

## WORLD-WIDE-WALKS / between earth & sky / Dun na nGall

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### Abstract

The World-Wide-Walks explore *natural / cultural / virtual* identities: mixed realities that encompass walking in physical environments and virtually surfing the Web. The first of these projects, *The Walk Series* was initiated by Peter d'Agostino in 1973 as video documentation / performances. World-Wide-Walks / between earth & sky / Dun na nGall is a video / web sculptural installation informed by environmental arts and sciences, and local knowledge. It is one of the five *Lovely Weather: Art & Climate Change* public art projects commissioned by Regional Cultural Centre / Donegal County Council Public Art Office in partnership with Leonardo/Olats.  
<<http://www.peterdagostino.net/WorldWideWalks/Donegal>>

### Researching climate-weather and natural / cultural / virtual identities

"Climate is how the atmosphere behaves over a relatively long period of time. Weather is what conditions of the atmosphere are over a short period of time."  
- NASA

An invitation to visit the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Geneva in 2006, heightened my awareness of issues regarding short term weather and long term climate change. The opportunity to



Fig. 1. WORLD-WIDE-WALKS / between earth & sky / Dun na nGall website ( Photo © Peter d'Agostino )

observe the real-time World Weather Watch (WWW) program created a symbolic connection for a theme of our project, Watch-Walk-Web.

Language and mythology provide a primary means of returning to our ancestral link to climate. Deirdre Dowdakin, whose name conjures up an important cycle of Irish mythology, had the opportunity to connect her experiences in County Donegal with family heritage sites, an ancestral graveyard and O'Dowda castle in nearby County Sligo.

David Tafler's research was based on his experiences in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, site of the 2004 Tsunami, where he developed an Irish Red Cross Society manual for beneficiary communication within emergency prone disaster areas.

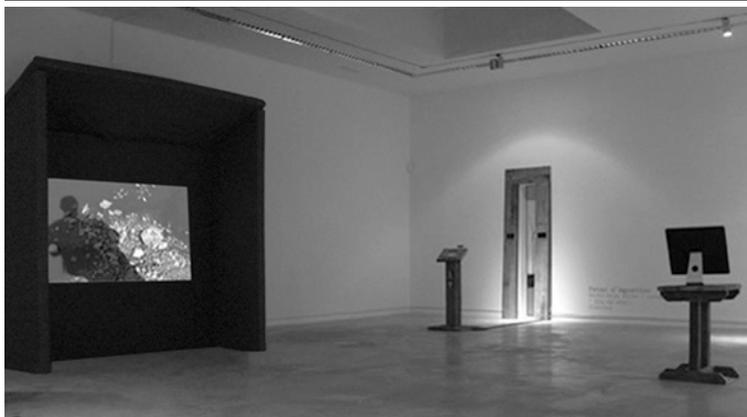
The Community Outreach Project (COP) manual has six operative modules: radio, television, print, SMS, wireless, and the Internet. A focus on SMS was significant for our *Lovely Weather Project*, providing a model for mapping and tracking individual stories around County Donegal.

### W-W-Walks / First Steps

Our travels and research in Donegal spanned the county and the seasons. David Tafler's visit in January enabled us to share the experience of Ireland's extraordinary winter of 2009-10, a measure of weather as a harbinger of climate change.

In March, I began my video walks at Newgrange, Ireland's most important pre-historic megalithic site built circa 3000 BCE. This

Fig. 2. WORLD-WIDE-WALKS / between earth & sky / Dun na nGall Installation overview ( Photo © David Tafler )



visit provided a reference for the Donegal sites I explored including the Grianan of Aileach and the Kilclooney Dolmen.

I also participated in the Lovely Weather workshops at the RCC in March. During the RCC artists' workshop presentations, Roger Malina ( *Leonardo/Olats* ) discussed weather and climate within the context of the arts and sciences. Inspired by this meeting, our team codified elements of our project with two key terms: "senses" and "sensors." It is one thing to see, hear or feel the weather, another to measure, decipher and chart climate over a long period of time.

We also consulted with Ilya V. Buynevich, a professor of earth and environmental science at Temple University. Professor Buynevich's expertise in the analysis of coastal areas utilizing Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) technology provided us with invaluable insights and specific references to landscape and climatic changes on the Donegal coast.<sup>1</sup>

I continued my walks throughout County Donegal in May. The evolving process of the video walks in varied urban and rural landscapes over the past four decades have made me keenly aware of differences between fully embodied human perception, and forms of virtually mediated images and sounds. Within the context of the climate research, I began to

focus on the Donegal coastal areas and Arranmore Island.

The Bealtaine Festival in May provided an opportunity for Deirdre Dowdakin to design a Landscape / Climate intergenerational workshop as part of the Lovely Weather residency program. The workshop was held at the Dolmen Centre, Kilclooney / Portnoo, for a group of elders and primary school children to share stories and drawings by mapping and identifying natural and cultural sites related to landscape and climate changes in the local area. The Centre, powered by a solar / geo- thermal system and a wind turbine, had recently celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the first "green" community centre in Ireland. It was an ideal focal point for our community residency activities and served as a model for the installation.

### Framing the Climate Change Debate- The Installation

The installation is composed of a green tent-like enclosure, a walking post, a framed window, and a web portal. A window in the enclosure has a 9-channel video projection of the walks: Arranmore Island, Doon Fort, Mt. Errigal, Inishkeel Island, Kilclooney Dolmen, Grianan of Aileach, Maghera Cave, Beltany Stone Circle, and Newgrange.

The walking post is embedded with an LCD video screen displaying a set of quotations from scientific, theoretical and poetic

sources relevant to global climate change and the Irish landscape. The cycle begins with this passage: *Framing is Understanding. How the environment is understood by the public is crucial: it vastly affects the future of our earth and every living being on it.* - George Lakoff

On the post is a solar cell powering a lamp that lights up when touched. The post faces a vertical window containing an image of a wind turbine from the Donegal County coast. The recycled wood framing the window has two embedded LCD video screens displaying a set of alternating flashing lights, images from portholes on the Arranmore ferry as it shuttles back & forth from the mainland to the island. On a wooden bench at the center of the space is a computer with the interactive website.

### References and Notes:

1. R.W.G. Carter, A. J. Parker (Eds), *Ireland: A Contemporary Geographical Perspective*, New York, Routledge, 1989.  
Production assistance: Ryan Gray, Vedran Residbegovic, Mike Rifenbury and Lia d'Agostino.  
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In Memoriam; Jon D'Agostino ( 1929-2010 ), Leonardo da Vinci School of Art, New York City.

**WORLD-WIDE-WALKS / between earth & sky / Dun na nGall installation © Peter d'Agostino**  
**Fig. 3. post & frame ( Photo © David Tafler )**  
**Fig. 4. wind turbine ( Photo © Peter d'Agostino )**  
**Fig. 5. solar cell ( Photo © Annick Bureaud )**

