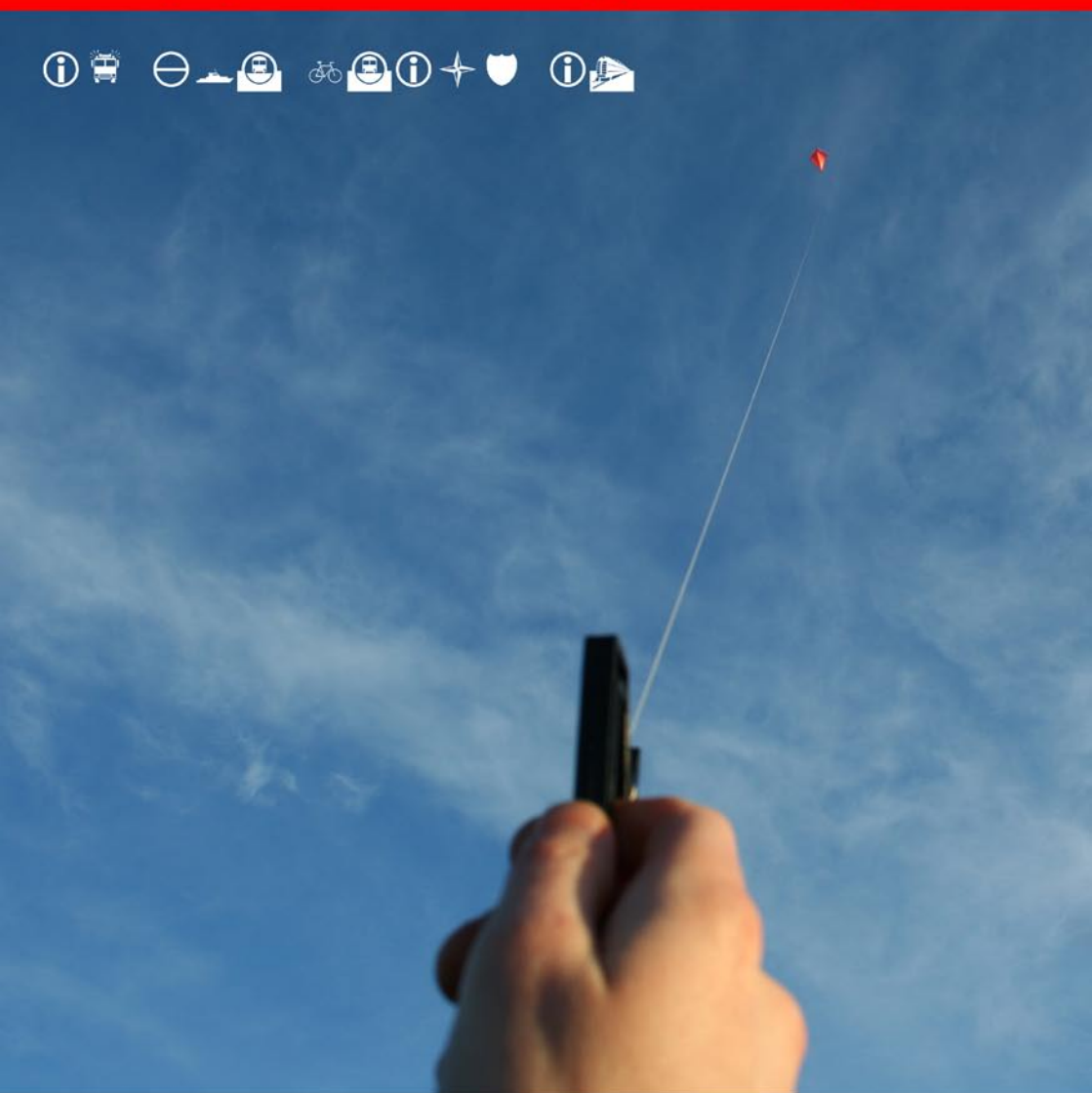


# Sapphire Highway



a good hatchery project

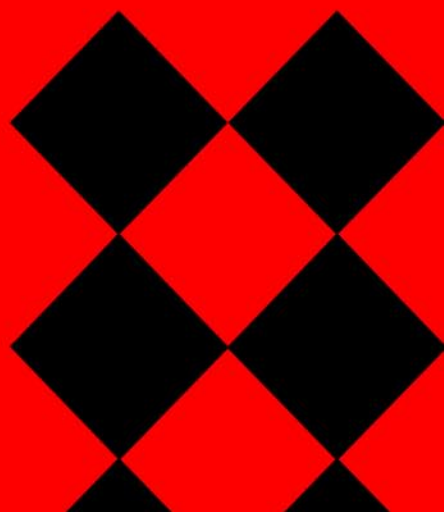




(Above) The Good Hatchery, 2008.

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## The Good Hatchery

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The Good Hatchery is an ongoing artist led initiative outside Daingean, Co. Offaly, Ireland. It is currently directed by both Carl Giffney and Ruth Lyons.

It has been said that under two percent of fine art graduates proceed to make an art related career for themselves in Ireland. Even less become practicing artists. Although the reasons for this statistic may be quite complicated, we believe that many of its central causes are financial in origin. It becomes virtually impossible to keep up a contemporary art practice immediately after college in Dublin without either compromising ones ideals or ones health. What seems to have become overlooked to some degree, is that the bulk of these financial pressures exist mainly in Dublin.

We believe that it has become a myth that an emerging artist needs to stay in Dublin to become an established artist. The majority of the connection that our group maintains with the art world seems to be conducted via the internet. Wireless internet has, only in the last year, become widespread and affordable enough to keep this connection intact in rural areas. It is in these rural areas that artists can find large buildings free of rent and enjoy a cheaper cost of living. We often visit Dublin to visit exhibitions, catch up with peers and collect the many surplus materials that are on offer there. It takes less than a forty minute drive from an Irish city centre to find yourself in almost unpopulated surroundings.

We intend The Good Hatchery to be an experiment in solving some of the problems associated with emerging as a young contemporary artist while simultaneously attempting to spread provocative art tactics and their outcomes out of the capital where it seems to maintain a stronghold.

We believe that a rural context can offer diverse and unique areas of concern that, due to the geographical make up of Ireland, effect the majority of people living on the Island. This context can easily be overlooked by contemporary art practice. We would hope to highlight some of the rich opportunities that are actually available to the emerging artist in rural Ireland.

The building that now homes The Good Hatchery was found on the internet in 2006. Using Freecycle, an internet-based recycling website, Carl Giffney made contact with Eileen Hanlon. She replied to an advert that read 'Wanted: derelict house or ruin for artists to live in and renovate'. Eileen generously offered a nineteenth century hayloft for this purpose that, the year before, had received a new roof, floor and windows. The building was weather proof and split into two floors but was in need of further development. Due to the lack of funds that were available to its refurbishment, The Good Hatchery was born.

In July of 2007 five NCAD graduates began to renovate the hayloft. Carl Giffney, Ruth Lyons, Elaine Reynolds, Rory Grubb and Chris Timms worked to change the building into some sort of base where creative processes could flourish. By November the space was habitable and could accommodate art and music making. At present, Carl and Ruth work in, and administrate, The Good Hatchery full time, while other art practitioners occupy the building and its studios part time. This fluctuating situation creates available space where dynamic residency programs can operate. All the materials, furniture and appliances, including the building itself, have been sourced for free via recycling, salvaging and reusing initiatives like Freecycle, Jumbletown and the BuyandSell freebies section. Currently the building contains studio spaces, workshops, a kitchen, living areas, two wood burning stoves and a comprehensive library. For images of this progress please visit the Good Hatchery website:

[www.thegoodhatchery.wordpress.com](http://www.thegoodhatchery.wordpress.com)



## Sapphire Highway

Sapphire Highway is the name given to an artist led residency program that took place in The Good Hatchery for three weeks in Autumn of 2008. An open call for interest was circulated in March and following a healthy response, briefs detailing the projects aims and intentions were given to all those who wished to participate. Briefs found their way not only to all provinces of Ireland, but many traveled as far as Israel, Canada and Iceland.

Art practitioners of all backgrounds were asked to submit a loose proposal that outlined their possible methodological approach to the Sapphire Highway project. The artists selected to participate in this project would be asked to respond to the very particular contextual terrain of the land surrounding the Good Hatchery. This specific environment is a very isolated rural one; a location that is very often overlooked by art organisations and therefore is seldom approachable to the contemporary artist. These surroundings offer eclectic and powerfully significant areas of interest. The nearby village of Daingean sits on the banks of the Grand Canal. Built on bogland the buildings lean gently in all directions. The town is dominated by the immense stone walls of what was the infamous Daingean reformatory. Run by the Oblate monks, it was a reform school for young boys and juvenile offenders. The reformatory closed in the late 80's but its legacy can be felt in the burdened silence that is encountered at any mention of the place.

The village is hemmed in by a flat expanse of Bord na Mona and privately owned bog land. These dark plateaus are dotted with stranded archaic machinery, and some patches of forest or sparse farmland. Cutting through the flat landscape are trade lines. Busy motorways, industrial train tracks and canals provide a transitory audience and also serve as grounds for topical inquiries. Breaking up the flat landscape is Croghan Hill, which is the highest point in Offaly. From the triangulation station at the top there is an amazing view that on a fine day can stretch as far as Dublin. Croghan Hill is deemed by many to be a sacred site; on the side of which there is a holy well, a deserted settlement and a cemetery. The bog that lies at its feet is where the Croghan Man was found. The sacrificed man was preserved for over 5000 thousand years before being discovered by a peat digger.

The Good Hatchery itself is part of a wall-ringed estate, the grand house of which was burned down in the mid 19th century in the most bizarre of circumstances. Of the vast demesne, the peripheries have been built on and sold to various families but a core of the demesne still remains that is home to some wild forest, farmland and strange dark stories.

One of the core aims of Sapphire Highway was to nurture direct and enthusiastic interactions between contemporary artists and this complicated terrain. By engaging, in a meaningful way, with the issues that may effect, or elude, local inhabitants it was hoped that both artists and inhabitants may gain a positive understanding of what a contemporary artists role can be in a very rural context.

Proposals were evaluated on their potential to create situations where uncompromised yet accessible art activity could take place. Meaningful, novel and enthusiastic proposals were given precedence. After much deliberation three artists were chosen: Ronan Coughlan, Sinéad Bhreathnach-Cashel and Patrick Corcoran. The following is a record of the activities that they undertook over the course of their three-week stay at The Good Hatchery.

# Ronan Coughlan

Ronan Coughlan graduated from the Galway Mayo Institute of Technology with first class honours in Fine Art in June of 2008. Male identity, lived experience and the environment in which he finds himself drive his artistic practice. The outcomes of this practice often involve the use of video, sculpture, performance and ceramics.



Ronan Coughlan at the thrashing, near Geashil



**Research at local briquette factory**

## **Free Help**

Ronan Coughlan arrived at the Good Hatchery with quite a solid proposal. He was originally born and reared in a nearby town called Cloghan but has spent much time living elsewhere. Although he has lived in New York, Galway and Mullingar for extended periods of time he would class himself as a Cloghan man and has an intimate knowledge of Offaly. He would return to Offaly often and worked on its bogs in his youth turning, footing, heaping, bagging and drawing turf. These times are noticeable in Ronan's build and accent. He mentions himself, 'every year I have been in Ireland since, I have had to deal with piss-Myers, nettles and hard labour.' In many ways his engagement with Sapphire Highway was something of a homecoming for him and due to this he wanted to immerse himself in the elementary pulse of the area and its community.

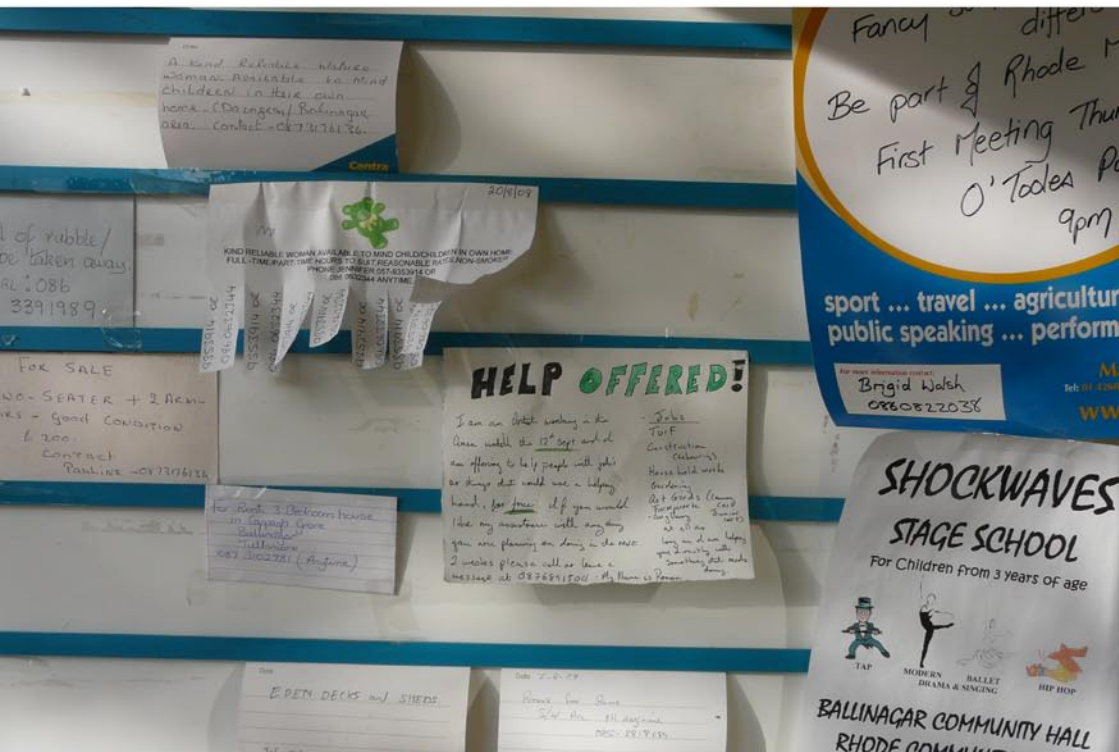
"After reading the brief I wanted to tap into something that I found fundamental to myself, and the people of the locale. With this in mind there was only one direction I could go, The Bog. To anyone who is from Offaly, The Bog is a place of vast importance; it is the source of fuel all year round, an area laden with historical reference and also a never-ending site of aesthetic beauty."

Ronans original proposal was activated by helping people to cut their turf. After gaining a rudimentary understanding of the lay of the land, he was prepared to meet some bog owners. This he did with great care by asking Eileen, the owner of the building that the Good Hatchery is homed in, to escort him to some of her neighbours and friends houses. His help was declined by the people they visited. Time and time again this happened although many different approaches were experimented with. It seemed that no one in the area was willing accept Ronans help on the bog and this rejection played hard on his mind. In response to this fundamental obstacle to his original plans, Ronan was forced to alter his strategy. Pining for involvement in the local community, and lamenting 'the days where people would do a turn for each other', he decided to offer his help with any task, free of charge.

His first tactic was to place a small, handwritten notice in a local shop. Among the various other adverts and notices was now one that informed shop-goers that a young man from Cloghan was offering his free help with any job ranging from construction to gardening for the duration of his stay in the area. Within the day the news had spread through much of the small community but there was no reply to the advert. As uneventful days passed, Ronan decided to up his efforts. Posters were produced that depicted Ronan laying foundations and heaping turf. More days slid by and still nobody would take him up on his offer. Ronan frequented the local pubs and subtly mentioned his proposal to those who inquired about his reasons for coming to Daingean. With his remaining time dwindling away, the Church was involved. Ronans notice was read out at Sunday Mass and by doing so the priest made his congregation aware of the unarguably Christian offer being made by the young man from Cloghan. One individual did allow Ronan a level of integration. He asked Ronan to accompany him to a thrashing in the local town of Clonygowan, much to the ridicule of some of the other local villagers. Ronans role would be to draw a picture of the farm machinery in action. This Ronan did and the resulting drawing was given to the local man who had brought Ronan all the way to Clonygowan on the back of his tractor.



The beginnings of Ronan Coughlans advertising





A table in Daingean Church advertising Ronan Coughlans altruistic services.

At the closing of his project, this one incident was the only event to punctuate an experience in which Ronan failed to encounter the integration he desired with the local community. Over the course of three weeks not one person had taken him up on his offer of free help.

In an effort to draw together the outcomes of his investigation, Ronan decided to produce a short leaflet that would document the entirety of his experience. This leaflet was entitled 'Free Help- a 3 week stay in Daingean'. The monochromatic print was written in Ronan's colloquial style and very accessibly covered his 'Approach to work', 'Getting the word out', 'The thrashing' and his 'Final Thoughts'. 250 copies of the leaflet were printed and, on the last day of his stay, were distributed among the village shops and pubs. Copies were available in the local chemist, post office, Church and butcher. Even Brian Cowen received a leaflet when he coincidentally opened Daingean's nursery on the same day. The following is a transcript of the leaflet's final chapter:

#### Final Thoughts

I do realise that it is hard to accept a new person into a small area where most people know each other extremely well. I have lived in Crookedwood for eight years and we are still considered "Blow In's." Suspicion and trust are two issues that people seem to have equal trouble with. I have found it amazingly difficult to infiltrate Daingean in almost any way. What I was offering is a rare thing in this day and age. With the word "Free" people may have had the preconception that there had to be a catch somewhere, but there was none. Perhaps people's pride got in their way. I was surprised at the lack of interest in something that I thought people would pounce upon due to the cost of labour these days, but I was wrong and my plea to "Help" fell on deaf ears. I would like to thank those who did give me a chance and hope in future people may take the time to think about what is being offered without hesitation. I do still have to ask myself, Why didn't anyone want free help?

Late on the final night of the Sapphire Highway project we made our way to a local pub to celebrate the occasion. A shout came as we opened the door, "Ah Ronan!", "Sure its himself!" His stay now over he could finally enjoy being a part of the village.

"If I had know you were offering free help, sure I had a job for you!" one man was leaning close to his ear. "He knew! You knew so you did! Don't mind him!"

Loud conversation went on in the pub that night, as presumably it must have in other parts of the village. Both a parable and a mirror Ronans work had succeeded in making something fruitless into something constructive, something unrewarding into something influential.

"Free Help"  
A 3-Week Stay in  
Daingean



Aug 22<sup>nd</sup> - Sept 12<sup>th</sup>

2008

Ronan Coughlan

Aug

Rona

A

F

Aug 2

Ronan



Leaflets being placed in Daingean's only pharmacy.



Explaining Free Help to our Taoiseach, Brian Cowen at the opening of a nursery in Daingean.

## Approach to Work

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2008 I started a week stay in The Good Hatchery, art studio in Daingean, Co Offaly. I plan was to help people doing free of charge. The reason: to help in the old Irish sense.

I feel that I have grown distant from the due to our fast paced lack of consideration man. I hoped to

people of the town er understanding of e. Initially I had e familiar as a hat more ed to offer my ing or one who and with

the bog the s is

## Getting

Having approached face to with no avail, needed. I heard there w local shop and decided t good place to advertise. I Offered" sign and posted it free help with a range of acti Turf, Construction, Househol Gardening, Art Grind's, etc... i help with anything at all, as long helping directly with something th doing. The advertisement had no re decided to then broaden my potential by making up three different posters. if people had not seen or heard I was al they would after I placed my posters al Village.



# Sinéad Bhreathnach-Cashell

Sinéad Bhreathnach-Cashell is a Belfast born artist who graduated in 2007 with First Class Honours from the University of Ulster. Currently she is organising a series of artist residencies, workshops and events in vacant rented accommodation around Northern Ireland in association with S.H.A.C. Housing Association. She is a co-founder of Playgroup and a member of Bbeyond. Her practice plays with the absurd to explore human behaviour. Through her public interventions she continues to 'look for the beach under the pavement.'

Selected works include:

Catflaps: Cardiff Art in Time, March 2007,

ARES 07: International Performance Art Residency Exchange Northern Ireland & Transylvanian Region, Omagh District Council and Catalyst Arts, 28th June - 4th July 2007, Scratch: curated by Helen Steele, CHQ, Dublin, November 2007, Seven People and a Table: Fix 07, Bbeyond and Catalyst Arts, November 2007, Bringing Back the Warmth: Playgroup action as special guests to MA Art in Public, Fix 07, Catalyst Arts, November 2007, CSR resident: Centre of Suburban Research, Spart Action Group, December 2007, Residence: Residence, Flat 1, February 2008, I AM: Bbeyond Polish Performance Art exchange, Stranmillis College and the Black Box, October 2008, House/Home: 466 Shore Road, Residence, November 2008, Plunder: Open studio, Catalyst Arts, November 2008.



Sinead Bhreathnach Cashell at Tesco, Tullamore.



**Umbrella cloud at the canal side**

Sinead Bhreathnach Cashel is a Belfast based artist whose practice involves engaging people to explore matters of communality, regeneration and co-operative playing in specific contexts. Sinead's work questions where the authority of society begins and how individual expression can co-exist with social control? Through a responsive process of collecting, documenting and playful interventions with public space and its detritus, she attempts to address some critical questions about living and creating meaningful art work in shared space.

During her first few days in The Good Hatchery, Sinead set off early every morning to explore the area and gather massive amounts of material both theoretical and physical. "I was interested in applying the theory of the Derive to a rural location something Guy Debord thought impossible, just as the local children couldn't believe that I could get lost here." Through this method of exploration and attending all the village's organised social events from bingo to mass, Sinead located herself firmly in the area.

Sinead then initiated various projects in the diverse locations of the Grand canal banks, the car park of Tesco's Extra in Tullamore, and a lay-by on the M6 motor way. In each of these spaces Sinead enacted strange and seemingly out of place activities using awkward objects and vessels to disrupt the surface and merge with the habitual traffic of each environment.

Inspired by stories of the children stealing bike chains and untying boats Sinead was drawn to the banks of the Grand Canal as one of her first sites of intervention. Sitting on the banks, the bridge provided a sheltered site under which to sit during the long afternoons and interact with the local children, to whom this territory seemed to belong during these hours. By adopting the familiar pastime of fishing and subverting it, Sinead established a bond of interest with this young audience. Sinead was seen employing various awkward methods of trying to catch fish; dangling chips over the surface of the water on the end of an extendable fork, trawling with mouse traps, poking the water with magnets attached to the end of stick fingers. "Through this playful intervention with the 'conversation traps' I was able to appear and gradually become familiar, I became a contested territory/toy to fight over." Sinead became a huge source of interest as well as of drawings and biscuits, in exchange the children gave her a fishing lesson. "During the fishing lesson they took on a different commanding role more adult/instructional – I was sent to the shop to get bait while they minded my stuff and they despaired at my clumsiness "ah Jesus it's all tangled! Now is that what you'll be doing back in Belfast". They showed me how it worked and then tested my ability by making me repeat their actions as they supervised alongside their own fishing."

Attracted to the call of an artificial bird, which acts as a 'bird scarer' to deter birds from entering the shop, Sinead headed down to the car park of Tesco's Extra in Tullamore. Standing in front of the entrance equipped with a decoy pigeon on her head and another on her arm Sinead began a conversation with the fake plastic magpie through the screeching sounds of a crow call. Over the period of a couple of hours this nonsensical banter subsisted between the two fake birds. At times Sinead referred to the pages of *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino, which she called out through incomprehensible squawks to the other bird. This absurd scene was treated by many with the same trepidation that might be displayed towards a mad woman, there were many sideways glances and double takes as people hurried by only to turn around and stare enthralled from a safe distance.



research



Lay-by intervention, M4 motorway, Tyrllspass





Intervention at the 'bird scarers', Tesco main entrance, Tullamore.





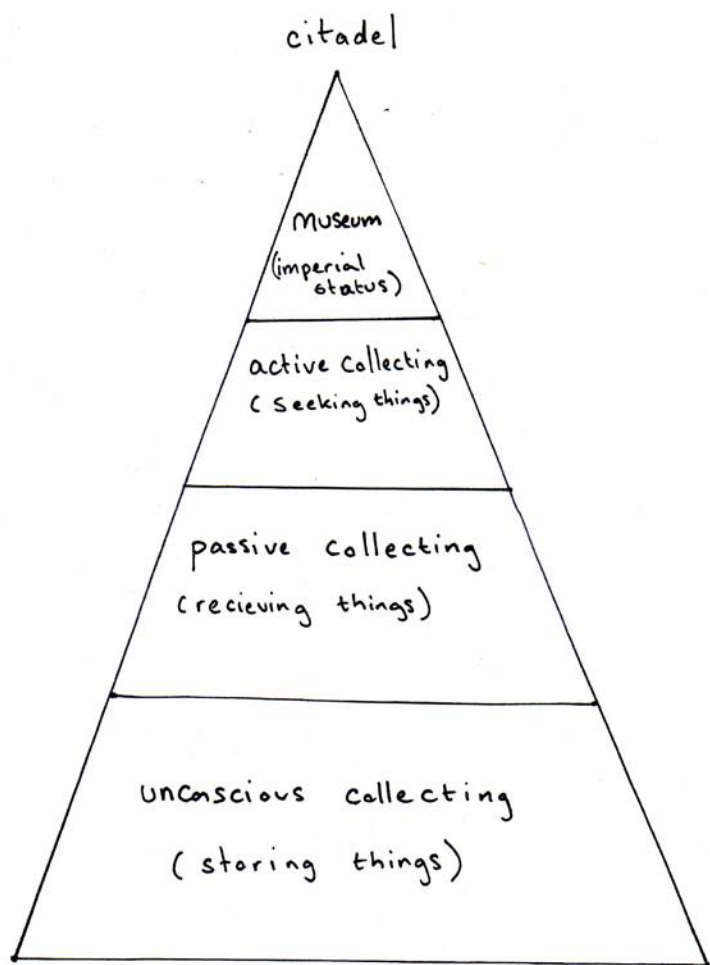
Intervention at canal bridge, Daingean.



As the chatter subsided Sinead was drawn into conversation with a curious onlooker "I took off my hat and we chatted about the story of the cities of Leonia and Trude that I was reading, why the bird scarer, playing, politics of industry, destinations and functional spaces". Sinead was interested in Tesco's not as a company but as a particular environment in which she could subvert people's perceptions of space and its designated function. "An inevitably futile attempt to talk with the birds became a fruitful conversation with strangers. A particular response to the peculiarities of this place it stands as an evocative image open to interpretations both comic and tragic."

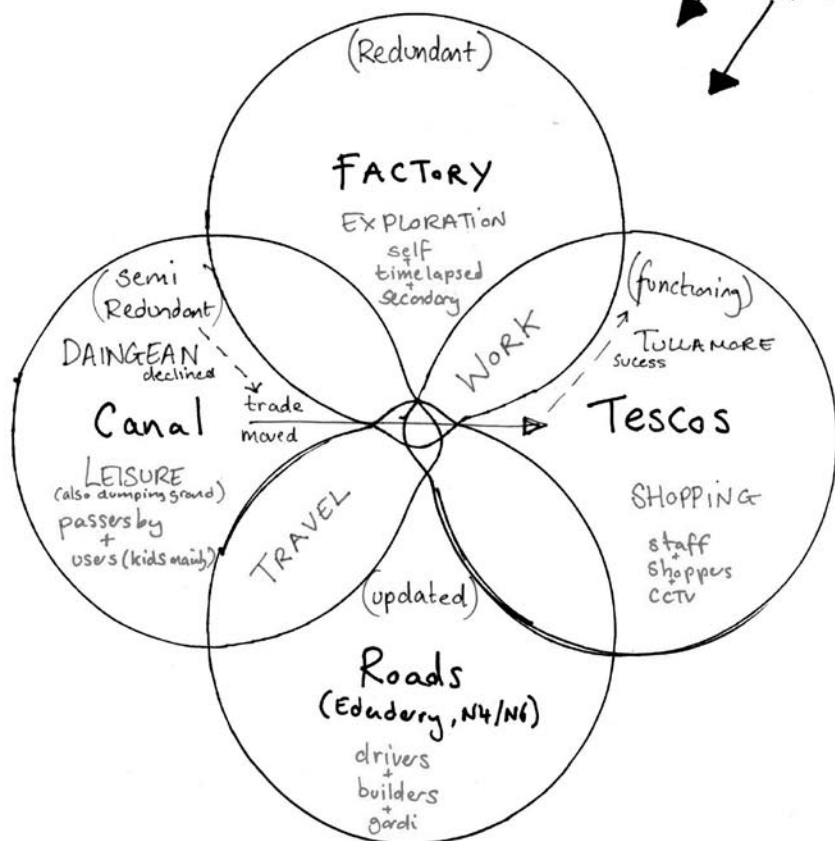
Sinead's third site of intervention was a lay by on the M6 motorway, although a high paced and hostile location, the space also provided a large albeit transitory audience. Here by transforming the lay by into a 'Play Stop' offering various distractions; a library, face painting, silent disco, hobnobs, sand pit, 6 pirate makeovers, Sinead's intention was to transform the location from a pit stop into an alternative destination. "Drivers on the motorway are striving to make time not spend time. Impatience and boredom are common experiences of drivers. In this context my activities must have appeared quite alien in this desolate landscape" As the only other pedestrians on a motorway are workers Sinead assimilated their appearance, dressing in High Vis clothing and a hard hat, she also produced altered road work signs to alert drivers in which the road worker had been given pig tails and a sand castle. In this situation as in Tesco's Extra, those using the Lay-by met the incongruous situation with a degree of trepidation. The vulnerability of a lone person in such a desolate atmosphere raised interesting questions surrounding personal responsibility in a heightened context. However from the safety of their speeding cars the high-speed audience responded with loud toots of their car horns and broad waves.

Each of these projects had it's own particular nature but share certain characteristics, the locations for the interventions were each a sort of non-space; a place built to serve a specific function as a throughway not intended as a final location. Each has a transient audience of users and are loaded with political and economic connotations. By altering the pace and vernacular of these locations Sinead offered a break away from the automatism and indifference which normally characterise these places.



LEVELS OF COLLECTING

introduce : PLAY  
 ABSURD  
 FOCUS



ALL SITES ~~are~~ NON-DESTINATIONS / NON-RESIDENCE

- FUNCTIONAL SPACES (UTILITIES)
- TRANSIENT AUDIENCE / USERS

visible : Anticipated / Normal experience : BOREDOM, AUTOMATISM  
 INDIFFERENCE, ISOLATION, DETTACHMENT

HIDDEN : INTIMACY, COMMUNICATION, CONTACT, PLAY, ATTACHMENT  
 NOVELTY, EXPLORATION, MANIPULATION, TRANSCENDENCE

DISTANCE  $\equiv$  MOVEMENT  $\equiv$  USE  $\equiv$  LIVING  $\equiv$  FUNCTIONING

# Patrick Corcoran

Patrick Corcoran is a graduate from the Limerick School of Art and Design and currently holds a studio in the Limericks city centre. He is a former member of RAP, Contact and Backwater Studio groups. Recent projects have seen him be involved in Ev+a 07, Cead in China and Dublins Darklight film festival. For Sapphire Highway much of his work took place within an abandoned peat briquette that is situated near the Good Hatchery.



Photo by Patrick Corcoran at brickette factory roof, Daingean



Part of Patrick Corcorans final installations



One of the many abandoned buildings used by Patrick Corcoran

## Sleeping Dogs

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Patrick Corcoran is primarily a video artist whose practice explores the haunting legacy that past actions have left on our current surroundings. In subtly dark and poetic ways Patrick offers his audience glimpses of the past through both physical and metaphysical traces gathered from a particular context. He is particularly interested in abandoned sites and spaces whose original function has been lost over time, leaving in its wake a heightened sense of emptiness. It is understandable so that on reading the project's brief Patrick was initially drawn to the peatbriquette factory which once offered employment to the population of Daingean but since its closure in the 1990's has stood defunct on the outskirts of town.

The immense and impressive structure of the old factory it is at once an attractive and intimidating space for an artist, as it was for Patrick, "When one encounters such a space which has a power and presence all of its own, it can be hard to break down all its elements when one wants to work with the space in question. I found this to be the case with the disused factory."

For the first days of the residency Patrick spent a lot of time collecting footage from inside the factory and documenting the reclamation of the industrial space by nature.

"On a sunny day, it had an almost uplifting atmosphere, with Swallows darting in and out of the broken windows and small and shrubs growing in its interior. On a dull, windy day, there was an ominous feeling to the space with the wind blowing and moving loose building material, at times I was unsure if I was alone in the space. The factory interior also had some very eerie rooms and features."

As the residency progressed the locals were coaxed into sharing some stories with the artists. The local history was glimpsed through a haze of ghost stories that hinted at events that took place at the notorious site of the Daingean Reformatory and the old Clonearl House. Drawing inspiration from these stories Patrick's footage of the abandoned factory combined with images of other local ruins became metaphors for a darker unspoken history that had been alluded to and glossed over. In the final video work Patrick, reflecting the tradition of story telling, created a soundtrack of natural sounds and a whispered voice over. "I wanted the soundtrack to hint at an aftermath of a semi-fictional event, a dark secret."

With the completed video work Patrick was then faced with the question of how to distribute or make the work available and to whom? Given the secretive nature of the work Patrick wanted to find some way of allowing the piece to be assimilated back into the community in a gentle and seamless manner. Throughout the three weeks working in the factory and its environs Patrick had encountered a few other visitors looking at the old building. Each of the visitors was drawn in by their own curiosity surrounding the unusual structure with its protruding chrome tubes and huge steel cogs of machinery. A couple of the visitors had been former employees of the factory. "The factory was a place to go exploring in and as it was off the beaten track, there no evidence of real 'vandalism' or regular use - graffiti, old fires, beer cans, etc. I decided to leave the DVDs around the factory on different floors and in different areas, so that over time other 'explorers' will come across the semi-hidden DVDs."



One of the cabinets used to display DVDS



More Sleeping Dogs to be found by the curious



Copies of the DVD entitled *Sleeping Dogs* were each encased in light sensitive paper and placed in various locations around the factory; on a table top waiting to be picked up, inside a broken locker, pinned in a display case and in the drawer of a desk accompanied by a note requesting that you take one home and watch it.

One can imagine the slow dispersal of this poetic work into the quiet of people's homes as a returning to the source, the work seeping back into society from where it came, just like the retelling of ghost stories sparks a return to the past or as a seed sprouting in an abandoned building begins a return to nature. It is impossible to estimate or guess at the scope of this project, in this selfless gesture of letting go, Patrick relinquished any claim on the work giving it a life of its own.

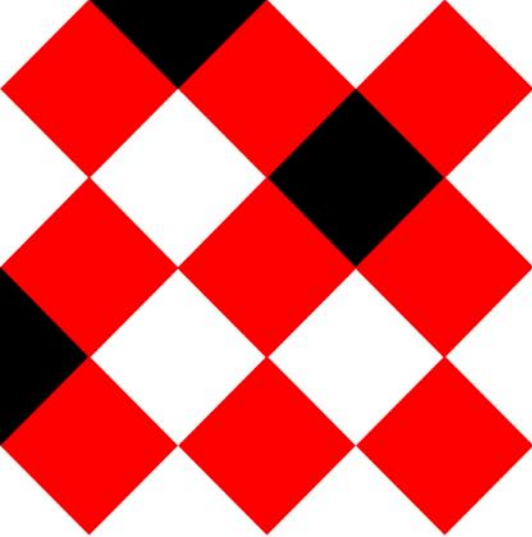
Over 150 of the DVD's were dispersed in various locations, on visits to the briquette factory over the months since Sapphire Highway it has been noted that numerous of the DVD's have been taken and rumors of their existence has been heard circulating around the village.



Film stills from **Sleeping Dogs**



**The briquette factory**



**Mark Durkan**

**Alternative Autonomies,  
freecycle, exchange and  
collective action**

Questioning and re-examination are inherent to any transitional period. This applies to any artist working in unfamiliar contexts, outside of their comfort zone, where risk is an intrinsic element. It also applies to young artists who find themselves without structure post art school. In addition the auspicious re-emergence of artist-led spaces as significant centres of activity are now strikingly pertinent at what has become a crucial time for redefining the positioning and presentation of the arts in Ireland. The Good Hatchery finds itself squarely posited in this arena. I will use the example set out by the Hatchery as a successful model for dealing with these complications as issues to be inventively resolved.

According to Carl Giffney and Ruth Lyons, the artists who initiated a project that has now become the The Good Hatchery "We intend The Good Hatchery to be an experiment in solving some of the problems associated with emerging as a young contemporary artist while simultaneously attempting to spread provocative art tactics and their outcomes out of the capital where it seems to maintain a stronghold. We believe that a rural context can offer diverse and unique areas of concern that, due to the geographical make up of Ireland, effect the majority of people living on the Island. This context can easily be overlooked by contemporary art practice. We would hope to highlight some of the rich opportunities that are actually available to the emerging artist in rural Ireland."

It may seem easy to look for an international alternative to the financial constraints of working as an artist in Ireland. The Hatchery bypasses this concern and still advocates artistic mobility but offers a viable option in the everyday territory of the local. This is an inward looking explication that utilises the resources available and contributes to a national creative economy.

The use of The Good Hatchery as a space was initiated through freecycle, an online exchange network. The ethos behind this system of connections is one of an egalitarian relationship to materials and goods that have outlived the uses of their previous owners and are posted as items to be taken away for free. Anything from hairbrushes, clothing, cars and in this case, property. Here the removal of monetary concerns diminishes the power of property possession as a measurement of assurance. This pecuniary distance with the engagement of space affords a comfort and impunity of its own. This is where the mobility thrives. Initially set up as an avenue for escaping the exorbitantly high cost of living in an urban environment, the initialisation and continued construction of The Good Hatchery offered an escape route from the escalated rental market and now ironically offers immunity from the new-liability of property ownership.

Importantly the Hatchery serves as an example of a direct re-constitutioning of the elements of disaffection. As an experimental project space, it is an active pursuit of the circumstances you want whilst seeking the solutions for the problems at hand.

Horkheimer suggests that during the process of construction the elements that constitute a piece of art are torn from their initial reality, reformed by the materials, the extrasubjective forces and the immanent processes to generate an object, be that of thought or of physicality, that at once pays respect to its social inheritance and yet still allows it to realign itself into a newly formed autonomous particular.

The distinction between artist, curator, cultural producer, administrator, manager and director are sidetracked if not rendered unnecessary. In its place a relationship of mutual self-interest emerges.

Working in this capacity it incorporates all of these activities whilst maintaining an integrity of purpose and drive. As a result this self interest is collectively replaced by a common interest. The independence of self reliance is reinforced in a building of structures that support the collective endeavours. This acts as the construction of an organised platform for the greater visibility of work and ideals that are underrepresented elsewhere.

The latent sociability in this relationship building platform is compelling not in its abundant offerings but more so in what it takes away. Living, working and socialising in The Good Hatchery is an exercise in limitations. Due to the limited resources at hand essentials can be hard to come by and necessities require time and effort. Instead of being a hindrance, this alternately affords a kind of acquittal from the less-than-necessary. A discharge from that which is less important than preparing food or gathering fuel. Under these circumstances it would be very easy to imagine an isolated utopia but this would be far from the truth. Communication is conducted over email for issues peripheral or external to the core activities of the Hatchery. The website provides an online diary of the development of the space and the people who occupy it generating a mutual umbilical cord that allows them to co-exist and extend upon each other. The real world activities have a virtual presence and that online awareness pervades the daily routine.

The materialisation of the Good Hatchery is an ongoing process. Freecycle and its other online equivalents provide a constant source for the material update of the space. In accordance with this however is a high turnover of artists, musicians, writers and cultural practitioners that constantly rejuvenate and contribute to the psychology of the space. Fundamental to the continued success of this space is a maintenance of this relational exchange. Whilst the physical space is inherently transitional in its visual formality and its functionality is constantly added to and built upon, a corresponding reciprocity of skills and experiences by the visitors and participants ensures a healthy dynamism within the Hatchery.

The use of The Good Hatchery as an architectural space will undergo many transitional phases in its lifetime (so far it has seen a change from gentrified manor to farmhouse, stable to artist-led project space). However, the The Good Hatchery as an idea is more enduring as it propagates the notion of self-actualised realities. Questioning and re-examining systems of behaviour in a transitional period is essential particularly at a time when its prospects are all too easily held up to the mercy of 'untractable' global tides. A future shaped by efficiency, creative resolution and most importantly by your own hand is a comforting thought.



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[www.thegoodhatchery.wordpress.com](http://www.thegoodhatchery.wordpress.com)



(Above) The Good Hatchery, 2008

