

WHAT IS ***Sculpture*** **?**





WHAT IS ___?

information programme

There is a growing interest in contemporary art, yet the ideas, methodologies and theoretical frameworks which inform its practice can be complex and difficult to access. The what is_? information programme is intended to contribute to the on-going enquiry into modern and contemporary art. It is framed as a question rather than presenting a definitive answer. Drawing on the expertise and experience of lecturers, artists, curators and critical writers, it provides a broad overview of some of the central themes and directions in modern and contemporary art.

03

The programme addresses aspects of modern and contemporary art theory and practice through talks, booklets and web-based resources:

- Series 1* 1970 to the present
- Series 2* 1900 to 1970
- Series 3* Materials and methodologies
- Series 4* Theory (in collaboration with MA Art in the Contemporary World, NCAD)

The intention is to provide background and contextual information about the art and artists featured in IMMA's exhibitions and collections in particular, and about contemporary art in general; to promote information sharing and to encourage critical thinking, debate and discussion about art and artists.

For further information see www.imma.ie

CONTENTS

what is_? information programme	page 03
introduction: sculpture	page 04
what is sculpture? - sinéad hogan	page 10
bibliography and further reading	page 20
glossary of terms	page 22
sculpture: resources	page 26

WHAT IS Sculpture?

Introduction

The Irish Museum of Modern Art is the national cultural institution for the collection and presentation of modern and contemporary art in Ireland. IMMA exhibits and collects modern and contemporary art by established and emerging Irish and International artists. The temporary exhibitions programme features work by established and emerging artists ranging from painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, photography, video and performance. IMMA initiates many of its exhibitions but also works closely with a network of international museums and galleries. IMMA's Collection includes artworks across a range of media and genres, acquired through purchase, donations, loans and commissions. Many art works have also been acquired through IMMA's temporary exhibitions programme and, on occasion, through IMMA's Artists' Residency Programme.

This introductory text provides a brief overview of sculpture. Terms associated with sculpture are indicated in CAPITALS and are elaborated on in the glossary on p. 22. Lecturer Sinéad Hogan's essay, *What is Sculpture?* provides an overview of sculpture, identifying some of the challenges in attempting to define this broad and evolving subject. The essay includes examples of artists and art works, some of which are included in IMMA's Collection. By focusing on IMMA's Collection we hope to draw attention to the range of sculpture in the Collection by artists such as Ulrich Rückreim, Janet Mullarney, Michael Warren, Aleana Egan and Antony Gormley.

We also hope to highlight the potential of IMMA's exhibitions and Collection as resources for further investigation and enquiry into the subject of sculpture.



what is sculpture?

Sculpture is the term used to describe three-dimensional artworks. Traditionally, sculpture was created using permanent materials such as stone, metal, clay, ceramic or wood although works made from durable material such as stone were more likely to survive over time whereas sculptures made of wood such as TOTEM POLES were less likely to survive. Contemporary sculpture can be made from any kind of material: stone, metal, light, sound, found objects, people or even the site itself. It can also comprise no materials. Sculptures can be permanent such as the monumental sculptures and statues honouring famous people and events, situated in prominent positions in city spaces. They can also be EPHEMERAL, TEMPORARY, PERFORMATIVE or TRANSIENT depending on the artist's intentions, the context in which the sculpture came about and its purpose.

Sculptural forms can be found in many cultures dating back to prehistoric times. In some societies sculptures took the form of figures such as STATUES or RELIEFS while in others they took on more abstract forms such as OBELISKS, standing stones or pyramids. The size and function of sculpture varies considerably depending on the context, materials and purpose. Traditionally, religious institutions, rulers and wealthy individuals were the main commissioners of sculpture. Sculpture in the form of statues, VOTIVES and shrines were commissioned to decorate palaces and sacred spaces such as churches, temples or tombs or to communicate a religious message, especially to a non-literate public. The form and presentation of sculpture was also influenced by religious prohibitions as religious institutions were the major PATRONS of art. Figurative representation is prohibited in Judaism and Islam resulting in ANICONISM and a preference for abstract and decorative sculptural forms. Figuration played an important role in Christianity evident in some of the innovations in sculptural practice during the Renaissance. However, even within Christianity there have been periods when figuration has been rejected resulting in ICONOCLASM, the destruction of figurative images of religious figures. Sculpture, especially MONUMENTAL sculpture, was also created for political purposes, to communicate a particular message such as triumph in battle or to reinforce the wealth and status of a ruler.

Rapid social, political, economic and cultural changes towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century influenced changes in the form, practice and purpose of sculpture. Prior to this period, sculptural training and practice was quite prescriptive: artists trained in academies and followed strict guidelines with regard to the form, subject and presentation of their sculptural works. Traditional sculpture tended to be figurative and created in a limited range of materials such as stone and bronze; therefore, the techniques of carving, modelling and casting were essential skills for a sculptor. However, new developments in technology, in particular PHOTOGRAPHY and FILM, meant that traditional concerns with naturalistic representation in drawing, painting and sculpture could be discarded in favour of more innovative and experimental approaches. Artists began to experiment with different types of materials and techniques reflecting their own interests and concerns.



Innovations associated with early AVANT-GARDE movements such as CUBISM, FUTURISM, DADAISM, SUPREMATISM, CONSTRUCTIVISM and SURREALISM resulted in the use of new materials and subject matter and the emergence of new ABSTRACT forms. Artists also began to experiment with FOUND OBJECTS and READYMADE objects and also with the new forms and materials derived from industrialisation. Emerging trends towards ABSTRACTION in MODERNIST sculpture emphasised consideration of the formal aspects of the artwork separate from its context. Innovations in sculpture were also influenced by new forms of public sculpture and memorialisation in the twentieth century in the aftermath of two world wars. Although figuration remained the dominant form of commemorative sculpture, new forms of memorialisation such as the CENOTAPH employed the ambiguous vocabulary of modernist abstraction seeking an alternative to earlier celebratory and triumphal forms. Developments in ARCHITECTURE and increased urbanisation and modernisation resulted in increased public spending on the built environment and a growing awareness of the role of sculpture in public spaces. This also generated new opportunities for artists to create large-scale sculpture in public spaces.

Image:
sculptural features from the plinth for queen victoria,
OPW, Royal Hospital KILMAINHAM

Developments in MINIMALISM, which favoured sculptural forms and focused on the material conditions of the artwork, shifted attention from representation to experience. They also expanded the possibility of sculpture in terms of its materials and construction, employing industrial materials and modes of fabrication. During the 1960s and '70s, prompted by social, cultural and political changes, new forms of practice such as ENVIRONMENTAL ART, LAND ART, INSTALLATION ART and SITE-SPECIFIC ART emerged providing new modes and contexts for sculptural practice.

Emphasising the relationship of the art object to its context and challenging its status as a commodity, these new forms of practice presented alternative ways to produce and display artworks outside the museum or gallery space such as in the landscape. Encountering a sculpture in a field or in an open public space is a different experience to encountering a sculpture in a gallery space. They also extended the possibilities for sculptural practice in terms of materials, subject matter, location and audience engagement. Informed by developments across a range of theoretical disciplines such as POSTSTRUCTURALISM, FEMINISM, POSTCOLONIAL THEORY, PSYCHOANALYSIS and CRITICAL THEORY, artists devised temporary, text-based and performative sculptural practice. Innovations in CONCEPTUAL ART shifted emphasis from the tangible art object to the concept, so that an idea or set of instructions could comprise an art work rather than a physical object.

Advances in technology, particularly in FILM, VIDEO and DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, the INTERNET and SOCIAL MEDIA have further expanded the possibilities of sculptural practice into the realm of the VIRTUAL and performative. Employing found, mass-produced, impermanent and APPROPRIATED objects and materials, contemporary artists continue to explore and expand the boundaries of sculpture in terms of form, materials, location and timeframe. Despite the expansion of the possibilities of sculpture beyond its physical properties into the more ephemeral space of ideas, sound, movement, light and virtual reality, the term sculpture continues to be employed to describe the construction and situation of an artwork in space.



Image:
Armourials from the gates
of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, 0924

What is sculpture...? [Sinéad Hogan](#)

what is sculpture?

10

A lot of 'stuff' could be referred to when asking the question 'what is sculpture?' It would be easy to become snowed under by such stuff and, in the hope of capturing its diversity, anxiously produce a list of keywords, names, descriptions of materials, processes, works and affects. I could then attempt to find a logic that might point to how all those things are caught in the net of such a category. Should this trail take the historical route?... but then where should I decide to start?... with the Greeks? Or do I go as far back as some of the oldest known 'sculptural' archeological artefacts such as the 'venus figurines?' These however pre-date our category, concept and understanding of 'art', as well as of subject, object and space, all of which are also historically shaped notions. And these inevitably frame any questioning around 'what is sculpture?' Asking what sculpture might be involves therefore many different intersecting histories. As well as an art history made up of periods, movements, artists and styles, we may need to include the cultural and anthropological histories of monuments and commemoration, of architectures and statuary, histories of votive rituals, totems, religious fetishes and decorative or symbolic architectural embellishments. Are all these relating to the same thing or, when approached through the lens of one of these histories, does the question 'what is sculpture?' itself show a plasticity and keep shifting its form and meaning? Matter, materials - the stuff that art gets made out of - also have histories, those of functions and effects, histories that lead us to question how we think about the role and phenomenology of things, leading to fundamental questions such as 'what is matter...?' Art as sculpture is a practice in dialogue with these histories.



Highly significant for sculpture whether taking place as structures, objects or spaces are the tensions and polemics of how cultures, societies and individuals approach the practice of 'giving form to ...' of creating objects to draw attention to a material presentation or 'stand for' or 'in place of' something or someone. These show themselves through different strategies of representation ranging from celebratory forms of construction to oppositional practices of iconoclastic destruction to spaces that reflect prohibitions against idol-making through providing a place for non-representation.

The question of sculpture also demands that we think about the 'object-nature' of art, its physicality, its materiality, its spatiality, its tactility. These questions in turn pose the further question of how sculpture is in relation with our embodied and temporal sense of being. It is therefore also the history of affect and the phenomenology of how we, as thinking-bodies,

experience the concrete material world. Sculptures can also be determinately different from this, showing a mute material refusal of psychological readings or projections. Sculpture often poses questions itself in terms of how it may sit in the context of everyday functional things, which we more usually differentiate (in often contested ways) as design, craft or architecture. And many sculptures now play self-reflexively with these discourses and disciplines through the recent sculptural history of the 'ready-made'. Further, we might also, in response to the material strangeness of sculptural practice, ask 'what is the role of non-object making, of de-materialising and performative practices within sculpture?' Thinking about these questions often operates by using the strategy of binary distinctions and relations, such as those between *matter-form* and *form-function* and *form-content*. Often it is through the very staging of these tensions that 'sculpture' takes place.

Therefore the simple clear elegance of the question 'what is sculpture?' may unfortunately need to be rephrased here into the more awkward form of 'what task does art set for the materials we encounter, when we encounter them as something transformable into something else, yet without a clearly designated functionality determining its final form?' Sculpture, as well as transforming materials into 'art', is also often required to perform other functions – its art 'work'. At times this may require it to represent, to depict, to affect, to evoke, to commemorate, to monumentalize, to decorate, or to physically stop us in our tracks and make us think or be amazed or surprised. If it is the kind of sculpture that is so effective that it physically stops us in our tracks, then what happens when that happens? Does sculpture demand that we look, or touch, or 'don't touch'? Are we required to imaginatively or literally activate it, participate as spectator from the 'outside' or become a necessary component material or participant 'within' the work?

The sculptor Eva Rothschild puts it like this, 'the question of its materiality should lead to a kind of intense looking where a sort of exchange takes place. Rather than a sort of passive looking, there is a sense of search, as sense of [...] demand from the eye in terms of what the sculpture might give it.' This approach might at first seem to emphasize the visuality of sculptural objects, but for all its fascinating visualities, a defining feature of sculpture is that it is never fully reducible to an image or verbal description (even though many sculptors may use image and text as components). Regardless of how high the quality of a particular documentation image or descriptive text is, it is always necessarily inadequate when it comes to those aspects of sculpture that by their sculptural nature can evidently not be presented through image and text as such. What is not reducible to an image is perhaps therefore what is most 'sculptural' about it, what is untranslatable. Just think of the experiential tactile impact of materials, structures and volumes and their affective qualities, such as hardness, roughness, smoothness, shininess, hollowness, transparency, solidness, spikiness, furriness, smelliness, disappearing-over-time-ness, stickiness, delicacy and all the almost infinite nuanced physicality of materials and forms



that I can merely evoke here, but cannot hand to you to touch and feel. I could show images that depict these but these would not communicate their visceral impact as a sculptural experience.

A crucial example for sculptural effect is that of scale. In order for something to appear huge or tiny the sculptural effect requires a shared space where a direct physical relation between our body encounters the other physical elements. Phenomenologically, sculpture is therefore a very different way of engaging with artwork than that which we experience through an image. Sculpture's way of using materials engages us by being able to affect our embodied situation through its situatedness, through the capacity to walk around it, experience it from different angles and sometimes in different spaces. (This can include different, complex and perhaps contradictory sculptural sensations we may encounter from, for example, tactile, plastic, free-standing 'presences' to the staging of immaterial, ungraspable 'absences'). Like a body or an architecture, one of the potentials for sculptural objects is to create an inside and an outside. Boundaries are formed which create

new spaces, volumes, and interventions in already existing spaces. These new spaces can be created by a sculptural intervention or sculptures can dynamically reactivate previously existing places.

Some sculptures appear as singular objects that aim for a decontextualised autonomy, their aspiration to be *as if* impossibly self-contained, ie. a 'pure-object-in-itself'. Others are made up of many different objects, forming component parts of a wider whole or constellation points in a series operating as a network of encounters. Some 'sculptures' are not even physical objects per se but the staging of interactions between materials and forces, or a showing by means of something else. Some move in the direction of merging with architecture and some in the direction of commodity and some seem to hardly exist except as a set of instructions related to the idea of what it might be.

When we engage with such phenomena as art-objects we are necessarily then led also to focus on how these relate to their support structures and frameworks. These are never separable aspects whether literal, conceptual or metaphorical and can be fascinating structures themselves. They include quasi-sculptural objects and spaces such as plinths or podiums, display cases, plazas, museums, galleries, public sites, private rooms, gardens, sides of motorways, boxes, mantelpieces, pockets, etc. Each space that waits or allows for sculptures to take place also reflects the changing histories of our relations to objects; for example, the courtyard of IMMA, once used for military rituals, displays and parades, now operates as an iconic open architectural setting, waiting for its next sculptural moment. The Highlanes Gallery in Drogheda is a 'decommissioned' chapel, repurposed and designed using a secularised white cube aesthetic with emptied alcoves and altar as part of its display area. The 'Fourth Plinth' project in London's Trafalgar Square keeps active a public space for temporary sculpture, setting these in direct dialogue with a different culture of permanent commemorative monumentality.

In taking on this task I requested permission not to rely on any images of specific artworks in this text, in preference for images of some spaces that might host sculpture. My justification for this 'cop-out', as well as the (as mentioned) inadequacy of representation through image of the question 'what is sculpture?' is that I am wary that any images I might have chosen would necessarily give a false sense of being exemplary. They might act as if 'explaining, demonstrating or illustrating,' as if pointing out the answer to the question 'what is sculpture?'... but of course in another way, each different work has a sculptural reality and particularity that, when encountered, *is* exactly *an* answer because each keeps open the tension between a work's singular particularity and its participation in the question 'what is sculpture?' This is not because the category 'sculpture' is now so huge that it indicates a meaningless relativity, but rather each work *adds* to the discourse *on sculpture* rather than closing it down.



Image:
Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square, London.

If we look then at the development of the objects, things or materials that have been variously considered 'sculpture' throughout the history of art, then we might say that, since modernity, our understanding of any firm category defining art, appears to follow the trajectory indicated by Karl Marx's famous quote, that 'all that is solid melts into air.'² If that is so, then what does asking the question 'what is sculpture?' mean for us, now? To keep asking that question means that we still want to know something about what it means to name some things as 'sculpture,' in differentiation from other things that are not-sculpture. To respond to *an* artwork from the IMMA collection, we can ask what makes Michael Craig Martin's work *On the Table* (1970) more than just 4 buckets of water, a tabletop and some rope? That is, what makes *On the Table* accurately described as both 4 buckets of water, a tabletop and some rope and *not* 4 buckets of water, a tabletop and some rope? What makes a work of art more than the sum of, and not reducible to, the materials that go into its making and yet is only those materials? What transforms those materials, processes or activities into *sculptural art*? In these peculiar ways sculptural objects appear to mimic en-soul-ed or animated things, have a fetish-like quality; yet, rather than being inspired by a force of agency, by a power to act autonomously, these objects are activated by a set of relations between environment, materials, spaces, makers, skills, techniques and these, gathered together, work as a place of interaction called 'sculpture'. In turn, when sculpture is set in place, it activates the specific area it occupies, as a set of relations, affects and discourses, like a concrete hyperlink. 4 buckets of water, a tabletop and some rope, hanging from a ceiling, become *enlivened* when *On the Table* is put into place. We could say it sets into action an example of the effect of the *joie de vivre* of 'what is sculpture?'

So, the term sculpture as we find it in a dictionary definition, is evidently no longer very evocative of what sculpture is. As a word 'sculpture' originally indicated a specific practice of carving or cutting and is now a loan word that gets applied to a wide variety of techniques and practices. It is interesting to note that 'sculpture' etymologically included the art of carving figures in relief and also the art of intaglio.³ This suggests that it may always have indicated a hybridity between object and form that emphasises the sense of materiality in any technique or technology, since intaglio is a form of printmaking that uses techniques of incision/cutting into a surface to make an image. Therefore the term sculpture perhaps focuses us on a sense of the material aspect of *all* artwork including those that operate predominantly through imagery. Every image has an object and material form for instance, where the image 'takes place' on a surface or through a screen with light effects, etc. This is why we can talk of both the 'sculptural' aspects of something that is not a physical sculpture as such and practices that are now forms of 'expanded sculpture' and installations which may not quite be limited to the experience of literally tactile objects as such, as may happen through screen-based or virtual technologies.



Image:
Michael Craig Martin, *On the Table*, 2004.



I propose therefore that it may be interesting to consider 'sculpture' to be something akin to a Theseus' ship. Theseus' ship is the famous philosophical thought experiment proposed by the Greek historian and biographer, Plutarch (c. AD 46 - AD 120). It poses the enigmatic question 'if all the material components of the object are replaced over time, is it still the same thing?' It was added to by the political philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588 - 1679), to provide what we could appropriately call here 'the curator's or conservationist's angle'. He asked what if all the worn bits of the ship were collected as they were being discarded and reconstructed according to the original design? You would then have two ships. Then the question becomes 'which would be *the* Theseus' ship?' The paradox opens out the classical question of *identity* and *difference* as an oscillation between materiality and essence and leads us to the enigmas of the affects of *presence*, change, time and continuity.

If we think of sculpture as a Theseus' ship, we might think of it currently as having sailed through a kind of modernity that reflects Marx's description of 'the solid melting into air'. Yet, after a focus privileging conceptualism, there is now currently a trend reengaging art with the question and nature of the 'object' and new ways of thinking materiality. Therefore, the story of sculpture seems like one where all that is solid melts into air ... and then condenses and reforms into different stuff, objects or plasticities and presumably these will then evaporate again and reform again. An example of a work that uses sculptural means to pose these kinds of questions for sculpture is *Shedboatshed (Mobile Architecture No 2)*, (2005), by Simon Starling, where a functioning shed on the banks of the Rhine was disassembled, with parts constructed into a boat that transported the other parts and all were then reassembled as a shed-sculpture in the Kunstmuseum, Basel.

Our story of sculpture has therefore been intertwined with the history and tensions that appear between the brute fact of the materiality of an object and the question of how function might determine its form and the apparent immateriality of the ideas informing what an object is or may be. These places of fascinating tension, when thought about, may best help answer why 4 buckets of water, a tabletop and some rope is also not 4 buckets of water, a tabletop and some rope but a sculpture known as *On the Table*, by Michael Craig Martin - one answer among many other answers, within IMMA's collection, to the question what is sculpture?

- 1 Tate Shots: Eva Rothschild, 24 July 2014, available at: www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/tateshots-eva-rothschild
- 2 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848.
- 3 Robert K. Barnhart, Ed., *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology*, The H. W. Wilson Company, p. 974.

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ABSTRACTION

Artwork that is non-figurative, non-representational and which is concerned with the formal elements of the artwork rather than the representation of subject matter.

ANICONISM

The avoidance of representation of divine beings, human figures or animals as part of a religious belief system. It is a feature of Islam and Judaism.

ARCHITECTURE

The discipline concerned with the planning, design and construction of the built environment in terms of its aesthetic, functional and social considerations.

AVANT-GARDE

French for advance guard or 'vanguard', a military term to describe an advance army group. The term is used to describe innovative, experimental or cutting edge artists and practitioners.

CONCEPTUAL ART

Originating in the 1960s, Conceptual Art emphasises the idea or concept rather than the production of a tangible art object. The ideas and methodologies of Conceptual Art continue to inform Contemporary Art practice.

CONSTRUCTIVISM

An abstract art movement founded by Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Rodchenko in Russia around 1915, which embraced developments in modern technology and industrialisation.

CONTEMPORARY

Refers to the present or recent past.

CONTEMPORARY ART

Refers to current and very recent art practice. Attributed to the period from the 1970s to the present, it also refers to works of art made by living artists. Contemporary Art can be driven by both theory and ideas, and is also characterized by a blurring of the distinction between art and other categories of cultural experience, such as television, cinema, mass media, entertainment and digital technology.

CRITICAL THEORY

A range of theories, drawn mainly from the social sciences and humanities, and associated with the Frankfurt School, which adopt a critical approach to understanding society and culture.

CUBISM

An early twentieth century movement led by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque which focused on the physical qualities of painting rather than the subject matter. It is characterised by the breaking up of the picture plane, merging of figure and ground, the adoption of multiple viewpoints, and simplification of form into geometric shapes. It is considered to be the forerunner of Abstract Art.

DADA

An anti-establishment and anti-war art movement founded in 1916 which used abstraction, nonsense texts and absurd performances to protest against the social and political conditions prevailing in Europe during World War I. Associated with the work of Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp and Marcel Duchamp.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Electronic data storage and transmission technology that enables immense amounts of information to be compressed on small storage devices, such as computers and telephones, that can easily be preserved, retrieved and transported.

ENVIRONMENTAL ART

A form of art practice which emerged in the 1960s in response to growing concerns about environmental and ecological issues. Traditionally associated with site-specific and installation practice, contemporary Environmental Art encompasses a broad range of media and methodologies.

EPHEMERAL

Something that is temporary, transient or lasting a very short time.

FEMINISM

A social, political, intellectual and philosophical movement advocating equal rights and representation for women in all aspects of society.

FILM

The medium used for the creation of still or moving images. The term is also used to describe a motion picture which is a sequence of images projected onto a screen, collectively referred to as cinema. In Contemporary Art, film is referred to as an art form.

FOUND OBJECTS

The re-use of objects, either manufactured or occurring in nature, which are not designed for artistic purpose, and are kept for their inherent qualities. Often exhibited in random juxtapositions to create new meanings.

FUTURISM

Early twentieth century movement which originated in Italy and embraced all things modern, including technology, speed, industrialisation and mechanisation. It also embraced violence and nationalism and was associated with Italian Fascism.

ICONOCLASM

The opposition to the worship of figurative or representational depictions of religious figures, often resulting in the destruction of paintings and sculptures of religious figures.

INSTALLATION

A broad term applied to a range of arts practice which involves the installation or configuration of objects in a space, where the totality of the objects and the space comprise the artwork.

INTERNET

A globalised system of computer networks linked by copper wire, fibre-optic cables and wireless connections, which provides services, resources and information, such as the hypertext of the World Wide Web, electronic mail, file sharing, online gaming and social networking sites.

LAND ART

A US art movement from the 1960s which emerged out of environmental and ecological concerns and the perceived limitations of the conventional art object or sculpture to respond to these concerns. Artworks were created within the landscape, often using the materials of the landscape.

MINIMALISM

An abstract art movement developed in the US in the 1960s which emphasised the use of simple, geometric forms and modern materials drawn from industry. It was an extension of abstraction focusing on the properties of the materials used but also a rejection of the ideology and discourse of Abstract Expressionism.

MODERN

Generally refers to the present or the contemporary, it is associated with the period of Modernism from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Modern can also be used to describe the period since the Enlightenment in the seventeenth century or the Renaissance in the fifteenth century.

MODERNISM / MODERN ART

Refers to art theory and practice from the 1860s to the late 1960s and is defined in terms of a linear progression of styles, periods and schools, such as Impressionism, Cubism and Abstract Expressionism.

MONUMENTAL

Something very large and significant associated with a monument – a structure used to celebrate or commemorate a significant person or event within a society

PATRON

Someone who provides support to artists or arts organisations in the form of finance, materials, conditions, encouragement, protection or access to markets. Traditionally, patrons were often key figures or institutions associated with the church, royalty, the aristocracy or the merchant classes.

PERFORMANCE ART

Involves an artist undertaking an action or actions where the artist's body is the medium. Performance art evolved in the late 1950s and is closely associated with Video Art as this was the primary means of recording this ephemeral art form.

PERFORMATIVE

The action of performing or acting out an aspect of an artwork either on the part of the artist or in collaboration with other artists or participants.

PHENOMENOLOGY

The study of the way things (phenomena) appear to us as an experience.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The process of recording an image – a photograph, on light-sensitive film or, in the case of digital photography, via a digital electronic or magnetic memory.

POSTCOLONIAL THEORY / POSTCOLONIALISM

An intellectual discourse of the late twentieth century drawing on theories from literature, film, philosophy and social and political science, concerned with the cultural legacy of colonialism in terms of national and cultural identity, race and ethnicity.

POSTSTRUCTURALISM

Theories and methods of analysis drawn from Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis which reject the objectivity of Structuralism emphasising the plurality of meaning and the instability of categories of intellectual enquiry. Associated with the work of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes.

PSYCHOANALYSIS

A theoretical paradigm for understanding human behaviour, and a form of intensive psychotherapeutic treatment in which free association, dream interpretation and consideration of resistance and transference are used to resolve psychological problems. Developed by Sigmund Freud in the late nineteenth century, there are many strands of psychoanalytic theory, including Object Relations Theory, Jungian Analytical Psychology and Lacanian Psychoanalysis.

READYMADE

A term used in manufacturing to distinguish between handmade and manufactured goods, adopted by French artist Marcel Duchamp to describe the selection and modification of a manufactured object by an artist to create an art work.

RELIEF

A raised sculptural form created on a two dimensional surface, such as a wood or stone panel usually by carving or chiselling.

SCULPTURE

A three-dimensional art object which is either created or constructed by an artist. Includes constructions, assemblages, installations, sound, new media, etc.

SITE

The space in which an artwork is located either temporarily or permanently, such as a gallery space, a space in an art fair or biennial, a public space or a site-specific space where the artwork is created in response to the conditions of the space.

SITE SPECIFIC

Artwork that is created in response to a specific site with the intention of being located in the site and where removal from the site would change the meaning of the artwork. Often associated with Installation Art, Land Art and Public Art.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Internet based platforms such as Facebook and Twitter for people to interact share and information and ideas.

SOUND ART

A form of art practice concerned with sound, listening and hearing, often involving an interdisciplinary approach. Sound Art encompasses acoustics, electronics, audio media and technology, the body, ambient sound, etc.

STATUE

A figurative three-dimensional sculpture traditionally made in stone or bronze.

SUPREMATISM

Russian abstract art movement founded by Kasimir Malevich around 1913 which emphasised the supremacy of form expressed through the use of a limited range of colours and geometric shapes.

SURREALISM

An anti-establishment, literary and visual art movement founded in 1924 by André Breton and influenced by Dada, psychoanalysis and Sigmund Freud's theories of the unconscious.

TEMPORARY

Short-term, brief or transient.

TOTEM POLE

An arrangement of symbolic figures and animals carved on a wooden pole usually associated with North American indigenous cultures. Totem poles serve many purposes such as celebration, commemoration, recounting local history or even to ridicule or shame.

TRANSIENT

Brief, passing, not long-term.

VIDEO

Technology used to record, store and project static images in a moving format similar to film. The production of lightweight, low-cost video technology, such as the Sony Portapak, in the late 1960s contributed to the growth in experimental video making during this period.

VIDEO ART

Artwork created using a video recording device. Video Art emerged as an art form in the 1960s and 1970s due to the development of new technology, and it is a prevalent medium in Contemporary Art practice.

VIRTUAL REALITY

A simulated environment generated by computer technology and experienced through sensory stimuli.

VOTIVE

An offering in support of a wish or expression of devotion usually in a religious context such as a church or temple.

The following is a select list of resources. A more detailed list of resources can be found on IMMA's website www.imma.ie

Information Websites

AN - The Artists Information Company
www.a-n.co.uk

Artcyclopedia
www.artcyclopedia.com

Intute
www.intute.ac.uk

The Artists
www.the-artists.org

STOT
www.stot.org

Sculpture and Public Art Websites

Artangel
www.artangel.co.uk

Art-public
www.art-public.com

Cass Sculpture Foundation
www.sculpture.org.uk

International Sculpture Centre
www.sculpture.org

Publicartonline
www.publicartonline.org.uk

Public Art Development Trust
www.henry-moore.org/hmi

Public Monuments and Sculpture Association (PMSA)
www.pmsa.org.uk

Republicart
www.republicart.net

Sheffield Hallam University
www.shu.ac.uk

IXIA
www.ixia.org.uk

Public Art Fund
www.publicartfund.org

Sculpture Network
www.sculpture-network.org/en/home.html

Situations
www.situations.org.uk

SKOR
www.skor.nl

Storm King, NY
www.stormking.org

Irish Sculpture and Public Art websites

EV+A
www.eva.ie

Firestation Artists Studios
www.firestation.ie

Irish Architectural Foundation
www.architecturefoundation.ie

Leitrim Sculpture Centre
www.leitrimsculpturecentre.ie

Publicart.ie
www.publicart.ie

National Sculpture Factory
<http://nationalsculpturefactory.com>

Sculpture in Woodland
<http://www.coillte.ie/index.php?id=249>

Sculpture in Parklands
www.sculptureintheparklands.com

Visual Artists Ireland
www.visualartists.ie

Journals and Magazines

Art and Architecture Journal
www.artandarchitecturejournal.com

Art Forum Magazine
www.artforum.com

Art Monthly
www.artmonthly.co.uk

Art Newspaper
www.theartnewspaper.com

Art Review
www.artreview.com

Circa Art Magazine
www.recirca.com

Contemporary
www.contemporary-magazines.com

Critical Inquiry
www.criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu

E-flux
www.e-flux.com/journal

Flash Art
www.flashartonline.com

Frieze Art Journal
www.frieze.com

The International Journal of Cultural Policy
www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10286632.asp

Irish Arts Review
www.irishartsreview.com

Journal of Visual Culture
www.sagepub.com/journals

Printed Project
www.visualartists.ie

Third Text
www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09528822.asp

The Visual Artists New Sheet
www.visualartists.ie

The Vacuum
www.thevacuum.org.uk

Variant
www.variant.randomstate.org

Museums and Galleries International Museums and Galleries

Art Institute of Chicago
www.artic.edu

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Victoria
www.accaonline.org.au

Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead
www.balticmill.com

Centres Georges Pompidou, Paris
www.cnac-gp.fr

Dia Art Foundation, New York
www.diacentre.org

Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao
www.guggenheim-bilbao.es

ICA Institute of Contemporary Arts, London
www.ica.org.uk

Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin
www.kw-berlin.de

Maxxi, Rome
www.maxxi.parc.beniculturali.it/english/museo.htm

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
www.metmuseum.org

Moderna Museet, Stockholm
www.modernamuseet.se

MOMA Museum of Modern Art, New York
www.moma.org

Mori Art Museum, Japan
www.mori.art.museum/eng

Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago
www.mcachicago.org

Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Finland
www.kiasma.fi

Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
www.moca.org

Musee d'Orsay, Paris
www.musee-orsay.fr

Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
www.mca.com.au

New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York
www.newmuseum.org

Reina Sofia, Madrid
www.museoreinasofia.es

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
www.sfmoma.org

Saatchi Gallery, London
www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk

Serpentine Gallery, London
www.serpentinegallery.org

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
www.guggenheim.org

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
www.stedelijk.nl

Tate, UK
www.tate.org.uk

Whitechapel Gallery, London
www.whitechapel.org

White Cube, London
www.whitecube.com

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
www.whitney.org

Witte de With, Rotterdam
www.wdw.nl

Irish Museums and Galleries

Butler Gallery, Kilkenny
www.butlertgallery.com

Catalyst Arts Gallery, Belfast
www.catalystarts.org.uk

Context Gallery, Derry
www.contextgallery.co.uk

Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork
www.crawfordartgallery.com

Cross Gallery, Dublin
www.crossgallery.ie

Dock Arts Centre,
Carrick on Shannon
www.thedock.ie

Douglas Hyde Gallery,
Dublin
www.douglashydegallery.com
Draiocht, Dublin
www.draiocht.ie

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

Fenton Gallery, Cork
www.artireland.net/systmpl/

Gallery of Photography,
Dublin
www.galleryofphotography.ie

Galway Arts Centre
www.galwayartscentre.ie

Green On Red Gallery,
Dublin
www.greenonredgallery.com

Hallward Gallery, Dublin
www.hallwardgallery.com

Highlanes Gallery,
Drogheda
www.highlanes.ie

Irish Museums Association
www.irishmuseums.org

IMMA
Irish Museum of Modern Art
www.imma.ie

Kerlin Gallery, Dublin
www.kerlin.ie

Kevin Kavanagh Gallery,
Dublin
www.kevinkavanaghgallery.ie

Lewis Glucksman Gallery,
Cork
www.glucksman.org

Limerick City Gallery of Art
www.limerickcitygallery.ie

Model Arts and Niland Gallery, Sligo
www.modelart.ie

Mother's Tankstation,
Dublin
www.motherstankstation.com

Pallas Contemporary Projects, Dublin
www.pallasprojects.org

Project Arts Centre, Dublin
www.projectartscentre.ie

RHA
The Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin
www.royalhibernianacademy.com

Rua Red Gallery, Dublin
www.ruared.ie

Rubicon Gallery, Dublin
www.rubicongallery.ie

Temple Bar Gallery & Studios, Dublin
www.templebargallery.com

Taylor Galleries, Dublin
www.taylorgalleries.ie

Biennials and Art Fairs

Documenta, Kasel
www.documenta.de

ev+a, Limerick
www.eva.ie

Freize Art Fair, London
www.freizeartfair.com

Istanbul Biennial
www.iksv.org/bienal11

Liverpool Biennial
www.biennial.com/

Manifesta, European Biennale of Contemporary Art
www.manifesta.org

Moscow Biennale
www.2nd.moscowbiennale.ru

Bienal de São Paulo
www.bienalsaopaulo.globo.com

Shanghai Biennale
www.shanghaiennale.com

Skulptur Projekte, Münster
www.skulptur-projekte.de

Venice Biennale
www.labiennale.org

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List of illustrations
Page 2
Alcove in formal gardens, Royal Hospital Kilmainham. Photo: Sinéad Hogan.

Page 5
Crate, IMMA. Photo Lisa Moran.

Page 7
Sculptural features from the plinth for Queen Victoria, OPW, Royal Hospital Kilmainham. Photo: Sinéad Hogan.

Page 9
Armorial from the Gates of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, OPW. Photo: Sinéad Hogan.

Page 11
Unidentified photographer, The selection of sculpture for the Summer Exhibition, 1933. Photo: Copyright Royal Academy of Arts, London.

Page 13
Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda. Photo: Jenny Matthews.

Page 15
Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square, London. Mayor of London's Fourth Plinth Commission. Photo: Greater London Authority.

Page 17
Michael Craig Martin, On the Table, 2004. Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art.

Page 18
The Brighter Boat, National Museum of Ireland. Photo: National Museum of Ireland.

The question of sculpture also demands that we think about the 'object-nature' of art, its physicality, its materiality, its spatiality, its tactility. These questions in turn pose the further question of how sculpture is in relation with our embodied and temporal sense of being. It is therefore also the history of affect and the phenomenology of how we, as thinking-bodies, experience the concrete material world.

Sinéad Hogan

What is Sculpture? is part of series 3 of the *What is_?* information programme which aims to provide a general introduction to key concepts and themes in Modern and Contemporary Art. *What is Sculpture?* provides an overview of the broad subject of sculpture. It includes a comprehensive essay by **Sinéad Hogan** *What is Sculpture?*