

Enter Stage Left

The craft of theatre in art

Artists: **Ella de Búrca, Lothar Götz, Aoibheann Greenan, Barbara Kasten, Gareth Kennedy, David Noonan, Alexandre Singh, and Althea Thaubерger.**

The theatre is traditionally seen as a space of storytelling and illusion, where the spectator surrenders to the narrative. In *Enter Stage Left*, various dramatic devices such as sets, props, lighting and scripts, are used by Irish and international artists to explore and disrupt the enchantment of thespian conventions. The exhibition is a peek behind the scenes, a revealing look at the craft of theatre and the ways in which artists have reimagined the stage through the prism of art.

The relationship to modernist developments in theatre and set design is evident in the work of Lothar Götz, whose installation *Pas de Trois* draws on the Bauhaus artist Oskar Schlemmer's 1922 *Triadic Ballet*. Götz's work positions the viewer in an immersive space of geometric painting, wooden vitrines and wall hangings, creating a flow of experience that hints at the artist's training as a dancer. A similar appreciation of the rich resource of performance history is found in David Noonan's large-scale linen collages of archival images from early stage productions. Any sense of time or place is blurred, and this ambiguity is emphasised in his subject matter of masked performers, backstage preparations and enigmatic tableaux.

Curated by **Chris Clarke** and **Fiona Kearney**

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Acting Out

The idea of the theatre as a space of political and social critique is demonstrated in Gareth Kennedy's practice. Encompassing sculpture, archival film and photographs, and hand-carved wooden masks, this installation explores the relationship between traditional folk theatre and the fascist ideologies prevalent in Italy's South Tyrol region during World War II.

In Ella de Búrca's double-screen video *Saying is Believing*, the artist asked a 16-year old actress to read back a prepared script. Posing questions that female artists often ask regarding the relationship between one's gender, past and practice, the dialogue between artist and actress becomes increasingly disjointed and unsynchronised.

Behind the scenes

Aoibheann Greenan's theatrical installation takes George Bernard Shaw's philosophical commentary on Richard Wagner's *Ring* tetralogy as its starting point. Incorporating handmade costumes and fetishistic props, Greenan's work adopts the Wagnerian 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (or 'total work of art') to immerse the spectator in a uniquely disturbing environment.

In Barbara Kasten's photographs, materials such as wire, mirrors and Perspex are assembled to create architectural sets. Her *Scenes* series addresses the spatial and atmospheric qualities of the theatrical stage, with the interplay of shadows and reflections evoking early modernist experiments in abstraction.

Curtain Call

Alexandre Singh's collection of masks, costume designs and photographs are drawn from one of the artist's earlier works, *The Humans*, a three-hour, three-act play that mingled elements of Commedia dell'arte, Broadway musicals, and Greek comedy. The installation here presents these objects as the relics of an unseen performance.

Althea Thauberger's film installation re-stages Peter Weiss' 1963 'play-within-a-play' *Marat/Sade*, in Bohnice, the largest psychiatric clinic in the Czech Republic. Her work re-imagines the original, which featured Sade directing patients in a play about the assassination of the French revolutionary Jean-Paul Marat, alongside documentary footage on the production and its setting.