

issue 1 / Autumn 2010

NEWS VIEWS

FIRESTATION
ARTISTS
STUDIOS

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Take a bow!

The arts really matter to us in Ireland; they are a big part of people's lives, the country's single most popular pursuit. Our artists interpret our past, define who we are today, and imagine our future. We can all take pride in the enormous reputation our artists have earned around the world.

The arts play a vital role in our economy, and smart investment of taxpayers' money in the arts is repaid many times over. The dividends come in the form of a high value, creative economy driven by a flexible, educated, innovative work force, and in a cultural tourism industry worth €2.4 billion directly a year.

The Arts Council is the Irish Government agency for funding and developing the arts. Arts Council funding from the taxpayer, through the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport, for 2010 is €69.15 million, that's less than €1 a week for every household.

So, at the end of your next inspirational encounter with visual arts, don't forget the role you played and take a bow yourself!

Find out what's on at

www.events.artscouncil.ie

You can find out more about the arts here:

www.artscouncil.ie

INTRODUCTION

Fire Station Artists' Studios has been around for 18 years and this is the first of a series of News/Views we plan to produce and distribute. Our aim with this newsletter is to let you know what we are up to, the opportunities we provide to artists, our plans for the future and hopefully provide ideas for possible collaborations or partnerships. Additionally, in each issue we will commission an art writer to write on a topic of relevance to Fire Station which will draw on a wider context than this organisation.

In these times of tighter budgets and lean spending Fire Station wishes to highlight its excellent facilities and to open up access to these. With this in mind, this autumn we advertised our new Sculpture Workshop and Digital Media Residencies. Furthermore, we continue to give artists opportunities to engage in peer critique and up-skill through the Masterclass and Digital Media workshop programme which is open to professional visual artists.

We recognise the opportunity to support Irish artists in an international arena by profiling ourselves internationally. By placing ourselves in an international context through commissions and our studio awards, we aim to support local artists make that step outside the island of Ireland. Artur Żmijewski's film, commissioned by Fire Station in 2009, *Two Monuments* will be shown in RHA in November along with the launch of our publication '*The Applied Social Arts*, Artur Żmijewski'.

In addition, the Think Tank programme lead by Kuratorisk Aktion started in September this year with seven Irish practitioners comprising of six artists and one curator.

Supporting more artists with subsidised live/work studio space has long been the focus of the board and staff of Fire Station. We plan to develop the building next door, number 12 Buckingham Street, into two additional residential studios and a general purpose space. This is thanks to a generous lease agreement with Dublin City Council and continuing fundraising and financing efforts.

We hope News/Views will assist artists, curators, galleries, arts and non arts organisations, to access our resources, learn about our supports for artists, our commissioning process, the way we engage with the artistic community and open doors to possible collaborations and partnerships.

Looking forward to hearing from you.



FIRE STATION NEWS



New Board Members

We are delighted to announce two new directors to our board and members of the Fire Station, artists Alan Phelan and Amanda Coogan. Brian Kennedy, a Belfast-based artist who served on our board for twelve years, and Ger Power from North City Centre Community Action Project, who served on our board for five years, both stepped down in January 2010. We would like to thank Brian and Ger for their generosity of time and expertise over those years. The Fire Station Board is undergoing a process of development and we are actively seeking to recruit new non artist board members to support us in realising our strategic plans for the next three years.

Current Board

Amanda Coogan – *artist*

Roisin Hogan – *Chair*

Pauline Kane – *community expertise*

Clodagh Kenny – *company secretary*

Mel MacGiobuin – *community expertise*

Alan Phelan – *artist*

Dan Shipsides – *artist*

Gertrude Exchange Residency Artists

This year the successful application was a joint application from Rhona Byrne and Mark Garry for the Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces Exchange with Fire Station.

Fire Station and Gertrude, which is based in Melbourne, began the exchange programme in 2008. Every second year an Irish artist is awarded the opportunity to spend six weeks in a studio in Gertrude with a small bursary and all accommodation expenses paid. Every other year an Australian artist is awarded the same opportunity in Ireland here at Fire Station with the additional opportunity to have a show and/or curatorial support from Pallas Projects.

To date the Irish artists have been shortlisted from past resident artists of Fire Station but this may change in the future.

Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces was founded in 1983 as a non profit contemporary art complex of gallery spaces and studio facilities in Fitzroy, Melbourne.

New Website

Fire Station launched a new website in May this year. We hope you enjoy the more coherent, visually interesting and art-friendly site which has been shortlisted for the IDI Design Awards 2010. Thanks to Karen at Pixel Design.

THINK TANK

'Troubling Ireland' Think Tank programme with 'Kuratorisk Aktion'

Sept 2010 – May 2011

Fire Station Artists' Studios is pleased to announce its first Think Tank convened in Collins Barracks, Dublin from 17th – 19th Sept 2010. Following a public call for applications earlier this year, artists and curators Kennedy Browne, Helen Carey, Anthony Haughey, Anna Macleod, Augustine O'Donoghue and Susan Thomson were selected to take part in this programme.

At the invitation of Fire Station, this programme is conceived and led by the Danish curatorial collective Kuratorisk Aktion – Tone Olaf Nielsen and Frederikke Hansen. Kuratorisk Aktion's practice investigates the complex relations between historical colonialism, capitalist globalization and post colonialism. Following a research trip to Ireland in January 2010, and a public hearing/consultation in Fire Station Artists Studios, ideas around the content and structure for the Think Tank evolved.

Structured as a year long mobile Think Tank that convenes at five different locations of social and political significance in Ireland, *Troubling Ireland* brings together six socially engaged artists and curators, inviting them to collectively reflect on their artistic/curatorial practices with an aim of developing new methodologies. The Think Tank aims to create a



critical, aesthetic and discursive platform for engaging questions of artistic and curatorial potentiality through an examination of the social realities of post colonial Ireland and its changing relationship to the global world order.

Troubling Ireland offers its participants the opportunity to develop project proposals along the way either individually or collectively. These proposals, along with findings and conclusions generated during the Think Tank will be presented in Dublin in May and Autumn 2011 in addition to some form of documentation/publication.

For further information:

www.firestation.ie/projects

www.rethinking-nordic-colonialism.org

ARTUR ŹMIJEWSKI



Two Monuments, Artur Źmijewski (2009), Video still

Artur Źmijewski in the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA)

The Fire Station is pleased to partner with the RHA, Dublin for this exhibition of works by Artur Źmijewski. Opening on Thursday 18th Nov 2010, 6pm – 8pm in RHA, Ely Place, Dublin 2. Video screenings *Two Monuments, 2009* and *Democracies, 2009* in Gallery II & III. Exhibition runs 19th November – 22nd December 2010.

For further information

www.royalhibernianacademy.ie

www.firestation.ie

New Fire Station Publication – The Applied Social Arts: Artur Źmijewski

To coincide with this exhibition and in keeping with Fire Station's policy of promoting critique and dialogue around socially engaged arts practice, Fire Station is launching the publication *The Applied Social Arts: Artur Źmijewski*.

Including essays by Dave Beech & Artur Źmijewski. Edited by Fire Station.

Purchase on line at www.firestation.ie or at the opening in RHA.

Panel discussion with Dave Beech (UK writer/artist), Dr. Áine O'Brien (Director, Forum on Migration and Communications) Jesse Jones (artist)

'The ethics of collaboration within socially engaged arts practice.'
Chaired by Liz Burns (Fire Station Artists' Studios)

Date: Friday 3rd Dec 2-3.30pm.
Venue: RHA Gallery, Ely Place, Dublin 2.

Background to Artur Żmijewski Exhibition :

In 2008 Fire Station Artists' Studios invited Polish artist Artur Żmijewski to develop a project in Dublin as part of Fire Station Artists' Studios Annual Studio Award. The aim of this award is to support socially engaged arts practice and to contribute to critique and debate around this ever expanding area of arts practice. We were interested in Żmijewski's work and the provocative questions his practice raises around socially engaged arts practice. It was also at this precise time that the previously booming Irish economy was in decline and the new immigrant workforce, mainly from Poland and other Eastern European countries, was starting to feel the impact of the recession. Over a series of visits in 2008/09, Żmijewski invited unemployed Polish and Irish men and women to take part in a series of intense workshops at Fire Station. He then filmed and edited the results into *Two Monuments*.

Democracies consists of 15 short videos made by Żmijewski between 2007 and 2009, in cities and towns across Europe. These videos, which play simultaneously, include a protest against the Israeli occupation in the West bank, a Loyalist parade in Belfast, a re-enactment of the Warsaw Uprising, the funeral of an extreme right wing leader in Austria, and a crowd of German and Turkish football fans.

This is the first time that *Two Monuments* and *Democracies* have been shown in Ireland. They were previously exhibited at Istanbul Biennale (2009) and Cornerhouse Manchester (2009).

STUDIO AWARD

Fire Station / Arts and Disability Ireland Studio Award 2010

Anna Berndtson

This partnership award between Fire Station Artists' Studios and Arts and Disability Ireland (ADI) is now in its second year with Swedish artist Anna Berndtson the recipient of this award. The aim of this award is to support the professional career development of visual artists with disabilities as well as capacity building Disabled arts practitioners in the visual arts sector in Ireland. The artist receives a bursary of €5,000 as well as €2,000 access grant, in addition to full use of the Fire Station digital resource area and equipment and access to technical support.

Berndtson is resident in Fire Station from March – December 2010. During her residency she has done a series of performances in Dublin, as well as developed new video and 2D work. She performed in IMMA in May 2010 as part of the Connect Mentoring programme launch, took part in a two person show with artist Amanda Elena Conrad in Mill Street Studios (August 2010), and did a solo show in the LAB (Sept 2010). In addition, she has taken part in talks on her work in NCAD, Mill Street, and with ADI director Pdraig Naughtan.

Mentoring Programme:

Berndtson is currently taking part in a mentoring programme with mentee Amanda Elena Conrad as part of the Fire Station/ADI studio award.



Monto, Anna Berndtson, (2010)

Studio visits:

Inbuilt into this award for 2010 is a series of studio visits to Fire Station by Irish disabled visual artists to chat to the resident artist about her practice as well as find out more about the award.

2011 Studio Award recipients

Ruth Le Gear and Hugh O'Donnell

For further information:

www.berndtson-art.net
www.firestation.ie/projects/disability-award
www.adiarts.ie

RESIDENT ARTISTS

Fire Station provides nine residential studio spaces for professional visual artists. Each artist can live in this subsidised accommodation for up to two years and nine months. The selection process is very competitive and we typically select artists at least eight months in advance of a studio becoming available. This is the current list of resident artists with artists' statements/biographies.

Anna Berndtson

Performance is the foundation of my artistic work. It is important to me to always renew my ideas and ways of working and I see it as an enrichment to work with new materials and subject areas. I also dig deep into the subject matter at hand and try to catch the energy and focus reflected in our society.

Karl Burke

My art practice is primarily concerned with perceptions, both emotional and physical, of our three dimensional world, and takes the form of sculpture, installations, photographs, video and sound.

A site-specific practice, the works I produce act as a three-dimensional notebook or diary tracing space, time and the individual. These three dimensional interventions endeavour to form a physical and emotive relationship between the art object, space/place and in particular the viewer.



*Caoimhe Kilfeather, But a Hercules, 2010
Polished coal, 41 x 34 x 15 cm*

Mark Clare

My practice does not lie within any one discipline but instead utilises a variety of mediums and techniques to produce work. This has included video and photography to document a myriad of performances and public interventions, the role of facilitator in developing collaborative projects with a wide variety of participants and more recently the production of sculptural objects.



Mark Clare, Shangri La, St. Anne's Park, Dublin, 2010

Eleanor Duffin

Beginning with a set of seemingly unrelated facts or objects, armed with an intuition that they are somehow connected, she works with abductive reasoning causing a process of interference that produces a hypothesis. This process has become both her subject matter and a working methodology. Recurrent themes within her practice also include a preoccupation with ideologies of modernity and the constructs of utopianism. The outcome of her research is presented as multi disciplinary installations.

Aurélien Froment

In Froment's work, objects are probed from different perspectives to unpack the way meaning is formulated through a complex interaction of context, objecthood, cultural memory and the self.

Recent exhibitions: *Langue étrangère, Langue maternelle, Seconde langue* (Motive, Amsterdam), *10,000 Lives* (Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju), *Art Parcours* (Basel), *Between Sight and Sound* (Green on Red, Dublin), *Dark After After Dark* (Khastoo Gallery, Los Angeles).

Paddy Graham

The only knowledge, wit or wisdom I have for now is that my paintings come from silence and a world of abandonment. In another world there is this wrestling and restless engagement with things such as aesthetics and truth in which I can sometimes aggressively articulate my experiences and carve them in stone as though unbreakable and, at the next turn, smash these tablets of truth with little regard for what, yesterday, was the law of belief.

Caoimhe Kilfeather

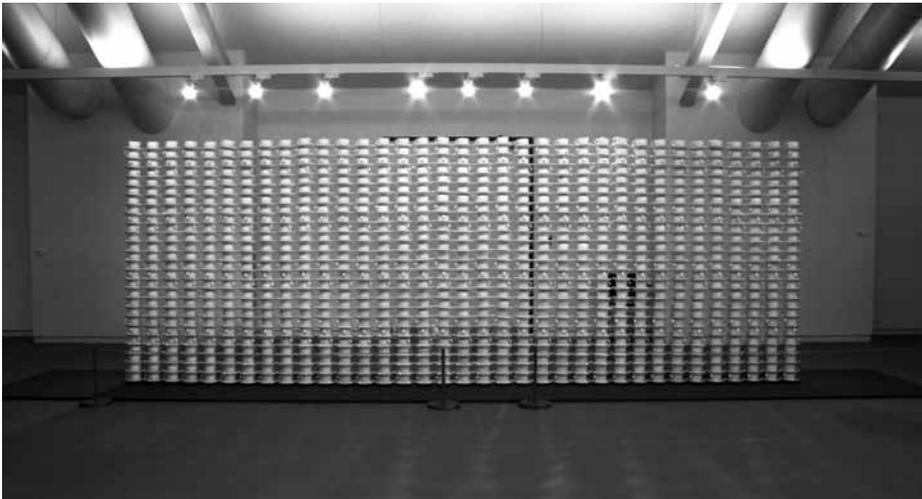
In making work I often use existing systems, objects or images as catalysts to generate alternative narratives or forms: a sort of relentless revisiting of the world's data. I also make drawings and other two dimensional work which act in dialogue with the sculpture. Intrigue in materials and a correlative sense of touch contribute to how I choose to make the work.

Gavin Murphy

Gavin Murphy's practice is related through an essayistic form of sculptural assemblage, made of unique fabricated elements, sourced and found objects, video, photography and text, and the plastic possibilities of cinematic structures and mise en scène.

Margaret O'Brien

O'Brien draws her inspiration from the everyday, the familiar and the domestic environment. In recreating objects or spaces that we encounter on a daily basis, she replaces their normally functional or benign fundamentals with an element of malfunction or mishap. O'Brien's practice is multidisciplinary and location is fundamental to her concerns.



Margaret O'Brien, *The Long Goodbye*, 2010
"Materials Worlds" curated by Riann Coulter at FE McWilliam Gallery, Northern Ireland

OPPORTUNITIES

Artists/Curator Advice Sessions

Val Connor and Cliodhna Shaffrey

Session Dates: Tuesday 23rd and Wednesday 24th November 2010.

Closing date for applications: Tuesday 2nd November 2010 @ 3pm.

Price: €30

Curators Val Connor and Cliodhna Shaffrey will give one on one critical feedback and practical support to artists/curators on their practice, how to present themselves or project proposals. Each session lasts 40 minutes and will include a follow up studio visit/meeting, the week of 24th Jan 2011.

Open to all artists/curators, who are actively practicing or interested in taking a new direction. Applications dealt with on a first come first served basis. Payment must be received to guarantee booking.

To apply please send application to Fire Station and include the following:

CV, Documentation (max 10 images, labelled), artists statement and/or project proposal, and a 'Statement' (max 300 words) clearly explaining what you would like to get feedback on. DVD accepted as hard copy (up to max 4 minutes pre cued).

State which date is your preference and we will try to accommodate you.

Valerie Connor exhibited with the artist group Blue Funk and was the Visual Arts Director at Project Arts Centre. She was Ireland's commissioner for the 50th Venice Biennale of Art and 26th Bienal de Sao Paulo, a board member of IMMA and Visual Arts Advisor to The Arts Council. She writes essays, reviews and criticism and lectures on the Photography BA at D.I.T. and M.AVIS at IADT.

Cliodhna Shaffrey is a curator whose practice includes exhibitions, arts research, writing, public art commissioning, arts policy and long term research based projects such as *Artist-as-Traveller: TRADE* (Leitrim and Roscommon) and *BodyCity* (Dublin Docklands). She is so-editor of *Publicart.ie* (with Sarah Searson) – the first on line resource for public art in Ireland.

The Politics of Memory – the commemorative in contemporary arts practice.

Shane Cullen

Dates: Wednesday 10th – Friday 12th November 2010

Price: €80 (10 places)

The politics of memory is the political means by which events are remembered and recorded, or discarded. Over the next twelve years the island of Ireland will witness a series of commemorations for upcoming anniversaries including 1912, 1913, 1914, 1916, 1922. Artists, curators and cultural

workers are currently being challenged to examine and reconsider the concept of “commemoration”. This three day workshop is an opportunity for artists, curators to explore ideas around ‘commemoration’, examining the past and present and looking to the future and receive critical feedback.

In drawing from Shane Cullen’s own practice, which has emerged for the socio- political context of the last thirty years, participants will have the opportunity to explore in depth ideas around commemoration, the challenges posed as well as receive critical feedback. The workshop will examine commemoration related to the “Holocaust”, looking at the work of Pierre Boltanski, Miroslav Balka and John Gerz. This will lead into an examination of commemoration in the Irish context, specifically the upcoming decade of commemoration and possible commissioning opportunities. Participants will be invited to consider and respond to a “commemoration brief” suggested to the artist, as well as take part in a walking tour. Day three will take as its theme the current conflict in the Middle East and its relationship to Ireland and will include an input from cultural commentator and activist Eamonn McCann. Texts will be circulated in advance for discussion.

Shane Cullen’s work has been widely exhibited in Europe, the United States and Canada. In 1995 he represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale and at the inaugural Lodz Biennale in Poland 2004. In 1998 he was awarded the P.S.1. Fellowship in New York, where he exhibited his seminal text installation ‘Fragments sur les Institutions Republicaines IV’, documenting the progress of the 1981 hunger strike by republican prisoners in Northern

Ireland. In 2002 he presented a vast sculptural work ‘The Agreement’ (www.theagreement.org) based on a complete transcription of The Good Friday Agreement which has toured widely throughout Great Britain and Ireland. He is an active member of the Culture and Conflict Group and in 2002 initiated a collaborative long-term project with the Courage to Refuse (www.seruv.org.il) in Chicago. This project has been presented at galleries in Rome, Lodz, London and at the Cork Caucus in 2005. “The Politics of Memory” an exhibition curated by Shane Cullen will open the Crawford Gallery, Cork in Oct 2010.

Applications are dealt with on a first come first served basis. Payment must be received to guarantee booking. For booking form and further information email: artadmin@firestation.ie. Booking must be accompanied with your CV.

4K – RED ONE Workshop

Piers McGrail

Date: 23rd October, 10am – 7pm

Price: €35 per person

4K RED ONE (Red Cam) workshop with specialist cinematographer and camera operator, Piers McGrail at Fire Station Artists’ Studios. An introduction to the camera with live demonstrations of its capabilities, contrast with HD video, post production management of footage for HD projection, with a chance to shoot footage providing practical information for professional artists.

As an experienced cinematographer for established film directors and artists, Piers will also illustrate over the course of the day, important aspects of working with a camera operator.

For booking form and further information email: artadmin@firestation.ie;
Tel: 01 8069010 (9am – 1pm, Mon-Fri)
www.firestation.ie
www.piersmcgrail.com

2011 Masterclass and Digital Media Workshop Programme

The 2011 Masterclass and Digital workshop programme is constantly being updated. Please contact us or visit the website to find out what is available next year.

April and June 2011

Artists/Curators advice session

June 24th - 26th 2011

Alastair MacLennan and Sandra Johnston, Performance workshop

Sculpture Workshop Residencies and Bursary

We are offering two sculpture workshop residencies starting in November 2010 with a bursary of €500 each. This residency is for 4 – 6 months and the artists will have full access to the sculpture workshop, part time workshop manager, workshop equipment and other resources in the Fire Station.

The successful applicants are: **Jennie Moran** and **Nicos Nicolaou**

Digital Media Residencies

We are offering four digital media residencies from November 2010 to November 2011 for a duration of up to four months each. The selected artists will have full access to the Resource Centre, part time resource area manager

and access at subsidised rate to all the digital media equipment.

The successful applicants are: **Jacinta Jardine, Ciara Moore, Molly O’Dwyer** and **Elaine Reynolds**

Application criteria for both residencies

- » Letter of interest in the residency and rationale for why it is appropriate for your practice and/or project; what you can gain from the residency.
- » Artists’ statement.
- » Work plan.
- » Documentation of work: photos/ jpegs of previous work and/or work-in-progress. 6-8 images.
- » DVD showreel (up to 5 minutes in length), must be cued to pre-selected piece.

Both Residencies will be offered again in 2011.

Sculpture Workshop Space

The Sculpture workshop is open to all professional visual artists. A work bay in the workshop can be rented for €60 per week and with this you can have general technical support from the workshop manager who works three days per week. Please call the workshop manager directly to make a booking or to rent use of the kilns.

Workshop Manager

Tel: 01 806 9013 Tue/Wed/Fri

GUEST WRITER

Mentoring

by *Fiona Fullam*

Currently defined as an experienced and trusted advisor, the origin of the word *mentor* comes from Greek Mythology. Mentor was appointed as the advisor for the young Telemachus by his father Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*. Mentor was also later the main character in the influential *Les Aventuriers de Télémaque*, written by Francois Fénelon at the end of the 17th century, which is the source of its modern usage. Systems of mentorship have been used frequently and consistently around the globe for thousands of years and are still practised today in a wide variety of contexts, including the master / apprentice of the medieval guild system, which continues today in Germany and is common in the learning of many trades around the world. What most mentoring relationships have in common is a structured framework, within which the mentor and mentee can operate and negotiate in an organic way. From the outset therefore, there is this positive tension between preparation and practice, between formal and familiar, between structured and organic.

mentoring, caring, leading, guiding, enabling, opening up, facilitating, focussing, teaching, allowing, permitting, making possible, easing, assisting, aiding, helping, relieving, improving, causing, bringing about, initiating, setting in motion, producing, instigating, triggering, beginning, proposing, proffering, giving, suggesting, recommending, advising, advocating, referencing, implying, indicating, hinting, designating, specifying, identifying, distinguishing, volunteering, portraying, introducing, launching, establishing, imparting, informing, enlightening, conveying, divulging, disclosing, exposing, instructing, tutoring, coaching, training, schooling, steering, conducting, channelling, educating, edifying, benefiting, explaining, expounding, expanding, familiarising, answering, questioning, recognising, valuing, challenging, showing, demonstrating, clarifying, illustrating, revealing, displaying, exhibiting, expressing, exemplifying, pointing out, typifying, representing, epitomising, embodying, elucidating, illuminating, simplifying, refining, symbolising, supporting, attending, enthusing, servicing, alleviating, allaying, mitigating, assuaging, reassuring, calming, placating, soothing, comforting, accompanying, mentoring

As a general rule a mentoring system or programme pairs an emerging artist/writer/dancer/playwright/filmmaker etc with a mentor, someone with more experience or skill, who will mentor them for a fixed period of time. Very many institutions around the world have this kind of mentoring programme, many of which are the result of a partnership between two or more organisations. Examples include AICA USA (the American branch of International Association of Art Critics); The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative offers promising young artists from all over the world a year's access to a renowned artist or master in a particular field; In most such cases the mentee is first selected, after which an appropriate practicing professional artist is approached to mentor the protégé or mentee. AICA USA is unusual in that the mentors are appointed, and it is they who each select a mentee. There are however countless different models and it is likely that each mentoring programme is very different, requiring an adaptation of various models to suit the particular context and participants.

The value of a good mentoring experience cannot be underestimated. Mentoring gives time and support to another artist typically at a period of transition in their career, giving them the benefit of experience, and passing on skills and expertise, helping them to develop networking skills, pointing out potential pitfalls and generally guiding them into the next stage of their career. Often these mentoring relationships between mentor and mentee develop into a professional friendship or collaboration. Setting up a mentoring programme however is not a simple task. Aims and objectives must be identified and named, in addition to well defined policies and procedures and thorough guidelines. Once mentor and mentee are selected, action plans, method of communication, agreed hours and time frame all have to be established, but these are usually fixed between mentor and mentee, and tend to be more fluid, with room for adjustments later if required. Boundaries have to be clear, advisory support available, expectations managed. Assistance and support are essential to work through any problems which may arise, if things don't run smoothly.

commencing, progressing, developing, expanding, growing, blossoming, advancing, evolving, moving forward, extending, enlarging, continuing, understanding, comprehending, appreciating, trusting, believing, confiding, expecting, relying, depending, following, tracing, supposing, assuming, committing, observing, noting, noticing, detecting, searching, exploring, investigating, surveying, examining, considering, probing, scrutinising, deliberating, contemplating, thinking, imagining, sensing, feeling, perceiving, intuiting, reflecting, apprehending, acknowledging, accepting, admitting, conceding, locating, discovering, determining, discerning, ascertaining, obtaining, attaining, grasping, building, acquiring, accomplishing, reaching, achieving, conquering, managing, realising, completing, fulfilling, succeeding

The Fire Station Artists' Studios and Arts & Disability Ireland are partners in a recent mentoring initiative, with the aim of capacity building the disabled practitioners in the visual arts sector in Ireland.¹ This idea came from noticing commonalities in the work of two artists, who had the potential to benefit greatly from some sort of pairing. Anna Berndtson,² born in Sweden but resident in Germany, was this year's recipient of the FSAS Studio Award for an artist with a disability.³ She was invited by The Fire Station Artists' Studios and Arts & Disability Ireland to mentor Amanda Elena Conrad, a German artist, living and working in Dublin. This is also an indication of the challenge to make the most of having a disabled contemporary visual artist in residence, in terms of engagement with others, in particular with the disabled community.

In the case of Anna Berndtson and Amanda Elena Conrad, a very positive and symbiotic relationship has developed which has been very beneficial to both the mentor and mentee. They meet regularly, visiting and critiquing exhibitions together, going to each other's studios, discussing work and developing their action plan or the next steps to be taken. This is a very organic process. They have undoubtedly felt their way along this path, creating their own way of working together as they progress. Anna helps Amanda to develop skills and strategies in verbalising her practice and professional presentation, while Amanda, who attended art-college here in Ireland, has been able to give Anna a local knowledge of the Dublin art scene, introducing her to contacts and creating an opportunity for them both to exhibit and discuss their work in Dublin. The pair held this exhibition *Reflections and Representations* in August 2010 followed by an artists talk. They also had a recorded conversation with Pdraig Naughton⁴ around disability in the arts. Both artists perform, albeit in very different contexts: Anna's performance work tends to be gallery based, durational, with an art audience in mind, while Amanda often performs on the street. The concept of audience, its perception and potential, was the focus of early discussions in the relationship. Both Anna and Amanda cite 'time' as the most valuable element of the mentoring programme: the time to reflect critically, to consult, exchange and support has been very beneficial to both parties.

*associating, sharing, connecting, collaborating, uniting,
cooperating, joining, bonding, befriending, partnering*

Each mentoring relationship is very different, by virtue of the people involved and the needs identified within that situation. These needs vary hugely, as do the personalities concerned. It is for this reason that mentoring programmes need to have a certain structure, while at the same time allowing the mentor and mentee to direct their own guiding/learning experience. There is no doubt however, that both mentor and mentee gain in a well supported, consultative, dialogical and reciprocal mentoring relationship. It has the potential to be a hugely valuable mutual exchange.

Fiona Fullam, 2010

- 1 This programme was developed using the tools of the Connect Mentoring Programme, which in turn was jointly developed by Common Ground and Create, which was funded by the Arts Council of Ireland. While Connect was developed specifically for artists whose work includes collaborative practice in a community or social context, the 18 month research period and resulting booklet and DVD provide insight and advice for any organisation wishing to implement a mentoring programme.
- 2 For further information on this artist, see <http://www.berndtson-art.net>
- 3 For further information on this award, see <http://www.firestation.ie/project/disability-award>
- 4 Pdraig Naughton is director of ADI and member of the Connect Advisory Group. For further information see www.adiarts.ie



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**FIRESTATION
ARTISTS
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