

16th April - 7th May 2016



In 2013, the Living Arts Project was established as a long term visual artseducational scheme, supporting the existing partnership between Wexford Arts Centre and the Arts Department of Wexford County Council. The aim of this project is to provide children with an understanding and appreciation of contemporary art. The Living Arts Project exhibition represents a selection of work produced by the participating primary schools and artists, offering pupils a chance to see their work presented in a professional gallery.

The following artists and schools were selected to participate in this year's programme: John Busher with Wexford Educate Together NS, Wexford Town; Els Dietvorst with Gusserrane NS, New Ross, Co. Wexford; Caoimhe Dunn with Glynn NS, New Ross, Co. Wexford; and Rosie O'Gorman with Rathnure NS, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.

Through the fourteen week project, the children worked to reflect significant issues surrounding celebrity culture and its connection to bodily perceptions and the notion of self; while storytelling and movement, the role of memory, personal and communal histories and the abstraction of the natural world have also been addressed within their work. The Living Arts Project provided the opportunity for the participating class groups to learn a myriad of visual art techniques; helping to strengthen their confidence, rely on their intuition and develop collaborative skills.

Each artist brought their own unique styles, talents and disciplines to the participating schools, encouraging pupils to think beyond the classroom and respond visually to the world around them. The project challenged the pupils and teachers through the mediums of film making, mixed media sculpture, printmaking, painting and drawing processes. In addition, this year saw the inclusion of clay animation, puppetry, mask-making and storytelling; making this year's exhibition one of the most unique in the history of the project.

A mentorship programme ran alongside each residency, and each artist nominated an independent artist or curator they felt was relevant to their professional practice. This mentorship helped to ensure the effectiveness and integrity of the programme on an ongoing basis, while also providing positive critique for the resident artist. In addition, the programme helped to refine methods of engaging with the pupils throughout each residency, ensured that the work and processes were of high quality and the dynamic between artists and students was challenging and productive. The following mentors were involved in the 2015/16 project: Michael Fortune, Marc Mac Lochlainn, James Merrigan and Karla Sanchez O'Connell.

Official exhibition launch

Saturday 16th April at 3pm

Opened by Artist Michael Fortune

at

Wexford Arts Centre

In association with Arts Department of Wexford County Council and the Arts Council



Glynn National School, New Ross, Co. Wexford

With thanks to Joe Ryan, Sinead Murray and Alex Lynch.

Caoimhe Dunn (lead artist)

Caoimhe Dunn is a model-maker/puppeteer and youth arts facilitator based in Wexford. Working through the discipline of puppetry, Caoimhe's workshops with the pupils of Glynn National School involved the creation and manipulation of objects. She is interested in the integration of performance based crafts of mask-making and puppetry with formal aspects of sculpture, and brought these interests to her role as lead artist. Pupils explored and created different approaches to the building of puppets and masks, using their creations and other found objects to explore movement, animation and storytelling. Exercising cognitive and fine motor skills, the students created figures from found objects and figured out how to articulate and bring them to life. Through the art of shadow puppetry they had the opportunity to explore the play of light and dark – to change and layer objects, giving them new meanings and character – to explore mood created by light, dark and colour. Caoimhe's mentor for this project was Marc Mac Lochlainn, Artistic Director of Branar, the renowned children's theatre company.

Caoimhe studied Fine Art, Model-making and Design in DLIADT, but her interest in masks and street theatre began through her participation in youth theatre. Caoimhe has created masks for performance as well as for exhibitions, and has created pieces for several productions by Dublin Lyric Players and the National Library's Yeats Exhibition - currently in the National Library. Caoimhe worked with Bui Bolg Productions as a model and prop maker, designer, puppeteer, performer and as their primary Outreach Artist and Youth Arts Facilitator from 2004-2015. She has directed, and performed and devised street theatre shows with Bui Bolg and Bui Bolg Youth Arts and has facilitated a mix of workshops for them and others. Recently, she worked as a prop maker for the Wexford Festival Opera.



Tanya Tierney (assistant artist)

Tanya Tierney's practice is closely connected to working with children and young people and her role during the Living Arts Project has greatly helped to inform her work and encouraged her to continue in this field. Tanya is keenly interested in exploring benefits that working through the arts can have on a young people; allowing them a platform to investigate, learn in diverse new ways and gain confidence in their own skills and abilities. Most importantly, she enjoys the excitement that children gain through learning about visual arts practices, as well as the therapeutic and social effects it can have.

Tanya is a recent graduate of the Wexford Campus School of Arts and Design (IT Carlow), where she graduated with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art. Currently studying art therapy, the Living Arts Project has helped her to understand the boundaries and limits that can arise when working with children. This experience has helped to grow her professional practice and abilities and remains committed to working with children in the future, particularly pupils with special needs and requirements.

Rathnure National School, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford

With thanks to Taragh Nolan, Darragh Kinsella and Úna Hayden.
Rosie O'Gorman (lead artist)

Guided by their common curiosities, the artwork Rosie made with the pupils at Rathnure National School explored themes of transformation both material and temporal. Whether this transformation be seasonal, annual or generational, through simple gestures or actions they manipulated scale, made use of unconventional materials, employed interdisciplinary learning, and researched their personal and communal histories. Together, they learned that their environment is not static, that their roles within their families, community and landscape can be actively engaged, and that art is a means by which they can explore this engagement. Rosie's mentor during the Living Arts Project was Wexford Artist and Film-maker Michael Fortune.

In 2000 Rosie graduated with a BA in Art and Design Education from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin. In the same year she received two national awards; the Larkin Memorial Award for teaching, and the Taylor Award for painting. With the support of a Fulbright Scholarship, Rosie attended the San Francisco Art Institute, California, receiving her MFA in 2004. On returning to Ireland, she established Cow House Studios with her husband Frank Abruzzese at her ancestral home in rural Wexford. Recent exhibitions include 'The Tools' (2014) curated by Nora Rodriguez at Root Division, San Francisco, and 'Sexual Souvenirs' (2013) curated by Naomi Watts at the Museum Everywhere Everyone Everything, Brooklyn, NY.



Sarah Codd (assistant artist)

Sarah Codd is visual artist living and working in Wexford and the surrounding areas. Working in a wide variety of media including drawing, mixed media and printmaking, Sarah's work deals with concepts of time. She is interested in creating a narrative through her work and ideas surrounding identity frequently appear. Her practice also involves community arts projects which engage both children and adults in contemporary art practice and appreciation. She strongly believes that arts experiences should not be limited to experts or professionals, but open to all.

Sarah Codd is currently undertaking a Masters of Arts in Arts and Heritage Management and seeking professional opportunities in this field. Sarah Codd also holds a BA (Hons) Degree in Fine Arts from Waterford Institute of Technology. Sarah is passionate about promoting contemporary visual arts in regional areas such as the South East of Ireland.



Gusserane National School, New Ross, Co.Wexford

With thanks to Anthony Heuston and Tim McGrath.
Els Dietvorst (lead artist)

Els approached the Living Arts Project with an interest in developing key visual art skills with the pupils and instilling self-confidence, competence and trust in their own abilities. She focussed on the fundamentals of visual arts practice such as the importance of light, shadow, composition and explored the notion of abstract art. Through drawing and sculpture, the work has a definite ecological concern; a common theme within Els' practice. Pupils were encouraged to closely observe the natural world around them while collaboration, communication and the drive to let their work develop through their own intuition and creativity was also important to this process. Els' mentor during the Living Arts Project was was Independent Curator Karla O'Connell Sanchez.

Els Dietvorst is a Belgian artist and filmmaker who lives and works in Duncormick, Co. Wexford. Her work focuses on communication, interpersonal relations and social conflict, as well as anti-utopian topics such as the human condition and the outsider. Through video, writing, drawing and sculpture, her personal work often takes the form of projects lasting several years in which she engages directly with her social environment. Els' work has been shown in Antwerp, New York, Brussels, Belgium, Casablanca, London, Moscow and Vienna. Els studied at Sint Lucas in Antwerp and graduated with a Master's degree in Fine Art and a HDIP in Education. Her latest film 'The Rabbit and the Teasel' was selected as the only visual arts film in the internationally renowned Arts festival 'Kunstenfestivaldesarts' (Brussels) and it was nominated for one of the most important documentary festivals in Europe, Visions du Reel in Switzerland, 2015. In September 2015, Els was commissioned to produce work for the Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art.



Tara McGinn (assistant artist)

As an interdisciplinary artist Tara's personal interest lies in the creation of art which acts as a mediator to concepts and criticisms which are important to her process of creativity, self expression, consciousness and necessity of being. This formula is the crucial developmental element of her practice. Her most recent work entitled 'The Show' (2015) was a collaboration with RuahBerney-Pearson, in which they made a performance piece considering the translucency of self judgement, attempting to explore the naturally acquired human behaviour of achieving a personality, identity and image we endlessly force upon ourselves in order to vindicate expectations that may or may not exist. Through the performance, involving a mix of dance, costume, text, music and interaction, the work purposefully laid a trail to prod at this stigma's fragile and pathetic reality and to possibly reveal a window to self contentment.

Tara is a recent graduate of the Wexford Campus School of Arts and Design (IT Carlow), where she graduated with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art. She was the recipient of the Student Art Purchase Award, IT Carlow in 2015. She has been heavily involved with performance, video, collaboration and dance on a number of projects.

Wexford Educate Together National School, Wexford Town

With thanks to Marie Banaghan, Mary Breen, Anne Howe,
Tasha Stephens & all other staff.
John Busher (lead artist)

John Busher's work through the Living Arts Project encouraged pupils to explore many core themes from within his own practice. This took the form of examining the role of memory, bodily perception and the notion of self, and further analysed attitudes surrounding celebrity culture and its connection to the self; currently a topical and pervasive phenomenon in youth culture. The medium of collage provided a backdrop to explore printmaking techniques, further dealing with the idea of myth and transformation, and pupils also had the opportunity to investigate these issues through intaglio printmaking, paint processes and claymation. Exploring themes of memory and sensory perception through narration and animation, pupils reflected on their individual responses to how they perceive the five senses. John's project provided an immersive, intensive visual arts experience for pupils and teachers. John's mentor during this project was James Merrigan, Artist, Art Critic, Lecturer and Co-founding Editor of Fugitive Papers and founder of the exclusively online art criticism journal +billion-.

John Busher graduated from NCAD with an MA in Art in the Contemporary World in 2015, completing a Post Grad in 2008, and an Honours Degree in 1999. His practice focuses on the nuances of perceptual experience which he investigates from a bodily point of view; figures often disperse through a gradual process of reworking. The physical properties of the medium are measured against the resulting imagery that materializes. He recently presented a solo exhibition entitled 'Floorplan', NAG Gallery, Dublin (2015). Recent group exhibitions include 'Transferrals', Pallas Projects, Dublin (2015); 'Impressions Biennial', CCAM, GMIT, Galway (2015), 'Winter Open', RUA RED, Dublin, 'Little Kingdoms', Catalyst Arts, Belfast, and 'Essays for the House of Memory', Ormston House, Limerick (2014). In 2015 he was awarded a Tyrone Guthrie Bursary from Wexford County Council and selected for the 'Artist in Prison Scheme'. He is also a panel artist on Wexford County Council's 'Artist in the Community Scheme'.



The exhibition will run in the upper and lower galleries of Wexford Arts Centre from Saturday 16th April to Saturday 7th May, and gallery hours are Monday to Saturday from 10am-5pm.

The Arts Department of Wexford County Council and Wexford Arts Centre would like to take this opportunity to thank all schools, artists and mentors involved in the project, and the local community for their support and interest in the project to date.

For further information please contact Catherine Bowe, Visual Arts Manager on +353 (0)53 9123764 or email catherine@wexfordartscentre.ie. For further information on Wexford County Council's full arts programme please visit www.wexford.ie/arts or call 053-9196441 or email arts@wexfordcoco.ie.

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