

IMMA

IMMA|texts

Art and Politics

call for papers

In April 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., artist Hans Haacke wrote to his friend Jack Burnham questioning the role of art to address political subjects:

Last week's murder of Dr. King . . . pressed something into focus that I have known for long but never realised so bitterly and helplessly, namely, that what we are doing, the production and the talk about sculpture, has no relation to the urgent problems of our society . . . Nothing, but really absolutely nothing is changed by whatever type of painting or sculpture or happening you produce on the level where it counts, the political level. Not a single napalm bomb will not be dropped by all the shows of 'Angry Arts.' *Art is utterly unsuited as a political tool.* No cop will be kept from shooting a black by all the light-environments in the world . . . [W]hy the hell am I working in this field at all. Again an answer is never at hand that is credible, but it did not particularly disturb me [in the past]. I still have no answer, but I am no longer comfortable.

Hans Haacke, in *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader*, eds. Will Bradley and Charles Esche, Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007, p. 174, (italics added).

In 1968 Haacke declared art 'utterly unsuited as a political tool;' yet, he went on to make, after this date, some of his most 'political' work, such as *MoMA Poll*, 1970; *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*, 1971; *Und Ihr habt doch gesiegt (And You Were Victorious After All)*, 1988; *Germania*, 1993 and *Der Bevolkerung*, 2000.

Fifty years later, artists and writers continue to ask questions about the relationship between art and politics. In the current political and cultural climate, these questions seem all the more pressing.

Call for Papers

IMMA is seeking papers addressing the subject of art and politics. While all paper proposals will be considered, we welcome papers from students and researchers and also papers that address aspects of IMMA's Exhibitions, Collections, and Engagement and Learning Programmes. For example, in 2019 IMMA will be showing the work of Columbian artist [Doris Salcedo](#) *Acts of Mourning*, (April – July, 2019); work from Les Levine's *The Troubles: An Artist's Document of Ulster*, (Feb – May, 2019); and also a [Derek Jarman](#) retrospective, *Protest!*, (Nov 2019 – Feb 2020). (See IMMA's website for more information www.imma.ie)

The organisers would also like to encourage applicants to take account of some or all of the following questions in the development of their ideas:

- What is political art?
- What forms can political art take?
- What is the relationship between art and politics?
- What is the relevance of politics to visual art, and vice versa?
- Must art effect 'change' in order to be considered political?
- Can an artist control the political import of their work?
- Are certain kinds of political art more acceptable than others?
- Should art be political?
- Can art be non-political? If so, when?
- Should art be, under given circumstances, a political tool?

A select number of papers will be published in IMMA's online magazine and in a stand-alone publication IMMA|texts. Selected papers will receive an honorarium of €200.

Format of essay:

Title
Author's name
College or institutional affiliation, if relevant
Summary – one to two sentences that describe the subject of the essay
Main text
Notes – numbered endnotes, not footnotes
Key words
Bibliography
Acknowledgements

Style:

PDF, Ariel, 10pt font, single spacing.

Images

images should be embedded in the text complete with captions (max 5MB total for essay). If selected, the author will be responsible for securing copyright permissions.

Word count:

2000 – 4000 words max not including endnotes and bibliography

Completed papers in PDF format should be sent via email (max 5MB) to:
Lisa Moran,
Curator: Engagement and Learning, Third Level and Research
Irish Museum of Modern Art
e: lisa.moran@imma.ie

Deadline 1 May 2019
