

## PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council commissions artists to explore local forests

*Temporary artworks created under ‘Nature and Place’ initiative to observe, explore, and respond to six public forests in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*

[Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council \(dlr\) Arts Office](#) has today (05.12.23) announced the award of three art commissions under its new ‘Nature and Place’ initiative. Supported by [Coillte](#) and the [Dublin Mountains Partnership](#), the initiative provides funding to professional artists to observe, explore, and respond to the public forests in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Three artists have been commissioned to create temporary works that are either lens or audio-based and take inspiration from the forests of Ticknock, Tibbradden, Barnaslingan, Carrickgollogan, Kilmashogue and Ballyedmonduff. The artists have each been awarded funding by dlr Arts Office to develop their projects between December 2023 and March 2024, when the resulting artworks will have a public outcome during National Tree Week (19<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> March 2024).

The artists are:

- Photographer **Martin Healy**, who plans to capture a series of photographs during walks in the six forests. His aim is to convey the contrasting perspectives of the humans, mammals, birds, plants and trees that share these spaces. The photographs will be presented in a limited-edition artist publication.
- Multimedia installation artist **Meadhbh O’Connor**, whose sonic artwork will be based on the six forests. O’Connor will engage with walkers familiar with these forests to record a series of poems. The resulting sound artwork will be premiered as part of an organised walk during National Tree Week 2024.
- Sound artist and composer **Robert Coleman** will collaborate with dancer and choreographer Laura Sarah Dowdall to create a site-specific soundwalk that explores the soundscape and environment of Barnaslingan Wood. The soundwalk will be presented live during National Tree Week 2024, when the two artists will guide audiences on walks through the forest.

Commenting on the commissions, Cathaoirleach of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Councillor Denis O’Callaghan said: “This innovative new initiative from dlr Arts Office highlights the important environmental and recreational benefits of the rural and forested part of our County. We are delighted to commission these talented artists to reflect on this creatively and look forward to seeing the resulting works during National Tree Week next March.”

Chief Executive of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Frank Curran added: “It was fantastic to see the large volume and high quality of the submissions we received from artists in response to our open call for applications. It demonstrates the high regard and great

fondness in which our forests are held, as well as their potential for creative inspiration and expression. We are grateful to Coillte for their support with this initiative, as well as to the Dublin Mountains Partnership, of which we have been a partner since its formation.”

The six forests that are the subject of the ‘Nature and Place’ art commissions are all part of the [Dublin Mountains Makeover](#), a long-term project managed by Coillte Nature in partnership with the Dublin Mountains Partnership to change the forest management focus to forests where biodiversity and recreation objectives are the priority.

“The forests in the Dublin Mountains are among the most important recreational sites for a growing urban population seeking fresh air and green space. They are also an incredibly rich source of biodiversity and play a vital role in climate mitigation and adaption,” said Director of Coillte Nature, Ciarán Fallon. “As part of the Dublin Mountain Makeover, we are changing the use of hundreds of hectares of land from productive to recreational forests, and we are delighted to be a partner in the fantastic ‘Nature and Place’ initiative, which – through creative engagement – invites people to explore and enjoy the forests on their doorstep.”

Chair at the Dublin Mountains Partnership, Suzanne Furlong added: “Our forests, woodlands and mountain habitats are important for our mental health and wellbeing and provide opportunities for rest and relaxation in nature as well as more active pursuits like orienteering, mountain biking and running. The Dublin Mountains Partnership is very excited to support this initiative by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and we look forward to seeing the artists’ creative responses to our local forests next spring.”

For further information, visit [dlrcoco.ie/arts](http://dlrcoco.ie/arts).

**ENDS**

**Contact: Sebastian Enke, Enkom PR, Tel: 087-3239496 / Email: [media@enkom.ie](mailto:media@enkom.ie)**

**Note to editors:**

- Photographer Mark Stedman has been commissioned to cover his announcement and will issue images to picture desks this afternoon.
- The artists who were awarded with the ‘Nature and Place’ commissions are available for interviews on request.

***About dlr Arts Office***

dlr Arts Office supports, programmes and develops a wide range of arts activities and opportunities across Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. It works in partnership with early years services, schools, youth services, community organisations and residential care settings, as well as with its colleagues in the Council to develop the arts at local level for those that wish to attend and participate in cultural events and activities. It programmes the Municipal Gallery in dlr LexIcon and manages several residencies and artform development opportunities in the Studio, dlr LexIcon. It provides annual arts grants and professional development opportunities for artists and arts organisations, has a significant public art programme and manages the

new Baths Artists Studios in Dún Laoghaire. For further information, please visit: [www.dlrcoco.ie/en/dlr-arts](http://www.dlrcoco.ie/en/dlr-arts)

#### ***About Coillte***

Coillte is Ireland's semi state forestry company, responsible for managing 440,000 hectares of primarily forested lands, about 7% of the total area of Ireland. Coillte recently launched its new forestry strategic vision, which aims to sustainably balance and deliver the multiple benefits from Ireland's state forests across four strategic pillars: climate, wood, nature, and people.

**Coillte Nature** is the not-for-profit branch of Coillte that is dedicated to the restoration, regeneration and rehabilitation of nature across Ireland. Its mission is to deliver real impact on the climate and biodiversity crises through large-scale projects based on the best ecological evidence. For further information, please visit: [www.coillte.ie/coillte-nature](http://www.coillte.ie/coillte-nature)

#### ***About the Dublin Mountains Partnership***

The Dublin Mountains Partnership (DMP) was set up in May 2008. The DMP's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 sets out a vision 'the Dublin Mountains is an area of outstanding beauty and a place for sustainable outdoor recreation where people can enjoy the hills, learn about and care for their environment whilst respecting residents, communities, neighbouring landowners and other recreation users'. The DMP partner organisations are Coillte, South Dublin County Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Dublin City Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service. For further information, please visit: [www.dublinmountains.ie](http://www.dublinmountains.ie).