

## Gerard Byrne

17 January – 8 March 2013, Galleries 1, 8 & Victor Petitgas Gallery (Gallery 9)

The Whitechapel Gallery presents the first major UK survey of Irish artist Gerard Byrne. Byrne is renowned for his films which revisit historic moments and conversations, ranging from an interview with philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre; science fiction writers Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov discussing the future; and articles from Playboy magazine. The exhibition traces Byrne's work from 1998 to today and includes seven major film installations, a series of photographs and the UK premiere of his latest multi-screen installation, *A man and a woman make love* (2012).

Byrne's work explores the way we build our understanding of the present through reconstructing the past. His diverse subjects have encompassed stories around the location of a Samuel Beckett play or the history of Minimalist art. Using actors, Byrne reconstructs conversations and events from high to popular culture, approaching them in a humorous, playful way and often in a consciously artificial style.

Gallery 1 shows his latest multi-screen installation, *A man and a woman make love* (2012). The work recreates a discussion held in the 1920s by the Surrealist group of artists and writers, including André Breton, Jacques Prévert and Yves Tanguy, in the form of a TV play with a live studio audience. The film unfolds across five large screens spread throughout the darkened space of Gallery 1, the story appearing and disappearing from one to the next.

This gallery also presents the UK premiere of *A thing is a hole in a thing it is not* (2010). Taking its title from a statement by sculptor Carl Andre, this five screen work re-stages key moments from 1960s art history, including Robert Morris's performative sculpture *Column* (1961), in which an upright square column after a few minutes on stage falls over, and a radio interview between US minimalist artists Frank Stella, Donald Judd and Dan Flavin in 1964. At different points during the day across the same screens, *Homme à femmes (Michel Debrane)* (2004) is shown, where French actor Michel Debrane re-enacts an interview in which philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre discusses his lifelong relationship with feminist writer Simone de Beauvoir as first published in *Le Nouvel Observateur* in 1977.

Works shown in Galleries 8 and 9 include *1984 and beyond* (2005-7) which features a restaging of a discussion between twelve well-known science fiction writers, including Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov, about their vision of the future. First published in Playboy magazine in the 1960s, the conversation shows the optimistic views of the writers at a time of political unrest in the United States.

Gerard Byrne's ongoing series of photographs are shown alongside his film installations. The exhibition includes images from his ongoing series of newsstands which capture magazine displays in newsagents, offering a snapshot of social-political history over the years.

## Press Release

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## Notes for Editors

- Gerard Byrne was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1969. He completed a BA from the National College of Art & Design, Dublin, 1991 and an MFA from the New School for Social Research, New York, 1996. He later studied at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center Program, New York 1997-8 and the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York, 1999. Since 2007 Byrne has been a Professor of Art at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen. Byrne is also a visiting lecturer at numerous institutions including The Royal College of Art, London and the National College of Art & Design, Dublin. In 2006, Byrne's work *New sexual lifestyles* was included in Whitechapel Gallery's *Short History of Performance IV*. That year he was also a recipient of a Paul Hamlyn award. In 2007 he represented Ireland in the Venice Biennale. Other major presentations of his work at international biennials include: dOCUMENTA, Kassel, 2012; Performa, New York, and the Venice Biennale, 2011; the biennales of Auckland, 2010; Gwangju and Sydney in 2008; Lyon in 2007; Tate Triennial in 2006; and the Istanbul Biennale in 2003. Solo exhibitions include: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 2012, IMMA, Dublin, 2011; Milton Keynes Gallery, 2011; The Renaissance Society, Chicago, 2011; ICA Boston and the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (both 2008); Dusseldorf Kunstverein, 2007; Contemporary Art Centre, Lithuania, 2007; MUMOK, Vienna, 2006; BAK, Utrecht, 2004; the Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2003. His work is included in public collections including: Tate, London; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; MUDAM, Luxembourg; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; FRAC Nord Pas-de-Calais and Pays de Loire; Arts Council of Ireland. Gerard Byrne currently lives and works in Dublin.
- *Gerard Byrne* is organised by the Whitechapel Gallery. The exhibition will tour to Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm.
- The exhibition is curated by Kirsty Ogg, Curator, Whitechapel Gallery.
- *Gerard Byrne* is accompanied by a catalogue published by the Whitechapel Gallery including an interview with the artist. Price £19.95.
- Gerard Byrne has created a limited edition for the Whitechapel Gallery to accompany the exhibition.
- Gerard Byrne is represented by the Lisson Gallery, London, Green on Red Gallery, Dublin, and by Galerie Nordenhake, Stockholm. *Present Continuous Past*, an exhibition of Gerard Byrne's work, will be on display at the Lisson Gallery from 30 January – 9 March 2013.
- *Gerard Byrne* is supported by Culture Ireland as part of Ireland's EU Presidency Culture Programme 2013.

## Visitor Information

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm, Thursdays, 11am – 9pm.  
Admission free. Whitechapel Gallery, 77 – 82 Whitechapel High Street,  
London E1 7QX. Nearest London Underground Station: Aldgate East,  
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