





# Art

A collaboration by  
Jennie Guy, Fiona Hallinan,  
Katy Fitzpatrick & Aislinn O'Donnell

# Philosophy

In partnership with both Bray School Project  
National School, and St. Mary's and St. Gerard's  
National School, supported by Wicklow County  
Arts Office and the Arts Council

# School

## Children, Contemporary Art and Philosophy

In Spring-Summer term 2016 curator Jennie Guy, artist Fiona Hallinan, education curator Katy Fitzpatrick and philosopher Aislinn O'Donnell worked in partnership with fifth class students from Bray School Project National School, Bray, and fourth class students from St. Mary's and St. Gerard's National School, Enniskerry and their teachers.

They held a series of workshops in schools in order to explore ideas, experiences and practices in art and philosophy. Working with curator Jennie Guy, artist Fiona Hallinan devised a workshop series called Bead Game for the students. Over three sessions in each school, Bead Game introduced the students to listening, collecting and discussion as artistic practice. They also explored themes of alternative scoring and memory amongst other themes related to the artist's work. These sessions culminated in the students casting their own found objects in resin, a process Hallinan evolved from a 2013 workshop at the Irish Museum of Modern Art. From these cast objects the students created a collective score of their own and each other's associated sounds. An image of the set of resin artworks created by the students from these sessions is documented overleaf.

Responding to some of the ideas being presented in these workshops, Katy and Aislinn delivered three Art and Philosophy workshops. Through experiential exercises, philosophical inquiry, reviewing, discussing, and recreating artworks, and by using drawing, sculpting, and writing as material practices of thinking, they explored sensations, questioned what we understand by memory, created instructions for an alien who has just landed in Wicklow, and reflected on the stories of objects and materials.

## Art and Philosophy — a selection of children's work and ideas

Philosophical Inquiry in response to the question:

### 'What is Memory?'

(in no particular order)

∴

Memory is in everything but you don't know it.

∴

Memories are special things that you cannot let out of your mind.

∴

We forget so new memories can come in.

∴

Memories are probably stored in the brain as when you think of them an image comes to your mind.

∴

Memory is like a soup.

∴

What you remember says who you are.

∴

You can't touch or feel or hear memories, but they exist.

∴

Memories could exist in your spirit.

∴

Maybe in the future we could have a chip implant so we wouldn't have to go to school

∴

A human brain with memory bubbles – a little bubble that was fun in your life.

If you don't want it, pop the bubble!

∴

Every living thing has a memory.

∴

Memories are stored somewhere in the body and can sometimes be thought over or seen again.

∴

Thoughts and experiences become memories, like a video recording in your brain.

∴

Memories can grow old and can fade away, like leaves.

∴

Core memories are part of your life, that affect it and change you and your identity.

∴

If humans didn't have memories they would be dumb.

∴

Without memory there would be no history.

∴

Good memories are held in the heart.

Bad memories are held in the head.

### Instructions for an Alien Who Has Just Landed on Earth for the First Time

Imagine bringing this alien around your school and neighbourhood. In groups the children mapped together new experiences and sensations that they could share with the alien. They also wrote instructions for the alien to do when they land in Wicklow.

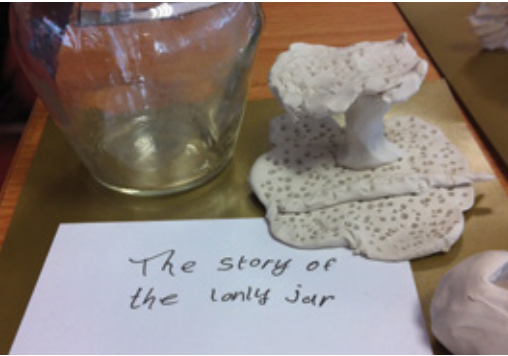


We want our alien to experience / do (sense, feel, hear, taste etc):

The feeling of the wind; sick; fear; the texture of paper; talking; laughter; sadness; feeling of skin; happiness; the feeling of water (hot or cold); the bark of trees; the texture of the pavement; horse riding; jumping; going toilet; playing soccer; reading; swimming; movies and books; hospitals; money; hot chocolate; grass; flint and steel; tv; the squelch of mud; to experience different foods; the feel of having friends; to feel hugged; feel sand between your toes; to roll in gravel; feel sun on your back by sitting in a window; going to school on a weekday; the feel of carpet or mud or anything you can walk on; the feel of human skin/hair; play with toys; go to a Bray match and cheer when they score; to feel a wave splashing on them; to feel how rough brick is; to experience pain; to see electronics; to smell a book; building something out of wood; to have fun; find out what it feels like to run fast; hear birds singing; sound of a river; get a job; dance; meet different animals; live in a house with people; play on the computer; go on holidays; do some art; go shopping for food and clothes; get a hobby; listen to music; climb a mountain; learn to read and write; singing and the sensation in your throat; choose a religion; wear a wig, because they don't have hair on their head; go to the hospital; learn to tell the time; slide; play on the swings and run around; lie down in the sun; splashing in puddles; do school work; eat a watermelon/marshmallow; take a big sniff from a mustard jar; see a picture of themselves.

### The Autobiography of an Everyday Object

Individually the children wrote the autobiography of an object. They considered what it is made from, what journey it has had, what stories it might tell, what are its hopes and dreams, who the object might be talking to, what kinds of other objects might it like to spend time with.



'I was made in a factory and then I was sold in a shop, somebody bought me and put a lot of songs on me. I'm tired of staying still all day and being burned!' (CD)

'I was made in Ireland in a 3d printer. I had many friends in this factory. But now I'm surrounded by snobby golden coins. I am nearly extinct. 1 and 2cent coins are not able to be exchanged anymore. So it probably won't be long till I'm gone.' (5-cent coin)



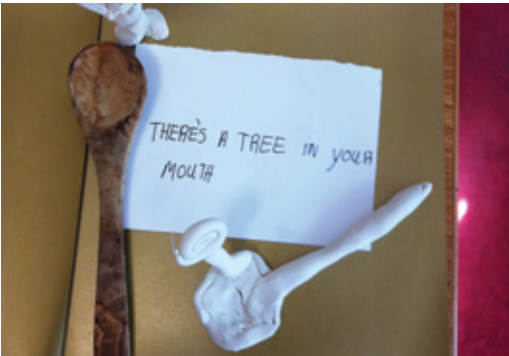
'Hi my name is Peter. I am a piece of paper, well actually half a piece of paper. Well I was a tree but then some man made me into paper. I preferred being a tree but you can't have everything...' (Pink piece of paper)



'I was born on grass in a school yard. I'm made of sun and water. I've been stood on by loads of kids and teachers shoes. My best friend is a daisy and my enemy is grass. I'm 22 years old. I have just been picked by a 10 year old school girl and now I'm lying on a table dying.'

'I am screaming in agony because people keep ripping me apart. I moved from pocket to pocket.' (Blu-tak)

'I am a battery. My name is Tesco. I am 111 I have a really long life. I don't have any legs. I am made of metal. I am scared of exploding and leaking. I rely on humans to keep me out of the fire.'



'I am a stick that has been sharpened & has just written on this piece of paper. I came from a tree from the back yard of St Mary's and St Gerard's NS. I really like my life it is full of adventure. It is fun having trips. My dream is to travel all around the world.' (Pencil)

'Hello I am pop the balloon and I didn't see where or how I was born... I was at a birthday party. How I died was someone shot me with a bow and arrow.'

## Jennie Guy and Fiona Hallinan in conversation

**Jennie:** Fiona, I remember when I was in fourth class at St. Mary's and St. Gerard's in Enniskerry. My perception has been heightened returning to Enniskerry and Bray School Project all of these years later, working with students of that same age on this project with you. It makes me think about the things that made an impact on me at that age, what stayed with me, things that made a difference. My fourth class school teacher taught my class how to play chess. Learning chess opened me up to a whole new thought process; a game that I have brought out of school and into my life to the present. I wonder what I would have thought if I had been at one of your workshops. During one of the first workshops that we worked on together in this project, you asked the students to do something for you when they got home. You said "I want you to feel like you're collecting sounds, then find an object to represent each sound. Imagine that you are reaching up for something on a tall shelf, but you're doing it with your ears."

There is something about asking students to think differently, use their senses and engage with their environment differently that can be so effective. Tell me more about your instinct to work with sound for The Bead Game.

**Fiona:** Hi Jennie. One of my influences when planning this series of workshops was a Sound Art workshop I attended at the Firkin Crane in Cork city around 2006, where I took a listening walk with a group of people through the winding streets of Shandon. I remember on the walk the guide suggested this idea of walking not with your eyes closed, but with your sight less heightened, so that you could focus on the sound around you. It was an extraordinary experience, wandering quietly around the streets, searching with our ears, past windows where we could hear muted television sounds, under a sky full of unseen seagulls, pigeons and crows. The city became even more alive and I wished I had been invited to listen closely in this way earlier in my life. It felt like we were training our ears up so that we could go forth in the world with a new perspective on it. I also remember, probably around the same time, a telephone ringtone that became available that only people

under a certain age could hear-its frequency was higher than those over about 15 years were able to detect so children and young teenagers could use it to secretly hear their phone ring at school. Listening as a practice seems to me to be a whole other way of experiencing the world and the present, and I was excited by the thought of exploring that idea with the students.



I just had the opportunity to listen to you speak at the conference Creative Agency in Local Communities in DIT, Grangegorman recently about Art School and your ongoing projects with contemporary artists in schools. It was really fascinating and a great talk! I wondered if you could tell me a little about the element of risk involved with the types of projects you are initiating, and how you negotiate that, or even celebrate it in your curatorial practice and work with artists and schools?

**Jennie:** Schools as places of learning have to run themselves so well. Organising something with independent curators and artists just a few months in advance that has indeterminate

outcomes can seem like a risk. Letting an artistic intervention pass the school's threshold, the school becomes host. These initial moments are crucial in defining these projects and partnerships. At the same time: Artists who agree to work in this setting take a risk by bringing their active working and professional practice into a challenging new environment in which it is not the norm, in which there is often little in place to contextualize what they do. So for the artist – for whom their working practice and each project that occurs within it is part of their professional identity – this open scenario can be quite intimidating, and quite risky. I hope that part of my curatorial approach addresses or subsumes these risks real (or imagined) by the schools, the artists, the funding partners or my own. Making art is inherently risky but supporting it isn't necessarily.

Excerpt from a conversation between Jennie Guy and Fiona Hallinan. For a full PDF version please contact Wicklow County Arts Office.

## Biographies

### Katy Fitzpatrick

Katy Fitzpatrick is a freelance education curator, facilitator, and lecturer. Her main areas of interest are interdisciplinary, collaborative and participatory art practices. She has curated multiple programmes, events and exhibitions with a focus on family and children's engagement with contemporary art. She has worked in a variety of contexts, including Tate London; the Irish Museum of Modern Art; Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane; and the Arts Council of Ireland. Katy has been working with Aislinn O'Donnell on the Art and Philosophy project for three years.

### Jennie Guy

Jennie Guy is an artist, curator and educator based in Dublin. She is the founder and director of Art School, a platform that establishes new interfaces between contemporary art and sites of education. She develops workshop and residency programmes that unite artists, students, and educators in substantial research exchanges and partnerships, both nationally and internationally. Her projects generate collaborative art-works, exhibition, screenings and publications, while remaining primarily invested in exploring artistic process.

[www.jennieguy.com](http://www.jennieguy.com)

### Credits

Special thanks to fifth class students in Bray School Project National School and fourth class students in St. Mary's and St. Gerard's National School, Enniskerry. Also to Jenny Sherwin, Mary McAuliffe, Donna Carroll, Carol Lanigan, Ruth Feeley, Jamie Finnerty, Claire Ryan, John Connor, Annette Gleeson, John Clarke, David Lynch, Olivia Murphy, Aoife Irwin Moore.

### Fiona Hallinan

Fiona Hallinan is an artist based in Dublin. Her collaborative projects include the Department of Ultrimology and Heterodyne. Working across multiple forms including sound, installation, food making and the production of events, her work responsively explores themes of knowledge production, memory and hospitality.

[www.notalittlepony.com](http://www.notalittlepony.com)

### Aislinn O'Donnell

Aislinn O'Donnell is a philosopher, lecturing in philosophy and philosophy of education. She publishes nationally and internationally and has been involved in a range of experimental projects across art, pedagogy, and philosophy. She has been teaching in Mary Immaculate College (University of Limerick) and will be shortly begin the role of Professor of Education in Maynooth University. Her work over the last number of years entails the ongoing commitment to engaging students across a range of contexts, from prisons to primary schools, in philosophical thought.

This project comes under the Strategic Partnerships initiative and is supported by Wicklow County Arts Office and the Arts Council.

