

Catalogue

Nowhere without no(w) is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue with contributions from Fergus Daly, Brian Dillon, Jörg Heiser, Caoimhin Mac Giolla Léith, Rebecca O'Dwyer, Benjamin Stafford and Rachel Thomas. Available from the IMMA shop for €15.00.

Edition

Nowhere without no(w) is accompanied by a limited edition of *Threshold* by Walker and Walker. Edition of 50, 30x30cm, printed on rag paper. Available framed or unframed from the IMMA shop from €95.

Associated Talks and Events

For a full programme of IMMA talks and events programmed in association with this exhibition please see the IMMA website www.imma.ie

IMMA thank Walker and Walker for their commitment and dedication to this exhibition. Thanks also to our partners Matheson, supporting Irish Art at IMMA, and our invaluable IMMA Members and Patrons, all of whom have made this exhibition possible. The artists thank Grace Weir, John Dingliana, Victoria Evans, Niall Sweeney, Wolfgang Fetz, Janice Hough, and the IMMA 1000 donors who supported a residency for the artists at IMMA.

This exhibition is curated by Rachel Thomas, Senior Curator: Head of Exhibitions, IMMA.

Have a question about an artwork? Want to know more? Ask a member of our Visitor Engagement Team, easily identifiable through their blue lanyards.

IMMA
COURTYARD GALLERIES – EAST GROUND
15 FEBRUARY – 03 JUNE 2019

Walker and Walker Nowhere without no(w)



Matheson

THE DEAN

DUBLIN



An Roinn Cultúir,
Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta
Department of Culture,
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

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Nowhere without no(w) is an exhibition of new and existing work from Irish artists Walker and Walker.

As is common in their practice, this exhibition presents works made in a variety of mediums, including neon, steel, pearl, binary code and more. These diverse materials are united by a rigorous practice that is primarily focused on language and its transformative effects. The importance of language is apparent in Walker and Walker's prolific use of text within their work and in the precise nature of their titles, many of which borrow from or present variations on lines from poetry and literature.

Room 1

On entering the exhibition, you encounter the first work almost unconsciously: the usual door handle leading into the gallery has been replaced with a door handle designed by Walter Gropius, a 20th century German architect, urban planner and theorist. The handle is both a tactile introduction to Walker and Walker's work, while also immediately linking you to the canon of art, design and literature from which their work takes influence and inspiration.

The presence before him was a presence (2019) continues Walker and Walker's series of works fabricated in neon. These works are often hung facing windows or only seen clearly in reflection. In this case, viewing the neon sign in the black mirror opposite it reveals the words 'the presence before him was a presence'. This phrase is taken from *The Jolly Corner*, a short story by the American writer Henry James in which the protagonist is confronted with a ghostly alter ego. This ghost represents the different paths he could have taken in his life, and consequently, the different people he might have become.

In an effort to uncover its origin and/or in the process compromising it (2019) features a wall-mounted vitrine containing a single pearl. It has been hollowed out, using a small drill bit, in an attempt to reveal

the miniscule piece of grit that marks the beginning of its formation in the shell of an oyster. In the process, the pearl has been altered, and has taken on a new form.

A stainless-steel sculpture placed on the floor mimics the tree holders/guards seen on some city streets. *Oak tree, waiting* (2015) becomes an object filled with the potential to hold a tree, but also representing the potential presence of a tree. This work identifies another ongoing theme within Walker and Walker's work; the tension between presence and absence.

Room 2

In this room, the nature of language is explored further. Aluminium lettering suspended on the wall spells out the phrase 'I say: a fl w r! And there arises musically, and its very essence, that which remains absent from every bouquet.' This phrase is taken from an essay by the French Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé. Reflecting on Mallarmé's desire to liberate language from what it signifies, Walker and Walker have deliberately omitted the vowels from the word 'flower', to emphasise the declarative nature of the spoken word as opposed to the written. Language is further explored in the *In-between letters* (2013) series. Seen throughout the exhibition it appears first in this room. These small, seemingly abstract sculptures represent what are usually negative spaces found between letters in words. Taken collectively these works provoke us to think about language and its construction and innate limitations.

Another ongoing concern of Walker and Walker's is engaging with and re-examining moments and works from art history. The work *Widow's pane, or bachelor's even, after Marcel Duchamp, after Charles Baudelaire* (2015) connects two major reference points for the artists. The first of these is the highly influential artist Marcel Duchamp. A Conceptual artist, he presented objects with their meanings obscured or reconfigured, similar to Walker and Walker's concern with language and form. Charles Baudelaire, the French poet, is a major

influence in his exploration of language and translation, particularly that of Edgar Allan Poe. On the opposite wall above the fireplace is an etching of Baudelaire by famous French modernist painter Édouard Manet, taken from a study for his work *Music in the Tuileries*, in the collection of Dublin City Gallery, the Hugh Lane, Dublin.

Room 3

Included in this exhibition is Walker and Walker's feature length film made in 2010 *Mount Analogue revisited*. Set entirely in one room and featuring a dialogue-heavy script, the film takes as its major influence and starting point a landmark novel by French surrealist writer René Daumal entitled *Mount Analogue: A Novel of Symbolically Authentic Non-Euclidean Adventures in Mountain Climbing* (1952). Although the film holds true to the spirit of the book, it is not a literal adaptation, and references other writers, who advocated the breaching of the limits of rationality in the pursuit of Utopia.

Room 4

In the final room of the exhibition, we see the work *Morning star/evening star* (2019). On the table in the centre of the room are a drawing plotter and a computer monitor. The plotter is drawing in real time the transit of Venus through space. The planet's course and its subsequent drawing takes eight years to complete, resulting in a pattern known as the Venus rose, due to its resemblance to the flower of a rose. The computer monitor on this table displays the transit of Venus translated to binary code in synchronisation with the drawing. Though we now know Venus to be a single planet, it once existed as two separate stars in people's minds. These two radically different visualisations of the same information explore the philosopher Gottlob Frege's linguistic challenge of explaining an identity statement such as 'The Evening Star is the Morning Star'.

The wall-mounted works behind the table appear to represent stars in the night sky but are in fact created through blacking

out Mallarmé's poem 'A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance' which was published in broad sheet format, leaving as the only remaining points of light the inside of any letter 'o' where it appears on the page. Above the door, a plaque reads 'Temenos'. Temenos is a Greek concept related to the border between worlds, a place marked off as holy or separate. The phrase is also used by founding psychoanalyst Carl Jung as representing a 'squared circle', or a space where thought and mental work can take place. The courtyard of IMMA lies beyond the door over which this work is placed, and it contains a circle within a square. Taken as a point of departure from the exhibition into the wider museum, Walker and Walker leave this plaque as a statement of intent and of a summation of their work as pieces that provoke and encourage thought.

Artist Biographies

Joe Walker and Pat Walker are twin brothers who began collaborating as Walker and Walker in 1989. They have exhibited widely nationally and internationally, including co-representing Ireland at the 51st International Venice Biennale in 2005 with their film installation *Nightfall*. Recent exhibitions include *Bookish*, Thomas Park Gallery, Seoul, South Korea (2016), *I went to the woods*, Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork (2016), *Return Inverse*, Magazin4, Bregenz Kunstverein, Austria (2015), *Punctum, Reflections on Photography*, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg, Austria (2014), *Gracelands: The Dark Thoughts that Surround Neon*, IMMA, Dublin (2014) and *Super 8*, Christopher Grimes Gallery, LA (2011). Their film *Mount Analogue revisited* (2010) was listed in film journal *Senses of Cinema* by Fergus Daly as one of the best films of 2010.

Image credit:
Walker and Walker
The owl of Minerva, 2012
Taxidermy owl, metal fittings, wood
Image courtesy Walker and Walker,
photograph by Ros Kavanagh.