

**studio 468**

A working space in Rialto

468

**1.** St Andrew's Community Centre,  
468 South Circular Road, Rialto,  
Dublin 8. **2.** Participants in an invited  
artists' discussion event, February  
2008. Left to right: Chris Reid,  
Dennis McNulty, Seoidín O'Sullivan,  
Anne Maree Barry, Terry Blake, Lisa  
Marie Johnson. **3.** Megan Kennedy.



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Edited by Logan Sisley and Siobhán Geoghegan

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# Encountering the Everyday

Siobhán Geoghegan

*On behalf of the studio 468 team*

04.05

Since the mid 1990s Dublin City's urban landscape has altered fundamentally, shifting and re-shaping how its citizens both physically and socially relate and exist alongside each other. Not unlike New York in the 1970s, Dublin City from the 1980s to mid 1990s housed a raft of artists in 'low rental' areas and neighbourhoods and warehouses alongside large public housing estates and traditional city communities.<sup>1</sup> In many ways Rialto is an example of that juxtaposition, a pocket of everyday life within a capital city. Demographically it houses a very socially and economically mixed population with two large public housing schemes, the former Fatima Mansions and Dolphin House. As an urban village, Rialto is sited<sup>2</sup> behind the Guinness Brewery (once the largest employer in the area) alongside the historical Liberties and fifteen minutes walk away from the National College of Art and Design and the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Not surprisingly Rialto has attracted many artists over the years to live and work in the area.

Since the 1980s there has been a vibrancy and openness to engaging in the arts in the Rialto area through both amateur and professional initiatives either located in, or coming from, community and youth groups, individuals and drama groups based in St Andrew's Community Centre on the South Circular Road. The formation of studio 468 was in many ways a slow burn initiative but there is no getting away from the fact that its location in a vibrant and active community centre has influenced how both artists and local residents have contributed to the ways and means of encountering each other, which have been varied and vast.

As a local resident you may have a longstanding relationship with a group based in St Andrew's like Rialto Youth Project, where Jamie Hendrick continues to volunteer. You or your family may have needed the services of Rialto Community Drug Team or Rialto Day Care Centre, or perhaps you may have performed on St Andrew's stage with Rialto Variety Group, accessed the alternative therapies session held on a Saturday morning or participated as a member of a local church group. Similarly you may have entered St Andrew's for local politicians' clinics, meals on wheels, bingo on a Friday night or as a voter in local, general or European elections. You may have stumbled upon an artist based in, or out of studio 468 adding again to the differences and mix of daily life, all its encounters and realities. Sometimes the everyday in St Andrew's and Rialto is a lot like Henri Lefebvre's description:



Participants in an invited artists' discussion event, February 2008. Left to right: Siobhán Geoghegan, Thomas O'Connor, Tony Fegan, Frances Mezzetti, Fiona Whelan.

Something, we will say, which is not easy to define, precisely since this something is not a thing, nor a precise activity with determined outlines. So what is it? A mixture of nature and culture, the historical and the lived, the individual and the social, the real and the unreal, a place of transitions, of meetings, interactions and conflicts, in short a level of reality. In one sense there is nothing more simple and more obvious than everyday life. How do people live? The question may be difficult to answer but that does not make it any the less clear. In another sense nothing could be more superficial: It is banality, triviality, repetitiveness. And in yet another sense nothing could be more profound.<sup>1</sup>

While the establishment of studio 468 was a natural progression and response to those years of encountering the arts in Rialto during the 1980s and 1990s, how it came about as a local development initiative is important to mark in this publication.

During the 1990s Chris Maguire, a local resident and visual artist, became an active member of Rialto Development Association (RDA) and witnessed the diversity of artists that came into the area during that time. As a practicing artist himself Chris was aware that there was a very real gap in Dublin of facilities for artists interested in developing their artistic practice in a neighbourhood setting which could provide the possibility of working in collaboration with local residents and/or communities of interest. During this time Chris proposed to the RDA the possibility of developing a self sustaining artist's studio that would be integrated and built in St Andrew's. On a couple of occasions the idea of the studio presented itself for possible development by the RDA but as an organisation it had many other more pertinent responsibilities in terms of managing and maintaining St Andrew's prior to embarking on new buildings. As a result the construction of the studio was postponed on at least two occasions.

The end of the 1990s brought a different set of realities for studio 468 to be realised. Thanks to the 'can do attitude' and support of Dublin City Council's arts officers Jack Gilligan and Sinéad Connolly, the establishment of Common Ground and the commitment of the RDA, a studio team was formed in 1999 to manage the development of studio 468 which is representative of Common Ground, the RDA and Dublin City Council. In 2000 Common Ground secured IR£25,000 in capital funding towards studio 468's construction which was pooled with the RDA's Young Peoples Services and Facilities award. These funds were integrated with the construction costs of the new day care centre for the elderly in St Andrew's.

It has always been the studio team's intention that studio 468 would offer extended and multiple artistic practice possibilities for artists and community to reflect on the contemporary world in ways that may never have been imagined. As it's alternatively situated in a vibrant and active community centre, studio 468 acts in a different way to traditional artists' studios, hosting multiple possibilities for artists and the immediate community to respond to their place and neighbourhood.

Importantly studio 468 offers artists time to initiate or develop work and since its first artist residency in December 2003 with Nevan Lahart it has hosted thirteen artists including a selection of Irish and international visual artists, filmmakers, contemporary dancers and classical musicians. For many artists this can be the shift from working and practicing in isolation to researching and making work with or in response to different communities of interest or ideas. studio 468 is always interested in artists that describe and present differing views on contemporary life and in its modesty represents an intimate part of Dublin's alternative artistic and everyday life, constructing and growing a knowledge base that has extended beyond Rialto with residency applications from Ireland and beyond. The diversity of practices and

initiatives have lived beyond their residency time. These include Seoidín O'Sullivan initiating a permaculture practice and establishing a local community garden in a disused car park on the South Circular Road, Fiona Whelan's practice with the *What's the Story?* collective, Anne Maree Barry's *Rialto Twirlers* short film and Kang Hyun Ahn's local performances on the streets of Rialto, *Hello to all my new neighbours*.

When artists finish their residency in studio 468 the studio team asks artists what has their experience of working in the studio been like and have there been unexpected benefits or shifts for how they make or view their work? Ailbhe Murphy's essay refers to this as 'learning in public'. The challenge of engaging in the arts at all is described perfectly in John Bissett's essay: 'To go sideways a little bit and be prepared to not know or have an opinion. A sort of 'willing' to engage.' The studio team is very proud that this publication marks the first eight years of studio 468's existence and learning. It marks and honours the risks that have been taken by artists, individuals and groups alike to find meaningful and diverse ways to work together. The studio team hopes that studio 468 inspires others to take similar risks to create their own arts and cultural spaces, be they local residents, artists or organisations. [SG 04.2010](#)

1. Dublin City's urban planning strategy from the mid 1990s to the late 2000s can be described as aiming to shift the demographic statistics that had for years identified pockets of endemic poverty, public housing populations and lone parents, particularly in the inner city of Dublin. It is no surprise that at the same time artists and their inner city neighbours made way for large scale private housing and commercial developments through large scale reallocation of private property and public land, through the sale of public land through largely public private partnerships. For more information see Bissett, J., 2009.

**Regeneration: Public Good or Private Profit?** Dublin: Tasc/New Island; or Drudy, P.J., [http://www.tcd.ie/Economics/staff/p\\_j\\_drudy.htm](http://www.tcd.ie/Economics/staff/p_j_drudy.htm).

2. Rialto is an urban village located in the south-west inner city of Dublin. For many years it housed two large public housing complexes, the former Fatima Mansions and Dolphin House whose demographics highlight long term endemic social and economic factors: high unemployment, high opiate drug use, early school leaving and lone parenting. The demographics also describe a large elderly population and increasing social gentrification with a new urban professional class moving into the area.

3. Lefebvre H., 1961. **Clearing the Ground**. In: Johnstone, S., ed. **The Everyday**. London: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2008, 33.

4. studio 468 is managed by a studio team whose members are: Siobhán Geoghegan, Director of Artistic Programme, Common Ground, a local arts development organisation, Sheena Barrett, South Central Area Arts Officer for Dublin City Council, Chris Maguire, a local artist and Director of Rialto Development Association (RDA) and Kieran Doyle O'Brien, local artist. The studio team meets every six weeks. In 2007 Logan Sisley was appointed on a contractual basis to assist with the management and development of the studio.

Common Ground is a local arts development organisation and registered

charity. Established in 1999 it is committed to creating opportunities for professional artists and communities to engage with each other in a variety of ways. Through the role of its Director of Artistic Programme, Common Ground actively supports the artists' residencies and studio 468's development and commits approx €10,000 annually to fund artists' stipends and the studios' general upkeep and maintenance. For Common Ground, studio 468's development is part of an ongoing commitment to support sites for emerging artists who seek to practise in a socially engaged or contextual practice. It offers a space for contemporary art practices that test and take risks to emerge, often beyond the residency timeframe and continuing to find ways to challenge and respond to the locale. [www.commonground.ie](http://www.commonground.ie)

Dublin City Council Arts Office provides a citywide arts development service, from its base in The LAB on Foley Street. The LAB also houses a contemporary art gallery (primarily showcasing emerging artists), rehearsal studios for the performing arts and training room facilities for professional development. Artist studios, exhibition and workshop spaces are also provided in The Red Stables, in St Anne's Park. The Arts Office Service includes programmes for Older Persons, Children and Young People, strengthening participation and involvement of Dublin people in community festivals and arts initiatives, and financial support for arts organisations and artists working and living in Dublin City. Dublin City Council Arts Office contributes to the ongoing development of studio 468 through a representative Arts Officer, Sheena Barrett.

Rialto Development Association (RDA) is based at St Andrew's Community Centre, Rialto. Through supporting the development of studio 468 it offers the communities of Rialto opportunities to engage with a wide range of professional artists. The RDA is the agency with ultimate responsibility for a number of critical community projects based in St Andrew's including Rialto Community Drug Team, Rialto Day Care Centre for the Elderly and Rialto Youth Project. The RDA gained funding through the Young Peoples Services and Facilities Fund in 1999 to contribute to studio 468's construction. The RDA is a registered charity.



Image from Kang Hyun Ahn, *Do Focail, Mo Capall (Your Words, My Horse)*, video documentation of performance, 2006.



# Contextualising the Artist: studio 468 and the Request to Engage

Ailbhe Murphy

What's he building in there?  
What the hell is he building  
In there?  
He has subscriptions to those  
Magazines... He never  
waves when he goes by  
He's hiding something from the rest of us... He's all  
to himself... I think I know  
why...

10.11

Tom Waits, *What's He Building?* from *Mule Variations*, 1999

The main characteristic of the external gaze into a private creative space which Tom Waits evokes here is one of misgiving at the sense of purposefulness attaching to a dubious project behind closed doors. However, the gaze from inside such private creative spaces out towards the world can also be somewhat circumspect. In this essay I would like to explore that intersection between the public gaze into the space of the artist's studio and the individual gaze returned out into the space of the public. I'd like to consider studio 468 and Rialto as a particular set of creative conditions which can animate the possibilities for some familiar misgivings and uncertain encounters and at the same time as a place with the potential to reach new understandings for shared creative practice. Let me begin by mapping some uncertainties within the field of cultural production and the figure of the artist within it.

## Cultural Dividers

Those who work in the creative sphere or what is sometimes termed the field of cultural production must become accustomed to various forms of splitting. As a field of practice it appears to offer a certain set of choices presented as mutually exclusive destinations. Within the moral economy of cultural practice the artist is confronted with the choice between an uncompromising, singular artistic vision and commercial success. It is no doubt a familiar moral corrective, as though a self-conscious eye to the market will contaminate the aesthetic integrity of the work. By extension, there is

the perceived tension between commercial success and critical acclaim, as though economic capital has some way of cancelling out cultural capital.

There is of course another almost defining dichotomy organised around the availability of time for cultural production. Perhaps the most compelling illustration of this long-standing trade off between time and survival is the iconic image of the lone artist in their studio with all the time in the world, pitted against the voracious teaching schedules of the art college. In any case, there are innumerable other splits and sub-splits around which the dilemmas of cultural practice can be understood as a series of somewhat dislocating choices. Wrestling with these apparent dilemmas is one of the main preoccupations of those who are trying to ride the wave of cultural production and gain some stable position within it. For those who have already managed to find some accommodation within this moral economy, in recent times yet another one of those binary choices has been coming ever more clearly into focus. It would not be accurate to say that this more recent one is *new*, it is perhaps better to say that it has always been there but is now beginning to find its own forms of institutional expression.<sup>1</sup>

So what is the shape of this new conceptual, moral and pragmatic fork in the road? Well it has something to do with the request for social engagement. We are increasingly seeing forms of practice which have been identified (or self-identify) as socially engaged, as art-in-context, as community-based, as participatory, as collaborative and so on. This connective impulse is being increasingly interrogated within the discourse and practice of art and organized and disciplined within the institutional field of arts practice and within the art academy. And yet the terms of reference for this request (and in some cases the demand) for social engagement have yet to be clearly formulated. This conceptual and terminological confusion is borne out by the sheer constellation of potential approaches to engaged practice. The diversity of these approaches is reflected in their attendant frameworks of legitimisation which include relational aesthetics, new genre public art, activist art, connective aesthetics and dialogical practice among others. The emergence of an invitation to artists such as that extended by studio 468 should be understood in the context of this gathering of momentum at the level of institutional arrangements within an evolving field of practice.

### Contextualising the Artist

studio 468 is located in St Andrew's Community Centre in Rialto, an urban village in Dublin's southwest inner city. St Andrew's is an impressive building. Formerly a church and school, it is now home to a number of community development organisations which together provide a range of facilities and programmes for residents in the Rialto area. The impetus for studio provision in Rialto came from the Rialto Development Association which owns and manages the St Andrew's Community Centre. studio 468 opened there in December 2003. The residency programme is managed and run by the studio 468 team which includes representation from the Rialto Development Association, Dublin City Council and a locally-based arts development organisation called Common Ground. Each of those partners recognises the creative possibilities generated by having artists based in a community context. More particularly, they recognise the potential for introducing artists to the specific context of the Rialto community which, over the past number of years, has seen the development of a rich variety of arts and cultural practice.

From the outset the studio 468 team has structured its invitations to artists in a

way that can combine the experience of an autonomous studio residency with the experience of direct engagement with the Rialto community. This has been achieved through a request that resident artists would collaborate with one of the youth and community development organisations or voluntary groups based at St Andrew's or in the wider Rialto area. In this way studio 468 provides dedicated studio space for practicing artists and in turn, the engagement of those resident artists with a local organisation. This two way exchange has been encouraged and formalised through gaining the commitment of the visiting artist to engage with an organisation for a period of six hours a week. Artists choose the organisation they wish to work with. Each artist is supported in establishing those connections by Common Ground, the studio 468 team and through the support of a part-time studio administrator. In this way studio 468 seeks to contribute to the professional development of the resident artists, to the community organisations which the artists choose to work with and to the wider cultural life of the Rialto community.

### Cultural Practice in Rialto

Artists arriving into the life of the community in Rialto via studio 468 are entering into an already vibrant fabric of artistic and cultural possibilities. St Andrew's Community Centre is home to a range of developmental and cultural initiatives. The Rialto Youth Project has engaged in creative processes since it was established in 1981. In 2005 it became the first youth project in Ireland to engage a visual artist as one of their team. In the last number of years, they have initiated international artistic exchanges, engaged in mural making at a local and international level, delivered performative events in public space and explored young people's experiences through filmmaking and drama.<sup>2</sup> More recently the *What's the Story?* Collective, which is made up of six young adults, two youth workers and an artist presented a compelling collective storytelling performance event which was based on young people's stories, all of which addressed the question of power.<sup>3</sup>

The Rialto Community Drug Team, also based in St Andrew's, is a key member of the Canal Communities Local Drugs Task Force. Between 2005 and 2008 the community representatives on the Task Force engaged in an exploration through the visual arts of their views and experiences of the drugs issue in the Canal Communities area. The project culminated in a series of mixed media works which made up the *Awakenings* exhibition. This exhibition was later complimented by a film which documented the making of the work and the contributions of those community representatives who were involved. The *Awakenings* project has served as a catalyst for debate and discussion among artists and community development practitioners in relation to the drugs issue at a city-wide level.

In the neighbouring Dolphin House flat complex, the Dolphin House Homework Club's participation in Common Ground's *Music for Me* programme is now moving into its fifth year. *Music for Me* is a Canal Communities-wide programme which was piloted in both the Dolphin and Fatima Homework Clubs. Children between the ages of six and twelve years of age come together at regular intervals to play and perform a broad range of percussive and musical instruments facilitated by a range of professional musicians. Their work has culminated in public performances held locally and in the Rotunda Room of Dublin City Hall, the Shaw Room of the National Gallery of Ireland and the John Field Room of the National Concert Hall.

The Rialto Variety Club is an amateur drama group represented within the Rialto Development Association. Each year they engage a professional theatre director to

facilitate them to produce a pantomime in winter and a play in summer both of which involve a number of young people from the area.

Based on Reuben Street, Fatima Groups United is the umbrella community organisation for a number of local agencies. Fatima Groups United has become synonymous with the production of large scale street spectacle and community-based carnival. That capacity for large scale street spectacle was vividly demonstrated in October 2008 when Fatima Groups United, collaborating with Macnas and a range of visual and performing artists took a leading role in devising and producing a community-wide Hallowe'en parade, *The Night of the Dark Angel*. A number of locally based youth and community development organisations participated in this event which involved 450 people of all ages. *The Night of the Dark Angel* was the first of a proposed three year cycle of community-based events to take place at Hallowe'en.

The Ark, a children's cultural centre in Temple Bar, conducted an outreach programme called *ArkLink* for over five years in Fatima Mansions. The Fatima Film Club is an extension of that programme. Its young filmmakers, aged between nine and fourteen years, have made a series of films which draw on young people's experiences in the Rialto area. The Fatima Film Club has won a number of national and international film awards.

The examples mentioned here are highlighted by way of illustrating that studio 468 is part of an already existing matrix of cultural endeavour within the Rialto area. Far from a culturally blank canvas on which to inscribe the mark of creativity, the studio 468 residency extends an invitation to artists to locate themselves within this wider nexus of community cultural development.

#### [studio 468 and the Request to Engage](#)

I believe that it is the embedded nature of studio 468 which lends it a unique potential for contextualising artistic practice. And perhaps this is where the studio 468 team has been prescient in responding to the range of self-splitting effects which are increasingly being felt and at times articulated in the field of practice. How and when one propels oneself forward as a potential collaborator is always critical. As artists are increasingly negotiating their presence across a range of different contexts, they are also learning how to develop their artistic processes in a variety of cross-sectoral and inter-institutional relations. Negotiation is at the heart of this work. In the context of studio 468 an interesting challenge emerges. Those inter-institutional negotiations must be entered into and realised over a relatively short timeframe, usually six months. The resident artists have responded in diverse ways to this challenge. They have engaged with the potential for cross-fertilisation between contemporary arts practice and community in its broadest sense and with youth and community development practice more particularly. Contemporary concerns with situated practice, contextual work and notions of place have also been reflected in the artist residencies to date.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to make any comprehensive account of the diversity and scope of the work of artists at studio 468 since the inception of the residency programme in 2003. At the same time it is possible to indicate, however telegraphically, something of the diversity of forms of expression and the range of community experience represented. Among the public manifestations of artistic engagement with the community there have been documentary films, the creation of a community food garden, public musical performances, critical dialogue on the nature

of collaborative practice, dance on and off the street, the construction of informal networks, street performance and drama. The range of community experience animated by those creative engagements has been considerable. Without attempting any exhaustive catalogue it has included older people's experience of social and recreational routines at their care centre, inter-cultural experiences of place, the young dance community of Rialto, children's experience via work with the homework clubs, women's experience of cultural production and class, young men's experience of the regeneration of their area and community response to the issue of drugs.

At a time when studio space is so hard to come by in the city the resident artists have enjoyed access to a dedicated and well resourced working space.<sup>4</sup> While based in studio 468 they also navigated, to different degrees, a tension which operates in that negotiation between the individual and the collaborative domain of practice activated within the arena of contextual practice. In relation to the individual domain of practice, there is almost an embodied sense of the studio as a necessary space in which to work and develop ideas. It is a space for reflection and experimentation, where in the making of work it is possible to relinquish unsuccessful strategies and try out different avenues. To put it more succinctly, a studio is a space where things are allowed to go wrong as part of the creative process. For the artist there is a delicate balance in maintaining that legitimate space for experimentation, what one might call artistic autonomy in the midst of equally legitimate community and organisational expectations which the studio 468 request to engage necessarily entails.

In the negotiation between the individual and the collaborative domain of practice this delicate balance is played out on at least two levels. Firstly, it is played out at the level of the contradiction between the need to engage in speculation and experimentation as conditions of creativity and on the other hand the requirement to present oneself within a specific community context as a creatively purposeful individual with a coherent, but not entirely pre-determined plan of some kind. Secondly, it is played out at the level of a sort of moral tension between an apparently 'socially unengaged' studio practice (evoked by the rather self-absorbed protagonist in the Tom Waits song) and the seemingly more 'civically generous' creative and social investments within the world of art-in-context.

studio 468's explicit structuring of a certain distribution of labour between studio-based practice and community engagement has undoubtedly encouraged the diversity of creative exchanges and the different strategies reflected in the approaches of the resident artists. The residencies to date have reflected a number of key artistic and social concerns in the evolving field of engaged practice. In this way, the studio 468 team has demonstrated a certain curatorial courage in making explicit the request to engage by formalising it as a defining characteristic of the residency experience.

### [Learning in Public](#)

In the broader landscape of studio provision in the city studio 468 inhabits a unique position as an interface between artists and community. At this juncture six years on it may be timely to ask how studio 468 might continue to develop as a locus for exploring a number of central preoccupations within the contemporary field of engaged practice. Given the potential of studio 468 to develop those lines of inquiry further, what might drive the evolution of the invitation to engage at studio 468?

What if studio 468 was to amplify its potential to serve as a conduit between artists and community? How could the studio 468 residency encourage an even greater proximity between the artist and the arena of cultural production that

surrounds them in Rialto? studio 468 has offered valuable support to a range of professional artists at different stages of their career. How could the existence of this dedicated studio space also nurture the development of artists emerging from within the local nexus of community-based cultural production? For example how might regular access to studio 468 as a space for artistic experimentation encourage the artistic confidences of community workers who are increasingly engaging as cultural practitioners in the Rialto area?

One direction we could imagine would be the possibility of constructing longer term engagements where creative alliances between artists and the community might form in ways that could transcend the existing constraints and determining parameters of the residency programme. It is also possible to imagine extending and developing the function of studio 468 as a friendly base for an orientation to collaborative work. For example, emerging artists at both graduate and undergraduate level might join their counterparts in the youth and community development sector. In this way studio 468 could be identified and known for providing an introductory hub as well as an established base for engaged practice. The studio 468 residency is a place where those that have cast a public gaze inwards and those that have returned a private gaze outwards have met and looked each other directly in the eye. What now are the conditions for dissolving some of the remaining misgivings and uncertainties?

Artist and writer Claire Pentacost has described the artist as one who serves as a conduit between specialised knowledge fields and other members of the public sphere. She characterises this role for the artist as Public Amateur. In this way she identifies them as: '... the person who consents to learn in public.'<sup>5</sup> studio 468 could set out to create the conditions where the spirit of the studio as a site of artistic experimentation is understood by artists and others from specialised knowledge fields within the community. These could include community representatives on a local drugs task force, youth workers, community development practitioners and those other members of the public drawn from the Rialto area. studio 468 is situating itself as a space that supports artistic and cultural practice which develops, articulates and critically reflects the potential richness of the interface between artist and community in many of its complex forms. Building on this strength it could uniquely position itself as a place where artists and others come to share. And where together, they consent to learn in public. [AM 07:2009](#)

1. Maria Lind writing in 'The Collaborative Turn' references the curator Angelika Nollert who points out that the first known group of artists working closely together was the Nazarenos in Rome in 1810-1830. Nollert makes the point that this type of collaboration as a conscious strategy became possible when the guilds disappeared and the idea of the artists as a romantic individual came to the fore. She also instances the newly proliferating collaborations between artists and curators, artists and artists, artists and others as gaining momentum in the 1990s. See Lind, M., 2007. *The Collaborative Turn*. In: Billing, J., Lind, M., and Nilsson, L., eds. *Taking the Matter into Common Hands*. London: Black Dog Publishing, 15 – 29.

2. In 2005 the Rialto Youth Project developed an arts and cultural plan called **Finding a Voice**. Over a three-year period from 2005 – 2008 Finding a Voice set out to create a new and sustainable model of arts provision which encompassed visual and performing art forms. The Rialto Youth Project continues to develop significant arts and cultural projects across all art forms as a means of engaging young people in a range of social, cultural and educational initiatives.

3. The **What's the Story?** Collective was formed in 2008 and emerged from the long term collaboration between visual artist Fiona Whelan and the Rialto Youth Project. **What's the Story?** Collective is an interdisciplinary group which sets out to explore the question of power both for the individual and in society, through a range of projects and events. See [www.section8.ie](http://www.section8.ie)

4. In recent years with the increase in the value of city centre property, independent studio space for artists has become increasingly difficult to establish and maintain in Dublin. In 2008 the Arts Council appointed CHL Consulting Company, working with independent media and arts practitioners, to conduct a Review of Visual Artists' Workspaces examining the provision of visual artists' workspaces throughout Ireland. The findings of the review, published in March 2009, will assist the Arts Council in the development of its policy with regard to workspace provision.

5. See Pentacost, C., 2008. *Beyond Face*. In: Chodos, E., ed. *Talking With Your Mouth Full: New Language for Socially Engaged Art*. Chicago: Green Lantern, 29 – 45.

















Full-colour plates (previous pages): Page 17: Film stills, *Rialto Twirlers*, 2010, directed by Anne Maree Barry, featuring Kim Donahue, Lee Graham, Tara Kiernan, Sarah McCoy and Shelley Sheridan. Pages 18/19: Vagabond Reviews and Fatima Groups United exhibition, *Fatima – A Cultural Archaeology*, at NCAD Gallery, May 2009. Pages 20/21: View of an installation by Chris Reid at the studio 468 exhibition, July 2005. Pages 22/23: Jennie Moran, *A Corner of the World*, 2010. This page: Megan Kennedy.

# Art, Me and Communittee

John Bissett

I must Create a System or be enslav'd by  
another man's  
I will not Reason and Compare: my business  
is to Create

William Blake, *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, c. 1820

24.25

I tend to think of art as the opposite of work. It involves work of course, spending time doing something but not at the instruction and timetable of someone else. Art is something that you like to do, and that gives you energy and purpose and perhaps hope in a general sense. But I am a relatively recent convert in many ways and I am struggling to find the place where 'art' fits in my own life and in the work that I do. As I have had no formal artistic background or training I have no artistic boundaries as to what constitutes art and what does not. Perhaps the first thing to say is that we, or most of us, have to work to live, therefore we have to build our lives around our own and our families' material survival. The nature of the work we do is a critical question related to the quality of our lives. If people were happy doing what they do the world would be a much better place. But that is a difficult place to get to. So the context we find ourselves in is important. What are the social conditions of our lives, and how do they affect our creativity, our artisticness? The social conditions of my life are very particular. I grew up in Dolphin House, a working class city council flat complex in the south inner city, went to school in James' Street, served an apprenticeship, spent some time in Australia and Canada and had a moment of illumination, an epiphany, that I should go back to school, and did as a mature student. I was lucky to be able to return to education, principally because I hadn't yet had children and some educational institutions such as St Patrick's College, Maynooth, were very favourable to people who had such epiphanies relatively late in life. I was able to subvert the dominant, linear model of education that sees you go through a series of stages at specific ages. This is a form of education which is built on competition and where, by and large, we are prepared for specific, class based roles in the workforce. I was able to take a little step back, and to get a little bit of control back over my life and to start again as it were.

The conditions of one's life then, have a critical influence, some things are in and

some things are out. Art wasn't talked about or practised in our household, nor was the idea of making things or creating things part of my schooling. It wasn't part of our habitus or way of living. When I have participated in dedicated art projects I often struggle with guilt for taking the time. And developing a passion for something or an interest takes time. It has to come from somewhere. Doing something that gives you a sense of fulfilment. Why write, or draw, or paint? People have different motives. Pleasure is one, so too is acceptance, respect or perhaps even admiration from others. Emily Dickinson wrote poetry all of her life but none of it was ever published until she was dead. Why did she write? Probably because she liked doing it, it helped her to make sense of the world around her and offered her some sort of fulfilment. We all live different lives and I have been thinking recently that perhaps mine would be better if I did one thing or followed one thread such as writing. I have dabbled in writing on and off for years but I never thought that I could live for it or make a living from it. I was reading Joseph O'Connor's novel recently, *Star of the Sea*, and one of the protagonists says that 'the hardest thing about writing is knowing what to write about.' Perhaps the answer for any art form or project is that you just start and see where it takes you. The nourishing of such capacities has been something that we haven't been too good at in Ireland. It has really been a case of you either have it or you don't have it. The world becomes divided between those who create and those who consume, instead of having a world where we all create, even to some small extent.

### Other People's Art

I watched a documentary many years ago now by the Australian writer and art critic Robert Hughes called *The Shock of the New*. I hadn't been taught the codes or the language for deciphering art but Hughes presented all of these different art forms and pieces with such enthusiasm and vigour that he sucked me in. I went out and bought the book of the series and I have picked up other strings in the sand since then and followed them to all sorts of places. I was amazed at the things that people did and the things they made, from paintings to buildings. But the one thing that stayed with me

was that Hughes said good art has a resonance. That was his definition. I took it to mean that it left a mark on you or an inner vibration that continued to hum long after you turned off the TV or put the book down. I presume that it's the same for making something. One of the more offbeat and interesting pieces that Hughes introduced were the abstract paintings of the Lithuanian born American émigré artist Mark Rothko. Hughes showed a series of Rothko's paintings that hang in a chapel in the southern United States. (Rothko himself called these paintings 'colour fields'.) There are also other huge paintings that hang in Tate Modern next to Southwark Bridge on London's South Bank. Rothko's paintings are enigmatic and to some extent indecipherable but there is a mystery and a depth in them that makes one ask why did he do that and what was it all about? I still like them to this day. And I think that one of the reasons I like them is because I don't understand them. I want to understand what they are about but perhaps if I did I would lose interest in them. Rothko killed himself while working on his last painting, his death was his final art bequest to the world. I have come to understand that you have to step off the life train if you want to see or experience things like that. To go sideways a little bit and be prepared to not know or have an opinion. A sort of 'willing' to engage. But there is quite a distance between going to see the work of feted or celebrated artists like Rothko whose work still remains at the higher end of the cultural mainstream and beginning to think about making or doing a piece of art oneself or with a group. It's a difficult transition. 'Great art' may inspire but it can also paralyse people into thinking that it's the only real art.

### Art and Us

26.27

One of the things I have done in recent years has been to try and introduce art into the work that I do with a group of people I work with as a community worker. All members of the group are connected to the Local Drugs Task Force<sup>1</sup> and given the history of the past twenty years in this area, our theme for the project, perhaps unsurprisingly, was Art and Drug Use. We tried to look sideways at the drugs issue using various art forms. There were six of us, all working within the Rialto, Inchicore and Bluebell areas (collectively known as the canal communities). Besides working in various community projects, the one thing we had in common was the fact that we had never really 'done' art for or by ourselves before. The basis for the project was that we would approach it as a group. This approach was taken because I believed that none of us, without support, would sustain an art piece from beginning to end as individuals. And these were all highly motivated, dynamic individuals. Art just wasn't part of our natural habitus or way of being.

We were lucky enough to work with the worldwise Rialto artist Chris Maguire who ebbed and flowed ergonomically with our energy as a group over a two and a half year period. Chris used to say that the only difference between artists and non-artists was the fact that artists act on their impulses and give time to them. They do, whereas the rest of just watch those who do and think it's not for us. I took Chris's point to mean that all of us can 'do' art, we just need to shunt our thinking over and be a little bit like Yosser Hughes and say 'I can do that'. Looking back at it now, we were entering into the space of 'can I make something' or 'can I really do that'? It was risky and unnatural for all of us. But we persevered, perhaps the greatest quality you can have. Be a dogged bastard and you can be an artist. Just sit and wait and the inspiration will come. We rarely let ourselves have the time. But on this occasion we did. It was slow and awkward, sometimes excruciating but we kept going. We had ridiculous thoughts and ideas about what we could do. We used paint, we used crayons, cameras, clay and

a host of other materials to see what we could make. We thought about the idea of making one big collective artwork. At the very start we tried to do this on large white sheets pinned to a wall, with people layering stuff on after each other. We discovered we weren't quite ready for that. I had come across an exhibition of aboriginal paintings in the Carlow Institute of Technology on the way back from Tramore a few years ago and had thought that they embodied an almost perfect collective artistic process. Their simplicity, colour and scale was astonishing. Some of the pieces were about twenty five feet by ten. But they had had thousands of years to perfect their craft, we were just starting. We looked at the work of other contemporary European artists. The now infamous and subversive London artist Banksy was a topic of discussion for a while. He prowls around London streets by night and leaves provocative, socially engaged murals and art pieces anywhere he can. Two male London policemen, kissing each other while dressed in full uniform is one that sticks in the mind. But his style and the forms he used were simple and accessible and provided the inspiration for a brilliant mural piece by Walter Bowden that eventually materialised and was painted on to the side of a small local power station in St Teresa's Gardens. The making of the mural was filmed as it happened over the course of a full day. The mural developed over a period of many months gradually coming into being from fragments of ideas. The same is true for a piece by Eilish Comeford, one of the women in the group. She had grown up in rural Kilkenny and had come to work in St Michael's Estate, Inchicore. She used photography to illustrate her shock at coming to work in the estate for the first time. The piece contrasted the claustrophobic nauseating interiors of the blocks with the panoramic breathtaking view over the city from the upper floors. It was entitled *That I may never get used to this*. The contrast between the urban and rural and the harshness of the urban landscape was detailed in a written piece that accompanied the photographs.

Another of the women in the group, Cathy Thorpe, was interested in using the idea of a maze to express the myriad turns, re-turns and detours that take place on the road into and out of problem drug use. After creating a maze on a base

Right: junk ensemble (Megan Kennedy and Jessica Kennedy), *Circus Freak*.

Below: Participants in an invited artists' discussion event, February 2008. Left to right: Chris Reid, Dennis McNulty, Seoidín O'Sullivan, Anne Maree Barry, Terry Blake, Lisa Marie Johnson.





Nevan Lahart speaking to students from NCAD's Postgraduate Diploma in Community Arts course.

of wood she made a collection of clay pieces and fitted them to the contours of the maze. The piece gradually unfolded over time with new pieces being added week after week until it became a finished work. Each piece had a reference point somewhere in the area either concretely or symbolically. The pieces were hand painted and came to represent a community's struggle with heroin and serious drug use over many years. On the same theme but using a completely different form, a video piece by Tony May entitled *Off the Wall* captured an afternoon handball event under 'The Arch' in Fatima Mansions just weeks before the entire estate was demolished as part of the regeneration of the complex. This poignant short documentary captured a community in transition with recollections from a male group of peers in their forties and fifties about what it was like to grow up in the complex. The brief conversational pieces in the film revealed a group of men who had led harsh lives and who had all lived through the heroin epidemic in Dublin from the late 1970s onwards. They had survived, but at a price. The film touched the surface of the complexity of serious drug use from pleasure to pain and everything in-between. It concluded with a roll call of those who had died from drug use over the years, played off against the sound of the ball popping off the wall under arch. An older brother of mine watched this film while it was on exhibition in Rialto and came out of the screening room in tears. I think it touched something in him about his generation and growing up in the area and also about getting older.

Another of the pieces that used film to convey its message was entitled *Seven Drunken Nights*. Tommy Coombes had taken the old Dubliner's ballad of *Seven Drunken Nights* and had reworked it giving the song a more contemporary resonance to get at the underbelly of drug use, especially alcohol. The film explored the dark side of our engagement with drug use, the damage it does to relationships and the abuse that sometimes results. The film was made using a group of local actors from Dolphin House with each reciting a rewritten verse to camera. The entire piece was shot in black and white and the camera just used the head shot giving the piece a very intimate and unsettling atmosphere. As each actor finished their piece they rotated and another replaced them. This short film touched a raw nerve with people who saw it. My own piece explored the relationship between power, knowledge and drug use. At the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s there was little formalised knowledge of drug use either from a quantitative or qualitative perspective in Ireland. The one detailed account of drug use in Dublin in the 1980s was the book *Smack* which was more of a journalistic account of what happened. But toward the end of the 1990s and with the establishment of Drugs Task Forces drug use has become something to be measured and to be quantified. The 'drug problem' has become insitutionalised and colonised to an extent by the number crunchers and experts who hold court on its constitution and structure. Experiential accounts of drug use tend to take second place and more and more the only 'real knowledge' is that which is produced by institutions such as the Health Research Board. My piece contrasted these two sets of perspectives by using a four sided glass box onto which quantitative tables were printed while inside the box a sculpted human head represented the more experiential side of drug use.

### Conclusion: Awakenings

All of these pieces together formed the *Awakenings* exhibition which went on display for a week across the three areas of Rialto, Inchicore and Bluebell in April 2008. The pieces were received fantastically well. The important thing was that we had tried to make 'art' doable in an ordinary sense. Something that any of us could do with the

right support and materials. Myself and Chris Maguire had acted as the 'holders' of the project, motivating people when their confidence was low or helping people to move from one stage to another. But perhaps the greatest strength was the group itself. Each valued the work of the other and encouraged it to continue. All of us modified our expectations into something realisable as the project progressed. Quite often the difficult piece was not generating ideas, there were loads of those, but getting from the idea to the thing itself. Making the idea into something material and real. The transition from idea to form. What do you make it from, do I make a film, do I use a camera or clay? Finding a form that helps you to express the idea was difficult. When we were about halfway through this process Chris used this huge accordion like picture book and presented all of the work to date on it. The book was opened out on the floor and when we looked at it we were able to see where we had come from and where we were going. Perhaps the one downside to the *Awakenings* project since it finished has been that almost all of those involved have gone back into their own specific jobs and have not, in my opinion, been able to sustain an artistic element within their work. I think there are a couple of reasons for this. The first of these is time. Creating time within hectic schedules is very difficult and almost all of the people in question have family lives to lead after a day's work so it is difficult for them to get time there. Many of them also work evenings. The second problem is related to time and is one of legitimacy. Many of us have been convinced that art is not a legitimate use of one's time especially if you are being paid to carry out a very specific job description. Time is a problem as is the legitimacy of the activity or the project. You are paid to do certain sort of work and do not stray. I want to finish this essay with the story of a man who lived in Los Angeles and who, when he came home from work one day, decided that he would build a small sculpture out the back of his house using coloured bottles. Like the beanstalk, the sculptures gradually became bigger and bigger and today have become a significant art-tourist attraction in Los Angeles. He had no formal artistic training, but what he did have was what William Blake was so adamant about, a desire to create. The trick for all of us is to find ways of acting on our artistic desires and make them catch fire. [JB 11.2009](#)

1. Local Drugs Task Forces were set up in Dublin and in Cork in the late 1990s to deal primarily with the opiate problem that was devastating working class communities and estates. They have community, statutory and voluntary representation. My job is to work with the community representatives on the Task Force and one of the key ways we have done this in recent years has been through the use of art.

## **Art and me**

John Bissett

How did this  
Life of mine  
Come to be

The things I do  
The things I want  
The things I see

The world I know  
Does not much  
Exist in art

Excavate mind  
And memory  
Dust off the parts

Genealogy  
History  
Sensibility

Work the raw materials  
With hand and heart  
Set a universe free

[10.2009](#)



# The Artist in Me

Jamie Hendrick

## Beginnings

In 1998 when I was eight years of age I joined my first art group. The group was known as the Mapping Group. Through this group I learned about all the different types of art. When I was young painting, colouring and drawing was the only art I knew. But through this group I learned how to make a 3D sculpture of my head using chicken mesh and clay. I also made pieces of art out of plaster. My favourite part of the group was going to the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) every Wednesday. I remember going into the museum, seeing all the art work and thinking 'That's just mad', like the Ann Hamilton exhibition. It was just hundreds of pieces of paper coming from the ceiling. I remember having to dig for five minutes to finally see the ground. I also remember the spinning curtain and running in and out of it time after time after time until I was falling with dizziness. In 2002 the Mapping Group ended. At that time I never understood the meaning or the story behind the Ann Hamilton exhibition and still to this day I don't. I suppose when I was younger I just liked the look of it and if it did something cool I was sucked right in.

In 2004 the artist Fiona Whelan took up her residency in studio 468. As part of Fiona's residency she chose to work with Rialto Youth Project. So through the youth project and working with youth worker Irene O'Donahue, they both set up The Dolphin Art Group later known as D'Art Group. I was a member of the group and all of a sudden I started to realise the meaning and the story of the art work I was working on.

The first project we did in 2004 was a 3D model of the Dolphin House flats where I live in Rialto. We made the model by drawing a map onto a big piece of wood and then we started to slot in the blocks, the roads, the community centre, the old folks, the football pitch and the old rent office and many other main features of the flats. We added a bit of paint and completed our first art project as D'Art Group. We decided to make an exhibition of the work we had just completed and as it was coming up to Christmas we wanted to present Dolphin House as a Christmas Wonder Land. We put really small LED lights in the lamp posts of the model and had it wired up so that by the flick of a switch the model was lit up. We presented the model in the community centre of Dolphin House and invited residents to come and see the model and talk about the future of Dolphin. We revealed our model by turning on the LED lights and sprinkling snow all over it.

Our next project in 2005 was to complete the first ever mural in Dolphin House. We discussed as a group what we wanted the theme of the mural to be and after a long in depth discussion we decided on the theme of 'Dare to Dream'. We decided on this because some members of the group did not believe that their dreams could come true because of where they came from. They felt people judged them because of where they came from, and other people in the group felt they could achieve any of their ambitions by just working hard and believing. The image of the mural included a young person trying to reach for a dream bubble to accomplish his dream and another part included two young people pushing back a wall to make room for them to accomplish their dreams by pushing back the barrier that stops them. We unveiled this mural at a big community festival in the Summer of 2005.

### America

We also did many small art projects in the group but our biggest project was travelling to America to paint a 200ft mural on to the side of a school. In 2007 the group linked in with a group of young people in Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Mural Arts Programme. Through a lot of e-mails we created a mural which consisted of both the Irish and American groups' ideas. Then in 2007 D'art group travelled to America to paint our mural. We built a major relationship with the American group over the 10 days and we were sad to say good bye because we didn't think we would see them again, but we were wrong!

Only a couple of months later we were working on a local summer festival and Jim Lawlor (the manager of Rialto Youth Project) pulled me and a couple of other group members aside and told us that we were invited back to America. If I remember correctly I jumped out of the chair I was sitting in and hugged Jim, as did the rest of the group and I just screamed the place down. We were going back to America and I was living my dream for the second time.

So we went back to America and rebuilt our friendship with our American friends, finished painting the mural and also did some TV, Radio and Newspaper interviews. I was 'Almost Famous'. After being to America twice we felt like it was



36.37



Top to bottom: Presentation by Anne Marie McGrane, Culture Night 2008; Jane Hughes performing in the Rialto Day Care Centre; Lisa Marie Johnson performing at Tulca 2008, Galway, with projected video of Sinead from Inchicore.

time for the Americans to come to visit us. During this time the group I had been part of for almost five years was slowly but surely coming to an end. We remained together for the duration of the Americans visit to Rialto in the Summer of 2008 and we also invited a new group into the process. The group was called the *What's the Story?* group. The D'Art group, the *What's the Story?* group and the American group all worked together and started a discussion on the theme of 'Power'. During that time we sourced over 50 Dublin City Council sign posts and painted what we felt symbolised power onto them. This project led to the start of something brand new.

### What's the Story?

The D'Art group merged with the *What's the Story?* group. It was sad to see the D'Art group finish after almost five years of working together and building what was more than a relationship, it was a friendship, but I was excited about the road the new *What's the Story?* group would take. The *What's the Story?* group consisted of one artist, two youth workers and eight young people. The group was a rare kind of group, a power sharing group and the first group where I experienced the young people, youth workers and the artist all sharing the same amount of power. Power was always the main issue in the group from the very start. At some stage I think almost everyone in the group struggled about the reality of sharing power while others were afraid to take their power. This power struggle was, in my opinion at the time, holding the group back. We spent most of the time arguing and others just couldn't be in that space and just walked out and left. I myself could not be myself in the group and wondered whether I could remain. I really struggled with speaking out in the group because I felt it was not safe to speak out in. After weeks of fighting and arguing and me saying nothing I finally took my power to speak out and tell other group members how I felt. Finally, after taking my power I felt like the group was at last going somewhere. Some people left the group after a while and in my opinion it was a good thing because I felt like that maybe they weren't ready for that kind of a group. Finally I felt comfortable and after this Rocky Road start we did our first major project.

## Anonymous

We decided after all the power discussions that we would all tell stories of times we felt powerless. I don't think anyone expected the project would turn out the way it did. Well I didn't! The stories were so personal to the individual telling them. So personal that we decided we did not want any one to know whose story was whose. After a lot of emotional discussion we decided we wanted to put our stories out there to the public and at the same time we wanted our stories to remain anonymous. We then created the first ever live reading event in Rialto called 'Anonymous' and we invited a select audience that we trusted. These were youth workers, artists and young people who were from or worked in the Rialto area. As part of the event we also selected a number of artists, youth workers and young people to read our Anonymous stories aloud to the selected audience and our own *What's the Story?* group. At the end of the Anonymous readings we invited and received feedback from the audience. The feedback caused a lot of emotion for the group and for the audience. Some of the audience felt like they wanted to tell their own personal stories and one audience member pointed out that a lot of the stories were to do with the Gardaí. Following the event we discussed this in the group and realised that a lot of the stories were actually to do with Gardaí, and that we had just selected and found our next audience for Anonymous.

We then did some research and approached the Chief Superintendent of the South Dublin City District of the Gardaí. Straight away he was up for the project, but he wanted to know why we wanted to do it. I suppose for me it was just for the Gardaí to hear my side of the story. How I feel when they're stopping me on the street or pulling me over or even when they're kicking in my door. I just wanted to scream into their face and ask 'Why? Why did you do this? Why did you do that?'. But I needed to change my attitude if I wanted my answers. We invited 24 trainee Gardaí, that had not been out on the beat yet, and two sergeants to an Anonymous event held in IMMA in July 2009. As a collective we felt we now held a powerful role as we planned and managed the event.

When the Gardaí entered the room they had to place their hats, Asp (baton) and hand cuffs on a table and took their seats. We had a mixed bunch of witnesses with us, people of all backgrounds that we had invited separately to the Gardaí. We invited thirteen Gardaí to read out the stories aloud and after the live reading we held a discussion session. Some of the Gardaí felt like we were attacking them but some felt that we were very fair within our stories, one said 'I am ashamed that Garda can do this to people.' I was taken aback by this. It was like I couldn't believe how honest he was. After the discussion everyone went outside of the room for a cup of tea and for me it was the most memorable time of the event. I had conversations with the Garda that I never knew I could have with them. I then understood that they too were having their own personal and internal power struggles. Sometimes I felt like I was having a conversation with a friend as they were so open and honest and I felt like within that hour of talking to them that perhaps I could trust them. If I was to ask myself what did I get out of that session it would be that Gardaí are only human just like me. Some had very similar backgrounds to myself with similar struggles, some have too much power that they can't handle and others just like their job. If I see a Garda now, I would say 'Hello', that wouldn't be a problem for me and I wouldn't care what my peers would call me. I consider both reading events the most personal thing I have ever done in my life. As a collective we have now entered into talks with a reporter from The Irish Times to write an article about the event in collaboration with us.

## Dreams

I have now being involved in the arts for eleven years, most of my childhood in fact. It has become part of my everyday life. I love doing all these different projects and it never ceases to amaze me, what we are capable of doing as a group. As you can maybe see from my story I have been a very lucky young person. I have lived my dream. A dream that some young people may not have the chance to achieve! I have amazing experiences as a young person. To achieve all this before the age of 20 is just rare and I consider myself an extremely lucky person. Art has and always will be a big part of my life and it's a big part of what and who I am today.

My next dream now is to set up an Art group and help young people to achieve what I have achieved. I work as a volunteer youth leader in Rialto Youth Project and plan on pursuing youth work as a career. I was once told that Rialto Youth Project produced many youth workers but it has never produced an Artist. I disagree, I have always believed and will always consider that there is an Artist in me! Therefore I am an Artist (without the Diploma). [JH 12.2009](#)

I have amazing experiences as a young person,  
to achieve all this before the age of 20 is just rare  
and I consider myself an extremely lucky person.  
Art has and always will be a big part of my life and  
it's a big part of what and who I am today.



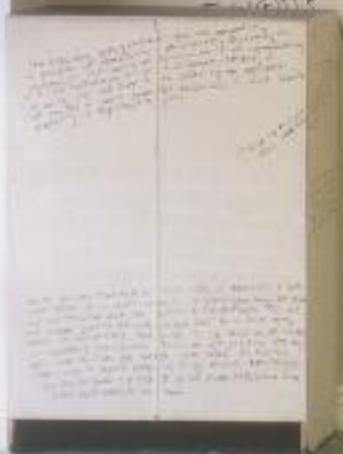
**Full-colour plates (following pages):** This page: Images from Kang Hyun Ahn, *Hello to all my new neighbours, Dublin 2006*, video documentation of performance, 2006. Pages 42/43: Terry Blake. Pages 44/45: Stills from video documentation of Jeong Hyun Kim and Dong Myoung Lee's residency. Pages 46/47: Wall drawing in response to initial nine month residency in studio 468, by Fiona Whelan. Page 48: *New Place, Same Faces*, 50 metre diameter ground painting by Fiona Whelan and Fatima Young Men's Group (a group of Rialto Youth Project) on the site of demolished blocks, Fatima, June 2004.











... COMMUNITY WORK ...  
... ARTIST ...  
... OTHER ...  
... 110W ...

The wall is covered in dense, handwritten text in black ink. The writing is organized into several columns and sections, with some words and phrases written in larger, bolder letters. The text appears to be a collection of notes, possibly related to community work or an artistic project. Some legible words include "COMMUNITY WORK", "ARTIST", "OTHER", and "110W". There are also some diagrams and arrows drawn on the wall, connecting different parts of the text.





# Artists in Residence

Artists' experiences of studio 468's *Artist in Residence* programme

## **Nevan Lahart** 06 – 12.2003

I had just finished my MA at NCAD, which took a bit out of me. I was knackered and found it difficult to truly get going. I wanted to use my time in the studio to re-gig my work practice and experiment with different approaches. I was a bit unsatisfied with the work I produced, but it lay the ground work for what I am presently at, which in this game is often the way it goes.

I found it hard to get many takers for the art as a lot of the clients in the Rialto Drug Team were on full-time courses where they already did art. Others were struggling to cope with very difficult situations and getting it together to go to art could be tricky. The takers were few. This does not in any way mean it was unproductive. I listened a lot and was informed by people with firsthand experience about something which I believe is neglected but of paramount importance to society. This experience will work its way into my work, if not directly then by something resembling the attitude of those I engaged with. NL 12.2003

**Nevan Lahart studied at Limerick School of Art and Design and the National College of Art and Design, Dublin. He worked with the Rialto Community Drug Team while resident in studio 468 in 2003. He subsequently completed a residency at the Irish Museum of Modern Art and at Solas Nua, Washington DC Group exhibitions include the 2004 and 2005 Eurojet Futures exhibitions at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Eigse, Carlow, 2006, and *ev+a* 2006, Limerick. He has held solo exhibitions at the Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, in 2007 and at the Royal Hibernian Academy in 2010. See: [www.nevanlahart.com](http://www.nevanlahart.com)**

48.49

## **Chris Reid** 09.2004 – 02.2005

My expectations were that I should be able to set up a situation whereby the group would be able to have a large input into the direction of the process and the finished artwork. Upon confronting the reality of ageing and the routine of the Rialto Day Care Centre I found that I had expected too much. There were inconsistencies in attendance due to illness or medical check-ups and age related disabilities of the group included various degrees of blindness, deafness and dementia, some of which made communication difficult. The necessity for almost constant staff supervision meant that my meetings with the group were constantly being interrupted. In response to this reality I changed my medium to video.

Using video enabled me to include all the members of the group in some way, as well as to engage directly with the routines, activities and spaces of the day care centre itself while also recording the memories and relationships that the group had of the wider city. Though I had to retain most of the editorial control, clients and staff can still contribute to and influence the finished piece.

I would say that working in St Andrew's has made me more aware of the need for a fluid, sensitive and flexible approach to working with people in their specific context. If difficulties occur they can become part of the solution that leads to the final piece rather than a hindrance. CR 05.2005

**Chris Reid** was resident at St Andrew's in 2004, where he developed a documentation and storytelling process with elderly people in the Rialto Day Care Centre which led to the production of a DVD. He subsequently undertook a residency at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 2004 and has exhibited in many group shows including *eva+1 2007* in Limerick and *Iontas 07* in Sligo. In 2008 he completed a permanent public art work in Nicholas Street, Ross Road, Bride Street and Bride Road in Dublin, commissioned under the Percent for Art scheme. As a part of this scheme Chris is currently producing a book based on recorded oral narratives of residents living on the aforementioned streets. The participatory arts organisation Create will publish and launch this work in June 2010. Chris is also producing a film that was commissioned by Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force. See: [www.chrisreidartist.com](http://www.chrisreidartist.com)

**Fiona Whelan** 12.2003 – 05.2004 / 11.2005 – 04.2006

In 2004, I undertook a residency in studio 468, entering into a collaborative process with Rialto Youth Project. Prior to the residency I had an individual practice as a painter and also worked in more educational and facilitative roles with young people. studio 468 offered me the opportunity to bring those two practices together. Being based in the studio full time allowed me to work with the youth project in an organic way and I could be present to people and place as an artist. In addition to the public art works that resulted from this process, the relationships that formed during this initial experience were to become the bedrock to a long term dialogical practice in Rialto.

Over 5 years, I have built my art practice within this context, working alongside a team of Youth Workers, developing a collaborative practice that transcends any of our individual disciplines and discourses and promotes the added value of a cross sectoral approach. The relationships and learning that arose from the first few years of this practice, laid the foundation for the formation of a new interdisciplinary group in 2008 called *What's the Story?* Collective. This group was set up as an attempt to push the boundaries of engagement within collaborative practice between artists and young people and the organisations with which they connect. *What's the Story?* Collective is made up of six young adults, two Youth Workers and myself, as Artist, who have been developing a critical practice through conversation, workshops and creative interactions, all committed to interrogating and understanding the power relationships at play both within the collective and within our everyday lives as individuals.

Having always struggled to find an appropriate form in which to create moments where the public could encounter this work, so often producing objects that felt very removed from the particular quality and genealogy of the ongoing dialogue, November 2008 saw an interesting turning point. *Anonymous; reading, narrative and memory* was a live participatory reading event that marked the first public engagement from this Collective. We constructed an intimate event with an invited audience of 60, to participate in both reading and responding to a selection of the aforementioned personal stories. The learning from this event led to the planning of a number of other works such as a second reading event in IMMA with members of An Garda Síochána and the development of a mobile structure called Section8. Our intention is to initiate meaningful creative experiences in the public domain in response to the stories, in a way that opens dialogue and invites response. FW 11.2009

**Fiona Whelan** studied Fine Art at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin, and completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Community Arts Education there in 2003. Fiona later completed the MA Art in Public at the University of Ulster, Belfast. She undertook her first residency in studio 468 in 2004 during which time she began collaborating with Rialto Youth Project. Following this initial phase of work, Fiona developed a long term collaborative relationship with Rialto Youth Project, supported by Common Ground, working alongside youth workers and young people to develop and produce work. Since 2007 they have focused on a three year project entitled *What's the Story?* See: [www.section8.ie](http://www.section8.ie)

## **Megan Kennedy + Jessica Kennedy** 07 – 10.2005

The aim was an opportunity to work on our next project which was performed in the Dublin Fringe Festival. We also worked in the Rialto/Fatima areas, facilitating dance workshops which we thoroughly enjoyed. The award helped our collaboration abilities, not just with each other but with other artists also involved in the Rialto project and this opened up a dialogue with visual artists, musicians and outside dance mentors.

studio 468 was in a community that we would have not have become familiar with if we hadn't been given the award, especially in terms of teaching and working with young people and other artists. For us even our rehearsal process was changed because of the studio space, which we found interesting. We liked how the space felt very much our own. MK + JK, 10.2005

**Megan Kennedy + Jessica Kennedy were resident in studio 468 from July to October 2005, during which time they worked with the Ferrini Youth Club and Fatima Homework Club. During their studio 468 residency they developed *Circus Freak*. The dancers co-founded junk ensemble in 2004, which is committed to creating works of brave and innovative dance theatre. Other junk ensemble works include *Drinking Dust* (Winner Culture Ireland Touring Award 2008), *The Rain Party* (Winner Excellence and Innovation Award 2007), and *Watch Her Disappear* (2004), which have toured nationally and internationally, the upcoming *Five Ways to Drown* (premiering in Dublin Dance Festival, May 2010). junk ensemble has been commissioned to make a new work in Aix en Provence, France, in July 2010. junk ensemble is part of Project Catalyst at Project Arts Centre. See: [www.junkensemble.com](http://www.junkensemble.com)**

## **Jane Hughes** 07 – 10.2005

I shared the space of studio 468 with two dancers Megan and Jessica Kennedy from August to October 2005. I recall a great sense of freedom the moment I was handed the bunch of keys to the studio. The knowledge that I could come and go at any time of the day or night to practise the cello gave a sense of renewed energy to my practice rituals. Living in a house with three flat-mates meant that I usually planned my practice sessions around their schedules. As a professional freelance musician, the possibility of having a free, designated practice space in Dublin city during the Celtic Tiger era was not the likeliest of events. And yet, thanks to the vision of Common Ground, DCC Arts Office and Rialto Development Association, this is exactly what happened.

studio 468 overlooks an enclosed garden square. During practice sessions I could be seen, and probably heard across the square by the ladies and gentlemen attending the Rialto Day Care Centre. As part of my studio residency, I was asked to identify a community group in the Rialto area with whom I would engage during the three-month period. The Day Care Centre was the first group to catch my eye, and therefore I performed for them with violinist Dara Daly who lived nearby. I have returned to the Rialto Day Care Centre on many occasions since my residency, as a performer and workshop facilitator on behalf of the DCC Arts Office and the National Concert Hall.

During my time in Rialto, I met a group of Congolese musicians through the Rainbow Neighbourhood Project. We arranged a jamming session to take place at studio 468. The session began with songs and rhythms from The Congo, and continued with some Irish ballads and original music by Rialto Youth Project worker Cian O'Melia (on guitar and vocals) and myself on cello. Cian and I collaborated again later in the year when we performed at a multi-cultural evening in Inchicore.

studio 468 is a unique and valuable resource for Dublin 8. It provides and promotes participation and access to the arts for the local community and offers artists a supportive environment in which they can express themselves and develop new skills. The ongoing provision, maintenance and occupancy of this studio are testament to its continued success. JH 02.2010

**Cellist Jane Hughes studied at DIT Conservatory of Music, Dublin and at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama in Glasgow. As a freelance musician she has performed with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, The Irish Film Orchestra, Opera Theatre Company and Opera North. She was resident in studio 468 from July to October 2005 during which time she worked with the Rialto Day Care Centre, local singer song-writers and Congolese musicians. This culminated in a performance at an intercultural concert at Áras Mhuire Hall in Inchicore organised by the Canal Intercultural Community Centre.**

### **Kang-Hyun Ahn 05 – 10.2006**

The residency gave me the chance to realise what I lack and need to develop in my work as an artist. I learned a lot from seeing how others work and handle everyday events at St Andrew's Community Centre. I was really impressed by the seminars, talks, and conferences as I could really see how art can change our lives and our environment. Before my residency, I had experienced community-based work only as an assistant in short-term projects with primary school students. At studio 468, I soon realised that I was not experienced enough to establish 'intimate' relations with Centre members, who had tight schedules of their own, in such a short timeframe. So I tried to reach out to more random neighbours beyond the Centre, expanding my view to a broader community. This led to some interesting work, I think, but somehow I feel regretful about some opportunities within the Centre that I may have missed. The feelings of disconnection and 'outsiderness,' as well as the limitation in time, were also obstacles during my time in studio 468.

One of the wonderful things about my residency was that I was introduced to every single person at the Centre, even if meeting for a very brief moment, and I was invited to attend every single meeting. I honestly felt that I was living there. At the end of the summer festival 'Bury My Heart' in Fatima Mansions that I took part in, I cried my heart out. I mostly worked on my own with support from others. It was great that there was always someone to go to for help. My residency resulted in three works: a six-minute video piece 'Do Focail, Mo Capall', a series of thirteen text collages 'Your words, My lines' and an experimental project called 'Hello to all my new neighbours'. These would not have been possible without the support of residents in the Rialto area. I returned home at the end of my residency with a renewed desire to contribute to the development of community-based art in Korea. KHA 03.2009

**Kang-Hyun Ahn is from Korea and studied sculpture at Seoul National University before completing a Master of Fine Art at The Slade School of Fine Art, London. She was included in the prestigious Bloomberg New Contemporaries exhibition in 2004. While resident at studio 468 in 2006 she worked with the Rialto Day Care Centre, Rialto Youth Project, and individuals in the Fatima area. She exhibited her work from Dublin in Korean Young Artists 2006 at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea. She now lives and works in Chicago and continues to exhibit internationally. See: [www.ahnkanghyun.com](http://www.ahnkanghyun.com)**

### **Seoidín O'Sullivan 11.2006 – 07.2007**

'Art projects and spaces can become free zones for making projects happen. Artists have tactically used these periods to initiate 'new thinking' or to put something forward what would not have originally been seen as acceptable, possibly to risky. It's amazing what can be passed through or made to happen when you call it art.'<sup>1</sup>

The SCR Community Garden Project, Dolphin's Barn

My residency at studio 468 began in November 2006. I moved into the artist studio situated in St Andrew's Community Centre and while there confronted my ideas on art, participation, activism and ownership.

I was part of the initial group of activists that set up Dublin's first community garden on the canal in Dolphin's Barn in 2005. This was the first time that I grew my own

52.53



South Circular Road Community Garden  
Top to bottom: The gardeners; studio 468;  
Seoidín O'Sullivan in the garden.



Top and bottom: Vagabond Reviews and Fatima Groups United exhibition, Fatima – A Cultural Archaeology, at NCAD Gallery, May 2009.

food. That year I learnt so much about the environment, food, gardening, collective organising, the creation of a positive space, trust and about how important community gardens are for our contemporary cities. There was no teacher; it was non hierarchical, merely learning by doing and skill sharing.

Community Gardens are collectively organised sites concerned with food production in a city. The community garden is about relationships with neighbours, with land use, with food and with nature. It is a space where skill sharing and learning can take place.

This squatted garden acted as a locus and knowledge sharing point for a number of activists and people living within the community wanting to respond to the direction that Dublin's development was heading in.

During my residency in studio 468 the gardeners were evicted from the site on the canal. I called a meeting in studio 468 and through the art residency managed to get permission from a local landowner to use a wasteland site for free. The studio in St Andrew's with its glass fronted doors acted as an incubation space for vegetable and fruit seeds in April 2007.

The site that we used and are still using to this day is on loan from St Salvage. They kindly gave us permission to use the site up till the planning application for apartment blocks had been approved and building on the site can go ahead. Even though we knew the site had planning permission on it, we decided to go ahead with the project anyway. We could at least create a prototype project that other community groups could be inspired by and Dublin city council could see how they work and possibly support them at a future date.<sup>2</sup> With the economic down turn we may have the site for a good few years to come.

54.55

The residency at studio 468 gave me the leverage to accelerate the next phase of the community garden project. I was in the enviable position of being able to use my connections and links with the St Andrew's community centre to give the project validity. The studio team had outlined that we did not have to come up with a finished product but that the space was an opportunity to work with a community group of our choice. Their ethos provided me with the time and space to experiment and push my art practice.

I have changed my hat a lot over the course of the project. I am an environmental activist, a local resident, an artist, a gardener and more recently a DIT lecturer in the fine art and design department, with my students using the garden as a learning space on Art and Sustainability. I put on the hat that fits at various times in order to keep the community garden project moving forward.

The project only works through a collective effort. It is all run on a voluntary capacity. It has been inspiring over the last three years to see and meet the many dedicated individuals who have given time to the project all adding their creativity, skills, input and aspirations. It's a small project with big ideas on the future of our cities.

'... In practice, the world of contemporary art has proved to be the most flexible environment for diverse projects, being a free zone of experimentation within the society at large the projects are labeled art only for strategic reasons – the strategy works as long as the concepts of art do not come to dominate the discourse. The same applies to the individuals working in the group: you call yourself artist, just because it is institutionally convenient, because the very concept of artist is obscure.'<sup>3</sup>

SO'S, 04.2010

1. Excerpt from IC-98 website: [www.socialtoolbox.com](http://www.socialtoolbox.com)
2. In 2010, through the environmental forum, we have published a booklet on community gardens for Dublin.
3. Excerpt from IC-98 website: [www.socialtoolbox.com](http://www.socialtoolbox.com)

**Seoidín O'Sullivan** was resident at studio 468 from November 2006 to July 2007 where she developed **The South Circular Road Community Food Garden Project**. She grew up in Durban, South Africa where she completed a degree in Fine Art; she later completed a Masters in Fine Art at NCAD, Dublin. In 2008 she participated in a two month residency at The Land Foundation in Thailand. Her art project TACTIC, in collaboration with South African artist Ralph Borland, received an Arts Council Project New Work Award in 2008 and a six month incubation space award at The LAB. Her collaborative film and research project TRESPASS, with Aoife Desmond, was awarded Arts Council funding in 2007 and was exhibited in The LAB in March and April of 2009. She recently received an Artist in the Community Project award to develop a project with St Margaret's Traveller Centre in Ballymun. She currently lectures at Dublin Institute of Technology.

### **Anne Maree Barry** 09.2007 – 05.2008

The aim of the Rialto Twirler project was to collaborate with a contemporary Irish subculture group whilst expanding my practice to professional filmmaking. I embarked on a method of looking for possibilities beyond my normal processes and contexts that were previously involved in the production of my work.

On residency at studio 468, in association with Common Ground I began to examine my practice and what I wanted to achieve. My initial field research led me to accompanying the Rialto Twirlers to competitions at the Tallaght Basketball Arena.

After establishing a relationship with the group I felt that they were worth a bigger story than one of my experimental short films. With confidence resulting from a New Work Award from the Arts Council, I began to develop the project and push my practice professionally. I approached Nicky Gogan, Director of the Darklight Film Festival and co-founder of Still Films, and she agreed to produce *Rialto Twirlers*.

In December 2008, I organised a workshop with Mark Bryan, a Cheer Music producer from Baltimore, USA with members of the Rialto Twirlers at the Dolphin House Computer Digital Project. Mark Bryan has remixed music on the successful cheerleading film *Bring It On* (Peyton Reed, 2000). Collectively we remixed a Robin S track for the Rialto Twirlers majorette troop to perform to at competitions.

In July 2009, the Rialto Twirlers film shoot took place at the former Eason's Warehouse in Crumlin. The film was officially selected for the 2010 Dublin International Film Festival. A solo exhibition in the Lab, Foley Street, in May 2010 will contextualise and document the project and film. A.M.B 04.2010

**Anne Maree Barry** attended the **The Limerick School of Art and Design** and **The National College of Art and Design, Dublin**. Her experimental short film, *Covered Road*, was the winner of the Best Irish Short award at the at the 2006 Darklight Film Festival, Dublin. While resident at studio 468 from September 2007 to June 2008 she began developing a film project with the Rialto Twirlers, a majorette group, for which she was awarded a grant from the Arts Council. After leaving studio 468 she was awarded a project studio at Temple Bar Gallery and studios to further develop the project. The film, *Rialto Twirlers*, was shown at the 2010 Dublin International Film Festival.

### **Terry Blake** 09.2007 – 05.2008

Working with young people in a community is both a challenging and rewarding experience. The initial priority of any artist is to build a good relationship with the people that they are working with and have an in-depth understanding of the locality and its history.

The voice of young people is often dismissed, ignored or taken for granted. Any ideas of collaboration with young people should come solely from them. It is the artist's role in collaboration with youth workers to nurture and encourage these ideas. It should be

educational without ever being like school. Young people's ideas are always fresh and vital whether they are aware of it or not. Their development in skills is rapid and over a small period of time this becomes apparent and vivid in the quality of their work. TB 04.2010

**Terry Blake studied at The Limerick School of Art and Design and The National College of Art and Design, Dublin, where he completed a Diploma in Community Arts Education. While resident at studio 468 from September 2007 to May 2008 he developed his film work with different groups including Rialto Youth Project. For three years Terry also held a long term working relationship with St Michael's Youth Project, and young men from the Youth Project. Pimp My Irish Banger was installed as part of the St Michael's Estate installation *Tales from the Promised Land* in November 2008 and invited to the inaugural exhibition at NCAD Gallery in February 2009.**

### **Anne Marie McGrane** 06.2008 – 01.2009

**Anne Marie McGrane studied at The Dublin Institute of Technology and at The National College of Art and Design, where she completed a Diploma in Community Arts Education. Before her residency at studio 468 she had worked as an arts facilitator with the Rialto Community Drugs Team, The Adelaide and Meath Hospital and the Base Youth Centre, Ballyfermot. While resident at studio 468 from July to December 2008 she worked with the Rialto Community Drug Team.**

### **Lisa Marie Johnson** 06.2008 – 01.2009

I worked with immigrant and local women and mothers during my residency to create *The Listening Projects*. The work produced during *The Listening Projects* was mostly video and text, but I also attended court with one of the mothers as a translator/performer. With *The Listening Projects* I provided a supporting place, a place of conversation and of performance.

During the residency I also worked with teenagers and children; changing the studio where they worked into a 'social cinema' with screenings of animation and film from Russia and Eastern Europe. Alongside these collaborative works and screenings, I also used the residency as a space for wider discussion. *A Working Class Seminar* saw artists and residents discussing working class in public practice.

Collaborative work such as *The Violence Couch* also emerged out of this residency. My performance work also emerges out of a community-based practice. *Anonomom*, 2007/08, *Human Error*, 2008, and *Parameters of the Gothic*, 2009, were all performances that emerged from, and merge with, my community practice. Much of my research during the Masters program has involved supplicancy around class, marginalisation, gender and identity. Most recently I organised and curated a lecture and garden party called *A conversation with you*.

'Winter is a woman, she unearths, unfarms and bawls for her lost children'

- *The Listening Projects* involved Sinead, Tina, Fernanda and Gail. I was particularly influenced in her choices by her work with one of the mothers.
- Those participating in *A Working Class Seminar* included Seamus Nolan, Dominic Thorpe, Sarah Tuck, Aislinn O'Donnell, Herv, poets Dave Lordan and PJ Brady, and Common Ground.
- *The Violence Couch* was in collaboration with Dr Tina McVeigh, Ailbhe Smith and Frank Connolly. *Anonomom* was performed at Excursions festival, Limerick, and Live Zones, Holland.
- *Human Error* was performed at A Foundation, Liverpool Biennial.
- *Parameters of the Gothic* was a collaboration with queer activists and American poet Raven at Lighthouse Cinema, Dublin, and Shunt Gallery, London.



St Andrew's Community Centre, 468 South Circular Road, Rialto, Dublin 8.



- *A conversation with you* included Jenny Haughton, Vivienne Dick, Amanda Coogan, Áine Philips, Mary Ruth Walsh, Sandra Johnston, Christine Buckley, Katerina from the food co-op and Clare Bonas (singer/songwriter).

LMJ 04.2010

**Lisa Marie Johnson studied Speech and Drama Theatre at Dublin Institute of Technology and completed a course for facilitators in art and conflict at the Cross Border Centre, Dundalk. She is currently completing a Masters of fine art at NCAD. She is a freelance practitioner of Theatre of the Oppressed, a form of theatre developed by Brazilian director Augusto Boal. Prior to the studio 468 residency Lisa Marie had performed at Tulca arts festival, Galway, and Eigse, Carlow, 2006, and *ev+a 2006*, Limerick. With Seamus Nolan she co-curated the events programme at Hotel Ballymun in 2007. During her residency at studio 468 from July 2008 to January 2009 she worked with a range of groups and individuals in the Rialto area.**

## **Vagabond Reviews + Fatima Groups United 01 – 09.2009**

Since 2008 Vagabond Reviews and Fatima Groups United have been working together on a collaborative research initiative called *Cultural Review*. Focusing on the rich history of arts and cultural practice in Fatima/Rialto, *Cultural Review* is organised into three strands of inquiry loosely corresponding to preoccupations with the past, *Cultural Archaeology*; the present, *Cultural Audit*; and the future, *Cultural Anticipations*. In February 2009 Vagabond Reviews began a residency in partnership with Fatima Groups United at studio 468, where we initiated the first strand of inquiry, *Cultural Archaeology*.

### Cultural Archaeology at studio 468

We began by defining the Cultural Archaeology as an archive (documents, photographs and films), a collection of objects and a series of conversations with community and youth leaders, representative residents groups, artists and community activists. studio 468 became an open site of recollection, a space for reviewing and (re)presenting narrative seams on a community history from multiple perspectives. Our inquiry began to take the form of a timeline sketch around the studio walls, reflecting early memories of Fatima Mansions following the move from inner city tenement housing in 1949. Spanning the decades, our inquiry explored more recent times where the arc of arts and cultural practice has been brought into play by the community and its leadership in the struggle to secure meaningful agency within the urban regeneration process. By putting these narrative traces together we hoped to capture and display something of the richness of the story of Fatima through the lens of its arts and cultural life.

### Cultural Archaeology at NCAD Gallery

In May 2009 the Cultural Archaeology project was in residency at the National College of Art and Design Gallery where it operated as a continuation of the open site of inquiry established at studio 468. While first findings were on display, the residency at the NCAD Gallery continued to develop and extend the Cultural Archaeology research process. We also used the NCAD residency as an opportunity to focus on the question of pedagogy and urban regeneration through structured and informal dialogue with a range of perspectives including artists, students, architects, youth and community development workers and activists, writers and academics.

### Cultural Archaeology at the F2 Centre

Following the residency at NCAD we returned to studio 468 to develop the Archaeology to the point at which it could be installed within the newly opened F2 Centre, the flagship community building of the newly regenerated Fatima Mansions. Currently on display at the F2 Centre, the Cultural Archaeology Timeline Wall serves as a springboard for a longer-term oral history project and community-based archive.

### In Summary

Our residency at studio 468 gave us an opportunity to establish a dedicated presence in Rialto during the engagement and production phase of the Cultural Review. In addition, the studio became a hub for artists and local arts-based initiatives including workshops with children from the Fatima and Dolphin Homework Clubs and a Drawing Group. At studio 468 we were able to create an open, participative and social presence for making, displaying and reflecting along a number of lines of inquiry with a number of different community and cultural practitioners. Through that process we hope the first steps have been taken towards securing and building a community memory at a key point of transition as Fatima moves beyond infrastructural transformation. VR + FGU 02.2010

**Established by Ailbhe Murphy and Ciaran Smyth in 2007, Vagabond Reviews is an interdisciplinary platform committed to developing creative and collaborative models of knowledge production through a combination of art interventions, research practice and critical analysis. Major projects to date include *Open Space* research for Dublin City Council and *Cultural Review* with Fatima Groups United.**

**Fatima Groups United (FGU) is the elected, representative body of residents and community organisations operating within the community formerly known as Fatima Mansions, Rialto in the southwest inner city of Dublin. Over the past decade FGU has pioneered a radical new approach to the physical, social, economic and cultural regeneration of the area.**

### **Jeong Hyun Kim + Dong Myoung Lee** 11.2009 – 04.2010

For six months, Dong Myoung and I could really have a creative time as a breathing body in Ireland. studio 468 in St Andrew's Community Centre is a great place. We could see a beautiful garden and sky all the time through the studio windows. This atmosphere created by the surroundings gave us open eyes and bodies so we could think and dance alike. The activities of our residency comprised body movement research including contact improvisation dance, filming and exchange with local people.

This residency has given us relaxation to enjoy the basic originality of the body itself.

It's a kind of turning point for me. During the residency there is no pressure for me to make innovative choreographies and create something new! I have been given time and space for thinking and researching what movement means for me, which I really needed.

We have been able to do improvisation work with Martin Nolan, the Uilleann piper. What a treasured experience! This collaboration with real Irish art encouraged nonverbal communication and exchange through music and dance. I was excited to perform with an Uilleann piper, because I felt this pipe is a symbolic one from mythology, not a normal musical instrument. We tried to find an interesting connection with sound and movement through improvisation practice and discussion. It was meeting with a vivid Irish tradition!

Filming environmental dance was also so encouraging for us. As strangers, we could have so much curiosity which was then transformed into our expressions. In one film a black-suited woman went around Dublin. She's a total stranger. The appearance of the stranger could make the real things clear, different and fun. I hope this film project could be expanded to other cities.

We held dance workshops for staff from The Rialto Community Drug Team and the children of Generation Text. It was an amazing experience. The drug team adult workshop was a special time. Ann and Mary were great dancers with passion. In fact, I've been afraid of conducting children's workshops for a long time but this time with

Generation Text I could step forward to children. It was significant and magical experience with body language. I still remember their rosy-cheeked faces while dancing. This memory will last a long time with us.

During the residency, Siobhán, Kieran, Chris and Logan helped us with many things in all sincerity. Through them, we can understand more about Irish culture and the regional character of Dublin, especially about Rialto. And most of all we got love from them like a family. Thank you so much. JHK + DML 04.2010

**Dancers Jeong Hyun Kim and Dong Myoung Lee are both members of the improvisation group, Improad Badac, based in Seoul. Jeong Hyun Kim studied choreography at the Korean National University of Arts having previously studied film and French literature. She has choreographed dance pieces and works for theatre, film and also for public spaces. Dong Myoung Lee studied dance at Yong in University. He has performed both dance and musical performances. While in Dublin from November 2009 to April 2010 the dancers held workshops with staff from the Rialto Community Drug Project and with children from Generation Text. Their residency culminated in a dance showcase at St Andrew's Community Centre.**

### **Jennie Moran** 05.2010 – 01.2011

**Jennie Moran began her residency at studio 468 in April 2010, just prior to the launch of this publication; her residency continues until January 2011 during which time she will pursue her work in which she seeks to create opportunities for hospitality. She studied sculpture at the National College of Art and Design and has continued her learning through residencies in Iceland, Italy, and Argentina. She was Artist in Residence at Airfield, Dublin, in 2008, resulting in the solo exhibition, *A Space That Gives You The Possibility To Think Something Else*. More recently she was Artist in Residence at the Killruddery Film Festival, Wicklow. Her projects have been facilitated by a Dublin City Council Art Bursary in 2006, an Arts Council Project Award in 2007 and an Arts Council Artist in the Community Award in 2009. She has worked with Kildare County Council, Leitrim Sculpture Centre, Galway University Hospital Arts Trust, and the curators/cultural consultants Marjetica Potrc, Sally Timmons and Sarah Searson. She is part of the collaborative projects Hope Inherent (see [www.hopeinherent.com](http://www.hopeinherent.com)) and Poetic Geographies (see [www.poeticgeographies.com](http://www.poeticgeographies.com)).**



## Contributors

John Bissett was born in Dolphin House, Rialto. He served an apprenticeship as a fitter in the Irish Glass Bottle Company in the early 1980s. John spent some years in Australia and Canada in the late 1980s before returning to Ireland where he then attended the National University of Ireland Maynooth graduating with a degree in Sociology and English. He continued his studies at University College Dublin and was awarded a Masters and Ph.D. in Sociology on the same occasion in 2001. John currently works as a Community Worker for the Canal Communities Local Drugs Task Force in Dublin. He has been a member of the St Michael's Estate Community Regeneration Team since February 2001. He is the author of *Regeneration: Public Good or Private Profit?*, published by New Island as part of the TASC series in 2008.

Jamie Hendrick is 19 years old and from Dolphin House, Rialto, Dublin 8. He has been a member of Rialto Youth Project since 1998. Jamie has continued to volunteer in Rialto Youth Project and four years ago Jamie completed FETAC Junior Leadership Training. Jamie plays a key role in the Hemispheres Project; an EU funded initiative that brings young people from the Northern and Southern Hemispheres together in Paris to discuss and explore world issues, global economics, the environment and poverty. In November 2009 the *What's the Story?* collective was invited to present *Twelve Anonymous Lithuanian Stories* as part of the visual arts programme of the NEU NOW Festival in Vilnius, Lithuania. The collective will be exhibiting in The Lab, Dublin, in late 2010. Please see [www.section8.ie](http://www.section8.ie) and [www.neunow.eu](http://www.neunow.eu) for more information on the *What's the Story?* collective.

Siobhán Geoghegan is Director of Artistic Programme in Common Ground and has been working there since its establishment in 1999. As well as the development of studio 468, Siobhán has worked with a variety of local community based projects and artists on a wide variety of artistic programmes. Based in Inchicore, Dublin, Common Ground is an arts development organisation that believes that the arts can play a central role in transforming and empowering communities. It is committed to bringing professional artists and communities together on 'common ground'. In 1998 Siobhán was awarded H.Dip in Arts Administration by UCD. She previously worked for ten years as a teacher of Art and Design in Dublin and overseas following her graduation from Crawford School of Art and Design in 1988. Siobhán is currently completing an MA in Art in the Contemporary World at NCAD on a part time basis.

Ailbhe Murphy is a visual artist living and working in Dublin whose practice has been based primarily within the community development sector. Past collaborative projects include *Unspoken Truths*, 1991 to 1996, with IMMA, the LYCS and the Family Resource Centre, St Michael's Estate, *Once is Too Much*, 1997 to 1998, with IMMA and the Family Resource Centre, St Michael's Estate and *Tower Songs*, 2003 to 2006, with CityArts, Fatima Groups United and the Rialto Youth Project. From 2002 to 2004 she was Liaison Artist for Breaking Ground, the per cent for art programme in Ballymun. Co-founder of Vagabond Reviews, 2007, an interdisciplinary arts and research platform, recent projects include commissioned international research for Dublin City Council on *Art in Urban and Suburban Open Space* and the *Cultural Review* with Fatima Groups United. Currently completing her doctoral studies at Interface (UU) Belfast, her research interests focus on critical co-ordinates for collaborative arts practice in contexts of urban regeneration. See: [www.vagabondreviews.ie](http://www.vagabondreviews.ie)



**Nevan Lahart**  
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