

Seven Impertinent Notes on Tentamen

or

..you are probably wondering why we have gathered you together in this crumbling house..

TENTAMEN

Lucy Andrews, Alan Butler, Niall de Buitléar, Joseph Coveney,

David Eager Maher, Aoibheann Greenan & John O'Connell

13 Nth Great George's St, Dublin

There are perfectly good reasons in the minds of children for sticking metallic objects in mysterious tri-part apertures in skirting boards. Similarly, mixing experimental cocktails with every available liquid beauty product in the house holds an undeniable logic, with the hope of mysterious, magical results being at stake, despite the peril of being sent to your room. It was, and will be, worth it. **Lucy Andrews** indulges in just this sort of everyday alchemy in her studio, but while its allure stems in part from being teasingly atavistic, it mainly holds one's attention by exhibiting a beauty which displays the artist's skill in knowing at what point the experiment is just so.

When **Alan Butler** stumbled across the stock image *Blank Tombstone*, hosted and sold on iStockphoto, he couldn't make out the 'blank'. There was the engraving, plain as day. But too virtual. Teasingly latent. So internet. Butler excels at putting (often wonderfully pointless) flesh on the bones of cyberspace, such as *Downloading is Killing the GIF Industry* (2011), where he sold single animated gifs on floppy disc for five euros each, and here, with a digital watermark, creating value out of its very negation.

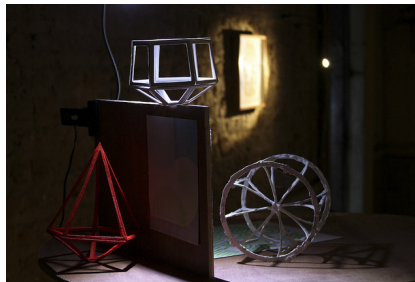
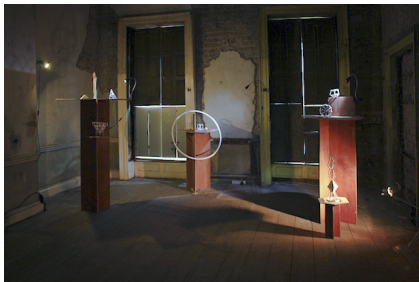


Alan Butler

Real Watermark 2

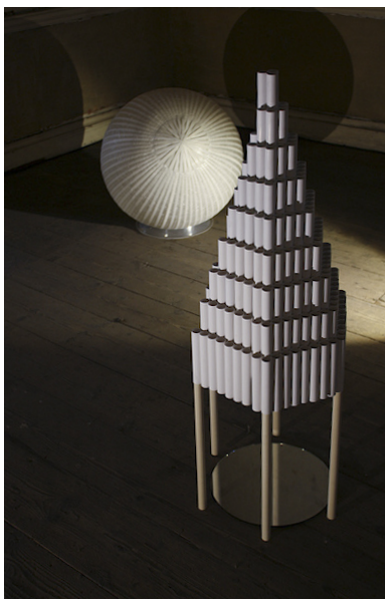
mixed media

In the future, an alarm clock shall be invented that, while looking ordinary, will erase from your memory the fact that you set it ten minutes fast, leaving you only to wonder why you spent so much money on it. Until such neuron-altering devices are available some psychological bells will have to remain un-rung. **Joseph Coveney** uses formal geometric patterns in both his 2-D and sculptural pieces. Recently, he has begun to incorporate material left over from pattern cutting to re-frame works, in a sort of augmentation-by-masking. The unplanned nature of these production off-cuts is what was appealing, but this happy realisation prevents him from continuing the experiment into the future. The idea of 'willingly' defying expectation or convention is an oft mentioned quality in writing about practitioners of art. Artists, it almost seem to say, know what they're doing. Here though, we find a serendipitous modicum of the incidental planted. A sort of rare, willing randomness.



Joseph Coveney,
all clutching at stars
mixed media

It had occurred to me in the past when looking at **Niall de Buitlear**'s sculptures, many of which have the look of Buddhist stupas – mandala-like structures used to house relics – or far-off temples from a science fiction movie, that I would like to experience them building-sized. To be able to climb them, walk into them. But I got it the wrong way around. Upon constructing such edifices, I would not fully appreciate their architecture by aerial perspective, the way the artist had intended – viewing the patterns' logics in overview, like giants.



Niall de Buitlear,
Untitled
mixed media

GK Chesterton said that “To think of a cow with wings is essentially to have met one...” He was writing about RL Stevenson, but it seems incredibly pertinent here. In **David Eager Maher's** work, Chesterton might have found too that the romance of possibility plays the soul, or perhaps more accurately, the anima, to the corporeal of mere worldly happenings. In his work, surfaces are often eschewed by a draughtsmanly transparency, much in the way a dream will be generous with fantastical artifice. Up is down and furthermore, your house could be the blue room of a radiating chapel in a Gothic church.



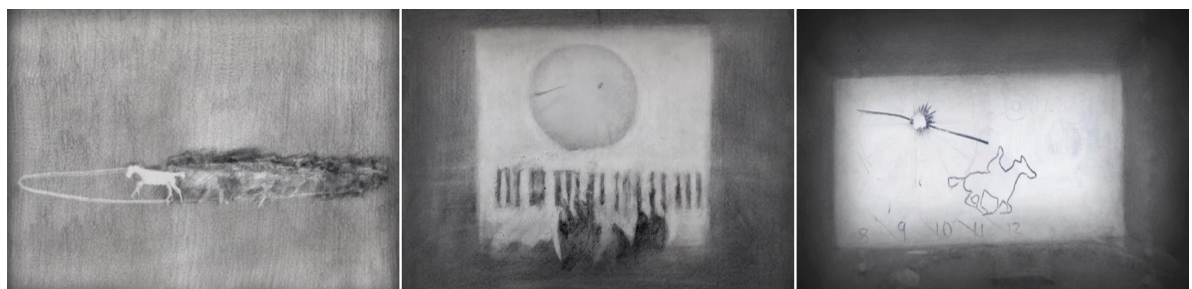
David Eager Maher
Monument
oil & conté on found paper
Atelier
watercolour & conté on
found paper

Aoibheann Greenan looks at stereotypes through the dark, sublimating glass of mainstream thought. Her sculptures and drawings are visual mashups, harmonising multiple sources from global sub/culture, and bending their mythopoeic elements to a form as inauthentic as those filtered by the commodification of colonialism and the tourists' gaze. The viewer / consumer is invariably involved in this unmasking while being implicated in its predication. Tough break.



Aoibheann Greenan
Folk Devil
mixed media

One of the recent developments in cinematography is forty-eight frames per second filming for theatrical releases, and somewhat predictably, this is proving to be just too much - optically altering the





John O'Connell
Horsepower
charcoal animation

forth wall to a beyond-HD fidelity, and offering a visual realism which most go to the cinema to escape. Conversely, **John O'Connell** uses rates slower than current standards, echoing the pioneering, days of moving pictures' first steps. These lo-fi parameters create incantatory tableaux with an ethereal, intoxicating dynamism and almost gyroscopic equilibrium, harking back to the magic of cinema's avant-garde and figures such as the Lumière brothers and Eadweard Muybridge.

Davey Moor, 2012