

PRESS RELEASE

5715 artwork examines the risk of homelessness in Ireland

The risk of homelessness in Ireland is highlighted in a new artwork currently on show at /Glitch Festival 2016 in Rua Red, Tallaght. 5715 is a sound and electronics installation, created by Dublin artist Sinead McDonald and Waterford artist Aileen Drohan. The installation outputs a range of sound frequencies derived from the ratio of the average rental prices for a 3 bedroom family home in each county in Ireland, versus the maximum rental price allowed for a family with three children under the government's Rent Supplement scheme. The result is a range of pitches from just above audible for lower risk areas, to squealing high-pitch where families are most in danger. Disturbingly, in no county in Ireland was the average rental price equal to or under the maximum allowed under the scheme.

The mathematical findings used by the artists produce some interesting results: the ratio between the average rental price of family home and the rent allowance supplement is, unsurprisingly, highest in Dublin and Wicklow, at over 1 to 1.6. It is also notably high however in Longford, at 1 to 1.44. Wexford and Sligo fare as best counties to live in if you are a family on rent allowance, with a ratio of 1 to 1.07, followed by Kerry, Roscommon/Mayo, Carlow, Tipperary, Kilkenny, Clare/ Donegal. Unaffordable rental prices become more pronounced in the remaining counties with ratios varying between 1 to 1.20 and 1 to 1.41. In 5715 the artists have outputted this data to frequencies fed from tiny Arduino microcomputers to 26 wall mounted piezoelectric disks. The cacophony of sounds produced can be difficult to engage with for any length of time.

The artwork title, 5715, refers to the number of homeless people in Ireland as of January 2016, according to the Department of the Environment, of which 1830 were children. New figures now put those numbers at 6189 and 2121 respectively. Rents are projected to rise a further 12% this year, placing an even greater number of families and individuals at risk. In many places across the country, availability is minimal and stock is priced far above the maximum limits set for Rent Supplement payments. Many families have been forced into emergency accommodation due to soaring rental prices, locking them into a cycle of increasing poverty.

ENDS.

Glitch is curated by Ciara Scanlan and Matthew Nevin of Mart.