

# HEXAGON

A body of new work created by  
6 professional artists discovering or  
rediscovering printmaking as a medium  
full of possibility during a residency at  
Cork Printmakers.

Conall Cary, Dominic Fee, Aoife Flynn,  
Fiona Kelly, Laura Kelly, Joanna Kidney

# Come Together

Whilst art practice continues to retain an image of being a solitary pursuit, it is significant that recent Turner Prize winning artist Duncan Campbell thanked Michael Clark, the dancer and choreographer, who worked with him on his award winning piece. As political activist Helen Keller stated, "alone we can do so little together we can do so much" art practice has incorporated the idea of collaboration and the collective as something powerful and progressive. Working collaboratively can make us think about how artists and in turn, art functions.

Collaboration has a contemporary significance as well as a historical lineage. The history of collaborative practices can be traced through the early outputs of the Dada Surrealist artists of the early twentieth century. With Dada and Surrealism, collaboration represented new and exciting challenges and ways of working for artists that could make new types of artworks and make a significant political and aesthetic break with work that went before. Another early twentieth century collaborative project, *The Omega Workshops* instigated by Roger Fry, were a key moment in collaborative practices where artists and designers worked anonymously to design and produce furniture and textiles.

Within contemporary art practice methods of working that challenge the traditional notion of art as a singular activity have moved from marginal positions that might have been seen as chiefly the domain of 'community art' into the mainstream art world. It is interesting to note how the discourse around the 'collaborative turn' in art practice appear to be framed as a polarising position between aesthetic and non-aesthetic judgements. The work of collectives such as *Royal Art Lodge*, *Paper Rad* and *The Hobbypop Museum* focus on the collective creative activity of drawing, painting and writing as a way of producing artworks imbued with the sense of optimistic play that can occur within collaborative activities. This type of practice stands at polar opposite to the work of collectives who explicitly eschew aesthetical considerations in favour of political and ethical concerns such as the work of collective *SUPERFLEX* and *The New World Summit* founded by artist Jonas Staal in 2012.

The critic and academic Claire Bishop discusses this in her essay "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents" *Artforum*, (2006). She examines how a particular discourse in relation to how collaborative art can function as a gesture of political resistance fails to address how aesthetic judgement might also be an important factor in how the work can have purchase or meaning.

'The social turn in contemporary art has prompted an ethical turn in art criticism. This is manifest in a heightened attention to *how* a given collaboration is undertaken. In other words artists are increasingly judged by their working processes- the degree to which they supply good or bad models of collaboration - and criticised for any hint of potential exploitation that fails to 'fully' represent their subjects, as if such a thing were possible.'

One of the key points Bishop makes is how a kind of hierarchy of meaning of ethical over aesthetic judgement in collaborative practices demands a closer and more critical examination. And that, as she states "good intentions shouldn't render art immune to critical analysis". This critical discussion of collective activity in art practice is an important development in how this type of activity is received and integrated into the contemporary art world mainframe. It gives a valuable counterpoint to some institutionalised assumptions around art's relationship to social change. However it remains to say that working collectively and collaboratively yields richly rewarding results for both artists and audiences as a way of producing objects and ideas for dissemination that promote a culture of sharing, consensus and communication.

**Alison Pilkington is an artist based in Dublin, she co-edits the publication *The Fold* with Cora Cummins.**

## Conall Cary

Conall Cary is a visual artist and printmaker based in Cork.

After studies at The University of Oregon he went on to study printmaking at the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, where he graduated with a First Class Honors Degree in 2010.

He has exhibited widely throughout Ireland and internationally, and toured projects such as The MACHISMO Project, addressing issues of modern male identity in Ireland.

Previous residencies in the U.K., Ireland and Finland have continued to contribute to and inform his work, addressing issues of masculinity and mental health, and the ways in which we are influenced and affected by the landscape.

He is currently working as a member of Backwater Artists Group and Cork Printmakers, where he also serves on the Board of Directors.

Initially my role in the Hexagon project was that of facilitator, helping the artists from Wicklow who didn't have a background in printmaking to create the kind of work they wanted to in the medium of print.

The Wicklow artists approached the project free of process-based inhibitions, meaning that they focused more on the work they wanted to make rather than worrying about how to actually make it, which is a sometimes limiting trap that printmakers fall into.

This pushed the Cork Printmakers artists to use their expertise in creatively stretching the traditional methods of production around the concepts and ideas of the Wicklow artists in order to realize their visions.

Inherent in such partnerships is an element of risk, but also the potential for surprise and newness to enter in, and it was with this in mind that I approached the project, and now the risk can be seen to have paid off in the wonderful works and connections that have been made as a result.



Above: 'Phoney Cascade', cast paper, projection, dimensions variable, 2014.

Next Page: 'Phoney Cascade', cast paper, projection, dimensions variable, 2014.



## Dominic Fee

Dominic Fee was born in County Donegal. He completed a diploma in art and design in the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology in 1994 and a BA in fine art in the Limerick School of Art and Design in 1996. Printmaking and ceramics were his main areas of interest during this time. In 2013 he completed an MA in the Crawford College of Art & Design, Cork.

Living in Cork for the last number of years, Dominic has continued to work extensively in the visual arts. He has worked as a technician in the Cork Printmakers print workshop, where he has collaborated with many artists to produce print-based work in all major techniques. He has also worked as a part-time lecturer in several Irish colleges including Crawford College of Art and Design, and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology. His work has been widely exhibited in many venues throughout Ireland and Europe.

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

For me, the Hexagon project offered a very rewarding opportunity for all six artists to work through an intensive two-week period of collaborative activity. Over the course of this time the projects being developed by the artists continually grew in ambition and scale, with many creative decisions being made and technical solutions being improvised on the fly.

Some common threads of interest began to become apparent as we worked. A preference in bringing printmaking out of its traditional 2d, wall-mounted format and into installation was obvious. The themes of architecture and physical environment/landscape were there, as was a concern with fabrication from modular components and the use of found or commonplace materials.

My own work for the show picks up on these themes, and emphasises the notion of the multiple from printmaking. I have attempted to respond to the specific architecture and viewing conditions of the building, by producing an open-ended and potentially interactive artwork which is a hybrid of art, industrial design, and toy.



Above: 'modUlar',  
card, dimensions variable, 2014.



Above: 'modUlar',  
card, dimensions variable, 2014.



Opposite: 'modUlar',  
card, dimensions variable, 2014.

## Aoife Flynn

Aoife Flynn is a visual artist from Wicklow, based in Dublin. BA LSAD 2008, MA IADT Dun Laoghaire 2011. Recent exhibitions include RUA RED Winter Open Exhibition, (2012/14) *NLA III* and *IV*, Irish Museum of Contemporary Art, Dublin (2012/13) *Sculpture in Context*, Botanic Gardens Dublin (2013), *Bellweather*, Limerick School of Art and Design (2013), and *Dark Matter Project* Bray, Wicklow in association with Mermaid Arts Centre and Wicklow Co. Co.(2012-2013). She recently recieved the Valerie Earley Residency Award at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre which she will undertake in 2015.

For the Hexagon project I wanted to explore how I could incorporate elements of printmaking into my installation pieces.

More specifically

I wanted to use repeat patterns that I had found in architecture and the urban environment and screen-printing seemed to fit this ambition.

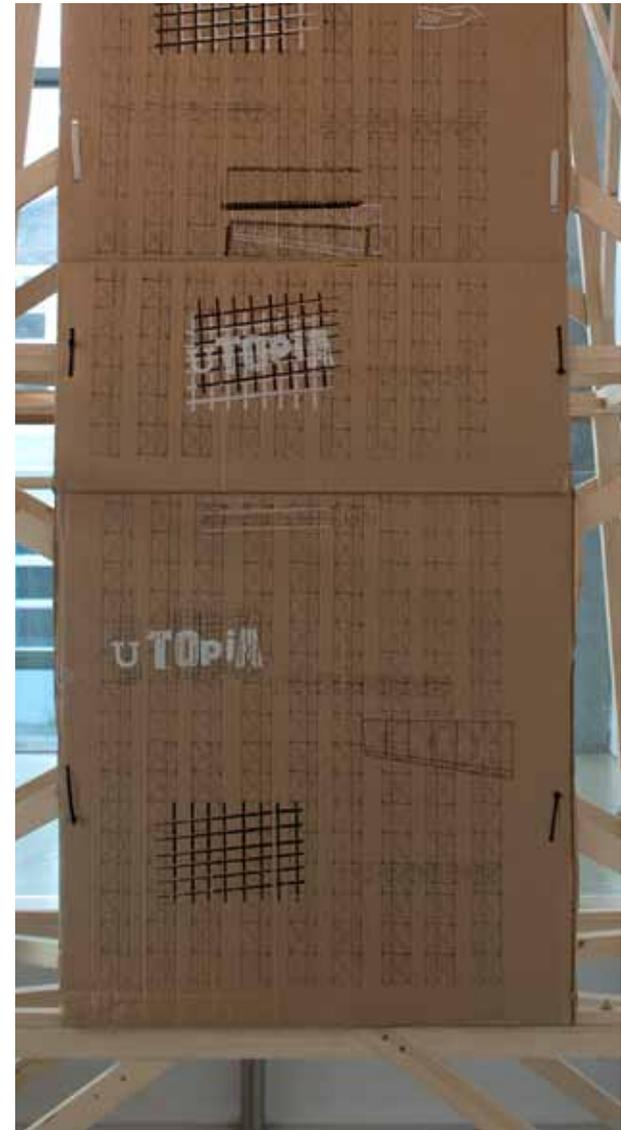
My work has focused on science fiction and utopian architecture and I have been interested in how our current technology would influence what architecture would look like on potential off-world colonies. My research led me to look at signage used to advertise new building developments from the fifties, the beginning of space exploration and also at how communication was such an enormous component of this exploration, attempting to make a connection beyond this world.

Opposite: *'Transmission'*, screen print and letter press on cardboard, wood, straws, cable ties, paper plates, tv arial, dimensions 440x80x90cm, 2014.





Opposite: Detail of *'Transmission'*,  
screen print and letter press on  
cardboard, wood, straws, cable ties,  
paper plates, tv arial, dimensions  
440x80x90cm, 2014.



Opposite: Detail of *'Transmission'*,  
screen print and letter press on  
cardboard, wood, straws, cable ties,  
paper plates, tv arial, dimensions  
440x80x90cm, 2014.

## Fiona Kelly

Born in Westmeath 1985, Fiona Kelly holds a B.A in Fine Art, Sculpture, received from Cluain Mhuire, Galway(2005) and a B.A (Honours) in Fine Art, Printmaking, from the Crawford College of Art, Cork (2008).

Recent exhibitions include Little Kingdoms, Catalyst Arts Gallery, Belfast, Northern Ireland, *Missing Something Which No Longer Exists* (Solo), 126, Galway, Ireland 2014; the awarded European Pépinières pour Jeunes Artistes MAP Residency exhibition *There are Thousands of Taps Dripping* (Solo), Ratamo Centre for Printmaking, Jyväskylä, Finland; *POST-IT, Borders and Crossings*, IMPACT8, Dundee, Scotland.

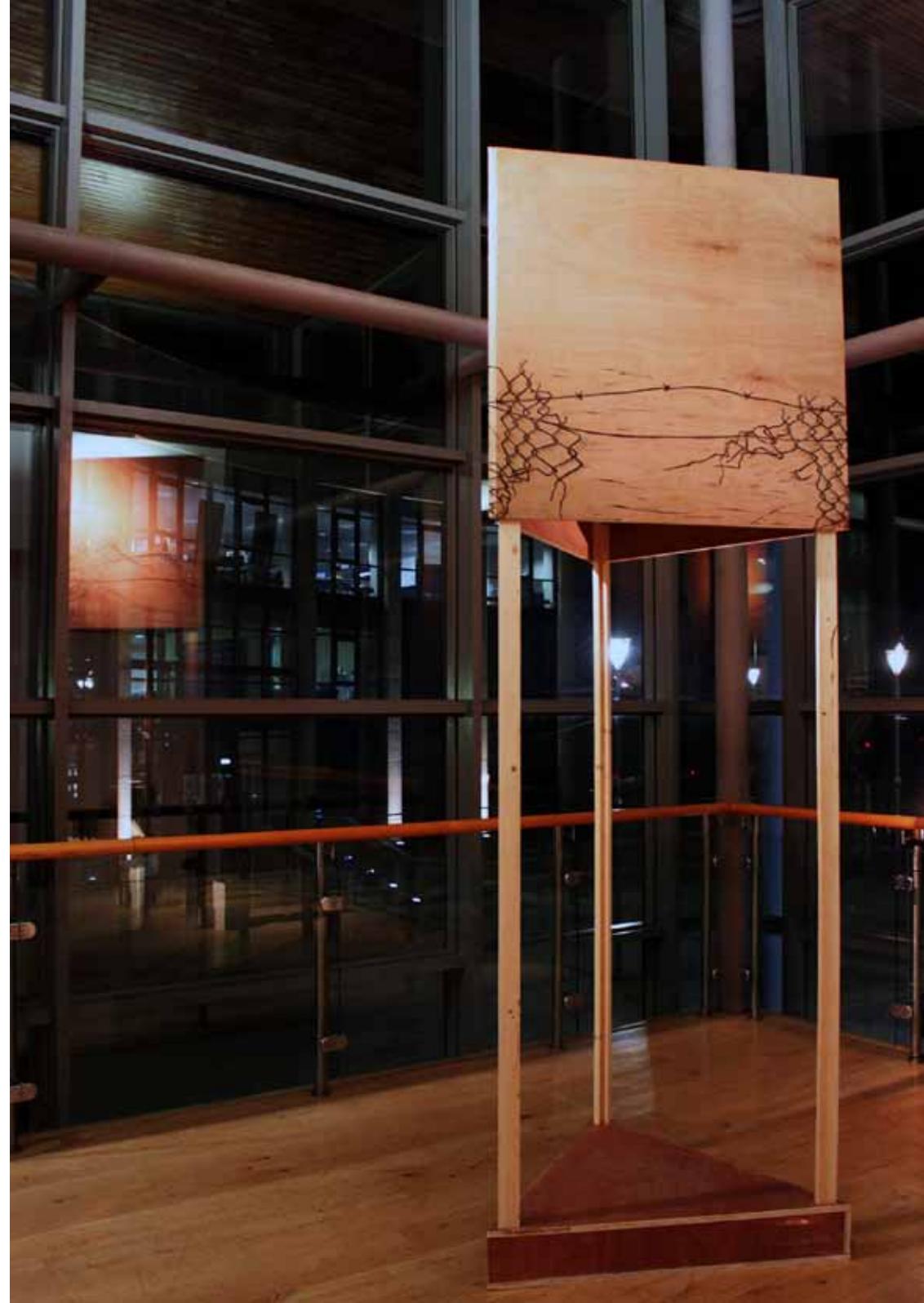
Introducing Non-Printmakers to the workshop is revitalising, they don't see the perimeters akin to the techniques, only the possibilities. This freedom of creativity introduced by the Wicklow Artists is seen in their scale and material choices; from recycled cardboard to a plastic we all liked to refer to as "The Creepy Stuff". The Cork based Artists organically became the role of the technician, aiding the exploration of technique and problem solving to realise each Wicklow Artists vision. This influence was apparent when it became time to create my own work, being able to work so closely with superbly talented Printmakers I was able to learn via collaboration. This collaboration allowed me to upscale, to explore the screen printing process, thus eradicating my personal perceived limitations in my practice of relief printmaking. Wood became my paper, bitumen became my ink.

Opposite: 'Community', bitumen on plywood, relief and screen print, dimensions variable, 2014.





Above: Studio, Works in progress, 2014.



Opposite: 'Allusion', bitumen on plywood, relief and screen print, 303x102x102cm, 2014.

## Laura Kelly

Laura Kelly was born in Dublin and now lives in Co Wicklow. Her solo exhibitions include *Prospect II*, The Drawing Project, Co Dublin; *Prospect*, Occupy Space@ Limerick City Gallery, Co Limerick; *A Point Faraway*, Talbot Gallery, Dublin. Recent group shows include *RuaRed Winter Open*, South Dublin Arts Centre, Dublin; *Royal Ulster Academy (RUA) Exhibition*, *Expansive Traces*, Ormston House, Limerick ; *COE'13*, Claremorris, Co Mayo; *Royal Academy (RA) Summer Exhibition*, London, UK; Belfast, NI; *Mermaid Open*, Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, Co Wicklow; *RHA*, Dublin. Recent awards include an RHA Studio Residency and selection for the Hexagon Project Residency at Cork Printmakers in 2014. She has a BA in Fine Art (Painting) NCAD, MA in Image Synthesis and Computer Animation, Middlesex University and an MA in Visual Arts Practice, IADT.

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

My practice is drawing based and currently explores the space between material presence and suggested illusion and involves the use of constructed elements. The attraction of exploring printmaking in the Hexagon residency was that it could offer new methods for combining the drawn with the constructed aspects of the work.

The two week HEXAGON residency was a whistlestop run through the world of printmaking with the very generous help of the three Cork artist/printmakers who participated. It has opened up a new art vista for me as well as providing a superb opportunity to interact with 5 other artists and exchange info, discuss and learn from them. On the print front, with the very generous assistance of Conall Cary, I experimented with screenprinting onto a large sheet of plastic and am still developing this particular work using monoprinting and digital printing techniques.

Now that the dust has settled after the initial whirlwind two weeks and I have been experimenting back in my own studio, I am really beginning to see the potential of how print works in hybrid ways on varied surfaces. The broad scope of what constitutes printmaking provides its appeal for me. Prior to this residency, I had very little experience of print apart from some basic etching and it wasn't an area I was hugely interested in. However it's as if a door has been left ajar into a room full of surprises now and I'm curious to go in and explore.



Above: Detail of 'Cross border Panoramic', plywood, jesso, pencil, newsprint, bamboo, thread, dimensions variable, 2014.

Next Page: 'Cross border Panoramic', plywood, jesso, pencil, newsprint, bamboo, thread, dimensions variable, 2014.



## Joanna Kidney

Joanna Kidney was born in Dublin and currently lives in Co. Wicklow. Her work is process oriented encompassing drawing, spatial drawing and encaustic painting. An intuitive engagement with materials plays a central role in the making of her work.

Solo shows in Ireland include Mermaid Arts Centre (upcoming); *Dig, undig, redig*, RHA Atrium Gallery, Dublin; *Sing yourself to where the singing comes from*, The Drawing Project, Co. Dublin; *This speaking place*, Stone Gallery, Dublin; Fenderesky Gallery, Belfast; *In and out of a familiar world*, Linenhall Arts Centre, Co. Mayo; *The shape of a moment*, Triskel Arts Centre, Cork. Group shows include *Eigse Carlow Arts Festival*; *RHA Annual Exhibition*; *Boyle Arts Festival*; *Contemporary Art from Ireland*, European Central Bank, Germany, *Metamorphosis in White*, Gallerie HD Nick, France; *Les Quatre Saisons de l'Art*, Gallerie HD Nick, France; *Shortlisted entries for First National Solo Exhibition Award* (three person), Sligo Art Gallery and *Works on Paper* (three person), Ashford Gallery, RHA, Dublin.

Hexagon was an open ended collaborative project. This generously and gently allowed for a natural evolution of the collaborative process and hence the final works made. Having the experience of the 3 Cork artists on board accelerated the possibility of making a large print work for me. The intense 12 day residency was rich with exchange and learning between the 6 artists. The project has largely broadened my thinking on the possibilities of printmaking, in particular silkscreen printing, as a means of translating drawing into one-off larger scale installation works and this has fuelled ideas for future work.

*Accumulations of compilations* is a large suspended drawing installation (10m X 1.5m). It originates from a practice of conscious and unconscious drawing and redrawing. This practice responds to a range of interests in micro details, geometry, symmetry and ideas of interdependence. The tension of opposing forces is tested within the piece, from light to dark, sparse to dense, macro to micro. *Accumulations of compilations* evolved in a cumulative, layering process using silkscreen and block printing and hand drawing, translating a vocabulary of many small drawings into one large drawing.

Opposite: Detail of 'Accumulation of Compilations', silkscreen, blockprinting and drawing on paper, 150cm x 10m, 2014.





Above: 'Accumulation of Compilations', silkscreen, blockprinting and drawing on paper, 150cm x 10m, 2014.

## **Cork Printmakers**

Hexagon is a Wicklow County Arts Office project presented by Cork Printmakers in association with Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre. Cork Printmakers is very proud to have initiated this project which enables professional artists to discover, or rediscover, printmaking as a medium full of possibility. Hexagon offered six artists a unique opportunity to collaborate, learn new skills and explore techniques in a professional print studio.

Through an open submission call issued by Wicklow County Arts Office, Cork Printmakers idea of delivering this project was selected. It involved six artists; three professional Wicklow based artists and three members of Cork Printmakers, all selected through open submission.

The Wicklow artists are, Aoife Flynn, Laura Kelly and Joanna Kidney, while the members of Cork Printmakers are Conall Cary, Dominic Fee and Fiona Kelly. The six artists worked together over a two week residency from 28th July to the 8th August 2014, at Cork Printmakers Studio, Cork City.

The residency provided an opportunity to develop hybrid approaches and to challenge the traditional boundaries of printmaking, enabling audiences to see printmaking in a new light. A number of themes quickly emerged as the artists discovered common interests such as architecture, both urban, abandoned spaces or utopian or in contrast, idyllic rural landscapes. Also elements such as geometry, the multiple or repeat patterns, exploration of scale, layering, mark making and the use of common place materials became apparent. Following the residency the six artists continued to communicate with each other as

they developed new work. The acceptance of chance and surprise that can occur with the practice of printmaking and within an open-ended collaborative process, also profoundly informed the artwork. The result is high calibre artwork that interacts with and challenges the gallery space. I would like to thank Jenny Sherwin, Wicklow County Arts Officer and Niamh O'Donnell, Director, Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre for their unwavering support for this project. Also, thanks to the staff of Cork Printmakers: Frances O'Connor, Johnny Bugler and Peter McMorris for all their hard work making this project happen.

Lastly, we are all so proud of the six artists and what they have achieved through this project, it could not have happened without your boundless energy, enthusiasm and generosity - well done to the 'Hexagons'!

**Valerie Byrne, Director  
Cork Printmakers.**

## **Wicklow County Council**

Over the last number of years Wicklow County Arts Office has rolled out a number of initiatives with the aim of creating deeper connections between artists and practitioners from Wicklow with each other and practitioners outside the county. Hexagon was a collaborative project between the Wicklow Arts Office, Cork Printmakers' and Mermaid Arts Centre. We were open at the outset as to what the artists responding to the call might produce. We planned a loose structure of the programme between the project partners and then had a desire to let the artists' influence the way in which the process evolved.

Our intention in taking this approach was to nurture a supportive dialogical framework with the hope that it would give rise to a meaningful exchange between the group that would impact on the direction of their practice. The artists gave generously of their expertise and shared their creative intentions with each other for the duration of the project. Key to fostering this was the commitment of time, natural connections do not instantly happen, they require careful curation and openness. Each of the artists brought their energy and a strong commitment to the exchange from the outset. The fluidity of that exchange which was cultivated overtime had a huge influence on the way in which they were to evolve their work. The resulting exhibition pushes the boundaries of traditional print making and demonstrates the artists' connectivity in the way in which it illustrates a sensitive navigation of each others practices and work.

**Jenny Sherwin Arts Officer, Arts Officer  
Wicklow County Council**

## **Mermaid Arts Centre**

Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre as one of the key project partners was pleased to be in a position to be part of this triad of support for the creation of Hexagon. The project exemplifies the way in which a range of different engagements and expertise are required to support an artist to create new work. Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre exists to enrich the communities of County Wicklow by encouraging and providing the best artistic experiences as a leading centre for the arts in Ireland. Central to this is supporting a range of creative entrepreneurs realise their ambition within the Centre. Residencies and commissions are a particularly special opportunity to have a deep relationship with the artists as they develop new work. The way in which Hexagon was realised was a particularly successful collaboration between agencies. The Arts Office developmental supports, the expertise of Cork Printmakers within the artform of the visual arts and the Mermaid who present work of the highest national and international standards. The exhibition presents one aspect of the progress and relationships which developed. The process however we hope stretches beyond the iteration of this work and will influence the artists as they go forward in their individual practices.

**Niamh O'Donnell, Director  
Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre**



[www.corkprintmakers.ie](http://www.corkprintmakers.ie)

[www.cargocollective.com/Hexagon](http://www.cargocollective.com/Hexagon)

[www.facebook.com/cork.printmakers](http://www.facebook.com/cork.printmakers)

All images courtesy of Paul Tierney and the artists



Cork City Council



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí

