

# In Context 4

## *IN OUR TIME*

South Dublin County Council's public art  
programme  
under the per cent for art scheme  
2016 - 2019

# Introduction – the commissions

Ciaran Taylor, 'Rock to the Top'

Rhona Byrne and Yvonne McGuinness, 'The Central  
Field'

Fiona Dowling and George Higgs, 'Work Songs'

Nathan O'Donnell, 'The Mill'

Veronica Coburn, 'Clamour and Roar'-  
A Citizen's Chorus'

Sarah Browne

and

Sean O'Sullivan, Creative Evaluation

# Supporting commissions

Kasia Kaminska – photography  
documentation

Kevin Kirwan – videographer and  
documentation

# Additional elements

- Muriel Foxtan – Freelance Arts Marketer
- Kate Bowe – PR Company – 2018-2019
- Printed Publication – launch November 2019
- Closing programme of talks and events – November 2019

# **‘Rock to the Top’-** a public art project by **Ciarán Taylor**



# **‘Rock to the Top’- project description**

- ‘Rock to the Top’ is a public art project by Ciarán Taylor, inspired by the feat of Oisín back from Tír na nÓg, who carried a boulder up the valley at Glenasmole with one hand
- In June 2017, Ciarán Taylor placed a granite boulder from Glenasmole outside RUA RED arts centre and gradually broke it into pieces. The people of South Dublin were invited to carry the rock on foot to build a cairn at the top of the valley
- Over a year, Taylor led monthly walks including events, talks, music and performances listening to place and the seasons.
- Each of the walks are documented with monthly reports on the [In Context 4](#) website and with photography and film

# 'Rock to the Top'- photo exhibition and film premiere



A photo exhibition to document the year-long project opened at RUA RED arts centre on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2018 and is on view until 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.

## **‘Rock to the Top’- observations**

- Commission truly captured imagination – over 400 participants
- Leo Oman (one of the loyal walkers) summed up the experience – *‘I thought you were mad, I thought you lived in Tir na n’Og. I was thrilled I to become a part of it.’*
- Ambitious idea, ably accomplished by the artist
- Successful partnership with Dublin Mountains Partnership
- Anniversary ‘Rock to the Top’ walk - mid-summer 2019
- Excellent photo / film documentation, monthly reports
- Extensive media coverage including a full page feature in The Times, Ireland edition, further coverage in the Tallaght News and Tallaght Echo so far
- A happy artist, an exemplary public art project and no broken legs!
- Play [‘Rock to the Top’](#) film, at beginning and 4.56 mins



**‘The Central Field’-  
a public art project by Rhona Byrne and  
Yvonne McGuinness**



# **‘The Central Field’- project description**

- Artists Rhona Byrne and Yvonne McGuinness proposed to ‘In Context 4 / South Dublin County Council’ a temporary land artwork, a kind of amphi-theatre to become a social sphere for local communities
- “How does a community comes together when there is no social amenity?” – the ‘Central Field’ temporarily became that space
- Project was based on a site that is due to be ‘commercial or district town centre’ of Adamstown

# **‘The Central Field’- project development**

- Access to the field was negotiated with developers, Castlethorn, and a gate was put in
- Artists worked on-site in a studio from January – June 2018
- From March – May 2018, artists produced a series of live and immediate responses, events, performances, interventions, gatherings and activities on-site and in collaboration with local schools and community groups
- ‘The Central Field’ was open every Sunday from 11.30am - 4.30pm until Sunday 27 May 2018, extended over the summer

# 'The Central Field' – temporary sculpture





## **'Coin Drop' event - March 2018**

Local residents are invited to the Central Field. The artwork is a temporary sculpture in the ground, a sphere in the grass, with a 'channel' dug out around it - the poured concrete is freshly laid. The crowd are invited to toss a coin from their country in on top as a marker for the future

# **‘The Central Field’ – key moments**

- **‘Our Field’ – a panel discussion-** Ken McCue, Cultural Planner, **Professor Mary Corcoran, sociologist** and **John Hassett**, moderator of the Lucan Parishioners.
- **A lively debate on-site on outcomes of the project, public art, socially engaged projects and the community**
- **Procession with school children, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes, through streets of Adamstown and on-site**
- **‘The Community Day’ – the closing event – street party and live art element, food and hospitality, kites were made with the community**
- Play ‘The Central Field’ artists’ film: <https://vimeo.com/293898927> and use the password ‘central’

## **‘The Central Field’ – the future of the project**

- ‘In Context 4 curators’ met with the artists on September 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss legacy
- Castlethorn have passed on ownership of the field to another development company, building work will soon commence
- The two artists are unresolved as yet as to where to take all of the content from this work. For example, is there a final performative piece to make?

**‘Clamour and Roar - A Citizen’s Chorus’ - a public art project by Veronica Coburn**





# **‘Clamour and Roar, A Citizen’s Choir’ – project overview**

- ‘Taster workshops’ across South Dublin County in Summer 2018
- 38 solid participants and additional 10 floating
- Response / interest came via The Civic Theatre and Bealtaine – established arts organisations
- Sept. 2018 – April 2019, weekly rehearsals, alternating between RUA RED, 3-6pm and The Civic, 11am – 4pm, on Saturdays
- Technical rehearsals from 29<sup>th</sup> April – 1<sup>st</sup> May
- Three performances, Thursday May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Friday May 3<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup> at The Civic / Main Space

# **‘Clamour and Roar, A Citizen’s Choir’ – project development**

- Group of participants is cross-generational and majority is female
- Artist’s interest is in capturing participants’ stories, experiences and the relationships that develop
- Weekly rehearsals will draw out creative content and develop it in collaboration with the group
- Veroncia Corburn is open to more participants joining
- Plan to make a short video / film of one of the rehearsals on 20<sup>th</sup> October and distribute this via social media as an ‘invite / call’ to others to join

**‘Work Songs’ –  
a public art project by Fiona Dowling and  
George Higgs**



# **‘Work Songs’ – a project description**

- Fiona Dowling and George Higgs collaborating with workers from a cross-section of workplaces, industrial and rural, to create a musical portrait of South County Dublin's economic profile.
- Rhythms, cycles, movements and sounds of work routines are transformed into song and performed by workers
- Each performance is filmed and distributed online
- The first work song 'First Earlies' was created in collaboration with plot-owner Catherine Cunningham at Friarstown Allotments
- [Play ‘First Earlies’ video](#) at beginning

## **‘Work Songs’ – five different performances**

- Worksongs #2 - 'Yesterday and Tomorrow Meet Today' is a collaboration with members of Platform One Writers, a group of dedicated writers and artists based in Tallaght. It was performed at RUA RED arts centre on 20<sup>th</sup> June.
- Worksongs #3 – mushroom foraging performance & event with participant, artist and opera singer Freda O’Dea in Massy’s Estate at 11am on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November
- Worksongs #4- ‘ The Hospital Song’ - Tallaght Hospital participants, a group of about 20 persons. – stand alone performance on Tuesday Nov 27th, 6:30 to 7pm
- Worksongs # 5- final performance is with social entreprise group Food Cloud – December date tbc

# **‘Work Songs’- observations**

- To date performances have been consistent though with small audience and participant numbers. However the impact has been witnessed with genuine interest by the different communities.
- Difficulties facing the artists are in workplace negotiations around the lyrics and rehearsal time, particularly where the workplace is a business i.e. Food Cloud or a large organisation like Tallaght Hospital.
- Artists are developing the project idea for future work and have made a proposal to Arts Council’s Project Awards to make it elsewhere in Ireland.

# 'The Mill'- a public art project by Nathan O'Donnell



# **‘The Mill’- the artist’s original intention**

- Led by writer Nathan O’Donnell, *The Mill* is inspired by the Clondalkin Paper Mill and the legacy of the 1980s’ strikes there
- Through exploring the legacy of the strikes and a history of radical publishing, Nathan O’Donnell wanted to engage a group of young people in Clondalkin to produce a magazine
- Programme for young people originally scheduled for Autumn 2018: writing, photography and journalism, hands-on experience with printing, learning about the history of paper, publishing, and print in Ireland
- The resulting radical magazine, designed by Clare Bell, would be published in Autumn 2018



# 'The Mill' – research and development phase

- June 2017 - May 2018 | 'The Mill': **extensive research and outreach**
- Autumn 2017 - Spring 2018 | 'The Mill': **visits to local secondary schools / Transition Year**
- Spring 2018 | 'The Mill: Conversations about the Clondalkin Paper Mill': **public event in Clondalkin Library**



# **‘The Mill: Conversations about the Clondalkin Paper Mill’ – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April**

- Presentations by Ciaran Swan (founder of the Irish Left Archive)
- Readings from activist Des Derwin, who wrote the defining account of the Clondalkin Paper Mills Action Group
- Local residents and family relatives affected by the closures and strikes in attendance
- Interesting accounts of the effect of the closures on the community
- Value in the oral history it generated

# **‘The Mill’- actions and review**

- Summer 2018 - various iterations of a call-out for participants to young people living in Clondalkin
- Original summer-school format changed to flexible ‘Newsroom’ structure – upon consultation with core group
- Aug. / Sept. 2018, artist proceeded with a core group of 3-4 participants and further call-outs to join the ‘Newsroom’
- Oct. 2018 – Newsroom idea is paused due to sporadic and unreliable take-up. Artist wants to rethink the specificity of the project – expanding age-range and geographic reach
- Next steps...

# A public art project by Sarah Browne- untitled



## **Sarah Browne – project timeline and progress**

- Visual Artist Sarah Bowne is interested in gyms / leisure centres as public amenities, cultural spaces and places to develop well being / health
- Open questions that prompt people to consider our relationship to our bodies, gyms and leisure centres and society
- Develop a trio of live, site-specific performances – to be delivered in a fitness class format in South County Dublin Leisure Centres
- 16<sup>th</sup> Oct. – deadline for producer applications
- February 2019 - closed launch and casting
- Final rehearsals and performances – November 2019

# **‘The Creative Evaluation’ – tangibles by Sean O’Sullivan**

- Late Oct. / early Nov. – an interim evaluation paper - approx. 7,000 words long – detailed reports on the individual commissions within the programme
- End of Oct/Nov. for a short, public-facing reflective essay for ‘Writing and Thinking’ section of the website
- End of 2019 - ‘Creative Evaluation’ - proposed as six essays that respond specifically to each commission and an introductory essay that examines the entire programme
- The ‘creative’ element will integrate image and audio alongside writing
- Considering an annotated addition for internal-facing analysis

# Publication – production plan

## Publication

- End October 2018 - draft tender for design and print to be circulated to the Arts Office / Orla Scannell
- November / December 2018 - procurement of a graphic designer / design company
- November / December – invite commissioned essays / interviews
- January – October 2019 – gather visual / written material and design and production
- November 2019 – publication launch as part of closing events / programme

# 'In Context 4' – PR Plan

- Kate Bowe PR appointed via tender process
- Devise and implement PR plan for artists' commissions and number of key spikes from September 2018 - December 2019
- Media coverage to date for Ciaran Taylor's exhibition: The Times, Irish edition, Tallaght News, Tallaght Echo, RTE Drivetime – preview, The Journal
- Date TBC for planning meeting between Kate Bowe PR, Orla Scannell and Claire Power in October

THE TIMES | Thursday September 27 2018

## Hillwalkers pay homage to hero of Celtic myth with modern-day cairn

WALKERS built a cairn to mark a mythic feat by the hero Osin, who fell in love with Niamh

on the mountain and transported it down to Tallaght, where he broke it into smaller pieces, which the hillwalkers carried back up. "There were monthly walks with groups of people carrying the pieces on longer and shorter parts of the walk. The project was really about time and the cycle of the four seasons."

When each walker got to the top of the valley, they placed their piece of rock on top of others which previous walkers had transported, creating a cairn.

"All around Glenasmole there are cairns and some are enormous and over 4,000 years old," Mr Taylor said. "We just moved a small boulder and that was our nod to people who 4,000 years ago were really committed to building these cairns as monuments."

After the spring storms ended, the cairn grew substantially from the loads delivered. The final rocks were added in June, a year after the start of the project. On each walk, led by Mr Taylor, participants met local experts, musicians, storytellers and farmers, taking part in events to mark the seasons.

Walkers learnt about plants and trees, ate locally grown produce and, on one walk, were given onions from the mountains to plant at home. The walkers also learnt about the return of the native red squirrel and how birds of prey might use the cairn in future.

"The county library bus was up at the reservoir and gave us tea and cake in September and the guys from the allotments gave vegetables and we had a lovely barbecue," Mr Taylor said.

"We had a piper in April and a choir performance during another walk. We also had poetry readings and for the last event we did a bilingual version of the story of Osin based on the Lady Gregory play. We even had semi-wild white horses up there and that performance happened during the snow in March."

Mr Taylor is working on *Crann-storm*, a site-specific performance for Dan Laoghaire-Rathdown's youth arts centre, The Grainstore, in Cabinteely. He said he was overwhelmed by the numbers who had turned out for the Tallaght walks. "One woman did ten... it was a fantastic experience."

The *Rock to the Top* photographic exhibition is at Kiva Red arts centre, Tallaght, from September 29 to October 20.

Jennifer O'Brien  
Irish Arts Correspondent

Groups of hillwalkers have recreated a mythic feat by moving a granite boulder up the side of the Glenasmole Valley in south Dublin in honour of an ancient legend.

According to legend, Osin, son of Fionn Mac Cumhaill, once came to the assistance of 300 men at the side of the valley near Tallaght, who were struggling to lift a boulder from the ground. Osin was returning from Tir na nÓg, the Celtic Otherworld, riding a white horse and was said to have shown super-human strength, morphing into an old man, while lifting the large boulder out of the ground.

In a modern re-creation, between June 2017 and June 2018, groups of more than 400 hillwalkers retraced the footsteps of Osin, carrying pieces of another boulder to the top of the valley.

The Rock to the Top challenge, commissioned by In Context 4, South Dublin county council's public art programme, featured monthly walks over the Dublin mountains throughout the year. They were captured on camera by the photographer Felipe Jón and will be exhibited in Tallaght this month.

Ciaran Taylor, artistic director of Carpet Theatre, launched the project after hearing of a call-out from Creative Ireland, the state programme to promote culture and wellbeing. His aim was to get people with busy lives to slow down and take in nature, inspired by the Irish folk tale.

"I normally create plays for theatres and site-specific locations. I have created plays before in a ferry terminal, a fire station and a shopping centre and even a village in Offaly," he said.

"Inspired by the story of Osin in Tir na nÓg, I wanted to see if we in the modern era could recreate the feat of Osin by handing together to get the boulder from Tallaght up Glenasmole. In today's fast-paced world, I wanted to reconnect people with nature and the landscape and one another."

Mr Taylor sourced a granite boulder

The fabled land of Tir na nÓg was said to be located off Ireland's west coast and was known as the land of perpetual youth. Osin was the son of Fionn Mac Cumhaill, leader of the Fianna, and the mythical hunter-warrior of Irish folklore. One day, Osin spotted a beautiful woman, Niamh, on a white horse, fell in love with her and agreed to live with her for eternity on Tir na nÓg. His encounter with the man struggling to lift the boulder came when Osin had ridden back to Ireland. When lifting the boulder, Osin fell from his horse and suddenly aged 300 years. He died soon after.




The fabled land of perpetual youth