



19/11/11—17/12/11

Pallas Periodical Review

Selected by Ruth Carroll, Carl Giffney, Mark Cullen & Gavin Murphy

David Beattie, Morton Feldman, Bea McMahon, Seán Shanahan, John Smith, Mark Clare, Maeve Curtis, Gillan Lawler, Aidan Lynam, Fergal McCarthy, Not Abel, Cecily Brennan, Carol Anne Connolly, Emma Houlihan, Andreas Von Knobloch, Nevin Lahart, Joseph Coveney, Michelle Considine, Barbara Knezevic, Colm Mac Athlaoich, Maggie Madden

An artwork, like a book is not made up of individual words on a page (or images on a screen), each of which with a meaning, but is instead "caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences." Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

Pallas Periodical Review is not a group exhibition per se, it is a discursive action, with the gallery as a magazine-like layout of images that speak (The field talking to itself). An exhibition as resource, in which we invite agents within the field to engage with what were for them significant moments, practices, works, activity, objects, nodes within the network.

To coincide with our new gallery space, refinement of our name and identity, and highlighting our dual role as a programming and resource organisation, Pallas Projects/Studios presents Pallas Periodical Review – a unique, yearly survey of Irish contemporary art practices. Structured as an editorial review with a critical and discursive position, it will look at commercial gallery shows, museum exhibitions, artist-led and independent projects, publishing, and curatorial practices.

The format has PP/S invite two peers – artists, writers, educators, curators – at the beginning of each year to review and subsequently nominate a number of art practices, which at the end of that year will be selected via an editorial meeting. Such a review-type exhibition within Irish art practice will act to revisit, be a reminder, a critical appraisal and consolidation of ideas and knowledge within the field of contemporary Irish art.

Additionally, Pallas Periodical Review has a fundraising element, with the works, or associated publications, editions etc. available to purchase during the course of the exhibition. All proceeds of which to go towards the 2012 exhibition programme.

Ruth Carroll has been Exhibitions Curator at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin since 2002. She holds a BA in Italian and English and a H. Dip in Arts Administration from NUI Galway and more recently a H. Dip in Management from the University of Ulster. She has worked with a wide range of both Irish and International artists including recent projects with James Coleman, Brian Fay, Nevan Lahart, Martina Cleary and the Futures series.

Carl Giffney is a visual artist who graduated from NCAD in 2007 and IADT in 2010 with first class BA and MA degrees respectively. In 2007 he co-founded The Good Hatchery, an artist led initiative that he now co-directs. From its remote base in the bog lands of North Offaly, The Good Hatchery challenges accepted methodologies of art making by hosting cultural practitioners and devising experimental projects, exhibitions and collaborations.

Pallas Projects/Studios is a not-for-profit initiative run by artists Mark Cullen and Gavin Murphy, active for fifteen years in Dublin's city centre. Pallas Projects continues to collaborate with peers to engage and develop current Irish contemporary art, through a continued commitment to solo projects by Irish and international artists, alongside occasional thematic group exhibitions, and initiated exchanges with artists' groups around Ireland and abroad.

Gavin Murphy: There is a quiet elegance to the rough-hewn materials assembled in the work of David Beattie, where concrete, paper, guts of radios, walkmans, and rudimentary sheets of metal perform simple interlocutory call-and-responses, equivocating a physical act or often-imperceptible vibration. Beattie is an artist who “encourages a sense of curiosity and exploration in his act of displacing quotidian objects, playfully welcoming new links and connections to be made between foreign ‘things’”. His most recent solo exhibition *A Knowledge of Things Familiar*, at TBG+S, Dublin, was a purely sculptural affair. His photographic works being fewer and more far-between than his sculpture – such as *Day and Night* exhibited here – convey this same elegance of enquiry, magnified perhaps by their scarcity.

Green on Red gallery has hosted several excellent solo exhibitions of Irish artists in the past year, one of those being *Two Fold* by Bea McMahon. Her film work *InDivisible* circled around notions of halving and doubling, in-betweenness, the number ‘2’ and the relationship of the human body to numbers – our pairs of eyes letting us form impressions of the world in three dimensions. As she explains, the filters used to create 3D technology polarise light removing either the left circular or right circular light waves – polarization of light was first observed in the Calcite crystal which created double images when light was refracted through it. With a look back to her source material for *Two Fold*, Bea has added a super saturated solution of mono ammonium phosphate, which has similar polarising properties, to a notionally invisible yet absorbent cardboard man.

Seán Shanahan's *Oasery, Tracery* for *The Golden Bough* series at Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, involved a single installation made up of five elements painted directly onto the curving gallery wall. Using this curve, with muted grey and deep orange, Shanahan optically activated the neoclassical gallery so as these painted motifs floated in front of the viewer at an undefined point between the eye and the wall, a most sublime and deft action. A painter of ‘refined geometric abstractions’, Shanahan’s work has increasingly been conceived with specific architectural destinations in mind, such as San Giorgio Scarampi and Villa Pomini Castellanza, and despite the abstract appearance, his work for *The Golden Bough* was in fact based on drawings Shanahan had made of his paintings in specific architectural settings.

Edited by Seán Kissane and designed by Peter Maybury, Vertical Thoughts – Morton Feldman and the visual arts has as its starting point Feldman’s 1967 project *Six Painters*, and as such the centrepiece is a very fine facsimile reproduction – from cover to endpapers – of

that exhibition’s catalogue floating in a black surround. Maybury uses black or grey borders subsequently for all the reprinted texts, approximating the page size of the originals. This device frames the privileged variety of documentation: scores, sketches, photographs of varying eras and quality, record covers, images of rugs, paintings and sculptures. The colour plates are treated with due dignity, while at the same time the type changes and dances from page to page. The book is prestigiously coffee table LARGE (though in order to accommodate the reproduction of large paintings) – but with an elegantly bound soft cover, it is not too precious.

We opened the new Pallas Projects space with an exhibition that I felt would be of real value to our present discourse, the first solo exhibition in Ireland of a singular voice in contemporary art John Smith. Influenced by the Structural Materialist ideas that dominated British artists’ filmmaking during his formative years, and fascinated by the immersive power of narrative and the spoken word, he has developed a body of work that deftly subverts the perceived boundaries between documentary and fiction, representation and abstraction. The choice was validated in the number who ignored the melee around the bar to sit and watch the entire one and a half hour main programme on the opening night, and his film *Slow Glass* has cemented itself as one of my favourite artworks since that time. All the films shown then are included in the release of a new DVD collection, as is *Lost Sound*, shown here, and made over a four-year period in collaboration with sound artist Graeme Miller.

Mark Cullen: Fergal McCarthy has an interesting practice that seems wedded to the Liffey. He conceives of the river as an under utilised resource and a valuable point of connection with nature and hopes that his practice can set about a rethinking of the cities relationship to its main waterway. In an ongoing series of what could be described as social sculptures McCarthy draws our focus to the potential of the Liffey. Following on from *Liffeytown*, his first major exhibition of public art on the Liffey in 2010, this year McCarthy installed his artificial island in the middle of the Liffey and took up residence. No mans land was a two week performance installation/social sculpture that captured my imagination in early autumn.

I came across Aidan Lynam's *Babel* when he first showed it in The Joinery Gallery on Arbour Hill. With this hybrid edifice of almost Borg-like construction Lynam reminds how society could be assimilated into unsustainable models – how its works could be perverted to stack follies high in the name of construction, of endless upward progress, in the name

of the city, the nexus of the boom. Lynam detournes the model vernacular of the building trade and represents it as a sculptural installation taking the form of a 1:200 scale architectural model of the city re-imagined as the allegorical Tower of Babel.

As demonstrated by this painting and other recent works [Gillian Lawler](#) continues to develop her particular vision unswayed by current trends in painting. Constructing images somewhere between surrealist imaginings of future cities and virtual architecture spaces with indistinct gravity and overwhelming scale, Lawler explores alienation, awe and anxiety within urban environments. This work shown in *Difference Engine Manifestation V* at Wexford Arts Centre has a synesthesiac quality that seems to trigger its own soundtrack in the mind of its perceiver. One can almost hear the engines hum out of this impossibly large floating city.

I first encountered [Maeve Curtis](#)' work whilst doing a studio visit in Engage Studios, Galway. I was intrigued with how Maeve was taking her work her on a journey out of ghostly representation and colour field painting into a deconstructed field of elements and surfaces, where aspects of her concerns such as spectral images and photographic projections were recombining with the structures of board, glass and wood to form assemblages and constellations of reflection and concrete forms with veiled images and planes of paint. For *Pallas Periodical Review* Maeve will exhibit two discreet elements of her practice.

DemocraCity and *For All Mankind*, were [Mark Clare](#)'s contributions to Dublin Contemporary. We discussed whether a video representation of *For All Mankind* could be shown. Mark was in the process of editing when I visited his studio and a change was taking place with the work as it was being transformed into another medium and potentially a new work entirely. Parking this until its completion we discussed other work and Mark presented me with photographs of *Remote Control* – his absurd mobile air traffic controller booth – a Panopticon that can be attached to the back of bike and brought to any location accessible by road. While there is a comical aspect to the piece within its potential use and the materials used in its production, it is also rooted in the darker aspects of authority and its desire for control within society.

Ruth Carroll: [Michelle Considine](#)'s work, *Islands*, was conceived during a group residency on the Clew Bay island of Inis Turk Beg during the winter of 2010 and exhibited with other work from that residency in 2011. Asked to specifically respond to the island and

surrounds, Considine created an idealised idyll, an evocative yet absent space, a heightened view of the surrounds that focused on the picturesque and our specific associations with rural space and memory. Working with a traditional medium of pencil on paper, she deliberately evokes nature as cyclical, reflecting flux and fragility, whilst obliquely mirroring the values that we associate with the inherited myth and nostalgia of the idea of the West.

[Joseph Coveney](#)'s practice combines drawing, model making, installation and print. His process begins with the material, using seemingly fragile and delicate elements such as paper and cardboard to construct in various scales and guises. Creating a discourse between both the disparate created objects and the spaces in which they inhabit, Coveney expands the possibilities of their meaning and references. His visual language creates apparent and non-apparent associations, our understanding of the work relying on our own sense of the work and its identification. Titles also lend a poignancy to the work, *Everything Come from Love*, allowing for sentiment in our reading of the piece.

Serene Object-scape, 2011, was exhibited in the Guesthouse, Cork and exemplifies the concerns and enquiries that typify the artist's practice. [Barbara Knezevic](#)'s installation posits itself as a subversion of our associations with material and her subtle intervention with that materiality has the ability to alter the inherent and associated value that the object holds. Knezevic's practice is concerned with the transformational potential of the art object, whilst subverting and transcending the stable material into the unstable, the transient and the vulnerable. She uses a wide range of materials, both natural and man-made, and elegantly subverts their meaning using handcrafted methods along with more industrial means of revision.

Hallelujah, 2011, is one work from a series of five paintings made over five days by [Colm Mac Athlaoich](#), exhibited in the exhibition *Temple Bar Revisited* that comprised of the series of works, a number of prep drawings and a video documenting the week long process. Working with pace and continuous scrutiny, or rather including a performative element to the act of making, impacted the decision making process, forcing mistakes to become compromises and quick judgements to take the place of considered determinations. One of the aspects of this project was the re-positioning and re-evaluation of Temple Bar in the cultural history of Dublin, this piece depicting GF Handel who composed his *Messiah*, whilst in cultural exile in the city in 1741/2, as his earlier success as a composer dwindled under political and artistic scrutiny.

Maggie Madden's practice tends towards intricate and protracted processes that meditate on the urban and its antagonistic relationship with the rural. This work, *Expansion*, 2011, is painstakingly composed of delicate stands of fibre optic cable, these thin lines of wire creating 3 dimensional drawings that beguile and teeter on the edge of self-distortion. Using found materials, the structures are reminiscent of architectural, physiological and organic structures, at the same time referring to their materiality and the material's association with connecting technological structures. The artist refers to these associations as "references to our networked world, communication and transport systems, infrastructures of contemporary life in modern cities". Madden transforms the mundane to create miniature and transient excerpts of vast and unending structures.

Carl Giffney: I understand the following works as being representative of (and responsive to) an intermediate time in Ireland. 2011, was a year marked by what felt like the final declines of many traditional forms of social capital (non-economic wealth that is created by ongoing interpersonal relationships, especially within groups). Economic, religious and social change has led to well-reported sociological change. I see examples of loss of social capital in places from fish farms to building sites, from rectories to sweet shops.

However, it not this decline or loss that typifies 2011 in my mind. In contrast to the recurrent portrayals of the difficult post-tiger years, I feel that there was a new latent energy building up. This collective energy is in much part the acknowledgement that old forms of social capital are beyond salvage and that now new social capital are to be developed. It is this mix of acceptance teamed with pro-activity that I found to be important when considering 2011 and looking into the future.

Cecily Brennan's *Unstrung* was one of three videos that featured in her solo show *At the edge of the skin* in The Mermaid Arts Centre. Together, the three spoke of a building latent energy of outlet, action and aftermath. Looking at instruments of glass and metal, heat and pressure, could literally be seen transforming potential energy into kinetic energy. *Unstrung* formed a centrepiece to these videos and with less abstraction added a humanity to the equation that directly speaks of resilience in the face of deluging power.

While Brennan's video works describe an overarching thematic to me, Emma Houlihan's *Arch* took the particular as initial contextual focus. Made while on residency in the Leitrim Sculpture centre, the work involved advertising in local papers before collecting an amount of rubble from a house knocked down in the locality at the end of the housing boom. The resulting cast arch physicalizes a personally reclaiming of rampant development. Using industrial materials and

techniques, it is the poetic retrieval of control on a more universal platform.

2010–11 were the first years to see record numbers of Irish Catholics officially 'opt out' of the Catholic Church – a definitive action after perhaps three decades of reports of institutional and individual crime.

Nevan Lahart's *Pirates of the holey see* featured in *Blasphemy* at Oonagh Young Gallery and is a succinct work when considering the contemporary Irish Church and its future. Carol Anne Connolly's *The Purest of Clichés* is a more meditative work that deals with national changes. It is representative of her broader practice that is often focused on development, sustainability and wellbeing. *The Purest of Clichés* is an inquiry that highlights the often familiar and habitual places where great changes take place.

Not Abel's practice regularly draws on the aesthetics of youth movements of the recent post-underground music and drug subcultures that find themselves making internal action in times of transition. This is seen in *The width of a circle*, a series of works that utilizes poster reproduction as sculptural installation rather than agents of underground communication.

Duality of change pt 1. Car Turn, formed one half of Andreas Kindler von Knoblock's NCAD degree show. With its counterpart being a communal kinetic dream machine, the collective action of turning over a car at the end of an institutional degree speaks strongly of a vibrant future, as does his other collectively engaged projects. These works lead me to understand 2011 as being about the gap between acceptance and pro-activity – the latent intermediate.

Preview: 7pm – 9pm Friday 18th November 2011

Dates: 19th November – 17th December 2011

Venue: Pallas Projects – 23 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1

Days: Thursday – Saturday, 12 – 6pm

www.pallasprojects.org | info@pallasprojects.org

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