

TORRANCE ART MUSEUM

VOLUNTEER EDUCATION SERIES
Declan Clarke // Recent Film Works

Screening #5:

Wreckage in May
Group Portrait with Explosives

Thursday, August 4, 2016 @ 3 – 5pm
Refreshments will be served



DECLAN CLARKE was born in Dublin in 1974. He studied at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin, and Chelsea College of Arts, London. He works predominately in the medium of film, but has worked frequently with other media throughout the last 15 years. His films reflect on everyday experiences and contrast these with grand narratives and explorations of the historical edifices of political power. Declan was shortlisted to represent Ireland in the 2013 Venice Biennale.

Please R.S.V.P. with:
MELISSA TRAN, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR, MTRAN@TORRANCECA.GOV

MORE ON THE SCREENING:

Though nominally using historical political events as their subject, the films are entirely grounded in the political present, and function as oblique commentaries on the causes, effects, and ongoing ramifications of the current, political climate social/political history through a cool and understated espionage film.

WRECKAGE IN MAY, 2015, explores the relations of agents, political agency and artistic production. Clarke utilizes the thriller/revenge film genre to examine the suppression of the Paris Commune in 1871 and the role of women in the founding, running, and defending of this short lived government. The film also considers the social and militant role of the artist Gustave Courbet in the Commune and how it contrasts with the younger generation of artists, whom he had inspired - the Impressionists. The plot of *Wreckage in May* depicts an unnamed agent figure that follows a female character around a city as she researches the history of the Paris Commune. Unbeknownst to the agent, he disturbs the ghosts of history through his covert intrusions into the woman's research; the consequences of which are unforeseen and disturbing.

GROUP PORTRAIT WITH EXPLOSIVES connects the former country of Czechoslovakia with South Armagh, a parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland. Though not areas that initially invite association with each other, through the vagaries of industrial manufacturing and international trade, an imperceptible link has been made between the two locations. On one hand, the industrial production center of Brno, Czechoslovakia was home to the Czechoslovak tractor and armament industries (Semtex plastic explosive developed here). On the other, South Amargh, located just north of the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State, is a rural, agricultural region transformed by their consumption of these cheap Czechoslovak products: tractors and plastic explosives. This film is a reflection upon the connectivity between production, socio-political unrest, violence and personal history that stretches across distance and context.