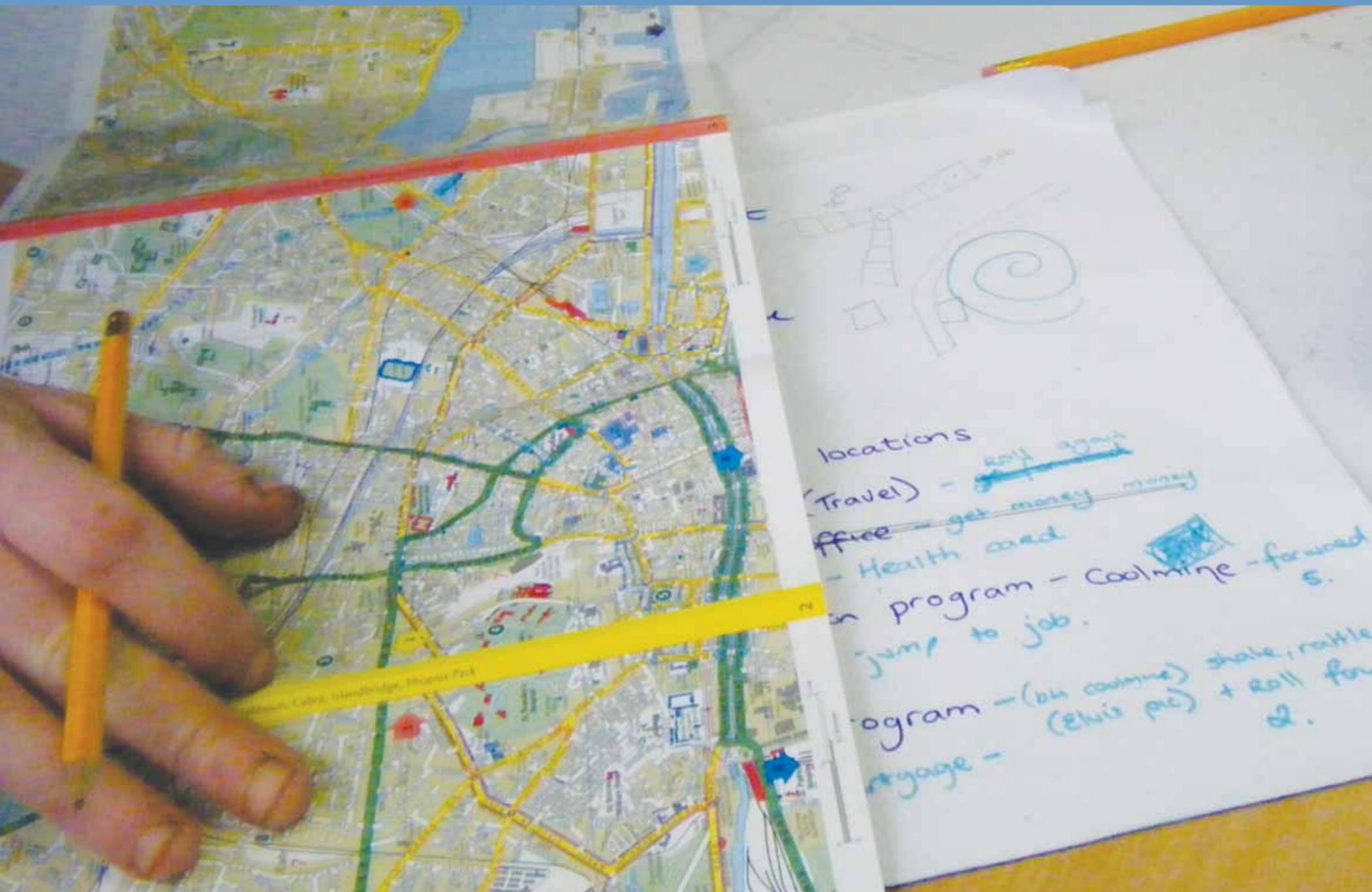


Sheena Barrett
in conversation with
Hans Ulrich Obrist

Curation

Producing Communities - A Marathon not a Sprint



Producing Communities – A Marathon not a Sprint

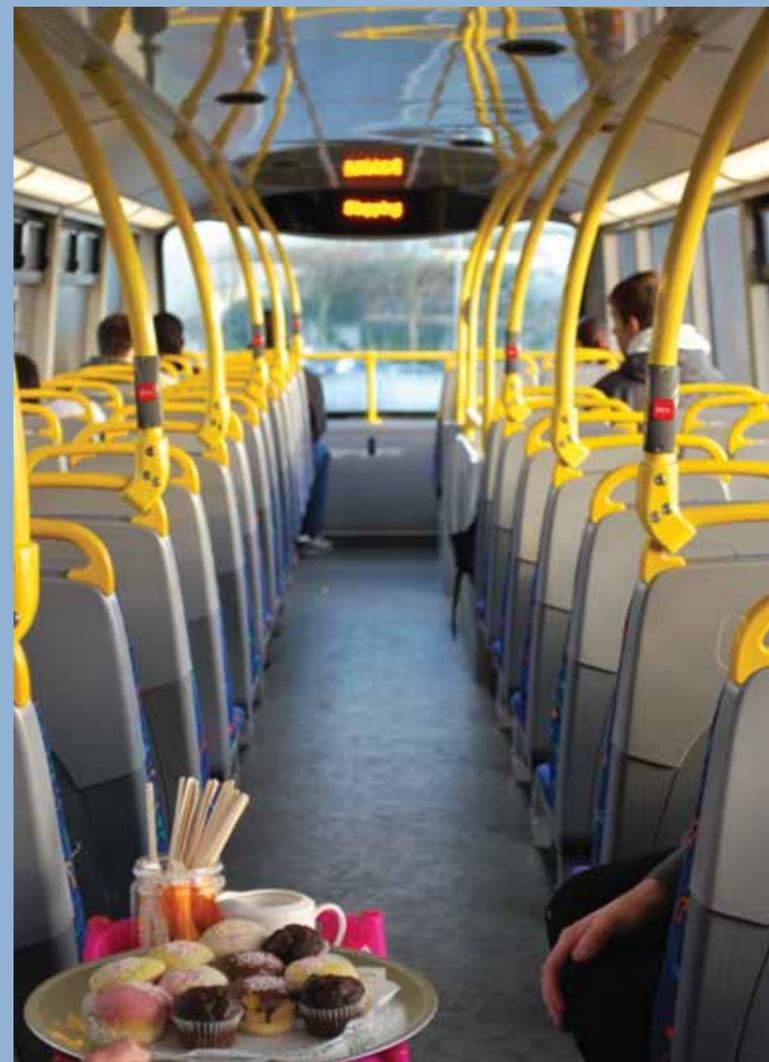
Sheena Barrett, Assistant Arts Officer, Dublin City Council and Curator of The LAB, talks to Hans Ulrich Obrist

The Swiss curator joined the Serpentine Gallery, London as Co-director of Exhibitions and Programmes and Director of International Projects in 2006. Prior to this he was Curator of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris since 2000, as well as curator of museum in progress in Vienna from 1993-2000. He has curated and co-curated over 200 solo and group exhibitions internationally since 1991, including: *Take Me, I'm Yours; do it; Manifesta 1; Cities on the Move; Live/Life; Nuit Blanche; 1st Berlin Biennale; Utopia Station; 2nd Guangzhou Triennale; Dakar Biennale; 1st & 2nd Moscow Biennale; Uncertain States of America, Lyon Biennale; and Yokohama Triennale*

In 2007, Hans Ulrich co-curated *Il Tempo del Postino* with Philippe Parreno for the Manchester International Festival. In the same year, the Van Alen Institute awarded him the New York Prize Senior Fellowship for 2007-2008. In 2008 he curated *Everstill* at the Lorca House in Granada, *Indian Highway* at the Serpentine Gallery, and was the curator for Artpace residencies in Texas.

What is the role of curators in responding to artists working collaboratively in context and how might this work translate to a gallery space?

I started to curate exhibitions in the early '90s and my first exhibition *World Soup* happened in my kitchen with Hans Peter Feldmann, Christian Boltanski, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Richard Wentworth and others. As a student I met Alighiero Boetti who told me that there are always curators asking you to do a gallery show, a museum show, sometimes you are invited to do a commission and if you are doing really well a biennale or documenta -but it was always the same formats. It's very limited in an artist's lifetime. Boetti said he'd always wanted to do a show on an airplane but nobody had ever asked him, and within the parameters of the art world at that time, that project would never have been possible.



Arts students Catriona Rogerson and Siobhan Carroll and Number 53 route, Dublin Bus

I was 18 at the time and thought maybe it would be an interesting thing to dedicate myself to extending the parameters and the ways of working; to do things which otherwise couldn't have happened. Ever since, whenever I work with an artist I try not to do projects that are somehow obvious but to ask the artist if there is a project they have always wanted to do. For me, it is not about formatting the practices, or squeezing the practices into any kind of given format. Later we realised the Boetti show (www.mip.at) with *museum in progress*.

I have had many conversations with artists about unrealised projects and little by little I began to gather them together, at first in a book, *Unbuilt Roads*, which I edited with Guy Tortosa. Often exciting public art projects don't happen because they aren't sensible, they are too expensive or too small or too big or there is censorship, even self-censorship, that is to say not daring to think up the idea. If we catalogue these unrealised projects, if we shift the parameters slightly, they can begin to happen. This is what we are trying to do now with Julia Peyton-Jones and the Agency of Unrealised Projects at the Serpentine

Are there practices that the gallery should stay away from, do you think?

For me it has never been either/or. Soon after working with Kasper König in the early '90s on a public art book, (*The Public View*), I started to work at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris, l'ARC with Suzanne Page on the *Migrateur* project - a series of projects which migrated through the building, bringing a range of approaches to the museum, testing how unexpected things can happen. For example Douglas Gordon exhibited graffiti in the toilets and sent a virus through the telephone system. For me it's not inside or outside the museum, it's always been an oscillation between.

The museum is a public space, I don't think art in public space means out of the museum. Museums can be deeply public and I think there has been a strange dichotomy within the culture of public art and public space. The differences are not absolute, they are more gradual.

Arts students Elizabeth Doogan and Susan Walsh with Coolmine Male Residential



*Guest artist tutor Peggy Shaw with Learning Development students
Photo: Justin Farrelly*

The idea of public art as we used to know it, particularly as it was so prominent in the 80s has maybe a little less visibility. Maybe now is the time to really reconnect to that whole dimension of public art and how public art can produce realities.

For example with the per cent how can we avoid for art scheme, squeezing practices into too schematic parameters? This is why I do believe that our *Agency for Unrealised Projects* is urgent because it opens up the field immensely. There are fabulous unrealised projects that we try to see if we can get realised. For me it starts with the art and I always think that it is extremely important that we do not instrumentalise art.

Is there a danger when you transfer work made in a community context into a gallery space that you might be perceived as exoticising the Other or that in failing to represent the practice in a gallery context you are failing the community?

In the 21st century it's about building lots of bridges. It's not about only one bridge between art and the public. There is not one sort of homogenised public. How things are made public is a polyphonic situation.

My most recent book, *A Brief History of Curating* presents a collection of interviews mapping the evolution of the curatorial field – from early independent curators in the 1960s and 70s and the experimental institutional programmes developed in Europe and the US. In the 70s there was a strong emphasis on experimental curating and we can learn a lot from these models now. There is a certain amnesia and this is why I decided to do the book. It's a protest against forgetting, about finding ways to resist amnesia. If you invent the future it is very often made out of the past. If you want to understand the forces in visual arts then you also need to understand what is going on in music, in poetry, in literature.

Creating a social space ultimately raises issues about community and how to create a community. It's not just about making something public but about art making a public or producing communities. Every day I am in the process of producing communities.

Sheena Barrett is Dublin City Council Assistant Arts Officer and Curator at the LAB, Dublin

Welcome to Create News

This is the sixth edition of Create News. Create News is published twice a year in March and September. It is sent free of charge, features a guest writer and offers the latest information on Create events and services.

If you do not wish to receive further editions, please write or email us at info@create-ireland.ie. You will automatically receive copies unless you ask us to remove your details from the list.

If you would like to receive a personal copy of Create News please email info@create-ireland.ie and include details of name, address and postcode.

Create, 10/11 Earl Street South, Dublin 8
www.create-ireland.ie

Continuing Professional Development Workshops:

To learn more about Create's forthcoming CPD workshops *Stories to be Danced* with Ron Brown, in partnership with Dublin Dance Festival May 12 and *Diverse Designs* May 27 with Reza Abedini and Paul Hughes, email communications@create-ireland.ie or visit www.create-ireland.ie

The Writing Contemporary Ireland CPD workshop with Mark O Halloran and Madani Younis elicited an enthusiastic response with places being taken up very quickly. The workshop was organised in partnership with Filmbase. Listen to Madani talk about the workshop on www.create-exchange.ie

Arts and Health 2009 Programme

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon is working in partnership with Create to deliver an Arts and Health programme in the Autumn of 2009. The 2009 programme will include an exhibition, conference and a series of commissioned opinion pieces. The Arts Council and Create has appointed Michelle Browne as the curator of the 2009 exhibition strand of the programme.

This programme will run parallel to the development of Arts Council policy and strategy in the area of Arts and Health.

New Audio on create-exchange.ie

New audio on create-exchange.ie - Legendary performance artist Peggy Shaw in conversation with theatre critic Peter Crawley; Anthony Haughey discusses his latest collaborative work; audio from the panel discussion *Collaborative Arts: Community, Authorship and Practice* with Michelle Browne, Michael Fortune, Mary O Sullivan, Feidlim Cannon. Bookmark www.create-exchange.ie

If you are an artist, arts officer or community engaged in a collaborative arts project and are interested in being interviewed for the site please contact Katrina Goldstone at communications@create-ireland.ie

From Context to Exhibition: The Learning Development Programme NCAD, DIT, IADT, Tisch School of Performing Arts NYU managed by Create

Exhibition 23 - 30 April at The LAB, Dublin City Council and

Talks series 24 - 28 April

To be launched by Peggy Shaw, international performance artist on 23rd April

Create, will host a series of talks, supported by The LAB, to accompany an exhibition of work that arts students from the colleges (National College of Art and Design, Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Art Design and Technology and Tisch School of Performing Arts, New York University) have created with communities of place and/or interest.

The week long series of events is called *From Context to Exhibition* – and will explore some of the critical questions behind artists working collaboratively with communities to co-author work, and to question the politics of translating the work from the context of production (the community) to a formal arts space (the gallery). The events will all take place at The LAB, Dublin City Council gallery. Speakers include artists Faisal Abdul Allah, Peggy Shaw, Milena Dragicevic-Sesic, a cultural policy advisor to the Minister for the Arts, Republic of Serbia and curator, artist, and writer Paul O'Neill.

Artist in the Community Scheme: Collaborative Planning Processes and Practices

Publication from Create in partnership
with Arts Council

Create will publish a collection of four essays by artists Rhona Byrne, Susan Gogan, Declan Gorman and Ríonach Ní Néill, documenting work produced through the Artist in the Community Scheme which Create manages on behalf of the Arts Council. The publication is produced in partnership with the Arts Council. The book will be of interest to individual artists across all art forms, community groups, local arts officers, arts institutions and those in the wider collaborative art sector. To order, contact communications@create-ireland.ie.



Photo: Susan Gogan;
Community: Migrant Rights Centre

Artist in the Community Scheme - Round One, 2009 Successful applicants for Round One in 2009 are:

Phase 1 Research + Development Awards (artist and community, artform)

Jennifer O'Dea / Gerry McCann, Focus Ireland, theatre; Aideen McDonald, Stoneybatter Youth Service, theatre; Michael Fortune, The Country and Western Allstars; visual art; Aileen Lambert, Irish Wheelchair Assoc. and Tallaghtfornia Youth Club, visual art; Cecilia Moore, Sillogue Eco / Rediscovery Centre, visual art; Michelle Read, Bealtaine, theatre; Kate Bradbury / Helena O'Connor, Clare Chess Club, visual art; Kevin O'Shanahan, Oige Na Gaeltachta, music / dance; Peter Kearns, The Sleeven Advocates Performing Group, film; Glenn Loughran, Robert Emmet CDP, Lithuania Community, visual art; Carol Ann Connolly, Respond Housing Association Sligo, visual art; Helene Hugel, Irish Deaf Kids, theatre.

Phase 2 Project Realisation Awards (community, artist, artform)

The Young Persons' Group, The Child & Family Centre Drogheda, Maeve Clancy, film; Galway University Hospitals Arts Trust, Jennie Moran, visual art; RehabCare Cork, Colette Lewis, visual art; Sherkin Island Development Society Ltd., Sheelagh Broderick, visual art.

The next deadline is 25 June 2009. For further information on the Scheme. contact Katherine Atkinson, 01-4736600, or email support@create-ireland.ie

Create received invaluable support from Raphael Siev the curator of the Irish Jewish Museum for Create News Edition 5. Sadly Raphael passed away at the end of January. We extend our sympathies to his family.

