



WHATSHAPPENING

A public inquiry into what is through the medium of silence.

Dáil Éireann, (The Irish House of Representatives),
Leinster House, Dublin 2. 2.15 - 3.15 p.m. October 6 2009.

The artist Chris Doris will be present in the public gallery.
Participation is invited through remote attention.

Silence is a diminishing but renewable human resource. Commonly understood both as the absence of language or noise and as a condition of inner stillness, silence has had various cultural expressions.

One of Ireland's most significant cultural contributions arose from the Christian eremitic tradition, rooted in silence practices of the Desert Fathers in Egypt. In the sixth century Colum Cille and Brendan exemplified these eremitic explorers.

In Christian creation mythology silence is seen as a state of negation. Creation occurs when the silence is broken. Dominion is established through the word and naming.

In Maori, Aboriginal, Norse and other cultures, silence is regarded as the creative ground of being. This perspective has echoes in contemporary physics with the notion that, in the absence of consciousness acting as an observer interpreter, everything would exist as pure potential.

During India's struggle for independence, Gandhi utilized

silence in the context of political transformation. In the various non-dual traditions, (Vedanta, Taoism, Zen etc.), silence has been used to dismantle language-based conceptual categorizing of experience. In Christianity there is the listening silence of Quaker practice and the silence disciplines of the Trappists and other monastic orders.

For the Romantic Movement introspective silence in nature was a core practice. The Enlightenment construct of the self as an autonomous and bounded entity, an individual, was to be liberated from rational constraint. Solitude and introspective silence in nature was a key strategy in this project.

Silence has connoted those deprived of their voice, silenced in social and political contexts and those who exercise the right to be silent.

Silence is at the heart of the creative act. It is what gives form and articulation to sound in music and to word in literature. It is the characteristic of resolution in the process of making art and in the finished work.

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WHATSHAPPENING employs simple and sophisticated processes of observation from meditation-based transformation systems. It utilizes sustained silence as a mode of shared inquiry, observational process and as a speculative communication framework. It places the philosophical and ethical implications raised by mindful awareness into a political context.

The consciousness traditions have evolved processes to address conditioned perception and tendencies. It is emphasized that clarity of presence and skilful action can only be sustained within an accompanying ethical framework.

Silent awareness challenges inherited notions of our individual liberty to think and act as we freely choose. It makes visible the involuntary disorder of thought, which underlies our conscious engagement with reality. Silence unravels the coils of conditioning that generate constricted identity and reactive behaviour.

The citizen with space for silent presence and reflection is less susceptible to conditioning and manipulation

and better equipped to engage effectively with what is happening.

As the undefended self emerges as inherently related and interdependent, the ethical imperatives of this open stance follow.

A multileveled vision of reality is posited. Causal and subtle levels of preform, from which material forms and structures manifest, may be observed.

Energetic accretions of past and present activities in the physical environment are visible in silence. Non-local participation in WHATSHAPPENING occurs through silent attention to self-process and the relational field.



