

2010

What is Installation Art?

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WHAT IS Installation Art **?**





THE WHAT IS_ IMMA talks series?

There is a growing interest in contemporary art, yet the ideas and theoretical frameworks which inform its practice can be complex and difficult to access. By focusing on a number of key headings, such as participatory arts, installation art and performance art, this series of talks is intended to provide a broad overview of some of the central themes and directions in modern and contemporary art.

03

This series represents a number of challenges: the inherent problems and contradictions in attempting to outline or summarise a wide-ranging, constantly changing and contested sphere of both art theory and practice, and employing summary terms to describe a range of practice, much of which emerged in opposition to such totalising tendencies.

Taking these challenges into account, this talks series offers a range of perspectives, drawing on expertise and experience from lecturers, artists, curators and critical writers, and is neither definitive nor exhaustive. The intention is to provide background and contextual information about the art and artists featured in IMMA's exhibitions and collections in particular, and about Contemporary Art in general, to promote information sharing, and to encourage critical thinking, debate and discussion about art and artists. The talks series addresses aspects of Modern and Contemporary Art, however, the emphasis will be on Contemporary Art and artists, focusing mainly on the period from the 1940s to the present.

Each talk is supported by an information leaflet which includes a summary, the presenter's essay, a reading list, a glossary of terms and a resources list. This information can also be found on IMMA's website along with more detailed information about artworks and artists featured in IMMA's Collection at www.imma.ie.

CONTENTS

what is__? talks series	page 03
introduction: installation art	page 04
here and now: art, trickery, installation - niamh ann kelly	page 08
bibliography and further reading	page 20
glossary of terms	page 21
installation art resources	page 24

WHAT IS Installation Art?

introduction

The Irish Museum of Modern Art is the national cultural institution for the collection and presentation of Modern and Contemporary Art in Ireland. IMMA exhibits and collects Modern and Contemporary Art by established and emerging Irish and international artists. The Temporary Exhibitions Programme features work by established and emerging artists ranging from painting, sculpture, installation, photography, video and performance. IMMA originates many of its exhibitions but also works closely with a network of international museums and galleries. IMMA's Collection includes artworks across a range of media and genres, acquired through purchase, donations, loans and commissions. Many artworks have also been acquired through IMMA's Temporary Exhibitions Programme and, on occasion, through IMMA's Artists' Residency Programme.

In this introductory text we provide a brief overview of Installation Art. Terms associated with Installation Art are indicated in CAPITALS and are elaborated on in the glossary on p. 21. We invited Niamh Ann Kelly, lecturer in Critical Theory, Department of Art, Design and Printing, in the Dublin Institute of Technology, to write an essay titled *Here and Now: Art, Trickery, Installation* which provides an overview of Installation Art. Kelly's essay includes examples of artists and artworks, some of which are included in IMMA's Collection or have been featured in IMMA's Temporary Exhibitions. By focusing on IMMA's Collection and exhibitions we hope to draw attention to the range of artworks by artists such as Ann Hamilton, Gerard Byrne, Liam Gillick, James Coleman, Cristina Iglesias, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Abigail O'Brien, Fergus Martin and Anthony Hobbs. We also hope to highlight the potential of IMMA's exhibitions and Collection as resources for further investigation and enquiry into the subject of Installation Art.

what is installation art?

INSTALLATION ART is a broad term applied to a range of arts practice which involves the installation or configuration of objects in a space, where the totality of objects and space comprise the artwork. Installation Art is a mode of production and display of artwork rather than a movement or style. Installation Art can comprise traditional and non-traditional MEDIA, such as PAINTING, SCULPTURE, READYMADES, FOUND OBJECTS, DRAWING and TEXT. Depending on the number of objects and the nature of the display, installation spaces can range from cluttered to minimal. The experience for the viewer of Installation Art is very different from more traditional artwork,



05

such as painting, which is usually viewed from a single reference point. Installation Art requires the active engagement of the viewer with the artwork. This may involve the viewer entering into the space of the artwork and interacting with the artwork. By entering into the space, the viewer encounters the artwork from multiple points of view, rather than from a single PERSPECTIVE more typically associated with looking at a painting. Installation Art may engage many or all of the senses - touch, sound and smell - rather than just the visual or optical sense. Installation Art also foregrounds experience and communication over the production of a finished art object.

Installation Art is characterised by the incorporation of the SITE or space of display into the artwork. In some instances the site or location of the work is an intrinsic and non-negotiable element of the work. To move the work or recreate it in another site would constitute the destruction of the existing work and the creation of a new work, which may contravene the artist's intentions. This type of Installation Art is called SITE-SPECIFIC, where the creation of the artwork relates to, and is contingent on, a specific site. Many artists who create Installation Art impose conditions and provide detailed instructions with regard to the installation of the artwork, such as indicating where and how it can be installed, what materials are to be used, and whether it can be reinstalled in the same or any other site.

While the site is a central component of Installation Art, in some instances it may not be particular to the artwork; therefore the artwork can be reconfigured or reassembled in other similar sites or spaces in its existing state or in a reconfigured state, subject to the conditions of the artist. For example, an installation might be assembled and exhibited in various gallery spaces within an ART MUSEUM or in a context outside the museum, such as a public space or in an ART FAIR or BIENNALE.

06

Installation Art is mostly associated with the period from the 1960s to the present; yet there are many precedents, particularly in early twentieth century AVANT-GARDE movements, such as SUPREMATISM, CONSTRUCTIVISM, DADA, SURREALISM and FUTURISM. For example, the exhibition designs of El Lissitzky, Marcel Duchamp and the alterations made by Kurt Schwitters to the rooms in his home, known as Merzbau, suggest early prototypes of Installation Art.

The formative period of Installation Art, during the 1960s and 1970s, was a period of social, political and cultural upheaval. A number of avant-garde movements which have influenced the development of Installation Art, such as MINIMALISM, ENVIRONMENTAL ART, LAND ART, CONCEPTUAL ART and PERFORMANCE ART, emerged during this period in reaction to the perceived limitations of MODERNISM – the COMMODIFICATION of the artwork, the foregrounding of representation over experience and the constraints imposed by a singular, detached encounter with the artwork. By abandoning constructs such as the frame and the plinth, Minimalist artists resisted strategies of representation and transcendence characteristic of Painting and Sculpture, drawing the viewer's attention instead to the totality of the actual experience of the artwork – its materials, context and site. Similarly, developments in Environmental Art, Land Art, Conceptual Art, Performance Art, HAPPENINGS and VIDEO ART resulted in the creation of temporary, performative and site-specific work, subverting the commodification of the artwork and shifting consideration from what the artwork represents to what the artwork communicates. By revealing the material conditions of display, artists challenged the dominance of the conventional viewing conditions of the art institution.

Emerging CRITICAL THEORIES during this period, in particular FEMINISM, POSTCOLONIAL THEORY and POSTSTRUCTURALISM, challenged modernist assumptions about a stable, predictable and singular viewing subject. These theories suggest that individuals are shaped by their cultural, social, political and psychological experiences and that these experiences inform their encounter with an artwork. As a mode of production and presentation, Installation Art offers a complex and multifarious engagement with the artwork, which reflects this representation of experience as fragmented and contingent.

The increase in new venues and large-scale, international exhibitions in the 1980s established the conditions for Installation Art to become a dominant format, particularly in the production of large-scale and spectacular work. Emerging artist-curated exhibitions placed a greater emphasis on the role of COLLABORATION in Installation Art. While site specificity was an important element of early forms of Installation Art, more recent forms tend to adapt to the interior conditions of the exhibition space. In this regard, site specificity has been displaced in favour of project-based, participatory or discursive forms of installation, where interaction with the viewer or audience is central to the artwork. This shift in emphasis towards discursive and participatory modes of practice was also influenced by the emergence of

07

SOCIALLY-ENGAGED and PARTICIPATORY ARTS in the 1980s and by RELATIONAL ARTS in the 1990s. These modes of practice emphasise the activation of the viewer through active engagement with the artwork.

The emergence of new technologies has also influenced the development of Installation Art, in particular VIDEO and FILM where many artists employ and subvert the conventions of the cinematic experience in terms of its use of space, narrative and engagement with the audience. More recent developments in DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, VIRTUAL REALITY and the INTERNET as virtual space, have expanded the field of Installation Art. Installation Art continues to be shaped and influenced by developments in other fields and disciplines. The performative elements of Installation Art have been influenced by developments in avant-garde THEATRE and DANCE and similarly, developments in ARCHITECTURE and INTERIOR DESIGN continue to inform consideration of the use and designation of public and private space.

The viewer's direct experience of the artwork is central to the realisation of Installation Art, yet the display of Installation Art is often temporary. The DOCUMENTATION of the artwork may be the only evidence of its existence, and in some instances it may be the sole means by which the viewer engages with the artwork. The temporary and ephemeral nature of much Installation Art also presents a challenge to the art market to commodify and sell such artwork, wherein the documentation may come to represent the artwork and, consequently, it may acquire a commercial value in its own right. Equally, the temporary nature of Installation Art presents considerable challenges to museums and galleries to store and conserve such work, especially where the work employs potentially obsolete technology or degradable material. Despite these challenges, Installation Art continues to be bought and collected by public and private collectors and institutions, often resulting in the consolidation of temporary or ephemeral work. Rather than contributing to the decommmodification of the artwork, the material conditions of Installation Art have effected changes in the display, acquisition, commissioning and conservation policies of exhibiting institutions, enabling them to accommodate the idiosyncrasies of such practice.

The term Installation Art is broad and all-encompassing and its prevalence and centrality in Contemporary Art is seen by some to suggest its imminent demise; however, artists continue to employ and adapt strategies of installation. Its versatility and flexibility as a mode of production and display, and its capacity to address the concerns of both the artist and the viewer, ensure that it remains a legitimate and relevant form of Contemporary Arts practice.

For bibliography and further reading see p. 20.

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Here and Now: Art, Trickery, Installation

Niamh Ann Kelly

introduction

Ideas of installation art span a number of art practices and are variously registered in a range of approaches to the histories and theories of art. Sometimes permanent in structure, usually ephemeral, installation art prioritises, as the term suggests, the mode by which art is installed as a crucial facet in a work's reflexive identity. This emphasis is typically achieved by ensuring, first and foremost, that the viewer is not a passive spectator but an active agent in how the work (re)defines place. This open-ended proviso of installation art acknowledges that reading, in the widest sense such as an encounter with art, is where knowledge is located. This concept finds a voice in the words of installation veteran Ilya Kabakov, who has remarked upon installation as a genre of art that takes note of a "shift from object knowledge to subject experience".¹ The functioning of installation art thus depends upon the presence of the viewer daily transformed, willingly or unsuspectingly, into necessary participants in the life of an artwork at a particular location.

From this premise and in the light of contemporary alertness to cultural relativities through constantly changing notions of community, to compile a definitive history of installation art is a possibly impossible project. Claire Bishop acknowledges the cultural limits of her study on Western installation art, while Erika Suderburg comments that installation art is a solely Western art-historical construct.² The disparity of these disclaimers serves a clear reminder that writing on art is always about points of view. Similarly, to claim an authoritative set of characteristics as central to all installation art would be a clumsily conventional and unproductive task. Instead I will focus on what can be identified as repeated themes and motives behind some exigent, influential and inspiring samples of installation art, in the hope that drawing attention to these topical aspects might contribute to general understanding and engagement with the persuasive power of this genre to make art experiential and immersive.

Locating the viewer

A recess in an interior wall of a room appears to have a full vase of flowers, and a nearby window seems surrounded by a billowing curtain. On closer inspection, the sense of depth, texture, light and even life, is revealed as an illusion: a flat wall meticulously painted to provide the eye with the impression of features not actually there. *Trompe l'oeil* is a manipulative mode of image making and produces a vision, which can only be realised by the artist through a considered awareness of the viewer: understanding how they see and where they stand.³ The resulting theatrical potential of painting can function as a metaphor for the wider trickery of art: to manipulate and undermine easy distinctions between experiences of life and of art, and between perceptions of reality and of representation.

Trompe l'oeil is evident in imaging practices from as early as classical painting and is arguably present in any attempts at depicting perspective, but is most readily identified with the Baroque period. As in *trompe l'oeil*, two of the core tasks typically undertaken by installation art revolve around how space is experienced and the activity of the viewer in a changeable contract between illusion and presence. This dual interest is echoed in the work of Jorge Pardo. In his exhibition at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2010, and in particular by his rendition through photo-wallpaper of interiors belonging to rooms elsewhere, Pardo plays on the viewer's sense of here and now, by insistently presenting an illusionary representation of elsewhere, at another time. A sequence of superimposed images along the museum's exhibition corridor re-envisioned the space as a reference to his there-and-then, inviting the viewer into his personal history as an artist. In *4166 Sea View Lane*, 1998, Pardo fully decommisioned the gap between everyday life and art: a house in Los Angeles was built as both an artwork and his place of residence.⁴

Arising from the observation that installation art prioritises viewer engagement, a useful point of differentiation between taking account of art as object and art as installation might be considered as part of a growing and determined insistence of artistic control over commissioning and curatorial power. Installation works by Ann Hamilton have progressively pioneered immersive experiences in which the duration of viewer engagement is vital. Often site and context-specific in her work, she also produces installations that are equally object-driven, such as *Filament II*, 1996. In this work, an organza curtain on a circular rail is mechanically programmed to spin, and to experience it the viewer must enter it. In theory, such an artwork can be described as a filled-space type of installation, as opposed to a location-specific work, to borrow Mark Rosenthal's explanation: it be packaged and remade elsewhere, if a little differently.⁵ Nonetheless, as with all her work the role of the viewer is an active one, necessary for the work to make sense.

08

09

Joan Simon points out that there is a “dynamic relation between the experiential and the picturesque” in Hamilton’s installations.⁶ Hamilton exerts a concerted control over the presentation of *Filament II*, for example, by maintaining the centrality of the viewer’s spatial immersion in the work, where a purely object-based piece might be (re)positioned more arbitrarily. In this reckoning, in installation art practices the artist’s awareness of the extent to which a viewer activates the work supersedes the managerial influences of the commissioner and/or curator. This power struggle has taken the form of an art that, in an out-right manner, proliferates space beyond the conventional art object, and therefore directly implicates the viewer and importantly, their experience, immersive or otherwise, as part of the work. Vanessa Hirsch identified in her discussion on Marcel Duchamp’s *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*, Paris, 1938, that the work: “bursts the spatial restrictions of a work of art”.⁷ This bursting forth, in all directions, is a symbolic tearing down of previously proffered boundaries of art - media specificity, discipline alignment, site of production, place of presentation and social function.

10



11

pushing the boundaries of art

Installation art is repeatedly distinguished as a genre of the late-twentieth century by a notable upsurge in artists’ stated interests in the potential for social change fostered by an emphasis on the experiential outcome of art, as epitomised in the rhetoric of Joseph Beuys among others.⁸ As a distinctive method of making art, installation art at this time challenged the reduction of art to an economic chip, tool of cultural discrimination or mechanism for social exclusion. Debates around art’s relationship to reality, in particular everyday socio-economic reality, lie at the heart of the preliminary indications of installation art as distinctive intentional genre, apparent in diverse collective and individual works.⁹ In 1961 a clearly intended installation-style work presented a smart critique of the values associated with material culture broadly. Claes Oldenburg’s *The Store* was a collection of typical saleable objects rendered in papier-mâché, such as a dress and decorative ornaments. Displayed in a rented store-front in the lower East Side of New York City, the artwork was a conflation of artefacts represented in a manner that denied their function within a viable commercial site. Oldenburg thus simultaneously queried the purpose of shopping and of art in a witty swipe at where and how cultural value is played out through social mores of consumption.

The Store also marked the displacement of studio that occurs in installation practice as the work is definitively constructed at the location of its presentation, in Julie Reiss’ words “the site is the studio”.¹⁰ Taking a sincere if belated cue from Oldenburg, forty years later, Michael Landy took all his material possessions and placed them on a specially constructed conveyor belt in a disused department store in London. In the space he bagged and tagged the items and created an inventory with various categories, before everything was destroyed. *Break Down* lasted for two weeks, by which time all his material belongings were destroyed. A self-conscious search for identity through a thoroughly destructive act, *Break Down* also constituted a determined disregard for the rift between studio and display, and negated the separation of performance from installation.

Rosenthal has described installation as an “elastic medium that compromised, even democratised, the sphere of art”: presumably Landy’s choice of venue and actions were indicative of an agenda to democratise art by enacting a refutation of personal identity on the high street.¹¹ Landy’s work, however, demanded witnesses and in this, as Reiss has suggested in general, the prominence given to the viewer’s experience makes installation art resistant to conventional methods of historicisation. The subversion of the spaces and practices of everyday life presented in the installation work of Oldenburg and Landy institute a defiant attitude towards necessarily chronicling either art or society in the terms received by their respective generations.

Image: eun-mo chung
Parallel windows, 1993.



12

Disregarding the limitations of defining artworks in terms of objects, media or discipline is conspicuous in the light and environment works of artists such as James Turrell, Robert Irwin and Olafur Eliasson. The systematic laboratory style explorations of visual and psychological perception by Turrell and Irwin highlight another shift in studio practice towards an experimental model in which intermittent presentations of installations in the form of exhibitions are simply expression, or even research, points in ongoing processes of art making. Eliasson's works distill or reconstitute natural phenomena into galleries, institutional environments and constructed exhibition sites to ultimately confront the capricious divide between outdoors and indoors, and so question the lived relationship between natural orders and contemporary culture. Friedrich Meschede claims that the outcomes of Eliasson's practice "render visible our fascination with the elements".¹²

Springing from a sustained and ongoing dialogical practice, Eliasson's art installations vary from subtle interventions to truly spectacular manipulations of environments. The *Weather Project* at Tate Modern, 2003, exemplifies the latter: the creation of an artificial sun, complete with ambient golden haze in the Turbine Hall. In other of Eliasson's work, olfactory and aural senses as well as visual and spatial perceptions are called upon in fuller explorations of the synaesthetic potential of art. As constructions of spaces that intervene at various sites to refocus personal and shared senses of location, installation art, through committed boundary-breaking, highlights how temporal experiences call attention to the precariousness of systems of representation.

performativity and the theatre of representation

Michael Fried's now famous essay on 'Art and Objecthood', 1967, pinned a demarcation between autonomous art, which Fried argued could trigger absorption, and objects in context, that became, in his terms, art in the presence of the viewer through a reliance on theatricality.¹³ Intended as a criticism of minimalist sculpture, the debate that Fried's text has come to represent has polarised theorisations on art practices of the late modern period. Nonetheless, the revolution of how notions and devices of theatrical staging have become, widely, integrated into subsequent art practices, and especially into installation (and obviously performance) art, remains of great significance in how artists have challenged the field of representation, more generally. Angelika Nollert has commented: "Art, like theatre, opens up spaces where illustrations can become happenings - ones which thrive on the awareness of their simulation".¹⁴

Kabakov, who works in collaboration with his wife Emilia, has even developed a subgenre of installation art in his theatre installation works. Throughout his practice, Kabakov eschews the possibility of complacency on the relationship between individuals and their environment, by focusing on the interaction between social conditioning and realms of imagination. *The Children's Hospital*, 1998, made for the Irish Museum of Modern Art, draws on the history of the museum site as a hospital and is combined with an interest in using fantastical elements to promote health - such as small mechanical theatres to provide entertainment for hospitalised children.¹⁵ The life-size scale of the hospital rooms clearly positions the viewer as the subject of the work and reorients the viewer's consciousness of the unnervingly trans-cultural codes of institutional spaces.

13

The staging of collective culture is also a driving concern in some works by Fred Wilson and Mark Dion. Their works, respectively, query the legitimacy of methods of cultural and historical representation and the basis of our enthrallment to codes of display in determining, as Flora Kaplan succinctly phrased it, "the making of ourselves".¹⁶ In the spaces of installation art, Wilson and Dion have systematically subverted systems that most readily make and perpetuate notions of otherness as the blinding base on which the formation of selves occurs, time and time again. Wilson eloquently noted the importance of location for his work at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003, *Speak to me as I am*, which included a range of materials to illuminate and interrogate the framed position of Africans in Venetian art history. Wilson also commissioned a Senegalese vendor to sell handbags at the entrance to the main exhibition area in a deft gesture depicting multicultural Venice. The bags were designed by Wilson but were mistaken by the local police for illegal designer knock-offs. Dion in his alternative archeology in *Tate Thames Dig*, 1999, for example, reinvents systems of value enlisting professional help across disciplines to present incidental throwaway culture as notice-worthy artefactual finds.¹⁷

For artists such as the Kabakovs, Wilson and Dion, a viewer's activated present-ness, *being there*, is key to the *raison d'être* of their works, which implies that installation art is in no small part a matter of spectacle, albeit a spectacle fashioned by blurred delineations between concepts of document

14

and simulation. Comparisons are often evoked between installation art and cinema and theatre, but the comparisons are limited. In a cinema, as de Oliveira points out, the screen divides audiences from the form (though perhaps less so with three-dimensional effects).¹⁸ Also, in a theatre, audiences are usually a silent, seated and still mass, separated from the stage and actors. Installation art activates the spectacle, thus extending the theatrical stage of culture into subjective experiences. The viewer is on location and an essential element of the scene in an engagement that confounds expectations of art as a purely representative practice. De Oliveira phrased it: the artist and viewer are together in a discursive environment.¹⁹ In other words, the experiential outcome of physically being in the work fosters a sense of dislocation from both everyday life and art, disavowing segregated concepts of reality and systems of representation.

Some historians, like Reiss, contend that installation art began as an alternative practice of cultural discourse that has migrated from its origins on the margins of mainstream culture to the very centre of institutional practice.²⁰ It can equally be interpreted that, far from sitting pretty in the seat of cultural power, installation art in museums or as part of large-scale commissioned projects can function to effectively perplex politics of representation at play in such traditional set-ups. Jacques Rancière's hypothesis of artistic practices as "'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility", seems to iterate the transformative potential of art on concepts of public domain and dominion.²¹ Installation art, then, as method of space reclamation, can re-territorialise culture from either margins or centres of commissioning authority, by virtue of an insistence on the viewer as indispensable to the work.

The practice of the *Situationist International* from 1957, set the scene for a discussion on psycho-geography and highlighted the importance of considering the urban public sphere as a living, changeable, subjective, as well as shared, space.²² Many public art projects - both temporary and monumental installation works - extend these concerns, where the site of art becomes a cue to reconsider the past in the present day. Installation art is viewed, but it is also heard, smelled and touched, enlisting the viewer in an active engagement that reflects the lack of closure, even interpretative restlessness, proposed by the Situationists. Bishop writes that art installation is a co-joined experience of activating viewers and decentering them as subjects. In a visual sense, she evokes this decentering in terms of a history of pictorial perspective, but one that is insinuated into the identity politics of fragmentation within postmodern theory: "[...] installation art's multiple perspectives are seen to subvert the Renaissance perspective model because they deny the viewer any one ideal place from which to survey the work".²³

Through his work in urban spaces, Thomas Hirschhorn has elaborated on a desire to generate art as a place for social interaction, where communication is open-ended. At Documenta 11, 2002, in Kassel, Germany, Hirschhorn developed a layered project that included a makeshift port-a-cabin library

towards a
conclusion

15

and cafe thematically dedicated to the philosopher Georges Bataille.²⁴ Situated in a suburban area away from the main exhibition venues, and primarily focused on engaging the local community, Hirschhorn's work pointedly prioritises the role of viewer-participant as the purpose of the materiality of the work: a library or cafe is only communally recognised as such if it is utilised. Nollert's description of 'performative installation' as a social space applies here: the performativity of the participants is reliant on the presence of the work, but is not entirely controlled by it.²⁵ The performativity aspect that attends installation art implies a counterpoint to predetermined representative processes, and renders the practice of installation art one of constant transition and art installations guaranteed uncertain outcomes.

When Marcel Duchamp attempted to place his 'readymades' in a gallery in 1917, he in effect stated that critiques of institutions of representation are a necessary part of art.²⁶ A urinal was deemed a fountain in the eventual transition from plumbing outlet to gallery plinth and so questions were raised: What is everyday life? What is art? Who decides these questions?²⁷ The advent of installation art harnessed these questions into: What is real? What is representation? As a result, many terms have been applied to installation art - category, event, environment, intervention, site, space, medium, assemblage, ensemble, simulation, construction. This indicates that comprehending the guises of art forms is much more complex than a historical litany of media practices can explicate. The distinctions of art genres is critically linked to shifts in social, economic, geographical and virtual contexts of how and where art is read, experienced and historicised through collections, exhibitions and documentation.

In an age defined by paradigms of mobility when potential to journey seems evermore widely available, artists are increasingly nomadic and virtual travel re-characterises the geography of social networks, the desire for physical spaces where contemplative, confrontational and participatory spectatorship can occur is peculiarly constant. Recognising, temporarily, installation art as a genre - with its inherent demand upon the viewer to *get involved, here and now* - crystallises the continued importance of the sublime contradiction of art as a persistent form, and site, of expression and communication. Potentially an interruption of everyday life, art can also be integral to daily living: manifesting in installation art as an active mode of cultural challenge and ideological confirmation.

16

- 1 Quoted in Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley and Michael Petry, *Installation Art in the New Millennium: The Empire of the Senses*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2003, pp. 14-15.
- 2 Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History*, London: Tate Publishing, 2005, p. 13; Erika Suderburg (ed.), *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 10.
- 3 The term *trompe l'oeil* is literally French for trick the eye. For discussions on the significance of *trompe l'oeil* see Hanneke Grootenboer, *The Rhetoric of Perspective: Realism, Illusions in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Still-Life Painting*, London/Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005 and: Parveen Adams 'Out of the Blue', in Carolyn Bailey Gill (ed.), *Time and the Image*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. 61-68.
- 4 Built with a financial contribution from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the house was primarily financed by the artist. The 3,200 square-foot house was on exhibition to the public for five weeks in 1998, and is now the artist's main residence and indicative of his work where separations between art, design and architecture are intentionally negligible.
- 5 Mark Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art: From Duchamp to Holzer*, Munich/Berlin/London/New York: Prestel Verlag, 2003, p. 28. De Oliveira draws attention to the debate on 'interior art' taken up by Camiel van Winkel, which also suggested an inherently self-contained type of material element, op. cit., p. 29.
- 6 Joan Simon, *Ann Hamilton*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002, p. 17.
- 7 Vanessa Hirsch, 'From the Sound of Colour to the Dissolution of Disciplines: Synaesthesia in Twentieth-Century Art', in *Olafur Eliasson: Scent Tunnel, A Project for the Autostadt in Wolfsburg* (Catalogue), Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2005, p. 99.
- 8 Joseph Beuys repeatedly espoused the idea that art could transform daily life, that everyone can be/is an artist. See Mark Rosenthal, Sean Rainbird and Claudia Schmuckli (eds.), *Joseph Beuys: Actions, Vitrines, Environments*, London: Mènil Collection in association with Tate Publishing, 2004.
- 9 Clearly many artistic practices have paved the way for installation art: among them the practices of the Dadaists and Surrealists as well as the interrelated aspects of Allan Kaprow's notion of environments, Jim Dine's use of assemblages, the performances of the Viennese Actionists and ideas incorporated in the staging of happenings and events from the late 1950s. Earlier works such as *Proun Room*, 1923, by El Lissitzky and; *Merzbau*, 1926-1936/37 by Kurt Schwitters have a significant formative influence on what we call installation art today.
- 10 Julie H. Reiss, *From Margin to Centre: The Spaces of Installation Art*, Cambridge (Mass.)/London: MIT Press, 1999, p. xvii. The placement of the studio of Francis Bacon as an exhibition in Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane articulates a popular resistance to the demystification of the art process sought by installation practices. In a related vein, the fascination with photographs, films, and even partial re-creations of Piet Mondrian's studio fashions this interest with artists' studios as a site of spectacle.

17

- 11 Rosenthal, op. cit., p. 25.
- 12 Friedrich Meschede, 'For All the Senses', in *Olafur Eliasson: Scent Tunnel, A Project for the Autostadt in Wolfsburg* (Catalogue), Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2005, p. 82.
- 13 Michael Fried, 'Art and Objecthood', first published in *Artforum* 5, June 1967. See Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, London/Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, pp. 148-172.
- 14 Angelika Nollert, *Performative Installation* (Catalogue), Snoeck/Siemens Art Program, 2004, p. 22.
- 15 Discussed by Johanne Mullan in *Irish Museum of Modern Art: The Collection*, Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2005, p. 96.
- 16 See Flora Kaplan (ed.), *Museums and the Making of "Ourselves": the Role of Objects in National Identity*, London/New York: Leicester University Press, 1996.
- 17 See Fred Wilson, *Speak Of Me As I Am*, Cambridge, MA/London: MIT List Visual Arts Centre, 2003 and; Mark Dion, *Archaeology*, London: Black Dog, 1999.
- 18 De Oliveira, op. cit., p. 23.
- 19 Ibid., p. 14.
- 20 Reiss, op. cit.
- 21 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, London: Continuum, 2002, p. 13.
- 22 See Guy Debord, *Correspondence: The Foundation of the Situationist International (June 1957 - August 1960)*, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008.
- 23 Bishop, op. cit., pp. 11, 13. Many installation works can be understood in this light. The anti-monument works of Jochen Gerz are indicative of these concerns where the monument is either invisible or becoming less visible. In the mirror works of Dan Graham the frustrations of perspective are realised by the possibility of multiple viewpoints as the works interact with their environment to render obscure clarity between reality and reflection. Collaborative artists Denis Connolly and Anne Cleary have created works based on scenarios of appearance and disappearance of the engaged subject through live and delayed projections.
- 24 One aspect was a pamphlet available on site, which included: Christophe Fiat, 'Thomas Hirschhorn: The Experience of Violence in Sacrifice', Documenta 11_Plattform5: Exhibition (Catalogue), Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002, pp. 564-567, a text commissioned by Hirschhorn, addressing Bataille's work.
- 25 Nollert, op. cit., pp. 13, 20.

- 26 Assuming the pseudonym and later ego of a Richard Mutt, French artist Marcel Duchamp submitted the work for exhibition with Society of Independent Artists New York in 1917. When the work was hidden from display, the controversy was sustained in *The Blind Man Journal*, Vol. 2 that year.
- 27 Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers brilliantly queried the casual persuasion of iconographies of power in the form of insignia, emblems, symbols and cultural display practices to demonstrate the terrifyingly thin line between what a society may understand as reality through representational practices in his so-called 'museum fictions' works in the 1960s and '70s. Discussed by Steven Jacobs, in *S.M.A.K. Museum of Contemporary Art/Ghent*, Ghent and Amsterdam: Luidon, 1999, pp. 96-103.

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image: ann hamilton,
filament II, 1996.

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20

installation art:
glossary

ARCHITECTURE

The discipline concerned with planning, designing and constructing the built environment in terms of its aesthetic, functional and social considerations.

ART FAIR

An event, usually held annually, to network, showcase, market and sell art. Art Fairs have become an important mechanism in the art market for Modern and Contemporary Art. Notable examples include Frieze, ARCO and ArtBasel.

ART MUSEUM

A venue for the collection, preservation, study, interpretation and display of significant cultural objects and artworks.

AVANT-GARDE

French for advance guard or 'vanguard', a military term to describe an advance army group. The term is used to describe innovative, experimental or cutting edge artists and movements.

BIENNIAL

A large-scale exhibition of international Contemporary Art hosted by many cities every two years. The Venice Biennale was the forerunner of what is now a dominant trend in exhibiting Contemporary Art.

**COLLABORATION/
COLLABORATIVE ART**

A form of arts practice where two or more artists, often from different disciplines, collaborate in the creation of an artwork.

**COMMODITY/
COMMODIFICATION**

A product or article of trade which is marketed for a

commercial exchange of equal value. The influence of the art market on the nature, production and distribution of art is often referred to in terms of commodification.

CONCEPTUAL ART

Originating in the 1960s, Conceptual Art pushed art practice beyond the conventional limits of the art object, placing an emphasis on the idea or concept rather than a tangible art object. The ideas and methodologies of Conceptual Art inform much Contemporary Art practice.

CONSTRUCTIVISM

An abstract art movement founded by Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Rodchenko in Russia around 1915, which embraced developments in modern technology and industrialisation.

CRITICAL THEORY

A range of theories, drawn mainly from the social sciences and humanities, and associated with the Frankfurt School, which adopt a critical approach to understanding society and culture.

DADA

An anti-establishment and anti-war art movement founded in 1916 which used abstraction, nonsense texts and absurd performances to protest against the social and political conditions prevailing in Europe during World War I. Associated with the work of Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp and Marcel Duchamp.

DANCE

The movement of the body in a series of prescribed or improvised gestures often

accompanied to music. The term also refers to the art form discipline concerned with the theory and practice of dance.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Electronic data storage and transmission technology that enables immense amounts of information to be compressed on small storage devices, such as computers and telephones, that can easily be preserved, retrieved and transported.

DOCUMENTATION

The process of recording arts practice, in particular ephemeral practice such as performance, through the use of photography, film, video, audio or text.

DRAWING

The process of mark making, often using implements such as pencil, charcoal or pastels, on a two-dimensional surface.

ENVIRONMENTAL ART

A form of art practice which emerged in the 1960s in response to growing concerns about environmental and ecological issues. Traditionally associated with site-specific and installation practice, contemporary Environmental Art encompasses a broad range of media and methodologies.

FEMINISM

A social, political, intellectual and philosophical movement advocating equal rights and representation for women in all aspects of society.

21

FILM

The medium used for the creation of still or moving images. The term is also used to describe a motion picture which is a sequence of images projected onto a screen, collectively referred to as cinema. In Contemporary Art, film is referred to as an art form.

FOUND OBJECTS

The re-use of objects, either manufactured or occurring in nature, which are not designed for artistic purpose, and are kept for their inherent qualities. Often exhibited in random juxtapositions to create new meanings.

FUTURISM

Early twentieth century movement which originated in Italy and embraced all things modern, including technology, speed, industrialisation and mechanisation. It also embraced violence and nationalism and was associated with Italian Fascism.

HAPPENINGS

Associated with US artist Allan Kaprow, the term Happenings emerged in the 1950s to describe time-based performances, events or situations which rely on artistic chance and improvisation to provoke the interaction of the audience.

INSTALLATION ART

A broad term applied to a range of arts practice which involves the installation or configuration of objects in a space, where the totality of the objects and the space comprise the artwork.

INTERIOR DESIGN

The discipline concerned with the planning and design of the interior built environment.

INTERNET

A globalised system of computer networks linked by copper wire, fibre-optic cables and wireless connections, which provides services, resources and information, such as the hypertext of the World Wide Web, electronic mail, file sharing, online gaming and social networking sites.

LAND ART

A US art movement from the 1960s which emerged out of environmental and ecological concerns and the perceived limitations of the conventional art object or sculpture to respond to these concerns. Artworks were created within the landscape, often using the materials of the landscape.

MEDIA

In general usage, media refers to forms of communication, such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the Internet. In the arts, media, the plural of medium, refers to the materials, methodologies, mechanisms, technologies or devices by which an artwork is realised. Traditional media include painting, sculpture and drawing and the specific materials used, such as paint, charcoal or marble, can also be referred to as media. In Contemporary Arts practice artists use a wide range of media, such as technology, found materials, the body, sound, etc.

MINIMALISM

An abstract art movement developed in the US in the 1960s which emphasised the use of simple, geometric forms and modern materials drawn from industry. It was an extension of abstraction, focusing on the properties of the materials used but also a rejection of the ideology and discourse of Abstract Expressionism.

MODERNISM

Refers to art theory and practice from the 1860s to the 1960s and is defined in terms of a linear progression of styles, periods and schools, such as Impressionism, Cubism and Abstract Expressionism.

PAINTING

The application of a pigment or colour to a surface such as canvas, paper or plaster. It was the dominant artistic medium for pictorial representation until the twentieth century.

PARTICIPATORY ART

Places the emphasis on the input and active reception of the audience for the physical or conceptual realisation of the work.

PERFORMANCE ART

Involves an artist undertaking an action or actions where the artist's body is the medium. Performance Art evolved in the late 1950s and is closely associated with Video Art as this was the primary means of recording this ephemeral art form.

PERSPECTIVE

The technique of representing three-dimensional objects on a two-dimen-

sional surface, such as paper or canvas, where the relationship between objects is determined by their distance from the viewer.

POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

An intellectual discourse of the late-twentieth century drawing on theories from literature, film, philosophy and social and political science, concerned with the cultural legacy of colonialism in terms of national and cultural identity, race and ethnicity.

POSTSTRUCTURALISM

Theories and methods of analysis drawn from Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis which reject the objectivity of Structuralism emphasising the plurality of meaning and the instability of categories of intellectual enquiry. Associated with the work of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes.

READYMADE

A term used in manufacturing to distinguish between handmade and manufactured goods, adopted by French artist Marcel Duchamp to describe the selection and modification of a manufactured object by an artist to create an artwork.

RELATIONAL AESTHETICS /RELATIONAL ART

A term coined by the French curator Nicolas Bourriaud to describe a set of art practices which place an emphasis on the social context in which the work is created and/or presented, and on the role of the artist as facilitator, where art is information exchanged

between the artist and viewer. He calls examples of this practice Relational Art.

SCULPTURE

A three-dimensional art object which is either created or constructed by an artist. Includes constructions, assemblages, installations, sound, new media, etc.

SITE

The space in which an artwork is located either temporarily or permanently, such as a gallery space, a space in an art fair or biennial, a public space or a site-specific space where the artwork is created in response to the conditions of the space.

SITE-SPECIFIC

Artwork that is created in response to a specific site with the intention of being located in the site and where removal from the site would change the meaning of the artwork. Often associated with Installation Art, Land Art and Public Art.

SOCIALLY-ENGAGED ART

Art practice which is informed by a social agenda and created and realised through engagement, collaboration and/or participation between an artist or artists and a specific social constituency, such as a youth group.

SUPREMATISM

A Russian abstract art movement founded by Kasimir Malevich around 1913 which emphasised the supremacy of form expressed through the use of a limited range of colours and geometric shapes.

SURREALISM

An anti-establishment literary and visual art movement founded in 1924 by André Breton and influenced by Dada, psychoanalysis and Sigmund Freud's theories of the unconscious.

TEXT/TEXT BASED

Artwork created using written or printed words as the material and/or subject matter.

THEATRE

The dramatic arts of writing, producing, directing, performing and presenting dramatic texts such as plays. The term also refers to the art form discipline of drama concerned with the theory and practice of drama.

VIDEO

Technology used to record, store and project static images in a moving format similar to film. The production of lightweight, low-cost video technology, such as the Sony Portapak, in the late 1960s contributed to the growth in experimental video making during this period.

VIDEO ART

Artwork created using a video recording device. Video Art emerged as an art form in the 1960s and 1970s due to the development of new technology, and is a prevalent medium in Contemporary Art practice.

VIRTUAL REALITY

A simulated environment generated by computer technology and experienced through sensory stimuli.

Installation Art: general resources

The following is a select list of resources. A more detailed list can be found on IMMA's website www.imma.ie.

Information Websites

Access Art

A resource for teachers and students. www.accessart.org.uk

Art:21 Art in the Twenty-First Century

A television series focusing exclusively on contemporary visual art. www.pbs.org/art21

Artcyclopedia

Internet encyclopedia on art and artists. www.artcyclopedia.com

The Artists

Database of modern and contemporary artists. www.the-artists.org

Axis

Online resource for Contemporary Art. www.axisweb.org

Collabarts.org

An information resource for collaborative art practice for artists, theorists and art students. www.collabarts.org

Database of Virtual Art

Documents the field of digital Installation Art. www.virtualart.at

Digital Art Source

Resource site for digital art and culture information. www.digitalartsource.com

Inside Installations

A three-year research project for the preservation and presentation of Installation Art (2004-2007). www.inside-installations.org

InstallationArtists.org

A free online community for Installation Art. www.installationartists.org

Intute

Online service providing information about web resources for education and research. www.intute.ac.uk

LabforCulture.org

The networking platform for information on European arts and culture. www.labforculture.org

Luxonline

Web resource for exploring film and video in-depth. www.luxonline.org.uk

New Video Installation

An online review for new experimental film, video and Installation Art. www.newvideoinstallation.com

STOT

Platform providing online links relating to Contemporary Art. www.stot.org

Organisations

Co-Lab

www.co-lab.ch

Furtherfield

www.furtherfield.org

ISEA

www.isea-web.org

WRO Center for Media Art

www.wrocenter.pl

Museums and Galleries International Museums and Galleries

Art Institute of Chicago,

www.artic.edu

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Victoria
www.accaonline.org.au

Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead
www.balticmill.com

Camden Art Centre, London
www.camdenartscentre.org

Centres Georges Pompidou, Paris
www.cnac-gp.fr

Dia Art Foundation, New York
www.diacenter.org

Drawing Center, New York
www.drawingcenter.org

Gagosian Gallery, New York
www.gagosian.com

Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao
www.guggenheim-bilbao.es

Hayward Gallery, London
www.haywardgallery.org.uk

ICA - Institute of Contemporary Arts, London
www.ica.org.uk

K21, Dusseldorf
www.kunstsammlung.de

Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin
www.kw-berlin.de

Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art,
www.massmoca.org

Mattress Factory, Pittsburg
www.mattress.org

Maxxi, Rome
www.maxxi.beniculturali.it

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
www.metmuseum.org

Moderna Museet, Stockholm
www.modernamuseet.se

MOMA - Museum of Modern Art, New York
www.moma.org

Mori Art Museum, Tokyo
www.mori.art.museum

Musée d'Orsay, Paris
www.musee-orsay.fr

Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago
www.mcacchicago.org

Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki
www.kiasma.fi

Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
www.moca.org

Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
www.mca.com.au

New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York
www.newmuseum.org

Palais de Tokyo, Paris
www.palaisdetokyo.com

Reina Sofia, Madrid
www.museoreinasofia.es

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,
www.sfmoma.org

Saatchi Gallery, London
www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk

Serpentine Gallery, London
www.serpentinegallery.org

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
www.guggenheim.org

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
www.stedelijk.nl

Tate Modern, London
Tate Britain, London
Tate Liverpool
www.tate.org.uk

Whitechapel Gallery, London
www.whitechapel.org

White Cube, London
www.whitecube.com

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
www.whitney.org

Witte de With, Rotterdam
www.wdw.nl

Irish Museums and Galleries

126, Galway
www.126.ie

Butler Gallery, Kilkenny
www.butlertgallery.com

Catalyst Arts Gallery, Belfast
www.catalystarts.org.uk

Context Gallery, Derry
www.contextgallery.co.uk

Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork
www.crawfordartgallery.com

Cross Gallery, Dublin
www.crossgallery.ie

Dock Arts Centre, Carrick-on-Shannon
www.thedock.ie

Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin
www.douglashydegallery.com

Draíocht, Dublin
www.draiocht.ie

Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane
www.hughlane.ie

Farmleigh Gallery, Dublin
www.farmleighgallery.ie

Fenton Gallery, Cork
www.artireland.net/system/door

Gallery of Photography, Dublin
www.galleryofphotography.ie

Galway Arts Centre
www.galwayartscentre.ie

Green On Red Gallery, Dublin
www.greenonredgallery.com

Hallward Gallery, Dublin
www.hallwardgallery.com

Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda
www.highlanes.ie

IMMA - Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin
www.imma.ie

Kerlin Gallery, Dublin
www.kerlin.ie

Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin
www.kevinkavanaghgallery.ie

Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork
www.glucksman.org

Limerick City Gallery of Art
www.limerickcitygallery.ie

Model Arts and Niland Gallery, Sligo
www.modelart.ie

Mother's Tankstation,
Dublin
www.mothersankstation.com

Pallas Contemporary Projects, Dublin
www.pallasprojects.org

Project Arts Centre, Dublin
www.projectartscentre.ie

RHA The Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin
www.royalhibernianacademy.com

Rubicon Gallery, Dublin
www.rubicongallery.ie

Taylor Galleries, Dublin
www.taylorgalleries.ie

Temple Bar Gallery & Studios, Dublin
www.templebargallery.com

Biennials and Art Fairs

Art Basel, Switzerland
www.artbasel.com

Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil
www.bienalsaopaulo.globo.com

Documenta, Kassel, Germany
www.documenta.de

ev+a, Limerick, Ireland
www.eva.ie

Frieze Art Fair, London, UK
www.friezeartfair.com

Istanbul Biennial, Turkey
www.iksv.org/bienal

Liverpool Biennial, UK
www.biennial.com

Manifesta
www.manifesta.org

Moscow Biennale, Russia
www.2nd.moscowbiennale.ru

Shanghai Biennale, China
www.shanghaibiennale.com

Skulptur Projekte Münster, Germany
www.skulptur-projekte.de

Venice Biennale, Italy
www.labiennale.org

Journals and Magazines

Afterimage
www.vsw.org/afterimage

Art and Culture
www.artandculture.com

Art and Research
www.artandresearch.org.uk

Art Forum Magazine
www.artforum.com

Artkrush
www.artkrush.com

Art Monthly
www.artmonthly.co.uk

Art Newspaper
www.theartnewspaper.com

Art Review
www.artreview.com

Cabinet Magazine
www.cabinetmagazine.org

Circa Art Magazine
www.recirca.com

Contemporary
www.contemporary-magazines.com

Contexts
www.create-ireland.ie

Critical Inquiry
www.criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu

E-flux
www.e-flux.com/journal

Flash Art
www.flashartonline.com

Frieze Magazine
www.frieze.com/magazine

Journal of Arts and Communities
www.intellectbooks.co.uk

Journal of Visual Culture
www.sagepub.com/journals

Printed Project
www.visualartists.ie

Senses of Cinema
www.sensesofcinema.com

Springer
www.springer.in.at

The International Journal of Cultural Policy
www.tandf.co.uk/journals

The Vacuum
www.thevacuum.org.uk

The Visual Artists News Sheet
www.visualartists.ie

Third Text
www.thirdtext.com

Variant
www.variant.org.uk

White Wall Magazine
www.whitewallmag.com

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List of Illustrations:
Page 2
Gerard Byrne, *New Sexual Lifestyles*, 2003, 3 channel DVD, 54 mins, Seven photographs, Dimensions variable, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Purchase, 2004, Installation shot from the exhibition, *Tir na nOg*, IMMA, 3 November 2004 – 28 March 2005, Photograph by Denis Mortell.

Page 5
Vong Phaophanit, *Neon Rice Field*, 1993, Rice, clear red neon tubes, Dimensions as installed here 35 x 393 x 1460cm, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Loan, *Weltkunst Foundation*, 1994, Installation shot from the exhibition, *Bearings*, IMMA, 27 April – October 2004, Also shown is Patrick Scott, *Chinese Landscape*, 1986, Photograph by Denis Mortell.

Page 10
Eun-Mo Chung, *Parallel Windows*, 1993, Oil on 12 shaped canvases, Dimensions variable, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Purchase, 1994, Installation shot from the exhibition, *The First 10 Years*, IMMA, 10 April – 23 September 2001, Photograph by Denis Mortell.

Page 12
Cristina Iglesias, *Untitled (Vegetation Room X)*, 2002, Resin and bronze powder, 250 x 230 x 245 cm, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Purchase, 2003, Installation shot from the exhibition, *Bearings*, IMMA, 27 April – October 2004, Also shown is Mainie Jellett, *Untitled, (Seascape)*, Photograph by Denis Mortell.

Page 19
Ann Hamilton, *Filament II*, 1996, Organza fabric, steel mount with electronic controller, Curtain height 426.72 cm, overall installation height variable, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Purchase, 2002, Installation shot from Ann Hamilton at hand, IMMA, 27 March – 14 July 2002, Photograph by Denis Mortell.

what is series 1?

Arising from the observation that installation art prioritises viewer engagement, a useful point of differentiation between taking account of art as object and art as installation might be considered as part of a growing and determined insistence of artistic control over commissioning and curatorial power.

Niamh Ann Kelly

What is Installation Art? is the fifth in a series of talks and booklets which aim to provide a general introduction to key concepts and themes in Contemporary Art. *What is Installation Art?* provides an overview of the context in which this emerging category of arts practice has developed. This is accompanied by an essay by **Niamh Ann Kelly**, titled *Here and Now: Art, Trickery, Installation*.

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