

## *FIRST CITIZENS SPEAK*

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The idea for *FIRST CITIZENS SPEAK* came from Dr Fergus Glynn, the GP in Corofin Medical Centre in North Clare. He was struck by the level of contentedness that he noted amongst his oldest patients, many of whom live at home, well into their nineties. Aware of the work being done at the X-PO project, in 2013 he asked if it might be possible to do a project that could somehow allow these older citizens of the county to share their wisdom about what they feel we are missing from our lives. Time did not allow either of us to follow through with the idea, but asked in 2016 by Age and Opportunity to put forward a proposal for the VOLTage Clare County of Culture Bealtaine programme for 2016, the idea seemed very appropriate.

Dr. Glynn agreed to collaborate and mediate communication and I made contact with over 20 potential participants. On visiting I quickly realized that many were very reluctant to be identified by name, or be seen on camera. The focus was on the recordings and participants had the opportunity to see and hear the film to ensure they were happy with their contribution. Dr Anne Byrne of NUI Galway wrote an essay to accompany the exhibition and musician Tim Collins provided an original piece of music *An Pocaire Gaoithe: The View from Above* recorded live in glór with the Kilfenora Ceili Band as soundtrack.

The film was exhibited in glór, both as a projection in the studio space and in the foyer beside a large photograph of rhubarb, taken in one participant's garden. This was a variety taken from her mother's home place in Kilfenora, County Clare, and transplanted to her new home when she married. The image came to represent the kind of inter-generational legacy I felt was at the core of the film. Of the 10 participants 5 came to the opening – some were too ill or frail to make the event however all have been given copies of the film. The film has now been screened publicly across Ireland and used as a starting point for workshops on inter-generational communication and exchange.