Patrick Scott
IMAGE SPACE LIGHT

information and resources for second level students and teachers

Patrick Scott, Small Rosc Symbol, 1967

16 February – 18 May 2014
Garden Galleries, Irish Museum of Modern Art Dublin
and VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art, Carlow

Patrick Scott IMAGE SPACE LIGHT will travel to Glebe Gallery, Churchill, Co. Donegal,
14 July - 29 August 2014 and Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal,
14 July - 27 September 2014.
About the Resources

These resources are intended to provide information and ideas about the exhibition Patrick Scott Image Space Light for second level teachers and students before, during and after the exhibition.

The resources provide information about the exhibition, the artist and his materials and methodologies. We have five selected artworks to look at in detail in terms of form, materials and style. Key words are highlighted in red and are explained in text boxes throughout the document.

Other resources include a timeline which situates Patrick Scott within the events of the twentieth century; some ideas and suggestions for looking at and discussing the exhibition; and a map of the gallery spaces indicating where the selected artworks are situated.

Further information including suggestions for books, websites and other resources are included at the end of the document.

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We hope you will enjoy your visit to the exhibition and that these resources will be of use.

Lisa Moran,
Curator: Education and Community Programmes
About the Exhibition

Patrick Scott Image Space Light
16 February – 18 May 2014
Garden Galleries, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin and VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art, Carlow.

This exhibition is a major retrospective of the work of Irish artist Patrick Scott, showing across two venues - IMMA and VISUAL Carlow - the exhibition Patrick Scott Image Space Light will bring together the most comprehensive representation of this artist’s long career.

The exhibition is curated by Christine Kennedy, Senior Curator: Head of Collections, IMMA, and the exhibition coordinator is Johanne Mullan, National Programmer, IMMA. The exhibition considers Scott’s career as a Gesamtkunstwerk, looking at the interdisciplinary nature of his work spanning architecture, painting, drawing, textiles and furniture design.

The exhibition at IMMA concentrates on Scott’s early works from 1940-1969 while VISUAL displays works from the 1960s to the present. The immense scale of the spaces at VISUAL provides a unique opportunity to exhibit together a number of Scott’s monumental tapestries which were created for many of the leading modernist buildings of the 1960s designed by architectural firm Scott Tallon Walker, such as the Bank of Ireland Headquarters.

Patrick’s Scott’s work varies considerably in size and medium from small paintings to industrial-sized tapestries. The size and form of an artwork can influence the way in which it is displayed - large works need large spaces - and also to what extent it can be shown in relation to other works so that themes can be explored and developments in an artist’s practice can be seen over time.

The exhibition is displayed in two venues: the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin and VISUAL in Carlow. In IMMA, the work is displayed in the Garden Galleries which is a self-contained building comprising a number of medium-sized rooms on three floors. The layout of the rooms enables the viewer to encounter the works thematically, where similar works such as the Bog Paintings and the Devices are displayed together to show the development of Scott’s ideas over time and through his use of materials. Much of Scott’s work is painting which requires suitable wall space and lighting. VISUAL has very large gallery spaces and high ceilings which provide a good opportunity for Scott’s very large tapestries to be shown together along with other large-scale works such as his tapestries, Kite and his Mediation Tables.

The lighting for the exhibition includes the use of natural and artificial lighting. Many of Scott’s paintings use bright colours which are vulnerable to fading under strong light. Spot lights are used on many of these works to manage the amount of light they are exposed to. In some rooms there is a combination of natural light (from the windows) and artificial light. Some of the large paintings such as Girl with Grass, 1958, need a careful balancing of spot lighting to ensure there is an even lighting over the entire painting. The drawings and works are paper are particularly vulnerable to light exposure and they are displayed in vitrines using spot lights.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue of images and essays from artists, writers, curators and collectors who provide an insight to the artist’s broad practice. There is also a gallery guide which provides an overview of the exhibition.

The exhibition includes documentary, photographic and biographical material which provides insights into the artist’s interests, influences and motivations.

There are guided tours and talks and events about aspects of the exhibition. See IMMA’s website www.imma.ie for further information.
About the Artist

Patrick Scott was born in Kilbritten, Co Cork. He studied architecture at UCD and, from 1945-1960, he worked for the architectural practice of Michael Scott where he was involved in the design of Busáras and Iranród Eireann trains. He also created design work for Signa design consultancy established in 1953 by Michael Scott and Louis le Broqyu.

In 1941 he became affiliated with the White Stag Group and had his first solo exhibition at the White Stag gallery in 1944. He represented Ireland at the Guggenheim International Award in 1958 and 1960 and he also represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale in 1960.

Scott gave up architecture to become a full-time artist in 1960 and has continued to practice as an artist and designer. In 1969 he joined the board of Kilkenny Design Workshops and in 2007 he was elected Saoi of Aosdána.

Methods and Techniques

Patrick Scott’s work encompasses a range of methods and techniques spanning architecture, painting, drawing, printmaking and design. As a self-taught artist he did not identify with or subscribe to any style, school or theoretical framework, although many associations can be made with Minimalism, Pop Art, Taschime and Lyrical Abstraction.

Scott worked as an architect in the offices of Michael Scott (no relation). He was involved in the design of Busáras, the central bus station in Dublin, including the complex mosaics throughout the building. The use of murals and colour as decorative elements was also associated with the modernist architecture of architects such as Le Corbusier, who included murals in the interiors of many of his public buildings and private buildings. Scott was also involved in the design of Iranród Eireann trains. His training as an architect influenced his ongoing concerns with structure and space.
‘I have no aim in my painting, other than my own happiness.’

Scott is considered to be one of the first Irish artists to employ pure abstraction in his painting which is evident in his flattening of the picture plane (abandoning both perspective and use of light and shade to create depth) and his use of geometric forms such as the rectangle and circle. However, despite the label of abstract artist, Scott believed all his work begins with a form in his vision.

Scott’s work in the 1950s can be seen to evolve over several phases. His early work employed simple motifs such as birds, trees and geometric shapes, in particular the circle which is a recurring motif in his work. In the early 1960s he created a series of ‘bog’ paintings inspired by his journeys between Dublin and Galway. This was followed by his ‘device’ paintings which employed the circle motif and the use of tempera on canvas. These works involved spilling and dripping paint on the canvas which was often saturated. They were partly inspired by the testing of hydrogen bombs in the 1950s and ‘60s during the early stages of the Cold War.

Scott is most well known for his ‘Gold’ paintings which he began in the mid 1960s. These works combine gold leaf and tempera on raw canvas to create geometric images which emphasise the beauty of materials. Scott employed a more precise and controlled technique creating these works. These works are partly influenced by his interest in eastern philosophy and his visits to China and Japan.

Scott’s design work included tapestries, textiles, set designs, screens, furniture, posters, brochure covers, Christmas cards and postage stamps.

Scott designed tapestries woven at Atelier Tabard, Frères et Soeurs in France and carpets produced by V’Soske Joyce in Galway, and he also designed a variety of rugs. He created a kite for the Kilkenny Arts Festival in 1981 which can be seen in VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art in Carlow.

Other design works include folding screens and meditation tables. Between 1977 and 1984 Scott created ten screens made of raw canvas mounted on wood and thinly framed with pale oak. These screens were square or rectangular and employed simple design motifs such as the circle or square. In 1991 he made a series of Tables for Meditation inspired by his interest in Zen Buddhism. When folded vertically the table tops provide opportunities for visual contemplation while meditating in a seated or lotus position.

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**Abstraction**

**Geometric abstraction** is a form of abstraction which uses geometric forms: cones, cylinders, cubes, rectangles, etc. It is associated with Cubism, Vorticism, DeStijl, Suprematism, Constructivism and Minimalism.

**Motif** is a recognisable element or theme which may be repeated in a work in various formats, such as the circle in Patrick Scott’s work.

**Tempera** is colour pigment mixed with a water-based medium such as egg yolk. It is associated with fresco painting where the pigment is applied to wet plaster on a wall.

**Painting**

**Abstraction** the process of making a work abstract through the elimination or avoidance of any representational elements and by emphasising the formal elements of an artwork.

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Patrick Scott, Meditation Painting 28, 2007

Patrick Scott, Device Tapestry, 1971

Patrick Scott, Goldpainting 57, design for postage stamp, date of issue 23 October 1980

Patrick Scott, Double-sided Twofold Screen I, front, 1979

Patrick Scott, Table for Meditation III, 1991

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Renvyle is a very early oil painting by Scott which gives an indication of his interest in abstract form and its relationship to space which becomes a recurring feature of his later work. In this work he flattens out the picture space by simplifying the form of the wall and gate so that they form a series of horizontal and vertical lines. We know it is a gate by the small decorative elements at the top. He reasserts depth in the picture with the tiny faint boat in the upper right-hand corner.

Scott uses oil paint on a very small canvas in this work. The paint is applied thinly onto the canvas so that the linear mark making in a grid format can be seen. This echoes the grid format of the gate and contributes to the flattening of the picture plane. In later works Scott began to use tempera and acrylic paint on unprimed canvas which enabled him to experiment with colour and techniques by applying paint through dripping, pouring and saturating.

This painting is created during the period when Scott was associated with the White Stag group. The influence of artists associated with that group such as Kenneth Hall can be seen in Scott’s work of this period. In its use of simple graphic forms and mark making and the play on abstract and representational forms, it is also suggestive of the work of Paul Klee, a Swiss artist who was very influential no many artists in the 1940s.
This painting is part of Scott’s ‘device’ series where he employs a large centrifugal, circular form in the upper part of a vertical canvas. The origin of the form is influenced by the mushroom clouds associated with the testing of hydrogen bombs in the US in the 1950s which were referred to as ‘devices’. The large circular motif also refers to Scott’s interest in meditative forms associated with Zen Buddhism which is a recurring element in his work. In this painting he uses two canvases (diptych) one above the other which creates a horizon line.

In this work Scott uses tempera on unprimed canvas. The unprimed canvas absorbs the paint very quickly giving the work its saturated, luminescent effect. The sunburst effect is created by positioning the canvas in an upright position and rotating the canvas so that the wet paint can drip down the canvas. Scott also experimented with devices such as straws to blow the paint on the canvas. The paint has congealed along the horizon line where the two canvases meet.

The work is suggestive of the staining techniques employed by artists such as Helen Frankenthaler who was also associated with post-painterly abstraction in the 1960s. Similarly the use of bright, clear, saturated colour suggests the work of artists such as Kenneth Noland and Louis Morris.

‘I painted them in sort of anger. They were all very explosive kind of paintings.’
Gold Painting 47
1969
Oil and gold leaf on linen
178.2 x 81.8 cm
Room 6, Ground Floor
Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Donation Gordon Lambert Trust, 1992

Referred to as his Gold Paintings, these paintings use simple geometric forms in gold leaf and tempera paint. Many of his gold paintings are created on large rectangular unprimed canvases presented vertically. There is often a horizontal line dividing the canvas in two. In this work the gold leaf is employed to create a rectangular form open at the bottom which marks out the lower half of the painting. This is balanced by a centred circular form in the upper half of the painting containing three black V forms which converge on the centre. In these paintings Scott is concerned with balancing the relationship between the forms and the space in which they are placed.

Scott began using gold leaf in his work from 1964. The technique for applying the thin sheets of gold leaf is complex and requires considerable dexterity and patience. Scott employs a subdued palette of colour in these works to emphasise the subtle qualities of the gold leaf.

Scott’s use of clean, simple geometric forms with little expressive markmaking or gesture, and the creation of these works in a series, is suggestive of 1960s Minimalism. The richness of the colour and texture of the gold leaf are the only areas where personal mark making are evident. While this work is considered to be a form of pure abstraction, Scott continues to reference the figure through the use of the vertical canvas (usually used for portraits) and by his combination of a circular form in the upper half and a square or rectangular form in the lower half. This combination of forms is reminiscent of his earlier figurative work such as Girl Carrying Grass, 1958.
Rosc Diptych
1967
Acrylic on canvas - two panels
122 x 121.5 cm each panel
Room 6, Ground Floor
Irish Museum of Modern Art, Donated by the Artist, 2013

This work, which comprises two square canvas panels (diptych), was created in the context of the first Rosc exhibition of international art in 1967. It was not included in the exhibition which featured the work of international contemporary artists.

The motif for the diptych is drawn from the Small Rosc Symbol (see image upper left) which Scott designed as the motif for Rosc 67 and which was featured on the cover of the catalogue. In the diptych Scott inverts the colours of the Rosc symbol and employs the motif in a repeating pattern. This work was informed by Scott’s interest in forms from early Christian sites and structures which he used to create motifs and designs. It also reflects an ethos of the Rosc initiative to create a link between traditional and modern Ireland. They also suggest the ongoing influence of simple, meditative forms such as the circle derived from Scott’s interest in eastern philosophy and Zen Buddhism.

While the Small Rosc Symbol was used as the motif for Rosc 1967 the large Rosc Diptych was created as an artistic response. It remained in Scott’s studio for many years and was recently donated by the artist to the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

The diptych consists of two square panels of unprimed linen canvas displayed horizontally. One panel is an inversion of the colour and pattern of the other. Scott’s interest in colour is evident in the way he activates the neutral colour of the canvas by using a bright contrasting colour of similar value. This is more evident in the Small Rosc Symbol where the colours tend to vibrate.

The bright, flat colours and simplified forms are reminiscent of the work of artists associated with Pop Art in the 1960s such as Andy Warhol and Edward Ruscha. The use of simplified forms and the presentation of work in a series is also suggestive of Minimalism however Scott resisted the tendency within Minimalism to abandon forms of expressive mark-making and the transcendental potential of the artwork.
### The Art Work

**Meditation Table IX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Sculpture / Tempera and gold leaf on native ash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>76 x 87 x 87 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>VISUAL Carlow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection</td>
<td>Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Purchase, 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### About the work

**Form**

Inspired by his interest in Zen Buddhism, Scott created a series of mediation tables. Each table has a square top surface which can be folded down to function as a low-standing screen. Each table surface is decorated with a unique version of a circular motif (mandala) to facilitate mediation. A small circular form is also painted on the back of the table top which can be seen between the folded forms of the legs.

**Function**

The mediation tables function both as table and, when the table top is folded down, as mediation screen. They are designed to facilitate a person mediating on the floor in a lotus or sitting position.

**Materials**

The tables are made from a light ash wood and are decorated on the table top with tempera and gold leaf. The use of natural materials and simple geometric forms is in keeping with the ethos of Zen Buddhism and mediation.
Patrick Scott Timeline

1920s
1921 born in Kilbritten, Co Cork

1930s
1939 studied architecture at UCD

1940s
1941 became affiliated with the White Stag Group
1943 foundation of the Irish Exhibition of Living Artists (IELA)
1944 first solo exhibition at the White Stag gallery
1945-60 worked for the architectural practice of Michael Scott: involved in the design of Busáras and Iarnród Eireann trains

1950s
1953 created design work for Signa design consultancy established by Michael Scott and Louis le Broquy
1958 represented Ireland at the Guggenheim International Award

1960s
1960 represented Ireland at the Guggenheim International Award and won the National Prize for Bog Grasses
1960 represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale
1960 gave up architecture to become a full-time artist
1962 beginning of ‘bog’ paintings
1963 began designing tapestries
1964 early ‘gold’ paintings
1967 designed the catalogue motif for Ist Rosc exhibition
1969 joined the board of Kilkenny Design Workshops

1970-present
1980 exhibited work in Rosc
1983 elected member of Aosdána
1984-45 Visits China as part of trade mission for Kilkenny Design Workshops
1986 Visits Japan and Australia
2007 elected Saoi of Aosdána
2014 Patrick Scott died

Timeline
1921 Irish Free State established
1929 Wall Street crash
1933 Nazi party assume power in Germany
1936 Spanish Civil War
1939-45 World War II
1943 Irish Exhibition of Living Art formed
1945 Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki
1949 Creation of NATO
1950-54 Korean War
1951 Samuel Beckett Waiting for Godot
1955 Warsaw Pact
1959-75 Vietnam War
1962 Cuban Missile Crisis
1963 Assasination of President Kennedy
1963 Civil Rights movement in US
1968 Student riots in US and Europe
1969 Moon landings
1972 Bloody Sunday in Derry
1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster
1987 Stock Market crash
1989 fall of the Berlin Wall
1990 invention of world wide web
1999 Euro introduced
2001 September 11 attacks
2003 Iraq war
2005 end of IRA military campaigne
2007 beginning of global recession
**Gallery Layout:**

Location of featured art works

A. Renvyle, 1943
B. Big Solar Device, 1964
C. Gold Painting 47, 1969
D. Rosc Diptych, 1967
E. Mediation Table IX, (VISUAL, Carlow)

**First Floor**

Room 1 - early work / White Stag
- Sea Fish, 1942
- Renvyle, 1943
- The Sun, 1944
- A Bird at the Zoo, 1943
- Flemish Garden, 1944

Room 2 - late 1940s - 1950s
- Wet Day 1949
- Box of Pippins, 1949
- The Courtyard, 1952

Room 3 - early geometric abstraction
- The Deserted Racecourse, 1954
- Study for the Fifteen Acres, 1955
- Under the Pier, 1959
- Girl Carrying Grasses, 1958

Room 4 - commercial design
- Miss Mouse Playing Ball, 1956

**Ground Floor**

Room 5 - Bog and Device series
- Bog Flora, 1960
- Quiet Morning, 1962
- Painting 24162, 1962
- Purppe Device, 1963
- Large Solar Device, 1964
- Found Device, 1964

Room 6 - Rosc 67
- Rosc Dipytch, 1967
- Small Rosc Symbol, 1967
- Gold Painting 3, 1967
- Gold Painting 47, 1968

Room 7 - Gold Paintings
- Gold Painting 6, 1964
- Gold Painting 34, 1965
- Gold Painting 56, 1968
- Gold Painting 57, 1968

Room 8
- Object 2, 1972
- White Fount, 1974
- Arcady 4, 1974
- Pyre, c. 1970-75

**Basement**

- Entrance
- Room 8
- Room 7
- Room 6
- Room 5
- Room 4
- Room 3
- Room 2
- Room 1
- Documentation
- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- Toilets
**Mapping the exhibition**
Use the attached floor plan to map out the exhibition indicating the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibition Space</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What kind of exhibition space is it – new, old, renovated, etc.?</td>
<td>How many rooms and floors does the exhibition comprise?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Display</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are the art works displayed?</td>
<td>What is the layout of the exhibition?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the spaces of the exhibition?</td>
<td>Is there a theme/s to the exhibition?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is/are the theme/s presented throughout the exhibition?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do visitors find their way through the exhibition?</td>
<td>Is it possible to get close to the artworks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any obstacles to getting around the spaces?</td>
<td>Consider the following in terms of access: space, lighting, information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seating</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there seating for visitors to sit and rest and/or contemplate the works?</td>
<td>What kind of seating is available?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is it situated?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lighting</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What kind of lighting is used in the exhibition – daylight, artificial, bright, low, spotlight, theatrical?</td>
<td>What are the effects of the lighting?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information, Reading and Resource Material</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What kinds of information, reading and resource material about the exhibition are available in the gallery spaces, at the reception desk, on the website, over the phone, etc.?</td>
<td>Are there labels and/or wall texts, gallery guides, guided tours, etc.?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the security issues for this exhibition?</td>
<td>What security mechanisms are in place?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggestions for teachers and tutors

Provide time for the students to look at and become familiar with the art works.

Provide factual and contextual information about the artist, the exhibition and the art works.

Try to facilitate a discussion that takes account of the student’s observations and impressions.

Encourage students to:
- spend some time looking at the art works before beginning a discussion
- make visual and written notes about the exhibition
- interact with the art works where appropriate
- discuss their impressions and observations
- support their impressions and observations with examples
- think about the materials and techniques the artist uses in her work
- make comparisons with other artists and art works
- identify aspects of the exhibition they consider successful and unsuccessful
- consider the broader context of the artist’s work: the cultural context such as literature, film, music and popular cultural references; the social context; the political context.

Research the artist and the exhibition.
Further reading and resources

Publications
Yvonne Scott, Patrick Scott, Retrospective, Dublin: Hugh Lane Gallery, 2002

Websites
Irish Museum of Modern Art
www.imma.ie

VISUAL Carlow
www.visualcarlow.ie

Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane,
www.hughlane.ie

Stoney Road Press
www.stoneyroadpress.com

Patrick Scott on the Kite tapestry
www.tcd.ie/artcollections/exhibitions/scott-kite.php

Art Terms
IMMA, What is_? programme - Glossary of Art Terms
www.imma.ie/en/subnav_112.htm

Tate Modern, Glossary
www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary

Museum of Modern Art, New York, Index of Art Terms
www.moma.org/collection

Acknowledgements

Content and Layout: Lisa Moran, Curator: Education Programmes
Specialist Advice: Rebecca Devaney, Second Level Art Teacher

Patrick Scott: IMAGE SPACE LIGHT
Curated by Christine Kennedy, Senior Curator: Head of Collections, IMMA
Exhibition Coordinator, Johanne Mullan, National Programmer, IMMA
Notes