

CHRIS DORIS: 10 POETS OBSERVE IN SILENCE

DUBLIN CITY GALLERY
THE HUGH LANE
22 MAY 2010



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FOR ONE
WORKING DAY
SAT 22 MAY 2010

10-5PM
1-2 BREAK



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The two-fold life of mankind sees us struggling in the concrete and reflecting in the abstract. In the former we suffer and die, but in the abstract we quietly reflect on the plan of the universe, as does a navigator on a ship's chart. When Chris Doris proposed this event to me for the Sculpture Hall he opened up a channel of memory that I had locked away since my time spent in studio practice. Slowing time down through silent observance allowed me to 'see things', not by looking, but by being in the 'presence of' an artwork. My hope in this event is to open up that way of seeing in the context of a museum and it's collection of artworks, thus revealing the power of an aesthetic experience that one can perceive each time you visit The Hugh Lane.

10 POETS OBSERVE IN SILENCE is one in a series of public artworks in which Chris Doris utilizes silence as a medium of shared public inquiry. In this case ten prominent Irish poets collaborate with the artist.

Chris Doris enacted 40 Days and 40 Nights as a public artwork on Croagh Patrick in 1999. This opened the way for a series of silence works by the artist which include Silencer-30 days of silence, 2007 and WHATSHAPPENING, 2009 in Dáil Éireann, the Irish Parliament.

Doris' studio-based and public works are informed by 20 years of academic and practical research in Eastern philosophy, Western psychology and science. He is currently doing an M.A. in Core Process psychotherapy, which integrates Buddhist psychology and Western developmental psychology.

Michael Dempsey
Head of Exhibitions

WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF INQUIRY IN 10 POETS OBSERVE IN SILENCE?

A primary authority and responsibility we have as human beings, is where we place our attention. In this work, silence is the medium of inquiry; attention and intention are the tools. In a witnessing stance the poets and the artist observe the self as a process, rather than as a fixed entity. The self's dynamic and momentary constellating, around conditioned responsiveness, is observed. Emergent gaps in this process are observed in stillness and attention then moves to phenomenal activity in the local and non-local relational fields.

The field generated and the resonances within it are offered as a context for observing the emergence of form, within and without.

WHY POETS?

Silence gives form to sounds and words. It is an essential quality of the formative moments in the creative process. Silence is implicit in the structure of a resolved and lasting artwork. The poet has a working relationship with silence and they have the task of extracting form from it. In this work the poets explore silence without such intent - simply observing and being present to what arises. The poet in Ireland is still conferred with some authority in public discourse, which carries the bardic connotation of one who offers perspective to the political sphere. The implications of the work in that regard are open, though it is clear that clarity and integrity of action requires presence to what is real.

ARE THERE PRECEDENTS FOR THESE SILENT INQUIRY ARTWORKS?

While quite different in form and intent, there have been significant works in silence. Influenced by Suzuki's Zen lectures in New York in the 1950s, the composer John Cage created famous silent pieces. Informed by his own academic engagement with Zen, his intention was to create a non-discriminatory and open aural sensitivity.

The performance artist, Marina Abramovic, made a series of silence works in the 1980's with

collaborators. Grounded in shamanic and cathartic processes as well as contact with Tibetan Buddhism, these innovative performances carried a ritual intent of self exposure and endurance.

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

Public participation is invited in this speculative work of inquiry. You may join at the venue with the seated poets and artist, or non-locally by remote attention.

The approach to an artwork and the response is not subject to prescription. However to view a painting, for instance, it makes sense to stand in front of it. For the modalities of seeing which this work posits, it is useful to attend to the body and ensure that one is in it. The vacillating thoughts and felt sense of self-process, can be observed. The latent potential of stillness may be seen and felt. The perceptual field can be widened through subtle intention and territories of emergent form and emptiness may be observed, to effect.

Holding open the space for sustained attention to the subtle and nuanced articulation of silence is one way into this work. This quality of attention and communion characterizes important moments in our lives - after birth and at the graveside, in moments of profound intimacy and recognition, at times of creative breakthrough and transformation, in collective trauma and shared wonder. Silence is a gateway into a non-elaborative and receptive awareness.

There are other facets to 10 POETS. It is an invitation to ways of seeing, predicated on the generation of a deepening field of stilled, silent awareness, which is multi-levelled.

There are many modes of awareness. Self-awareness refers to a mode of reflexive consciousness. This is a reflective, cognitive operation, which examines what is past. Mindful awareness is rooted in the present. It is a monitoring, non-discriminatory awareness of what happens to us and in us, in successive moments of perception. Awareness is also seen as a ground state of being, which permeates and sustains all existent forms. It is regarded as inherent to the human condition and is the basis for all emergent sentient process.

10 POETS brings observational and transformative processes from the contexts of psychology, neuroscience, biology, physics, psychotherapy and Eastern, experientially deduced philosophy. It places them in an art context of shared public inquiry and sustained seeing.

The momentary configuration of self forms and conditioning, and their inherent emptiness may be glimpsed.

The ability to freely respond as we chose may look less clear cut.

The tremulous, shifting, subtleties of shared silence may be felt.

The limitation of conceptual thought may be apprehended.

The relationship of consciousness to embodiment may come into focus.

The resonant spaciousness, generated by stillness, may be perceptible.

The emergence of objects in consciousness and the relational field-and their transience-may be observed.

The non-local entrants into the field may be met.

The role of intention and the creative observer, in generating form, may be highlighted.

The inherent interdependence of emergent forms may be clear.

A lot is potentially implicated in the simplicity of silent awareness. On the other hand, there may just be the subtle choreography of 10 poets sitting and breathing in silence, and breaking and returning on the hour.

Chris Doris 2010
www.chrisdoris.ie

THE POETS



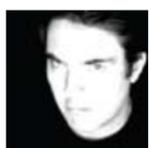
Chris Agee was born in 1956 in San Francisco and grew up in Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island. He attended Harvard University and since 1979 has lived in Ireland. He is the author of three books of poems, *In the New Hampshire Woods* (The Dedalus Press, 1992), *First Light* (The Dedalus Press, 2003) and *Next to Nothing* (Salt, 2009), as well as the editor of *Scar on the Stone: Contemporary Poetry from Bosnia* (Bloodaxe, 1998, Poetry Society Recommendation), *Unfinished Ireland: Essays on Hubert Butler* (Irish Pages, 2003) and *The New North: Contemporary Poetry from Northern Ireland* (Wake Forest University Press, 2008). He is currently completing a collection of essays, *Journey to Bosnia*. He reviews regularly for *The Irish Times* and is the Editor of *Irish Pages*, a journal of contemporary writing based at The Linen Hall Library, Belfast. He holds dual Irish and American citizenship, and spends part of each year at his house near Dubrovnik, in Croatia. *Next to Nothing* was shortlisted for the first Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry, funded by the Poet Laureate and organized by the Poetry Society in London.



Paddy Bushe was born in Dublin in 1948, and now lives in Kerry. He writes in both Irish and English, and has published eight collections of poetry, the most recent of which is *To Ring in Silence: New and Selected Poems* (Dedalus 2008), a bilingual volume. He has also published three books of translations. He is currently editing an anthology featuring twelve poets and a photographer who stayed on Skellig Michael as part of an OPW project. He is a member of Aosdána.



Seamus Cashman, poet and former publisher, founded Wolfhound Press in 1974, and developed it into a leading literary and cultural publishing house. He was previously an editor with Irish University Press. His poetry collections are *That morning will come: new and selected poems* (Salmon Poetry, 2007); *Carnival* (Monarchline, 1988); *Clowns & Acrobats* (Wolfhound Press, 2000). He edited two key anthologies for young readers: *Irish Poems for Young People* (1975; still in print) and commissioned work from over 100 poets to create the very successful *Something Beginning with P: new poems from Irish poets* (O'Brien Press 2004).



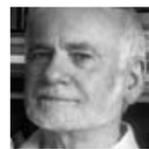
Patrick Chapman was born in 1968. His poetry collections are *Jazztown* (Raven Arts Press, 1991); *The New Pornography* (Salmon, 1996); *Breaking Hearts and Traffic Lights* (Salmon, 2007); *A Shopping Mall on Mars* (BlazeVOX, 2008); and *The Darwin Vampires* (Salmon, forthcoming in 2010), the title poem of which has just been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He has also written a book of stories, *The Wow Signal* (Bluechrome, 2007); an audio play, *Doctor Who: Fear of the Daleks* (Big Finish, 2007); the award-winning film, *Burning the Bed* (2003); and episodes of *Garth & Bev*. He lives in Dublin.



Rachael Hegarty was born and reared in Dublin. She was educated in Holy Faith, Finglas, University of Massachusetts, Boston and Trinity College Dublin. A recipient of Arts Council Bursaries and writing scholarships, she was nominated for the 2004 and 2006 Hennessey Prize and short listed for 2009 Francis Mac Manus Prize. She teaches with CDVEC and the Trinity Access Programme. Her most recent work has appeared in *Our Shared Japan*, an anthology of Irish poetry and Poems for Patients.



Kevin Higgins is co-organiser of Over The Edge literary events in Galway, Ireland. He has published three collections of poems *The Boy With No Face* (2005), *Time Gentlemen, Please* (2008) and *Frightening New Furniture* (2010) all published by Salmon Poetry. His work also features in *Identity Parade - New British and Irish Poets* (Ed Roddy Lumsden, Bloodaxe 2010).



Eamonn Lynskey was born in Dublin in 1948. His poetry has appeared in many magazines and journals. He was nominated for a Hennessy New Irish Writing Award in 2006 and featured in the Oxfam calendar last year. His first collection, 'Despatches and Recollections' was published by Lapwing (Belfast) in 1998 and his second, 'And Suddenly the Sun Again' will be published by Seven Towers Ltd (Dublin) this month (May 2010). He has performed his poetry widely and is an enthusiastic supporter of the open mic in Dublin and elsewhere.



Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill was born in Lancashire in 1952, of Irish parents, and was brought up in the Dingle Gaeltacht and in Nenagh, Co Tipperary. Her collections include *An Dealg Droighin* (Cork, Mercier Press 1981); *Féar Suaithinseach* (Baile Átha Cliath, An Sagart, 1984); *Rogha Dánta/ Selected Poems* ([translated by Michael Hartnett] Dublin, Raven Arts Press, 1986); *Phaoroh's Daughter* ([with translations by thirteen authors] Loughcrew, The Gallery Press, 1990); *Feis* (An Sagart, 1991); *The Astrakhan Cloak* ([with translations by Paul Muldoon] The Gallery Press, 1992); *The Water Horse* ([with translations by Medbh McGuckian and Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin] The Gallery Press, 1999/Wake Forest University Press, 2000); *Cead Aighnis* (An Sagart, 2001); and *The Fifty Minute Mermaid* ([with translations by Paul Muldoon] The Gallery Press, 2007).



Eileen Sheehan is originally from Scartaglin, Co Kerry, now living in Killarney. Her first collection, *Song Of The Midnight Fox* (Doghouse Books) was published in 2004. She is on the Poetry Ireland Writers in Schools Scheme and has been employed by County Kerry VEC teaching Creative Writing at Killarney Technical College. Anthology publications include *The Watchful Heart: A New Generation of Irish Poets* (Salmon/2009); *TEXT - A Transition Year English Reader* (Ed Niall MacMonagle/ The Celtic Press); *The Open Door Book of Poetry* (Ed Niall MacMonagle); *Winter Blessings* by Patricia Scanlan; *Our Shared Japan* (Dedalus Press). Her second collection, *Down the Sunlit Hall*, was launched in 2008. She has just completed a second term as Poet in Residence with Limerick Co Council Arts Office.



Barbara Smith lives in County Louth. She holds an MA in Creative Writing from Queen's University, Belfast. Recent achievements include being shortlisted for the UK Smith/Doorstop Poetry Pamphlet competition 2009, a prizewinner at Scotland's 2009 Wigtown Poetry Competition, and recipient of the Annie Deeny 2009/10 bursary awarded by the Tyrone Guthrie Centre for Artists and Writers, Ireland. A first collection, *Kairos*, was published by Doghouse Books in 2007.