

ARTLINK

PROGRAMME REPORT

ACTIVITIES 2023



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on another remarkable year at Artlink, it is with great pleasure and pride that I present to you our programme report for 2023. Throughout this past year, Artlink has continued to fulfil its mission of fostering artistic growth, nurturing creativity, and enriching communities through the arts.

Artlink's commitment to supporting artists' development activities remains unwavering. We have provided numerous workshops, networking activities and resources to empower emerging talents and seasoned artists alike. Our goal is to create an environment where artists can thrive, explore new techniques, and push the boundaries of their creativity.

Our artist residencies have continued to be a cornerstone of Artlink's programming. These residencies provide artists with the time, space, and support they need to fully immerse themselves in their creative process. Our residencies offer a unique opportunity for artists to connect with new environments, cultures, and communities. Through these experiences, artists have been able to explore new ideas, develop their craft, and make meaningful contributions to the communities they inhabit.

MARK HILL

CHAIRMAN





INTRODUCTION

Artlink sustained its successful artist residency program in 2023, welcoming renowned international artists Ráðhildur Ingadóttir, Karolina Bregula, and Caoimhín Gaffney. These residencies not only enriched the artistic landscape but also fostered cultural exchange.

In continuation of our commitment to fostering artistic growth, Artlink forged strategic partnerships with other organisations. These collaborations facilitated knowledge exchanges and reciprocal residencies, providing Donegal artists with invaluable opportunities for development. Exchanges included Newfoundland artist Tessa Graham's residency at Fort Dunree and Donegal based Sarah Lewtas' tenure as a visiting artist at Eastern Edge, St. John's.

Artlink's exhibitions programme remained a cornerstone of artist development efforts, catering to artists at all stages of their careers. Our annual Artlink Members show, *What We Can Do*, expertly curated by Lindsey Merlihan of 126 Gallery, showcased the works of fifty-two artists from Donegal and beyond. This exhibition offered a platform for artists with diverse levels of experience to show their work. In addition seven artists staged solo exhibitions at Fort Dunree: Stephanie McGowan, Leanne McLaughlin, Fiona Mulholland, Karen Rann, Liam Rodden, Allannah Robins and Harry Kerr.

In collaboration with Adriana Valderrama López, a PhD Researcher at Ulster University, Martha McCulloch embarked on the monumental task of creating a living archive of Artlink spanning over three decades. This initiative, which will continue into 2024 and beyond, preserves our rich history and cultural contributions for future generations as well as generating ideas for future projects and facilitating a reflection on Artlink's evolving impact and audience.

Artlink expanded its *New Rhythm* program beyond Fort Dunree to encompass Buncrana, aiming to enhance the visibility and accessibility of art in the area. Through outdoor exhibitions and cultural events, we fostered a sense of community and enriched the cultural experience of both locals and visitors.

In partnership with Donegal County Council, Artlink hosted the second *Art in the Park* outdoor exhibition at Swan Park, Buncrana. This exhibition featured newly commissioned works by eight talented artists, further enhancing the cultural vibrancy of the region.

Artlink's journey in 2022/23 included valuable mentoring from Amicitia through the Social Enterprise Regeneration Programme, organised by Inishowen Development Partnership. This collaboration culminated in a successful application to the Arts Council of Ireland Capacity Building Fund for a feasibility study on the potential of an Inishowen Art Festival. Conducted in partnership with Amicitia, ConsortiaCo, and Samhlaigh Collective, with curator Keith Whittle as a project mentor, the study laid the groundwork for future endeavours and solidified Artlink's commitment to fostering artistic excellence in the region.

Artlink's initiatives in 2023 not only enriched the cultural landscape of Inishowen, providing opportunities to experience high quality artistic work, but also further embedded Artlink in the local community through various initiatives undertaken in the town of Buncrana.

PUBLIC EVENT

ART IN THE PARK

1ST – 28TH FEBRUARY

As part of a move to present work in the open, in part to engage with a wider audience, Artlink staged its second temporary exhibition in Swan Park, Buncrana. A much-loved public space since the Victorian times, Swan Park was bequeathed to the people of Buncrana by local philanthropist Harry Swan.

The exhibition opened to coincide with Imbolc, marking the beginning of spring, when the park was just emerging from deep winter. This is part of a more holistic change in direction to nurture a new rhythm, a new way of working, a new routine, informed by the Celtic calendar, to reconnect us with natural rhythms, the seasons, and the tides.

The artists and their artworks selected from an open call were Anna Stainsby (*In Expectation*), Catherine Greene (*Meridian*), Tara Eileen Welch (*Suille / The Eyes*), Fifi Smith (*Lesser-spotted Tree Dragon*), Grainne McMenamin (*Broinn / Womb*), Kevin Harkin (*Walk On / Plough Horse*), Konrad Juscinski (*Dark Matter*) and Paul Rosser (*Take a Moment*).

The exhibition was supplemented with making workshops by two of the exhibiting artists Anna Stainsby and Tara Eileen Welch.

ANNA STAINSBY | IN EXPECTATION

Meridian refers to an imaginary line connecting the North and South Poles, a guide drawn on maps to indicate a location on Earth. The title *Meridian* was chosen for this work to represent any place on earth where a person might, with sincerity, share a moment of communion with a bird in flight.



CATHERINE GREENE | MERIDIAN

Súile (the Eyes) is crafted from driftwood and glass, meticulously collected from the shore and dried over a span of five years. This work encapsulates the artist's profound appreciation for the transformative power of the sea. The natural weathering process imbues each piece of driftwood and glass with unique colors and textures, creating a harmonious blend of nature's artistry and the artist's vision. The weathered surfaces tell a silent story of time and tides.

This dragon evokes the comfort of myth while referencing the dread of extinction of real endangered species today. The creation of this piece is a reflection on survival and extinction in the guise of mythology.

From the epic saga of Beowulf to the modern fantasy of Tolkiens' Hobitt, to the finale of the video game Minecraft, the Dragon is seen as a fierce protector of the precious and rare thing. Perhaps the precious thing in our times is the endangered species of the earth. So, here stands the second last lesser spotted tree dragon, tattered and forlorn. Her very name makes it clear that she is an endangered species. Her mission - to find the last lesser spotted tree dragon. If she fails, she herself will become the very last lesser spotted tree dragon. In that case, the species will be gone forever.



FIFI SMITH | LESSER-SPOTTED TREE DRAGON

Imbolc symbolises the halfway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. The word *imbolc* means *in the belly of the Mother*, because the seeds of spring are beginning to stir in the belly of Mother Earth. This installation invites the public to reflect on our place within nature amidst the beautiful surroundings of Swan Park. After months of the park turning inward, of hibernation and of rest, we can allow ourselves to be held in *Mother nature's belly* for a while - we can open up our senses to observe how above and all around us, life is beginning to stir again- we can see and hear the earliest breaths of spring and feel our spirits rising.



Walk On/Plough Horse is inspired by, and dedicated to, men like Paddy chuck Doherty from Burnfoot Co Donegal. Paddy was a man I always liked meeting and chatting to when he called with me for horse food at my shop. The sound of his hobnail boots as he walked into the shop was music to my ears; a big gentle personality of a man you develop from working with horses. 'Have you two bags for Monica?', he say in his soft spoken voice. Paddy was a horse plough man still turning the sod in Donegal with his horses. Men and women like him helped feed and shape Ireland for hundreds of years."





Take a Moment asked us to reflect on the passage of time and how it seems to move at different rates depending on the season; slower in the winter, faster in the summer. As a set of discs fall they create a sound similar to that of a wooden wind chime. The weight is gradually redistributed to the bottom of the sculpture. Once they reach the bottom the pole needs to be rotated to start the process over again. The lighter discs fall faster than the darker discs to illustrate the different experience of time from summer to winter.



Dark Matter by Konrad Juściński is an innovative augmented reality sculpture and sound installation. By scanning a QR code with their smartphones, viewers could experience the work, which exists solely through this technology. Juściński's art bridges the gap between culture and the organic, blending new technologies with nature to blur the boundaries between instinct and archetype. Through "Dark Matter," he invites the public to explore the interplay of the digital and natural worlds, challenging perceptions and enhancing the sensory experience.

KONRAD JUSCINSKI | DARK MATTER

ENGAGEMENT

MAKE 'N' MEND CLUB

1ST MARCH - 5TH APRIL

Building on the accomplishments of the Compassionate Culture Network project conducted in 2021/2022 for the Irish Hospice Foundation, Artlink persevered by organising ongoing creative drop-in sessions at St Mary's Hall, centrally located in Buncrana.

Designed for the broader community, the Make 'N' Mend Club fostered a welcoming and creative environment where all were encouraged to participate. Every Wednesday, diverse artists and artisans showcased their talents, enriching the sessions with their unique skills.

The sessions included workshops in Lino Print Techniques with Cara Donaghey, Stencilling and Experimental Mark Making with Julie McGee, Casting in Jesmonite with Catherine Ellis and Junk Journaling with Sigita Strike





EXHIBITION

AFTERLIGHT

STEPHANIE MCGOWAN

25TH MARCH – 23RD APRIL

Stephanie McGowan's practice encompasses painting, drawing, sculpture and installation. Working in a repetitive process, she forms layers of physical interactions; in the wrapping of thread or by continually dipping fabric in dye. The materials themselves echo a timely quality as she employs seasonal foliage and vegetables gathered from daily trips as a dipping medium.

Completely enthralled and agitated by the cycles of life, her solo exhibition focuses on utilising a material's memory to hold onto and record the passing of time. The thread paintings begin as pixelated imagery, abstractions of personal memories that become unfamiliar, coded colour-mappings filled with emotion. Stephanie hopes that her objects, charged with memory and creative actions, will act as connections between her and the viewer.

Stephanie McGowan is a visual artist based in the North-west of Ireland. She gained a distinction in her BA in Fine Art from the Institute of Technology, Sligo. Following this, she was selected for the RDS Visual Arts Awards 2017. She continued her studies and completed a Masters in Contemporary Art Practice at the University of Edinburgh in 2018.

She has exhibited nationally and internationally and is a member of NINE Collective. In 2021 she received an Arts Council of Ireland Agility Award.



ENGAGEMENT

AMACH ANSEO

Amach means 'out' and Anseo means 'here'; Amach Anseo is Irish for 'the future' or 'henceforth'.

Established in 2017 by Rebecca Strain, *Amach Anseo* finds its home at The Potting Shed, a space created and conceptualised by artist Christine Mackey in 2013 during the *Resistance and Rebellion* residency at Fort Dunree. The mission of Amach Anseo is to foster a community of creativity and sustainability, leveraging the concept of growth to promote holistic health and well-being.

In 2023 *Amach Anseo* continued weekly meetups, maintained the community garden including the Laurentic Garden of Reflection, gently observing as the seasons transformed the space. In addition two plant swaps were organised, where seeds, cuttings and plants were the only currency.

The North West Home Education group continued to meet for a weekly Art and Nature Club and the group was involved in beach cleans as part of Clean Coasts. This contributed to them being awarded the Clean Coasts Youth Hero of the Year 2023.

In the summer Amach Anseo hosted *Womens Collective Ireland - Donegal* for their annual Women's Nature in Mind Day; reconnecting with women through ecotherapy.

Creating Community: The Role of Creative Practice in Empowering Donegal Women research project took place at the Potting Shed and members *Amach Anseo* took part. The project was a partnership between *Women's Collective Ireland-Donegal* and Dr Catherine Barbour at Trinity College Dublin and was funded by the Irish Research Council. It involved bringing together women for creative workshops using the concept of *the elephant in the room* to discuss social issues impacting women and then examining the role of creative practice in empowering women.





EXHIBITION

FRACTURED

LEANNE MCLAUGHLIN

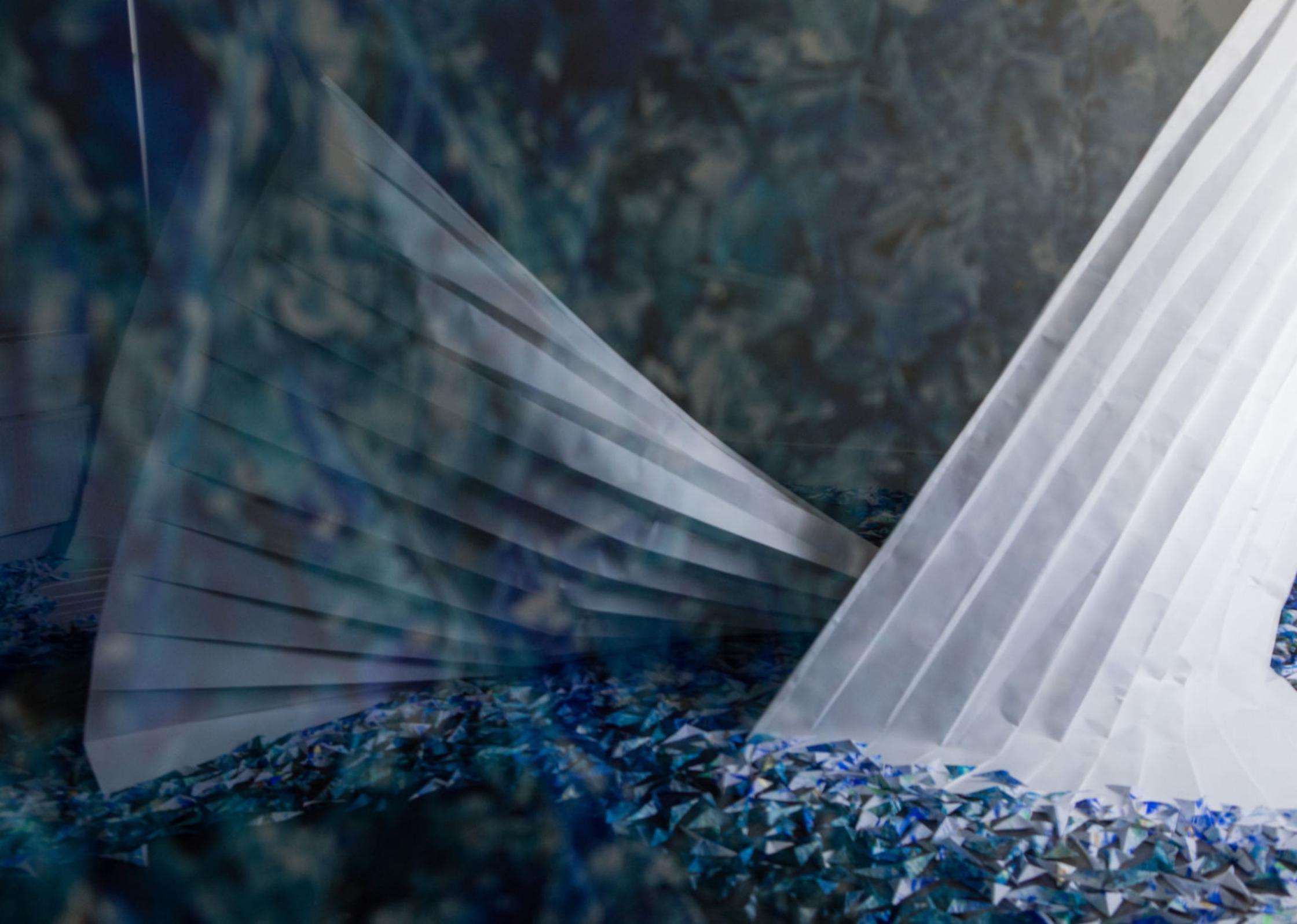
6TH MAY – 4TH JUNE

From the Fibonacci sequence to the principles of symmetry and balance in design, patterns can be found everywhere in our natural world and in the human-made structures that surround us. Through a series of large-scale sculptural works, sound and film, Leanne McLaughlin created an immersive experience that invited us to question the power of patterns in our lives, and how they can both liberate and limit us; from the calming repetition of a soothing motif to the frenetic energy of a chaotic pattern.

When observing a system fractured in any form, we conjure up notions or feelings of broken chaos. Within the chaos, self-similar forms organise themselves to regenerate into a constant state of pattern. These patterns are found within us and in surrounding environments. The effect of loss on her daily patterns drove the artist's initial interest – she wanted to understand the uses, influence and consequence patterns had on her every day. The result impacted her perception of patterns, recognising and relating with them in the most unlikely of places and situations.

Paper is the medium chosen for this entire exhibition. Paper lends itself easily to creating repetitive patterns. Folds upon folds, it allowed the artist to create large impactful forms with little impact on the environment, collating thousands of sculptural pieces, all of which contribute to the one larger system of patterns.

Leanne McLaughlin is a visual artist from Derry~Londonderry, Northern Ireland, living in the Donegal Gaeltacht for twenty years. A graduate of the University of Ulster's Fine Art programme, Leanne has worked on a variety of projects from exhibitions, public sculptures, and community arts, to outreach and engagement programs. She has completed a number of high profile commissions, for Mountshannon Arts Festival, The Botanic Gardens, UCD and Blarney Castle, has been a member of artist collective An Cossan Glas since 2010, and is lead artist and manager of a new arts collective Turas Úr.



RESIDENCY

KAROLINA BREGULA

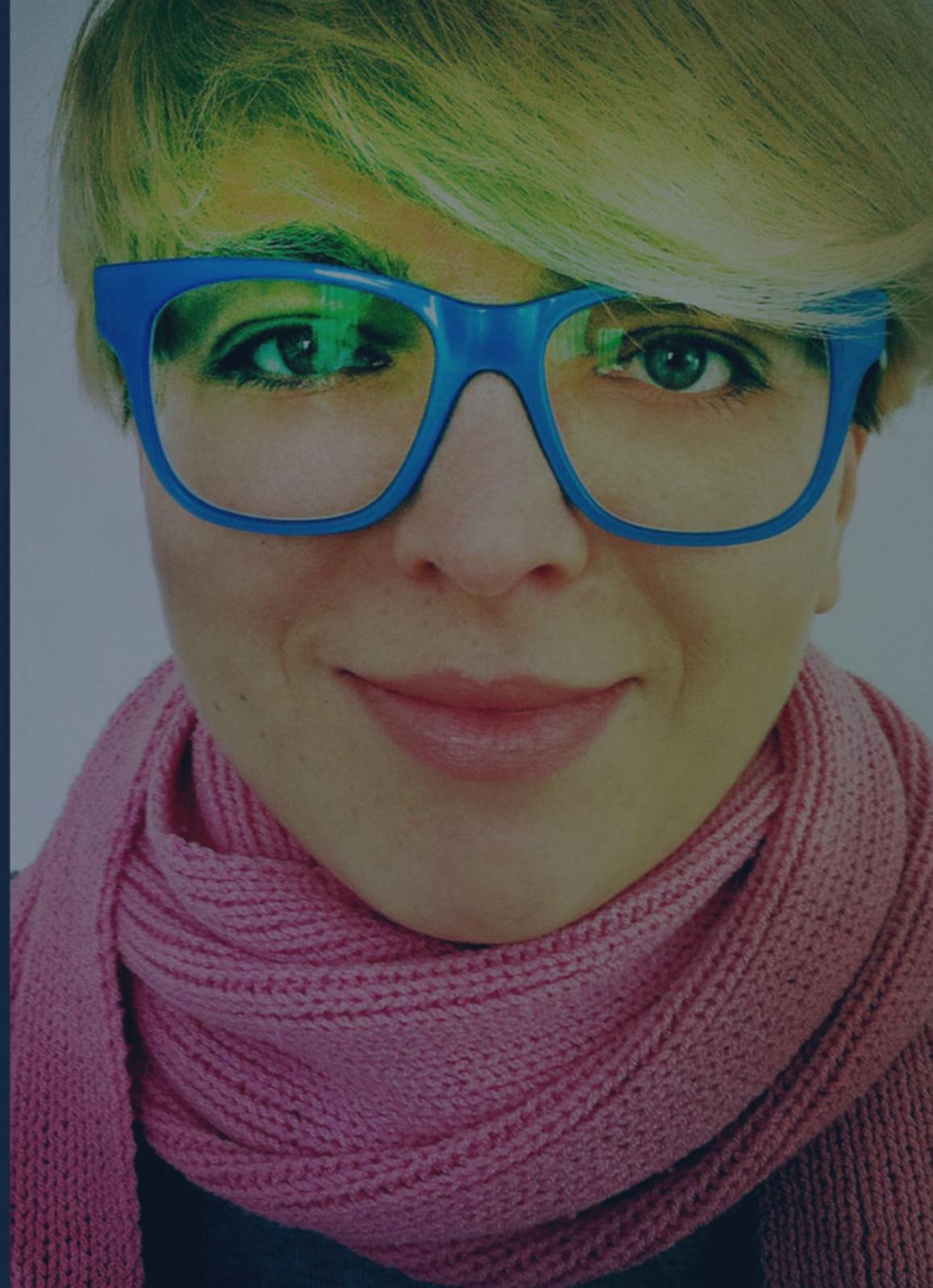
JUNE AND DECEMBER 2023 | APRIL AND MAY 2024

Karolina divided her residency up over twelve months in order to have time to get to know the local community and create a truly collaborative film work.

“As the resident artist at Artlink, I've embarked on a long-term project titled Floods. This endeavour comprises a 5-channel video installation and a collaboratively written narrative, both serving as reflections on our relationship with the sea. Working closely with women who engage in daily sea swims, we've begun crafting a story together.

My interactions with the Buncrana community occurred during two visits in June and November of 2023. These encounters allowed me to connect with women who embrace daily sea swims, interviewing them to lay the groundwork for our shared narrative.

The initial gathering in June unfolded at the local Buncrana cinema, where I screened my previous films and presented my project's concept. Discussions ensued regarding our future collaboration, including plans for a writing workshop. Throughout my stay, I engaged with experts on sea-related issues and individuals with intimate ties to the sea, particularly the dedicated women who swim in its waters daily.



My residency at Fort Dunree unfolded in four distinct phases, allowing me ample time to prepare for the intricate production ahead. Revisiting Buncrana multiple times over the span of a year facilitated the development of genuine connections with both the locale and its inhabitants, enriching the project's depth and authenticity”.

Karolina Breguła, a visual artist and graduate of the National Film School in Łódź, explores the status of artwork and the materiality of art objects across various mediums. Her work critically scrutinizes contemporary art, focusing on its reception and the connection between art and reality. Breguła's collaborative approach blurs the line between professional and amateur artistic activity. Her exhibitions span prestigious institutions worldwide, and her works are featured in esteemed collections. Currently an associate professor at the Academy of Art in Szczecin, Breguła resides in Warsaw, where her artistic practice continues to challenge conventions and provoke critical dialogue.



ENGAGEMENT

ETB FUNDED COURSES

Artlink has, over the past few years, developed a healthy, supportive relationship with Donegal Education and Training Board's Community Education section. The ETB Community Education Support Programme stands as a beacon of support for the facilitation of adult education initiatives within the community. Through financial backing for tuition expenses and other costs, the programme aims to foster social cohesion, enhance individual wellbeing, and empower community development.

The programme seeks to promote the organisation and delivery of low-cost, community-based educational initiatives tailored to groups traditionally underserved by such opportunities. The goal is to encourage participation in order to bolster confidence levels and contribute to personal development. By fostering growth and innovation within the community education sector, it contributes to the enrichment of local educational landscapes.

In essence, the Community Education Support Programme serves as a catalyst for educational empowerment, social inclusion, and community resilience. By fostering a culture of lifelong learning and collaboration, it contributes to the holistic wellbeing and sustainable development of individuals and communities throughout Donegal.

MONOPRINT ON CLAY
23RD MAY - 4TH JULY

ECO FRIENDLY BOOK ART
26TH AUGUST - 23RD SEPTEMBER

LIFE DRAWING
26TH AUGUST - 23RD SEPTEMBER

DRAWING IN
23RD MAY - 4TH JULY

ART TASTER
18TH MAY - 15TH JUNE

INTRODUCTION TO STAINED GLASS
23RD SEPTEMBER - 28TH OCTOBER



RESIDENCY

RÁÐHILDUR INGADÓTTIR

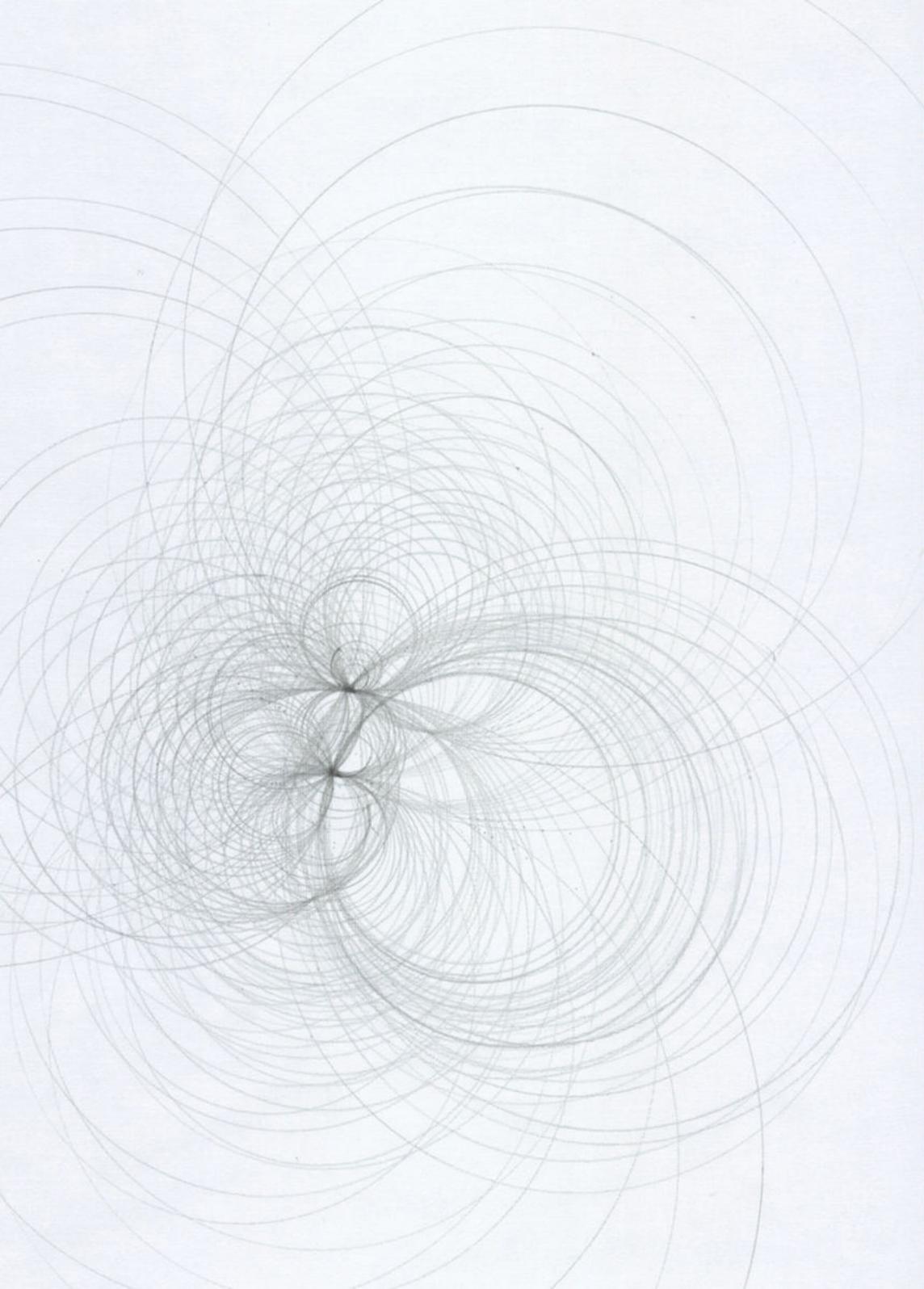
JUNE

Contemplation on Gravity-Waves is a series of drawings Ráðhildur started in 2021. Like the drawings of vortexes, which represent the movement of the entire universe in her work *Vortex* (1998 to 2021), they represent cosmic forces. Albert Einstein predicted the existence of gravitational waves in 1916 in his general theory of relativity, and the phenomena became confirmed as fact in 2017. The waves are ripples in space-time caused by some of the most violent and energetic processes in the universe.

Her projects usually start with drawings, but are also very much inspired by places. During the residency she continued with the drawing series of gravity-waves, in hope of it developing into a long-term project connected to what she experienced at Fort Dunree.

“As I have not been in Donegal before, I can’t imagine how my project would develop. But there are many criteria, like the people of the area, the history, the language, the nature and the ancient cultural connections between Ireland and Iceland. I was brought up and have lived most of my life in Iceland, which is, like Ireland, an island in the Atlantic Ocean. This has influenced my way of thinking. I think a lot about space, which I see as nature. Living in Iceland gives you a strong sense of being in space, and how the human destiny is interwoven into the cosmic rhythms of space. I am very curious to see how being in [the] Donegal will affect me, and hope to bring from there experiences that will open new paths in my work.”





Ráðhildur Ingadóttir, born in Reykjavík, Iceland in 1959, has crafted a prolific career spanning both Iceland and Denmark. Having studied in England from 1981 to 1986, she has since become a fixture in the contemporary art scene. Her solo exhibitions, held in various galleries across Germany, Denmark and Iceland, show a diverse range of works, from the immersive *Inside a Conch Shell: One Dot* series to the thought-provoking *Embrace* at Torstrasse 111, Berlin. Additionally, her participation in group exhibitions globally underscores her impact on the international art community, with highlights including *PERCEPTION AND UTOPIA* in Mongolia and Finland. Notably, her works have found a home in prestigious public collections such as The National Gallery of Iceland and The Reykjavik Art Museum. Alongside her artistic endeavors, she has also contributed to the art education landscape as a part-time teacher at the Icelandic Academy of the Arts from 1992 to 2002. Through a rich body of work and dedication to her craft, the artist continues to captivate audiences with their distinctive vision and exploration of themes.

EXHIBITION

ALCOVES

FEEL GOOD FORTNIGHT

24TH JUNE - 9TH JULY



Artlink's participation in Feel Good Fortnight featured an exhibition hosted within the military museum located at Fort Dunree.

Recently renovated to enhance visitor experience, the museum provided an ideal venue for Artlink's showcase. Fort Dunree graciously collaborated with Artlink, offering access to the empty vitrines embedded in the walls of the main fort building. These vitrines became the canvas for artworks during Feel Good Fortnight 2023.

Artlink extended invitations to artists, community groups, and school groups to contribute artworks for each of the nine vitrines. Inspired by the fort and museum, the artworks explored themes such as the scenic vistas of Dunree, military history, peacekeeping efforts, and local wildlife. The exhibition featured works by students from Desertegney National School, Little Acorns Afterschool Club in Carndonagh, Nursery Lane Afterschool Club in Fahan, The North West Home Education Group, iCare Buncrana, and Inishowen-based artists Mark Cullen and Rois Deeney.

ENGAGEMENT

ECO INISHOWEN PORTRAITS

Change Makers Donegal has initiated the Sustainability Passport Project to enable individuals, community groups, social enterprises, and businesses in Donegal to lead a more sustainable life. Currently, Change Makers are collaborating with Artlink on a portrait project. This project aims to capture 100 images of local sustainability champions in Inishowen, Co Donegal. Through these portraits, they aim to inspire more people to contribute towards building sustainable towns and cities, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These black and white portraits will be exhibited in several locations in Donegal to reach a wider audience with the sustainability message.

ChangeMakers Donegal is a community project funded by Irish Aid that aims to educate adults in Donegal about the connections between the lives of people in Ireland and globally. The programme looks at the root causes of local and global injustice. Inishowen Development Partnership (IDP) is the lead partner, while Donegal ETB, Trócaire, Self Help Africa, and Concern Worldwide are the other partners on the Steering Committee that governs the project.



EXCHANGE

TESSA GRAHAM

JULY

Throughout July Tessa Graham took part in the International Atlantic Exchange Residency between Eastern Edge Gallery, Newfoundland and Artlink. For four weeks, she was able to build her art practice by connecting with the beautiful coastal landscape of northern Donegal. Having lived in Waterford City for a semester during her undergrad, she was enthusiastic about returning to Ireland to take part in this residency exchange.

Throughout her residency, Tessa was set up in the Potting Shed where she could focus on documentation processes, analogue photography and writing while also experimenting with natural dyes local to the area. She foraged fireweed, yarrow, heather, and meadowsweet to create a catalogue of dye samples for future projects. During her stay, she also held a photography workshop and nature scavenger hunt for beginner photographers in Swan Park in Buncrana.

As this was her first experience with an international residency, it allowed her the time and space to process ideas, experiment with new techniques and media, all while exploring new parts of Ireland she had not visited. In addition to roaming around Fort Dunree, she was able to visit the Ulster Museum in Belfast, Malin Head, Giant's Causeway, Seamus Heaney's HomePlace, Grianan of Aileach, and many more.



"I place great importance on process in my artistic practice, working primarily with film photography and printmaking. I focus on liminal relationships between personal identity, geographical routines and the natural world. Recently I have begun to explore the notion of displacement and the embodiment of home through the process of documenting seasonal foraging in Newfoundland. I record and respond to the physical places I inhabit, allowing myself to be inspired by the imagery, shapes and colours that create a specific region. My work emphasizes place, and the role it plays in tandem with searching for and longing to find home."

Tessa Graham is a visual artist, writer and educator living in St. John's, Newfoundland. As an art teacher she has worked and lived across the province from Labrador City to St. John's, allowing the land in all its seasonal iterations to influence her practice. She has participated in group shows throughout Newfoundland as well as a solo show in Ontario. Tessa's most recent work has been publicly funded by ArtsNL and will culminate in a solo show in March 2023. Tessa began an MFA at Memorial University, Grenfell Campus in May 2023. She is a current member of Eastern Edge Artist-Run Centre, VANL-CARFAC and an active member of the arts community in St. John's.





Best known as an interdisciplinary artist, Fiona Mulholland's practice spans a variety of media and disciplines. She is a graduate of the National College of Art and Design and she holds a master's degree from the Royal College of Art in London. She has realised several large-scale sculptural works and has curated a number of group exhibitions. She has been selected for residencies at the Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris and at the Leitrim Sculpture Centre. In 2019, She curated 'Crowded Thresholds', a touring exhibition for the design and Crafts Council of Ireland which was presented as part of the Kilkenny Arts Festival.

EXHIBITION

IN SEARCH OF PEARLS & FUTURE FOSSILS

FIONA MULHOLLAND

24TH JUNE – 23RD JULY

This solo exhibition presented new and existing works which expand on some principal concerns in Fiona's practice, making reference to domestic paraphernalia, ecology and archaeological artefacts. Working in a variety of media and across different disciplines, she has consistently been interested in challenging the conceptual boundaries between fine and applied art. She generally uses a variety of strategies to explore a given brief and photography is an integral part of the research. The images act as visual cues both aesthetically and conceptually – encapsulating the story of place and time.

In sculptural works she often reduces the formal elements to their component parts to present poetic configurations that cross-references conflicting narratives of 'nature' and 'culture'.

A keen hiker and passionate collector of natural and found objects, the artist reflects on these passions as creative pursuits. The resulting works attempt to map delicately bound embodied experiences, natural entropies and activating exchanges between subject and viewer.

As we are all now so aware, humanity has caused a significant effect on the earth. Unfortunately, flotsam, detritus and waste material from our industrial activities are now ubiquitous along the Donegal shorelines, the results of which, we are beginning to witness with the discovery and subsequent research into new raw materials that carry the legacy of our industries. We now bear witness to the fruits of human-generated 'natural' waste. What are the fossils of the future?





PUBLIC EVENTS

THE SEAS ABOVE

LUXE

15TH JULY

The Seas Above was a spectacular illuminated performance through Bunrana culminating in a fiery finale on the shore front.

Playing with Fire and Water, this elemental, processional work journeyed through the seascape of Sligo and Donegal following the passage of the waning moon. It began on Mullaghmore beach at the full moon & continues with processions through Sligo and then Bunrana before closing on Árainn Mhór at the new moon.

The Seas Above was a commission by Cairde Sligo Arts Festival in cooperation with the Earagail Arts Festival and was been funded by the Arts Council of Ireland Spectacle Commission Award. Luxe worked with Artlink to engage the local community and gather a broad range of people to participate in the procession.





FRANK BOYCE | VERONICA BUCHANAN | PAUL CAMPBELL
FRANCES CROWE | MARK CULLEN | MARY JOYCE DAVIS
DEIRDRE DOHERTY | MARY DOHERTY | ORNA DOHERTY
CARA DONAGHEY | RUTH DUFFY | CATHERINE ELLIS
SOPHIE FITZPATRICK | MICHAEL FRIEL | SEAMUS GALLAGHER
DAVID GEPP | ÉADAOIN GLYNN | TESSA GRAHAM
ALISON HANCOCK | KEVIN HARKIN | JOSEPHINE KELLY
VINCENT KELLY | PAUL KERR | CAROLINE KUYPER
SARAH LEWTAS | DIANE MAGEE | MAURA MASON
JOHN MCCARRON | AIDAN MCCARDLE | MARTHA MCCULLOCH
LISA MCGILL | HEATHER MCLAUGHLIN | AISLING MONDS
ANNEMARIE MURLAND | HANNAH PIDKALIUK | EMMA PORTER
MATTY PORTER | NINA QUIGLEY | FIONA RAINEY
JACQUI DEVENNEY REED | CARMEL REYNOLDS | ERIN RODDEN
LIAM RODDEN | AMY RODDY | SINEAD SMYTH
PATRICIA SPOKES | DEBORAH STOCKDALE | CAOIMHE STONES
GERALDINE TIMLIN | TANYA TSARINA | RIKKI VAN DEN BERG
SUSAN WALSCH

EXHIBITION

WHAT WE CAN DO

MEMBERS EXHIBITION

5TH AUGUST — 3RD SEPTEMBER

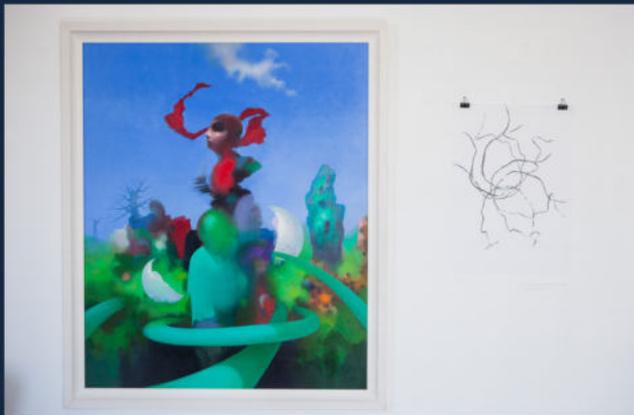
In 2023, Artlink's annual exhibition captured widespread attention with over 50 works of art spanning from expansive outdoor sculptures to textiles, paintings, photography, and film, all presented through various technological mediums. Titled *What We Can Do*, the exhibition served as a reflection of our evolving relationship with technology and its intersection with nature and the subconscious world of dreams. This theme was inspired by the concept of collective effervescence, denoting the shared energy and harmony experienced when individuals unite in pursuit of a common purpose.

Curated by Lindsay Merlihan, Co-Director of the 126 Artist-run Gallery in Galway, the exhibition showcased artworks that exhibited inventive and resilient modes of thinking, disrupting existing systems through activism, experimentation, and play. *What We Can Do* aimed to celebrate the extraordinary potential of ordinary individuals, posing the question of how we choose to harness our collective capabilities.

Influenced by the pioneering works of André Breton, Gaston Bachelard, and Carl Jung, who advocated for the recognition of an imaginal life, the exhibition encouraged artists to explore the depths of their unconscious psyche, challenging conventional norms and systems. Through mediums such as dreams, reverie, and imagination, artists were prompted to unearth surreal, instinctual, and creatively disruptive elements, ultimately reconnecting with their humanity amidst the mechanical constraints of modern society.



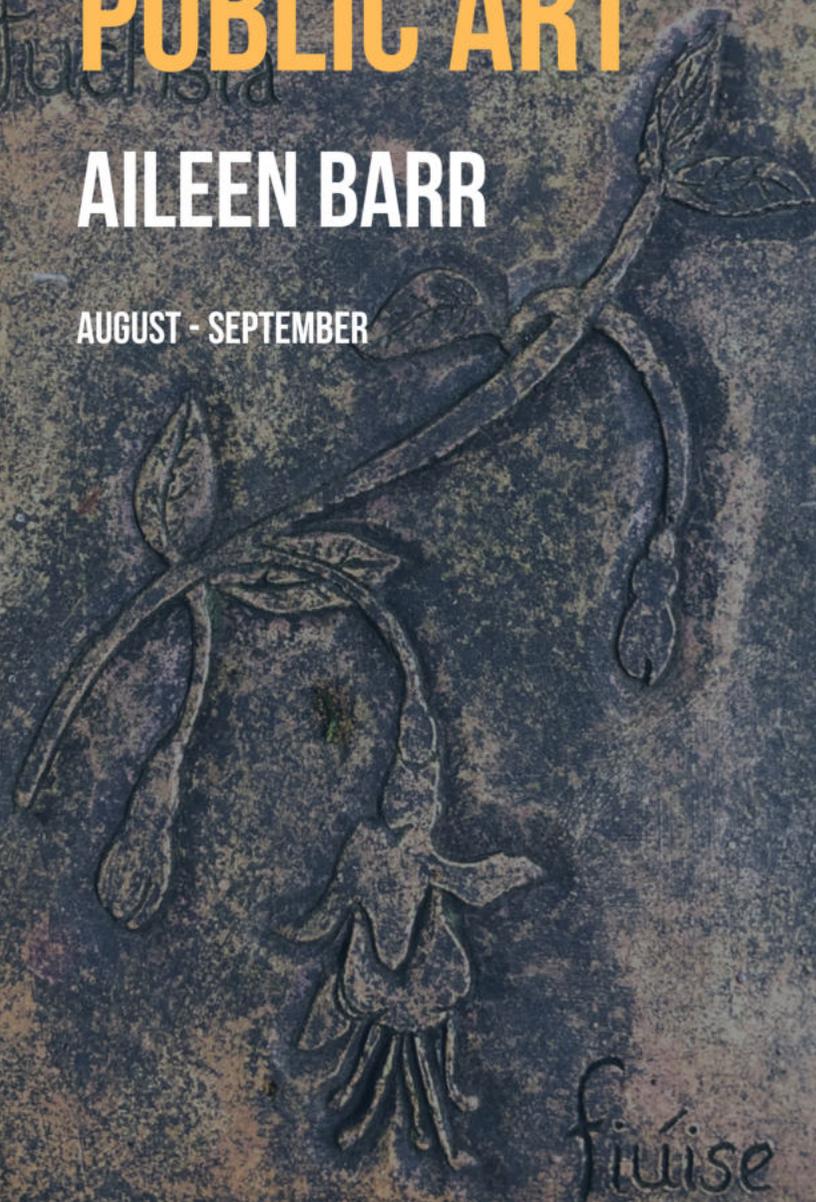




PUBLIC ART

AILEEN BARR

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER



Artlink's inaugural public art project, Art in the Park, commenced in 1994. Aileen Barr, one of Artlink's founding artists, spearheaded the project with support from an Artist in the Community grant from the Arts Council of Ireland. Collaborating with a local FAS scheme engaged in repairs and upgrades within Swan Park, Barr orchestrated an eight-month-long engagement at the Artlink studio. Here, participants diligently crafted tiles, contributing to the fabrication of a seat and an environmental tile trail weaving through the park. The overarching goal was to infuse the park with captivating artwork while offering an educational journey for children to connect with their natural environment.

Though traces of the original tilework endure along the paths, the seat, themed around the Life Cycle of the Salmon, was dismantled years ago due to irreparable damage to its concrete foundation. However, efforts were made to reincorporate the salmon-themed tiles onto another bench, which unfortunately succumbed to the ravages of the 2017 flood, claiming many tiles from the environmental trail.

In light of Swan Park's regeneration, Artlink felt compelled to revisit this meaningful project, deeply ingrained in the local community's heritage. Consequently, new ceramic pieces inspired by the original artwork were developed for the park. Aileen Barr, now based in San Francisco since 2002, returned to Artlink as a resident artist during September and October 2023. While here, she collaborated with local artists to conceive designs for the new ceramic installations and conducted a series of presentations and workshops with community groups. Notably, several participants from the original Art in the Park project joined forces with Barr once again.

Under the mentorship of Aileen Barr, local artist Matthew Porter led the creation of a series of tiles forming an environmental trail. This trail intricately narrates the park's rich history, diverse habitats, and vibrant flora and fauna, further enriching the park's narrative tapestry.



LIFE CYCLE

PARR



ENGAGEMENT

STRONGWOMEN SCIENCE

3RD SEPTEMBER 2023.



Artlink supported the Inishowen leg of the *StrongWomen Science* tour of *Circus Science Shows* produced by *Circus250*.

Featuring two exceptional women, Aoife Raleigh and Maria Corcoran, who have seamlessly blended their scientific prowess with circus performances, the show was a memorable experience that sparked curiosity and wonder.

Aoife Raleigh, an engineer by profession, and Maria Corcoran, an environmental scientist, have embarked on an inspiring journey, transforming themselves into circus performers and unravelling the mysteries behind awe-inspiring acts. The audience witnessed their astonishing feats and learned the science behind seemingly impossible tricks, such as balancing a chair on your chin, juggling liquids, and eating fire.

In an engaging, fast-paced performance, audiences were treated to a dynamic showcase of juggling, acrobatics, and hula hoop artistry, all interwoven with scientific explanations. *StrongWomen Science* aims not only to share scientific facts but also to ignite a passion for inquiry and creativity in the realm of science. The show has a particular emphasis on encouraging girls and young women to explore the captivating world of science.

"By combining the wonder of circus performances with the accessibility of scientific principles, our show also highlights the value of learning from failures and the power of teamwork – values shared by both science and circus. We're on a mission to bring the magic of circus to new places and introduce the world of science to those who may have never considered it before. The impact of *StrongWomen Science* extends beyond entertainment; it aims to inspire young minds, especially girls, to see a future in fields like engineering that might not have been on their radar previously."

Dea Birkett, founder, *Circus250* and visionary behind *StrongWomen Science*

RESEARCH

INISHOWEN ART FESTIVAL FEASIBILITY STUDY

In 2022, Artlink was awarded funding through the Arts Council's Capacity Building Support Scheme to investigate the potential of an arts festival across the peninsula of Inishowen Co. Donegal. To carry out the feasibility study Artlink was joined by:-

Keith Whittle, London-Tokyo based curator, lecturer, and writer.

Maria Coleman, Samhlaigh Arts Collective, socially engaged arts practitioner.

Patrick Mulvihill, co-founder of community development organisation Amicitia.

Sam Marchetti, co-founder of Consortia Co, a commercial innovation agency.

Adriana Valderrama Lopez, psychologist, former museum director, and researcher on Artlink archive

Methodology

Artlink Archive An in-depth exploration of the Artlink archive project to understand the historical background of Inishowen's and Artlink's efforts to shape the artistic and cultural landscape over the past 30 years. This provides a rich source of inspiration which helped to draw connections with the past and envision possible futures.

Community Engagement Next, we conducted community engagement activities through three distinct workshops, each targeting different groups within the Inishowen community. These workshops enabled us to gather insights from a variety of stakeholders, including artists, local residents, community groups, businesses, social enterprises, and local authorities. Through these conversations, we gained an understanding of the community's hopes, dreams, challenges, and ideas for the festival.

International Perspective We complemented these activities with a series of expert talks from individuals who have experience in managing relevant and prestigious Visual Arts Festivals. These sessions provided valuable learnings and insights on successful initiatives, offering an external perspective and expert wisdom. Speakers were David Teevan, Lewis Biggs, Fram Kitagawa, Leah Gordon and Shubigi Rao.

Workshops A series of workshops to ignite creativity were held over a weekend in the spring. Delivered by a multidisciplinary team, these workshops encouraged participants to weave creativity (including drawing, dance, music, mask-making, writing) with elements of nature, heritage, and well-being.

Training Additionally, we initiated a capacity-building training program for artists. This program provided artists with the necessary skills and knowledge to take an active role in the festival's design and implementation, further embedding the festival in the local arts community.

Recognizing the ever-changing and unpredictable nature of funding cycles, we recognize that these recommendations need to maintain a degree of flexibility and adaptability. Central to this fluid approach is the need to build the capacity of the artistic community within the region, whilst also extending the network of partners beyond the confines of the peninsula. These recommendations are distilled into a series of action items:-

Action 1: Condense and share the key findings of the study

Action 2: Encourage the creation of a new collective with key stakeholders, with the view to making joint funding applications

Action 3: Design a second iteration of the training programme for a broader group of participants.

Action 4: Create a mission, governance, and evaluation practices with the new collective.

Action 5: Continue to work on acquiring Creative Places funding to enhance the promotion of local arts and culture across sectors.

Action 6: Encourage the inclusion of visual art as part of existing regional and local festivals.

Action 7: Expand the new collective's reach through strategic network building.

Action 8: Prioritize sustainability and inclusion in all aspects of the new collective.

RESIDENCY

CAOIMHÍN GAFFNEY

1ST — 31ST AUGUST

Caoimhín Gaffney applied to the Artlinks residency programme with the intention of developing a new film and photography work titled *All At Once Collapsing Together*, to be showcased in a solo exhibition at the Butler Gallery in Kilkenny in March 2024. The project aimed to explore the therapeutic potential of nature amidst climate anxiety, juxtaposing the urge to heal or escape with the harsh reality of environmental degradation.

During the residency, Caoimhín developed a two-screen film capturing footage of native wildlife and landscapes around Fort Dunree and the Inishowen peninsula, collaborating with two performers to depict unsettling human figures within these settings. The film symbolically delved into themes of ritual, sacrifice, and renewal, reimagining humanity's relationship with nature in a post-colonial context. Additionally, Gaffney utilised medium format analogue photography and written texts to respond to the local environment, aiming for a visceral portrayal of humanity's troubled connection with nature, including reflections on the impact of oil and petroleum companies.

During the residency, Caoimhín screened two of their films: *A Numbness in the Mouth* and *Far from the Reach of the Sun* at Buncrana Cinema. This was followed by a discussion.

"The Artlink residency came at a crucial time for my practice when I was finishing the research and writing for a new film and photography project, and needed to begin producing it. The residency gave me the time and space to concentrate fully on creating the work, and the funding gave me the resources to invite the performers in my film to Inishowen, and to rehearse with them on location. The residency also gave me access to amazing locations which shaped the tone and aesthetic of the film. Being able to learn about different local ecosystems, and make work in response to them, helped me develop parts of the work in unexpected ways. Sharing my films through a screening in Buncrana cinema was also a great experience, and I felt the informal chat with the audience and Artlink staff in the cinema was an excellent way to make artist film more accessible and open. The only challenge I faced was the weather and outdoor shoots, but the location of the accommodation meant I could be very flexible with my schedule as so much was easily accessible from there. Being able to spend a concentrated amount of time in Fort Dunree and Inishowen allowed me to realise the project and achieve some ambitious ideas I had been wanting to try for a long time"

Caoimhín Gaffney is an accomplished artist, filmmaker, and writer with a global presence in exhibitions and film festivals. Notable solo exhibitions include showcases at esteemed venues such as the Crawford Art Gallery, Block 336 in London, and the Contemporary Art Institute (CAI02) in Sapporo. Their upcoming exhibition at the Butler Gallery in 2024 anticipates new groundbreaking work. Gaffney's films have received acclaim at prestigious festivals including FACT, Cork Film Festival, and the London Short Film Festival, where they were honored with the Little White Lies award. Their international recognition includes being an UNESCO-Aschberg laureate artist-in-residence in South Korea and receiving a Sky Arts scholarship.

In addition to their artistic pursuits, Gaffney has made significant contributions to academia, serving as a lecturer at Ulster University and delivering guest lectures at institutions such as the London College of Communication, Technological University Dublin, and Trinity College. Gaffney holds a distinction from the Royal College of Art's MA Photography and Moving Image program and obtained their PhD from Ulster University's School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences in 2022.



ENGAGEMENT

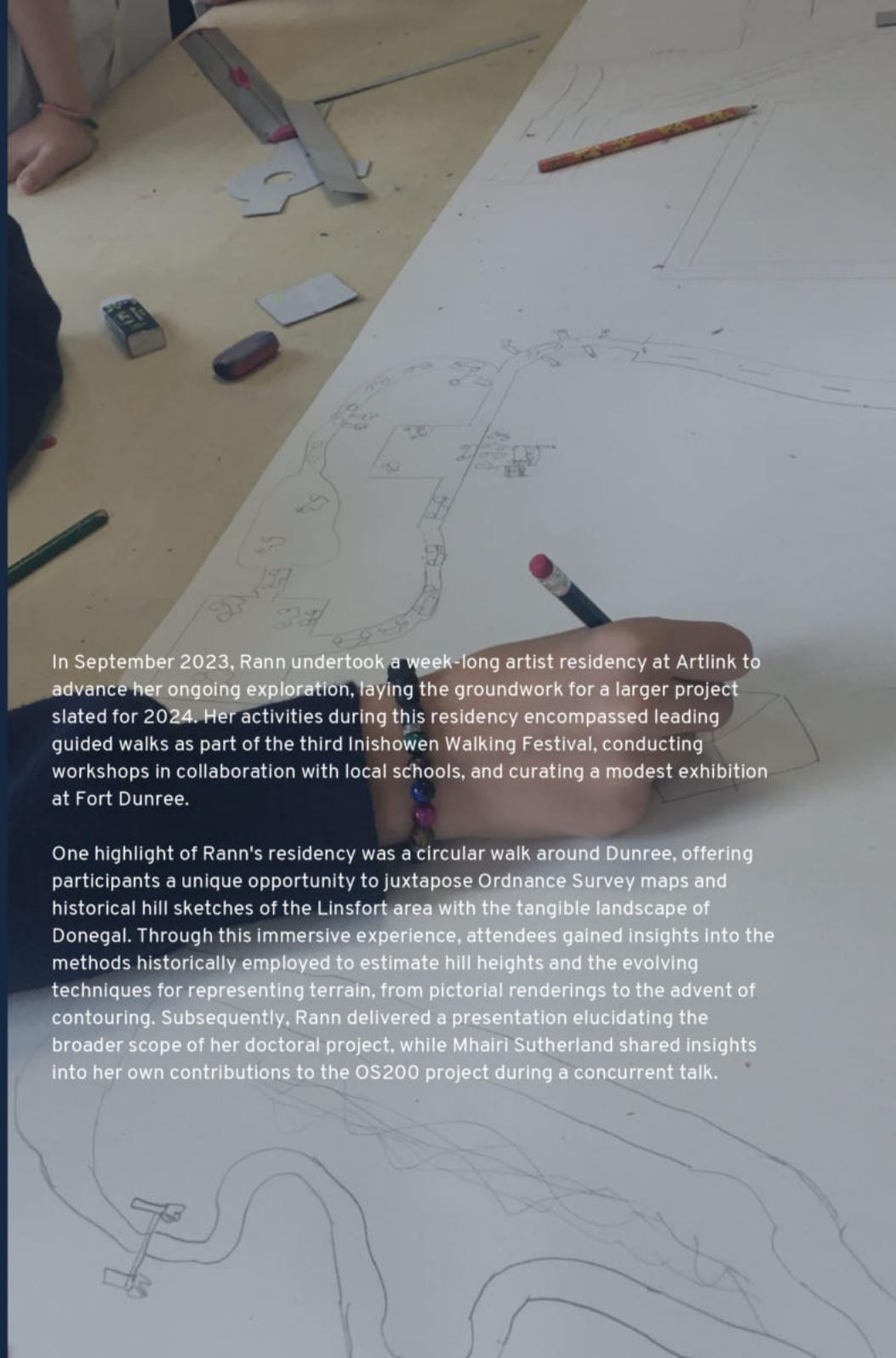
DRAWING WITH ALTITUDE

KAREN RANN

13TH – 20TH SEPTEMBER

Karen Rann's artistic practice is intricately intertwined with the dynamic interplay between people and their environment, often culminating in installations, sculptures, or performances. Her creative process is deeply informed by the specific history and character of the locations she engages with. This is reflected in her thoughtful selection of materials, construction techniques, and forms, all of which are meticulously derived from the historical context and functional significance of the site.

Rann's doctoral research, notably the Great Lines project, led her to collaborate with Artlink and focus her attention on Mullaghary, a modest hill in Dunree. Situated within the Inishowen Peninsula, this locale holds particular significance in the evolution of contour lines, being the site of pioneering experiments in their cartographic representation and practical application for navigating the landscape. These initial efforts, dating back to around 1839, were undertaken by Ordnance Survey hill-sketchers, with surviving examples such as Plate VI from the publication "A Paper Landscape" providing invaluable insights into this historical cartographic innovation. Notably, this specific plate depicts a section of land adjacent to Fort Dunree, marked as one of the earliest instances of contouring on maps.



In September 2023, Rann undertook a week-long artist residency at Artlink to advance her ongoing exploration, laying the groundwork for a larger project slated for 2024. Her activities during this residency encompassed leading guided walks as part of the third Inishowen Walking Festival, conducting workshops in collaboration with local schools, and curating a modest exhibition at Fort Dunree.

One highlight of Rann's residency was a circular walk around Dunree, offering participants a unique opportunity to juxtapose Ordnance Survey maps and historical hill sketches of the Linsfort area with the tangible landscape of Donegal. Through this immersive experience, attendees gained insights into the methods historically employed to estimate hill heights and the evolving techniques for representing terrain, from pictorial renderings to the advent of contouring. Subsequently, Rann delivered a presentation elucidating the broader scope of her doctoral project, while Mhairi Sutherland shared insights into her own contributions to the OS200 project during a concurrent talk.



ENGAGEMENT

INISHOWEN WALKING FESTIVAL

15TH - 17TH SEPTEMBER

A number of community organisations in Inishowen came together to deliver the third Inishowen walking Festival. Artlink hosted three guided walks.

Fox's Rock & Bulba Way

This hike was a looped walk which travelled towards and just under the iconic Bulbin Mountain. Guided by Sharon Porter of Solas Ireland Walks and Hikes, this was a tranquil walk with stunning views of the Urris Hills, Desertegney, Clonmany and Lough Swilly throughout.

Drawing with altitude: how mapmakers added hills to maps

This walk was circular beginning at Dunree where walkers looked at Ordnance Survey maps and sketches of the Linsfort area. Participants surveyed the rolling hills of Donegal through mapmakers' eyes. The walk included exploring historical methods for estimating heights of hills and the different styles for drawing hills from pictorial through to contouring. The walk was led by Dr Karen Rann, an artist with an abiding interest in historical methods for flattening landscape onto paper maps.

Inch Wildfowl Reserve

Glór Inis Eoghain is a community group formed to promote the use of Irish in the Inishowen peninsula. Glór accompanied participants on a walk and talk as Gaeilge around the Inch Wildfowl Reserve for all those interested in hearing and using Irish. The walk was led by Artlink member Sinead Walsh.







Comfort Ye My People is an exquisite new body of work by Connemara-based Alannah Robins, a meditation on our relationship with nature, a love letter to the land. It is about time and water.

This wasn't the exhibition Alannah originally proposed. She had other plans for her exhibition at Fort Dunree, but she was so completely overcome with grief for the ecological crisis in which we find ourselves that she felt an overwhelming compulsion to simply draw the mountains. She said, "I think it might be somehow related to our need for comfort and security when living in a state of chaos. In this work I aim to draw our attention from overwhelming and paralysing climate anxiety to geological time; to a sense that the mountains will be okay."

Andri Snær Magnason's beautiful book *On Time and Water* interweaves the micro-details of human familial relationships with the grand scope of glacial time. He invites his daughter, and the reader, to imagine the extent of our own love for our own kin in time. What will be the year when your daughter's granddaughter is 94 years old? What will the world be like then? Do you grieve for that world, or do you celebrate it? In this work, using drawings, etchings and light installation, Alannah aims to thread a path between these different states: grief and celebration.

In *Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow*, Alannah has drawn traces of human habitation so intertwined with nature that they cannot be taken out or removed. The lines of a fence on the mountain have altered grazing patterns, which have altered vegetation. The collapsed beehive hut is overgrown with grass and wildflowers. It has begun its reintegration with nature. Archaeological remains are scattered across our landscape, and sometimes it is hard to know which stones were put there by people and which by ice or water.

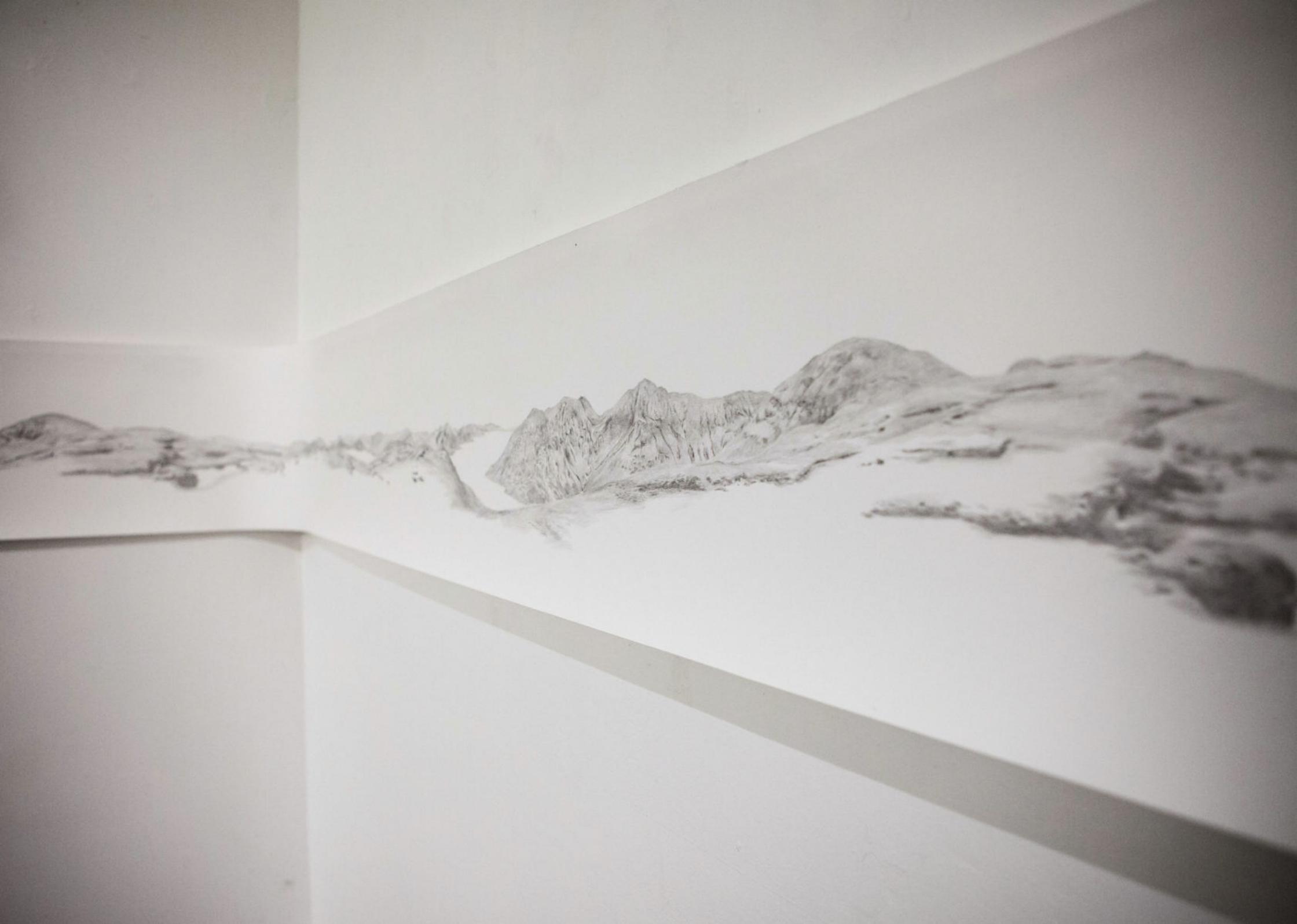
EXHIBITION

COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE

ALANNAH ROBINS

8TH SEPTEMBER – 8TH OCTOBER

Founder and artistic director of Interface residency and studio, Alannah Robins is a graduate of the NCAD and has an interdisciplinary artistic practice. She has won several commissions and awards for her artwork, including a public commission for the Waterford Institute of Technology, Tyresö Kulturstipendium and Helge Ax:son stipend. Recent exhibitions include *Behold*, Altan Klamovka, Prague, 2022; *Spirit*, Oblastni Galleri Liberec, 2021; *Carrying the Songs*, Detroit Stockholm; *The Half Light*, Pasaj, Istanbul, 2016 and *Bach in the Water*, with Cecilia Josefson, Galleri CC, Malmö (all 2016), also *Púca in the Machine*, Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, 2022; the Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, London's Dialogue Cultural Space and in Sweden, in Tegen2, Detroit Stockholm and Kiruna Stadshus. Her work is found in collections including the Museum of European Art, Oblastni Galleri Liberec, Czech Republic.



EXHIBITION

OUT THERE

LIAM RODDEN

6TH OCTOBER — 15TH OCTOBER

This exhibition brought to light the otherworldly paintings of Buncrana based artist Liam Rodden. His work has an introspective, visionary quality, each brushstroke an expression of his inner world. The resulting paintings are a poetic translation of the places he loves, offering an insight into his particular perspective on these places.

Liam doesn't aim to create an objective depiction of these scenes but to capture a fleeting moment. There is an intangible essence to Rodden's artwork that eludes definition and classification. It is a quality that exists beyond the tangible strokes of the brush, beyond the pigments on canvas.





CATHAL MCGINLEY
CLÍODHNA TIMONEY
TIM STAMPTON
ANDREA SPENCER
NIKI NEMEK
BERNIE MCGILL



ENGAGEMENT

SEA CHANGE

Sea Change was a collaborative initiative between Artlink and Roe Valley Arts & Cultural Centre, Limavady, aimed at fostering artistic exchange and exploration among creatives from Donegal and the Causeway Coasts & Glens regions. The project sought to connect artists whose work resonated with themes of the coast, the sea, or maritime heritage, envisioning a platform for mutual learning and creative development.

The core objective of Sea Change was to facilitate meaningful interactions among selected artists, encouraging them to delve into new realms of creativity and expand their artistic horizons. By bringing together diverse perspectives and backgrounds, the project aimed to cultivate an environment conducive to innovative collaboration and the emergence of fresh artistic expressions.

In May 2023, the participating artists convened to initiate the collaborative process. They engaged in various activities, including a unique mail art project, where a circulating box served as a canvas for collective creativity. This exercise not only sparked initial collaborative efforts but also set the stage for ongoing dialogue and idea exchange.

Additionally, the artists conducted a public participation event on November 12th, 2023. This event aimed to extend the project's impact beyond the artist cohort, inviting the community to engage directly with the creative process. Held at Fort Dunree, the event promised a diverse program curated by all six artists and supported by representatives from Artlink and Roe Valley Arts.

Sea Change stands as a testament to the power of collaboration in fostering artistic growth and community engagement. By uniting artists around shared themes and facilitating meaningful interactions, the project not only enriched the creative practices of its participants, but also created a platform for dialogue and exchange that resonated with the broader community.

Clíodhna Timoney sound recording workshop



Flameworking talk and demonstration with Andrea Spencer





Writing & Walking Workshop with Bernie McGill

Writer Bernie McGill led a writing workshop that took inspiration from the history and natural environment of the site at Fort Dunree that overlooks Lough Swilly and the North Atlantic. The event also aimed to spark inspiration for the work of writers from across these islands writing in response to the sea.





Meitheal Líniochta (Drawing 'Work Team') with Cathal McGinley
Cathal McGinley created a team drawing or Meitheal Líniochta. The idea of 'Meitheal' or 'work team' is the Irish term that denotes a community collective working towards a common goal, an act of neighbourly help and cooperation. This social concept is embedded in our Irish consciousness and Cathal utilises this approach not just as an instinctive methodology for his practice but also as a way to include and engage with both his own community and the audience. This activity featured a live fiddle player.

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

DONEGAL VISUAL ARTISTS NETWORK

The Donegal Visual Artists Network (DVAN), established in 2021, is dedicated to fostering the growth of artists in County Donegal. Spearheaded by Artlink, the Regional Cultural Centre in Letterkenny, Glebe House & Gallery, Churchill and An Gailearaí, Gweedore, the network aims to provide a supportive platform for artist development.

In the late summer of 2022, Grainne McMenemy assumed the role of Project Coordinator for DVAN. With nearly two decades of experience as a freelance artist, Grainne brings a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the artistic community. She recognises the difficulties artists face in balancing professional growth with the demands of their craft, financial stability, and personal commitments.

Identifying a widespread need for peer-to-peer connections and regular, valuable networking opportunities, Grainne embarked on initiatives to address these gaps. A needs analysis survey conducted by Visual Artists Ireland on behalf of DVAN revealed a strong desire among members for skill-sharing and practical workshops. Responding to this feedback, Grainne organised a series of artist studio visits, providing participants with valuable insights into diverse artistic practices. These events, held across the county, were strategically located to ensure accessibility for rural artists, thereby fostering inclusivity and community engagement within DVAN.

The cohort of members is growing steadily and the programme to date has provided the tools to start building connections, fostering curiosity for each other's practices, sharing skills, helping each other to reflect on where we're at and what we need in order to keep practising. These are all necessary factors within artistic community building and the collective desire for it to continue is strong.

The informal nature of the sessions immerses participants in a range of hands-on practical masterclasses, encouraging creative artistic discussions, professional practice presentations and peer-led skill sharing.

Events have been well attended throughout and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Engagement with the Whatsapp peer-to-peer group fluctuates from week to week, but continues at a generally high level with the information exchange and artist/organisation networking being lively and supportive.



Donegal Visual Artist Network Programme 2023

- *Life Drawing Meets Yoga with Maria Coleman* 10 January 2023 at An gailearaí, Donegal.
- *Studio Visit and Group Critique* with Laura McCafferty 12 February 2023, Inishowen.
- *Studio Visit and Artist's Talk* with Celina Muldoon 4 March 2023 Ballyshannon.
- *Artist Talks and Networking Event* at Glebe Easter Exhibition Opening, 7 April, Glebe Gallery, Churchill.
- *Studio Visit and Talk with Sarah Lewtas* 22 April 2023 Mulligan's Farm, Dunlewey.
- *Studio Visit and Talk with Ros Harvey and Tim Stampton* 12 June at Ballagh Studio, Malin.
- *Somatic Experience, Movement Awareness and Mark-Making*: a practical workshop facilitated by Steve Batts, Artistic Director of Echo Echo Dance Theatre, Derry 18 June.
- *Artist Networking and Art Performance* by Hilary Gilligan, Samhlaigh Arts Collective (west Donegal) 4 August 2023.
- Introduction to Printmaking Facilities at Leitrim Sculpture Centre 20 October 2023.
- DVAN Networking lunch and Artist Talk by Emily Waszak 28 October at the Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny.
- Regional Networking and Skill-share event: a practical introduction to working with willow hosted by Brendan Farren 11 November.
- Branding and Digital Marketing for Artists and Craftspeople: by specialist Dervla Clarke 9 December

Autumn is a time for taking stock of what we have achieved for the year and making a plan for how to make it through the coming winter. As the days grew shorter and the weather got colder we looked for creative ways to be resilient.

Traditionally a time for pickling, baking, weaving, whittling Artlink nurtured a community movement to renew ourselves through slow steady restorative creativity. Over the winter months artists and crafts people were invited to share their passions and demonstrate how a novice might begin to embrace a creative project.

Overwintering was a series of workshops that invited artists and makers to share their creativity with others with the view to picking up some inspiration to keep us going over the long dark winter months.

This project grew from the Compassionate Culture Network with the Irish Hospice Foundation which Artlink developed in 2021/2022, creating nurturing, supportive spaces to help in dealing with grief and loss. In this instance we were looking more generally at the arts as a means to foster safe, nurturing spaces for wellbeing and good mental health.

The workshops took place weekly at St Mary's Hall in the heart of Buncrana, facilitating easy access for most of the community.

ENGAGEMENT OVERWINTERING

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER





EXHIBITION

ARCHIVE

27TH OCTOBER – 10TH NOVEMBER

Curated by Dr Adriana Valderrama from Ulster University and Artlink Project Co-ordinator Martha McCulloch, the archive exhibition includes extensive materials and documentation that encapsulate a three-decades-long journey and is accompanied by an online digital archive. The motivation behind creating this archive lies in the understanding that having an archive is crucial for shedding light on the individuals and projects that form the organisations history.

Formed in 1992, Artlink has been at the forefront of bringing art to the local community through its exhibitions, workshops and innovative projects – nurturing artistic talent and providing local, national and international artists with a unique opportunity to conduct research, experiment, and create new and original works.

“I would like to take this opportunity to invite all art enthusiasts and the general public to visit and to add to the archive share any materials eg invitations programmes leaflets and other artworks produced during the 30 years of Artlink. These will be professionally documented and added to the digital archive.”

“This wonderful exhibition and digital archive is not just a retrospective – it is an ongoing celebration of Artlink’s enduring commitment to the local community and artistic excellence here in the North West of Ireland. Importantly, for over 30 years now, Artlink has been unwavering in its dedication to supporting and promoting local, national and international artists – playing a pivotal role in nurturing artistic ambitions, bolstering profiles and providing artists with such a great platform to realise their creative visions.” Dr Adriana Valderrama

artlink
promoting Visual Arts in the community

Drawing a balance

A Journey in Art, Education and Community

artlink has the pleasure of inviting you to the launch of the book *Drawing a Balance: A Journey in Art, Education and Community*

at the Tull-y-arvan Mill, Buncrana, Co. Donegal
on 13 November 2000 at 11.00 am
RSVP before 6 November 2000

Refreshments will be served
For further information contact Artlink
Tel: 096 71 6266 or email: artlink@eircom.net



2000
ster praises
of Artlink

PAUL CAMPBELL

MARK CULLEN

MARY CROWLEY

AUDREY DOHERTY

CLAIRE HARKIN

ROS HARVEY

JOSEPHINE KELLY

GRAINNE MCMENAMIN

RUTH MCCARTNEY

HANNA PIDKALIUK

MATTHEW PORTER

TIM STAMPTON-WOOD

DEBORAH STOCKDALE

ANNA STAINSBY

TARA EILEEN WELCH



PUBLIC EVENTS

IN THE MAKING

18TH NOVEMBER

In a deliberate departure from the conventional Christmas Craft Fair, *In the Making* aimed to honour the creative process and the remarkable abilities of local artists and craftspeople. The event featured fifteen skilled participants, each presenting their distinctive creations and imparting their expertise to the public.

A notable aspect of the event was the diverse array of artists and crafters involved. Audrey Doherty, an accomplished milliner, showcased the intricate techniques behind her exquisite hats and headpieces. Anna Stainsby, a specialist in upcycling, and crochet, demonstrated her innovative approach to transforming disused items. Deborah Stockdale exhibited her impressive embroidery skills, while Ruth McCartney showcased the art of spinning. Grainne McMenamin guided attendees in creating their own prints, while Paul Campbell exhibited his masterful woodworking abilities. Claire Harkin showcased weaving techniques. Matthew Porter displayed his ceramic work and monoprints and provided opportunities to try out hand-building in clay, while Mary Crowley demonstrated her exceptional watercolour skills. Josephine Kelly shared her profound expertise in oil painting techniques, and Tim Stampton showcased his printmaking prowess by creating intricate prints in full view of the public. Rose Harvey, a highly respected painter specialising in pastels, gave her expert advice on techniques and materials. Hanna Pidkaliuk demonstrated the painstaking art of cross stitch, Tara Eileen Welch was on hand to pass on her skills in the art of stained glass and Mark Cullen demonstrated digital animation techniques, 3D printing and his approach to producing children's books.

The sharing of warming food and refreshments, accompanied by live music by Alielvina Rudenko, added to the vibrant atmosphere.



The Married Life of Atoms served as a poignant retrospective exhibition showcasing the personal photographic endeavors of the late Harry Kerr. Curated by his life and work partner, Martha McCulloch, the exhibition offered an introspective journey through Kerr's prolific career, highlighting the diversity and depth of his photographic projects.

The selected works for the exhibition were meticulously edited from a multitude of projects, each echoing Harry Kerr's eclectic array of interests and concerns. His body of work delved into themes as varied as the interpretation of meaning, the dynamics of landscape and space, the nuances of time and location, and the complexities of communication. Furthermore, Kerr's fascination with the snapshot aesthetic, mathematics, particle physics, and apocalyptic visions, alongside his reverence for the inherent beauty of photography, was evident throughout the exhibition.

Harry's approach to photography was marked by his use of a wide range of cameras, from the simple toy Diana camera to sophisticated large format plate cameras. The Diana camera, in particular, played a significant role in his oeuvre. Known for its basic construction that often resulted in unpredictable optical effects such as blur, vignetting, and light leaks, the Diana camera embodied the essence of indeterminacy—a theme recurrent in Kerr's work. This fascination with the unpredictable and the irreproducible underscored Harry's exploration of scientific and mathematical uncertainties, as well as the philosophical inquiries into the nature of definition and meaning.

A notable feature of the exhibition was the inclusion of proposals for works that Kerr never realized or only partially completed. Among these was an ambitious proposal for an installation that would utilise slides illuminated by electronic flash, activated by motion sensors. Drawing inspiration from apocalyptic imagery found in the Book of Revelations and the Bhagavad Gita, notably referenced by Robert J. Oppenheimer during the first atomic detonation, the proposed work aimed to juxtapose the transient nature of photographic exposure with the profound analogies and imagery of apocalyptic visions. Kerr's intention to bridge the ephemeral moment of photographic capture with the existential contemplations of humanity's end times highlighted his innovative spirit and deep engagement with the thematic undercurrents of his broader work.

EXHIBITION

THE MARRIED LIFE OF ATOMS

2ND DECEMBER — 21ST JANUARY

The Married Life of Atoms not only showed Harry Kerr's mastery over the medium of photography but also offered an intimate glimpse into the mind of an artist deeply concerned with the philosophical and existential questions of his time. Curated with profound respect and understanding by Martha McCulloch, the exhibition stood as a testament to Kerr's legacy, inviting viewers to engage with the complex range of themes and concerns that shaped his artistic journey. Through the lens of his diverse and thought-provoking work, Kerr's artistic vision continues to inspire and challenge the boundaries of photographic expression.

Symposium

Artlink and Street Level Photoworks invited a group of respected photographers to give presentations prompted by Harry Kerr's work and his contribution to the development of photography as a fine art medium. They were all connected in different ways with Harry; a few in recent years when taking part in Artlink's residency and exchange programmes and others going back to those formative years at Glasgow School of Art.

This symposium extends Artlink's exchange/collaboration with Street Level Photoworks, Glasgow, developing the residency exchange to also involve a knowledge exchange.

Speakers were Calum Angus McKay, Frank McElhinney, Amanda McKittrick, Peter Finnemore and Paul McGuckin

The Married Life of Atoms: Harry Kerr



AIMS | VISION | MISSION

Artlink is an artist-led organisation, formed in 1992, run by a team of professional artists working from studios at the historic and inspiring location of Fort Dunree, Inishowen, County Donegal. It exists to support the ambitions of local, national and international artists at all stages of their professional career. Artlink makes a valuable contribution towards the creative development and wellbeing of the local community and helps build a strong sustainable culture and economy in the region. This is achieved through a programme of regional, national and international exchanges and residencies, exhibitions, practical creative workshops and participatory community events. In an area packed with ancient history and breathtaking scenery, Artlink connects and inspires people to produce creative projects uniquely rooted in 'place' and inspired by this rural, coastal context.

OUR VISION

Our vision is of a time when rural areas in Ireland will have a vibrant, sustainable art community, confident in the uniqueness of its voice.

OUR MISSION

Artlink's mission is to provide the expertise and physical resources to build a strong sustainable visual arts culture and contribute to the artistic and economic ecology of the North West of Ireland.

OUR AIMS

- To create opportunities for Irish and international emerging and established visual artists to develop their creativity and art practice.
- To create a vibrant, committed and rigorous visual art community locally.
- To creatively empower the local community and widen participation in the visual arts. To increase public knowledge and appreciation of contemporary art.
- To explore the contribution of contemporary visual arts in the social and economic development of rural places.
- To develop innovative art projects rooted in this rural, coastal context.
- To build national and international connections for the arts in the North West of Ireland. To make new opportunities for people to be involved in the arts as audiences and active participants.
- To make Fort Dunree a focal point of artistic interest along the Wild Atlantic Way. To develop premises at Dunree as a fully accessible arts facility/resource for the population of Inishowen and the wider region. To ensure long term sustainability for Artlink and all its activities

BOARD

Mark Hill

Mark Hill is a sculptor working in the public domain. He is Co-Director of LUXE - Landscape Theatre Company www.luxe.ie. He holds a BA (Hons) Degree in Fine Art from Liverpool Art College. His career in Arts and Theatre spans over 30 years. Mark enjoys long term creative relationships with artists, arts organisations, festivals and funding bodies across Ireland and Internationally. As a dedicated community artist his work engages and is enjoyed on all levels.

Martin McGinley

Music Development Manager at Donegal Music Education Partnership, part of the Donegal Education and Training Board. Former BBC NI television reporter, former editor of the Derry Journal and Donegal Democrat. Well-known traditional fiddler.

Esther Alleyne

Arts and Culture Facilities Officer at Roe Valley Arts Centre Esther was Arts Business Development Manager at Loaf Pottery in Crawfordsburn and has worked with various regional and international organisations including Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company for 6 years as well as Young at Art, Gary Rowntree Dance and LUXE

Sean Beattie

Sean Beattie is a research historian, editor of Donegal Annual, Macklin Festival and Colgan Heritage Weekend committee member, chairman of Ulster Local History Trust, author of a number of books on Donegal history, Ph.D. specialising in Congested Districts Board. Worked as a teacher of English, History and French in St. Joseph's Secondary School, Derry, subsequently at Ballyfermot Vocational School, Dublin. In 2013 he was awarded an honorary degree by the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Sharon Porter

Sharon is an entrepreneur, educator and enterprise development consultant. She has worked with the community sector and commercial start-ups as a consultant, trainer and mentor. While employed at Ulster University, Sharon championed cross-campus innovation and entrepreneurship education within diverse subject areas and lectured in Arts Entrepreneurship. She recently set-up Solas Ireland Walks and Hikes and is a qualified hiking and a Regional Fáilte Ireland Tour Guide.

Jack Murray

Jack Murray lives in Buncrana and has been an elected member of Donegal County Council since 2011. He served as Chairperson of the Inishowen Municipal District from 2017 - 2018 and as Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council from 2021 - 2022. He is passionate about supporting arts and culture locally and sees the local authority as a key vehicle for assisting in its development.

Shane Finan

Shane Finan, an artist and project manager, specializes in collaborative, research-based work. He focuses on critical technologies, creating interactive artworks exploring human and nonhuman relationships through myth, ecology, and digital technology. With six years of experience leading AI and machine learning projects at Trinity College, he now leads the artistic research project Púca in the Machine and co-founded the artist collective ^.

3

SEMINARS

4

RESIDENCIES

86

WORKSHOPS

20

TALKS

7

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

3

SCREENINGS

2

MINI FESTIVALS

4

PROJECTS

3

PUBLIC EVENTS

90,000

EVENT ATTENDEES

3

GROUP EXHIBITIONS



STREET LEVEL
PHOTOWORKS

LUXE



