



ECO SHOWBOAT PROJECT REPORT 2021-2023

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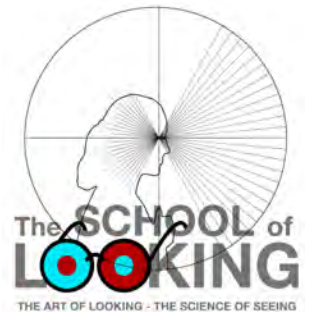
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Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017-2022





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48M at Tullamore Harbour, July 2022

OUTLINE

PROJECT OUTLINED IN 2020:

ECO SHOWBOAT ARTS EXPEDITION 2021 - 2023

We will undertake an ambitious two-year expedition addressing climate change through art on the inland waterways, collaborating with local artists to make new art treating ecology and delivering community workshops exploring fresh water biodiversity, on a historic barge that we are transforming into a zero-carbon floating arts infrastructure.

We will initiate new cultural partnerships and spark creative responses to climate change; extending the geographical and social impact of our and other artists work to anchor the arts in the climate change debate countrywide.

ARTISTIC GOALS:

To navigate the waterways to make new art responding to climate change, collaborating with local artists and inspiring creative responses to climate change within communities.

OBJECTIVES:

To make new work engaged with climate change with artists across the island.

To deliver public workshops addressing climate change through art in each county we visit.

OUTCOMES:

Artists all over Ireland will collaborate to address climate change.

Audiences will experience art addressing climate change, sparking conversations leading to new initiatives to address climate change.

HOW PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES WERE MET (IN BRIEF)

Because of the pandemic, the expedition launch was postponed from spring 2021 to spring 2022.

In summer 2021, in consultation with Waterways Ireland and with our other funding partners we decided against the use of **48M** for our two-year expedition, preferring a smaller and lighter converted yacht, **Mayfly**, as a practical solution to travelling sustainably on the waterways in Ireland. We fitted out this vessel as a solar electric craft capable of navigating the Shannon, the Erne, the Grand Canal and the Barrow using only solar power.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/BOAT.html>

The smaller vessel would not be suitable for receiving the public on board, and so, during the winter of 2021-22, we designed a pop-up space, the **Pangolin Pavilion**, an outdoor projection space made from repurposed beach parasols, designed to be erected rapidly, resist wind, provide shelter, provide good acoustics and a comfortable setting for small group workshops.

http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/UMBRELLA_DOME.html



Anne cycles over Meleek Weir, July 2021

On 1 May 2022, we launched the Eco Showboat at the Hunt Museum in Limerick, and navigated slowly northeast along the waterways aboard the solar Mayfly, following a carefully managed schedule of quayside events to meet and work with local artists, scientists and communities to spark climate action. In 2022, we travelled south to north from **Limerick to Enniskillen**. In 2023, we undertook a similar journey to the east - along the Shannon, Grand Canal and Barrow - from **Askeaton** on the Shannon estuary to **New Ross** on the River Barrow estuary.

During the two-year expedition, the Eco Showboat team hosted **31 public engagement events** in 15 different counties, attracting **audiences in excess of 13,000 people**. The public were received in the *Pangolin Pavilion* or at a local community venue. At each of these events the solar-electric boat was on public exhibition at the quayside and the programme included a work by at least one local artist engaging with environmental issues. The team included a marine biologist, **Rachel O'Malley**, who presented a “kick-sample”, showing macroinvertebrates from the bed of a local river to the public and talking about particular problems to do with water quality and biodiversity in local fresh water environments.

https://youtu.be/rOZ7qJOGel8?si=mKWNlx6DNmggc_fr

At most of the events, the team was joined by a scientist who gave a talk about some environmental issue, by the local LAWPRO officer who spoke about water quality or by other local environmental activists. The solar-electric boat was on public exhibition on quaysides, on the day of the event and for several days before and after, in the presence of the artists. Dialogue with communities along the waterways was focused on the energy transition, biodiversity and climate action. The project was partnered with and has received financial support and awards from both arts and science agencies, a recipient of the SFI Discover Award to support public engagement and to enhance STEM awareness in community settings.

2021: PREPARATIONS

E-BIKE RECCE - JULY-AUGUST 2021

With a global pandemic and an international supply chain crisis, we had no choice but to put off our expedition to 2022. Frustrated with the delays, we decided to do what we could, and in summer of 2021 we set out to cycle the interconnected network of waterways. On July 7th, released from pandemic quarantine, we headed off on E-bikes along the Grand Canal. At Loughton we visited **Marta Golubowska**, our only “live-aboard” artist. We left the Grand Canal at Shannon Harbour, and followed the Shannon south towards Banagher to visit the harbour with artist **Alan Phelan**; then on to Portumna, where we met up with **Joanna McGlynn**, who was developing an Eco Showboat project in the forest. Continuing along Lough Derg we visited **Paul Berg** and his Crannog Ceoil at Mountshannon. Next day we continued down the Shannon towards Limerick, where we met **Chelsea Canavan** and **Deirdre Power**, already preparing community projects for the Eco Showboat’s visit. They introduced us to **Pat Lysaght**, at 78 still on the water from morning to night guiding boats through the treacherous waters of the Abbey River on his boat *The Eye of the River*. We took a train with our E-bikes to Waterford, aiming to follow the Barrow navigation from the estuary to County Kildare. This wasn’t easy at first, the estuary is bordered by farmland, the road following a winding, hilly route far from the water’s edge. At St Mullin’s we finally joined the towpath and cycled over several days as far as Sallins making a recce of Graiguenamanagh, Carlow and Vicarstown. Stopping in Dublin to visit artists **Alan Phelan** and **Deirdre O’Mahony**, we then followed the Royal Canal to the Shannon and Lough Ree before meeting photographer **Kevin O’Dwyer** at Clonmacnoise. After a short detour to visit Acres Lake with Eco Showboat artist **Christine Mackey**, we finally joined the Shannon Erne Waterway and, crossing the border, continued as far as Enniskillen where we visited artist **Diane Henshaw** and her actor partner **Paddy McEneaney** to discuss our project for Fermanagh.

PROJECT INAUGURATION, 22 AUGUST 2021

August 22nd saw Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform **Malcolm Noonan** launch the Eco Showboat project on the banks of the River Nore in Kilkenny (outdoors to comply with COVID health and safety guidelines). This was a unique event bringing together artists, scientists and the community in the open air on the banks of the River Nore. The event included an exhibition of the Eco Showboat design drawings, musical performances and family workshops exploring the ecology, physics and biology of water, led by several Eco Showboat artists and with guest scientists from SFI.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=153551126902851&set=a.110894027835228>



Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform Malcolm Noonan at the project launch the Eco Showboat in Kilkenny, 22 August 2021



Pangolin Pavilion at Killaloe, May 2022

THE BOATS: 48M & MAYFLY

We were always aware that the transformation of the **48M**, a heavy steel barge, to electric propulsion would be costly and that our funding did not cover such capital expenditure. As our knowledge of the Inland Waterways grew, we became aware of additional issues such as bio security, weed growth, height limitations, and other factors, leading us to question the suitability of the 48 M as a fully mobile unit.

In September 2021 we consulted with the Arts Council on the possibilities of working with a more suitable vessel and were told that would be fine. In Summer 2021 we acquired *Redstart*, a small yacht that we fitted out and rebaptised **Mayfly** to start our expeditions in spring 2022. We fitted Mayfly out with a Torquedo Cruise 2.0 FP drive, 4 no. 110 amp 12 volt lead acid batteries and a Bison electric outboard motor. The battery bank is mains chargeable, and once we had fitted a 1Kw array of solar panels on a lightweight aluminium structure, we had a fully autonomous solar boat, charging continuously as long as there is daylight. The Mayfly has other advantages over the 48 M : She is light (1 Tonne) and comes with a trailer - so can be easily taken out of the water (eg. to be disinfected to ensure bio security). The 48 M remains moored on the spurline of Tullamore Harbour, and we are currently discussing her future with her owner Waterways Ireland.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/BOAT.html>

PANGOLIN PAVILION

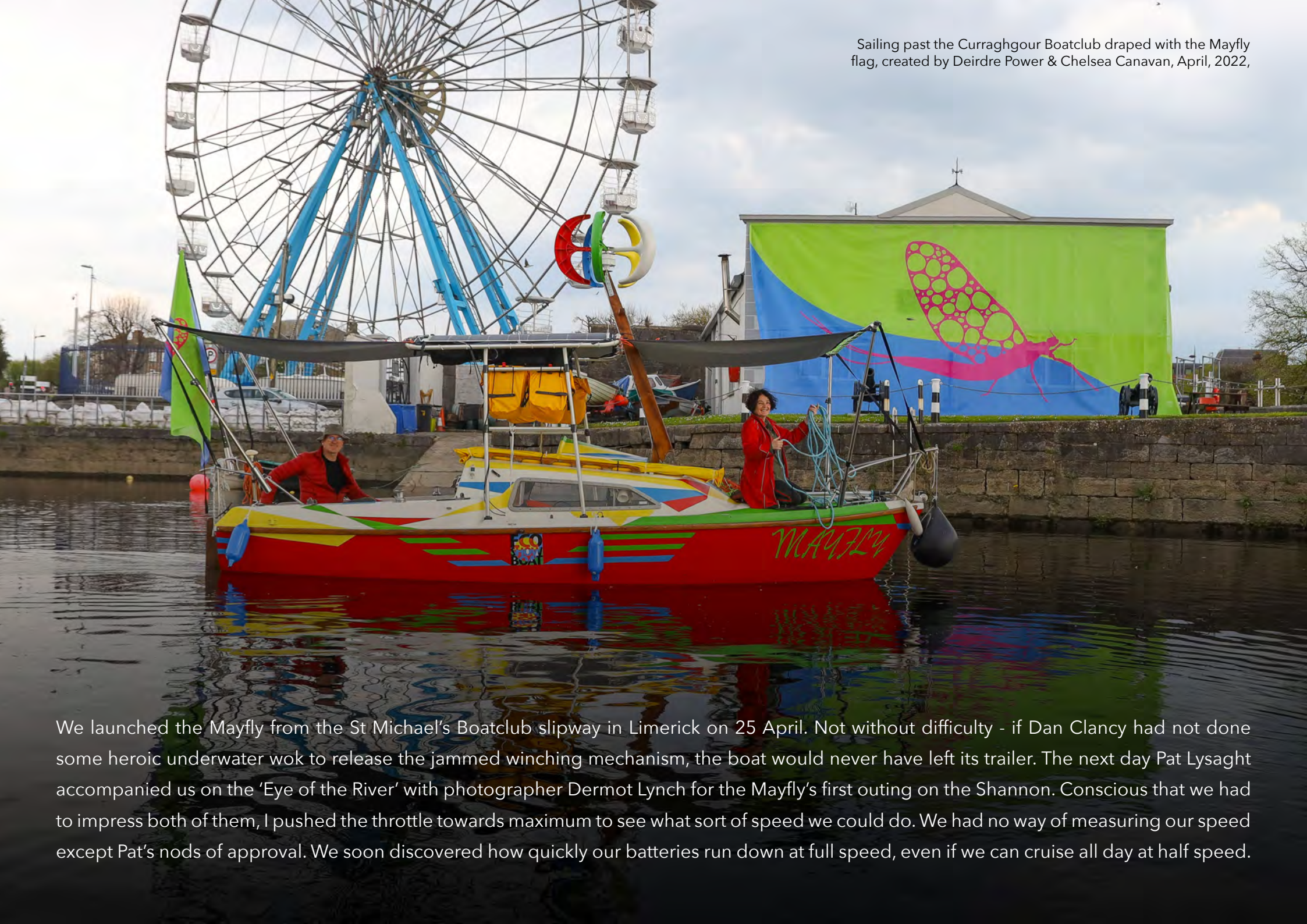
The smaller vessel is not suitable for receiving the public on board, and so, during the winter of 2021-22, we designed a pop-up space, the **Pangolin Pavilion**, an outdoor projection space made from repurposed beach parasols, designed to be erected rapidly, resist wind, provide shelter, provide good acoustics and a comfortable setting for small group workshops.

http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/UMBRELLA_DOME.html



Inside the 48M, March 2022

Sailing past the Curraghgour Boatclub draped with the Mayfly flag, created by Deirdre Power & Chelsea Canavan, April, 2022,



We launched the Mayfly from the St Michael's Boatclub slipway in Limerick on 25 April. Not without difficulty - if Dan Clancy had not done some heroic underwater work to release the jammed winching mechanism, the boat would never have left its trailer. The next day Pat Lysaght accompanied us on the 'Eye of the River' with photographer Dermot Lynch for the Mayfly's first outing on the Shannon. Conscious that we had to impress both of them, I pushed the throttle towards maximum to see what sort of speed we could do. We had no way of measuring our speed except Pat's nods of approval. We soon discovered how quickly our batteries run down at full speed, even if we can cruise all day at half speed.




Ruairí Ó Conchúir talks about fresh water ecology at the Hunt Museum, 1 May 2022

For the boating community, the reputation of the Abbey River is as bad as the name of the place where it flows into the Shannon: Hellsgate. When the turbines at Ardnacrusha are running and the tide is low, the waters move at a rate that is terrifying to behold, let alone navigate. We had no choice but to navigate up the Abbey River on the day after our opening at the Hunt Museum: it would lead us to the monumental lock at Ardnacrusha Powerstation - the same lock that was closing the very next day for essential works and that was our only access to the upper reaches of the Shannon where the rest of our expedition was to happen.



But we did have a secret weapon - Pat Lysaght.

Pat is a legend. He has been helping boats to negotiate the Abbey River for decades. He knows every secret of tide and turbines. On 2 May, he told us that the powerstation was running two turbines - not what we wanted to hear. But Pat was not worried: he waited with us at Hellsgate, waiting for the tide to rise on the Shannon behind us and then watching as its flow slowly started to push back against the current descending the Abbey River from the turbines. Then, choosing his moment like an artist, he led us away from Custom House Quay, under the arch of Matthew Bridge and up the Abbey River which - though still quietly flowing - looked quite like a pond!

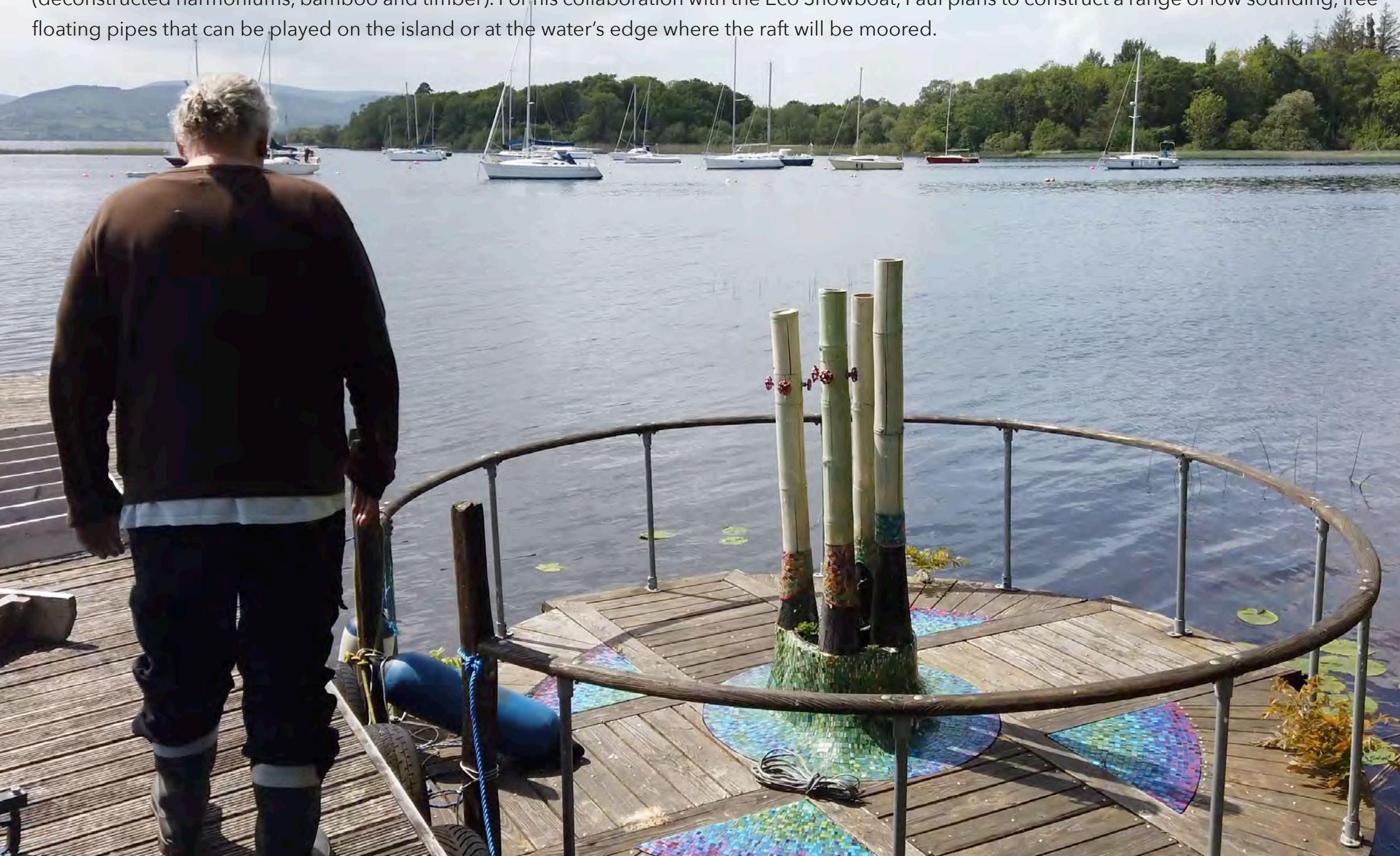
A narrow, vertical lock chamber with high, rusted metal walls. The walls are made of vertical panels with small, dark rectangular openings. At the top of the chamber, a waterfall cascades down into a pool of water. The water is dark and reflects the light from the top. The overall atmosphere is industrial and somewhat somber.

After saying goodbye to Pat Lysaght, who had guided us up the Abbey River from Limerick, and a night spent moored alone at the tailrace pontoon, we finally passed through the giant lock at Ardnacrusha - 100 feet ascension through water, concrete and steel...

Killaloe, May 2022: UL Civil Engineering Professor Tom Cosgrove shares his knowledge of the heroic engineering project that is the great industrial legacy of the Irish Free State - the Ardnacrusha hydro-electric scheme that has reshaped the lower Shannon and changed the ecology of the whole river. It was built to generate all the power the young nation would need. A century later it supplies less than 3% and some ecologist argue that the environmental impact - isolating the upper river from the sea and compromising the migration of important species such as salmon and eels - can no longer be justified, even if hydro-electric power is, by its nature, low-carbon and renewable.



We worked with artist Paul Berg in Mountshannon on a new phase of his musical island on Lough Derg in collaboration with the Eco Showboat project. Four years ago Paul started working on '*An Crannog Ceoil*' - a four meter diameter raft fixed to a disused pontoon. The project involves working with air displacement by water pressure (in this case using the natural flow and rise of Lough Derg, where the raft is located) to play sound pipes (deconstructed harmoniums, bamboo and timber). For his collaboration with the Eco Showboat, Paul plans to construct a range of low sounding, free floating pipes that can be played on the island or at the water's edge where the raft will be moored.



We were warned that Lough Derg is like an inland sea, where the waters can change very quickly with the weather and where currents and winds meet to make *boxing waves* that can surprise even the most experienced sailor. We set out from Killaloe at dawn on 11 May. The sky was blue and the lake ahead of us looked like a pond. But that changed...



School visit to the Mayfly, Dromineer Harbour, May 2022




It was still sunny - even if storm clouds were gathering - when we did our morning workshop with a class of local schoolchildren. Met Eireann was forecasting 55 km/h winds for the afternoon. We had set up the umbrella pavillon under the shelter of three trees as a horizontal canopy, hoping to catch as little wind as possible. But at midday, just after the children left, we thought it best to strike the pavillon. As it turned out, not a moment too soon - by 2pm, the wind was whipping up waves on Lough Derg and the rain was hammering down. Fortunately Tipperary Arts Officer Melanie Scott found us an alternative venue just 50 yards away: the *Whisky Still*, Dromineer's only pub, was closed, but the proprietors kindly offered us the use of their marquee overlooking the harbour for Eleanor Hooker and Emily Cullen's poetry reading, which went ahead inside the relative calm of canvas as the wind howled outside. https://youtu.be/5WN3_Bdg41o



The Mayfly's stop at Portumna in late May was the chance to intersect with two artists who have been developing a rich seam of work together as part of the Eco Showboat programme. Their work developed through the winter of 2021-2022 in response to a biodiverse site in Portumna, where the forest edge meets a floodplain on the shores of Lough Derg. Working through walking, they developed a profound engagement with place, observing and recording the more than human world of forest and lake. In May they invited us and the public to walk with them - to look at, listen to, touch and even taste the sylvan springtime.

Anne with Kevin O'Dwyer on the *Pilgrim's Road* (Slí Mhór), July 2022. Kevin has been working on his photo essay *Sacred Spaces* exploring and photographing the Irish midlands with its bogs, eskers, rivers, and monastic sites, following a road that has been used by pilgrims for centuries built on the glacial ridge known as *the Esker Riada*, formed over 12,000 years ago. The Esker Riada and the River Shannon formed a natural 'crossroads' in the heart of Ireland, coming together at Clomacnoise. If drainage and industrial harvesting of peat have radically changed the landscape, yet something still remains of the medieval road which offered pilgrims a raised path across the bogs to the monastic site.



An aerial photograph of a boat deck. The deck is made of light-colored wooden planks. On the right side, there are several large solar panels mounted on the deck. A colorful wind instrument, resembling a pinwheel with red, green, blue, and yellow blades, is mounted on a wooden stand. A person is visible on the deck, and another person is sitting on the ground. A camera on a tripod is also visible. The boat is on a body of water.

The last springtime stop on our Shannon expedition brought us to Clonmacnoise where we met with Cork based sound artists Irene Murphy and Mick O'Shea to prepare a very special experimental performance on the waterfront of the monastic site. Mick and Irene used microphones and hydrophones to record the sounds of wind and water, performing an improvised live performance, using these recordings and their own self-made instruments to create an immersive sonic experience that became part of a sonic ecosystem.

As his contribution to the Eco Showboat 2022 programme, artist Alan Phelan made a fabric intervention at Banagher Marina in his signature red, green and blue colours, relating to the Joly screen colour photographic process which was invented by Offaly native John Joly in the 1890s - one of the first colour images. Alan gave a talk under our umbrella dome about Joly's contribution to science in the company of Dr Patrick Wyse Jackson from the TCD Department of Geology (where Joly also worked) in a broad ranging discussion on rocks, geological time, climate change and, of course, art.



How Rocks Can Save The Planet, Artwork by Alan Phelan, Banagher Marina, July 2022.

Perhaps the only way to fully tune the solar machine we were sailing was to take her on a long trip upriver - testing her against current, wind and rain, as well as the scrapes and collisions that every boat meets on the waterways. We had cleats and stays breaking in heavy winds on Lough Derg; our 3 kilowatt lithium battery stopped recharging when we reached Portumna; we smelt an electrical connector melting on the hottest day of the year on Lough Ree; we saw our windmill collapse when it hit the underside of Tarmonbarry bridge; we had to upgrade the boat's primary batteries from lead-acid to AGM in Carrick; we almost finished on a rock in Lough Erne when our propeller was strangled by weed... <https://youtu.be/mO-1Km2mliY>



Mayfly arrives on the River Boyle, July 2022



We left the Shannon just north of Carrick, turning west onto the Boyle River which brought us onto Lough Key and to the town of Boyle. Of all the lakes we navigated, Lough Key was perhaps the most beautiful - dark wooded islands in a soft bowl of blue-green water. It was also the furthest we ventured into the west and the weather constantly reminded us of how close we were to the Atlantic which sent us generous quantities of wind and rain. Moored on Doon Shore to the lake's west, we discovered the unhappy secret of the lake's colour: a summer bloom of Blue-Green Algae - which, despite its name, is not an algae at all but a cyanobacteria, toxic to us and sometimes fatal for animals.

Artist Padraig Cunningham's work for the Eco Showboat at Boyle was inspired by the Shannon Cave, a snaking underground passageway, 5.4 kilometers in length which crosses the border from County Fermanagh, to County Cavan. He studied a 3 dimensional map of the cave, in particular of one section is called the Mayfly. Padraig was intrigued that a place formed so slowly over time by such powerful geological forces would be named after such a delicate creature with such a short life cycle. The sculptural works that he installed on the bank of the Boyle River in late July evoked these conflicting notions of time and scale, as well as the subterranean world of the Shannon Cave. https://youtu.be/BszDc4_jueg



Padraig Cunningham installing the artworks Folds 1, 2&3 on a meadow between beside the Boyle River and the Boyle Canal, July 2022

Our project on Lough Key was a collaboration with artists Anna Macleod and Padraig Cunningham around the theme of the Mayfly. Anna and Padraig had worked through the early summer, watching and capturing these ancient macroinvertebrates which appear - if at all - in great swarms above the water for a period of days in the early summer. Like the Caddisfly and the Stonefly, the Mayfly is an "indicator species" for biologists, bringing good news since they only appear if the waterway from which they emerge is free of certain pollutants.



Ephemera, artwork by Anna Macleod and Padraig Cunningham, Lough Key Forest Park, July 2022





In early August we sailed north to Acres Lake, County Leitrim, where we had the privilege of working with an artist who has long had a practice anchored in environmental issues and a profound understanding of biodiversity. Christine Mackey had spent the winter researching, developing and constructing a series of floating pods seeded with plants drawn from a seed collection that she had been accumulating for a number of years. Many of these plants are under threat of extinction while others are phytoremediators with a capacity for purifying and healing damaged water systems. On August 4th, we floated this small archipelago of willow baskets on Blackrock Pond, hopefully the first of many iterations of Christine's poetic - and perhaps seminal - Mesocosm project.



At every stop we made on our Shannon-Erne expedition we were accompanied by biologist Rachel O'Malley. Each Sunday morning, before the Eco-Sunday event, she would enter the river to collect a 'kick sample'. Biologists use this sampling method - kicking at the mud, silt and stones in the riverbed, catching whatever is dislodged in a net - to study macroinvertebrates living in the river, identifying indicator species such as the stonefly, the mayfly nymph or the caddisfly which give them clear indications of the health of the waterway. In our case, the objective was to make the public aware of this hidden eco-system beneath the water and of the beauty and complexity of these lifeforms which most of us refer to - if at all - as *creepy-crawlies*.



Rachel O'Malley collects a kick-sample on the Erne River at Belturbet, County Cavan, August 2022

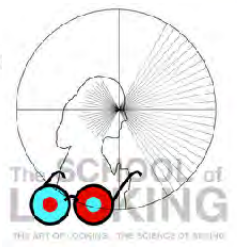
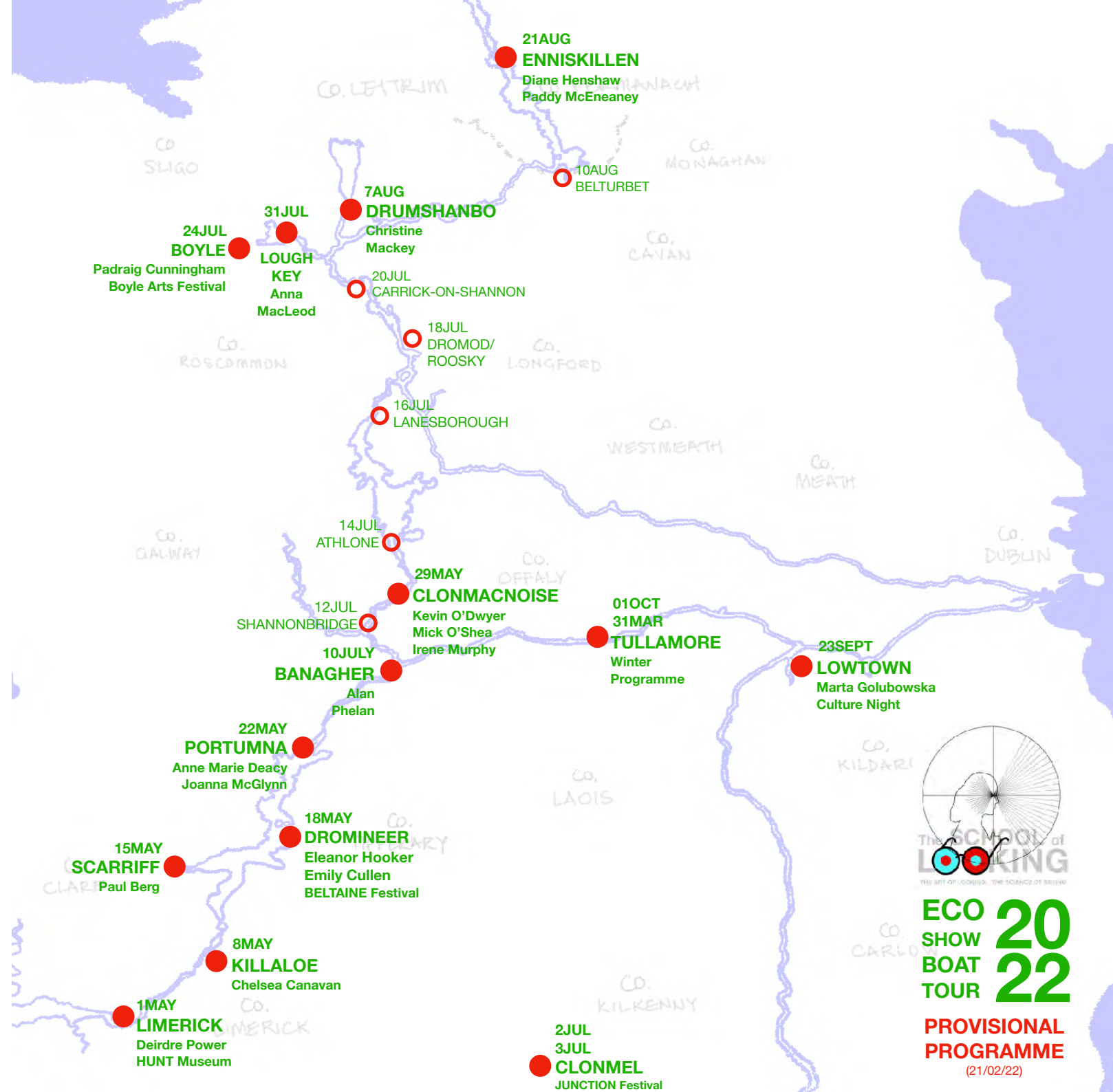
We asked Diane Henshaw and Paddy McEaney to help us create a thought provoking event to give a powerful finish to the Eco Showboat's Shannon-Erne expedition in County Fermanagh. They didn't disappoint us - Eco Sunday at Carrybridge on 21 August was a mix of burlesque invention and political provocation. Diane and Paddy invited singer/storyteller Valerie Whitworth and inventor/artist Michael Cummins to participate in the happening, which included a participative performance of Coco Love Alcorn's song 'The River', some subtle optical magic inside cardboard boxes, an in situ mural painting under the bridge and a song and dance routine about diamonds and pearls...



Diane Henshaw and Paddy McEaney talk about ecological issues in Fermanagh, Carrybridge, 21 August 2022.

Mayfly arrived at her destination, Enniskillen, on the evening of 19 August at sundown, after a long zero carbon expedition from Limerick using only solar power and creating 15 art events along the way to raise awareness of climate change. If the voyage was as much about science as it was about art, it was nevertheless, for us, first and foremost about learning - mastering the technology, getting to know the people, watching the wildlife, discovering the landscape...and above all learning about the fresh water environment and the qualities it offers as a condenser of the human and natural world as well as all the active and potential problems it faces...





ECO SHOW BOAT TOUR 2022

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

(21/02/22)

2022 SCHEDULE



Workshops at Killaloe, May 2022

30 APRIL 2022

Curraghbour Boat Club, Limerick.

Limerick artists **Deirdre Power** and **Chelsea Canavan** directed a workshop to create flags to accompany the Eco Showboat on its journey, while **Andrew Duhig**, member of Curraghbour Boat Club, shows us his extraordinary model of a canal lock. The event finished with a ceremonial pinning of the flags on to the Pangolin Pavilion.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/CURRAGHGOUR.html>

1 MAY 2022

Hunt Museum, Limerick

Artists **Deirdre Power** and **Chelsea Canavan** presented 3 new artworks - *The Mayfly Flag*, *Water Paths Archive* and *Ljusne Stich'n Limerick* - created for the Eco Showboat project. **Ruairi Ó Conchúir** of the Local Authority Waters Programme told us what people can do to help improve water quality. Limerick born scientist **Dr. Margaret McCaul** demonstrated new innovative water quality sensors developed through research at the INSIGHT SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics. In the Pangolin Pavilion, Limerick's "Old Man of the River" displayed his photographs of the river and environment going back 50 years.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/HUNT.html>

8 MAY 2022

Kileen's Lock, Killaloe

Tom Cosgrove, Professor of Civil Engineering at University of Limerick, talked about the history and environmental impact of the Shannon hydro-electric scheme, and scientist **Dan Minchin** talked about the problem of non-native species in the Shannon and Erne.

Artists **Anne Cleary & Denis Connolly** showed video of the Eco Showboat's passage through the monumental Ardnacrusha Lock. Artists Deirdre Power and Chelsea Canavan presented their Mayfly flags, commissioned by the Eco Showboat, and held a drawing workshop.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/KILLALOE.html>

15 MAY 2022

Scarriff Harbour

Artist **Paul Berg** presented *an Crannog Ceoil* (the Musical Island), a four meter diameter raft which makes music as it moves in the water. **Cormac McCarthy** of Waterways Ireland talked about how the organisation uses the shared heritage of the inland waterways as a tool for community engagement and awareness raising.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/SCARRIFF.html>



Pangolin Pavilion at Scarriff Harbour, May 2022

18 MAY 2022

Dromineer Harbour

As part of **Bealtaine Festival**, the Eco Showboat hosted readings by two Tipperary poets, **Eleanor Hooker** and **Emily Cullen**, as well as a talk by Eco Farmer **Ailbhe Gerrard**.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/DROMINEER.html>

22 MAY 2022

Portumna Castle Harbour

Artists **Joanna McGlynn** and **Anne Marie Deacy** guided the public through a sensory exploration of place on a forest trail leading from the Mayfly's mooring at Portumna Castle Harbour through Portumna Forest Park, and researcher **Niall Ó Brolcháin** talked about rewetting peatlands and carbon emissions.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/PORTUMNA.html>

28 MAY 2022

Shannonbridge Fort

Photographer **Kevin O'Dwyer** looked at landscape and history around the *Pilgrims Road* to the monastic site of Clonmacnoise; we screened a recently completed film by artist **Sheila Flanagan** documenting the River Shiven, one of Ireland's Blue Dot, high status rivers and we hosted a performance by spoken-word eco-artist **Earthman Bob**.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/SHANNONBRIDGE.html>

29 MAY 2022

Clonmacnoise Marina

Sound artists **Mick O'Shea** and **Irene Murphy** proposed an immersive sonic experience, *Through Air and Water*, where the audience becomes part of a sonic ecosystem - reflecting the sounds of wind and water at the ancient site of Clonmacnoise.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/CLONMACNOISE.html>

10 JULY 2022

Banagher Marina

Artist **Alan Phelan** discussed with **Dr Patrick Wyse Jackson** from the TCD Department of Geology "How Rocks Can Save the Planet" and made a fabric intervention in the Marina in his signature red, green and blue colours.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/BANAGHER.html>



Musicians Shahab & Shayan Coohe at Lough Key, July 2022

24 JULY 2022

Boyle Harbour/King House

Artist **Padraig Cunningham** installed two in situ sculptural works on the bank of the Boyle River; Poet **Mary Turley-McGrath** read a selection of her poetry about rivers.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/BOYLE.html>

31 JULY 2022

Lough Key Forest Park

Artists **Anna Macleod** and **Padraig Cunningham** were joined by biologist **Dr Mary Kelly-Quinn**, specialist in the mayfly, organic farmer **Tommy Earley** from Mount Allen Eco Farm and musicians **Shahab & Shayan Coohe** to celebrate the mayfly on the shore of Lough Key.

http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/LOUGH_KEY.html

7 AUGUST 2022

Acres Lake, Drumshanbo

Artist **Christine Mackey** launched her in situ floating sculptural work *Mesocosms* and scientist **Dr. Dolores Byrne** brought the public on a walk to explore plant extinction in Ireland.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/DRUMSHANBO.html>

14 AUGUST 2022

Belturbet Marina

Singer-songwriter **Deirdre Murphy** gave her first performance of her Water Song, commissioned for the Eco Showboat; LAWPRO officer **Ben Malone** spoke about issues affecting fresh water and **Earthman Bob** gave a spoken-word performance.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/BELTURBET.html>

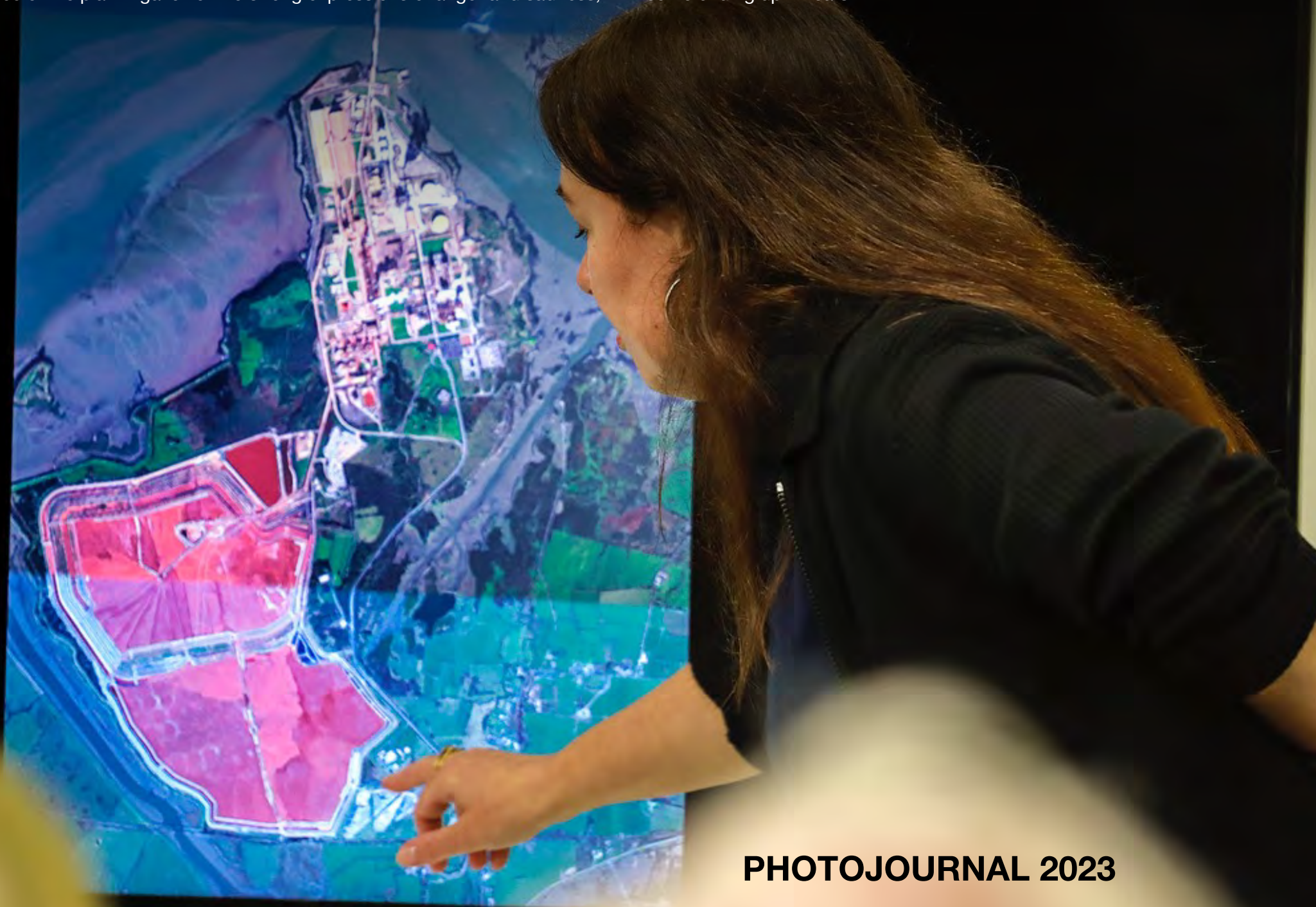
21 AUGUST 2022

Carrybridge Marina

Fermanagh based artist **Diane Henshaw** created an in situ mural work *Cloud Appreciation*; actor **Paddy McEaney** performed a satirical work highlighting fracking and mining in the UK; performance artist **Valerie Whitworth** invited the public to participate in a collective performance, and artist **Michael Cummins** showed some of his poetic viewing devices.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/CARRYBRIDGE.html>

Askeaton Community Hall, 22 April 2023. Locals gathered to hear invited artist Michele Horrigan discuss her research into the Aughinish Alumina plant, which led to highly emotional scenes. Aughinish, a focus of Michele's work for many years, is Ireland's largest industrial complex, and Europe's biggest bauxite refinery. People, tired and frustrated by over thirty years of illness, deterioration of water quality, biodiversity loss and harm to livestock - which they unsurprisingly link to the presence of the plant - gave vent to strong expressions of anger and sadness, with some ending up in tears.





Mayfly, newly painted, was launched on the Deel river on April 22nd for the 2023 Eco Showboat Journey to the East. Leaving Askeaton a day or two later in sub-zero temperatures at sunrise, with a resolve to continue to work with Michele and the Askeaton community to raise awareness of their demands for an independent investigation into the environmental and health impacts of the Alumina plant, the Eco Showboat sailed up the Shannon Estuary on the rising tide to Limerick to take part in the annual Riverfest festivities.



At the Hunt Museum urban farmer Kevin Wallace joined the Eco Showboat team to tell us about Korean natural farming methods and artists Chelsea Canavan and Deirdre Power had fun with people of all ages during a Food Print workshop, a creative event designed to highlight the carbon footprint of our food while producing really beautiful printed artwork.

FRIDAY 12 MAY 2023.

Visual artist Aideen Barry hosted a wonderful coming together of ecologists, artists, and friends to debate ecological issues in her house on the lower slopes of the Silvermine Mountains, not far from the site that was mined for silver for nearly a thousand years, but also in more recent times mined for zinc, bauxite, lead, copper and barite. The slopes on which Aideen and her family live are contaminated with heavy metals. Aideen and her neighbours are advised not to plant vegetables directly in the soil of their gardens, but to use elevated beds with fresh topsoil, nor disturb hedgerows, and neighbouring farmers can no longer raise livestock or cultivate their land.



SATURDAY 27 MAY 2023.

Our event at the Market House in Mountshannon began with sound artist Slavek Kwi letting us experience some of the underwater sound samples he has collected over the years - locally in Mountshannon or during his travels - using sound as a way of developing a deeper empathy with nature and its many ecosystems. The programme included: Mountshannon artist Paul Berg, who showed us progress on his *Crannog Ceoil*; Niall Ó Brolcháin, expert in peatlands conservation, who discussed how and why we should rewet our bogs; Eco-poet Grace Wells who read a selection of her work. We finished with the music of harpist Anna Tanvir and her partner Maninder Singh, followed by sustainable teatime.



SATURDAY 17 JUNE 2023.

After struggling for days through the weed of the Grand Canal, Mayfly arrived in Pollagh to screen our new short film, *Pilgrim Road Movie*, with local artist Kevin O'Dwyer following a walk across the bog along a trail that medieval pilgrims knew as *An Slí Mhór*. As the storm raged outside - lightning cutting the electricity and interrupting the screening five times - the film followed Kevin and Anne walking through peatlands, putting together the jigsaw of Offaly's history - from medieval pilgrimages to post-war peat harvesting. The event ended in the late afternoon with a debate about whether this holy trail could be Ireland's own *Camino de Santiago* - and whether such mass tourism was even desirable - as lightning again and again knocked out electric power, brought to us so recently in our history by burning the very bogs on which we were standing.



TUESDAY 20 JUNE 2023.

Approaching Kilbeggan Bridge, we saw that our windmill would not pass underneath, just as the clouds dissolved into a torrent of rain.

Taking down the windmill and mast should have taken 20 minutes, but it ended up taking an hour and a half, time enough for the storm to dissipate and sunshine to return.

Turning off the Grand Canal onto the spur-line - a short section of canal leading to Tullamore Harbour - Mayfly moored alongside 48M, the first time the little electric sailboat had encountered its mothership - a big rusty heritage barge! Caitriona Devery of the Pollagh Heritage Group described the meeting as "like a gnarly granddad with his nifty young granddaughter".



SATURDAY 24 JUNE 2023.

48M played host to a private, filmed concert by Irene Murphy and Mick O'Shea - a sort of inauguration for this historic barge, which had been part of the Eco Showboat project from the beginning but which had still never received the public. Mick and Irene - who already produced beautiful work for the Eco Showboat project at Clonmacnoise in 2022 - worked like alchemists, mixing the noises resonating from the ancient steel structure with music and sounds of their own - recordings of water and wind - to create a tapestry of strange, subtle, beautiful sounds to celebrates the metallic nature of the hundred-year-old 48M.





TUESDAY 27 JUNE 2023

Just outside Lowtown, the canal became so weedy that we could barely see water - the usually navigable middle of the canal progressively overgrown with bulrushes, lily pads and long grasses. Anne spoke to Ger Daly - Waterways Ireland engineer in charge of the Barrowline - who explained that the reason for all this weed trouble was essentially global warming: after a long heatwave in June, the water was much warmer than usual. This, combined with the sun, meant that the weeds had grown much faster than usual. Water levels on all the canals were low due to drought (as we had already seen on the Grand Canal before Pollagh) and Waterways Ireland's small fleet of weed cutters had struggled to keep up with this bloom. But he assured her that, after Rathangan, the weed had been recently cut and should be much more manageable. Thankfully, this turned out to be the case...



SATURDAY 1 JULY 2023

At Vicarstown, Emily Miller presented her strange and wonderful art using taxidermied hides of small creatures killed by cars on the roads around Laois. Stretching the preserved hides of these creatures over handmade frames, Emily's work is a stark reminder of the terrible impact we have on the creatures around us.



SATURDAY 22 JULY 2023

The day in Carlow came to a close with a concert by Anna Tanvir and Maninder Singh, who reprised beautiful traditional folk songs from Ireland, India, Madagascar, as well as several other cultures, all brought together in Anna and Maninder's own wonderful and intimate style in the impressive front hall of VISUAL Carlow. In particular, it is their rendition of the Swahili song *Malaiika* that we remember, a gentle lovesong gently delivered, somehow managing to make the large space seem very intimate.

SATURDAY 29 JULY 2023

At St Mullins, it was a truly beautiful day, with sun breaking through after a few early showers, as Deirdre O'Mahony directed her extraordinary *Song of the Farmer and the Dung Beetle*, an experimental operatic performance by the amazing Siobhan Kavanagh and Michelle Doyle on a grassy bank of the Barrow. The piece was commissioned by the Eco Showboat project. Deirdre - an artist whose work focuses on environmental issues and farming - had composed the song based on conversations with Kilkenny farmer Suzanna Crampton about the importance of the dung beetle in maintaining healthy soil. Suzanna believes that the dung beetle is the most important link in the chain of the soil biosphere. They recycle nutrients and dig them deep into the soil while also aerating the soil and making it more permeable for water, increasing soil fertility. The vital little creature is under threat however from insecticides, antibiotics and worming medicines given to livestock.



THURSDAY 3 AUGUST 2023

No previous part of our expedition had been talked up to quite the same extent as the journey from bucolic St Mullins to the port of New Ross. But after all the talk, the journey took less than 2 hours and went exactly as we had planned. Mayfly left the lock at St Mullins about an hour after high tide, just as the flow was beginning to gather pace. Knowing we needed to go slowly until we reached Ferrymountgarrett Bridge, we left the tide carry her as much as possible, only accelerating when we needed to steer. What no one told us was just how beautiful the River Barrow is after you leave St Mullins. The river turns through a series of deep wooded ravines. Mayfly's electric motor is very quiet, and we could hear birdsong, the wind in the trees and the flow of the water.



SATURDAY 5 AUGUST 2023

In New Ross we had invited three local performance artists - the storyteller Joe Brennan, the artist/writer Suzanne Walsh and the poet Ben Mac Caoilte - to join us at a very special venue: the Dunbrody, a 19th Century 'famine ship' recreated in 2001 and now permanently moored on the quay at New Ross. Naively perhaps we had thought that we could moor the Mayfly alongside her for our event. But in fact the tide - always the tide - made that impossible. It was of no great importance because it was a fantastic evening even without Mayfly. Joe told a series of stories, each with an environmental theme, such as the Inuit story of *Sedna and King Gull*.





SATURDAY 12 AUGUST 2023

We moored Mayfly alongside a beautiful barge we were to stay on for the following week, on the east bank of the Barrow, right at the very edge of the town. At night, when we looked to one side we could see Graiguenamanagh's lights shining ahead while the other side was plunged in darkness, with nothing but the River Barrow and the woods around. On Saturday, the Waterways College very kindly hosted our Eco Showboat event to a full house, and our old friend, dancer and choreographer Cindy Cummings improvised a beautiful performance with Anna Tanvir and Maninder Singh.



SATURDAY 19 AUGUST 2023

In the early afternoon Anne led a biodiversity walk along the River Barrow, telling us all about the various wildlife that spawns along those paths, such as the Himalayan Balsam, a beautiful yet terrifyingly prolific invasive species - the seeds pop out when you touch the pods and are projected up to seven metres.

SATURDAY 19 AUGUST 2023

The audience then made it back to the Waterways College for an experimental performance - created by Denis & our daughter Lotti, with help from Anna Tanvir and Maninder, sketching out and discussing their understanding of the fascinating *Sirens* chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.





FRIDAY 25 AUGUST 2023

Mayfly navigated back up the river as far as Carlow. But a call from Waterways Ireland inform us that during Storm Betty several trees had been knocked into the canal approaching Dublin and no boats could pass. Efforts were underway to remove them, but it would take several weeks. It would certainly not be done on time for Mayfly's scheduled navigation into Dublin for our celebratory event in Dublin's docklands. This news left Mayfly effectively stranded, her destination cut off by more of the violent weather we have become so accustomed to everywhere in the world in these last few years, the beginning, surely, of an age of climate disruption like the world has never seen before.



SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2023

The final event of our *Journey to the East* was at the Townhall, Windmill Lane. In this generous volume, we installed a suspended kinetic artwork by young Dublin artist Kerrie O’Leary exploring sea levels, using data and technology to demonstrate the shifting of water in Dublin Bay, a visual representation of nature’s complexities and changing environmental patterns.



SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2023

The evening was completed by a witty installation, *Glue Hands Here*, from Dublin artist Alan Phelan, a talk by artist Marie Hanlon introducing her upcoming work for the Eco Showboat at Horwath, and a concert by Anna Tanvir and Maninder Singh, who sang a new song dedicated to our boat, the Mayfly.



SATURDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2023

In Howth we celebrated our arrival at the sea, at the end of our freshwater expedition, with an exhibition of Marie Hanlon's *Salt / Water* at Jobst Graeve's College Lane Gallery, one of the oldest buildings in Dublin, pervaded by the smell of the sea and the sound of gulls.



6-24 SEPTEMBER 2023

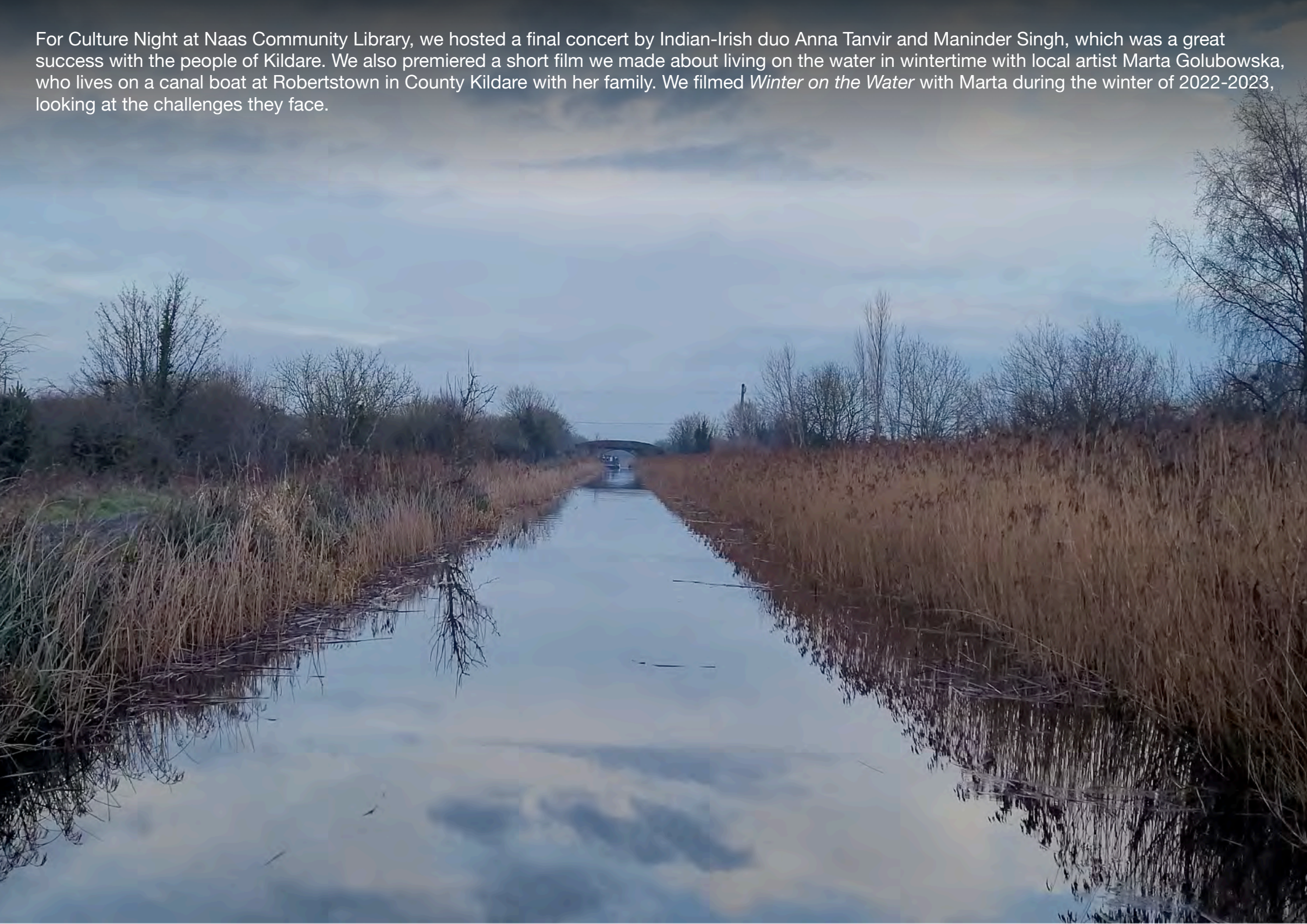
Marie Hanlon's installation, *Salt / Water*, dealt with the complex relationship between salt and freshwater. All salt originated in the sea. Mined varieties such as Himalayan pink and black rock salt were once part of the seabed. Much of the earth's surface is covered with water, but less than three per cent is drinkable and this includes freshwater locked in the ice. Perhaps the greatest threats to life today are seawater gain and freshwater loss. Melting polar ice is causing sea level rise, whereas the more complex effect of glacier melt is a loss of freshwater for huge numbers of the population.



CULTURE NIGHT, 22 SEPTEMBER 2023

To honour the Mayfly's final mooring in 2023, Anne wears Patrick Jackson's *Cloak of Howth* at Naas Harbour.

For Culture Night at Naas Community Library, we hosted a final concert by Indian-Irish duo Anna Tanvir and Maninder Singh, which was a great success with the people of Kildare. We also premiered a short film we made about living on the water in wintertime with local artist Marta Golubowska, who lives on a canal boat at Robertstown in County Kildare with her family. We filmed *Winter on the Water* with Marta during the winter of 2022-2023, looking at the challenges they face.



SCHEDULE 2023



Artist Aideen Barry talks about the poisoned land at Silvermines, May 2023

22 APRIL 2023

Askeaton Community Hall

Artist **Michele Horrigan** presented her investigation of the environmental and health impact of the Aughinish Alumina plant - followed by heated debate – while several local environmental activists told us about other ecological threats that Askeaton faces.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/ASKEATON.html>

29 APRIL 2023

Hunt Museum, Limerick

Limerick artists **Chelsea Canavan & Deirdre Power** gave a workshop on the carbon footprint of food and a talk about their ongoing engagement with the urban and waterside communities in Limerick; urban farmer **Kevin Wallace** talked about Korean methods of farming without chemicals.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/LIMERICK2023.html>

12 MAY 2023

Shallee, Silvermines

Aideen Barry brought together artists, activists, thinkers, scientists and the public for food, drink, conversation and a projection of Katrine Costello's *The Silver Branch* (2018) at her home in the slopes of the Silvermines Mountains. Aideen talked about her own experience living with her family on land poisoned by toxic 20th Century mining.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/SILVERMINES.html>

27 MAY 2023

Mountshannon Market House

Mountshannon artist **Paul Berg** showed us progress on his *Crannog Ceoil*; sound-artist **Slavek Kwi**, also living in Mountshannon, played underwater sounds from the lake; **Niall Ó Brolcháin**, expert in peatlands conservation, discussed how and why we should rewet our bogs; Eco-poet **Grace Wells** read a selection of her work, and we finished with the music of harpist **Anna Tanvir** and her partner **Maninder Singh**, followed by sustainable teatime.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/MOUNTSHANNON.html>



Senator Aisling Dolan talks to Denis about solar power, Ballinasloe, June 2023

3 JUNE 2023

Portumna Castle

Dave Wall of the National Biodiversity Data Centre brought us on a field trip to study dragonflies and damselflies and artists **Anne Marie Deacy** and **Joanna McGlynn** showed some of what they gathered, recorded and learned from Portumna Forest in 2022 for the Eco Showboat project.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/PORTUMNA-2023.html>

9 JUNE 2023

Ballinasloe Library

A screening of a short film produced by the **Artfarm Collective** about the River Shiven, a little known but important reserve of biodiversity in East Galway.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/BALLINASLOE.html>

10 JUNE 2023

Ballinasloe Harbour

We launched the new musical Mayfly art installation, using sensors and arduino boards to turn Mayfly into a sound artwork, while Rachel O'Malley introduced people to some of the little creatures that live in our waterways.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/BALLINASLOE.html>

17 JUNE 2023

St Mary's School, Pollagh

In the company of **Pollagh Heritage Group**, we invited artist **Fiona McDonald** to talk to us about her work in the peatlands of Offaly and we projected a short film we made with photographer **Kevin O'Dwyer** exploring what remains of "an Slí Mhór" the medieval roadway used by pilgrims for centuries to walk to Clonmacnoise.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/POLLAGH.html>

24 JUNE 2023

48M, Tullamore Harbour

Sound artists **Irene Murphy** and **Mick O'Shea** improvised a live performance on the 48M using recordings made along the Grand Canal and playing their own self-made instruments to create an immersive sonic experience in the rusty metal interior of the old work barge.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/TULLAMORE.html>



The Dunbrody, which hosted our New Ross event,
August 2023

01 JULY 2023

Vicarstown Community Hall

Emily Miller - a young and talented artist who grew up on a local farm - showed us her artwork using taxidermy of small creatures killed by man, and we listened to music by Indian-Irish duo **Anna Tanvir** and **Maninder Singh**, followed by sustainable teatime.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/VICARSTOWN.html>

22 JULY 2023

VISUAL Carlow

Carlow artist **Saidhbhín Gibson** talked about her artwork '*Perpetual Glow*' and Indian-Irish music duo **Anna Tanvir & Maninder Singh** performed their own compositions and folk songs from around the world in many different languages. In honour of Carlow's long association with sugar production, Maninder - a chef as well as a musician - invited us to sample some sweet culinary delights from both Indian and European confectionary traditions.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/CARLOW.html>

29 JULY 2023

The Quay, St Mullins

Artist **Deirdre O'Mahony** presented a new work made for the Eco Showboat project, *The Song of the Farmer and the Dung Beetle*, performed live on the shores of the Barrow by vocal artist and performer **Siobhan Kavanagh** and multidisciplinary artist **Michelle Doyle**, focusing on the work of Kilkenny farmer **Suzanna Crampton**, who has been instrumental in raising issues about the importance of manure to maintain healthy soil and water ecologies.

http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/ST_MULLINS.html

5 AUGUST 2023

The Dunbrody, New Ross

An evening of spoken-word performances aboard the Dunbrody - a reconstructed famine ship - by three Wexford artists: storyteller **Joe Brennan**, performance artist **Suzanne Walsh** and poet **Ben Mac Caoilte**.

http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/NEW_ROSS.html

12 AUGUST 2023

Waterways College, Graiguenamanagh

Cindy Cummings improvised an adventurous mix of contemporary & traditional dance techniques in conversation with music performed by **Anna Tanvir & Maninder Singh**.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/GRAIGUENAMANAGH.html>



Suzanna Crampton and Deirdre O'Mahony talk about *The Song of the Farmer and the Dung Beetle* after the performance at St Mullins, 29 July 2023

19 AUGUST 2023

Waterways College, Graigueamanagh

Anne Cleary led a biodiversity walk along the banks of the Barrow; **Denis Connolly** and daughter **Lotti Connolly** sketched out and discussed their understanding of a fascinating chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses* in collaboration with **Anna Tanvir** and **Maninder Singh** who finished the afternoon with a short concert, followed by sustainable teatime.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/GRAIGUENAMANAGH.html>

2 SEPTEMBER 2023

The Townhall, 1 Windmill Lane, Dublin

We commissioned a suspended kinetic work by Howth born artist **Kerrie O'Leary** exploring sea levels in Dublin Bay, and an installation by Dublin artist **Alan Phelan** - *Glue Hands Here* - wittily referencing the use of art in climate change activism.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/DUBLIN.html>

6-24 SEPTEMBER 2023

College Lane Gallery, Howth

Jobst Graeve's College Lane Gallery hosted Dublin artist **Marie Hanlon's** installation *SALT / WATER*, the final art commission of the Eco Showboat programme, focusing on the complex relationship between salt and freshwater. <http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/HOWTH.html>

22 SEPTEMBER 2023

Naas Community Library

Naas Harbour was the Mayfly's final port of call and, for Culture Night at Naas Community Library, we showed a short film about living on the water in wintertime, *Winter on the Water*, made with local artist **Marta Golubowska**, and we hosted a final concert by Indian-Irish duo **Anna Tanvir** and **Maninder Singh**.

<http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/NAAS.html>

FESTIVALS

2-3 July 2022

Clonmel Junction Festival

Eco Showboat was invited to participate the Clonmel Junction Arts Festival in early July. With the participation of poets **Grace Wells**, **Mark Roper**, artist **Deirdre O'Mahony**, marine biologist **Rachel O'Malley**, in partnership with LAWPRO, Suir Can, Clonmel Rowing Club and Tipperary Sports Partnership, and with warm thanks to Cliona Maher and all the team at Clonmel Junction Festival.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ig-iNd5GuQ>

2-4 SEPTEMBER 2023

Electric Picnic

Eco Showboat participated in the *HumanLab* at the Electric Picnic, a new art and science hub at the Mindfield section of the festival, including curated workshops, talks and a conversation with emerging artists to give some insights into the range of work carried out by the Eco Showboat project.

Anne with Mark Roper and Grace Wells,
Clonmel Junction Festival, 3 July 2022





The Mayfly Flag, 2021. Deirdre Power & Chelsea Canavan

ART COMMISSIONS



How Rocks Can Save the Planet

Anne Cleary, Alan Phelan, Prof. Patrick Wyse Jackson, Denis Connolly at Banagher, July 2022

The Eco Showboat invited 42 local artists to participate in the project and many of them created new work for the project. In all, 22 artworks were commissioned:

The Mayfly Flag

Designed by Limerick artists **Chelsea Canavan & Deirdre Power**, the flag responds to the life and ecology of our rivers, reflecting the short lived aquatic insect of the northern hemisphere, the ephemeral Mayfly. The award winning artwork and flag flew over the Rockefeller Center during Earth Day Celebrations in April 2022 and has flown on the Mayfly during the entire Eco Showboat expedition.

http://www.schooloflooking.org/EcoSHOWBOAT/DEIRDRE_CHELSEA.html

An Crannog Ceoil

Begun four years ago, Mountshannon artist **Paul Berg's** 'An Crannog Ceoil' is a four meter diameter raft fixed to a disused pontoon. The project involves working with air displacement by water pressure (in this case using the natural flow and rise of Lough Derg, where the raft is located) to play sound pipes (deconstructed harmoniums, bamboo and timber). For his collaboration with the Eco Showboat, Paul constructed a range of low sounding, free floating pipes to be installed and played on the crannog.

<https://youtu.be/7ktlQdfli50?si=HczxHTzHL20Eq1Wq>

l a n d // i n g

Two walks in Portumna Forest in May 2022, created by the collaborative practice of sound artist **Anne Marie Deacy** and socially engaged artist **Joanna McGlynn**, both based in Galway. The complementing walks unearthed the sights, smells, sounds, textures and tastes of a biodiverse landscape, where forest edge meets floodplain on the shores of Lough Derg, and the two artists invited their public to connect with the natural environment and consider it in the context of a more than human world.

<https://youtu.be/oYcTuQOds-s?si=LpY4eIFgqxUf4HH>

How Rocks Can Save the Planet

Dublin artist **Alan Phelan** made this fabric intervention in the Banagher Marina in his signature red, green and blue colours. These relate to the Joly screen colour photography process which was invented by Offaly native John Joly in the 1890s - one of the first colour images.

<https://youtu.be/SwlnlySUv80?si=AfMF3k5OhqKZc2zq>



Ephemera II
Anna Macleod and Padraig Cunningham
Lough Key Forest Park, July 2022

Through Air and Water

Cork artists **Irene Murphy** and **Mick O'Shea** used microphones and hydrophones to record the sounds of wind and water and create an improvised live performance at Clonmacnoise using these recordings and their own self-made instruments to create an immersive sonic experience where the audience becomes part of a sonic ecosystem.

https://youtu.be/NNfKu5W3LBU?si=F5xLL_7njyzBpMmb

Aven

Folds 1,2&3

Boyle artist **Padraig Cunningham** joined speleologists to explore the Shannon Cave where the river passes underground and through a network of caves. His two works, installed in a meadow between the Boyle River and the Boyle Canal, express his understanding of this hidden river beneath our feet, flowing through powerful static forces captured in rock.

https://youtu.be/BszDc4_jueg?si=7tqXzTCJZ_JiUcNJ

Ephemera 1&2

Leitrim artist **Anna Macleod**, collaborating with **Padraig Cunningham**, focused her work for the Eco Showboat on the Mayfly – or *Ephemera* as they are called in Latin. These two installations, one in the lake and one in the forest, expressed her perception of the aquatic insect as a metaphor for the precariousness of existence in the Anthropocene & as a symbol of survival and renewal.

<https://youtu.be/wYU6HT8WxFA?si=SjJtdWuXqEJgPhgE>

<https://youtu.be/gWSt3T8GmsA?si=Jzo3mPKgBX-ICbzU>

Mayfly Improvisation

For our Eco Sunday event at Lough Key Forest Park on 31 July 2023, Anna Macleod invited musician Shahab Coohé and his brother Shayan to perform an improvisation inspired by the life-cycle of the Mayfly.

<https://youtu.be/d2H4z3gPvPI?si=kio9adccsfQTHBQ->

Mesocosms

Leitrim artist **Christine Mackey** created this floating sculptural work for the Eco Showboat at Drumshanbo, constructed using woven baskets of indigenous willow built on mycelium floats, seeded with bullrush, yellow flag iris and purple loosestrife, all acting as *phytoremediators* that purify and heal damaged water systems.

https://youtu.be/gQ_EkXanO5c?si=21J5SRp7O7eFEEgg



Cloud Appreciation
Diane Henshaw
Carrybridge, August 2022

The Water Song

Singer-songwriter **Deirdre Murphy**'s song '*The Water Song*' was commissioned by the Eco Showboat in early summer 2022 and first performed at our event at Belturbet. The song introduced us to a softer, cathartic, less analytic vision of water which softened our own encounters with the rich biodiversity of the waterways.

<https://youtu.be/Wga7G9otvXc?si=KHD-dDvGMcfRqhKg>

Cloud Appreciation

Fermanagh artist **Diane Henshaw** created this in situ artwork for the Eco Showboat at Carrybridge on the Erne, paying homage to Chinese landscape painting with her own painterly abstraction.

<https://youtu.be/JGmbjD5hqbA?si=CHDXJE-OpDmR38k1>

Stigma Damages

Over several years, Askeaton artist **Michele Horrigan** studied the environmental presence and health impacts of Aughinish Alumina Ireland's largest industrial complex, and Europe's biggest bauxite refinery. In spring 2023, she visited a town in Australia close to a bauxite refinery as is Askeaton. She compiled her findings into a presentation setting out her case with video, photography and data.

<https://youtu.be/M4B26jGrhXU?si=okLI-R3WAOZcsJ4P>

Pilgrim's Road Movie

A short film of a walk with photographer **Kevin O'Dwyer** in July 2022 exploring what remains of the medieval roadway used by pilgrims for centuries as they travelled along the Esker Riada - a continuous raised glacial ridge on the landscape formed over 12,000 years ago - on their way to Clonmacnoise. Kevin brought us through the post-industrial peatlands to visit many pieces of the historic jigsaw that is County Offaly.

<https://youtu.be/9APAyO-aTM?si=KyEpkvzBvwYwvK8O>

Play the 48M

Sound artists **Irene Murphy** and **Mick O'Shea** improvise a live performance on the 48M using recordings of the Grand Canal and their own self-made instruments to create an immersive sonic experience in the rusty metal interior of the old working barge.

<https://youtu.be/amY0VLzqsA?si=gdbcwglNErNvGHdf>



Alan Phelan presents *Glue Hands Here*
Windmill Lane, September 2023

The Song of the Farmer and the Dung Beetle

This new work by Kilkenny based artist **Deirdre O'Mahony** for the Eco Showboat programme, performed live on the shores of the Barrow by vocal artist and performer **Siobhan Kavanagh** and multidisciplinary artist **Michelle Doyle**, focused on the work of Kilkenny farmer **Suzanna Crampton**, who has been instrumental in raising issues about the importance of manure to healthy soil and water ecologies.

<https://vimeo.com/852159892?share=copy>

Water Life

Choreographer **Cindy Cummings** improvises a dance to the music of **Anna Tanvir** and **Maninder Singh** at the Waterways College, Graiguenamanagh, for the programme of the Eco Showboat's *Journey to the East*.

<https://vimeo.com/854952682?share=copy>

372.5 ~ DUBLIN BAY

Young Dublin artist **Kerrie O'Leary** created this kinetic artwork exploring sea levels in Dublin Port, installed in the generous volume of the Townhall at Windmill Lane for the final stop of our *Journey to the East Expedition*.

<https://vimeo.com/865274614?share=copy>

Glue Hands Here

Dublin artist **Alan Phelan's** installation in the Townhall at Windmill Lane for the final stop of our *Journey to the East Expedition*, using his trademark red green and blue to wittily reference the use of art in climate change activism.

<https://vimeo.com/865269562?share=copy>

SALT / WATER

Dublin artist **Marie Hanlon's** mixed media installation, focusing on the complex relationship between salt and freshwater, was installed at Jobst Graeve's College Lane Gallery for three weeks in September 2023, the final art commission of the Eco Showboat programme.

<https://vimeo.com/865146206?share=copy>

Winter on the Water

Artist **Marta Golubowska, who** lives on a canal boat at Robertstown in County Kildare with her family, made this documentary with us during the winter of 2022-2023, looking at the challenges they face living on the water in wintertime.

<https://vimeo.com/868412947?share=copy>



Mayfly with SVT Canoe and Kayak Club
Vicarstown, Saturday July 1st 2023

Eco Showboat events were cross disciplinary thematic events, aimed at stimulating debate around fresh water ecology. The commissioned artists had the opportunity to present or discuss their work, which generally involved a longer engagement with community or location. Added to this, talks and workshops were the focal point of the day.

Booking

A small allocation of tickets for each Eco Sunday were available on Eventbrite. The Eventbrite pages were used to promote the event, provide additional information to those interested in attending and to make communities aware of the fact that they could visit the Showboat and that there were organised events.

Attendee Figures

Team members recorded numbers attending individual events within the larger programme.

Total Number of Attendees at Eco Showboat events: 13,162

LOCATION(S) OR VENUE	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	DATE ACTIVITY STARTED	DATE ACTIVITY ENDED	NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES OR ACTIVITY SESSIONS	PUBLIC ATTENDANCES	COMMENTS/NOTES
LIMERICK: Custom House Dock (Marina)	EXHIBITION	24.4.22	29.4.22	6	105	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
LIMERICK: Curraghgour Boat Club	WORKSHOP/EXHIBITION	30.4.22	30.4.22	3	271	Art workshops, projections
LIMERICK: Hunt Museum (Eco Sunday)	SEMINAR	1.5.22	1.5.22	1	190	Talks by artists, activists & scientists
KILLALOE (Marina)	EXHIBITION	3.5.22	7.5.22	4	99	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
KILLALOE (Eco Sunday)	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	8.5.22	8.5.22	1	126	Talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
SCARRIFF (Marina)	EXHIBITION	9.5.22	14.5.22	6	117	Presentation of zero-carbon vessel
SCARRIFF (Eco Sunday)	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	15.5.22	15.5.22	1	106	Talks & workshops by artists & activists
DROMINEER (Marina)	EXHIBITION	16.5.22	17.5.22	2	101	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
DROMINEER (Eco Sunday)	WORKSHOP/PERFORMANCES	18.5.22	18.5.22	1	115	Talks & workshops by artists & activists
PORTUMNA (Marina)	EXHIBITION	19.5.22	21.5.22	3	164	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
PORTUMNA (Eco Sunday)	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	22.5.22	22.5.22	1	152	Talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
SHANNONBRIDGE (Marina)	EXHIBITION	23.5.22	27.5.22	5	163	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
SHANNONBRIDGE: Fort (Eco Sunday)	WORKSHOP/PERFORMANCES	28.5.22	28.5.22	1	107	Talks & workshops by artists & activists
CLONMACNOISE (Eco Sunday)	PERFORMANCE	29.5.22	29.5.22	1	70	Sound art performance
CLONMEL ROWING CLUB	EXHIBITION	2.7.22	2.7.22	1	158	Projection & workshops by artists & activists
CLONMEL: Denis Burke Park	WORKSHOP/EXHIBITION	3.7.22	3.7.22	1	297	Talks & workshops by artists & activists
BANAGHER (Marina)	EXHIBITION	5.7.22	9.7.22	5	200	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
BANAGHER (Eco Sunday)	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	10.7.22	10.7.22	1	186	Talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
CLONMACNOISE (Marina)	EXHIBITION	11.7.22	13.7.22	3	166	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
ATHLDNE (Marina)	EXHIBITION	14.7.22	15.7.22	2	130	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
LANESBOROUGH (Marina)	EXHIBITION	16.7.22	17.7.22	2	199	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
TARMONBARRY (Marina)	EXHIBITION	18.7.22	19.7.22	2	143	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
CARRICK-ON-SHANNON (Marina)	EXHIBITION	20.7.22	21.7.22	2	130	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
BOYLE (Marina)	EXHIBITION	22.7.22	23.7.22	2	153	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
BOYLE: King House (Eco Sunday)	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	24.7.22	24.7.22	1	108	Talks & workshops by artists & activists
DOON SHORE (Marina)	EXHIBITION	25.7.22	30.7.22	6	148	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
LOUGH KEY VISITOR CENTRE (Eco Sunday)	PERFORMANCES	31.7.22	31.7.22	1	308	Talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
DRUMSHANBO (Marina)	EXHIBITION	2.8.22	6.8.22	5	206	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
DRUMSHANBO (Eco Sunday)	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	7.8.22	7.8.22	1	230	Talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
LETRIM VILLAGE (Marina)	EXHIBITION	9.8.22	9.8.22	1	108	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
BALLYCONNELL (Marina)	EXHIBITION	10.8.22	11.8.22	2	111	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
BELTURBET (Marina)	EXHIBITION	12.8.22	13.8.22	2	173	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
BELTURBET (Eco Sunday)	WORKSHOP/PERFORMANCES	14.8.22	14.8.22	1	269	Performances, talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
ENNISKILLEN (Marina)	EXHIBITION	16.8.22	18.8.22	3	128	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
CARRYBRIDGE (Marina)	EXHIBITION	19.8.22	20.8.22	2	176	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
CARRYBRIDGE (Eco Sunday)	PERFORMANCE	21.8.22	21.8.22	1	245	Performances, talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
ELECTRIC PICNIC (Mindfield)	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	2.9.22	4.9.22	3	519	Performances, talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
ASKEATON (Marina)	EXHIBITION	20.4.23	25.4.23	6	172	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
ASKEATON: Community Centre	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	22.4.23	22.4.23	1	228	Talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
LIMERICK: Custom House Dock (Marina)	EXHIBITION	26.4.23	28.4.23	3	187	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
LIMERICK: Hunt Museum	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	29.4.23	29.4.23	1	172	Talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
DROMINEER (Marina)	EXHIBITION	4.5.23	10.5.23	6	150	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
SILVERMINES (Shallee)	SEMINAR	12.5.23	12.5.23	1	122	Projections & talks by artists & activists
MOUNTSHANNON (Marina)	EXHIBITION	24.5.23	28.5.23	4	114	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
MOUNTSHANNON MARKETHOUSE	SEMINAR/PERFORMANCES	27.5.23	27.5.23	1	321	Performances, talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
PORTUMNA (Marina)	EXHIBITION	30.5.23	4.6.23	5	168	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
PORTUMNA CASTLE	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	3.6.23	3.6.23	1	234	Talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
BALLINASLOE (Marina)	EXHIBITION	7.6.23	11.6.23	4	273	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
BALLINASLOE LIBRARY	SEMINAR/PERFORMANCES	9.6.23	9.6.23	1	196	Projection & workshops by artists & activists
POLLAGH (Marina)	EXHIBITION	14.6.23	18.6.23	4	238	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
POLLAGH: ST MARY'S SCHOOL	SEMINAR/PERFORMANCES	17.6.23	17.6.23	1	194	Projections & talks by artists & activists
TULLAMORE HARBOUR	PERFORMANCE	24.6.23	24.6.23	1	16	Sound art performance
VICARSTOWN (Marina)	EXHIBITION	29.6.23	2.7.23	3	145	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
VICARSTOWN (Community Centre)	SEMINAR/PERFORMANCES	1.7.23	1.7.23	1	232	Performances, talks & workshops by artists, activists & scientists
CARLDW (Marina)	EXHIBITION	20.7.23	24.7.23	4	205	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
CARLDW VISUAL	SEMINAR/PERFORMANCES	22.7.23	22.7.23	1	269	Performances, talks & workshops by artists & activists
ST MULLINS (Quay)	PERFORMANCE	29.7.23	29.7.23	1	187	Sound art performance
ST MULLINS (Blanchfields Pub)	SEMINAR	29.7.23	29.7.23	1	161	Talks by artists & activists
NEW ROSS (Marina)	EXHIBITION	3.8.23	6.8.23	3	145	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
NEW ROSS: Dunbrody	PERFORMANCES	5.8.23	5.8.23	1	246	Performances workshops by artists & scientists
GRAIGUENAMANAGH (Marina)	EXHIBITION	8.8.23	20.8.23	11	423	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
GRAIGUENAMANAGH: Waterways College	SEMINAR/WORKSHOP	12.8.23	12.8.23	1	226	Performances & talks by artists
GRAIGUENAMANAGH: Waterways College	PERFORMANCES	19.8.23	19.8.23	1	318	Performances & talks by artists
DUBLIN: Windmill Lane	SEMINAR/PERFORMANCES	2.9.23	2.9.23	1	306	Performances & talks by artists
HOWTH: College Lane Gallery	EXHIBITION	6.9.23	24.9.23	15	469	3 week art exhibition, Wednesdays to Sundays 11am-4pm
NAAS (Harbour)	EXHIBITION	22.9.23	22.9.23	1	218	Exhibition of zero-carbon vessel in presence of artists
NAAS: Community Library	SEMINAR/PERFORMANCES	22.9.23	22.9.23	1	450	Performances & talks by artists
TOTALS				172	13162	



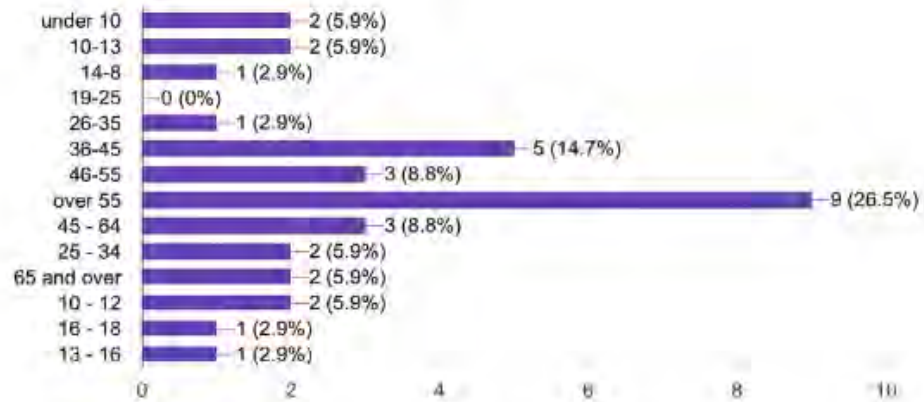
Lough Key, July 2022: Tommy Earley talks about sustainable farming

A brief questionnaire was sent to the Eventbrite bookers. The findings from respondents are included below. This is a small sample, but it reflects the informal data collected in visitor books and comment sheets supplied to visitors attending Eco Sunday events. The gender break down in the survey reflects the gender of those who booked tickets in advance. These were largely women.

Included is a sample of comments submitted with questionnaires.

What Age bracket do you fall under?

34 responses

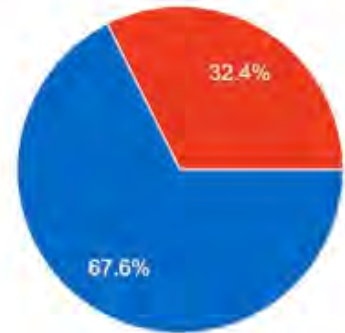




Artist Christine Mackey talks at Acres Lake, August 2022

Do you identify with one of the terms below? If so, please indicate.

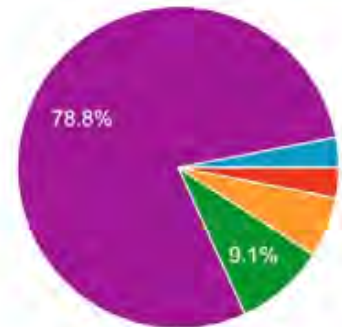
34 responses



- Female
- Male
- Non binary
- Prefer not to say

How would you rate the content of the talk?

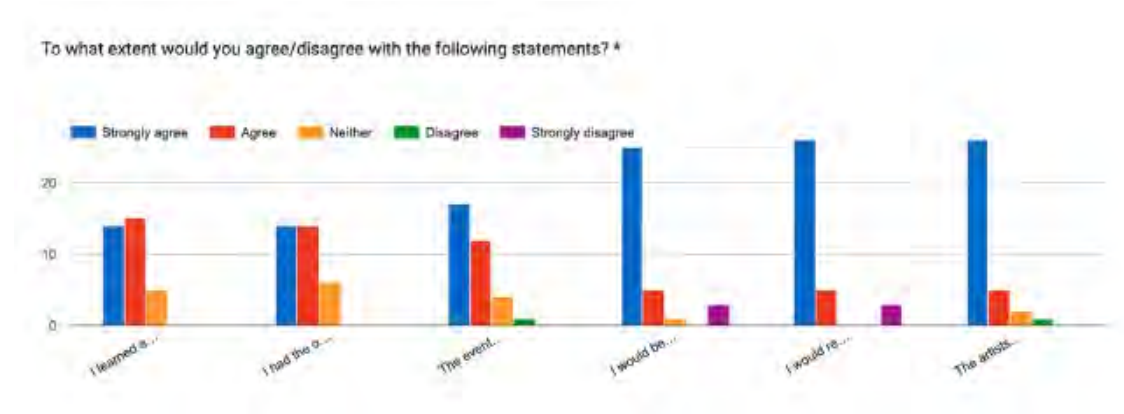
33 responses



- Very poor
- Poor
- Neutral
- Good
- Very Good
- Don't know



Denis Connolly talks at Vicarstown Community Hall, July 2023



I learned a lot about fresh-water biodiversity

I had the opportunity to consider the River Shannon in the context of Climate Change

The event helped me consider climate impacts

I would be interested in attending more Eco Showboat events.

I would recommend this event to a friend.

The artists and scientists delivering this event were well informed and engaging.

SOCIAL MEDIA

All accounts established in mid 2021.

Facebook - 1747 followers

Twitter - 463 followers

Linkedin - 300 followers

Instagram - 1198 followers

Instagram

Followers - 1198

Accounts engaged with in July, August, September - 2,044

The project has followers in Ireland, United Kingdom, France, United States and Germany

Follower Age Range

13-17 0.2%

18-24 5.7%

25-34 18.5%

35-44 25.6%

45-54 28.7%

55-64 14.2%

65+ 6.8%

Gender

75.9% Women

24% Men

Films and clips from the project have been viewed over 12,000 times on Instagram

Twitter

463 followers

Assessing the figures from June to August 2022, when the majority of the Eco Showboat tour took place, tweets earned 30, 700 impressions over this 90 day period.

Facebook

Friends 1,747

Films and clips from the project have been viewed more than 5,000 times in 2022

Facebook has a broad audience of followers and was used as a ‘sharing’ tool with community groups in locations along the tour route and to link in with Local Authority Arts Officers, who shared information on events. The Facebook Page was also utilised to join special interest groups such as Shannon Boat Owners, Boat Clubs, Community Notice Boards and Regional Newspapers and Tourism organisations. The linking to other Facebook Groups was aimed at targeted marketing and promotion of the Eco Showboat Project. This was a strategy to extend the reach of the project and to enhance awareness of the multi-disciplinary aspects of the work. Individual posts were prepared and shared on multiple pages throughout the course of the 2022 and 2023 expeditions.

Limerick Culture and Arts Office	23,000 followers
Leitrim Arts Office	1,700 followers
Galway Arts	4,700 followers
Westmeath Arts Office	1,300 followers
Longford Arts Office	467 followers
Clare Arts Office	2,800 followers
Offaly Arts Office	2,200 followers

Sample of Cross Disciplinary Groups

Julian Fowler, BBC Journalist, Tyrone	2,000 followers
Drumshanbo Tidy Towns	1,200 followers
Local Authority Waters Programme	2,500 followers
Curraghgour Boat Club	347 followers
Offaly History	7,600 followers
Boyle Community Hub	1,100 members

In addition to acknowledging the support and funding received from the project’s main funders were also supportive on social media.

Creative Ireland, with its community and education focus, featured the project on its e-bulletin on multiple occasions:

May 2020 <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/news/the-eco-showboat/>

August 2021 <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/news/the-eco-showboat/>

April 2022 <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/event/eco-showboat-2/>

Creative Ireland also 'shared' multiple Eco Showboat Posts across its social media platforms throughout the tour.

Instagram - 11,400 followers

Facebook - 25,000 followers

Twitter - 24,500 followers

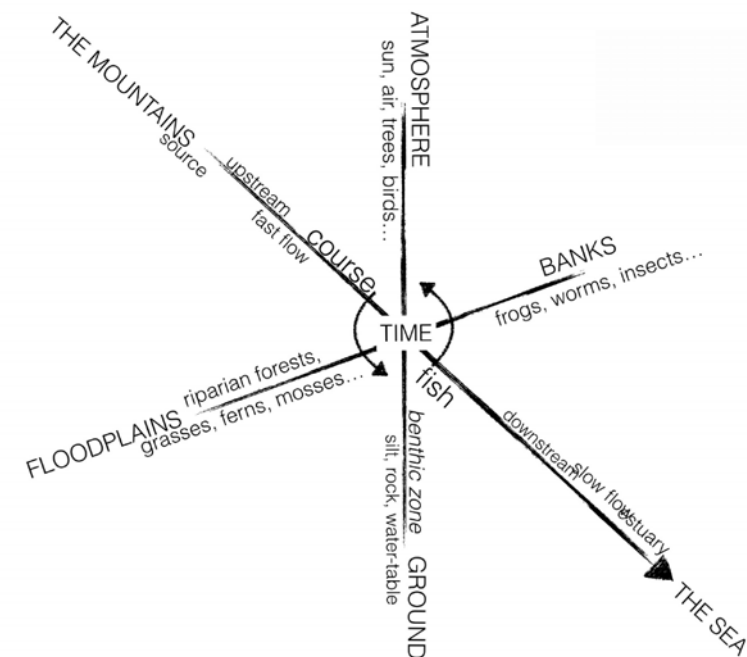
Science Foundation Ireland was particularly supportive of the Eco Showboat on Instagram, sharing images and information in its stories throughout July, August, September 2022.

LAWPRO shared information related to specific events on the tour, particularly where LAWPRO scientists joined Eco Showboat on the tour. LAWPRO is on Twitter and Facebook.

Facebook - 2,500 followers and Twitter 2,995 followers

Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics is a particularly supportive partner on Twitter - retweeting almost all tweets related to the project.

Followers - 9,509





PUSHING THE BOAT OUT FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Artists are making their way across Ireland's inland waterways in a solar-powered boat this summer, talking to locals about climate action



Sylvia Thompson

A solar-powered boat, skippered by artists, is making its way across Ireland's inland waterways this summer, engaging with scientists, artists and local communities about climate action along the way.

This novel project began last summer when Paris-based Irish artists Denis Connolly and Anne Cleary travelled up the Shannon-Erne waterway from Limerick to Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, on their converted sailing boat, the Mayfly, creating pop-up events en route.

On April 22nd this year, Connolly began a second voyage west to east, starting from Askeaton on the Shannon estuary with the aim to reach the Irish Sea at Howth on Sep-

tember 9th. Cleary will join him along the second half of the journey later this month.

The Irish Times caught up with Connolly in the Co Laois village of Vicarstown recently. The bright colourful boat with its solar-panelled roof, playful wind turbine and flag is moored close to a bridge on the Grand Canal in this serene spot.

'Freedom to travel'

Swallows flit in and out of the eaves of the heritage buildings on the canal-side of what is now part of the Barrow Way cycling route. Meanwhile, local people are gathering in the nearby community hall to listen to Connolly speak about his adventures.

Speaking in advance of his talk, Connolly explains how he and Cleary moved to Paris following their studies in architecture in Dublin. "We practised architecture through the 1990s and then we drifted towards art. When our twin daughters finished school, that gave us the freedom to travel so we decided to integrate the environment into our art practices," says Connolly.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Cleary

and Connolly came up with the idea of travelling on the inland waterways of Ireland in a zero-carbon boat and got funding from local authorities, the Arts Council, Creative Ireland and the Science Foundation of Ireland for their expedition.

In 2022, scientists engaged locals in a pop-up umbrella-domed tent alongside the boat. Topics ranged from rewetting boglands to fracking, foods and sounds of the forest to An Crannog Ceoil, a musical installation by Paul Berg on Lough Derg. Pieces of music and art were commissioned along the route.

In 2023, the couple is drawing larger crowds to community centres and libraries at their stop-offs. "The idea is to make people aware of both the qualities and the problems of our inland waterways and interconnections between freshwater, farming practices in catchment areas and the seawaters," says Connolly. He also mentions the risks of bringing invasive species such as zebra mussels on the inland waterways and how important it is for boat users to clean their gear and their boats before moving from one waterway to another.

Video footage

In his talk in Vicarstown, Connolly shows people video footage from last year's voyage from Limerick to Enniskillen. "We knew nothing about boats and rivers when we started. Artists are naturally inclined to look at small things which is why so few artists tackle climate change but following the advice of Indian writer, Amitav Ghosh in *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, we began with what we know."

Cleary, who is involved with the French Green Party (*Europe Écologie les Verts*) adds that for her, it's important that people see that taking on climate action doesn't have to be difficult. "We've met people cleaning rivers, tackling invasive species, baking and farming sustainably and re-wilding — the more people who do things, the bigger impact it will have. We are tapping into these networks and giving them a forum on our journey."

In Vicarstown, freshwater ecologist Rachel O'Malley is helping children identify the tiny swimming insects in a basin of water she took from a nearby river earlier that day. "It's important that children understand what lives in the river and these

66

We've met people cleaning rivers, tackling invasive species, baking and farming sustainably and re-wilding — the more people who do things, the bigger impact it will have

macro-invertebrates are vital fish food and important for us to have a healthy ecosystem," says O'Malley who is part of the Mayfly team at several of its stop-offs this summer.

In advance of their visits to towns and villages on their route, Connolly and Cleary seek out local artists to engage about environmental issues. For instance, in Askeaton, there was intense debate about the "red mud fields" left over from processing bauxite into aluminium at the Aughinish Alumina plant there. "It's like a wet red desert and artist Michele Horrigan spoke about how she discovered high levels of aluminium in her blood which led to an hour-long row," explains Connolly.

Soil pollution

At Dromineer, Co Tipperary artist Aideen Barry spoke about her concerns about soil pollution from mining near her home on the side of the Silvermines mountains.

But it's not all doom and gloom. In Vicarstown, artist, Emily Miller shows some of her miniature paintings inspired by her father's organic farm nearby. "I so appreciate the efforts farmers put in to give us food. It can be challenging, isolating and not always financially rewarding work yet we'll need farmers more than ever with more plant-based diets in the future," says Miller.

Miller also creates large framed taxidermist pieces made from hedgehogs, squir-

rels and other small animals she finds dead on the road. "I want to give dignity to these creatures who didn't receive dignity in their lives," she explains.

Irish-Indian harpist Anna Tanvir and her chef/musician Indian husband Maninder Singh make vegan treats and chai tea for everyone before performing songs in Irish, English, French, Swahili, Hindi and Malagasy.

They will join the Mayfly again in Carlow town (July 20th) and St Mullins (July 29th). "It's a very generous thing that Denis and Anne are doing — providing a platform for people to listen free to artists and musicians while also giving them an insight into the environmental issues," says Tanvir.

Listening to Connolly speak and watching his enthusiasm for bringing local artists and scientists together, one gets the feeling these journeys will continue. "Next year, we hope to go along the Irish coast to tour the lighthouses of Ireland. We will continue to live in Paris but we are happy to have a more itinerant lifestyle too," he says.

Some of the stops on the Mayfly eco-showboat's journey are: St Mullins, Co Carlow (July 29th), New Ross, Co Wexford (August 5th), the Grand Canal Dock, Dublin (September 2nd) and Howth (September 9th). See schooloflooking.org for full details of the itinerary.

Artist Denis Connolly on board the Mayfly at Vicarstown, Co Laois this week. Below: Connolly and Anne Cleary during last year's voyage.

PHOTOGRAPH: NICK BRADSHAW/BRENDAN DOWD



NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

02/07/2022

THE TIMES

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-eco-showboat-aims-to-spark-climate-action-but-what-sort-of-action-do-we-want-vvq5wzrx8>

04/07/2022

RTE ARENA

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-mayfly-eco-showboat-peter-brook-brian-and/id331543709?i=1000568907907>

19/08/2022

BBC NORTHERN IRELAND

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-62603771>

BBC Newsline TV audience is 150,000

Article on BBC News NI got 23,000 views

BBC NI site - 9,700 views

Twitter - 2,800 views

FB Video - 3,700 views

07/10/2022

RTE NATIONWIDE

<https://www.rte.ie/player/series/nationwide/SI0000001172?epguid=IH000412870>

21/04/2023

THE IRISH TIMES

Earth Day: 11 Irish visions of the future. Gemma Tipton, Irish Times, 21 april 2023.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/2023/04/21/earth-day-11-irish-visions-of-the-future/>

08/07/2023

THE IRISH TIMES

<https://www.irishtimes.com/environment/climate-crisis/2023/07/08/novel-project-aims-to-convince-people-that-climate-action-doesnt-have-to-be-difficult/>

Summer 2023

THE GLOSS

<https://thegloss.ie/an-eco-showboat-is-educating-ireland-on-climate-change-one-waterway-at-a-time/>





Fri 07 October 2022

We take to the water, with a couple who are travelling the Shannon on an electric, solar powered boat. We meet a Wexford community who have undertaken a project to improve water quality in their local stream. Plus, the ongoing national effort to protect and support salmon stocks in our rivers.

Accessibility

Subtitle (English)



REGIONAL MEDIA (SELECTION)

<https://www.leinsterleader.ie/news/home/1290982/naas-library-announce-exciting-events-for-culture-night-2023.html>

<https://www.insight-centre.org/insights-on-peatland-restoration-on-the-shores-of-the-river-shannon/>

<https://visualcarlow.ie/whats-on/the-eco-show-boat-comes-to-carlow>

<https://visualcarlow.ie/whats-on/the-eco-show-boat-comes-to-carlow>

<https://wexfordweekly.com/2023/07/31/solar-powered-eco-showboat-will-be-in-new-ross-this-saturday/>

<https://imro.ie/news/interdisciplinary-artist-and-musician-deirdre-murphy-shares-the-water-song/>

<https://www.impartialreporter.com/news/20671381.eco-showboat-dock-carrybridge-afternoon-performance-art-science/>

<https://www.offalyindependent.ie/2022/06/28/eco-showboat-to-dock-in-banagher-for-special-climate-focused-event/>

<https://fermanaghherald.com/2022/08/eco-showboat-on-its-way-to-fermanagh/>

<https://www.leitrimobserver.ie/news/drumshanbo/876151/artists-eco-showboat-to-visit-drumshanbo-lake.html>

<https://electricboats.media/>

<https://www.anglocelt.ie/2022/08/09/ecoboat-set-to-dock-in-belturbet/>

<https://irishtechnews.ie/the-eco-showboat-expedition-2022/>

<https://www.ilovelimerick.ie/the-mayfly/>

<https://twitter.com/ilovelimerick/status/1521485217646747651>

<https://www.huntmuseum.com/whats-on/eco-boat-launch/>

<https://www.limerickpost.ie/2022/04/05/limerick-riverfest-returns-over-may-bank-holiday-weekend/>

<https://www.live95fm.ie/news/live95-news/riverfest-returns-to-limerick-this-may-bank-holiday-weekend/>

<https://www.glartent.com/IE/Limerick/207419869276006/Riverfest-Limerick>

<https://www.visiteastclare.ie/tec-events/ecoshow-boat-in-killaloe/>

<https://clarearts.ie/2022/05/eco-showboat-comes-to-clare/>

<https://clarearts.ie/events/the-eco-showboat-mayfly-summer-expedition-2022-comes-to-scariff/>

<https://www.tipperarylive.ie/news/local-news/807748/busy-programme-for-tipperary-bealtaine-festival.html>

<https://allevents.in/dromineer/eco-showboat-at-bealtaine/10000308518315587>



FEEDBACK

2 VISITORS TO ECO SHOWBOAT AT KILLALOE

Man - 50's Woman - 40's

Where did you hear about the Eco Showboat?

We read about it online. We are both interested in gardening and have an off grid airbnb. We wanted to hear the talks and the Sunday suited us to travel to the event. We came from Kilkenny.

What attracted you to the event?

We liked the mix of art and science. We are both quite well informed about environmental issues, but the art element made it sound like it might be fun.

What did you think about the boat and the set up on the day?

We loved the Pangolin structure. I was very interested in how it was designed and held together. I wish I had asked about that on the day. The talks were excellent, really enjoyable and there seemed to be a good mix of ages there. We did some drawing. That was nicely guided by the artists. We followed the project on Instagram

17 YEAR OLD WHO ATTENDED THE EVENT IN PORTUMNA

Where did you hear about the Eco Showboat?

My parents read about it online and asked me if I wanted to come. My Dad took me here today.

What attracted you to the event?

I am very interested in the environment and climate action. I was involved in the School Strike for the Climate in my local area.

What did you think about the boat and the set up on the day?

I thought it was great. I loved the boat and the umbrellas. The forest walk was so interesting and I felt a little self-conscious but everyone got involved and took part so I did too. I drew a picture!



Participants at Portumna Forest, May 2022

FAMILY 2 PARENTS AND 1 TEENAGER, LIMERICK

Where did you hear about the Eco Showboat?

We came in for Riverfest and we saw the boat and came over. I didn't know what it was to be honest, but it all looked interesting so we stayed for a while.

What did you think about the boat and the set up on the day?

I went to the talk in the Hunt Museum and it was really good. I learned a lot. I didn't expect this when I came in. My daughter loved the drawing and we had a look at the exhibition in the Hunt. It was great.

ATTENDEE AT WINDMILL LANE, 2 SEPTEMBER 2023

I am a carpenter, I don't know much about these subjects. It interests me because I live ecologically, I built my own house, I don't drive a car, I am very concerned about nature, I try to live in a conscious way, so I am interested.

ATTENDEE AT WINDMILL LANE, 2 SEPTEMBER 2023

I work in an office. [...] I just saw the advertisement about the changes in the sea level in an event page, so I came. I am from Mongolia, so we have bad air conditions, pollution, and I'm very interested about the commotion of it. It is my first time at this type of event. I want to know more and join this kind of event.

ECO ACTIVIST, COLLEGE LANE EVENT, HOWTH, 9 SEPTEMBER 2023

I write educational materials. I am the author of textbooks. I am also doing an environmental project; it is kind of a community project to do with environmental stewardship for children. I did not know about the Eco Showboat before and I'm really excited about it. Talking to Denis certainly sparks ideas for things we can collaborate on. This was meant to be, I'm looking forward to it!

ARCHITECT, COLLEGE LANE EVENT, HOWTH, 9 SEPTEMBER 2023

I am an architect in Dublin, I am also producing drawings and photos, I am trying to establish a link between people and places. The Eco Showboat is fantastic, It is so "multi" – it involves so many artists, so many communities, so many people become involved that had previously no



Participants at VISUAL Carlow, July 2023

interest on it. But once they have been exposed to the whole idea behind the eco showboat they realize that we all are interested, and we have to be. It is the way of the future. It has been a fantastic project to have witnessed. I have followed it online. They engage with people and get people on their side. The local communities become aware of how - in a modest way to start with - we can all change our lifestyle to an extent. It is down to individuals and small communities to start with.

ATTENDEE AT TRINITY COLLEGE TALK, 21 SEPTEMBER, 2023

I work as a writer and artist, and I teach in NCAD. I thought [the presentation] was incredible: huge amounts of work putting people and organization together and it is lovely to see Ireland like that, through the waterways joined up through the infrastructure and also the people and the issues, the biggest issue being climate change. I was absolutely blown away by the amount of work that was put into it. The impact is kind of incremental, but even if you reach one or 2 people, it has a ripple effect - the more you go to these events the more you realize it is an emergency.

ATTENDEE, NAAS, CULTURE NIGHT, 22 SEPTEMBER 2023

My husband is a biologist, so my kids are interested. They were here talking about fresh water and different things that live in it , and it is great to have some samples and work through the documents here and try to identify them. It is definitely entertaining and hopefully will increase a bit of awareness.

COMMENTS IN VISITOR BOOK

Fascinating talk on context of Ardnacrusha

Excellent talk from Professor Tom Cosgrove

Children really enjoyed the interactivity of the event. Well done!

This talk on non native elements of the Lough Derg bio system was very interesting and informative



Clare Breen leads a workshop at VISUAL Carlow
July 2023

Brought my 2 children, age 3 and 5, who really enjoyed the 'fishing' and identifying of the samples etc, and also the sketching. They were a bit young to engage with the talks much, but I thought the tent structure and the atmosphere was great. Was shame there weren't bigger numbers but nice to see numbers grow through the afternoon.

Found event info on website good and detailed but would have been great to see age guidance and suitability of children referenced too. Was bit unclear whether you would be able to view or go on boat or the Crannog Ceoil....

I loved the project and how it plans to engage with the natural environment of the river Shannon with the artists taking a very hands on approachs by living on the mayfly.

It is great to see a project like this visit and engage with places that may have been overlooked previously, or only looked at as recreation spaces.

It challanges us to reexamine our natural surroundings with more importance.

Our children loved the pavillion structure as well as the interactive art elements

Loved the poetry, harp playing and eco farming presentation. Well done all.

I so enjoyed this event, my own work is about the restoration of sitka forestry to native woodland so it ticked all my boxes and more! I even learned a new word: transpiration. The tree shelter sculpture and mint tea infusion at the end of the walk ended it nicely. Anne-Marie and Joanna did a great job communicating the richness of the site in an interesting way. Looking forward to the next Eco Showboat event...

Great setup. Love the umbrellas. Eclectic mix of people.

Keep up the good work.

Not engaging at all, but a really nice man.

BRILLIANT & INTERESTING EVENTS!!! but poorly advertised even locally to the forthcoming event, councils should be more pro-active in assisting

Thanks, we had so much fun and learned lots of new facts



Participants at Naas Community Library,
Culture Night, September 2023

I really liked looking at the different creatures and looking at the boat.

Thank you so much I loved the visit to Dromineer and I loved the solar cooker

As the boat travels this summer interest will peak in the ideas via word of mouth in river communities I believe the placement of the eco showboat project at marinas where river festivals are on the calendar for 2023 will encourage a wider passing audience of those who miss out this year for sharing of information and knowledge. Our visit was very informative and engaging.

Thoroughly enjoyed and the organisers input was also great.

Also, apologies for the hound hair left on your mats, tat was ya I'm afraid.

Le meas, Annie.

I am a primary school teacher and would love some events for schools

Thoroughly enjoyed this talk, it was a real eye opener about something I knew nothing about. loved the art work and how science and art combine to deepen an experience.

Exciting project and glad we got to come see it and to learn about the project along with water quality information.

Really enjoyable event. Excellent speakers, informative engaging and real

Love the whole concept - artists and ecologists presenting together is fantastic. Well done with the programme.

Will be watching out for more

Really lovely day, very interesting and inspiring

I think you need a new bigger boat



Anne Cleary, backstage at Windmill Lane, September 2023

TEAM MEMBER: RACHEL O'MALLEY, MARINE BIOLOGIST

Overall assessment of the reaction to the workshops on the tour?

Overall, I think the workshops went down very well, with all ages. People were very interested in learning about macroinvertebrates insects that live in our rivers and lakes and learning more about water quality.

Children loved looking at the insects and parents got involved then too. There was a lot of engagement at all the 'Eco Sunday' events and I think it made people think more about water quality and why it is so important for all of us that use our rivers and lakes.

What worked and what didn't?

I found that leaving a small amount of materials out and adding to it slowly when more people came along worked really well rather than having too much out all at once. It was great to work with small groups and letting participants take their time and give them space to carry out the workshop.

I used to have fishing flies and books out to link water quality back to fishing but, mid journey, I decided this might not be the best way to promote water as there was a backlash for this. Certain people didn't understand why I wanted to promote fishing and compared it to 'head hunting'. In order to ensure there was no barrier in place for the workshops I pulled the fishing element out of the workshop.

At the workshops people asked about lots of different things, especially climate change and declining biodiversity. They loved what Anne (Cleary) and Denis (Connolly) were doing. If people couldn't attend or stay for long they would ask if we would come back again. Unfortunately, it was a one day event. A lot of the time, kids lost track of time and spent ages at the workshop carefully studying the insects. There was an aspect of mindfulness in there also.

Additional Comments?

It was great to have LAWPRO there as well and I feel we all worked well together. It was great having community officers from the local area who knew the area well and were able to answer questions I was unsure of.



EVALUATION

The evaluation of the project is based on assessment of how the Eco Showboat met its original aims and goals in a small converted yacht. The 'Mayfly', a sister boat to the 48M (heritage barge) changed the project, both in terms of the geographical journey undertaken, but, also, in terms of re-imagining how original goals could be achieved.

METHODOLOGY

- Original goals of the project have been evaluated alongside the programme and project delivery in 2022 and 2023.
- Public attendance at engagement events has been recorded.
- Open questionnaires have been sent to attendees at engagement events and findings included.
- A visitor/log book has recorded on site responses to interactions with the project.
- The journey has been recorded in photography and film and these form the basis a piece of art River Movie, as promotional material, and to be utilised as part of future pedagogy.
- Team members have been interviewed and feedback sought on an ongoing basis.
- Data has been recorded on public engagement through social media platforms.
- Press and promotional material has been collated and recorded.

EVALUATION: OVERVIEW

The onset of COVID and the impact of Brexit led the project leads (Anne Cleary and Denis Connolly) to rethink the project and reimagine what was possible to meet their goals. The renovation of the heritage barge, 48M was neither practical or affordable post-pandemic. The team was intent on completing a voyage on Ireland's waterways iover 2022-2023 and to liaise with the commissioned artists and communities along the route. It was decided that the 'Mayfly', a small converted yacht fitted out with an inboard electric motor powered by a battery bank charged by a solar array would be the boat used for this voyage. It required considerable input from the team leaders, both in terms of replanning and organisation, to enact this fundamental change to the project. The project leads were convinced that their new proposal would meet their original goals and realise the ambition and reach planned for the Eco Showboat Project.

In addition to mooring the boat at various locations along the inland waterways, they designed a public engagement 'campus' which would fulfil their original goal to have outdoor engagement at the

waterside and provide space for talks, workshops and interaction between artists, STEM professionals and public. This was a requirement while planning in 2021 due to limitations in group sizes indoors, and the future evolution was unpredictable. The 'floating classroom' was replaced by the 'Pangolin Pavilion'. The development of this infrastructure was documented and posted on social media alongside the conversion of the Mayfly. The venue was designed to be erected rapidly, resist wind, provide shelter, channel rainwater, provide good acoustics and a comfortable setting for small workshops, conversations and presentations. The team leads emphasize the fact that erecting the structure, which is composed of 25/30 striped beach parasols, is a highly effective demonstration of STEAM skills in itself. The Pangolin Pavilion allowed for the development of different spaces for activities and workshops at each of the Eco Sunday events. The campus included the Mayfly, erected easels for the 'Slow Looking' workshops and the Pangolin Pavilion which was kitted out with ground cover made from recycled plastic, some seating, outdoor tables for workshops and a projector and screen. As, in the case of the Mayfly, the design and appearance of the Pangolin Pavilion, direct the eye, peak curiosity, highlight innovation and demonstrate STEAM principles. In 2023, this strategy again evolved as pandemic restrictions no longer applied at all. It was decided to engage with communities in advance of events and avail of community spaces such as libraries, community centres etc. This facilitates engagement with the local community effectively.

EVALUATION: REVISED STRATEGY (2022)

- Mayfly was converted to a fully solar electric boat.
- As there was uncertainty about the suitability of the Mayfly for travel on the canals, team leads (Anne Cleary and Denis Connolly) revised the route, deciding to follow the course of the Shannon through the midlands and along to Enniskillen over a four month period. This route was agreed, as the commissioned partners and artists for the 2022 programme were largely located along that route.
- The route was ambitious and the vast scale of the waterway juxtaposed strikingly with the modest boat. This visual imagery was used to great effect, as part of the message of climate action on the journey; small steps, modest scale, leading to a major achievement.
- The project leads used the conversion of the Mayfly as a STEAM exercise – recording and informing followers on social media about the measures taken to convert the boat. They then transformed the Mayfly into a work of art - developing a design using vivid colours, displaying prominently solar panels and windmills, and adding a sound installation - which would capture the attention of people on every river bank, where they moored, and be highly visible for drone photography.
- The Mayfly journey was plotted to involve public engagement days, 'Eco Sundays' in 2022 and "Eco Saturdays" in 2023 when a programme would include 'conversations'; there was a deliberate strategy to retain an air of informality at the events. Presentations and conversations were led by artists, historians, scientists, engineers, biologists, geologists, poets, musicians, historians, farmers and agricultural innovators, film makers, boat builders, designers and representatives of river communities. In addition



Ben Malone of LAWPRO talks about freshwater ecology at Belturbet, August 2022

to these programmed days, the team leads also planned stops in various locations along the route, promoting the stops and inviting the community to come to the mooring location to visit the boat.

- A workshop strategy and content was devised, in co-ordination with partners for open air engagement with the community at each 'Eco Sunday' event. In the adapted project, a 'pop up' laboratory and arts studio was devised.

- To develop a STEM programme addressing fresh water ecology and tour it. Marine biologist **Rachel O'Malley** joined the team for the tour both years. She devised and delivered open air workshops focused on fresh water ecology.

- To stimulate cross-disciplinary debate around fresh water ecology. The programme included contributors from many disciplines and project leads adopted an approach which made the sessions geographically rooted in the area where the events were taking place. Although broader issues about climate change were being discussed, each event had a local perspective.

Speaking to the project leads, this was a deliberate decision, which roots the climate conversation in each community. The leads had identified a 'detachment' from the discussions about preserving fresh water and fresh water ecology. The diverse programming decisions were aimed at 'fixing attention' and leading communities to look more closely at water resources.

- To spark community actions addressing climate change. The programme leads wanted the programme to have local resonance in each location and to have contributors who are experts, or, who have taken notable actions in addressing climate change. The atmosphere in which these programme contributors encountered the community was deliberately informal and relaxed. While booking for events was available, the leads encouraged 'walk ups' and curious passers-by to participate. The overall aim was to spark interest and to encourage communities to feel part of the solution to climate change in their area.

- To ensure the sustainability of the Eco Showboat as a vessel self sufficient in energy, and as a resource for communities country-wide.

EVALUATION: REVISED STRATEGY (2023)

The numbers of reservations on eventbrite gave an early indication that the pop-up *Pangolin Pavilion* might be too small to host many of the 19 public events programmed for the "*Journey to the East*" from Askeaton to Howth. As in 2022, it was necessary to have, at each port of call, an indoor venue as backup in case of inclement weather. But when consideration was given to increasing numbers, these backup venues were mostly considered more suitable than the Pangolin Pavilion, and this consideration was confirmed as the summer advanced and the numbers attending the events slowly increased because of interest generated by media coverage and word of mouth. As it happened, the weather also deteriorated as the summer advanced so indoor venues became more and more of a necessity. It was also noted that working with local community spaces gave a better connection with local communities

and meant that the talks/debates/performances were generally better attended by local people. The venues chosen for the 2023 expeditions were:

- Askeaton Community Hall
- The Captain's Room, Hunt Museum, Limerick
- Mountshannon Markethouse
- Portumna Castle
- Ballinasloe Library
- St. Mary's School in Pollagh
- Vicarstown Community Hall
- Carlow VISUAL
- Waterways College, Graiguenamanagh
- The Dunbrody Famine Ship, New Ross
- The Townhall at Windmill Lane
- College Lane Gallery, Howth
- Naas Community Library

Looking back on 2022, it was noted that events where there was either food or music were more convivial, and people would stay longer. This was important, since the primary objective was to create conversations around environmental issues. It was decided that there should be music and/or food as part of the programme wherever possible in 2023. This was handled differently at every venue, but it eventually meant the inclusion of musician duo **Anna Tanvir** and **Maninder Singh** in the Eco Showboat programme for Mountshannon and later for several venues along the River Barrow. Maninder is a chef as well as a musician, and the Sikh culture he comes from often centres on music and culinary hospitality. Anna & Maninder became an important part of the Eco Showboat team, contributing both food and music to the programme at Mountshannon, Vicarstown, Carlow, Graiguenamanagh, Windmill Lane and Naas.

EVALUATION: CONCLUSION

It is clear that the Eco Showboat has undertaken a very successful voyage. The team leads have ensured that the programme was delivered by artists and scientists with formidable national and international profiles, but which was strongly rooted in the local environment in which each public event took place. They made it attractive and accessible to all age groups and have, at their core, a commitment to using the arts as a tool for harnessing creativity and community activism in climate action. This is not simply aspirational as their broad experience in art, design, exhibition, community engagement and as educators is evident in every considered aspect of this project. They have facilitated conversations about the most urgent aspects of climate change and have an approach which gives the community

agency in this. They have been able to design a programme which brings together prominent artists and scientists with communities in a coherent and accessible way.

The interest in the project has been growing incrementally over the two years of the expedition, with a report on RTE's Nationwide in 2022 and a full page article in the Irish Times in 2023. The ongoing work on the 48M gives the project many options for the future but it was the innovative journey on the Mayfly - touring multiple inland waterways, rivers and lakes with the pop-up Pangolin Pavilion - that has proven to be most inspirational for a public ever more concerned by environmental issues.



School Workshop at Dromineer, May 2022

Mayfly on Lough Scur, August 2022

