

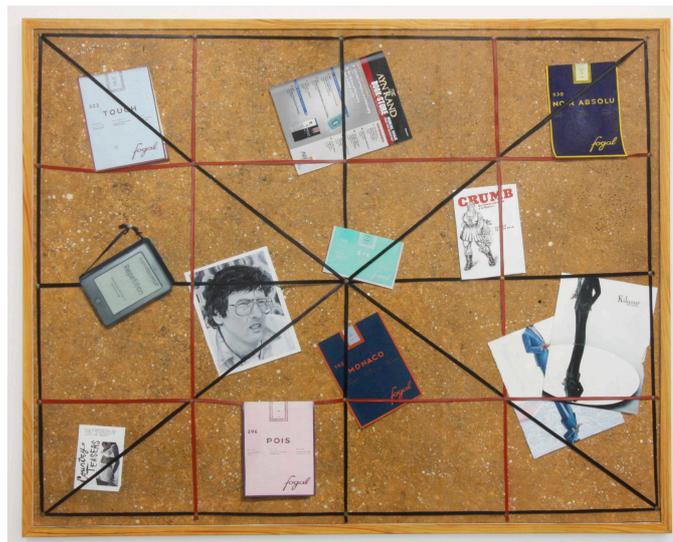
Selective Memory

Artists in the archive

21 November 2014 - 15 March 2015

Lewis Glucksman Gallery
University College Cork

www.glucksman.org



Lucy McKenzie, *Quodlibet XXIV*, oil on canvas, 2012,
courtesy of the artist and Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Brussels

Artists: Zbyněk Baladrán, Paulien Barbas, David Raymond Conroy, Dani Gal, Ruth Maclennan, Mike Mandel and Larry Sultan, Lucy McKenzie, Marge Monko, Gavin Murphy, Alan Phelan, Anne Ramsden, Jasper Rigole, Valerie Snobeck, Sean Snyder, Miek Zwamborn

Curated by Chris Clarke and Orla Murphy

In association with Digital Arts & Humanities, University College Cork

The archive preserves the past, its remnants and records, within a repository of human knowledge. However, it also offers a space for critical engagement and creative invention, for challenging the archive's supposed objectivity with unorthodox histories, subversive interpretations and speculative ideas. Drawing on photographs, documents, film footage and texts, artists have used the archive to create new works from existing materials, to unsettle established readings of the past and to imagine alternative narratives. **Selective Memory: Artists in the archive** explores the ways in which Irish and international artists continually return to the archive, in order to imbue it with a new sense of subjectivity and individuality.

The specific materials associated with the archive are revealed in the work of several artists. **Miek Zwamborn's** sculptural installation is inspired by her research into a 19th century herbarium or plant album found in the archives in which she works. Speculating upon the owner's inscribed dedication to an apparent lover, the artist re-traces the relationship between these two individuals through objects and texts displayed in horizontal drawers and trays. This process of drawing connections between disparate images and materials also informs **Lucy McKenzie's** *Quodlibet* series, a term referring to

topics of theological or philosophical debate. While resembling billboards pinned with photographs, leaflets and writings around given subjects, these trompe l'oeil oil paintings play with the tension between the temporary, tangential relationship and the permanence of her chosen medium. The speculative associations that McKenzie forges from diverse source materials are forever fixed in her precisely detailed and illusionistic compositions.

Anne Ramsden's project *Museum of the Everyday* finds its material in the photographs that the artist collects on her online flickr archive. Ramsden appropriates and combines representational codes present in advertising, the media and museums, and, in this series, re-frames banal, everyday images as posters for imagined collections and exhibitions. This impulse is shared with **Jasper Rigole**, whose practice explores and re-contextualises archival film footage drawn from home movies, travel videos and anthropological documentaries. His ongoing project *The International Institute for the Conservation, Archiving and Distribution of Other People's Memories* examines how such amateur materials fall outside of the remit of 'official' archival collections.

The re-editing of found footage into new narratives is represented in video works by **Zbyněk Baladrán** and **Marge Monko**. In Baladrán's piece *Working Process*, he overlays grainy film sequences from Soviet Czechoslovakia with segments of text, while Monko's work sets still photographs of Estonian factory workers to an excerpt from a play by the Austrian Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek. **Dani Gal** re-enacts the first Israeli television broadcast in 1966 through his research into newspaper articles and testimonials. This event, undocumented at the time, demonstrates the capacity for speculation concerning omissions in the archive, and, in **Ruth Maclennan's** film of interviews with professional archivists, she emphasises this tendency by disruptively editing their responses. **Gavin Murphy's** film *Something New Under The Sun* also takes place in the archive, following a researcher who delves into the history of Dublin's iconic, and now demolished, IMCO building.

Mike Mandel and Larry Sultan's *Evidence* series from 1975-77 represents a seminal moment in the way artists engage with the site and materials of the archive. This selection of photographic images found in public and private American institutions, agencies and corporations was one of the first conceptual artworks to demonstrate that the meaning of an image is conditioned by the context and sequence in which it is seen. **Paulien Barbas** photographs objects from the archives of the Bauhaus, emphasising their staging and display by, for instance, revealing the lens flare of the camera of the clump of blu-tack that props up an item. In **Alan Phelan's** *Handjob* series, the artist himself

has collected and compiled images, materials and paraphernalia that relates to representations of the human hand. Phelan's playful and provocative collection, which began as a convalescence activity after breaking his thumb, has grown to include objects and artworks from colleagues and friends as well as online images. In this way, the notion of the artist's hand as the bearer of an individual, tactile, and expressive gesture has become the impetus for an ever-expanding and collaborative archive.

Speculation towards the original context of archival materials and the decisions that warranted their inclusion in a collection is addressed in a number of works. By obscuring or effacing an appropriated image, artists point to an inherent ambiguity, a sense of the unknowable, around such materials. **Valerie Snobeck's** images are mined from the 1970s Documerica project, a government initiative to document the state of the American environment. However, by encasing the photographs in layers of mesh, plastic, netting and burlap, she renders the original images indecipherable. **David Raymond Conroy** displays partially erased pages from found books alongside a video of overlapping online screen grabs, sound-tracked with an enigmatic monologue on accessibility and the internet. **Sean Snyder's** practice involves the transference of his extensive archive of photographs and videos into digital files, destroying the originals in the process. While his images capture the effects of transmission, corruption and compression in the digitizing of materials, they also acknowledge the residual traces left over. Even as the physical document disappears, a new archive is formed in the process.

Developed in partnership with Digital Arts & Humanities, University College Cork, **Selective Memory** explores the archive as a space that is continually open to new readings and revisions. While artworks in the exhibition address themes such as material, narrative, site and speculation, they have been further designated with 'keywords' that allow for different trajectories to be mapped across the physical layout of the galleries. Capturing the ways in which artists and academics explore the archive, this non-linear approach invites the viewer to sift through materials, follow distinct lines of inquiry and to forge new, unanticipated connections.

Notes on the artists and artworks

Selective Memory includes work by the Irish artists Gavin Murphy and Alan Phelan. Gavin Murphy has exhibited his work throughout Ireland at galleries including Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, Royal Hibernian Academy, Oonagh Young Gallery and eva International. Alan Phelan's recent exhibitions include solo shows at Detroit, Stockholm; Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast; and Cairo Video Festival.

Zbyněk Baladrán represented The Czech Republic at their national pavilion for the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. Dani Gal was included in that same year's curated exhibition The Encyclopedic Palace.

Lucy McKenzie is currently the subject of a solo exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago. Her other recent solo shows include exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; The Artist's Institute, New York; and Cabinet, London.

Marge Monko's film *Nora's Sister*, included as part of **Selective Memory**, was included in the roving European art biennial Manifesta 9 in Genk, Belgium.

Sean Snyder is exhibiting work from his 2009 project *Index* from the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. *Index* involved the artist editing and digitising images from previous research projects so that the files of his practice could fit onto a single USB stick.

Mike Mandel and Larry Sultan's *Evidence* project was created from 1975-77 while the artists were graduate students. The resulting series of photographs and artists' book was one of the first examples of contemporary artists engaging with archival materials. Larry Sultan is the subject of a career retrospective at Los Angeles County Museum of Art from November 9, 2014 – March 22, 2015.

It is possible to arrange for press interviews with the curators and some of the participating artists. For further discussion of the exhibition, press images or more detailed information, please contact:

Chris Clarke, Senior Curator, c.clarke@ucc.ie or +353 21 4901822, Lewis Glucksman Gallery, University College Cork, Ireland.

Notes on events in the exhibition:

The Lewis Glucksman Gallery makes great art available to everyone. A wide range of events and activities are programmed for all abilities throughout the exhibition run.

You can view the entire programme in our seasonal brochure at

<http://glucksman.org/CurrentBrochure.pdf>

To learn about new media art:

Art + Ideas: Dr. Sarah Cook

1pm, Wednesday 11 February

<http://glucksman.org/artandideas.html>

To hear from artists and film-makers :

Perspectives: Artist Talk series

Alan Phelan, artist, 1pm, Thursday 19 February

Gavin Murphy, artist, 1pm, Thursday 26 February

Carmel Winters, film-maker, date tbc

<http://glucksman.org/perspectives.html>

For family audiences:

Family Sundays: making art together

3-4pm, Sundays from 23 November - 14 December, 2014

and 11 January - 15 March, 2015

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

Thanks to all artists and lenders of artworks for **Selective Memory** including Galerie Catherine Bastide, Brussels; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; Defares Collection; Collection Nicoletta Fiorucci, London; Collection Fotomusem Winterthur; Freymund-Guth Fine Arts, Zurich; hunt kastner, Prague; LUX, London; Seventeen, London; Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Brussels; and private collections.

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