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Slow Curating: Re-thinking and Extending Socially Engaged Art in the Context of Northern Ireland

In the past ten years, the definitions of a curator have been complicated, misused, appropriated, and re-contextualised. But as someone who has spent nearly twenty-five years working with artists, curating shows, producing creative interventions, while also being a political activist, a mother and partner, and employed as an arts worker within varying institutions—the notion of the curatorial has always been problematic. I did not adhere to the fixed mentality between departments, and specifically between curatorial and education. [1] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n1](#)) So when the educational turn in curating came into our lexicon, I felt comfortable in that territory. In fact, I embraced it even more. It felt good to be working in varied formats, disciplines and opened up space to mediate a site where socio-political and historical issues and creativity converge with visual culture and civil engagement. I believe if we really examine what is happening in our field of curating, in museology as a whole, in contemporary art practice, and in our own social and political lives, the nuances of being a reflective and engaged curator have been evolving for some time. The role of the curator is not dead, but it is changing and we can no longer be the alleged standard bearer of authority and expertise.

What began as curatorial curiosity—in artists responding to context and the use of educational approaches to unpack issues found in the work—quickly became a practice: an approach and method within which the curatorial premise and the institutional vision became intertwined. While this is commonplace now with curators in museums and galleries responding to the changing nuances of art practice, communitarian discourse, and the politics of contemporary society; the question of knowledge production comes to the fore—for artists and audiences. In our quest for knowing more, feeling more deeply, responding more relevantly, I wonder what became of the space of knowing that we don't know it all or the idea that we don't have to understand it all. Curators have become cultural producers and exhibition makers—does this then mean we create knowledge? For whom? And to what ends? I argue that it is within this place—inside the institution—where we find a simulacrum of the production of knowledge within curatorial practice. And it is this space where we find ourselves re-thinking our curatorial practice. This essay attempts to unpack various ways of curating space that facilitates "knowing" and "not-knowing" for artists and audiences—a permeable space that offers more questions than answers—produced by artist, curator, educator, participant, and audience.

It may be useful to note areas that contextualise this practice: the social turn/curatorial turn/educational turn in curating; the socio-political context interest in non-hierarchical methods, the DIY/Occupy Movements, and the financial/funding structures; and the role of museums today.

[2] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n2](#))

Socially engaged curating is a type of curatorial work and is part of what has been called the “social turn,” where curators employ pedagogical methodologies and approaches as part of the curatorial premise and process. These new curatorial processes and approaches have now gone beyond institutional critique to notions such as Caroline Christov-Bakargiev’s “locational turn,” the popularist art activism, Paul O’Neill and Mick Wilson’s “educational turn,” or Jens Hoffman’s “paracuratorial.”[3] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-](#)

[thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n3](#))

With so many “turns” how are we to know where we stand?[4] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-](#)

[thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n4](#))

Arguably, these new approaches build on the development of curatorial practice, the changing face of museology, and reflect the socio-political context within which curators find themselves.

Socially engaged curatorial practice is an approach that focuses on the production, distribution, and consumption of art through multiple platforms with an emphasis on process and connecting with audiences. It is an intentional process of collaboration, context, and engaging within communities—working with artists who employ social practice methods as well as with artists who have more of a traditional studio practice. This is somewhat different than an artistic social practice because, as curators, we often also deal with institutional accountability and other practicalities, as well as the weight of art history, curatorial practice, museology, and the art market. However, the biggest difference is that socially engaged curatorial practice focuses on the role of the curator, the production of the exhibition or project, knowledge, memory, and understanding, as well as innovative methods and approaches to mediation—which is often from the inception of a project to production and presentation.

In contemporary art we can see that the notion of “the curatorial” is a discourse that is responsive to the artistic, political, and communitarian practices of the 1960s and 1970s; the development of curatorial professionalization in the late 1980s and 1990s; and the dramatic growth via dominant yet competing perspectives of post-institutional critique since 2000 as found in both theory and museology. And socially engaged curating is part of that discourse that prioritises the experience as much as the object while attempting to activate the space between object and audiences.

Curating in Contested Spaces: Portadown, Northern Ireland

Inspired by the work of Declan McGonagle in Ireland, I was one of a number of curators who began working with artists who wanted to engage with the multifarious, post-conflict context of Northern Ireland. The site was Portadown, which has been a contested site for more than 800 years. In 1998, after decades of town centre bombs and decimated trade due to The Troubles,[5] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-](#)

[thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n5](#)) the town centre management company Portadown 2000 embarked on a mission to rebuild the middle of Portadown. Central to that regeneration was a new art centre.[6] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-](#)

[thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n6](#)) Engaging in ideas of cultural tourism, community development, and a real interest by artists in the area, the company—made up of a broad cross-section of the divided communities—facilitated a grassroots initiative to fund a contemporary art space led by the visual arts.

In 2003, I was appointed by Portadown 2000 as the Arts Manager of a newly designed Millennium Court Arts Centre in the historically politically tensioned town. For seven years we carried out experiments, some of which were successful and others not, that began to develop a more permeable approach to curating. The method was to commission new work by artists, create space in the institution for discourse through multiple avenues of entry such as artist's talks, panels, tours, workshops, and symposia, and reach audiences.

We wanted to reach widely and deeply for audiences as collaborators to engage in the issues presented in the artwork. So for the first four years we produced many significant projects, including Shane Cullen's *The Agreement* 2004, which was a hotly debated touring project on the Good Friday Agreement. In a region that voted in its majority against the peace process Agreement, we organized a panel discussion with all of the Northern Irish parties to allow space for them to develop and present their nascent official platforms on culture. We presented two exhibitions on the culture of the Orange Order, unpacking the concept of Orangeism—posing questions about a Protestant / Unionist / Loyalist culture in the North.[7] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-](#)

[thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n7](#)) In the first exhibition we worked with the Orange Order, LOL 1 located around the corner from MCAC, co-curating with them the presentation of Orange Order artefacts drawn from their archives and local collections. The second show highlighted contemporary artists' response to Orange Order symbolism. We also hosted the first public discussion about Orange Culture and we carried out primary research into the nuances of 'orangeism' as a culture, a subculture, or a so-called imagined community.[8] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-](#)
[thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n8](#))

In a third example, my colleagues and I set forth to collaborate with a local historical society to present an exhibition within a framework of community curating. The project took place in 2007 and entailed an excavation of the local Wades ceramic factory, a cross-community oral archive of local people who worked there, and the production of new academic knowledge on Wades ceramics. The show was entitled: *Wades Ceramics: Irish Kitsch or Regional Vernacular* 2007, which posited several unflattering dichotomies and provocative potential narratives. The show was in juxtaposition to a show on contemporary Irish craft. We often considered the dialogue between gallery spaces as much as more immediate discussions found within the exhibitions site. The public loved the shows and our numbers soared.

Slow Curating

It was during the later years in Portadown that my approach to socially engaged curation was developed into an approach that I have called *slow curating*. It is a framework that enables, explores, and expands museum and exhibition experiences for more relevant audience engagement. Inspired by the Slow Movement, it intentionally and directly connects to context and specifically notions of the local, employs relational and collaborative processes, and reaches out to diverse communities. It is not necessarily about time, though it is temporal in a relational way. Indeed, the process includes a meaningful and deep understanding of one's immediate context, working with localexperts to learn the cultural politics, the poetics of place, andto investigate issues conscious and unconscious that affect everyday lives. The notion of taking time is important, as is working in collaboration with a sense of place and alongside working artists and the community. It means promoting reciprocal relationships, open-ended proposals, and outcomes that can be decided by different people and at different times in the process. The element of control and power ebbs and flows, and self-reflection and self-evaluation are continual and an important part of the process. The slow method also connects directly to pedagogical models and does not recognize the institutional division between the notions of curatorial and educational processes and methods employed in the process.

One example of this approach was a solo project with Belfast-born artist Andre Stitt who is based in Wales. Known as a performance artist, Stitt was a central figure in the political art scene in Belfast in the late 1970s, in London from 1980 to 1999, and then in Wales for more than two decades. We invited Stitt to come to Portadown to create a new body of work that was developed through a series of site visits and explorations in Craigavon.

Central Craigavon was a planned city, in the vein of Milton Keynes in Great Britain and was conceived as a linear city linking the smaller towns of Lurgan and Portadown to create a single urban, progressive, nearly utopian place. Cash incentives were offered to draw families from Belfast down the M1, and planners embraced new ideas of personal and leisure space, including separate paths for traffic and cyclists. But when the Goodyear factory, the largest European factory at the time, closed down and the Troubles broke in the late 1960s, the planners left and around 50% of the city of Craigavon was never built. It was locally known as Little Beirut.[9] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n9](#)) By 2008 there was a renewed spirit post-peace process and a Celtic Tiger thirst for housing. Craigavon began to see a gentrification on the grounds of a dystopian site.

Stitt responded to the context by: walking and biking the territory and various sites, talking to locals, researching public records, and creating a new series of paintings. The end result was an exhibition and catalogue. The artworks in the end, arguably, had deeper and more relevant connections—sometimes literally in relation to a fact, a person, or a place, and sometimes conceptual as traces of human relations and memories.

During that time my curatorial process began to include working with artists to create space for meaningful and deep understandings of local context, working with local experts in the community to investigate issues that affect everyday lives. Here is where the dramatic break

from art as objects alone began for me as a curator. The process became just as important; the authorship was blurred, and the expertise of place, context, and even of making was highly and intentionally complicated. Our organisation and the people within it developed an expertise in socially engaged practice with artists whose work engages with socioeconomic and political context and issues. We worked with artists who create dialogical projects unfolding through a process of performative interaction. Imperative to this process was the role of the audience and the community, and often outside art workers, community activists, politicians, and others became a central part of the process.

Guerrilla Girls All-Ireland Tour

A final example is a project carried out in Ireland—both North and South. In late 2008–2009, MCAC co-commissioned new work by the internationally known feminist arts group, the Guerrilla Girls, based on site visits and research material. Importantly, I wanted to have an all-Ireland investigation—rarely seen in Irish visual art / Irish museums—due to the divided country. We also wanted the project to be open-ended and extremely collaborative, with four key commissioners. The project became a collaboration between Millennium Court Arts Centre in Portadown, the Glucksman Gallery in Cork, the University of Ulster in Belfast, University College in Dublin, and the National College of Art & Design in Dublin. We met regularly to collaboratively guide not manage or push the process of the project.

The research carried out included: "gigs" by the Guerrilla Girls to hear from artists, creative workers, collectors, and museum administrators; statistical research by arts activists⁹; and online comments from the Guerrilla Girls All-Ireland Project website. The research was about listening to others, gathering stories and experiences, and counting—literally a quantitative element that focused on how many female artists were in the collections of the major museums in Ireland—the Ulster Museum in the North, the Irish Museum of Modern Art and the National Gallery—both in Dublin, and the Cork-based Glucksman Museum. Other quantitative research included statistics from the Arts Councils in the Republic of Ireland and the North of Ireland, as well as statistics on female students and outcomes after graduation from the National College of Art & Design and Ulster University. Far from being off put, the museums, the universities and the Arts Councils happily participated in the process. All of this research was then sent to the Guerrilla Girls, who responded to the statistics, the oral archives, and their own instinctual creative processes to create the new work.

The Guerrilla Girls gigs were held in Portadown, Ulster University in Belfast, NCAD in Dublin, and the Glucksman Gallery in Cork. The gigs attracted young women who responded well to the events. Questions were posed, such as, "Do we really need Feminism?" and "Aren't we past that?" As one of the Commissioners, I felt that what was important was the creation of new work but also facilitating the space for dialogue and debate on a subject often not discussed. And many of the participants said that to experience the Guerrilla Girls in person and see the new work was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see art history in the making.

With four new works, the all-Ireland Guerrilla Girls Tour was then exhibited in Portadown, Cork, Dublin, and Kilkenny. I feel the project was historic and significant in relation to artists and the museums of Ireland—both North and South. These artists had something very important to

reveal to those of us in the visual arts in Ireland, as they commented on the status not only of artists who are female but also on gender, race, nationality and religion in contemporary society. An important aspect of the overall project was continuing the dialogue about the issues raised by the Guerrilla Girls. At all venues, with Gigs in early 2009 and then on the tour in 2009-2010, the hosting organizations hosted public discussions.

In relation to the curatorial process, there was an intentionality of openness and transparency in organizing, a collaborative curatorial premise or premises, an open-ended artistic process that focused on the dialogical method of mediation both before and after the artwork was created, and highly political yet poetic potential outcomes. Whether at meetings or at the gigs, workshops or getting dinner after events, it felt like a sit-in demonstration at university with an unruly bunch of potential agitators. What happened was a multi-site, cross-disciplinary approach to making and interpreting new visual research and artwork. The new work was informed by this new type of visual art research. The Girls were supported by a small, working group of feminists who carried out "boots on the ground" research to send back to the Guerrilla Girls. The "gigs" effectively demarcated the status of women artists in Ireland. New work was made and the Girls returned to start the tour of the new work, which resulted in an exhibition, a public intervention, public debates, and ongoing feminist-led work by artists, curators, and others in Ireland. In the end, we employed a social process and a working framework that created a lens through which power and powerlessness were identified, gender examined, and issues about women in contemporary Irish society could be discussed.

Activating Potentialities

This curatorial process is rhizomatic, organic, and non-linear. In that respect, noted philosopher Rudi Laermans's notion of "activating potentialities" in curatorial projects is useful. Within the Slow Curating framework, authorship and expertise is continually challenged and the role of participant and audience becomes *a priori* in the process. The emphasis is about activating: the process, the space between art and audience, and the epistemological nuances found in knowing and not-knowing. The main aim of Slow Curating is to open up space for dialogue and discourse. Can we embrace the idea of "not-knowing" or reject the notion that art is about educating? This idea is important in breaking down outdated notions of curating, as well as the figure of the curator as an expert. How do we know what we know? Obviously via years of learning, but do we know it all? Taking this stance then, authorship and expertise culminates as a contested space where the curator and the audience / community engage in a reciprocal relationship of mutual respect and admiration of what is brought to the table in relation to the specific artwork or project.

There are numerous examples of evaluations and assessments—educational outputs and knowledge demarcations—set into both public and private funding. This has been fairly standard, and contested, within art milieus in both the USA and Europe. My curatorial experience has gleaned knowledge of exhibition and event production that can be framed to provide such statistics but the structure of current models leaves the artistic and creative processes lacking for

effective and nuanced evaluation. How can we know what we know, and worse yet, how do we know we've taught it? It is, and has often been, difficult to quantify or even qualify statistics or knowledge production within the current framework.

I am not alone. Many curators and educators have found the current framework not only lacking but also quite inept. Mary Jane Jacobs clearly explains that we are using “the wrong framework” to assess socially engaged art and she calls for more connection and emotion.[10] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n10](#)) If we are to measure our engagement, McGonagle asks us to reject “wide and shallow [engagement] rather than narrow and deep—sightseeing rather than insight.”[11] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n11](#)) Furthermore, curator and social practice advocate Claire Doherty asks us to support creating situations “in wrong places...with flexible time-frames and emerging from different kinds of motivations than a group exhibition rationale.”[12] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n12](#)) It is also about taking time and about creating criticality in creative space. As a curator I hope to create a space for dialogue—often finding myself presenting projects that ask more questions than provide answers. But it is this space where knowledge production may be created as a site for “not-knowing” and accepting that.

These approaches have at their foundation the aim of re-articulating and re-framing curatorial epistemologies. Some are overtly and openly antagonistic to historical curatorial models. Other times, and most commonly found in my practice, the approach is more parasitical. Parasites harbour the potential to affect their hosts in profound ways. I am interested in exploring artistic, curatorial, and creative practices that foster and flourish in parasitical relationships. Following Michel Serres’ understanding of the parasite, I aim to uncover beneficent parasites: artists and curators whose practices parasitize existing structures, whether academic, architectural, or administrative. Vito Acconci has described this *modus operandi* as art “under cover,” a parasitical practice that insinuates rather than professes, that relies more on stealth and less on a well-oiled public relations machine.[13] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n13](#))

Therefore, we cannot take a critical position regarding “not-knowing” based on current models, or at least not that I have found in my work. However, it is important to consider debates from key scholars, such as Laermans, Antonio Gramsci, and Paulo Freire. I reference these critical positions on not-knowing as examples and point to “activating potentialities” of not-knowing as an epistemological goal in socially engaged curating. As Laermans explains:

“The self-enlightened teacher of course knows this: s/he knows that s/he actually doesn’t know what s/he is really doing when transferring knowledge or instructing a skill. Notwithstanding the existence of didactics, teaching therefore remains a form of art, in the pre-modern sense of the word, which cannot be rationalized according to mere technical precepts. It is a craft, a *métier* whose very skilfulness rests on the paradoxical capacity to transform the not-knowing that the

activity necessarily implies into a workable delusion of knowledge or expertise. With this simulacrum there will always correspond a particular mode of addressing the learner, an assumed identity that vastly co-structures the educational relationship.”[14] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n14](#))

So, like curating, Laermans’ essay on teaching theory and the art of not-knowing discusses the notion of theory as a learned knowledge—through various pedagogical approaches such as “the traditional lecture format to the more interactive forms of learning.”[15] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-](#)

[thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n15](#))

Laermans points to the “alternative approach, the notion of theory still involves bits and pieces of codified knowledge and the quasi-sacrosanct texts”[16] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n16](#)) of the canon such as Weber, Foucault, Kant, Adorno, or Rancière. In turn, can we take this “learned knowledge” from curatorial practice and involve other bits and pieces? Curators are influenced by many sources, ideas, and fields. Why limit ourselves by “knowing”?

Yet, what is most interesting is Laermans’ polemic of “doing theory” and the “intrinsic political dimension...[found within doing theory]...such as ‘heteropia,’ ‘public,’ and ‘intellectual common.’”[17] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n17](#))

Conversely, can we polemicise that curators are “doing curating,” or are they attempting something more? By breaking from curating to notions of the curatorial, can we facilitate knowing and not-knowing? Noted curator Maria Lind explains eloquently the difference:

“Curating’ is ‘business as usual’ in terms of putting together an exhibition, organizing a commission, programming a screening series, et cetera. ‘The curatorial’ goes further, implying a methodology that takes art as its starting point but then situates it in relation to specific contexts, times, and questions in order to challenge the status quo. And it does so from various positions, such as that of a curator, an editor, an educator, a communications person, and so on. This means that the curatorial can be employed, or performed, by people in a number of different capacities within the ecosystem of art. For me there is a qualitative difference between curating and the curatorial.”[18] ([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n18](#))

Throughout my curatorial practice, what I have come to embrace and define in my work could be aligned with what Laermans calls “activating potentialities.” Simply put, I do not under-estimate audiences. Socially engaged curating does not adhere to a watered-down curatorial premise or an intentionally populist mediation, but it does pose activating possibilities where audiences may learn something now or later, may learn much or little, or may be moved to love or hate. As Laermans describes:

“Learning thus unavoidably includes the simultaneous hurtful yet instructive experience of failure, of falling through or not-understanding. To learn, momentarily or structurally, that one is not able to grasp something is indeed part and parcel of every genuine learning process.”^[19]
([issue-24-reader/Slow_Curating_Re-thinking_and_Extending_Socially_Engaged_Art_in_the_Context_of_Northern_Ireland.html#n19](#))

Curator as Educator?

In small to mid-size museums and galleries, curators often work closely with educators; increasingly, we see the divisions between departments in museum/gallery/art spaces being blurred. In the case of larger organizations, there have been more decisive and more divisive attempts to see the attempts by the V&A and Brooklyn Museum at curatorial teams. Lessons can be learned from these examples. My experience has been in smaller organizations, where individuals wear many hats, and there is less importance put on specific roles and departmentalised mentalities. Examples of blended techniques used in my curatorial practice include Visual Thinking Strategies, curatorial teams, curators of education, community projects, interactive exhibition design, alternative language in labels, the use of technology and social media within the curatorial process, using crowdsourcing or online voting for curating, community curating, and many others.

With a clear curatorial commitment to slowness in both its temporal and conceptual definitions, my Slow Curating method was and is continually and reflectively adapted and altered to the socio-political and historical contexts of additional appointments in LaGrange, Georgia USA, Fargo, North Dakota USA, and most recently at The Model: Home of the Niland Collection in Sligo, Ireland. Slow Curating attempts to articulate a curated space that is dialogical and dialectical. By embracing a framework of Slow Curating, we find a dialectical approach that is an open model for knowledge production; a site for many people and not just the few; and a true simulacrum of the production of knowledge within curatorial practice.

Notes

- 1** Arguably, those of us working in small and medium-size institutions never could—we wore many hats, including curatorial, producer, installer, registrar, education, outreach, marketing, and floor sweeper. Rarely did we have the opportunity to say something like: “That’s not my job.”
- 2** This is a brief description of the overarching areas of influence on my practice in particular, but that others have also noted as influential. They are not a definitive list of areas that have shaped socially engaged curation, but they are among the most important. Other writers who have delineated influences of social practice include Mary Jane Jacob, Tom Finkelpearl, Claire Bishop, Terry Smith, Paul O’Neill, Claire Doherty, Michael Brenson, Charles Esche, Teresa Gleadowe, Lucy Lippard, and Shannon Jackson to name only a few.
- 3** Caroline Christov-Bakargiev discussed this term in her dOCUMENTA 13 curatorial statement in June 2012; the popularist art activism is a commonly used term for artists who employ direct political tactics as part of their practice. It is a term embraced, embodied, and transferred by noted art activists Stephen Dumcombe and Steve Lambert in the USA who run the Center for Artistic Activism; the term “educational turn” was explored in Paul O’Neill and Mic Wilson’s book

eds, *Curating and the Educational Turn*, Open Editions with De Appel Arts Center, London, 2010; Jens Hoffman's "paracuratorial" is often cited, and one source can be found tranzit.org/curatorialdictionary/index.php/dictionary/curatorial/.

4 Irit Rogoff cleverly articulates some early criticism of "turning" in her essay for *e-flux* in 2006 entitled "Turning."

5 "The Troubles" is a colloquial term to describe the politics and warfare in Northern Ireland from 1968 – 1998 between the Irish Republican Army and the British State. It ended with a peace process and The "Good Friday" Agreement, which was voted upon in Ireland both North and South.

6 Art centres were an important regeneration tool in the Celtic Tiger of Ireland north and south in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The idea of cultural tourism, the "build it and they will come" mentality, and the Bilbao Effect were also influential to the leadership and vision of Portadown 2000 at the time. I feel that it is important to note that these notions reflected a can-do attitude and a near-obsessive positivism in a town that was continually attempting to re-imagine a life post-Troubles while still being anchored with one of the most the quintessential signposts of the war, the walking of the Orange Order down Garvaghy Road. It is to their credit that Portadown 2000 was one of the first town redevelopment companies in the North of Ireland to see the potential of art and culture.

7 The Loyal Orange Institution, more commonly known as the Orange Order, is a fraternal organization loosely organized in a similar way to the Masonic orders. They are an anti-Catholic, anti-Irish Republican organisation, with close ties to all of the Unionist and Loyalist political parties in Northern Ireland. There are many parts to the Orange Family—from other sub-groups to a women's group. Their origins come from the need of the British ruling class to have supporters in Ireland loyal to the crown. Their origin and subsequent growth can be traced to the Crown's need to fight the United Irishmen and to defeat Home Rule in Ireland. They take their name from the Dutch-born British Protestant King William of Orange who defeated Catholic King James at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. Each year, on July 12, supporters of the Orange Order celebrate this victory with parades, family festivals, and contentious parades through Catholic areas. More than 40,000 people attend the events each year. See: Johnston, M. 2005 *Seeing Orange*, Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Ulster.

8 The term "imagined communities" was coined by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* Revised and extended. ed., Verso, London, 1983. It presents the notion of community as a social construction. His primary example is the nation-state.

9 Local narratives confirmed by the documentary film "The 'lost' city of Craigavon to be unearthed in BBC documentary," which was also reported in the *Portadown Times*. 30 November 2007.

9 This included myself and a young curator, Geraldine Boyle, in the North, Dublin-based art historian Kate Parsons and Catherine Marshall, then Head of Collections at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin.

10 Mary Jane Jacobs, Public Talk, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and interview with the author, May 2014.

11 McGonagle, Declan, "Terrible Beauty," International 04. Ed. Paul Domela. Liverpool: Liverpool Biennial, 2004.

12 Claire Doherty, "Curating Wrong Places...Or Where Have All the Penguins Gone", Paul O'Neill, ed., *Curating Subjects*, De Appel, Amsterdam and London, 2007.

13 Michael Serres, *The Parasite*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, [1980] 1982a, and Vito Acconci "Public Space in Private Time," Lecture for International Symposium Andere Orte. Öffentliche Räume und Kunst, 1997. This idea was formulated and crystallized with my colleague Christina Schmid in preparation for a proposed conference panel.

14 Laermans, Rudi. "Teaching Theory and the Art of Not-Knowing: Notes on Pedagogical Commonalism," *Krisis: Journal for Contemporary Philosophy* Issue 1, 2012, p. 63.

15 *ibid*, p. 64.

16 *ibid*.

17 *ibid*. p. 65.

18 Hoffmann, Jens and Maria Lind. "To Show or Not To Show," *Mousse* Issue #31.

19 Laermans, Rudi. "Teaching Theory and the Art of Not-Knowing: Notes on Pedagogical Commonalism," *Krisis: Journal for Contemporary Philosophy* Issue 1, 2012, p. 63.

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