The Living Arts Project was established in 2013 as a long term visual arts educational scheme. It seeks to strengthen the existing partnerships between Waterford Arts Centre and the Arts Department of Waterford County Council. The aim of the collaborative project is to make the understanding of, engagement with, and the fundamentals of contemporary art more relevant and attainable for local audiences.

In April 2014, an open call took place for interested artists and schools to submit expressions of interest to participate in the programme, and after an overwhelming response the successful schools and artists began working together in September.

This year, the artists and schools selected for the primary school residency programme were: Donagh Latchford with Ballysalleen NS, New Ross; Marie Claire Hanrahan with Buncrana Lores, Gorey; Eilis Delaney with Mercy NS, Wexford town; and Laura Ni Fhiadhlinn with Scott Mhuire NS, Wexford town. Each of these collaborative projects is unique in its own way and processes to the schools, encouraging each student and group to start diverse and original work: highlighting a huge variety of themes, materials and artistic approaches. The themes developed by these student groups, included representations of the body, loneliness, society and self-reflection. Artistic Abstraction, using varied materials and methods, was also explored as well as the use of technology. The project challenged young students to think and employ new, creative approaches, equipment and materials that they had not encountered before. The students engaged with contemporary and traditional art practices while gaining invaluable collaborative, confidence building skills.

An important aim of the residency programmes is to prioritise the development of the artists’ work within the project and use this development to encourage students engaging from the participating schools. A mentorship programme ran alongside each residency and each resident artist nominated an independent artist or curator they felt was relevant to their professional practice. The mentorship helped to ensure the effectiveness and integrity of each programme on an ongoing basis, while also providing positive critique for the resident artist. In addition, the programme helped to define methods of engaging with the students through each residency and ensured that the work and processes were of high quality and the dynamic between artists and students was challenging and productive. The following artists were involved in the 2014/15 project: Carissa Farrell, Eamonn Carter, Karl Sanchez O’Connell and Siobhan Beares.

Laura Ni Fhiadhlinn (lead artist)

Laura Ni Fhiadhlinn is a multidisciplinary artist whose work through the Living Arts Project has truly expanded many themes important to her own practice. The impossibility of return to a previous state of being after an impact, as well as physical engagement with discarded materials and bonding elements to create mysterious sculptural forms underpins much of her work: utilizing text, sound and video. During the Living Arts Project, the artist’s interest in stirring and hybridizing everyday materials was explored in the students over the winter term. The children further experimented with narrative forms to contextualise their sculptural activities. Laura’s mentor on the project was Siobhán Beares, Curator – The LAB Gallery, Dublin.

Laura graduated from N.C.A.D. in 2013, with a first class Honours Degree in Fine Art Painting. Sculptural work, text, sound and video and participative group projects have also become important facets of her practice. Laura is also a qualified and practicing primary teacher, and the playful inquiry of young learners is an influence on her art making processes. Laura is the recipient of numerous awards and bursaries, including the Emerging Artist 2014 Artslink Bursary, Firestation Artist Studies Sculpture Bursary and Catalyst Arts Residency. Laura was presented as an artist on the Waterford County Council Artist in the Community Scheme and worked with Waterford Youthreach participants on the group project. Flight. Selected exhibitions include: Emergence, Wexford Arts Centre Annexe Space, Wexford; Flight, Annex Space, Foundation 14, Talbot Crescent, Tolka Galley Dublin; C30 C30 C30 C30 NSiE Collective, Library Project Dublin; Graduate Show, Catalyst Arts, Belfast; Perpetual Review, 3, Pallas Projects Dublin; Tunneling Physics, Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, Dublin; and Curated, Catalyst Arts, Belfast.

Pavlina Kubelkova (assistant artist)

Through her personal work, Pavlina is mainly interested in interactions between humanity and technology. As we create and use technology, this very same technology shapes our lives in return. Pavlina’s work questions the relationship between art, its environment and the world. Using and experimenting with projectors, interactive computer programs as well as other, more common video editing software such as Skype, she highlights the human element of the use of technology in order to create a narrative which runs through those virtual channels.

Pavlina is a recent graduate of the Waterford Campus School of Art and Design (IT Carlow), where she graduated with a B.A. (Hons) in Art. She has recently undertaken visual arts projects in co-operation with the Faculty of Art in Duxte, Czech Republic. These projects have allowed her explore technology and software on an artistic, experimental basis. It has also given her the opportunity to participate and exhibit on an international level. Pavlina has recently participated with exhibitions in the College of Art in Paphos, Cyprus and KABK Hague in Netherlands.

Ballycullen National School

with thanks to Margaret Furlong and Ali Walsh

Donagh Latchford (lead artist)

Coragh’s personal practice is concerned with light, colour and the universality of paint. As a painter working in acrylics from photographs, she is interested in the effects of high contrast and over exposure have on images. She exaggerates high saturation within images, in incorporate vibrant colour. Coragh’s process often involves dialogical and publically engaging elements as well as the use of digital imagery, integrating people and places that she encounters online. She seeks permission from the authors of her source images and reselling dialogues are an important part of the collaborative process. Her own work as part of the Living Arts Project, a painting entitled The Yellow Fairy, is of a young girl, Viselma from Slovakia, whose image appeared in her father’s photo blog, VenVil. Donagh’s mentor on the project was Carissa Farrell, independent Curator.

Coragh holds a BA (Hons) in Fine Art from the Waterford Campus School of Art and Design (IT Carlow). In 2014, she was awarded Waterford County Council’s Tyone Guthrie Award and is on the Arts Department Artist in the Community Scheme panel. She works with Waterford Arts Centre as a facilitator of both adult and children’s workshops. In 2014, she received training from Golden Artist Colors, New York as a certified Golden Artist Educator. Her paintings are held in the collections of Waterford VEC, IT Carlow, Kilkenny Inn Hotel, RHSA Ireland, Ardmore Park Hotel and in both private and corporate collections in Ireland and the US.

Nancy Rochford-Flynn (assistant artist)

Nancy Waterford-Flynn is an interdisciplinary artist based in Co. Waterford. Her practice involves video through documentary and performance based formats; with social history, photography, video, text, sound, and narrative strongly underpinning her work. Her current work examines gender and identity and the physical and psychological effects of exclusion and oppression. As an activist her role provokes discourse in equality issues.

Nancy completed a BA (Hons) in Fine Art at Waterford Campus School of Art and Design (IT Carlow). Her practice incorporates participatory and community based art with multimedia to explore the relationship between art and people. Recent- ly she has worked as a project facilitator for the Arts Department at Waterford County Council’s Artist in the Community Scheme and is listed on their artist panel for 2015. She is currently working as an artist on both Macroom Tapas Project, New Ross, Co. Wexford.
Mary Claire Kehoe (lead artist)

Mary Claire Kehoe is a professional printmaker based in Gorey, Co. Wexford. The primary motivation for her work is an ongoing investigation of suppressed emotion and thought mediated by convey, using printmaking as a form of self-expression. Her current body of work, Locked In, Locked Out, and Everything In Between, 2019 focuses on the ambivalent state of isolation and the hopeful desire of escape. Drawing on personal experiences, these abstract concepts are open to the viewer’s personal interpretation; however, for Mary Claire they represent a constant emotional battle, one that may never be won. How she expresses this inner conflict offers very reliable themes and ideas for any viewer; ideas surrounding personal uncertainty, fear, anticipation, the constant threat of panic and the heightened feeling of isolation to a normally rational mind. Mary Claire’s mentor on the project was Esmond Carter, Director – Gorey School of Art (GSA).

Mary Claire graduated from Limerick School of Art & Design in 2005 and obtained a Masters in Printmaking from the University of the Arts, London in 2007. Since then she has worked as an art teacher and has recently set up her own studio where she concentrates solely on creating new work. Having exhibited in numerous group shows, Mary Claire has recently shown in Dublin, Paris and she is currently exhibiting, Concentrate on your Breathe at the Waterbeach Theatre, Derry. Her next solo show Locked In, Locked Out, and Everything In Between is at the Ulster Hall, Belfast in May 2015.

Claire Butler (assistant artist)

Claire Butler, an artist originally from Rosslare Harbour, Co. Wexford, explores nature, the Irish landscape and Irish folklore through print. Her recent work takes a particular interest in the landscapes around her and explores the idea that perhaps overlooked over changing beauty in nature. The marks in her printings evoke a sense of imagination and a unique narrative for each viewer, capturing a fleeting moment of beauty in nature.

Claire studied at the Limerick School of Art and Design, graduating in 2005 with a BA in Fine Art Painting. She has been involved in various group exhibitions in Wexford in recent years. Now based in Rosslare, Co. Wexford, she continues to take inspiration from the rural landscape that surrounds her.

Els Dierxvord (lead artist)

Els Dierxvord is a Belgian artist and film-maker who lives and works in Dunoon, Argyll, Scotland. Her videos, drawings and sculpture explore anti-utopian themes such as social conflict and survival in the margins. Els’ work focuses on communication, collaboration and social conflicts, often returning to anti-utopian themes such as the notion of the outsider and the symbolic prison. Through her films, she works in socially-contested sites collaborating with people who host inhabit these places as instinctively she is drawn to unconventional individuals determined to live as far from the mainstream grid as possible. In 2012, she started the online film project entitled The Black Lamb which submitted as a feature-length documentary offering an intimate view into rural Ireland intertwining individual stories with larger universal issues such as globalization, food production, emigration and biodiversity. Els’ mentor on the project was Karis O’Connell Sánchez, Independent Curator.

Dierxvord has had numerous international exhibitions and has shown work in Mafra Antwerp, Belgium; Villa de Wibb Centre for Contemporary Arts, Rotterdam, Holland; Palais de Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium; KunsthalleEggeslo, Vienna, Austria; Danielle Arnaud Gallery, London, UK and l’Arche at the Neos Gallery, New York, USA. Her films have been presented in the Rotterdam Film Festival, the Arges Film Festival, and the Cânastânia Film Festival. In 2014, Els presented a new series of works at the Brussels-based Kunstencentrum Antwerp and Arges, Centre for Art and Media.

Laurence O’Toole (assistant artist)

As an interdisciplinary artist, the core of Laurence’s practice is photographic and sculptural. However, he utilises other disciplines and medias and is currently developing filmmaking, print and poising skills for future projects. His work is concerned with the extrapolations of science fiction literature as a contemporary parable generator. This, combined with research into current environmental and economic concerns, produces works that examine aspects of greed, growth, sustainability and catastrophe.

Laurence originally studied graphic design, but ultimately gravitated to 3D design and metal fabrication. He studied sculpture at Wexford Campus School of Art and Design (IT Carlow) where he graduated in 2016 with a BA (Hons). He currently resides near Carrigore Point, Co. Wexford where he draws inspiration from the constantly transforming coastal environment.

For further information on the Living Arts Project or participating artists please contact Catherine Bowe, Visual Arts Manager, Wexford Arts Centre at catherine@wexfordartscentre.ie

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