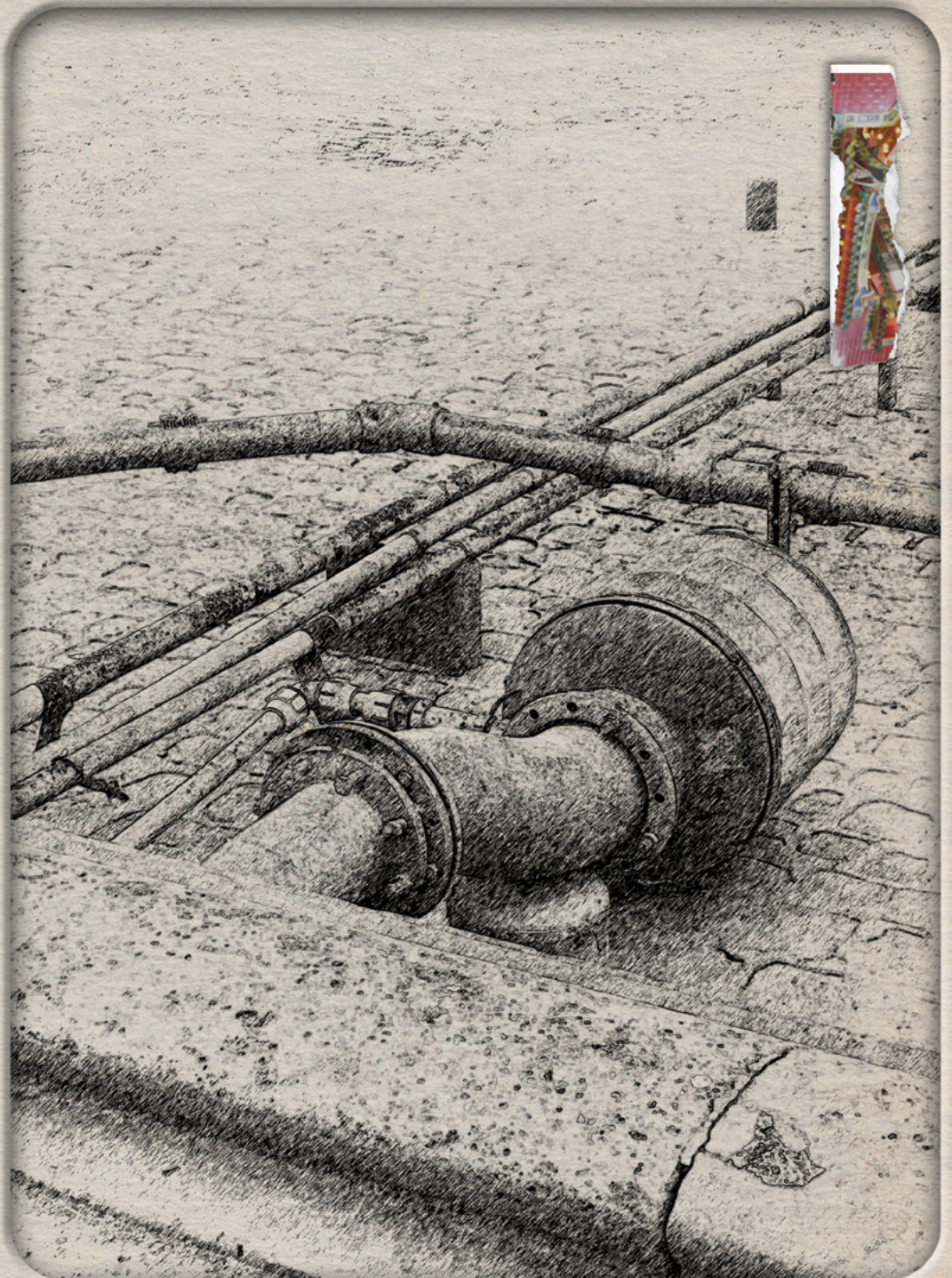


Mirror Lamp Press

August 2023

No.8



About



@mirrorlampress

EDITORS

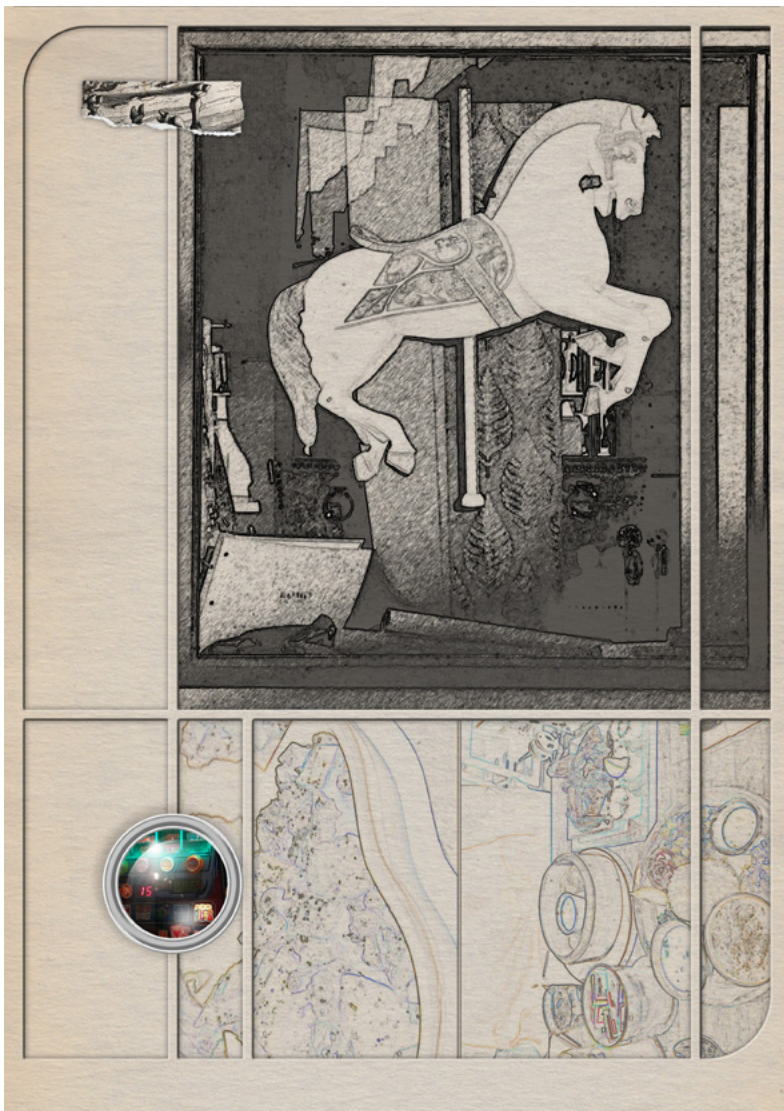
Gwen Burlington
Eoghan McIntyre

PROOFREADER

Jen Wade

PUBLICATION DESIGN

Paul Mulgrew



09

Editorial

GWEN BURLINGTON
EOGHAN MCINTYRE

13

The House That Frank Built

NIAMH MORIARTY

24

Abstractions in My Pocket

JOHN THOMPSON

32

Whistling Brigid

JESS MC KINNEY

34

Un-immersed?

MICHAËLE CUTAYA

42

Circles of Observance

SUZANNE WALSH

49

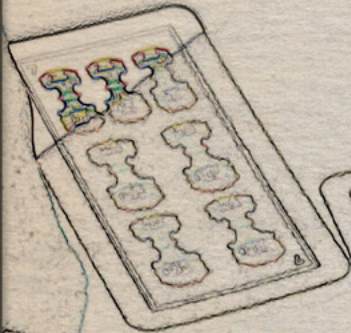
Video Essay: The Psyche of Sour Cream

MORAN BEEN-NOON

52

Video Essay: Morality and Temporal Sequence

COLM KEADY-TABBAL



Writers

Michaële Cutaya

Michaële Cutaya is a writer on art living in County Galway.

John Thompson

John Thompson writes on art and philosophy. He is researching for a doctorate at University College Cork on the topic of conceptual art and materialism. His wider research interests include the history and philosophy of Marxism. He also creates art.

Suzanne Walsh

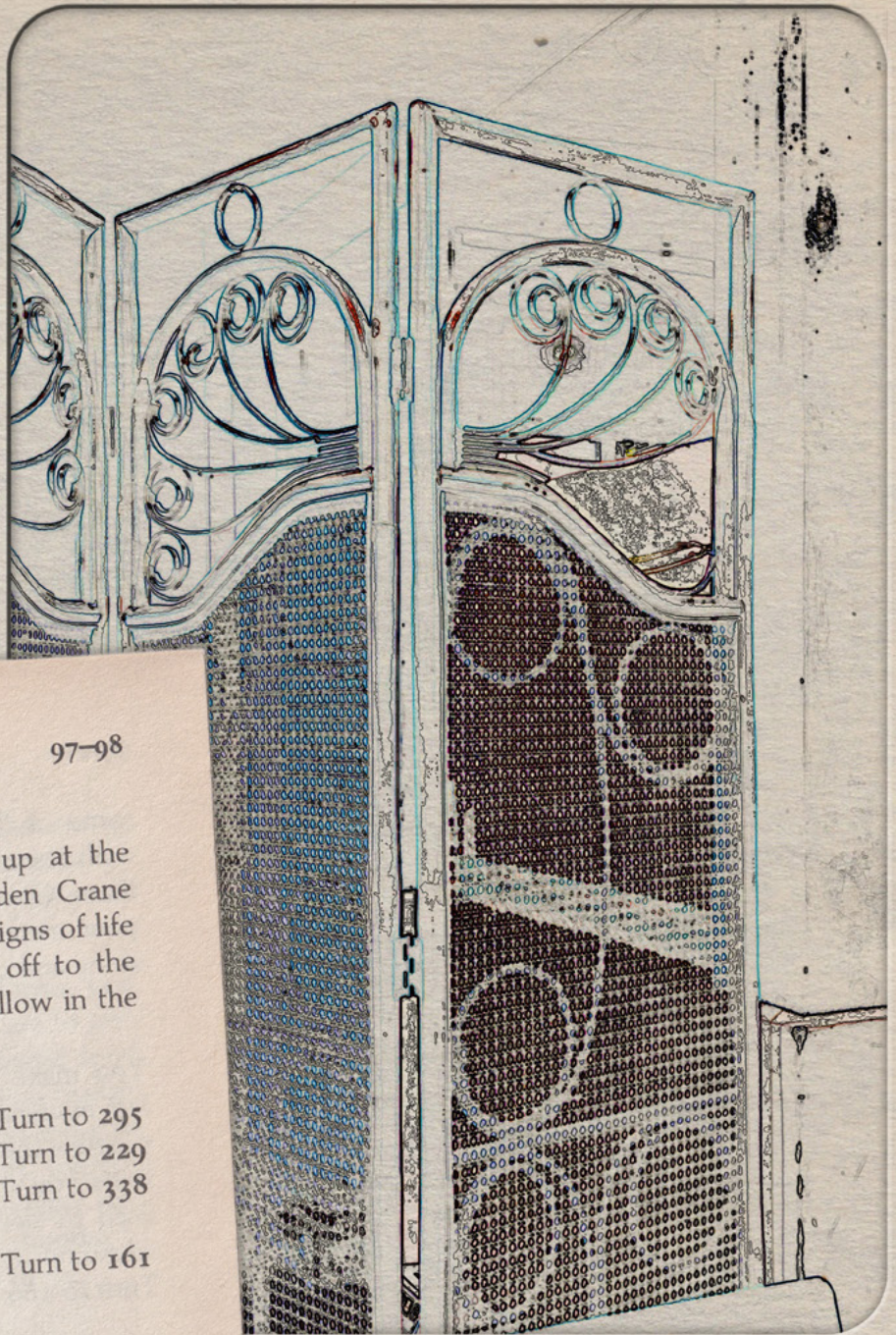
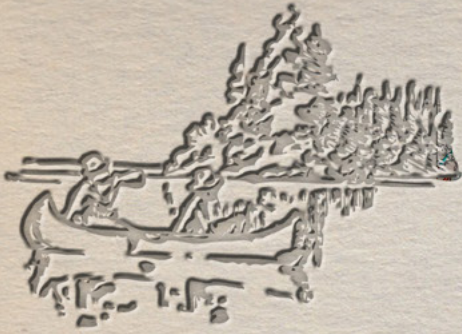
Suzanne Walsh is an artist and writer working with performance, audio, and text. They have an interest in non-human worlds, and in creating rifts through which new meanings and realities can emerge. They also publish essays, art-writing, poetry, and fiction in publications including *gorse journal*, *Fallowmedia*, and *Winter Papers*, as well as commissioned texts for galleries.

Jess Mc Kinney

Jess Mc Kinney is a writer from Inishowen, Donegal. Her work has appeared in *The Winter Papers*, *The Moth*, *The Stinging Fly*, *Banshee* and *Abridged*, along with anthologies by Poetry Ireland and New Island Press. She completed her MA in Poetry at Queen's University Belfast, where she was awarded the Irish Chair of Poetry Student Award. Her debut pamphlet 'Weeding' was published with Hazel Press in 2021, later shortlisted for the Patrick Kavanagh and Saboteur Awards. She is currently working towards her first collection and novel, with support from the Arts Council Literature Bursary.

Niamh Moriarty

Niamh Moriarty (they/she) is a visual artist based in County Leitrim. Since 2010 Niamh has collaborated with Ruth Clinton, using performance, video, sound installation and storytelling to examine the construction of official and folk records, and how these can contribute to a collective sense of possibility or paralysis. Niamh also works as a researcher and editor with ACA PUBLIC (an imprint of Askeaton Contemporary Arts).



97-98

97

The path winds upwards and you squint up at the looming majesty of the chief of the Golden Crane Mountains. You can't see any buildings or signs of life at the summit. Ahead, a sandy path forks off to the left. At the junction sits a shaven-headed fellow in the red robes of a monk. Will you:

Ignore him and carry straight on?
Bow to him?

Ignore him and take the left fork?
Ask him if Baochou Monastery lies
at the summit of the mountain?

Turn to 295
Turn to 229
Turn to 338

Turn to 161

98

Mercenaries stream past you the battle is won. But there is covered litter, which the sand comes a high, pure note. The shake then splinters. A flapping vertically from the wreckage peers into the sky. The me among the rubble and unear useful find,' he comments, tu mercenaries loot the bodies c cheerfully over the quality of

Over the next few days, as t for an opportunity to attack none presents itself: he is much too careful and sus- picious to allow anyone near him. Finally you are forced to give up this plan. You are starting to acquire



Artist

Cillian Finnerty

Cillian Finnerty is an artist based between London and Co. Mayo, working across publishing, sculpture, and installation. Recent presentations of work include *Between Different States* (Block Projects, Sheffield), *I was Baptised in Fortnite* (Antwerp House, Manchester), and

PORTICO II (London). Previous education includes the BFA Painting program at NCAD, and MA Publishing at London College of Communications.

www.cillian-finnerty.info

Video Essayists

Colm

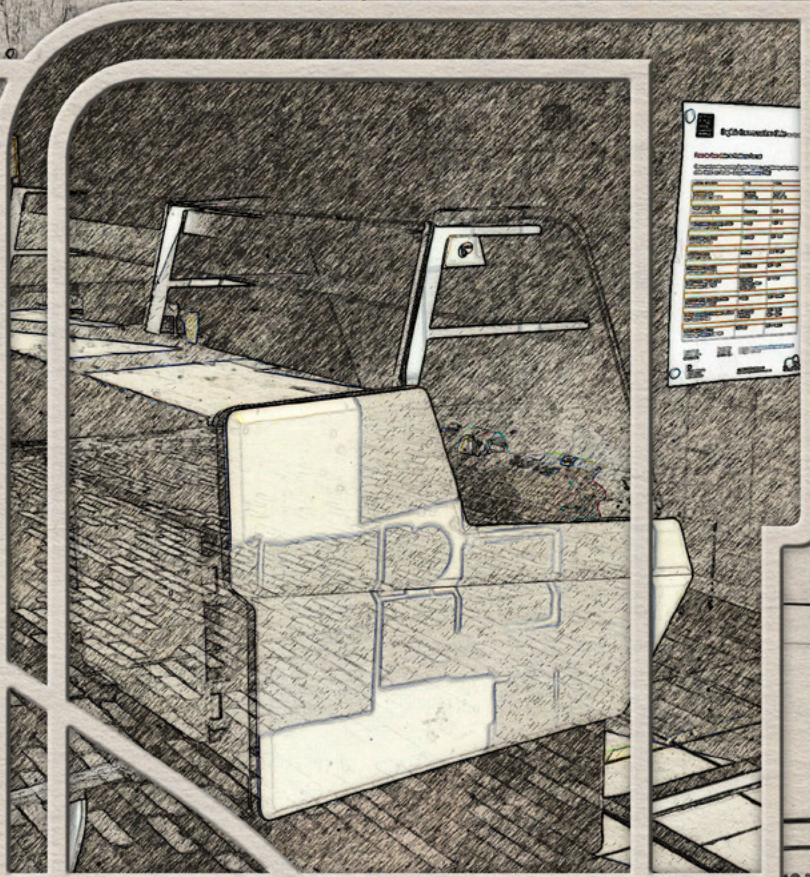
Keady-Tabbal

Colm Keady-Tabbal (they/them) is an Irish Lebanese artist based in Dublin and New York. Their practice investigates epistemologies of sound, place and memory and their relation to systems and architectures of control. Operating through sculpture, installation, performance, moving image, composition and writing, their work addresses legacies of applied modernism and behaviorism, often appropriating forms and languages from existing media and infrastructure. They are currently an MFA candidate in Sound Art at Columbia University School of the Arts.

Moran

Been-noon

Moran Been-noon is a Dublin-based visual artist and independent curator. She predominantly makes moving image installations, using animation, archived material, and non-traditional projections. Her work explores post-migration living and, using her own identity and lived experience, how compound ethnicities influence one's sense of belonging. It incorporates studies of the body's engagement with place, culture, systems. She is interested in the relationship between folkloric places (real or imagined) and the self (foreign or local).

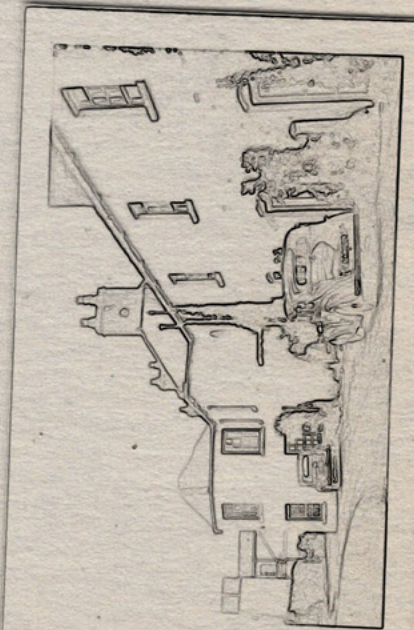
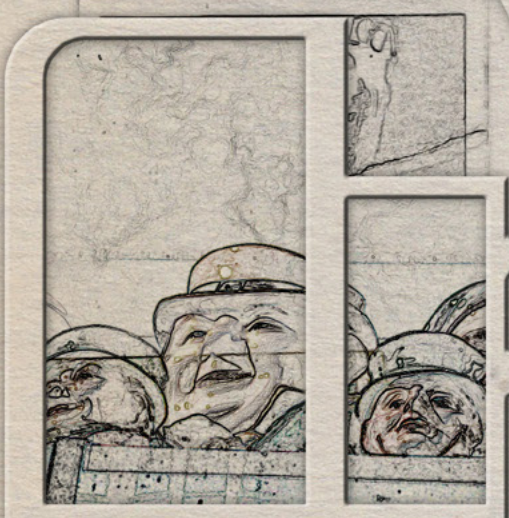


Kochbuch/Rezepte	
1	100g
2	200g
3	300g
4	400g
5	500g
6	600g
7	700g
8	800g
9	900g
10	1000g



BRIDGE ...
LADY ...
GET A ...

34
2
V



Welcome to the eighth issue of MLP.

Niamh Moriarty's *The House That Frank Built* delves into the rich history of a red brick home and the complex narratives intertwined within its walls. It confronts the legacy of slavery and the interplay between idealised notions of heritage and the harsh realities of history. Moriarty's exploration of the constructed narratives surrounding Irish identity invites us to question our own relationships with the past.

John Thompson's *Abstractions in My Pocket* engages with the interplay between theory and lived experience. It interrogates abstraction and the ways in which it shapes our interactions with the world. By questioning the boundaries between the abstract and the concrete, Thompson encourages us to explore the complexities of human thought and artistic expression.

In the poem *Whistling Brigid* Jessica Mc Kinney examines the complex portrayal of the historical figure Brigid, who finds herself caught between the realms of a pagan goddess and a saint. The poem delves into Brigid's intricate connection

with mythology and the land, exploring the tensions and connections between these various aspects of her identity.

Michaële Cutaya's *Un-immersed?* challenges our perception of immersive art, which has increasingly permeated contemporary exhibitions. Through an examination of aesthetic distance, participation, and the societal implications of immersive experiences, the piece prompts us to reflect on the role of art in shaping our understanding of reality.

Suzanne Walsh's *Circles of Observance* takes us on a contemplative journey through the War Memorial Gardens in Dublin. Through delicate descriptions of cherry blossoms, stone crosses, and still waters, Walsh explores the intersection of personal grief and collective remembrance. It urges us to reflect on the complexities of commemorating the past while navigating the present.

This issue features two essay films. In *The Psyche of Sour Cream*, Moran Been-noon responds to Anya Von Bremzen's memoir, *Mastering the Art of Soviet Cooking: A Memoir of Food and Longing*. By intertwining memories of life in the USSR and

as an immigrant in New York City, Von Bremzen explores the cultural significance of food. Been-noon's video response expands on these themes, shedding light on the complex connections between food, family, history, and cultural rituals. Colm Keady-Tabbal's video work, *Morality and Temporal Sequence*, is a reflection on love, possession, time, and abstraction.

Our featured artist, Cillian Finnerty, embraces the interlinked nature of the digital landscape. He skillfully combines the aesthetics of analogue drawings with the digital medium, resulting in visually striking juxtapositions. With the use of hyperlinks within his drawings—which connect to various websites and online resources—Finnerty takes readers on a disparate journey, ranging from documents on counter economics to the design of Seinfeld's iconic and seemingly impossible apartment. Finnerty's approach not only reflects the nature of MLP as a journal, but also embraces the inherent circulatory nature of how we connect online.

Enjoy the issue.



The House That Frank Built

Niamh Moriarty

Francis Rogan's prosperity is reflected in this red brick home¹.

In Sumner County, Tennessee, a team of archaeologists and conservators carefully dismantled a once fine brick house that had stood for 178 years. They numbered each component and shipped them all across the Atlantic. The destination was the Ulster American Folk Park, an open-air museum located outside Omagh in County Tyrone, where the house would be reassembled brick by brick².

In November, I took a trip with my friend and frequent collaborator, Ruth Clinton, to see this assortment of homes and civic buildings from Famine era Ireland and Antebellum America. Together, we have been collecting stories of early migration from Ireland to so-called America, where people fleeing domestic hardship created by British policies settled across the Atlantic, only to become oppressors themselves in the 'New

World’.

This historic relationship between Ireland and the United States has had significant consequences, including the involvement of Irish settlers in the genocide of Indigenous people and the destruction of their lands, as well as ongoing cooperation between our state and the US military. Shannon Airport has served as a landing and refuelling point for planes carrying soldiers, cargo and prisoners since 1990³.

Shannon Group PLC oversees Shannon Airport as well as another nearby folk park in County Clare. In 1959, a traditional thatched cottage was dismantled stone by stone from land designated for a new runway ‘and it was from there the concept of Bunratty Folk Park was born’⁴. The cottage made way for technological progress at Shannon and moved to this Ireland-themed park, cast as a humble cottage in an unspoiled landscape, as yet untouched by modernity.

Thus, an idealised version of Ireland was constructed by Irish Americans, embraced by Irish nationals, and sold back to Irish American tourists through our heritage industry. These

heritage experiences allow the diaspora to embark on touristic pilgrimages to their ‘homeland’, paradoxically ‘returning’ to a place and time they have never before experienced, and that no longer exists⁵.

After navigating the potato famine-themed section of the Ulster American Folk Park, we boarded a replica of the Brig Union ship, bound for Americay!⁶ We filed past the bunk beds in steerage and disembarked onto the cobbled streets of the ‘New World’. The trail then led us out to the countryside, where we approached a final, formidable house.

This particular building had taken the opposite journey from the emigrants who set sail from Ireland in order to build these new homes and futures. Upon arrival, the bricks were meticulously reassembled into the stately house we see today, suspended in time but dislocated in space. The house is curiously polka-dotted with the remnants of numbers that had indicated the placement of each brick in the overall composition. Inside the large living room, we took out the visitor’s map and read:

Francis Rogan's prosperity is reflected in this red brick home. However, the Rogans' wealth was owed to the work of enslaved people. Generations of African-Americans cleaned and looked after children in these rooms. Slavery in Tennessee officially lasted until 1865. The 1870 Census records there were five black people living here, labouring and cooking for the Rogans. Their names are recorded as Eliza Bill, Richmond, Jason Rogan, Rhodes, and Stokely.

Let's begin again from the point of departure.

Back in eighteenth-century Donegal, the family patriarch, Hugh Rogan was a member of The Defenders, an agrarian Catholic secret society⁷. At this time, Ireland was subject to the penal laws, which suppressed many aspects of the native culture, including restrictions on Catholic land ownership, religious worship, and education.

Rival militias formed with The Defenders in constant conflict with the Protestant Peep o' Day Boys, who would raid Catholic homes under the pretence of confiscating arms. It was in these volatile conditions that an enduring philosophy

emerged among the struggling tenant farmers, that the right to bear arms would guarantee them not only their liberty but also their property⁸.

In 1775, fearing arrest and conscription by British authorities, Hugh Rogan fled to America ‘in order to breathe the air of freedom’⁹.

After travelling to the region now known as Tennessee, Rogan joined an expedition along the Cumberland River to identify ‘new lands’ and to establish colonial settlements, violently defending them against the Cherokee, Shawnee and Yuchi First Nations¹⁰.

The guerrilla warfare skills Rogan had honed in Ireland easily transferred to life in the Old West, where he rallied against indigenous defenders, aligning himself with the British colonists.

A genealogy survey published in 1909 annals the settlers of Sumner County. Here Rogan is described as a ‘raw’ and ‘gallant’ Irishman, ‘always ready for service, always ready to fight the Indians and help protect his neighbors’. He was regarded as ‘a man without fear, with a big, kind heart, and was a general favorite among the pioneers’¹¹.

Noel Ignatiev’s seminal text, ‘How the Irish

Became White’, depicts how many previously disadvantaged Irish emigrants promptly adapted to a life of power and privilege in America. ‘To become white they had to learn to subordinate country, religious, or national animosities, not to mention any natural sympathies they might have felt for their fellow creatures, and to a new solidarity based on colour - a bond which, it must be remembered, was contradicted by their experience in Ireland’¹².

This process is no better exemplified than by our protagonist who, by the end of the century, had gained not only political, religious, and economic freedom, but had also acquired 1000 acres of fertile land where he built himself a traditional Irish stone cottage¹³.

In 1825 Francis Rogan, Hugh’s son, who had spent his entire life on the plantation, built a two-storey brick house in the Flemish style as a symbol of the family’s increasing wealth and status. Although Francis was born in Tennessee to Irish parents, he followed the British and Continental European ‘desire on the part of the colonists to recreate the familiar brick architecture of their homeland’¹⁴.

The Rogans gained prosperity through the cultivation of cash crops on their farm, primarily wheat, tobacco, sweet potatoes, and corn. The farm relied on slave labour, and by the mid-nineteenth century, the family presided over one of the largest slave plantations in Tennessee, solidifying their position among the region's wealthiest settlers¹⁵.

Brick-making took place at the property, with enslaved people likely shouldering much of this skilled labour. Enormous quantities of raw clay would be extracted from the river's floodplains, followed by an extended period of tempering (drying out through the winter months). Labourers would then shape the clay using wooden moulds, producing several thousand bricks to be fired in a purpose-built kiln¹⁶.

These bricks housed several generations of Rogans until the residence fell into disrepair in the 1990s, leading to its acquisition and relocation to the Folk Park in Northern Ireland¹⁷.

During the house's reconstruction, conservators discovered some bricks that held imperfections – handprints, dents, and marks left by people and

animals present when the clay bricks were drying outside. Those bricks were carefully removed for further study and preservation. A conservation archaeologist involved in the project noted that ‘at least one man and one small person’ had been involved in the making of bricks¹⁸.

After our visit to the house, we had the opportunity to meet with Liam Corry, the museum curator. Liam generously searched through countless climate-controlled halls to locate the box containing these displaced bricks. As he peeled away the white paper and packing foam, he revealed imprints from racoons and other unfamiliar North American creatures embedded in the red clay.

With care, Liam removed the final two bricks from the box. One bore a handprint, and the other a bare footprint, likely belonging to a child approximately seven or eight years old who lived, and apparently worked, on the plantation two centuries ago.

We imagine these imprints as conscious stowaways. Once hidden within the walls of this house, they have now travelled across land and

water to reveal themselves in present-day Ireland. The moulds, now museum artefacts, represent the connection between ourselves, our diaspora, and the legacies of institutional racism that continue to afflict the Global North.

As we grapple with surges of nationalist violence and nativism at home, each brick serves as a reminder and a warning. Sharing and retelling these stories of the Irish in America can open up a space to acknowledge our past struggles, confront our complicities and, crucially, build our capacity for solidarity.

The simple marks made by hand and foot pressed into damp clay beckon to us across time, serving as relics and fossils that give material substance to the narrative of a house and a way of life that was built by our ancestors.

1. Ulster American Folk Park. Visitor's map. Available at: ulsteramericanfolkpark.org/ulster-american-folk-park-maps (Accessed July 2023).

2. 'Tennessee Rogan House'. (2008) Overview document including comments from Stephen Brown, Tennessee project archaeologist and conservator. Ulster American Folk Park. Page 3.

3. 'U.S. assurances about Shannon flights a "mockery", says Bree' in *Sligo Champion*. 28.06.2006

4. Bunratty Castle. Available at: www.bunrattycastle.ie/folk-park/ (Accessed July 2023).

5. Rains, S. (2007) *The Irish American in Popular Culture 1945-2000*. Dublin. Irish Academic Press. Page 101.

The House That Frank Built

6. Wright, R.L. (1975) 'The Irishman's Farewell to his Country' in *Irish Emigration Songs and Ballads*. Bowling Green University Popular Press.

Oh then, fare thee well lovely Erin's Isle, for here I cannot stay,
I do intend to cross the sea, bound for Americay,
To leave the land that gave me birth, oh it makes my heart full sore,
To leave that sainted island where the shamróg green do grow.

7. 'Hugh Rogan – One Irishman's Impact on Frontier Tennessee'. (2008). Ulster American Folk Park. pp. 1 & 6

In 1998 Hugh Rogan's stone cottage was also moved stone by stone to a new location in Bledsoe's Fort Historical Park outside Gallatin, TE.

8. Blackstone, W. (1765) '*Commentaries on the Laws of England*'. Oxford. Book. 1, Page 36.

9. Cisco, J.G. (1909) '*Historic Sumner County Tennessee Genealogies of the Bledsoe, Cage and Douglass Families*'. Nashville Tennessee. pp. 94

10. Native Land Digital. Available at: native-land.ca/ (Accessed July 2023)

11. Cisco, J.G pp. 94. pp. 291 & 292

12. Ignatiev, Noel. (1995) '*How the Irish Became White*'. London & New York. Routledge. Page 96.

13. 'Hugh Rogan - One Irishman's Impact on Frontier Tennessee'. Page 1.

14. Guymon, G. (1986) '*An Historical and Archaeological Study of Brickmaking in Knoxville and Knox County, Tennessee*'. Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee. Page 10.

15. 'Tennessee Rogan House'. Page 2.

16. Guymon, G. pp. 15 & 56

17. 'Tennessee Rogan House'. Page 18.

18. Ibid. Page 2.



219

You all travel back to the wreckage that once was your village and try to rebuild as best you can. Eventually you make something of a life for yourself, but you never avenge the death of your father.

220

The barbarians look you up and down as you enter their camp, but not one of them lifts a weapon against you. If you have the word 'never' written on your *Adventure Sheet*, turn to 354; otherwise, turn to 169.

221

'You are disturbing the peace of the mountain,' says the monk. 'Either tell me this, or leave me in peace: what is wide at its feet, narrow at its head?' Will you reply:

Heaven?

Turn to 173

A pine tree?

Turn to 112

A mountain?

Turn to 397

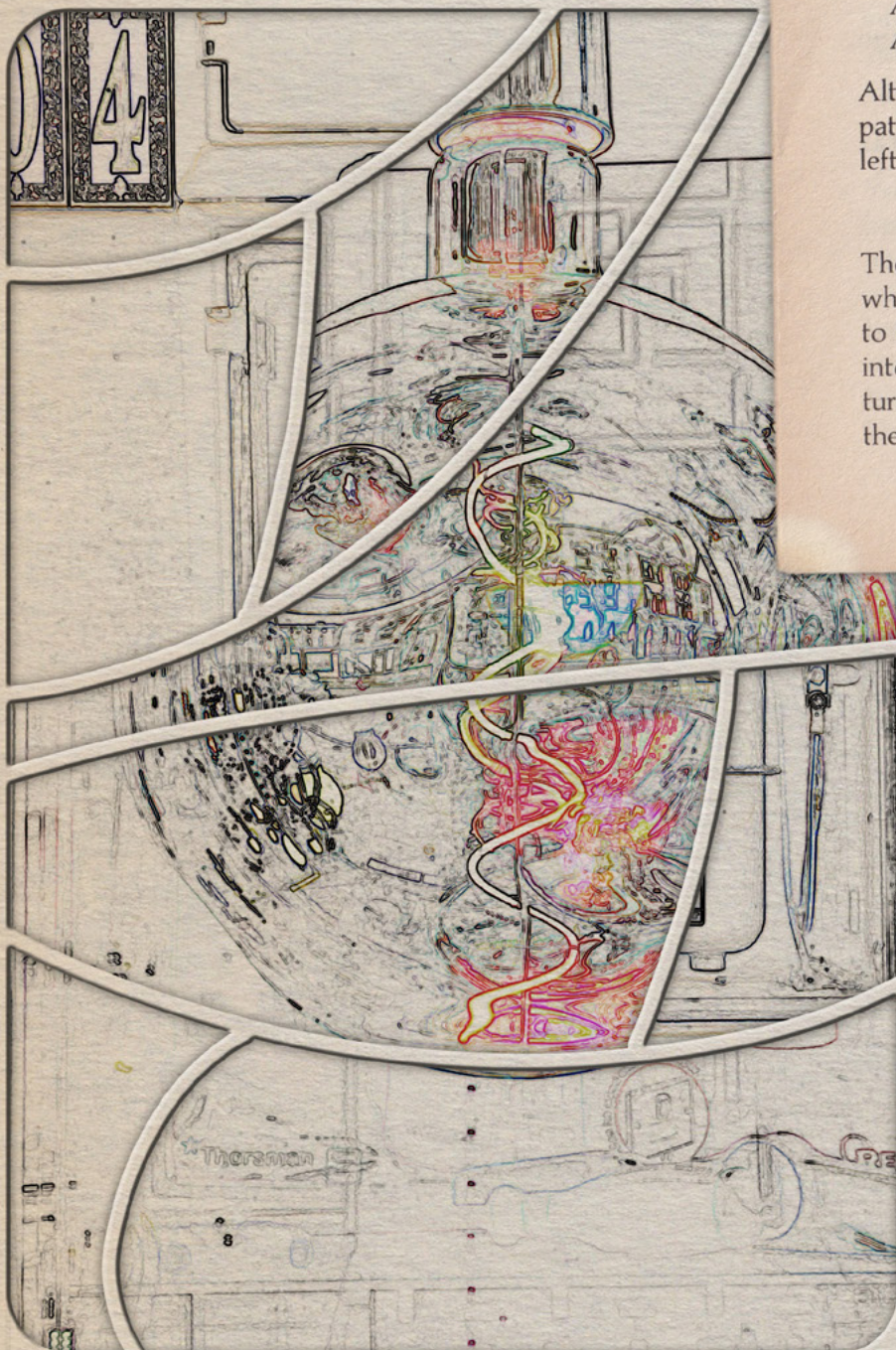
A giant?

Turn to 57

Alternatively, you may carry on along your original path (turn to 295) or ignore the monk and take the left-hand fork (turn to 271).

222

The temple you are in is unfamiliar. After some time a white-faced monk enters and, seeing you, hurries off to fetch others. They escort you out of the temple and into the streets of Traole. If you head north from here, turn to 140. If you go south, turn to 99. If you stay in the town and make enquiries, turn to 375.



Abstractions in My Pocket

John Thompson

“All theory, dear friend, is grey, but the golden tree of actual life springs ever green.”

– Mephistopheles, *Faust: Part One* (1808)

The fictional demon Mephistopheles presents a stark contrast between theory and life, depicting the former as dull and grey and the latter as vibrant and golden. This contrast often extends to the opposition of the abstract and the concrete, the universal and the specific. I used to think of concrete as being grey and solid, but I learned that it etymologically suggests a livelier colour. The Latin word *concretus* means ‘grown together’ or ‘mixed together.’ On the other hand, *abstractio* means ‘to draw away’, ‘to separate’ or ‘distance from’. In light of this comparison, one might conclude that it is advisable to steer clear of abstractions and focus on life. Hence, we frequently hear the criticism, “you’re being too abstract!” rather than, “you’re way too concrete”. However, can we truly turn our heads from abstractions?

Let's delve into both charges and examine them more closely.

When someone tells you “you’re being too abstract!”, it is often followed by the call to “come back down to earth”. This return to earth gives a sense of the utopian to the abstract. In the abstract realm, we tend to disregard the difficulties that exist in reality and become engrossed in our thoughts. Adrian Piper, a conceptual artist and philosopher, describes this state as a form of ‘flying’. Robert Storr further comments on the ‘ecstasy of abstraction’ present in Piper’s thinking. When we think in abstract terms, the harsh reality in front of us seems to dissipate, and we transcend our individual subjectivity – be it gender, race, or societal class. However, we must eventually descend from the rapturous heights of thought. Perhaps you have already landed.

But can I help but be abstract?

Alfred Sohn-Rethel, a mid-century Marxist, offered an intriguing analysis and inversion of the divide between thought and the world, as typically understood in abstraction. Drawing from Marx’s analysis of the commodity in *Capital*

Vol. 1, Sohn-Rethel argued that we enact an abstraction through our actions in reality. By treating qualitatively different products such as corn, clothes, or words on paper, as exchangeable for one another, we make certain assumptions. We assume that the product remains unchanged at the time of purchase, that it transcends the effects of time, and that both sides of the exchange are somehow equivalent. All these aspects of exchange indicate a detachment from qualitative differences and concreteness. Money serves as the great symbol of this abstraction, facilitating the act of exchange.

Abstractions in my pocket, abstractions in my head.

According to Sohn-Rethel, we engage in an abstraction in reality, which he termed ‘a real abstraction’. What’s fascinating is that instead of abstract thought happening first, we first act in a way that instils abstraction into the heart of society. Sohn-Rethel even proposed a connection between the birth of philosophy and money – the coin, whose value is tied to something abstract rather than its being the piece of bronze or silver – suggesting that the abstract nature of money

influenced philosophers like Plato in thinking about abstract Ideas, such as Justice, Beauty, and Love. Money provided them with a model of something abstract. With abstractions in their pockets they could have them in their heads. Even the concept of Being itself, as an overarching singular concept, resides in this abstraction. Whether or not we fully embrace Sohn-Rethel's perspective, he points out how everyday practices, as simple as going to the shop, can be seen as acts of abstraction.

I abstract before I even get to think. But let's delve into the realm of thought for a moment.

Hegel once posed the question, "Who thinks abstractly?" and answered it by saying, "the uneducated". This response may seem crude and unexpected coming from Hegel, a philosopher often criticised for his unwieldy and complex ideas. Even Marx joked that Hegel seemed to deduce the existence of apples and pears from the existence of an abstract idea of Fruit. However, as a philosopher known for uniting opposites, Hegel was highlighting that to truly know something, we must understand its specifics in relation to actual instances. He gives the example

of murderers, or more specifically, handsome murderers. Hegel values the admirer who says ‘yes he is a murderer but isn’t he handsome’ rather than the moraliser who simply condemns them. The former recognises the individual, while the latter remains in the realm of abstraction. At its most abstract, all they are saying is murder equals murder, a equals a, and there is no room for causality or contingencies. Hegel’s perspective differs. We only grasp the true identity of something through its contingent existence. Here again, abstraction seems to unfold in reality, with a needing to be not-a in order to be a.

And then there’s art...

We are familiar with the criticism of artists being too abstract. Painters who don’t depict figures and practitioners of contemporary art, inheritors of conceptualism, often face this critique. Abstraction, in some sense, unites the two defining movements of twentieth-century art: abstract and conceptual art. Despite conceptual art emerging as a reaction to high modernism, in which abstract art found its place in the 1960s, these two movements are often conjoined as metonyms for contemporary art by those who

fear its current state. Conceptual art is considered abstract due to its emphasis on the concept, that abstract thing concerned with thought and, even worse, theory! Abstract art, on the other hand, moves away from naturalistic forms, as seen in Mondrian's reduction to horizontals, verticals, and primary colours. Although conceptual art can incorporate figures, they often appear detached or indifferent, such as in Joseph Kosuth's utilisation of photographs and dictionary definitions of everyday objects, which seem a kind of ruse – a means to highlight the insufficiency of representation itself. Despite all the disparagement, these artistic movements never achieve pure abstraction; each artwork remains a concrete assemblage of materials, such as paint, paper, or other perishable substances. These materials open the artwork to infinite descriptions and particularised responses (think of the passages to be written on those highly noticeable cracks on the surface of Malevich's black squares). However, art also exists as a separate entity, detached from the world.

To make concrete, mix metaphors and methods, let's say a word about abstractions today.

The most valued abstractions are the ones found in one's wallet. "For gold contend/On gold depend /All things... Woe to us poor!" (*Faust*, 2802-04) Can we imagine a project that brings the flight of abstraction down to earth? Is it shot down from on high or caught by the action of those below uniting in praxis?

1. Piper, A. (1987) "Flying" in *Adrian Piper Reflections 1967-87*. New York: Alternative Museum (pp. 24-33)
2. Storr, R. (1996) "Foreword" in *Out of Order, Out of Sight (Volume II): Selected Writings in Art Criticism 1967 – 1992*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press
3. Sohn-Rethel, A. (1978) *Intellectual and Manual Labour: A Critique of Epistemology*. London. MacMillan.
4. Ibid.
5. Hegel, G.W.F. (1808) "Who Thinks Abstractly" Available at: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/se/abstract.htm> (Accessed: July 2023).
6. Marx, K and Engels, F. (1845) *The Holy Family*. Available at: <https://www.marxists.org/subject/dialectics/marx-engels/holy-family.htm> (Accessed: July 2023).

FLAGS AND EMBLEMS OF THE WORLD

Described by R. O. Dennis D.E.E. F.S.A.
Rouge Croix Pussavant of Arms
Illustrated by G. Mussett and N. Manawaring
Herald Painters

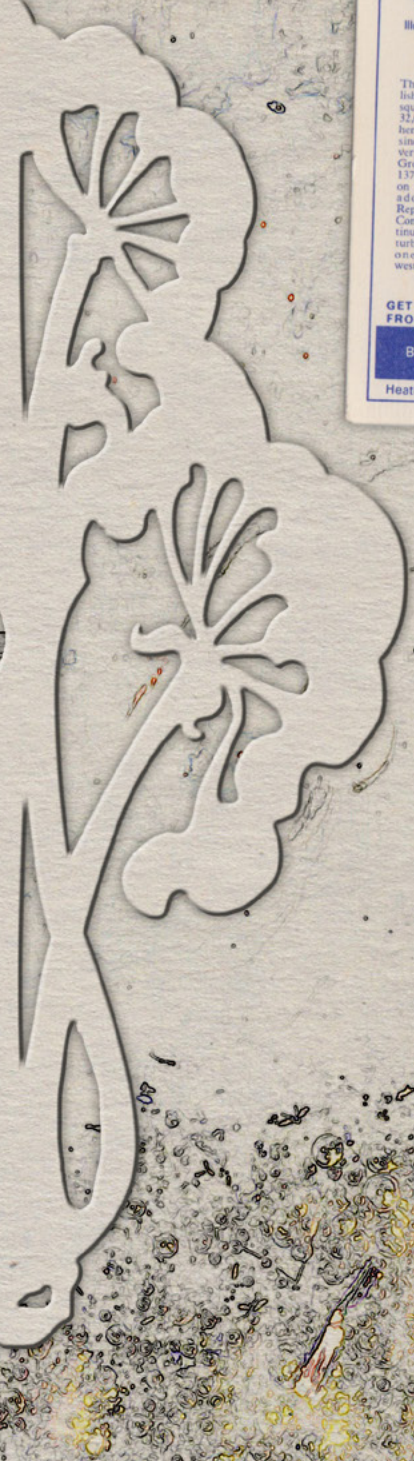
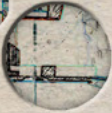
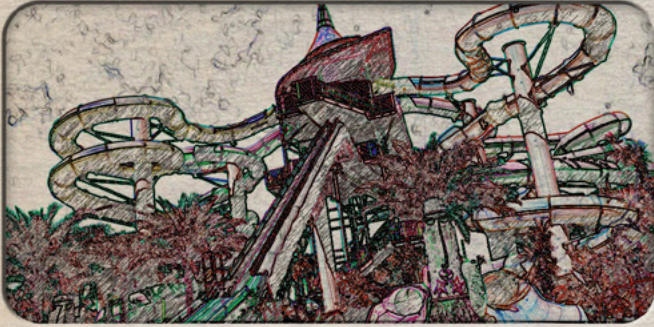
POLAND

The Polish People's Republic, established in 1952, has an area of 121,000 square miles and a population of some 32,000,000. The eagle has been the heraldic emblem of the Polish Kings since the early Middle Ages, and a very fine example of it appears on the Great Seal of Casimir the Great (1333-1370). The present State Arms, based on a sixteenth century design, were adopted in 1927 by the pre-war Republic and retained by the post-war Communist Government, thus continuing a traditional link with Poland's turbulent past, in which on more than one occasion it was a bastion of western civilization.

GET A PICTURE CARD ALBUM FROM YOUR GROCER-Price 6d

Issued with
BROOKE BOND TEA
and Tea Bags

Heathrow House, Cranford, Middx.



Whistling Brigid

Jess Mc Kinney

bíonn Lá 'le Bríde ina shaoire ar chasaibh

gusted towards the shallows / soil gives way sooner
than you'd expect / searching for sinewy rushes
to snap across the knuckles / daylight drains
with fingers knotted to the weeds / insects clamour
/ evening creeps like damp / like the figure
leached from murk / shaded on the far shore
/ cloaked as a shrub / sharp flames bedded
in its palms / whistling / rinses a shiver
across the lake / sets you scurrying like a field
mouse / heart larger than your head / across stone
circles / a mound at their centre / exalting pale
white painted twigs / a crop of thorn bushes /
gathered with fraying ribbon / faded votives / scratched
glass beads / no longer the woods you knew
by heart / crouched beneath the crown of an alder
/ crows group like dark fruit / bulbous stalactites /
telling backwards jokes / their laughter scratched
to splinters / sky above bleak as a confessional /
when a hollowness calls out / from under the ground
/ descend the clootie well / christened by salted dust
/ you watch the figure approach / deer legged /
face split like a moon / branches and bright flowers
heaped in its arms / twisting a new tune /



Un-immersed?

Michaële Cutaya

Apart from referring to a proliferating type of installation, “immersion” designates a peculiar form of viewership and has become a benchmark to measure the success of an art exhibition. On the face of it, its meaning appears straightforward enough: an immersive artwork aims to absorb or mesmerise the viewer into an all-encompassing sensory experience¹. One could wonder about the present desire for immersion, yet it is about non-immersive art I began to speculate: what could be described as an un-immersive encounter? In my attempt to answer this question, not only did the possibilities as to what a non-immersive art could be multiply, but, in turn, reflected back on the meaning of immersion, developing into a rather dizzying series of shifting contrasts and oppositions.

One way to approach our characterisation of non-immersive art is through the notion of aesthetic distance. Since the development of aesthetics as the philosophy of art in the

18th century, aesthetic experience has been understood as sensory contemplation, requiring both perception and intellectual appreciation. Immanuel Kant in *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) distinguished between taste as a purely sensory appreciation and judgement of the beautiful, or art, which requires the engagement of both the faculty of imagination and the faculty of understanding. The immersive experience, by prioritising sensory perception, seems to leave little room for the exercise of understanding.

Another way to think of the non-immersive is suggested by Bertold Brecht's 'Verfremdungseffekt' variously translated as an estrangement, or a distancing effect. In his theatrical work, Brecht sought to create effects that would disrupt the audience's passive identification with characters and plots. This involved, he wrote, "stripping the event of its self-evident, familiar, obvious quality and creating a sense of astonishment and curiosity about them". Brecht used techniques such as direct address to the audience, harsh lighting and explanatory placards to provoke critical thinking and prevent the audience from becoming emotionally involved.

Brecht's conception of theatre was partially a reaction to Richard Wagner's 'Gesamtkunstwerk': a 'total' or 'unified' work of art, which sought to realise a synthesis of artforms and engage all the senses so as to absorb the audience. Wagner's vision can be seen as the ultimate prototype for immersive art. Yet, despite their divergent approaches, both Brecht and Wagner dreamt of transforming the audience into a people: a critical revolutionary one for Brecht, a unified *Volk* for Wagner². This raises a question about immersive art that is not easily disentangled and largely depends on the specific artwork: does it create a collective experience that would produce a sense of shared experience, or does it isolate the viewer – as the donning of the by now ubiquitous VR headsets might suggest?

If we take the immersive experience as isolating, then non-immersive forms of art could include such practices as participatory and socially engaged art³. Curator Nicolas Bourriaud had theorised artistic practices that take human relationships within their social context as their material under the name of Relational Aesthetics (1998). In this approach, the artist acts as a facilitator, empowering the audience. Bourriaud

states, “the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever scale chosen by the artist”. The artwork contributes to the elaboration of collective meaning, counteracting individual consumption. In this context, we can question the extent to which the engagement and interactivity claimed by many immersive exhibits can be considered genuine participation.

Bourriaud situates the artistic practices he discusses in the continuity of Guy Debord’s diagnosis in *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967). Debord defines the spectacle not merely as a collection of images but as “a social relation between people that is mediated by images”. In *The Society of the Spectacle*, representation has replaced authentic social life. Relational aesthetics can be seen as a contemporary variation on Situationism, attempting to counter the detrimental effects of the spectacle by creating moments that awaken authentic desires.

When Debord approached the image as part of the modern conditions of production, the image becomes, for Fredric Jameson, the

symptom of postmodernity. In his famous essay, 'Postmodernism and the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', (1984) Jameson characterises postmodernism as "a new depthlessness, which finds its prolongation... in a whole new culture of the image or the simulacrum". He sees Postmodernism as "the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense". Jameson see this superficiality exemplified by the multiple glass façades of new downtown skyscrapers. Debord's spectacle becomes in Jameson's writings the triumph of superficiality.

Yet, as recent articles on the immersive experience have pointed out, its aim is to awe the viewer through mind-blowing and multi-sensory encounters with art, that is to create a simulacrum of experience: a spectacle. Etymologically speaking, to be immersed is to be plunged into a liquid that is to be below the surface; to dwell in the depths. So we might mischievously wonder, what is the nature of the spectacle: its superficiality or its depth?

Conversely, a surface does not have to be smooth and reflective like a glass window or a flat screen,

a surface can be rough and rugged, its very asperities a welcome respite from the seasickness induced by a VR ride and the circumvolutions of theory alike.

In ‘A Questionnaire on Materialisms’ conducted by the magazine *October* in 2016, Giuliana Bruno wrote:

“On the surface of things, time becomes material space... Things retain on their surface, and transmit, the movement of circulation, the fabrication of difference, the texture of negotiation, the conditions of mediation, and many other forms of passage. Materiality, in this sense, is an archive of relations and transformation.”

When the immersive can come across as another form of distraction, to look closely and pay attention to the thingness of the art object, is perhaps the very definition of the non-immersive experience. And quite simply, it is at the surface of things we build our being in the world.

1. Several articles have been written analysing the “immersive” phenomenon, exploring its connections to new virtual technologies, its impact on the display and reception of art, and the emergence of new spaces and organisations that bypass traditional exhibition institutions. Coverage from the past couple of years includes: a special issue of *Art in America*, *The Art of Immersion*, January 2021. Available at: <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/immersive-art-1234580701/#!> (Accessed July 2023); Wiener, A. (10 February, 2022) *The Rise of “Immersive” Art, Why Are Tech-Centric, Projection-Based Exhibits Suddenly Everywhere?* *The New Yorker*. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-silicon-valley/the-rise-and-rise-of-immersive-art> (Accessed July 2023); Fite-Wassilak, C. *New Rules of Immersion*, e-flux criticism. Available at <https://www.e-flux.com/criticism/538656/new-rules-of-immersion> (Accessed July 2023); Heardman, A. (June 2023) *Against Immersion*, *Art Monthly* 467.

2. Wilson Smith, M. (2007). *The Total Work of Art, From Bayreuth to Cyberspace*. Routledge.

3. Participatory art designates a form of art that directly engages the audience in the creative process so that they become participants in the event and socially engaged practice, an art that is collaborative, often participatory and involves people as the medium or material of the work.



Circles of Observance

Suzanne Walsh

Cherry blossoms are heavy on trees where lawns roll down to the Liffey. The ground rises gently towards the high limestone walls that surround the memorial gardens. It feels good to be here when I'm agitated everywhere else. Roses are starting to bud and bloom in concentric circles of flowerbeds descending to a circular pool. It's coming up to the first anniversary of my mother's death, and I'm preparing to return to my homeplace to commemorate her. The year's turning seems to make the loss sink deeper into time, becoming more permanent.

Granite sparkles in the stone steps. Thick flowering vines of clematis and wisteria cascade over the pergolas nestled between the small neoclassical buildings. People lounge on the sides, looking down. My dog starts to bark at another dog and as her barks are ringing in the granite bowl we must leave. As we pass, I cast a glance at the water, where stagnating algae spreads in billowing swathes.

Now onto the centre pavilion, wide and grand, with closely mowed lawns. On one side, up steps on a pedestal is a high, slender, stone cross. Gold script on either side commemorates the 49,400 Irish dead that fought in World War I. In the centre of the lawns rests a large tomb-like structure known as the ‘Stone of Remembrance’ or the ‘War Stone’, bearing an inscription: ‘Their name liveth forever more’. On either side are two wide inert fountains with obelisks, empty in this dry spell. Wind is barely stirring the lush foliage beyond the walls.

These gardens are drawing me today, because they are peaceful, perhaps because I’m thinking about memory and the dead, although my own are a world away from this military solemnity. However, the history of these gardens is not as simple nor as eternal as it seems. Their creation was at times at odds with the ideologies of the newly formed Irish State, and they went through cycles of both care and dilapidation. The granite stone cross withstood two attempts by the IRA to blow it up in the 1950s. This landscape holds previous layers; Viking burial remains and artifacts, including a dog-headed weight, were found here in the nineteenth century.

The small neoclassical buildings, resembling watchtowers, are called ‘bookrooms’, and they house books that record the names of the dead. The border decorations within these books were crafted by the artist Harry Clarke. Consisting of seven designs, they repeat throughout the pages in black ink—silhouettes of round towers and Irish wolfhounds intermingled with searchlights and fighter planes—twisting ornately like foliage. There is a poignancy in this more personal record of the individuals who died, and in the memory that books can hold.

I try to think of World War I dead, here, unimaginable on this modern hot day, only thinking, inevitably, of current wars and unrest in the world. Would the dead be pleased by these stone memorials? They, like the living, vary in their opinions. Perhaps some could be honoured by this grand tribute, while others might feel this pristine garden to be out of touch with their violent muddy end. The cross weighs down any potential unruly spirits, while the War Stone at the centre is open to any wandering ones. The sky is yellowing in the north, reflected in the twin pools in the rose gardens.

Each passing year, I will have anniversaries for my own dead, which means that the moment continually recedes, or else circles back endlessly. What do you do on such a date? Go to the places they used to love, or find somewhere with the right atmosphere? A memorial landscape like this one differs from those created for individual loved ones—it represents an abstraction of death’s sacrifice on a public and tragic scale, rather than a private one, and it carries its own power-driven agendas. Yet, it is porous to the individual lives that wander in.

I wonder if anyone else is thinking of those killed in the war today, as they laze in pairs or alone on the lawns, clad in ice-cream-coloured clothes. Two young men, accompanied by large dogs on leashes—one black and sleek, the other nut brown with black ears—approach the War Stone. They lie around its base. I can see, at a distance, the pink beat of the brown dog’s panting tongue.

An older man, dressed in grey suit-trousers and pale blue shirt, his skin slightly reddening in the sun, sits on the base of the high cross and looks out at the War Stone. The brown dog’s ears are jackal-pointed alert. I’m sitting in one of the seats

inserted into cupolas in the bookrooms, where statues might usually stand. My own dog rests beneath me in the shadows. I direct my thoughts to the dead although they are not here, if they are anywhere. Birds tend to their young in the bushes, and even granite slowly wears down.

Everyone moves slowly or remains still, caught in the amber light. One of the young men walks from the War Stone up to the cross, under the gaze of the seated man. The dogs watch. Figures drift in and out from various ornate exits and entrances. A black long-haired dog with a ball in its mouth drifts by. The brown jackal-dog is excited. A woman in a long red dress approaches the War Stone.

We walk away, descending towards the small temple at the slope. On the floor, the words begin, 'We have found safety with all things undying...' under the darkening sky. There is comfort in orbiting fixed points—stone crosses, memorials, gravestones—but each year is not the same. These markers are made from those who embody a particular societal viewpoint, which is likewise fixed in its time. Truly, the dead are mutable, and as each year arrives, we change alongside it. The

rituals for the dead we carry with us may change too. They are simultaneously gone forever and forever dead—here and not here—an antithesis to stone and monuments, even though it's an ancient and human effort to resist this flying free of the once living to the immaterial world.

Later, when we're home, the evening explodes with thunder and lightning, which we watch from our upstairs window, and I watch the storm's progress online. Red circular flashes mark the lightning hitting the city across the map. It slowly diminishes, moves slowly northeast, then out across the sea and away.



The Psyche of Sour Cream, a video response to Mastering the Art of Soviet Cooking: A Memoir of Food and Longing by Anya Von Bremzen

17:59 mins, HD Video, 2023

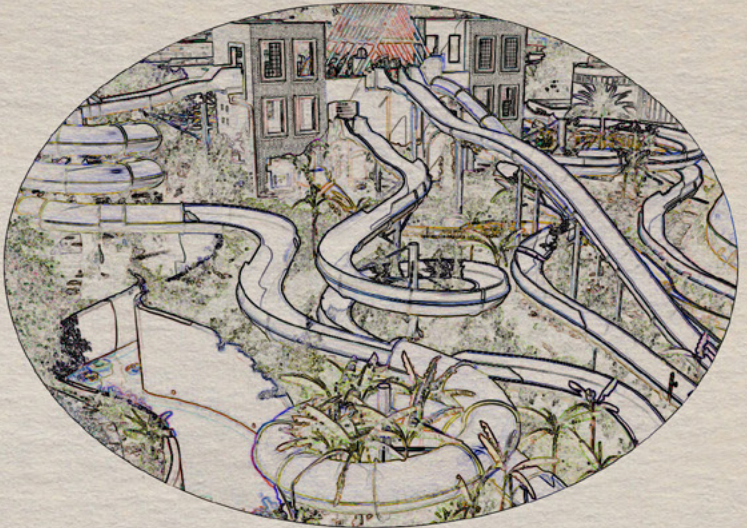
Moran Been-noon



[Watch Video](#)

In the 17th and 19th centuries, the term “nostalgia” was coined to describe the experience of suffering from manic longing, similar to

melancholy, specifically directed towards an object or a place. Over time, the term has acquired a more positive connotation, adding a sense of fondness to the longing (Julie Beck, 2013). Today, nostalgia often serves as a starting point when contemplating culinary culture, drawing upon traditions and childhood memories to forge a connection to a different time and place. *The Psyche of Sour Cream* serves as a response to the memoir of culinary writer Anya Von Bremzen, who, in her book, intertwines memories of life in the USSR and later in New York City as an immigrant with the cultural and ritualistic significance of food. The conversations depicted in the film establish links between food and both positive and negative stories of family, history, cooking, and eating within Soviet and Irish cultures.



Morality and Temporal Sequence

6:56 mins, HD Video, 2023

Colm Keady-Tabbal



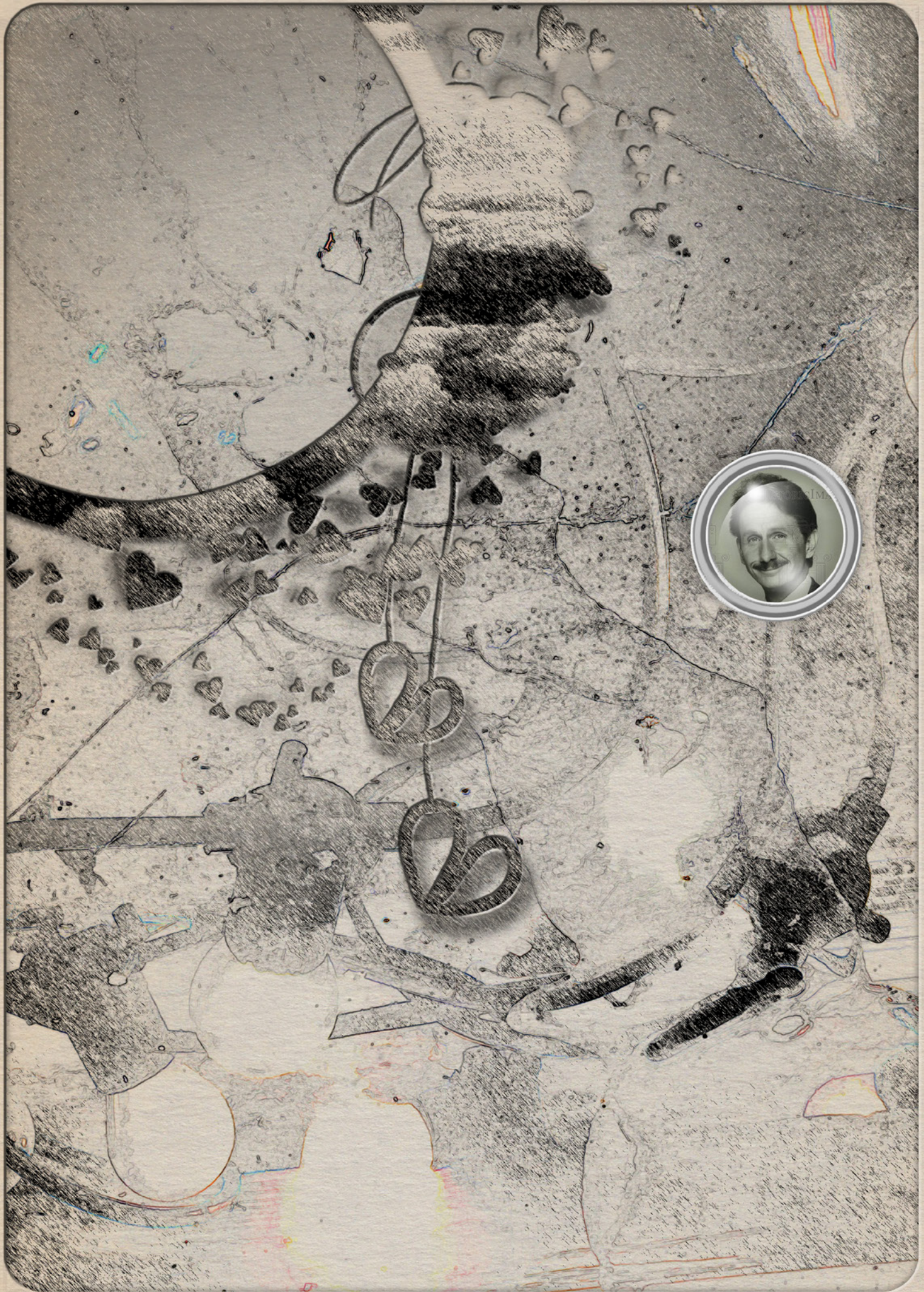
[Watch Video](#)

Morality and Temporal Sequence is a video about love, possession, time, and abstraction.

Music by Colm Keady-Tabbal with lyrics by Theodor W. Adorno.
Copy Edited by Eimear Walshe. Visual Effects by Conor Keogh.

Commissioned by Mirror Lamp Press (2023).

Made with support from the Arts Council.



Cover

Where to crawl into

Page 02

So that the signal can be received

Page 04

By our instructors, our agents abroad, our patients, our stiff-coated and small-shod tormentors

Page 06

Wherever they might be: all over the world tonight! Yes

Page 08

It's a line from a song that's popular, but quoted in a giddier (animal) tone:

Page 12

On your forehead is contained the State; across my shins is stretched the Church;

Page 23

Friendship-as-Institution is deposited under your fingernails

Page 31

Arms count double, everyone knows that, but few know for what

Page 33

Unless of course

Page 41

Alternatives emerge, say, in hedges, in the pub, in an icebox, from within a toupee

Page 48

Or, why not, in an evening associated with re-enactments of sputtering (and the necessarily attendant cleanups)

Page 51

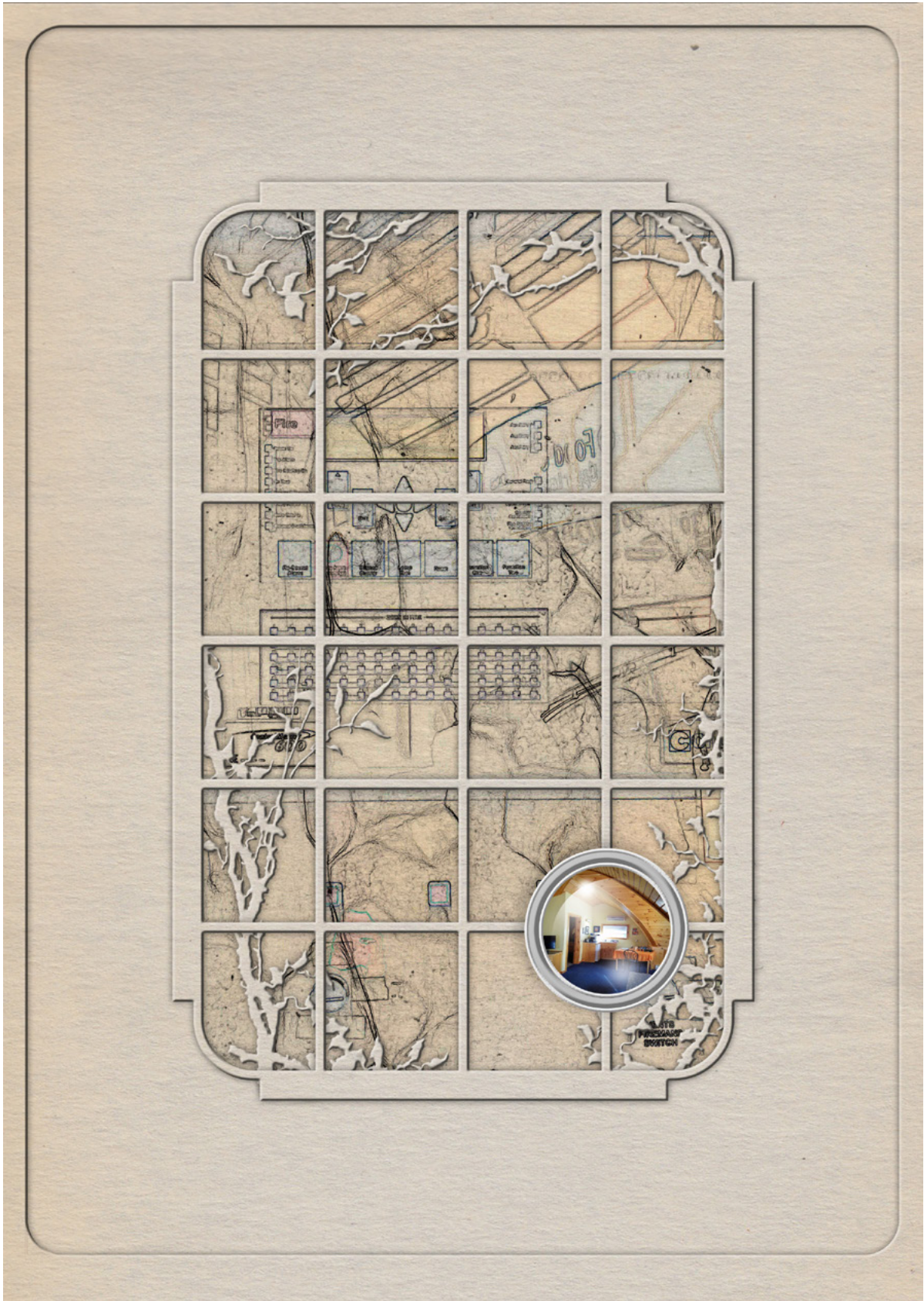
As children like us are rightly and sullenly instructed by our elders, to soak

Page 53

The final drops of sap from papers that leave the Lino

Page 55

Effectively invisible to anyone but the ants



www.mirrorlampshade.com
info@mirrorlampshade.com

© 2023



No.8