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A project initiated by
James L Hayes
artist and CIT/CCAD Lecturer

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IRON



TEMPLE BAR
GALLERY +
STUDIOS

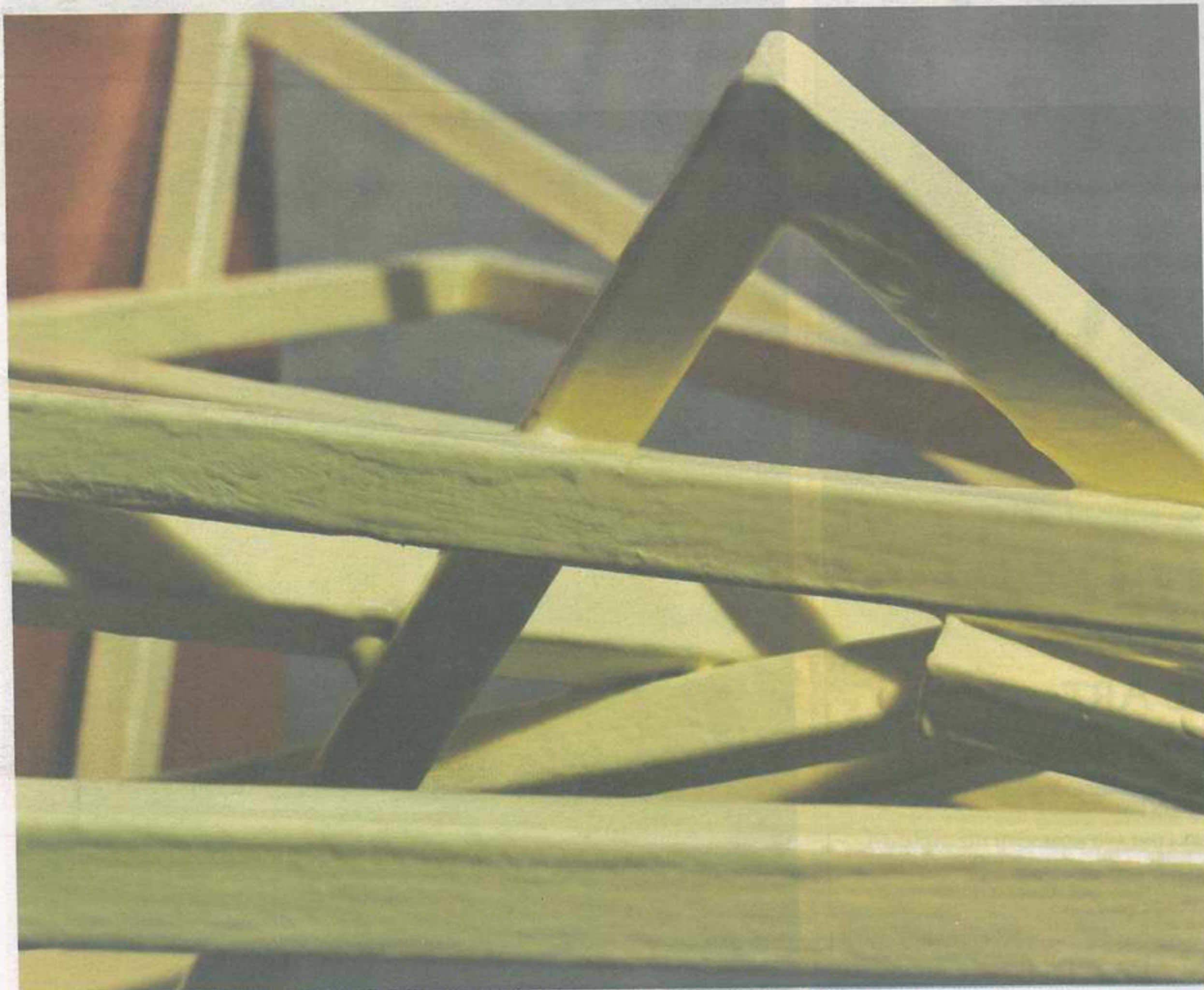
Open Call for Artists Studios 2012/13

Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, Dublin is now
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Membership studios (three year)
Project studios (one year)
Graduate Studio Award (six months)

Information on how to apply and application forms can be ob-
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or by phoning 00 353 (0)1 671 0073

Closing date for receipt of all applications is
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The Visual Artists' News Sheet

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VISUAL
ARTISTS
IRELAND



REGIONAL PROFILE

Visual Arts Resources and Activities: Limerick

Faber Studios



Faber Studios, Limerick



Faber Studios' new home, previously Thomond Office Interiors



Faber Studios, Limerick

IN November, Faber Studios moved from its Catherine Street location to its current, larger premises at 19 Henry Street, formerly Thomond Office Supplies. This has been hugely beneficial and a significant change for the Studios. Our larger premises provides a permanent front exhibition area that can be used for talks, screenings, and events. Most of the space comprises five permanent studios and one communal workspace. Previously, Faber Studios focused on sculpture and object making, now there is potential for broader scope, embracing the range of currently developing art practices. Our new site also reflects the socially engaged nature of the studio, which is adjacent to the Limerick Youth Resource Centre, and the Henry St Garda Station – with whom the group have planned upcoming projects.

Faber Studios is a collective of artists; all our members are involved in the decision-making, and work towards making it a professional art space, and a dynamic part of the city. It was one of the original spaces started under the Creative Limerick Initiative, in 2009, by Limerick School of Art and Design (LSAD) graduates Clive Moloney, Chris Boland, Stephen Neary, and Sarah Bolger. Since then there has been a turnover of members including Brian O'Shea and Vivienne Quin. Current members include Marie Connole, Aaron Lawless, Caelan Bristow, and Ronan McGeough.

In 2010 and 2011, Faber ran the successful 'Artists Talk' series, in conjunction with LSAD, and hosted artists Nevan Lehart, Suzanne Bosch, and John Beattie. Our upcoming programme involves a continuation of the 'Artists Talk Series' as well as public workshops and projects within the greater

community. Our first projects on Henry Street were for Limerick Language Alive Week: 'Living Place' involved the people of Doras Luimni, and 'The Midnight Court' involved St Mary's Parish Community. Other annual involvements include C-Inside, Culture Night, eva International, and projects with LSAD and University of Limerick students. Our newest initiative is the Graduate Residency Program with LSAD Sculpture Department; we will award two residencies (one month and six months respectively) per year.

Faber Studios are fortunate to be located in Limerick City, which offers a wonderful sense of camaraderie amongst the artist community. The art spaces help and support each other. Faber members have aided other spaces with projects, the installation of exhibitions, and organising events. Recently members from Wickham Street Studios and Occupy Space helped Faber in the big move from its former premises to its current site. There has been assistance from Ormston House, and Limerick City Gallery donated walls to Faber to help build the new studio spaces. Frequently, artists from other spaces will call in for a chat: a rare occurrence elsewhere in Ireland or abroad. As a result, Faber Studios continues to flourish in the distinctive creative environment of Limerick.

Marie Connole, Faber Studios Member
<http://faberstudios.blogspot.com>

Limerick Printmakers



Member of Limerick Printmakers painting the floors



Launch of the 'Heroes and Villains' exhibition, steam roller printing



'Heroes and Villains' exhibition, 2011, large format woodcuts



Members of Limerick Printmakers moving the etching press

THEY say that moving is one of the most stressful thing you can do. They also say that change is good. So when Limerick Printmakers Studio and Gallery (LP) decided to move 54 artists, tonnes of printmaking equipment, and an overflowing administration office, there was both trepidation and excitement.

Three graduates of the Limerick School of Art and Design, Melissa O'Brien, Kari Fry, and Claire Boland, established Limerick Printmakers Studio and Gallery in 1999. LP provides facilities for etching, collagraphy, lithography, silkscreen, woodcut, monoprint, digital print, and darkroom photography. The studio and gallery are Arts Council funded and have a Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) status.

For 10 years, Limerick Printmakers existed at No 4 Robert St – a beautiful 200-year-old grain store building in the heart of the old city, right next to the historic and busy Milk Market area. This dynamic part of the city was ideal for a young gallery and studio, and the location began to shape the profile of LP. The gallery established itself as one that would show both emerging artists such as Suzannah O'Reilly, Marianne Keating, and Alan Crowley, alongside well-known artists such as Jack Donovan, Martin Finnin, Graphic Studio Dublin, Robert Ryan, Farcy Productions and Gerard Mannix Flynn. The studio served to retain young graduates from the LSAD printmaking department, who would otherwise have left to practice in Dublin or Cork, while also attracting international artists.

Over the years, however, the listed building in which LP housed itself developed structural problems that were too great for an arts organisation such as LP to tackle. So, in 2010, the difficult but necessary decision to leave No 4 Robert St was made.

Limerick has suffered the highest unemployment rate per capita in the country. With the downturn in the economy, and as businesses began to close down citywide, vacant spaces opened up. LP turned to Limerick City Council and the Limerick City Council Arts Office for advice and help in taking the next step. A building was found in St John's Square, an architecturally significant area, earmarked as the new cultural quarter in the Limerick City Development Plan. The building showed huge potential in terms of space for future programmes but required surveys, planning, tenders,

conservation work, and financing before it could be used, so LP had to find a short-term home.

All suitable, interim properties in the city were viewed, which proved an extremely fast process, as the needs of a printmaking studio and gallery are so specific. During this time, LP worked off site in a number of locations to provide printmaking facilities to studio members. These included: the Limerick School of Art and Design (LIT), Mary Immaculate College (UL), and our nearest neighbours, Cork Printmakers. Other studios in the country pledged support throughout this time, as did many of the local arts organisations such as Raggle Taggle Studio and Gallery, who hosted our education and exhibition programme for the duration.

Eventually, No 5a Sarsfield, in the heart of the city centre, was decided on as the ideal property, for a number of reasons. The new interim building on Sarsfield Street is a ground floor one, with open plan spaces, and a small set of rooms for offices, which could completely house the existing printmaking equipment. The different areas link easily and flow from one to the other, making it a more comfortable space to work in. The new building is on a main thoroughfare and has a full glass frontage in the gallery, making it extremely visible and inviting to visitors.

After a year of major upheaval, the actual move from one side of the city centre to the other happened during the summer of 2011, with zero budget. There were hydraulic lifts and forklift trucks, and a core team of LP members using their muscles. The community, both arts and non-arts, came out in force with their support during this time: Limerick City Council, the Arts Council, EML Architects, LIT, Mary Immaculate College (UL), as well as local businesses and other art studios and groups.

The new space for LP opened on 14 July 2011 to a massive audience, with its annual Open Submission Print Show. The aim is to remain on Sarsfield Street until the resources and funding are found to develop a long-term home in St John's Square. Limerick Printmakers will remain rooted in the community, and are positive about the future, which we hope will bring many new opportunities.

Fiona Quill, Board of Directors / Member
<http://www.limerickprintmakers.com>

REGIONAL PROFILE

Souls in Purgatory

Michele Horrigan, *Dante's Rock Phase 1*, 2011

FOR several years now, my artistic practice has revolved around the legacies and interpretation of environment and site. Much of this work involves an associative way of working, as researching and encountering a particular location leads to various narrative threads that then appear in my artworks, which are predominantly photographic and video based.

I have a long-term project, 'Nature Obscured by Factory / Factory Obscured by Fog', which is an ongoing investigation into the aluminium industry, considering the history and economic chain of handling around bauxite ore, the material used to produce aluminium metal. My initial interest in this subject derives from the Aughinish refinery in my hometown of Askeaton, County Limerick; the largest industrial complex in Ireland, it is currently owned by Russian conglomerate Rusal. In the 1990s, environmental concerns surrounding the plant and its allegedly toxic effect on the local agricultural hinterland were frequently in the national news. Through videos, photographs, and contextual information in a gallery space, my project sequenced information on this history into a debate around nature and industry, environment, and economy.

After recent visits to the US (the Washington Monument is capped with an aluminium apex) and to smelters in the UK, I decided to visit a now disused quarry in Les Baux-de-Provence in southern France, on a mission to gather visual and contextual material to further my understanding of the subject. This particular mine is where bauxite was first discovered in 1822 by geologist Pierre Berthier. While researching the area prior to my trip, I came across a reference to the poet Dante Alighieri who was said to be inspired by the landscape of Les Baux to write vivid descriptions of purgatory in his epic poem *The Divine Comedy*. Dante completed these verses between 1308 and 1321, during which time he was exiled from Florence and travelled several times through the hills and valleys of Provence.

As I worked in the disused quarry, I thought about Dante's time in the region, and decided to try and test out a way of visualising how Dante might have understood the region. I spent several days roaming around the valley photographing prominent rock formations, many of which are quite spectacular, akin to the background of a Renaissance painting. In some locations I found my camera framing images of faces and heads in the stone, natural phenomena that seemed as if

they were almost carved into the rock. I continued to seek out these facial features. After re-reading his *Divine Comedy*, it seemed likely that Dante might have seen these same faces in the fourteenth century, and that they might have influenced his writings. His version of purgatory as a journey involving a process of constant searching seemed appropriate here.

I then entered the town of Les Baux to further examine these associations. One of southern France's answers to Killarney, Les Baux is a tourist hotspot of consumerism, which in my mind drew a tantalising parallel to what a contemporary purgatory would be: souls walking aimlessly from place to place in search of a way out. This might be compared to the modern touristic experience walking from souvenir shop to souvenir shop searching for the consummate gift or bargain. The resulting video, 16 minutes long, traces an approach from a road into Les Baux, through streets of gift shops and tourism infrastructure, to the medieval castle hilltop in the centre of the town. Using the video footage of this experience, I spliced in subtitles featuring relevant quotes from Dante's *Purgatorio*, in an attempt to create sometimes uncanny or associative connections between the site and his writing.

A version of the project was included in 'Location', an exhibition exploring artists' relationships with ideas of psychogeography, curated by London-based Ruth Hogan for Occupy Space in Limerick in January 2012. 'Dante's Rock Phase' consisted of a series of silver gelatin back and white images of the region's rock formations, and an enlarged diagram featuring purgatory, with an exit from Hell and entrance to Eden, appropriated from a critical version of *The Divine Comedy*. The accompanying video, *Purgatory*, is projected close by.

Michele Horrigan is an artist and curatorial director of Askeaton Contemporary Arts. This project will be exhibited at the National Centre for the Arts in Mexico City later this year.

www.askeatonarts.com, www.michelehorrigan.com.

Ormston House

Lisamarie Johnson, *Sucking the Bell, 'Undertow'*, Ormston House, 2011

Pat Fitzpatrick preview, Ormston House



Brian O'Doherty talks to Tadhg McCullagh at Ormston House

outcomes of research, in identifying gaps in the cultural infrastructure, and in re-invigorating models of practice in Limerick.

The open / invited programme began with experimental performances during the inaugural Irish Sound Science and Technology Convocation and the exhibition 'Convergence: Literary Art Exhibitions', researched and curated by Dr Christa Maria Lerm-Hayes, co-hosted with Limerick City Gallery of Art. In order to support young practitioners in the city, a Graduate Award and MA Research Award were introduced to undergraduate and postgraduate students to develop solo exhibitions – a scheme that will continue on an annual basis with a rotating panel of invited selectors.

As our independent programme developed, a set of overarching questions arose in relation to the space. Operating under a licensed agreement, Ormston House acknowledges the circumstances of its existence and challenges the notion that art remains a "tolerated enclosure within the global capital in which non-productive, dysfunctional and pointless experimentation can still take place". The purpose of this initiative is not to smooth over or aestheticise the economic difficulties facing the city 'until further notice', but to make a genuine contribution to the city's cultural fabric and to create new working platforms for creative practitioners. Without subverting the conceptual frameworks of the individual artists, we invited Sonia Shiel, Kevin Cosgrove, and Keef Winter to work with us in an authentic collaborative way to look at and deal with the idea of 'work' and 'working' in the exhibition 'Monkey Wrench'.

Free to respond to events in the city, Ormston House then adapted its programme to highlight Limerick City Council's purchase of the 'Opera Centre'. This 3.2 acres site (so called as Catherine Hayes, the opera singer, was born on this block) was destined to become a shopping centre. In a bold move, the city's regeneration project reconsidered its policies and in order to avoid further property speculation (the site sat idle for several years), bought the site for as yet unplanned redevelopment. To celebrate this new way of thinking, we invited Liam O'Callaghan to bring his audio-visual sculpture *Bit Symphony* to Limerick; not only an engaging use of objects, material, sound and technologies, it activated discussion with people in the city on how this neighbouring site could be used.

Ormston House is currently developing and adapting a phased development plan, and despite not having secure tenancy, is looking well into the future to continue to provide support structures for local, national, and international projects. As always, we welcome feedback on our ideas and programmes, and suggestions on how we can use this space to further establish Limerick as a hub for new and even radical thinking. Let us know what you think.

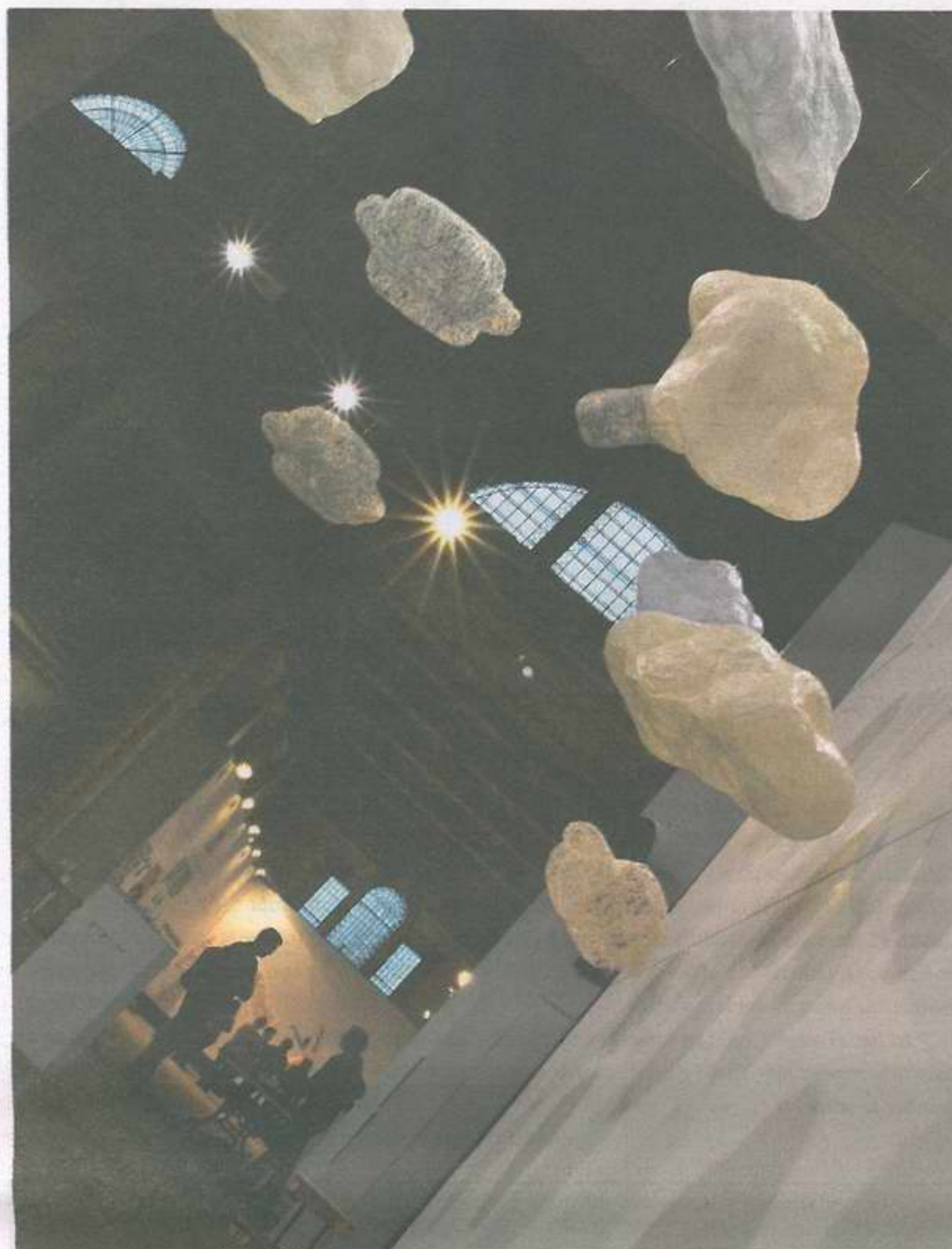
Mary Conlon, Director / Curator
www.ormstonhouse.com

Notes

1. Charles Esche, 'Art and Artists', *The Autonomy Project*, Van Abbemuseum, 2011.

REGIONAL PROFILE

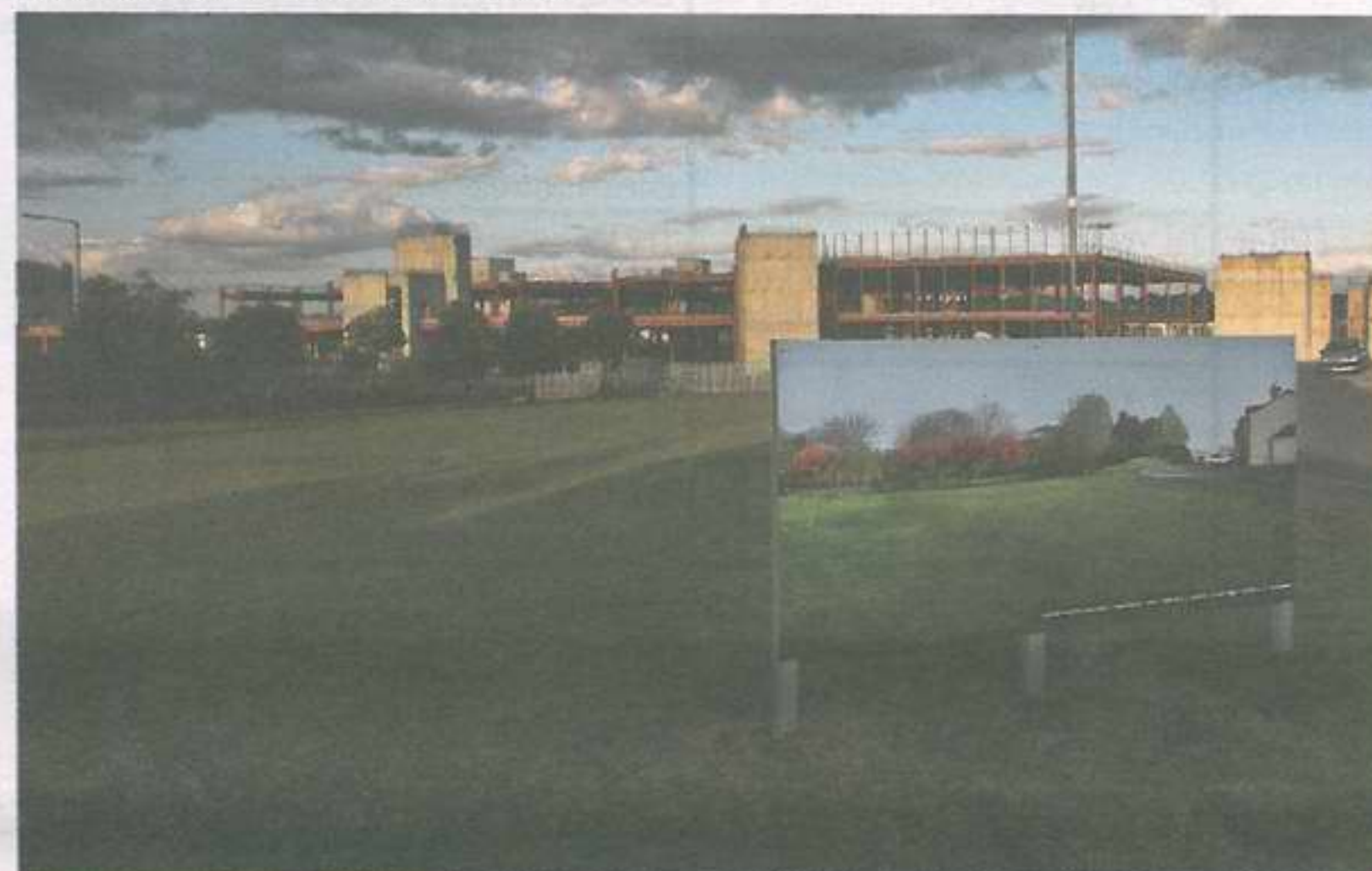
Limerick School of Art and Design



Limerick City Gallery of Art, open day, image by Paul Tarpey



Limerick City Gallery of Art, open day, image by Paul Tarpey



Castletroy View Project, image by Deirdre Power

LIMERICK is an exciting city with a dense cultural infrastructure, and is a great place to live and work. This perception is one shared by many: the artists, students, creatives, and cultural practitioners who live here. It is also a perception held by generations of students from Limerick School of Art and Design, and by the large group of artists and designers that make up the collectives driving the Creative Limerick initiative. Recently, at a hotel overlooking the river, I sat amongst 400 people drawn from all walks of life, who had come together for a town hall meeting based on the Local Heroes model. When the question 'What is unique and ongoing for Limerick?' was posed, the word culture was repeated time and time again.

Since joining the Limerick School of Art and Design, over two and half years ago, it has been an invigorating period for the institution and for me personally. I was fortunate to arrive after a long period of renovation and development, and to work in what is now one of the best art school facilities to be found anywhere. It was also a time of anxiety and of fear due to the new fiscal reality. However, what we imagined were going to be challenges, in a time of diminishing resources, have also become opportunities. Amazingly, this has been a time to do new things, and a time to grow. There is a remarkable energy and vibrancy in the Clare Street Campus; it is a fun place where we work hard!

I am very conscious how the school relates to, and engages with, the city, although this is not a new phenomenon or concern. LSAD has been in existence since 1852, and I recently came across a catalogue of an exhibition, held in the city in the early nineteenth century, which gives a sense how art has been regarded in Limerick. Of particular interest was an exhibition of works loaned by local collectors, which included paintings by Titian, Rembrandt, and Velasquez. The catalogue, from 1821, opened with this statement, which is still relevant today:

"A more mature examination of the claims of Fine Arts, will produce a clear conviction that they are not the unprofitable agents of luxury, nor any obstacle to the increase of wealth, but that wherever they have constituted a feature of public economy, they have contributed largely to the honours and riches of the state. They are not merely the ministers of superfluous desires, but are the indispensable means of

enlarging the best interests of society, and producing the highest degree of civilization."

It is interesting to reflect on this sense of civic engagement in the context of art practice, which is still so prevalent today. LSAD has been particularly active in terms of its role as an active force within the city. It has pioneered a new programme, the MA SPACE (Social Practice and the Creative Environment). The programme seeks to function in the negotiation between the studio and the lived environment. It brings together graduates from differing backgrounds and specialisations, and encourages this group to act within society, with the support and critique of the faculty and visiting specialists. This allows the participants to reflect deeply on the empirical process of learning. Its first graduates produced a remarkable range of interactions, none more striking than Deirdre Power's ongoing contribution to the people of Castletroy View, in their efforts to come to terms with living in the shadow of a gigantic abandoned development.

The participation of LSAD students and graduates in the Creative Limerick initiative has been remarkably successful and highly intuitive. Recently, I had the opportunity to lead the executive, and fellow heads of school from LIT, through the city centre, to visit the various galleries and studio spaces that have emerged as creative energy hotspots in the blighted central area – the debris of the property market implosion. It is empowering to reflect on how these artists, students, and creatives use their time and energy to create value out of failure. These cultural producers are growing in ambition and confidence.

As former Director of the Limerick City Gallery of Art, I am very proud of the re-opened, newly extended and renovated gallery. I look forward to a fresh programme of activities under the new Director, Helen Carey. One of the most dynamic collaborations that the school has engaged in is the Shinnors Curatorial Scholarship, in collaboration with the City Gallery. The first three participants were: Dr Pippa Little, who graduated recently with a PhD; Susan Holland, the first Shinnors MA to complete the programme; and Mary Conlon of Ormston House, who is currently completing her PhD. The next Shinnors candidate is due to commence the programme later this month. This is an example

of our active learning philosophy – a model that we also began in collaboration with Visual Carlow, where the Shinnors Curatorial Fellow Emma Lucy O'Brien, is actively involved. We are currently planning several more collaborations with institutions where curatorial students working on a research platform can engage at a very high level with curatorial practice, while contributing to the cultural programmes of key institutions.

Finally, to summarise current developments at LSAD, we are adding 'Photography and Lens Based Media' to our Fine Art BA, and 'Animation with Digital Design' will be a new discipline, as part of our design degree offering. We are further developing our research profile, and programmes include a taught MA in Contemporary Design Practice, and another in Community Film Making. An MA SPACE graduate group are seeking to set up a Research Hub, and we will shortly launch the Irish Fashion Incubator Limerick (IFIL) as a creative enterprise in the city centre, which seeks to retain and draw in many exciting fashion designers and artists who use textiles in new and innovative ways.

Mike Fitzpatrick is Head of the Limerick School of Art and Design. He was previously the Director / Curator at Limerick City Gallery curating exhibitions by John Shinnors and Connolly Cleary, among many others. He has presented solo shows around the world and taken part in numerous international residencies.

REGIONAL PROFILE

Arts Office: Limerick City

For the recent official opening of the redeveloped Limerick City Gallery of Art, the Arts Office put together the history of the Carnegie building which houses the gallery. Built in 1906 as a Carnegie Library, the City Council moved the library out in 1985 and took the brave decision to make it into a dedicated art gallery. What became obvious, in putting this history together, is that things don't happen overnight. A short chronology shows the development process:

1936	The idea to set up an art gallery in Limerick was agreed upon
1937	The first Limerick Municipal Art Gallery Sub-Committee was set up
	The first paintings for the collection were acquired
	The first exhibition of these paintings was held
1940	Limerick Corporation decided to house the municipal art gallery in the Carnegie Building and borrowed £7,500 to pay for the necessary extension to the building
1985	The library moves to a new premises and the Carnegie Building is given over to Limerick City Gallery of Art
1999	South Gallery extension added as phase one of the redevelopment
2011	Phase two redevelopment with café, storage area, workshop area



Carnegie Library, 1910, image courtesy of Limerick City Gallery



Carnegie Library, 1910, image courtesy of Limerick City Gallery

So it took over 70 years to get to where we are now, and a lot of people were involved along the way, but what is important in this story is that partnership and leadership made it happen. The idea of setting up an art gallery in Limerick originated with John J Johnson (manager of the Grand Canal Company in Limerick and thus in charge of the Limerick Canal). There followed a series of meetings between officials of the Corporation and a number of prominent figures in the artistic community which resulted in a public meeting being held in the Town Hall on Rutland Street and a committee (chaired by Justice Flood) established to put the project in motion.

Early in 1937, a Limerick Municipal Art Gallery Sub-Committee was set up, whose membership included Dermot O'Brien, Sean Keating, Dr George Furlong (Director of the National Gallery of Ireland), Justice Flood, Mayor Dan Bourke TD (the only Mayor of Limerick to serve five consecutive terms), former Mayor Michael Keyes TD, and a number of other Limerick notables. Two local businessmen were particularly active on the committee – J J Johnson, who served as honorary secretary, and Paul Bernard (proprietor of the Grand Central Cinema) who was honorary treasurer.

Parallel to the development of LCGA many other important things happened in Limerick in the visual arts: In 1977, eva International (then E+va) was established; in 1983 Sam Walsh founded the Limerick Contemporary Art Society that purchased contemporary drawings, and in 1991 donated the National Collection of Contemporary Drawing to LCGA; in 1988, Limerick City Council agreed to employ an Arts Officer; in 1993, eight artists' studios were opened with a capital grant from the Arts Council; in 2010 Creative Limerick was established by Limerick City Council that supports the use of vacant spaces by artists; and in 2012, Limerick City Council will be the first local authority to open eight artists' apartments, a sustainable living model for artists.

In my 22 years I have to come to understand – like those who drove the idea of an art gallery for Limerick 70 years ago – that a good idea needs support, and I look forward to the ideas continuing to flow for another 22 years.

Sheila Deegan is the Arts Officer for Limerick City Council

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REGIONAL PROFILE



Limerick City Gallery of Art, interior

Limerick City Gallery

ANNETTE MOLONEY TALKS TO HELEN CAREY ABOUT HER NEW ROLE AS DIRECTOR OF LIMERICK CITY GALLERY

Annette Moloney: Firstly Helen, congratulations on your new role as Director of Limerick City Gallery of Art (LCGA). Your position will run from 2012–2014. What do you feel is achievable – realistically – within that time?

Helen Carey: Limerick City Gallery has just reopened after a period of closure for the main building and off-site activity, which saw quite a lot of integration with other activities within Limerick. It seems to me there was a lot of energy, and LCGA had a part to play outside of the building. There was a type of 'dematerialisation' of the building into the city. Immediately, I see my role as making the building relevant to that activity, but also consolidating, without solidifying, the notion that a building has a part to play in a town at large. Ideally the building should have quite an overarching presence, with a certain amount of variation on that presence. In more global terms, the institution is undergoing a period of readjustment regarding the role it plays for the arts sector, for the community, and for the general public. As we see budgets cut and roles change, we witness a certain amount of crisis and certainly a lot of flux. I see my role at this point as steering a ship with a steady hand, but also anticipating what the role of the institution could be after this time of flux – setting the organisation fair to be able to weather the storm ahead and what comes beyond.

AM: In your recent curatorial practice, you have explored "notions of work and protest, and where History intersects our understanding of the present and influences our ideas for the future". Are there elements of your practice to date, or indeed some unrealised ideas, that you are looking forward to exploring in your new role at LCGA?

HC: Yes, of course, the fit couldn't be better as far as I'm concerned. My interest is in labour history and its portals – where work and labour feature in peoples' lives, acting as a metaphor for their condition within society and how that can be calibrated and measured in terms of work conditions and the changing conditions of labour. In Limerick there is a solid history surrounding industrialisation, from the Limerick Soviet up through to the present day. Limerick is thought of as a city that can embrace the radical quite wholesomely, or even challenge the radical to be genuinely radical. I would be very interested in looking at the modernisation of Ireland and the Lemass era, with regard to the collection here at LCGA. I'd like to look, particularly, at artistic activity

in Limerick from the War of Independence through to the modernisation of Ireland and up to the present day – as we look down the barrel of a decade of commemorations.

AM: Michael D Higgins has spoken about his vision for "social solidarity" in Ireland and his belief in a need for "active citizenship". Do you think that LCGA, as a public institution, has a role to play in this?

HC: I think that there are real gaps in leadership at the moment, both in Ireland and further afield. In many ways, culture has been given the rather difficult task of being 'mankind's leader' and basically having all of the heavy lifting to do. However, it has to be said, this is a claim that has often been made, so there is an element of 'now is the time'. We are in Limerick, in the midst of big changes, so 'what is to be done?' is a big question, especially in terms of creativity and people's innate sense of contributing to a better place, a better world, a place where there are a great deal more values that are just and fair. These are things that we need to really examine and re-examine. Do we have the building blocks in place for 'active citizenship' to actually happen? I think within art practice at the moment there is quite a lot of discussion, thought, experimentation and development on this theme. There has to be a lot of generous interchange and exchange. I suppose the challenge for the arts is to make that exchange, interchange, generosity, and curiosity become part of an infectious position, yielding something really useful – and I don't mean useful in a utilitarian way, but something that has legs, that can grow.

AM: To date, LCGA has had a strong and open Education Programme that attracted broad public audiences, was particularly family friendly, and was often connected to the Shinnors Fellowship set up by the gallery. Is the role of the Education Programme, within the institution and the city, something that you are looking forward to exploring?

HC: Without a doubt: the idea of a stately galleon up at the top of Limerick, without anybody in it, just doesn't light anyone's fire. I think the quality of the Education Programme is ambitious but it's also intelligent, and I define intelligence as a gathering of information and also as a life force – it's not about ticking a box. I think the Shinnors Scholars have been incredibly valuable and innovative. The

contributions they have made are remarkable and there's a body of information there on which one builds; there's a precedent. I've also realised that, in Limerick, there is a very up-to-the-minute understanding of the role of visual art. Generally, people here have encountered art in a sophisticated form, through eva International, as well as LCGA.

AM: The idea of the permeable or malleable institution was discussed at a recent Arts and Civil Society Symposium. Do you think that LCGA can offer a 'permeable' programme? More specifically, do you think that the gallery can reflect on and develop dialogues around the wider social context of Limerick as a city? Limerick has a distinct geography and history, particularly in terms of planning, often linked to the fact that fewer people now live in the city centre. There's an ownership of the city, especially at night, that's very distinctive.

HC: Yes, I've noticed that. To be honest, it's early days for me to be able to answer that question with any degree of detail. However, the amalgamation of the city and county local authorities is crucial, and will offer a huge amount of understanding about what a city with a hinterland actually is. They need to permeate each other, because – again we go back to the notion of work – the reality is that the city brings people in from the hinterland, for a lot of hours during their day. In Limerick, the geographical borders are not just being permeated through the local authority reform agenda; their very manifestation is disappearing. The idea of the 'invisible city' has been part of social theory for a while: within that membranous thing, that invisible outline, you'd like to see the city's character – established through history – becoming readable from different angles.

AM: As you've mentioned, the arts sector in Limerick city has experienced a period of change over the last few years. While refurbishments were taking place in key institutions (the Belltable Arts Centre, LCGA) a number of new alternative art spaces were established, many located in vacant commercial spaces. What is your view on the links, current or potential, between LCGA and these artist-led initiatives?

HC: Again, it's really too soon to say. However, it would be almost counter-intuitive if you weren't predisposed to develop those links. The idea of the 'occupy', the idea of the slack buildings, which you have looked at in detail yourself, the idea of animating things for a short time, or for a longer time, to look at the logistics or even the legal aspects – all of that has been something impressive about Limerick. It would be folly to think that you could have a view about LCGA that didn't include trying to work together. And, quite frankly, they are so exciting. So, on day three of my new role, I can tell you I'm very happy to countenance partnerships on a wide basis.

AM: Staying on the value of partnerships and collaboration, eva International is another key element of the cultural community in Limerick, which will now happen on a biennial basis. During the timeframe of your role you will experience two iterations of the project. Is eva International a project you are looking forward to interacting with?

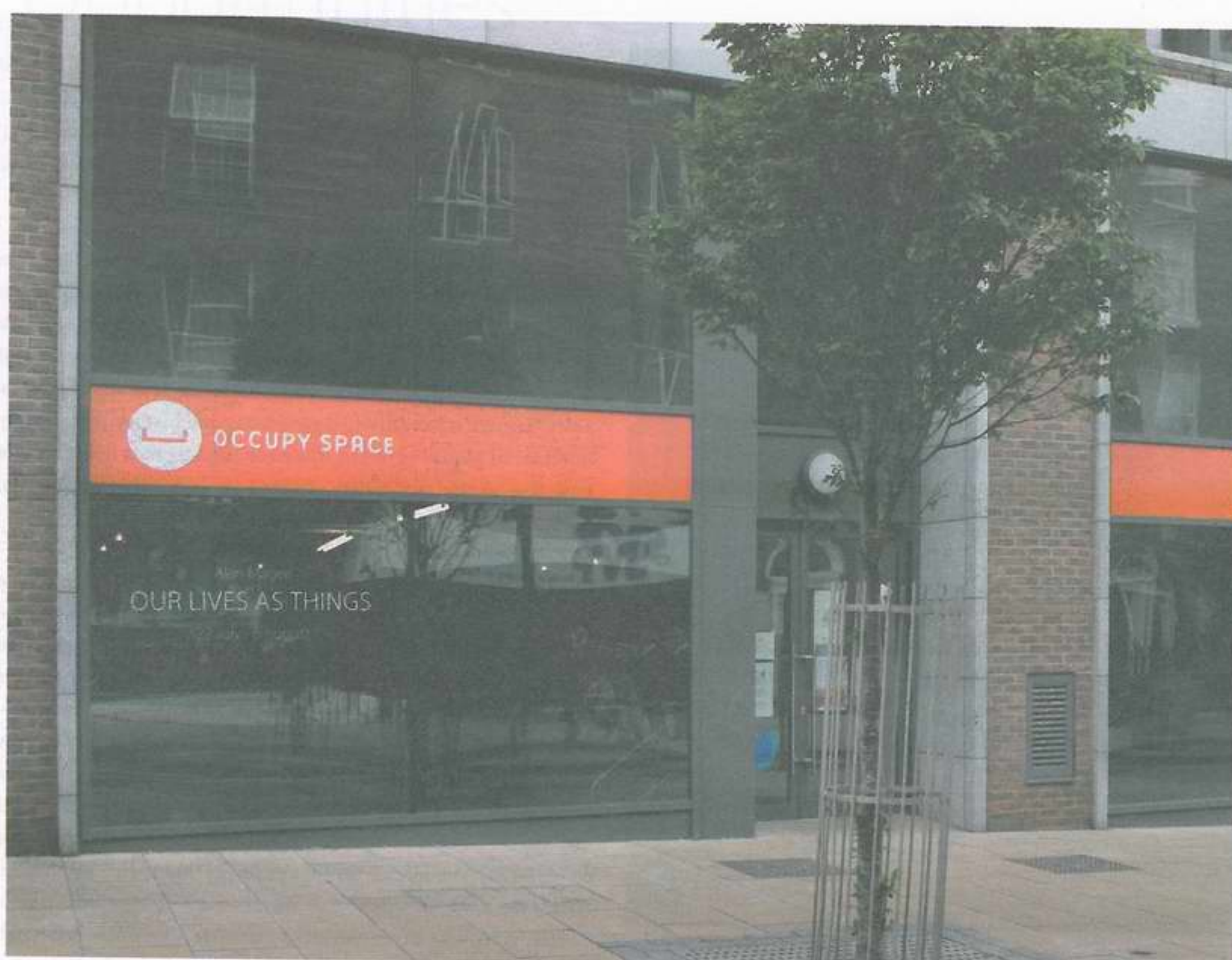
HC: I think eva International is a most exciting project, regarding both its history and future. It will contain all the elements of a really heightened contemporary art experience. Woodrow Kernohan is doing a marvelous job and it's a real opportunity for Limerick to show a kind of prescience when it comes to what is current, what is the future, what is important and what is – I think a word that doesn't get used enough – significant. What is significant in our time? I think that eva International is a pretty good filter of the significant.

AM: One final question, regarding another no-less important cultural institution in Limerick: are you looking forward to visiting Thomond Park for a Munster Rugby game...?

HC: Well, then I'd have to change jerseys...My father played for Leinster, so we're talking about a bigger philosophical dilemma and I can't commit myself, not just yet. But I'm up for that particular match, and certainly in Thomond Park of all places.

Annette Moloney is a curator and collaborator based in Limerick
<http://gallery.limerick.ie>

REGIONAL PROFILE



Occupy Space, Limerick



Occupy Space, Limerick



Enable Ireland class at Raggle Taggle, Limerick

Space Age

AOIFE MADDEN DISCUSSES RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CREATIVE LIMERICK INITIATIVE, WHICH AIMS TO MAKE VACANT PROPERTY IN THE CITY AVAILABLE FOR ARTISTIC PRACTICE

CREATIVE Limerick – Connect to the Grid is a creative and innovative scheme coordinated by the Property Department in Limerick City Council, under the realm of Economic Development. The scheme is in partnership with the third level colleges, creative industries, commercial property owners and their agents operating in Limerick city. Creative Limerick initially aimed to find a use for vacant property in the city by maximising Limerick's creative capital, but has since seen Limerick become Ireland's leading city for artist-led creative activity.

I took over as coordinator of the scheme in November 2011 and was instantly impressed with the effect the scheme has had on Limerick city, in maintaining and increasing the vibrancy of the city. Part of my role is to seek out key vacant properties in the city centre, and then try and convince the landlord to allow Creative Limerick use of the property, until it is rented or sold.

Limerick City Council puts a standard license agreement in place that is signed by the landlord, the creative practitioner, and Limerick City Council. The landlord maintains their structural and fire insurance, but this agreement protects the landlord against all expense, costs, and losses from any damage that should occur in the premises while they are participating in the scheme. We also indemnify the landlord against all expenses arising from injury to the creative practitioners or the general public while on the premises. This security provided by Limerick City Council to the landlord underpins the scheme and has ensured its continuing success.

The creative practitioner is required to pay all utilities and set-up costs incurred during their time in the property. In my role as Creative Limerick Coordinator, I liaise between the landlord and the creative occupant and do weekly checks to ensure the building is being used in accordance with the original terms of the agreement.

There are currently eight active Creative Limerick locations in the city centre. Those involved directly in the contemporary visual arts include:

OCCUPY SPACE is an artist-led gallery situated in the Thomas Street Centre, directed by Noelle Collins and Kevin O'Keeffe. In 2011, Occupy Space received funding support from the Arts Council of Ireland. In its first two years, the gallery has hosted more than 30 exhibitions showcasing well over 150 established and emerging artists (Irish and

international), established an Annual Graduate Residency Award, and facilitated numerous events including performance nights, video screenings, social engagement projects and artist talks. Most notably, in late May 2011, Occupy Space hosted 'in-flux', a large scale exhibition utilising the six floors of the Thomas Street building, supported by Limerick City Council and eva International; gathering together 10 Irish and international artist-led gallery spaces, this project brought to Limerick an exciting sample of diverse contemporary art practices from some of the most interesting artist-led spaces in Ireland and Europe. As an example of the public support for visual arts in Limerick, it should be noted that to produce 'in-flux' Occupy Space was assisted by nearly 30 volunteers from the local community, who were invaluable to the project's success.

<http://www.occupyspace.com>

RAGGLE TAGGLE provides both artist studios and an exhibition platform to a variety of individuals and organisations. They are located on the corner of Sarsfield Street and Henry Street, and their primary goal is to make a cultural contribution to the area, as well as fostering budding artists and professional practitioners. The gallery caters for a wide range of local interests such as undergraduate exhibitions and community-based activities. These activities have varied from Enable Ireland performances to sonic sound art *byob* events. While requests for the gallery have increased in demand, the space is primarily a project-based studio. The condition of residence being that each artist perseuse and develop their practice with the appropriate gusto.

<http://raggletaggleconsortium@gmail.com>

FABER STUDIOS is an artist collective and gallery located on Henry Street that aims to promote and facilitate object-based sculpture and mixed media work. There are five members: Marie Cannole, Caelan Bristow, Aaron Lawless, Vivienne Quinn, and Ronan McGeough. Faber recently moved premises within the scheme to larger premises, which has been hugely significant for the Studios, as they can now offer a permanent exhibition area that can be used for talks, screenings, and events. The majority of the space contains five permanent studios and one communal workspace. In 2010 and 2011, Faber ran the successful 'Artists Talk Series' in conjunction with LSAD and their upcoming

programme involves a continuation of the 'Talk Series' as well as public workshops and projects within the community.

www.faberstudioslimerick.blogspot.com

ORMSTON HOUSE is perhaps the most exciting addition to Creative Limerick since the last article in the Visual Arts News Sheet. It launched its visual art programme in August 2011 in a 2100 sq ft dedicated exhibition space at 9 – 10 Patrick Street, in the heart of Limerick City. Ormston House will devise and deliver an experimental programme of multi-disciplinary exhibitions and events, and develop a series of research-based and archival projects.

Other creative practitioners occupying spaces include the Creative Tree Space in the Thomas street centre, which is a community-orientated workshop providing lectures and exhibition space dedicated to environmental projects, performing arts, well-being activities, fitness, and education. Artist Jean Ryan also holds a space in the Thomas Street Centre, which serves as a gallery for his work and for holding painting classes. Tarmo Tulit photography occupies a space in the same building, providing photography classes and a photographic workshop. Recently, Sadhbh Lyons took a space within a doorway on Bedford Row in Limerick. What was once a run down entrance to the building was transformed by Sadhbh into a mini-gallery, and really adds vibrancy to the street.

The most recent addition to the scheme is the introduction of pop-up shops. A graduate of the Limerick School of Art and Design, designer Marion Murphy Cooney, and well-known milliner Aisling Maher, will open a pop-up shop under the scheme in the Thomas Street centre in the coming weeks. We are also in the process of setting up a Limerick City Craft Hub that will provide an outlet for local craft makers to sell their products in a prime city centre location.

One thing that is clearly evident to me since coming on board with Creative Limerick is the wonderful sense of camaraderie among the artist community in Limerick. All the spaces help and support each other and work together in helping the creative environment in Limerick City to flourish. Limerick City Council has been unique in its approach to vacant property and this has paid off with increased footfall into a vibrant and creative city.

For any further information on the scheme please contact Aoife Madden, Creative Limerick, Limerick City Council on 061407325.

creativelimerick@limerickcity.ie

REGIONAL PROFILE



Woodrow Kernohan and Annie Fletcher



Woodrow Kernohan

EVA RETURNS

JAMES MERRIGAN INTERVIEWS WOODROW KERNOHAN ABOUT HIS ROLE AS DIRECTOR OF EVA INTERNATIONAL 2012

James Merrigan: Taking into account that art directors have to take on a pluralist approach within art institutions and when overseeing art events, your history is very artist-centric – can you elaborate?

Woodrow Kernohan: I am an artist by training and began organising group exhibitions as a way of creating opportunities for myself and other artists. Exhibition-making is now an integral part of my practice, and central to this is an understanding of exhibitions from an artist's perspective. *eva International* was founded by artists in 1977 and my predecessor, Paul M O'Reilly, is also an artist. Artists remain a central part of the organisation, and I continue to make work.

JM: Do you think it is important for the director of an event like *eva International* to have got their hands dirty as an artist?

WK: Managing an event like *eva International* requires a range of skills, and having self-initiated projects as an artist and curator definitely helps. Working with grass-roots arts organisations, it has always been important for me to help artists realise ambitious projects, and this is very much what *eva International* does. Being an artist has always helped when working with non-gallery spaces, and the economic downturn has increased these kinds of opportunities. Recently, I worked with a part-restored Georgian townhouse and a dilapidated department store in Brighton, creating multiple exhibitions and gallery spaces.

JM: Limerick town centre has been hit hard by Ireland's deepening recession. On the other hand, Limerick's visual art scene has never been more vibrant with vacant commercial buildings being populated by artist-run spaces such as Occupy Space, Ormston House, and Faber Studios.

WK: There is a high percentage of empty commercial properties in Limerick, yet there is an energy in the city centre created through spaces like the ones you have mentioned, along with Limerick Printmakers and Raggle Taggle, made possible through the Creative Limerick initiative. Through access to these kinds of empty commercial properties, artists and curators can turn a negative situation into a positive outcome for the wider community. These kinds of spaces provide invaluable opportunities within the city and should be present in economic upturns, as well as downturns.

JM: During *Tulca 2011*, curated by Megs Morley, a situation arose whereby the arranged main exhibition space fell through because of commercial interest. Is *eva* dependent on similar commercially viable locations?

WK: This is the risk when working in non-traditional gallery spaces; contingency plans are essential. *eva International* will spread over

multiple spaces across the city, including the recently reopened Limerick City Gallery of Art, The Belltable, and The Hunt Museum. We are currently exploring working with non-gallery spaces and hope to work in partnership with many organisations within Limerick City and beyond.

JM: Limerick is also fostering curator talent through the Shinnors Curatorial Scholarship, such as previous Shinnors Scholar Claire Feeley, and currently, Mary Conlon, who has brought a new energy to Limerick visual art scene with her 'Six Memos' project and Ormston House art space, which is very visible to the public on Patrick Street.

WK: The Shinnors Scholarship is a fantastic opportunity for curators, provided through collaboration between Limerick Institute of Technology, Limerick School of Art and Design, and Limerick City Gallery of Art. *eva International* is also hoping to host a Shinnors Scholarship, so watch this space.

JM: It could be said that it was good for *eva* to take a break for a year, giving artists time to better digest and reflect upon what has happened to Ireland economically, socially, and psychologically since 2008?

WK: There has been a radical shift both in Ireland and globally. In 2012, *eva International* returns as a biennial and the curator, Annie Fletcher, describes her approach as 'taking the temperature' of what is happening here and now in Ireland. We will be working in partnership with multiple organisations from Limerick and across Ireland, including Visual Artists Ireland, to provide a platform that will reflect current concerns and ask pertinent questions.

JM: Why was Annie Fletcher chosen from the shortlist of curators for *eva 2011*?

WK: Annie Fletcher is currently Curator of Exhibitions at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, one of the most significant and innovative museums in the world. She is well known and respected for her work as a curator here in Ireland, including 'Cork Caucus', co-curated with Charles Esche and Art / not art (2005). Annie has a familiarity with the arts ecology in Ireland from an international perspective and, along with her energy and vision, this makes her the ideal curator for *eva International 2012*.

JM: The significant jump in proposals for 2012 must be partly attributed to having a curator of Annie Fletcher's reputation – home and abroad – curating *eva*?

WK: This year has seen an amazing number of artists submitting to *eva International*, around 2000 proposals from over 70 countries, and I am sure Annie's reputation has contributed to this surge in interest.

JM: An excerpt from the curator's statement for *eva International* reads: "This year *eva International* will attempt to tap into this feeling of imminence by understanding how artists define and explain the status quo in relation to global events. What are we on the verge of? How do artists envisage what is to come and what is to be done?" As mentioned, Limerick has been affected greatly by the economic downturn; how do artists, in this context, respond to the current state of affairs?

WK: As curator, Annie wants to capture this unprecedented opportunity for change. She is currently developing her curatorial direction for *eva International* and her references include Sarah Pierce's *It's time, man. It feels imminent* (2008) and Peter Lennon's film *Rocky Road to Dublin* (1967), which posed the question "what do you do with your revolution once you've got it?" *eva International 2012* will appraise where we're at and how we move forward.

JM: Ignoring what the newspapers say about global affairs, there seems to be a feeling of 'optimism' within the visual arts in Ireland, as demonstrated by the growth in artist-run spaces, curator projects, and commentary on visual art.

WK: In times of difficulty and limited means, artists and curators are able to be resourceful, making opportunities and exploring new economies, exchanges, and ways of working, both commercially and non-commercially. Artists are able to be light-footed and innovative in a way that commerce cannot.

JM: What changes are planned for the future of *eva International*?

WK: One of the main changes for *eva International* is that it is now a biennial. Another major change is that we are in the process of appointing a new design team to refresh the identity, and this will be re-launched along with the full programme in March. Working in partnership with the Van Abbemuseum is also a new direction, and collaborating with key national and international organisations is something we hope to continue. We aim to bring international audiences to Limerick and increase the visibility and opportunities for Irish artists internationally. *eva International 2012* promises to be topical and exciting.

Woodrow Kernohan is an artist and curator who is currently Director of *eva International* (formerly *e v a*). Previously he was Co-Director of Brighton Photo Fringe, Co-Director of Permanent Gallery (Brighton) and Exhibitions Curator at The Regency Town House (Hove). He recently curated an exhibition by Neil Brownsword, and exhibited at Guest Projects, London.

James Merrigan is an artist and art critic. Future exhibitions include a solo shows at the Mermaid Arts Centre Bray and the LAB 2012. As an art critic Merrigan has written for Circa Magazine, a-n magazine, and is a monthly contributor to Aesthetica Magazine.