

CREATE: NEWS 18 May 2015

Susanne Bosch on
**Nomadic
Practice**



create national development
agency for collaborative arts

www.create-ireland.ie

Artist as Double Agent

I AM SITTING AT THE AIRPORT, ABOUT TO FLY TO BERLIN. FOR THE MILLIONTH TIME, I FIND MYSELF IN A CONTRADICTION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION; WHAT IT IS THAT I KNOW AND WHAT IT IS THAT I DO.

I am flying again, an action that I intended to have stopped even though I am currently what might be called a nomadic practitioner. More ironically still, I am coming from a four week residency dealing with sustainability and future viability and going to Berlin to participate in an EU project to look at ways of enhancing transnational mobility for collaborative artists, to be part of an initiative that is looking at ways to improve the potential supports, especially for those in participatory projects.¹

As someone increasingly defined by the label 'nomadic practitioner', it seems I have come to represent a type of flexible human that in this functional Society means fulfilling changing and sometimes contradictory demands and roles. I could try to convince the reader with explanations about financial needs and the symbolic and social capital of my participation. But I will not do that, because since I became part of this silently growing global sustainability movement, I detect a lameness in my explanations. I am passionately interested in this movement which seeks to resist neoliberal action, with a clear commitment to responsible economic activity, the natural environment and principles of social togetherness.

As artists, we frequently share methodologies that have been explored widely by the sustainability movement: Gift economy, art of hosting, permaculture design. As nomadic socially engaged artists, we often arrive in settings where the consequences of the neoliberal system are starkly evident. Most often, we tend to get invited to develop or self-initiate transformative art processes or projects to make a change from a *worse* situation to a *better* situation. In this approach some would subscribe to Tania Bruguera's notion of 'Arte Util'. Bruguera states 'If it is political art, it deals with the consequences, if it deals with the consequences, I think it has to be useful art'.² I feel encouraged and heartened by colleagues such as John Jordan who - speaking at the recent at the Artists

1 For information on the COLLABORATIVE ARTS PROGRAMME PARTNERSHIP (CAPPP) visit <http://www.create-ireland.ie/current-press/collab-arts-partnership-programme-capp-art-in-social-and-community-contexts-%E2%80%93-ambitious-cultural-partnership-successful-in-creative-europe-bid>

2 Bruguera, Tania, *Useful Art Event*, New York, 23 April 2011, [online] Available at <http://immigrant-movements.us/tag/useful-art/> [accessed 6 April 2015].

3 Artist Organisations International, 9-11 January 2015, HAU Berlin, <http://www.artistorganisationsinternational.org/> [accessed 3 April 2015]

Organisations International³ - reflected that as artists we might read the challenges of our profession in a broader context, in the light of growing global systemic stress.

When artists, researchers, arts managers and art organisations come to the challenges and opportunities of transnational collaborative arts practice, (including the question of its future viability), we need to carefully examine our own way of thinking. It seems today a privilege for most professions, including collaborative artists, to work at home, or even in their own country. For so many, the role of being an outsider having to adapt quickly to changing environments and unfamiliar contexts, is what passes as the norm. An artist has to articulate his/her requirements as well as finding a common ground, building up trust in the collaboration and dealing with compromises around resources (usually time, money, skills, staff support). The outsider role is often better understood, accepted, even welcomed by local participants as they recognise many of the challenges due to their own work/life experience. Generally where the real challenge lies is with the institution that has invited the artist. Institutions often bring specific expectations and sometimes even more specific predetermined ideas about the results. Art institutions with their funding dilemmas and organisational structures often struggle with the attendant blurry but lively processes that form the reality of collective or interdisciplinary actions. What collaborative practice can offer is a marketplace, an agora for practicing, negotiating, and creating means of shared responsibility, engagement and action. Artists such as Jeanne van Heeswijk have worked for decades on negotiating and maintaining the freedom of this artistic process, where place means more than a physical site, it means to become locally embedded. The challenge, as I see it, for any support

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structure be it an institution, a curator, or a commissioning body, is to respect ethical, social and environmental principles, whenever practicing, funding or supporting cultural mobility.

To relate back to my described struggle as a 'serving human' in a system that I desire to transform, it becomes clear that to practice in this field means to interrogate your attitude as much as your social and artistic skills. A social art practice sets out to sensitize people towards ambiguities inherent in the current societal systems and to

create awareness of tensions and contradictions. At the same time there is an outward conversation and process of negotiation with the other stakeholders in the field. All of them, including oneself, caught in the dilemma of contradictory and conflicting demands and roles.

As part of the Collaborative Arts Partnership Programme (CAPP) we will be having conversations

about these ambiguities and dilemmas whilst seeking to further professionalize and strengthen collaborative arts practice over the course of four years. At its core the partnership is underpinned by the idea of collective transnational learning and sharing amongst artists, partner institutions, researchers, a wider audience and participants. The ideal outcome of this practice-based encounter could be a step towards a stronger agency for the artist as well as a legitimisation, appreciation and more formal supports for the application of this type of practice.

At this point I wish to offer a note of caution. We might seem to deliver measurable economic and social developments to fix the fragile position of this field thereby satisfying the need for evidence-based, pragmatic policy making. Yet we know that an aesthetic encounter is an individual subjective experience; a process of transformation. It is well nigh impossible to measure these subjective

experiences – especially against certain kinds of evidence based markers provided by the system in question.

In reality, I would suggest our double agency attempts to position a certain quality of being in the world while fulfilling our changing and sometimes contradictory demands and roles. I find the medical term “Dopamine”⁴ here useful to describe our role as participatory practitioners in the current climate. Dopamine exists as a stimulus between two different entities which moves things forward. It can be described as an activator that is located exactly in the *In between*. Its quality is to be open, creative, fluid, to activate things. In my western art education we were taught that without a clear idea or concept the outcome of an art piece would be messy. In the field of socially engaged or anthropocentric art I would argue the same: without a clear understanding of ones stimulus as an artist, one cannot in turn act as a stimulus or be the dopamine.

Claire Bishop distinguishes between two distinct artistic strategies of restoring and realizing space for communal, shared, social engagement. One would be an art practice, which through gestures of social impact offers an alternative to social injustice. The other is through an artistic approach, which engaged the world primarily in its own terms⁵. Without doubt my practice belongs in the first category but acknowledges the powerful impact that the latter approach offers. For me artistic production is the place to work in joint temporary collectives united by a collective passion, it's the place to help invest and to create possible alternative futures.

Cover Image: The Possible in Being/Das Mögliche im Sein by Susanne Bosch, One month personal encounters about sustainable models of living and working, network meeting and installation at the “Utopian Days Festival 2015”, St. Arbogast, Austria
Image credit: © Peter Kees 2015 dasmoeglicheimsein.wordpress.com and tagederutopie.org

IN SHORT... WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

Welcomed a new Director, Ailbhe Murphy, to Create; been busy with Collaborative Arts Partnership Programme, hosted our European partners in the Create Collaborative Arts Programme in Dublin; travelled to Berlin for another EU partner meeting; managed the First Round of the Artist in the Community Scheme for 2015, (as you will see, the Scheme will be able to fund a number of artists to create ambitious collaborative projects with groups as diverse as The Romani Womens group and boat builders); announced the successful applicants to the Tolka Public Art Commission (below); programmed events and talks with Visual Artists Ireland, Cork Midsummer and Dublin Dance Festival. Watch our website for these exciting events throughout May and June.

Reading Room – Catalogue now Online

Create's Reading Room includes case studies and evaluations of collaborative arts projects, critical theory and guidebooks. The Reading Room can be used as a research facility by students, Create members, artists and arts organisations or it can simply be a space to view the range of work inspired by collaborative arts practices. We are now able to provide an online catalogue, referencing the publications and resources in the Reading Room. Our collection is constantly growing, and new materials are added regularly.

Access to the Create Reading Room is available to members and non-members, but is by appointment only. To make an appointment, or for advice on our catalogue or stock contact janeorourke [at] create-ireland.ie or call 01-4736600. www.create-ireland.ie/joining-create/create-reading-room

Are You a Member of Create?

Did you know that by joining Create you can have access to a range of benefits? Membership of Create is open to individual artists and arts organisations, across all art forms.

Members can now avail of reduced cost insurance for artists and organisations ; a health plan from HSF (an organisation that gives cash back for everyday medical expenses); a discount on health insurance from Aviva; access to Garda vetting for artists and employers involved in arts and cultural activities; priority booking and discount for CPD Workshops; a range of discounts at arts venues around the country; access to short term 'hot desks' in the Create office at Curved Street.

Full details at www.create-ireland.ie



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Arts Council Artist in the Community Scheme

First Round 2015

Create manages the Artist in the Community Scheme on behalf of the Arts Council

Research and Development Award

Artist; Community; Context; Artform; Location

Colette Lewis; Romani Women's Group; Cultural Diversity; Visual Arts; Cork

Jijo Sebastian; Indo-Irish Atheists; Cultural Diversity; Film; Dublin

Sean Taylor; Irish Palestinian Groups; Cultural Diversity; Visual Arts; Limerick

Marie Brett; Crowley Funeral Directors; Community of interest; Visual Arts; Cork

Niamh Fahy; Gort Cancer Support; Arts and Health; Visual Arts; Galway

Ríonach Ní Néill; Tuismitheoiri na Gaeltachta; Community of place; Dance; Galway

Research and Development Award with Mentoring

Artist; Community; Context; Artform; Location (Mentor)

Lisa Fingleton; Organic farmers; Community of interest; Visual Arts; Kerry (Aideen Barry)

Síobhán Clancy; Abortion Rights Campaign; Community of interest; Visual Arts; Dublin (Áine Phillips)

Anna Spearman; Globe House; Cultural Diversity; Visual Arts; Sligo (Anthony Haughey)

Nollaig Molloy; Boat builders; Community of interest; Visual Arts; Roscommon (Gareth Kennedy)

Theresa Guschlbauer; St. Mary's Daycare/Place for U; Community of interest; Visual Arts; Tipperary (Susanne Bosch)

Project Realisation Award

Community; Artist; Project title; Context; Artform; Location

Short Term

[Irish Wheelchair Association](#); Corina Duyn; The Puppet Project; Arts and Disability; Visual Arts; Waterford

Long term

[Tropicana Musica](#); Steve Wickham; A Common Ground; Cultural Diversity; Music; Sligo

[RADE](#); Malcolm MacClancy; Dublin 1916; Community of interest; Theatre; Dublin

[City of Cork Symphony Orchestra](#); Ian Wilson; ReBirth; Community of interest; Music; Cork

Panel: Sheelagh Broderick, visual artist; Louise Lowe, theatremaker, Anu Productions; Caroline Cowley, Public Art Coordinator, Fingal County Council. Observers: Ann O'Connor, Arts Participation Adviser, Arts Council; Olga Anacka, Intern, Create.



Before We Go – Dublin Dance Festival talk
Photo credit: Rémon Fromont, Jorge León and Thomas Schira

WELCOME TO CREATE NEWS

This is the eighteenth edition of Create News. Create News is published twice yearly in May and October. 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.

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THE ART OF DYING (Create / DDF/ Bealtaine Festival)

Date: 28 May // Time: 2.30 // Venue: The Gate LAB

Dare we speak of the unspoken, life's challenging frontier – unrehearsed, unknown, often imagined and widely feared? By what means, if any, might we retain some agency over the process of dying? How can art and artists begin a conversation that is often without words?

Create, Dublin Dance Festival and the Bealtaine Festival invite a panel of artists, philosophers and end of life care specialists to discuss the role of arts practice within the ethical, philosophical and practical realities of this subject.

Create, seeks to provide a platform for meaningful discussion on all aspects of collaborative arts. Bealtaine Festival celebrates creativity as we age. Both organisations partner with Dublin Dance Festival to present a talk connected to wider issues on art and society raised by Jorge León's powerful film *Before We Go*, which features choreographer Meg Stuart.

See the film *Before We Go* at the IFI, Sun 24 May, 5pm

Booking via Dublin Dance Festival website <http://www.dublindancefestival.ie>

TOLKA OPW COMMISSION with Dublin City Council, Meath County Council and Fingal County Council Managed by Create

The Office of Public Works (OPW) under the Per Cent for Art Scheme and local arts authorities with Create, have provided funding for a number of Per Cent for Art commissions relating to the creation of flood defence systems on the River Tolka in catchment areas across Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council and Meath County Council.

Create is delighted to announce that Matt Green (lead artist) and an artist group consisting of Sven Anderson, John D'Arcy, Jennie Guy, Conan McIvor and Stuart Sloan have been successful in this exciting commission.

These six artists are collaborating to produce *Tolka Nights* - a series of three public events set upon the Tolka in late 2015