



Monday 24th February 2020 | 11:00 - 18:00 | Dublin City Hall

Housing & Ideology

*A symposium examining the cultural impact
on an obedient city*

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank all of the activists, artists, planners & academics that have given their time, experience and expertise to ensure this is an instructive event today.

John Anderson Jnr. & GFD Conference Hire

Thom Mc Dermott

Frank Sweeney & Dublin Digital Radio

Kaz & Raelene at IFI Archive

The Right Catering Company

The staff at Dublin City Hall

We would also like to thank you for attending this event and hope it is an informative day with plenty to consider.

The city is a dynamic & transient thing to be negotiated.
It is our wish that this will become a regular event to reflect this.

This event will be livestreamed and aired on ddr
check #housingideology for updates

The ***Housing & Ideology Symposium*** aims to establish a forum for a myriad of voices to explore the experiences of living in an obedient city and point the way towards possible solutions. We want to attempt to understand what has brought us to this point and the role ideology has played in this.

Ireland has the youngest population in Europe, and arguably one of the most engaged and knowledgeable when it comes to the issue of housing and town & city planning, as evidenced by the public mood during the recent election.

As we face into a period of unprecedented global turmoil, we ask; in a time where an abundance of dynamic and diverse solutions to how we live and inhabit the planet are crucial, why are we so mired in impractical, unequal and poorly designed systems?

It is our wish that this event (and others like it) will be inclusive of all, inspire other conversations and, most importantly, inform key actions that are fit for purpose for the year 2020.

Can Dublin escape the constraints on the city's moral, creative and ethical horizons which have held it back for decades?

Introduction

- Andrew Keogh

Andrew Keogh is an artist, filmmaker & youth worker. He is creative director at Bread&Circus and producer of *The 4th Act* film.

'The obedience of the citizens produces a happy city'

- Dr Niamh Puirseil

Dr Niamh Puirseil is an independent historian who has written widely on Irish political and social history. A former editor of the labour history journal *Saothar*, her publications include a history of the Irish Labour Party and most recently, *Kindling the Flame, 150 years of the Irish National Teachers Organisation*. She lives in Dublin.

Fresh Paint on the Walls, 9'

- Avril Corroon

Avril Corroon is a visual artist from county Westmeath and living in London, she is currently on residency at ACME Studios with the Goldsmiths MFA Award. She works with moving image, performance and sculpture to explore situations where precarious conditions have become every-day.

'Dublin: Unevenness and the Entrepreneurial City'

- Dr. Philip Lawton

Philip Lawton is an Assistant Professor in Geography at Trinity College Dublin. His research is interested in the intersections between the political economy of place, social space, and everyday experiences of cities. Recently, he has published work on gentrification, suburbanization, and the role of image-making in the transformation of contemporary cities. Ultimately, the research is driven by a desire to create more inclusive and socially sustainable cities.

'Housing as a Human Right'

- Aisling Bruen in conversation with Take Back The City

Aisling Bruen is a Community Development Worker at ICON. She is also involved with the Dublin Central Housing Action Group and National Homeless & Housing Coalition. In conjunction with the group Empowering People in Care (EPIC), Bruen is organising a housing support group for care leavers. She hopes the group will provide a platform for young people to advocate for their housing needs.

'Distance from Stone, 10'

- Michelle Doyle

Michelle Doyle lives and works in Ireland. She attended the National College of Art and Design where she received a Bachelor of Fine Art Media in 2013 and completed her Masters in Art and Research Collaboration in Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dublin in 2016. She was recently awarded the A4 Sounds Artist in Residence Award (2018), the Sirius Residency Award (2019) and the Firestation Digital Media Award (2019).

'Ballymun Regeneration and Class War'

- Leona Cully

Leona Cully is a writer based in Dublin. Stories in *Stinging Fly Anthology* (2018) and *The Stinging Fly* magazine; *New Planet Cabaret Anthology* (New Island Books); *Wild Word Magazine* (Berlin); *Penduline Press* (U.S), *Carve Magazine* (U.S); short-listed for *Fish Short Story Prize*, 2013. Collaborated on *Edges & Margins I and II* exhibitions which combined story, film, visual art and music to explore issues around urban space.

Presenting the Cultural Quarter, 11'40"

- Kerry Guinan

Kerry Guinan is an artist practising social and site-specific intervention. Her work critiques the relations of art, capital and place in a neoliberal context.

'Who Designs the City for Whom?'

- Emmet Kirwan in conversation with Ali Grehan & Dáithí Downey

Emmet Kirwan is an Irish actor, playwright and screenwriter. He is known for starring in RTÉ2's *Sarah & Steve* and for writing and starring in the 2015 play, and 2018 movie version of *Dublin Oldschool*. Other credits include parts in *Ella Enchanted*, '71 and *Inside I'm Dancing*.

- Ali Grehan

Dublin City Architect, Ali Grehan has held a variety of roles spanning private practice in Dublin, London and Bilbao, and in the Public Sector; where her particular focus has been on leading large-scale urban regeneration, housing and infrastructure projects.

- Dr. Dáithí Downey

Dr Dáithí Downey is Head of Housing Policy, Research and Development for Dublin City Council where he also leads the Dublin Housing Observatory as its Principal Investigator. The Dublin Housing Observatory's mission is to make Dublin city an affordable and sustainable place to live by ensuring its housing and urban development strategy, policy and practice is underpinned by robust evidence. He was Director of the Dublin Region Homeless Executive to end of 2016, having previously been its Deputy Director & Head of Policy and Service Delivery.

'Support Apollo House: Framing vacancy from the grassroots'

- Tommy Gavin

Tommy Gavin is an urban geographer based in the School of Geography in Trinity College Dublin, where he is a PhD candidate. As a member of the Irish Housing Network, Tommy was a spokesperson for the Home Sweet Home campaign during the occupation of Apollo House in 2016/2017.

The 4th Act, 75'

- Director Turlough Kelly, Producer Andrew Keogh

Originally from Ballymun, Turlough Kelly is a screenwriter, journalist, filmmaker and researcher.

Ballymun is a suburb of Dublin and home to the largest social regeneration programme in Europe. *The 4th Act* examines the legacy of this 18-year regeneration project, via the dramatically and digitally reconstructed memories of the community itself.

Fresh Paint on the Walls, 9'

- Avril Corroon

Fresh Paint on the Walls is a satirical take on the private rental market, gentrification, and the increasing difficulty of living in the neoliberal city. The voice-over narration theorises on the motives behind the capitalist and patriarchal landlord's widespread use of magnolia coloured paint in rental accommodation. By revising the current rental market through the landlord's absurd habits, *Fresh Paint on the Walls* estranges the reality of the situation where housing is seen as a commodity over social need.

Distance from Stone, 10'

- Michelle Doyle

Distance From Stone is a visitor centre video about the history of heritage, stone and the city. Dublin in 2018 is a living museum and one whose obedient citizens have little control over. Taking pebbledash as a symbolic worship of stone and aspiration entirely unique to Ireland, the film negotiates in what way the city has made citizens obedient. Privatisation of resources and of history further distances the people who should be able to access them. Is the city an incinerator, which routinely burns heritage and turns it into a combustible gas?

Presenting the Cultural Quarter, 11'40"

- Kerry Guinan

Presenting the Cultural Quarter documents an intervention into the Parnell Square Cultural Quarter by artist Kerry Guinan. Launched in 2013, the Parnell Square Square Cultural Quarter is a semi-private D.C.C. development which promises 'renewal and growth' in the area. In this exhibition the motives and implications of such a cultural strategy are subject to interrogation.



They [memories] do not liberate me in any sense except that once you have written down something your mind is ready to go further. I do not want to be liberated from them. I would consider liberation from them a grievous loss, irreparable. I am not recording tragedy. I do not wish to be liberated from that past and, above all, I do not wish to be liberated from its future.

- C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*

“The 4th Act” refers to the popular perception of the Ballymun narrative as a simplistic story in three acts; first, the construction of high-rise housing in Ballymun as both a knee-jerk emergency response and a grand social experiment; second, the supposedly inevitable decline of this housing; and third, the redemption of Ballymun through the messianic intervention of the state and private sector.

Literally no aspect of this narrative reflects the realities of Ballymunners’ experiences over the past five decades. As filmmakers, we hope that by “liberating” the unseen audiovisual archive - a hidden history - accumulated by Ballymun Communications and others, we might empower the people of Ballymun to graft a fourth act onto this crude narrative – one composed of their own experiences in the face of the neglect, suspicion, ridicule and outright malice heaped upon them by national and local authorities and the media.

The contempt in which the political elite hold working-class communities has seldom been more evident. With increasing and alarming candour, working-class people are routinely depicted as feckless, untrustworthy, “those who pay for nothing”. In the face of an unprecedented housing crisis, the notion that working-class people are a contaminant that must be quarantined has crept into the political orthodoxy.

The regeneration of Ballymun was the testbed for this ideology. It was here that planners and politicians honed their arguments for “mixed-income development”, “defensible space”, for the concept that home ownership produces a better, more socially responsible class of human being from the sub-human species that dragged its knuckles across the concrete of Ballymun.

This poisonous ideology now enjoys near-hegemonic status within the national consensus. The 4th Act may be a frail voice in the wilderness, but it is a distant echo of thousands upon thousands of voices that fought the proponents of this vicious ideology to a standstill for over 25 years. This ideology is furthered in the media bias that ‘others’, curates, demonises and renders as whitewashed anecdotal ‘Joe Duffyisms’ all that is the working class experience, caring to focus only on patterns of consumption and violence.

In the context of the current housing crisis, it may appear incongruous that residents of Ballymun were dissatisfied with, or unwilling to accept, the standard of accommodation foisted upon them by the state during the Regeneration. In truth, however, this defiance was utterly justified.

Within Ballymun, it is now widely accepted that the Regeneration, as eventually executed, was a perversion of the ideals for which the community had fought, sacrificed and suffered over the course of decades. Countless planners, developers, civil servants, bureaucrats and public artists benefited handsomely from its largesse; retiring with benefits or gaining promotion. The very least to which Ballymunners were entitled was that which they had been promised. No apology should be sought for this and none is offered by this film.

We are minded of other communities in the throes of such regenerations; St. Teresa’s Gardens, St. Micheal’s Estate, O’Devaney Gardens, the whole city of Limerick now at the behest of a Saatchi rebranding exercise. In these locales – amongst many others – we hope that the rigour and authenticity of the messages and facts of the film may carry impetus, heart and inform.

We wish to dedicate this film to the memory and family of Rachel Peavoy, whose death from hypothermia in a Ballymun flat awaits credible investigation.

The Filmmakers



Open Letter September 28th, 2018



Dublin City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath

**BREAD
AND
CIRCUS**

