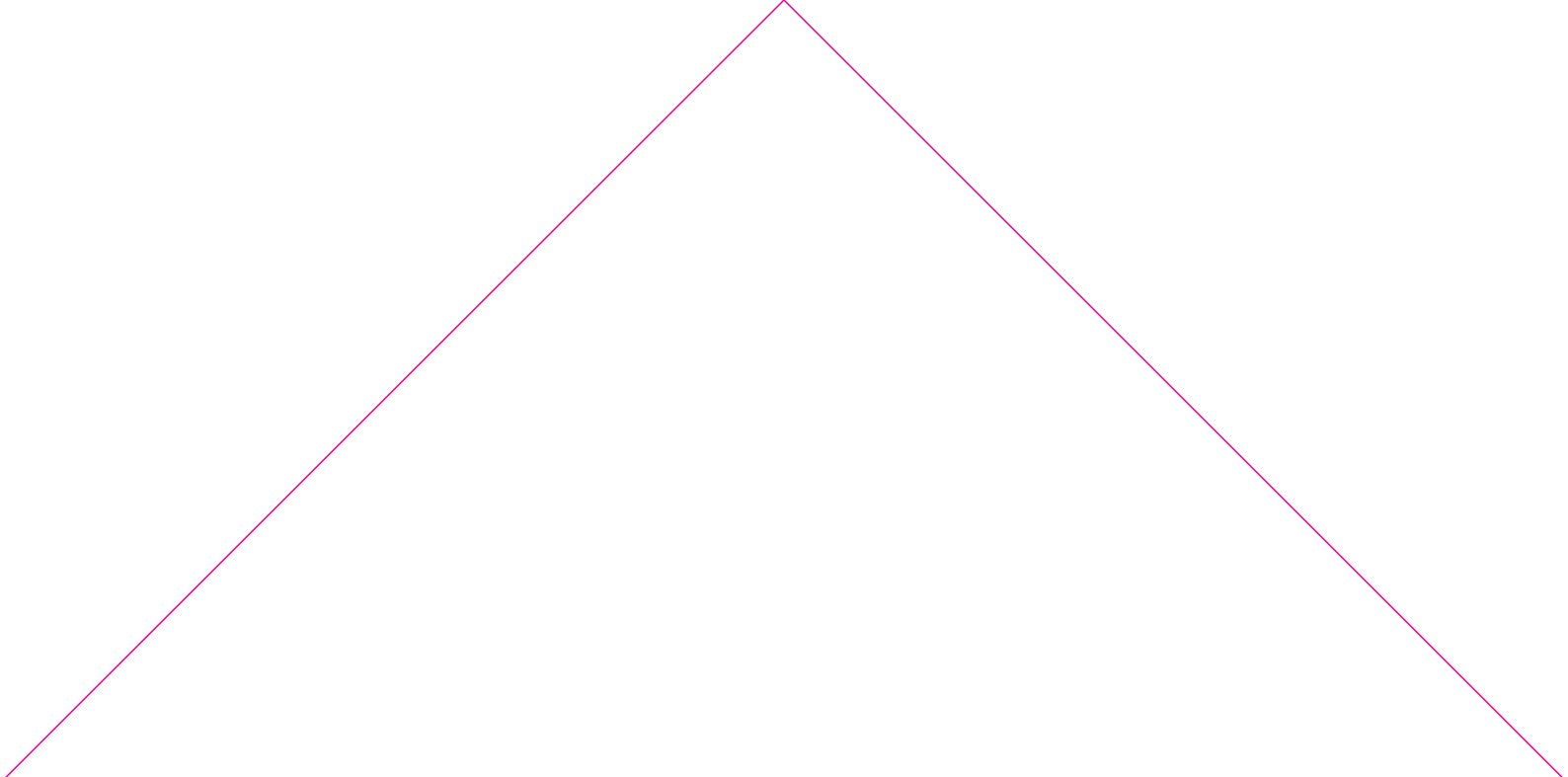




Sarah Pierce  
Scene  
of the Myth

Galerie für  
Zeitgenössische Kunst  
Leipzig

27. Januar – 26. Mai 2024  
January 27 – May 26, 2024



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## Einleitung

Dies ist das Zine zu *Scene of the Myth*. Es enthält Werkinformationen – Abbildungen, Kurztexte, Materialien und alle beteiligten Archive und Personen – sowie bereits veröffentlichte Texte über die Arbeiten, einige davon von der Künstlerin selbst.

Eine der Fragen, die ich mir als Kuratorin stellte, war, wie die Präsenz dieser vielzähligen Gespräche, Beziehungen und Zeitlichkeiten, die die Arbeiten umgeben, für Besucher:innen zur Ausstellung gehören können, ohne die Wände zu nutzen.

*Scene of the Myth* ist die erste umfassende Einzelausstellung der in Dublin lebenden, us-amerikanischen Künstlerin Sarah Pierce. Sie versammelt Installationen, Performances und Videoarbeiten aus 20 Jahren künstlerischer Praxis. Erstmals 2023 am Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (IMMA) gezeigt, haben wir für die Ausstellung in der GfZK eine Auswahl von acht Installationen zusammengestellt.

Pierces Praxis zeichnet ein breites Spektrum an Materialien und Formen aus. Gleichzeitig durchlaufen wiederkehrende Muster das Kunstmachen: historische Momente, Brecht'sche Lehrstücke, Figuren der Kunst- und Ausstellungsgeschichte und die Beteiligung von Studierenden. Sie korrespondieren mit Schlüsselbegriffen – Instituieren und Protestieren, Hinterlassenschaften und Übungen, Gemeinschaften und Migrationen –, die Pierce in ihren Schriften und künstlerischen Überlegungen einsetzt und die mich bei der Auswahl der Werke für *Scene of the Myth* geleitet haben.

Die Schlüsselbegriffe ziehen sich quer durch die Ausstellung. Es gibt keine Markierungen oder Gruppierungen, die anzeigen, welche Begriffe auf welche Werke zutreffen, es sind temporäre Zuordnungen, und Werke können mit mehr als einem Begriff korrespondieren.

Von Pierce bzw. ihren Projekten habe ich gelernt, wie eine Idee von Gemeinschaft greifbar werden kann, die sich einer eindeutigen Konzeptualisierung oder Fixierung als Ort oder Gruppe entzieht: In *Pathos of Distance* ist sie verstreut, in *Towards a Newer Laocoön* ist sie mit den Beziehungen zwischen Lehre, Lernen und Protest ver-

bunden oder wie in *No Title* auch eine Möglichkeit, mit Demenz über eine Pathologisierung hinaus zu interagieren.

Der Ausstellungstitel ist einem Essay der Künstlerin entlehnt, in dem sie Ausstellungen als Momente beschreibt, durch die die Erzählungen und Konventionen einer historischen Vergangenheit in der Gegenwart rekonstruiert werden.

Performances, die die Künstlerin als Übungen, denen kein Script zu Grunde liegt, einsetzt, begleiten Arbeiten wie *Campus*, *Future Exhibitions* und *Levitating in the Nauman*. Sie sind eine Methode, Lehren, Lernen und Herstellen – inklusive des Kunstmachens – als repetitive Handlungen zu demonstrieren, die regelmäßig gemeinschaftlich ausgeführt werden. In der gesamten Ausstellung kommt Pierces Verständnis von „Rebellion“ zum Tragen – eine grundlegende Infragestellung von Autoritäten und akzeptierten Wahrheiten –, über die sie auch geschrieben hat.

Das früheste Werk der Ausstellung, das *Paraeducation Department*, ist nicht im Grundrissplan enthalten, da es keinem der Ausstellungsräume zugeordnet ist.

Als „Para“-Struktur in der gastgebenden Institution ist sie ohne Agenda und bietet den Besucher:innen an, sich zu versammeln und selbst zu organisieren. Während in *Pathos of Distance*, *Levitating in the Nauman* oder *Future Exhibitions*, die Möbel aus Institutionen (Künstler:innen Studios, Second-Hand-Läden oder der GfZK selbst) stammen und auf die immateriellen Beziehungen verweisen, in die sie eingebunden sind, hat Pierce die Betten im *Paraeducation Department* in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Künstler Alex Pentek nach einem Entwurf von Enzo Mari angefertigt und die Matten mit der Künstlerin Mary Kervick.

Rike Frank

## Introduction

This is the zine for Sarah Pierce's *Scene of the Myth*. It contains information on the artwork in the show, such as illustrations, short texts and the materials, archives and people involved. It also includes previously published writings, some by the artist herself.

One of the questions I asked myself as a curator was how the presence of these multiple conversations, relationships and temporalities surrounding the works can become an integral part of the exhibition, without using the walls.

First held at Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin (IMMA), *Scene of the Myth* is the first extensive solo exhibition of the Dublin-based American artist Sarah Pierce. It presents installations, performances and video works stemming from twenty years of practice. For the iteration at the GfZK, a constellation of eight works from IMMA has been selected.

Pierce's practice incorporates a wide range of materials and forms. At the same time, recurring patterns emerge in her artworks: historical moments, Brechtian plays, figures from art and exhibition histories as well as the involvement of (art) students. These correspond with key concepts – instituting and protesting, legacy and exercises, communities and migrations – which Pierce explores in her writings and art-making and which have informed my selection of the works. The key terms run across the entire exhibition. There are no markings or groupings to indicate which terms apply to which works – they are temporary attachments and might link to more than one.

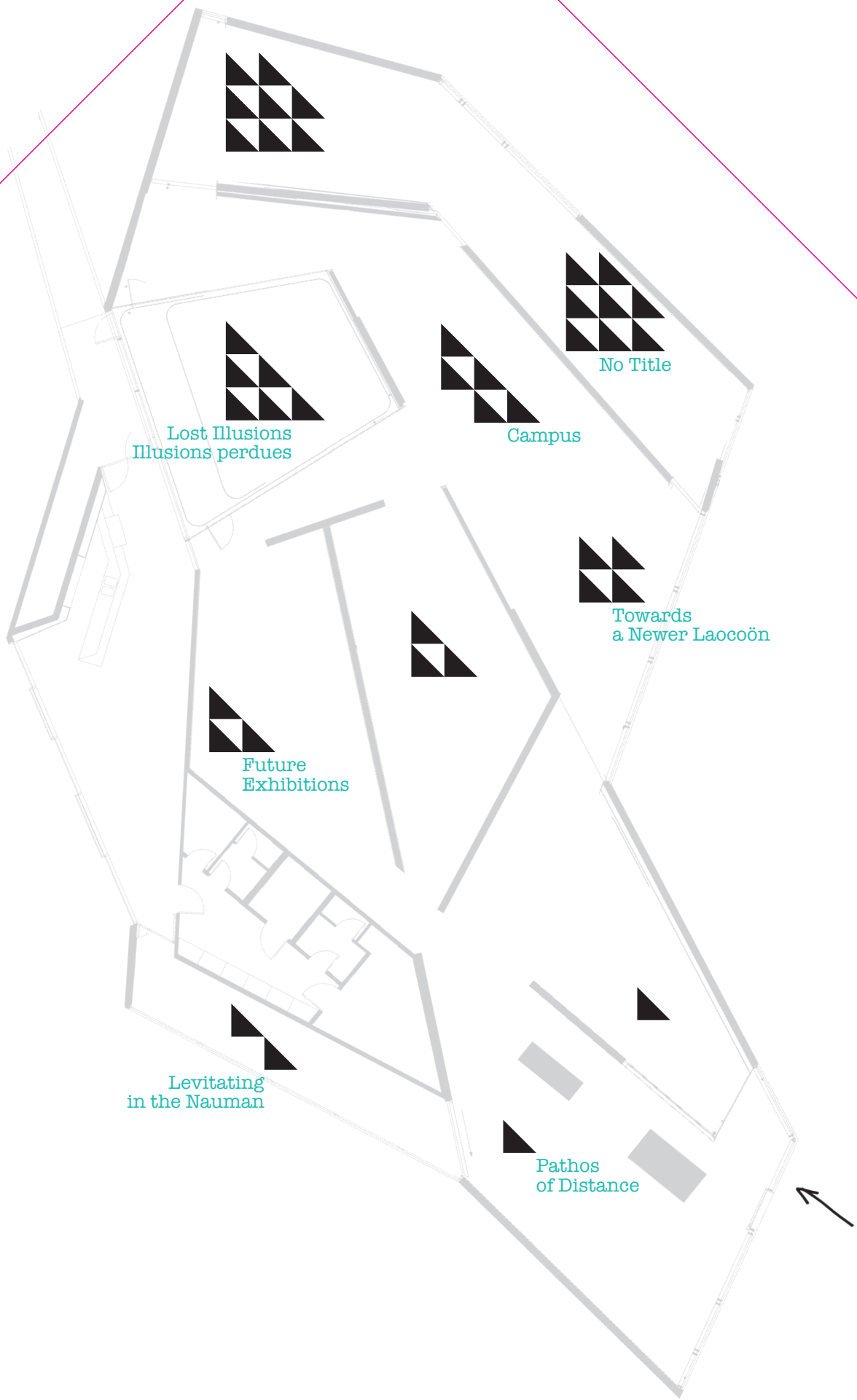
From Pierce, or rather from her projects, I have learned how a concept of community can be made tangible while defying conceptualisation or attachment to a fixed place or group. In *Pathos of Distance*, the community is dispersed; in *Towards a Newer Laocoön*, it is tied to relations among teaching, learning and protest; and in *No Title*, it is a potential for interacting with dementia outside of pathologisation.

The title of the show stems from one of the artist's essays, in which she describes exhibitions as moments through

which the narratives and conventions of a historical past are re-constituted in the present. Performances, employed by the artist as scriptless exercises, accompany works such as *Campus*, *Future Exhibitions* and *Levitating in the Nauman*. As a method, they demonstrate teaching, learning and making – including art-making – as repetitive acts that are regularly performed collaboratively. Throughout the exhibition, Pierce's understanding of 'rebellion' comes into play, a fundamental questioning of authority and accepted truths, which she also has covered in her writing.

The earliest work in the exhibition, the *Paraeducation Department*, is not included in the floor plan, as it is not assigned to one of the rooms. As a para-structure in the hosting institution, it comes with no agenda; it rather offers visitors the opportunity to gather and self-organise. Furniture plays a prominent role in the exhibition. In the works *Pathos of Distance*, *Levitating in the Nauman* or *Future Exhibitions*, the pieces of furniture are originally from institutions (artist studios, second-hand stores and the GfZK itself), referring to the immaterial relationships they are part of, while the beds in the *Paraeducation Department* Pierce made in a collaboration with the artists Alex Pentek based on a design by Enzo Mari, with additional soft furnishings made with artist Mary Kervick.

Rike Frank



Lost Illusions  
Illusions perdues

Future  
Exhibitions

Levitating  
in the Nauman

Campus

Towards  
a Newer Laocoön

Pathos  
of Distance

No Title

## Pathos of Distance

Jede Fotografie ist eine digitale Kopie eines zwischen 1813 und 1912 geschaffenen Kunstwerks. Diese aus Ländern in aller Welt stammenden Werke stellen außerhalb Irlands lebende Personen und Gemeinschaften dar, die mit einer 100 Jahre alten historischen, irischen Diaspora verknüpft sind. Gebrauchte, häusliche Möbel aus den Beständen Leipziger Geschäfte und dem Fundus der Oper Leipzig begleiten die 42 Bilder, zusammen mit einer Reihe von Wandtexten zu den Themen nationaler Staatlichkeit, kultureller Identität, Heimat und Hybridität.

Each photograph is a digital copy of an original work created between 1813 and 1912. Sourced from countries around the world, the works depict subjects and communities outside of Ireland associated with 100 years of a historic Irish diaspora. Domestic second-hand furniture from the stocks of suppliers in Leipzig, as well as the collection of the Leipzig Opera accompanies the 42 images, along with a set of wall texts on nationhood, cultural identity, homeland and hybridity.

42 Digitalfotografien mit verschiedenen Gebraucht-  
möbeln. Lasergedruckte Wandtexte auf Papier.  
Sammlung Irish Museum of Modern Art, erworben 2021.  
Forty-two digital photographs with various second-hand  
furniture. Laser-printed wall texts on paper. Collection  
Irish Museum of Modern Art, purchase 2021.

2015 in Auftrag gegeben von Donal Maguire für  
*Visualising the Irish Diaspora*, ein fortlaufendes  
Forschungsprojekt, das er am ESB Centre for the Study  
of Irish Art an der National Gallery of Ireland initiiert  
und entwickelt hat. Mit Forschungsbeiträgen und  
Texten von Kathryn Milligan, (ehemals) ESB CSIA  
Research Fellow.

Commissioned in 2015 by Donal Maguire for *Visualising  
the Irish Diaspora*, an ongoing research project he  
initiated and developed at the ESB Centre for the  
Study of Irish Art at the National Gallery of Ireland.  
With research and writing by Kathryn Milligan,  
ESB CSIA Research Fellow (formerly).





## Pathos of Distance

### > Plattform 1 Porträts

#### [Plattform 1 Portraits](#)

Gebrauchte Möbel, 20. und 21. Jahrhundert

Maße variabel

[Second-hand, domestic furniture, 20th and 21st century](#)

[Dimensions variable](#)

Künstler:in unbekannt

Miniaturporträt von James Miranda Barry

Öl auf Elfenbein, um 1813–1816, Privatsammlung

[Artist unknown](#)

[Miniature Portrait of James Miranda Barry](#)

[Oil on ivory, c. 1813–1816, private collection](#)

5,6 x 6,5 cm

Samuel Calvert (1828–1913)

‘The Sandhurst Impersonator – Mrs Edward

De Lacy Evans’

[Illustrated Australian News](#), 15. November 1879

State Library of Victoria IAN01/10/79/14

21,94 x 31,06 cm

Robert Tucker (1807–1891)

‘Mrs. Sophia Bryant, Doctor of Science of the

London University’

[Illustrated London News](#), 19. Juli 1884

15,01 x 20,56 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

Catherine Hayes, ‘Irish opera singer and prima donna’

Lithografie mit faksimiliertem Autograf, um 1850

London: Cramer, Beale & Co., Regent Street, undatiert

[Lithograph with facsimile autograph, c. 1850](#)

[London: Cramer, Beale & Co., Regent Street, n.d.](#)

23,79 x 32,15 cm

Wallace Morgan (1873–1948)

Miss Leonora O’Reilly, ‘American suffragette and

trade unionist’

Bleistift auf Papier, 1912

[Pencil on paper, 1912](#)

Courtesy National Portrait Gallery Smithsonian

Institution

19,73 x 21,2 cm

James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903)

*Jo*

Kaltnadel auf auf Büttenpapier, 1861

[Drypoint on laid paper, 1861](#)

Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

31,12 x 45,09 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

James (alias Yankee) Sullivan

Druck, um 1846

[Print, c. 1846](#)

Library of Congress LC-DIG-pga-04356

31,66 x 45,5 cm

Francis Charles Needham (Viscount) Newry (1842–1915)

‘O’Farrel in Darlinghurst’

Bleistift auf Papier, 1868

[Pencil on paper, 1868](#)

National Library of Australia NLA.PIC-an6332101

28 x 37,66 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

Admiral Guillermo (William) Brown (1777–1857),

‘Father of the Argentine Navy’

Briefmarke, Argentinien, um 1956

[Postage stamp, Argentina c. 1956](#)

3 x 3,8 cm





## Pathos of Distance

→ Künstler:in unbekannt

Miniaturportrait von Daniel Florencio O'Leary  
(1801-1854)  
Öl auf Elfenbein, undatiert, Sammlung unbekannt  
[Artist unknown](#)  
[Miniature Portrait of Daniel Florencio O'Leary](#)  
(1801-1854)  
[Oil on ivory, n.d., collection unknown](#)  
6,9 × 7,87 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)  
'Brig. Gen. Michael Corcoran, of the Irish Brigade late  
Colonel of the Gallant NY Sixty Ninth'  
handkolorierte Lithografie  
Currier & Ives, New York, um 1860  
[Lithograph, hand-coloured](#)  
[Currier & Ives, New York, 1860s](#)  
Library of Congress LC-DIG-ppmsca-08409  
29,5 × 38,6 cm

Gustave Courbet (1819-1877)

*Jo, La Belle Irlandaise*  
Öl auf Leinwand, 1866  
[Oil on canvas, 1866](#)  
Courtesy Nationalmuseum Stockholm  
54 × 65 cm

Thomas Eakins (1844-1916)

*The Veteran* (Portrait of George Reynolds)  
Öl auf Leinwand, um 1885  
[Oil on canvas, c. 1885](#)  
Courtesy Yale University Art Gallery  
56 × 42 cm

Samuel E. Chamberlain (1828-1908)

*The Great Western as Landlady*  
Bildnis Sarah Borginnes alias Sarah Bowman  
alias The Heroine of Fort Brown  
Bleistift und Aquarell auf Papier, um 1846  
[Depiction of Sarah Borginnes aka Sarah Bowman](#)  
[aka The Heroine of Fort Brown](#)  
[Pencil and watercolour, c. 1846](#)  
12 × 14 cm

**Plattform 2 Kämpfende Ir:innen**

[Plattform 2 Fighting Irish](#)

Gebrauchte Möbel, 20. und 21. Jahrhundert  
Maße variabel  
[Second-hand, domestic furniture, 20th and 21st century](#)  
[Dimensions variable](#)

Samuel E. Chamberlain

*Execution of Legion of San Patricio before Chapultepec*  
Aquarell auf Papier, um 1846  
[Watercolour on paper, c. 1846](#)  
San Jacinto Museum of History, Texas  
8,25 × 18,25 cm

Louis Lang (1812-1893)

*Return of the 69th (Irish) Regiment, NYSM,*  
*from the Seat of War, 1862*  
Öl auf Leinwand, 1862-1863  
[Oil on canvas, 1862-1863](#)  
Courtesy New York Historical Society  
Photography Williamstown Art Conservation Center  
355,6 × 225,24 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

'The Great Suffragist Procession'  
*Illustrated London News*, 20. Juni 1908  
29,5 × 40 cm







## Pathos of Distance

➤ Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

‘The Riots at New York – the rioters burning and sacking the colored orphan asylum’  
*Harper’s Weekly*, 1. August 1863  
Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-106376  
46,6 × 36,27 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

‘Draft Riots in New York, The Mob Lynching a Negro in Clarkson Street’  
*Illustrated London News*, 8. August 1863  
31 × 44 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

‘Draft Riots in New York, Destruction of the Colored Orphan Asylum’  
‘Draft Riots in New York, Conflict Between the Military and the Rioters in First Avenue’  
*Illustrated London News*, 15. August 1863  
31 × 44 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

‘Charge of the Police on the Rioters at the Tribune Office’  
Holzstich, 1894  
[Wood engraving, 1894](#)  
*Harper’s Pictorial Record of the Civil War*, Volume II.  
Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-47037  
25 × 15 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

‘Home Rule Riots in Glasgow’  
*Illustrated London News*, 22. August 1880  
44 × 31 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

‘Attack on the Prison Van at Manchester and Rescue of the Fenian Leaders’  
‘Fenian Prisoners at Manchester Conveyed through Mosley-Street on their way to the Bellevue Prison’  
*Illustrated London News*, 28. September 1867  
60,5 × 44 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

‘Enlisting Irish and German Emigrants on the Battery at New York’  
*Illustrated London News*, 16. September 1864  
44 × 31 cm

Eastman Johnson (1824–1906)

*The Girl I Left Behind Me*  
Öl auf Leinwand, um 1872

[Oil on canvas, c. 1872](#)

Smithsonian American Art Museum  
Ankauf zum Teil ermöglicht durch  
Mrs. Alexander Hamilton Rice im Gedenken  
an ihren Ehemann sowie durch Ralph Cross Johnson  
[Museum purchase made possible in part  
by Mrs. Alexander Hamilton Rice in memory of  
her husband and by Ralph Cross Johnson](#)  
88,7 × 106,7 cm

Eastman Johnson (1824–1906)

*The Fugitives*

Öl auf Karton, um 1862

Brooklyn Museum, Schenkung Gwendolyn O. L. Conkling,  
40.59a-b

[Oil on paper board, c. 1862](#)

[Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Gwendolyn O. L. Conkling,  
40.59a-b](#)

35,24 × 42 cm





## Pathos of Distance

### > Plattform 3 (5 Werke) Alltag

#### [Plattform 3 \(5 pieces\) Everyday](#)

Gebrauchte Möbel, 20. und 21. Jahrhundert

Maße variabel

[Second-hand, domestic furniture, 20th and 21st century](#)

[Dimensions variable](#)

St. Patrick's Day in America (pinxit John Reid)

Duval & Hunter, Philadelphia

Farblithografie, 1872

[Colour lithograph, 1872](#)

Marian S. Carson Collection, Library of Congress

79,48 × 65,07 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

'Irish Protestant Benevolent Society - Île Ste-Hélène'

*Canadian Illustrated News*, 5. September 1874

Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec, BANQ

Vieux-Montréal. Collection Édouard-Zotique Massicotte,

P750, album de rue 6-59-a

40 × 29,5 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

'Montreal - Arrival of the Irish Canadian Pilgrims

from Rome. Father Dowd Addressing the Multitude

From the Rectory of St. Patrick's Church'

*Canadian Illustrated News*, 25. April 1877

Library and Archives Canada / Bibliothèque et Archives

Canada; nlc-66011

29 × 19,4 cm

L.H. Beauvoir

'Quel evenement joyeux ...'

Voyages autour du monde: Australie, Java, Siam,

Canton, Pékin, Yeddo, San Francisco, Paris 1879

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

29 × 19,4 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

'New York City, Irish Depositors of the Emigrant

Savings Bank withdrawing money to send

to their suffering relatives in the old country'

*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 13. März 1880

Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ds-01486

26,25 × 20,39 cm

Matthew Somerville Morgan (1839-1890)

'New York City - Among the Poor - A Summer

Evening Scene at the Five Points'

*Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*, 26. August 1873

Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-122335

35,79 × 44,25 cm

Frederick Burr Opper (1857-1937)

'The Irish Declaration of Independence that

we are all familiar with'

Chromolithografie

[Chromolithograph](#)

Puck, 9. Mai 1883

Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-28386

29,18 × 36,07 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

'Concejo a Los Gringos'

*El Mosquito*, 13. Oktober 1889

National Library of Argentina

40 × 28 cm

Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

'De Inmigrantes ...'

*El Mosquito*, 29. September 1889

National Library of Argentina

40 × 28 cm

## Pathos of Distance

> Künstler:in unbekannt

[Artist unknown](#)

'The Chinese Question'

*Harper's Weekly*, 18. Februar 1871

Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-53346

26,67 × 40,64 cm

Augustus Earle (1793-1838)

'A Government Jail Gang, Sydney N.S. Wales'

J. Cross: London 1830

State Library of New South Wales

31 × 38 cm

D.E. Wyand

*The Squatters of New York - Scene near Central Park*

Holzstich, 1869

[Wood engraving, 1869](#)

*Harper's Weekly*, 26. Juni 1869

Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-106378.

36 × 44,8 cm

James Pattison Cockburn

*Long Island on the Rideau Canal (Irish Labourer)*

*View near Manotick, Ontario*

Aquarell, Feder und Tinte auf Papier, 1830

[Watercolour, pen and ink on paper, 1830](#)

Courtesy Royal Ontario Museum

26,95 × 35,81 cm

William Clark (1803-1883)

'Cutting the Sugar Cane'

Aquatinta, koloriert, 1823

[Aquatint, coloured, 1823](#)

London: Infant School Society Depository

JCB Library Brown University

39,5 × 27,3 cm

Thomas Eakins (1844-1916)

*The Swimming Hole*

Öl auf Leinwand, um 1885

[Oil on canvas, c. 1885](#)

Amon Carter Museum of American Art

92 × 70 cm

Gustave Courbet (1819-1877)

*Le Sommeil*

Öl auf Leinwand, 1866

[Oil on canvas, 1866](#)

Petit Palace Paris, Musée des Beaux-arts de la Ville de Paris

200 × 135 cm



## Pathos of Distance

Since 1700, approximately 9 million people have left Ireland to settle in destinations around the world. A vast majority departed between the early-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, when over 60 million people emigrated from Europe in one of the largest episodes of migration in history.

For many the act of leaving was a matter of choice. For others it was to escape poverty, famine or hostile conditions. Some were prisoners or exiles.

The forty-two artworks displayed here have been selected from vast databases of images. They range from c.1813 – 1912. Each has been reproduced as a digital copy in a 1:1 scale to an original that exists elsewhere.

The groupings show either individuals born in Ireland or events or occasions linked with Irish communities abroad. They are from national and private collections around the world.

Multiple, secondary, and minor, the copy exceeds the limits of origin to exist everywhere and anywhere.

The diaspora experience is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity.

— Stuart Hall, *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*

Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference.

— Stuart Hall, *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*

Portraits of individuals; personal narratives entwined with historical events; subjects formed through material shifts from one place to another:

an agitator,  
a boxer,  
a convict,  
an educator,  
a manual labourer,  
an opera singer,  
artists' models,  
doctors,  
suffragettes,  
and military leaders.

George Reynolds appears in a work by the American painter Thomas Eakins. His portrait is not usually framed within the context of diaspora. Like many Irish emigrants to America, Reynolds fought in the American Civil War. He later enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and led the student support of Eakins, his teacher, when the artist was removed for bringing nude models into the life drawing room.

Gustave Courbet's *Jo, La Belle Irlandaise*, surfaces as a counterpoint to Eakins' portrait of Reynolds. He is 'the veteran' and she is the muse. Jo Hiffernan worked as an artists' model in London and Paris. She was seventeen when she met James Abbott McNeill Whistler in 1860. She is the ethereal figure in his most famous work, *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*.

Among his lesser-known works, a drypoint etching by Whistler presents a different Jo — dark, rough, immediate.

Edward de Lacy Evans and James Miranda Barry each emigrated as women and began lives as men. Following his medical training, Barry joined the army and served at military hospitals. In 1826, he performed the first recorded cesarean section by a European in Africa in which both mother and baby survived.

In Australia, Evans earned a living through various forms of manual work, including mining, carting and ploughing. He married three times, with his first marriage to Mary Delahunty taking place under Catholic rites. Evans' biological gender was discovered when he was admitted to the Bendigo asylum following a breakdown. His doctors outed him to the press who labelled Evans an 'impersonator' and 'impostor'.

*The San Patricios and The Great Western.*

St. Patrick's Battalion was a unit of several hundred migrants, primarily Irish, which fought for the Mexican cause during the Mexican American War. Following capture by the Americans, thirty of the Battalion's soldiers were hanged at the Battle of Chapultepec in one of the largest mass executions in American history.

In hundreds of miniature watercolours, artist and US Army private Samuel Chamberlain documented the brutal scenes he witnessed in battle. An outlier in the series is an interior featuring Sarah Bowman, the Irish American innkeeper and madam. Nicknamed 'The Great Western' she was a camp follower of Zachary Taylor's army during the Mexican American War.

Over the course of her life Bowman was married multiple times, often without legal record or the blessing of a priest, and was known at various times by the names Boginnis, Bourdette, Bourget, Bourjette, Borginnis, Davis, Bowman, and possibly Foyle. Her exact birthplace is unclear; she lived mostly on the American frontier. Without formal education she did not read or write, though she was fluent in Spanish. Upon meeting Bowman for the first time, a priest at Fort Yuma described her as the only Spanish-speaking American woman he had ever met.

One thing leads to another. Causes have their effects. But the wind blowing on one continent may ultimately be caused by a tiny shift in the air over another.

— Fintan O'Toole, *White Savage*

To forget that there is a world beyond the community to which we belong, to confine ourselves within narrowly defined cultural frontiers, would be, I believe, to go voluntarily into that form of internal exile which is called the 'homeland'.

— Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*

Irish Americans served on both sides during the American Civil War, the vast majority for the Union Army. Many volunteered while others were drafted to fight. Some formed their own units and engaged in Irish customs and used the Irish language. This included the New York 69th Regiment, founded by Thomas Francis Meagher, one of seven Irish-born Generals in the Union Army.

In New York City, working-class men, primarily Irish immigrants, unable to afford the commutation fee and unwilling to participate in the American Civil War triggered the largest civil insurrection in American history. Over four days, rioters clashed with police, looted, and destroyed buildings and tortured and killed numerous black people who were the targets of crowd violence.

Events equally celebrated and shameful, depict a persistent stereotype: the fighting Irish.

This is the threshold of using images to trace the diaspora.

Diasporic narratives fold around prevailing tales, received truths and retold histories.

Amidst the stresses and transformations of diaspora, are contradictions and instabilities that unsettle a distinctly nation-state-based existence. For theorist and philosopher Judith Butler, the diasporic is the realm of living with others in a diverse world of exiled and stateless subjects.

Moving from source to source, the digital image lives in the realm of the dispossessed — multiple, variable and implicitly *with others*. Rather than securely 'in place', these images gather out-of-bounds.

What is a country but a life sentence?  
— Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*



## Pathos of Distance

While a national, geographic entity produces and polices identity, the notion of a 'zone' is one suspended between various identities – a site of evacuation in which the 'law' of each identity does not apply, having been supplanted by a set of contingent rules.

– Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infrima*

A painting by the American Unionist soldier and artist Eastman Johnson invokes an Irish ballad popular among both Union and Confederate soldiers:

*The Girl I Left Behind Me.*

An ambiguous figure in ambiguous surroundings, marked by the pathos of distance – an affective imaginary.

She could be Irish, possibly – or Ireland – the country left behind, where cultural identity is the golden band on a nation's ring finger.

Another remarkable scene of the American Civil War painted by Eastman shows a family fleeing on horseback:

*The Fugitives.*

Invariably described by art historians as a family of African American slaves escaping amidst a waging battle, an alternative reading emanates from the female figure. Her complexion is notably light.

Could she be Irish? Possibly. One of many indentured servants who worked the southern plantations, perhaps. In a land where race and origin are proxies for nationhood, separate diasporas wrap around each other.

The more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily is one able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision. The more easily, too, does one assess oneself and alien cultures with the same combination of intimacy and distance.

– Edward Said, *Orientalism*

The fashioning of everyday life is an intensely creative activity – communal, technical, and habitual.

Used furniture items culled from the stocks of second-hand suppliers form a national collection of sorts. A local vernacular, the stuff of set-up lives, familial and familiar, common and touched – touching.

Sticking. Attached.

Diasporic intimacy does not promise a comforting recovery of identity through shared nostalgia for the lost home and homeland. In fact, it's the opposite. It might be seen as the mutual enchantment of two immigrants from different parts of the world or as the sense of the fragile coziness of a foreign home. Just as one learns to live with alienation and reconciles oneself to the uncanniness of the world around and to the strangeness of human touch, there comes a surprise, a pang of intimate recognition, a hope that sneaks in through the back door, punctuating the habitual estrangement of everyday life abroad.

– Svetlana Böym, *On Diasporic Intimacy*

Salman Rushdie, the British Indian novelist, observes a story of transformation, often untold or overlooked in one of the West's most cherished tales: *The Wizard of Oz*. He writes:

Anybody who has swallowed the scriptwriters' notion that this is a film about the superiority of 'home' over 'away', would do well to listen to the yearning in Judy Garland's voice as her face tilts up toward the skies. What she expresses here, what she embodies with the purity of an archetype, is the human dream of leaving, a dream at least as powerful as its countervailing dream of roots. At the heart of *The Wizard of Oz* is the tension between these two dreams; but as the music swells and that big, clean voice flies into the anguished longings of the song, can anyone doubt which message is the stronger? In its most potent emotional moment, this is unarguably a film about the joys of going away, of leaving the grayness and entering the colour, of making a new life in the 'place where there isn't any trouble'. It is a celebration of Escape, a grand paean to the uprooted self, a hymn – the hymn – to Elsewhere.

– Salman Rushdie, *Out of Kansas*

Thomas Eakins' *The Swimming Hole* features a group of bathers who are students of Eakins' and participants in his work.

Gustave Courbet's *Le Sommeil* features two lovers, enraptured amidst dishevelled sheets.

Each image includes a known Irish immigrant: George Reynolds in the Eakins and Jo Hiffernan in the Courbet. They settled on separate continents, and while they both worked as artists' models, it is unlikely they met during their lifetimes.

Beyond the anecdote that connects them lies a radical possibility.

Something bursting, modern, and yet to come.



## Pathos of Distance

### NOTES ON MAKING PATHOS OF DISTANCE

Sarah Pierce

*Sometimes we feel we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools.*

— Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–91*

In 2014, I began work on an invitation from the National Gallery of Ireland. The proposal was to enter into a project with the ESB Centre for the Study of Irish Art based on research already underway at the centre, involving historical representations of an Irish diaspora. For over a year, Donal Maguire, Kathryn Milligan and I collaborated on an endeavour framed by questions: is there a visual culture of diaspora, what types of images might it include, who created them and for whom? The guiding principle for the project was to make a new artwork to discover what it might mean to present this material in the context of a national, historical art museum. I have made a series of ‘hybrid’ interventions installed on platforms in the three rooms that comprise the Print and Drawing gallery of the National Gallery of Ireland. Each piece combines items of used furniture sourced in Dublin with digital images sourced from collections around the world.

Without the *pathos of distance* ... that other, more mysterious pathos could not have developed ... that longing for an ever-increasing widening of distance within the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, more remote, tenser, more comprehensive states ...

— Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, 1885

Nietzsche’s philosophy of self formation involves a conviction that one’s place in the world rests on unstable foundations. Places change and these changes act on our bodies, our needs and desires, our pleasures and discontents. Identity marks differences passed between generations

and across distances. The corporeal and social constitution of who we are involves a pathos, our pathos, where the self is distant to others, and yet longs for connection. A real and imagined diaspora subject arises out of similar (trans)formations. Diaspora refers to movements of large populations of people, away from an original homeland. On a fundamental level it is a material shift from one place to another. It is also a scattering; less a geographic zone than a zone of displacements, dispersals and imagined returns. A diaspora identity is dislocated, marked by ‘a widening distance’, which contains, always, a secondary, affective dimension of losses and intimacies that summon a remote place.

It is here the artworks of *Pathos of Distance* begin — by looking at the rhetoric of diaspora, produced visually as much as through any other narrative form. Following on the work of theorists such as Edward Said, Stuart Hall and Irit Rogoff, the exhibition is itself an allegory for conditions that involve fluid and unfixed subjects not easily categorised, that in turn challenge what it means to *be Irish*. For Hall, the diaspora subject corresponds to a hybrid identity that works in two directions, on the one hand defined by a common, originating culture that prevails despite mass dispersals around the globe, and on the other, a complex and dislocated sense of self. The *distances* that emerge through experiences of migration constantly produce and reproduce a conception of identity that is neither pure nor essential, but rather constituted by transformation and difference.


The exhibition design involves three adjoining rooms, each offering a set of images displayed among pieces of innocuous furniture culled from the stocks of second-hand suppliers in Dublin. Hybrids. Displacements. New arrangements. Items bought and sold to furnish houses, apartments and bedsits, where occupancy and ownership shift according to one’s changed status in the world. They represent a national collection of sorts, a projection of collective preferences and a reminder of the role material culture plays in processes

of representation. The dismantling of clear distinctions between what is and is not worthy of representing the Irish nation, asserts an irreducible present — or presence — where the appearance of regular, everyday items in the National Gallery of Ireland fundamentally reorders a shared national culture.

The research is ongoing. Each artwork is a pause — a moment of gathering that features a core set of historical images selected from a vast assortment of digital material, purposefully drawn from collections originating outside of Ireland. They appear in the exhibition as copies that exist (*or belong*) elsewhere. Their presence is completely reliant upon technologies that make an image reproducible — *and this changes everything*.

Despite links to nation, diaspora is not a call to nation. The diaspora is an experience of leaving combined with the experience of *having left*. For this reason, the diaspora subject is never identical to the subject who leaves, because they are never in the same place. Having lived most of my life outside the country where I was born, when I am ‘home’ I am often identified as being ‘from’ somewhere else. This is not a unique condition, but it is not exactly shared. It shapes how I view cultural identity and national representation, and why I identify more with the paradox of living out the conditions we inherit beyond the communities to which we are born, beyond nation, beyond tradition and beyond the imaginaries of a ‘homeland’.

*Pathos of Distance* is one such paradox.

[Sarah Pierce, “Notes on making *Pathos of Distance*”, exhibition text for *Sarah Pierce: Pathos of Distance*, curated by Donal Maguire, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, 2 December 2015–6 May 2016.] 

## Levitating in the Nauman

Ein doppelt belichtetes Foto aus dem Jahr 1966 dokumentiert den Künstler Bruce Nauman, wie er in seinem Atelier eine Übung performt. Abgesehen von der Kamera verwendet er seinen Körper, den Boden und zwei Stühle als Requisiten. Der Titel der Fotografie, *Failing to Levitate in My Studio* [etwa: *Beim Schweben in meinem Atelier versagen*], vermittelt diesen Moment als einen scheinbar geradlinigen, repetitiven Vorgang im Kunstmachen. Pierce inszeniert eine Szene mit Naumans Fotografie zusammen mit zwei Stühlen, wie sie in ihrem Atelier verwendet werden, und einer Reihe von Anleitungen. Während Naumans Foto zwar in zahlreichen seiner Kataloge abgedruckt ist, taucht es in keinem Ausstellungsverzeichnis auf. Hat es das Atelier je verlassen?

A double-exposure photograph from 1966 documents the artist Bruce Nauman performing an exercise in his studio. Along with the camera, he uses his body, the floor and two chairs as simple props. The photograph's title *Failing to Levitate in My Studio*, offers this moment as a deceptively straightforward, repetitive drive in art-making. Pierce stages a scene that includes Nauman's photograph, along with chairs brought in from her studio in Temple Bar, Dublin and a set of instructions. While Nauman's photograph has been reproduced in numerous catalogues on his work, it is never included in exhibition lists. Has it ever left the studio?

Gruppenperformance mit zwei Stühlen, Anleitung und Fotokopie.


Group performance with two chairs, instructions and Xerox copy.



2014 von der Kuratorin Rike Frank für die Ausstellung *Shimmering* in der Galerie Krobath, Wien, als Teil des Projekts *The Century of the Bed* in Auftrag gegeben. Konzipiert gemeinsam mit Rike Frank. Gesten und Sprechchor entwickelt von Sarah Pierce, basierend auf der Doppelbelichtung *Failing to Levitate in My Studio* (1966) von Bruce Nauman.

Commissioned in 2014 by curator Rike Frank for the exhibition *Shimmering* at Galerie Krobath, Vienna, as part of *The Century of the Bed*. Conceived with Rike Frank. Gestures and chants developed by Sarah Pierce based on the double-exposure photograph *Failing to Levitate in My Studio* (1966) by Bruce Nauman.

Mit Performer:innen, die über eine öffentliche Ausschreibung zur Teilnahme aufgerufen wurden. Während der gesamten Ausstellung finden von Zeit zu Zeit öffentliche Proben und Performances statt.

Featuring performers recruited through an Open Call. Public rehearsals and performances will take place at intervals throughout the exhibition. 





Future  
Exhibitions

*Future Exhibitions* erstreckt sich über zwei benachbarte Räume und verwendet Objekte aus dem Umkreis der Institution zur Inszenierung einer Performance. Im Lauf der Performance beschreibt ein:e Erzähler:in jeweils ein Dokument, das mit einer historischen Ausstellung zusammenhängt: ein Foto, einen Brief, einen Katalog, eine Zeitungsrezension und einen Schadensbericht. Mit jedem Szenario findet ein Wechsel der Bühne statt, so dass sich die Erzählenden in Begleitung einer Gruppe von Performer:innen, die die Objekte umarrangieren, zwischen den Räumen hin- und herbewegen. Durch diese Bewegungen wird das Publikum „geschoben und gezogen“.

Set in two adjoining rooms, *Future Exhibitions* uses objects from around the institution to stage a performance. During the performance, a narrator describes a document related to a historical exhibition: a photo, a letter, a catalogue, a newspaper review and a damage report. With each scenario, a change of scene takes place, as the narrator moves back-and-forth between the rooms accompanied by a group of performers who rearrange the objects. These movements ‘push-and-pull’ the audience.

Gruppenperformance mit Dingen aus dem Umfeld der Institution.

Group performance with elements collected from around the institution.



2010 in Auftrag gegeben von den Kurator:innen Barbara Clausen, Achim Hochdörfer und Catherine Wood für *Push and Pull*, mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Wien und Tate Modern, London. Basierend auf dem Kunstwerk *Push and Pull: A Furniture Comedy for Hans Hoffman* von Allan Kaprow, entstanden für die Ausstellung *Hans Hoffman and His Students* am MoMA, New York (1963). Originalskript von Sarah Pierce basierend auf Archivmaterial von Kasimir Malewitsch, 2000+ Arteast Collection, Seth Siegelaub, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, und Allan Kaprow.

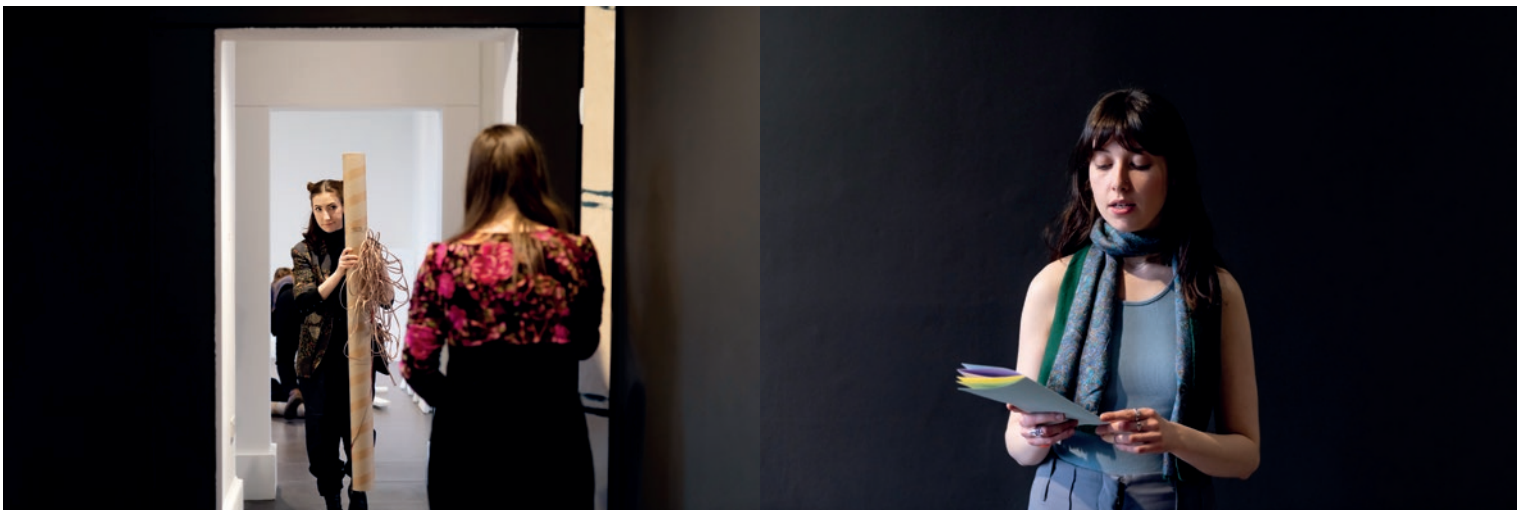
Commissioned in 2010 by curators Barbara Clausen, Achim Hochdörfer, and Catherine Wood for *Push and Pull*, mumok, Museum of Modern Art, Ludwig Foundation, Vienna, and Tate Modern, London. Based on the artwork by Allan Kaprow, *Push and Pull: A Furniture Comedy for Hans Hoffman* made for the exhibition *Hans Hoffman and His Students*, at MoMA, New York (1963). Original script by Sarah Pierce based on archival documents by Kazimir Malevich, 2000+ Arteast Collection, Seth Siegelaub, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, and Allan Kaprow.

Mit Performer:innen, die über eine öffentliche Ausschreibung zur Teilnahme aufgerufen wurden. Während der gesamten Ausstellung finden von Zeit zu Zeit öffentliche Proben und Performances statt. Featuring performers recruited through an Open Call. Public rehearsals and performances will take place at intervals throughout the exhibition. ▣





Future Exhibitions





## Future Exhibitions

Pierce's installation and performance takes place in the environment of Allan Kaprow's *Push and Pull: A Furniture Comedy for Hans Hofmann* (1963). It bears mentioning that the 'furniture' in question is mostly unusable, that the 'comedy' is fairly highbrow, and that Hans Hofmann was an abstract expressionist. A prolific pedagogue, Hofmann is indeed largely to blame for the spread of the movement, though he did, incidentally, count Kaprow as one of his students. You would think that such fault lines would make for an evocative artwork, especially at a curatorial program beleaguered on all sides by uncontrollably expressive artists. But the previous rendition of Future Exhibitions in this very space, in the group show *Anti-Establishment* (2012), was a tragedy. Kaprow shared the small room with many other artists, most of them abstract

expressionists, and during the performance at the jam-packed opening, the daughter of a Bard professor was walloped on the head with a 10-foot pole. Surely we can do better than this. In the present rendition, the installation occupies the entire room, incorporating elements from the rest of the exhibition, while the performance meanders throughout the show, engaging with a smaller audience in less dramatic fashion.

Tirdad Zolghadr

[Tirdad Zolghadr, text from gallery handout, *Monogamy*, curated by Tirdad Zolghadr, CCS Bard Galleries, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, 24 March–26 May 2013.]



### SCENE OF THE MYTH

Sarah Pierce

#### I.

*The event? And had it taken place?*<sup>1</sup>  
Maurice Blanchot

In 1963, in response to an invitation to participate in a group exhibition of former students of Hans Hofmann,<sup>2</sup> Allan Kaprow constructed two rooms in a warehouse: one brightly lit and decorated with mostly yellow furniture and objects, arranged like a small bedroom; the other dim, lit by a solitary lightbulb, and filled with "junk"—ladders, boxes, stacks of paper, plastic wrap, etc.. This room's walls were covered in dark paper and the objects within appeared more stored than *arranged*.

Kaprow provided a lengthy set of instructions to accompany the work, in which the artist laid out his plans for visitors to remake the rooms after him—choosing the furniture, exchanging it between the rooms and adding their own "interpretations" of the environment. Each day the rooms would

change through the efforts of someone coming in and rearranging what someone else had left behind.<sup>3</sup>

Kaprow embellished his instructions with recommendations. These he wrote as a direct address, in which he urges visitors to consider various formal and aesthetic relationships between the objects, the rooms, and, significantly, people. Try, for example, contrasting "positive and negative" elements; place a "sunset-colored" room against a "blue-Monday one." "Do you like candy-canes? Then why not paint everything in stripes?" He goes on to encourage visitors to produce new compositions even after they leave. "Consider whether or not you're a red-head and dressed in Kelly green. Are you fat, fatter than the table? In that case, quickly change your clothes if the small chair's color doesn't correspond; and also lose some weight." In places, the instructions adopt a pseudo-philosophical tone: "How long does it take to develop artistic senses? Why not ask an interior decorator? [...] Instead of 'forms' try simply an idea like rooms full of people versus empty rooms. [...] If form is too much for

you why not chuck it all and take the pure leap? What is a 'pure leap?'"<sup>4</sup>

The instructions are part of the work, and the address treads a line between judgement and charade, affect and lousy taste, where participation is more a result of cajoling than open systems, cast and yet unbound by the space of the artwork or exhibition, where "anyone can find or make rooms of any shape, size, proportion, and color," and "everyone else can change them."<sup>5</sup> The delivery brims with absurdist logic, and one can hear Kaprow, the student, poking fun of Hofmann, the teacher. The latter would often paint as he lectured, in order to demonstrate his famous push-and-pull technique of moving pigment around a canvas to create abstract works. Hofmann's aesthetically charged language translates into a joke among his students, and yet there is more at stake Kaprow's "furniture comedy" than just parody. As Kaprow's Happenings evolved from once-off events into socially charged environments capable of expanding (in theory) beyond the specifics of space and time, his instructions for *Push and Pull* prepare us for a work that hinges on its own exposure, and therefore most conditioned by and co-dependent upon a *community of the exhibition*.

In writing about community, Jean Luc Nancy describes a scene of transmission where people gather to receive narratives he names *myths*. Unlike other stories, the myth includes the scene of its invention and recital—a scene connected in space and across *times*. He writes: "With myth, the passing of time takes shape, its ceaseless passing is fixed in an exemplary place of showing and revealing."<sup>6</sup> The community of the exhibition is not simply present to receive the artwork (as narrative or myth). It is initiated into the *scene of the myth*, as Nancy writes, "if myth is primarily defined as that with which or in which time turns into space." The Museum of Modern Art in New York's original press release for the show took considerable care to relate the parameters of Kaprow's contribution, to describe the objects and rooms *and the*

instructions, and to indicate that the work would not tour with the other artworks, but that other exhibitors "can stage an environment in the spirit of a text provided by the artist."<sup>7</sup>

Crucially, the community of the exhibition is as dispersive as the work, perhaps initiated, but a community nonetheless of "anyone." This is not to say that Kaprow's *Push and Pull* is an open system where the viewer completes the work, nor is it conceptual (formed as instructive text), nor is the claim that through compliance everyone is an artist. And despite multiple re-stagings in recent years by artists, curators, and even dealers, the work is not *contingent* (as with relational aesthetics). It is *dependent*, wholly and completely, upon the community of the exhibition. A community, if you will, that does not refer to a particular set of individuals bound to a particular origin, but rather a community that traverses the event—appearing and dispersive—anyone and no one.

If there is any doubt as to whether or not Kaprow expected visitors to carry out his instructions, it is worth noting that he added an amendment to "the exhibitors," which was never meant to be read by the public. The original show, "Hans Hofmann and His Students," was held over one day in a warehouse in Manhattan, organized by MoMA before traveling to various venues in the United States. The plan for the tour, as mentioned, was to send Kaprow's instructions only, along with the works by other artists in the show. However, at a certain point Kaprow realized that his intentions for the work were not happening (so to speak). The amendment attends to this problem:

Implied here, and of course in the actual Environment-Happening, is the wish to by-pass the habit of 'ssh, don't touch,' useful with respect to older art but an impediment to understanding certain traditions that have recently begun to develop. I am most interested in the handshake between the artist and others. The museum or gallery director can now be instrumental in bringing this about.





## Future Exhibitions

In parentheses Kaprow adds: (From reports, I gather that this arrangement has not worked out optimally. In an exhibition atmosphere people are not geared to enter into the process of art. Hence, this kind of work is much better off away from the habits and rituals of conventional culture. A.K.)<sup>8</sup>

This is a subtle clause, an additional directive for the exhibitor to be instrumental in the work, taking on a special role in its repeated and restaged transmission by demonstrating how to move the objects, touch them, drag them, and arrange them. A momentary defeat, perhaps, but revealing of Kaprow's ambivalence towards this abdication of the work to the "scene" of the exhibition. He acknowledges that the museum or gallery director carries or conveys the special connection between the artist and "others"—whom I am naming the community of the exhibition. Nancy describes the speaker who delivers the myth this way: "We do not yet know whether the one speaking is from among them or if he is an outsider. We say that he is one of them, but different from them because he has the gift, or simply the right—or else it is his duty—to tell the story."<sup>9</sup> It is not the speaker's story; it is the community's. The myth is not authored; it is *held* and sustained.<sup>10</sup> Kaprow's ambivalence expands to the curbing effect of the exhibition on an audience that is unsure (or unwilling) to exceed convention and, in turn, onto an artwork that refuses to be avowed as such.

### II.

Allan Kaprow's instructions for *Push and Pull* include a large, cumbersome wooden crate that houses a numbered series of cardboard onto which Kaprow painted (using heavy black paint) his original set of instructions. Like an Ark and its tablets, the crate and its contents are safely stored at mumok in Vienna as part of the museum's permanent collection. In 2010, curators Barbara Clausen, Achim Hochdörfer, and Catherine Wood invited me to make a new

work for a group exhibition at mumok, which would travel to Tate Modern. The exhibition was called *Push and Pull*, after Kaprow's work (and not, ironically, after Hofmann's technique). *Future Exhibitions* (2010) is a performance that takes place in the midst of the environment of Allan Kaprow's *Push and Pull: A Furniture Comedy for Hans Hofmann* (1963). The performance takes place in two rooms connected by a large opening; one room is white, the other is black. The white room is evenly lit. The black room is rigged with theatre spots and colored gels. Each room consists of materials gathered from around the building: shelves, tables, rope, a television monitor, a fan, scraps of timber, boxes, frames, cardboard tubes, used carpet, packing materials, and pedestals. It is the generic material found in and around cultural organizations, in offices and storage spaces—the stuff of past exhibitions, relating to the administration of artworks, their display, as well as the physical managing of the institution. When the performance begins, the white room contains only black or white materials, arranged in geometric configurations around the room. The black room holds all the remaining objects, set up in discrete combinations that loosely resemble artworks by known artists. For example, a pair of wooden crates placed side-by-side (Donald Judd), a piece of carpet carefully folded into a symmetrical lump (Robert Morris), low-level static on a TV (Nam June Paik), or a set of transparent pipes leaning against the wall (Eva Hesse). The audience gathers inside the white room and a speaker, standing on a plain chair, announces the "first scenario": This is a photograph of an exhibition. In it there are several canvases hanging on the walls with paintings of geometric shapes, circles, squares, crosses and similar compositions. The paintings are numbered 1 through 39 with bits of paper tacked to the wall. The paintings are hung in groups, salon style. The photograph is oriented to the corner of the room. Hung in the upper corner, near the ceiling is a black square on a white canvas. On the floor, placed next

to the wall is a modest black chair. It is The Last Futurist Exhibition.<sup>11</sup>

The speaker gestures to the walls, pointing at paintings that are not present, describing how they are hung, and finally gesturing to an empty corner where the walls meet near the ceiling. After each scenario, there is a scene change witnessed by the audience, made by specially prepared demonstrators who move the various items between the rooms, dismantling and rearranging the objects. These changes are long and drawn out and the audience members view them from where they stand in the room, so that at times the demonstrators' actions are difficult to see depending on one's vantage point. The performance continues in this way, with the speaker moving back and forth between the black room and the white room, and the audience following, crowding into the space, as the demonstrators rearrange the rooms until finally the black room is completely empty and the white room is dense with materials. Each scenario in *Future Exhibitions* relates to a historical exhibition, but not necessarily a historic one. Beginning with the famous photograph of Kazimir Malevich's installation of thirty-nine Suprematist paintings and ending with a letter written by the director of an art space in Dublin to a student whose work was damaged by a drunkard who "went berserk" at the opening when asked to leave. The documents (a photograph, a calendar, a newspaper article, and several letters) form the script, so that each scene works as an intensification of both the act of making something public and visible (the act of exhibiting), and its documentation (the archive, exhibit, or evidence). "Future exhibitions" is a category: it is how institutions anticipate "the work" before it arrives in the exhibition and how publics prepare for what comes next. The intersection of references, past and present, present and absent, continues throughout the performance, as the speaker moves back and forth between the white room and the black room, joined by the audience. With this movement, the objects shift as well, as

the demonstrators carefully and methodically take the installation apart and remake the next scene. These changes happen while the audience watches, and over the course of the performance the rooms change as a result of materials being dragged, rolled, dissembled, pushed, and pulled between the rooms. Each carefully prepared interval re-situates a respective document in space and time, literally performing the spaces between times, between documents as a fluctuation of objects, people, and narration. The space is difficult to navigate physically, as the audience, demonstrators, and materials move around, crowded in, cutting across the two rooms. If we pause for a moment and think about the object of the curatorial—and in this moment, this hesitation, if we shift slightly to ask, what is the subject of the curatorial—we may begin to distill the *community of the exhibition*. A subject produced at the moment of exposition, beyond the display of artworks (and beyond the necessary, usual or coerced participations, interactions, and gatherings that arise out of the moment of exhibition). Things like: knowledge, encounters, gatherings, economies, exchanges, careers, experts, territories, and so on. If we think of an exhibition as an end, a destination, something we move towards, then the curatorial is only an organizing function, a process, how we get there. However, returning to Nancy, the exhibition is also a mythic scene (not to be confused with myth itself): "It names things unknown, beings never seen. But those who have gathered together understand everything, in listening they understand themselves and the world, and they understand why it was necessary for them to come together."<sup>12</sup> Like the gestures and interruptions that Walter Benjamin cites in epic theatre that run *through a moment of exposition*, beyond the event and around it, the curatorial takes place in intervals, so that in fact, the curatorial sustains the scene of the myth, and turns the exhibition into something held, temporarily and less bracketed in terms of a beginning and end.



## Future Exhibitions

### III.

For Hannah Arendt, the nuances that link action to freedom and plurality, speech and remembrance, distinguish political action as a mode of human togetherness on the one hand, from prescriptive political agendas on the other. If we consider the meaning of politics as described by Arendt, rather than presuming there is a consensus around the political, we can find ways to address “those enduring elements that are worthy of being remembered and are revealed only in our living and acting together politically.”<sup>13</sup> Paul O’Neill describes the curatorial at its most productive, as the prioritization of “a type of working with others that allows for a temporary space of cooperation, coproduction, and discursivity to emerge in the process of doing and speaking together.”<sup>14</sup> For O’Neill, the curatorial involves a constellation of discursive forms and processes, of varying degrees of publicness, that at times disrupt or, at the very least, remain unreconciled within an exhibition. Without fixating on process or any semblance of medium, and without setting up an opposition between the publicness of the exhibition and the less, or not-at-all, public activity that runs through all exhibition-making, we can pick up O’Neill’s inference of a temporary space of doing and speaking. The apparent openness of Kaprow’s invitation carries a set of expectations, forms and traditions. The work can be reproduced, possessed, and imposed, and *equally*, dispossessed, disavowed, and discharged. This is the seed of Kaprow’s instructions—they can be *not followed* without interrupting “the work.” The work’s exhibition is a return to the awkward scene of the myth—a work that never actually *happened* to begin with. The folly of each restaging of *Push and Pull*—and there have been many—is the appeal for curators and artists alike that these scenarios can stand-in for a community that may or may not arrive, a conversation that never takes place, but an artwork that can be attested to nonetheless. The community of the exhibition is flawed by the very temporalities that accompany

remoteness, distance, invariable failures, and the impossibilities of duration as a mode of being together. Nancy writes that the structure of *being exposed* involves being, “posed in exteriority, according to an exteriority, having to do with an outside in the very intimacy of an inside.”<sup>15</sup> The community of the exhibition involves what is made manifest and exposed, temporarily and incompletely—keeping in mind that “what takes place” is not always in the realm of the visible, and that all displays, even ostensibly “permanent” ones, eventually recede and disappear. Nancy also writes of the scene of the myth which, when interrupted, renders the myth of community impossible. To interrupt the scene of the myth is to intercede in a legacy of discrete and enduring narratives contained within a metanarrative. The community of the exhibition contains grammars that reproduce universalizing narratives as well as other, “localized” stories, subjectivities, and identities.<sup>16</sup> The temporality of the moment of exposition, including the repeated disappearances, interruptions, and intervals between exhibitions, comprises what it means to be the community of the exhibition—to be narrated, transmitted, and received as such. Rather than bound in a state of togetherness, exposure in exhibition leaves us vulnerable. It is because both the exhibition and the art it contains arise out of plurality that I am seeking to characterize the community of the exhibition through a politics that coincides with entering into an “address” with others through acts that present, demonstrate, reveal, invoke, make manifest, and, importantly, expose. Exhibitions summon and gather artworks and artists, audiences and narratives, and even when they prepare us to receive counter-narratives to unravel the scene of the myth by correcting the past or taking stock of the present, exhibitions reinforce a consensus, whether new or “renewed” that this is *the moment*. But regardless of claims and narratives, meta- or counter-, there is a quality of coming together that has to do with what it means to enter a community that precedes the moment, and extends

beyond. A community that is not circumscribed by the event, and is unavowable through works of art. We know how to perform Kaprow’s instructions. The tradition has been absorbed. With allegiance, the community of the exhibition returns to the scene of the myth we have sworn to uphold.

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community* (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill 1988), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> “Hans Hofmann and His Students”, April 18, 1963, presented by the Museum of Modern Art at Santini’s Warehouse, 447 West 49th Street New York.

<sup>3</sup> Allan Kaprow, “Instructions: Push and Pull: A Furniture Comedy for Hans Hofmann”, *Assemblage, Environments, and Happenings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1966).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Luc Nancy, “Myth Interrupted”, in *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> Press release, Museum of Modern Art, 18 April 1963. The exhibition travelled on to Colorado, Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. [https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press\\_archives/3139/releases/MOMA\\_1963\\_0051\\_48.pdf](https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/3139/releases/MOMA_1963_0051_48.pdf) (accessed February 11, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Kaprow, op. cit., “Amendment to Instructions”, 1963.

<sup>9</sup> Nancy, “Myth Interrupted”, p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> Nancy writes: “In the speech of the narrator, their language for the first time serves no other purpose than that of presenting the narrative and of keeping it

going. It is no longer the language of their exchanges, but of their reunion – the sacred language of a foundation and an oath. The teller shares it with them and among them.” From “Myth Interrupted”, p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> *Future Exhibitions* (2010). Installation and performance. Original script by Sarah Pierce. Commissioned jointly by mumok, Vienna and Tate Modern, London, for “Push and Pull”, curated by B. Clausen et al.


<sup>12</sup> Nancy, “Myth Interrupted”, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken 2005), p. 199. Arendt’s theory of action comes into play here, as she states, “The goal is not contained within the action itself, but unlike ends, neither does it lie in the future...”

<sup>14</sup> Paul O’Neill, “the Curatorial Constellation and the Paracuratorial Paradox,” in *The Exhibitionist* no. 6 (San Francisco: CCA Wattis Institute 2012), pp. 56–57.

<sup>15</sup> Nancy, “Foreword,” in *The Inoperative Community*, xxxvii.

<sup>16</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, reprint 1997), p. 156. Lyotard’s idea of ‘grand narrative’ is the story that is considered common to all. He proposes a move to small narratives—*les petit récits*—as a way to break up or unravel the metanarrative’s dominant stream.

[Sarah Pierce, “Scene of the Myth”, in Beatrice von Bismarck and Rike Frank (eds.), *Of(f) Our Times: Curatorial Anachronics* (London: Sternberg Press, 2019), pp. 9–22.] 



## Towards a Newer Laocoön

Die Laokoon-Gruppe ist eine Leihgabe aus der Sammlung des Antikenmuseums der Universität Leipzig und wird für den Zeitraum der Ausstellung nicht unweit ihres eigentlichen Standort in den Räumen der GfZK aufgestellt. Auf fünf Arbeitstischen aus der Abteilung Malerei und Druckgrafik des National College of Art and Design (NCAD) sind Zeitungsausschnitte zu sehen, die sich auf einen bestimmten Moment in der Geschichte des College beziehen. 1969 veranlassten Proteste der Kunststudierenden in Dublin die irische Regierung, die Schule zeitweise zu schließen. Im Mittelpunkt der Proteste stand der Wunsch der Studierenden nach neuen Unterrichtsformen und die alte, von der Gruppe *Laokoon und seine Söhne* verkörperte Lehre abzuschaffen.

The Laocoön group is on loan from the collection of the Museum of Antiquities at Leipzig University and will be on display in the rooms of the GfZK for the duration of the exhibition, not far from its actual location. Five worktables borrowed from the Paint Department and Fine Print present newspaper clippings referring to a specific moment in the history of the National College of Art and Design in Dublin. In 1969, art students in Dublin staged protests that led the Irish Government to periodically close the school. At the heart of these protests was a desire among them to learn new forms and to dismantle the old teaching symbolised by *Laocoön and His Sons*.

Laocoon-Skulptur mit Zeitungsausschnitten, Arbeitstischen von Studierenden und Gipsfragmenten.  
Laocoön sculpture with news clippings, student worktables and plaster fragments.





## Towards a Newer Laocoön

→ 2012 in Auftrag gegeben von der Kuratorin Sarah Glennie und dem Irish Film Institute für die Einzelausstellung *Towards a Newer Laocoön* in der NCAD Gallery, National College of Art and Design, Dublin, in Zusammenarbeit mit Anne Kelly, Kuratorin des NCAD Galerieprogramms. Betitelt nach dem Essay des amerikanischen Kunstkritikers Clement Greenberg, „Towards a Newer Laocoön“, erstmals veröffentlicht in *Partisan Review VII*, Nr. 4, New York, Juli-August 1940. Commissioned in 2012 by curator Sarah Glennie and the Irish Film Institute for the solo exhibition *Towards a Newer Laocoön* at the NCAD Gallery, National College of Art and Design, Dublin, in collaboration with Anne Kelly, curator NCAD Gallery Programme. Titled after the essay by American art critic Clement Greenberg, ‘Towards a Newer Laocoön’, originally published in *Partisan Review VII*, no. 4, New York, July-August 1940.

### Atelier du Louvre

Abguss der Gruppe des Laokoon, zwischen 1800–1815  
Gips, 198 × 143 × 63 cm

Courtesy Antikenmuseum der Universität Leipzig,  
Abgussammlung, Inv.-Nr. G 603.

Erwerb zwischen 1840–1859

Cast of the Laocoön group, between 1800–1815

Plaster, 198 × 143 × 63 cm

Courtesy Collection of antiques of the university of  
Leipzig, cast collection, Inv. no. G 603.

Acquired between 1840–1859

Fragmente der im Zuge der studentischen Proteste am  
National College of Art and Design 1969 beschädigten  
Frieße. Gips, um 1750.

Fragments of friezes damaged during student protests  
at the National College of Art in 1969. Plaster, c. 1750.

Courtesy National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

Studentische Arbeitstische aus dem Paint Department  
and Fine Print.

Student worktables from the Paint Department and  
Fine Print.

Courtesy National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

Zeitungsausschnitte.

Newspaper clippings.

Courtesy NCAD Student Protest file, Collection National  
Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL), NCAD, Dublin:  
‘Row flares up in Art College’, *Evening Press*, Thursday,  
20 February 1969.

Fotografie von sitzenden Studierenden bei einer Demon-  
stration mit „Krieg & Frieden Projekt“ Tafel, Datum und  
Quelle unbekannt.

Photograph of students sitting in demonstration with  
‘War & Peace Project’ blackboard, date and source  
unidentified.

„Art college conflict over agreement“, *Evening Press*,  
Wednesday, 23. April 1969.

‘Art college conflict over agreement’, *Evening Press*,  
Wednesday, 23 April 1969.

„Students say pact broken“, *Irish Independent*,  
Donnerstag, 24. April 1969.

‘Students say pact broken’, *Irish Independent*,  
Thursday, 24 April 1969.

Fotografie von sitzenden Studierenden bei einer  
Demonstration mit gezeichnetem Porträt auf Kamin-  
sims, Datum und Quelle unbekannt.

Photograph of students sitting in demonstration  
with drawn portrait on mantelpiece, date and source  
unidentified.

„Newsmen in, out“, Datum und Quelle unbekannt.

„Vandals stop college sit-in“ mit Fotografie von  
zerbrochenen Gipsabgüssen im Hof des College,  
*Evening Herald*, Mittwoch, 4. Juni 1969.

‘Newsmen in, out’, date and source unidentified. ‘Vandals  
stop college sit-in’, featuring photograph of broken plaster  
casts in college yard, *Evening Herald*, Wednesday,  
4 June 1969.





## Towards a Newer Laocoön


➤ „Art students divided on what to do“, *Irish Press*, Donnerstag, 5. Juni 1969.

‘Art students divided on what to do’, *Irish Press*, Thursday, 5 June 1969.

„Incidents worry art students“, Datum und Quelle unbekannt.

‘Incidents worry art students’, date and source unidentified.

Handschriftliche Notiz auf der Rückseite eines NCAD Mitteilungsblatts, Juli 1971. NCAD Studierendenprotest Akte, Sammlung National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL), NCAD, Dublin.

Handwritten note on the reverse of NCAD Newsletter, July 1971. NCAD Student Protest file, Collection National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL), NCAD, Dublin. 



### PRACTICES OF NEGATION

Sarah Pierce

[...] On the morning of November 9, 2016, I drove my seven-year-old son along a country road to school. He kept asking and wanting to know if the people who voted for Trump are bad people. I shared the question. *Are they?* The Day After (as I call it now for the end-of-the-world dread it carried) was filled with questions. How did this happen? How were we so wrong? It was hard to say his name, let alone believe this was the next president. We had been living in upstate New York for two months while I taught at Bard College. It was a fleeting return to the US, planned partly to show my Irish son what life is like in *America*. The sore spot was that our semester away coincided with the US presidential election. The evening we arrived, as we entered Red Hook in early September, I saw the first of many *Trump for President* signs we would encounter during our stay. It was instantly clear that the consensus we streamed via NPR into our Dublin home had a whole other angle, but less clear then was the scale of that side’s bigotry. Trump placards were to be expected; the Confederate flags were a surprise.

As I walked from the parking lot along the wide path leading to the entrance of the Hessel Museum, through the post-apocalyptic haze that hung over the campus, I pondered whether my students would show up. The seminar I was teaching involved a small group of graduate students at the Center for Curatorial Studies. I wanted to make a class that would take up the structural challenges of feminism, built on a thesis set out in 1971 by Linda Nochlin in her essay, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” Nochlin cautioned her reader not to take the bait. That is, “to dig up examples of worthy or insufficiently appreciated women artists throughout history; to rehabilitate rather modest, if interesting and productive careers; to ‘rediscover’ forgotten flower painters or David followers and make out a case for them; to demonstrate that Berthe

Morisot was really less dependent upon Manet than one had been led to think.”<sup>14</sup> Instead, Nochlin suggested a radical, far more ambitious undertaking: to change educational institutions so that anyone courageous enough to take the risk can prepare, study, experiment, and ultimately achieve greatness. This is not a recalibration of institutional standards or a leveling of the playing field; it involves a profound commitment to change. Men—and women—rely on, reproduce, and benefit from institutional arrangements where a large portion of great and not-so-great art results from a circumstance of gender.<sup>15</sup> Greatness as a mark of liberation requires a complete reworking of organizational circumstances: an institutional turn away from the cult of the artist, and an educational turn toward signs and symbols within a total system of art making.

Through our weekly provocations we asked what it would mean to predicate a feminist project on *greatness*—not as a demand or desire to be named, recognized, valued, or seen, but instead as a condition to be claimed and produced. This structural shift asks questions at the level of institution. What does it mean to be here, in this privilege, and who is here with us? The meaning of *with* extends beyond physical presence. It extends across times. Hannah Arendt wrote about politics as what “arises between men.”<sup>15</sup> We are never alone in politics, which is why my politics are never mine only. This plurality is crucial to those “spaces of appearance” that Arendt described “where I appear to others as other appear to me.”<sup>16</sup> In many ways, teaching epitomizes the very stakes of what we mean by plurality—of what it means to situate one’s activity through an ongoing inhabitation rather than through quantifiable work/works. To think through teaching is to connect the outward manifestations of practice to a political mode of being in the world. An idea that politics are handed from one generation to the next does not sufficiently account for making new beginnings within the conditions of politics. The political binds us to territories (both real and imaginary) that are difficult to





## Towards a Newer Laocoön

escape, difficult, but not impossible, and this is the promise of politics evoked by Hannah Arendt.<sup>17</sup> A promise that is not predicated on mastering the political, or gaining experience in politics, is not limited to speculative thought, but is itself an embodied reality.

As an artist who teaches, I often wonder how to deliver Arendt's promise to students. To promise the world can change, changes the conditions of politics—it changes things. Teaching holds this promise—not *holds* as in potential, but rather as in *sustains*. Teaching holds this promise, and this both risks and affirms what passes between generations as a need to think, judge, and make the conditions of politics anew. I wonder if it is possible to teach in ways that open the political to new thoughts and new acts—I do not mean as a result of teaching, but as a way of risking what it means to *teach*. The plurality of politics arises out of a thinking and doing together that involves the past as much as the future—but never securely or completely. At its most basic level, teaching is an address. It requires one to address the other through modes that formalize what is said. Conversations that take place through teaching behave like a monologue, spoken by one person and addressed to other people, such that in the structure of teaching, no matter how informal the tone, there is an authority instilled by the one who speaks. Anyone who teaches knows this, or should know this (which is not to say that privileging the teacher's voice is warranted or preferable.) The teacher who makes efforts to counterbalance this authority also knows that the student speaks as a student. I prepare by placing the chairs in circle, or reminding students to address each other, or introducing other voices, but it is me who authorizes these realignments.

As a teacher I am responsible for an address, which is to say I am also responsible for the practices of negation that obscure this authority. This introduces an ethical dimension to the activity of teaching that is further complicated by a paradox that goes to the core of what it means to *speak*

in situations that are personal and contingent, immediate and to a degree public. It helps here to think of teaching less as a transfer or transmission and more as a setting down. To set down is also to let go, and by letting go I allow others to take up what has been said. Arendt wrote eloquently about such moments. In her concept of action, we venture to put our words in the world, and by doing so she emphasized a necessary unpredictability that accompanies action, because it is impossible to predict or determine how what is said will be used, misused, understood, or repeated.<sup>18</sup> Action moves what I have said and produces something more, and reproducibility of action is also its community.

I arrive and my students are waiting. I feel the weight and limit of my role. What to say? What to say, let alone teach in this moment? I have nothing. Hilary Clinton's concession speech is scheduled to come on at some stage during our session, and scrolling news headlines along open monitors distract us from a conversation yet to take place. To kill time, I suggest we walk across the hall to the museum. But no one wants to be in there. We return after a few minutes, too discomposed to be in an exhibition. We need to move through this without explanations or citations—without art. There is nothing to elaborate and nothing to enact. As we stand by in an atmosphere of imminent delays and arrivals, I try reading to the group. It is a lost act. We do nothing.

It occurs to me now, what I could not put into words then. This nothing was our agency as much as it was our situation. Pure and absolute. A power yielded in anticipation of those of us who were there, gathered in institution, as well as those who had not yet appeared.

In a long passage in *The Unavowable Community*, Maurice Blanchot identifies a way of *being-in-togetherness* not marked as presence, but that instead hands us over to "time as a dispenser."<sup>19</sup> This function of time operates as a community, but a negative community marked by absence. A community without the event, without a determination to remain, not measured

by duration, but more truly by its power to endure. A community that disregards its own imperatives; formidable in its refusal to react. Blanchot writes, "Presence of the 'people' in their limitless power which, in order not to limit itself, accepts *doing nothing*... A power supreme, because it included, without feeling diminished, its virtual and absolute powerlessness, symbolized accurately by the fact that it was there as an extension of those who could no longer be there... Presence and absence... in a sovereignty the law cannot circumscribe."<sup>20</sup> As we navigate gatherings that involve people and institutions, questions resurface about how community returns, not through the presence of a project, but through a negation that cannot speak. In absence we return to a community that holds over distances and times, through variable failures and impossibilities. In the middle of our inheritances, while believing in them, we confront their incongruities—not as lost illusions but as lived conditions.

This is one way to think about that day last November. We held through slippages and murky waters. A discussion underway transformed into practice. Greatness coalesced across different planes, exposed and transferable in the structural arrangements of a pedagogy stripped bare.

<sup>14</sup> Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?"; in *Women, Art, and Power: And Other Essays* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1988) p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Nochlin includes class in these circumstances as well, which extends to race, since for her class is more social than economic.


<sup>16</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York, NY: Schocken, 2005) p. 95.

<sup>17</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, ed. Margaret Canavan (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1998) p. 198.

<sup>18</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of the Politics*, pp. 191–197.

<sup>19</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 175–246.

<sup>20</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community* (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill, 1988) p. 47. Blanchot and Arendt have connections to Bard through their writings; my intention is to cite them and thereby cite a community of readers that runs through this text. The ellipsed text details a spontaneous march during the events of May '68 in Paris for the victims of Charonne.

[Sarah Pierce, excerpt from "Practices of Negation"; in Paul O'Neill, Lucy Steeds and Mick Wilson (eds.), *How Institutions Think: Between Contemporary Art and Curatorial Discourse* (Cambridge, MA: LUMA Foundation/ CCS Bard College and The MIT Press, 2017) pp. 206–208.] 

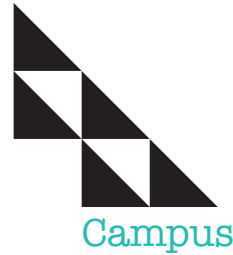




*Campus* beruht auf Sarah Pierces anhaltendem Interesse am Hochschul-Campus. Bei der Arbeit an dem Werk konzentrierte sie sich auf die University of Pittsburgh und untersuchte das Jahrzehnt des Umbruchs zwischen 1959 und 1969, als in den Vereinigten Staaten die Bürger:innenrechtsbewegung in die Anti-Vietnam Kriegsbewegung überging. Die aufkommende politische Haltung weißer Studierender gegen den Krieg überschattete den Aktivismus Schwarzer Studierender, die die Universität umgestalten wollten; ja geriet sogar mit dieser aneinander. Ausgewählte Zeitungsausschnitte aus dem Bürgerrechtsarchiv der University of Pittsburgh berichten von Ereignissen, die zur Gründung der Black Action Society (BAS) und zum Bruch zwischen den beiden radikalen Studierendenbewegungen führten. Fünf hängende rote Stoffbahnen bilden die Kulisse für eine Reihe von Performances, die sich auf dieses Material beziehen. Im Skript werden Gesten aus politischen Protesten mit Anleitungen aus einem Kunstkurs studio-basierter Praxis kombiniert, die eine Dozentin an Studierende beim Herstellen von 3D-Arbeiten gibt.

*Campus* emerges out of Pierce's ongoing interest in the college campus. To develop the work, she focused on the University of Pittsburgh, looking into the decade of transition between 1959 and 1969, when the Civil Rights movement in the United States merged into the anti-Vietnam War movement. The emergent politics of white students who opposed the war overshadowed and even clashed with the activism of Black students who wanted to transform the university. Selected newspaper clippings from the University of Pittsburgh's Civil Rights Archive report events that led to the establishment of the Black Action Society (BAS) and the rift between the two radical student movements. Five suspended red panels are a stage for a series of performances that draw on this material. The script pairs gestures from political protests with instructions from a studio art class, given by a teacher to her students as they engage in making 3D works.





➤ Gruppenperformance mit roten Stoffbahnen und Archivmaterial.  
[Group performance with red fabric panels and archival documents.](#)

2011 in Auftrag gegeben von der Kuratorin Georgina Jackson für die Ausstellung *Neighb(u)rhood* in der Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh. Die Forschung wurde vom U Pitt Civil Rights Archive unterstützt. Originalskript von Sarah Pierce frei nach einer Unterrichtsstunde der Kunstdozentin JoAnna Commandaroso in einer Medienkunstklasse an der University of Pittsburgh.  
[Commissioned in 2011 by curator Georgina Jackson for the exhibition \*Neighb\(u\)rhood\* at the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh. Research support from the U Pitt Civil Rights Archive. Original script by Sarah Pierce adapted from a live studio art class by art teacher JoAnna Commandaros at the University of Pittsburgh.](#)

Mit Performer:innen, die über eine öffentliche Ausschreibung zur Teilnahme aufgerufen wurden. Während der gesamten Ausstellung finden von Zeit zu Zeit öffentliche Proben und Performances statt.  
[Featuring performers recruited through an Open Call. Public rehearsals and performances will take place at intervals throughout the exhibition.](#)

Fotokopien von Zeitungsausschnitten.

[Xerox copies of newspaper clippings.](#)

Courtesy University of Pittsburgh, University Archives Information Files, Civil Rights Archives.

„Black and White: Is It that Plain?“, Paul Stoller, Hrsg., *The Pitt News*, 9. September 1968.

[‘Black and White: Is It that Plain?’ by Paul Stoller, Ed. \*The Pitt News\*, 9 September, 1968.](#)

„Black Rebels End Pitt Sit-In“, gefolgt von „Blacks Get Pledge“, *Pittsburgh Press*, 16. Januar 1969.

[‘Black Rebels End Pitt Sit-In’ continues, ‘Blacks Get Pledge’, \*Pittsburgh Press\*, 16 January, 1969.](#)

„Something Black Is Coming“, *Pitt News*, 21. Februar 1969.

[‘Something Black Is Coming’, \*Pitt News\*, 21 February, 1969.](#)

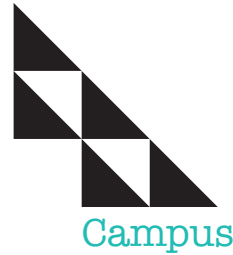
„Pitt Students Awaiting Fast“, gefolgt von „49 At Pitt In Protest Fast“, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 12. März 1969.

[‘Pitt Students Awaiting Fast’ continues, ‘49 At Pitt In Protest Fast’ \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*, 12 March, 1969.](#)

„Sitting Room Only“. Foto: *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 12. März 1969.

[‘Sitting Room Only’. Photo: \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*, 12 March, 1969.](#)





Campus

➤ „Pitt Protesters Move To Another Building“, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 13. März 1969.

‘Pitt Protesters Move To Another Building’, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 13 March, 1969.

„Pitt Fast Due To End At Noon“, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 14. März 1969.

‘Pitt Fast Due To End At Noon’, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 14 March, 1969.

„The Sit-In At Pitt“, *Pittsburgh Press*, 19. März 1969.

‘The Sit-In At Pitt’, *Pittsburgh Press*, 19 March, 1969.

„Protest Steps Out On Best Foot Here“, gefolgt von „Protest Puts Best Foot Out“, *Pittsburgh Press*, 15. Oktober 1969.

‘Protest Steps Out On Best Foot Here’, continues, “Protest Puts Best Foot Out”, *Pittsburgh Press*, 15 October, 1969.

„My Cousin Went“. Foto: *Pittsburgh Press*, 15. Oktober 1969.

‘My Cousin Went’. Photo: *Pittsburgh Press*, 15 October, 1969.

„Pitt Students Plant White Crosses“. Foto: *Pittsburgh Press*, 15. Oktober 1969.

‘Pitt Students Plant White Crosses’. Photo: *Pittsburgh Press*, 15 October, 1969.

„Blacks Jive At Talent Show“, *Pitt News*, 13. November 1970. ▣

**LEARNING PIECES  
AN INTERVIEW  
WITH SARAH PIERCE  
BY CLAIRE POTTER**

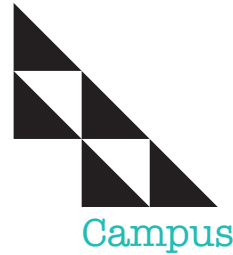
Roy Claire Potter

[...]

**SP** Yeah there is, but actors also have a different ethical code in relation to the script. When I did *The Artist Talks* performance at The Showroom in London, a year before I did *Campus*, that also happened with MFA students from Chelsea and Goldsmiths, and I started to realise that there was a certain demand in the work as it moved away from working something out together and more toward me directing the action. The actors in Eindhoven had to memorise the dialogue phonetically, and for a Dutch speaker who has never even heard spoken Irish, that’s quite a demand. It was probably the first time Irish has been spoken by Dutch actors in the Netherlands! But in most of the performance works I’ve made it isn’t until the third or fourth time it is performed that it really forms into a work and I know it’s not really going to change that much. And so the more it’s performed, the more I can understand what it is, and how to perform it again. By the time we performed *Campus* at FlatTime House in London it was already quite structured, so I could impart my confidence to the group, and be more of a guide to performing the nine exercises that form the script. The bits between the nine exercises, for me that’s where the performance is, when the group is relying on each other and figuring out how they get from one exercise to the next.

**RCP** That’s the thing that strikes me when I remember participating in *Campus*, the feeling that the work was most active within that group. I remember thinking at the time: who is this audience following us from room to room?

**SP** I know—and there is an exercise in the middle when one of the performers chants directly to the audience, ‘You don’t have any structure!’ When I did it at VOX in Montreal the audience was much more frontal. So if you imagine a big room



where the entrance is at one end, and the audience were all gathered at that end, and the red curtains the group pulls back and forth during the latter half of the script were hung in the other half of the room. So we walked in doing the entrance chant and moved toward the curtains, and the audience stayed where they were and watched the performance. This audience watched us rehearse three times and then the final performance, and they really got that it was about the group-body as a connected, learning thing. I heard later that while I was working with the performers between each rehearsal there was another artist, a teacher, who was talking with her students about what had just happened. I wish I had that as a recording! So at the same moment that I was instructing the performers she was saying things to her students like, OK, so what just happened here? What did you see? Is this a typical performance? Etc...

**RCP** Ha-ha! And *Campus*' chanting comes from an art class too...

**SP** Yeah, exactly!

**RCP** I find it interesting that the performance also doesn't come at the end of the rehearsal period, but is constituted by the preliminary elements; reading the script, talking, trying things out among the group...

**SP** ...and the audience—their learning curve is important to what is happening. In this way it relates to the content. The script isn't developed from that part of art school teaching that is about grading students 2:1 or 2:2, but those moments when something is being developed, and more than that, it's about taking that moment when something is being tested out and saying that is actually *something*. It's like what you were describing with the redaction performance, when you the writer, reader, and performer are struggling with the words, which is very different if somebody else occupies one of those roles. So it's about paying attention to those moments and not calling them process, or rehearsal even, or test—all these words imply some future realisation, and that's not at all what interests me.

**RCP** And as *Campus* continues to be performed and the script becomes inevitable, does that mean we move away from the work? Or, to put it another way, is the emergence of the script at the detriment of the performance?

**SP** That's a really good question and I wonder the same thing. I was in Moscow last summer with curating students making gestural and chanting performances, undocumented and it sort of doesn't exist, and I wonder about that relationship to what a 'final work' is because on one level the script crystallises something but each version of the performance is never going to be realised fully, and that's where it becomes an analogy for me, for the art school as an ever-changing and replenished community. But it's also administrative. The script is just administration in a way; think about it in relation to the bureaucracy of a campus or a school. There is always someone who can perform it. Last year, when there were student protests in the National College of Art and Design, and I said this to you before, the administration was counting on the fact that there will always be a community, there will always be a present student body, and it will not be this student body. It is cynical. But in a similar way, the script is anticipating that there is always going to be someone there to make it happen. The script can be really, really passive. And that's what I like and don't like about the idea of a script. It's not that the script is my writing or the artwork, it's more like an inventory—and then, because I'm interested in archives, I want to analyse those moments that aren't 'the work.' The instruction that *Campus* is based on is totally connected to the repetitions and protocols of administration, of administering instruction through spoken word.

**RCP** And the verbal instruction that the teacher gives her students, the recording which *Campus*' script is developed from, within that are the echoes of her teacher and earlier administrations.

**SP** Exactly, and it's not what we think is happening when we're in the position of the student, when we think we're in this

relationship and the instruction is for *me*, about *me* and *my work*—I mean this sounds really jaded...

**RCP** Ha-ha! No, it's completely true! But also: Oh my god! No! I really loved being in *Campus*!

**SP** Ha-ha. I know! I know, and you enjoyed it in the way we all do when we are students and when the experience is all-encompassing.

**RCP** And perhaps that's why process is such an unsatisfying word to describe something like this. What terminology would you use, if we aren't using rehearsal, or process, or test?

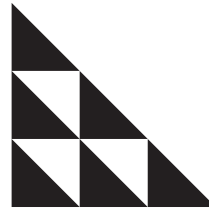
**SP** I often use the words 'exercise' and 'demonstration' to describe the performance, because that is how it comes together. Each exercise is a break in the performance, so to call them scenes or acts would be misleading. There is no narrative. This helps the performers understand that they are not acting or performing. It is them, as they are, demonstrating a set of exercises. It is not nuanced. I've learned a lot from Brecht's *Lehrstücke*, or *Learning Pieces*, and the exercises he made with his company in order to allow the actors to reflect on their role. He framed learning as something other than betterment. So for

the demonstrators in *Campus* or *Gag*, it is not about blind participation, and it is also not about just doing something for the experience.

**RCP** It seems that is a correlation between how I would describe the spectral definition of reading and writing, with how we are relationally defining 'passive' and 'active,' or what it means to participate?

**SP** There is an idea of interactivity in art that getting the audience to do stuff means it makes them less passive. But when we just do what we are told we are passive. For Brecht participation is not about just switching places, the audience taking the stage for example. It is about the audience and the actor reflecting on their role. In the exercises I am continually reflecting on my role, as the artist, as the guide, and this calls attention to the role of the students or actors as demonstrators. The point of Brecht's Epic Theatre was not to subvert the form, but to allow space within it for reflection to take place. [...]

[Roy Claire Potter, excerpt from "Learning Pieces, An interview with Sarah Pierce", *gorse* no. 5, March 2016, pp. 40–44.] ▣



## Lost Illusions/ Illusions perdues

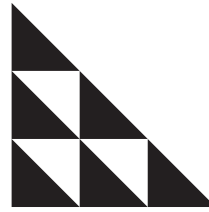
Jedes der Videos zeigt die Dokumentation eines ein-tägigen Workshops mit Kunststudierenden im Rahmen einer Ausstellung. Die Studierenden führen choreografierte Sprechgesänge und Gesten aus und auf, die sich aus der Bewegung im Raum und der Interaktion mit den ausgestellten Werken ergeben. Die elf Keramiken stammen aus einem umfangreichen, inoffiziellen Archiv von Arbeiten, die Künstler:innen, die das Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Alberta, Kanada, besuchten, angefertigt und zurückgelassen haben.

Diese werden zusammen mit Dokumenten aus dem Besitz des Banff Centre gezeigt, die sich auf einen Vorfall im Jahr 1989 beziehen, als eine Gruppe von Künstler:innen, die das Zentrum besuchten, ein Kunstwerk des kanadischen Künstlers Mark Lewis vandalisierten. Die Dokumente enthalten einen Offenen Brief von Lewis an die Künstler:innen, in welchem er den Akt als eine Form von Zensur kritisiert.

Eine zweite Serie von Keramiken wurde von Sarah Pierce hergestellt, die mit einer Assistentin anhand eines Fotos einen Tag lang jedes Stück nachformte. Die Doppelgänger werden gemeinsam mit 1994 verfassten Briefen, die aus dem Besitz der gemeinnützigen Galerie Mercer Union in Toronto stammen, gezeigt. Die Briefe beziehen sich auf eine Einzelausstellung des damals 26jährigen Künstlers Eli Langer, die 1994 in der Galerie stattfand. In einer Abfolge bemerkenswerter Ereignisse wurden Langer und die damalige Direktorin von Mercer Union, Sharon Brooks, wegen Verstoßes gegen die kanadischen Kinderpornografie-Gesetze angeklagt und vor Gericht gestellt.

Each video presents documentation of a day-long workshop with art students, set within an exhibition. The students act out and perform choreographed chants and gestures derived from moving around the space and interacting with the works on display. Eleven ceramic pieces in the work come from a vast, unofficial archive of pieces made and left behind by artists visiting the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Alberta, Canada. These are shown with documents belonging to the Centre that refer to an incident in 1989 when a group of artists





## Lost Illusions/ Illusions perdues

visiting the Centre vandalized an artwork by Canadian artist Mark Lewis.

The documents include an Open Letter by Lewis to the artists where he criticises the act as a form of censorship. A second set of ceramics was made by Sarah Pierce, who worked with an assistant over the course of one day, using a photograph as a reference to remake each piece. The doppelgangers are shown with letters written in 1994 that belong to the not-for-profit gallery Mercer Union in Toronto. The letters refer to a solo exhibition at the gallery in 1994 by artist Eli Langer, who at the time was 26 years old. In a series of remarkable events, Langer and Mercer Union's then Director, Sharon Brooks, were accused and tried in court for violating Canada's child pornography laws.

Zwei Einkanal-Videos (keine feste Laufzeit) mit Synchronon. Elf Originalkeramiken und Archivdokumente auf runderneuerten Sockeln der Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig; elf Keramikrepliken und Archivdokumente auf Sockeln.

Two single-channel videos (no fixed duration) with synchronised sound. Eleven original ceramics and eleven replica ceramics with archival documents on refurbished plinths by GfZK Leipzig.

2013 in Auftrag gegeben von den Kuratorinnen Jesse McKee, Georgina Jackson und Pip Day für die dreiteilige Ausstellung *Lost Illusions/Illusions perdues* in der Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff, Alberta, bei Mercer Union in Toronto, Ontario, und in der SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art in Montreal, Quebec. Betitelt nach dem epischen Roman des französischen Schriftstellers Honoré de Balzac, *Illusions perdues*, der ursprünglich zwischen 1837 und 1843 in drei Teilen veröffentlicht wurde. Commissioned in 2013 by curators Jesse McKee, Georgina Jackson, and Pip Day for the solo exhibition in three-parts, *Lost Illusions/Illusions perdues* at Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff; Alberta, Mercer Union in Toronto; Ontario, and SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art, in Montreal, Quebec. Titled after the epic novel by French

writer Honoré de Balzac, *Illusions perdues*, originally published in three parts between 1837 and 1843.

Mit Studierenden des Conceptual Art Club der Alberta University of the Arts in der Ausstellung *Skirt the parlour, and shun the zoo* (2013) in der Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff; Olivia Simpson und Kayla Kirsche vom College of Arts an der University of Guelph in der Ausstellung *Push and Pull* (2014) bei Mercer Union, Toronto, und Thomas Dalbec von der University of Quebec in Montreal in der Ausstellung *A Problem So Big It Needs Other People* (2014) in der SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art, Montreal.

Featuring students from the Conceptual Art Club from the Alberta University of the Arts, in the exhibition *Skirt the parlour, and shun the zoo* (2013) at Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff; Olivia Simpson and Kayla Kirsche from the College of Arts at the University of Guelph, in the exhibition *Push and Pull* (2014) at Mercer Union, Toronto; and Thomas Dalbec from University of Quebec in Montreal in the exhibition *A Problem So Big It Needs Other People* (2014) at SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art, Montreal.



Ausgewählte unvollendete Werke, die Künstler:innen als Gäste des Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Kanada im Keramik-Workshop zurückgelassen haben, präsentiert auf restaurierten Sockeln.

Selected unfinished works left behind in the ceramics workshop by visiting artists at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada, displayed on refurbished plinths.

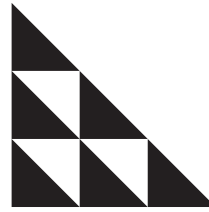
Walter Dexter (Kanada)

Weißes Gefäß und Sockel mit blauen Tupfen und Sgraffito, um 1979/80

White vessel and base with blue spots and sgraffito, c. 1979/80

Courtesy Estate of Walter Dexter and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada.



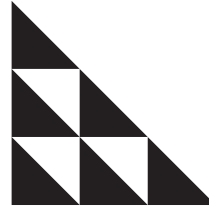


## Lost Illusions/ Illusions perdues

- Shahadat Hossain (Bangladesch [Bangladesh](#))  
Kugelförmige Vase, schmale Öffnung.  
Blaue und weiße Oxidation, um 1990  
Kugelförmige Vase, schmale Öffnung.  
Dunkles Steinzeug und Oxidation, um 1990  
[Spherical vase form, narrow mouth.](#)  
[Blue and white oxidation, c. 1990](#)  
[Spherical vase form, narrow mouth.](#)  
[Dark stoneware and oxidation. c. 1990](#)  
Courtesy Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada.
- Katsue Ibata (Japan)  
Weiße und schwarze Kelle mit Handgriff, 1989  
Courtesy die Künstlerin und Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Kanada.  
[White and black ladle with handle, 1989](#)  
[Courtesy the artist and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada.](#)
- Jihye Kim (Südkorea [South Korea](#))  
Blaugrüne Stachelform, Porzellan-Oxidation, um 2000  
Courtesy die Künstlerin und Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Kanada.  
[Spiky blue-green form, porcelain-oxidation, c. 2000](#)  
[Courtesy the artist and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada.](#)
- Elsa Naveda (Mexiko [Mexico](#))  
Viereckige Pyramide mit Krakelee-Glasur, um 2008  
Courtesy die Künstlerin und Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Kanada.  
[Four-pointed pyramid with crackle glaze, c. 2008](#)  
[Courtesy the artist and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada.](#)

- Elizabeth Ross (Mexiko [Mexico](#))  
Zwei Stücke, salzglasiert (Teil einer „Kolonne von Maisspindeln“), 1999  
Courtesy die Künstlerin und Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Kanada.  
[Two pieces, salt glazed \(part of a 'Gang of Olotes'\), 1999](#)  
[Courtesy the artist and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada.](#)
- France Trépanier (Kanada [Canada](#))  
Blaue Wachsschale, 2005  
Courtesy die Künstlerin und Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Kanada.  
[Blue wax bowl, 2005](#)  
[Courtesy the artist and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada.](#)
- Anne Marie Wasshede (Schweden [Sweden](#))  
Farbige abstrakte Form, schlank.  
Ton-Glasur-Oxidation, um 1985  
Farbige abstrakte Form, breit.  
Ton-Glasur-Oxidation, um 1985  
[Colourful abstract form, slender.](#)  
[Clay glaze-oxidation, c. 1985](#)  
[Colourful abstract form, wide.](#)  
[Clay glaze-oxidation, c. 1985](#)  
Courtesy Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada.
- Künstler:in unbekannt  
Kleine, gerippte Testform. Blaue und weiße Metallglasur, Ton-Oxidation. Datum unbekannt.  
[Artist unknown](#)  
[Small, ridged test form. Blue and white metallic glaze, clay-oxidation. Date unknown.](#)  
Courtesy Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada.





## Lost Illusions/ Illusions perdues

➤ Administrative Materialien zur vandalisierten Fotografie von Mark Lewis, 1989. Courtesy Paul D. Fleck Library and Archives, Banff Centre, Alberta: Sicherheits-Störfallbericht, Leslie Sampson, 18. Oktober 1989 (2 Seiten). Schadensbericht, Mark Lewis - „She Will Ride Her Skirt Up High Over The Slippery Surface“ Brief von Mark Lewis an Helga Pakasaar, Oktober 1989 (3 Seiten). Antrag auf Kapitaleistung, 2. Januar 1990. Administrative materials related to vandalized Mark Lewis photograph, 1989, courtesy Paul D. Fleck Library and Archives, Banff Centre, Alberta: Security Occurrence Report, Leslie Sampson, 18 October, 1989 (2pp) Damage Report, Mark Lewis - “She Will Ride Her Skirt Up High Over The Slippery Surface” Letter from Mark Lewis to Helga Pakasaar, October, 1989 (3pp) Request for Capital Expenditure, 2 January, 1990.



Keramikrepliken von Katie Lyle und Sarah Pierce auf nachgebildeten Sockeln. Gebrannter Ton, unglasiert, 2014. Replica ceramics by Katie Lyle and Sarah Pierce, displayed on remade plinths. Fired clay, unglazed, 2014.

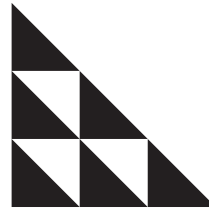
Korrespondenz zum Polizeieinsatz bei der Ausstellung von Eli Langer und zum Gerichtsverfahren, 1993–94. Correspondence related to raid on Eli Langer exhibition and court case, 1993–94  
Courtesy Mercer Union, Toronto, Canada:

Brief von Max Allen an den Vorstand vom 18. Dezember 1993. Letter to the Board of Directors from Max Allen, 18 December, 1993.

Pressemitteilung, *Censorship News*, 19. Dezember 1993. News Release, *Censorship News*, 19 December, 1993.







## Lost Illusions/ Illusions perdues

➤ Brief von Toshiya Kuwabara an den Vorstand und die Mitarbeiter:innen der Mercer Union vom 20. Dezember 1993.  
[Letter to the Board and Staff of Mercer Union from Toshiya Kuwabara, 20 December, 1993.](#)

Korrekturvermerk, Toshiya Kuwabara, undatiert.  
[Correction Notice, Toshiya Kuwabara, n.d.](#)

„Dear Ben and Mercer Board Members“, Brief von Wayne Baerwaldt, 21. Dezember 1993.

[‘Dear Ben and Mercer Board Members’ letter from Wayne Baerwaldt, 21 December, 1993.](#)

Brief von Bob Murphy an den Vorstand der Mercer Union vom 22. Dezember 1993.

[Letter to the Board of Mercer Union from Bob Murphy, 22 December, 1993.](#)

Brief an Mercer Union, „To Whom It May Concern“, von John Marriott, 2. Januar 1994.

[Letter to Mercer Union, “To Whom It May Concern” from John Marriott, 2 January, 1994.](#)

Brief von Steven Schechter an den Generalstaatsanwalt von Ontario vom 10. Januar 1994.

[Letter to the AG of Ontario from Steven Schechter, 10 January, 1994.](#)

Brief der Ukrainian Women’s Association of Canada an den Generalstaatsanwalt von Ontario vom 12. Januar 1994.

[Letter to the AG of Ontario from the Ukrainian Women’s Association of Canada, January 12, 1994.](#)

„Dear People of Mercer Union“, Brief von Jorge Luiz Marzo, 20. Januar 1994.

[‘Dear People of Mercer Union’ letter from Jorge Luiz Marzo, 20 January, 1994.](#)

Brief von Laura Marks an Sharon Brooks vom 21. Januar 1994.

[Letter to Sharon Brooks from Laura Marks, 21 January, 1994.](#)

Brief des Toronto Arts Council an den Vorstand der Mercer Union, 24. Januar 1994.

[Letter from Toronto Arts Council to the Board of Mercer Union, 24 January, 1994.](#)

Brief von Lisa Nabieszko an den Generalstaatsanwalt von Ontario vom 31. Januar 1994.

[Letter to the AG of Ontario from Lisa Nabieszko, 31 January, 1994.](#) 

### SARAH PIERCE

Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre  
for Arts and Creativity,  
18 January–9 March 2014

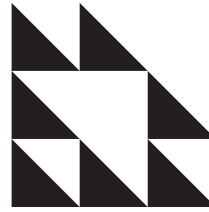
Befitting its dyadic title, Sarah Pierce’s exhibition “Lost Illusions/Illusions Perdue” prompts two possible interpretations: one based in denotation and the other in connotation—although trying to untangle one from the other is not so simple. Forming something akin to an institutional memory-based scatter piece, Pierce’s recent work taps into the Banff Center’s varied history, with its assortment of ceramics from former artists-in-residence, kept by instructor Ed Bamiling, and a four-channel video displaying students participating in Brecht-like learning plays. Meanwhile, copies of archival material, placed casually throughout the space, track correspondences between artist Mark Lewis and the institution following the vandalization of his photograph in 1989. The unearthing of the imbroglia over Lewis’s piece, which was allegedly attacked by a group of women because of its perceived pornographic

contact, is almost institutional critique; it implicates the center in political discourse, countering its image as an idyllic alpine retreat, removed from the art world.

While looking at the exhibition as a literal portrait of an institution raises rewarding questions, this perspective alone hazards reducing the show to a litany of overt references while failing to account for its aesthetic presence. It might be precisely what Susan Sontag, in her 1964 essay “Against Interpretation,” deemed “the revenge of the intellect upon art.” More rewarding is when viewers take in the exhibition as a mixture of seemingly unrelated materials, discourses, and ambiances. The totality becomes an ephemeral landscape of form and content that provides space for viewers to experience place in its rich complexity, where meaning is not prescribed by the artist, but becomes an active agent—unsettled and unsettling.

Zachary Cahill

[Zachary Cahill, “Sarah Pierce”,  
*Artforum.com*, 25 February 2014.] 

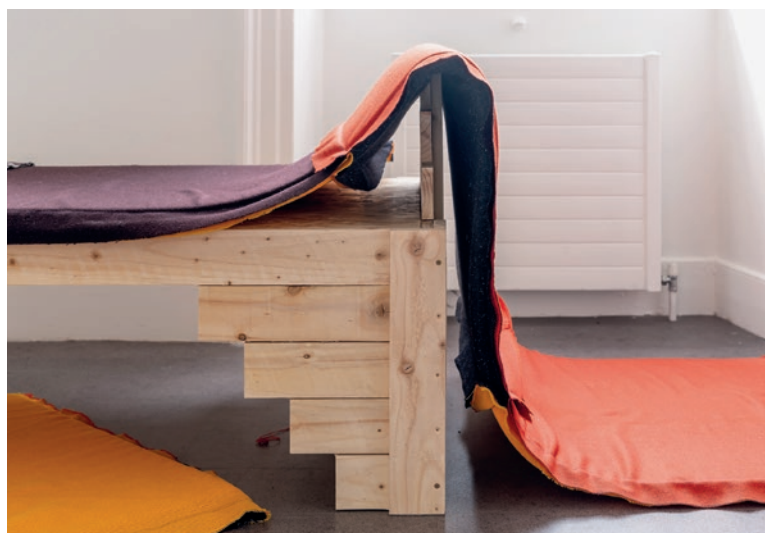


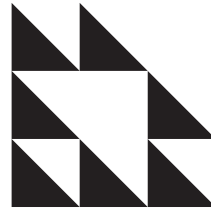
Paraeducation  
Department

2004 entwickelten Sarah Pierce und die Kuratorin Annie Fletcher das *Paraeducation Department*, um über das Wissen nachzudenken, das eine Gemeinschaft in das Museum (mit)bringt. Als Gegengewicht zu den musealen Vermittlungs- und Ausstellungsprogrammen hat *Paraeducation* keine Zielgruppe oder Agenda. Es schätzt das Sich-Versammeln als einen Akt und ein Ziel an sich. Im Grundriss der Ausstellung in der GfZK ist *Paraeducation* nicht einem der Ausstellungsräume zugeordnet.

In 2004, Sarah Pierce and Annie Fletcher developed the *Paraeducation Department* as a way to think about the knowledge that a community brings into the museum. As a counter-balance to the museum's education and exhibition programmes, *Paraeducation* has no audience or agenda. It values gathering as an act and an end in itself. In the floorplan for GfZK *Paraeducation* is not assigned to one of the exhibition spaces.


Enzo Mari, *Autoprogettazione „Letto“* (Bett). Gefertigt für *Scene of the Myth* in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Künstler Alex Pentek. Matten, verschiedene Größen, aus Stoffen aus Dublin. Gefertigt für *Scene of the Myth* in Zusammenarbeit mit der Künstlerin Mary Kervick. Enzo Mari's *Autoprogettazione 'Letto' (bed)*. Fabricated for *Scene of the Myth* in collaboration with artist Alex Pentek. Soft furnishings, various sizes, with fabric sourced in Dublin. Fabricated for *Scene of the Myth* in collaboration with artist Mary Kervick.





## Paraeducation Department

➤ 2004 in Auftrag gegeben von der Kuratorin Annie Fletcher für die Ausstellung *Tracer* am Witte de With (heute Kunstinstituut Melly) und TENT., Rotterdam. Konzipiert mit Annie Fletcher. Gründungsmitglieder der Paraeducation Hannah Arendt Lesegruppe in Rotterdam: Anke Bangma, Jason Coburn, Jeremiah Day, Tanja Elstgeest, Alette De Jong, Annabel Howland, Maria Pask und Apolonija Šušteršič. Der *Paraeducation Reader* mit Kunstwerken von Luca Frei und Texten von Jeremiah Day, Chris Evans, Fucking Good Art, Fergal Gaynor, Elisabeth Mayerhofer, Paul O'Neill, Renée Ridgeway, Simon Sheikh und Craig Smith steht unter [www.themetropolitancomplex.com](http://www.themetropolitancomplex.com) zum Download zur Verfügung.

Commissioned in 2004 by curator Annie Fletcher for the exhibition *Tracer* at Witte de With (now Kunstinstituut Melly) and TENT., Rotterdam. Conceived with Annie Fletcher. Original members of the Paraeducation Hannah Arendt Reading Group in Rotterdam: Anke Bangma, Jason Coburn, Jeremiah Day, Tanja Elstgeest, Alette De Jong, Annabel Howland, Maria Pask and Apolonija Šušteršič. The *Paraeducation Reader*, featuring artwork by Luca Frei and texts by Jeremiah Day, Chris Evans, Fucking Good Art, Fergal Gaynor, Elisabeth Mayerhofer, Paul O'Neill, Renée Ridgeway, Simon Sheikh, Craig Smith is available to download online at [www.themetropolitancomplex.com](http://www.themetropolitancomplex.com). 



### INTRODUCTION

Annie Fletcher and Sarah Pierce

The *Paraeducation Department* began as a way to use a platform provided by two institutions, Witte de With [now Kunstinstituut Melly], and TENT., in the form of an exhibition. The initial invitation asked six curators to seek out the city of Rotterdam, to check its cultural pulse so to speak, and to convey these stats back through an exhibition or project that would also mark the first collaboration between the two institutions, all with the originating purpose of celebrating TENT.'s five year anniversary. As we started, faithfully following our remit, the word that resonated for us was 'collaboration'.

In many ways the *Paraeducation Department* performed a certain resistance in relation to how the institutions wanted us to participate in their exhibition as 'artist' and 'curator'. We refused to engage aesthetically in the exhibition, and took on instead an experimental and ethical stance in relation to how we would resituate individualised 'output' as collective 'input' during the course of the project. This was a direct response to an overwhelmingly conservative agenda set out nationally in the Netherlands through the Culture Nota and the closure of spaces engaged with what might be understood as research driven non-aesthetic processes.

From the outset we were concerned not to replicate the rhetoric of participation and democracy as it plays out through many art installations, and to instead outwardly acknowledge that all invitations imply a set of exclusions and inclusions that affect how participation is understood, and who feels inclined (empowered) to take part. Finding the works of Ivan Illich and Noam Chomsky led us to think about how we understood participation as a set of localised situations and non-localised involvements. Edward Said provided invaluable terms for negotiating this practice within institutional time/space. We could mark a particular moment in the Netherlands as representa-

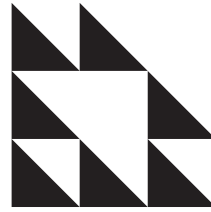
tive of certain circumstances involving space, real estate, power, money, etc. Said's work on audience and the circulation of information allowed us to strategise a social praxis, and to propose this process as an alternative mode of representation.

An appropriate response to any invitation might be simply to ask, Why this invitation? Why now? The Paraeducation Department was set up in acute awareness of a present context, one that revealed real power (to echo Said, Who asks? For whom is the asking being done? In what circumstances?). We choose to participate by seeking out others to join us, to experiment with us by activating a response, as opposed to responding reactively.

We discovered in our conversations, while developing the project that education, in this context, is perceived in a myriad of ways; as a space of learning, a means of instruction, a process of discussion, even as indoctrination. It frequently operates as a process relying on a hierarchical imparting of knowledge from the knowledgeable to the unknowing. What seems overt and constantly problematic is how education connotes very particular power relations. We wanted to explore why and how models of schooling (the academy) are interesting for artists and to explore this potential for ourselves.

The experience and exploration of education is, of course, politically loaded, in some cases explicitly so. Here, proposing educational models suggests knowledge exchange and development, but also the notion of invested responsibility in, and critical reflection on the contemporary and the local. Another important political aspect of this work is its communal nature (both formally and informally), which in turn questions the assumptions of a singular artistic or curatorial authorship and suggests collectivity as an example of empowerment as well as one of exploration. It was this aspect which appealed to us in forming the Paraeducation Department. However, this generation of autonomous,





## Paraeducation Department

informal, uncontrolled, and shared production is particularly complex to maintain and manage within an art space against the demands of the art market and other professional expectations. Our project tries to look at these aspects specifically, to think through what would be the minimum requirements to maintain such a space or an activity within an active contemporary art institution, with all of the demands of the local and beyond. How can we support and expand on such developments, especially in the light of much external pressure not to, because they simply don't conform to traditional, visible 'image-commodity-culture'?

This notion of participation became interesting for us to think about as a space to occupy or to develop (when thinking about the artistic community) from within an institutional setting like Witte de With or TENT. It suggested a different dynamic than a distribution of information outwards, to the community associated with the programmed exhibition activity. We wondered what it would be like to initiate a kind of 'paraeducation' space, which would create the possibility of information and specialisation, knowledge and skills being brought in from the community at a local level. This would not just augment and extrapolate on the programme itself but also develop its own knowledge. It suggests a multi-directional dialogue and various types of communities or audiences who might contribute their own knowledge. Who would that be? What would that make the art institution into? What kind of function would it, in effect, develop for the art institution itself within the community? What would the acceptance of this information and its incorporation into programming say about artistic and curatorial authorship? It also asks, very simply, what are the ethics of practicing locally as an institution or as an artist – especially in an era of global visibility when one can potentially translate practice more easily outside of one's own context. The discussion developed by Irit Rogoff about participation and collectivity in

relation to artistic practice is particularly interesting in this context:

Collectivity is something that takes place as we arbitrarily gather to take part in different forms of cultural activity such as looking at art. If we countenance that beyond all the roles that are allotted to us in culture - roles such as those of being viewers, listeners or audience members in one capacity or another - there are other emergent possibilities for the exchange of shared perspectives or insights or subjectivities - we allow for some form of emergent collectivity. Furthermore that performative collectivity, one that is produced in the very act of being together in the same space and compelled by similar edicts, might just alert us to a form of mutuality which cannot be recognized in the normative modes of shared beliefs, interests or kinship. To speak of collectivities is to de-nativize community, to argue it away from the numerous essential roots of place and race and kinship structures that have for so long been the glue that has held it together.<sup>1</sup>

If we choose to understand and indeed nurture collectivity as formative of non-essentialising communities, then the shared site of an art space has extraordinary potential to produce affinities that might resonate locally through tapping into common interests and patterns of communication, shared histories and beliefs. [...]

<sup>1</sup> Irit Rogoff, "We — Mutualities, Collectivities, Participations" in *I Promise It's Political*, exh. cat., Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 2002

[Annie Fletcher and Sarah Pierce, excerpt from "Introduction", in Sarah Pierce (ed.), *The Paraeducation Department* (Belfast: Interface, School of Art and Design, University of Ulster, 2006) pp. 3-4.]



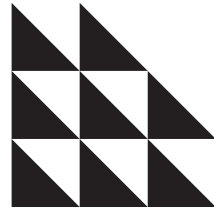
AFFINITY GROUPS ARE SELF SUFFICIENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS OF ABOUT 5–15 PEOPLE. A NUMBER OF AFFINITY GROUPS MAY WORK TOGETHER TOWARD A COMMON GOAL IN A LARGE ACTION, OR ONE AFFINITY GROUP MIGHT CONCEIVE OF AND CARRY OUT AN ACTION ON ITS OWN. SOMETIMES, AFFINITY GROUPS REMAIN TOGETHER OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME, EXISTING AS POLITICAL SUPPORT AND/OR STUDY GROUPS, AND ONLY OCCASIONALLY PARTICIPATING IN ACTIONS.

AFFINITY GROUPS SERVE AS A SOURCE OF SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY FOR THEIR MEMBERS. FEELINGS OF BEING ISOLATED OR ALIENATED FROM THE MOVEMENT, THE CROWD OR THE WORLD IN GENERAL CAN BE ALLEVIATED THROUGH THE FAMILIARITY AND TRUST WHICH DEVELOPS WHEN AN AFFINITY GROUP WORKS AND ACTS TOGETHER.

EVERY AFFINITY GROUP MUST DECIDE FOR ITSELF HOW IT WILL MAKE DECISIONS AND WHAT IT WANTS TO DO. THIS PROCESS STARTS WHEN AN AFFINITY GROUP FORMS.

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No Title

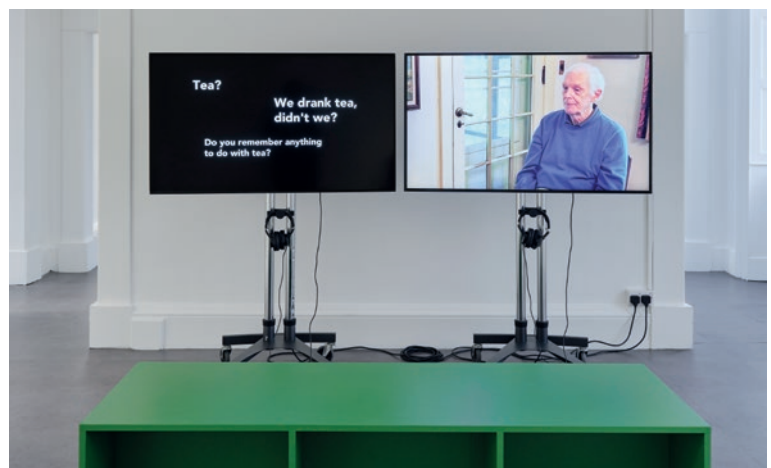
*No Title* betrachtet den Zustand der Demenz in Verbindung mit Verfahren des Kunstproduzierens. Die Arbeit, die auf einer Reihe einfach produzierter Videos aufbaut, umgeht die Beschränkungen des klinischen Diskurses, um Persönlichkeit im Kontext von Demenz neu zu denken. Gefilmt im Haus ihrer Familie und unterstützt von ihrer Nichte, die die Kamera bedient, führt Pierce ihre Eltern auf einfühlsame Weise durch eine Reihe von ihr entwickelter Übungen, die auf einem Tisch ausgeführt werden und die vom Kunstmachen, Gewohnheit, Häuslichkeit, aber auch furchtlos von Erinnerung, Verlust und familiärer Liebe erzählen.

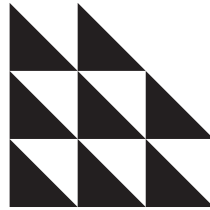
*No Title* considers the condition of dementia in relation to the protocols of art-making. Anchored in a series of modestly produced videos, the work bypasses the limitations of clinical discourse to re-think personhood around dementia. Filmed in her family home, and assisted by her niece operating the camera, Pierce intimately guides her parents through a series of tabletop exercises she developed that speak of art-making, habitude, domesticity, and also unflinchingly of memory, loss, and familial love.

Sechs Einkanal-Videos auf Flachbildschirmen mit Workshop-Materialien. Sammlung Irish Museum of Modern Art, erworben 2021.

Six single-channel videos on flatscreen monitors, with workshop materials. Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, purchase 2021.

2016 in Auftrag gegeben von Sara Greavu für CCA Derry~ Londonderry in Nordirland als Teil des *Our Neighbourhood public programme*. Mit Anne und Russell Pierce. Betitelt nach Gemälden des niederländisch-amerikanischen Künstlers Willem de Kooning, die um 1987-1997 nach seiner Alzheimer-Diagnose entstanden sind. Mit Dank an Projektteilnehmer:innen aus dem Creggan Day Centre und der Alzheimer's Society, Foyle, Derry. Den Workshop in Derry ermöglichte John Beattie, es filmte Sean Mullan. Produktionsassistentz and Filmaufnahmen in Maine, USA, von Josie Pierce.





No Title

➤ Das Buch *No Title*, gemeinsam herausgegeben von Sara Greavu und Sarah Pierce und veröffentlicht vom CCA Derry (2017), ist in der Ausstellung der GfZK erhältlich. Es enthält Texte von TJ Clark, Karl Holmqvist, Mason Leaver-Yap, Roy Claire Potter und Jacob Wren. Commissioned in 2016 by Sara Greavu for CCA Derry~ Londonderry in Northern Ireland as part of the *Our Neighbourhood public programme*. Featuring Anne and Russell Pierce. Titled after paintings c.1987-1997 by Dutch-American artist Willem de Kooning following his Alzheimer's diagnosis. With thanks to project participants from Creggan Day Centre and Alzheimer's Society, Foyle, Derry. Workshop facilitation in Derry by John Beattie, with filming by Sean Mullan. Production assistance and filming in Maine, USA, by Josie Pierce. The book *No Title* co-edited by Sara Greavu and Sarah Pierce, published by CCA Derry (2017), is available in the GfZK exhibition. With writing by TJ Clark, Karl Holmqvist, Mason Leaver-Yap, Roy Claire Potter and Jacob Wren.

#### Übung 1 Fund/Objekt:

8 Minuten, 14 Sekunden. Objekte auf Stoff.

#### [Exercise 1 Found/Object:](#)

8 minutes, 14 seconds. Objects on fabric.

#### Übung 2 Muskel/Gedächtnis:

6 Minuten, 34 Sekunden.

#### [Exercise 2 Muscle/Memory:](#)

6 minutes, 34 seconds.

#### Übung 3 Spiegel/Taststift:

12 Minuten, 3 Sekunden.

#### [Exercise 3 Mirror/Tracer:](#)

12 minutes, 3 seconds.

#### Übung 4 Geist/Image; Übung 6 Still/Leben:

7 Minuten, 5 Sekunden; 7 Minuten, 13 Sekunden.

#### [Exercise 4 Ghost/Image; Exercise 6 Still/Life:](#)

7 minutes, 5 seconds; 7 minutes, 13 seconds.

#### Übung 5 Figure/Grund:

23 Minuten, 32 Sekunden. Filz, Seil, Stäbe, Klötze und Papier auf Stoff.

#### [Exercise 5 Figure/Ground:](#)

23 minutes, 32 seconds. Felt, rope, rods, blocks, and paper on fabric.

#### Übung 7 Gestalten/Verschieben:

Acht Zeichnungen, Tinte auf Papier.

#### [Exercise 7 Shape/Shift:](#)

Eight drawings, ink on paper. ▣

#### 'NO' TO DAYS, DATES, AND PRESIDENTS

Mason Leaver-Yap

On arriving in my friend's kitchen one afternoon a year ago, she turned and said she was going through a mourning process for me. I remember this incident with clarity, not least because the beer I was opening at the time irrepressibly foamed up and out of the neck of the bottle, soaking my shirt, but also because I couldn't quite understand what she was saying. I felt embarrassed about the spillage that had darkened my t-shirt and made me stink in the hot apartment, and by my simultaneous failure to comprehend what sounded like a prepared confession.

As I mopped myself up and asked what she meant, my friend tried to explain that she was mourning me in relation to my recent first person name change. She was referring to the fact that I had, over the past year, shifted my name from an explicitly female-sounding proper noun (one that my immigrant father had, admittedly without knowing the gender usually given to that name, first spotted on a reusable internal mail envelope at work) to a gender non-specific noun that I had appropriated from my maternal grandmother's maiden name without much consideration.

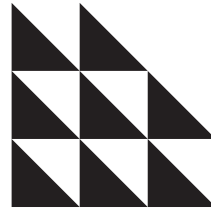
I didn't finish the beer or the conversation, and was left feeling my lack of continuity disturbed my friend, and possibly others—embarrassing them and, consequently,

embarrassing myself. My natural instinct was to withdraw from confrontation—one made up of emotions to which I had difficulty relating but had, nonetheless, been responsible for inspiring.

Up until that point, I felt the name change was simply a publishing exercise in relation to the by-line of my writing, which had become increasingly intimate. The publishing was an attempt to match something I believed was personally obvious. But this change had seemingly produced a rupture in the security of an external idea of what or who I was to others. After leaving the apartment, I realised I had difficulty participating in—and no desire to recognise—the modest grief resultant of me circulating a noun perceived as significantly different to that which had gone before. This new noun had replaced and, to my friend, seemingly destroyed its precursor. This grieving was less to do with loss and more to do with the anxiety about the explicit emergence of realities that had always existed.

A couple of years ago, my maternal grandmother was beginning to forget people's names, including some vagueness about my birth name too, but she frequently and with enthusiasm said she liked my purple and black muscle t-shirt. She mentioned this on a twenty-minute loop, so I would wear it whenever I would see her, partly because I knew she liked it but also because I enjoyed receiving her clockwork compliments about my dress sense. Praise like





## No Title

this had previously dropped out of our conversations around the time I was eight years old, when I started dressing myself in boy's tracky bottoms, oversize t-shirts and, later, unisex or male perfume. Now, however, she seemed to like the look and smell of me, and the ambiguity of names was less important than her interest in deep purple—a colour she had previously protested as ugly.

As an adult I would visit her in her house. This was a home my extended family felt had become—within a decade of her declining health—the wrong shape, size and feel for her needs. But she liked it the way it was, as long as someone else was around to keep her company. My visits would not be frequent enough to alleviate my guilt over previous absences, though she didn't seem to notice the difference.

In the afternoons, she would ask me to turn pages for her at the piano. The musical interlude was a way of suspending the need for conversation. She did not seem to relish discussions about shared family events from the past ten years, but would happily play music on my old electric keyboard. Since childhood, I remember she would only play the kind of music that my father privately characterised as "problematic": German interwar music, American cowboy folk songs, and some Austrian romances about purity and the countryside. Given that she couldn't always recall the lyrics in her later life, there had been an unexpected political corrective applied to her amnesiac's repertoire. This was further enhanced by the fact neither of us could figure out how to switch the Casio keyboard preset from anything other than the 'funky clavi' effect. Her renditions of songs like 'Edelweiss' had the feel of an Isley Brothers cover.

A woman has a long scar across her arm. She was injured when she started out doing choreography classes for people with dementia. She calls this early part of her career her 'naïve period'—a time in which she had not yet understood that even if someone can't recall their past explicitly, it is always implicit.

She got the scar when she was teaching a choreography class that got out of hand, and tried to bring it to order. She addressed one of the members of the class and told him to go back to his chair. On hearing this reprimand, he grabbed a walking stick and hit her across her arm. She later found out he'd been previously worked as a teacher. In his act of hitting her, he had meant to discipline her unruliness. One regime of appropriate behaviour was met with another.

The gaps in her memory, of which there were many, filled up with new narratives that had the feel of autofiction. We talked about things that had been previously off limits. I didn't care whether it was true or not, though occasionally I felt scandalised by the *possibility* of their truth, as well as her newfound trust in me as her confidante. Sitting on a creaking swing chair at the bottom of the garden and staring across the Welsh-English countryside border one summer afternoon, she told me about the first time she ever saw someone have sex and how informative her voyeur's experience had been. She was speaking to me as an adult. This was something rare in our traditional family structures, where the casting of appropriate roles had once seemed the most hardened, and had consequently fled. I told her that she reminded me, in that unlikely moment, of Jack Smith as he wrote, 'all fantasies are valid'. Much later, when I looked up the Smith text again, I realised I had already expunged some detail in my retelling. He actually said, 'all sex fantasies are equally valid'.

Three years ago, I was working through the archive of a retired curator in the Midwest. She had recently donated her correspondence, gifts of art, ephemera and moving image collection to the museum. I was keen to go through some of her correspondence with a number of now-iconic artists with whom she'd worked very early on in their respective careers.

In her work, she had the unique talent of giving many artists their first institutional break—commissioning suites of films, securing locations, funding, exhibition spaces and tours, and maintaining contact over decades, as their practices and audiences grew. With a few of the artists, she moved across the country in order to live closer to them. She had spent much of her life with these people, many of whom had since passed.

She and I met a few times, down in the museum foyer for coffee, or else we would go to watch matinee movies in the museum cinema. She couldn't remember many of the people she worked and lived with throughout her life, nor the day, date or president, and she didn't recognize me from previous visits together. But our afternoons weren't a fact-finding mission. They were about coming to terms with an archive *beyond* its material contents, and establishing recognition of a more emotional knowledge: persona, motivation, impulse, even the voice in which many of these letters and essays had been written. Though admittedly partial, many of the facts were already preserved in the archive (a life's work secured in temperature-controlled, acid-free, systems of encoded knowledge). Her contribution to culture had already taken place: it had been accessioned and ordered. What was taking place between us, then, was an emphasis on the present tense: the way in which a conversation could move in any direction, untethered by memory and convention, yet still marked by emotion.

'We are here under conditions. You either accept them or fight them... but you're not going to change the conditions.' That was Annie Dillard. She is a non-fiction writer who retired from writing a decade or so ago because one day, entering a room and spotting her handwriting on a legal pad, she failed to remember why she had written the note, or the idea to which the writing pertained.

One time, while waiting to enter the cinema to watch *The Goldrush*, a Charlie Chaplin impersonator turned up for the screening. I saw the woman's moment of confusion, hilarity, and uncertainty about this monotone comic figure as he waddled through the foyer, frequently dropping his cane, and finally extending the crook of his arm to her—an arm as an invitation to accompany him into the cinema auditorium.

The normative motivation to fix someone who cannot be fixed (and who may also have no interest in being fixed) has its roots in the desire to propagate reasonableness and remove difference. The unknowability of someone makes us feel uncomfortable. We use our discomfort to validate our correctional impulse to redress gaps, false memories, and give permission to tell someone else's tale as the right version. But these stories are correct for whom, and to what end? It is the indulgence of a bad listener's sentimentality that legitimises the movement against another's change of character.

While dementia could be understood as a wrecking disease, a disease of lack, it is also a structure through which an author renegotiates and produces narratives unbothered by the limitations of historical accuracy and linear chronology. The value of demented truth sheds knowledge and reveals feeling. Like incantation, narratives are saturated with emotional meaning. Knowing the day, date or president is perhaps not the best criteria through which our humanity should be measured. Fantasy becomes the new guardian.

[Mason Leaver-Yap, "'No' to days, dates, and presidents", in Sara Greavu and Sarah Pierce (eds.), *No Title*, CCA Derry~Londonderry, 2017, pp. 101–104.]

## Biografien Biographies

### KÜNSTLERIN

Mit dem Begriff *The Metropolitan Complex* beschreibt Sarah Pierce seit 2003 ihr Projekt, welches sich durch Formen des Versammelns auszeichnet – sowohl historischer als auch von ihr initiiertes. Die von ihr eingesetzten Prozesse der Recherche und des Präsentierens zeugen von einem breitem Verständnis kultureller Arbeit und einer ständigen Neuverhandlung der Bedingungen für das Produzieren von Kunst, das Potenzial für Dissens und für Selbstbestimmung. Pierce arbeitet mit Installationen, Performance, Archiven, Gesprächen und Dokumenten und öffnet diese dabei oft für das Persönliche und Zufällige, um so überlieferte Geschichten und akzeptierte Formen in Frage zu stellen. Ihr Interesse gilt u.a. der radikalen Pädagogik und der Arbeit von Studierenden, dem kunstgeschichtlichen Erbe und Figuren wie El Lissitzky, Auguste Rodin und Eva Hesse sowie den von Maurice Blanchot und Georges Bataille begründeten Theorien von Gemeinschaft und Liebe.

Pierces Werk ist in Europa, den USA und Kanada in bedeutenden Ausstellungen gezeigt worden, u.a. im Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2016), CCS Hessel Museum & CCS Galleries, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson (2016 und 2012) sowie Tate Modern London und mumok Wien (2010). 2014 präsentierte sie eine groß angelegte Einzelausstellung in drei Teilen, *Lost Illusions/Illusions perdues*, gemeinsam entwickelt mit der Walter Phillips Gallery Banff AL, Mercer Union Toronto ON und SBC Galerie Montreal QB. Weitere Einzelausstellungen sind: *No Title* am Centre of Contemporary Art, Derry (2017); *The Meaning of Greatness* am Project Arts Centre, Dublin. (2006). Pierce hat an bedeutenden internationalen Biennalen teilgenommen, darunter Glasgow International (2018), Eva International (2016, 2012), Biennale de Lyon (2011), International Sinop Biennial (2010) und Moskau Biennale (2007). 2005 repräsentierte Pierce zudem Irland in einer Gruppenausstellung bei der 51. Biennale von Venedig.

Veröffentlichungen zu ihre Werk umfassen *No Title*, gemeinsam herausgegeben mit Sara Greavu, verlegt von CCA Derry und gestaltet von Kaisa Lassinaro, mit Essays von T.J. Clark, Karl Holmqvist, Mason Leaver-Yap und Claire Potter; sowie *Sketches of Universal History Compiled from Several Authors*, herausgegeben von Rike Frank, verlegt von Book Works, London, und gestaltet von Peter Maybury, mit Essays von Melissa Gronlund, Tom Holert, Barbara Clausen, Declan Long und Padraic E. Moore. Pierce schreibt regelmäßig und hat Beiträge zu vielen Publikationen verfasst, zuletzt in *Of(f) Our Times: The Aftermath of the Ephemeral and other Curatorial Anachronics* (Sternberg 2019).

Pierce wurde 1968 in Connecticut geboren und wuchs in Ontario auf, bevor sie in Los Angeles die Universität besuchte. 1994 schloss sie ihren Master of Fine Arts am Cornell University College of Architecture, Art, and Planning ab, 1995 durchlief sie das Independent Study Program am Whitney Museum in New York, und 2014 wurde sie in Curatorial/Knowledge am Goldsmiths College, London, promoviert. 2000 zog sie nach Dublin, wo sie seitdem arbeitet und lebt.

### ARTIST

Since 2003, Sarah Pierce has used the term *The Metropolitan Complex* to describe her project, characterised by forms of gathering, both historical examples and those she initiates. The processes of research and presentation that she undertakes demonstrate a broad understanding of cultural work and a continual renegotiation of the terms for making art, the potential for dissent, and self-determination. Pierce works with installation, performance, archives, talks and papers, often opening these up to the personal and the incidental in ways that challenge received histories and accepted forms. Her interests include radical pedagogies and student work, art historical legacies and figures such as El Lissitzky, August Rodin, and Eva Hesse, and theories of community and love founded in Maurice Blanchot and Georges Bataille.

Pierce's work has shown widely in the EU, US and Canada with major exhibitions at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2016), CCS Hessel Museum & CCS Galleries, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson (2016 and 2012), and Tate Modern and mumok Vienna (2010). In 2014 she presented a major solo exhibition in three-parts, *Lost Illusions/Illusions perdues*, developed jointly with Walter Phillips Gallery Banff AL, Mercer Union Toronto ON, and SBC Galerie Montreal QB. Other solo presentations include: *No Title* at the Centre of Contemporary Art, Derry (2017); *The Meaning of Greatness* at Project Arts Centre (2006). She has participated in major international biennials including Glasgow International (2018), Eva International (2016, 2012), Lyon Biennial (2011), International Sinop Biennial (2010), Moscow Biennial (2007), and in 2005, Pierce represented Ireland in a group exhibition at the 51st Venice Biennale.

Publications on her work include *No Title*, co-edited with Sara Greavu, published by CCA Derry, and designed by Kaisa Lassinaro with essays by T.J. Clark, Karl Holmqvist, Mason Leaver-Yap, and Claire Potter; and *Sketches of Universal History Compiled from Several Authors*, edited by Rike Frank, published by Book Works, London and designed by Peter Maybury with essays by Melissa Gronlund, Tom Holert, Barbara Clausen, Declan Long, and Padraic E. Moore. Pierce regularly writes and has chapters in many publications, most recently in, *Of(f) Our Times: The Aftermath of the Ephemeral and other Curatorial Anachronics* (Sternberg 2019).

Pierce was born in Connecticut in 1968 and grew up in Ontario before attending university in Los Angeles. In 1994, she completed her MFA at Cornell University in the School of Architecture, Art and Planning, and in 1995 she attended the Whitney Program in New York. In 2000 she moved to Dublin where she continues to work and live. She holds a PhD in Curatorial/Knowledge from Goldsmiths College UK.



## Biografien Biographies

### KURATORIN

Rike Frank arbeitet als Kuratorin und Autorin und lehrt Ausstellungsgeschichte und kuratorische Praxis. Sie ist Geschäftsführerin des Berliner Förderprogramms Künstlerische Forschung und Künstlerische Ko-Leiterin der European Kunsthalle, einer Institution ohne eigenen Raum, die sich trans-institutionell versteht und in Figurationen stattfindet. Temporalität und Textilität sind Schwerpunkte ihrer Arbeit, ebenso die Suche nach neuen Zugängen zur Ausstellungsgeschichte und der Dokumentation und Archivierung kuratorischer Praktiken. Institutionelle Anbindungen in der Vergangenheit umfassen: Associated Professor of Exhibition Studies an der Akademie für Bildende Kunst in Oslo /KHIO (2014–2018); Leiterin des Ausstellungsraums an der Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig (2012–2014); Mitglied des künstlerischen Programmteams der European Kunsthalle (2008–10); Kuratorin bei der Wiener Secession (2001–2005); Projektleiterin des Ausstellungsbüros, documenta 12 (2007). Veröffentlichungen als Herausgeberin und Mitherausgeberin umfassen: *Of(f) Our Times. Curatorial Anachronics* (2019), *Ane Hjort Guttu. Writings, Conversations, Scripts* (2018), *Textiles: Open Letter* (2015), *Textile Theorien der Moderne. Alois Riegl in der Kunstkritik* (2015), *Timing – On the Temporal Dimension of Exhibiting* (2014) und *Sketches of Universal History: Compiled from Several Authors by Sarah Pierce* (2013). [www.kunsthalle.eu](http://www.kunsthalle.eu)

### CURATOR

Rike Frank works as a curator and writer and teaches exhibition histories and curatorial practice. She is Executive Director of the Berlin Artistic Research Grant Programme, as well as co-director of the European Kunsthalle, an institution without a physical space which operates trans-institutionally and takes place in figurations. Her practice often reflects on temporality, textility as well as instituting and the documentation of curatorial articulations. Past institutional affiliations include Associate Professor of Exhibition Studies at the Academy of Fine Art of the Oslo National Academy of the Arts /KHIO (2014–2018); head of the exhibition space at Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig (2012–2014); member of the Artistic Program team, European Kunsthalle (2010–2012); Curator, Secession, Vienna (2001–2005); head of the Curatorial Office, documenta 12 (2007). Publications as editor and co-editor include *Of(f) Our Times. Curatorial Anachronics* (2019), *Ane Hjort Guttu. Writings, Conversations, Scripts* (2018), *Textiles: Open Letter* (2015), *Textile Theorien der Moderne. Alois Riegl in der Kunstkritik* (2015), *Timing – On the Temporal Dimension of Exhibiting* (2014), and *Sketches of Universal History: Compiled from Several Authors by Sarah Pierce* (2013). [www.kunsthalle.eu](http://www.kunsthalle.eu)

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Sylvia Sadzinski

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Karl-Tauchnitz-Str. 9–11, 04107 Leipzig, [office@gfzk.de](mailto:office@gfzk.de), [www.gfzk.de](http://www.gfzk.de)

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#### AUSSTELLUNG / EXHIBITION

Sarah Pierce: Scene of the Myth wird kuratiert von Rike Frank (European Kunsthalle). Die Ausstellung wurde vom Irish Museum of Modern Art / IMMA Dublin, in Zusammenarbeit mit der GfZK – Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst und der John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton, organisiert.

Sarah Pierce: Scene of the Myth is curated by Rike Frank (European Kunsthalle). The exhibition has been organised by the Irish Museum of Modern Art / IMMA Dublin, in collaboration with Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst / GfZK (Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig) and John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton.

#### Kuratorin Curator

Rike Frank

#### Projektleitung Project management

Vincent Schier

#### Ausstellungsgrafik Exhibition graphics

Yvonne Quirnbach

#### Ausstellungsteam GfZK GfZK Exhibition team

Jan Barich (Haustechnik Facility management)

Lars Bergmann (Sammlungsverwalter Art handling)

Nicole Döll (Bibliothek Library)

Marcel Fichtner (Haustechnik Facility management)

Alexandra Friedrich (Kunstvermittlung Art mediation)

Julia Gollan (Kommunikation und Veranstaltungsorganisation

#### Communication and Programme Assistant)

Annett Koch (interne Organisation Administration)

Nora Krings (Kunstvermittlung Art mediation)

Constance Künzel (Verwaltungsmanagement Administrative Manager)

Lena Seik (Kunstvermittlung Art mediation)

Sabine Weier (Presse-/Öffentlichkeitsarbeit Press and public relations)

Franciska Zólyom (Direktorin Director)

#### Aufbauteam Technical team

Julia Gerke (Produktionsleitung Head of production), zusammen mit together with Morten Bjerre, Bernd Fattich, Mara Jenny, Paul Nägele, Kay Lotte Pommer, Hans Thiele, Julius Vogelsberg

#### Kunstvermittlung Mediation team

Mina Bamarni, Lydia Bogdan, Hà Cao, Maja Engesser, Alexandra Friedrich, Martin Haufe, Alexandra Ivanciu, Daniela Junghans, Saori Kaneko, Fumi Kato, Tania Kolbe, Nora Krings, Romy Kroppe, Martin Moresco, Chiara Rauhut, Luisa Richter, Melanie Ruhe, Linus Saturnus, Jakob Schober, Lena Seik, Wiebke Steinert, Victor Stinglhamber, Hanna Thuma, Eduardo Xerez

#### Performances

Leon Billerbeck, Nora Frohmann, Aya Ganor, Sarafina McLeod, Sophie Meuresch, Kata Churi Potrykus, Lenya Taubert, Aleksandra Velichko, Angelika Waniek, Lissy Willberg

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