



ART REBELS

CATALYST ARTS 1994-2010:
A CURIOUS RETROSPECTIVE



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21ST MAY-12TH JUNE

PREVIEW: 20TH MAY 6PM-MIDNIGHT

A CURIOUS RETROSPECTIVE

IN DARKEST FEBRUARY 1996, the members of Catalyst Arts were invited to fill an empty box marked Art Rebels for the annual members show. 79 boxes were returned, and exhibited anonymously. Where members wouldn't or couldn't return a box, the directors of Catalyst filled it on their behalf. Catalyst Arts was then a mere two years old and based in Exchange Place off Donegal Street, in a building long since demolished. The floorboards in the gallery were lifted up and the boxes placed between the beams, to be sealed off until 2010 when they would be unearthed and reopened. All this while the 79 Art Rebels boxes have travelled with the gallery, hauled from pillar to post by Catalyst volunteers, members and directors.

Now, in 2010 they reach their final destination and the optimism of the Catalyst committee of 1996 that the gallery would still be here in 14 years is reflected in the dedication of over 50 directors since, to the idea that an entirely volunteer led gallery can thrive in Belfast.

The Art Rebels boxes, like Catalyst, have survived the moves, the crises, the parties and the controversies of 14 years of artist led mayhem.

Art Rebels is a celebration of the creativity and ambition of the people that have made this possible- the directors who gave up two years of their lives to Catalyst. It has always been the quality of the directorship that has made Catalyst one of the most innovative and exciting art spaces in Ireland. All of the exhibiting artists have

•ABOUT CATALYST ARTS•

Catalyst Arts was formed 16 years ago in response to what was seen as a cultural vacuum, and is Belfast's primary artist-led organisation. It is run by committee of unpaid volunteers, and a directorship lasts two years only, in order to ensure Catalyst remains vibrant with new energy, never learns from its mistakes and thus completely avoids stagnation.

Catalyst Arts is always a gallery, but has also been a 24 hour cinema, a recording studio, a publishing house, a skip, a radio station, a rumble sale, a wrestling ring, a sauna, a distillery, an agnostic chapel, a banquet hall, a darts team, a leisure centre and a night club. Beyond its gallery walls, it has staged exhibitions on billboards, on gable ends, under floor boards, in a clothes shop, in the back of a van, car and a bus, on the airwaves, under the Lagan, in an airport baggage scanner, up a mountain, down the Falls, up the Shankill, over in Lisbon (not in Lisburn) and in a haunted house. Working for Catalyst has been likened to handling a hot potato, holding onto the mane of a stampeding lion, a crash course in crisis management and a baptism of fire for those who believe in it enough to take the risk. It has accidentally shut down Stormont, been robbed, beaten and sued, has had to move four times and amazingly, it has survived through the madness of over fifty directors to date.

The most important factors about Catalyst are that it is non-profit and a members-based organisation to whom the present committee is responsible to. This means that for twenty quid you receive all information of upcoming events or opportunities, you can take part in the annual members show, get reduced rates on paying events, access to equipment such as video camera etc, and can have your say in the annual general meeting. Catalyst Arts is not a clique and welcomes anyone who wishes to get involved by volunteering their help, sending in proposals for exhibitions / projects and most importantly by applying to become a director.

served on the committee at some point from 1994 onwards; many have gone on to success as artists and curators and taken on significant roles in the arts infrastructure of the UK and Ireland. Art Rebels brings many of these people back together for the first time, with performances, discussions and workshops running alongside the gallery exhibition.

GRAND OPENING/RE-OPENING

20TH MAY 2010, 6PM-MIDNIGHT

THE SEALED BOXES from Art Rebels '96 will be unearthed and reopened at the beginning of the evening to mark 14 years since they were first sealed underneath the floor boards of the first Catalyst gallery. 34 Catalyst ex-directors, artists who have worked in Catalyst Arts from its inception in 1994 to the present day will be exhibiting alongside this in the gallery. Join us to launch Art Rebels 2010 and relaunch Art Rebels 1996 in style, with music from original Club Curious DJs.

Cherie Driver will be working with Catalyst's extensive archive of art projects, publications and artifacts, making it accessible to

the public and becoming an integral part of the exhibition.

Catalyst Arts will be initiating a creative careers workshop, aimed at students graduating from fine art courses at the University of Ulster in 2010. Hosted by two Catalyst ex-directors and look at careers in art, curating and in arts management. The workshop will be an introduction to life after art college, and look at practical ways to find your feet in the art world. The date of this workshop is subject to change and numbers are strictly limited, so contact the gallery by phone or email to secure your place.

EXHIBITING ARTISTS

Allan Hughes
Angela Darby
Benji DeBurca
Brendan O'Neill
Brian Patterson
Brown&Bri
Caelan Bristow
Cherie Driver
Cian Donnelly
Colm Clarke
Dan Shippides
Deirdre McKenna
Dougal McKenzie
Duncan Campbell
Ellis O'Baoil
Elina Medley
Eoghan McTigue
Fionnuala Doran
Fuyuka Shindo
Grainne Cullen
Helen Sharp
Johanna Leech
Julie Bacon
Justin McKeown
Karen Vaughan
Leo Devlin
Lurach Bredin
Mark Orange
Meabh O'Donnell
Peter Richards
Phil Collins
Phil Hession
Robert Peters
Sara O'Gorman
Seamus Harahan
Stephen Hackett
Ursula Burke

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