

[art@work]

Artists Residency Programme 2010



[*art@work*]

art@work is a residential programme of Roscommon County Council Arts Office where artists spend three weeks in a company in County Roscommon making artworks influenced by the environment, staff and working practices of that company. Since its inception in 2001, the programme has had over fifty residencies in thirty Roscommon companies and organisations and continues to be a unique outlet for contemporary art to be integrated into society – introducing not only art, but also artists, and the processes of making art, to new audiences.

To the company the programme offers a valuable and unique advertising platform in both a local and national context as well as being an innovative project with the potential to develop staff interrelations and create new insights for the company. To the workforce, the presence of a programme like *art@work*, which is influenced by the workplace, can stimulate a pride and recognition of the work they do. To the artist it offers the opportunity to explore different methods of working, new influences, and the opportunity to produce art in a unique context which allows for greater participation in its creation.

In a unique way, *art@work* promotes the creative sector by encouraging creativity in new ways whilst also supporting the professional development of artists.

For further information on *art@work* and how to get involved as an artist or a company, please contact Philip Delamere at Roscommon County Council Arts Office at artsoffice@roscommoncoco.ie or 090 66 37285.

Please see www.roscommonarts.com for further details.

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[Foreword

Luke 'Ming' Flanagan / Mayor: Roscommon County Council]

The arts have a fascinating and crucial role to play in our society. It's perhaps not recognised as much as it should be, but the arts are the flag-bearer for creativity, and creativity is one of the best assets that we have as a county, and as a country.

It's not to say that creativity and the arts are the same thing. On the contrary, creativity and being creative can be evident in almost everything we do. What's unique about the arts though is that they are more about creativity than they are about anything else. They are a hub of invention, innovation, expression and creative thinking. So the more we are around art, and interact with the arts, the more we bring these valuable skills into our own thinking.

This is why *art@work* is unique. For most of us, our opportunities to encounter art are limited to looking at or listening to finished products, whether that's in galleries, theatres or on CD's. Occasionally, there's an interesting documentary or interview about a remarkable artist, and many of us know a musician, dancer, or a painter that we might meet and chat to once in a while.

With *art@work* though, you have the opportunity of following the story of a work of art up close from its source, through its development and into its finished form. It's an eye opener to see how artists work. Looking at the projects that these artists have engaged in makes you appreciate the sheer hard work, effort and fascinating projects that they do. Deirdre Creighton at Ballaghaderreen Library made the valuable comment "creativity forces you to think outside the box, to look for inspiration, find solutions. It is something we need to do more of as a society".

This publication describes eight fascinating and varied projects. Almost all of them worked out differently than expected, they often changed course, they all learned from experience, from new influences and from other people. And that's how it should be. I would like to congratulate the participating companies for becoming involved in the programme and to the artists for their openness, commitment and creativity. I would like to thank the Arts Council for their continued support and pledge the continued support of Roscommon County Council to the valuable work evident in programmes like *art@work*.

[Introduction

Kathleen Martin / Director: Community & Enterprise, Roscommon County Council]

The introduction to Roscommon County Council's current Arts Plan states that the 'arts play a central function in the cultural well being of the county', that they also 'have vast implications socially and economically, the three strands of which are inherently intertwined.'

Nowhere is that more evident than in *art@work*. As a programme it has layer upon layer of benefits to the different people involved, and like many arts programmes it represents excellent value for money even in these straitened times.

art@work is about a lot of things – but one of its most evident characteristics is the value it places on partnership. Without exception, all the companies and artists are eager, willing and enthusiastic, and because of this, each residency has resulted in a beneficial and rewarding experience for all involved.

Reading through this publication, I am intrigued by the contributions of the artists, particularly the motivations behind why artists make art. When asked why they were interested in *art@work*, almost all wanted to work with other people and to leave themselves open to new experiences and new challenges. This is an invaluable temperament which evidently permeates into all those around them during these residencies.

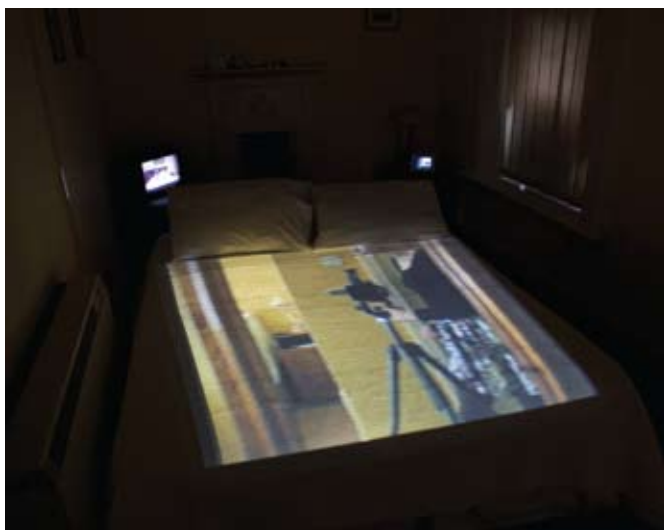
Each of the companies has to be commended for their openness and generosity to their artistic guests. I believe the same creative spark and openness to new things that is so evident in the artists involved is equally to be found in the company managers – which is what undoubtedly led them to becoming involved in *art@work* in the first place – a trait that will serve them well in the current economic climate.

For one programme, *art@work* ticks a lot of boxes. It supports the professional development of artists, it promotes the creative sector by encouraging creativity in new and innovative ways, and it also introduces artists and the making of art to new audiences.

This is a wonderful programme and a great publication. I want to commend the members of Roscommon County Council for their support of *art@work* and also thank the Arts Council for their continued support for this programme since its inception in 2001 and I look forward to its continued success in years to come.



Video Still



'Occupied' Installation

[*Alissa Kleist @ Gleeson's Townhouse*]

Gleeson's Restaurant, Townhouse and Food & Wine shop is a family run business whose main ethos is to provide genuine hospitality and traditional Irish food with a strong link to our local area. We currently employ 30 people. We are proud members of Good Food Ireland and promote local producers through our menus.

ALISSA KLEIST - artist

What interests you about making art?

What interests me about making art is the inherent potential of a work art to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, create alternative realities and question our perception of the world around us. I get a personal satisfaction not just from the process of making but also from the examination of a finished piece, deciding what works and what can be enhanced.

What initially drew you to art@work?

I was interested in the site-specific nature of the *art@work* residency programme. Having previously made site-specific installations in more art-related spaces I felt it would be stimulating to draw inspiration from, and make work in, a non-artistic environment with its own rules and challenges. What also attracted me to apply for the *art@work* residency programme were the unexpected and the unpredictable elements that are part of working in a new place and with people who might have a very different perspective on things.

Did you originally see any connection with what the company does and your work?

I am interested in the concept of staging and I felt this bears some resemblance to the hospitality industry, which aims to create or stage a positive (artificial) experience. Often a very busy environment, it is in the quiet moments during the lull of activity that the townhouse has an almost cinematic quality. Spending time there feels like being behind the scenes of a carefully orchestrated production. For me part of the work that I make lies with the viewer's reaction to it or their experience of it. In that sense the staff at Gleeson's and I share a concern for the viewer/customer's needs and requirements.

What noteworthy or significant stages or experiences did your process go through during the residency?

I had initially intended to recreate in some way the large garden that was originally at the back of Gleeson's townhouse, which Mary Gleeson had mentioned in the site visit. However, after doing research about the building and its history in the initial stages of the residency I became interested in also re-creating and re-enacting other aspects of its past. I decided to use Gleeson's as a set, staging these fragments of history, utilising video for its capacity to manipulate our perception of reality, space and time.

In what way did this process of creating work differ to your normal working practices?

While I am used to working within constricted timeframes, the fact that I live and work in Belfast meant that every time I travelled to Roscommon I had a deadline to deal with as I was only able to stay for a few days at a time. Spreading the 15 days of the residency out over 3 months meant that I was able to work in stages, with research, documenting and filming taking place in Roscommon and the planning, preparatory work and editing executed in Belfast. As a result I managed my time, and what I did with it, much more effectively than normal. I also felt there was something quite poignant in the fact that the residency became a shared experience. Though the staff sometimes found it perplexing that I would be interested in certain aspects of the townhouse that they are so used to (the beautiful light in a dark-red carpeted corridor, the quiet kitchen at the end of the day), it was often gratifying to explain and for a moment experience these things with another person. I think a lot of artists, myself included, sometimes retreat into an artistic bubble, and to (momentarily) include someone else into this process can be very rewarding.

If your work practice changed during the residency, how has it changed and what influenced these shifts in your practice?

For me one of the great benefits of the structure of the programme is that it is very open, which meant that I was able to adapt to the new circumstances created by the residency while continuing to explore some of the core themes of my practice. I don't feel my practice has changed; rather the residency gave me an opportunity to develop it further.

MARY GLEESON- Gleeson's Townhouse

What were your expectations of the residency?

Our impression before the residency started was that a piece would be created somewhere to represent the loss of a garden – the building used to have a wonderful garden many years ago.

Was having this artist in residence different in any way to what you expected?

Very different – a very new use of technology and layering in a way we would not have seen before. The way the past history, steps back through time and previous eras of this house were stranded together and presented using video on the canvas of a guest bedroom was very powerful. All the dimensions we never have time to think about in the busy day-to-day running of the business were revealed and we could feel the history of the story of this place we now love and work in.

What do you think were the benefits to the company of having an artist in residence?

The residency had a powerful effect on how we view what we do now in our business. It made us aware that this is not just a building where we run a business. We are the current layer of this place from which foundations were dug in 1863. Everyone who lived here left their spirit and their mark from Presbyterian minister to Catholic priest to Doctor. Alissa used powerful imagery to honour this past and made it current by incorporating the staff who work here today.

Did you discover anything new about how artists work?

We had a more traditional view of what an artist might create so this was a huge eye opener in its contemporary nature and technological presentation.

In general do you think creativity and the arts have any ongoing beneficial role to play in non-arts organisations or mainstream industry?

It's difficult to see how a full time artist could be incorporated into a situation like ours on an ongoing basis although this residency definitely had positive benefits for us and hopefully for Alissa.

'Occupied' 2010

[mixed media installation, dimensions variable]

The work made for the mixed-media installation in the old AIB Bank building for Roscommon Culture Night 2010 is influenced by the time I spent at Gleeson's townhouse during the *art@work* residency.

The work seeks to explore the boundaries between reality, fiction and the artificial. Each looped clip exhibited here examines a different aspect of the history of the building that is now Gleeson's townhouse. Originally a Presbyterian manse, it was also inhabited by a priest, a doctor and was left empty for a period of time before Mary and Eamonn Gleeson converted it.

Often a very busy environment, it is in the quiet moments during the lull in activity that the townhouse appears almost cinematic. Spending time there feels like being behind the scenes of a carefully orchestrated production. Gleeson's became a film set in which, with the aid of props, I re-created snippets of the building's and its inhabitants' past. The absence of visual records documenting the interior of the building proved to be frustrating at times, but ultimately meant I had to improvise. Consequently I utilised video not only for its connection to cinema but also for its capacity to manipulate our perception of reality, space and time.

What resulted became work that questions the authenticity of these re-interpretations, as well as the staged hotel environment. In order to captivate the viewer, a film main objective is to present imagery that is 'believable', and therefore effectively tells a story. Each of the clips shown as part of the installation suggest the unfolding of an event, implying something has happened or is about to happen. They relate to each other but do not form a grand narrative. Essentially what the viewer encounters is not a story with an ending, but the fragmented unfolding of reality. Thus what seemed like a doctor's room is set in a hotel, what looks like an empty room becomes a self-portrait of the artist. The ultimate disclosure of the artificial nature of the shots in a certain sense breaks the magic that cinema tries so hard to suspend.

I was interested in including certain cinematic faux pas (the reflection of the camera person, somebody crossing the camera, the presence of housekeeping staff) to further heighten the artificial, staged nature of the footage. By layering shots I wanted to connect the, what seems to be, fragmented historical past of the building to its present function as a hotel.

The final footage is displayed in yet another set, this time of a staged hotel room, the furniture itself becoming props, perhaps referring back to the ultimate function of the hotel and guesthouse: to create an experience in a carefully staged environment.



Image from 'search engine', a short story on film

[*Alice Lyons @ Ballaghaderreen Library*]

Ballaghaderreen Branch Library serves the town of Ballaghaderreen and the surrounding rural areas. It has 1,210 library members (2009), over 18,000 items of stock including books, audio books on CD, and DVDs. The library is a venue for book launches for local and national authors, and workshops for children and adults during the year.

ALICE LYONS - artist

What initially drew you to art@work?

Ballaghaderreen figures in my family's history, and I was ready to make something about the story of my grandmother, who was born near the town. I feel at home in libraries and knew that it would be a welcoming place to approach material that was tender for me to work with.

Did you originally see any connection with what the company does and your work?

Yes, I wanted to make something, a poem or a short film, which could be part of the library's collection.

What noteworthy or significant stages or experiences did your process go through during the residency?

I found that the library as a site was important for the first third of the residency. I took photos and read in the genealogical research section. I was a fly on the wall when some Americans came in 'looking for their roots'. Discussions with the library staff about how they try to help descendants of Irish emigrants find their family history were really evocative. I was fascinated with so many aspects of life in the library, but I wanted to keep my work focused and use my time wisely. After the first week in the library, I went out to Lisacul, where my granny had been born, and did some filming and other research. Finally, I struggled with the decision about where to cut the film: in one way, I felt I 'should' do it in the library even though I would have to carry in all my equipment because of the 'residency' aspect of the work. However, I also had to acknowledge, that editing film and writing are introverted activities, and I wanted to work in a focused way without 'interpreting' what I was doing in a public space. I decided to cut at home in my studio knowing that what I made would be in residence in the library afterwards. I also decided to do a public screening and talk about the work in the library. Libraries are repositories of literature and places for reading - inward activities - and I suppose my attitude to this residency reinforced the introvert aspect of art-making



Image from 'search engine'



Image from 'search engine'

DEIRDRE CREIGHTON - Ballaghaderreen Library

What were your expectations of the residency?

This is the first time the Ballaghaderreen branch of Roscommon County Library participated in the *art@work* project. We did not know what to expect, but were open to whatever the artist wanted to do for the project. Her submission was interesting, but we understood it could change in the course of the project.

Was having this artist in residence different in any way to what you expected?

No, but it was less intrusive than we had expected. Alice spent some time in the library and did some filming. She was so discreet that we usually carried on as normal.

What do you think were the benefits to the company of having an artist in residence?

It makes us aware that artists work like everyone else, that they are dependent on customers and clients as much as any business or service. They depend on our good will and on our awareness of the value of the work they do in society.

Did you discover anything new about how artists work?

Sometimes we have a rather narrow definition of what constitutes a piece of art. Projects like this help to expand our awareness of the different ways art can be produced.

In general do you think creativity and the arts have any ongoing beneficial role to play in non-arts organisations or mainstream industry?

Creativity forces you to think outside the box, to look for inspiration, find solutions. It is something we need to do more of as a society. Too often we don't think for ourselves and depend on other people to do our thinking for us. We suffer from tunnel vision. Artists show us that we can be creative in our own work and daily life. There is enormous value in looking at something in a different way, or doing something differently.

“Creativity forces you to think outside the box, to look for inspiration, find solutions.”



'Confections (abroad) #3', 2010



'Confections (abroad) #5', 2010

[*Amy Stevens @ Molloy's Bakery*]

Molloys is a family business serving the people of Roscommon since 1922. We produce a range of crusty breads, scones and rock buns early every day. We are customer focused and adopt to serve the needs of our customers, hence we produce a range of spelt bread daily (wheat free and wheat, yeast and dairy free). We also produce fresh cream cakes and pastries daily and celebration cakes are made to order. Our fine food shop compliments the range of bread and cakes with some excellent local and regional products. Local honey, dried herbs, pork and bacon and hand made chocolates are sourced from within 30km of the town. The company has won several awards for bakery products and is in the finals of Retail Excellence Ireland 2010. Molloys employ 37 full and part time staff.

AMY STEVENS - artist

What interests you about making art?

For me, making art is figuring out how to visually interpret certain aspects of popular culture in a fresh and interesting way. Finding new, excessive and humorous ways to express myself keeps me engaged in the process. I enjoy the reactions of the viewer when they experience the absurdity of the colour, pattern and icing in the cakes. I am also pleased when my images evoke emotions; whether these are memories of a cake disaster, cake as celebration, keeping up appearances, or sheer eye candy. My main goal in making art is to offer the viewer an opportunity to see the world in a different way, to understand art in a new way and to enjoy viewing art.

What initially drew you to art@work?

Strangely, *art@work* came to me! In March of 2010 I received an email from a fellow artist who saw my photographs in a blog and thought my work would fit well with the *art@work* residency, especially at Molloy's Bakery. The deadline for registering interest was a week away and I decided to go for it. Coincidentally, this same artist (Niamh O'Connor) was also accepted into the *art@work* program for 2010.

Did you originally see any connection with what the company does and your work?

Because my work for the past six years has been about making cakes and photographing them, it was truly a perfect fit for me to be able to work at a Molloy's Bakery.

What noteworthy or significant stages or experiences did your process go through during the residency?

Because I live in the United States and had limited time to stay in Ireland, I worked the three weeks of the residency consecutively, which added a bit of time constraint. I work well under pressure, so it was a positive challenge! The first day I was told to observe, which was fascinating, but hard for me because I was standing around, ducking out of the way while everyone was busy at work. The second day I jumped in and started working with decorators Lillian and Sandra. I helped decorate pastries and cakes and immersed myself into the workings of the team. I also put a

binder with my CV, artist statement and images of my work in the break room for the employees to see who I was. I found this very helpful and received various comments from the employees who looked at the book. The next couple days I removed myself from working as an employee and started working as a resident artist. For a couple of days I documented everything with my camera. Racks of pastries and breads, inside the cafe, the decorators and display cases. I found documenting to be a helpful way of getting the creative process flowing even though my intention was not to use those particular photos for the final images.

In what way did this process of creating work differ to your normal working practices?

It was definitely an adjustment working in the bakery. First off, I didn't really have a set space to keep my equipment and supplies, so each evening I was carrying my things back to where I was staying. Unlike my studio at home, where I keep everything I could possibly need all in one place, I felt a bit nomadic and needed to work as more of a minimalist. On the other end of the spectrum, it was refreshing to be able to decorate and not have to bake the cakes or make the icing. I had racks of cakes, pastries and anything else edible at my disposal as well as buckets of butter cream! It was such a luxury to just be able to focus on the decorating part of the process. (Even though at one point Declan seemed a bit concerned with how many cakes I planned to use!)

If your work practice changed during the residency, how has it changed and what influenced these shifts in your practice?

A major change in my process was creating my own backgrounds for the cakes. I normally use different patterned fabrics as backdrops and then decorate the cake based on the colour and design. My original intent was to find Irish fabric and ephemera for the backgrounds. When I realized the availability of the kind of crazy fabric I like to use was not realistic, I decided to make my own backgrounds from photographs. The backgrounds I used are all photographic elements from walking around Roscommon. One afternoon I took my camera for a stroll and shot all of the textures I could find. I was then introduced to a local photographer who printed these large enough to use as backdrops. The next week I decorated cakes to match the backgrounds and photographed the finished cakes. Making my own backgrounds opened up a world of possibilities for me and I definitely plan on exploring this for future work. Another change in my work was learning to make sugar paste flowers. When I first began the residency, I expressed my desire to make flowers. One of the talented decorators, Lillian, came in late one evening to make a wedding cake and set me up on the other work table and taught me how to make roses and sunflowers from moulds and cutters. Since then I have ordered my own moulds for my current work.

As part of my proposal I documented my month in Ireland as well as my work and process at the bakery, which can be seen on the blog on my website www.amystevensart.com/ireland.

DECLAN MOLLOY - Molloy's Bakery

What were your expectations of the residency?

Amy had worked with cake in the past and used a lot of bright colours. Because it was Amy's first time in a commercial bakery I thought she might change her focus based on observing what we do day to day. All our artists to date have surprised us with their imagination.

Was having this artist in residence different in any way to what you expected?

Amy's use of colour was very different to ours, we use what we call food colours creams, light brown and pale blue and pale pink, Amy's use of colour was very different, bright and in your face. A cake created by Amy would definitely be noticed!

What do you think were the benefits to the company of having an artist in residence?

The main benefit of having an artist lies in the fact that management and staff are always open to looking at new ideas and suggestions, we feel we can learn something from somebody with a creative mind. The artist could sow a seed for a new product or a new design.

Did you discover anything new about how artists work?

Every artist is individual and can see the potential to create something from a broken cake, the food colouring, the ingredients and the utensils in the bakery, something that we don't see.

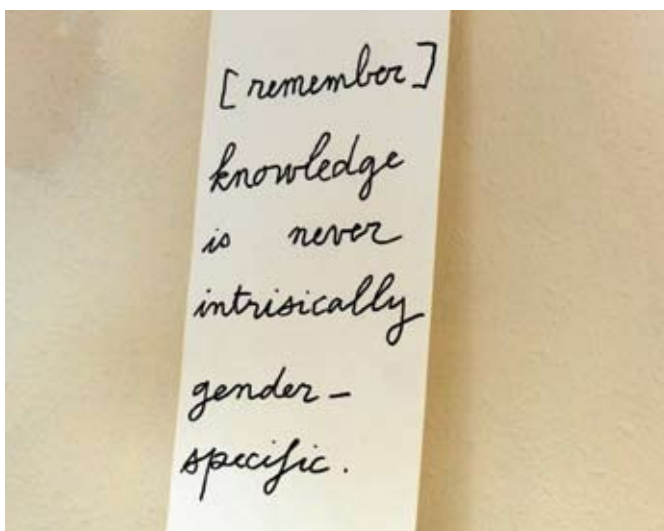
In general do you think creativity and the arts have any ongoing beneficial role to play in non-arts organisations or mainstream industry?

Some of the benefits we see from having an artist is the fact that we have a good learning ethos in the bakery and we will learn from watching someone else working. Artists are creative and we have used some of their ideas or modified them to suit our production. There's also a fun element as some of the cakes are novel.

“My main goal in making art is to offer the viewer an opportunity to see the world in a different way, to understand art in a new way and to enjoy viewing art.”



'Leftovers' (in situ, non composted desiccated vegetable remains in glass jars)



Detail from installation 'If we call them weeds, what does it make us?'
Old AIB building, Roscommon town, culture night 2010

[*Djeribi @ The Organic Garden*]

We are a community project (grant-aided by Pobal Community Services Programme) in Crossna half-parish, near Boyle. We produce organic vegetables and fruit, run training programmes, school gardens and community events and give (free) gardening advice. Knockvicar Organic Garden is much more than 'just' a garden: it is a meeting point for people, a place where things happen.

DJERIBI - artist

What interests you about making art?

Art happens for me at the most intimate level, first as a means of negotiating a safe relationship with the world: making something out of what I see/happens to me, turning it into some kind of 'not me possession' as described by Winnicott. Secondly, as I release these things to the gaze of others, there is always a political gesture: in what I make, in the act of making, I can embody and make real my vision of the world.

What initially drew you to art@work?

I am interested in describing myself as an artist as just another individual in the community. I was really looking forward to being a person, in the artist's role, working alongside others and being able to establish a conversation about respective positions, what was being planned and made. When I started to go to artists books fairs a number of years ago, I really treasured the fact that people who just walked off the street were able to pick up what I had made and react to it in a very immediate way and confidently describe it back to me as an object in their own life. I felt that kind of enriching conversation was always hard got in the gallery context but that this residency would afford many such occasions. And it did.

Did you originally see any connection with what the company does and your work?

There are a lot of connections in the organic garden with what I am if not strictly speaking with what my work is about, but as I always endeavour to achieve a non-fragmented vision of what my life is about I suppose the answer could simply be yes. I had started being involved with the place three years ago through my bread-and-butter work (maison djeribi), and had made over that time a number of interventions as a self-elected artist in residence, so I convinced Laszlo that it would be great to go along with the scheme. It is for me a good public place, where members of the public come in quite an open frame of mind, and very importantly where everyone working there feels really lucky to be doing so.

What noteworthy or significant stages or experiences did your process go through during the residency?

The usual panicking that I had set myself too big an agenda, and then the relief in deciding that my involvement could readily overflow into post-residency time. The residency coincided with a really stressful time in my personal life but every

single day I spent in Knockvicar organic garden I was able to surrender to a feeling of complete peace, like a believer entering a cathedral. Because of my prior and ongoing involvement with the place I did not put any pressure on myself to have anything 'finished' at the end and I really loved taking the time to engage with the process of being placed in a particular environment and engaging with particular people. For 'If we call them weeds, what does it make us?', the installation I put up in Roscommon town for culture night, I enjoyed the pressure of attempting to testify of work that was mostly in progress and in situ. I chose to, rather than encapsulating the whole residency, use some of the creative vocabulary I had been gathering there. It seemed to hold together. For me my being involved in making art is a way of being at all times more intensively alive, and I felt that I was able to make this feeling contagious to the people who work at Knockvicar, that my presence was an excuse for more enjoyment and more reflection in what they were working at. As my official time in the garden has officially come to an official close, no thread has been completely tied up yet, the mud oven is growing slowly like a plant, relying on a lot of people's enthusiasm and particular skills and becoming part of the landscape, a thousand photographs are waiting to be knotted into something, stories have been told and may be echoed, plant labels are being finalized and will be planted in the spring, a series of evenings of soup and bread/film and discussions is planned for the new year, etc. A good few ripples, more or less solid, all truly enriching for me.

In what way did this process of creating work differ to your normal working practices?

Completely. I mostly work on my own, applying a very high level of control to what I do. I also normally work a lot with paper and fragile and non-waterproof materials in a very messy studio. I did not set up a studio in the garden, I was mostly on my feet in the open, engaging in conversations, listening a lot, digging, wheelbarrowing, photographing, building. I really enjoyed taking the role of conceptual catalyst, for instance in the case of the erection of the mud oven, and letting the ownership of the project be taken on by all concerned without having to relinquish my own take and creative intent. I was surprised to find myself confident that in providing the necessary impetus, the background concept or story I could let the ownership of the project go, that some creative inputs could come from other people and yet not rob me of anything on the contrary, that there would possibly be more to gain.

If your work practice changed during the residency, how has it changed and what influenced these shifts in your practice?

By letting other people be very involved in what I had conceived I was able to make peace with what I could describe as the organic way in which I normally work and normally fight against. That contrary to normal practice when I exert a very high level of control onto a piece and often have to wait for someone else to recognize it as a part of their world for it to feel alive, this happened very early on and did not deprive me of anything. In the same way that an organic gardener to be successful has to learn to work with nature and not doggedly impose his/her own vision, I was able to sit further back than I would usually choose to and still be assured that my vision was a bold creative gesture even if the end piece does not completely resemble me. How it will change my practice long term, I know not, I am sure it will though. I am really grateful, really, grateful.

LASZLO KENDERESCI - *The Organic Garden*

What were your expectations of the residency?

I was looking forward to have someone on site whose subject and method of working differs from what and how we regularly do things. I was also expecting her to create something that will remain in the garden after the residency is over, so our visitors and trainees can admire and enjoy it.

Was having this artist in residence different in any way to what you expected?

It was. To my surprise I found her presence and involvement utterly natural. On the other hand, I expected the artwork to take a sort of linear development, something growth or production-like. It was a revelation to discover how much has to go on in the artist's mind before anything materialises.

What do you think were the benefits to the company of having an artist in residence?

It was great to have her present in our every-day toiling-away life. She formed close and friendly relationships with my colleagues, took real interest in what and how we do – I wouldn't be surprised if Djeribi would be consider to try her hand organic home-growing.

Did you yourself discover anything new about how artists work?

I did. It seems there is a lot happening in the artist's head before any sign of any art-piece would materialise. Slow, it seems, but I guess the building blocks of whatever piece of art it is, have to be all together before construction begins, even if these pieces are not visible. But the most important lesson was to me to realise that the artist's work is not at all production-like. It is more a way of being, seeing and understanding, spiritual rather than materialistic. Even the complete absence of an art-piece carries a value through the vibrations created by the artist connecting up with the world around her or him.

In general do you think creativity and the arts have any ongoing beneficial role to play in non-arts organisations or mainstream industry?

I guess we can't be sure, without running proper experiments. For example: creating societies without any art, and comparing them to ones with art. We would have to run these experiments for centuries, naturally, and with large number of test and control groups, to be able to eliminate the random elements and identify the significant differences. Without this scientific methodology we can only guess that it would be a bloody unpleasant world without art and artists.

“I guess we can't be sure, without running proper experiments... Without this scientific methodology we can only guess that it would be a bloody unpleasant world without art and artists.”



[Maggie Gallagher @ Nurture's Best]

Nurture's Best Crèche is an Award Winning Centre of Excellence Crèche, located on the N5 in the picturesque village of Tarmonbarry, only five minutes from Longford town. Nurture's Best Crèche opened in 2007 in a large spacious, purpose built building. Our motto is – 'Striving for the very best for your child in our care, because you don't get a second chance at those first formative years.' This motto is reflected throughout life in the Crèche – in our progressive educational programme, our highly qualified Care Team and our worldwide menu created by our own in-house chef. At Nurture's Best Crèche there is a strong emphasis on creativity, arts based activities and on spending time outdoors. We now have a Care Team of fourteen people who have way above average qualifications and are known for their friendly and motherly manner. They participate in our strong Progressive Professional Development Programme ensuring that our programme keeps up to date with cutting edge developments in Early Childhood Care and Education.

MAGGIE GALLAGHER - artist

What interests you about making art?

As a theatre practitioner the art I make is ephemeral and lives on only in the memories of those who have been witness to the event. Memories are the touch stones of our identity, our reference points to our past and our guides to the future. I believe theatre has the power to change lives, to show alternative routes and to heal grieved identities. Theatre can also entertain and be great fun. To take on a persona and act out a part for another so that we both might find a moment that is worth keeping as a memory is the gift that art, an audience and my creativity offers me each day.

What initially drew you to art@work?

As an experimental theatre practitioner I am comfortable working in unusual spaces and in the public eye, so, unlike other artists I was not drawn to the idea of leaving 'the studio' to work in a different space. What drew me to the residency was to work with materials I may not have thought about engaging with, for example, the raw materials of a baker, vegetables from seeds through to produce and stone from slab to carved object. Also I felt a drawn to return to my Roscommon roots and work in the county I grew up in and to experience its artistic landscape through a mature lens with an objective to unearth new inspirations inside myself.

Did you originally see any connection with what the company does and your work?

As a youth theatre facilitator, as well as a professional actress, I have worked extensively with young children and young adults. However it has been a number of years since I worked with children under eight. Regardless of age, I employ the use of theatre games and warm-up techniques. Many of these have been adapted from well known childhood games. Children's play is not self conscious and is entered into with total belief in the parts they have created: a pirate, an astronaut or a circus

clown created in the playground are as real as the school teacher or parent looking on. Boundaries change in a heartbeat and what was one minute the moon can suddenly become a tightrope to be navigated with the care and attention. Viola Spolin, credited as the 'grandmother' of theatre games recognised the potential of games to the theatre practitioner and created warm-up techniques modelled on the games of children. Many of her techniques are still used by companies to this day. This idea of learning directly from the creativity of children is not only relevant to the ethos of Nurtures Best but also to the Praxis method of my company. At Nurtures Best 'the focus is the children's own and non-directed' in keeping with the Reggio system employed by the staff. This demystifying of art allows creativity to be experienced by all the children at the crèche regardless of ability. In the Praxis method the work is also non-directed and actors are encouraged to develop their own level of creativity which will feed into the group process. This is the application of Paulo Freire's theory of anti-banking which underpins the Praxis method. In a banking education, students are 'containers, receptacles to be filled by the teacher'. In the anti-banking system 'the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but who is himself taught in dialogue with the student, who in turn, while being taught also teaches'.

What noteworthy or significant stages or experiences did your process go through during the residency?

The greatest challenge and also the most significant experience I had during this residency was to just 'be' in the space with the children. Although this is how I work in a professional space I am more used to 'doing' or 'showing' while working with children. Although I knew I wanted to observe the children at natural play in order to develop new games from their play I was surprised by my inner conflict to allow myself that space to just 'be', to 'watch' and not 'join in'. In order to deal with this I gave myself the direction that I could only 'join in' if invited by the children which meant that I did not influence their play.

In what way did this process of creating work differ to your normal working practices?

I have often adapted theatre games, on the hoof, to suit a particular group. Here I got the opportunity to create games directly from free play I observed. Due to a summer camp being run during the residency, I got the opportunity to 'test' and develop the games I created with the older children who were attending. This was of enormous benefit as the games got an outing and problems solved alongside their creation. It also had a wonderful side effect, that of the summer camp children creating and developing their own games in a more structured way which they were eager to show me week to week.

If your work practice changed during the residency, how has it changed and what influenced these shifts in your practice?

The residency has made me re-evaluate my workshop practice with young children. It has shown me that, given a suitable environment, I can employ the same techniques that I use with adults i.e. that of taking a step back as 'the leader' and allow the organic creative expression of that individual to come to the surface without my influence.

CAROLIN CALLERY - Nurture's Best

What were your expectations of the residency?

We were aware that this year's proposal was very different to last years. We had a very open attitude and had hoped for a mutual exploration/observation of an artist at work by the staff, children and parents alike. With this year's proposal we were not at all sure what to expect or how it would 'look and feel' as Maggie spent time in our midst.

Was having this artist in residence different in any way to what you expected?

We had thought it might have been more difficult to engage parents as much as last year, as this proposal was more 'invisible' and observatory in essence. A detailed newsletter, introducing Maggie and the project was sent to all parents and we were delighted with the number of parents who engaged with Maggie discussing the project and observing her at work in the various care rooms.

What do you think were the benefits to the company of having an artist in residence?

The children and Care Team absorbed a lot from their interaction with Maggie and also observing how different children responded to her. As Maggie observed the children at play, they often interacted with her. As the majority of her visits were during the Summer months our School Summer Camps were in full swing and she could discuss her work easily with the older children, who took great interest. The Care Team also gained a lot. They found it very different to last year but gained great insight from the many in-depth discussions with Maggie about the games and warm ups she was observing and developing - where they came from, what activities sparked particular games etc. This very much created a mutual forum for deep thinking around the physical and mental motivations of children's natural ability for spontaneous play. They also commented on what they learned about the theatre world. Most felt they gained some insight into the rehearsal techniques employed by theatre companies of which they would have had very little previous knowledge.

Did you discover anything new about how artists work?

Maggie's project involved detailed observation skills and a lot of patience on her behalf. The Care Team found it fascinating to 'observe her observing' and to see the level of detail she was recording as she patiently took meticulous notes on the games and actions which she thought held potential.

Did the artists work have any effect on how you or the staff see your own business?

We have a strong creativity programme at Nurture's Best Crèche and consider it extremely valuable for our Care Team to interact with professional artists, which adds greatly to the training workshops they do. This 'rare glimpse' of an artist at work is a new level of experience for them, opening their eyes to the multitude of materials around them for exploring creatively. Also the nature of this year's proposal encouraged the Care Team to study and look deeply at the nature of organic play itself, especially from the perspective of theatre, which was a fresh angle for an area they would already have studied. We are delighted that Maggie is producing a book of games developed during the Project. We will definitely use this as a reminder of her time with us and what we gained from this fantastic *art@work* experience.



'Scent of Stone'

[Mary-Jo Gilligan @ Feelystone]

Feelystone was established over 225 years ago, and represents ten generations of accumulated craft experience in the design, manufacture and supply of domestic, architectural and monumental stone.

MARY-JO GILLIGAN - artist

What interests you about making art?

The world is perfectly unfathomable. I use the flex of an idea or the pull of my gut as guide ropes for moving through the world. I'm interested in what I experience, what you experience and how our experiences are formed. If I make art I can give a great amount of my attention to the world as an experience. Making feels like discovering. It's a good feeling. I'm interested in developing my research process as a conveyor of this feeling, of sharing this feeling. I use research as a path to visit all manner of places and as a reason to talk to all manner of people. I'm interested in the scope for shared experience in the making of art as much as in the encounter of a piece of art.

What initially drew you to art@work?

I heard about *art@work* by way of a project that someone told me about where an artist made a giant metal gramophone cone to funnel sounds through space in a workplace. I was enthused by this scene. I've always liked when art crosses paths with people outside of galleries and museums. I'm also very drawn to making art that responds to specific spaces. For me, during the initial site-visits, the Feelystone factory space was teeming with sensory material: smells, dust, puddles of water, clatters and movement... I wanted to be there, absorbing the situation. *art@work* seemed like a wonderful way to stimulate conversations between strangers, to re-jig understandings and to probe experiences.

Did you originally see any connection with what the company does and your work?

Initially our work seemed like polar opposites. Feelystone make very solid objects as final products. I typically make temporary things. Feelystone work with a specific material. I work with an array of media and materials.

The bulk of my practice is active research and experimentation. As an artist this process is riddled with potential changes at every stage until the final decision on the future artwork is made. Once this final stage is reached I think there are certain similarities between Feelystone and my practice as we both plan the manufacturing process, use the tools at our disposal to craft a product to a high standard and would often work to a tight deadline.

What noteworthy or significant stages or experiences did your process go through during the residency?

The process began firmly rooted in my proposal that focused primarily on exploring the smell of stone. The proposed idea for embodying such research was to isolate the smells of individual types of stone perhaps creating a 'perfume' from interesting specimens. I studied stone, the geology of Ireland and scent during this time. It was

really interesting to speak with a variety of people about their perception of the smells involved in their work, from geologists in the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) to staff in Feely's working environment. One geologist's process left a strong impression: she would put a stone into her mouth not so much to taste it but to feel out the texture and therefore the mineral structure. In an interesting connection Barry Feely told me about a similar habit of stone crafters in years gone by who would put a fresh chip of limestone in the corner of their mouths while working.

In general smells are ephemeral being easily lost to dispersion and often go unnoticed in their full complexities by our vision dominated perceptive faculties. The smells of most stones were particularly slight. I spent a lot of time trying to eliminate other odours from the specimens. I discovered that the scents were perceptible immediately after breaking a sample (and loosening molecules into the air) but very quickly neutralized into vagueness. I soon also hit a real obstacle when my own sense of smell became compromised due to blocked sinuses. I tried various approaches but failed at capturing smell for a useful period of time. It was frustrating work! The situation really made me consider my process and how it needs to change if I am to have a sustainable art practice.

In what way did this process of creating work differ to your normal working practices?

I approached this residency as a window of opportunity to make a solid batch of work: solid as stone. I have undertaken various residencies before, each replete with their own unique challenges, and I did not foresee any unmanageable difficulties with this project. So it was unsettling when one arose. The project's capacity for development felt the weight of a sudden lack of confidence. As a result my process differed from previous residencies in that it remained rooted in research, without culminating in an event/installation/object that embodied my research ideas. The open remit of *art@work* did not demand an end product so I was not under pressure to force a final art piece together. This I really appreciate.

However despite an immediate resolution the rich experience will no doubt surface in future work. In the midst of a creative existential crisis it was easy to forget that I am part of a greater ecosystem of art, one sustained by the constant thinking, making, doing of artists the world over. The living art practice of any independent artist is at the beck and call of evolution, synthesis, assimilation, renewal and cross-pollination. Already a packet of Wicklow Granite rock dust is wrapped in bubble wrap and headed for Providence Museum USA in response to a request from friend and artist Alison Owen for her artwork-in-residence.

If your work practice changed during the residency, how has it changed and what influenced these shifts in your practice?

The key for me during this time was finding the opportunities that crisis creates. My practice is more aware now. The residency illuminated my practice's weak points. It has enabled me to build those weak joints up both in practical ways and in attitude. Having reflected I have a healthier perspective on the problematic realities of being an artist. I've found myself drawn to artists who speak honestly about the instances/projects/periods of creative crisis that they have experienced. It's an elusive subject because it is so close to our sense of identity, our existential bones. But I think that makes it all the more important to speak about.

FINBARR FEELY - Feelystone

What were your expectations of the residency?

I thought it was an impossible task but that is the beauty of Art, it has no boundaries.

What do you think were the benefits to the company of having an artist in residence?

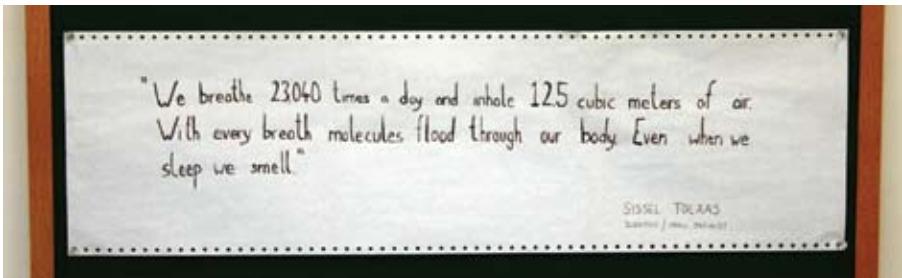
Mary-Jo had an idea and she followed through on it. The result was not what she hoped but that's part of the learning curve of life. I commend her for the way she stuck with it and had the strength of character to admit it was a challenge too far.

Did you discover anything new about how artists work generally?

Mary-Jo has a very gentle and pleasant way about her and I like that. On her last day with Feelystone Mary-Jo invited staff to join her for a chat and a cup of tea to get feedback on her stay, this was a nice idea and it finished off her time with Feelystone in a very positive way.

In general do you think creativity and the arts have any ongoing beneficial role to play in non-arts organisations or mainstream industry?

We must continue to push the boundaries to discover new ways and new products this is why the Arts will always have a role to play in mainstream industry.



Noticeboard in canteen

"I've always liked when art crosses paths with people outside of galleries and museums."



'Break'

Giclée print on board. 16' x 11' (size variable)

Photographed over a two day period at the back of the centre, this space is a sun-trap and vibrant social area during break-times for conversation, tea and cigarettes, emptying bins, watering plants, bike-borrowing, signing a card etc. Inserting the tables from the adjacent canteen invited other uses and greater access to the space.

[*Niamh O'Connor @ The National Learning Network*]

National Learning Network, Castlereagh, provides training and employment services for people who are out of work due to injury, illness, learning difficulty or disability. We pride ourselves in delivering high quality, individualised training programmes which lead to recognised qualifications and job opportunities. Our vision is a world of equal opportunities through learning. Our multidisciplinary team consists of 12 full and part time staff and over 50 learners. National Learning Network recently achieved the FÁS Excellence Through People Award at Gold Level, a result which places it among the top 10% of companies in Ireland who have achieved this award to date.

NIAMH O'CONNOR- artist

What initially drew you to art@work?

The *art@work* programme dovetails with my own interests in terms of working responsively in an environment. I'm not so interested in pursuing an art audience – sometimes I think that artists are just talking to other artists (not that I don't want to hear what other artists think). The support that Roscommon County Arts Office gave is really what made it feasible for me.

Did you originally see any connection with what the company does and your work?

Yes – the National Learning Network in Castlereagh is a training and education centre which supports learning in a responsive way, building on the interests and needs of each individual. It's a centre about people and my work is quite socially driven. Central to my practice are issues around representation, self-perception, display and choice. I became interested in the communal spaces in the building, in the experience of learning as defined by people I spoke with and the punctuations in the working day.

What noteworthy or significant stages or experiences did your process go through during the residency?

I wasn't expecting to enjoy it so much and to engage with people emotionally – this did influence the process. I realised fairly quickly that I can't always be thinking about the work – I was there all day and break times were an opportune time to meet people, but not everyone wants to be interrogated on their lunch break by a curious artist!

In what way did this process of creating work differ to your normal working practices?

The speed with which the work was conceived and completed was much faster than my normal working process, which was refreshing. The focused time gave an impetus to the work that was unexpected and a challenge to keep up with.

If your work practice changed during the residency, how has it changed and what influenced these shifts in your practice?

For me the most interesting pieces were quite spontaneous – in saying that the 15 day residency took place over 3 months, so there was time to digest and incubate ideas. I tend to alternate between quite formal constructed images which are composite layers of photographs and drawings and what I would describe as ‘creative interventions’ which are more spontaneous. This residency has helped me to clarify the value I place upon both tendencies.

Thank you to everyone at NLN for your kind generosity and good humour.



‘I want to learn how to make friends’

Giclée print on board, 8' x 6'



‘I want to learn how to solve problems’

Giclée print on board, 8' x 6'



‘I want to learn how to be the best mum in the world!’

Giclée print on board, 8' x 6'

From the series ‘I want to learn ... badges’. Badges made with/by learners and staff, based on a display of learning goals, in the centre.

CARMEL GREANEY - The National Learning Network

What were your expectations of the residency?

This is the first time National Learning Network Castlereagh has been involved in this type of project, therefore our expectations were somewhat unknown. We hoped that the artist would discover our unique approach to individualised training, our community integration and the difference our service makes to learners, their families and the local community. We also hoped that the artist would allow staff the opportunity to stand back and look at their roles from a different perspective.

Was having the artist in residence any different in any way to what you expected?

The residency really did live up to our expectations. Niamh was commendable in her ability to engage both learners and staff in her projects. Her interpretations of our role as staff encouraged us to savour the achievements and positive effects we have on those we work with. She also encouraged learners to reflect on what is most important to them and gave them a great insight into the art of photography.

What do you think were the benefits to the company of having an artist in residence?

The benefits to the organisation were immeasurable. From a learner point of view it was both enjoyable and educational. Niamh often encouraged learners to watch as she effortlessly manipulated photographs. She also worked closely with a number of learners to produce portraits which encompassed both their personal and training lives. From a staff viewpoint she, through both photography and conversation, encouraged us to look deeper at both our surroundings and our roles. It was also interesting to watch how the learners responded to Niamh's presence. The residency allowed for mutual observation of both the artist and the people she worked with.

Did you yourself discover anything new about how artists work?

It was interesting to see how much time and precision Niamh spent on her work and how she continuously found ways on improving what to our untrained eye seemed to be a finished piece.

We clearly experienced how artists think outside the box. It was interesting to see how Niamh could find an idea in things that we see everyday and hold little value on. Niamh could take a very straight forward picture or idea and in time manipulate it to create something extraordinary. Her finished pictures really did tell a thousand words to speak a thousand words.

In general do you think creativity and the arts have any ongoing beneficial role to play in non-arts organisations or mainstream industry?

The inclusion of art within our centre is fundamental. For a learner it allows expression that often can't be achieved theoretically. It also encourages inclusion within a centre through both production and display. This is evident in the continuing interest and discussion generated by both the art created by our resident artist and the art created by our learners as part of their programme. From a staff outlook the opportunity to incorporate creativity into both our programme delivery and the material we use plays a conducive part in making training both interesting and effective.



'Snail Mudra'

A drawing from 'Conversation Pieces', a series of breaktime performances



'Tower of Onions'

A drawing from 'Conversation Pieces', a series of breaktime performances

[*Siobhan Clancy @ The Family Life Centre*]

The Family Life Centre is an umbrella for three projects: Family Resource Centre, Counselling and Psychotherapy Centre, Roscommon Violence against Women Services. We aim to support and enrich family life in all its diverse forms today, to affirm the value and uniqueness of each individual.

SIOBHAN CLANCY- artist

What interests you about making art?

I am interested in the experiences and ideas that are not usually communicated; that are felt but not expressed because they are perceived to be so common as to be unnoticed or taken for granted. Or else they are thought to be so uncommon that they become taboo. There is an art to communicating. For me, making art is a very physical process. It is driven by a compulsion that bypasses the rational mind through acts of collecting, absorbing, distilling and reforming into a new material. That's why tactile, aural, event-based and performative work that has interaction interests me. I think it can engage an audience in an active, direct way because their senses are immersed. I feel this has the potential to access the collective consciousness and foster some mutual understanding. The rationale usually comes afterwards. I realise this is why I am usually most interested in working in participatory or collaborative contexts, most often with 'minority' groups or in 'non-art' spaces – the latter being what appealed to me about *art@work*.

What initially drew you to art@work?

I am intrigued by the ways in which people solve problems creatively in their own work; the innovation of methods or invention of tools that fulfill tasks efficiently, the art of their work essentially. I was also curious about how certain work routines develop into habits or even rituals, so I viewed the workplace very much as an innovative, performance space. The Family Life Centre facilitates many groups, so I was interested to observe how spaces that invite creative group investment could be created effectively, and what kinds of ethos support that development. I was curious about how the expertise in psychology behind those processes could influence my own performative work. The library offered a great resource for this and the centre literally felt like an accepting, open space in which to research and experiment. A core objective of Family Life Centre is the integration of services with the social fabric of Boyle and this inspired a whole range of ideas given the intriguing historic, cultural and natural interests in the area.

What noteworthy or significant stages or experiences did your process go through during the residency?

The most significant change for me was working within a very structured day in a set location with fixed break times. Usually, my working day is long and very varied, often involving at least one change in location between meeting places, home office, workshops, schools/colleges, studio, online or on-site work. Breaks are irregular

according to what I'm doing or where I'm going. In the Family Life Centre, I felt it was during the break time that I got most research done and the chance to connect with staff. Breaks had significance, kind of like a family dinner that one makes and effort for; this time was put aside each day. I found myself structuring my working day so I could be ready to break at 11am, 1pm and at 3pm, whereas usually I would work until I'm finished, or hungry or tired with no structure as such. The ritual of sharing cups of tea and reflecting on the days events afforded an invaluable personal space. It was a chance to check in with everyone and exchange support, advice or a good laugh to lighten the load of external demands and deadlines. I began to use this time to introduce work in progress or what I called 'Conversation Pieces'. By inviting participation or feedback from the staff I hoped to take advantage of the range of expertise and insights present in the room at this time, as well as responses on a personal level. Sometimes I did feel in this context that what I was doing was downright odd but it was greeted with a level of curiosity, openness and honesty that felt genuinely supportive and encouraging.

In what way did this process of creating work differ to your normal working practices?

Being involved mostly in participatory or commission-based practice, I would rarely have the time to explore the kind of work that a) didn't involve facilitating a large variety of interests alongside my own, including that of funders or b) didn't depend on a fixed deadline for production of an artwork. The staff provided a willing (if sometimes baffled!) audience with which to test out ideas and offer personal and professional insight. The Arts Office was supportive in its openness to the artist's self-defined brief and this was very refreshing. So this opportunity was enormously beneficial to the development of a body of performance works that has been suspended for some time. This has been really valuable. The immediate output from the residency was a calendar and book made with staff and service users. For me the artistic achievement however was in the event at which these were presented for Culture Night in Boyle on September 24th. Friends and family members and staff gathered to launch the calendar and hear a reading of a chapter from the biographical book by the author, Gertie Mullaney.

If your work practice changed during the residency, how has it changed and what influenced these shifts in practice?

During my research, I encountered a recurring theme of communication in the centre and locality. As an artist, I am very conscious that how we communicate shapes our identity and culture as a society and it impacts on the quality of all our relationships. This centre offers a resource to support the development and care of healthy relationships. A range of services including support groups, creative activities, social events, ki-massage and psychotherapy, to name but a few, focus on communicating and sharing experience for the benefit of personal welfare. As most service users were on holidays during Summer and therefore unable to physically engage with the residency, I set up an artist's blog; www.flartboyle.com to communicate the process. This was something that previously would have unnerved me – the feeling of exposing my research and work at early stages; cataloguing the challenges, admitting the failures and constantly searching for something that not even I was sure how to express in words, which was why I choose to be a visual artist in the first place. Gradually, this blog became a digital sketchbook where I documented my experience, invited

participation and showed documentation from the 'Conversation Pieces'. I suppose, in trying to open up my practice to others, I developed confidence in the process myself. On the whole, the residency was a great opportunity for self reflection that I hope will strengthen the critical rigour of my practice.

LOUISE MORAN - Family Life Centre

What were your expectations of art@work?

In one way we had no expectations as to what the residency would bring to our organisation, but we hoped this person would bring a new dimension to our work. We hoped that the artist would see the various components of our work and take away an understanding of the organisation, the people, the community and the work.

Was having this artist in residence different in any way to what you expected?

It certainly was, the artist Siobhan brought a whole different way of thinking and being to us in the Centre, as some said 'she was a breath of fresh air'. She dared to be different and yet inclusive of all, who would have thought that we would have spent a coffee break with snails crawling on our arms! It was a whole new experience to us and opened up avenues of art that we would hope to follow and enjoy.

What do you think were the benefits to the company of having an artist in residence?

The benefits to the organisation were wide and varied from raising the profile of the Centre through the artist to the whole interaction of staff, volunteers and users. It was also beneficial for the community to be included in a variety of ways so that they could see the Centre in a different light. When Siobhan was here she set up a blog of her daily activities and we were able to see how much goes on within our community and how interesting it was seeing things from another perspective.

Did you discover anything new about how artists work?

Yes, artists move in mysterious ways! At times, I couldn't see where Siobhan was going with something but once she explained it or put it into action it made perfect sense. Siobhan showed through her work how unpredictable or spontaneous an artist's work can be, and also how the best laid plans can change. We experienced how the artist almost always thinks outside the box and this was a very interesting concept in itself.

In general do you think creativity and the arts have any ongoing beneficial role to play in non-arts organisations or mainstream industry?

Absolutely, the experience of having Siobhan has really opened our eyes, hearts and minds to the arts and the creativity that can be practised within our organisation. We are looking at ways that we can bring arts to the wider community by involving them in various projects.

[*Artists' Biographies*]

ALICE LYONS

Alice Lyons has an interest in bringing poetry to new contexts and media. Her poems have appeared as public art installations in municipal spaces and rural sheds; in books, journals and magazines and as film-poems in cinema and gallery screenings worldwide. She is the author of two collections of poems and is the recipient of the Patrick Kavanagh Award for Poetry. She lives in Cootehall, County Roscommon.

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ALISSA KLEIST

Alissa Kleist was born in Amsterdam in 1986. Residing in Ireland since 1997, she graduated with a First-class BA in Fine Art from Limerick School of Art & Design in 2008. She is currently studying for a two-year Master of Fine Art Degree at the University of Ulster. She was awarded the Cork Printmakers Annual Bursary in June 2008. From July to November she participated in the UNESCO recognized art project 'Sehnsucht nach Ebene 2', part of the Capital of Culture 2010 initiative in Hagen, Germany. She exhibited as part of TotalKunst suitcase series in Edinburgh in Nov. 2009. In 2008 she was awarded a solo show as the winner of the Belltable Graduate Open Competition. Group Exhibitions include site-specific installations at STATION in February and June 2010, 9' to 5' Residency at PS2 in November 2009, 'From The Inside Out' with Ruaidhri Lennon in Limerick Printmakers, 2009, Limerick City Gallery of Art DA '08 Open Drawing Awards, Claremorris Open Exhibition '07, and the RDS Student Art Awards '07 where she received the Freyer Award.

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AMY STEVENS

Amy Stevens is an American artist who grew up in Arizona and currently lives in Philadelphia. She works as both an artist and part-time professor at local universities in Pennsylvania teaching various photography courses. In 2005 she earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Photography from Temple University's Tyler School of Art and her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography was earned in 1998 from Arizona State University. Her work has been shown in group exhibitions all over the United States including Seattle, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, Los Angeles, and Chicago. In Canada, her work has been exhibited in Montreal and Toronto. In 2007 she completed a two-year Career Development Fellowship with The Center for Emerging Visual Artists and was awarded an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Independence Foundation. Stevens has notably shown in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Delaware Art Museum, Photo LA, Photographic Center Northwest, Philadelphia International Airport and Maryland Art Place. In 2009 Amy was announced a U.S. winner in Magenta Foundation's Flash Forward Emerging Photographer's competition which included a published book and a traveling group exhibition in Toronto, DC and Boston. Her current work can be viewed at www.amystevensart.com

Contact: www.amystevensart.com

DJERIBI

Djeribi, born Paris 1967, emigrated Dublin 1990 and on to Leitrim, 2000, has been running mermaid turbulence, a publishing project since 1993. Her inclusive polymorphic practice also includes writing, visual arts (artistsbooks, objects, films, installations), food (sourdough bread, pâtisseries, edible art performances) and farming with her two children and Lukasz Jurgowiak, a basket-maker. Work currently in progress: Protest Song (public art), Local Hands (film), the rural cinema project, the institute of life wonderful. Most recent commissions: artist pages in The Blue Notebook (UK) and Les Cahiers Intempestifs (France) and artist book: Path to Promise (within a community project funded by the EU Peace III programme).

Contact: maybe@mermaidturbulence.com

MAGGIE GALLAGHER

Maggie Gallagher has been involved in the practice of creating theatre both as an actress and technician since 1993. During this time she also facilitated the creative practice of professional artists and young people in her role as Productions Manager at the Courthouse Arts Centre. In 2007 she established the experimental theatre company – Curious Tail. As well as undertaking training in multimedia, digital film and administration, Maggie has a Diploma in Youth and Community Work, a post-graduate Higher Diploma in Drama from UCD and is currently undertaking an MA programme in Dramatherapy at NUI Maynooth. Much of Maggie’s current practice is influenced by the work of Sam Dowling and Praxis Theatre Laboratory where she has been Associate Director since 2000. The Praxis method of work has a theoretical basis in a psychoanalytical view of art, groups and creativity, and an intuitive rather than a technical approach to the practicalities of theatre. The creative tool the ‘Here and Now’ informs all stages of creativity, from discovery through to performance. Her work in recent years has been supported by bursaries from Artlinks, Wicklow County Council, The Arts Council and the Grubb Institute, London.

Contact: info@curioustail.ie

MARY-JO GILLIGAN

Mary-Jo Gilligan is currently based in Ireland and works independently and collaboratively as an artist and curator. Her practice is often site-specific and is something of a portable laboratory. She works in a variety of media from installation, video, sound, scent and drawing to live performance and intervention. Gilligan studied at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia and NCAD, Ireland where she graduated in 2007 with a BA honours degree in Fine Art. She has continued her training internationally with the Live Art Development Agency Winter School and Fooksbarn Theatre. Her work has been commissioned by arts organizations and County Councils and has been activated in a variety of galleries, public sites and slack spaces. She is the co-producer of Transitopia ‘08, a site-specific public art project created for Naas, Co Kildare, a co-curator of Preponderance Of the Small for the Douglas Hyde Gallery and is the founder of the architectural research body Dublin City Agency for the Sensory Investigation of Constructed Space. She is also a member of the art collective Soft Blonde Moustache with whom she regularly performs and exhibits.

Contact: <http://maryjogilligan.wordpress.com>

NIAMH O'CONNOR

Based in Co. Sligo, Niamh O'Connor received a BA in Fine Art (first class hrs.) from Sligo IT in 2004. Niamh has a strong connection to the Arts & Health field with dialogic and collaborative approaches (across contexts) being central to her art practice. Video, photography, sculpture and textiles are preferred areas with an impulse towards the handmade and documentary. She is interested in visual culture, notions of self-perception, display and public/private expressions of 'taste' and is currently working on two series, 'Re-' a collaborative project dealing with body image and attempts to construct new ways of relating to self and a long-term project which predominantly investigates the use of colour in domestic exteriors. She has exhibited in Ireland, France, Scotland and the US and has been awarded a number of residencies and commissions. Other related activity includes arts documentaries and promotional material, arts consultation and coordination of an arts in mental health programme.

Contact: niamboconnoremail@eircom.net | www.niamboconnorartist.wordpress.com

SIOBHAN CLANCY

Siobhán Clancy's practice explores the dynamics of collaboration and the dialogue that informs it. Her work is produced within site specific briefs that respond directly to the unique settings in which she works including community, healthcare, alternative economies, formal and informal education and youthwork. Participation by stakeholders in these areas is facilitated by the artist through multi-disciplinary research, workshops, lectures, activities and events. Performance, actions and tactile/multi-sensory environments invite audiences to access and engage with the works.

Contact: info@siobhanclancy.com

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