

AN URGENT ENQUIRY: DUBLIN CITY



27/04/2018

Bull Island Biosphere, The Red Stables at St.
Anne's Park

AN URGENT ENQUIRY: DUBLIN CITY



27/4/2018

North Bull Island Interpretative Centre

Pat Corrigan, island supervisor from Dublin City Council, gave a brief history and overview of the North Bull Island Biosphere Reserve, followed by a short walk down to the coastline. The Interpretative Centre itself was part lecture theatre, part natural history museum, part aquarium and all located in an observation tower-like building complete with a telescope for viewing wildlife.



Figures 46 & 47: North Bull Island Biosphere Reserve

Pat Corrigan, the island supervisor began his discussion of the biosphere reserve at the Interpretative Centre which was established in 1985. He explained that the island itself is protected as a nature reserve, under EU protocols, and as a UNESCO biosphere reserve. North Bull Island is also a Wildfowl Sanctuary, a Ramsar Convention site, a Biogenetic Reserve, and a Special Area Amenity Order site. He noted that Dublin Bay Biosphere works with schools, universities, community groups, NGOs and local businesses to inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature. He explained the three central goals of the organization are to conserve island and coastal biodiversity, to support education and research and to promote sustainable development.⁶⁵ More specifically, the DBB also concentrates on urban resilience and urbanisation impacts on ecosystem service, climate change, the conservation of species and habitats and the conservation of rare species in order to preserve local landscape histories.

Biosphere reserves differ from the traditional conservation model because they attempt to marry the protection of biodiversity with a range of human activities on the protected site. Corrigan noted that North Bull Island is the only Biosphere worldwide which includes within its area a national capital city. Therefore, its impact on society is higher than for just the immediate resident population. Corrigan went on to explain that North Bull Island is the accidental consequence of human, industrial and mercantile development. It is currently 5 km in length and 1 km wide, and covers an area nearly 15km² in size, including both land and seashore and with ever depositing sand, the coastline is continuing to expand.⁶⁶

The biosphere reserve hosts over 300 recorded species of rare flora including officially protected ones such as the bee orchid and the helleborine orchid. The North Bull Island is of international importance for waterfowl on the basis that it regularly supports in excess of 20,000 waterfowl including the Shelduck, Teal, Pintail, Shoveler, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin, Curlew, Redshank, Turnstone and Black-headed Gull. It also qualifies for international importance as the numbers of three species exceed the international threshold – Light-bellied Brent Goose, Black-tailed Godwit, and Bartailed Godwit.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Dublin's Biodiversity Enjoy it Know It Keep it Presentation for Embedding Biodiversity in your Organisation BITC. (2017). [PDF] Dublin: Dublin City Council. Available at: http://www.bitc.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Niamh-Ni-Cholmain_Dublin-City-Council.pdf [Accessed 3 May 2018].

⁶⁶ Dublincity.ie. (n.d.). *Bull Island* | Dublin City Council. [online] Available at: <http://www.dublincity.ie/main-menu-services-recreation-culture-dublin-city-parks-visit-park-north-bull-island-unesco/our> [Accessed 3 May 2018].

⁶⁷ Ibid.

After a series of exquisite natural wildlife photography slides, Corrigan brought the Think Tank out to the Dollymount Strand from where we could see the chimneys of the Poolbeg Generating Station just visible in the distance. He explained the island faces challenges due to increased intensification of recreational pressures, including the unleashing of dogs. This results in the erosion of some dune zones and increased disturbance of wildlife resulting in decline (Irish hare) and even loss (little tern) of species. The southern portion of the Island is also being eroded due to an increased frequency of intensive storms. The introduction of the invasive flora sea berry, by humans is also problematic and has since been spread around the island by birds, resulting in increased maintenance costs and threats to habitats. Additionally, there are threats posed to water quality by increased human populations combined with delays in increasing sewage treatment capacity for Dublin Bay as well as typical pollution streams such as plastic waste.

Despite these ongoing issues, the North Bull Island Biosphere Reserve continues to thrive. 'It is a classic example of a paradox of conservation: a number of the most significant sites remaining for wild creatures are the direct outcomes of human activity.'⁶⁸

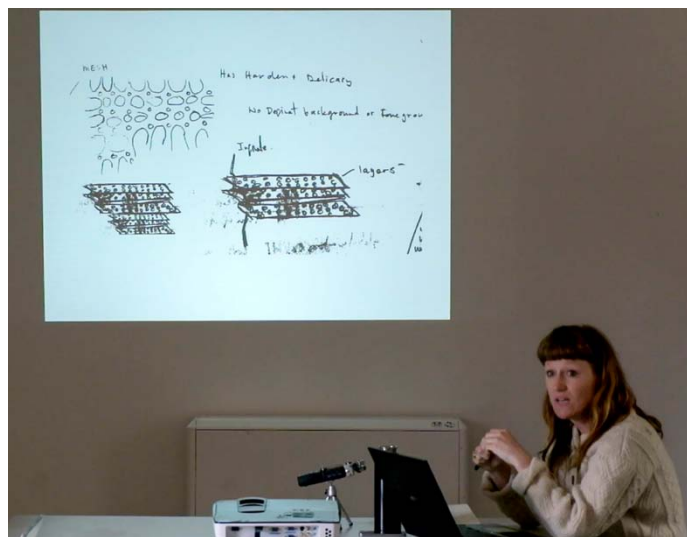


Figure 48: The Red Stables at St. Anne's Park

From the Bull Island Biosphere Reserve, the Think Tank group went to The Red Stables at St. Anne's Park for a series of presentations and discussions. Dublin City Council opened The Red Stables in June 2006 as dedicated space for visual artists, the creation of contemporary art with the additional aim of promoting public enjoyment and appreciation of the arts. Two residency programmes offered an emerging Irish artist and an International artist the chance to live and work in The Red Stables, while two Summer School Programmes were run with the theme of Art & Ecology. Curated by Denise Reddy and Seán O Sullivan, in 2012 and 2013, the Summer School provided opportunities for learning and spaces for presentations, films, discussions, field trips and exchanges between artists and ecologists.

⁶⁸ Woodworth, P. (2012). Dublin's accidental island. *The Irish Times*. [online] Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/dublin-s-accidental-island-1.539254> [Accessed 3 May 2018].

A RESIDENCY IN THE PORT OF PORTO ROSIE O'REILLY



27/4/2018

Presentations at The Red Stables

Rosie O'Reilly is visual artist and maker working in the field of instillation art. She holds a BA in Philosophy and sociology from Trinity College Dublin and is currently completing an MA in Art & Research collaboration at IADT. Specific theoretical areas of research have been in moral philosophy, systems thinking, ecological and social framing. Recent work has included a group performance and publication at IMMA "Rosc: Fiction of the contemporary (2017).

In 2013 she was part of the ArtistsFollowing a 3-week residency at L'Aboral Contemporary Art Centre Gijon, Spain she exhibited 'Seasons as Fluid Forms' at the Centro de Cultura Antiguo Instituto. Her work is also concerned with space specific and action based pieces, which have occurred outside the gallery space; Street art and temporary spaces.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Lay of the land. (2018). *LAY OF THE LAND: ARTISTS*. [online] Available at: <http://www.layoftheland.ie/artists17/> [Accessed 3 May 2018].



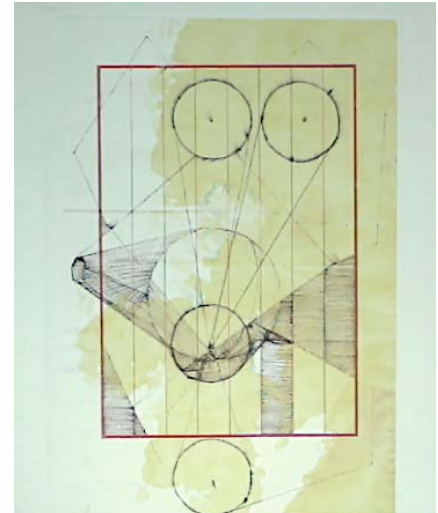
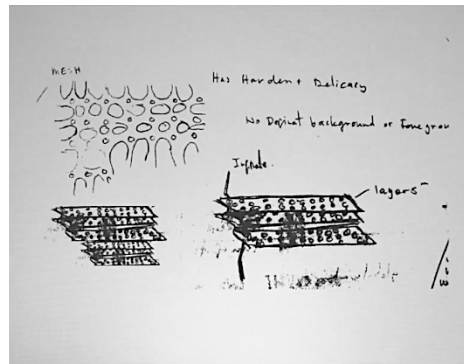
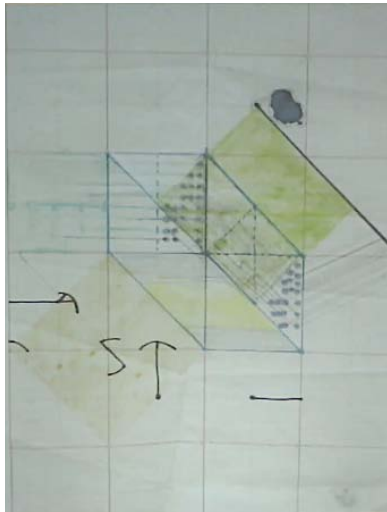
Figures 49 & 50: Rosie O'Reilly, sea urchin observations, 2017

The following pages are a composite overview of Rosie O'Reilly's presentation and select projects from her current body of work. O'Reilly spent three months as an artist in residence and researcher at CIIMAR, an interdisciplinary marine research institution. Her residency was founded on research questions that explore how we understand change, borders and movement in a time dominated by the Anthropocene, climate change and big data. The building itself, is located within a marina and port which houses the cruise terminal points for human transport vessels and which is flanked by one of Europe's largest container ports.⁷⁰

O'Reilly worked directly with an ecologist and geneticist, observing work in the area of invasive species studies and Anthropogenic change in marine ecosystems. The first image above represents the dynamic lab structures that attempt to determine the peripheral survival limitations of sea urchins, increasing water temperatures and measuring respiration rates.⁷¹ The second image is a video still taken of the movement of a sea urchin. From this observation and documentation process, O'Reilly began to understand her role as one of an invasive species within the science laboratory, invading the knowledge and creation spaces that the ecologists and geneticists occupied.

⁷⁰ Connolly, M. (2018). *Report from Porto: ARC Researcher Rosie O'Reilly on ERASMUS + Traineeship*. [online] Arciadtd.ie. Available at: <http://arciadt.ie/?p=1948> [Accessed 3 May 2018].

⁷¹ Connolly, M. (2018). *Report from Porto: ARC Researcher Rosie O'Reilly on ERASMUS + Traineeship*. [online] Arciadtd.ie. Available at: <http://arciadt.ie/?p=1948> [Accessed 3 May 2018].



Figures 51, 52 & 53: Rosie O'Reilly, Speculative Drawing, 2017

Influenced heavily by theorist Donna Haraway, O'Reilly developed a way of working, dissecting text and inserting it into drawings, a process she terms speculative drawing. The black lines throughout the drawings refer to her original MA research question: How is the Anthropocene interpreted in contemporary art? The drawings simultaneously reframe and question whether artistic practice can address the social and environmental issues of current climate change. The dense black lines represent a misconception that knowledge structures are static. Ultimately as a researcher studying biodiversity and the environment, O'Reilly observed that everything is in flux.

The theoretical determination behind the drawings also stems from Timothy Morton's notion of *hyperobjects* —entities that are of such vast temporal and spatial dimensions that they defeat traditional ideas about what a thing is in the first place. O'Reilly described examples of hyperobjects being climate change, Styrofoam, and radioactive plutonium. She specifically refers, to the idea of nature, suggesting as Morton does, that humans and the natural world become mesh mates. The term *mesh* referring to the interconnectedness of all living and non-living things, consisting of infinite connections and infinitesimal differences.⁷²

⁷² Morton, T. (2013). *Hyperobjects*. Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, p.30.

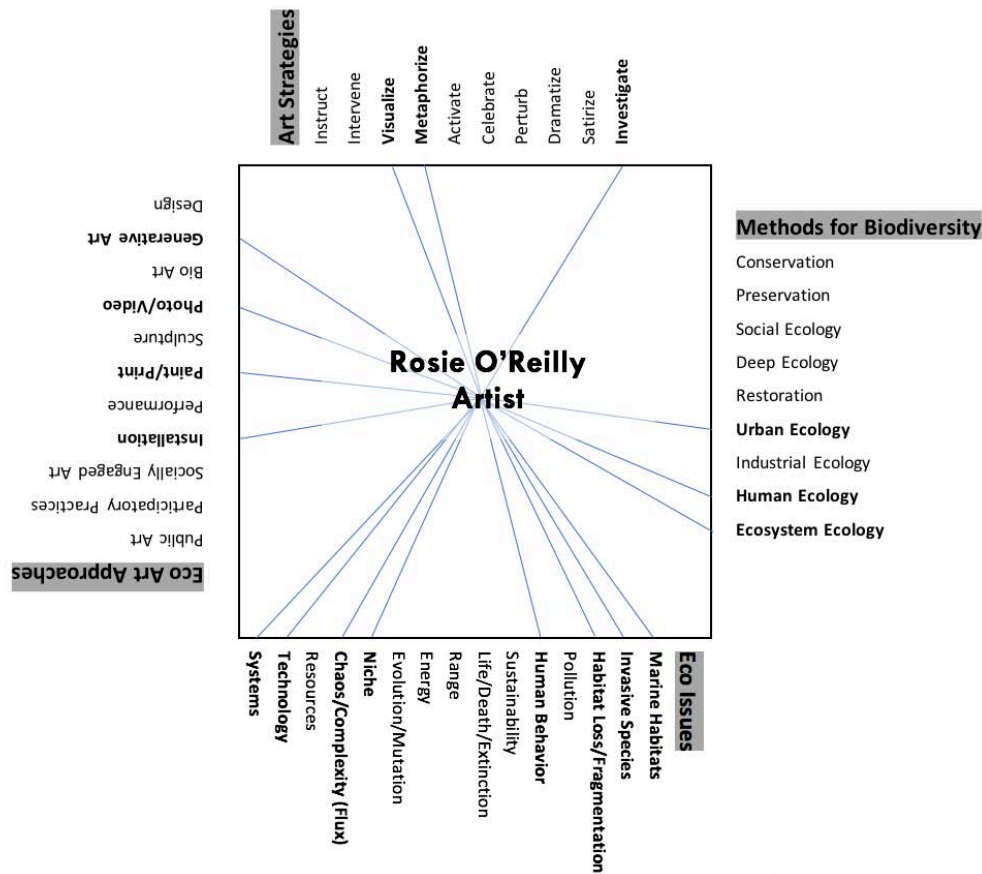


Figures 54 & 55: Rosie O'Reilly, *Speculative Drawings*, 2017

The first image represents O'Reilly's experiment based on going research within CIIMAR that was altering and measuring the pH levels of water. Making a hydrophone, or underwater recording device, she manipulated and then documented the sounds of the of dissolving calcium carbonate based species such as sea urchins and molluscs. The resulting recordings were overlaid with recordings of scientists working in the laboratory. The final work was produced as an audio performance, creating a sonic fiction of research into the effects of climate change within marine environments.

For the second image, O'Reilly worked with a Lisbon-based philosopher, Dr. Bartholomew Ryan and experimental photographic space called *Casa da Imagem*.⁷³ The image is a photograph of an invasive species of Japanese seaweed, made with 16mm film and developed with ecologically friendly agents such as ascorbic acid and seaweed.

⁷³ Betacasa.fmleao.pt. (n.d.). *Casa da Imagem*. [online] Available at: <http://betacasa.fmleao.pt/a-casa/team/?lang=en> [Accessed 3 May 2018].



Rosie O'Reilly's practice is both research based and process oriented. It is an interdisciplinary practice that is manifested through the media of drawing, sound art, installation and lens based practices of Photography and Video. Through these varied media, O'Reilly employs strategies of investigation, metaphorization and investigation in order to question existing knowledge structures surrounding both scientific and artistic disciplines. It is through these strategies that the core issues related to marine habitats, habitat loss and fragmentation, human behaviour and niche are expressed. Her practice also investigates notions of chaos, complexity and flux as well as technology and systems so as to address the developing age of the Anthropocene, climate change and migration through a visual and sound art. Her practice, rooted in Urban Ecology, Human Ecology and Ecosystem Ecology, not only bridges and expands the methodologies and enquires of cutting edge scientific research and contemporary artistic practice.

LOVING THE PLANET

NIAMH NÍ CHOLMÁIN



27/4/2018

Presentations at The Red Stables

Niamh Ní Cholmáin is Dublin City's Biodiversity Facilitator for Community Engagement. She discussed her role in relation to local schools and explained the importance of biospheres for developing community connection to place, engagement with and protection of the natural world.

The following pages are a composite overview of Niamh Ní Cholmáin's presentation entitled *Loving the Planet*. The overview recounts Ní Cholmáin's discussion of the overarching aim of the Dublin City Biodiversity Action Plan 2015-2020 as the conservation of biodiversity within the City. She explained that it will rely on a combination of different approaches, including direct and appropriate management of biodiversity at local and regional level, identification and protection of important conservation value areas, enhancing biodiversity conservation within the green infrastructure network, raising awareness and understanding among decision-makers, provision of appropriate guidance to landowners, and changing behaviour among the public towards the protection and appreciation of biodiversity.

Importantly, Ní Cholmáin then explained her approach to engagement with the public, distilling her nuanced complex interactions down to 10 essential elements. They include:

1. An Annual Awareness Programme that celebrates important national and international dates related to the environment and biodiversity such as World Wetland Day, Tree Week, International Day Biodiversity Walks & Talks and Specialist workshops.

2. OWLS' events. OWLS' stands for Outdoor, Wildlife, Learning and Survival and is a Children's Nature Charity based in Dublin. e run a series of outdoor events and workshops throughout the year that take place in parks and natural areas around Dublin. They are aimed at families with young children who want to discover more about their natural heritage whilst having fun outdoors. The aims of the events are to offer young children experiences that get them in tune with their natural world, whilst learning and having fun at the same time.



Figure 56: OWLS outdoor activity and workshop

3. Biodiversity Fringe events are held as part of wider events such as the Dublin City Council's iconic Rose Festival, RTE Dawn Chorus events and the Battle for the Bay. The events consist of interactive displays, walks and talks on Biodiversity.

4. Facilitation Opportunities for Citizen Scientist Volunteering. Citizen science is the involvement of volunteers in science. It is scientific research conducted, in whole or in part, by amateur or nonprofessional scientists. The motivations of participants vary widely so citizen science projects must be designed in such a way that the project will engage the widest possible number of participants. One of the key motivations for many participants is that

they are not just participating for the good of a particular project, but rather being part of larger communities and are acting for the greater good. Some of the more popular citizen science projects include the garden bird survey run by Birdwatch Ireland and public participation in protection of the coastal zone run by Coastwatch.

5. Local school Engagement includes visits to, discussions with and demonstrations for local school children. As part of the 2008 – 2012 Biodiversity action plan a number of resources were produced to aid biodiversity education and awareness. Native tree trails, audio podcast tours, and wildlife signage were developed for public parks. Teacher handbooks, class activity sheets, information leaflets and posters were produced for schools. Guidance notes were developed for enhancing biodiversity in buildings, gardens and neighbourhoods.



Figure 57: North Bull Island Biosphere Reserve Brochure

6. The Brent Geese Ambassador Project invites people to become ambassadors for the geese. Their role is to raise awareness of the geese among family and friends, to practice and promote good behaviour when encountering geese and other wildlife and to recognise and promote the UNESCO Dublin Bay Biosphere Reserve as an integral part of Dublin City. Ambassadors visit North Bull Island or another part of the Biosphere to see and identify the geese as they graze on the mudflats, marshes and open spaces. In the last 3 years over 300 hundred children form 4th class primary schools have become Brent Goose Ambassadors.

7. Participation in UNESCO Dublin Bay Biosphere with events such as guided boat cruises to see the birds of Dublin Bay, marine litter clean up, dusk bird chorus walks, native amphibian and reptile exhibitions, walks and talks, Battle for the Bay events, Kids Sea Camps, Swift surveys and Bat conservation walks and talks among many others.

8. Development of A Branding for Biodiversity Branding for biodiversity involves finding out what values people hold, and how they perceive their relationship with nature. Understanding the psychological and sociological response to local environments is the first step toward building a powerful brand. It also involves moving away from two common misconceptions about how people think which are chiefly responsible for undermining the impact of current biodiversity messages. The first is an assumption that people are rational. The second is the belief that people will value biodiversity for its own sake.



Figure 58: Branding for Biodiversity

9. Development for an Arts and Ecology Strategy: Art is increasingly viewed as a resource for raising awareness of biodiversity. Biodiversity acts as an inspiration within many art forms, and art itself can help communicate the importance of conserving biodiversity within the City. The Red Stables Summer School projects of 2012 and 2013 were successful example of past initiatives in Arts & Ecology. As part of the Dublin City Biodiversity Action Plan 2015- 2020, an art and ecology strategy will be implemented.

10. Collaborations with Mainstream Biodiversity Events such as the Dodder Gathering. The Dodder Gathering was a networking summit was held in 2017 for representatives from local community groups from source to sea on the Dodder. This summit consisted of presentations from Dublin City Council on topics ranging from the water quality, flood defences, landscape management of Herbert Park and litter prevention. After the information session, participants gathered to discuss the river, what it means to them, what concerns they had and what actions needed to be carried out to promote and protect the river. In the afternoon, there were interactive displays on wildlife, the wonders of water and river stories.⁷⁴

The discussion of essential elements for public engagement was presented in detail as they quintessential examples of the multitude of projects that Ní Cholmáin is involved in and are specifically relevant to the Think Tank's intention to promote and facilitate future Art & Biodiversity public works. These elements demonstrate not only best practices but also what activities, workshops and needs are already being met with Dublin City with regard to the active engagement of the public in natural environments.

⁷⁴ Dublin City Biodiversity Action Plan 2015 - 2020. (2018). [PDF] Dublin: Dublin City Council. Available at: http://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/Press/Documents/Draft%20Dublin%20City%20Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan%202015-2020%20_November%202015_.pdf [Accessed 3 May 2018].

HOW THE ARTS CAN REACH WHAT ECONOMISTS CAN'T MARK WALLACE



27/4/2018

Presentations at The Red Stables

Mark Wallace is the director of Beaford Arts and the vice-chair of the North Devon Biosphere Reserve. Beaford Arts is England's longest-running rural arts organisation. Working in partnership with volunteers in communities across the region, Beaford Arts works across the 1350 square miles of north Devon's UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in partnership with the land, the environment and the people within it.

Beaford Arts commissions, presents and promotes events in rural north Devon communities such as performance, music, dance and comedy. Venues range from halls to ancient churches, barns to beaches and from cliff tops to sand dunes. The programme of events feature international, national and regional artists presenting new work. Beaford Arts also commissions artists to work in the local environment and with communities for extended periods during a residency programme.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ www.anothervision.co.uk, d. (n.d.). *Beaford Arts*. [online] Beaford-arts.org.uk. Available at: <https://www.beaford-arts.org.uk/> [Accessed 3 May 2018].



Figures 59 & 60: North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

In his presentation entitled: How the Arts Can Reach What Economists Can't, Mark Wallace gave a brief overview of the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, introduced Beaford Arts and discussed a few of the past projects they help to facilitate. The following pages present a composite overview of Wallace's presentation.

The above two images depict the North Devon Biosphere Reserve, the aerial map as well as one of the many picturesque vistas contained within. The biosphere was designate a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 1976 and is located on the estuary of the Taw and Torridge Rivers. The area of North Devon's Biosphere Reserve is 3,300 square km. It is home to about 150,000 people who are mainly engaged in services, manufacturing, agriculture and fishing. ⁷⁶ The biosphere reserve is an amazingly rich habitat with over 470 species of flowering plants, several Red Data species and a unique research history. The catchment area of the reserve includes the Lundy Island, England's first Marine Protected Area a habitat for seals, a variety of marine species, plants and insects particular to the area. ⁷⁷

The biosphere reserve is active in encouraging community involvement especially with regard to education and volunteering and has trails for the public to explore the area. Traditional land use practices, such as the practices of grazing sheep and cattle in the saltmarsh, are still maintained. This practice has been in place for more than a century and maintains the marshes in a condition suitable for wintering wildfowl. The biosphere reserve is also active in working with farmers, for instance the Catchment Sensitive Farming Project and helps farmers understand how their land use has effects further downstream. Traditional local fishery harvests Atlantic salmon sea trout and sea bass which are species that rely on the site as part of their lifecycle. Mussel fishery and the harvest of ulva and laver are still practiced in a traditional way. The North Devon's Biosphere Reserve participates in the Devon Marine Conservation Zone County Group for the Finding Sanctuary partnership which looks to establish Marine Conservation Zones in the seas around south-west England as part of a wider network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

⁷⁶ North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve UK. (n.d.), *North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve UK*. [online] Available at: <https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/> [Accessed 3 May 2018].

⁷⁷ UK Man and the Biosphere Committee. (n.d.). *North Devon's Biosphere Reserve*. [online] Available at: <http://www.unesco-mab.org.uk/north-devon-biosphere-reserve.html> [Accessed 3 May 2018].



Figures 61 & 62: James Ravilious, *Mothers & Children on the Beach*, 1975 & *Netting Cabbages*, 1984

Wallace described a significant collection of Beaford Arts, the photography portfolio of James Ravilious. Over 17 years, from 1972 to 1989, Ravilious documented the people and places of northern Devon, amassing a collection of over 70,000 images. As a member of the local community, he was trusted to photograph all aspects of local life and thus has created a richly authentic portrait of Devon. He worked by available light only and never posed his subjects, composing at speed with a Leica camera, auxiliary viewfinder and pre-war uncoated lenses. The archive now exists, in part, as a searchable database of over 1,700 images of North Devon and its people.



Figure 63: Men with plough and horses at ploughing match. Huxtable of Barnstaple plough, 1 way cut plough, 1906.

In addition, to his own archive, James Ravilious built what is known as the Old Archive. The archive consists of over 5,000 photographs of the wider Devon area with pictures dating between 1870 and 1940. Inspired by a local Women's Institute meeting exhibiting members' photograph collections, James began to ask his subjects whether they themselves had any old photographs of the area which they might like to have included in the Beaford Archive.

He collected these images by rephotographing them, working closely with his colleague George Tucker to build what they called the Old Archive. Documentation relied upon the memories of those supplying the images; their recollections were carefully recorded, but often partial.

Additional images were accessioned by successive Beaford archivists, who also curated Old Archive exhibitions aimed at collecting the hidden histories in the images. The Old Archive now contains over 7,000 images, most of which date from 1880-1930 and predate the arrival of the Brownie camera in the region.



Figure 64: The Hidden Histories Project, 2017 - 2020

The Hidden Histories project is a three year Heritage Lottery funded exploration of the materials within the archive, seeking to improve Beaford Art's understanding of, and accessibility to, the photographs. Through modern day digitisation techniques, experts are able to interrogate the negatives in the collection with a new level of detail – uncovering social and environmental change through a medium that is simultaneously evocative and deeply relevant to the communities of north Devon.

A key focus of this ongoing work is a new digital archive: an online platform bringing art and technology together, to enhance the way that the inhabitants of the North Devon Biosphere experience their environment. A new website, Beaford.org was launched with the aim of bringing together the themes of heritage, art, memory and environment in a virtual space. This will enable users to explore photography that documents the environmental change of their land. Interactive areas of the website will empower visitors to also contribute their own knowledge of this change to the Archive. Another strand of the project will be to collect 80 new recorded interviews with people connected to the archive, thus bringing an added dimension as well as multiple perspectives and voices to the archive.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ www.anothervision.co.uk, d. (n.d.). *Beaford Arts*. [online] Beaford-arts.org.uk. Available at: <https://www.beaford-arts.org.uk/> [Accessed 3 May 2018].



Figures 65 & 66: Chris Leonard creating Ice Chimes and Terje Isungset performing Ice Music, 2012

Pictured to the above left is Chris Leonard with his Ice Chimes, made with water sourced from the River Torridge in north Devon. Leonard made 6 - 8 chimes that ranged from 8-10 cm in diameter, the longest one measuring 150 cm long, and a series of sequentially shorter chimes in between. A range of special xylophone hammers were sourced via Totnes from China and the wooden frame to hold the chimes was made from wood grown and harvested locally in north Devon. The chimes were hung using thin leather straps. The leather comes from south Devon and has been tanned using a 200 year old tanning process using natural oak tannins and is powered by a water wheel.

The Ice Chimes were played by Norwegian percussionist, Terje Isungset, during a Beaford Arts hosted event, Ice Music. Isungset views his creative process as a cross between a sound artist and a shaman, crafting his own instruments from Norwegian natural elements such as arctic birch, granite, slate, sheep bells and ice.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ www.anothervision.co.uk, d. (n.d.). *Beaford Arts*. [online] Beaford-arts.org.uk. Available at: <https://www.beaford-arts.org.uk/> [Accessed 3 May 2018].



Figures 67 & 68: Kimmo Pohjonen, *Earth Machine Music*, 2012

For the realization of *Earth Machine Music*, Finnish accordionist and composer, Kimmo Pohjonen met local farmers, sampling the sounds of local machines, engines, equipment, farm implements, tools and any sound-emitting creation, inanimate or animate, mechanical or living. Pohjonen then returned to Helsinki and composed new music using these sounds and integrated them into his accordion sounds, samples and constructions. The concerts, performed in local farms, featured Pohjonen with accordion and sampled sounds, creating new musical soundscapes live in real time performance with the local farmers and machine operators.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Kimmo Pohjonen. (n.d.). *Earth Machine Music* | Kimmo Pohjonen. [online] Available at: <http://kimmopohjonen.com/projects/earth-machine-music/> [Accessed 3 May 2018].

SUPER NATURAL PLASTIC EATERS YVANNA GREENE



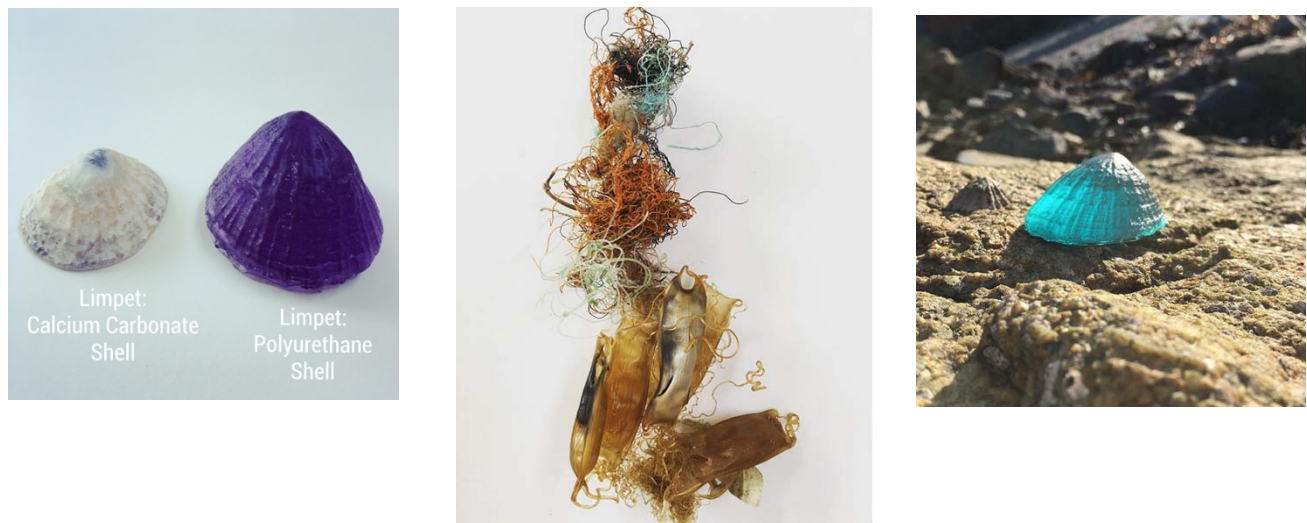
27/4/2018

Presentations at The Red Stables

Yvanna Greene is a visual artist living and working in Dublin. She works in a variety of media including printmaking, photography, sculpture and performance. Plastic pollution has become an important part of her focus and research and in particular how micro plastics (pieces less than 5mm in diameter) are making their way into the food chain of marine animals and birds.

She commonly takes home small found treasures that inspire drawings which are an important part of my practice. Yet, as plastic pollution becomes more common place on our coastline, her treasures have turned to almost daily gatherings of used and non recycled plastic. She is in the process of completing year 2 of an MA in Art and Research Collaboration at IADT.⁸¹

⁸¹ Yvanna Greene. (n.d.). [online] Available at: <https://www.yvannagreene.com/> [Accessed 3 May 2018].



Figures 69, 70, 71: Yvanna Greene, Super Natural Plastic Eaters, 2018

Yvanna Greene's presentation took the form of performative lecture. In a work of speculative fiction, she presented the above iridescent sculptural forms as citizen scientist discoveries. Daily walks and swims along the shores of Dublin led Greene to first observe the amount of micro plastic that was accumulating along the coast. At first disturbed by this, she then began to realize that molluscs, crabs and even birds had adapted to the onslaught of plastic material in the ocean by incorporating it as part of their diets. As a result the hard chitin of crab shells, the calcium carbonate shells of limpets and mussels and even the keratin in the beaks of birds were being replaced by highly coloured synthetic structures.

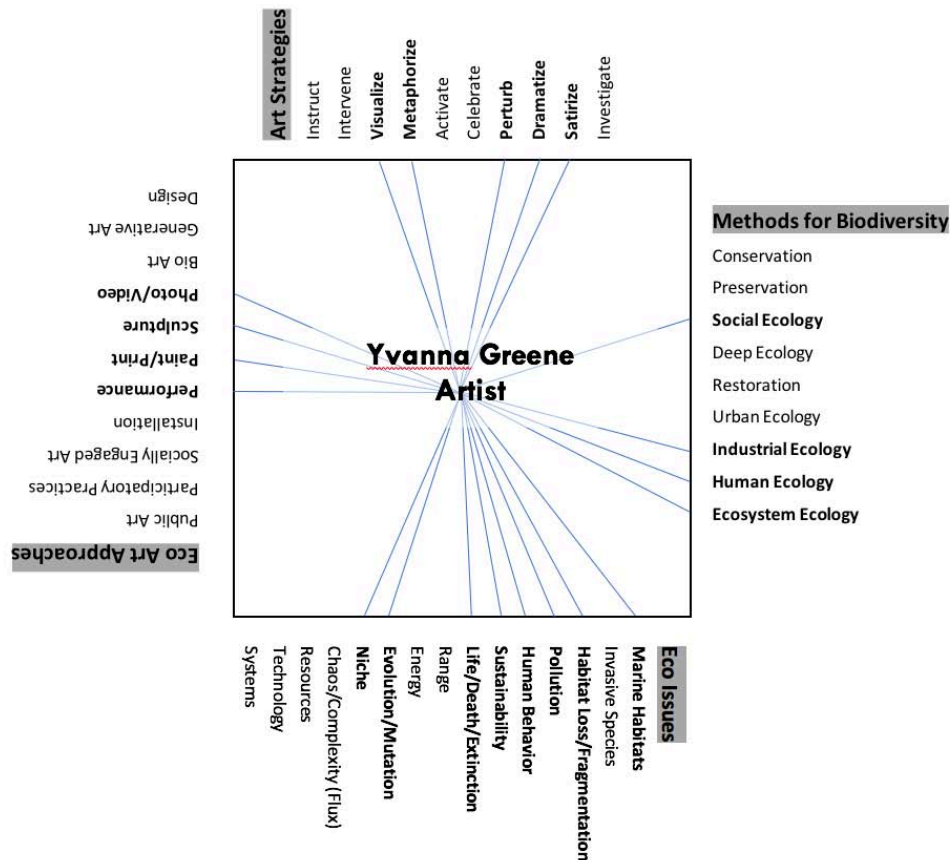
Greene presented these mutations as evolutionarily advantageous adaptations. She guided the group through a series pseudo-scientific tables comparing the composition of organic materials with synthetic ones. She explained how polyurethane protein substitution was an ideal adaptation for all marine life. It was a more durable and robust material and the vivid, translucent colours made the animals more desirable in terms of sexual selection.

Her seriousness in the delivery of the lecture and the appropriated scientific methodology left a few audience members questioning the validity of the findings. Her overenthusiasm for plastic in the marine environment was both humorous and disquieting, implicating the entire audience in the widespread uptake in plastic consumption and disposal.



Figures 72 & 73: Yvanna Greene, 8 Week Yellow Micro Plastic Diet & Cheliped 2, 2017

The first print above imagines the rapid transformation of a natural chitin based crab shell into a polyurethane based shell as a result of an 8 week yellow micro plastic diet. Greene reports that 'over this period of time he is able to transform himself to a fully plastic supernatural everlasting crab.' The second print imagines the potential for claw development and augmentation as marine species, in particular crabs become adept as consume plastic and polyurethane and transforming it in order to create the basis for their exoskeletons. Although this work wasn't presented during the Think Tank session, it contributes to a broader understanding of Greene's process and practice.



Yvanna Greene's site-specific interdisciplinary practice is realized in a multiplicity of ways namely printmaking, sculpture, photography and performance. Through these varied media, Greene employs the following strategies in order to connect to a wider public audience: visualize, metaphorize, perturb, dramatize, and satirize. It is through these strategies that the central tenets of marine habitats, habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, human behaviour, sustainability, life/death/extinction, evolution/mutation and niche are explored. Her practice and research are founded on the frameworks of Social Ecology, Industrial Ecology, Human Ecology and Ecosystem Ecology. Greene's practice calls into question the patterns of plastic consumption and disposable and the effect it is having on coastal Irish waters. Using humour and satire to deliver hard to swallow truths about the current state of the environment, Greene is content to allow the viewer to remain in deeply uncomfortable and reflective spaces.