



FESTA

NORBERT FRANCIS ATTARD

ARTISTS' RESIDENCY PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, DUBLIN, IRELAND.

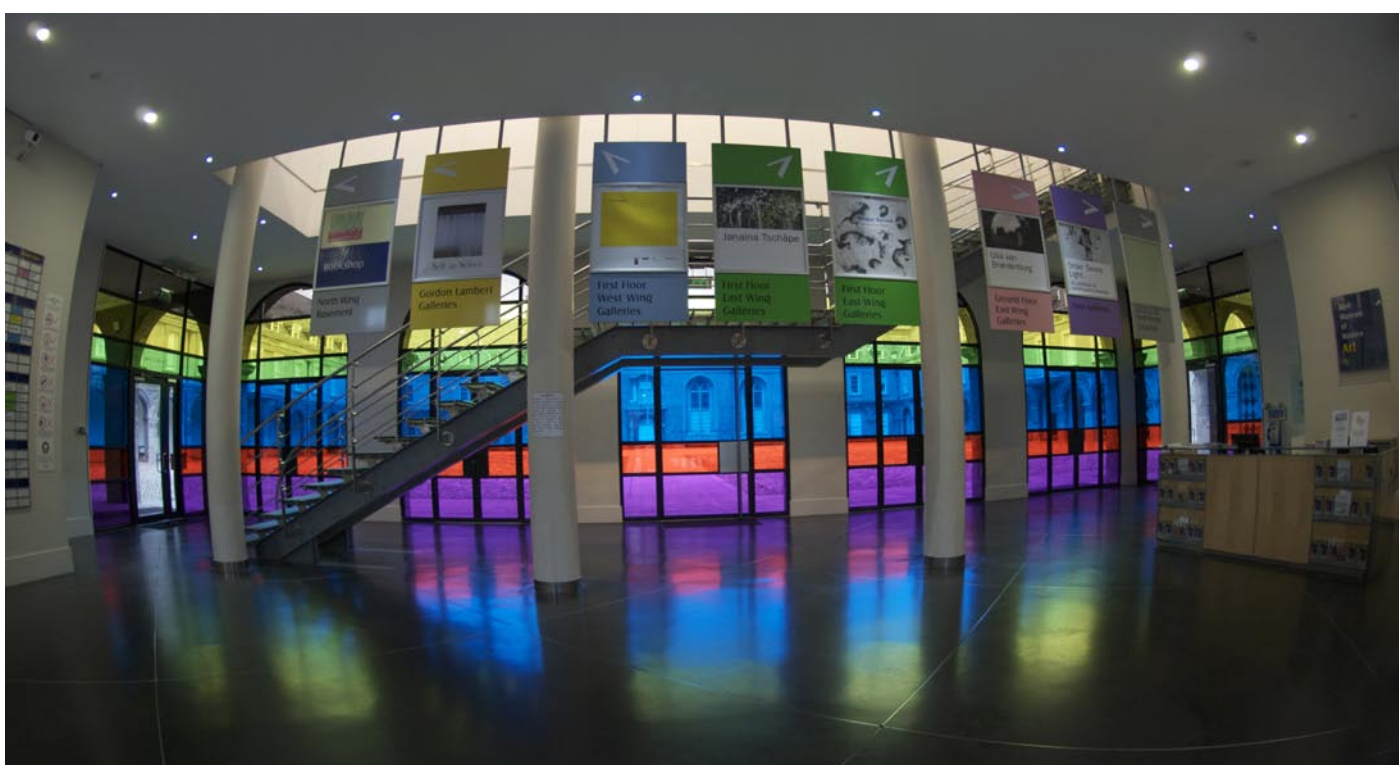
30TH JULY - 12TH AUGUST, 2008.

Created during his residency, as a site-specific response to The Irish Museum of Modern Art, FESTA is an architectural intervention by Maltese artist Norbert Francis Attard. It is the colour you see beckoning to you and that tells you which door to come to. You look through it before you enter the building at all. Without picking up a paintbrush Attard paints for us with light and colour as painters always have done. This is not surprising as he used to be an abstract painter and the memory of many acts of painting is certainly here, embodied, shining for us, revealing the shifting relationship between light and colour and how one makes the other.

It is bright, showy even, but then artist Norbert Francis Attard is in playful mood here and the spangled allsort that is FESTA is an invitation to us to loosen up a little too, to question how we can behave in front of an artwork. Hospitality is implicit in this entrance space and this work reinforces it. We are received and welcomed by this work and invited to enjoy being ourselves within it. The ebbing and the flowing of the coloured light in the space offers us a tantalising floor of colour that begs us to step into it, move through it and as we do to observe how our presence and our movements change what we see and how we are seen. A dance across the floor will draw colour from the walls, a glorious train of light to follow us that is uniquely ours in the moment. There is every reason now to press up to the windows, to move from frame to frame and observe the changes in focus and detail, how seeing is different when our attention is really held. The newness of architecture that is embedded into the old looks newer than ever as the old looks older too.

Vibrant in its delivery, the invitation to us to participate in this work is warm and extrovert and characteristic of Attards Mediterranean background, where each year as many as 60 religious festas take place in the streets of towns and villages in Malta. In FESTA the artist wants us to enjoy the dynamic as well as the static experience of his art.

Norbert Francis Attard is a former architect, now a multi-disciplinary artist, who is preoccupied with the physicality of architectural spaces and the sedimented layers of memory within them. He knows that memories are as much a product of place as people and is intent on making art works that shed light on this fact and heighten our awareness of the spaces we use and the changing histories of perception of them. As much intrigued by our memories as his own, he intends that we will make connections for ourselves of past and future, old and new and identify opposing forces such as inside versus outside, public versus private. He responds sympathetically to the existing architectural spaces and buildings and invites us to view them and ourselves anew, through the lens of colour and light that he holds up to our memories and attitudes, individual and collective.





FESTA tells us that although we are all rooted culturally we can travel and transcend, mix and blend just as the colour we see here does. We can acknowledge and celebrate contrasts and make new harmonies if we choose to. Attard asserts that no location is neutral and that our sense of place is always shaped by past histories and contemporary ideologies. In FESTA Norbert Francis Attard challenges our understanding of the nature of matter and of experience and how the boundaries between ourselves, each other and the spaces we occupy can change.

CLARE CARSWELL





Norbert Francis Attard has made site/context-specific installations in many countries including the UK, Cuba, Spain, Germany, Greece, Turkey, Israel, South Korea, USA, Taiwan and Japan. His work has been exhibited at the Liverpool Biennale, the Havana Biennale and in the Echigo Tsumari Triennale in Japan. He represented Malta at the 48th Venice Biennale in 1999.

The Artists' Residency Programme (ARP) is the Irish Museum of Modern Art's studio / residency programme. ARP provides opportunities for artists to research and develop their practice, it supports both emerging and established artists, working in any medium by application or invitation and is open to Irish and international artists. For more information on any aspect of the ARP please contact the ARP Co-ordinator Email janice.hough@imma.ie. Website www.imma.ie