

Welcome by An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Denis O'Callaghan

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the very first Concourse Offsite Installation Art Programme. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council is committed to high quality arts and cultural programming and believes in the value of the arts and about the distinctive contribution they make to the quality of life of the county and its inhabitants.

Since 1994, DLR Arts has commissioned and developed an exciting range of festivals, exhibitions, initiatives and educational programmes including the Festival of World Cultures, the Irish Youth Dance Festival, the Artist Residency Programme, the Visual Arts Programme, the Public Art Programme, the Artists in Schools Programme and the Country House Concerts.

2008 sees the first Concourse Offsite Installation Art Programme taking place in the wonderful setting of Blackrock Park. It is fantastic to see the Arts Office and the Parks Department working together to provide the public with an opportunity to see contemporary art in an outdoor setting and on behalf of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council I hope that you will enjoy visiting Concourse Offsite.



An Cathaoirleach,
Councillor Denis
O'Callaghan

Concourse Offsite 2008 Curators' Introduction

Since 1999, DLR Arts has commissioned contemporary visual artists to create artworks specifically for exhibition in County Hall. 2008 sees an exciting new development of this programme with DLR Arts commissioning three artists to create site-specific artworks for the outdoor location of Blackrock Park.

Artists Aoife Desmond, Mark Garry and Alan Phelan were invited to respond to ideas of transience and impermanence in the context of Blackrock Park. The exhibition happens in the context of DLR County Council's redevelopment plan for the park, which is due to begin later this year and will see the park significantly transformed and modernised.

Concourse Offsite takes contemporary art outside the conventional exhibition space and brings it into an everyday setting where it will be experienced by the users of Blackrock Park as well as a wider arts audience. In moving outdoors, the exhibition presents new challenges for the artists involved who had to respond to the special considerations of working in a fluid, natural environment.

All of the artists have a site-specific installation practice and through it, they've engaged with the unique environment or history of the park.

A temporary exhibition, in a transitional setting, Concourse Offsite in Blackrock Park touches on ideas of time, memory, change and impermanency specific to a particular location and setting. The exhibition is a chance for the public to experience art in the every-day world for a short time, 1st May — 1st June 2008.

Curators:
Carolyn Brown & Claire Power



Introduction

'Wetland'
(simultaneous presence of
land and sea)

Aoife Desmond spent several months visiting and filming Blackrock Park. *Wetland* (simultaneous presence of land and sea) is a Super 8 film shown on a temporary screen, which captures the ever changing environment and wildlife in Blackrock Park. She examines the park as a transition between land and sea, industrial and wild, Victorian and future development. The park has several boundaries of road, rail, water, wasteland and building. Within this fragile ecology there are several protagonists: four herons, two swans and a lone egret. Their daily routines of feeding, resting, etc are

juxtaposed within this shifting environment. The natural ecology of the park is that of a salt marsh like Booterstown Bird Sanctuary. It is the park's relationship to its former geography and to the sea that Aoife has emphasised in this work.

"This work consists of a simultaneous projection of photographic slides and Super 8 film within a temporary cinematic environment with an accompanying research booklet. The footage is the result of numerous walks through and around Blackrock Park between early January and the present. Through this documentation I am tracing changes in light and season and building up a subtle relationship with the park."
Aoife Desmond



Picture Credits:
Aoife Desmond, *Blackrock Stream, Wetland 2008*, photographic slides and Super 8 film (Image courtesy of the artist)

Aoife Desmond, *Blackrock Park, Wetland 2008*, photographic slides and Super 8 film (Image courtesy of the artist)

Aoife Desmond

Aoife Desmond is an interdisciplinary artist who works with performance, installation, drawing and film. Her work examines the role of nature in the urban environment and bodily understanding of place and space. In her recent work she has created simultaneous super 8 film and slide projections which act as visual diaries of specific sites. She has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally.

This dual projection piece includes a commissioned soundtrack by artist and musician Karl Burke and is projected and realised with assistance by film maker/ technician and distributor Pip Chodorov.

Wind Harps

Within his site-specific installation practice, Mark Garry places less emphasis on finite statements and is much more interested in opening up the imaginative possibilities of one's interaction with an artwork. With this in mind he has developed an artwork that is an ephemeral and mysterious presence in Blackrock Park. A sound art piece, *Wind Harps* is activated by the environmental conditions of the park itself so it is site-specific in an almost literal sense. Depending on wind speeds, the artwork is activated momentarily to emanate beautiful, ethereal sounds that then disappear again. The effect is a subtle, almost imagined impression upon the consciousness of the people who pass through the park. While Mark often uses

natural and craft materials such as thread, beads, origami and plants in his installations, *Wind Harps* is a part of Mark's practice that sees music as way to engage with and navigate viewers through physical spaces.

"I felt that sound and music seemed the most interesting analogy for this exhibition concept, in that sound implants a sensory impression in ones mind without materially existing. This work emanates a series of sounds that can be heard periodically at all times of the day and night by people passing through the park. A subtle intervention into the landscape of the park, it both activates the location and perhaps reminds people of the potential of the world that surrounds them."
Mark Garry

Mark Garry is a Dublin based artist, writer and curator. In 2005, he completed a Masters in Visual Arts Practices at Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology. Since then Mark Garry has exhibited widely internationally and was one of the artists who represented Ireland at the 2005 Venice Biennale. Currently, he is working on his first museum exhibition in the USA at the Mattress Factory Art Museum in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.

Wind Harps is a collaboration with Canadian musical instrument maker Greg Joly, who custom-made these musical instruments for the project.



Picture Credits:
Mark Garry. *Untitled*, Photograph: 6" x 4" inches, (Image courtesy of the artist and the Kerlin Gallery Dublin)

Mark Garry

*Lizzy Feeder,
Bald Finch
Thin Lyrics*

Alan Phelan's three artworks make a connection between the social and musical history of Blackrock Park and the bird wildlife. The two papier-mâché sculptures and graphics with graffiti on the bandstand take as their starting point the Thin Lizzy free gig in the park in 1971. In referencing this gig, Alan creates a link to the past by re-introducing shared moments from the past into the present and perhaps re-establishes a musical legacy for the park among a new generation of park users. Research plays a fundamental role in Alan's practice, supporting his interest in the narrative potential surrounding an artwork. The aesthetic of these three artworks, *Lizzy Feeder*, *Bald Finch* and *Thin Lyrics* reference the styles and phenomena associated with

the park in its transitional state. The ideas implicit in the works are humorous, nostalgic and critically engaged.

Lizzy Feeder is a papier-mâché crushed car bird feeder hanging from a tree – the front of the work is a three-dimensional rendering of the album cover artwork for the Thin Lizzy 1971 self-titled first album.

Bald Finch is a papier-mâché bird in the Cottage Aviary building. The work is a fusion of a small finch bird, which is the most populous bird in the Park and a bald eagle. This turns the tiny domestic bird into a bird of prey.

Thin Lyrics are graphics with graffiti on the bandstand base incorporating lyrics from the 1971 Thin Lizzy album. The sentimental tone of the text co-exists with the un-official graffiti on this structure, recognising like the other works, the kind of social, anti-social

and sanctioned behaviour that function throughout the Park.

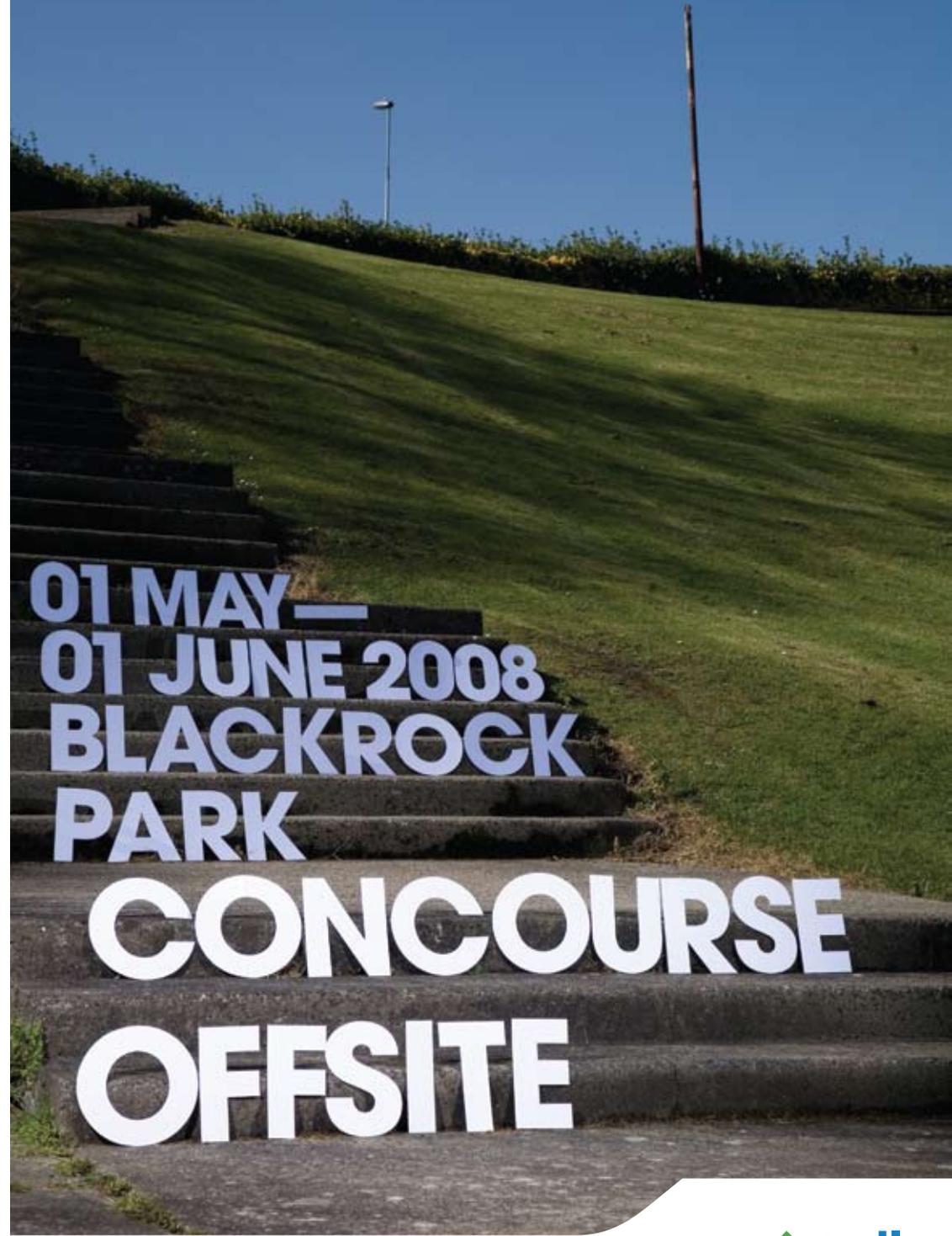
"With my work I am interested in referencing narratives from history and popular culture as well as site concerns. For this project I have centred the three works around a music event in the park and the birds who inhabit the Park – fusing a human recreation aspect of a public park and the wildlife who also, in a way, use the park." Alan Phelan

Alan Phelan studied at DCU, Dublin and RIT, New York. Previous solo exhibitions include *Mother's Tankstation*, Dublin, 2007; *The Lab*, Dublin and MCAC, Portadown, 2006. Group exhibitions include *Solstice Arts Centre*, Navan, 2008; *Feinkost*, Berlin, 2007; *SKUC*, Ljubljana, 2006; *SKC*, Belgrade, 2006 and the *Whitney Museum of American Art*, New York, 2004. Phelan was short-listed for the *AIB Art Prize* in 2007.



Alan Phelan





Curated by Carolyn Brown and Claire Power.
Project managed by Claire Power.

Artists Talk with Sarah Seanson
(note to designer to leave room for a paragraph here)

Blackrock Park is located beside Blackrock DART Station. It is easily accessible by DART, bus or car and there is parking available.

For more information please contact DLR Arts office on (01) 2719531 or log on to www.dlrcoco.ie/arts

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