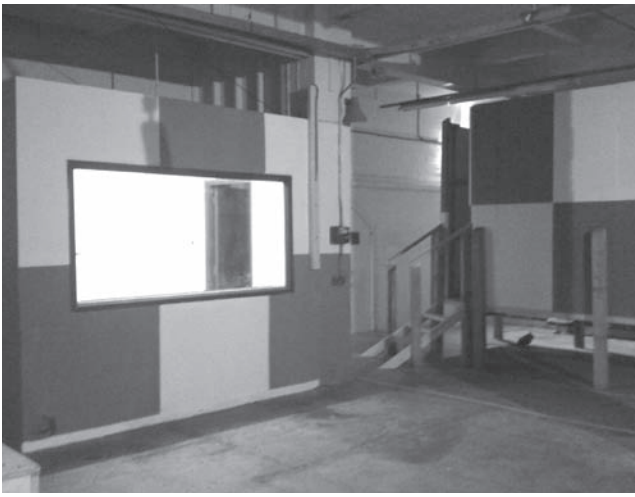


## STUDIO PROFILE



Still from Not Squares Video filmed in ADHOC.

Sinead Conlon *RErem* (ADHOC Student Resident)

Open Space Technology, 10 Year Plan Workshop. Facilitator: ADHOC Member Joanna Karolini.



Open Space Technology, 10 Year Plan Workshop. Facilitator: ADHOC Member Joanna Karolini.

Keith Winter (ADHOC Collective Member) *Scopophobia* at the Golden Thread Gallery

# Constitutional Creativity

JAMES HEPBURN PROFILES ADHOC COLLECTIVE, BELFAST.

ADHOC began back in June 2009, when by chance we viewed a warehouse hidden in a narrow Belfast street, close to the Cathedral Quarter, that was previously occupied by a print works. Having found the space we then drafted a business plan that incorporated our main aims and objectives; and our constitution was drawn up granting us charitable status. ADHOC's constitution outlines the support provision that we offer to individuals and groups.

ADHOC's spaces within the building include two large areas that function as substantial gallery spaces. In addition there are two smaller spaces, which we have dedicated for use as music rehearsal rooms. They are currently occupied by two bands, Not Squares and Girls Names. On the first floor, there are 14 artists' studios, which cater for artists at all stages in their careers. Our studio holders' practices are varied, including media gaming; graphics; installation; sculpture; costume design and painting. We have also created a printing area and a small darkroom.

ADHOC also facilitates a two-month student residency programme. We will also be hosting an international exchange, as well as creating exhibition opportunities for emerging artists – both locally and internationally. In the future ADHOC will also provide workshop opportunities and develop an outreach programme.

Myself and co-founder Colm Clarke's key aim for ADHOC was that it could be utilised by local artists, in an active and participatory way. With many artists in Belfast looking for space to show work, we set up the ADHOC collective, the remit of which is that each member commits to organising one show, event or workshop a year and are afforded creative freedom within the space to produce any viable project.

The ADHOC Collective members are: Laura Graham (Collective Chair), Doug Holton, Lisa Malone, Keith Winter, Brian Connolly, Acitore Artizzone, Catherine Devlin, Barney, Eoin Smith, John Cashin, Charlotte Bosanquet, Angela Halliday, Jenni Hutchinson, Joanna Karolini. We opened our doors to the public on the 25 September 2009 as a participant of Culture Night Belfast – presenting a group show of collective and studio members. The exhibitions in the space have been through good will of the artists as we currently are unable to offer a fee

though provide full technical support and assistance with marketing etc. We constructed our website to promote the events and exhibitions which is a vital tool now in marketing and since our launch we have had some media attention and were invited onto Radio Ulster's Drive time show and Arts Extra.

Each collective member has by now submitted an outline project proposal and this has enabled us to devise and cost a programme. ADHOC has availed of the Social Entrepreneurship Programme, which has provided us with full business mentoring – with the aim being to make ADHOC a fully sustainable as a social enterprise. In addition one of the collective have sought individual funding for their projects and we are currently exploring the avenues of funding we are eligible to apply for.

Our first solo show by a collective member was an exhibition of two video works by Angela Halliday, a Belfast-based artist. (12 Nov – 2 Dec). The show consisted of large high-definition video projections – *Helen (the library was my great project)* and *1859*.

Our first student residency was awarded to Sinead Conlon (12 Jan – 4 Feb), who had just completed an MA Art in Public at the University of Ulster. The gallery space in ADHOC gave Conlon the scope to construct a large-scale installation entitled *Re:REM* – which comprised a life sized wooden replica radio studio.

The weekend of the 16/17 January saw Joanna Karolini facilitate 'Ten Year Plan, an Open Space Technology Workshop'. The workshop gave people the chance to look ahead ten years and discuss the possible avenues of achieving their goals within the arts etc. This was the first of six that will happen in various arts organisations.

The recent Arts Birthday Celebration featured an anti-homophobic performance from Hugh O'Donnell and a video installation by Ally Mc Loughlin-Harte. The Sunday Strip Club were in residence for the evening, and featured Bored Housewives, Kitty and the Can Openers, and several comedians. The night was rounded with a DJ set from Not Squares.

During February (15 –18 Feb) ADHOC hosted an exhibition of work by students of Architecture and Visual Communication from the University of Ulster. The show will use ADHOC as a base for project

that will utilize empty retail units throughout the city – in Smithfield Market, Donegall Street, Royal Avenue, Millfield and Carrick Hill. The exhibition was run as part of 'What's Wrong with This Place? Questioning and Exploring: Urban Research Belfast' organised by PLACE: The Centre for Architecture and the Built Environment for Northern Ireland. Overall the project aims to challenge pre-conceptions about Belfast's neglected urban centre through the visual and physical explorations of students in at the University of Ulster, Belfast. The collaborative project displays the results of teaching that researches ways to better engage students to participate with their wider community and the built environment.

Recently on show 18 – 25 Feb was a documentary film exhibition, focused on the subject of portraits of places and people called 'The Moving Portrait'. The key issues explored in the show included comparisons between journalistic documentary making and contemporary art practice; along with questions of truth and objectivity. The works were created by past and present students from the MA Documentary Film course, at the University of Coleraine. Colin Graham who has organised the project showed a short film about the Belfast based performance artist Alistair McClellan. As part of the exhibition a panel discussion took place, featuring contributions from Mr Cahal McLaughlin and Dr Slavka Sereikova (25 Feb). The event was focused on the subject of the display of film within a contemporary art gallery settings.

The rest of 2010's programme will feature more projects devised by the collective's members. These will include an installation of large-scale paper sculpture; a sound art 'open-jack' night; contemporary theatre; roundtable discussions and critiques; photography exhibitions; along with presentations of work from our student residents. As well as this, later this year ADHOC will be sending representatives to attend and participate in a number of European events.

We hope that in the future, ADHOC's enablement of a quick turnaround of exhibitions and events, will continue to help artists communicate the issues that are current in today's society – as well as and artists in furthering their careers. Our ambition is that ADHOC remains an avenue for providing a high standard of creative projects and events in the city and provide further opportunities.

James Hepburn

www.adhocbelfast.co.uk