



Fingal County Council presents:

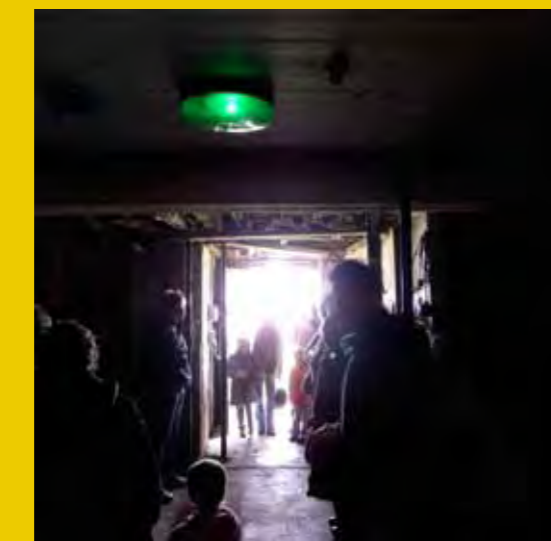
Tattered Outlaws of History

A twelve-screen installation of performances filmed from the gun turrets of each of Fingal's Martello towers.

A reunion of the towers built to defend against a Napoleonic invasion that never came.

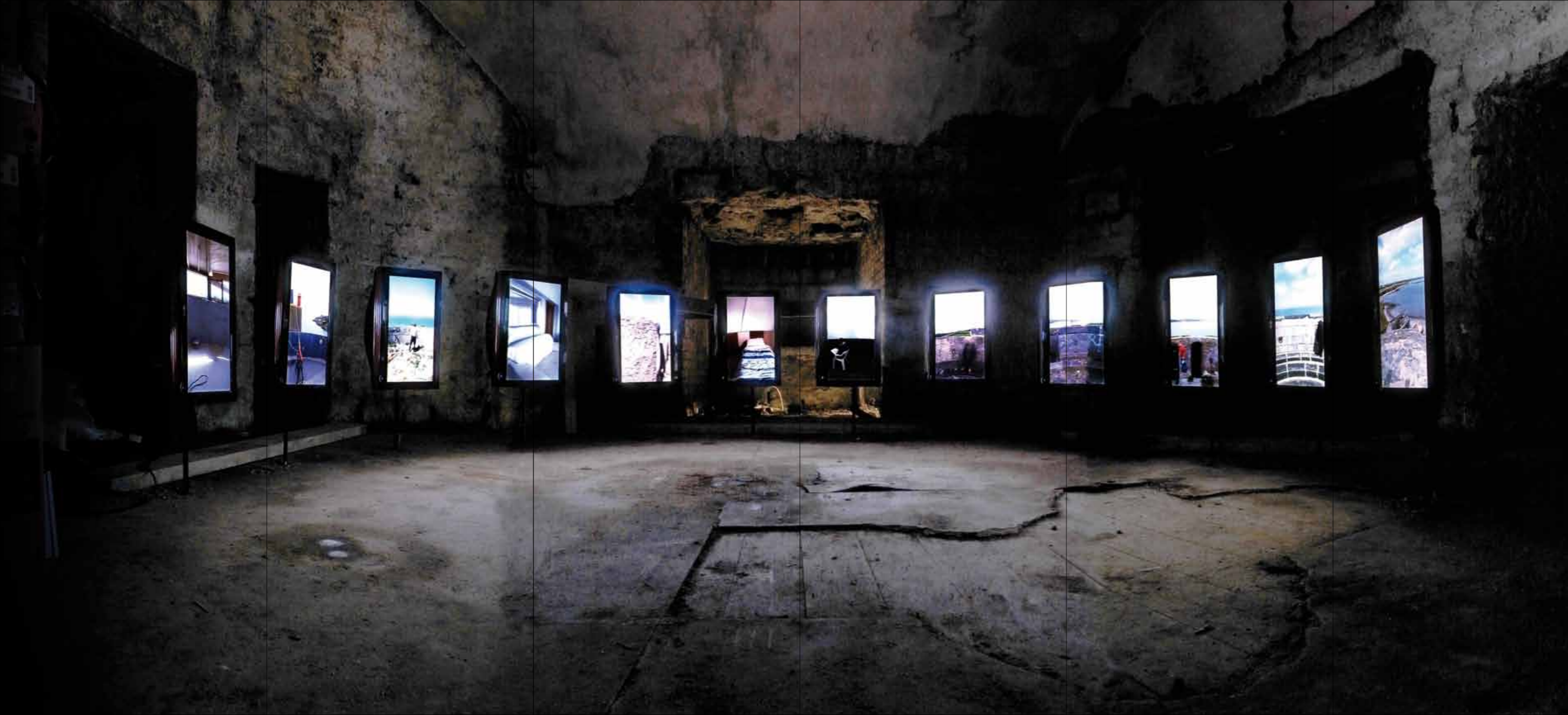
Dan Dubowitz and Fearghus Ó Conchúir

The Martello Towers are part of an international family of defence forts built in the 19th century throughout the then British empire. They were inspired by the Genovese tower at Mortella point in Corsica which successfully resisted British attack in 1794. The towers were round, with thick walls to resist cannon fire. They were built to accommodate a garrison of 30 men and a single roof-mounted cannon that could rotate 360 degrees.



About 50 Martello towers were built on the Irish coast, twelve of which are in Fingal. The Fingal towers were built between 1804 and 1806 in expectation of a Napoleonic invasion; but that invasion never happened and new, more powerful artillery rendered the towers obsolete. It is said that the towers were built within sight of one another to make possible communication of an impending attack, although not all are.

Communication and failure of communication are a strong guiding principle for Tattered Outlaws of History. The Martello Towers were built to function as a defensive unit, but never fulfilled that function and never found a unified purpose again. Each tower has developed an individual and distinct history evidenced in their current states of ownership, use and repair. Tattered Outlaws of History acknowledges that individuality in the particularity of each performance; but it also re-establishes a tentative communication between the towers, as one performance echoes another and family resemblances become apparent.



For this project, we placed a tripod where the cannon would have been on the roof of each tower and built a motor that enabled the camera to rotate continuously through 360 degrees. The camera does 12 revolutions in one hour and in that time, it films solitary performers whose activities are sometimes seen, sometimes missed by its impassive rotation. Each performance was filmed in one take, and the 12 synchronised films have been brought together in a semi-circular installation of screens in the Skerries Tower. In assembling Fingal's towers for this reunion, Tattered Outlaws of History also signals to the wider international family of Martello towers to which this collection belongs.



Dan Dubowitz is a multidisciplinary artist and architect based in Italy. Originally trained in Architecture at Sheffield University, and after a spell working for Peter Eisenman in New York, his media then broadened to include photography, film, and installation work with appropriated artifacts and spaces. Dubowitz is known internationally for his work on wastelands and his artwork masterplans for public spaces.
www.civicworks.net

Fearghus Ó Conchúir is an independent choreographer and dance artist. Brought up in An Rinn, he completed degrees in English and European Literature at Magdalen College, Oxford, before training at London Contemporary Dance School.

His current creative preoccupation is the relationship between bodies and buildings in the context of urban regeneration, a preoccupation that has manifested itself in film and live performance in Europe, North America and China.
www.bodiesandbuildings.blogspot.com



Tattered Outlaws of History

Dan Dubowitz and Fearghus Ó Conchúir



1 Sutton

Privately owned, summer house

Sutton tower is being renovated by its current owners. Locals remember parties and artists there and many played in it as children.

The nearest DART is Sutton station. The tower is at the start of the coastal walkway to the Baily Lighthouse.



Eva Dubowitz



2 Howth

Council-owned, Radio Museum

Pat Herbert opened Ye Olde Hurdy Gurdy Museum of Vintage Radio after the Howth tower was restored in 2003. From the 1850s, the building was used as a telegraph exchange after the cables of the first telegraph from Great Britain came ashore on the beach just below the tower. In 1903, the tower was used for Lee de Forrest's demonstrations of wireless telegraphy and soon after, Marconi conducted wireless transmissions in the area.

The tower is still used as a communications post by the amateur radio station that operates from there most Sundays with a distinctive aerial on the tower's roof.

The museum is open from 11am until 4pm daily from March to November and at weekends only the rest of the year.

The nearest DART is Howth station. The entrance to the museum is up a steep pathway opposite the Abbey Tavern in Abbey Street, Howth.



Joe Dillon



3 Ireland's Eye

Privately owned, derelict

Perched on a rock island with a large comorant and seagull population, the Ireland's Eye tower is grander than the others in Fingal because of its bigger diameter. It sits under the flight path to Dublin airport and the regular drone of aircraft competes with noisy seagulls who hover in the wind overhead.

The tower is reached by boat from Howth harbour. The nearest DART is Howth station.



Fearghus Ó Conchúir

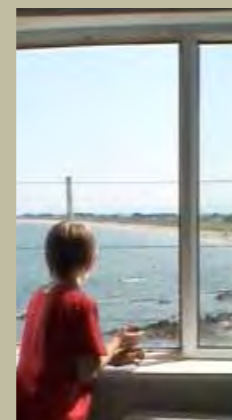


4 Portmarnock

Privately owned, 3 apartments

The tower has been converted into three flats, one of which sits on what would have been the original roof-space of the tower. Instead of broken bottles and bird droppings, this tower has white leather sofas and wooden floors befitting Celtic-tiger luxury.

The tower is at the head of Portmarnock beach, at the start of the coastal walkway to Malahide. The nearest DART is Portmarnock station.



Zach Dubowitz

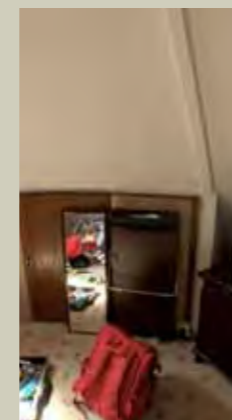


5 Malahide

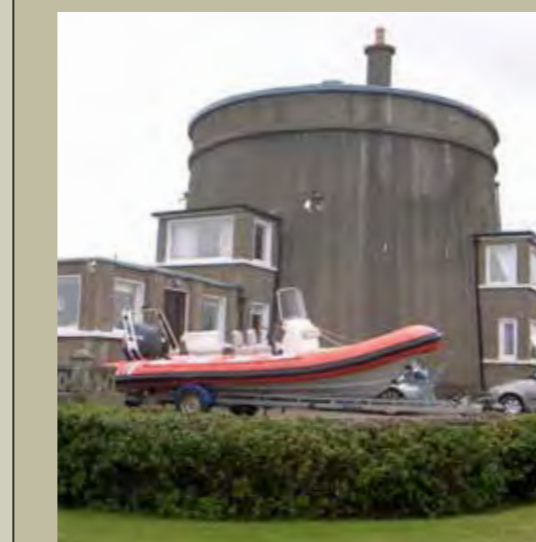
Privately owned, house

The Hick's Tower was remodelled in 1911 by architect Frederick Hicks. The conical roof and other Arts and Crafts-style additions disguise the Martello tower construction underneath. The main volume of the tower is now a baronial living room and its gun turret has become a bedroom.

The nearest DART station is Malahide. The tower is visible from the coast road just south of Malahide town.



Zach Dubowitz



6 Portrane

Privately owned, house

The tower is a private dwelling with extensions added to make it more habitable. The roof-space was rumoured to have had a Jacuzzi on it. Now it has an elegant timber sun-deck.

The nearest DART is Donabate station. The tower is visible from the nearby car-park of Portrane beach.



Tom Savage



7 Balcarrick

Privately owned, derelict

The tower is privately owned but not in use. It sits on a small corner of private land between the beach car park and the nearby hotel. There are the remains of a crumbling pebble-dashed construction on the roof.

The nearest DART is Donabate station, though it is some distance on the Balcarrick road to Donabate beach.



Bernadette Iglich



8 Rush

Privately owned, summer house

The tower is in the ownership of the Chillingsworth/Doolan family since it was bought as a summer retreat from the city. Dorothy Doolan, who speaks in the film, describes how her father built her a room on the tower's roof. The room's walls collapsed when nearby rocks were being blown up for a sewage project, leaving the remains that are still visible on the roof. From her vantage point on top of the tower, Dorothy watched the comings and going of friends on the beach, her future husband's bus and croquet on the lawn below.



Dorothy Doolan

Dorothy passed away after the filming. It's a privilege to be able to acknowledge her great love for the tower in this work.

The nearest DART is Rush and Lusk Station. The tower is visible from Hand Park off the Lower Main Street of Rush.

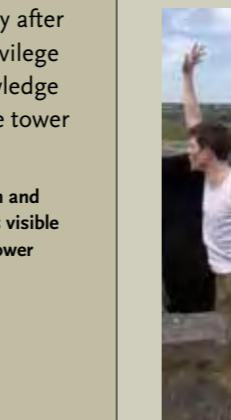


9 Lough Shinny

Council-owned, derelict

The tower sits alone on Drumanagh headland which is the site of the largest promontory fort in Ireland, dating from the late Bronze/Early Iron Age. Access to the site is possible on foot along the farm track from the Skerries road opposite St Catherines, though the track crosses private land. The tower itself has a rope that hangs from the first floor entrance.

The nearest DART is Rush and Lusk.



Fearghus Ó Conchúir

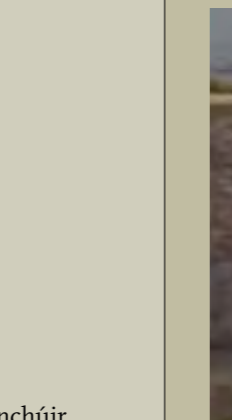


10 Shenick's Island

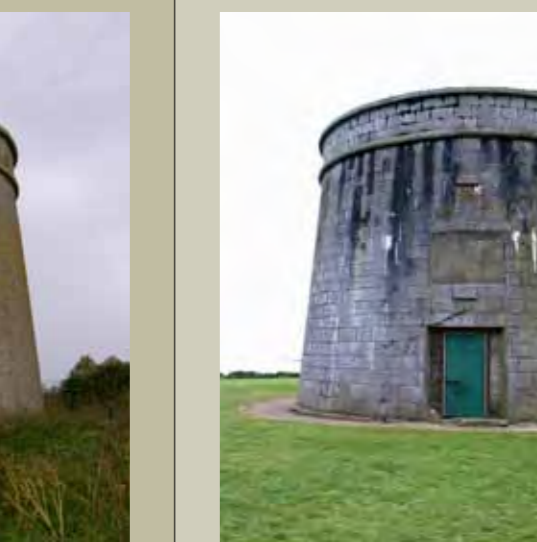
Privately owned, derelict

The island, whose name means fox island, was bought by the McDonagh family in 1917 and used for grazing. It became a nature reserve in 1987 and has a colony of seals. It can be visited by foot at low tide only, from the beach opposite the rugby club. Otherwise a boat trip from Skerries harbour is possible.

The nearest DART is Skerries station.



Zach Dubowitz

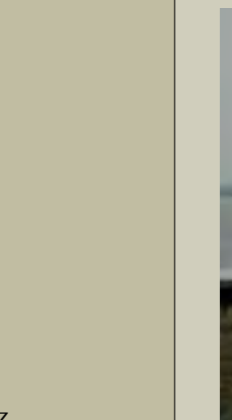


11 Skerries

Council-owned, currently accessible

Red Island, the site of the Skerries tower, was a popular holiday camp with its own dance hall and recreation facilities. Cheap international travel reduced the appeal of holidaying at home and the camp closed in 1980. The tower has survived the vagaries of fashion. It served as a cafeteria, as a private dwelling and was most recently used for storage by Fingal Parks department. It has been made accessible to the public as part of this project with a view to stimulating a debate on new uses for those towers owned by Fingal County Council.

The nearest DART is Skerries station. The tower is easily accessed from the car park at Red Island.



Fearghus Ó Conchúir



12 Balbriggan

Council-owned, derelict

The tower is located at the Black rocks, where Lambreecher Estate meets the sea. The openings in the tower have been walled up. The parapets have been demolished leaving only rubble on the roof. It is the only structurally incomplete tower in the group of twelve but it nonetheless conveys a resilience common to the others.

The nearest DART is Balbriggan station.



Fearghus Ó Conchúir