

The Parks Service



The Parks Service is known primarily as a sound artist, but his work in music has always been filtered through his interest in programming, electronics, technology and youth culture. Inspired by both the underground rave scene he called home in his teens and the computer games he played as a child, he seeks to use music technology to open up the possibility for the creation of alternate imaginative realms that are utopian, beautiful and full of hope.

The Parks Service's earliest projects focused on bringing his imaginative fantasies to life through radio jams and hacks. In *REPORT! REPORT!* (1998-99), listeners who tuned in to 2FM during the evening rush hour found themselves confronted with traffic reports describing herds of unicorns loose on the Belgard road, floods of ping-pong balls cascading down Kiltipper Way and garden gnome riots disrupting traffic on the Old Bawn Road. Much of his early work in this vein was inspired by the radio plays of Orson Welles and Samuel Beckett, although transformed by prankish wit. As The Parks Service's interest in hacking radio developed, however, his work began to use sounds far removed from that of the radio announcer's voice. In *LOCKED* (2001), he set up short-range transmitters along the Lock Road in Lucan, tracing an ancient fairy pass. These transmitters jammed all radio frequencies except for one narrow band. According to the artist, "People driving along the Lock Road and listening to their radios were hit with bursts of sferics and atmospheric phenomenon. It was like the fairies themselves were loose. I wanted to

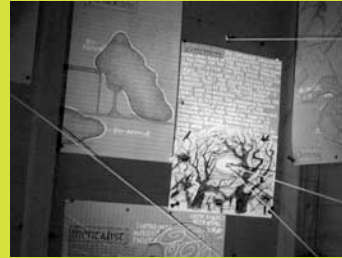
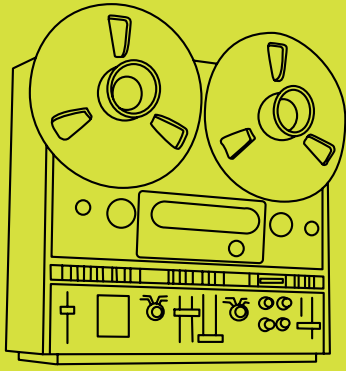


reactivate these folk routes, fairy passes and ley-lines, and connect them to the sounds that exist all around us that we can't hear, sferics, ultrasonic sounds like bat whistles. For me, the coming into being of these sounds is supernatural." The Parks Service's goal of connecting listeners with something otherworldly was further investigated in *inSErTI* (2002), a work in which the artist hacked the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence's SETI@home project. SETI@home supplies participants with a free computer program that uses their computer to analyse radio telescope data for signs of extraterrestrial life. The Parks Service hacked into this network and inserted packets of "semi-recognisable musical structures, clusters of could-be speech, winks and sparks of possible language."

After the criminal proceedings brought against him in 2003 for hacking *SETI@home*, The Parks Service turned toward the creation of site-specific sound installations that by their very nature "hacked" the sites where they were placed. *5 Badges* (2003) was installed in hidden corners of Tallaght's Kilnarnagh Estate, where local teenagers were known to gather and drink; *Parking* (2006) employed several run-down cars scattered through the car park of The Square shopping centre; the *burned* project (2004-07) featured various installations in burned-out cars, including *i'm no po-lice* (2006), which turned a burned-out and abandoned police car in Jobstown into a lush, tactile soundworld.



Centre: Photo by Neil T
Bottom: Photo by Jay Tong



The Parks Service's most recent work takes the concept of hacking and re-applies it to his own childhood world. The Parks Service was the third of five brothers, and grew up in Glenasmole at a time when it was difficult to get television reception there. As a result, he and his brothers spent a lot of time reading comics and science-fiction, as well as playing video and role-playing games. Inspired by a variety of sources, including *Dungeons & Dragons*, the *Sláine* comics of Pat Mills and Mike McMahon, and the Irish mythological saga "The Burning of Dá Dearga's Hostel", the brothers developed their own fantasy world and role-playing game called *The Legend of the Fornar Resistance*. Broadly taking in the diverse interests of the five boys, *Legend* expanded from the traditional swords and sorcery of the fantasy genre to include vampires, aliens, robots, parallel dimensions, cyberspace and many of their own inventions, including those most evil of villains, the genetically-mutated Augments. Within this fantasy realm, Ireland became Emeraldia, Glenasmole became G'smole, and most of Munster had been blasted into the ocean as a result of zombie uprisings. In *The Legend of the Fornar Resistance* (2008), The Parks Service recreates the world of the Fornar, inviting the observer into it through the magical space of a small, dark shed, where one can listen to the story of the Fornar Resistance while using a hand-held torch to study assorted maps and drawings pinned to the walls within. Special UV torches reveal secret



information: where gaps in the Fortress of Vartrouug's force-field are located, for example, how to defeat a Minoton, or how to move through the Hole Singularity at the mouth of G'smole valley into cyberspace. In this work, history, geography and folklore are "hacked" by the imaginations of the teenage Fitzpatrick brothers, a process opening fantastic realms right before our eyes, offering limitless possibilities and refreshing our view of the world we live in.



CHIMERIC MUTANTS

CM'S EMERGED FROM THE AFTERMATH OF THE NUCLEAR BOMBING OF NEW YORK WITH HIGHLY-MUTATED IMMUNE SYSTEMS. CM'S CAN WITHSTAND ANY KIND OF CHEMICAL ATTACK