LOCIS

LOCIS, COLLABORATIVE ARTS PROGRAMME
LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL ARTS OFFICE, IRELAND
THE CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ART "ZNAKI CZASU" IN TORUŃ, POLAND
BOTKYRKA KONSTHALL & RESIDENCE BOTKYRKA, SWEDEN

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ABOUT LOCIS

Locis was a collaborative programme, co-funded by the Culture Programme of the European Union, between Leitrim County Council Arts Office, Ireland; the Centre of Contemporary Art Znaki Czasu in Toruń, Poland; and Botkyrka Konsthall/Residence Botkyrka, Sweden. Locis was designed to provide knowledge, resources and opportunities for artists to engage internationally and to reinforce the principle that a vibrant arts practice should, and can, be maintained from anywhere and that networking across borders can occur from anywhere and with anyone.

The programme comprised of a two-year, three-country artist-in-residence programme where each of the three partners sent and received a leading artist from their country to work with, and mentor, groups of artists from all three regions. Each group met together three to four times throughout the year culminating in an exhibition and seminar which was representative of, or the culmination of, their time together.

As well as documenting the six residencies which made up the programme, this publication also contains essays by three writers who were asked to reflect on the programme in their country and to consider how residencies relate to their contexts and/or provide developmental opportunities for artists in a particular location. In addition, three other writers – Doreen Massey, Anik See and Saša Nabergoj were invited by the three curators to write essays on broader topics of specific interest to the three partners.

LOCIS / INTRODUCTION

Our personal and professional development, and the development of our communities, becomes richer and more enhanced when we impart and share our knowledge and experience with others. For almost everyone involved in this project, Locis has been a journey of learning and discovery about similarities and differences, practice and experience - unearthing and exploring the opportunities presented by working among such an eclectic group of creative individuals. Each of the three project partners, six lead artists, twenty-four participant artists and the communities they lived amongst have been part of that journey contributing to the wellspring presented in this publication.

The Latin word Locis is the dative and ablative plural of the word place, meaning going to or coming from a place. It seemed an appropriate title for an artist-in-residence programme where artists criss-crossed Europe learning from each other and experiencing each other's cultural environments.

There are a number of recurring themes in these residencies, and in the different impetuses of the three project partners, who shaped the purposely loose parameters of the programme. Among these was the idea of 'centre', what that term means today, and particularly what limitations to an artist's practice still exist by dint of where one happens to be located.

In Ireland the Locis programme was preceded by other artist-in-residence projects which sought to challenge the traditional cultural trade routes where artists felt it necessary to move from the rural north west of Ireland to Dublin and onto London, New York or Berlin in order to maintain or continue their professional practice. As the biggest impediment to international travel is now the amount of traffic you are likely to meet en route to your preferred airport, and the speed of your broadband the only impediment to international communication, it seems entirely appropriate that the centre can now be exactly where you are, or where you choose to base your practice at any time. As proof to this point, within Europe the three project partners are about as different from each other as could be imagined, and the Locis project has been all the richer because of that.

Leitrim County Council is the rural local authority for County Leitrim in the northwest of Ireland. In the eighties, following a period of population decline going back to the 1850s, many artists started to migrate to the area attracted to Leitrim's unspoilt beauty and to sustain a living where the cost of living was lower than larger urban areas. A county of 30,000 people, Leitrim now benefits from having one of the country's largest sculpture centres and one of the country's most prominent multidisciplinary arts centres. Interest and involvement in the arts permeates all aspects of society. Today almost 5% of the population are employed in the creative sector, and the arts, creativity and the wider creative sector are an intrinsic part of the county's social, cultural and economic planning and development principles.

The Centre of Contemporary Art "Znaki Czasu" (CoCA) in Toruń is an arts centre in one of the oldest cities in Poland and the birthplace of the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus. The centre was established by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage in 2006 as a part of the programme 'Znaki Czasu' (Sign of the Times). CoCA places a strong emphasis on concepts of 'being contemporary' and 'being international'. Its interdisciplinary character and openness towards innovative and progressive research in a variety of expressive media epitomises its active and dynamic role within a regional and national cultural context, and underlines its pursuit of dialogue with other contemporary art institutions operating world-wide.

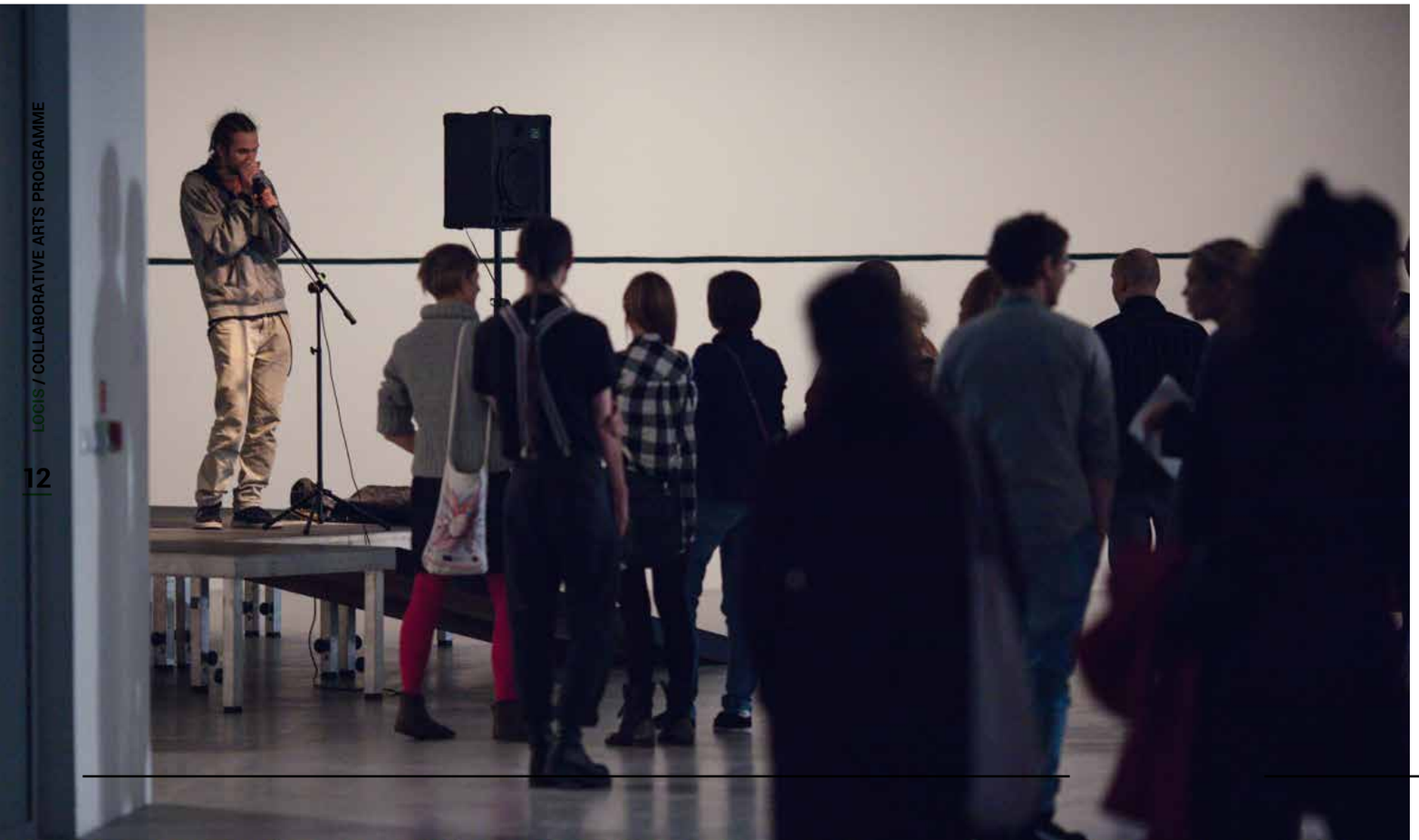
Botkyrka is part of Greater Stockholm and is one of Sweden's most international municipalities with people from more than 160 different countries speaking 100 different languages. The artist-in-residence programme Residence Botkyrka is run by the arts centre Botkyrka konsthall, and is a collaboration between the Department of Culture and Leisure, the Department of Urban Planning, the housing company Botkyrkabyggen, and the Multicultural Centre. Residence Botkyrka promotes site-specific, context-based art exploring the possibilities of art to influence a place and its identity. Residence Botkyrka works in public spaces and supports projects that are difficult to implement without a relationship to the place and its communities. Residence Botkyrka is also interested in the issues of co-creation and how the interaction between people can contribute to social change. As of 2014 The New Biennial for Art and Architecture highlights many of the projects by visiting artists and architects in the neighbourhood of Fittja, where Botkyrka konsthall is building a new arts institution.

Because Locis involved such different partners – a rural county, a provincial city and a suburb of a capital city – each with a different language, a different currency, different social construct and different culture – a great deal of time was spent exploring and bridging these differences. Not that this was a separate task to be accomplished before the main work could be undertaken, rather these discussions and this exchange was the central and integral nucleus that drove the project forward.

Locis was designed to provide knowledge, resources and opportunities for artists to engage internationally. While very different from each other in many ways, the three partners share the same desire to create opportunities for artists to network internationally and to reinforce the belief that a vibrant arts practice should, and can, be maintained from anywhere and that networking across borders can occur from anywhere and with anyone. The programme provided emerging and more established artists from these three regions with opportunities to broaden their practice, to operate across borders and to gain access to international networks.

While the programme was not designed to be about outcomes or finished works of art, much interesting work did happen as a result of Locis and in some cases quite remarkable work was accomplished. Moreover, as a means of encouraging dialogue among artists, enhancing networks and providing new opportunities, the programme can attest to some considerable achievements.

Philip Delamere, Dobrila Denegri & Joanna Sandell



IRELAND /
LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL ARTS OFFICE

Leitrim County Council is the local authority responsible for the administrative area of County Leitrim, a rural county of 31,778 people in the northwest of Ireland. The Council has long recognised the pivotal role of the arts socially, culturally and economically and further recognises that for the arts sector to flourish, it is essential that artists have opportunities to further their professional development. Key to that development is the opportunity to engage with the arts beyond the local and national, and it is with this in mind that Leitrim County Council seeks to develop opportunities like Locis to encourage this exchange.

POLAND /
CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ART “ZNAKI CZASU” (COCA)

The Centre of Contemporary Art Znaki Czasu in Toruń was set up by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland in February 2006 as a part of the operational programme ‘Znaki Czasu’, carried out by the Ministry. CoCA in Toruń has profiled itself as an institution that puts emphasis on concepts of ‘being contemporary’ and ‘being international’. It’s interdisciplinary character and it’s openness towards innovative and “cutting edge” research in variety of expressive media guarantees it’s active and dynamic role within a regional and national cultural context, and underlines it’s strong potential in a dialogue with other contemporary art institutions operating world-wide.

SWEDEN /
BOTKYRKA KONSTHALL / RESIDENCE BOTKYRKA

Residence Botkyrka is an international artist-in-residence programme run by Botkyrka konsthall. The context-based residency programme invites internationally active artists, curators and architects who are interested in working site-specifically in the northern part of Botkyrka. It is a collaboration between the Department of Culture and Leisure, the Department of Urban Planning, the housing company Botkyrkabyggen, and the Multicultural Centre, a forum for research and artistic expression relating to migration, social and cultural diversity, in the municipality of Botkyrka. This cooperation enables different people, such as urban planners and researchers to contribute with knowledge and networks to the visiting grant holders.

NO MAN'S LAND

ANIK SEE

An old Persian friend of mine, who left Iran 35 years ago in his late 20s, once told me that he doesn't have a language anymore. His Persian is disappearing and, being a literary intellectual, someone for whom precision in words is paramount, he felt his English wasn't up to snuff. I disagreed with him, and found it a bit sad that he felt that way.

Then, nine years ago, I left Canada for The Netherlands, for the singular reason of love. A fork in the road that veered towards excitement and the unknown, a question mark turned into an exclamation mark. It was not an easy decision, but it also wasn't a difficult one. I did not know what I was giving up, or what I would gain. That's become a bit clearer now though it's ever-changing, never fixed. And the point is now moot.

I've been told I'm acquiring an accent in my default tongue, English. A handful of Canadians have pointed it out in recent years; a group of tourists in Amsterdam whom I helped with directions; a man in the Yukon whose bed and breakfast I stayed at for two nights. Even my mother (who has a strong accent herself), though she says it only comes out when I'm on the radio.

I, of course, haven't noticed an audible change but I do notice my English failing me once in a while now, especially in conversation, when I'll automatically and unwillingly insert a Dutch word if the English one isn't subconsciously and unfailingly at hand. To add to that, Canada and its English are evolving in ways I'm not aware of because I'm not a part of its daily life anymore. I catch myself watching 'The Wire' or 'True Detective' with subtitles, that kind of thing.

I now recognize the feeling my Persian friend has, and all the emotion that comes with it. When you leave your default language, your default culture, you exist in a kind of no man's land. You begin to feel, whenever you open your mouth, that you can't say exactly what you want and how you want, in any of your languages; and that nothing can ever be completely understood, everything is, always, lost in translation.

§

I once met a man at a party who told me that for his whole life his dream had been to drive across Canada, to get away from the stifling crowdedness (his words) of Amsterdam and The Netherlands, of the microchip-like quality to its landscape, all straight lines and predetermined, and get to a place that was raw, whose fate was as yet undecided, to stand somewhere and see no one.

This man, he drives from east to west, starting in Toronto. He drives and he drives and after a few days of just driving, not really having paused, he decides that the prairie he's reached by then is the place to get out of the car and experience the vastness of the landscape. It's his first time and so it has to be just right. He turns off the highway and drives down a secondary road until he thinks he's reached his place. He gets out of the car and walks into the middle of a field. He stands there, he says, waiting. He doesn't really know what he's waiting for. Off in the distance, his car door dings. He looks around and sees nothing. No house, no tree, no hummock behind which something could be hiding. There is nothing to suggest human existence, or any life at all, except for himself.

The thing he's been waiting for starts to arrive. Slowly, slowly. But it's not what he thought it would be. It's panic. He starts to suffocate. Can't breathe. He runs back to the car, the dinging door, and tears down that road back to the highway, never leaving the car again - except for gas - up until he reaches Vancouver, four days later.

Turns out, vastness is not what he wanted. Turns out a small, crowded, microchip-like country is just fine when presented with the opposite.

§

I was on one of the Friesian islands in northern Holland once, where the edge of a village met the sand and the sea. There was a cafe full of Dutch tourists drinking espresso and coffee with milk. Surrounding the cafe and village was a split rail fence, the kind you'll find in a horse paddock. Wouldn't keep much out; it's more an idea, a demarcation that something different is happening here than on the other side of this thing. Here = social. There = antisocial. I was standing on the outside, by the sand and sea.

The tide started to go out, and fast. The Wadden Sea, between the islands and the mainland, is shallow and sometimes a pathway between the islands emerges at low tide. So when the water started to withdraw I was suddenly faced with hundreds of metres of sand, which had been submerged minutes before . I walked towards the beach and kept walking, following the water as it retreated, nearly running now, hardly keeping up. I turned around to see how far I'd come. I saw thousands of people inside the split rail fence, having their coffee, being social. I saw I was the only one out on the sand, which by now stretched for a kilometre in either direction around me. I wondered if I'd done something wrong, if suddenly I'd start sinking into quicksand, or get swallowed up by a whale. But there was no danger. Just differing views on the preferred place to be.

§

If you want to stay in The Netherlands, after a certain amount of time, you have to complete a series of 'integration' tests - four language tests, and one called 'Knowledge of Dutch society'. This test, which you might think would include questions about history, geography, political systems and practical things like filing taxes consists of nearly 40 questions, almost all of them about public procedures and behaviour. They can be frustratingly nuanced and borderline offensive.

For example:
'Mo is in the emergency room with a wounded hand. A man sitting next to him asks what happened. (This is accompanied by a series of photos in which two people - a black man with a bandaged hand and a white man - sit next to each other, gesturing or speaking.) When Mo tells him, the man says, "That wasn't very smart of you." How should Mo respond?
a) by choosing somewhere else to sit
b) by saying the man is right
c) by telling the man he isn't so smart himself.'

The test does not explain the *way* something has been said, but assumes you have been living in The Netherlands for a number of years already and have begun to understand the cultural nuances of the country, as compared with your own. The 'correct' answer is the one that is the 'most Dutch'; whether or not you agree with it - that is precisely the point of the test.

§

I'm Canadian with German parents and I live in Amsterdam. Two passports, two and two-half languages (English and Dutch, German and French). German is my mother tongue. I spoke nothing else until I went to school, and continued speaking it well until I started learning Dutch nine years ago, and then my German all but disappeared.

When I'm in Holland I have to explain why I'm there since most Dutch can't fathom a Canadian wanting to live there - imagine, they think, a Canadian giving up all that space and freedom in the landscape. When I'm in Canada, I have to explain why I live in Amsterdam. When I'm in Germany, I have to explain why my German is substandard for someone who holds a German passport. All fair enough.

But the interrogation doesn't come where I expect it the most. When I re-enter Canada, I always prepare myself for the barrage of questioning that never happens. I can still enter the line of those with Canadian passports, even though I fill out the customs form as a visitor to Canada. No one ever asks me to explain that.

If my son is with me, many papers need to be shown; that I'm his mother; that yes, I have a different last name; that no, I'm not married; that yes, his father and I live together; that yes, his father knows that we're travelling together; that yes, we will love each other til death do us part. And at a dinner party? Forget it. Half the conversation is taken up reluctantly explaining my name, background and all of the peripatetic decisions I've made that landed me, the daughter of immigrants from Europe, back in Europe, unmarried but happily together with the father of my son.

Some days I just want to be Jane Smith, born to two Canadian parents, raised and still living in Toronto, one language, one passport, husband and children with the same last names. Not often, but sometimes.

I often leave customs and dinner parties thinking, 'I can't possibly be the only one whose life can't be summed up in one sentence, or one document. Does everyone else lie?' Where is the latitude for nuance in such a black and white world?

§

The thing with Canada, the thing that gets me every time, the thing that lets me know I'm home are the bilingual signs. 'Welcome to Canada!/Bienvenue au Canada!' Anywhere you arrive in Canada, you will see those signs. It is a reminder of our special status, our uniqueness in the world, how the perception of our country is frozen in centuries-old history.

I'll let you in on a secret. Canada isn't *really* bilingual; unless you arrive in Quebec, the French will stop at the border. The federal government has always been determined to advance this half-myth mostly because it's original, and gives us some cachet in the international arena. Sure, Quebec is the 'French part' of Canada but it's officially unilingual, not bi. And of the ten provinces and three territories that make up our country, only two are officially bilingual in French and English: New Brunswick and Manitoba. The truth is, unless you live in or next to Quebec the French-language schooling you receive in Canada is sub-par, and taught in Parisian French; it will render you useless and misunderstood should you venture into the French-speaking part of your own country, which has its own version of the language. The truth is Canada is a polyglot of Dene, Hindi, Mandarin, Cree, Farsi, Gaelic, Italian, Portuguese, Inuktitut, Polish...you name it.

But those bilingual signs, they are powerful for someone who grew up with the myth that only French and English counted...

The last time I returned to Canada I passed those signs, let the feeling of home sweep in, rushing up from the terra firma, past my toes, my knees, my stomach, pausing for a brief, almost undetectable moment at my tear ducts and then filling me completely. I am Canadian, I thought with a grin, as I walked down that hall in the airport away from the plane. Je suis Canadien!

I walked down that hallway listening to flight and baggage pick-up announcements in Japanese, Tagalog and Russian. They made me smile. How progressive we are, us Canadians!

And then I reached the customs and passport control area. There were two lines: 'Residents of Canada/Résidents du Canada' and 'Non-Canadians/non-Canadiens'. I stood there a while, trying to translate, to decipher where I was to go. And I realized I am neither. In my own country I was at a fork in the road that needed a third line, perhaps even a fourth. The feeling of home slipped off me, spilling onto the carpeted floor I was standing on, dispersing in millions of multicultural beads like quicksilver while I tried to decide which fork to take.

Anik See is a Canadian freelance writer, radio producer and translator living in The Netherlands.

PLACE, AND RELATIONS AGAINST THE GRAIN

DOREEN MASSEY

Over the last few decades the air has been full of promises of a new dawn, a new way of being. The new world, sometimes under the sign of postmodernity, ridiculed the old claims to authority, its persistent hierarchisation of voices, its tendencies to rigid structures and bureaucracy. In their place was promised a flattening of hierarchies, a decentralisation of voices, a world of jostling multiplicity.

In my own sphere of work, the academy, we challenged ourselves as to the basis of our claims to 'knowledge' (as opposed, for instance, to the knowledge of those 'on the ground' or 'on the margins', who might carry the real truth of what was going on). In both academe and parts of the arts there was talk of the death of the author. We challenged the status of those Grand Narratives, of Progress, Development, and so forth that implied that there was only one way - that, for instance, what were called 'developing countries' were developing towards *our* state of 'development' - that they were not different, nor trying an alternative model. They were just behind. History was like a long queue, with some at the head and others working to catch up.

Instead of structures and hierarchy we were entering, it was said, a networked society of multiple criss-crossing relations. A world of complexity and difference: horizontality in place of the vertical. In politics, the old solidarities, of trades-unionism for instance, were characterised as lumbering. Instead, new forms would be developed, constantly shifting, fleet-of-foot, complexly networked. Participatory democracy would/should replace 'old fashioned' parties and systems of representation, argued some. It was a promise of complexity, multiplicity, and a greater equality of voice.

So what happened? Well, to begin with it should be said that some of the criticisms of the past and the promises for the future were and still are to be welcomed. The Grand Narratives that assumed (and thereby through their formation of the social imagination helped impose) only one-way forward absolutely needed challenging (although the current mantra of There Is No Alternative is hardly an improvement). Some of the big hierarchical structures had indeed become sclerotic. Things did indeed need shaking up. And there is indeed today more networking, a greater acknowledgement of difference and complexity, and a feeling of a greater (and indeed sometimes overwhelming) multiplicity. In lots of ways things feel freer, and somehow looser.

And yet. In my own field of human geography, I have watched as in this ever-more-interconnected world the human race has become more and more concentrated into mega cities. I have analysed, and pondered, the fact that not only population but many kinds of power too seem to have been drawn into, and woven together in a handful of global cities. Global cities - where different forms of power intersect, form constellations and reinforce each other - are a product of the very same period that proclaimed the horizontality of networks. The geography of people and of power seems to have become more centralised.

Likewise, the academic world has never been so structured around mega stars who fly about the world broadcasting their messages (frequently, ironically, proclaiming the pending horizontalism). What on earth happened to the death of the author or to the need to value knowledge produced on the margins?

The examples could be multiplied. The internet's promise of a democracy of voices is threatened by corporate control and harvesting, and by centralised surveillance.

In some ways this apparent contradiction mirrors, indeed is a part of, the more general socio-political shift that has taken place since the 1970s. In Western Europe social democracy (with its big battalions, its commitment to a measure of redistribution and equality, and its veneration of notions of the public and the abilities of the state) was undermined, and in both Western and Eastern Europe the tenets and practices of neoliberalism won the battle for hegemony. The stress on individuals and markets might seem to be absolutely a piece of a world-view that promises democracy and equality. And yet, of course, what neoliberalism has in fact delivered is a sharp increase in inequality on almost all dimensions.

In many ways, the geometries of power have become even more concentrated than they were before. The centres seem to have become more central even while, undoubtedly we live in an age of networks.

Moreover, this has further ramifications as the process feeds upon itself. In the United Kingdom, London is increasingly dominant, and the terms of this dominance only further reinforce it. So professional workers find themselves inexorably drawn to the capital city. This is where the jobs are; where the wages are higher (though costs are too); most certainly it is where you have to go to climb the greasy pole, to be closer to those with power within your chosen field. But the loss of these social strata can make it even more difficult for any project to achieve economic growth in the regions they leave behind. And being the global city attracts further advantages to London. Virtually all the 'national' cultural institutions, for example (museums, galleries, sports stadia), are in the capital. National funding for the arts is grossly unequal, per capita funding in London is far higher than that begrudgingly given to other regions ('we have to support our global city'). And so the centrality is reinforced.

And so too is the inequality of daily life among the denizens of this country. A class of children in a school in London can easily visit, say, the National Gallery in the space of an afternoon. For a school in a small town in the north of England, the same access to the arts would cost a fortune in train fares, time, and possibly even accommodation. It is in these ways, in terms of how things are played out in disparities of opportunity and the richness of daily life, that the current geographies can seem so vicious. The unequal geographies of cultural access; it is because of this, as well as and because of the conundrum of such steep hierarchy in a world that once promised dispersal (remember, we were all going to work from a cottage far from the city), that I was drawn to contribute to this important project.

However, the situation is, interestingly, more complex than this; for although these centres of power have undoubtedly been reinforced (in general inequality and the rise of the super-rich, in the international dominance of a few global cities), it is very difficult to locate a single centre of that power. There is, as has often been remarked, no Winter Palace any more as the obvious place to storm. Mark Fisher in a chapter of his book *Capitalist Realism*, entitled 'There's no central exchange' writes insightfully of the *'centrelessness of global capitalism' and 'the closest thing we have to ruling powers now are nebulous, unaccountable interests exercising corporate irresponsibility'* [1]. He argues that *'Kafka is poorly understood as exclusively a writer on totalitarianism; a decentralized, market Stalinist bureaucracy is far more Kafkaesque than one in which there is a central authority'* [1]. The 'centre' itself is networked and somehow cannot be found. And its very dispersion can increase the sense of powerlessness of those beyond the bounds of the charmed circle.

On the other hand, in these areas beyond the bounds (what are often called 'the regions', 'the provinces', 'the periphery') other things have been happening. One of the most interesting things going on in global economic and politico-cultural relations is the enormous flourishing of South-South relations. Solidarities between Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, trade and intense competition between India and China, the enormous expansion of South-South trade in general, the growing joint power of the BRIC countries, and so forth. A proliferation, in other words, of relations that by-pass the global North, the old 'centre'. To some extent, that centre is irrelevant to them. Given political courage and the right conditions, relations do not have to follow the classic route between centre and periphery with all the spatiality of dominance and subordination that has historically been implied. Hints here, then, of parallels with Locis?

There is an analogous story going on at the moment about the railway network in the UK. It is currently remarkably centripetal - the structure is focused on London. It is also the case that there is, as hinted at above, a marked and intensifying economic, social - and cultural - divide between the south east corner of the country and 'the rest' (it even has its acronym - RUK). One proposal to remedy this divide is to invest in railways (a proposal which it is hoped at the macro-economic level would also kick-start the economy, generate jobs, etc). But consider the geography of this investment. The official proposal is to link north and south with a high-speed connection. It is a knee-jerk, London-centric response. Of course, the argument goes, the periphery would be better off were it to be more closely tied to the centre. Would it? There seems to be little evidence for this assertion. An alternative proposal is to improve the railway connections within the (so-called) periphery itself. From Liverpool to Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Hull, for instance. (At the moment the trains here are not so much high-speed as trundling, though I have to confess that, not usually being in a hurry, and the landscape being so interesting and beautiful, I love them. But that's another matter.) The aim would be to enrich connections within the north itself, to weave together something alternative, more of its own.

This draws us into recent debates about the nature of place. In contrast to a more traditional view of places as almost bounded things, drawing their unique character from deep internal historical roots, it is now widely recognised, not only that places are inevitably open, in constant contact with the wider world, but also that the very specificity of each place is in serious measure a product of its articulation within those wider relations, and of what is made of those relations.[2] This further implies that places are not necessarily internally coherent, that they always need to be negotiated and - the really important point here - that places are things we *make*, not just things that we inherit.

A parenthesis is in order here, which takes us back to the opening scene and the promise of a world of interconnection, network, and flow. As in other spheres, so too in relation to place, there were those who took this position to extremes. If places are products of relations, and if we live in a world in which relations (networks, etc.) are dominant, then 'places' cease to have any meaning. All is dissolved into the wider global interconnectivity.

I have to say I disagree thoroughly with this argument. In the end it is an argument that does battle with the old notion of place, as fixed and stable and bounded. It sets up 'place' and 'flow' as opposites, whereas in fact each is necessary to and formative of the other. What we have to do instead of abandoning place is reconceptualise it - each place a particular constellation of relations within the global world.

So, if places are made, and if the structure of relations within which they are embedded is an important part of that making, then it follows that a creative attention to a place's wider connections is crucial. It also follows that forging new relations will, however subtly, shift the identity of a place. On the world scale, current governments in Latin America are trying to do this; to forge a collective identity that is no longer merely the 'backyard' of the global centre to the north but which asserts, precisely through the building of connections both among themselves and with the rest of the world, a character that they have built themselves. Think too of the contrasting implications for the sense of place in/of the north of England, of the different geographies of proposed railway investment. Building new relations, especially against the grain, is a real challenge, but in a sense it is about no more than taking at their word the promises and potential of the networked age.

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1. Fisher, M., *Capitalist realism: is there no alternative?* Winchester: Zero Books, 2009.
2. Massey, D., *For Space,* London: Sage, 2005.

FROM LOCUS TO LOCIS

SAŠA NABERGOJ

TWO CASES

A place's cultural identity is constructed from many segments that sometimes complete but often overlap or even contradict each other. It gradually forms through time, in a complex relationship between people and environment.

The invisible stitches that glue together place and its multiple identities are very often tackled by the world of art. I believe artists with their practices, but especially with their modus operandi, offer another view or shed light on things that have been overlooked, neglected or forgotten in society. Artist residencies that bring artists, curators and thinkers from the realm of contemporary art to a specific place can, therefore, play an active role in rethinking and reshaping prevailing structures, especially as vital arts contributions seem to push towards losing the fear of the time/vacuum/space in-between where shifts can happen.

How can a local context be reconceptualised by the temporary invasions of others? Carefully selected individuals always bring with them different knowledge, topics and even strategies. They can be constitutive, disturbing, enhancing or just stimulating. Allow me to show two scenarios; one that I know well and one the other I instigated myself.

First, let's look at a scenario embedded within the small city Celje in Slovenia. The cultural context of the city has changed radically from a sleepy traditional periphery to a vibrant and culturally strong (albeit still) small town. About two decades ago, the Centre for Contemporary Arts Celje gradually started putting together an ambitious programme, including research and exhibition projects that made an art historical analysis of the local art scene through the important decades of the seventies and eighties. Exhibitions and publications contextualised, and added to, the prevailing art history of the recent past, but crucially also the present, thus bringing local artists wider recognition. This type of in-depth curatorial work in the centre of the city functioned as a catalyst; creating and providing a stimulating context for others to self-organize within, or just become actively engaged in. It also brought new potential; empowering those that previously felt the need to relocate to bigger cities, Ljubljana especially.

The programme was composed of several formats to address and communicate specific local issues. Parallel to the research and exhibition projects that focused locally, an extensive international exhibition programme gradually brought interesting art and curatorial practices from different parts of the world to the city, slowly building up the audience and local art practice, and gently introducing a vocabulary to decipher contemporary art.

The artist-in-residence programme, AIR Celje (developed by same art centre), followed the overall process (of empowering the local art scene) and enabled a more intense international infusion of diverse artistic and curatorial practices. This proved to be a crucial element in a gradual shift in the respective local cultural milieu. It also focused on artistic and curatorial research processes and shed light on tactics and strategies used by artists and curators. This provided the local audience with necessary insight into the working methods of art professionals and facilitated a way of deciphering the final outcome.

The AIR Celje residency programme played and is still paying a crucial role in shifting the cultural identity of the city of Celje. This is mainly connected with the residents' long-term engagements with the local environment. The artists-in-residence are specifically asked to get involved in the local context and are expected to come up with projects involving local residents.

These are important factors of the residency contributing to its success interlinking art with the local society. Last but not least (and this is especially interesting for me) is that the impact of art residencies is reaching out, outside of the art world, explicitly fostering and enabling situations of potential exchange between artists, curators and people who may rarely encounter contemporary art.

This brings me to the second scenario. The idea of bringing together artists and specialists from various disciplines such as urban historians, oceanographers, philosophers, curators, critics, sociologists, fashion and industrial designers, and landscape architects, who all share similar affinities, are engaged in similar topics, but approach them in different ways. This was of utmost importance for me when I started to work on the conception of the third international contemporary art triennial PORTIZMIR3 in Izmir, Turkey, back in 2012. I wanted to show the potential artistic practices, based on research and engagement in the social and political fields, have when operating on the emancipatory level in knowledge production.

Therefore, I structured the triennial not as a single big exhibition but more like a series of smaller events (many of them included a research residency format) and developed it specifically for the needs of the locality; partly enhancing some but mostly infusing practices I believed could shift the rather small art scene of Izmir towards a more complex one. My own curatorial working process was structured as a series of intense residencies (seven days each) spread out over three years as I always work on a specific site, trying to invent formats that correspond to the local environment through active engagement with it.

Five fieldworks were created in order to show how strategies and tactics that artists develop within their practices could represent a valuable contribution to a change in thought, leading to changes in the prevailing general artistic methods. I was especially interested in generating synergies from two seemingly diametrically opposed work procedures: scientific methodology based on specialisation versus artistic methodology based on the principle of bricolage. Artists, who often work as bricoleurs, manage to solve various tasks and problems mainly because they are not specialists but are resourceful when using different tools they find, often applying them without knowing or even caring about the instructions on how to use them. Sometimes they manage to reach incredible solutions that are only possible when people think outside the box. This approach joined by its counterpart, in this case scientific methods on the emancipatory level, is capable of creating genuine interdisciplinary collaboration and opening different perspectives in the reading of the ordinary and expected.

This was the case with the fieldwork by the group *Deep Blue*, composed of various individuals from art, culture and science, who considered the sensitivity of the some of the aquatic ecology linked to the Izmir bay raising questions that turned out to be locally relevant in some aspects and highly global in most.

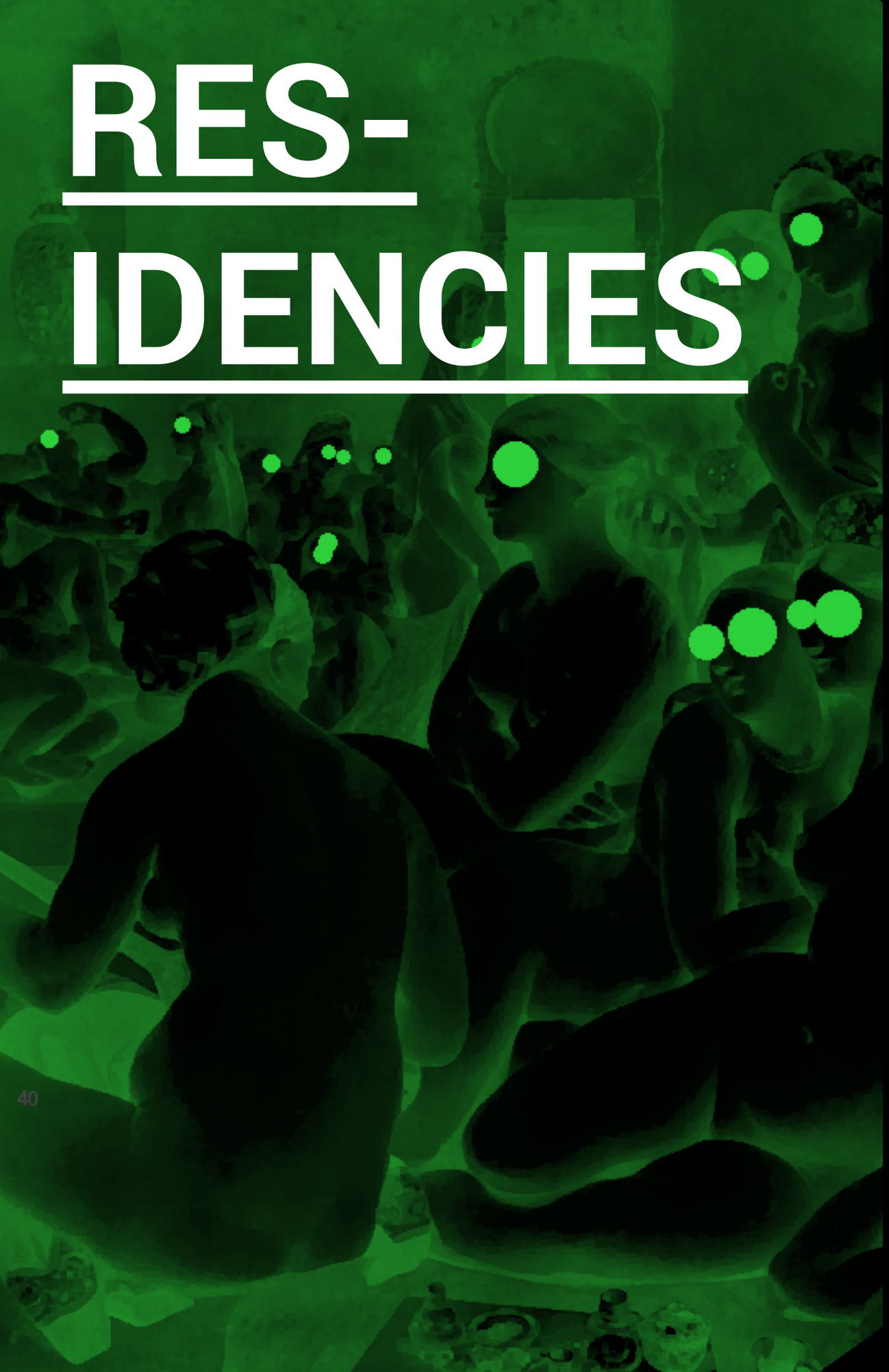
Deep Blue spent an intense one-month residency bringing together a new media artist from Slovenia with a local photographer, an underwater photographer, a physicist, oceanographers as well as an artist working in the medium of traditional Islamic art. The oceanographers, for example, had no previous knowledge of contemporary art or artistic practices but found it very effective when different experts engage in the same topic, in this case the immortality of jellyfish. The group has since further developed their collaboration in many different ways through exchanges and interests in new knowledge. This platform seemed to allow for all actors to contribute from an emancipatory position, creating a fairly traditional collaborative project where each presented their field and then slowly learnt about each other's as well as the actual format of working together. The intense collaboration resulted in a separate fieldwork exhibition during the Izmir triennial: *Archive Visualised*.

I believe residencies, when focused on tailor-made situations and based on research can intervene into a local context and make the invisible tissue of the city visible, in both symbolic terms as well as in reality. The diverse collaborations between artists and experts in different fields have the potential to shed light on important topics for the city, establishing platforms for interdisciplinary collaborations that continually bring knowledge and skills to the city.

However, even more important I strongly believe the potential of the contemporary art world, for establishing operational models based on cooperation through mutual and respectful exchange of knowledge should be taken into the account. This would lead us to implement a responsible work methodology with principles that could serve as a case of good practice when negotiating the new world order currently being experiencing at breakneck speed.

Saša Nabergoj is an art historian, curator and critic based in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

http://www.celeia.info/center_sodobnih_umetnosti
http://portizmir.org/eng/



RES-IDENCIES

2013:

BOTKYRKA KONSTHALL / RESIDENCE BOTKYRKA, SWEDEN
DOMINIC STEVENS (IE)
MATTIAS ÅKESON (SE)
EWA AXELRAD (PL)
JORUN KUGELBERG (SE)
ELAINE REYNOLDS (IE)

CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ART "ZNAKI CZASU" IN TORUŃ, POLAND
JONAS NOBEL (SE)
MAJA HAMMARÉN (SE)
PATRYCJA ORZECHOWSKA (PL)
AREK PARASITE (PL)
CATHAL ROCHE (IE)

LEITRIM SCULPTURE CENTRE / LEITRIM ARTS OFFICE, IRELAND
JAROSŁAW KOZAKIEWICZ (PL)
ULRIKA LARSSON (SE)
KATHY O'LEARY (IE)
NIALL WALSH (IE)
NATALIA WIŚNIEWSKA (PL)

2014:

BOTKYRKA KONSTHALL / RESIDENCE BOTKYRKA, SWEDEN
ALEKSANDRA WASILKOWSKA (PL)
NAOMI DRAPER (IE)
AGNES MOHLIN (SE)
LUIS FILIPE ROCHA (SE)
MAGDA WĘGRZYN (PL)

CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ART "ZNAKI CZASU" IN TORUŃ, POLAND
SEAMUS NOLAN (IE)
PHOEBE DICK (IE)
EMMA HOULIHAN (IE/SE)
LILIANA PISKORSKA (PL)
DAGMARA POCHYŁA (PL)

THE DOCK / LEITRIM ARTS OFFICE, IRELAND
JOHAN THURFJELL (SE)
JULIA ADZUKI (SE)
LINDA SHEVLIN (IE)
BRIGITTA VARADI (IE)
KAROLINA ŻYNIEWICZ (PL)

2013:
BOTKYRKA KONSTHALL / RESIDENCE BOTKYRKA, SWEDEN
LEAD ARTIST:
DOMINIC STEVENS (IE)
ARTISTS:
MATTIAS ÅKESON (SE)
EWA AXELRAD (PL)
JORUN KUGELBERG (SE)
ELAINE REYNOLDS (IE)

Hur Fittja Förändrade Världen / How Fittja Changed the World
Comic strip, 2013
Installation view *"What can be described can also take place"*
Photo: Simon Berg

Dominic Stevens

Don't think, look!
(Wittgenstein)

I was delighted to be asked to be involved in the Locis residency in Fittja - only I didn't like the idea of 'leading' it. As a practicing architect who teaches, I have always looked at education as being a collaboration where knowledge is co-created by teachers and students together and it was important to me that this residency would be a collaboration involving our shared interests and concerns. On our first day of meeting, we presented our work to each other and started a process of getting to know one another within the context of the specific setting, Fittja.

We were interested in being a part of something, not being observers or commentators on something. Our relationship with each other and our relationship with Fittja had to do with real things. Things like deciding what to shop for, what to cook, our favourite foods tempered through the supermarkets of Fittja, which offered a broad exotic selection due to its residents originating from 161 different counties. We had to decide where to visit or how to behave as visiting artists, and how to proceed with the sense that we had to create something, somehow together. I think that while we were doing that we used the group as a resource for reflection and critique.

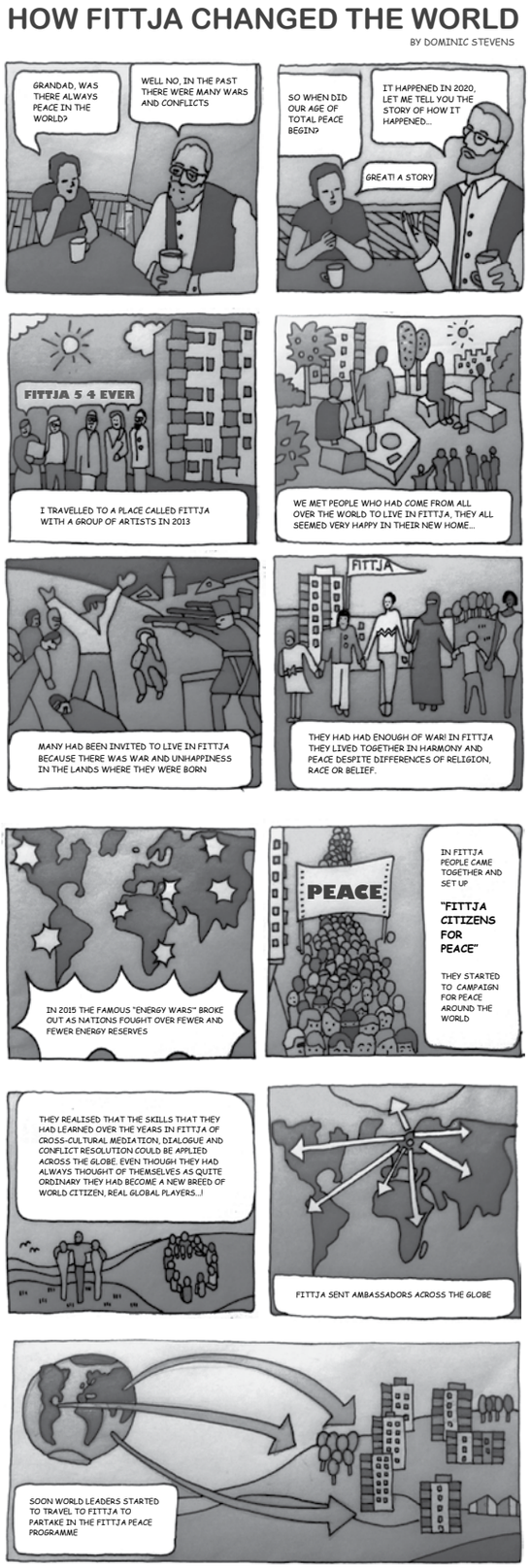
I think our finest hour of collaborating by 'doing' was the five of us sitting around a table with our laptops working simultaneously on a shared Google Doc, struggling with the differences between vague verbal agreement and enthusiasm and precise written proposal language. We used the title *What can be described can also take place*, which expressed a sense of our growing interest as a group in the language of development, of improvement, the utopian language of high modernism which created Fittja as part of the 'Million Programme' during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

What can be described can also take place
(Wittgenstein, Tractus Logico Philisophicus)

Part One: Who are we?

We are five artists. The Locis programme gave is the opportunity to meet and explore the interrelations and potential synergies between our practices. We have each worked with themes concerning the relationships between people and the places they inhabit.

The creation of place.
Architecture as a social product.
How architectural space exerts control.
The relationship between body and space.



Dominic Stevens

◂◂ *Hur Fittja Förändrade Världen / How Fittja Changed the World*
Comic strip, 2013

Part Two: Being in Fittja

We made two visits to Fittja and had an ongoing online conversation about this process of collective experience.

Fittja exploded into our consciousnesses and we struggled to understand this place of calm Nordic design occupied by what seems like all the peoples of the world.

We met all kinds of people - citizens, experts, planners, researchers, people within the structures of power and the people upon whom that power is visited.

Part Three: Past Futures and Future Futures

Being in this place has influenced our bodies and our thoughts and therefore our practices.

Fittja was born of a vision, a dream for a bright new future, and its existence is littered with new visions, plans for ‘development’, ‘upliftment’ and ‘people’s palaces’...

During the period of Locis we worked out ways of supporting each other’s work, of collaborating while together (easy) and while in different places, using a mix of Facebook and email. We were exposed to each other’s practices and thought processes as we each tried to make sense of Fittja. This has lead to further collaborations and plans for more, in effect a connection with artistic practices from elsewhere and a connection to Fittja as a setting that embodies so many of the challenges and opportunities that contemporary societies face. At a certain time each day we all stop what we are doing, face towards Fittja and chant ‘GO FITTJA FIVE’.

Mattias Åkeson
What can be described can also take place 1973-2013 (Roll-ups)

‘Roll-ups are about visions. The meeting between desires, wishes, estimates and plans in relation to the physical location. We live in a time when every place must have a vision. All activities and all of life are tinted by a capitalist worldview. Upwards, forwards and straight ahead. PowerPoint aesthetics. They characterize our language and our view of how we should live our lives and what places look like.’

The proposal included a printed booklet with sentences from the municipality’s marketing material stretching forty years back. Mattias’s intention was to develop the material into an audio guide and a physical intervention of citations in residential areas.

The work *An exercise of form and shape* comes from Mattias’s seven-year-old son who was given the task of designing the cover of the first edition of *Émile, ou De l’éducation* from the year 1762, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). *Émile* served as inspiration for what became the new (French) national education system. Rousseau considered knowledge a weapon.

The masses were to be educated, enlightened and formed in order to be free. Rousseau also had an interest in copying and spent a lot of time copying music. Mattias's son spent around two hours to complete his copy of the book cover. In Swedish the title reads 'Om uppfostran' (On Education).

Dominic Stevens

For the exhibition, Dominic Stevens developed a comic strip entitled *How Fittja Changed the World* describing a new exciting future for Fittja.

'I believe in looking at things positively in a straightforward manner, so therefore I decided to explore the qualities that a very multicultural area like Fittja has to offer. The twenty-first century is set to be defined by the movements of peoples from one place to another and areas like Fittja lead the way and, I believe, have a duty to creatively teach the rest of the world how we can all live together in harmony. The piece explores how the physical act of building together can help build a sense of community; this is something that has been lost in the developed world.'

The screened film *Some Structures* from 2013 presents some perspectives and ideas that underpin Dominic's architectural practice. The viewer is brought along on a journey of spatial organization through a close reading of selected places in County Leitrim. The sites vary but all demonstrate a sensibility through a series of reflections on the customs, spatial culture and organizational methodologies that have been and still are employed in the management of people and space.

Elaine Reynolds

Elaine developed *Promisings* as a proposed work, which enters into a dialogue with the archive of promotional material that exists in relation to Fittja and the current plans for the regeneration of this Million Programme Housing area. The work borrows visually from the commercial proposal and the ideological assurances of architectural master plans. Promisings gestures towards inherently propositional forms; the mood board is a tool for communicating a design concept, to quickly inform others of the overall 'feel' and 'flow' of a proposed idea. The 'PowerPoint presentation' has come to function in a similar way, it serves to build a convincing narrative around the concept, the pitch. In this case, the viewer encounters an analogue version of a PowerPoint presentation, disconnected, printed out and hung on the wall. The visual language points to some ideal form, or place, or lifestyle but the presenter who would elaborate on these slides is absent.

Two previous works by Elaine were also presented in the exhibition; *Rural Renewal* and *On/Off States*. The works are connected to the Rural Renewal schemes initiated by the Irish government in response to a housing crisis in the late nineties. In 2008, the economy entered into dramatic decline and many of these projects were abandoned. The countryside is now host to countless unfinished, uninhabited 'ghost estates', uncomfortable monuments to a deregulated housing market. *Rural Renewal* depicts an advertisement for one such housing development in Leitrim. *On/Off States* documents a live event that took place at the same abandoned 'ghost estate' depicted in *Rural Renewal*. Industrial lights were installed within the concrete cell of an unfinished home and were programmed to flash on and off in Morse code sequences.

Ewa Axelrad

Ewa Axelrad's work *Between the Windscreen and the Rear-view Mirror* used a fictitious book as a pretext for guided tours to be organized in Fittja. The idea of the project uses the phenomenon of city tours in the footsteps of fictional characters that have become widely popular in Stockholm recently.

'Since the Polish landscape is saturated with memorials and references to the past, I'm interested in Sweden's relationship with its past and the potential within fiction for revisiting it. The project further seeks to consider how collective memory can be imprinted on urban space through the use of guided tours that aren't related to reality.'

Two existing video works, part of the *CODA* series from 2012 made in collaboration with Steve Press, were screened. With the videos shot at an abandoned industrial estate, *CODA* imagines a moment of complete yet almost imperceptible heat-induced entropy.

Jorun Kugelberg

In the video work *Trespassings*, developed specially for the exhibition, Jorun Kugelberg focused on Botkyrka konsthall and the library in Tumba, which are separated only by a glass door. These are two public places but with different conditions; a place for literature and reading and another to discover and explore contemporary art. Jorun was interested in exploring the boundaries between them, developing a video work that was projected onto the glass door. *Trespassings* is about renegotiating solid surfaces and concepts.

The video work *Place as Event* from 2012 was projected outside of the exhibition space in Botkyrka Konsthall, on the wall next to the entrance door.

'We move along pre-taught lines. Lines that show the direction and that create boundaries, separating the outside from the inside, the centre from the periphery. Lines that we follow because they exist; lines that exist because we follow them. In this film I interact with a place that has temporarily been a part of my everyday life. In order to go against my learned choreography, I try not to plan a single movement before it happens. The result is a countermovement against boundaries and restrictions, as well as an investigation of what it means to be in one location.'

Dominic Stevens

Some Structures
Film project by Dominic Stevens in collaboration with Vaari Claffey, Ronan McCree, Kevin Freeney, 2011
Installation view, ***"What can be described can also take place"***
Photo: Simon Berg

Mattias Åkeson

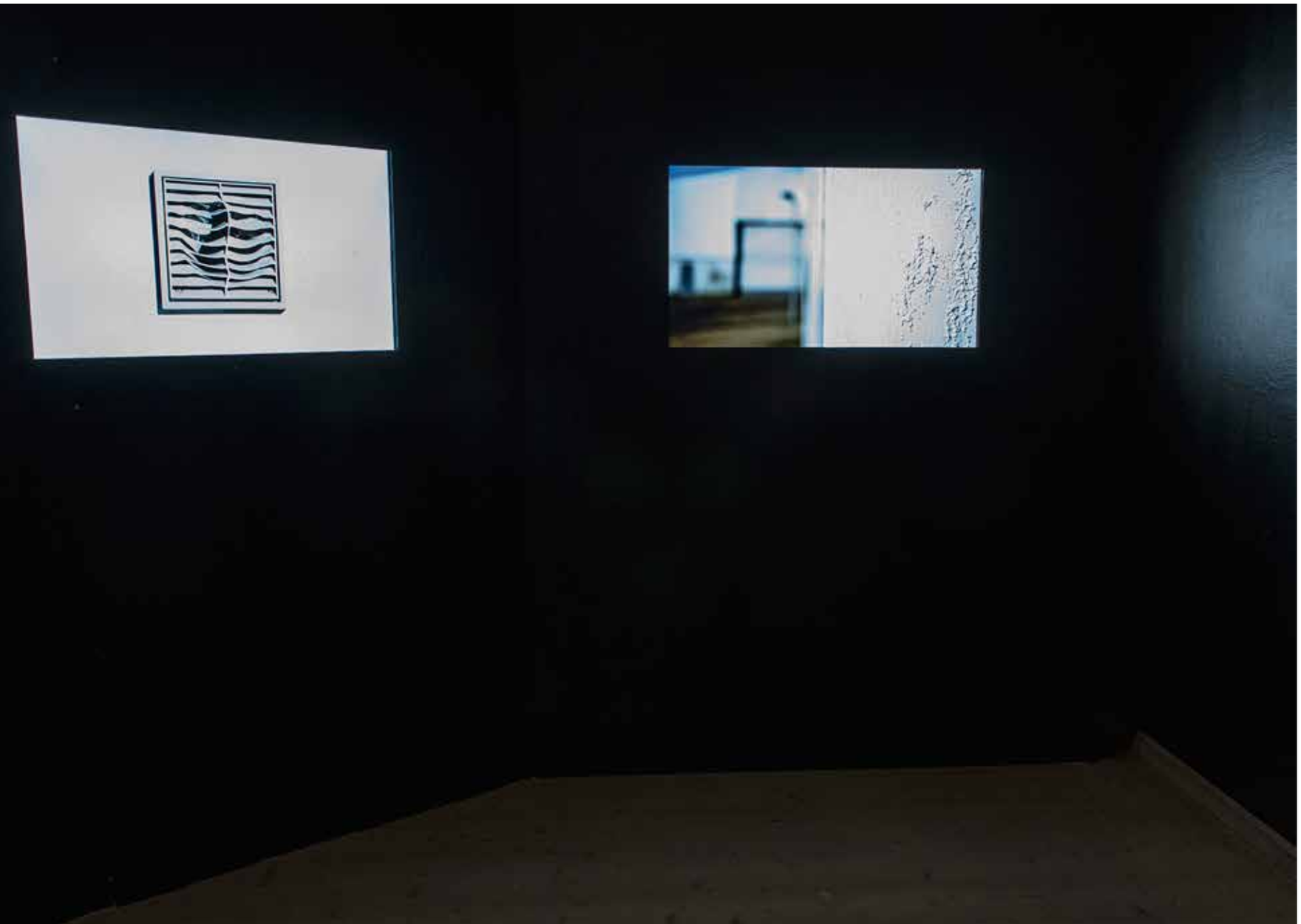
Research images from the residence in Fittja, Botkyrka.
“30 min from the city centre we are building a city were every child will have a tree of its own”
Photo: Mattias Åkeson

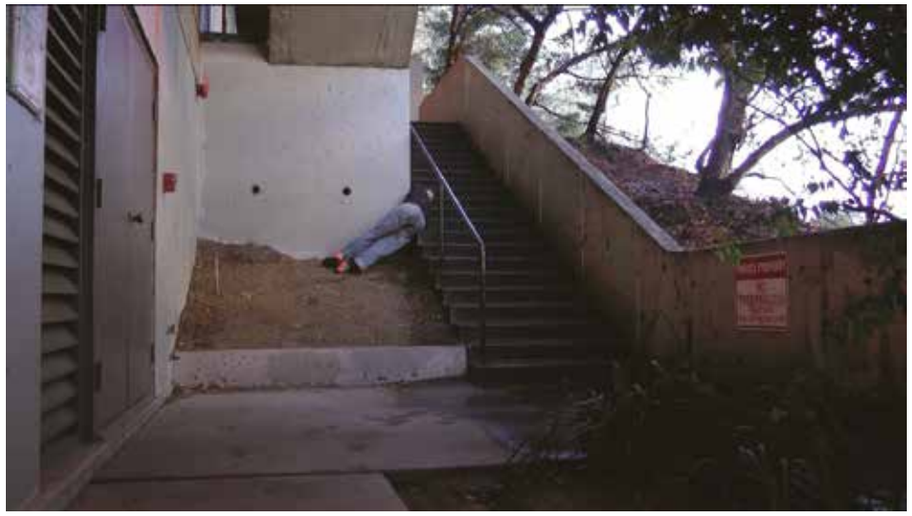
What can be described can also take place 1973 – 2013 (Roll-ups)
Roll-ups, carpets, printed matter, 2013
Installation view, ***"What can be described can also take place"***
Photo: Simon Berg

Ewa Axelrad

Between the Windscreen and the Rear-view Mirror
Folded paper folder, 2013
Installation view, *"What can be described can take place"*
Photo: Simon Berg

Coda # 4 and Coda # 7
Videos, 2012
Installation view, *"What can be described can take place"*
Photo: Simon Berg





Jorun Kugelberg

Place as event

Video projection, one out of four films from a larger installation, 6:30 min, 2012

In a series of films, site-specifically installed in different institutions – Jorun uses improvisation to challenge ingrained orientations and explore other ways of co-existing with places that were part of her every day surroundings. For the exhibition in Botkyrka konsthall, the film showing stairs and the sign *"Private Property: No Trespassing"* was projected onto the entrance of the exhibition hall, in connection to the stairs leading up to it from the shopping mall.
Photo: Jorun Kugelberg

Trespassings

Video projection on glass door, 2013
Installation view, as seen through the library, ***"What can be described can also take place"***.

The video was projected onto a sliding glass door between Botkyrka konsthall and the public library next door. It is an investigation of the boundary between these two spaces, both open to the public but with different choreographies, languages and audiences.
Photo: Simon Berg

Elaine Reynolds

Rural Renewal
Digital print, 59 x 8.5cm, 2013
Installation view, ***"What can be described can also take place"***
Photo: Simon Berg

Promisings
HD Video (video still), 2013
Promisings is a moving image work that incorporates propositional forms (mood board and power point presentation) to look at the regeneration of Fittja. Produced while on residency in Residence Botkyrka as part of the Locis programme.

On/Off States
Live event (Production Still), 2010
The event took place in a 'Ghost Estate' in Co. Leitrim. Lights were installed in the concrete shell of an unfinished home and programmed to flash on and off in coded sequences. Undertaken while on residency in the Leitrim Sculpture Centre.

"What can be described can also take place" Botkyrka konsthall, 26 January, 2014.
Invited speakers: Ylva Frid, architecture office Spridd and Prof. Elizabeth Hatz, architect and curator.

DOMINIC STEVENS
IRELAND

I graduated from Architecture school in 1989. In 1995, after working in Berlin I returned to Dublin and started private practice. In 1999 I relocated my practice to rural County Leitrim. I now divide my time between building, architecture and teaching. My practice focuses on making buildings and theoretical projects in the Irish countryside.
I am interested in researching by doing things, by taking action, and then reflecting upon what I have done in order to learn. If you want to learn how to dance you have to start dancing! I believe that ***acting*** or ***doing*** allows us to respond to our deeper selves, to the places within that we may never access if we begin by intellectualising.
I came to Fittja with a strong interest in the vernacular, of empowerment through the creation of one's own dwelling. Fittja was the antithesis to this way of thinking. It embodied the very thing that Heidegger criticised in his essay ***Building Dwelling Thinking*** of 1951 presented at a conference on housing, which celebrated the success of the post war housing programme (of which Fittja represents the tail end). I wondered how so many people from different places with strong local building (and therefore spatial) traditions could live in this neutral place created for them.

EWA AXELRAD
POLAND

Ewa Axelrad creates distinctive installations, usually employing the qualities of already existing spaces. The minimalism of the provided architecture usually gets interrupted with photographic images she places in its interiors. The introduction of naturalistically depicted bodies becomes an equal counterpoint to those sterile spaces. Together they form often radical common messages referring to the condition of modern society. These multi-dimensional pieces are the result of meticulous work carried out on a preliminary conceptual level. The idea permeates the consciousness of the recipient through the sensual pressure exerted by the surprisingly expressive surrounding. That successful transmission of an idea is possible through a skillful spread of its content ***'…onto architecture and images placed in its interiors. Moreover a participant of the exhibition becomes a victim of the role discretely shifted from the figures on the photographs onto him or her'.*** (Piotr Pękala)

MATTIAS ÅKESON
SWEDEN

Mattias Åkeson studied at the Art Academy in Bergen, Norway and graduated in 2001. He was one of the founder members of the Norwegian artist group Gutengut (1999 -2004) that made a wide range of interdisciplinary projects working with performance, video, installations and social interactions. Today he divides his time between artistic practice, teaching and commissions.
His fields of interest could be explained as dealing with Scandinavian welfare, middleclass consumption identity, and the relationship between community as a collective and the individual. He has been doing projects looking at the shopping mall, the art gallery and the kindergarten. The relationship between architecture, activity and user is an important base for his practice.
In 2009 he published the book ***Northern Comfort*** (Labyrinth press), which contains essays and a series of photographs dealing with the shopping mall. In 2012 he was Artist-in-Residence at Ingmar Bergman´s home on Fårö, Gotland.
Recent projects include the exhibitions ***Cash Flow / Konsumera Mera (More Consumption)*** at Botkyrka Konsthall and Norrköping Museum of Art, ***Hem ljuva hem (Home Sweet Home)*** at Konsthall C in Stockholm, and ***Barnstugan (The Kindergarten)*** at Gallery 54 in Gothenburg. At the moment he is working on a publication about Barnstugan.

ELAINE REYNOLDS
IRELAND

My work addresses aspiration, lifestyle, embeddedness and isolation as they are determined in an increasingly complex global economy. Through combinations of moving image, installation and site-specific modes of working, I aim to identify ideological assurances in the everyday and to comprehend the channels through which they are produced and disseminated. This approach has brought me into contact with unique communities and diverse architectural spaces; from abandoned 'Ghost Estates' of post Celtic Tiger Ireland, to the modernist Stockholm suburbs of Fittja and the mining camps of North Western Australia. Recent works gain access to materials via the internet, the resulting experiments in expanded film, montage and docu-fiction follow an approach that reflects the logic of this networked condition. By mapping relationships between sites I aim to understand my own place in a complex global system of movement and exchange.

JORUN KUGELBERG
SWEDEN

With a background in drag and queer burlesque performance, Jorun Kugelberg continuously explores how the moving body can challenge the conditioning that it is being subjected to by its surroundings. Her work is mainly concerned with places that play a part in the every day lives of many people and as a consequence her installations tend to happen outside of the white cube. Recent works are site-specifically installed video projections. Here, one reality is projected onto another but both are equally important actors in the piece - enhancing, altering and expanding each other. Jorun's work deals with the connections between and the co-dependence of mental and physical space. A reoccurring theme is how seemingly abstract political paradigms gets materially manifested in, and negotiated through, architecture and the planning of the city.

Exhibition installation CoCA 2013
Photo: Wojciech Olech

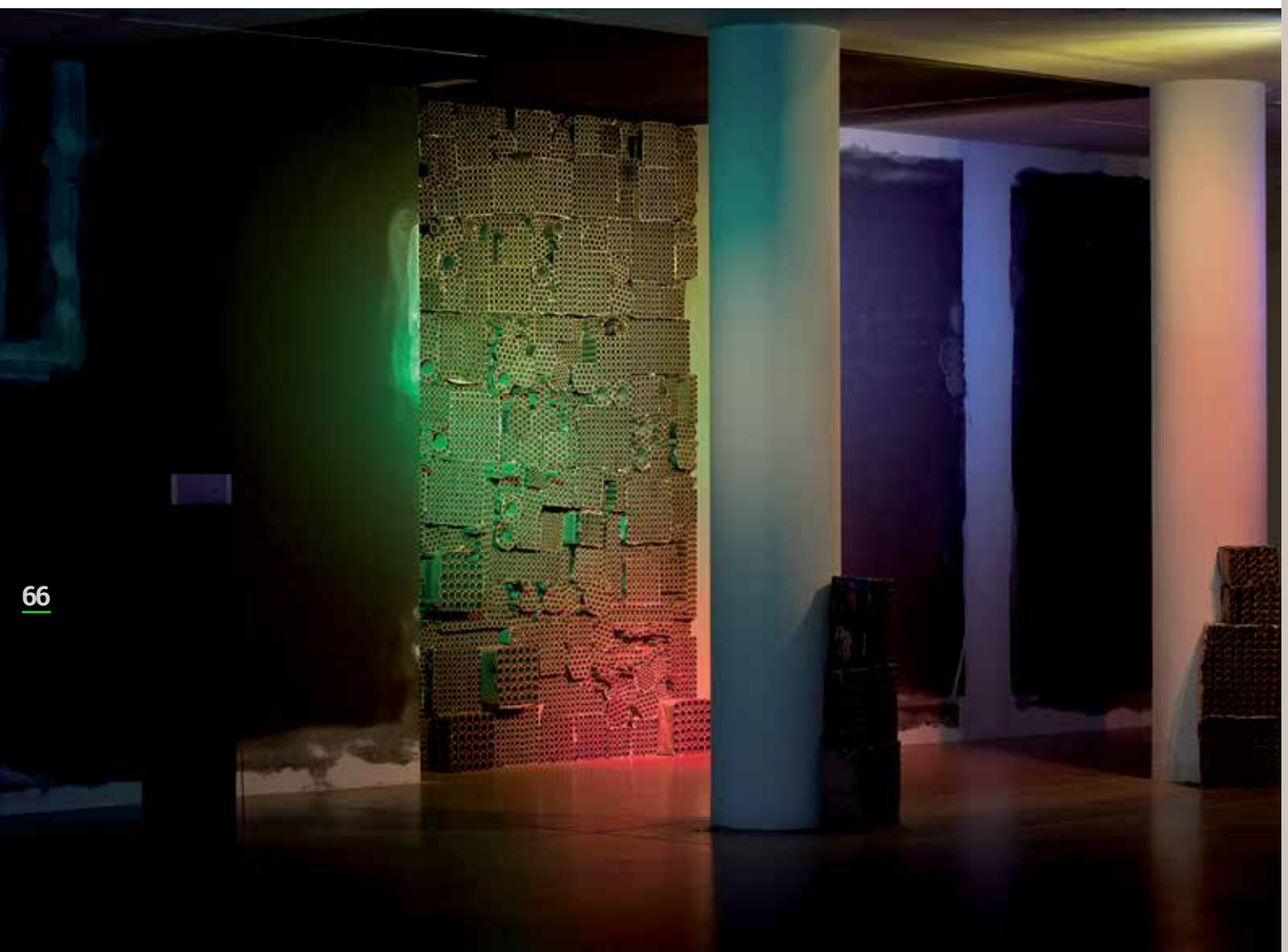
2013:
CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ART “ZNAKI CZASU” (COCA) IN TORUŃ, POLAND

LEAD ARTIST:
JONAS NOBEL (SE)

ARTISTS:
MAJA HAMMARÉN (SE)
PATRYCJA ORZECHOWSKA (PL)
AREK PARASITE (PL)
CATHAL ROCHE (IE)

Patrycja Orzechowska

Wall
Installation, 2013
Installation view, *"Please call Stella"*
Photo: Wojciech Olech



Jonas Nobel

First there was darkness, then someone turned the light switch on and a big empty space was revealed - the second floor of CoCA. One thousand square metres of emptiness.

In a town called Toruń in Poland, two Swedes, two Poles and one Irishman met. We were all artists and we were told to make an exhibition. We were free to do whatever we wanted. As if by magic we were expected to fill a void - a big empty void in the form of an art space. We started talking, presenting our artistic practices to each other without any concern for time. Our presentations lasted for hours and the hours stretched to days.

Often we got stuck in translation. Language is such a blunt tool when talking about art. Talking about your practice is hard enough in your native tongue; in English it becomes a struggle. We showed each other PowerPoint presentations of our work. What can be said? What can be understood of what has been said? In between the image of the work and what was said about the work, I started to imagine a deep dark emptiness. Misunderstandings became a meaningful form of communication, a point in the PowerPoint, of very high density, a density which our limited language skills could not reach. This density was connected to images of earlier works. The low-resolution images of the PowerPoint had a higher degree of resolution than our common language. I started longing to experience the works outside their pale existence on the screen in the conference room. Rather than forcing the team to produce new work in a workshop I decided that I wanted to experience these works for real. I wanted to take them from their low-resolution life on a pale screen in the conference room to the physical space of CoCA. And just like the artists had met, the artworks would interact with each other, and it was interesting to see what would come out of a communication between physical things.

The title of the show was borrowed from a work by Cathal Roche called *Please Call Stella*, a work in which he musically translates a seemingly nonsense text beginning with the words 'Please Call Stella'. The text was composed by linguists in order to have all the sounds of the English language represented. Cathal mimics their intonations with the fragile sound of a harp. Layer upon layer of understanding is revealed and a new knowledge beyond language appears. A poetic reality is understood. Who is Stella? Is it a person or maybe it should be translated into Latin - star? Someone is begging someone to contact a star floating in the universe. Is Cathal's musical translation made to communicate with the stars? Why does the star need a shopping list? We called Stella and we brought things back and placed them in the big dark void of CoCA. *Please Call Stella* was an exhibition about physical objects but also the dark emptiness between them. This dark emptiness resembles the possibilities and the problems of a space like CoCA.

The work *Wall* by Patrycja Orzechowska deals with an event that took place in another time, in an unknown place. The main story has already been told. The fireworks have already gone off and we can only hope that someone saw them. It must have been a hell of a show somewhere, sometime. A show that now takes place in the minds of others, translated and remembered in unforeseen ways. The viewer is softly drawn towards an endless after-party and a happy New Year. In the ongoing project *DEADLINE. Never Ending Story*, Patrycja collects texts about the ocean and illustrates them in a book. When she stumbles across a text or image she finds interesting she adds them to the book. It is like a miniature search engine on the Internet where the artist is God/Google, presenting another personal understanding of the ocean. For this exhibition she added one of my texts, taken from the work *Display of Loss This Play We Lost*. Patrycja translated the text into Polish, which in a way made it her own.

Maja Hammarén presented a film that was part of a more extensive work called *Storyteller Journalisten som ville vara en björn (Storyteller the Journalist Who Wanted to Be a Bear)*. The film is an interview with the well-known Swedish radio journalist Eric Schüldt. The strange feeling of recognition may only be felt by a Swedish radio audience, but it is nevertheless important. It serves as a background to many of the levels of stories in the film. The film shows an informal interview with the journalist about his profession, the journalist being the interviewee. What does he feel are important stories to tell? And how does he translate them? As the film and the talk continue, the famous journalist informs us that he is in fact a honey-eating bear with a straw hat. Is he serious? Or rather, on hearing can we ever listen to his radio documentaries again without thinking of the storyteller as a honey-eating bear? Does it matter who tells the stories or how they tell them? Stories are told not only with ink on paper, on screens or through microphones, they are written in our brains and alter the way we conceive of the world.

Arek Parasite hired an anonymous family to paint his paintings for the exhibition, one black and one white spiral painting. The family is from the area in Toruń in which he grew up, and he came in contact with them through local social workers. They got paid about 2000 zloty to paint the two paintings. The money was the equivalent of each artist's production budget for the exhibition. Arek played the role of employer, but also posed questions such as: what is work doing to us as individuals? Why is unemployment often considered a form of failure? It is hardly the individual's fault that they are unemployed. And what happens when we no longer need humans as workers, when we have removed ourselves from the chain of production?

I made a new piece based on the storage of CoCA's plinths. In the parking lot of CoCA there was a graveyard of plinths. Every art institution has one. I wanted to give this body of corpses new life, and make them dance in their former temple, as well as telling a story about forgotten achievements in supporting and displaying art. The work got the title *Empty Museum, a Choreography for Used Plinths.* It was also a way of communicating with Cathal Roche's musical piece by letting the dead objects dance to his piece *Please Call Stella*. The work is a continuation of an earlier installation called *Display of Loss - This Play We Lost* in which I exhibited a lot of empty jewellery display boxes. The show focused on display systems and what they can add to the object they are supposed to display. Is contemporary art a display system? If that is the case, what is it displaying? The installation was supported by a short text about a boat crew being shipwrecked - the same text that was included in Patrycja Orzechowska's *DEADLINE. Never Ending Story*.

In the last room of the exhibition, the participating artists made a translation in clay of the things on Stella's shopping list, attempting to even further broaden the act of translation into the realm of materializing language in a physical form.

The exhibition space was left in its raw state with the marks of former exhibitions as a way of showing what goes on behind the scenes of an institution like CoCA, and a way for the five artists to thank everyone working at CoCA for inviting us. After and before every show there is a lot of work that is not visible to the audience. During the exhibition someone cleans the floors, mostly on Mondays when the museum is closed. In order to highlight this activity the artists didn't paint the walls and polished only a portion of the floor into a pathway for the audience. It is through contrast that the world is discovered. If everything was white and clean nothing would exist. It's the dirt that defines the clean and the black that defines the white.

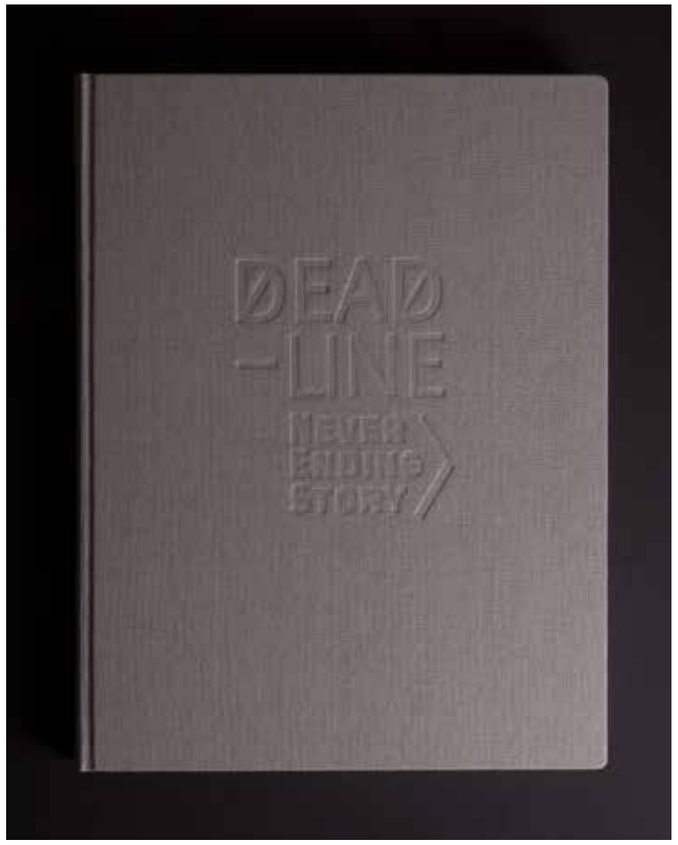
Jonas Nobel

Empty Museum, a Choreography for Used Plinths
Installation, 2013
Installation view, *"Please call Stella"*
Photo: Wojciech Olech

Maja Hammarén

◂◂ ***Storyteller The Journalist Who Wanted to Be a Bear***
Video, 2011

⧗ ***Storyteller The Journalist Who Wanted to Be a Bear***
Video, 2011
Installation view, ***"Please call Stella", 2013***
Photo: Wojciech Olech



Patrycja Orzechowska

DEADLINE. Never Ending Story
Artbook | inkjet print on cotton paper format 25 x 32 cm | edition 4 + 2 A.P. 2012
Installation view, ***"Please call Stella", 2013***
Photo: Wojciech Olech

Arek Parasite

◂◂ *Untitled/Next Chapter/Privilege to work/Family Spiral*
2013

▾▾ *Untitled/Next Chapter/Privilege to work/Family Spiral*
2013
Installation view, *"Please call Stella", 2013*

Cathal Roche

Please call Stella
Music installation, 2013
Installation view, ***"Please call Stella", 2013***
Photo: Wojciech Olech

JONAS NOBEL
SWEDEN

Jonas Nobel studied at the Umeå Academy of Fine Arts, and now lives and works in Stockholm. His interdisciplinary practice involves both art and design. He is one of the founder members of Uglycute, which merges art, design and architecture. Jonas has created a permanent installation for Restaurant Riche in Stockholm, and has participated in numerous exhibitions, including the previous Moderna Exhibition in 2006 at Moderna Museet, Stockholm. In 2007, his book, ***'The memory of this experience will fade and you will eventually die I' m sorry I' m so very very sorry'*** was designed by Research and Development.

Uglycute is a design and architecture office based in Stockholm, Sweden. Founded in 1999 by Andreas Nobel, interior designer; Fredrik Stenberg, architect; and Markus Degerman and Jonas Nobel, artists. Uglycute are working to expand the concept of design by crossbreeding it with their different professions and trying to analyse its impact on society by not only practicing but also writing, teaching and organising workshops.

AREK PARASITE
POLAND

An artist is bound to create art – it is both his occupation and raison d'être. He earns his living by either selling products, or by organising exhibitions or performances. However, it is not uncommon that an artist, despite putting best efforts into his work, cannot support himself. He is forced to gradually abandon his love for art, in favour of a profitable career. Thus, he dies as an artist. In order to survive – or even make art lucrative – I embraced the idea of parasitismology.

CATHAL ROCHE
IRELAND

Cathal Roche is a multi-instrumentalist, composer and sound-artist based in the north-west of Ireland. Specialising in solo improvisational saxophone performance, Cathal began performing as a free improviser and jazz musician in 1999. After relocating his practice from Dublin City to County Leitrim in 2001, Roche began developing a more personalized saxophone sound language through a prolonged isolated study of local birdsong, weather, intonational phonology, extended saxophone techniques, improvised dance, and spatial multi-tracked composition.

Cathal is drawn to working closely with both groups and individual professionals in other fields and disciplines. In the creation of new performance, Cathal has engaged with dancers, actors, visual artists, writers, composers, musicians, engineers, linguists, teachers, doctors, patients, schools and others. His performance/installation work aims to engage equally with environment, architecture, audience and theatre, using sound performance to give tone to shimmering, whispering and unspeakable questions, and to excavate himself and the audience deeper through the resonance of fundamental tones and their multiple harmonics.

MAJA HAMMARÉN
SWEDEN

Maja Hammarén is an artist and writer engaged in the acting body, the power of language and performativity, collective experiences and narrator positions. In her works she explores art, aesthetics and language as tools for political regimes and economic interests. What languages are used? How does 'new liberal' sound? How does 'national socialism' sound? And what do these look like - a business company; a PR expert; and a liberation struggle among slaves?

PATRYCJA ORZECHOWSKA
POLAND

In her work, Patrycja Orzechowska uses photography, collage, installation, graphic design, art books and interventions in the public space. She is interested in the choreography of the body and how it inscribes into various structures or constructions, as a form that serves both the vain attempt of restoring the proper order of things in our social and family life as well as searching for harmony in the urban tissue. That is why in her practice she often refers to a variety of performing arts, cooperating with modern dancers, gymnasts and actors. She creates artworks with the human figure as the main motif. The bodies subjected by her subjects to an innocent training become structured compositions of disturbing shapes. She treats her work as a field of experiment and experience. Therefore, apart from drawing inspiration from the study of psychology or sociology, she eagerly reaches for questionable practices and methods such as constellations or astrology in order to use them to create an alternative theatrical (or supposed image) of reality, which is seen from a new point of view.

2013:
LEITRIM SCULPTURE CENTRE /
LEITRIM ARTS OFFICE, IRELAND
LEAD ARTIST:
JAROSŁAW KOZAKIEWICZ (PL)
ARTISTS:
ULRIKA LARSSON (SE)
KATHY O'LEARY (IE)
NIALL WALSH (IE)
NATALIA WIŚNIEWSKA (PL)

Second [ˈsīt]

Seminar as part of 'Second ['sīt]' exhibition,
16 November, 2013, Leitrim Sculpture Centre.
Photo: Brian Farrell

Second ['sīt]

Second ['sīt] was the culmination of three months work in the town of Manorhamilton by four artists Ulrika Larsson, Kathy O'Leary, Niall Walsh and Natalia Wisniewska who worked under the direction of Jarek Kozakiewicz. The point of departure for this project was a series of workshops during which the participants worked out individual concepts regarding public space.

The title carries two meanings: 'Second Sight' and 'Second Site', written phonetically. In English the pronunciation of both words is the same. The title points to another (new, refreshed) way of looking at places. Places, situations, afterimages of history, which have become part of Manorhamilton inhabitant's daily life, which can be seen through the eyes of the artists in a new way. This second, refreshed way of looking, which the artists of the work share with the inhabitants, gives these places/ situations a new possibility of existing in the consciousness of the local community.

All the projects have a site-specific character, although some were realised in the gallery space of Letrim Sculpture Centre. Some were related in a physical way to a specific location, others to the characteristic features of Manorhamilton in general. They became a sort of comment to the contemporary condition of the town and its inhabitants. They refer to the past and at the same time point our thinking towards actions which can improve quality of living in the future.

In each of the works of these four artists there is a perception of the town through individual interests and experiences. The public space here is very widely understood. From an abandoned church, through a citation for the present which is a counterpoint to the past, via social problems for inhabitants here and now, to critics of urban solutions, seen from the perspective of personal experiences.

At the time of Ulrika Larsson's first stay in Manorhamilton, "Our day will come" was a pop song about love by Ruby & the Romantics. In the course of a conversation with a citizen of Manorhamilton she learned about the historical aspect of the expression within the confines of the Irish politics. Influenced by the conversation in Manorhamilton, she formulated the answer "Our time is now" to the historically burdened expression "Our day will come". Aesthetics is the apparent code of cultural identity and therefore also a limit. As the title suggests, the limit as such is the focus of her work. The boundary that defines the present from the past, classes, countries, and unions. Invisible limits that we all relate to.

Seminar as part of 'Second ['sīt]' exhibition,
16 November, 2013, Leitrim Sculpture Centre.
Photo: Brian Farrell

Niall Walsh's project 'Sentries' substitutes local men for the official forces in the identification and preservation of public space. Throughout the residency, Niall worked with a group called 'The Men's Shed' in Manorhamilton. This group is part of a growing phenomenon which provides a space for men to gather, communicate and work, with the aim of creating a non-confrontational atmosphere where the men can talk about their lives and the highs and lows which they may be confronting. Having identified sites for the erection of public seating around the town, the group were involved in the design and manufacture of the seating. The Locis exhibition contained a selection of photographic portraits of participants in the 'SENTRY' project, documentation of the process involved and examples of the seating that was developed.

St. Clare's Hall on the outsirts of Manorhamilton captured the attention of Natalia Wisniewska because of the austerity and harmony of its outline. The sole decorative forms are four arched windows which are now shut down with plywood. Her attention turned to transposition of meaning and the swing, oftentimes very surprising, of sacred buildings - synagogues changed to serve as city baths or cinemas, Christian churches into art galleries, hotels and pubs. Everywhere there is a slow decay of sacrum unto profanum - in the case of St. Clare's Hall, the building is awaiting an inevitable end when it will undertake a new use. 'Phantom and Spectre' transformed the windows into 'anti-windows of stained glass' - black facets with band of light on the edges giving the impression of glowing light from inside.

Kathy O'Leary's film 'Second Sight/Site' developed for the Locis exhibition draws on personal experience. As a wheelchair user, her experience of access difficulties brought to mind the theoretical concept of a wormhole within which a passage through space-time could create shortcuts for long journeys across the universe. With a Go-Pro camera attached to her she captured footage that looked from the different perspective of a wheelchair user. With the purpose of creating further dialogue around these topics, the film depicts a satirical wormhole journey through the urban and rural landscape as if travelling through space and time into different dimensions and environments.

Jarek Kozakiewicz

Seminar presentation as part of **'Second ['sīt]'** exhibition, ▸▸
16 November, 2013, Leitrim Sculpture Centre.
Photo: Brian Farrell

Ulrika Larsson

Borders and Aesthetics
Series of photographies and wall text, 2013
Installation view, ***Second ['sīt],*** 2013

Kathy O'Leary

'Second Sight | Site'
Video, 2013
Photo: David O'Hara

Installation view, ***'Second Sight | Site,*** 2013
Photo: Brian Farrell

Niall Walsh

'Sentries'

2013

Installation view, ***Second ['sɪt],*** 2013

'SENTRY' project, documentation of the process involved and examples of the seating that was developed.

Photos: Brian Farrell

Natalia Wisniewska

Phantom and Spectre
Site-specific installation in Manorhamilton, 2013
Photo: Brian Farrell

JAROSŁAW KOZAKIEWICZ
POLAND

Jarosław Kozakiewicz works at the intersection of art, science and architecture. His practice is inspired by artistic-architectural projects including contemporary ecology, genetics, physics, astronomy and ancient cosmological concepts, which relate microcosm with macrocosm. Identifying an analogy between the human body and the natural world, Jarosław questions the anthropometrical character of Vitruvian man as the traditional paradigm of architecture. Instead, he proposes an organic paradigm, a `geometry of the inside´. His quest has led him to utopian and critical architectural and land-art projects. Some of them have received prizes in major architectural competitions. In 2007 Jarosław's Mars Project, a massive redesign of the landscape of a former lignite-mining area near Lake Baerwalde in Germany, was completed. It takes the form of rolling landscape shaped like a giant human auricle. Other projects include proposals – often utopian schemes – for ecological or symbolic solutions in the field of urban planning (Transfer, 2006) or architecture (Oxygen Towers, 2005). In 2006 Jarosław represented Poland at the Venice Biennale of Architecture.

ULRIKA LARSSON
SWEDEN

A primary concern of Ulrika Larsson's work relates to what she refers to as our situation, and the impact that situation has on us, and our bodies. Much of her work in recent years has focused on examining what happens within a social context if the assigned role of an individual is ignored. Who is allowed and given opportunity to speak? Ultimately, this is a question of power and democracy.

Her method in several projects has been to combine strategies taken from documentary, film and portrait photography to examine positions of identity. In ***Blonde on Blonde*** she invited Carolina Gynning, a Swedish celebrity, to exchange roles with her. She worked with ***The Power of The Situation*** – how we are dressed, what role we play and whether we are anonymous or identifiable or not. The film structure is worked out from impressions from The Stanford Prison Experiment conducted in 1971 by psychologist Philip Zimbardo; a pioneering research experiment that ignored the individual inside.

NATALIA WIŚNIEWSKA
POLAND

Natalia Wiśniewska lives and works in Toruń. Her practice is diverse encompassing objects, site-specific installations and performance art. She is also interested in experimenting with sound as a separate artistic medium.

Her work often uses the social and cultural context where she explores relationships based on syncretic influence, contrast, and inversion. She is searching for the private and intimate stories expressed through language with all its semantic range of references. There is also an interest to reach the unspeakable and the latent meaning of the word, in a quest to analyse the human condition and redefine thinking.

KATHY O'LEARY
IRELAND

My visual arts practice involves creating and developing a particular goal towards inclusion and participation within an artistic and research context.

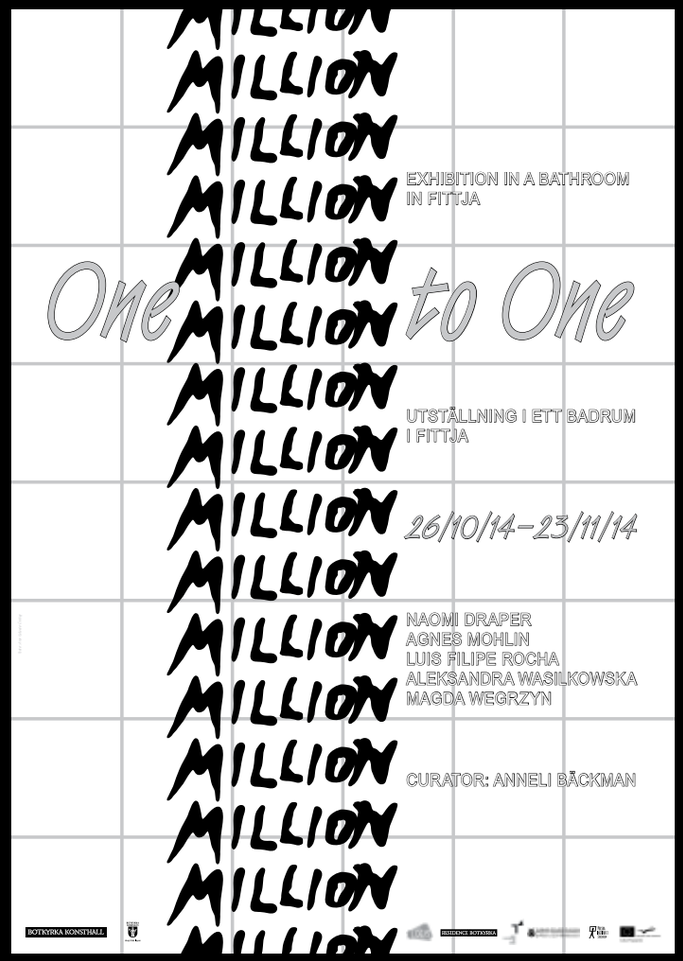
Early in my career my interests in communicating interpretations of the body and the landscape became a cohesive language. I often include my own body within this lexicon. In recent years collaborations with artists, musicians, performers and technicians have created new interactive audio / visual artworks.

As an artist my work is multidisciplinary and includes processes such as drawing, printmaking, video, sculpture / installation, photography and interactive media. These layers conceptualise and create reflections on the ever-changing world by utilizing the abstract space in-between to create a unique perspective and pliable structure. These have become my methods for navigating the blurry terrain of memory and imagination, reflecting my viewpoint of the world. I trace and retrace, retracing my path, mapping serves as a metaphor for searching, an implication of the unknown in wide , open spaces, paralleled with my personal confines, exploring 'time and space' in my research methodologies. My practice is a transformation in breaking boundaries and borders.

NIALL WALSH
IRELAND

Niall Walsh was born and bred in the suburbs of Dublin in the sixties, attended an art school where he was introduced to art and learned some skills, became interested in politics, new wave and travel, went to live and work in the U.S. gained experience in working with polystyrene, and participated in some group exhibitions. He spent some time travailing and learning Spanish in Central America, returned to Ireland in the late eighties, did some work with arts administration and spent a year working on stone restoration. Started working on a series of carved wooden heads and figures, expressionist in nature. In the nineties, he moved to the west of Ireland and got involved in establishing the Leitrim Sculpture Centre, teaching and working on public commissions in order to pay for the renovation of an old cottage. He continued to participate in group and solo shows, symposia and residencies. Niall completed an MA in 2010. His work has changed to a more "socially engaged" process, bringing together concerns about politics, environment, and change, and creating the opportunity where the audience has the chance to engage with these issues.

2014:
BOTKYRKA KONSTHALL / RESIDENCE BOTKYRKA, SWEDEN
LEAD ARTIST:
ALEKSANDRA WASILKOWSKA (PL)
ARTISTS:
NAOMI DRAPER (IE)
LUIS FILIPE ROCHA (SE)
AGNES MOHLIN (SE)
MAGDA WĘGRZYN (PL)



Seminar:

One Million to One in Botkyrka konsthall, 26 October, 2014
Agnes Mohlin presentation.

One Million to One in Botkyrka konsthall, 26 October, 2014
Left to Right: Anneli Bäckman, Agnes Mohlin, Magda Wegrzyn, Naomi Draper, Zöhre Alici, Luis Filipe Rocha, Aleksandra Wasilkowska
Photo: Simon Berg

One Million to One

The period between 1965 and 1974 saw a new phase in Sweden's architectural history: the Million Programme (Miljonprogrammet). More than one million homes were produced in a very short space of time to meet the great shortage of housing at the time. It was a project based on a utopian dream of a good life for all but many of the areas it produced were soon drawn into a negative light and have increasingly earned a bad reputation.

Fittja was developed as part of the Million Programme in the southern suburbs of Stockholm in keeping with the architecture based on the modernistic paradigm: mass production, segregated spaces and standardized architecture.

In the project *One Million to One* we reverse the modernistic paradigm where society is perceived as a mass that can be controlled and easily repaired by master plans and rational arguments. Our strategy is to switch from large-scale to micro, unique and intimate gestures, from a million to one.

The starting-point for our work was the critical view on an existing context and tactics already produced. Our aim was not to invent or produce new knowledge but to reinterpret and add another layer to an already existing frame. During our residency, research and meetings with local artists and architects we discovered the publication *SUPERFITTJA*, an archive of artistic and architectural works dealing with different aspects of Fittja.[1] The majority of the projects presented in the publication refer to the ideas of the sixties and seventies, like the utopias formulated by the influential architecture firm Superstudio; a dream of finding big solutions through the analysis of patterns, structures, flows and rules. The only project that focused on the human aspects and personal history was a work by Astrid Linnér called *Meeting Zöhre*, which, instead of analyzing buildings, focused on one person: "I have been working with Zöhre as an architect, redrawing her apartment. I did not find spectacular architectural dreams. I found out that the basic standards are very low and that she dreams of a clean bathroom."

Continuing with this dream of a 'clean bathroom', our project can be considered as an additional layer on previous matter, a site-specific installation or exhibition as a gift from five independent artists to Zöhre. We consider Zöhre a one-person audience and we devote our work uniquely to her private view.

Zöhre has worked and lived with her family in Fittja for forty years but just like a large part of the population of Fittja she was born elsewhere - in Kulu, a small town in central Turkey. According to Slavoj Žižek the history and the shape of the toilet could be a reflection of national identity as well as being ideological - and the way we use it may reflect an entire society. Through the toilet and the bathroom - the smallest part of our domestic space - we want to rethink the notion of modern architecture, progress and regression, rituals of purification and modernist hygienic arguments; we are also looking for hybrid identities where different taboos, rituals, habits and cultures meet and the social protocol is shaped by this intimate space.

1. SUPERFITTJA was a group exhibition with students from KTH – School of Architecture that took place in Botkyrka konsthall, 28 May – 30 August 2014.

Documentation of the exhibition ***One Million to One*** and reference library at Botkyrka konsthall

Agnes Mohlin installs the work ***A Room of Ones Own*** in Zöhre Alici's bathroom.
Photo: Simon Berg

One Million to One is an exhibition that is dedicated to one person alone and her specific view. The exhibition challenges notions of 'audience' and 'artwork' in which the exhibition is usually the final destination of an artwork, a point where the work is presented to a broader audience. The art experience should usually be accessible to as many as possible. In *One Million to One*, the artist reverses Duchamp's *Fountain* gesture in which an everyday object, a urinal, was reformulated into an artwork. Instead the artwork returns to the bathroom and becomes an exclusive object, hidden from the view of the broad public. Art is not eternal - it changes and vanishes, melting into our everyday lives with their invisible rituals and taboos. Or, as Stephen Hicks summarizes Duchamp's message: 'Art is something you piss on.'

Agnes Mohlin
A Room of One's Own, Shower curtain.

Agnes Mohlin decided to create a shower curtain, a second door within the bathroom, something to hide behind that allows you to be yourself, and to be by yourself. In her curtain she has incorporated the lock and the drain - the two most crucial elements to the bathroom - and bubbles, the act of cleaning. In some of the bubbles, Fittja is reflected; the view from the small bathroom window, whilst other bubbles contains the symbol of the evil eye; a symbol of protection in the Mediterranean, which Zöhre already has on her bathroom textiles- the symbol of protection.

Naomi Draper

In *Plan, Plot, Survey,* sculpture/drawing Naomi Draper wanted to examine the toilet/bathroom in relation to the site of Fittja, which translates as beach meadow or moist place in Old Swedish. The name accurately describes the natural environment that surrounds the suburban area with its vast meadows and located by a lake. Access to nature was important when planning the Million Programme, as it would contribute to the wellbeing of the citizens. Naomi wanted to explore the commonalities between the private bathroom space and the reed beds found at the shore of the lake in Fittja, both as places that function to cleanse and purify.

For the exhibition Naomi created a sculpture/drawing that reflects the process of planning, plotting and surveying when building architectural spaces. Zöhre was asked to identify and mark out the area that she would propose to change. Then Naomi, with the use of a chalk line made up of a braided reed rope, created a chalk line drawing that will fade and wash away as the space is used.

Luis Filipe Rocha
Untitled Genitive, Potato masher, towel.

Inspired by Zöhre's husband who expressed an irritation about not having a good place to place the towels, Luis created an addition to the bathroom in the shape of a ready-made sculpture. In the winter of 2012 Luis bought a kitchen utensil for mashing potatoes with the intention of making a shepherd's pie. This was one of three objects that made him feel at home in the house that he had just moved into. However, next time he moved the potato masher never made it into the kitchen, instead Luis placed it on his working desk, amongst books and other materials, all the time with the haunting feeling that it should be used for something other than mashing potatoes. When Zöhre's husband expressed the wish to hang the towels in a proper way, folded instead of hanging, Luis had an epiphany.
The potato masher never went back to the kitchen.

Luis' sculpture in the bathroom intends to fuse two cultures. One will perform in a new function and the other will provide identity and write history.

Magda Wegrzyn
Hidden from the Gaze, Acrylic paint on canvas.

Magda Wegrzyn wanted to work with painting as a medium in order to visualize Zöhre's private gaze as well as thoughts when she was alone in her bathroom. The initial plan was to draw directly on the tiles that were supposed to be mounted in the bathroom, but when the renovation plans were canceled, Magda decided to paint tiles on a canvas instead, measuring the size of one of the bathroom walls. In the left corner of the painting the tiles are unfolded, unveiling a glimpse of Kulu, the Turkish village in which Zöhre was born.

Aleksandra Wasilkowska
Modern Splash, Sound.

Modern Splash is a sound specific installation, a muzak composed specifically for Zöhre's bathroom. The piece transforms Mozart's music into a toilet sonata and acoustic perfume. The toilet became an instrument replacing a piano in his popularly known "Turkish March". Originally, the last movement of XI Piano Sonata imitates the sound of a Turkish Janissary band which was much in vogue in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries and inspired some of the most prominent European composers like Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. They incorporated a Turkish style in their works and up to day the musical style *Alla turca* seems to serve as a form of musical relaxation or entertainment. The influence of Turkish music in European classical music didn't evaporate until today. The use of the slang term "Turkish section" to describe the percussion section of an orchestra persisted into modern times.

Modern splash is an acoustic hybrid that, in a Duchampian gesture, crosses cultures that never coexist - sanitation with sonata as a metaphor for fluid European identity where different flows meet.

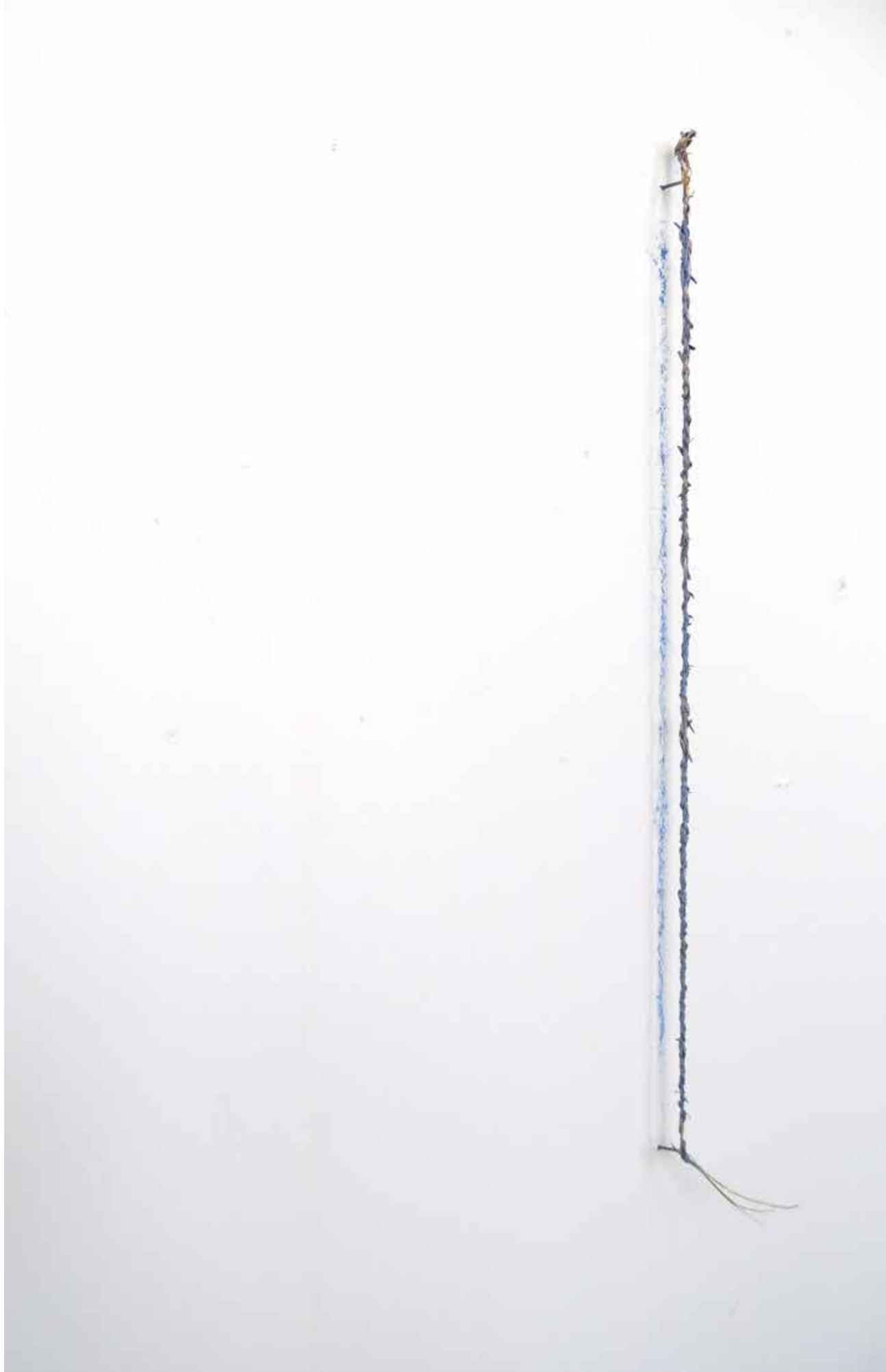
Aleksandra Wasilkowska

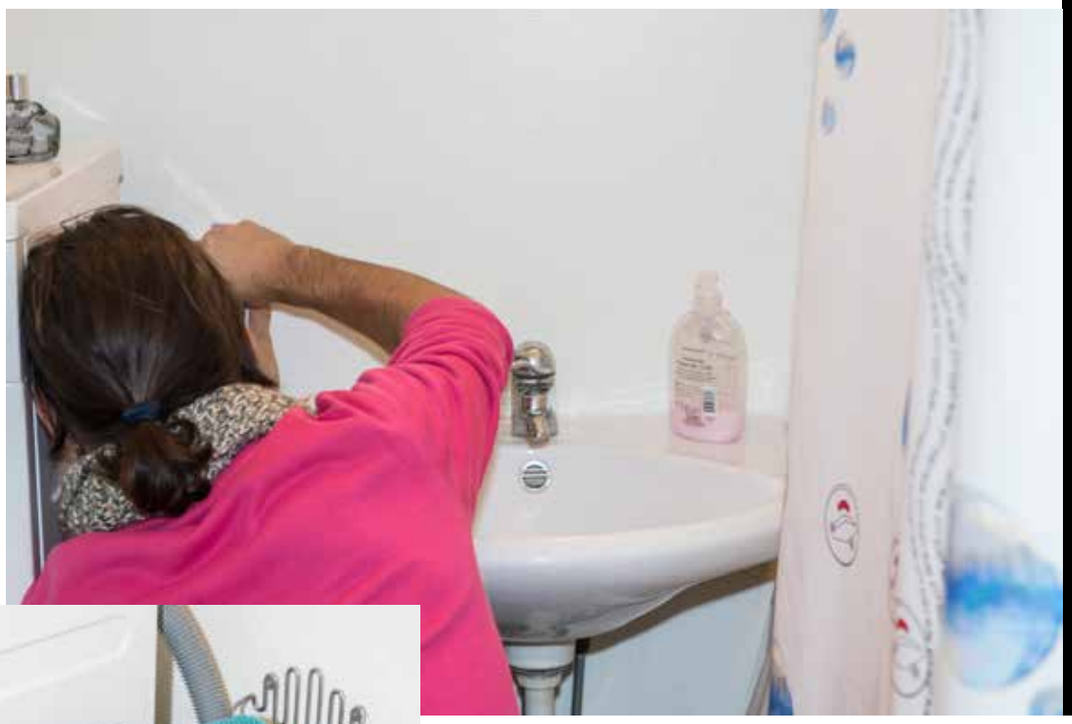
Modern Splash ▸▸
Sound, 2014

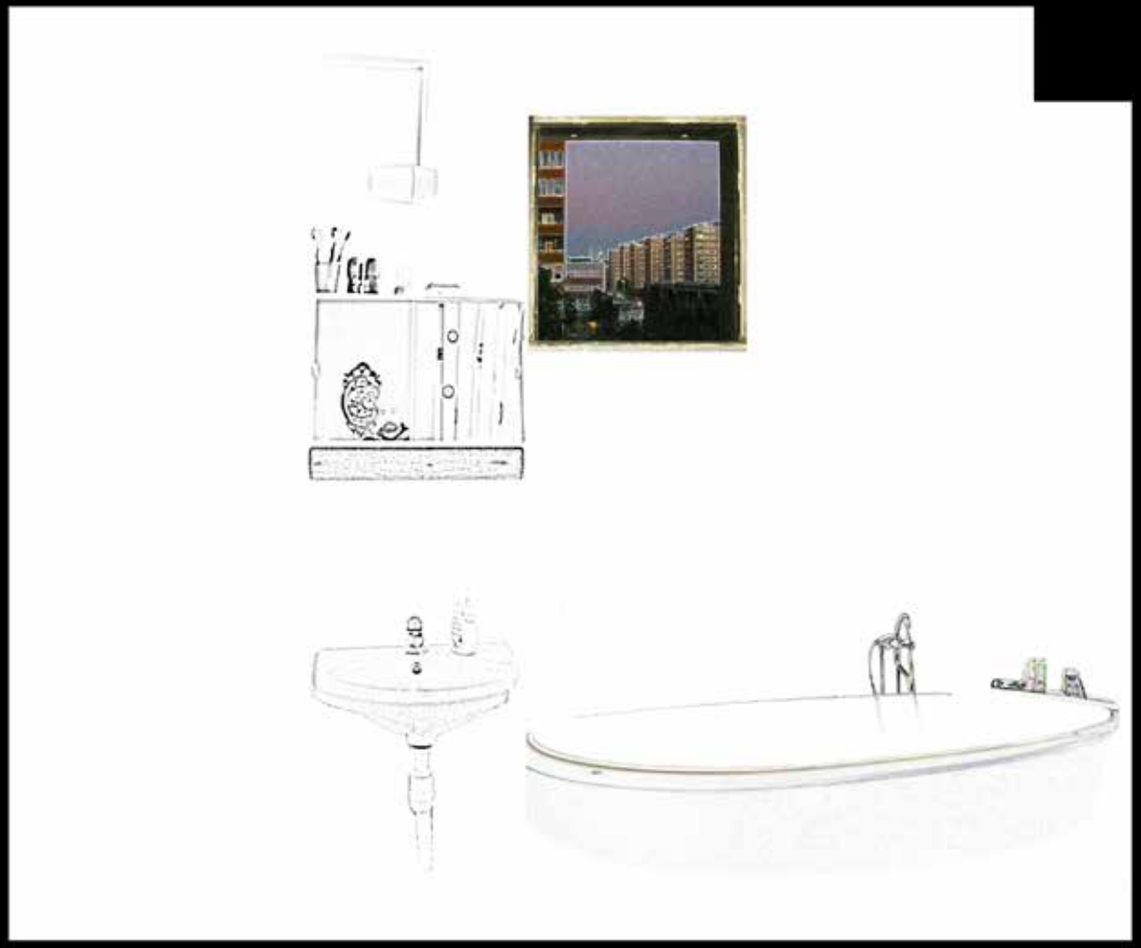
Zöhre Alici in her bathroom.
Photo: Simon Berg

Naomi Draper

Plan, Plot, Survey
Sculpture / drawing, 2014
Photo: Simon Berg



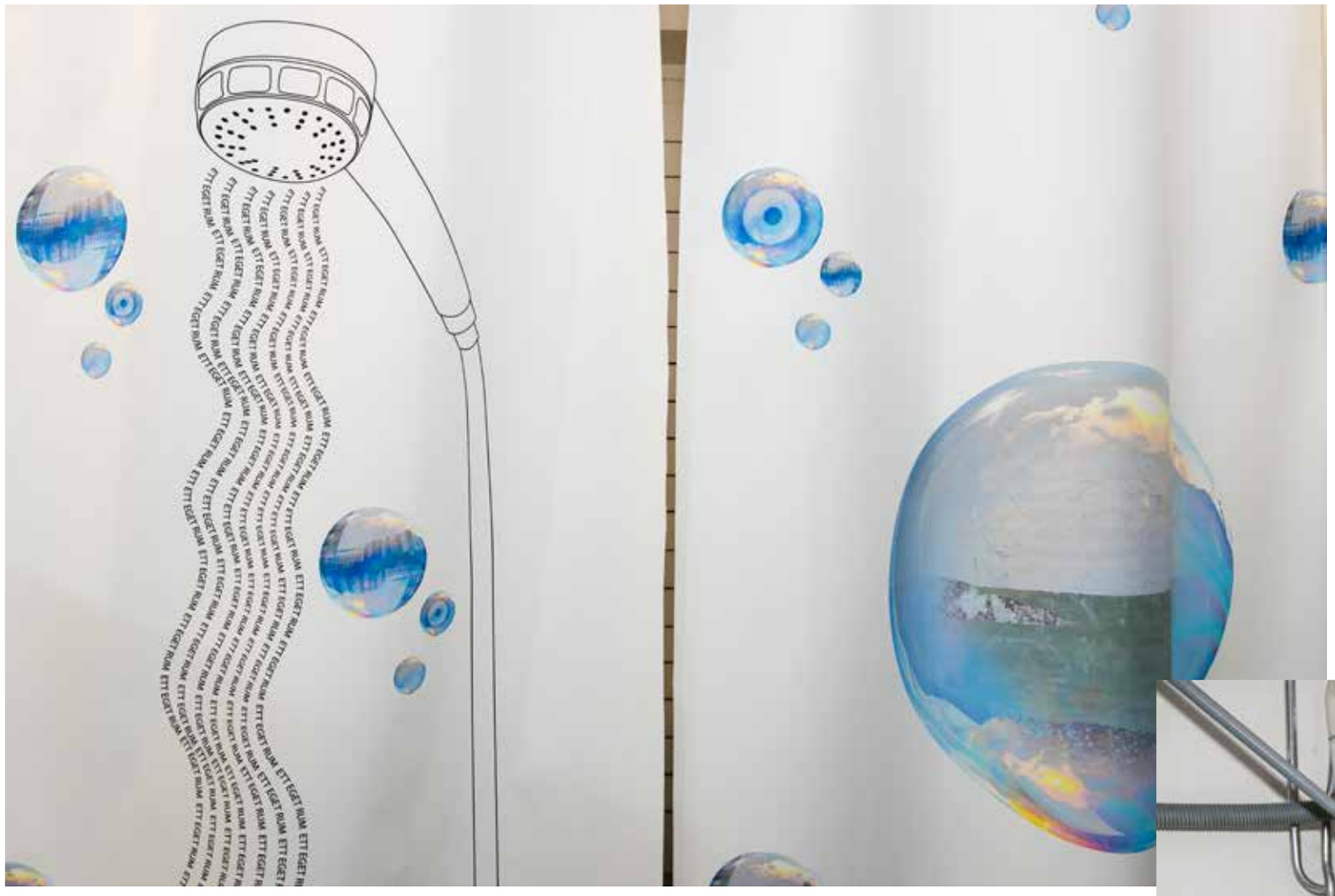




Luis Filipe Rocha

Untitled Genitive
Sketch/drawing, 2014

Untitled Genitive
Sculpture, 2014
Photo: Simon Berg



A Room of One's Own
Shower curtain, 2014
Photo: Simon Berg

Magda Wegrzyn

Hidden from the Gaze
Acrylic on canvas, 2014
Photo: Simon Berg

Hidden from the Gaze
Sketch/drawing

ALEKSANDRA WASILKOWSKA
POLAND

Aleksandra Wasilkowska is an architect and artist based in Warsaw. Her main interest is the informal and self-organising spaces denied from the official discourse like stalls, bazaars or toilets that she calls Shadow Architecture. She works within different media like books, installations, scenographies, architectural projects and urban strategies. She represented Poland in the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2010 with Agnieszka Kurant.

Recently she exhibited her works in MoMa in Warsaw ´***'What we can see'*** showing artistic scene of the last decade and ***'Slow Future'*** in CCA in Warsaw about the notion of degrowth. She is working with the on-going art project ***'Bazaristan'*** that has become a frame to work with different cities on renovation of existing bazaars like the oldest existing bazaar in Warsaw Bazar Rozyckiego.

AGNES MOHLIN
SWEDEN

I am an artist and architect working with objects and words. I would say that my art deals with bodies, spaces and the power to control and define them. I explore these subjects through sculpture and buildings. In my view, people as well as power structures are material things, they are palpable and in no way abstract.

For a long time, I have been focusing on the bathroom, both in my practice as an artist and as an architect. The bathroom is like a vent in a culture where the most basic things are forbidden and seen as embarrassing. It is a room to be locked, and a space where one manages the body and all the dirt it produces; there is a drain that swallows all that is produced, like a black hole.

Recently I have started to work with stone, trying to make monumental works still closely connected to the body and the intimate world around it. I enjoy the paradox of trying to communicate these feelings through the hard material of stone. I like it when things get flooded, when stuff is flushed away or when the body overflows with emotions in the form of tears, or words.

LUIS FILIPE ROCHA
PORTUGAL/SWEDEN

Luis Filipe Rocha wais born in Coimbra, Portugal but has been based in Sweden since attending the course Mejan Arc at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm in 2011. He previously studied art and architecture at the University of Coimbra where he graduated in 2005. At this time he was also engaged in performing arts, working as an actor, scenographer, director and producer.

Luis sees his practice being formulated somewhere in the interstice between academic research and an experimental, garage DIY-approach, influenced by the avant-garde. Luis developed his own visual and conceptual vocabulary involving a great span of architecture, photography, sculpture and social theory. He has worked as an architect in Barcelona, London and on the Island of Mozambique focusing on the relationship between cultural heritage and contemporary arts.

His artwork is always characterisized by the use of reused materials, industrial refuse and construction leftovers. For him these are pieces of a puzzle "'where nothing else can be added and from which nothing can be retracted"'. Philosophically, no question should remain unanswered and no answer should remain a question, which allows him to become easily seduced by paradox, interdisciplinary and vernacular sensitivity.

MAGDA WEGRZYN
POLAND

Magda Wegrzyn is a visual artist, doctoral candidate and independent curator. Her work addresses questions of perception, digital technologies and communication in tune with aesthetics, and the medium of painting. Speaking of painting - from the context of digital technology - she calls upon a tangible contact during the process of interaction with it. Her current interests reflect upon articulation in painting, in tune with visual rhetoric - understanding the communication of the visual image as contrast to the verbal message, the function of the image and its impact on the public. She examines how digital culture affects the perception of a medium in the case of both a painter and a receiver. She is interested in Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver: ***The Mathematical Theory of Communication*** and its possible use in art. Magda was has been honoured with several fellowships and has participated internationally in various solo and group exhibitions since 2010. In 2012 she collaborated with the Center of Contemporary Art in Toruń, Poland. Her work has been featured in various magazines and portals such as: ***Art in Berlin, Musli Magazine, Notes Na 6 Tygodni, Poland Art*** and ***Artinfo.***

NAOMI DRAPER
IRELAND

Naomi Draper's multi-disciplinary practice explores the fragility of our built and natural environment, investigating what defines space and how it is lived and activated by humans and non-humans. Combining a range of mediums and processes, particularly through drawing and glass, Naomi examines the structures and boundaries, limitations and new potentials of public and private environments.

2014:
CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ART “ZNAKI CZASU” (COCA) IN TORUŃ, POLAND
LEAD ARTIST:
SEAMUS NOLAN (IE)
ARTISTS:
PHOEBE DICK (IE)
EMMA HOULIHAN (IE/SE)
LILIANA PISKORSKA (PL)
DAGMARA POCHYŁA (PL)

Seamus Nolan

Locis is premised on the idea that there are no expectations to produce. The process is one of exchange and informality, of research and collaboration.

No demands to produce anything other than the formalities or commonalities of arts production, recognized here as enacting the visit, the research, the hospitality, the connections, the statement, the image, the publication, the text, the advertisement, the exhibition, the seminar, the banquet and the after party...

The immaterial artwork recognized in the signifiers of its materiality, utilizes the materiality of context, and in this case the project becomes an opportunity to display, and or *to commandeer a host of sites upon which meaning may be produced.* In this realm of inquiry the artwork might exist beyond the gallery, in an expanded field of activity, which acknowledges the indeterminability of the artwork and the support, which this kind of work requires in order to develop.

Funded by the EU Culture Programme and selected by the participating cultural centres, our work and ideas somehow represent what is acceptable as artworks, ideas which are concurrent with existing cultural practice, we have been presented with the opportunity to represent contemporary European culture.

The nature of the project is premised on the exchange, the process of inquiry, of friendship and of critique, with a secondary objective to present work in the gallery.

At what point is the informal process of inquiry and exchange formalized and constituted as an effective model for producing informality? In a sense the outcome of the project has been defined in its guidelines, yet these same guidelines constitute a model for developing a practice beyond the confines of traditional research and development.

Working, as we have been, in a reflexive and reciprocal manner, facilitating criticality in terms of the development of the work, the context of its production and the site of its presentation. Similarly considering an outcome, the artwork may or may not exist but should engage the artist and his or her chosen audience in a dynamic of mutual antagonism, to make new a visually performative or process-based interrogation of the form and subject, the specific conditions of the individual arts practice, and the complexities and contradictions of its manifestation as a work of art.

The polemic, which exists in making work that is critically engaged, where the subject reflects the problematics of the institutional framework or seeks to represent the marginal within this framework, is the ability of the institution to absorb its own critique. The issue of cultural authority and validation whereby the gallery enacts the role of Andrea Fraser, has questioned her own work which is renowned as a model of institutional critique, in asking why the gallery would ask her to make work which is critical of their process if they thought it would make any difference.

Photos: Natalia Miedziak

The impetus to create new, to move beyond the artist studio and the gallery and to lend institutional support to the process of engagement, which the artist pursues, rather than the object of its representation, speaks of a desire to reassess the role of art in society. If occupying the gallery is secondary to the process of producing work then we are left with the problem of how and why the artwork must be represented other than to justify funding and fulfil its contract of immediate social or political engagement.

All activity is not art, and all art is not activity.

Giorgio Agamben points to the immaterial artwork when he asserts that the artwork is a false confrontation between the idea of creativity and labour, citing the artists role as one of justifying ones existence beyond the dynamic of labour and exchange. Asserting that existence does not require justification, either through work or through production; the artist's role is to define the purpose of his or her own existence.

The idea of acquiring funding to pursue a process of exchange without any foreseeable outcome reminds us of Jörg Schröder's advertising agency Bismarc Media, whose employees were told to produce nothing, and when they couldn't bear producing nothing, observe each other labouring under the pointless compulsion to be productive. A general manager was appointed whose task was to undermine any possible output.

Is the goal of the project to reject the artwork and champion the process? No, but if the goal of the project is to develop new models of exchange and ways of making work, the challenge then is to infuse these elements of production and instigate artworks as process, ethereal models of exchange materialised in order to disappear, embodying the tensions of these contradictions in the sites of contact between the gallery, the artist, the audience, and the subject.

Enter quickly, as I am afraid of my happiness

"Enter quickly, as I am afraid of my happiness" Jacques Derrida explains. As if, then, the stranger could save the master and liberate the power of his host; it's as if the master, qua master, were prisoner of his place and his power, of his ipseity, of his subjectivity (his subjectivity is hostage). So it is indeed the master, the one who invites, the inviting guest, who become the hostage - and who really always has been. And the guest, the invited hostage, becomes the one who invites the one who invites, the master of the host. The guest becomes the host's host. The guest (hôte) becomes the host (hôte) of the host (hôte).[1]

Jacques Derrida speaks of the anxiety around the loss of self in accepting otherness, playing with the notion of hospitality as conditional in terms of the host guest relationship or unconditional hospitality in terms of truly accepting otherness. The possibility of the host becoming the guest or the guest becoming the hosts host relates to this underlying acceptance of the other and the possibility of change occurring within the encounter. This statement becomes a device to make explicit and forego the conditional and offers a level playing field where both host and guest might meet as equals.

Photos: Natalia Miedziak

The works presented as part of the Locis project are premised on the notion that change is both possible and desirable, the works seek to transform, transcend or transgress distinctions between the ideas of artist and activist, audience and performer, protagonist and subject. Interrogating the spaces of collective behaviour in order to instigate or infer alternative narratives within these relationships. The gallery becomes a site for engagement but a site among sites, for the works are situated within public and collective spaces as much as private and individual space.

The gallery operates as an armature, which might support the activities of the individual artists, playing host to these diverse practices from varied cultural and social backgrounds. Fluctuating between host and guest, between conditional and unconditional. Informing meaning and identity in processes of positioning and disposition.

Phoebe Dick plays with notions of performer and performance, offering a platform for exchange through the act of participation; the viewer is invited to perform for the staff in the front of the house in exchange for a ticket to enter the show. Activating the object(s) and process of engagement through the mechanics of exhibition, performance and reciprocation.

Liliana Piskorska invites the staff, board of CoCA, and audience, to reconsider the objectives of the cultural centre and opens a dialog around issues of gender and identity politics within the framework of the gallery programme. Advocating for a social as well as a cultural responsibility towards the artist and the artwork, reflecting on notions that institutionalized public legal entities have the ability to shape social thinking.

Dagmara Pochyła reflects upon the collective, and brings everyday public structures into the gallery as objects of monumental positionality. These sites of memory and collective identity formation destabilise the notion of shared meaning in history and ideology, these recalcitrant objects refuse appropriation and offer the viewer an opportunity to renegotiate memory in the present.

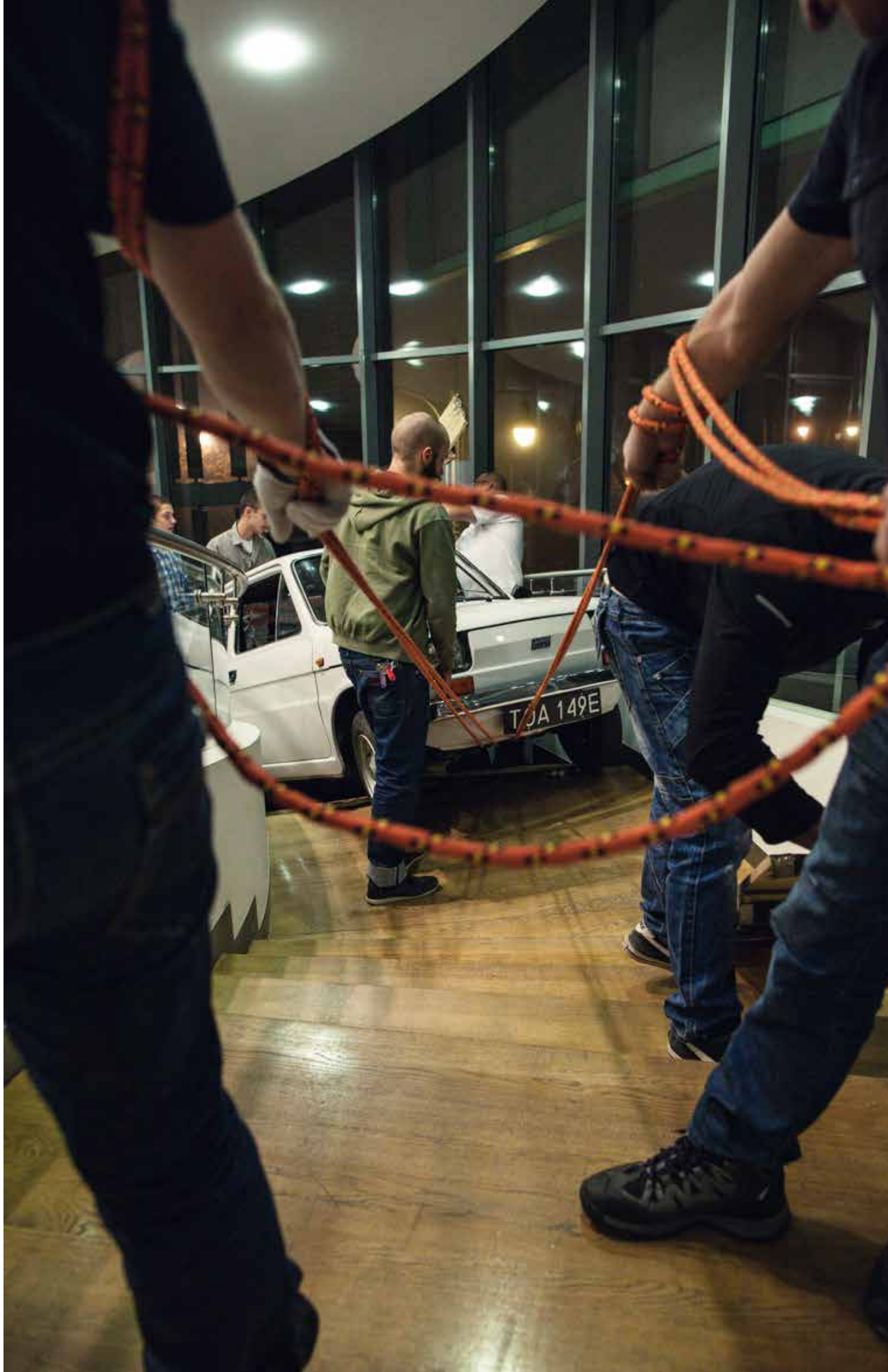
Emma Houlihan fluctuates between protagonist and antagonist, reading the city and its potential for transformation. A series of actions exist within the city and gallery, interactions and interventions, which crystalize the incidental moment in an expanding process of enquiry.

Seamus Nolan sets in motion a project to remake the discarded relief panels of two little known Polish artists Józef Murlewski and Czesław Woźniak, the designers of the ornamental relief panels of the Children's building in Toruń. These interior panels were recently destroyed to make way for the refurbishment of the buildings new identity as a Pizza Hut, although the exterior of the building has been preserved as a protected structure under the UNESCO heritage city guidelines.

1. Derrida, Jacques. *Of Hospitality.* Trans. Rachel Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000,. p. 123-125

Seamus Nolan

The Anthropology of Future Ruins
Performance *'car ascending a staircase'*, 2014
Photo: Natalia Miedziak



Seamus Nolan

The Anthropology of Future Ruins
Pizza Hut Carvings
2014
Photo: Natalia Miedziak

Phoebe Dick

Performance
2014
Photo: Natalia Miedziak

Emma Houlihan

Dragon of Toruń
Installation, 2014
Installation view, *'Enter quickly, as I am afraid of my happiness'* 2014
Photo: Natalia Miedziak

Liliana Piskorska

Stains ▸▸
Video, 2014
Installation view, *'Enter quickly, as I am afraid of my happiness'* 2014
Photo: Natalia Miedziak

Dagmara Pochyła

Flash Back Ground
Installation, 2014
Installation view, *'Enter quickly, as I am afraid of my happiness'* 2014
Photo: Natalia Miedziak

Dagmara Pochyła

Nothing Has Changed
Installation, 2014
Installation view, ***'Enter quickly, as I am afraid of my happiness'*** 2014
Photo: Natalia Miedziak

SEAMUS NOLAN
IRELAND

My practice investigates the relative value of objects and social processes as they appear within different economies and contexts. In my work, I try to unravel the commonplace, to recognise the inherent structure or code from which we, as social and political animals construct and de-construct the world around us. My work is concerned with power relations, energy and possibility; I am interested in reconfiguring the everyday as a means to examine or question the purveyors of meaning.

PHOEBE DICK
IRELAND

Phoebe Dick lives in Manorhamilton in the north-west of Ireland, less than an hour from where she grew up. Phoebe's connection to physical and social surroundings emerges in work that evidences a keen eye and appreciation for the wider world, and this particular region, with an acute awareness of some of the problems faced within it.

A love of complex systems, chaos and fractals, informs Phoebe's worldview, and her creative process is often a mathematician's quest to discover simple transferable truths, similarities, or patterns in the world. What Phoebe perceives or perceives to be possible in her surroundings is reduced or expanded, expounded on, and made public in various media, with printmaking and songwriting forming the foundations of a diverse practice.

A desire to creatively engage with her environment beyond her personal practice led to Phoebe's involvement in the development and management of a "creative community space" and guesthouse in Manorhamilton, where a platform is provided for various social and creative activities and Phoebe's faith in chaos is put to the test.

LILIANA PISKORSKA
POLAND

I am a non-heterosexual artist living and working in Poland. I am staining the city with myself. In my work I am talking about being seen in the public space and seeing others in the public space. My work concerns visibility and visualization of visibility. I am playing with my openness; I want to bring myself closer to the landscape, my home district and my community. There is a state of longing. I am longing to become a member of a community. An art institution legitimizes my activism, my activities, and the institution legitimizes me as an artist and so it also legitimizes me as a person. It gives me credibility. But could the institution, by standing behind my artwork, legitimize my presence in a society? Art and culture should be an area of freedom and equality, a place to present Utopian social and political images.

In my work I am staining the landscape. I am pressuring you to choose a side, I am asking you to verbalize an opinion and to make a statement of your own.

EMMA HOULIHAN
IRELAND/SWEDEN

Toruń Główny, 5 minutes shy, I seek out the wait. The train station is under construction, the waiting room, like most waiting rooms, feels wrong - neither cosy nor conducive to conversation. I wander, waiting for what I don't know. I circle main arrivals and departures, the morning light flooding in, god fingers illuminating Romuald Drzewiecki's ceiling above - sparkling in the morning sun - a dream of fool's gold.

What is a waiting room? A repository for those who are anticipating arrival or passing time in advance of departure, or a purgatory for those gathered together in a common limbo? What is a storage space, a statue park or a gallery? A container, a vessel for objects. Objects that if arranged together have the potential to create new meanings. Trains never leave, but depart. They never reach their destination, but terminate. The end of the line. Yet, nothing is permanent, everything is temporary. Change is constant.
Can a collection of obtuse triangles come full circle and transform into an object of good – a pseudo dodecahedron to mimic a fool's gold? Only time will tell if one can begin from the beginning again and reinvent the good parts.

DAGMARA POCHYŁA
POLAND

I spent my childhood surrounded by pinewoods, modernist architecture of the University of Nicolaus Copernicus and typical blocks of flats. I never gave a thought about becoming an artist;, I was always more into biology, animals and nature. The decision to study art was sudden and unexpected. I graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, specializing in the Intermedia Art in 2007. My diploma work was an interactive video installation entitled ***Being of Projectionn/Projection of Being*** and it has been presented in various exhibitions in Warsaw, Klenovy (Czech Republic) and Toruń. In my works I mostly use video, installation and performance media. In the beginning I focused mainly on new technologies and new media, and their influence on the forms of interpersonal communication as well as the intrinsic nature of these changes. The performance actions raised questions of the relationship between the individual and an intuitively perceived unity of the world, the interdependence of entities. My work also deals with topics of parallelism and duality within the individual, distortions of the space and time perception, and attempts to capture the "in-between" states. I'm currently moving within the mottos of post-humanism, where I examine the relationship between nature and culture.

2014:
THE DOCK / LEITRIM ARTS OFFICE, IRELAND
LEAD ARTIST:
JOHAN THURFJELL (SE)
ARTISTS:
JULIA ADZUKI (SE)
LINDA SHEVLIN (IE)
BRIGITTA VARADI (IE)
KAROLINA ŻYNIEWICZ (PL)

LOCAL

Interview with the residence artists

For Locis 2014, the Irish residency was led by Swedish artist Johan Thurfjell, with participating artists Linda Shevlin, Brigitta Varadi, Karolina Żyniewicz and Julia Adzuki. The group convened for three separate stays in Leitrim - an unknown landscape for three of the artists, but familiar to the other two who reside there. Leitrim-based arts writer and researcher Joanne Laws met the group during their visit in September 2014, to gain an insight into the various projects that were underway at the time, and to probe the thematic inquiries emerging from the residency process.

Joanne Laws: Johan, as lead artist, can you describe some of your original ideas for the 2014 Irish residency, with regard to the Leitrim setting?

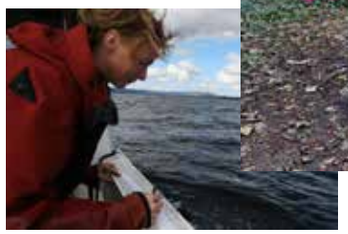
Johan Thurfjell: *The only thing I knew about Carrick-on-Shannon, when I was invited to lead the residency, was that it was beautiful, small and rural. I devised a very straightforward idea for the artists in the group to just spend time together in Carrick, and to work intuitively with the location as our thematic starting-point. I myself experienced moving from an urban setting (Stockholm) to a rural village in the countryside, and continue to reflect on how this relocation has affected my studio practice. Based on this experience, I was certain that I wanted all of us to make new work for the upcoming exhibition, which would concentrate our sessions together and focus the individuality of our shared experience.*

JL: How have these unfolding experiences of the rural Irish landscape informed your own artistic inquiry?

JT: *I find the Irish mythology more present and visible in the landscape than in the Swedish. Since I'm interested in mythologies in general, and mythological creatures in particular, I wanted to further explore Irish mythology upon my arrival. When the group met for the first time, we embarked on some extensive sightseeing to places of interest. In Sligo, we met wood-carver Michael Quirke, who introduced me to the myth of the Dobar Cù - the 'dark wet hound'. This myth states that all of us, at some stage in our lives, will eventually need to visit the 'Underworld'. Down there, within ourselves, this monster lives, and to pass him we must become friends with him. This myth became the door-opener back into a project I've been working on at home for some time. In my piece for the exhibition I am using the Dobar Cù myth as a framework for a story based on my own personal experiences of life.*

JL: Some of you have been working with the natural elements and materials of the west of Ireland. Has this process revealed unexpected connections with your own native landscapes?

Julia Adzuki: *The experiences of the residency in Ireland have provided a strong reminder of my Celtic family origins and some insights into underlying mythologies. Growing up in Australia, my childhood was rich in direct experience with wilderness and rural landscape, informing much of my work with natural and ephemeral materials. Through ritual actions with poetic instruments I am attempting to document something of the reciprocal exchange between landscape and body. Mythology, I have come to realise, provides a lens through which the reciprocal interaction of nature and human are acknowledged, in contrast to the prevalent and observable scientific perspective. Exploring megalithic tombs, holy wells and fairy forts awoke*



an awareness of the many layers of earth meeting the feet with each step. My fascination with the Sheela Na Gig, led to creating vulva mask forms of Kombucha (bacterial culture of fermented tea) symbolising the Mother and passage of life from which we emerge and eventually return.

Karolina Żyniewicz: *Like Julia, nature is also my main source of my inspiration, so Ireland's influence was very intense. It seems almost impossible to imagine responding to this place without incorporating nature, which determines all aspects of life here, more or less directly. Death is a special moment of human return to nature, ancestors and the earth. Because I am fascinated with funeral traditions, everywhere I travel I visit cemeteries, searching for information about cultural rites.*

Peat is a natural treasure of Ireland, which is inscribed in tradition, through its multiple uses as a fuel, fertilizer, medicine and cosmetic. Comprised from dead matter such as plant debris, peat is also a natural preservant, demonstrated by the human remains which have been naturally mummified within peat bogs, presenting these bogs as 'natural cemeteries'. The work I have developed during the LOCIS residency has been informed by Polish and Irish funeral traditions. It has involved the construction of 'Peat Cemeteries' – simple tombs made from turf – and 'Pantry/Cemetery' experiments, involving the preservation of various foodstuffs in peat.

As the youngest member of the Irish residency group, I learned a lot from the other artists. Julia taught me how to make kombucha, and Brigitta taught me how to spin wool. We shared many significant things from our art practices, as well as personal life experiences.

JL: Brigitta, although you moved to Ireland in the nineties, you have articulated your sense of being 'neither native nor foreigner' in the context of the Locis residency. Has the visiting artists' responses to the west of Ireland (re)famed your connections with Ireland and/or your native Hungary?

Brigitta: *The residency created a platform for dialogue on so many levels, and brought to the surface several questions that have been brewing, regarding how I (re)examine my own identity, especially since spending more and more time in New York. Almost like a travelling monk, I journey between three different places in the world, observing significant differences which might not have been invisible had I only stayed in one location. The residency journey has become a vehicle for reconnecting my past, present and future, with the aim of finding a place of contentment embedded in three different cultures. Through the mix of cultural origins of the other Locis artists, and their interest in the landscapes and mythologies of the west of Ireland, I have begun to reconnect with my Hungarian cultural heritage and my deep enduring love affair with Ireland.*

JL: Linda, as the only Irish person on this year's Leitrim residency, have the visiting artists' impressions of Ireland (re)framed your perceptions of your local landscape?

Linda Shevlin: *Rationalising my relationship to my immediate environment - both physically and socio-historically - is an ongoing concern within my work, but it has certainly been heightened through this residency process. What appealed to me in Johan's initial proposal was the capacity to play out associations between physical relationships to 'place' and culturally constructed notions of identity, and I was curious to see where that might lead.*

JL: How has this trajectory influenced your current work?

LS: *Although the thematic structure of my work can vary, the underlying conceptual inquiries tend to be site-responsive, often located in proximity to my home (e.g. Lough Key Forest Park, The Moylurg Tower, the ballrooms of Roscommon and The Organic Centre in Rossinver, etc.). The Locis process, and the time spent with the group visiting the 'mythologically-loaded' sites I have previously overlooked, has allowed me to connect several abstract concepts in my work: The occult, mythology, magic and science fiction, paradigm shifts from historical fact to fiction, and the representation of these things in modern science and popular culture.*

JL: Any branch of mythology in particular?

LS: *I'm looking at the origins of writings on mythologies, such as 'The Book of Invasions'- an account of Irish history as recorded by medieval scholars. It contains pre-Christian elements and was considered an accurate account of Irish History until relatively recently. Mostly considered myth now, it has been argued that it was based loosely on actual events. Mythological tropes such as the 'invisibility cloaks' worn in battle, denote a power that has subsequently been explored in popular culture, from the Brothers Grimm stories and 'The Invisible Man', to Samuel R. Delany's 'Dhalgre' - a book closely linked to Greek and Roman mythology.*

JL: Johan, perhaps you could offer some concluding thoughts. How are you reflecting (at this mid-way point) on the artists' responses to your brief, and the projects they have embarked on so far?

JT: *The group is responding to my proposal just as I had hoped it would. The five of us have dug ourselves into new projects, finding our own different ways of responding to the geographic location. Since the Irish mythology is so present in the landscape, we have all naturally gravitated towards the subjects of mystique, ritual and myth. Our individual experiences of the residency differ slightly: For me, Julia and Karolina - the foreigners in the group - Ireland is untouched territory, offering perhaps a 'push into practice' resulting from excitement of the new. Brigitta and Linda have a different challenge. They live here, and already have a long history of working with the locality in their practice. Our differing positions and approaches to the subject matter have been important for the dynamic within the group. Throughout our three working sessions in Carrick, we have come close to each other on a personal level and also through our practice, allowing us to help and support each other with the challenges of our projects, which is a situation that I find ideal.*

Johan Thurfjell
Dobar Cú (production still)
HD film , 2014
Installation view, ***LOCAL***

The film Dobharchú is a result of my Locis residency in Carrick-on-Shannon 2014. The Irish legend of the monster that dwells within us all (the Dobharchú) represents the framework for a filmed journey into my own underworld.
Photo: Padraig Cunningham

Johan Thurfjell
Eight Scenes from the Underworld
Framed photographs , 2014
Photo: Padraig Cunningham

Julia Adzuki

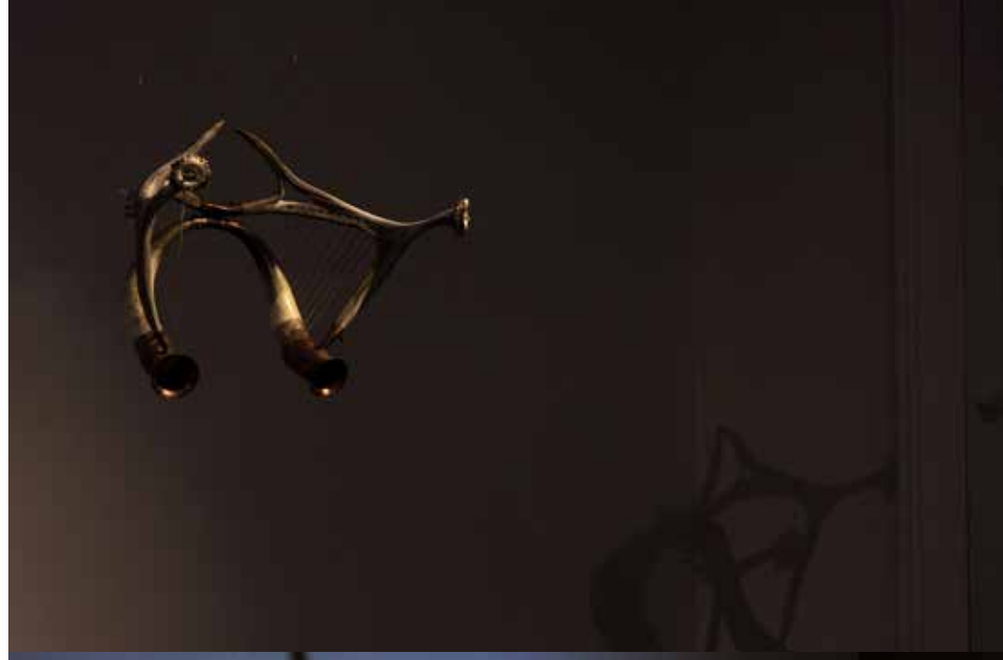
The Unfolding
Film stills, 2014

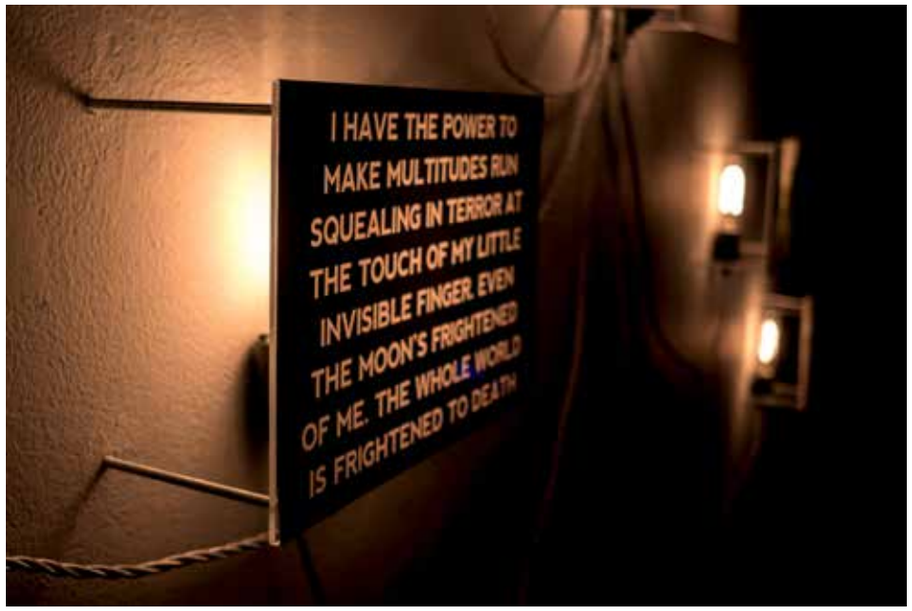
Wind Horn Harp
Sculpture, mixed material, 2014

Water Imbibed
Sculpture, mixed material, 2014

Kombucha Petticoat
Sculpture, kombucha, 2014

Installation views, *LOCAL*
Photo: Padraig Cunningham





Linda Shevlin

◂◂ ***Have taken up our abode, visible and invisible, in this City***
Duratran prints, perspex, Edison bulbs, 2014
Installation view, *LOCAL*
Photo: Padraig Cunningham

▾ ***Have taken up our abode, visible and invisible, in this City***
Duratran print, 2014

Karolina Żyniewicz

Preserving of Ireland (detail)
2014
Installation view, ***LOCAL***

The sheep heart preserved in peat is part of the project *Preserving of Ireland*. It is a very symbolic description of my emotions connected with Ireland, tied also with admiration for the magic properties of peat. The heart is perfectly preserved. I took it back to Poland in a cover of dirty wool found in the Irish mountains.

Postnecropolis (detail)
2014
Installation view, ***LOCAL***

Photos on porcelain are an integral part of my installation *Postnecropolis*, at the exhibition in The Dock Arts Centre. It is a special combination of Polish and Irish funeral traditions tied also with a concept of posthumanism. The photo portraits of people, which in Poland are placed on the graves, are in my work devoted to the plants growing and dying on the peat bog. It could be understand as a story about the lifecycle of matter.

Photo: Padraig Cunningham

Brigitta Varadi

In conversation ▸▸
Plywood and wool, 2014
Installation view, ***LOCAL***

Photo: Padraig Cunningham

JOHAN THURFJELL
SWEDEN

Johan Thurfjell's work spans a great variety of media; from painting to video, sculpture, model making, photography and text. Often the visual language interacts with a subtext to make a more complex structure, which like a camouflage pattern can only be read after a while. This structure of telling generates the kind of dynamic that constitutes the force-field of the work. Johan himself says that he sees his work as metaphors, like *"cubes of condensed bouillon where stories have been reined in and cooked down"*. It is often a question of fragments taken from the artist's memories combined with elements taken out of context that form this world of fiction. Something that reflects and accentuates the effects of the imagination on life, the wear of time on memory, and the influence of fiction on reality. Johan currently lives in the countryside one hour south of Stockholm.

JULIA ADZUKI
AUSTRALIA/SWEDEN

My practice is informed by reciprocal relationships within nature, the exchange of the body and surroundings, and the return of ephemeral mediums such as ice and snow. It was the ice that first drew me north, from Tasmania to Lapland. I had begun playing with temporal ice installations, filling latex moulds in the freezer at home. I was captivated and longed to meet wild ice, ice as expansive space, void and habitat. For seven winters I lived far north, exploring these materials, watching creations trickle back, returning to the melting river each spring.

Unwittingly, Sweden had become my home. Another seven years on, I am exploring the reciprocal exchange of the body and surroundings through kinaesthetic experience, movement in the landscape and poetic actions documented as film. The key tools in my process now are the Skinner Releasing Technique – a somatic dance practice and the Tarot of Marseille. Both provide a lens through which the reciprocal interaction of nature and humans are experienced/symbolised. The kinaesthetic experience of reciprocity with our environment has the capacity to heal fractures between ourselves and the Other – the Nature we have stepped outside of in our minds, that is so essentially us. From each breath to the wind, the water circulating in our bodies passes on the way through countless fluid beings.

BRIGITTA VARADI
HUNGARY/IRELAND

My work explores how memories can inform our present day perspectives and artistic expression. I like to find beauty, rhythm and patterns around me in a search to find the hidden, invisible element that gives us simple pleasure in our everyday life. I am also interested in the aesthetics of these patterns and its slowly built constructions. Using different types of fibers and techniques I search for reflection, a momentary flash of emotion, for a surface that contains many meanings and memories. The process of the technique I use, felt making, reflects the essence of my work, an erosion of memories through repetitive action until all that remains is the action itself.

The work I developed during my residency became a vehicle for reconnecting my past, present and future, with the aim of finding a place of contentment embedded in three different cultures, Hungary, Ireland and USA and unifying the fragments of my daily life, reflecting its essence of renewal and memories of the past.

LINDA SHEVLIN
IRELAND

Linda Shevlin is a visual artist and curator based in Co. Roscommon, Ireland. Her projects unpack the complexities of modernity's effects on land and the socio-cultural landscape of her environment. Her recent work has drawn attention to the role that certain historical/ mythological tropes and characteristics have played in inspiring recent scientific research and how these ongoing inquiries have infiltrated popular culture. Using exhibitions, film, and installations she creates situations that explore the borders of fact, fiction and reality.

KAROLINA ŻYNIEWICZ
POLAND

At the core of my interest lies the balance between nature and culture, as I see them represented through visual arts. Nature provides me with the set where I can examine the field of aesthetics. At some point in my creative practice, I came to the conclusion that representational work was no longer satisfying. Why imitate something when you can interact with it? Art, in my mind, should be a kind of investigation, similar to that of science. The most important aspect is the process. The art piece or exhibition is only "alive" for a certain time, like all living beings. For me, it is about asking questions, researching, and the adventure. A great part of my work comes out of curiosity. I am interested in all aspects of the natural world but I can't access all of it. Art gives me the possibility to use every area of knowledge without specialiszation. It is a place where I can make relationships between different layers of thinking. For some time I have been developing concepts of post-humanism in my work, which could be understood as the equality of all living beings. My recent projects connected to this are ***Postnecropolis*** and ***Taste of borders***.

RE-FLECT-IONS

BETWEEN FIELDWORK AND MYTH: LOCATING IRISH ART ON THE PERIPHERIES

JOANNE LAWS

Speaking at the 'Contour of the Commons' seminar in C.C.A. Derry, Northern Ireland, in 2012, Professor Declan McGonagle[1] outlined the socially engaged role of Derry's former Orchard Gallery during the eighties. With regard to the gallery's international profile, he discussed the implications of being geographically situated *'at the edge of an island, off another island, at the peripheries of Europe'*, away from the 'metropolitan centre' [2]. Using the example of Antony Gormley's 'Sculpture for Derry Walls', commissioned by Orchard (N.I) and TSW (U.K) in 1987 [3], McGonagle described how speculation from urban centres (regarding the suitability of the artwork) was futile, given that ultimately, the *'knowledge and meaning surrounding the city walls could only be generated from within Derry'*. With historical and social structures in flux, he explained, it was possible to carve out a new *'ideological position'*, which reframed Derry as the *'epicentre of activity'* and everywhere else as the 'periphery'. In the context of the Locis residency programme, and given that the Locis partners in Toruń and Leitrim are geographically at equal distances from their respective capital cities, *'maintaining a vibrant art practice away from urban centres'* was identified early on as a topic of relevance.

This short text aims to briefly situate the west of Ireland landscape within a long art historical and cultural trajectory, while tentatively outlining the modern day politics of rural art production. Scholarly research pertaining to the Spatial Turn in cultural geography, will reveal pertinent artistic research tools (largely appropriated from ethnographic fieldwork), which have provided important methods for engaging with contemporary rural Irish life. Viewed through this spatial lens, the work of the artists participating in the two Locis Irish residencies will be discussed, informed by the loosely designated annual themes of architecture and socially engaged practice, and the inherent conceptual inquiries that unfolded, including 'vernacular knowledge' and 'mythologies of place'.

IRISH LANDSCAPE AND THE SPATIAL TURN

From my perspective as a Leitrim-based arts writer and researcher (who frequently travels to urban centres to attend meetings, events and exhibitions), I have become increasingly aware of an emerging sensibility among certain Irish artists who are finding ways to channel timely responses to place, be they peripheral, suburban or rural contexts, or other contested spaces including border-zones. For contemporary Irish artists, it has never been easier to live rurally while 'dipping in and out' of the centralised artworld 'hubs'. However the socio-spatial impact of remote living on contemporary visual arts practice has yet to be comprehensively examined. In my view, emerging and multi-faceted 'ecologies of practice' in rural contexts, seem to echo significant scholarly developments linked to the 'Spatial Turn' in Cultural Geography and Memory Studies, which acknowledge the growing importance of spatiality as an analytical tool for research across architectural, ephemeral, and virtual spaces [4]. This also coincides with a *'wider recognition of the power of 'place' in the constitution and description of society.'* [5]

As a spatial designation, 'landscape' has occupied a central place in the art historical canon, and by extension, has historically been synonymous with Irish spirit and identity. From Paul Henry's 'pure landscapes' (bereft of human figures, symbolic of poverty, war and emigration) to the primal depths of Sean McSweeney's 'bog pools', historical depictions of the west of Ireland landscape in particular helped forge a visual identity for a newly independent Ireland. For contemporary, post-Celtic Tiger Ireland relationships to the landscape have recently evolved to encompass geopolitics, labour studies, and ecological approaches to sustainable living, against a backdrop of government-imposed austerity and the 'commemorative landscapes', which are unfolding with irony, amidst a decade-long phase of pivotal centenary dates (2012-2022). Emerging scholarly discourse seeks to re-construct 'the West' away from 'Romantic nationalist ideas and clichéd tourist[ic] frameworks', towards modern understandings of what it means to *'live and practice on the fringes in geographical or conceptual terms'* [6].

VERNACULAR KNOWLEDGE

In an extended essay *'On the Edge: An Exploration of the Visual Arts in Remote Rural Contexts of Northern Scotland'* Anne Douglas argues that while ways of working in metropolitan contexts have become the dominant model for contemporary visual arts practice, such systems of production are not transferable, or indeed appropriate for remote rural contexts[7]. Within rural art production, Douglas argues, artistic roles tend to be more blurred. The audiences are not specialist interest groups but an aggregate, with relationships defined by qualities of closeness, familiarity, and participation, rather than distance, anonymity and spectatorship. Concurring with Declan McGonagle's views on emphasis on 'local knowledge' and 'embedded practice', creative methodologies in rural contexts, Douglas explains, often need to be developed from within, based on local interest and issues.

Locis 2013 was thematically underpinned by explorations at the intersection of art and architecture, prompting wide-ranging artistic investigations across site-specific themes such as 'vernacular architecture' [8], rural and suburban ecologies, linguistics, 'support structures' [9] and public space. Led by Polish artist and architect Jarosław Kozakiewicz, whose practice encompasses sculptural installation, land intervention and bio-architecture, the 2013 Irish residency group presented newly developed work at an exhibition entitled 'SECOND ['SIT]' at Leitrim Sculpture Centre in November 2013 to coincide with the Locis seminar.

Probing notions of 'place', visuality and citizenship, the 2013 Irish residency group developed lexicons for approaching issue of local and public space, linked to the overarching architectural theme. 'Discursivity' as a facet of 'community engagement', has been widely cited as a method for encouraging participation in art since the sixties [10], and has increasingly become a defining feature of rural art production. Whether as a 'soft knowledge exchange' or democratic device, establishing dialogue through conversation is perceived both as a shaping force in society, and as a catalyst for developing extended definitions of art.

Engaging with the local community in Manorhamilton, Niall Walsh worked with a 'Men's Shed Project' to develop solutions to perceived short-falls in basic amenities within the town. Walsh's *Sentries* project comprised hand-crafted benches, project documentation, and photographic portraits of local men, whom he considered to be the town's 'gate-keepers', based on their tendency to congregate and 'pass the time of day with their fellow townspeople'. Ulrika Larsson's project *Borders and Aesthetics* probed the contemporary resonance of the politically burdened Irish expression 'Tiocfaidh ár lá/Our day will come'. Informed by conversations with locals about the contemporary implications of this loaded phrase, issues relating to active and/or passive living in a consumerist society became important, reclaiming language and prompting her textual response 'Our Time is Now'. Employing psychogeographic methods in her film *Second Sight/Site*, Kathy O'Leary journeyed through both urban and rural landscapes to examine public access and inclusivity within the built environment, from the perspective of a wheelchair user. Meanwhile, Natalia Wiśniewska mobilised a different set of tools pertinent to artistic research in rural contexts. Informed by local historical records, oral history and photographic archives, she conducted research on a derelict former church, tracing 'episodes of small town community life' and transforming the 'afterimages of history' into a modern day, active spectacle.

MYTHOLOGIES OF PLACE

A similar set of spatial propositions permeated the Locis 2014 residency, which sought to examine socially engaged, self-organising artistic activity. Led by Swedish artist Johan Thurfjell, the 2014 Irish residency group convened on three separate occasions in Leitrim, using the geographical location as a starting point for devising individual and collective responses to their rural setting. During their first session, the group embarked on numerous visits to collectively suggested sites of interest. As a result of these 'walk-abouts' in the rural Irish landscape, 'mythologies of place' began to emerge as a common theme. Adapted from ethnographic and geographical fieldwork, walking has been well documented across a range of 20th century art movements as an increasingly important artistic research tool [11]. While much of this activity has previously focused on cities and urban space, there is now a growing curiosity about the significance of 'art walking' for suburban, rural, periphery, border and other contested landscapes. The grounded act of walking reveals alternative routes, incidental materials, unexpected encounters and conversations along the way, which reach beyond the logical confines of existing maps, requiring more intuitive methods of orientation. Generally, these 'speculative journeys' through particular landscapes - often accompanied by narration or parallel narrative inquiries - aim to side-step pre-determined notions of place, probing instead a 'range of inter-connected ecological, historical, mythical, visual, archaeological, scientific, cultural, linguistic, and intuitive elements associated with place' [12].

For the Locis 2014 Irish residency participants, these speculative journeys through the west of Ireland landscape produced wide-ranging inquiries, which probed ancient Irish folklore and mythology made visible through explorations of nature, magic, ritual, funeral rites and the Occult. While Johan Thurfjell extended his longstanding interest in mythology to examine the Irish myth *Dobar Cù/The 'Dark Wet Hound'* (creature of The Underworld), Julia Adzuki used the pagan iconography of Sheela na Gig to articulate the passage of life from which we emerge and eventually return. Other artists devised tentative links

between the rural Irish landscape and their own native terrains. Using peat - a material resource common to both Ireland and her native Poland - Karolina Żyniewicz created sculptural artefacts including 'Peat Cemeteries' (simple tombs made from turf) and 'Pantry/ Cemetery'(experiments, involving the preservation of various foodstuffs in peat) to highlight similarities between the ancient funeral rites and cultural practices of the two countries. Unexpectedly, Brigitta Varadi found that the residency process caused her to reflect on issues of personal identity. Through the visiting artists' fresh impressions, she began to reconnect with the time when she first moved to, and fell in love with, the northwest of Ireland. Conversely, Linda Shevlin used the residency process as a catalyst to reassess her relationship with her immediate terrain, probing historical accounts of Ireland, and the paradigm shifts that occur when facts and mythology converge.

As a concluding thought, it would be fair to suggest that many of the research and production methods employed by the artists participating in the Irish Locis residencies broadly reflected many of the 'fieldwork' practices that have become increasingly commonplace, both in Irish rural art production and further afield. From archival research, discursivity and community engagement to speculative journeys, walk-abouts, and material and conceptual engagements with the landscape; these processes offer fresh insights into the differing economies, infrastructures and audiences in rural areas, while ultimately highlighting the role of artists in responding to these places. Interestingly, the art residency format itself provides further access to a broader paradigm shift within contemporary practice: the re-emergence of 'art of the everyday'. Encompassing many non-art processes such as living, working, cooking and eating together and the reciprocal exchanges that emerge out of extended discussion and skill-sharing; art of the everyday draws on artistic precedents such as the 'dematerialised' art practices of the sixties and seventies, revealing new tendencies in modern life. If art can be perceived as a vehicle for cultivating 'life practices' - from the ritualistic to the ad-hoc - then there is certainly scope for interest and further research on the contribution that rurality can make to this debate.

Joanne laws is an arts writer based in the Northwest of Ireland.

1. Professor McGonagle was Director of The Orchard Gallery, Derry (from 1978 to 1984 and 1986 to 1990) and is currently the Director of the National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

2. Declan McGonagle in conversation with Sean Lynch, C.C.A Derry-Londonderry, 27th October 2012.

3. For details on Gormley's 'Sculpture for Derry Walls' (1987) see publicart.ie http://www.publicart.ie/en/main/directory/directory/view/sculpture-for-derry-walls/ed93e256b1a06102796ba95f1134c4b8/

4. Kümin, B. and Usborne, C. 'At Home and in the Workplace: A Historical Introduction to the Spatial Turn', History & Theory 52, October 2013, pp. 305 – 318.

5. Stephen Daniels 'Place and the Geographical Imagination', Geography 77(4), October 1992, p.p. 310-322.

6. Press release, 'Once Upon a Time in the West' symposium with Sylvere Lotringer, curated and moderated by Katherine Waugh, 18th May 2013.

7. Anne Douglas 'On the Edge: An Exploration of the Visual Arts in Remote Rural Contexts of Northern Scotland' in Advances in Art, Urban Futures, 2005.

8. Dominic Stevens (who led the residency with Botkyrka Konsthall in Stockholm in 2013) discussed his ethos of Vernacular Architecture at the Locis seminar, Leitrim Sculpture Centre, 15th November 2013.

9. Tessa Giblin, discussing Céline Condorelli's 'Support Structures' (Sternberg Press, 2009) at the Locis seminar, Leitrim Sculpture Centre, 15th November 2013.

10. Claire Bishop 'Participation', (MIT Press: London, 2006)

11. An interest in walking as a leisure pursuit emerged during Romanticism, accumulating in mid-19th century France with discourse surrounding the 'flâneur' as a figure of literary and philosophical significance. 20th century movements such as The Surrealists and The Situationists further probed walking as a revolutionary act. The concept of Psychogeography was developed by the Lettrist International movement, with Guy Debord defining urban wandering as a 'speculative drift' and 'renovated cartography' in 1955. Aligning with the history of protest walks, the conceptual and symbolic significance of walking was explored by avant-garde and Fluxus movements, and Land Art practices of the late 1960's. Contemporary approaches to urban and rural walking have further expanded the tradition of psychogeography, to encompass memory studies, counter-tourism, digital technologies and virtual landscapes, occurring at the interface between art, architecture, and social practice.

12. Iain Biggs 'All Flesh is Grass: Deep mapping as an 'essaying' of place'; Illustrated talk given at the 'Writing' seminar at the Bartlett School of Architecture, Friday 9th July, 2010

LOCIS IN TORUŃ – A STUDY IN (IN)VISIBILITY AND AN EXPERIMENT WITH OPENNESS

NATALIA CIEŚLAK

Toruń is a town with a dynamic and changing identity. Until recently it was almost exclusively associated with the catchphrase 'get gothic', but today it no longer wishes to be seen from a single perspective, even though it preserves the memory of the great astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus, who was born here. In the making of the contemporary image of Toruń as an open-minded and modern town, the institutions devoted to culture and the exchange of ideas play an increasingly important role. One such institution is the Centre of Contemporary Art 'Znaki Czasu' (CoCA) built only a few years ago and located in its characteristic building of brick, glass and metal, which is well suited to the landscape of the Old Town and in keeping with the state-of-the-art standards of contemporary architecture for galleries and museums. CoCA, however, as a space contributing to the portrait of Toruń of today, is not merely a building with exhibition galleries and relevant infrastructure; most of all, it is a centre which, in preparing its programme, aims and philosophy, takes into account the context in which it is placed. On the one hand, it is receptive and responsive to the needs of the local community and the expectations of town dwellers, while on the other it is determined and strives to secure and maintain its position on the map of Polish institutions presenting contemporary art.

CoCA will be seen and experienced in different ways by tourists, by frequent visitors who come to see current exhibitions, or by contemporary *flâneurs*, who ramble around the town in search for attractions. Also, artists who step into these spaces with their own visions, ideas and creative imaginations experience the space in their own way. It is right here, in CoCA, where ten artists, divided into two distinct and independent groups, took part in the two editions of the Locis artist-in-residence programme.

When I was asked to write a short essay to discuss their work, I realized that I looked at these two groups from entirely different perspectives. I observed the results of the first edition in 2013 as an ordinary visitor to the exhibition: my contact with the resident artists was limited to the reception of their work. In 2014, I had the opportunity to become more involved in the work of the group. As one of the co-ordinators, I worked more closely with the artists and could follow their process as well as their preparations to present the outcomes of their collaboration. The shift in my point of view was therefore significant and undoubtedly influenced my experience of the two editions presented at CoCA.

EXPOSING THE INVISIBLE

The first year of the residency programme seemed to me to primarily engage in a dialogue with the institutional profile of CoCA, the context of its role as an exhibition space, but also as a place for interaction between various artistic objects as well as between the artworks and the public. The artists in residence formulated a collaborative expression in the form of an exhibition concept that was more focused on facing the challenge of the immense and daunting exhibition space at their disposal rather than on merging their work with the official framework programme of CoCA. The result of these efforts became the exhibition entitled *Please Call Stella*, presented on the second floor of the building and including works by the artists Maja Hammarén, Patrycja Orzechowska, Arek Parasite and Cathal Roche, all of whom worked under the leadership of Jonas Nobel.

As the members of the group declared in the introduction to the exhibition, it dealt with the relationship between material objects and the 'black void' between them. This void, which gave much room to organize the space but also caused various problems, presented itself as a phenomenon that is not semantically neutral. The empty spaces were not meant to be synonymous with a lack, absence or shortage, but were used as a legitimate artistic matter which pervaded CoCA's space.

The works situated in this meaningful void, as well as the architecture of the exhibition, revealed a number of interesting, but often marginalized aspects of CoCA's everyday life. One of these aspects was portrayed by leaving a plain partition wall from the previous exhibition (with clear signs of its earlier use); it pointed directly and emphatically to the 'construction' aspect of an exhibition set-up and indirectly to the work of technicians without whom no presentation could come into being: an exhibition is not merely an artistic concept, it also requires a physical effort to put it in place. Another element of the arrangement (or perhaps it should be seen as a distinct artistic work) emphasized the role of the cleaners who keep the space well-ordered and cared for: it was a polished pathway which imitated a shimmering clean floor. Even the storage spaces of CoCA played an interesting part owing to Jonas Nobel who made an installation, in a dynamic 'choreographic' setting, made of various plinths and supports that are normally kept in the basement, hidden from the sight of visitors.

OPENNESS OF THE INSTITUTION

My observation of the second Locis group was influenced by an entirely different context than the exhibition *Please Call Stella* which was primarily based on exposing the invisible. The group that gathered in the summer of 2014 were the artists Phoebe Dick, Emma Houlihan, Liliana Piskorska and Dagmara Pochyła under the leadership of Seamus Nolan. In my position I could follow the artists' processes closely, as if from backstage. I organized workshops, meetings with people that the artists wanted to talk to or brought them to places they wanted to visit. Their wide array of interests encompassed the issue of locality and the idiosyncrasies of the place where they met. The context of local architecture, as well as its history and ideology and their strong resonances, which influence the social views of space, become powerfully apparent in their work. Among the most inspiring places, in my view, was the jail Okrąglak Areszt Śledczy w Toruniu, a panopticon-type building, and the main railway station Toruń Główny with its modernist interior decoration.

One could sense that this group intended to initiate a lively dialogue between art and society, as they involved people and places and created actions that combined artistic practices and social activism. It seems that in their work the artists were influenced by their earlier individual experiences with public awareness campaigns concerning ecology, sexual minorities or other issues that had to do with the current social and cultural situation. These experiences largely contributed to directing their combined efforts into practices that engaged both themselves and the public.

The relationship between the guest and the host served as the starting point of the exhibition developed by the artists and entitled *Enter Quickly as I Am Afraid of My Happiness* that opened in CoCA early in November 2014. In their work, they addressed various aspects of openness and hospitality conceived as an ability to receive the 'Other' and put oneself in his or her shoes, which is a phenomenon discussed by a number of contemporary thinkers, including Jacques Derrida whose work *On Hospitality* served as a source of inspiration, as well as providing the quotation that became the title of the exhibition.

The artists direct our attention to this intricate, elusive and heavily nuanced relationship between the guest and the host and its particular bearing on social life. As it may be observed, various aspects of contemporary social life reflect the ambivalent approach of various institutions to their hospitality rules: on the one hand they try (or pretend) to be open, while on the other, especially in the face of a crisis, they shrink their borders and the 'liberty of conduct' and remind their guests, saying: 'make yourselves at home, but remember that it is we who make the rules'.[1]

The exhibition and accompanying events consisted of actions or performances (Phoebe Dick), documention of prior artistic undertakings (Seamus Nolan), interactions with the viewer and providing space for their activities (Liliana Piskorska, Dagmara Pochyła) or reminding us of the historical context of the local artistic landscape (Emma Houlihan). The exploits by the group, which trace their origins to situations, objects, places or events that were particularly meaningful to the artists, all contributed to the conceptual framework whereby the gallery becomes, most of all, a space for action and engagement.

Locis is a project run by three institutions located in Poland, Ireland and Sweden, which are all situated beyond the commonly understood centres of cultural life and artistic production in their countries. The peripheries, as we can see in the results of this residency programme, are indeed capable of focusing the artists' attention and can stir up their emotions and intellect. The Locis programme, with its pronounced emphasis on the local context, provided the environment for interactions between the creative individuals and unfamiliar spaces as well as between each other. These common experiences brought various results, for there were some that were firmly placed in the usual framework activities of CoCA, as well as others that went beyond the institutional walls: both in the physical sense and in the sense of its conventional activities.

Natalia Cieślak is a project coordinator at the Centre of Contemporary Art "Znaki Czasu" in Toruń (CoCA)

1. E. Chwiejda, *Sztuka (wro)gościnności. O dialogu: imigrant – artysta – gospodarz [The Art of Hos(pi)tility: a Dialogue between an Immigrant, an Artist and a Host]*, http://www.obieg.pl/artmix/31163#footnoteref8_2gdjx29, accessed on 11.11.2014.

VISIONS TO BE CONTINUED
SARAH KIM

The Locis initiative in Stockholm reassured me that it is possible for art processes, collaborations, and networks to escape - for a moment - the anxious and hasty practices of capitalist production. The time allocated for thinking and reflecting together seemed to confirm the very importance of that activity. A section from the Locis concept states *'this collaborative project offers an opportunity to contemplate'*, which is a fantastic luxury. If one can agree that almost every aspect of life is controlled and determined by capital, then maybe it is safe to assume that there is a desperate need for a space free from this dominant hegemonic experience. Can culture and art be a relief from this intense infringement? This is a question for cultural producers. There is enormous potential in recognising the autonomy, independence, and importance of culture - culture as a whole social process where we shape our lives. The congregation of artists using this space focuses on making art that challenges the ideological structure in society.

COLLABORATION

The group of artists that met during the 2013 residency approached the task of collaborative contemplation with a certain level of care and awareness. There was an apparent sense of vulnerability and uncertainty despite or maybe in relation to their class privileges as a white middle class art group in the setting of Fittja, a working class suburb with a large immigrant population. They underline, *'We see ourselves as outsiders or guests in this place, and our research as being wholly subjective.'* This is a clear stance to take and a common comfortable position within artistic research. In this role you have a certain freedom to interpret and escape some responsibility. Despite this exceptional status, there was a level of reservation and careful regard in their process of getting to know one another and the site.

When entering an unfamiliar context, there is a concrete challenge to perform and deliver. You often see within group art projects a nervous scrambling under the condensed production period. Suddenly insecurities can arise and lead to rash tendencies to run with the first bad idea. This is all too familiar for those who have worked with forced collaborative projects or been through the relational aesthetic wave. I believe these problems stem from a lack of time and the pressure to create and adapt your artistic practice to the capitalist mode of production. To prevent the traps of implicit bias, prejudice and reductive thinking, this Locis group initiative takes a necessary pause for reflection. Asking questions of who are we, what are we involved in, where are we, and how do we proceed? This activity confirms the social relations within the group and creates a secure environment for visions to be uttered, described, and imagined.

CONTEMPLATION

Part of the method of collaboration included a necessary step back looking into the archives of art history and architecture, and in particular, ideas from an era in art that embraced rediscovery, re-appropriation, and re-acquiring of space. The sixties and seventies art movements embody a keen sense and understanding for the power of subtlety. Artists like John Cage, Yves Klein, and Ad Reinhardt, for example, were engaged in a process of examining the present with a type of deep and layered mindfulness by acknowledging the endless possibilities that surround us everyday. Seeing the new in the known requires an act of meditation on the spaces in-between, and here patience is essential. Cage once stated in an interview, '*Sounds are just sounds, they don't have to mean anything.*' With this perspective one is liberated from the constant pressure for newness and the obsession with novelty. By bringing back these references from art history as inspiration the Locis team has started the groundwork for combating the neoliberal crash course propulsion, constantly in demand from a commodified culture. A slowness is emphasised, a practice of refusal to make new things, and instead a suggestion is made to meet together, give a genuine attempt to observe, research, think and appreciate what exists.

VISION

Another key inspiration for the group was the award-winning proposal *Fittja People's Palace*, by the architecture office Spridd [1]. This renovation plan was interesting as a concrete formulation and vision for the gentrification of this area. Fittja is one of the many suburbs built during the Swedish Million Programme era (1965-1975). The rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of Stockholm demanded for a large-scale housing project to be initiated by the state. The identities of these suburbs were built with the intention to be an ideal, affordable place for families to live in modern homes, close to nature, and easy commute/access to the city centre. Now, the gentrification process has begun and renovations have started, which aspire toward 'sustainable, profitable, and scalable methods'. The renovation plans for one residential building showed that the original construction was considerate, solid, and still relevant to contemporary conditions. Minor reinforcements are to be made for the security and maintenance of the houses. The sensitivity mainly lies in the process of communication and interaction with the residents. Their crucial focus point was to have *transparent collaboration* with the residents, especially after the recent demonstrations and protests against the selling off of municipality-owned housing properties and general rent inflation in the region. The discussion of class and cultural capital of the expanding cultural institution cannot be ignored in this context. A maximum of 10 per cent rise in rent has been stated for this building. Methods for opening up a discussion, to be in dialogue, and make connections with residents are currently being put into effect.

The Locis 2013 group displayed the results from the meetings and their individual experimentations and research in an exhibition and seminar at Botkyrka konsthall. The title 'What can be described can also take place', a quote from Wittgenstein's *Tractus Logico Philisophicus*, literally explains the group's interest in visionary language for the given site. On a whole, each work carried a sparkle of optimism. The articulation and desire for change is felt. This visionary work is clearly important and the practice of imagining a future is crucial and should rightfully be nurtured with such initiatives as Locis. The methods investigated and developed within the setting of the cultural institution allow for an exchange between fellow artists and researchers from other countries. These ideas of slowness and time to protect oneself from speeding commercialism are affirmed and permitted. All these contemplations enlighten us and also offer us a moment to reconsider the power of architecture, and the limitations and potential of art.

BORDERS

It is key, for a cultural producer, to force an awareness and recognition of certain contradictions. If the desire for this 'free space' for visionary activity that stimulates thinking within a cultural institution aims to be truly free, perhaps one must also scrutinise the whole practice itself to avoid a re-establishing of our capitalist superstructure. This challenge is a never-ending loop, albeit necessary activity.

There is a distinct border in the cultural sphere that must be acknowledged. Inside Western art institutions, the majority of both workers and audience come from a white, middle or upper class background. Often the border - or class divide - is unintentionally drawn. From my experience (as a non-white cultural worker) these institutions seem to be desperate to do the opposite. In this observation, however, similar tendencies, strengthened hierarchies, are invariably a felt outcome. But the assessment can hardly be that the visions themselves are the problem.

In this contemplative pause and meditative step, which Locis took in 2013, a consensus was discovered. The vision is to break the divisions. The potential is in the social relations created and confirmed through visionary language and solidarity.

ACTION

The Locis artists and architects who met in 2014 dived straight into the collaborative process and scanned through the compiled artistic research made in Fittja. The Residence Botkyrka programme has compiled a rich resource of visionary projects and has made many connections with a variety of artists, architects, and members of the local community. Almost as if it was destined to be, the Locis group of 2014 was drawn to a particular woman living in Fittja named Zöhre Alici. They came across a publication from a previous project, where Zöhre was interviewed and in which she expressed a desire to renovate her bathroom.

The challenge to fulfil her desire and be in dialogue with her became a calling for the group. This individual became the central focus for the collaboration. Unlike the first group, which decided to stand at a distance and observe, the Locis 2014 artists take the exact opposite approach with a decisive action crossing the social and cultural borders to get personal. They not only enter into a direct social relation with a Fittja resident, they are examining the most personal space in the home - the bathroom.

There was a playfulness around the ideas of limitations, and testing borders – that became the method – under a sort of *transparent collaboration*, which the Locis context provided. What can these artists do for this individual? What kind of relationship is established? This type of confrontation exposes the delicate nature of the social relationships created in cultural projects where personal stories are used. Zöhre's story is artistic material, her bathroom is the exhibition space, she is the audience and inspiration, and they are working exclusively for and with her. This whole collaboration depends on this precious individual. Exchange value can be estimated here in terms of integrity, time, and materials. On one side it may seem that having five artists revolve around one person is obviously an advantageous position for the person in focus, but the stakes are higher for Zöhre. In accepting this spotlight treatment, she is providing space and content for the art project. One cannot ignore the questionable outreach and charity projects that are a big part of art production today. When we are under governments, which serve to promote exploitation, you can't help but ask again: who is profiting from this?

The five artists and architects are enthusiastic and committed to their subject. If the Locis projects aim to test the ideological structures in search of combative practices, the focus on this relationship between Zöhre and the artists is a genuine attempt to understand the current conditions in Fittja. This decision is a sort of militant research move to find the truth. They form an alliance, exchange views on property renovations through this specific context, of her home- and very personal space of the bathroom to display the relevance of public and private concerns. This method investigates the transitory and changeable aspect of all experiences and processes. Allowing for an approach that stresses change and spontaneity, and encourages an alternative way to think. By suggesting a space to avoid oppressive contradictions in that moment of investigation together. The creation of new temporary unpredictable art spaces, crossing boundaries, and creating opportunities of exchange to discuss the truth about property and power structures is a cunning method in which art projects like Locis can ultimately achieve something. That something is the exposure of the impenetrable truth of the existing property relations underlying the spaces in which we live. The material then, that this research can supply, is not on a level of actual person-to-person influence in the renovation process of each home as such, but rather, paraphrasing Brecht; as a truth that can be used as a weapon.

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1. *Fittja People´s Palace* was the winning entry of the Swedish part of the competition Nordic Built Challenge in 2013

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