

The Parish

An exhibition by Michael Holly with the Clonakilty GAA Community

Gallery 2 | Level 1

2 April to 12 May 2022

This exhibition takes Clonakilty GAA as its starting point to explore the GAA as an integral part of Irish culture and community. The GAA is the most ubiquitous cultural, community and sporting institution in Ireland, with a presence in almost every parish. However, it has seldom been the focus of creative work. Clonakilty-based artist Michael Holly spent over three years documenting the many and varied aspects of the Clonakilty GAA community, examining the impact of the presence of the GAA on a rural community, and how it may define what it means to be rural and Irish in an increasingly culturally homogenised and globalised society.

Since early 2019 Michael has been closely interacting with the regular activities of the Club, recording footage and sound using principles of ethnographic/ observational filmmaking, encompassing and representing the scope of a GAA club as a community organisation. He recorded a range of activities, including sporting activities (training, matches etc.) as well as social events, fundraising events, a funeral, award ceremonies and religious services. From early 2020 he focused on the Ladies Football Team and continued interacting with the Club and conducting interviews as restrictions allowed throughout Covid-19.

Michael's research focused on developing an innovative way of making a documentary film about and with a group of people which has the welfare and benefit of the community at its core. Michael sought to collaboratively develop a system of collecting and showing sensory information using video images and sound, that can become a new way of knowing and understanding a community, while providing the community with a new way of knowing and understanding themselves.

The Parish considers the unique place that the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and its affiliated organisations such as the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA) have in Irish society. With its values of physical discipline, personal sacrifice through volunteering, community participation and consolidation of Irish identity, the GAA has, in many ways, come to define what it means to be a part of a community in contemporary Ireland.

A programme of talks and discussions will take place around the exhibition including:-

Saturday 16 April at 12 noon - A presentation by Michael Holly on his project.

Saturday 30 April at 12 noon - A talk by journalist Ger McCarthy on his book *Cork LGFA: Game of My Life*.

Saturday 7 May at 12 noon - A talk by photographer Paul Carroll on his photobook *Gaelic Fields*

These events are free and no booking is required.

With thanks to the Clonakilty GAA community and Ger McCarthy, Chairman of Clonakilty GAA Club and to Seán Phair, Aaron O'Keeffe for their participation and support.

Michael Holly is an artist, nonfiction filmmaker, researcher and lecturer based in Cork, Ireland. His work involves parafictional and nonfiction investigations into how identities are formed, and into the relationships that people have with culture, landscape, history and ecology. He is an Irish Research Council funded PhD candidate in Film & Screen Media at University College Cork. *The Parish* forms part of his creative practice-led doctoral project.

The Parish travels to South Tipperary Arts Centre from 21 May to 24 June 2022

For further information on the exhibition and events see www.westcorkartscentre.com and www.mickholly.com and Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre social media.