element of this project *Re-Imagining Rhebogoe Meadows* began by examining the failed Park Valley Shopping development that is situated on the urban fringe of Limerick City and County is an exploration of the politics of urban space.

The project has grown to engage with the communities living in the surround of the townlands of Rebogoe Meadows and Singland. These communities objective is to reclaim their space by not only challenging the view of the failed Park Valley Shopping development that currently overlooks their 'green', but also by re-imagining their place as it 'should' be.

This project is an attempt to rationalise two conceptualisations of space, that of the planner and developer in imagining their gigantic shopping complex scheme and the communities in crafting narratives regarding 'their' space as it used to be, as it is now and as it might ultimately become. It may also serve to expose the lapses in how we remember (memory of what was) and the fictions that we often create. The work attempts to seek out what is obvious but unquestioned and thereby questioning it through the power of images and discourse.

Having engaged with the community I find I can offer documentation and connectivity and also perhaps the oxygen of publicity to help recreate this space in the context of an evolving community vision.

'An existing space may outlive its original purpose and the raison d'être which determines its forms, functions, and structures; it may thus in a sense become vacant, and susceptible of being diverted, reappropriated and put to a use quite different from its initial one.'

- Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.



Bernadette Sheridan

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Bernadette Sheridan is an artist who lives and works in Limerick. Her artwork is collaborative and process led, presented through video, sound and photography. Her interest lies in the conversations that acknowledge the diversity and commonality of human experience, our individual and collective histories.

My work engages the virtually invisible subject of older people in society. Unlike gender, race and other social constructs that affect identity, the subjects of age and aging have received little attention. Older age is defined in relation to youth and what it lacks. My work questions whether there are creative ways of looking at older age other than by aligning it with youth. Equally important to raising questions about cultural constructions of age, is the need for dialogue around the role older people play or should play in our communities.

WHEN ALL FRUIT FAILS, WELCOME HAWS

My current work, *When all fruit fails, welcome haws*, a collaborative work in progress, is a sound piece being developed for radio and podcast. It presents a collection of conversations between older women, elders as I prefer to call them, from Limerick's St. Munchin's parish. Their conversations are reflections on lives lived, love, music, family, tradition, hopes and fears. These reflections are told through a collaborative development of individual song choices and play lists. These conversations have been recorded in their homes, in their retirement club and in the studio, over the last 12 months.

My work's interest lies in collaboratively providing creative alternatives for addressing older age beyond the familiar representations of memory, reminiscence and archive and in developing a methodology of practice that places older people in a present day context, the here and now. It provides an opportunity for them to step outside of what they normally do and to become architects of their own space. In turn, deciding who speaks for them. This collaborative work initiates the need for conversation around the idea of community elders and their role in developing and strengthening communities. These women's voices become the voices of experience, offering insight, inspiration and perspective to the challenges facing many communities in Limerick.



Rebekah Wall

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Rebekah Wall is a Kerry based artist whose work imitates the artist's struggle to maintain a sustainable living. In an attempt to celebrate artistic innovation she has created an alter ego named Sally Murphy who is a subsistence hunter and artist collecting materials for her work from the land and sea.

Her work is provocative, multi-disciplinary and uses the web as a platform for performance that defies traditional definitions. She continues to explore a variety of new socially engaged interdisciplinary projects.

Rebekah has a strong pedagogical background working in a primary, secondary and third level capacity. More recently she has worked as a curator for Siamsa Tire Theatre and Gallery. In June of this year she opened an art gallery and working studio in Tralee which is currently creating a residency programme.

Having received her Diploma in Sculpture at GMIT Galway she went on to do her degree at Limerick School of Art and Design. The artist works on a private commission basis and is also currently working in the Artist In Residence programme at Siamsa Tire with the Artist Sandra Ann Vita Minchin.

Rebekah has exhibited in Ireland, France, Germany, Italy, Canada and the United States.

BEFORE I'M GONE

Before I'm Gone is a web based project created by Sally Murphy on the 11th of January 2011, using Etsy an Ebay for artists to tell her story and make it a realization.

Sally who is 83 years old and lives in a cottage by the sea with her dog called Tiny, hoped to pass on 200 years of traditions and ways of life passed down to her by her mother and grandmother.

This wild little old lady who is an avid storyteller began to tell her stories via this virtual shop where she began a process of generosity and exchange with her customers who wished to buy a little of the world she spoke so dearly of in the form of shells and glass. Her community of interest fast identified themselves as the Irish diaspora and spoke of their longing to be reunited with so many of their lost Irish traditions. In return for the handwritten quill and ink letters filled with Irish sea treasures these recipients had to tell her story and begin putting into practice her traditions. So began the project where a human connection was being made and a longing to belong or own a part of a forgotten Ireland was born. Each day she would collect, package and post a little of Ireland to be sent across the waters, with orders growing bigger as time went on. Emails were received asking for more stories, advice on life's problems and soon, photographs of her traditions being practiced. Sally then began to collaborate with customers who wished to illustrate her stories.



Siobhan Wilmott

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Siobhan is originally from Limerick and studied Applied Social & General studies in CIT. She has spent the last seven years working in a variety of Adult, Youth and Children services. She previously specialised in researching adolescent drug addictions and their experience in an addiction centre. Siobhan is currently working in adult residential services in Cork and has a particular interest in the area of mental health and advocacy work. She hopes to develop her practice further by incorporating experiences and expertise in social care into a socially engaged art practice.



I'M TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE

It is estimated that 506 people died by suicide in Ireland in 2009. At least 486 people died by suicide in 2010. So, who are these people and have we become desensitised to statistics?

I'm Talking about Suicide is a project that explores the taboo issue of suicide in Ireland today with particular interest in the role of language and use of statistics surrounding suicide. It is a process of exploration through researching current available literature on suicide, whilst also engaging with professionals and people affected by or from suicide, thus creating an inclusive and on-going process of dialogical exchange. Current suicide research largely uses scientific approaches that rarely engage with affected individuals. I am interested in the phenomenological aspect of suicide while investigating related issues of stigma, language and censorship.

I'm Talking about Suicide has evolved through a process into a design collaboration, creating a suicide campaign consisting of a series of eight posters. This campaign differs from current campaigns because rather than focusing on statistics and figures, the posters identify eight individuals who are deemed through research to be most at risk of death by suicide in Ireland. The purpose of such is to develop a campaign that promotes dialogue that resonates with the Irish public, humanises the subject matter and challenges perceptions of who is at risk of death by suicide. The campaign purposely does not focus on mental health and depression, but rather, that a single life event can prove too difficult for some to cope with. The reasoning for such an approach is to try and encourage the community to take ownership of the issue rather than relying solely on health care professionals.

My work reflects my interest in finding design solutions that challenge current social issues and my practice is influenced by the social design agency; Think Public. It is not my intention to offer solutions or impose ethical values upon the public. The emphasis is on the process rather than the end object. I hope that exhibiting my work will create a different space for dialogue that will both direct the project and my own practice further.

My husband Jack (left)
Age: 55
Loved spending time with his family.

Between 2009 and 2016, the rate of suicide among the young working community has just about tripled. But of the most shocking.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT THIS ISSUE?

I'M TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE

My cousin Hannah (left)
Age: 24
Loved going surfing at the weekends.

I have had some experience in the number of multiple suicide riskings in the same area. Young people who had previously attempted can be at risk of repeat suicidal thoughts.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT THIS ISSUE?

I'M TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE

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