

LIVERPOOL and DUBLIN

DAVID JACQUES

As if in a dream, dreamt by another

COLOPHON

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An Atlas of the Difficult World*

Katrina Goldstone

Moving is bred in my bones. I am the grand daughter of immigrants. At some time or other, someone in my family has been moving from one country to another or within the country they were living in. Migration is a phenomenon at once ancient and yet thoroughly modern. This ceaseless and amazing human movement runs on high energy, desire and necessity. More often than not, the migratory impulse is fuelled by immense resourcefulness, courage, or in the Yiddish, chutzpah, sheer nerve or cheek. Whether or not, it is forced by persecution, prejudice, economics or simply a desire for a better life in the broadest sense of the word, moving from one place to another stirs up a complex range of feelings: Regret, sorrow, guilt, fear, anticipation or sheer relief. Nowadays, for many people migration also spells significant danger. I have not quite forgotten a surreal newspaper photograph of a Spanish beach, with sunbathers spread out under a huge gaudy parasol. Just on the edge of this banal holiday snapshot the body of a drowned would-be migrant was visible, in a pose macabrely mimicking that of the sun worshippers. The man was one of the hundreds lost in the perilous stretch of water between Morocco and Spain.

The precise number of people who drown at sea, who perish in the undercarriages of planes or trains or who are even murdered by unscrupulous traffickers is unknown. Since 1993 the anti-racist organisation UNITED has monitored the deaths of those trying to scale the impenetrable perimeters of 'Fortress Europe'. More than 4500 deaths of refugees and migrants have been documented up to now. As the organisation points out: 'These deaths are not isolated incidents. They are symptomatic of policies that no longer see the humanity of those fleeing their homeland, but prefer to see them as numbers, or worse, as a natural disaster, 'a flood''

One thing is certain though, people who come from elsewhere harbour a strong sense of indebtedness to their new country. They view their adopted homeland with fresh eyes. As Tammy Coulibaly says of her husband, Cheikh, portrayed in **As if in a dream, dreamt by another**: 'He can see everything that we have that we don't see ourselves. He can see how easy it is and how lucky we are.'

In the voraciously greedy globalised and violent 'atlas of the difficult world' we inhabit, migration is, more than ever, a tale of the haves and the have-nots. Increased inequality in the world and conflicts over the globe mean people are setting out in hope and fear for other shores. Or as is happening in so many countries in the so-called 'developing world', the intellectual elite are lured by the promise of untold wealth to Europe or the United States, thus robbing their own societies of precious intellectual resources, to say nothing of the searing impact of their leaving on their own families. The World Bank has estimated that 70,000 of Africa's most qualified people leave each and every year. In the poorest parts of Mexico whole villages are devoid of their men folk, who toil day in day out on construction sites or in hellish kitchens in American restaurants. These hard earned salaries are in turn sent back to villages and towns to support the families left behind. These remittances are in effect a form of 'hidden aid', which is estimated to exceed economic aid by more than a quarter to these countries. Once upon a time, the Irish economy was bolstered by

emigrant remittances. Now its others' migrant labour we depend on.

'We have coming in on every boat, persons of every nationality and every religion and no religion - the greatest to any alarming extent, the Jews. Now personally, these formally chosen people may be very pleasant and very nice to meet, and one would not be inclined to object to the advent of a few of that creed and class, but when they come in thousands, as they are every year, and when settling here and displacing natives, it is matter of public concern and serious importance.'

The Irish Rosary, 1927

That was written in April 1927 but it could have appeared yesterday. One has only to change the word Jews to 'refugees' or 'Romanians' and it is contemporary, current affairs-speak. Why do we so fear and demonise migrants? Arguably one of the most dynamic societies in the [Western] world - the United States - is a nation of millions of migrants and diverse ethnic minority groups, all striving and struggling and from that maelstrom of complex identities creating a special energy, innovation, dynamism and change.

David Jacques acknowledges his huge debt to John Berger's seminal work **The Seventh Man** and is on record as saying that he wanted to place **As if in a dream, dreamt by another** within a broader socio-political context. Jacques' work explores the intricate threads that bind migration, identity and memory. His art makes the forgotten or ignored visible and 'public'. It is a process akin to what artist Shimon Attie has described as: '... peeling back the wallpaper of today to reveal the histories buried underneath.'

For the entire process of migration and its aftermath, begets its own mythologies. Be it the stories told by one generation to the next about moving, which become altered imperceptibly but irrevocably with each re-telling. Playwright Arthur Miller's father's suppressed 'minority anxiety' was encapsulated with the simple yet telling phrase 'Stay away from crowds.' Perhaps only those who hear the ghostly whisper of the word 'pogrom' or 'lynching' echoing in their consciousness can understand the true weight of those few words.

Then there are the modern myths about migrants, lethal tall tales, that transform them from individuals into a parasitic mass come to feed off the affluent. Migrants, asylum seekers stand accused of every crime and vice. Jacques' work interrupts the poisonous discourse challenging tabloid invention with quieter assertions. 'They worked all days and all hours. I only saw him twice up until I was 12 years old.' This is what David Lee recalls of his father Fong Lee.

The life stories portrayed in this exhibition in the simplest terms express the complex emotions of scattered peoples. Compressed in a single sentence or the defiant tilt of a shoulder is the struggle and the small victories of people who come from elsewhere, whether it is from over the sea or down the road, from countryside to town. As well as subtly capturing the vivacity and spirit of the people concerned, the exhibition also proves more than a worthy adjunct to Berger's earlier pioneering work.

* **An Atlas of the Difficult World: Poems by Adrienne Rich**, Adrienne Rich, 1988.

CREATE

Wes Wilkie 09.2004

Currently, Ireland is experiencing the early stages of becoming a multi-cultural society. The diversity of cultures, ethnicities and values is broader today than at any time in Ireland's modern history and will continue to expand. Issues of racism, exclusion, prejudice and inequality are endemic aspects of western society and Ireland is not immune to them.

Within the population of new settlers, refugees and asylum seekers particularly those that are dislocated from their own communities, the issue of identity and what it means to be born in one society and live in another, present daily challenges.

In June of 2000, CREATE organised a 'meet and greet' visit of Irish arts organisations to Liverpool. Of the many artists we met, David Jacques was the only one exploring a culture theme through his work. Having known David for many years, during which time I had observed the evolution of his practice, I was not surprised when I saw the work he was making. The Liverpool phase of **As if in a dream, dreamt by another** was under development and looked stunning. His unique approach to exploring social issues through his work is always challenging and apposite.

Seeing his work again, I felt that David's informed perspective would be a significant contribution to the exploration of cultural identity and related issues in Ireland.

Two years later, I made an approach to David and asked him if he would consider creating a Dublin version of **As if in a dream....** Happily, David said yes and the rest is history.

Fire Station Artists' Studios

Clodagh Kenny 09.2004

The Fire Station Artist's Studios became involved when David applied for the Fire Station Studio Award: Artist Working in the Community, and was successful.

The Fire Station saw the issues surrounding identity and sense of place that David was exploring as current, relevant themes for an Irish audience. This is particularly so within its own neighbourhood of North Inner City Dublin where, over decades, new settlers in Ireland have found a home.

David worked for over 6 months with the Fire Station developing a Dublin version of **As if in a dream, dreamt by another**. During this time he interviewed scores of people who each had a unique story to tell. The outcome was a series of 12 banners tracing aspects of migrant history in Dublin, this publication, a touring show and an artist's significant contribution to an improved understanding of complex social issues.

As if in a dream, dreamt by another

David Jacques 08.2004

As if in a dream, dreamt by another* began as a project in Liverpool during the late 1990s. Essentially, it was inspired by my on-going fascination with the city's history and in particular issues surrounding migration, diaspora and displacement. Ultimately, I wanted to find a distinctive way to engage with these themes in my practice as a painter.

The preparatory process for the work entailed a fair amount of research. This was made somewhat easier by the fact that I had a number of friends who had migrant forebears. They provided me with a photograph of a relative, which would be projected and rendered in paint, life-size onto large silk hangings. This linked back to some of my previous work, producing trade union bannerworks and signaled my intention of creating a 'public' body of work. Subsequent interviews conducted with the owner of the photograph gave a deeper insight into the experiences of the subject and meant I could have the chance of fixing a 'voice' onto the painting.

Significantly I wanted the 'voice' to act as an interpretation of experiences and events, to be a challenge to the memory and a chance to present or recover this 'voice', one so often omitted from 'official' renditions of history. Through my initial contacts, I was lucky to then be directed 'by word of mouth' to others within the immediate community who entrusted me with their stories and photographs.

Finally some twelve banners were completed and on the strength of these, an opportunity arose to base myself in Dublin and reproduce the project through the Fire Station's **Artist in the Community Award**. The Dublin works developed a life of their own, a slightly different emphasis and dynamic. As well as depicting people who had arrived from other countries, I decided to also represent those who had left Ireland as well as also those who had experienced an 'internal migration', moving from rural areas to the city. I wanted to play with the definition of migration, if you like.

From its' inception the whole idea of the project was that it sought to tap into an aspect of life within a local community - through oral history and the family photograph, arguably the most popular form of pictorial iconography.

For me, the work became focused and gained a sense of urgency by the contemporary commentaries being played out through the media and on the streets of many major cities. I felt that broadened the context in which these works could act as a signpost: to this end, on a wall in my workspace I'd pinned a page from The Independent dated 1 May 2000. It was an article which profiled five people who were seeking asylum, headlined 'These are the most vilified people in Britain' ...

* **As if in a dream, dreamt by another** is a line taken from the book **A Seventh Man** by John Berger, which draws upon the condition of Turkish migrant workers in 1970s Germany. Berger employed a multi-faceted approach to his subject; the poetic, political and sociological renderings came to him through a number of influences and resources. These were then juxtaposed with images from the photojournalism of Jean Mohr to create a seminal work regarding the experience of migration in late twentieth century Europe.

Michael Murphy speaking about his father John

Dublin, 16.06.2003

'... my father headed off to seek his fortune in New York. It turned out that it was during the Depression in 1927 and work was very scarce. He had work here in Ireland but he just wanted to better himself in the States. I was told he had one room and all he had was a bed, a chair, a photograph of my mother and the children and all he had was his rosary beads and he said that it was that what helped him keep sane thinking of them at home and praying at night when all around were losing their heads. But he managed to put a few bob by as well as try to send a few bob home to maintain the wife and the kids.

I suppose he succeeded where other people failed - hit the bottle & maybe wound up on Skid Row. He managed to come through and he was very lucky getting his job back that he left in Belfast and shortly when he got home again there was a vacancy came up in Dublin in Arthur Guinness & Sons. He applied for the job, got it and never looked back. Thirty-three years in the brewery ...'



**Sepideh Sefidvash-Hockley speaking
about her mother Mahin, who came
from Iran**

Dublin, 24.06.2003

‘...My mother was born into a Baha’i family in Iran in the 1930s. She was a mild and quiet-spoken child who suffered the effects of discrimination at school because of her religion. She arrived in Ireland in 1968 with a burning determination to raise her children in a freer, more accepting society. However, Ireland in the 1960s was a provincial society in which people of foreign origins were considered a peculiar novelty. Once again my mother experienced a feeling of disjointedness, unacceptability, a lack of belonging, for the most part due to her inability to speak English. Adjusting to a new climate, culture, traditions and language was a difficult barrier to overcome. Nevertheless, my mother championed the cause of refugees in Ireland through the Baha’i community, the Irish Refugee Council and later as founder and president of UNIFEM Ireland ...’



Fiona Galvin speaking about her grandfather Michael O'Gealbhan

Dublin, 20.06.2003

'... his name was Micheal O'Gealbhan, an Irish speaker from Kerry. They would have had a small farm on the coast on the Kenmare River South Kerry. His sister became a nun, sister Ita, moved to America. Kathleen and Dan stayed in the house down there, Michael moved to Dublin, Seamus moved to Donegal.

When he was 16, the 1916 Rising happened, he took part in the battles in Kerry, that was one of the few places where the Rising was successful. After that was the time he hated, all he said was that it turned brother against brother and tore families apart. It certainly wasn't what they fought in the Rising for. Eventually he moved to Dublin and got a job in the Civil Service. He was partly responsible for anybody who fought in the Rising to get a state pension, but he never took it himself. He was never happy with the Treaty. He felt dislocated from the new Republic. He lived in Phibsboro' and married a Roscommon woman, they had five kids, all sons. He used to socialize a lot in the inner city. A lot of them would have been from the country. They would have really stuck together ...'



Tammy Coulibaly speaking about her husband Cheikh Coulibaly who came to Dublin from Senegal

Dublin, 16.04.2004

'... we met seven years ago. When I met him he was just so different, so unusual. He had a larger than life personality, like he didn't believe anything was impossible, which is not like typical Irish people here. He can see everything that we have that we don't see ourselves. He can see how easy it is and how lucky we are.

At the beginning when we met and he would talk about starting a business and he really believed it you know. It just came natural to him but not to me. That for me was great and when he explains things, he has a unique way of explaining things. With [the] Senegalese if they find something unbelievable it's like whoo! Just his expressions when he talked, for me the conversation was a great excitement and when we started going round the schools doing anti-racism at the beginning I felt like I was mammying him in case he couldn't find the words to explain something. But bit by bit I backed off and let him struggle to find the words. I used to love peoples' reactions, just watching the kids when he's talking, it just reminded me of when I met him first. It was like I was reliving it all over again. For us it's the ideal job ...'



Mary Cawley speaking about her mother Sarah Joyce who comes from a Traveller community

Dublin, 01.12.2003

‘... she was reared up in Mullingar, born in 1933. Her father’s name was Christopher McDonagh, her mother’s name Mary McDonagh. There were 12 of them altogether, Mammy was the youngest one. She’s the only one living and she’s 70 this 10th of December.

She had 17 kids of her own, there’s 8 living out of 17. She’s travelled around all her life, she’s never changed her way of living. She always wore this long skirt, the plaid skirt and her hair put in the pocket. Same style to her clothes, boots, nothing’s ever changed. She always, all the time, talks about the Travelling life. She hates living in the site because she feels locked in all the time and just left alone she’d go travelling this minute. She’s travelled all over the world herself, knows every part of England. She still has a great memory of the whole lot. Always talking about the things her father and mother done. She’s a great singer and even up to this day still loves the sewing and baking ...’



**David Lee speaking about his father
Fong Lee who came from Hong Kong**
Dublin, 05.12.2003

'... he came to this country in 1957. There was no luxury in those days you know, he came over on a ship, took 3 months from Hong Kong to England. At first he worked in the laundry business in Liverpool and obviously Ireland being so close to Liverpool - he could've took a day tour. I don't really know but eventually he was in Ireland and he started working in the restaurant business.

Along with a few other partners, friends I think they were some of the first Chinese people to set foot in Ireland and they worked hard. They worked all days and all hours. I only saw him twice up until I was 12 years old, I came here when I was 12 in 1969.

That's typical in that era of Chinese people working in Western countries, you know the man would have left and the wife and the kids then eventually coming over at the last stage and join up again. My dad didn't speak much English because he was working all the time in the kitchens and had no time to socialise, they just kept their heads down and worked ...'



Willy Gifford speaking about his father John 'Blinky' Gifford

Dublin, 28.04.2003

'... John 'Blinky' Gifford, that's what they called him. He got that from a fall he got when he was only a young lad and his eye wasn't done properly in the hospital, so one of his aunts took him up to a private doctor who she'd worked for and she got the job done, but that old name stuck to him all the time - 'Blinky' Gifford.

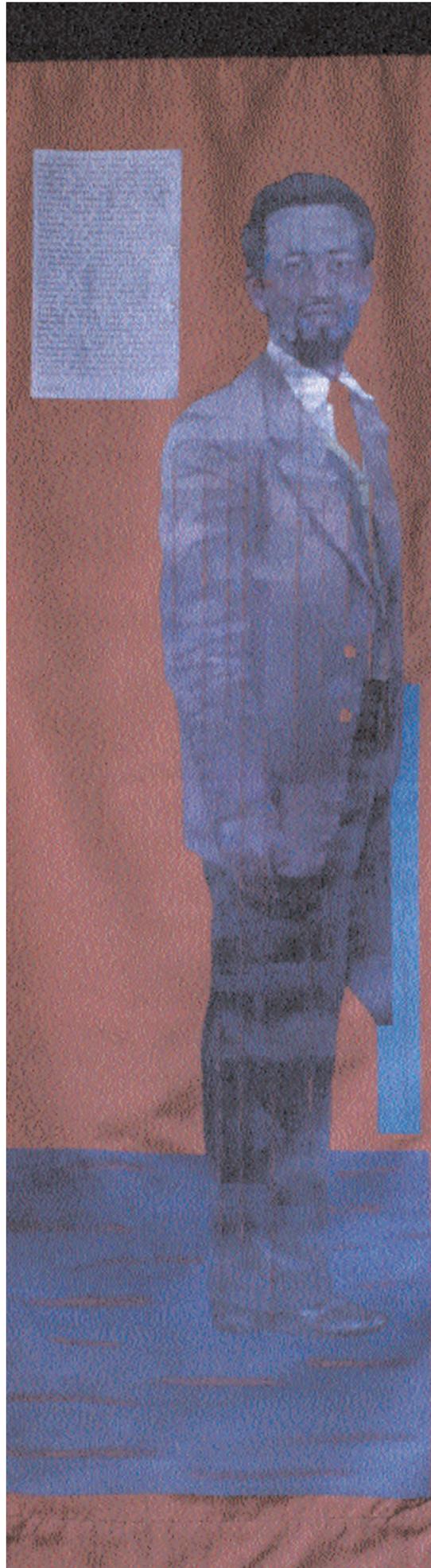
He used to fight up in Belfast. I'm sure his name was Brown up there. He boxed under the assumed name because he was in the army down here and they wouldn't allow you to go up. He was fighting for purses, I think he used to get £5 a fight that was a lot then. [In] 1943, '44, '45 he did some boxing in London as well. [He fought] ... twenty professional fights under that name Brown. When you were boxing in Dublin, all's you'd get is a voucher for one of the big stores, say Clerys. If you won the army championships you could get an overcoat, suit or shoes, that's all you got ... he was very good at swimming, he played football for the army and he was good at singing, he was an all-rounder ...'



Remco de Fouw speaking about his father Jan who came from Holland
Dublin, 02.12.2003

‘... he would have come to Ireland approximately 52 years ago. He did a spell in the Dutch army after the war, did his two years service. Then at that stage he traveled around Europe. He’d have then gone to night classes at art college learning graphic design, a thing that he would have already had a flair for. A friend of his was working in advertising for Aer Lingus as a graphic artist, gave him his first sort of bread and butter work. The rest of it was for advertising and publishing, negotiated from here or there in the spirit of a freelance graphic artist.

Because of his forty-four years work with Bord Failte as art director, he’s actually a bit of an authority on ancient and hidden Ireland. In that sense he’s probably a little more Irish than the Irish themselves, in terms of having a broad knowledge of history and things like that. He’s amassed a fairly large sort of data-base of fact and knowledge about his perception of Ireland. But I think it’s still a deeply personal and poetic interpretation of Irish culture and history. He’s always found a source of inspiration there and reinterpreted it into his own creativity as graphic artist and teacher ...’



Jade Dunne speaking about her mother Hilda who came from Zambia
Dublin, 19.04.2004

'... she's originally from Zambia, from a small town called Sioma ... she met my dad in 1974. He was teaching there at the time. When she came over for the first time she found Dublin - well coming from Africa - the weather was awful. She found in 1980 in Dublin there were very few mixed race people. My dad has never really wanted to come back and live here, he's from Dublin.

She knew nobody here, but my mum is a very friendly, open person. She's never felt like she's had a problem being in a minority here. I think she gets lonely now, she wants to go home as she's getting older. When you're younger it's different, but as you get older you kind of want to get back where you feel at home. She's a fanatic gardener as soon as she wakes up she thinks about flowers. When she goes to bed at night she thinks about flowers. Any free time she has she thinks about plants. Whenever she goes back half her luggage is probably flowers. She's working for a church organisation. She's also a member of a charity called AkidWa which helps black women in Ireland ...'



May Murphy speaking about her
brother-in-law Sean who left Dublin
for Liverpool

Dublin, 23.09.2003

'... he went away on the boats. A couple of times when I was in hospital having one of the kids he came in to visit me and brought a load of stuff, and then when he come up the house here there'd be butter, meat, he was great like that. He loved it over there in Liverpool and going home to Vera and the kids. I mean coming in to Dublin, what was he coming in to, sour face his old one. She'd stop a clock, she'd put you off your breakfast.

He was shaped up for the Guinness job. The father wanted him to go to Guinness' but he wasn't having it. He wanted to go to sea and the brewery was a job for life and those were hard times back then. It wasn't great pay on the boats, wasn't great pay for the cook. But it was something in him, something he had to do ...'



Annie Kabdebo speaking about her husband Tom, who came from Hungary
Newcastle, County Dublin, 17.09.2003

‘... well he left. He had to leave Hungary when he was 21 because he was fearing for his life. He escaped to Austria and he managed to come to Britain. [It was] 1956 after the time of the revolution. He wanted to pursue a university career and he ended up in Wales. Because of his interest in books, he decided librarianship would be for him. The position of director of the university library here at Maynooth came up and he moved here. I think he liked it very much. He was writing a book on Ireland [it’s] about all his travels around the country and interesting places he found for fishing, it’s a travel guide really. I met him when I was on a trip to Cork with the National Symphony Orchestra. He was coming home from Cork we were taking the same train and we saw each other after that ...’



Ivana Bacik speaking about her grandfather Karel Bacik who came to Waterford from Czechoslovakia
Dublin, 25.06.2004

'... my grandfather grew up in the Czech Republic. He studied engineering in Prague and met my grandmother who was what we'd now call Croatian. She was also studying engineering which was unusual. She had the pick of men because there were very few women at the university. She always told the story that she chose my grandfather because he was the one with the car. She said it was a good investment.

He started working as a manager in a shoe factory and then he took over a glass factory. He was active in the Czech resistance. He would never talk very much about it. He was taken away by the Germans and put into a Nazi prison and spent a few years there. After the war, in '46, he came back to take over the factory again. But the communists had been elected and he realised it would be difficult for him and his family. He made a contact with a man in Waterford. Waterford glass had closed down. My grandfather had brought over craftsmen from Czechoslovakia to the factory but eventually there were problems and he had no more capital to put in. He became a manager and later a director. But for some time he was written out of the history of Waterford glass ...'



DAVID JACQUES

David Jacques was born in Liverpool in 1964. He studied Mural Design at the Chelsea School of Art and gained a Masters degree in Public Art from the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee.

He has undertaken a variety of travelling scholarships, most notably in Mexico, California and Berlin. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally with showings at the Walker Art Gallery Liverpool, the National Portrait Gallery, London, solo exhibitions in Cologne and a touring show in Spain. He lives and works in Liverpool.

Works from **As if in a dream, dreamt by another** have been shown at venues in Derry, Cologne, Manchester, Vermont, Dublin and Liverpool.

CREATE

CREATE is a resource and enabling organisation that provides support services for arts development and practice in Ireland. Services - focused on standards of practice and sustainable development - are aimed at arts practitioners, arts organisations and arts projects irrespective of their area of practice or programme.

For further information on CREATE visit www.communityartsireland.com

FIRE STATION ARTISTS' STUDIOS

Located in Dublin's North Inner City, the Fire Station Artists' Studios provides residential studios to national and international artists, workshop facilities, and training opportunities to professional visual artists.

A key policy of the Fire Station is to contribute to the debate on collaborative arts practice through initiating and developing contextual arts projects of innovation and excellence.

Since the early 1990's the Fire Station developed partnerships with ICON (Inner City Organisation Network) and other community organisations on projects such as Inner Art (1997), The Memorial (2000), Consume (2000), and Daedal(Us) (2003).

The Fire Station also runs an annual Studio Award for An Artist Working in the Community. This award is designed to promote professional practice and support artists who work in a community context. It consists of a rent free residential studio for one year and an art materials budget. David Jacques was the winner of this award in 2002/3.

For further information on Fire Station's Studio Award for An Artist Working in the Community please visit www.firestation.ie