

## Living Arts Project Exhibition

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March – Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2014

**Official Launch:** Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April at 7.30pm

**Guest Speaker:** Helen O'Donoghue, Senior Curator: Head of Education & Community Programmes, IMMA



The Living Arts Project is a long term visual arts educational scheme which consolidates the existing partnership between Wexford Arts Centre and the Arts Department of Wexford County Council and intends to make engagement with, and understanding of, the fundamentals of contemporary visual art even more attainable for local audiences.

In order to facilitate this development, the scheme is comprised of two key strands; an artist in residence programme for primary schools in the County and a curatorial residency for one transition year group in a local secondary school. In April 2013, an open call took place for interested artists, curators and schools to submit expressions of interest to participate in the programme, and after an overwhelming response the successful schools and artists began working together in September.

For the primary school residency programme the artists and schools selected were; Orla Bates with St. Ann's NS, New Ross; Els Dietvorst with St. Anne's NS, Duncormick; Aileen Lambert with St. Colman's NS, Enniscorthy; and Kate Murphy with Our Lady of Lourdes NS, Bunclody. The secondary school chosen for the transition year curatorial programme was Gorey Community School who worked with curator and art historian Karla Sanchez O'Connell. The end of project exhibition represents a selection of work produced by the participating primary schools and artists, and a curated virtual show undertaken by Gorey Community School.

### Orla Bates

Orla Bates' practice is drawing based and her media spans a spectrum of printmaking, drawing and photography, all of which are utilized in exploring ideas about the construction of memory, perception and the nature of time. Recent work concentrates on exploring how we record our experiences and how our perception of reality becomes fragile and subtly distorted with the passing of time and loss. Using photographs taken from nature and the landscape as a starting reference, drawings and prints are reworked in a process which explores the gap between reality and our perception. Through a selection process the visual record becomes reinvented through making marks, erasing, blurring and changing. Some areas are blurred and hazy whilst others remain sharp and delicate. The exploration of making marks create shifts between the illusion of the image and the reality of the surface.

*'Our project explores the themes of time and memory. Fifth class students took the unit of 24 hours and each child created one clock for one hour in their day. Our video shows a day in the life of fifth class. Sixth class looked back at their time in primary school as they investigated the theme of memory. Each student made a stop motion animation about a favourite school memory.'*

### Els Dietvorst

Els Dietvorst's work focuses on communication, collaboration and social conflicts, and she often returns to anti-utopian themes such as the notions of the outsider and the symbolic prison. In her films she works in non-places and socially contested sites collaborating with the people who host/inhabit these places as instinctively

she is drawn to unconventional individuals determined to live as far from the mainstream grid as possible. In 2012, she started the online film project entitled *The Black Lamb* which unfolds over a three-year period and

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will culminate as a feature-length creative documentary offering an intimate window into rural Ireland intertwining individual stories in a remote, rural location with larger universal issues such as globalization, food production, emigration and biodiversity.

*'I think drawing is the base of any artistic outcome, for my own work it is the base of everything. I think a process between child and art teacher is much more interesting than any outcome or final production.'*

### **Kate Murphy**

Kate Murphy's work is concerned with the material quality of objects and she collects a range of objects which inspire the work. These objects are chosen either for purely aesthetic reasons, or because they have been imbued with personal or collective meaning. In the most recent work, her 'painted objects' somewhat resemble discarded stage set pieces or strange domestic architecture. Sometimes animal imagery comes through the work, hinting at our tribal or primitive relationship to material things. The work attempts to express the inherent tension between the solid materiality of an object, versus the intangibility of the meaning it may hold. Conversely, the work points to the weight and importance of meaning versus the impermanence of material things.

*'During this project, the children explored how colour, texture and form can be used to express emotion in visual art. The children also looked at symbolism and at tribal or 'primitive' art and mask-making. They used non-traditional painting tools to make these self-portraits, drawing together symbols of things important to them in their daily lives.'*

### **Aileen Lambert**

Aileen Lambert's video, sound and performance practice is concerned with the relationship which the body has with its environment, and often represents a claiming of space. Using simple actions and gestures, she traces her body's presence on the landscape, expressing and documenting a particular place and time. Many works are concerned with a vain attempt to preserve, mark or measure a certain material, activity or process. Much of the work is concerned with a futile attempt to hang onto something which is intangible, and uses metaphors such as the voice, breath and shadow to explore archetypal notions of life and death, and the passing of time.

*'Using my own performance-based video practice as a starting point, pupils engaged in a wide range of activities to explore their relationship with the school environment. Working primarily in small teams, they came up with ideas, devised movement sequences, shot and edited material. Using primarily lens-based media - stills photography and video - they investigated the ordinary everyday school environment using the form of video documentary, invented extraordinary movement using stop-motion animation and recorded performative engagements with the schools interior and exterior.'*

### **Karla Sánchez-Zepeda O'Connell**

Mexican by birth, Karla completed a Master of Arts in Art History and Museum Studies, Texas Christian University supported by a Fulbright Scholarship. She advanced her experience further with internships, and by working at various museums both in Mexico and the U.S.A.: the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the Art Institute of Chicago, and Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso. Following this she became involved in the field of higher education, working for the Mexican Fulbright Commission from 2001-2004.

*'During the project, we explored some of the many different aspects of curating through site-visits, lectures and interviews with visual artists and curators. The students' final project started with a reflection on issues that are of most interest and/or concern for them as individuals. They then discussed these with their colleagues and decided on a theme they wanted to explore. They chose work for their virtual exhibition from the collections of IMMA, the Tate Modern, MOMA, the Museum of the Art Institute of Chicago, The Guggenheim Foundation and the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia.'*

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



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