

These Immovable Walls:

critique

PERFORMING POWER AT DUBLIN CASTLE

OVER the last number of years a number of key events in Ireland have led to the nation considering its sovereignty. The IMF/EU financial bailout (2011–2013) caused many to question how far we had move from sovereignty, while the visit of the Queen of England prompted self-reflection on how far we have come in the last 100 years. Ireland has also embarked on a cycle of centenary commemorations in the city celebrating events leading up to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. Dublin Castle has been intimately linked with these events and has been the seat of power in the city for much of its 800-year history. It was also host to many of the events for the Irish EU presidency in 2013. As such it seems timely to propose a series of works that look at the site's relationship to power both current and historical. In partnering with the Office of Public Works, this exhibition of newly commissioned performances for the first time interrogates Dublin Castle as a public space. The exhibition engages with the castle's current function as a heritage site, while also housing government departments, and its at times controversial history. These Immovable Walls considers the aesthetics and architecture of power as well as notions of legitimacy, force, coercion and voicelessness. These seven performances draw out the nuances of power at a political level but also explore the minutiae of power relations in everyday situations. I am delighted to present the work of these eminent national and international artists and look forward their excavation of the present and past of this site through these ambitious works.

Michelle Browne, Curator



Carey Young, *Speechcraft*, 2007. Staged at the Hayward Gallery, London, 2012. Speaker: David Jones Photographer: Ana Escobar. Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.



Maurice O'Connell, *Preamble*, 2009, Seaton Delaval Hall. Image courtesy November Club.



Sandra Johnston, *Currency*, solo performance for Performance Na Festival, commissioned by Performance Art Bergen, Norway. Photo by Bjarte Bjerkiun.



Pauline Cummins, *The Spy at the Gate*, 2014, performance, 1.5 hours. Photo by Fiona Morgan.



Dominic Thorpe, *Sticks coming from the mouth and going out the window*, duration 2 hours, Old School House, Dale, Norway – presented by the Nordic Arts Centre 2013. Photo by Arild H. Eriksen.



Kateřina ředá, *From Morning Till Night*, Tate Modern, London, 2011. Photo by Michal Hlad.



Carbon Design (Philip Napier & Michael Hogg), *Nu Ruralists*, 2009. Performative Artwork, Variable Message Sign, For Sale Sign Props, Lurgan Park, Northern Ireland.

PAULINE CUMMINS

The Spy at the Gate

Time: 2:30–4pm, 11 & 12 July (ticketed performance). Location: The Apollo Room, Drawing Room.

I am Emily – Duchess of Leinster. Married to Lord Kildare when I was 15, I was once the richest woman in Ireland. My homes were Leinster House in Dublin, which I found cold and dark, Carton House in Kildare where I kept my darling spotted cows, and my beloved Frescati in Blackrock. Join me for a journey through my life and times, 1731–1814. Come meet my family and my 22 children as we move through the castle where once we danced. Within these walls the history of Ireland unfolds, with its usual extremes of poverty and excess, revolution and suppression, privilege and inequality. The Duchess will receive guests between 2:30pm – 4:00pm each day.

The Apollo Room is a reinstatement of an 18th-century drawing room from Tracton House, in Dublin's St Stephen's Green, demolished in 1912. Its fireplace and plasterwork ceiling with the central figure of Apollo with his lyre surrounded by trophies representing music, the arts, war and the hunt were rescued, put in storage in the National Museum and, in 1966, incorporated in this specially created room.

Pauline Cummins' performance and video work examines identity, gender and socio-cultural relations connected to different communities in society. Cummins' video installations have been exhibited nationally and internationally and her work is in the permanent collection of the Irish Museum of Modern Art. She is a lecturer in the Dept of Sculpture at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

KATEŘINA ŠEDÁ

First Class

Time: 10am–5pm, 11 & 12 July (go to reception for details). Location: State Apartments.

Special offer in Dublin Castle! A unique opportunity to experience the tour in a different way to the thousands of annual visitors. With the option of buying a first class ticket, you get the added benefit of entering the state apartments on a red carpet, singing during a tour or one of many other once-in-a-lifetime experiences. For just one day in the year you can feel like a VIP visitor or an important state delegate. Do you want to make a phone call during the tour and you're afraid the guide will tell you off? Not this time! Buy your first class offer at the ticket desk.

Dublin Castle evolved to suit changing requirements – in particular following the great fire of 1684, when it became a palace rather than a fortress. Since Irish independence, the Castle has been transformed into a place of national prestige and the State Apartments, formerly residential quarters of the Viceregal Court, now host important state functions.

Kateřina Šedá (b. 1977) lives and works in Brno–Lišeň, Czech Republic. In her actions, which she often implements in the countryside or the suburbs, Šedá tries to establish bonds between the local people. With the aid of their own (provoked) activities and the unconventional use of everyday resources, she attempts to arouse a permanent change in their behavior.

MAURICE O'CONNELL

Audi Vide Tace

Time: 10am–5pm, 11 & 12 July, ticketed tours 11am & 1pm 12 July. Location: Throughout Dublin Castle.

Maurice O'Connell uses dialogue, language and performed identities to interrogate roles and relationships between the artist and his context. O'Connell will inhabit the public and private spaces of Dublin Castle through the facilitation of the staff. He becomes an internal and external presence, both ambiguous and certain, taking on a perceived identity by becoming a familiar presence to both staff and public. Through this presence he will map and establish access throughout the site. The permissions and access suggest visible but almost imperceptible authority. Using traditions within contemporary arts, architecture, museology, education theatre and structural development, O'Connell interrogates the exchange and transaction that language and performed roles play in brokering temporary encounters between the artist and others.

Dublin gets its name from the ancient Black Pool harbour, or Dubhlinn in Irish, that occupied the site of the present Castle gardens and it is most likely that a Gaelic ring-fort stood on the site of the Upper Castle Yard. It was a strategically important location during the almost 300-year Viking age.

Maurice O'Connell is an Irish artist based in the UK. He has presented work in a variety of contexts and his projects and roles include Cultural Olympiad, Biennials, immersive residencies in large scale institutions, creative associate and lead performer on large scale immersive theatre experiences, Regional Advisor and Development officer, licensed security and Professional Listener.

DOMINIC THORPE

Proximity Mouth

Time: 10am–1pm, 11 & 12 July. Location: The former Children's Court (a.k.a. President's Room).

Dominic Thorpe examines cultures of silence that mask and enable systematic abuses of large numbers of people, including children, within structures of care of people. His work makes connections between past and current situations in which many people have been and are abused and rendered voiceless, such as the past incarceration and treatment of children in Irish industrial schools and the current treatment of asylum seekers going through the asylum process and living in direct provision accommodation. This performance forms part of an ongoing body of work examining the nature of collective memory and how the documenting of facts related to past abuses does not readily lead to the acknowledgement and elimination of similar abuses today.

The waiting area, cell and hearing room of the Children's Court were situated at ground and first-floor levels of the building (now reconstructed) in the northwestern corner of the court-yard from the 1940s to the early 1980s, when many buildings in Dublin Castle were used by various government departments and services.

Dominic Thorpe has exhibited and performed work extensively in Ireland and internationally. He has received numerous awards including those from The Arts Council of Ireland and Culture Ireland. He is a resident at the Fire Station Artists' Studios Dublin and is currently the first artist in residence in humanities at University College Dublin.

SANDRA JOHNSTON

Entitlement

Time: 12–2pm, 11 & 12 July. Location: State Corridor, Drawing Room.

Johnston creates site-responsive performance actions that propose ways of considering issues of 'contested space', testimony and empathetic communication. Each improvised performance results directly from careful observation of specific environments; sifting through the circumstantial spatial and social encounters that occur there. Johnston will explore two historical considerations; Margaret Thatcher's stay in the Queen's Room, and her infamous quote "We must try to find ways to starve the terrorist and the hijacker of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend", and the castle's statue of Justice which controversially is not blindfolded to discrimination and was positioned turning her back on the people of Dublin.

The original State Drawing Room dates from the 1830s and was designed by Jacob Owen. It was damaged by fire in 1941, but the pier glasses, console tables and 18th century fireplaces survived. Across the courtyard, The statue of Justice by John Van Nost the Younger (1750–1787), depicts Justice with the scales in one hand and the sword of vengeance in the other.

Sandra Johnston is a Northern Ireland artist working internationally since 1992. Her artworks encompass performance actions, video installations and drawing. In 2013 she published, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt: An Investigation of Doubt, Risk and Testimony Through Performance Art Processes in Relation to Systems of Legal Justice*, with LIT (Berlin, Münster, Vienna, Zurich, London). She is currently, Senior Lecturer at Northumbria University, UK.

CAREY YOUNG

Still Life

Time: 1:20pm & 4:20pm, 11 July, 1:20pm 12 July (ticketed performance). Location: Portrait Gallery.

Carey Young's new performance *Still Life* involves the reading of a will – an event familiar from cinema or TV soap operas, but which has no basis in reality. The will, which will be highly experimental in form and content, takes a playful approach to notions of ownership, fictionality, delay, economy and the circulation of objects, and will develop Young's interest in law as a form of choreography. The piece will relate to Dublin Castle's many associations with ideas of succession and legacy, its legal tradition, and its current function as a site of display and a film location. Daniel Monk of Birkbeck University School of Law is the legal advisor to the artist.

The Portrait Gallery, mostly used as a dining room, features the portraits of sixteen Viceroys, the ceremonial representatives of the British monarchs in Ireland. The 19th century Ionic columns and the door decoration are after the Athenian Erechtheion and give a Greek revival character to the room.

Carey Young's solo exhibitions include Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, and The Power Plant, Toronto; group exhibitions include Tate Liverpool, the Hayward Gallery, London, the New Museum, New York, MoMA/PS1, New York and Tate Britain. She is represented by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

PHILIP NAPIER

Soon

Time: 10–5pm, 11 & 12th July. Location: Upper Courtyard, Dublin Castle.

Philip Napier uses the stay of Margaret Thatcher in Dublin Castle as a lever to connect several performative elements to the strange pantomime of performing power. Thatcher's premiership straddled a series of pivotal events of the 'Troubles', whose legacy forms part of contemporary excavations of 'the past', inflecting current political dialogue. These events are characterised by cycles of life, death and waiting, evoked in this work by a jaguar car glimpsed between movement and stasis. Napier is interested in how public monumental forms communicate values and how these values are changed by their 'performance' in contemporary contexts. He looks to the visual spectacle of popular mural based monumental culture, whose audience of tourists and journalists are intrinsic to the distribution of the messages inherent in the works.

The present Upper Castle Yard closely corresponds to the castle established by King John of England in 1204, which functioned as the seat of colonial rule and the centre of military, political and social affairs. It was here in 1922 that the British administration handed over power to the new Irish State.

Philip Napier is an artist and educator. He works as both solo and in collaboration with others, often re routing meaning in public environments and situations. Napier has represented both Ireland and Great Britain at International Biennials including Brazil and Kwangju. He is currently Professor of the Fine Art Faculty, NCAD, Dublin.

TICKETS:

Please go to reception to receive your exhibition wristband that will allow free access to the State apartments. Maurice O'Connell's tours, and Pauline Cummins' and Carey Young's works are closed performances. All tickets for these works are allocated on a first come first served basis from reception. There will be no re-admittance. No photography/video of the performances is allowed.

STAFF:

Michelle Browne, Curator
Ciara McKeon, Assistant Curator
Jenny Papassotiriou, Dublin Castle Liaison
Dairne O'Sullivan, PR & Marketing

THANK YOU:

Jenny Papassotiriou, Mary Heffernan, Des Swords, Alisha Naughton and all the staff at Dublin Castle, Seán O Sullivan, David Ondra, Aideen Darcy, Terry Fagan, Jane Izati, Chinenye Anameje, Sejini Palanantham, Jenny MacDonald, and Fergus Byrne, Vukasin Nedeljko, Selvavathany Rajagopalan, Mark Oosterveen, Daniel Monk, Asumpta Broe, Sinead Keogh, Renee Browne, Dairne O'Sullivan, Sean Mac Erlaine and all of our volunteers!

SEMINAR:

A seminar will take place at 2pm, 11th of July at Dublin Castle that will look at crossovers in research into the performance of power in art and society. Speakers include Dr. Shirin Rai, Warwick University, Artist Fiona Whelan, participating artist Maurice O'Connell and Denis McCarthy author of Dublin Castle: At the Heart of Irish History.

TIMETABLE:

	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5
Pauline Cummins *								
Maurice O'Connell								
Sandra Johnston								
Philip Napier								
Kateřina Šedá								
Dominic Thorpe								
Carey Young *								

* Ticketed events