

Living/Loss

The Experience of Illness in Art

23 November 2012 - 10 March 2013

Lewis Glucksman Gallery
University College Cork
www.glucksman.org



Cecily Brennan, *Man with Eczema*, 2002,
egg tempera on gesso. © Cecily Brennan

Artists: Cecily Brennan, Martin Creed, Damien Hirst, Laura Potter, Mary Rose O'Neill, The Project Twins, Paul Seawright, Jo Spence/Terry Dennett, Thomas Struth, and material from the Wellcome Collection.

Curated by **Fiona Kearney** in partnership with the **Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre**, UCC

Great achievements in modern medicine have enhanced our knowledge and treatment of many diseases, but understanding what it feels like to be sick requires more than technological advances and medical science. The facts of disease are objective and readily available, whereas illness is subjective, less accessible, difficult to teach, and sadly, often neglected.

Although the developed world has been relieved of many scourges, chronic illness is widespread and increasing in prevalence. Few are spared the experience of illness or can avoid being touched by it, either personally or because of the misfortune of a loved one. **Living/Loss**, a major exhibition at the Lewis Glucksman Gallery, University College Cork, presents a range of artistic perspectives on illness, from the candid self-portraits of Jo Spence during her cancer treatment, to the tender and compassionate paintings of patients by Cecily Brennan. The show embraces humour with the tongue-in-cheek pharmaceutical packets invented by Damien Hirst, and pathos in the heightened detail of Thomas Struth's photography for hospital rooms. A site-specific work that deals with public perceptions of illness has been specifically created for the gallery by Irish artists, the Project Twins.

Living/Loss: The Experience of Illness in Art takes you on a journey through different responses to illness, revealing how artists have captured and explored the emotional as well as physical manifestations of ill health.

An illustrated exhibition catalogue accompanies **Living/Loss** with information on all artists, a guide to works in the show and an essay by **Professor Fergus Shanahan**. This is available to press in PDF format on request.

Living/Loss has been generously supported by University College Cork, the Arts Council of Ireland, Dublin City of Science, the Goethe Institut, and philanthropic contributions through Cork University Foundation.

It is possible to arrange for press interviews with the curators and some of the participating artists. Further discussion of the exhibition, press images or more detailed information, please contact: Catherine McEntee at c.mcentee@ucc.ie or +353 21 4901846

Notes on the artists and artworks:

Living/Loss includes works by eminent international artists such as Damien Hirst, Jo Spence, Martin Creed and Thomas Struth. Thomas Struth will visit Cork in March 2013 to do a public conversation with Glucksman Director, Fiona Kearney.

Four Irish artists are included in the show: Cecily Brennan, Mary Rose O'Neill, Paul Seawright and The Project Twins. A new site-specific work *Oh Great!* responding to the themes in the exhibition has been created especially for **Living/Loss** by The Project Twins, whose A-Z of unusual words found global recognition earlier this year following a feature in the Huffington Post.

Damien Hirst, *The Last Supper*

A series of screenprints by artist Damien Hirst has been loaned to the exhibition by the British Council. This series entitled *The Last Supper* presents thirteen pharmaceutical packets redesigned by the artist so that instead of brand drug names, common meals such as Steak and Kidney Pie, Beans and Chips, and Mushrooms, are featured. The artist also includes his name prominently in each image. There is the obvious suggestion that our final repast is more likely to be pills than food, but also a questioning of faith in science, and faith in religion to remedy any ill.

Laura Potter, *Rosary*

The need for hope while undergoing treatment is captured in Laura Potter's rosary beads made of paracetamol and vitamins. Combining pharmaceutical materials and Catholic iconography to explore how patients must place their trust in medicine, the work also alludes to the prayers said for the suffering of others, as well as in an Irish context, the importance of religious orders in caring for those with serious illnesses.

Jo Spence, *Hospisis*

For Jo Spence, whose final works reflect upon her impending death from cancer, the possibility of dealing with illness often means looking at it directly, of acknowledging its presence as an inescapable aspect of life. In one of her last photographs, Spence is in a hospice, clearly very ill, but holding in her grasp the shutter release button which allows her to take her own picture, still determined to represent her illness, and her life, on her terms

Notes on events in the exhibition:

The Lewis Glucksman Gallery makes great art available to everyone. A wide range of events and activities are programme for all abilities throughout the exhibition run. You can view the entire season in our current **seasonal brochure** at <http://www.glucksman.org/PDFs/CurrentBrochure.pdf>

For an expert audience:

Artists Talks: Insights into contemporary art practice

January – March 2013

<http://www.glucksman.org/talks.html>

To explore themes in the exhibition:

In Detail: Looking closely at a work of art

Professor Fergus Shanahan and Professor John Cryan respond to the exhibition

<http://www.glucksman.org/indetail.html>

To get creative in the gallery:

Family Sundays: making art together

3-4pm, Sundays throughout exhibition run

<http://www.glucksman.org/familysundays.html>

Note on the Lewis Glucksman Gallery

The Lewis Glucksman Gallery is an award-winning museum on the campus of University College Cork. It is located in the Lower Grounds of UCC, on the main avenue on the right hand side coming through the Ceremonial Gates entrance on Western Road. It is a short walk from Cork city centre, and on bus routes no.205/208.

Opening Hours

Tuesday – Saturday, 10-5pm

Sunday 2 – 5pm

Closed Mondays

Admission Free/ Suggested donation €5.

Contact Details

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