

# THE DOCK



Waking the Land

## **Introduction**

This is an immersive sensory experience. You are free to explore this space as instinctively as you like, following loose pathways in between swathes of flag iris. You are welcome to sit on the bales, close your eyes, breathe in the smell of the space and listen for a faint sound of wildness. Hanging from the bale banner covers are pockets which you are free to explore.



The ^ collective cultivates collaborative research, experimentation, creation, and dissemination by working with the North Leitrim community and nature as mutual co-creators of meaning.

To achieve this, we organise and host events in our workspace in Manorhamilton that we run together. This has taken multiple forms, such as social gatherings, symposia, rituals, workshops, walks, sharing food together, and exchanging our different knowledges and stories.

The space is in the centre of Manorhamilton, always in the shadow of Benbo mountain — a constant live presence in the town. The studio allows the collective members and community to explore art in a rural context, examining how the creation of work rooted in place and the local landscape can enable innovative and meaningful collaborative work.

The ^ collective is understood as a *relational field of becoming* that is dedicated to creating collaborative works of art in the context of wildness, situated in the locality of North Leitrim.

Our work, within the space and outside, uses worlding practices that bring the human and non-human into community, conversation, encounter, and care. Leitrim is distinctive for its thriving ecosystems, supported by small-scale, low-impact farming and traditional land stewardship that allow wildlife and agriculture to coexist. Meadows are the result of an intentional balance of care between humans and the land. In comparison to other parts of Ireland, Leitrim has a much lower uptake of intensive farming practices, which has resulted in a unique habitat of semi-natural grasslands and rich biodiversity.

Due to the vulnerable nature of this land, low population, and rurality, Leitrim and surrounding areas have had to be defended from fracking, immense wind turbines, overabundance of sitka spruce forestry, and, most recently, gold prospecting in the Five Glens of North Leitrim. Our explorations for the work presented here began with the potential loss and grievability of Benbo mountain to extractive goldmining, where we created a wake for the mountain that we are in danger of losing, celebrating its life and liveliness.

In this exhibition, we move to another meaning of 'wake', presenting work that we hope helps wake the land and ourselves up from a dream that has encapsulated us. By engaging with our land *care-fully*, we are celebrating it and highlighting its presence.

## **Waking the Land**

In this work, ^ answers a call to inhabit the interstitial meeting places of the seen and not-so-seen world, by honouring symbolic, spiritual, and poetic relations as much as material, ecological, and political ones.

Our arts practice and discourse are shaped by this plurality, opening space for gestures that are not about solving or mastering, but about living-with, un-learning, and attuning to the more-than-human in all its complexity. The work has been informed and led by encounters with the mountain (*Benbo*), the meadow (*five small meadow patches that we each tended and observed over the last nine months*), and plant material from these different sites.

All of the materials in this space have been found, collected, or were already at hand. The main plant material is yellow flag iris, *feileastram*, once used for fodder, bedding, dyeing, and medicinal purposes — now relegated to the category of ‘weed’. It both thrives on, and creates, water-logged ground, and reproduces quickly.

Wool has been collected from the barbed wire fences; old bed sheets and a worn woollen blanket have been dyed with yellow flag iris root, dock root, and iron. A found piece of silk is presented as a mutable framing for the rhizome that dyed it. Hazel and Sally rods, a cow skull, rocks, seeds, plants, bones, and other found entities have accompanied us here into this space. The stitches in the banner bale covers follow the guidance of the materials themselves, the threaded paths are intuitive, purposely untethered from formal cartographic systems. In these gestures, land is reimagined as relationship rather than cartography, unfolding through tending and attention rather than measure and territory.

The outside world is invited inside to inhabit the old Courthouse of Carrick-on-Shannon, a building once bound to order and judgement, now reimagined as a site of porous encounter.

In this assemblage, we are actively juxtaposing the building's historical use with its current use as an arts centre, co-locating histories of colonial order and classification with chaotic immediacy and unpredictable encounter.

## **Woven Textile and Loom**

*'Bhí mo chuimhneamh ort. I was thinking of you.'*  
— In memory of Manchán Magan.

A loom will be added to the exhibition on Saturday 6 December 2025. The textile on this loom is a collective act of remembrance in progress. Each woven line carries the intention of the person who wove it as an offering made in memory of someone or something.

The loom is an opportunity to enter a space of quiet attention. The materials are undyed wool from the native Galway breed of sheep with plant material from Benbo Mountain and the five tended meadows.

People are invited to add their contributions.  
For bookings, please contact  
**[thedockartscentre@gmail.com](mailto:thedockartscentre@gmail.com)**.

## Opening Reception

At the opening reception on Saturday 22 November at 2:30pm, ^ will perform a **ritual procession** through Carrick-on-Shannon, starting from The Dock. The procession will last approximately ten minutes.

The ritual procession marks a turning point for Waking the Land, a movement from acknowledging the potential loss of our beloved Benbo Mountain to celebrating the vast life it breathes into our land.

^ marked the waking of our land at Samhain in 2024; now, ^ marks the reawakening of the living land through the opening processional ritual, where they will gather together with the land once more to bear witness to its rebirth and renewal.



## Events Schedule

On Saturday 6 December 2025 from 1 — 4pm, a **Collectives Social** will take place for collectives based in the north-west of Ireland. The event will include two collective making events weaving natural materials. Collective members and individuals seeking collectives of their own are welcome. All are welcome, booking is required.

On Saturday 17 January 2026 from 11am — 3pm, the **Leitrim Experimental Animation Kollektive** (LEAK) will run their monthly workshop in the exhibition space, animating some of the natural materials. A donation of €5 is welcome, but not required. All are welcome, booking is required.

Finally, a ***Waking the Land gathering*** will be held on Saturday 24 January 2026 from 1 — 7pm. This will include panel talks about plant succession and semi-natural grasslands, workshops, drawing performance, music, film screenings, artist talks, and more. All are welcome, booking is required.

All events are free to attend.  
For bookings, visit [thedock.ie/exhibitions](https://thedock.ie/exhibitions).

## Acknowledgements

^ would like to thank Mary Conlon and the team at The Dock for all of their support, particularly Krzysztof Kuczerawy and Aaron Dobson.

We would also like to thank Leitrim County Council Arts office for continuously supporting our work, particularly Alice Dixon and Philip Delamare, and the Irish Hospice Foundation for supporting the early work on this project in partnership with the Glens Centre Manorhamilton, with particular thanks to Brendan Murray, Dominic Campbell, and Elizabeth Hutchinson.

Thanks to our community:

Amy Bunce, Mella Jo Bunce Finan (*stitching and feeding*), Yosef Dvoves (*seed saving and willow rods*), Kathy Mooney (*weave specialist, warp and loom set-up*), Liz Byrne, Frank de Mol (*memory weaving*), Diarmuid MacDiarmada (*support and care*), Rob Ireson (*flag iris*), Jim McMorrow (*iron node*), Anna Macleod (*glass and general support*), Phoebe & Hedda Dick (*Central*), Dessie and Mary Carroway (*straw bales*), and Marie and Michael Finan (*care*).

Thank you to the Benbo banner workshop artists and others who collaborated or supported or advised on the making of this work:

Crona Gallagher, Soraya Ricalde, James Gilmartin, Donal O'Kelly, Finola McFadden, Niamh O'Brien, Andy Roche, Micheál Herron, Chris Bowring, Roberta Bacic (*Conflict Textiles*), Martha McCullough and Rebecca Strain (*Artlink Fort Dunree*), Martina Feeney (*Manorhamilton Library*), Caroline (*Caz Cards Printing*), Simon Browne, Alice Strete, Luke Murphy, Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij and Yoana Buzova (*Varia*), and all the staff at the Leitrim Sculpture Centre.

We thank the iris, sheep, rushes, grasses, bog, insects, protozoa, birds, cows, frogs, willow, hazel, and other non-human critters that worked with us, intentionally or otherwise. We are grateful for any sacrifice made, particularly by those plants that we have taken from and that we have no language with which to offer our thanks.

Mostly, we would like to thank our five meadows and Benbo mountain — without whom this work would never have been possible.

## ^ Biographies

**Tara Baoth-Mooney** is an interdisciplinary art practitioner whose work encompasses sound and visual art, including performance. Tara's practice uses storytelling as a way in to meaning making around human – non-human attachment and lived experience. She holds a PhD in Art based practice (University of Wolverhampton, 2023) and a Master's in Fashion and the Environment (University of the Arts, 2012).

**Shane Finan** assembles artworks and projects from interactive contemporary technologies, found objects, and traditional media. Their practice is as both artist and creative producer on collaborative projects. Their work is research based and explores the impact of technologies on human and non-human actors in rural places. They hold a Master's in Interactive Digital Media (Trinity College Dublin, 2013) and a BA in Fine Art (IT Sligo, 2008).

**James Kelly** creates sculptural objects and film that are concerned with non-waking realms and especially explore a rare type of dream in which he feels the presence of another reality that seems external to his own subconscious.

He received an MFA in Sculpture from the Slade School of Fine Art in 2014, had his first solo exhibition *Lightning Path* at the Leitrim Sculpture Sculpture Centre in 2023, and lives in the Glenade Valley of North Leitrim.

**Laura McMorrow** is a visual artist from Leitrim. She holds a Masters in Fine Art (University of Ulster, 2012) and graduated with a degree in Painting (Limerick School of Art and Design, 2008). Her practice incorporates video installation, animation, sculpture, collage, and painting. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Gardener Digs* at The Ashford Gallery, RHA and *The Lost Acre* at Leitrim Sculpture Centre.

**Sonya Swarte** is an artist based in North Leitrim. She holds a BA in Archaeology (Leiden University, 2005) and an MA in Creative Arts (ATU Sligo, 2022). Her practice is focused on the local in North Leitrim. She completed a Technical Development Residency at the Leitrim Sculpture Centre in 2024, exhibiting some of the work produced in 2025, and has screened an animation at the Galway Arts Festival in 2022.



## Resources

Waking the Land  
**[www.waking.land](http://www.waking.land)**

Tara Baath-Mooney  
**[www.tarabaath.wordpress.com](http://www.tarabaath.wordpress.com)**

Shane Finan  
**[www.shanefinan.org](http://www.shanefinan.org)**

James Kelly  
**[www.jamespskelly.com](http://www.jamespskelly.com)**

Laura McMorrow  
**[www.lauramcmorrow.com](http://www.lauramcmorrow.com)**

The Galway Wool Co-op is a farmer-run organisation that was created to restore the cultural integrity of Native Irish Wool. The co-op was integral in bringing back our only native breed of sheep from potential extinction.  
**[www.galwaywool.ie/the-growers/](http://www.galwaywool.ie/the-growers/)**



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County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Liatroma

