Press Release
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Four artists embark on an exciting public art project bringing art and science together along Ireland’s East Coast

Fingal County Council’s Arts Office, gathered with colleagues in Dublin City, Wexford and The Arts Council on the Burrow Beach, Portrane beach last week to announce the four artists chosen for a unique public art project.

These artists will, for the next few months, collaborate with biodiversity specialists along Ireland’s east coast, creating an artistic response to the influences of climate change and its effects on the biodiversity.

Fingal County Council, Wexford County Council and Dublin City Council came together and put out a call for artists interested in exploring this area of art and ecology to apply to be part of a new environmental residency programme entitled An Urgent Enquiry.
The artists chosen for these significant residencies were announced as Mary Conroy & Joanna Hopkins, for Fingal, and Mark Clare Wexford, & Fiona McDonald (Dublin City). This opportunity enables them to reside for three months in each county to explore the biodiversity of each area and the effects of climate change, through research, interactions with environmental specialists, scientists and advisors, relating to the artists interest and engaging with local communities with support from the local authority Arts & Biodiversity Offices.

They will work closely with the Biodiversity Officers Hans Visser (Fingal County Council), Lorraine Bull (Dublin City Council) and Niamh Lennon (Wexford County Council).

Artistic outcomes of each residency will be presented publicly in each local authority in Autumn 2019.

The project is funded through the Arts Council’s Invitation to Collaboration scheme which supports innovative, ambitious local authority collaborations.

- Mary Conroy and Joanna Hopkins | Fingal – Portrane

Mary Conroy and Joanna Hopkins are collaborating visual artists with a shared interest in the environment, science and memory. The essential element both artists would like to explore for the residency is the theory of ‘Environmental Generational Amnesia’. The theory by Dr. Peter Kahn is: ‘..the idea that each generation perceives the environment into which it’s born, no matter how developed, urbanised or polluted, as the norm. And so what each generation comes to think of as ‘nature’ is relative, based on what it’s exposed to.’ (www.downtoearth.org) Mary & Joanna will be based at our unique Resort Residency located at Lynders Mobile Home Park, Portrane.

Through interactions with local communities they will explore local knowledge and living memories relating to the history of the area, its traditions, folklore, wildlife in the area, the environment and issues affecting its wellbeing. Also as a starting point they would like to research bird colonies, in particular migratory wildlife and the correlation between human society and how one can impact on the other. Temporary artworks will be developed that respond to the Fingal coastline, focusing on bird colonies and how our everyday actions impact our future, and the future of the other species that contribute to the ecosystem that we call home.

The Urgent Enquiry team are located within the local authority and through their collective experience of commissioning public art, were mindful that this subject matter be explored meaningfully and perhaps act as a catalyst for change. With this in mind they have joined forces with those tasked with managing the biodiversity of each area towards this shared agenda and by offering these series of site specific residencies. The artists will be able to avail of the breadth of local knowledge, ongoing research and connection to a range of active communities from the peninsula of Portrane, to Bull Island, which also is part of the UNESCO designated Dublin Bay Biosphere, to the beaches and slob lands of Wexford and the wider global context.
For more see www.anurgentenquiry.ie

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