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IRELAND IN PERSPECTIVE
THE ART OF BRIAN O'DOHERTY/PATRICK IRELAND

2 Volumes

Volume I : Text

Brenda Moore McCann

A Thesis submitted in candidacy for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Dublin, Trinity College

Faculty of Arts

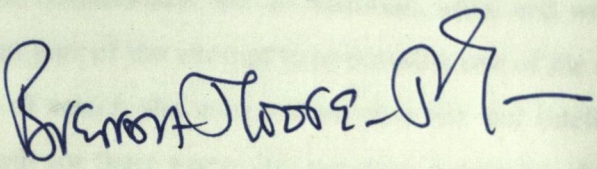
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My chief debt of gratitude in writing this thesis goes to Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland, not only for making the art but also for his constant courtesy, patience and encouragement to a neophyte in the area. The common bond of sharing a medical training, Irish identity and an interest in art was certainly a factor in the mutual trust engendered in both writer and subject. The generous assistance of the artist's wife and sometime collaborator, the art historian, artist and writer, Barbara Novak, has been an important part of the attempt to re-envision one of the most exciting periods in recent art history, of which she was a close observer and intellectual participant. I also wish to thank both for their warm and generous hospitality during research visits to New York and Todi, Italy.

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help in the initial stages of research, and whose friendship has been an added bonus. Secondly, Dorothy Walker, a very early champion of O'Doherty/Ireland's work, was more than generous with her time, providing me with colourful testimony of the Irish context, including opposition, to contemporary art in general and to O'Doherty/Ireland's in particular. Through her numerous critical writings she also provided much valuable material. I am grateful too to Anne Crookshank and Hilary Pyle, for access to material relating to O'Doherty and Jack B. Yeats.

Artists Robert Ballagh, Brian King, Theo McNab, Sue McNab, Noel Sheridan, Nigel Rolfe, Patrick Scott, all made comments which were of help in contextualising work carried out in Ireland. Declan McGonagle, George Dawson, Barbara Dawson, Liam Kelly and Patrick Murphy must also be thanked for their insightful comments. Barra Boydell generously assisted in elucidating the serial aspects of contemporary music. Medical colleagues, but especially Noel Martin, shared many of their memories of that period of the artist's life. The artist's family but in particular his niece, the artist Ruth O'Doherty-Walshe, was most helpful.

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SUMMARY

This dissertation set out to evaluate the contribution of an artist known by the double artistic persona, Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland. It is the first critical analysis of the artist's work over the past forty years. Taking as its starting point the pioneering role within the first generation of conceptual artists in New York during the late 1960s, it seeks to establish the nature of that contribution, then, and since then, and to place the *oeuvre* within its appropriate historical context. By so doing, in addition to providing the fullest account yet of one of conceptual art's significant practitioners, it provides a greater understanding of the history of a relatively neglected area of contemporary art until recent times.

From its inception, conceptual art has been identified with the practice of a certain few well known artists, a fact which has tended to obscure that of contemporary pioneering artists whose practice differed from theirs. Recent scholarship has begun to identify the widely diverse approaches, practices and concerns of the latter. O'Doherty/Ireland's art falls within this group of artists. While the reasons for such a delay in recognition of these wider tendencies do not form a major part of the dissertation's focus, some aspects of that delay are addressed where relevant to the particular practice under discussion. The approach taken is thematic rather than chronological and is confined largely to the art of O'Doherty/Ireland. The large volume of internationally recognised art criticism by O'Doherty is not examined formally in the dissertation, however, parts of it are included where it provides support to an interpretation of the art.

The dissertation is divided into two parts. Part I maps out the foundations and sources upon which O'Doherty/Ireland's artistic enterprise is based. It covers the historical, theoretical, artistic and social contexts from within which the art arose. While some published essays upon the artist's work allude to some of these contexts, none have done so in the same depth. It includes selected works which demonstrate shifts in thinking which occurred within these contexts. Part II identifies and explores three main themes associated with the *oeuvre*. Works have been selected to illustrate each theme, but at the same time, the interlocking nature of the themes throughout the *oeuvre* is emphasised.

The Introduction aims to set the dissertation in context. It outlines other work of relevance in the field where available, the sources and methodology used, and a summary of the findings. Chapter one is necessarily a long chapter, given the labyrinth of interwoven concerns which underpin conceptual art, and this artist's work in particular. It is divided into a number of subchapters which discuss the various contexts from which O'Doherty/Ireland's art specifically, evolved. Firstly, overall, it attempts to lay out art historical, socio-political and theoretical contexts within which the work and its themes are analysed in subsequent Chapters. While not intended to be a comprehensive overview of the tangled history of conceptual art, it primarily aims to emphasise particular elements within it which are seen to be of crucial significance to this artist's practice and concerns. Secondly it aims to document a sense of the intensity and excitement of an exhilarating time in western life and its art, using as primary sources the artist and his circle, in conjunction with published material from the time. Events in the artist's life are introduced only where they are deemed relevant to the formulation of his art, as for example, his emigration to America in the late 1950s. Thirdly, it identifies and discusses various intellectual sources thought to be relevant to the practice of the artist. An artwork, but also an early conceptual art exhibition, *Aspen 5/6*, is included in this section as an examplar of those sources. It also functions as a kind of manifesto for O'Doherty/Ireland's art. The systems and models used throughout his practice are also presented, including a discussion of one such model, the artist's book. The series of art critical essays, *Inside the White Cube*, are included in Part I, since they provide important indicators of the theoretical and conceptual basis of O'Doherty/Ireland's deconstruction of the gallery space, realised most fully in his Rope Drawings installations, discussed in Part II. The artwork *Rick*, is included as another example of O'Doherty/Ireland's institutional critique.

The three Chapters in Part II which follow, identify and discuss the major themes of language, perception and identity within O'Doherty/Ireland's art. Sub-themes and concepts such as 'location,' the 'self' and 'other,' are interspersed throughout all three Chapters. Chapter 2 outlines the approach to language within contemporary art practice, and explores the theme within O'Doherty/Ireland's art, using major works selected by the author to illustrate his particular approach. The background to his introduction of the

archaic Celtic Ogham language into contemporary art, and the differences in his approach to language from that of colleagues is discussed for the first time. Critical reviews of various works are included.

Chapter 3 gives an outline of issues surrounding perception within contemporary art. It explores O'Doherty/Ireland's approach to perception which, it argues, is related to both the psychology and politics of perception, pursued through the ideas outlined in Chapter 1. Key works are selected by both artistic persona, where they demonstrate relevant points made in the discussion. Included are works from the many different categories within the *oeuvre*, of which sculpture, drawings on paper, and installation, represent a few. Critical reviews of work both in Ireland and America are included.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the theme of identity and explores the way in which O'Doherty/Ireland has critically engaged with the subjectivity of *both* viewer and artist through a series of drawings, paintings, and Ogham sculptures. The political nature of the gesture to change his artist name during a performance called *Name Change* (1972) is contextualised in some detail, given its critical importance within the *oeuvre* and for his reputation. The artistic context of this work is explored for the first time, where the notion of the meta-artist is applied. *The Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* (1966), another key work from earlier in the *oeuvre* is presented and discussed in relation to O'Doherty/Ireland's art and to the reception of Duchamp's art and ideas at the time.

The study concludes by placing the art within an international and an Irish context. It draws together the findings of the preceding Chapters to demonstrate that O'Doherty/Ireland's art is indeed a significant contribution to the history of contemporary art. The first five Appendices give further information about the artist and his exhibition history. Appendix B, "Works in Ireland 1940s & 1950s," represents only extant works which were available for documentation either in Irish collections or in the artist's own collection. The last two Appendices list some of the major exhibitions of Minimal and Conceptual art between 1964 and 1972.

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Page size 17.8 x 14 cm

Publisher: National Excelsior Publications, Hollywood

Edition 400

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Publisher: Universal Limited Art Editions, New York

Edition 27

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Publisher: Galerie Wide White Space, Antwerp,

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Edition 100 (numbered)

Collection Museum of Modern Art, New York

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Publisher: The Limited Editions Club, New York

Edition 300

Collection Museum of Modern Art, New York

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Publisher: Siegelaub / Wendler, New York

Edition 1,000 (unnumbered)

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Publisher: Unovis, Vitebsk

Edition unknown

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Publisher: Harry N. Adams Inc,

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Edition 1,000

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Photograph by Shaun McCann

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Collection Edit deAk

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Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art (Gordon Lambert Trust)

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Collection of artist

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Photograph courtesy of artist

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Morris, R. & Schneeman, C.

Site (1964)

Performance, Judson Memorial Church, New York

Figure 78b

Morris, R. & Schneeman, C.

Site (1964)

Figure 79

O'Doherty, B

Chess Set (1966)

Metal, glass, gouache on mirror, board

3.7 x 41.9 x 41.9 cm

Collection Hirshhorn Museum of Art, Washington D.C.

Photograph by author

Figure 80

O'Doherty, B.

Structural Play No. 1, Presence (1967)

Performance by artist and Killian Walsh (1998)

Orchard Gallery, Derry

Photograph by author

Figure 81

O'Doherty, B

Structural Play No. 1, Presence (1967)

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 82

O'Doherty, B

Structural Play (Chess) (1967)

Performance June 1998

Orchard Gallery, Derry

Photograph by author

Figure 83

Ireland, P.

Vowel Grid (1970)

Performance (June 1998)

An Grianán Fort, Co Donegal

Figure 84

Ireland, P.

Vowel Grid (1970)

Performance (1977)

Eisteddfod Celtic Festival, Wales

Photograph courtesy of Nigel Rolfe

Figure 85

Ireland, P.

Vowel Grid (1970)

Performance (1977)

Eisteddfod Celtic Festival, Wales

Photograph courtesy of Nigel Rolfe

Figure 86

Ireland, P.

Vowel Grid (1970)

Performance (1981)

Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Massachusetts

Figure 87

An Grianán Aileach (Iron Age)

Co, Donegal

Figure 88

An Grianán Aileach Entrance

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 89a

Diagram of five-fold division of Ireland

Figure 89b

Diagram of division of four provinces via Time & Space

Figure 90

Ireland, P.

Vowel Grid (1970)

Performance (1998)

Co. Donegal

Photograph courtesy of artist & Orchard Gallery

Figure 91

Ireland, P.

Vowel Grid (1970)

Performance (1998)

Figure 92

Ireland, P.

Vowel Grid (1970)

Performance (1998)

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 93

Beckett, S.

Quad (1982)

T.V. Performance

Suddeutscher Rundfunk, Stuttgart

Photograph courtesy Anna McMullan

Figure 94

Beckett, S.

Part of Text & Diagram of movements in *Quad*

Collected Shorter Plays of Samuel Beckett (1984) London: Faber & Faber

Figure 95

Ireland, P.

One (2000/ 2001)

Acrylic on canvas

182.8 x 182.8 cm

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 96

O'Doherty, B

Permutations of One in a Magic Square (1967)

Ink on paper

55.8 x 43 cm

Collection of Lucy Lippard

Figure 97

O'Doherty, B.

One to Five Rotated (1967)

Ink on paper

55.8 x 43 cm

Figure 98

O'Doherty, B.

One Drawing (1969)

Coloured inks on paper

58.4 x 73.6 cm

Figure 99

Ireland, P.

Here (c. 1985)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Photograph by author

Figure 100

The Sirius Art Centre

Cobh, Co. Cork

Figure 101

Ireland, P.

One Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle (1996)

Preliminary sketches

Courtesy of artist

Figure 102

Ireland, P.

One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle (1996)

Wall painting

Installation view

Figure 103

Ireland, P.

*One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle (*1996)

Installation,assisted by John Reardon, Sirius Art Centre, Cobh

Photograph by Shaun R. McCann

Figure 104

Ireland, P.

The Ogham Cycle (1996)

Detail

Figure 105

Ireland, P.

The Ogham Cycle (1996)

Detail

Photograph by Shaun R. McCann

Figure 106

Ireland, P.

One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle (1996)

Detail

Photograph by Shaun R. McCann

Figure 107

Ireland, P.

One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle (1996)

Detail

Photograph by Shaun R. McCann

Figure 108

Ireland, P.

One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle (1996)

Detail

Photograph by Shaun R. McCann

Figure 109

Janus figure (c. 5th A.D).

75 cm

Boa Island, Co Fermanagh

Figure 110

Ireland, P.

One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle (1996)

Exterior installation view

The Sirius Art Centre, Cobh, Co.Cork

CHAPTER 3

Figure 111

O'Doherty, B.

Between Categories (1957-68)

Detail

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 112

O'Doherty, B.

Between Categories (1957-68)

Detail

Figure 113

O'Doherty, B.

Between Categories (1957-68)

Detail

Figure 114

O'Doherty, B.

The Sorrows of Z (1968)

Mixed media

Collection of artist

Figure 115

O'Doherty, B.

Smell (1966-67)

Pencil on paper

67.9 x 58.4 cm

Photograph by author

Figure 116

O'Doherty, B.

Study for the Five Senses: Hearing (1966)

Gouache, ink and pencil on graph paper

43.2 x 55.8 cm

Photograph courtesy artist

Figure 117

Ireland, P.

Two Superimposed Open Boxes (1975)

Pencil & coloured ink on paper

58.4 x 73.6 cm

Figure 118

O'Doherty, B.

The Five Senses of the Bishop of Cloyne (1967-68)

Ink & watercolour on graph paper

43 x 55.8 cm

Collection of Artist

Figure 119

Ireland, P.

Rimbaud's Cradle (Rope Drawing No. 67) (1983)

Coloured inks on paper

66 x 101.6 cm

Charles Cowles Gallery, New York

Figure 120a

Church at Cloyne, Co. Cork

Figure 120b

Plaque (to left of entrance)

Photographs by author

Figure 121

O'Doherty, B.

Hearing (1966)

Mixed media

162.5 x 20.3 cm

Photograph by author

Figure 122

O'Doherty, B.

Sight (Narcissus) (1966)

Mixed media

185.4 x 58.4 cm

Photograph by author

Figure 123

Column stereoscope (c. 1870s)

Figure 124

O'Doherty, B

Hearing (1966)

Detail

Photograph by author

Figure 125

O'Doherty, B.

Sight (Narcissus)

Detail

Figure 126

O'Doherty, B.

Maze (1968)

Ink on paper

58.4 x 73.6 cm

Figure 127

Aycock, A.

*Maze (*1972)

Wood in five concentric dodecatagonal rings

384 x 72 cm

Figure 128

Simonds, C.

Labyrinth (1973)

Clay bricks & moss

Collection Harry Torczyner

Figure 129

Morris, R.

Labyrinth (reconstructed- in left foreground) (1974)

Painted plywood & masonite

462.2 x 914.4 cm

Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao 1997

Figure 130

St. Bridget's Cross

Pre-Christian sun-wheel

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 131

O'Doherty, B.

Labyrinth (1967)

Gouache & coloured pencils

21.59 x 55.8 cm

Figure 132

O' Doherty. B.

Blue Labyrinth (1968)

Paint on mirror & glass

91.4 x 91.4 cm

Photograph by author

Figure 133a

O'Doherty, B.

Labyrinth as a Straight Line (1967-68)

Typewriter on paper

Each 21.5 x 27.9 cm

Figure 133b

O'Doherty, B.

Labyrinth as a Straight Line (1967-68)

Detail

Figure 134a

Ireland, P.

Elvehjem Labyrinth (1993)

Wood, drywall installation

274.3 x 731.5 x 731.5 cm

Figure 134b

Ireland, P.

Labyrinth for Elvehjem Museum (1992)

Pencil & gouache on paper

113 x 424.1 cm

Figure 135a

Ireland, P.

Elvehjem Labyrinth (1992)

Detail

Figure 135b

Ireland, P.

Elvehjem Labyrinth (1992)

Detail

Figure 136

Ireland, P.

Labyrinth (1993)

Installation, P.S. 1, New York

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 137

Ireland, P.

Caligari's Palace (Rope Drawing No. 99) (1993)

Installation, Institute of Contemporary Art, P. S. 1, New York

Figure 138

Ogham Stone (c. 5th-7th century)

Photograph courtesy of University College Cork

Figure 139

Ogham Alphabet

Figure 140

The Book of Ballymote (c. 1391)

Leather-bound manuscript, 251 folios (imperfect)

Written mostly in Irish at Ballymote Castle, Co. Sligo

Royal Irish Academy MS 23 P 12: Cat, No, 53

Photograph courtesy Royal Irish Academy

Figure 141

O'Doherty, B

Pair (1967)

Painted wood & aluminium

Two modules

213.3 x 60.9 x 269 x 269 cm

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 142

O'Doherty, B.

The Rake's Progress (1970)

Polished aluminium on wood

1832 x 215 cm

Collection, Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin

Photograph by John Kellet, courtesy Hugh Lane Gallery

Figure 143

O'Doherty, B.

The Rake's Progress (1970)

Detail

Photograph by John Kellet

Figure 144

O'Doherty, B.

The Rake's Progress (1970)

Detail

Photograph by John Kellet

Figure 145

" Here" translated into Ogham

Figure 146

O'Doherty, B.

Newman's Razor (1970)

Stainless steel

335.2 cm

Collection University College Dublin

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 147

Flavin, D

Nominal Three-To William of Ockham (1963)

Flourescent lights

Collection Guggenheim, New York

Figure 148

Brancusi, C.

Endless Column (1935-38)

Cast iron

1155cm

Tirgu-Jiu, Romania

Figure 149

O'Doherty, B.

Newman's Razor (1970)

Detail

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 150

O'Doherty, B.

Newman's Razor (1970)

Detail

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 151

O'Doherty, B.

Newman's Razor (1970)

Detail

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 152

O'Doherty, B.

Newman's Razor (1970)

Detail

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 153

Ireland, P.

Humbert's Motel (Rope Drawing No. 100) (1993)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, 150, Greene Street, New York

Figure 154

Ireland, P.

Phonic Grid (Rope Drawing No.1) (1973)

Rope & paint

180 x 180 cm

Installation, 112 Greene Street, New York

Figure 155

Ireland, P.

Ziggurat and Reflection (1979)

Coloured inks on paper

73.6 x 58.6 cm

Figure 156a

Ireland, P.

Thumbprint Stone (c. 1983)

Watercolour on paper

114 x 119.3 cm

Collection of artist

Photograph by author

Figure 156b

Ireland, P.

Zig-Zag Stone (1983

Watercolour on paper

114 x 119.3 cm

Figure 157

Ireland, P.

Sky Light (Rope Drawing No. 13) (1975)

Gouache drawing

77.5 x 57.5 cm

Private collection

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 158

Ireland, P.

Sky Mark (Rope Drawing No. 14) (1975)

Rope

Variable dimensions

Installation, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

Figure 159

Ireland, P.

One Drawing in Two Rooms (Rope Drawing No. 5) (1975)

Rope & paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Installation view

Figure 160

Ireland, P.

One Drawing in Two Rooms (Rope Drawing No. 5) (1975)

Installation view

Figure 161

Da Vinci, L.

Flying Machine

Beech, iron,brass, coirrope,leather & tallow

167 x 490 X 1100 cm

Working model after Leonardo da Vinci,

Ms. B (IFP), fol. 74v

Built by A Ingram & Associates & J. Wink,

Tetra Associated, London, 1995

Figure 162

Ireland, P.

Five by Five (Aerial Perspective) (1977)

Coloured inks

58.4 X 73.6 cm

Figure 163

Ireland, P.

Open Box on Green Ground (1986)

Coloured inks on paper

58.4 x 73.6 cm

Collection, Barbara Novak

Figure 164

Ireland, P.

Open Box (blue background) (1985)

Coloured inks

58.5 x 73.6 cm

Collection of Julius S. Held

Figure 165

Ireland, P.

Flying Open Cube (1993)

77.5 x 65 cm

Colour relief print

Edition of 20

Private Collection

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 166

Ireland, P.

Closed Box: Transparent Cube (1975)

Coloured inks on paper

66 x 101.6 cm

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 167

Ireland, P.

Museum 3 (1983)

Coloured inks on paper

100 x 65.5 cm

Collection, Butler Gallery, Kilkenny

Photograph by author

Figure 168

Ireland, P.

Museum Series (1983)

Watercolour on paper

66 x 101.6 cm

Photograph courtesy of Charles Cowles Gallery, New York

Figure 169

Ireland, P.

Exploded Gallery Series (1981-82)

Liquitex on paper

Variable dimensions

Photograph courtesy Charles Cowles Gallery, New York

Figure 170

Ireland, P.

Exploded Gallery Series (1981-82)

Liquitex on wall

Variable dimensions

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 171

Ireland, P.

Red Room: 12 Lines in 6 Planes (1983)

Watercolour on paper

66 x 102 cm

Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art (Gordon Lambert Trust)

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 172

Ireland, P.

Camera (Rope Drawing No. 40) (1978)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, School of Visual Arts Museum, New York

Installation view

Figure 173a

Ireland, P.

Corner Line (Rope Drawing No.31) (1977)

Rope & paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego

Installation view

Figure 173b

Ireland, P.

Corner Line (1977)

Installation view

Figure 174a

Ireland, P.

Corner for Tatlin and Fred Astaire (Rope Drawing No. 48 & 52) (1979)

Rope & paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Project Art Gallery, Dublin (March 1979)

Installation, Hayden Gallery, M.I.T., Massachusetts (September 1979)

Installation view

Figure 174b

Ireland, P.

Corner for Tatlin and Fred Astaire (1979)

Installation view

Figure 174c

Ireland, P.

Corner for Tatlin and Fred Astaire (1979)

Figure 175

Ireland, P.

Untitled Corner (Rope Drawimg No. 53) (1979)

Rope & paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Hayden Gallery, M.I.T. Massachusetts

Installation view

Figure 176

Ireland, P.

String Quartet (4 Corners) (Rope Drawing No. 64) (1982)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, The Brooklyn Museum, New York

Figure 177

Ireland, P.

String Quartet (4 Corners) (Rope Drawing No. 64) (1982)

Installation view

Figure 178

Ireland, P.

String Quaret (4 Corners) (1982)

Various installation views

Figure 179

Ireland, P.

Song of the Vowels (c. 1998/99)

Acrylic on canvas

182.8 x 182.8 cm

Collection of artist

Photograph by author

Figure 180

Ireland, P.

Song of the Vowels (c. 1997)

Acrylic on canvas

182.8.x.182.8 cm

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 181

Ireland, P.

I/Thou (c. 1996)

Acrylic on canvas

182.8 x 182.8 cm

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 182

Ireland, P.

I/Thou (c. 1994)

Acrylic on canvas + reflective sculpture

182.8 x 182.8 cm + 124 x 124 x 38 cm (h)

Photograph by author

Figure 183

Ireland, P.

I/Thou) (c. 1998/9)

Acrylic on canvas

182.8 x 182.6 cm

Photograph by author

Figure 184a

Ireland, P.

House Call, Martello Terrace (Rope Drawing No. 77) (1986)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Clocktower, New York

Figure 184b

Ireland, P.

House Call (1986)

Installation view

Figure 185a

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Underpass (Rope Drawing No. 57) (1980)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Akron Art Museum, Akron, Ohio

Figure 185b

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Underpass (1980)

Installation view

Figure 186a

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Portal (1980)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Charles Cowles Gallery, New York

Figure 186b

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Portal (1980)

Installation view

Photograph courtesy artist

Figure 187

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Corridor (Rope Drawing No. 103) (1995)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Crawford Gallery, Cork

Photograph by author

Figure 188

Borromini, F

Palazzo Spada (c.1635)

Rome

Photograph by Shaun R. McCann

Figure 189a

Ireland, P.

Preparatory Sketches for Borromini's Corridor (Rope Drawing No 103) (1995)

Pen on paper

Varable dimensions

Courtesy of artist

Figure 189b

Ireland, P.

Preparatory Sketches, Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Figure 190

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Installation view

Figure 191

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Detail of artist's tools

Photograph by author

Figure 192

Ireland,P.

Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Installation view

Photograph by author

Figure 193

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Installation view

Photograph by author

Figure 194

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Photograph by author

Figure 195

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Installation view

Photograph by author

Figure 196

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Spectators viewing sightline

Photograph by author

Figure 197

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Framed sightline

Photograph by author

Figure 198

Borromini, F.

Framed view, Oratory S. Filippo Neri (1637)

Rome

Figure 199

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Installation view

Photograph by author

Figure 200

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Corridor (1995)

Installation view

Photograph by author

Figure 201

Hopper, E

Sun in an Empty Room (work in progress) (c.1963)

Oil on canvas

73.6 x 101.6 cm

Figure 202

O'Doherty, B

Past, Present, Future (Portrait of the Artist Aet.7) (1967)

Photograph & handwritten text on board

58.4 x 73.6 cm

Collection of artist

Figure 203

Ireland, P.

Purgatory of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, Homunculus, Four Spatial / Verbal Propositions(Rope Drawing No. 73) (1985)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College Dublin

Photograph courtesy of Dorothy Walker

Figure 204

Ireland, P.

Study for Purgatory 1 (1985)

India ink on paper

Each 130 x 123.7 cm

Collection, Trinity College Dublin

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 205

Ireland, P.

Study for Purgatory 11 (1985)

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 206

Ireland, P.

Study for Purgatory 11 (Rope Drawing No. 73) (1985)

Detail

Photograph by author

Figure 207

Ireland, P.

Purgatory (Rope Drawing No. 73) (1985)

Installation view

Figure 208a-c

Ireland, P.

Box (Rope Drawing No, 107/8) (2001)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, The Avram Gallery, Southampton College, New York

Installation views

Photographs courtesy of artist

Figure 208d-f

Ireland, P.

Box (Rope Drawing No. 107/8) (2001)

Installation view

Figure 209

Ireland, P.

Corner for Tatlin and Fred Astaire (Rope Drawing No. 54) (1979)

Coloured inks on paper

73.6 x 101.6 cm

Atlantic Richfield Corporate Art Collection

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 210

Ireland, P.

The Red Room (Rope Drawing No. 57) (1980)

Red ink on paper

73.6 x 101.6 cm

Collection Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence

Figure 211

Ireland, P.

Borromini's Underpass (Rope Drawing No. 58) (1980)

Ink on paper

73.6 x 101.6 cm

Charles Cowles Gallery, New York

Figure 212

Ireland, P.

String Quartet (4 Corners) (Rope Drawing No. 65) (1983)

Coloured inks

73.6 x 101.6 cm

Charles Cowles Gallery, New York

Figure 213

Ireland, P.

Drawing for Big A (Rope Drawing No 72) (1984)

Coloured inks on paper

73.6 x 101.6 cm

Charles Cowles Gallery, New York

Figure 214

Ireland, P.

The Purgatory of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker,

Humunculus, Four Spatial / Verbal Propositions

(Rope Drawing No.73) (1985)

Coloured inks on paper

73.6 x 101.6 cm

Collection, Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison

Figure 215

Anti-Vietnam War Demonstration (1970)

Kent State University

Contemporary newspaper photograph

Figure 216a

Ireland, P.

Morton's Journey (Rope Drawing No. 86) (1987)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation Artspace, San Francisco

Installation view

Figure 216b

Ireland, P.

Morton's Journey (1987)

Installation view

Figure 217

Ireland, P.

Morton's Journey (Rope Drawing No. 86) (1987)

Installation view

Figure 218

Ireland, P.

Morton's Journey (1987)

Installation view

Figure 219

Ireland, P.

Dotted Grid (c.1978)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Photograph by author

Figure 220a

Ireland, P.

I/Thou (c. 1980)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Figure 220b

Ireland, P.

Song of the Vowels (c.1978/9)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Figure 221

Ireland, P.

Here (c.1979/80)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Photograph by author

Figure 222

Ireland, P.

Now (1999)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 223a

Ireland, P.

Cube (c. 1980)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Photographs by author

Figure 223b

Ireland, P.

Cube (c. 1980)

Wall Painting

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Figure 224

Ireland, P.

Sea View (c. 1985)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Photograph by author

Figure 225a

Ireland, P.

Times of Day Cycle (c. 1980s-90s)

Rope Drawing

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Figure 225b

Ireland, P.

Times of Day Cycle (c. 1980s-90s)

Installation view

Photograph by author

Figure 226a

Ireland, P.

Trecento (Rope Drawing No. 85) (1987)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum Todi, Italy

Figure 226b

Ireland, P.

Trecento (1987)

Installation view

Figure 227a

Roadside altar

Val d'Orcia, Tuscany

Photograph by Shaun R. McCann

Figure 227b

Roadside altar

Val d'Orcia, Tuscany

Photograph by Shaun R. McCann

Figure 228

Ireland, P.

Ogham Grid (c.1980s)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Photograph by author

Figure 229a

Ireland, P.

DIAID: In Memory of Lost Friends (Rope Drawing No. 91) (1989)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Fuller Gross Gallery, San Francisco

Figure 229b

Ireland, P.

Diaid (1989)

Installation view

Figure 230

LeWitt, S.

Wall Drawing No. 477 (1986)

Colour ink wash

Variable dimensions

Figure 231

LeWitt, S.

Wall Drawing No. 522 (1987)

Colour ink wash

Variable dimensions

Private collection

Figure 232a-b

Ireland, P.

Women of Algiers, Rope Drawing No. 84 (1987)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation views

Installation, The Detroit Institute of Arts

Figure 232c-d

Ireland, P.

Women of Algiers (1987)

Installation views

Figure 233a

Ireland, P.

Kane, Rope Drawing No. 70 (1984)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Charles Cowles Gallery, New York

Figure 233b

Ireland, P.

Kane (1984)

Installation view

Figure 234

Ireland, P.

Cradle, Rope Drawing No. 2 (1974)

Rope

Variable dimensions

Installation, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York

Figure 235

Sandback, F.

Untitled (1989)

Dark red acrylic yarn

330 x 655 x 163 (h/w/d)

Installation, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston

Figure 236

Sandback. F.

Untitled (1976)

Yarn

Variable dimensions

Installation, P.S.1, New York

Figure 237

Ireland, P.

Standing Magic Square (Rope Drawing No. 19) (1976)

Variable lengths of rope

Installation, P.S. 1, Institute for Art & Urban Resources, New York

(This is the same Figure as Fig.6)

CHAPTER 4

Figure 238

O'Doherty, B.

Piero in Ireland (1957)

Figure 239

Bird, W.

Punch Cartoons (1910-48)

Source: *The Different Worlds of Jack B. Yeats: His Cartoons and Illustrations* (1994)

Hilary Pyle, Dublin: Irish Academic Press, pp. 138-174.

Figure 240

Maclise, D.

Portrait of William Maginn (1793-1842) (1830)

Pencil & watercolour

27.4 x 18.7 cm

Collection of National Portrait Gallery, London

Figure 241

O'Doherty, B. / Ireland, P.

The Tranformation, Discontinuity, And Transformation of the Image (1969-present)

Arcade photographs mounted on board

76.2 x 101.6 cm

Collection of artist

Figure 242

Warhol, A

Marilyn Monroe Diptych (1962)

Oil on canvas

Each 208.2 x 289.5 cm

Collection Tate Gallery, London

Figure 243

Becher, Bernd & Hilla

Winding Towers (1997)

Black & White photographs

173.4 x 191 cm

Figure 244

Kawara, O.

4th March, 1973, Dakar (1973)

Acrylic oncanvas

20.5 x 25.5 cm

Collection, Museum Boyamns-van-Beuningen, Rotterdam

Figure 245

Opalka, R.

1965 / 1-00 (1965)

(Detail) 18715786-1837737

Acrylic on canvas

195.6 x 134.6 cm

Collection of artist

Figure 246

Muybridge, E.

(Detail) Animal Locomotion Study Plate No, 491(self portrait) (c. 1887)

Collotype

Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Figure 247

Darwin, C.

Photographs, Plate 111

From: The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals (1972)

Figs,4,5,6, copies from Duchenne's,

The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression (1862)

Figure 248

Warhol, A.

Self Portrait (1986)

Synthetic polymer paint & silkscreen on canvas

203.2 x 193 cm

Collection Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburg

Figure 249

O'Doherty, B.

Portrait of Marcel Duchamp: Slow Pulse Rate (1966)

Mixed media

42.2 x 42.2 x 2.5 cm

Collection of artist

Figure 250

O'Doherty, B.

Portrait of Marcel Duchamp (April 4th 1966)

Electrocardiogram mounted on board

Ink & typewriter on paper

27.94 x 21.59 cm

Collection of artist

Figure 251

O'Doherty, B.

Study for Second Portrait of Marcel Duchamp,

Lead One, Mounting Increments (1967)

Ink on paper

58.4 x 73.6 cm

Collection of artist

Figure 252

O'Doherty, B.

Portrait of Marcel Duchamp (1966)

Oscilloscopes

Photograph by author

Figure 253

O'Doherty/Ireland

Name Change (1972)

Statement

Photograph courtesy of Gordon Lambert

Figure 254

O'Doherty/Ireland.

Name Change (1972)

Performance signing of Statement

Photograph courtesy of Gordon Lambert

Figure 255

O'Doherty/Ireland

Name Change (1972)

Photodocumentation of performance

Typed text & handwritten signatures pasted onto board

70.3 x 152.4 cm

Photograph courtesy of artist

Figure 256

O'Doherty/Ireland

Name Change (1972)

Performance, Vowels Structural Play

Photograph courtesy of Gordon Lambert

Figure 257

Gordon Lambert & Name Change coat & documentation (1998)

Photograph by author

Figure 258

O'Doherty/Ireland.

Name Change (1972)

Performance detail

Photograph courtesy of Gordon Lambert

Figure 259

O'Doherty/Ireland

Name Change (1972)

Performance detail

Photograph courtesy of Gordon Lambert

Figure 260

O'Doherty/Ireland

Name Change (1972)

Documentation detail

Figure 261

O'Doherty/Ireland

Name Change (1972)

Performance detail

Photograph courtesy of Gordon Lambert

Figure 262

Ireland, P.

White Cube (1998)

Wood & paint

h. 243.8 cm

Orchard Gallery, Derry

Photograph by author

Figure 263

Farrell, M.

Madonna Irlanda or The Very First Real Irish Political Picture (1977)

Acrylic on canvas

174 x 185.5 cm

Collection Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art

Figure 264

Scott, P.

Orange Device (1962)

Tempera on unprimed canvas

101.5 x 81 cm

Collection Jury's Hotel Group, Dublin

Figure 265

Kelly, O.

The Marchers (1969)

Cast aluminium

18 x 70 x 7 cm

Collection Bank of Ireland, Dublin

Figure 266

Farrell, M.

Pressé Politique (1974-75)

Collage on board

152 x 101 cm

Figure 267

Farrell, M.

Sunday (1997-98)

Mixed media on canvas

210 x 108 cm

Figure 268

McNab, T

Irish Elegy (1971)

Wood, satin, silvered barbed wire, stainless steel

102.3 x 70.1 cm

Collection, Irish Museum of Modern Art (Gordon Lambert Trust)

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 269

McNab, T.

Ireland (1972)

Screenprint

63 x 52 cm

Edition 22

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 270

Ballagh, R.

Bloody Sunday (1972)

Installation, Irish Exhibition of Living Art

Chalk & animal blood

Project Arts Centre, Dublin

Figure 271

Ballagh, R.

Bloody Sunday (1976)

Statement that accompanied photo-documentation of installation

Exhibition, Orchard Gallery, Derry

Statement courtesy of artist

Figure 272

Newspaper Headlines, January 31st 1972

Irish Independent

Figure 273

Ireland, P.

A Modest Proposal (1980)

Map on board

78.7 x 41.9 cm

Photograph by Fionn McCann

Figure 274a

Ireland, P.

H- Block (Rope Drawing No. 92) (1989)

Rope & wall paint

Variable dimensions

Installation, Orpheus Gallery, Belfast

Figure 274b

Ireland, P.

H-Block (1989)

Installation view

Figure 275

Maze Prison, Belfast

Aerial view

Figure 276

Ireland, P.

H-Block (Rope Drawing No. 92) (1989)

Installation view

Figure 277

Hamilton, R.

The citizen (1982-83)

Oil on canvas

Each 200 x 100 cm

Collection, Tate Gallery, London

Figure 278

O'Doherty, B.

375 I's (1969)

Coloured inks on paper

58.4 x 73.6 cm

Figure 279

O'Doherty, B.

I Drawing (1971)

Ink on paper

58.4.x.73.6 cm

Figure 280

O'Doherty, B.

225 1's, Overlapping Crooked Lines (1971)

Coloured inks on paper

58.5 x 73.6 cm

Figure 281

O'Doherty, B.

I Drawing (1972)

Coloured inks on paper

58.4 x 73.6 cm

Collection, Jan and Ingeborg van der Marck

Figure 282

Ireland, P.

25 Angled I's on a 5 x 5 Point Grid (1975)

Coloured inks on paper

58.4 x 73.6 cm

(This is the same as Fig. 78)

Figure 283

Ireland, P.

I Drawing at Two Scales (1975)

Coloured inks on paper

58.4 x 73.6 cm

Figure 284

Ireland, P.

Dictionary of I (1992)

Coloured inks & pencil on paper

76.2 x 57.1 cm

Collection of artist

Figure 285

Ireland, P.

Dictionario de Io (1979)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Photograph by author

Figure 286

Ireland, P.

I Wall Painting (1978)

Wall painting

Variable dimensions

Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy

Installation view

Figure 287

O'Doherty, B.

Structural Play (Identity) (1967)

Photograph courtesy artist

Figure 288

O'Doherty/Ireland

Five Identities (1998)

Photographs on board

INTRODUCTION

Art history has often been slow to recognise the achievements of particular artists. Some artists lionised during their own lifetime are now forgotten while with others, a period of years elapses, sometimes hundreds, before receiving the attention of art history. The reasons for this are as various as the number of artists, but ultimately rely upon conventions operating within the world of art and within art history. The emergence of conceptual art during the late 1960s internationally, represented a paradigmatic shift which challenged established conventions of art, as well as of art history, in a radical way. Not surprisingly, these challenges were resisted, so that by around 1972, the dominance of conceptual art was eroded by the re-emergence of traditional modes of practice, particularly those which suited the commercial aspects of art. However certain practitioners of conceptual art continued to make and expand their work over the next few decades. Some have received international recognition for their work, while others have not received their fair share. One of the latter is the artist known as Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland.

For the past forty years, Brian O'Doherty has been a central figure within the artworld of New York. He has been, and continues to be, a widely respected critic internationally. He is however also an artist who has made art under the name O'Doherty, becoming one of a generation of New York- based artists who emerged out of Minimalism in the mid-1960s as a pioneer of conceptual art. Changing his artist name to Patrick Ireland since 1972, for reasons which shall be explained, he has continued to make art largely in the form of ephemeral installations. Although the latter side of his career is known generally within the art worlds of America, Ireland and elsewhere, the full range of his art is less widely known.

This dissertation is the first to critically evaluate O'Doherty/Ireland's art in depth from the 1960s to the present. As the 1960s can now be considered a historical period, the *oeuvre* has been placed in its appropriate art historical context. In approaching both these tasks, a number of questions were posed: as a pioneering figure within New York conceptual art, what is the nature of O'Doherty/Ireland's concerns and practice? Where may the art be placed within the annals of contemporary art and to what extent might

contingent factors within the artist's career have mitigated against a greater acknowledgement of the art?

In attempting to answer these questions the study limited its main focus to the exploration of the visual art of a multifaceted career. The reasoning behind this is justified from a number of viewpoints. O'Doherty's contribution as an art critic is taken as an aspect of a career which has already been recognised for many decades internationally. Similarly a detailed investigation of the extent of the contribution to the National Endowment for the Arts was considered beyond the immediate scope of the study. This is not to deny its substantial nature and its links in the wider sense to the world of art. [1] However, in spite of this range of overlapping activities extending over a period of thirty years, it is clear that the central practice of the career since the 1960s has been first and foremost that of an artist. It is thus this practice rather than any other activity which forms the main focus of the dissertation in order to offer a better overall understanding of it.

The reader is alerted to a constant feature of this artist's practice, the use of multiple pseudonyms, for reasons that will be addressed during the course of the text. This may lead to confusion as to the authorship of various works. However, the reader can assume that all artworks prior to 1972 are those of Brian O'Doherty while those after 1972 to the present, are those of Patrick Ireland, a system that is followed throughout the text. Where appropriate, O'Doherty/Ireland is used when discussing elements which embrace both phases of the career. Most of the critical writings, essays, books and novels alluded to are by Brian O'Doherty. Those written by the alias Sigmund Bode and the female alter ego Mary Josephson, are pointed out as such in the text where they and other aliases are discussed within the context of the theme of identity in Chapter 4.

Research was conducted against a background of relatively limited sources relating to conceptual art within art historical literature. While a detailed discussion of the various reasons for this neglect are beyond the scope of this dissertation, there are certain

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[1] The Media Arts Program run by O'Doherty (1976-1994) has been called, "the esthetically most progressive department at the National Endowment for the Arts." Kostelanetz (1993), p. 162. A recent publication by Michael Brenson, *Visionaries and Outcasts* (2001), discusses O'Doherty's pivotal role within the NEA between 1969 and 1976, in largely favourable terms (pp. 52-59). See also Appendix A.

issues which intersect with its concerns in particular ways. These have been lucidly synopsised by art historian Hans Belting in *The End of the History of Art*? [2] He describes a loss of faith in a rational, teleological basis for artistic production by contemporary artists and a similar loss of faith in the historical description of those forms by some historians. What both seek is " a rethinking the function of art and challenging its traditional claim to aesthetic autonomy." [3] Allied to a search for new models for both artist and historian has been the revised notion of the artist, a matter of particular concern to this dissertation. However it is most important to stress that the paucity of literature and the wider reception of this artist's work must be seen in the context of a general antipathy to conceptual art within the New York artworld. During the late 1960s to mid-1970s, Lucy Lippard tells us, art was re-captured and sent back to its "white cell." [4] New York, she reports, since the late 1950s the self- satisfied art capital of the Western world, did not pay much attention to, "... conceptual gnats nipping at its fat flanks..." and was able to reinstate the gallery-money-power structures which underpinned art in a capitalist system.[5]

Besides Gregory Battock's anthology of interviews and essays by artists in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (1968), Ursula Meyer's *Conceptual Art* (1972) and Lucy Lippard's, *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966-1972* (1973), most other contemporary sources were found scattered throughout catalogues, art magazines such as *Artforum* and *Art in America*, and reviews. Sandler's *American Art of the 1960s* (1988), and *Art of the Postmodern Era: From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s* (1996) and Harrison and Wood's *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (1992), also provided background material. Although more and more literature began to become available during the 1990s, the historical synthesis and

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[2] Belting (1983; ed. 1987).

[3] Ibid., p. xi.

[4] Lippard (1973; ed. 1997), p. xxii.

[5] Ibid., p. xix. The forthcoming book (2002) about the politics of conceptual art by Alexander Alberro, based upon a doctoral thesis, should prove interesting reading in this context. Alberro interview with author, 2001.

chronology of the complex strands involved internationally is still awaited.[6] The same might also be applied to the New York strand, as witnessed by the need for the present study.

In spite of over forty solo exhibitions, there has been a parallel lack of serious critical analysis of the artist's work which provided further challenges to the research. Two important retrospective exhibitions were however held during the 1990s of O'Doherty/Ireland's work. The catalogue essays which accompany these exhibitions offer insights regarding specific works by some of the most influential critics and art historians within the American contemporary artworld, yet none of the writers provide a critical evaluation of the entire *oeuvre*.[7] An added challenge has been that much of the mature work, between the 1970s-1990s, has been in the form of ephemeral installations, not all of which have been properly documented. The author has had the opportunity to personally experience only a few of these works since commencing research.

More positively, during research there has been direct access and the full co-operation of both the artist and his wife, art historian Barbara Novak. The challenge of dealing with any living artist can be onerous but also very rewarding, since the living artist can refute certain interpretations of his/her work thus often broadening and deepening the response to it, if accepted critically. Some examples are addressed within the text. It has however been recognised that there may appear to be an inherent paradox in eliciting the authority of an artist who has sought, like others of his generation of artists, to displace such authority from his work.[8] However, equally it has been recognised that artists like O'Doherty/Ireland adopted such a stance as part of a wider debate around Modernism's concept of the artist and the nature of artistic creation, which this study elucidates for his art. The powerful formalist concept inherited from Romanticism, conceived of artists and their works as subjective, intuitive and irrational, so that as a corollory their pronouncements or written statements could be disregarded in

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[6] Bann in New York (1999), p. 6.

[7] Among the sixteen critics were Kenneth Baker, Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Lucy Lippard, Irving Sandler and Barbara Rose. See in Youngstown, Ohio (1994).

[8] In O'Doherty's case, this was especially so since he was the first to commission Barthes famous essay, "The Death of the Author." See Chapter 1 under *Aspen 5/6*.

art historiography. The critic or art historian on the other hand, could judge both objectively.

This dissertation on the contrary draws the conclusion that an artist's verbal or textual account is valuable source material which can provide keys to the conceptual armature of the work. Such accounts therefore are as legitimate parts of the construction of visual knowledge as the works of art. Both contribute to culture-specific visual and intellectual discourse which in time becomes a record of human consciousness and experience. In addition, given the relative absence of critical commentary until more recently, most of the information about this form of art has had to come through the artists themselves. As Lippard points out in the Preface to *Six Years: The dematerialisation of the art object from 1966 to 1972*, by reading what artists said and looking at their work, people got first-hand rather than second-hand information about the work.[9] Sandler also has pointed out, that there is often a wide gap between what art critics and artists say, where on the whole, he has found the artist to be more illuminating. He quotes O'Doherty:

> "Art's...retrieval on grounds irrelevant to its inception, the unloading of new diagnoses, Marxist accusations...As readings extend to the context of context, you feel you are standing at the edge of a pool where the ripples at your feet have forgotten the dropped stone." [10]

One of the methods chosen for research therefore, has been the engagement of the artist's views, memories and insights through a series of interviews conducted between 1997 and 2001 in Ireland, Italy and America. These were carried out either in person or by telephone. Letters from the artist to the author are also included as primary source material. In addition research included discussions with contemporary artists, critics and historians in both America and Ireland. These sources together with the examination of extant works or documentation of ephemeral works, provided the bulk of the material for

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[9] Lippard (1973; ed. 1997), p. 7.

[10] O'Doherty (1991), p. 59, quoted in Sandler (1996), pp. xxvi-xxviii.

this dissertation, together with an increasing flow of literature on conceptual art in the last couple of years. The traditional art historical methodology of making qualitative judgements based on taste and the development of a distinctive style were considered inadequate for the task in hand. Judgement here is based on other criteria, such as the quality of the concepts and their experiential and visual realisation. The adoption of a thematic, non-chronological approach was selected since it provides a number of advantages in dealing with work which resists easy classification. Firstly, it lends greater coherence to the presentation of a broad range of work in different categories and media, and allows works from different series and periods to be presented in each of the theme chapters. Secondly, it serves to reveal and emphasise for the first time, an overall coherence within the *oeuvre*, irrespective of any artistic style.

This dissertation shows that a significant contribution had been made by O'Doherty/Ireland to contemporary art since the mid-1960s, which continues to the present day. O'Doherty, as a pioneer of conceptual art made some of the most challenging works of the early period, introducing the minimal labyrinth, language performances and the Ogham language into art as well as producing one of the earliest portraits and exhibitions of conceptual art. In addition, he contributed significantly to the theoretical and intellectual framework of conceptual art through his critical writings. The dissertation also argues that O'Doherty's other artistic persona, Ireland, has continued that contribution since 1972 through his innovative Rope Drawings, which realise many of the critical and theoretical issues of the earlier period.

Broadly, the *oeuvre* involves a critical re-evaluation of the major elements of art experience forming probably one of the most complex artistic projects of the period, as it relates to the artwork, the viewer *and* the artist. Aside from the claim to original status for a number of motifs such as the labyrinth, of greater importance to the study, is the radical interrogation of key issues associated with Western ways of seeing and thinking. The work challenges preconceived ideas long associated with the Enlightenment and more recently with hegemonic Modernism. Over the decades since the late 1960s and 1970s, this re-evaluation has extended to a critical engagement with aspects of the legacy of Duchamp, as well as Minimalism and conceptual art itself.

The dissertation also shows that the processes and conditions of viewing, the interpretive response, together with an inquiry into the artistic persona form the core of O'Doherty/Ireland's art. It shows that the emphasis on the body, and the original approach to language using Irish motifs positions his art in ways which are distinct from that of contemporaries, while at the same time adopting many of the systems and ideas of advanced art in New York during the 1960s. Using simple materials and constructive methods which are easily comprehended, there is a constant engagement with different media and how they shape the viewer's response. Using a repertoire mined from a scientific and literary background as well as his native country, cinema and art, there is an interweaving of subject matter which allows the artist to comment obliquely on a wide range of issues, including canonical forms of art. It is argued that a fugitive quality and lack of a fixed viewpoint within the work, is analogous to the artist's sceptical view of the world, something which might also be regarded as typical of an Irish mind. The dissertation reveals for the first time here-to-fore ignored sources for O'Doherty/Ireland's art. The challenge posed throughout research of establishing interconnections between different aspects of an eclectic range of work over the past forty years is underlined by the wide range of contexts and sources which inform the *oeuvre*. It is to these that we now turn.

PART ONE: O'DOHERTY/IRELAND'S ART IN CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1: O'DOHERTY/IRELAND AND AMERICAN ART

1.1. O'Doherty/Ireland's Early Career

O'Doherty/Ireland was born in Ireland in 1928, but the most significant part of his life as an artist has been spent in New York to which he emigrated in 1957 (Appendix A). Aspiring from the start to become a New York artist, his Irish background as well as his scientific training provided him with a rich resource for his artistic ideas. As the youngest of a family of four boys, all of whom had become doctors, O'Doherty maintained the family tradition within the medical profession, although it is clear from the start that his real ambition was to become an artist. Throughout his medical training he not only published poetry and wrote art-critical reviews that are still remembered for their insight, but also exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy and the Irish Exhibition of Living Art (Appendix B).

Though obviously possessed of considerable literary and critical talents his ambition centred on the desire to find a different kind of visual art from that being practised in Ireland during the 1950s. Ireland at that time was emerging from its World War Two isolation in a climate that was extremely conservative: "Modern Art was still regarded by the mass of people as being fraudulent and /or subversive."[11] Cubism of the variety which had been introduced into Ireland by Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone from Paris in the 1930s, was felt by many, including O'Doherty, to be little more than an academic version of the earlier Cubism of Picasso and Braque. O'Doherty has remarked that at that time, that he was looking for emancipation from his provincial backyard by looking towards the cultural axis of Moscow/Berlin rather than Paris. He was interested in testing "some of the ideas I was getting out of Paul Klee...I was never a Francophile..." [12] This interest in Moscow, and particularly in Russian Constructivism, reappears, as we shall see, in his art activities in America during the mid-1960s. The artist had no formal training in art but absorbed much from visiting exhibitions around Dublin

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[11] Fallon (1975), p. 24.

[12] Letter to author, 1996.

and by his own reading about art. Recently, O'Doherty/Ireland describes his sense of isolation in the Dublin of his youth, but that he learned "a fair bit about Hopper, Stuart Davis and Duchamp" before arriving in America by sending away for books on art.[13]

He formed friendships with Thomas MacGreevy (1893-1967), the poet and first director of the National Gallery of Ireland, and Jack B. Yeats (1871-1957). O'Doherty admired Yeats as the, "only painter you could confidently call major in the Ireland of my youth, and I followed his trail like an Indian scout." [14] He wrote reviews for all of Yeats' exhibitions at Waddington's Gallery, the only avant garde gallery in Dublin at the time. However, there is no evidence that O'Doherty was influenced artistically by the older artist, apart from one painting entitled *Preacher* (painted at the age of seventeen after seeing a Yeats exhibition) (Fig.1). The painting of the hands in particular point to Yeats' handling of paint. He states: "Lovable though he was he was not on my road as an artist."[15] When he finally met him in 1956, they struck up a relationship which culminated in Yeats lending his support for a scholarship to Harvard in 1957. O'Doherty in return did the last portrait of Yeats, *Portrait of Jack B. Yeats*, on Valentine's Day 1957, in the Portobello Nursing Home where he died two weeks later on 28th March (Fig.2). While O'Doherty's move to study for a Master of Science degree at Harvard gave him the foothold in America that was to shape him as an artist, his career would arguably have been quite different if he had not earlier been awarded a Nuffield scholarship to Cambridge, England. There, he carried out research on visual perception at the Experimental Psychology Laboratories. This research was to become a major springboard for his artistic inquiries in America.

Following his arrival in the U.S.A. in 1957, O'Doherty absorbed himself into American life. After graduating with a Masters Degree in science at Harvard, he worked in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, presenting one of the first public art television programmes in the United States, "Invitation to Art," through which he met and interviewed many great names of the art world.[16] In 1960 he married the art historian

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[13] Letter to author 1995a

[14] Letter to author 1996

[15] Ibid.

[16] These included Albers, Gropius, Duchamp, Hopper.

Barbara Novak, who was to be a seminal force in his life in terms of her constant support and understanding of his work over the next forty years. She also participated in the intense intellectual discussions surrounding late Minimal and early conceptual art in New York with O'Doherty and artist colleagues.[17] Between 1965 and 1967/68, both associated with a loose, informal group of artist friends and colleagues which included Sol Le Witt, Robert Smithson, Mel Bochner, Dan Graham, Peter Hutchinson, Eva Hesse, and Ruth Vollmer. This grouping together of like-minded artists and some critics like Lucy Lippard, O'Doherty/Ireland has called the most stimulating period of his life. [18] They were aware that they were involved in something of importance, but they were not quite sure how it would evolve. [19] There were many social evenings shared by this younger generation of emerging artists, such as the one described in Lippard's book, *Eva Hesse*.[20] In it she recounts an evening spent at Ruth Vollmer's in 1966 which included Brian O'Doherty, Barbara Novak, Will insley, Bob Smithson, Nancy Holt Smithson, Mel Bochner, and of course Hesse. [21] Lippard reports that O'Doherty had reviewed Hesse's work for *The New York Times* in the early 1960s, after which they became friends.[22] In a 1991 catalogue essay, " Stella and Hesse: Dispatches from the Sixties," he remarks that Hesse may have been the most original artist he had ever met. Her work, he says

> "seemed a kind of folly, because there was nothing to connect it to...She suggested a swap of one of my ogham sculptures for one of her "wursts,"with the

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[17] Apart from being the artist's wife, Novak, as an observer and participant in the intellectual discussions of the 1960s, has been an invaluable primary source for this dissertation. Her insights and knowledge of the inception of conceptual art and its position since, are also informed by her long career as Professor of Art History at Barnard College, Columbia University from the 1960s until her retirement in 1999. She is also a well respected artist, critic, and writer. See also Newman (2000), pp. 434-435.

[18] See Newman (2000), p. 435, where O'Doherty/Ireland and Novak describe the exhilaration of the time. Lucy Lippard also describes a similar art community around the Bowery area of New York. See Lippard (1973; ed. 1997), p xviii.

[19] Ireland interview with author, 1998.

[20] Lippard (1976).

[21] Ibid, p. 68.

[22] Ibid, p.18.

string hanging out of it, but its ambiguous associations—penis/tampon—so confused me that I deprived myself of a work I would now cherish." [23]

Many of these communal evenings were spent participating in discussions about art, literature, politics and philosophy stimulated by a common reading of such books as Wittgenstein's *Blue and Brown Books* (1958) and *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), [24] George Kubler's *The Shape of Time* (1962), Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Notes for a New Novel*, Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962 in English translation), as well as Barthes, Foucault, Derrida and Lacan. The publication of Camilla Gray's *The Russian Experiment in Art: 1863- 1922* in 1962, also had an impact upon some American artists. O'Doherty/Ireland himself reports that between 1964 and 1966 he did, "an enormous amount of reading," including the above, and this undoubtedly informed his art, as shall become apparent when discussing his works. [25] Some idea of the range may be gleaned from the following sample of authors present in his studio library in New York: Wittgenstein, Pascal, Nobokov, Ancient Greek philosophers, French Symbolists, Wilde, Flann O'Brien, Nietzche, Barthes and books on language, mazes, numerology, magic squares and mathematics.

A catalogue essay which O'Doherty wrote in 1984, although devoted mainly to the work of Peter Hutchinson, reveals some of the internal dynamics and concerns of the group of artists with which he associated in the mid-1960s. He relates that Hutchinson's early work with its concerns with organic process was inimical to some late minimalist and early conceptualist artists:

"There was some organophobia among the practitioners in the circle Hutchinson and I were part of, a circle much given to discourse and argument, yet unaware at that time that it had the future in its hands." Painting in particular was felt by

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[23] O'Doherty (1991) p. 59. O'Doherty recalls here also that he had first met Hesse in 1965 at a party in Nancy and Bob Smithson's house.

[24] This was written while Wittgenstein was in Ireland in the late 1940s. See Wall (2000).

[25] Ireland interview with author, 1998.

some of these artists, " to have exhausted its options for the time being. Some felt that the very act of painting...was retardataire." [26]

The ideological fervour of some artists among the group is evident, when some, like Smithson, felt that the paintings Hutchinson was doing around 1965-66 were not permissable.[27] In a recent interview, O'Doherty/Ireland reports that around 1968, during a telephone conversation with Mel Bochner, he said: " I'm no longer interested in the object." There followed a long silence after which Bochner replied that he had also reached the same conclusion. Both realised that they had said something of immense significance.[28] It was also around this time that each within the group began to find their differing paths, so that the loose association of colleagues disintegrated. O'Doherty describes the parting of ways in the following way:

> " Bochner, highly literate and conceptually ingenious, and LeWitt, systematically subverting his own systems through an inspired redundancy, went on to their dazzling careers. Smithson consummated his love affair with the fuliginous wastes of New Jersey and beyond. Dan Graham was spinning his wordworks and capturing those serial tracts of suburban houses that later became famous. Eva Hesse, always fearless and impervious to everything but her own catagorical imperative, swept the organic and inorganic along in one magisterial wave. My interests were in labyrinths and the quasi-serial language code of ogham." [29]

Hutchinson, moved to Land Art in 1969 with Smithson, Heizer and Dennis Oppenheim, the latter dubbed by O'Doherty/Ireland as, " ...one of the most radical and enigmatic of that generation." [30] A few years later Smithson, Hesse and Vollmer died. But the fierce competitive atmosphere in New York among artists seems also to have been a

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[26] O'Doherty in Provincetown (1984), p. 11.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

[29] O'Doherty in Provincetown (1984) p. 11.

[30] Ibid., p. 13.

factor in the dissolution of the group of artists. O'Doherty/Ireland has maintained a friendship with Hutchinson and only occassionally sees LeWitt, whereas he no longer sees Bochner or Graham.[31] By this time, O'Doherty, like other artists within the group, was beginning to establish his own position within a conceptual art context.

Some American conceptual artists forged relationships with like-minded artists in Europe and elsewhere by the end of the 1960s, exhibiting abroad and some eventually living there, as Sol Le Witt was to do later, in Italy.[32] O'Doherty/Ireland too exhibited intermittently in Europe from the late 1960s. Lippard points to the increasing number of reciprocal connections made between younger artists in New York and Europe by the end of the 1960s. Significantly perhaps in terms of his artistic visibility however, O'Doherty operated independently of both visiting European and British conceptual artists within New York at the time. [33]

Earlier in 1961, following Barbara Novak's appointment at Columbia University, O'Doherty had moved to New York permanently to become the art critic of *The New York Times*. This was a position which he took somewhat reluctantly in order to make a living, since he continued to nurture the ambition to renew his career as an artist in New York.[34] He formally abandoned the position in 1964 when he began to make art again. In spite of the formal resignation of the critic's role, he has however continued to write about art over the years in catalogue essays, books, and his editorship of *Art in America* between 1970 and 1974. An early artwork, *The Critic's Boots* (1964) directly relates to this time (Fig.3

The asymmetrically arranged boots were the ones worn by him when he covered various exhibitions in New York. While it is not claimed that this is a major work, it is noteworthy for a number of themes which were to become defined within O'Doherty/Ireland's mature work: language, the body and the senses, and anti-authorialism. Though the boots are tongueless, they "speak" through an outer layer of words, the artist's own critical reviews. The boots which had been used to write about art,

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[31] Ireland interview with author, 2000.

[32] O'Doherty/Ireland also has established a home/studio/museum in Italy since 1976.

[33] Lippard interview with author, 2001.

[34] Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

had themselves become art, in a somewhat similar fashion to Van Gogh's old boots. There is the allusion to the body by virtue of its imprint through time in the shape of the boots. They might also be considered the forerunner of Barthes' famous essay, "The Death of the Author," which O'Doherty was to commission a few years later, being speaking boots, yet deprived of their author. By the juxtaposition of many different possible interpretations as suggested here, this early American work exhibits a dominant characteristic of O'Doherty/Ireland's subsequent output namely, humour, and an openness which permits multiple interpretive options on the part of any specific viewer.

Leaving the post of art critic of *The New York Times* was a significant moment since it signalled a determination to pursue the ambition to become an artist in the intensely competitive artworld of New York. That determination recalls the dual role he had played earlier in life, in Ireland, in which he juggled the life of a medial student with making art and writing a substantial amount of art criticism. It was important also however from another point of view in that it is probably one of the significant factors which has had the effect of keeping his work from having a higher public profile over the years. By this time he had built up quite a reputation in New York as a public figure via his television work and his art criticism, and so there were those who were dismayed at the loss of such a prescient critic on the one hand, and certain artists who resented his attempt to move into 'their territory' where the competition for survival was fierce and critics were perceived as ' the enemy' in terms of authorial authority, on the other. The critic Lucy Lippard has characterised his position as: " a curious 'insider/outsider' position within the minimal/conceptual movements as commentator, supporter, intelligent critic, and participant."[35]

O'Doherty's position within the New York artworld of the 1960s was therefore unique in many respects, being both inside and outside of established conventions. Other factors were also operating within and without the artworld at the time. Corporate and private patronage supported predominantly permanent, object-based art, necessitating many conceptual artists, including O'Doherty/Ireland, to work for a living outside of making art. Only a few like LeWitt and Kosuth, for example, were in a position to work

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[35] Lippard in Washington D.C. (1986), p.13.

solely as artists during the 1960s. Of importance also is the fact that in a competitive society based upon individualism and excellence within a field of specialisation, there was in tandem a deep suspicion of anyone who did not dedicate themselves fully to one area of endeavour. This 'either/or' emphasis, the hallmark of Western thinking, did not consider as serious an artist who was also a critic, teacher and writer.[36] The English artist Peter Hutchinson, commented recently on his own experience of America, in which there is a tendency to "pigeon-hole you," to "get taped easily" in the tough environment of the artworld.[37] This deeply ingrained cultural attitude appears to explain some of the particular problems faced by an artist like O'Doherty/Ireland. For him, with a reputation already established within the New York artworld as a critic during the crucial stages of evolution of early conceptual art, the emergence of his art appears to have suffered from a studied absence of critical appraisal. While this may also be the case for other artists of that generation like Hutchinson and Bochner for example, there was antagonism from some critics, (and perhaps some artists). It was perceived by some that he had an unfair advantage over other artists given his background, and that, " he was trying to play both sides of the fence." [38] For O'Doherty/Ireland however, his perceived advantage became his Achilles heel. For example, Irving Sandler in his *Art of the Postmodern Era: From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s* (1996), cites O'Doherty as critic rather than artist among the acknowledgements and Introduction, and in the text as art administrator of National Endowment for the Arts. [39] In his earlier book, *American Art of the 1960s* (1988), O'Doherty also receives many entries, but again, as a writer and critic.[40] Nowhere is he specifically described as an artist, although there is more than one allusion to *Aspen*

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[36] See Kearney (1985), p. 9, regarding, " the linear, centralising logic of the Graeco-Roman culture which dominated most of western Europe...hense the mainstream of western thought rested upon a series of fundamental oppositions... (creating)...the dualistic logic of *either/or*..."

[37] Hutchinson interview with author, 2000. He also commented that he had abandoned criticism for this reason.

[38] Baker interview with author, 2000.

[39] Sandler (1996), pp. xxvi-xxvii, 12, & 186, 187.

[40] Sandler (1988), pp. 69-70, 246 & 348.

5/6(1967), an artwork and exhibition which O'Doherty both edited and contributed to as a conceptual artist.

These perceptions were to be further aggravated by his appointment as Director of the Visual Art Department of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1969, a position he retained until 1976, relinquishing it to become Director of Visual Arts and Media until 1994, and then Director of Millenium Projects between 1994-96. Research has shown that this long commitment to the public service of art, while paradoxically widely acknowledged as an important and valuable contribution, has at the same time been an added burden in terms of artistic reputation.[41] Some indication of the antagonism can be gleaned from the following remarks of an otherwise favourable review by Paul Richards of Ireland's Exhibition, "Patrick Ireland: Drawings 1965-1985" at the National Museum of American Art. Richards argues that the National Museum ought to show only America's most important artists. He then turns to question which most troubles him, the artist's high position in the government's art bureaucracy. This position, he says, " seeds the mind with doubts," although he acknowledges later in the review, that the National Museum had not received any money from the NEA.[42] It seems therefore, that far from O'Doherty's government and critical positions being any advantage to his artistic ambitions, the opposite was the case in reality. Lucy Lippard confirmed recently, that looking back, O'Doherty/Ireland's position was doubly complicated by virtue of his powerful position and contacts through *The New York Times* and the National Endowment for the Arts, so that as an artist he was somewhat compromised, however unfair that might have been to him.[43]

In fact, throughout the decades since the late 1960s, through his various roles, O'Doherty has consistently used his position to act as an important and powerful advocate of fellow-artists. This supportive stance is borne out by the large collection of colleagues' artworks based on a system of mutual exchange, built up over forty years. The collection also acts as a powerful indicator however, of the respect of artist friends

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[41] It is notable in the context of public service, that following his medical training, O'Doherty achieved a Masters degree in public health from Harvard. See Appendix A.

[42] Richards, P. *The Washington Post*, 14th April, 1986.

[43] Lippard interview with author, 2001.

and colleagues for O'Doherty/Ireland's own art from the beginning. The list includes works by Duchamp, Rothko, Hopper, Davis, Rauschenberg, Christo and Held among others, and demonstrates also his closeness at the time to many of the seminal figures whose work came to be associated with conceptual art internationally such as LeWitt, Bochner, Graham and Hesse.

From around 1964, O'Doherty was showing in group exhibitions in New York and had his first one-man exhibition there in 1966, although he did not exhibit in the Siegelaub show or any of the exhibitions which have since been considered to have launched conceptual art in New York and elsewhere (Appendix G). By this time he had set his own course within conceptual art, making work which was quite different in its emphasis from that which initially received the greatest attention in New York surrounding the practices of such artists as Kosuth, Weiner, Barry and Heubler. O'Doherty unlike Le Witt and Kosuth, did not write a "manifesto" of conceptual art around the mid-1960s, although it will be later argued that O'Doherty did in fact produce what amounted to a manifesto, through the innovatory artwork/exhibition entitled *Aspen 5/6* (1967). It was also around this time that O'Doherty was writing about the art of Hopper, Pollock, Rauschenberg, Rothko, Davis, de Kooning, Wyeth and Cornell, later published as *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth* (1974).

This problem of a "pure" artistic background is one with which other notable polyartists such as John Cage have also had to contend, as the following outlines:

> "there has been a kind of prejudice against Cage as a visual artist, although he has made visual art for much of his life. The art world does not like cross-cultural figures, particularly when, like Cage, they are best known for their work in another discipline, when their visual art might be no more than a sideline. Cage's drawings, prints, and installations are so wonderful as to belie that observation, and there is little doubt that he is one of the key artists of the century..." [44]

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[44] Yood (1992), p.xvi.

The 1972 change of name to Patrick Ireland also served to complicate his position, being understood in America simply in terms of a political gesture relating to a distant country,[45] or alternatively, with complete incomprehension.[46] Interestingly, *Name Change* which subsequently gave a political cast to all his work, has not received any serious critical evaluation within the artistic context in which it was conceived and performed, except for Brenson's "Narrative of the Name," as recently as 1998.[47] (See Chapter 4). Betty Parsons, O'Doherty's agent at the time, for commercial reasons, was far from pleased by his change of name in 1972.[48] He had been exhibiting at her famous Gallery in New York, where Pollock, Gottlieb, Rothko, Still, Newman, Reinhardt and Cornell, all had had their first one-man shows.[49] In spite of her disapproval however, he continued to show there as Ireland, until he moved to the Charles Cowles Gallery in 1980. The critic Jan van der Marck, writing as late as 1993, contextualised Ireland's his position in a way which echoes the quotation above relating to Cage:

> "In our age of specialization and certification, there is a tendency to frown upon the exercise of multiple talents. Versatility in more than one art, to professional watchdogs, smacks of amateurism, lack of commitment, or self-delusion. The opposite, in all likelihood, is true though art's unfortunate commodification in our time favors its single-focus practice and production." [50]

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[45] Baker interview with author, 2000.

[46] Broun interview with author, 1997.

[47] Brenson (1998), pp. 7-18.

[48] Ireland letter (1990a), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 25.

[49] Hall (1991).

[50] Van der Marck in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 6.

1.2. Minimalism

The America that Brian O'Doherty arrived into in the late 1950s and early 1960s was one which was moving from an industrial to a post-industrial world of mass information technology for which media theorist Marshall McLuhan was to coin the phrase a "global village." It was a time too, in which art in both America and Europe experienced a paradigmatic shift of sensibility from a Modern to a post-Modern world. America was no longer looking to Europe, and particularly Paris, as the centre of the art world. New York, for the first time in Western art history had taken over the mantle of leadership from Europe. Abstract Expressionism there had been firmly established by artists like Jackson Pollock, William De Kooning and Mark Rothko but more particularly by the theoretical underpinning exemplified by the powerful formalist critic Clement Greenberg as laid out in his essay "Modernist Painting."[51]

His aesthetics were the lynchpin around which an enormously powerful art system evolved, which included art dealers, collectors, historians and critics, galleries and museums. In essence, Greenberg held that in the modern era, each of the arts had been progressing towards 'self-definition,' and that what was autonomous and intrinsic to painting was flatness, the rectangular shape of the support and the properties of the pigment. The most important quality however was flatness, since it was unique to painting. Subject matter, politics, and social concerns were excluded as belonging to the world of literature, while " tactile" elements belonged to the realm of sculpture. Art became its own subject, an object of representation rather than a means of representation of the world. Furthermore Greenberg asserted that it was the artist's primary goal to create art of quality and the critic's job to recognise it, and that art of quality is international, transcendent and universal.[52] Greenberg's extraordinary power and

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[51] Greenberg (1961). On Greenberg's aesthetics see, Sandler (1994), pp. 1-8; Stiles & Selz. (1996), p. 2; Danto (1997), pp. 81-98; and Mussman's 1966 article, " Literalness and the Infinite," in Battock (1968; ed. 1995), pp. 236-247.

[52] The ultimate source of this kind of aesthetics was the philosophy of Kant (1724-1804), and the Enlightenment's belief in rational enquiry, and the autonomous individual. See Danto (1997), pp. 84, 86-87.

influence within the artworld in New York in a sense served to stimulate an equally powerful anti-formalist counter-movement among artists and critics which was to span Pop, Minimalism and conceptual art and extend the boundaries of art in an unprecedented way.

Challenges to what was perceived as institutionalised formalist aesthetics had begun to mount in the 1950s with artists like Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg among others, producing informal, collage-like paintings drawn from mass-media imagery. The latter's contribution, incidentally, was characterised by O'Doherty in 1974 as representing the solution to many of the problems bequeathed by the Abstract Expressionists, suggesting also that Rauschenberg would in time, be seen as the dominating figure of the 1950s and 1960s. [53] The shift of sensibility gathered momentum during the late 1950s so that by the early 1960s Modernism, as interpreted by Greenberg, was beginning to wane although Colour-Field painting was still flourishing. Artists looked for differing ways to reject the implication that a progression of styles in modern art was historically determined and that the agent for conferring the authority of history was the formalist critic. This, it was felt, led to a situation in which the critic in effect became an art tout, since he insisted on promoting only art which fitted the formalist canon thus impoverishing discourse on contemporary art. In this context, Sandler quotes Greenberg's dismissal of Oldenberg's sculpture and the painting of Jasper Johns and his promotion of Caro and Andrew Wyeth:

" When in the name of taste Andrew Wyeth was proclaimed a better artist than Johns (in what seemed to be a crass attempt to destroy a central figure of the opposition), then formalist criticism had become utterly unbelievable." [54]

Opposition was also forming within criticism itself, Sandler states, among a group of anti-formalist critics "who commanded art-world attention," whom he lists: Lawrence Alloway, John Ashbery, Dore Ashton, Douglas Davis, Thomas Hess, Max Kozloff,

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[53] O'Doherty (1974) p. 8.

[54] Sandler (1988), p. 118.

Hilton Kramer, Brian O'Doherty, Fairfield Porter, Harold Rosenberg, Robert Rosenblum, William Seitz, Leo Steinberg, and G. R. Swenson. [55]

Another crucial figure that emerged in the context of New York's counter movement was John Cage, and the Black Mountain College activities. Neo-Dada and Fluxus artists were largely inspired by his experimental music and theories. In addition, for artists like Rauschenberg and Johns, it was through the mediation of Cage that the gestures of Marcel Duchamp became known, thus opening art up to new content and everyday life. The idea of an activity or event as opposed to the static art-object was promoted thus breeching the traditional hierarchical boundaries of painting and sculpture. In fact there was a separation of the traditional alliance of painting and sculpture, with sculpture gaining the upper hand. This resulted in the term " sculpture" being applied to anything regarded as real, in the sense of occupying real space, as opposed to something which was represented, as with painting. In effect, as Thomas McEvilley points out: "One can regard a painting as sculpture insofar as it is an object; but you could not regard a sculpture as a painting." [56] The expansion of the category of sculpture to performance, such as Gilbert and George's living sculptures for example, co-existed with a proliferation of new anti-art media in the form of type-written texts, documents, photographs, film and video. Interdisciplinary works between the arts evolved which demanded new aesthetic and critical interpretation for an expanding field of perceptual experience.

This new approach to art-making has become categorised under the term 'contemporary art,' in order to signify the end of Modernism. Used in the context of art, it does not simply signify a temporal notion or what happens at present; rather it implies that there are no more 'periods' or master narratives of art; that it is less a style of making art than a style of using styles or a style not seen before. It therefore overlaps with another term, 'post-Modern,' a term initially borrowed from architecture, denoting yet again the end of Modernism, and a deliberate lack of style in favour of the hybrid and ambiguous. Appleby, Covington, Hoyt et al. describe post-Modernism as " a general

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[55] Ibid.

[56] McEvilley (1999a), p. 46.

rubric that encompasses many aesthetic undertakings and critical methods, all of which hint at the fact that we may be witnessing a major reconfiguration of cultural and philosophical paradigms." [57] However, like many other names within art, some initially pejoratively applied, the term 'post-Modernism' has become part of art's language.[58]

Lippard and John Chandler in February 1968, published an article in *Art International*, "The Dematerialization of Art," in which they characterised what later became conceptual art as coming from two directions: art-as-action and art-as-idea. O'Doherty has called Lippard's subsequent book "...The Holy Book of this era, enclosing between its covers the record of an extraordinary intellectual adventure." [59] He, on the other hand, a year earlier in 1967, characterised the art world then as being split into those who believed that art had to do with art, and those who believed it had primarily to do with life. Pointing out that such divisions had existed throughout art history, psychology and philosophy he states:

> " The art as art is of course, always historically triumphant in that art continually survives its contexts and thus its initial "meaning." It is against this art-life dilemma that artists and critics tend to define themselves...Life as a substitute for art and art as a substitute for life (and indeed for art) are now commonplaces." [60]

O'Doherty's comments about the new kind of artist in society in 1963, not only indicate the thinking of sympathetic critics and some artists' at the time, but can now be applied retrospectively to his own artistic persona:

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[57] Appleby, Covington, Hoyt et al. (1996), p. 386.

[58] This dissertation uses the upper case for both Modernism and post-Modernism in accordance with the terms as defined above.

[59] O'Doherty in Provincetown (1984), p.13.

[60] O'Doherty (1967), Introduction, p. 13

" Lately there are signs that the artist is looking for a point of contact with his surroundings, social, physical, and philosphical, in a way he has not done before." [61]

Numerous alternative art strategies emerged in quick succession after Pop art in the early 1960s: Op art, Land art, Body art, Minimal art and Conceptual art. This period is remarkable for the speed with which one "movement," or change of sensibility overtook another. This was especially so during 1966-69. Exhibitions, for example, like *Primary Structures* at the Jewish Museum which gained art-world acceptance for the Minimal sculpture of Judd, Morris, Flavin and Andre in 1966, overlapped with the very different sensibility of Bochner's 1966 "Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to be Viewed as Art," and O'Doherty's *Aspen 5/6* of 1967 (See Appendices F and G). In fact artists first known as Minimalists, such as LeWitt and Morris, after art-world acceptance of conceptual art by 1969, also became known as conceptual artists.[62]

It was from within the context of late Minimalism during the intense and exciting intellectual milieu of the mid-1960s that O'Doherty's art initially emerged. This is so in spite of the fact that he did not show in any major defining exhibitions of either Minimal or conceptual art, as noted above. This may be explained from a number of different perspectives. The ideological stance of much Minimalism did not suit his sensibility, no more than that of the 'analytical/pure' branch of conceptual art which quickly became dominant in New York, mainly through the activities and writings of Kosuth. With an already established persona as a respected critic, artists attempting to establish their own artistic personae, may have been unwilling to include him in shows.[63] In addition, O'Doherty's early art did not fit easily into the defining boundaries being then set around

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[61] See O'Doherty (1963; ed. 1967), " Art and Freedom—the Crisis of Style," (*The New York Times*), p. 203.

[62] Recently, it has been suggested that LeWitt is primarily a Minimalist artist or proto-conceptualist. In this sense he can be regarded as a transitional figure. See Osborne (1999), p. 52.

[63] Artists like Kosuth, Bochner, Alloway and Graham had all organised exhibitions. See Appendices F and G.

conceptual art.[64] O'Doherty's position therefore, as already noted, was somewhat blurred from early on within an artworld attempting to keep abreast of and define a rapidly changing artistic landscape. In addition, O'Doherty's independent approach to language for example, may have obscured his early conceptual work until the recent revival of interest in conceptual art practitioners like him with a broader sensibility and concerns than those of 'analytical' conceptual art.

Baker defines Minimalism as a term which is slightly more precise when applied to works of visual art, as opposed to the word " minimal," which has come to mean loosely any stylistic austerity in the arts.[65] According to Baker, the former carries two distinct implications, each with its own historical resonances. The first refers to sculpture or three-dimensional work made after 1960 which was visually inert, barren of decorative detail, in which geometry is emphasised and expressivity avoided. The art historical ancestry here included Suprematism, De Stijl, and Constructivism allied to a response to mass production in a capitalist society. The second was the tendency to present as art things indistinguishable from non-art objects with the intention of questioning the perceptual and institutional terms of the validation of art. The art historical sources for this second tendency Baker includes are Marcel Duchamp's readymade, and Constantin Brancusi's sculpture. It is argued here that O'Doherty/Ireland's art, with some differences, broadly embraces both of these tendencies.

In direct opposition to the hegemony of Modernism and particularly Abstract Expressionism in New York, the abstraction and illusionism of painting was substituted by Minimalism with an art of objects in real space, which implicated the viewer in a new way. The notion of style was eschewed with the employment of new materials in a non-hierarchical, non-referential way allied to a reduction of means. Clarity and intellectual rigor were prized in contrast to the subjectivity and emotionalism of Abstract Expressionist painting. These are all characteristics which are evident in O'Doherty/Ireland's art, including construction of a piece according to a preconceived

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[64] Barbara Novak in conversation with the author in 1999, recalled that some artist colleagues at the time thought that O'Doherty's work was too " lyrical." On the other hand, Ireland himself remarked to Lucy Lippard that Eva Hesse had once said to him, " I hope you don't get too pure..." See Ireland letter (1985).

[65] Baker (1988), p. 9.

system. One feature however not generally found in his practice is that in which the new sculpture was modelled, welded, or assembled in the factory. The attitude and tone of some American Minimalist artists' work derived from the plain matter-of-fact Shaker tradition and the pragmatist philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce and William James. Also it is interesting to note that some of the artists involved, like Judd for example, were antagonistic to their work being connected in any way to European Constructivism or Suprematism.[66] Many at the time had the attitude that " Europe is over and done with." [67] Morris also, for example, in an interview in 1985, states as much in reference to his own early work:

> " In the Minimal-type pieces ..., there is not necessarily any influence from European art or even much of a reaction to it. If there's a reaction, it's a reaction to what's going on in American art at the time." [68]

This emphasises the provincial and quasi-nationalistic attitudes of many American artists at the time to which O'Doherty/Ireland's art stands in sharp contrast from the mid-1960s on. For him, the sources were mainly European. These, as the study will show, were predominantly literary, which, amongst others, the stark minimalist drama and prose of fellow Irishman, Beckett, and the new novel of Alain Robbe-Grillet featured. Lucy Lippard recent characterised O'Doherty's temperament in the following way:

> "Brian's sensibility was so much broader than ours at the time—we were narrow, but thought we were broad!" [69]

She remarks that initially she and her artist colleagues were very anti-European in their attitude, whereas O'Doherty seemed to understand both Europe and America and slide easily between the two, being "so multi-faceted, witty and knowledgeable. I wish I had

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[66] See " Questions to Stella and Judd," Glaser (1964), in Battock (1968; ed. 1995), p.155.

[67] See *October 70* (1994), p. 141.

[68] Buchloh (1994), p. 49.

[69] Lippard interview with author, 2001.

known him then, he could have helped me a lot." [70] These remarks are supported by O'Doherty's broad knowledge of art history as a critic and his early interest in Russian art while still in Ireland, but also by the production in 1967 of the composite artwork/magazine/ exhibition, *Aspen 5/6*, which, besides contemporaries, included traditional European avant-garde constructivists like Moholy-Nagy, Gabo and Pevsner and Dadaists like Duchamp. This work is discussed in detail later in this Chapter.

Minimalism emerged at a time of immense cultural and social upheaval, in which among other concerns, the American obsession with individuality gained new ground as a new generation gradually shook off the conformity required during World War Two. However, as Baker describes:

> " The conflicts over civil rights and the Vietnam War dramatized the divergence between official doctrine and everyday life. The ideology of freedom and justice for all ran counter to people's real experiences of racism, discrimination against women, educationally enforced conformity, and oligarchic government...meanwhile media mechanisms for shaping collective opinion and behaviour became rapidly more refined." [71]

Historically, both Minimalism and conceptual art's place in the annals of art continue to be the subject of debate and are, as yet, not clearly understood in terms of chronology, influence, or the complex impulses which underpin different practices. [72] Since its inception Minimalism was often dismissed:

> "For just as the rightists in the 1950s sought to bury the radicalism of the 1930s, so rightists in the 1980s sought to cancel the cultural claims and to reverse the

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Baker (1988), pp. 15-16.

[72] Ireland interview with author, 1997a. See also Anne Wagner's Preface to 1995 edition of *Minimal Art* (1968), pp. 12-18, which quotes O' Doherty's essay, " A Platonic Academy–Minus Plato: The Future in New York," (1966). See also Round Table discussion, "The Reception of the Sixties," *October 69* (1994), pp. 3-21.

political gains of the 1960s...Nothing much changed for the Gringrich radicals of the early 1990s, and political passion against the 1960s runs as high as ever today." [73]

Foster recently described two misreadings of Minimalism, as either reductive due to minimal content (Wollheim), [74] or idealist (Greenberg),[75] due to its pure forms and logical structures. But, he argues, Minimalism's aim was to overcome the dualism of subject and object through the phenomenological experience of the viewer:

> " Thus, far from idealist, minimalist work complicates the purity of conception with the contingency of perception, of the body in a particular space and time." [76]

This remark is of particular relevance to O'Doherty/Ireland's work as we shall see in Part II. Partly in response to an absence of serious critical analysis coupled with antagonism on the part of most formalist critics, the pioneering generation of Minimalism, Judd, Flavin and Andre as well as a younger generation of conceptual artists like O'Doherty, LeWitt, Morris, Graham and Smithson, made significant contributions also to art-critical discourse.[77] In fact a vast amount of critical literature by artists was largely ignored until the 1980s by academic art history, and this is especially the case with conceptual art until quite recently.[78] O'Doherty remarked upon this neglect in 1984:

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[73] Foster (1996), p. 35.

[74] Wollheim (1965) in Battock (1968; ed. 1995), pp. 387-399. Wollheim is credited as the first to apply the term " Minimal" to art, citing "certain combines" of Rauschenberg together with Reinhardt's paintings and Duchamp's unassisted readymades. Battock, p. 387.

[75] Greenberg (1967) in Battock (1968; ed. 1995), pp. 180- 186.

[76] Foster (1996), p.40.

[77] Gregory Battock's *Minimal Art* (1968; ed. 1995), still remains one of Minimalism's key texts with its compilation of some of the most important critical writings of the 1960s by contemporary artists and critics. Jeanne Siegal's *Artwords: Discourse on the 60s and 70s* (1985), also assembles interviews she had between 1966 and 1973 with over thirty artists.

[78] Stiles & Selz (1996), pp. 4 & 7.

" Why are this era and its artifacts dismissed in serious discourse?...Viewed across the commercially satisfying decade of the '80s, that adventure is mostly revisited only to point to its unaccomodating fragments deposited in a cul-de-sac." [79]

This antagonism to Minimalism and conceptual art that followed, is of particular relevance to this study and its analysis of the reception of O'Doherty/Ireland's art. For Foster, at stake then and since, is the " nature of meaning and the status of the subject." Both are produced in public in " the physical interface with the actual world, not in a mental space of ideal conception." [80] The concern within Minimalism about the nature of human selfhood or the capacity of an individual to judge the meaning of events, is of immense importance within O'Doherty/Ireland's art where it becomes a dominant theme. So too is the challenge offered by Minimalism to the central model of Modernist aesthetics, the artist as existential creator. (Chapter 4 shows how this model is treated in O'Doherty/Ireland's art). The stress on the temporal nature of the perceptive process has been one of the areas of resistence to Minimalism since it, "threatens the disciplinary order of modern aesthetics in which visual art is held to be strictly spatial." [81] The various ways in which this facet of Minimalism is made explicit by O'Doherty/Ireland's art is discussed in Chapter 3.

Ultimately, by the late 1960s, the initial critical spirit associated with Minimalism had been neutralized by the gallery system and commerce, allied to a general backlash against the liberal spirit of the 1960s. Minimalism however had spawned a number of different tendencies: the eccentric minimalism of Hesse; process art composed of scattered soft fabric and other "antiform" materials; earth art; minimal performance art and conceptual art. Allied to a rejection of sculpture and particularly painting, there was also growing antagonism to the spaces in which art was shown, the gallery and museum. O'Doherty's critical contribution to this latter aspect of conceptual art is discussed later in this chapter. Amongst these various post-Minimal tendencies, conceptual art in the late

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[79] O'Doherty in Provincetown (1984), p. 11.

[80] Foster (1996), p. 40.

1960s succeeded in reviving some of Minimalism's spent forces, by critically engaging with what had been implied by Minimalism, which in some but not all cases, eliminated the art object. O'Doherty's art emerged during the time when his work and that of some others of the second generation of artists, was beginning to move away from static Minimalist sculptural forms towards performance, photography, video and textual documentation, which later became codified as conceptual art. As a recent writer put it:

> "Nearly as soon as the minimalists were given their label, a generation of younger successors appeared. Dismantling the minimalist object, they had given the autonomy of objects to lines and planes." [82]

O'Doherty's art is a critically important part of this move. This is said in spite of the fact that as yet, the precise chronology and disentangling of the threads between Minimalism and certain strands of conceptual art, awaits art historical clarification.[83] Although both occurred around the same time and shared certain artists, the basic thrust of conceptual art differed from Minimalism so that conceptual art stressed, according to Lippard, "the acceptively open-ended in contrast to Minimalism's rejectively self-contained. If Minimalism formally expressed "less is more," Conceptual art was saying more with less." [84]

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[81] Foster (1996), p. 40.

[82] Racliff (2000), p. 153.

[83] Anthologies of both Minimal and Conceptual art cite the same artists. For example O'Doherty, Bochner, Graham, Morris, Smithson and LeWitt are cited in Battock's anthology, *Minimal Art* (1968; ed. 1995), as well as in Alberro & Stimson's anthology of conceptual art (1999). Meyer's *Conceptual Art* (1972) also cites among others, Bochner, Graham, LeWitt, and Morris. Ratcliff's recent review of art between 1965 and 1975, *Out of the Box* (2000), also includes O'Doherty with above artists.

[84] Lippard (1973; ed. 1997), p. xiii.

1.3. Systems

1.3.1. Grids

The increased exposure and familiarity during the 1960s with technical information systems brought mass media and language into the foreground within the social sciences. Contemporaneously with these developments during the late 1960s, artists tried to avoid traditional materials and methods of art practice in a variety of ways. Some therefore adopted the use of various systems from other disciplines such as information technology, industry, mathematics. In order to eschew traditional pictorial or sculptural properties in their work, other symbolic and abstract systems formed part of a repertoire which aimed to foreground perception with a new kind of 'technical reading.' Meredith Monk explained in a 1996 interview:

> " In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a lot of people were trying to get back to some fundamental principles. The minimalist aesthetic was prominent and different people were exploring reduction in different ways." [85]

Among the systems in use by O'Doherty/Ireland since the 1960s are grids, serialism and mathematical magic squares. Using these he has explored language via a reductive aesthetic involving vowels and numbers. The graphic medium of pencil, or ink pen was preferred over easel painting until the last decade. Besides the use of systems, his sculpture abandoned the traditional distancing technique of the pedestal, and diffused the 'inside/outside' concept in which the 'inside' of the work was traditionally assumed to symbolise its content. In addition, he adopted models like the box, the cube, and other 'containers' of information, such as the artist's book and gallery installations. By such methods, O'Doherty/Ireland has extended categories of art beyond the traditional triad of painting, sculpture and architecture, as can be seen by the category list later in this Chapter.

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[85] Monk in London (1998b), p. 77.

The grid, although art historically a classical emblem of rational order linked to perspective in the Renaissance, with late twentieth century artists like O'Doherty/Ireland, it became a paradigm for an anti-developmental, anti-mimetic, anti-narrative, anti-historical form of art. In O'Doherty/Ireland's work since the late 1960s, it has been used in the form of drawings on paper, wall paintings, plays, as well as three-dimensional installations. Rosalind Krauss, in an 1981 essay, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde," describes the uses to which the grid had been put by certain artists, suggesting that given its sense of a fresh start, which, though art historically fictional, it attracted one artist after another.[86] The grid's structure, by prohibiting development and promoting repetition opposed Modernism's, " discourse of originality." Furthermore, Krauss suggests that the grid would not permit the projection of language onto the realm of the visual and thus, "the grid promotes this silence, expressing it moreover as a refusal of speech." [87] This does not apply in O'Doherty/Ireland's case since, as Chapter 2 shall discuss, he found a unique way of applying language to the grid. The grid by definition is also endlessly extendable without any natural limits in either two or three dimensions. In O'Doherty/Ireland's work, while preconceived restrictions are imposed and possibilities explored within those set limits, the implied sense of extension remains. To him, the grid is multivalent:

> "How do you say something new about the grid, grandchild of perspective and the Renaissance? It's supposed to be indexical of all that is rational, but I think it's as mad as many logical things turn out to be, artificial, hysterical, subsuming its own version of chaos, it's rigid but flexible, a measure of scales but scaleless, it's flat with intimations of depth, democratic about space but really absolutist, stamped with rigidity but alert with permutational virtuosity." [88]

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[86] Krauss (1981; ed. 1986), pp. 151-170.

[87] Ibid, p.158.

[88] Ireland in Derry, Northern Ireland (1998), p.21.

O'Doherty's grids therefore seem to facilitate the ambivalence of the ways grids can be read, which Krauss terms as a centripetal or centrifugal.[89] The former maps the space within a frame whereas in the latter, the grid extends to infinity, beyond the boundaries imposed by the artist. For an artist such as O'Doherty/Ireland with a background in the psychology and physiology of vision, the perceptual bivalency of the grid is of special interest.[90] Krauss in another essay about the grid in 1978, discusses a range of centrifugal grid projects. She cites Patrick Ireland's phonic grids as exemplary works exploring perception, along with others including Agnes Martin and Larry Poons.[91]

1.3.2. Serialism

Serialism is another system favoured by O' Doherty/Ireland since the late 1960s. As a system, it facilitates the exploration of a range of artistic possibilities in a pre-set logical sequence. It was a system which attracted other young conceptualists in the mid to late 1960s, who were also interested in set theory, mathematical progressions, permutations, and other kinds of logical processes. The term serialism is derived from contemporary musical composition first postulated by Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), in which a fixed sequence is determined for some or all the elements, most commonly that of pitch. A basic order for the 12-note chromatic scale, called the series/row/set, is constructed with a pattern of intervals which can be used in one of 4 ways: in its original form; in reversed or retrograde order; in an inverse order; and in an inverted, reversed order. The sequence therefore could be inverted or reversed but the relationship between the units must not be corrupted.[92] O'Doherty's early use of serialism can be seen from an aluminium wall-sculpture, *One* (1969) (Fig. 4), for example. It can be read from two points of view at the sides, in which the word 'one' is inscribed in Ogham in a double (reversed) fashion. However, besides sculptures such as this, O'Doherty/Ireland has produced an immense array of drawings based upon serial ideas. The linking of these 20th

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[89] Krauss (1986), p.6.

[90] Given O'Doherty's scientific training it is interesting to note that scientific textbooks on the physiology of vision often used the grid.

[91] Krauss (1978; ed. 1986), p. 21.

[92] Hall (1996).

century musical ideas to an archaic Celtic language, as shall be discussed in Chapter 2, has been one of his most important contributions to contemporary art.

O'Doherty's knowledge of serialism was assisted greatly by his friendship with the composer, Morton Feldman.[93] An affinity is also evident between O'Doherty/Ireland's visual art which aims to stretch the perceptual powers of viewers, and Feldman's acoustic plane which demands heightened concentration because of its distinctive quietness and stillness. Among O'Doherty's colleagues at the time, Mel Bochner and Sol Le Witt also adopted a serial system. Ireland comments that:

> "Serialism was our mother's milk in the mid and late 1960s. It was a way of reading art rather than recognizing compositions. Serialism and sets made for busy reading. It's a mode of perception that's gone now—the young see differently—but it made the eye a gymnast, with some of the gymnast's leaps and thrills. I suppose each art has a mode of perception buried in it, and the future brings foreign eyes, eyes that don't speak the language, as it were." [94]

Elsewhere, he has described serial thinking as the link between Minimalism and conceptual art during the late 1960s. [95] This interest in serialism is also found in his writings. In 1968, for example, his catalogue essay for an exhibition of the work of the Dadaist filmmaker Hans Richter, opened up a new "mode of perception" for it. [96] In the essay O'Doherty maps out his early contribution with films such as *Rhythmus 21* (1920 or 1921) and scrolls like *Preludium* (1919), which are concerned with the nature of motion itself. These works are serial, he suggests, since composition is eschewed (changes in forms of units), in favour of the serial (changes in the number, attitude and position of units). O'Doherty/Ireland relates that initially Richter himself was hostile to such a serial interpretation:

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[93] Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

[94] Ireland, letter (1987), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 21.

[95] Ireland lecture, 1978.

[96] O'Doherty in Massachusetts (1968), n.p. Richter (1888-1976) with Viking Eggling (1880-1925), invented abstract cinema. Richter was also a writer, painter and sculptor.

" I imposed the serial reading, at first against his reservations. Finally, as artists do, he took my reading because, perhaps, it made him more current." [97]

Hamilton suggests that Richter's concern with motion through the use of abstract forms introduced the " the orchestration of time," into art. [98] As we shall see, O'Doherty/Ireland shares a concern with time which is exploited (or orchestrated) in novel ways within his art. O'Doherty's colleague at the time, Mel Bochner, in an article written in 1967 provides further insights into the thinking behind artists' adoption of serialism:

" Everything that exists is three-dimensional and takes up space (...the medium in which the observer lives and moves). Art objects are qualitatively different from natural life yet are coextensive with it. This "intrusion" factor is the basis for the unnaturalness of all art." [99]

He continues that these ideas were relevant to certain art of the day, which could not be dismissed on stylistic or metaphoric grounds, that deliberately heightened artificiality by its clearly visible and ordered structure. He suggests also that serialism or Systemic art was a highly abstract and ordered form of art and thought, which was self-contained and non-referential, was worked out *a priori*, and carried through the piece to its logical conclusion, without any adjustments based on style or chance. Serialism therefore provided visual artists like O'Doherty, Bochner and LeWitt for example, with an ideal device in which no "subjective" or "personality" decisions could influence the making of an artwork, attributes considered at the time to characterise the excesses of Abstract Expressionism. All parts of the work were equally important without an inherent hierarchy, a condition akin to the serial music of Schoenberg, Boulez and Feldman among others for which, Bochner suggests, the only musical precedent is Bach's "Art of

[97] Ireland interview with author, 2000b.

[98] Hamilton (1967), p. 348.

the Fugue." The serial art- work was "arranged" (another musical analogy), rather than "composed," since the latter would imply some adjustment of the parts in terms of their size, number, colour or placement to arrive at the finished work, whose exact nature was not known beforehand. "Arrangement," on the other hand, implied the fixed nature of the parts and a preconceived notion of the whole, thereby eliminating the intuitive, creative and expressive characteristics of Modernist art. Thus the radically new language of music at the earlier part of this century which had formulated its own rules for organizing sounds (grammar), its own patterns (syntax) and its own kind of structures (sentences), supplied a paradigm for a new language being sought for visual art in the mid-1960s. It is not too surprising to learn that both serial music and Bach's Fugues are among O'Doherty/Ireland's favourite musical forms. [100]

In an article entitled " A Platonic Academy—Minus Plato: The Future in New York" of 1966, the same year as his first one-man exhibition at the Byron Gallery, O'Doherty describes the intellectual climate among new artists as being like an academy in view of the strongly anti-avant-gardist attitude. The essay is important for what it reveals about O'Doherty's thinking at the time: " To be avant-garde now is to be old-fashioned," he suggests, noting that all artmaking requires models, but those models could be as arbitrary as any artist could think of, (eg. solid geometry, bad industrial design, topology, structural engineering, fourth dimensional paradoxes etc., continuing,

> "...as models of course, you use them but you don't believe in them, they are simply the artist's conceptual landscape of "nature"... " [101]

The revised role of art necessarily had implications for the artist who, he explains, working with the mind rather than the hand becomes, " ... a scholar-artist whose thoughts are carried out by others." [102] The study shall show how this scholar-artist worked these ideas through his own art.

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[99] Bochner (1967), in Battock (1968; ed. 1995), p. 92.

[100] Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

[101] O'Doherty (1966; ed. 1967), pp. 251-255.

[102] Ibid.

Eco, the author of *Opera Aperta* (1962), quotes a useful definition of serialism by the musician Pierre Boulez:

> " Serial thought has become a polyvalent thought process...As such, it is in complete contrast to classical thought, according to which form is a pre-existing entity and at the same time a general morphology. Here (within serial thought) there are no pre-constituted scales, that is, no general structures within which a particular thought could inscribe itself. A composer's thought, operating in accordance with a particular methodology, creates the objects it needs and the form necessary for their organization each time it has occasion to express itself. Classical tonal thought is based on a world defined by gravitational attraction; serial thought, on a world that is perpetually expanding." [103]

Eco's concept of the 'open work,' a "constant questioning of any established grammar," in music or any artistic genre is also, he says, "a poetics of serial thought." [104] Eco argues further that the open work represents through its formal properties a characteristically modern experience of the world and as such, is an "epistemological metaphor." Not only does it reflect aspects of modern philosophy (phenomenology) and science (the theory of relativity, mathematical information theory), but through its lack of conventional order, it represents by analogy the feeling of senselessness, disorder, and "discontinuity" that is felt in the modern world. [105]

This dissertation argues that O'Doherty/Ireland's work is characterised by the poetics of serial thought, and so could also fit into Eco's definition of an 'open work.' [106] His art represents a kind of thinking which runs parallel to modern scientific tendencies

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[103] Quoted in Eco (1962; ed. 1989), p. 218.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid, p.xiv.

[106] In stating this, there is no evidence that O'Doherty was even aware of Eco's *Opera Aperta* (1962), which was only translated into English in 1989. Ireland interview with author, 2000c. Eco was however a key source among Arte Povera artists during the 1960s together with American philosopher, John Dewey. See Flood and Morris in Minneapolis (2001), p. 15.

towards the indeterminate and relative. Although these can be interpreted in a negative fashion, they can also be interpreted in a positive fashion, or can be juxtaposed to each other, as we shall see in O'Doherty/Ireland's art. As such, it embodies the spirit of open-ended experimentation without restraint by formal limitations, thus conveying the infinite variability of both art and experience. He himself stated recently:

> " I see perceptual sophistication as its own spatial avenue to poetry...But that's only part of the story. Poetic insight or outsight, or whatever, takes you only so far...What I'm talking about is the hard poetics of the visual, an area hardly scratched in art-writing." [107]

1.3.3. Magic Squares

Yet another system frequently used by O'Doherty/Ireland since the late 1960s, and therefore included here, is the mathematical system of magic squares. A magic square is an array of numbers arranged in a square so that the sum of the numbers in each row, column or across the two major diagonals, total the same number. This number is called the "magic constant." He has used it for drawings (Fig.5), Rope Drawings (Fig. 6), and more recently, for sculptural work (Fig. 7). In this glass-brick sculpture for example, each column is arranged according to the following magic square of brick units: from left to right of the photograph: 4,9,2, (top); 3,5,7 (middle); 8,1,6, (bottom). Typically in O'Doherty/Ireland's art, the magic constant, as here, is 15. The frequent use of a multiple of 5 relates to the five sets/rows of the Ogham language, which O'Doherty/Ireland introduced to contemporary art in the late 1960s. The use of systems indicates O'Doherty/Ireland's scientifically rigorous cast of mind and training, but their application to the complex philosophical issues with which his art engages lends his art its distinctive qualities. These may be best described as the fine balance maintained between concepts of order and a poetic heuristic inpulse.

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[107] Ireland letter (1990a), in Madison Wisconsin (1993) p. 27.

1.3.4. Dot, line, plane

O'Doherty/Ireland's art operates in many different media, but a significant proportion of the output has been in the medium of drawings using dots, and lines. The dot and the line's reductive nature, was especially appealing to an artist whose work was emerging out of Minimalism into conceptual art. The dot, line, and the plane, were first adopted during the late 1960s and 1970s by O'Doherty/Ireland. The drawings initially took the form of the graphic medium of line on paper, but later with the Rope Drawings series became lines drawn in real space. The line, for so long the basic element of traditional artforms, in his hands became the focus of a new aesthetic. Its elusive properties, together with the fact that it was not painting obviously made it an attractive medium. The ability of a line to order space out of all proportion to its minimal physical properties, its invasion of language,.[108] and the fact that it is not a form, but a mark of location, is all relevant to O'Doherty/Ireland's art. When reviewing the "Line Exhibition" (1975-76) which included Ireland's work, Foote commented on the various properties of a line:

> " A line is a conceptual joy because it is, above all, a terrific idea. Clear, unequivocal, simple, functional but formless, visible but invisible...The artists in the " Line" show are concerned with line's nonpictorial functions; their works, which cut across all media, identify and comment upon its many "nonart" habits and foibles." [109]

O'Doherty/Ireland's adroit use of the elusive qualities of line has been an unique feature throughout his *oeuvre*, especially in the Rope Drawing installations (Chapter 3). In these he has exploited the minimal material form of a line in terms of its breadth; its directional dynamism and energy which can be used to locate, connect or divide, measure, stop or start, be straight, but rarely, in O'Doherty/Ireland's art, be curved. Time is also an important concern as his notebooks make clear:

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[108] For example, phrases like to 'walk the line', ' tow the line' and to ' cross the line' etc. are commonplace metaphors.

" On the lines, time lingers and dawdles, then flashes and disappears. A piece made of different duration? Eye infallible on verticals, dumb on horizontals (no spirit-level in the eye), somewhere between, on obliques. Obliques are confused verticals or horizontals getting smart." [110]

The catalogue accompanying the " Line Exhibition" attempted to create various categories for the artists' explorations: lines on a surface; lines in space; negative lines; positive lines; projects; objects; line as expression; line as system; line as tracking. Foote notes however that such attempts at categorisation proved unsatisfactory, some artists' work fitting into one or more category. She concludes:

" If such difficulties prove anything, it is that the richness of line as medium, the depth of the investigation to which it has been subjected, and the range of solutions to be found within current art activities establish it as a prime force working within the overall context of post-Minimal art." [111]

This adherence to the ambiguous properties of line throughout O'Doherty/Ireland's art can also be traced to his Irish background. The open-ended linearity of Irish visual art can be seen from the megalithic labyrinthine stone carvings of Newgrange and Knowth (3,500 B.C.) (Fig. 8), to the curvilinear motifs of the *Book of Kells* (Fig. 9) and Christian High Crosses (Fig. 10). While O'Doherty/Ireland's art generally avoids the curvilinear use of line, the Stone Drawings series (1982-84) are an exception within his *oeuvre* (Figs. 11, 12). [112] The artist states about these drawings:

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[109] Foote (1976), pp. 54-56.

[110] Ireland Notebooks (1973-77), in La Jolla, California (1977), n.p.

[111] Foote (1976), pp. 54-56.

[112] These resulted some years after visits made to pre-Celtic and Celtis sites in Ireland for a CBS show on "The Treasures of Ireland," at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, in the late 1970s. See Ireland letter (1990b), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 29. See also Appendix A.

" ...(the) patterns must have had some significance other than decoration...So in making those drawings I had a sense of rehearsing the stones' original function...(thus that halting, biting, hatchet-line), and a sense of tattooing a living surface...while trying to avoid romanticizing remote prehistory..." [113]

Along with artists' investigation into new ways of making art in the 1960s came the growth of work in a variety of new media. O'Doherty/Ireland's *oeuvre* is a good example of this. The following list compiled by the author demonstrates the variety and richness of his *oeuvre* between 1957 and 2001, as well as showing how O'Doherty/Ireland contributed to a major expansion of art categories. Other categories like Gestures, Rope Drawings, Structural Plays and Ogham works in all media are however specific to his own practice. Some, such as labyrinths, cubes, boxes and artists' books are categories of artmaking shared with other artists. However, the labyrinth for example, was first introduced as a model within conceptual art by O'Doherty.

1. Alphabet Drawings Series (1974-)
2. Artist's Books Series (1966-)
3. Book Drawings (1999-)
4. Boxes Drawings/Sculptures (1964-) (e.g. Early: *Kinnity, Newton's Egg*. Late: *White Cube*)
5. Chess Drawings/ Sculptures Series (1965-)
6. Dot Drawings Series (1970-)
7. Early Paintings (Ireland) (1945-57)
8. Earthworks (1968, 1975, 2000) (e.g. *Hellfire Club Project, Rick*)
9. Exploded Gallery Drawings Series (1983-)
10. Five Senses Series (1965-72)
11. Gestures (1957-80) (*Between Categories, Portrait of Marcel Duchamp, Aspen 5/6, Name Change*)
12. I-Drawings Series (1969-)

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[113] Ireland letter (1990b), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 30.

13. Identity Photographs (1969-) (e.g. Continuous Self Portrait and *Five Identities*)
14. Installation Drawings (1979-)
15. Labyrinths (1967-68, 1992-93
16. Late Paintings (1989-)
17. Lines on Planes Drawings Series (1983-)
18. Museum Drawings Series (1983-)
19. Ogham Drawings Series (1967-)
20. Ogham Sculptures (1967-71)
21. Open Box Drawings Series (1975-); Prints (1993)
22. Plexiglass/ Glass Sculptures (1998-)
23. Rope Drawings Series (1973-)
24. Stone Drawings Series (1982-84)
25. Structural Plays Drawings (1967- 70)
26. Structural Play Performances (1977-1998)
27. Vowel Poems (1967- 68) (recorded by Tellus, No.21, New York, 1988)
28. Voice and Myth Drawings Series (1974-)
29. Wall Paintings (1978-) (Permanent, at Sirius Art Centre, Kalamazoo and Todi Museum)
30. Wells Drawings (1967-69)

1.4. Conceptual art

Conceptual art occurred simultaneously internationally and although it developed in different ways in different parts of the world, all shared the common thread of unstable economic, social and political forces. The instability related to a number of factors such as the Cold War; the Vietnam War; the collapse of colonialism; the sexual revolution; increased education; the growth of technology; consumerism and travel. How the impact of these changes was felt within America though, is what is of concern to this study. There, a cultural anxiety about America's enormous economic growth, the arms race, and racial inequality became galvanised into political rebellion through opposition to the Vietnam War. This is important, since a culture of resistance to the establishment also became part of the emergence of conceptual art, which a recent writer has called, " the single greatest shift in art since the Renaissance." [114] Within America however, it is unlikely that conceptual art could have happened without Pop and Minimalism's prior breaching of art conventions.

'Concept art,' was a term first coined by Harry Flynt in 1961 in which he described concepts as the material for art in much the same way that sound is the material for music. The more commonly used term 'conceptual art,' was not applied to the various models used by artists until around 1967 with Sol LeWitt's "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art." LeWitt defined conceptual art, using the lower case c, as an art in which, "The idea becomes the machine that makes the art." [115] All planning and decisions are made in advance of the making which becomes perfunctory even to the extent of being executed by others. However, this definition does not apply to all practices, and best fits LeWitt's own practice.[116] In O'Doherty/Ireland's practice for example, although work is planned in advance, the execution is given as much weight as the idea. Joseph Kosuth defined conceptual art differently from LeWitt, but also in a way which best applies to his own art, with the sense of a capital C stating: " The "purest" definition of conceptual art would

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[114] Wollen in New York (1999a), p. 81.

[115] Le Witt (1967), in Harrison & Wood (1992), pp. 834-837.

[116] Godfrey (1998), p.13.

be that it is an inquiry into the foundations of the concept "art", as it has come to mean."[117] However by 1973 some argued that Kosuth's theoretical, analytical approach represented yet another kind of formalism that encouraged an attitude of Art-for-Art's sake.[118] Others like Art and Language, a collaborative group in England set up in 1969, made language and theory about art the actual material of art through their magazine *Art and Language*. They defined conceptual art as Modernism's nervous breakdown.[119] For critic Lucy Lippard and many artists, dematerialisation of the art object was the defining factor of conceptual art, "when a chaotic network of ideas was in the air both in America and Europe."[120] Later, while acknowledging that it was an inaccurate term with which to describe photographs or pieces of text, Lippard continued to use it for art which she felt de-emphasised material elements like "uniqueness, permanence, decorative attractiveness."[121] The confusion surrounding the definition of conceptual art continues however, as a 1994 Round Table reveals when leading American critics disagree as to who could legitimately be called a conceptual artist in the first place.[122]

Like the Minimalists just prior to them, early conceptual artists shared an anti-expressionist stance. In adopting alternative models, many, but Joseph Kosuth in particular, paid particular attention to Ad Reinhardt's minimalist Black Paintings and anti-metaphysical writings. Lessons were also learnt through Minimalism, especially through the writings of Judd.[123] Much information about contemporary thinking was also

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[117] Kosuth (1991), p. 25. Throughout this thesis the use of capital C refers to this strand of conceptual art, while c with the lower case, refers generally to all other modes of conceptual art.

[118] Godfrey (1998) p. 255. This is not surprising given Kosuth's acknowledgment of the influence of Rheinhardt. See Kosuth's *Art after Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966-1990* (ed. 1991), p. 29.

[119] Godfrey (1998), p.14.

[120] Lippard (1973; ed. 1997), p. 5.

[121] Ibid.

[122] *October 70* (1994), pp. 142-143. de Duve, for example, does not consider Dan Graham a conceptual artist, while Buchloh has a similar opinion of Michael Asher.

[123] Judd's forthright views through his writings and interviews made him a leading figure of opposition to Greenbergian Modernism. See Harrison and Wood (1990), Introduction p. 809, to reprinting of Judd's "Specific Objects" article of 1965, first published in *Arts Yearbook 8*, New York.

disseminated through an important series of art magazines during the 1960s.[124] Barnett Newman was another key figure in terms of his development of line and use of colour, to both painters and minimal sculptors. [125] Buchloh writes that the emergence of two divergent streams within conceptual art arose in part from different readings of Minimal art, and in part from the impact of Minimalist figures as a point of reference.[126] Like Minimal art, conceptual art gradually became established through a series of exhibitions from 1966 to 1972, mounted by critics (Bochner, Lippard), the dealer Siegelaub, and artists themselves (O'Doherty, Kosuth) in alternative galleries or magazines. Recently, O'Doherty's 1967 *Aspen 5/6* magazine has been called the first conceptual exhibition.[127] By 1969, Siegelub's "January 5-31, 1969" show, was followed in 1970 by "Information," at the Museum of Modern Art, thus conferring artworld acceptance of conceptual art (however reluctantly), as a legitimate form of art (See Appendix G). The changed sensibility can readily be perceived by contemporaneous exhibitions in 1967. The Minimalist exhibition "American Sculpture of the Sixties," showing work by LeWitt, Morris, Judd, Andre, Flavin and Bladen for example (Figs. 13, 14, 15),[128] and the very different kind of work being produced by such artists as O'Doherty, *Portrait of the Artist Aet 7* (1967),[129] and Baldessari, *What This Painting Aims To Do* (1967), for example, make this clear (Figs. 16, 17). Similar work to these was shown in alternative exhibitions like Bochner's (Fig.18).

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[124] The leading ones were *ARTnews*, *Arts*, *Art in America* (O'Doherty was editor between 1970-74), and *Artforum*.

[125] See Siegal's introduction to *Artwords* (1985; edn. 1992), pp.1-12.

[126] *October 69* (1994), p. 118-120. He cites Graham's engagement with LeWitt, Flavin and Morris; Bochner's with Flavin, and Kosuth's with Judd, Rheinhardt and Duchamp (via Johns and Morris), but his rejection of LeWitt.

[127] See Alberro in *October 70* (1994), p. 131. This is discussed in Part II.

[128] The figures here were not those actually shown in the exhibition, but are presented as exemplars of the kind of work carried out by artists mentioned in the text.

[129] The text was originally written in 1965 for an unpublished book, *Memoir of a Medieval Childhood*, and later used for this photo-text work. The photograph is of an abandoned shop on Third Avenue, New York. Letter from artist, September 2001.

1.4.1. Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)

Most commentators today attribute to Marcel Duchamp the over-riding influence in the emergence of conceptual art. This is because he moved art from what he termed "retinal "pleasure, towards art that promoted new ideas about the definition of art, its premises, means of production, and its relationship to culture. However not all artists were as influenced by Duchamp at the time, as certain accounts of the period would now have us believe. This point has particular relevance to this dissertation since O'Doherty/Ireland, along with other contemporary artists like Oldenburg and Ed Ruscha, for example, rejects a direct influence upon his work. [130] In view of the myth of Duchamp today, this may be difficult to appreciate. Lippard suggests in one of the early books about the period *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972* (1973), [131] that while Duchamp had to be included art- historically, among artists that she knew at the time, the writings of Ad Rheinhardt, the work of Jasper Johns and Robert Morris, and the "deadpan photo-books" of Ed Ruscha, had a more immediate influence:

> "most of the artists did not find his work all that interesting", but, "as responsible critics we had to mention Duchamp as a precedent, but the new art in New York came from closer to home...Duchampian "claiming", however, was an occasional strategy..." [132]

In a 1994 Round Table discussion in *October* magazine, "Conceptual Art and the Reception of Duchamp," Alberro points to the immense complexity of the reception

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[130] Ireland interview with author, Todi 1998b. See *October 70* (1994), for other artists interviews, pp. 33-59.

[131] Meyer's *Conceptual Art* was published a year earlier in 1972.

[132] Lippard (1973; edn. 1997), p. ix. Morris, for example, acknowledges literal references to Duchamp in his early work, but claims that what American artists were reacting to at the time was, "what's going on in America now," citing his "oedipal rage" against the sculpture of David Smith on the one hand, and the influence of structural ideas learnt from his wife, Simone Forti, at Judson Church, on the other. Morris interview 1985 in *October 70* (1994), p. 49. See also interviews with Warhol, Oldenburg and Ruscha which express similar views on Duchamp.

processes at work during the period of proto and early conceptual art. He objects to too ready a reading of Duchamp into American conceptual art stating that it relates to one particular model, that conventionally associated with Kosuth, whereas in reality, there is not one unified theoretical model but several competing ones. [133] Buskirk also points to a surprisingly literal notion of the reception of Duchamp, suggesting that it implied that an artist had to have seen Duchamp's work and to be thinking about Duchamp very directly for certain issues to come into the work. [134]

Krauss also queries such a reading at another Round Table, " The Reception of the Sixties": "Doesn't the delayed reception of Duchamp mean that there can't have been an early conventionalization of Duchamp?" [135] A consensus emerges that the definition of conceptual art has to a large extent been controlled by Kosuth by limiting it to a,

> " very specific reading of Duchamp, which is to say exclusively to the readymade as the threshold condition of Conceptual art, and further, the interpretation of the readymade as a performative act, an act that says "I intend X as a work of art"...(thereby)... lifting...the work of art into a purely philosphical realm by means of the ontological question posed by the readymade." [136]

For de Duve, while Kosuth had contributed by pinpointing critical issues, he had failed as an artist and theorist in interpreting them.[137] Kosuth's definition for example does not

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[133] *October 70* (1994), pp. 127-146.

[134] Ibid, p. 137.

[135] *October 69* (1994), p.14. Duchamp, although living in New York since 1942, was not highly visible in the American art scene until the publication of Lebel's monograph in 1959. But it was the 1963 retrospective in Pasadena, and the mediation of Cage, Johns and Rauschenberg which really put him on the map for younger artists in New York. Tomkins comments that during the 1950s Duchamp was a peripheral presence, being ignored by the Abstract Expressionists who had made New York the centre of the international contemporary art world. Tomkins (1997), p. 377.

[136] Krauss in *October 70* (1994), pp. 127-8.

[137] Like Greenberg's criticism, Kosuth's importance as an artist and theorist seems to be that he continues to be the critical focus against which other kinds of conceptual art are defined. See Siegal Introduction, (1985; edn. 1992).

allow for alternative practices such as O'Doherty/Ireland's. As this dissertation shows in Part II, his is far more extensive than Kosuth's narrow linguistic/textual definition permits. Alberro also cites O'Doherty among those artists using different models of conceptual art which point to hybrid concerns. These hybrid models, he suggests, are more concerned with mass distribution of art, simplification and de-skilling of production, de-centring of the artist, de-aestheticization and an emphasis upon non-transcendental forms of thinking.[138]

Perhaps the key to unravelling the relative weight to attribute to Duchamp within artists' work during the late 1960s, is to be found in Thierry de Duve's comments, which echo those of some of the artists already quoted:

> " It seems to me that from this perspective the discussion has taken too much the side of traditional art history, that we're looking for influences...who has done what first, and so on and so forth. And my own view being that Duchamp is someone who has in fact not invented anything—though he's a great artist, of course—but pointed at the conditions of art-making that are not just the ones valid for a decade but valid for 150 years, makes me somewhat impatient with this art-historical approach. Because in a nutshell what he accomplishes is revealing the transformations of modernity—all of them. So in that sense you don't need to establish a causal link or an influence to be able to say that once the finger has been put on the wound lots of things begin to burgeon all over the place." [139]

The issue however remains problematic for art history at this time. It appears that Duchamp represented an alternative approach to art which *retrospectively* became recognised during the 1960s, so that he was not necessarily a *direct* precedent for many artists.[140] Many, like O'Doherty, while they admired his anti-establishment stance, did not agree with his nihilism towards art. While Duchamp may not have been a direct reference for conceptual artists of the 1960s, the situation was quite different thirty years later when

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[138] *October 70* (1994), p. 128.

[139] *October 70* (1994), p. 132.

there was a renewed emphasis upon the readymade object in the 1980s and 1990s.[141] Sherrie Levine's quotation of Duchamp's *Fountain* in 1991 in precious bronze shows the extent to which Duchamp's ideas had been transformed by art history into iconic museum objects within two decades (Fig.19).

Some commentators have automatically located O'Doherty/Ireland's gestures and pseudonyms directly to the influence of Duchamp. O'Doherty's 1966 *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* (See Chapter 4), also has been widely interpreted as a straightforward homage rather than a *challenge* to some of Duchamp's ideas, as the artist had intended. This dissertation however argues in Chapter 4 that this is not accurate and that the source of the use of pseudonyms, for example, lies in O'Doherty/Ireland's Irish background. Some critics like Lippard who were sympathetic and well informed about conceptual art from the start, did however interpret the *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* as the artist had intended, referring to the work as,

> "...a complex work, and a rather audacious one, challenging as it did the life and work of a veritable myth." [142]

Duchamp and O'Doherty had first met around 1959-60 and struck up a friendship later when O'Doherty moved from Boston to New York. Often meeting in each other's apartments, Duchamp and O'Doherty shared certain attitudes about the artworld and chess.[143] Both disliked what they perceived as the egomania of many artists in New York at the time:

> "Much of the art community is impossibly imploded and narcississtic, and for those of us who have had other lives, its mountainous molehills sometimes became tedious." [144]

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[140] See Osborne (1999), p. 48, where he states, " 'Duchamp' is largely a retrospective effect of the 1960s."

[141] Godfrey (1998), p. 398.

[142] Lippard in Washington D.C. (1986), p. 14.

[143] Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

[144] Ireland letter to Alberro, 1995b.

Later in 1964, O'Doherty wrote a critical review for *Newsweek* in which he suggested that Duchamp would be the most influential artist of the second half of the century.[145] Ironically, this relatively early and accurate, critical response to Duchamp in a artworld then fiercely defensive of Abstract Expressionism, served to support superficial criticism of O'Doherty's early art as Duchampian.[146] O'Doherty's response to Duchamp's work and ideas was however more complex and challenging.

The inclusion of Duchamp, for example, in *Aspen 5/6* (1967) magazine, is a clear indication of O'Doherty's ready recognition of Duchamp's importance as an art historical precedent or "ancestor" of conceptual art.

> "Duchamp was in the past...and Duchamp's ideas were very interesting...but they were not mine, the common interest we had was chess..." [147]

He is adamant, however, that he wanted to avoid becoming what he has called a "Duchampette" stating, "I was very clearheaded that to be influenced by Duchamp was to lose your Queen." [148] However, where O'Doherty/Ireland does acknowledge the particular importance to him of Duchamp's ideas, is his emphasis upon the importance of viewer reception within art.[149] This is evident from his invitation to Duchamp to recite his 1957 lecture, "The Creative Act" in *Aspen 5/6*. Duchamp's argument in this lecture coincided with O'Doherty's own ideas about viewer reception around the mid-1960s,

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[145] O'Doherty resigned as art critic when *Newsweek* refused to publish the article (perhaps because the editor, whose wife was an Abstract Expressionist painter, disliked Duchamp?). The article was subsequently sent to the Schwartz Duchamp Archive. Ireland interview with author, Todi 1998b.

[146] See Guilbaut's *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (1983).

[147] Ireland interview with author, Todi 1998b. Interestingly, they never talked specifically about art.

[148] Ireland letter to Alberro, 1995b. This position is underlined by the fact that he withheld the *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* from the Duchamp Retrospective Exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1973. He also refused to allow an account of its making to be included in a collection of Duchamp literature edited by Joseph Masheck (1975). Ireland interview with author, Todi 1998b.

[149] Ireland interview with author, Todi 1998b.

since at that time he was writing about the neglected role of the spectator in art in his *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth,* which was published later, in 1974.

1.4.2. The end of conceptual art?

Around the early 1970s, there is a general consensus that the central position which conceptual art had momentarily achieved in New York from the late 1960s, declined for a variety of reasons. Of these the return of the market was the most dominant, coupled with an underlying resistance to the radical thrust of conceptual art's anti-market stance. Some indication of the resistance is borne out by the fact that it was not until 1970 that a major museum mounted an exhibition of conceptual art. This was the "Information" show at the bastion of Modernist art, the Museum of Modern Art. By contrast, many European museums by the end of the 1970s, already had works by American artists like Robert Morris, for example, before any American museum.[150] This underlines the fact that traditionally in the United Sates, there has been less government support for the arts compared with Europe, and this is so in spite of the efforts of the National Endowment for the Arts established by the Johnson administration in 1965. Even twenty years later, there was little change in the attitude to the arts. In 1988, for example, European governments were providing $20 to $40 per citizen to the arts compared with 68 cents per citizen in the United States, one of the richest nations of the Western world. [151]

O'Doherty was one of those critics who had commented upon the dominance of the market within the artworld, as early as 1963:

> " It is not unusual nowadays to hear a young artist talk, like a young actor, of "making it"...Caught up in the artificial forces of big business, the artist is having a hard time being his own man." [152]

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[150] Godfrey (1998), p. 205.

[151] Zeigler (1994), p. 58.

[152] O'Doherty (1963; ed. 1967), " The Corruption of Individuality," (*The New York Times)*, p. 197.

Over twenty years later, in the 1986 edition of *Inside the White Cube,* O'Doherty, once more laments the erosion of the insights and lessons that had been won by conceptual art between 1964 and 1976:

> "Product and consumption returned with a plethora of content for those starved of it ...as given the conditions of our culture, it must." [153]

and:

> " This work didn't collect very well. It looked strange on the wall beside a painting. It couldn't be easily exchanged for coin of the realm." [154]

For certain artists there were other reasons to stop making conceptual art. Some, like Mel Bochner and Terry Atkinson for example, returned to the practice of painting. Atkinson, a founder member of the collaborative group Art and Language, cited the reason for his departure from the group in 1974 as his perception that their activities functioned as a new kind of formalist academy and recognisable as a new type of style.[155] Others like Victor Burgin seem to have agreed with Atkinson's views regarding "pure" or "theoretical" Conceptual art, regarding it in 1973 as encouraging an Art- for -Art's sake attitude.[156] The Documenta V Exhibition in Kassel in 1972, is often seen as the high-water mark and the end of conceptual art as a distinct body of ideas about art. The curatorial approach used at Documenta V was seen by some artists to have minimised the revolutionary or subversive character of their work. Andre, Morris, Judd, LeWitt and Smithson wrote a joint letter of protest and some withdrew from the show altogether.[157] Lippard also lamented the unfulfilled promise of conceptual art, noting that major conceptualists were selling their work for substantial sums of money in both America and

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[153] O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1986), p. 113.

[154] O'Doherty in Provincetown (1984), p. 13.

[155] Godfrey (1998), p. 252.

[156] Ibid., p. 255.

[157] Ibid., p. 251-2.

Europe. She also noted that "interactions between mathematics and art, philosophy and art, literature and art, politics and art, are still at a very primitive level." [158] This latter remark is of particular interest in the light of O'Doherty/Ireland's work, as we shall see. Although the inception of conceptual art was intense, exhilarating and intellectually exciting, as indicated above, the climate became intense for another set of reasons articulated by Lippard:

> "There has been a lot of bickering about what conceptual art is/was; who began it; who did what when with it; what its goals, philosophy, and politics were and might have been." [159]

O'Doherty confirms this view regarding his own group:

> "Proscriptive and polemical, the members of that group watched each other. This brilliant cluster of individuals exhibited to perfection the wary dynamics within any avant-garde group, which directs itself to the future by editing out options and non-conformities that dilute its collective impetus." [160]

And recently, Alberro in an essay, " Reconsidering Conceptual art, 1966-1977," states that from its inception, and continuing to this very day, conceptual art has been entangled in controversy by those who stake claims to its foundational moment, citing in particular Joseph Kosuth's assertions in *Art after Philosophy, Part 11* (1969). [161] This assessment is of importance in the overall context of this dissertation, since it highlights yet again, the dominance of one strand of conceptual art over others, such as that of O'Doherty/Ireland. Perhaps though, it can be argued that judgements about the demise of conceptual art were in one sense premature, since they refer more particularly to the dominant "pure" form of Conceptual art, rather than to the more open-ended model represented by artists such as

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[158] Lippard (1973; ed. 1997), p. 263.

[159] Ibid., p.vii.

[160] O'Doherty in Provincetown (1984), p. 13.

[161] Alberro & Stimson (1999a), p. xvi.

O'Doherty/ Ireland and others. Victor Burgin implies as much in 1973 when he describes "pure" conceptual art as the last gasp of formalism suggesting that such "theoretical" artists do not produce art, resembling craftsmen who constantly shape their tools but never actually get down to any work.[162] Douglas Heubler's also comments in 1982 that the perceived demise of conceptual art was a result of the mistaken notion that it was yet another kind of style in which the object was replaced with the idea, and that it had set out to collapse the very institutions—art galleries, museums collectors—upon which art relies. Conceptual artists he suggests, had instead adopted a dialectical stance towards such institutions in order to promote effective discourse from within the art world. Going further, he claims that the potential of conceptual art to engender a view of the world had hardly been adequately tapped. [163] These remarks, it is argued here, accurately describe the stance adopted within O'Doherty/Ireland's art.

Although some became disillusioned, others artists like O'Doherty/Ireland, LeWitt and others, continued to build on their work of that period over the next three decades. In fact the legacy of the first generation is evident not only in its direct descendent, Neo-conceptualism, but also in much of the ambitious art being made today in all media, as well as its role in precipitating changes in institutional practices.[164] Godfrey, referring to the dogmatism of, for example, Kosuth and Art and Language, regarding how conceptual art should be made, suggests that artists with a:

> " more sophisticated understanding of visual and material culture, influenced especially by Barthes, Foucault and a re-reading of Freud, has led to a less censorious attitude to the making of actual objects and representations. Today, therefore, we no longer find such a rigid dichotomy between the conceptualization and the making of art." [165]

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[162] Quoted in Godfrey (1998), p. 255.

[163] Ibid., p. 254.

[164] See Osborne (1999), p. 47, on the role of philosophy among conceptual art of the 1960s/1970s and that of its post- and neo-conceptual progeny of today.

[165] Ibid., p. 389.

It is argued in this dissertation that it is precisely because of an acute understanding of the intellectual counter-culture represented by the above French authors among others, that O'Doherty/ Ireland has been able to continue to explore in many media a consistently rich body of ideas beyond what might be called the 'high' period of conceptual art's reception between 1966 and 1972.We turn therefore to another important contextual source within which to place O'Doherty/Ireland's art, art theory.

1.5. Art Theory

While disillusionment with the manner in which criticism (language) had come to weigh unduly upon (wordless) art in the New York art world had caused O'Doherty to reject art criticism earlier in the 1960s, paradoxically at first sight, language was to become one of the major themes of his art. [166] This turn towards language was part of a general shift that occurred in both the theory and practice of art from the late 1960s, to which O'Doherty as commentator and O'Doherty/Ireland as practitioner have contributed. In both roles, a trenchant critique of a dogmatic formalist interpretation of Modernism was erected which has had repercussions for the three fundamental elements of any art experience: the artwork, the artist and the viewer. To these three a fourth can be added, the container within which the art is presented, the gallery. It is to the theoretical context for this critique that we now turn.

This shift within art during the mid 20th century must be seen as part of a wider cultural debate, begun in the 1920s and 1930s within the fields of psychoanalytic, Marxist and linguistic criticism, which was reformulated in the 1950s and 1960s into a new context. The currently successful versions of these as well as feminist criticism, structuralism and poststructuralism, mark the transition to critical theory. Such an evolution in thinking occurred as a reaction to the liberal humanist consensus, perceived as formulaic and academicised by the mid-twentieth century. While each kind of critical theory derived from a different tradition and history, several ideas concurred to form a

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[166] The first part of this sentence is adapted from an article " Wordless Images/Imaged Words," by Ireland (1984), pp. 164-166.

counter-tradition in terms of thought and knowledge. This counter-tradition has had a powerful revisionist effect upon traditional Western ideas regarding the nature of the world, language and the individual subject.

It has been argued by some that this counter-tradition has in fact had a long history which goes back to the sceptical philosophical school of ancient Greece and French neo-Pyrrhonists of the Renaissance such as Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) who resisted a Pythagorean-Platonic rationalistic approach to human understanding.[167] This refusal of the canon should not be seen as an anarchic repudiation of any order; rather it is a repudiation of a perceived coercive order. While present within the visual arts early in the 20th century in the guises of Dada and Surrealism, the mid-century version of this counter- tradition was resisted within academic institutions until the 1980s, largely due to its radical stance coupled with the predominance of formalism.[168] The history of art, ratified as belonging to the order of things or as conforming to destiny, was therefore considered open to challenge. It is within the context of this counter-tradition that the work of O'Doherty/Ireland is placed. In multiple interviews over the years, he has suggested as much, stating as recently as 1999, that behind both Minimalism and conceptual art was the desire to avoid avant-garde utopianism so that, " ...the future disappeared, and we were in the Now." [169]

The "project" of critical theory from the 1960s onwards, in essence, has been to re-establish connections that had been severed between literary and artistic studies and the fields of philosophy, language studies and history. This realignment was directed against a body of attitudes, ideas and assumptions broadly called liberal humanism. It is not the task here to adjudicate as to the relative merits or otherwise of these ideas but to ask how they relate to the work of the artist in question, since it is at least clear that many of them inform his work. However it is important to stress that it is not suggested that the artist has slavishly put theory into practice or that an artwork is nothing more than an illustration of theory. Rather what is attempted is to give an indication of the intellectual

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[167] McEvilley (1999a), p. 13.

[168] Stiles & Selz (1996), p.4.

[169] Ireland interview with author, 1999.

background within which the art was produced, and though certainly informed by theory, moved beyond it to make art.

It is not without significance that the rise of theory in the late 1960s and early 1970s coincided with the 'moment' of conceptual art and that many artists involved like O'Doherty/ Ireland, had scientific or philosophical training at University level.[170] These were also times of social hope and political militancy within universities both in Europe and the United States. The intellectual theories of the French Structuralists questioning the assumption that literature embodied universal value which was to be interpreted by a classless, genderless, non-ethnic, disinterested reader, was fertile ground for a generation that increasingly questioned academic, social and military control. This growing radicalism was fuelled in America, as already mentioned, particularly by opposition to the Vietnam War. Allied to Structuralism's radical appeal was its scientific rigor and logic which appealed to a technologial and scientifically driven age. But for artists opposed to the humanist model of artistic creativity, exemplified by Expressionism, it offered an alternative model. This certainly seems to be the case with O'Doherty/Ireland. The application of its methology to the humanities was destabilising throughout academia since it insisted that the 'self' and society were simply constructs determined by deeper structures created within society itself. In addition, it challenged the related notions of rational inquiry as the sole instrument of change, and a belief in continual progress.

Doubt was also cast upon the capacity of language to adequately describe the external reality of the world. Structuralism and then post-Structuralism, as developed by Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-), Roland Barthes (1915-1980), Jacques Lacan (1908-1981) and Michel Foucault (1926-1984) in France in the mid-1950s and 1960s was essentially rooted in the structural linguistics of Ferdinand Saussure (1857-1913). His insights were adopted so that emphasis was placed on systems of thought rather than on individuals. This concept was adopted by many emerging conceptualists, including O'Doherty. Things, Saussure suggested, whether texts, language, individuals, culture, or the human mind cannot properly be understood in isolation from the context of the larger structure

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[170] Tony Smith, for example was also an architect, and Sol LeWitt had worked with the architect I.M. Pei, for a while.

of which they form a part. Some of the key concepts of Saussurean linguistics, and their application to Structuralism/post-Structuralism, are worth briefly reviewing here for their relevance to the work of O'Doherty/Ireland.

By studying how meaning is established and maintained in language, Saussure began to look at the patterns and functions of language. He established that there is no inherent connection between a word and what it designates, that the meanings given to words are purely arbitrary and maintained by convention alone. For Structuralists, this meant that if language is a sign system based on arbitrariness, it follows that language cannot be a reflection of the world and experience, but a separate system from it. As shall be seen this is of the utmost relevance in O'Doherty/Ireland's approach to language in his art. Saussure also maintained that the meanings of words are relational, that meaning is part of a "syntagmatic chain" in which no word can be defined in isolation from other words as for example, male/female, night/day, good/bad. A review by O'Doherty in 1964 of the new art is revealing in this context:

> "Transformation as a concept has given way to the idea of relationships as a criterion...the vital relationship is no longer the old idea of formal interaction on a canvas, but a balance between the art and the brute fact mediated by the observer." [171]

Saussure concluded that language constitutes the world rather than merely recording it. Meaning, he argued, is not contained inside objects or things but is always outside, in the sense that meaning is attributed to a thing or an idea by the human mind, and constructed through language, as for example with such words as 'freedom fighter'/'terrorist.' Through Saussure therefore and Structuralism and post-Structuralism, critical theory in all its various guises formed a degree of consensus that challenged the perceived hegemony of a Modernist, liberal humanist tradition. All shared a profound distrust of "totalizing" notions of a canon of "great artists" or "great books," believing all arise out of a sociopolitical situation that is particular to them. The essence of these ideas were

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[171] O'Doherty (1964; ed. 1967), "A New Union of Art and Life," (*The New York Times*), p. 213.

transposed to the visual arts, belatedly compared to literature, by pioneering artists like O'Doherty, and others, from the late 1960s.

In 1994, Irving Sandler for example, cited O'Doherty as among the first to recognise the importance of French intellectuals by introducing Barthes to the English-speaking world.[172] Barthes' "The Death of the Author," shall be discussed in greater detail below since the essay has a particular relationship to the work of O'Doherty/ Ireland. In 1967, the same year the essay was commissioned by O'Doherty, further evidence of his interest in Structuralist theory is supported by the following remarks:

> "There is an increasing tendency for criticism to be about criticism rather than about art...Absolute standards are obsolete. "Psychological" criticism is limited, "formal" criticism a highly useful tool that has, however, been discredited by the formal critics. Art criticism has to be reinvented for every generation, and it seems to me that the mode most suitable to dealing with art now is some modification of the *"structuralist"* criticism that is well established in anthropology and literature" (author's italics). [173]

Tellingly, in view of his own art he added:

> "Such multiple frames of reference catch the art object in transit through a section of time in a way impossible for modes that depend completely on the fiction of "development," which is really a critical disguise for the illusion of progress." [174]

However, it needs to be pointed out here that in spite of theory informing O'Doherty/Ireland's art, at the same time he has always been aware of the dangers of an over-determined adherence to it. He pointed out recently that theory is only useful to an artist up to a point, that to follow it too rigidly can lead one into a black hole.[175] Terry

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[172] Sandler (1994), p. 36.

[173] O'Doherty (1967), Introduction p. 12.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

Eagleton reflects these comments when he states, that all theory is inherently narcissistic and eventually self-defeating, and that Structuralism (along with Marxism and feminism) with hindsight, became yet another form of "totalizing" idealism.[176] Eagleton neatly sums up the course of theory thoughout the past three decades stating:

> "In the early 1970s, there was much talk of the relations between signifiers, socialism and sexuality; in the early 1980s of the relations between signifiers and sexuality; and as the 1980s moved into the 1990s, much talk of sexuality. Theory had shifted almost overnight from Lenin to Lacan, Beneviste to the body." [177]

His conclusion however, that what became known as cultural theory had failed in a practical sense to dismantle the assumptions of the traditional humanities, may be somewhat pessimistic when juxtaposed with its qualified successes. These, briefly, may be characterised as less security in a neutral reading of any work of art; the dismantling of formalism; the reduction of authorial authority; awareness of the exclusion of certain groups from the canon; and the blurring of the distinction between high and popular culture. Eagleton states at the end of his book that it is not that the humanist is wrong to trust the possibility of universal value, rather that it is difficult to say what those values would be in a world possessing different political and economic status. [178]

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[176] Eagleton (1983), p.192.

[177] Ibid., p. 194.

[178] Ibid., p. 208.

1.6. Aspen 5/6 (1967)

We shall now examine a hybrid work by O'Doherty, which exemplifies the broad thrust of the above contexts. It is included here because it is an unconventional form of theoretical "manifesto." Thus it provides a context for not only for advanced art of the 1960s, but also for O'Doherty/Ireland's own art. These are articulated here for the first time. It also represents an example of early conceptual art. This therefore is a complex work with contributions by many artists from both contemporary art and the traditional avant-garde in different disciplines. As a box/magazine, it also functions as an alternative model of exhibition which formed such an important part of the thinking of the first generation of conceptual artists.

In 1967, a critical time in the evolution of the conceptual 'moment,' O'Doherty was asked to edit the art magazine, *Aspen 5/6* as a special double edition[179] (Fig.20). The first issue, *Aspen 1*, had been been edited by George Lois, Tom Courtos and Ralph Tuzzo. *Aspen 2* was designed by Frank Kirk, *Aspen 3* by Andy Warhol and David Dalton, and *Aspen 4*, by Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore. *Aspen 5/6* was edited and designed by O'Doherty with art directors David Dalton and Lynn Letterman. While issues 3 and 4 were produced in the form of thick envelopes, O'Doherty's *Aspen 5/6* issue was in the form of a box. It was devised according to a mathematical system which dictated not only the arrangment of the box's contents, but also its structure. [180] Using systems as part of *Aspen's* internal structure, it sets out the intellectual context and antecedants for emerging radical art. The white cubic box was composed of two units which could be arranged in a number of differing configurations to make sculptural pieces in a modular system much favoured at the time as a compositional method (Fig.

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[179] The title of the magazine was probably designed to draw attention to the cultural and counter-cultural aspects of Aspen, Colorado, which is better known as a ski resort. In the summer, Aspen hosts a Summer Words literary festival; a summer exhibition at the Aspen Art Museum; the Aspen Dance Festival; Jazz Aspen Snowmass; Aspen Music Festival (54th year); and the International Design Conference (since 1951). *Aspen*, the magazine, was published by Roaring Fork Press, the name of the river which runs through the heart of Aspen.

[180] Ireland interview 1997b.

21). For O'Doherty, this box-magazine functioned as an exhibition and artwork, but also as a theoretical model of the conceptual armature for its contained artworks. But beyond this it also provided the critical underpinning for a distinctive strand of conceptual art which was open and pragmatic. O'Doherty states that he wanted his edition to include progenitors of his ideas about art at that time:

> "I assembled all that was of interest to me in a kind of election of ancestors and contemporaries held together in several conceptual schemata, cross-referenced through traditions and themes, and summarized in the language of set theory..." [181]

His reply to an interviewer in relation to another work, in the same year as *Aspen 5/6* reveals what this dissertation argues, that his thinking is largely rooted in literature as well as a scientific background:

> " One of the things that strikes me about the whole development of non-romantic art here is that it is so late. It happened in literature long ago. The fact that it is so late happening is evidence that art is not ahead of its time but behind it." [182]

In this box, O'Doherty identified those strands of intellectual thought which had been masked by the success of Abstract Expressionism. Time, and the nature of change in time and cultural/historical space, underlined his project which, Janus-like, looks both forward and backwards. In looking forward, by the inclusion of LeWitt, Graham, Bochner and himself, O'Doherty accurately pin-pointed the various concerns within emerging conceptual art namely, the institutional critique, the adoption of systems, and language. Each artist in different ways went on to develop paradigms for art which were distinct and went beyond those of the art historical contributors. Many of these models still require scholarly attention. Sandler states that the material collected by O'Doherty for *Aspen 5/6* had, in retrospect, accurately,

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[181] Ireland in Youngstown, Ohio (1994), p. 16.

[182] O'Doherty interview 1967, in Battock (1968; ed. 1995) p. 372.

"...summed up the sensibility of that decade and foretold much of what would influence artists subsequently..." [183]

It is worth noting too, that *Aspen 5/6* constituted part of O'Doherty's on-going interest in boxes as metaphorical spatial containers for art. [184] For him, they were a means of escape from the traditional frame or pedestal which began earlier in the 1960s with *Kip's Bay: The Body and Its Discontents* (1964) (Fig.22), and the *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* (1966) (Chapter 4), for example. The model continued into the 1970s with the series of Open Box Drawings (beginning 1975), and Rope Drawings (beginning in 1973) (Chapter 3), which challenge and engage with the "box" of the gallery space up to the present day. Within *Aspen* 5/6 itself, this theme is continued in which some texts were "boxed" by lines, such as those by Barthes, Kubler and Sontag, for instance (Fig. 23). In this context too, the white colour and shape of the *Aspen 5/6* forges a visual link to his later theoretical book, *Inside the White Cube* and more indirectly to his Rope Drawing installations within the white box/cube of the gallery (Fig. 24).

Some of the most distinguished intellects of the contemporary international world of literature, Samuel Beckett, Susan Sontag, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Michel Butor and Roland Barthes were commissioned for *Aspen 5/6*. O'Doherty reports that most of the contacts were made initially by telephone. For example Barthes was in Philadephia at the time and when O'Doherty requested something anti-romantic dealing with a new relationship between writer and work, Barthes submitted his influential "The Death of the Author." [185] This therefore was the first publication of the essay. [186] Also published for the first time in *Aspen 5/6* was Sontag's, "The Aesthetics of Silence," Dan Graham's *Schema*

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[183] Sandler in Youngstown, Ohio (1994), p. 35.

[184] Fluxus may be the source of a general interest in boxes around this time.

[185] Ireland interview with author, 2000.

[186] Barthes (1967). Barthes' essay was translated for *Aspen 5/6* by Richard Howard. It was published in 1968 in French as "La Mort de L'Auteur," in *Manteia V*, and subsequently in English, in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. and ed. by Stephen Heath, London, Fontana, 1977.

(March 1966) entitled *Poem, March 1966*, and Sol Le Witt's first serial piece, *Serial Project No.1, 1966* (Figs.25, 26).

The other contributors, notably for that time, were an international cross-section of American and European artists drawn from the fields of dance, film, art and music as well as literature. They included a formidable list: Marcel Duchamp, Merce Cunningham, Morton Feldman, Robert Rauschenberg, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy/ Stan Van Der Beek, Hans Richter, John Cage, George Kubler, George Burroughs, Robert Morris, Richard Huelsenbeck, Naum Gabo/ Norton Pevsner, Douglas MacAgy, Michel Butor,[187] Mel Bochner (Fig.27), Tony Smith (Figs. 28, 29), and last but not least, the editor himself who included his own *Structural Play 3* (Fig.30). The box was filled by these contributors with one book, 4 films, 5 records, 8 boards and 10 printed data which were affiliated with "movements" selected and devised by the editor: Constructivism, Structuralism, Conceptualism, the "tradition of paradoxical thinking," "objects" and "between categories," (Fig.31). The "themes" that provided a framework for all of this were: "time (in art and history)," "silence and reduction," and "language," all elements, it is stressed, which are characteristic of O'Doherty/ Ireland's own artistic *oeuvre* (Fig.32). The forms and media of the various contributions can be seen in (Fig.33).

It is notewothy that the earlier generation of Minimalists—Andre, Flavin, Judd—are absent from *Aspen 5/6's* "ancestral tree" due to the fact that part of O'Doherty's project was to evoke a post-Minimalist era for which the term "conceptual art" had not yet been applied. [188] Minimalist objects, too, were by this time becoming absorbed into the art system as icons of a new avant-garde, thus losing their original criticality. However, as noted, for artists like O'Doherty, and other contributors like LeWitt, for example, who had come to conceptual art through Minimalism, its anti-transcendental and sceptical attitude was an important step towards dismantling artist subjectivity. Pioneering artists like Joseph Kosuth, though contemporary with O'Doherty and his colleagues, were also omitted. Importantly then, *Aspen 5/6* gives one of the

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[187] See Kostelanetz (1993), p. 33, in which he claims that Butor is the most experimental of the "nouveau roman" school in which he has tried to "replace two-dimensional linear history with a three-dimensional spatial one."

[188] Ireland interview with author, 1997b.

earliest indications of an opposing model or aesthetic formulation within American conceptual art, differences which persist to the present day. Alberro, as noted above, points out that although the model of linguistic or theoretical conceptual art articulated by Art and Language and Kosuth two years later than *Aspen 5/6* in 1969 quickly became, and continued to be the dominant one, there was an alternative model. Significantly, he agrees with the argument of this dissertation that O'Doherty, whom he includes with Bochner, Darboven, LeWitt, Lee Lozano, and others in the mid to late 1960s, were artists dealing with different, even opposed sets of interests, than those of linguistic conceptual art. He also identifies the persistence of authorial authority at the expense of the viewer's experience in Kosuth's aesthetic theory as a key distinction. [189] This aspect of O'Doherty/Ireland's work is the subject of Part II of this dissertation.

Sol LeWitt's influential 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Art' were published in the same year as *Aspen 5/6*, 1967,[190] They provide in textual form many of the different ways of thinking which were realised by actual artworks in *Aspen 5/6*. It is worth stressing here that the entire project for *Aspen 5/6* was conceived and carried through by O'Doherty alone, without any discussion with colleagues regarding the selection of contributors, or the theoretical context. Some artists like LeWitt, Bochner and Graham however, were invited by O'Doherty to design their own contributions, elements of which he applied to other printed matter to maintain consistency. The contents page however was completely designed by O'Doherty himself, including the use of set theory to "describe" the contents. This is a veiled salute to " the greatest film ever made" *Citizen Kane* (Fig.34). [191] He describes *Aspen 5/6* as his own one-man show for that year, thinking of the invited

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[189] See " Reconsidering conceptual art," in Alberro & Stimson (1999a) pp. xvi-xxx.

[190] *Artforum*, Vol. 5, No 10, Summer (1967), pp. 79-83. LeWitt's "Sentences on Conceptual Art," were published in *0-9* (1969), New York, and in *Art-Language*, Vol.1, No.1, May 1969, Coventry, England.

[191] U is a connecting unit in set theory, like 'and' or 'plus.' In *Aspen 5/6* it connects the various parts of the box's twenty-eight contents together. B (box) = L (language), F (film), R (record), B (book), D (data). Ireland interview with author, 1998a. The last three letters, R, B, D, with the connecting unit sound like the word "R...bud," (rosebud), the enigmatic word which frames Orson Welles' film. O'Doherty's box alludes to those partially open (rosebud) pieces neglected in the historical jigsaw of art.

contributors as " brushstrokes in my painting." [192] The notion of a chess game comes to mind here, in which all of the contributors are assigned a particular role where various moves can be played out in a number of possible ways. The juxtaposition of the contributions and their combined relative weight in the historical 'game' is left open to each viewer; but within the game, the ultimate aim is to 'checkmate' deterministic Modernism. This open-ended approach however is itself juxtaposed to the careful selective process involving various bipolar dialectics: constructivism/minimalism, Dada/symbolist poetry; structuralist film/minimalist performance; and, various forms of non-linear fiction from Beckett to Burroughs.[193]

The inclusion of Russian Constructivism is just one of the numerous interesting aspects of this box. The degree to which Russian Suprematism and Constructivism influenced Minimalism and conceptual art is historically problematic. An artist like Morris, for instance, has stated that he was unaware of Russian Constructivism in the late 1950s, and when he did know of them, they were incidental to his work.[194] This contrasts sharply with formalist critic Michael Fried's statement in "Art and Objecthood," in which he relates Morris' sculpture directly to, "the lapsed tradition of Constructivist sculpture established by Tatlin, Rodchenko, Gabo, Pevsner, and Vantongerloo."[195] Fried's position is perhaps understandable given Morris' own hailing of Tatlin as,

> " perhaps the first to free sculpture from representation and establish it as an autonomous form by the kind of....non-image...and by his literal use of materials." [196]

Camilla Gray's publication *The Russian Experiment in Art 1963-1922*, certainly had an impact upon some artists during the 1960s. Flavin, for example, was not alone in

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[192] Ireland interview with author, 2000.

[193] In the context of O'Doherty/Ireland's use of pseudonyms (Chapter 4), it is noted that Burrough's first book, *Junkie* (1953), was published under the pseudonym, William Lee. Kostelanetz (1993), p. 31.

[194] Morris (1985) in *October 70* (1994), pp. 47-54.

[195] See Fried (1967) in Battock (1968; ed. 1995), pp. 116-147 .

[196] See Morris (1966), in Battock (1968; ed. 1995) p. 224 .

dedicating work to Tatlin (Fig.35). In 1977, Ireland produced a drawing, *For Malevich Even Though...* (Fig. 36). The title indicates an attraction towards Malevich's Suprematism which can be seen later in the treatment of space in some of Ireland's finest drawings (Chapter 3). However, in other aspects of Ireland's work, the affinity is more firmly aligned to Tatlin, as shall be seen in the Rope Drawing series, one of which is entitled *Corner for Tatlin and Fred Astaire* (1979) (See Chapter 3). [197] It is also worth remembering that earlier in his career in Ireland, O'Doherty had looked to Moscow rather than Paris, so at least in his case we can assume that he was well acquainted with the Russian avant-garde. An early abstract painting painted in Ireland, demonstrates this affinity as well as demonstrating an early interest in geometry, space and colour, which were to play such an important part in his later career (Fig.37). Sandler suggests that in spite of the problem of the extent of influence, it is equally clear that American artists became interested in the Russian avant-garde because of the development of their own work. He cites O'Doherty's *Aspen 5/6* (1967) as evidence for this:

> "When Brian O'Doherty compiled his "box" of materials that aimed to exemplify the sensibility of the sixties, (Aspen 5/6), he focused on artists identified with Minimalism—LeWitt, Mel Bochner, and Tony Smith—and included an entire section on historic Constructivism, linking the old and the new, as it were." [198]

Aspen 5/6 , as an exhibition of seminal works, constituted a typical attitude among radical artists against the usual art magazine, then seen as another part of the one-sided controlling monolith of the art-market. Alongside new art-magazines, contemporary artists' books represented another kind of model, as we shall see later in this Chapter. Dan Graham, a contributor to *Aspen 5/6*, outlines the reasoning behind many artists' recourse to the new form of art-magazine :

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[197] As if to underline this affinity, the artist is fond of saying, " I'm a Tatlin man!" Ireland interview 1997b.

[198] Sandler (1988), p. 246.

"Art magazines ultimately depend upon art galleries for their economic support, just as work shown in galleries depends on photographic reproduction for its value in the media. Magazines determine a place or frame of reference both inside and outside. Magazines specialize in a "field" in a way that replicates other social and economic divisions, for instance the specialized "world" of art and artists termed the "art" world...What Pop art pointed out was that the information media, such as magazines, could be used dialectically within the art system. That is, a work could function in terms of both the art language and the popular language of the media at the same time, commenting upon and placing in perspective the assumptions of each." [199]

In other words, other means were sought to widen access to art as part of the institutional critique so that catalogues, interviews and art magazines were adopted in place of the museum or gallery. Graham's own work *Schema (March 1966)* in *Aspen 5/6* is an early example of the shift from the art object/artist to the wider context of the medium of distribution and exhibition outside of the legitimising apparatus of the gallery (Fig.38, 39). This work, a set of typewritten pages whose components were to be published individually in various magazines, effectively avoids traditional art narrative, composition and any reference to external reality. Rather, it abandons the auratic original art object, places it within an information as opposed to an art system, and by the depersonalised approach, signals a revised approach to the artist as agent.

This de-centring of the authoritative author/artist was an important reason for Graham's inclusion in O'Doherty's *Aspen 5/6*. A problematisation of the artist as agent operates also in the work of artists like LeWitt, Weiner and O'Doherty/Ireland in differing ways from the mid-1960s. Chapter 4 addresses the issue within O'Doherty/Ireland's art specifically. In *Aspen 5/6*, the editor extends it to the editorial. Using one of his early pseudonyms, Sigmund Bode, he expresses his intentions for the constituent components of the box: persons, concepts, a period were objectified as "objects," thus making them amenable to placement within different systems, some of

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[199] Graham in Barcelona(1998), p. 64.

which had as yet to be invented (Fig.40). [200] This idea of placement or 'location' is a concept which recurs throughout O'Doherty/Ireland's art in many different ways, as we shall see.

For some artists then, anti-authorialism was an attitude which the utilisation of serial/modular systems, cubic forms and industrial materials helped to promote. Alberro pointed out recently, that for artists like O'Doherty/Ireland, the processes of conceptualization and realisation are complementary and the use of systems avoided the centred authorial artist by producing artworks which can be followed by each individual viewer and read in a variety of ways. [201] Initially, Sandler suggests, industrial materials, forms and techniques were valued because they were new, so that broader cultural and social contexts were not considered by artists.[202] This however does not apply to O'Doherty/Ireland, Sandler himself had noted O'Doherty's early recognition of the French intellectuals, and Lippard's remarks, quoted above, which also refer to O'Doherty's broad understanding of both Europe and America.[203]

In these early years also, Seth Siegelaub, the first American art dealer to promote conceptual art, devised a new theory for the exhibiting of conceptual art in terms of information." Primary Information" artworks, were those which no longer depended on physical presence, an object, and thus they became an abstraction which was not distorted or altered by reproduction in documentation or book-form. "Secondary Information" works, on the other hand, were those which were open to distortion in conventional art books and magazines. Besides the more democratic nature of the magazine in terms of access to art, its greater ease of distribution and lower costs, artists also favoured its appeal to the present reflected by its continuously changing contents as opposed to the "timelessness" attributed to the art gallery context. O'Doherty's *Aspen 5/6*, replaced the conventional art magazine tied to the gallery-system, economically by gallery advertisements, and theoretically by upholding its definition of "Art".

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[200] Sigmund Bode was first used in Ireland during the late 1940s or early 1950s. Letter to author, 1996.

[201] See Alberro & Stimson (1999a), pp. xx-xi.

[202] Sandler (1988), p. 70.

[203] See quoted remarks by Lippard, pp 26-27, in interview with author, 2001.

The box itself draws attention to one of its themes, time, as it relates to reception since its objects must be read, or listened to, or watched, in different modules of time and space. Dore Ashton points to this in her review in *Studio International* in 1968. [204] O'Doherty's awareness and understanding of the complexity of the receptive process is borne out by his comments in 1987 that the artist's intention is, " a poor pilot" in terms of the reception of any work. [205] Similarly, LeWitt states in 1967:

> "Once out of his hand, the artist has no control over the way a viewer will perceive the work. Different people will understand the same thing in a different way." [206]

Ashton also notes that the "abyss of silence is carefully skirted. Which is true of the whole issue, and which, finally is the result of the rumorous nature of O'Doherty's genius."[207] The anti-authorial theme is further exemplified by the use of black and white typewritten text. The idea of de-skilling and de-aestheticization to deny notions of authorship and style, was typical of conceptual art practice of this time. However, an essential part of the box's radicalism is its explicit and thematic articulation of such themes using projects within the box.

At first sight Duchamp's *Boite-en-Valise* (1941) might be pointed to as a source for *Aspen 5/6*. However close examination shows that there are significant differences between the two. Firstly, the active participation of the viewer using different senses of seeing and listening to activate the process of reception, marks O'Doherty's box out as different. Secondly, while *Aspen 5/6* shares the self-referencing procedures of Duchamp's box, importantly however, it references more than O'Doherty's own art. O'Doherty's *Aspen 5/6* extends Duchamp's idea of a transportable exhibition to encompass major contributors not only from the history of art, of which Duchamp is one among many, but also others from the wider cultural field. Duchamp's box on the other hand, maintains the

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[204] Ashton (1968), pp. 272-273.

[205] Ireland letter (1987), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p.22.

[206] LeWitt (1967) in Harrison & Wood (1992), p. 834.

[207] Ashton (1968), pp. 272-273.

artist's presence by presenting a mini-exhibition of one artist's major works which Walter Arensberg has called, "a new kind of autobiography."[208] In contrast, by the use of one of his pseudonyms, Sigmund Bode, the dual position of O'Doherty as editor/artist is minimised, thus maintaining the anti-authorial thrust of the box. Thomas McEvilley pointed out recently that the aesthetics of the box have been a major, yet unacknowledged, element of 20th century exploration of forms between painting and sculpture. [209] *Aspen 5/6* should be in the forefront of any such future investigation, since it represents a move beyond Duchamp's self-referencing closed circuit towards one which is open-ended in terms of reception, in tandem with the new paradigm of the de-centred artist and the anti-institutional critique. Graham's *Schema* (1967) in *Aspen 5/6*, and *Homes for America* (1966-67), and Morris' earlier *Cardfile* (1962) represent other examples of the de-centred artistic approach at around the same time (Figs. 41, 42).

In an essay entitled "What was an Author?" Molly Nesbit discusses *Aspen 5/6* in some detail. She perceptively articulates some of its critically important features, summarised briefly as follows: its technological look refers to a technological social order as opposed to modernist purity; the box breaks a whole host of taboos which put new means and economic realities side by side; it asserts its own position as a cultural product tentatively engaged with the larger, uncultured, but technologically sophisticated world and lastly, the box demonstrates that authors, even some modernists, could do critical work. [210]

Given these various assessments, its absence from recent overviews of the period in view of its historical importance, is surprising, and particularly its absence from Sandler's recent book, *Art of the Postmodern Era: From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s*, given his appraisal of it historically in 1994, as quoted, and his inclusion of it in his earlier book, *American Art of the 1960s*. Given its early inclusion inclusion in

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[208] Tomkins (1997), p. 316

[209] McEvilley (1999a), p. 152. As Part II shows, boxes formed part of O'Doherty's search for other media of artmaking from the early 1960s in common with artists like Lucas Samaras and Fluxus artists. In 1965 he exhibited in the "Box Show," at the Byron Gallery, New York.

[210] Nesbit (1987), pp. 241-243.

Lippard's book, *Six Years,* it is unlikely that it was unknown within the artworld.[211] Also, a recent writer on conceptual art, although citing the first publication of Barthes' "The Death of the Author" in "the avant-garde magazine Aspen," on page 139 demonstrating an awareness of it, on page 225 he suggests that Seth Siegelaub's 1970 (July/August) edition of *Studio International* was the first exhibition in a magazine. [212] Unfortunately, given its historical importance, few copies of *Aspen 5/6* remain in circulation. Ireland recalled recently that many in the late 1960s were confounded by the edition and discarded it, so that many copies of the magazine are now lost. [213] He also reports that after its publication the publisher suffered severe financial problems so that some of the participants went unpaid. [214] However, one or two copies are extant and *Aspen 5/6* from the artist's own collection was exhibited at the Patrick Ireland retrospective exhibition at the Elvehjem Museum of Art, November 1992-January 1993, and more recently, in 2001, in the "Box" show in Southampton College (Appendix C). This renewed interest in it is evidenced by one scholar in the United States claiming it to be the first exhibition and "the foundational moment of conceptual art." [215]

The dedication of *Aspen 5/6* to the Symbolist poet, Stéphane Mallarmé, is of some significance in the context of the box/exhibition, but also more generally for O'Doherty/Ireland's art. As noted in the Introduction, art history has for a variety of reasons long ignored the more experimental attitudes of literary theory of which Mallarmé was a major innovator. O'Doherty's dedication therefore may be interpreted as signalling the drive to pursue a similar course, which he perceived as long overdue within the visual arts. In other words, not only is a challenge to traditional modes of

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[211] Sandler (1996); Sandler (1988); Lippard (1973; ed. 1997), p. 32.

[212] Godfrey (1998), pp. 139 & 225.

[213] Ireland interview with author, 1997b.

[214] Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

[215] See *October 70* (1994), p. 131. Quote from Alberro interview with author, 2001. Alberro elaborates upon this statement in response to the author, to say that conceptual art arose within a milieu, rather than with any particular work or moment, so that *Aspen 5/6* represents that mileiu along with the work of other American and Latin American artists. Letter to author, 2001. See also Alberro article, "Inside the White Box," in *Artforum* (2001), pp. 170-174.

representation in art proposed, but also to art history itself. [216] Mallarmé's innovations have attracted the attention of many other artists, all of whom produced artists' books based on his poetry and his dream of the book. [217] Alberro suggests that the interest of artists like Graham in Morris' *Cardfile* (1962), nominated by some critics [218] as one of the first conceptual artworks, probably had less to do with Duchamp and more to do with Mallarmé's "Book." It, he says, captured the imagination of not only Graham, but also LeWitt, Bochner and a "host of others." "Interest in Mallarmé," he states, "crystallizes in Brian O'Doherty's Aspen 5/6, which is devoted to Mallarmé." [219]

Undoubtedly at a time when avant-garde artists were searching for an escape from the romanticism of Abstract Expressionism, O'Doherty was attracted by Mallarmé's anti-romanticism and anti-naturalism, sharing his belief that, "...in an unstable society, lacking unity, no stable and definitive art can be created." [220] Mallarmé's resistence to the notion that poetic language was an expressive representation of the world, his conviction that it must be separate from the language of ordinary speech, and should approach the condition of music, finds resonances in O'Doherty's magazine in terms of its contributors and its formal structure. However it is important to stress here that in invoking Mallarmé, O'Doherty was not implying that the work be interpreted solely in literary terms, a point underlined by the presentation of *Aspen 5/6's* contents in mixed media from beyond, as well as including, the world of literature.

The typographical format of *Aspen 5/6* and O'Doherty's design for the contents layout with its pyramidal structure of sentences echo albeit in different configuration, Mallarmé's baroque-like structure of waves of diagonal sentences against the whiteness of the surrounding page in 'Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard' (Figs. 43, 44). This pyramidal motif later becomes a favoured geometric shape in many of Ireland's Rope Drawings (Figs. 45). The whiteness of the page for Mallarmé was an integral part

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[216] Belting (1983; ed. 1987), p. 58.

[217] Castleman in New York (1995), p. 36. O'Doherty/Ireland's Artist's Books are discussed after *Aspen 5/6*, later in this Chapter.

[218] Buchloh in " Round Table: Conceptual Art and the Reception of Duchamp," *October 70* (1994).

[219] *October 70* (1994), p.131.

[220] Dorra (1994), p. 141.

of the poem in much the same manner that silence forms an essential part of any musical composition. His conception of the written word being an object that exists in the spatial and visual field of the white page is echoed by O'Doherty's remarks about his Ogham sculpture series:

> "I had a somewhat primitive sense of words as objects, augmented when repetition numbs the meaning out of sound, leaving what Stuart Davis might call a sound-shape." [221]

O'Doherty/Ireland's Ogham letters or words arranged on the reflective surface of the sculpture therefore, are akin to Mallarmé's word/objects on the white space of the page (Fig.46). Like Mallarmé, he sought liberation of the artist from increasingly restrictive rules of artmaking and production. Mallarmé sought to release the poet's material, language, from a system already structured by means of syntax to convey meaning. He sought for poetic language the undifferentiated character of a musician's material, sound, which could create an infinity of possible structures. Mallarmé therefore constructed his poetry on the musical motif of the positioning of his elements, words, in a relational system rather than that of syntax. O'Doherty too, found in serial music a relational criterion for new art in the 1960s. With a relational system, the possibilities for meaning are expanded for the reader/viewer, while at the same time, the presence of a different underlying system is suggested forcefully.

Mallarmé's ambition therefore provided a model which paralleled that of the editor and his selected contributors to *Aspen 5/6* a hundred years later for an art-form liberated from the confining parameters of the immediate past. Morton Feldman's inclusion provides just one example. As an experimental composer (defined by Cage as music where the outcome cannot be foreseen), who did not, "want the mirror of history in my work," he shared O'Doherty's attitude to history. But also with his unique form of musical notation, he was able to write music which could project sounds free from a compositional rhetoric, thus permitting the performer greater freedom with both pitch and

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[221] Ireland letter (1987), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 21.

rhythm. [222],Although he alternatively also used traditional notation, all his music avoided systematic composition producing soft, subtle and undramatically gestural music. As this brief outline of the characteristics of his work shows, *Aspen 5/6's* themes of time (in art and "history"), and silence and reduction are very much in evidence, demonstrating the shared affinity of sensibility between O'Doherty/Ireland and Feldman.

Another contributor, George Kubler, argues that "the definition of art as symbolic expression has dominated art studies in our century," the effect of which he suggested, has been an over-emphasis on the study of meaning. Pointing out that every meaning requires a support which can change structurally through time and, importantly, can be sensed independently of meaning, Kubler continued:

> "...forms of communication are easily separable from any meaningful transmission. In linguistics the forms are speech sounds (phonemes) and grammatical units (morphemes). In music they are notes and intervals; in architecture and sculpture they are solids and voids; in painting they are tones and areas." [223]

A similar system of relationships with affinities to the literature of Mallarmé and Feldman's serial music was established in O'Doherty's art with the series of Ogham Drawings, begun in the same year as *Aspen 5/6*, in 1967.

Susan Sontag's essay, "The Aesthetics of Silence," illuminates further the basic tenets of what critic Dore Ashton has called O'Doherty's "wheel of cultural probing" in *Aspen 5/6*. Sontag suggests that, every era has to reinvent the project of "spirituality," for which in the modern era, the most active metaphor is "art." She goes on to say that with the promotion of the arts into "art" (in the modern period) came one of the leading myths about art, the absoluteness of the artist's activity, that it was, "an expression of human

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[222] Feldman interview (1980) in *Soundpieces* (1982), p. 170.

[223] Kubler (1962), p. vii.

consciousness, consciousness seeking to know itself." In contrast, the newer myth denying that art is mere expression:

> "installs within the activity of art many of the paradoxes involved in attaining an absolute state of being described by the great religious mystics...a craving for the cloud of unknowing beyond knowledge and for the silence beyond speech, so art must tend towards anti-art, the elimination of the "subject" (the "object", the "image"), the substitution of chance for intention, and the pursuit of silence." [224]

These sentiments recall those of Sol LeWitt in 'Sentences on Conceptual Art' when he states: "Conceptual Artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach." [225] In 1970 O'Doherty himself in an interview about his Ogham sculptures says:

> "I wouldn't be ashamed of saying there's a kind of checked transcendentalism built into these pieces. They begin in literalness and end somewhere else." [226]

Morton Feldman recognised this when he saw the first exhibition of Ogham Sculptures at the Betty Parsons Gallery in 1974 when he remarked: " I don't know anything that tells me more about reality and explains it less." [227]

Susan Sontag could have been describing O'Doherty/Ireland's art when she points out that all serious projects relating to consciousness become ultimately projects for the unravelling of thought itself towards which the serious art of our time has moved increasingly. She adds that irony is the "the only feasible counterweight to this grave use of art as the arena for the ordeal of consciousness." [228] Her appeal for a certain playful quality is provided by the editorial summary of the magazine's theoretical foundations by

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[224] Sontag (1967; ed. 1994), pp. 1-34.

[225] See LeWitt (1969), in Harrison & Wood (1992), p. 837

[226] See O'Doherty interview (1970), p. 31.

[227] Ireland interview with author, 2000.

[228] Sontag (1967; ed. 1994), p. 33.

Sigmund Bode. This piece, entitled "Placement as Language" (1928), was a fiction devised by the editor as an apologia for his placement of contributors according to his own scheme. The author, as noted, was O'Doherty's pseudonymous self, the date selected for the text being that of O'Doherty's own birthdate. [229] Unable to find a suitable text to embrace the ideas behind his project, he decided upon the device of inventing one. Significantly in terms of this dissertation, a recent critical anthology of conceptual art included this piece by Sigmund Bode as an exemplar of early conceptual art. [230] It is also worth noting at this stage the linkage made between the idea of language and the spatial concept of placement or 'location,' which recurs throughout O'Doherty/Ireland's art and is discussed in greater detail in Part II.

Alain Robbe-Grillet was cited by O'Doherty in 1966 as the theoretician-in-residence for the body of ideas put forward by radical artists of that time.[231] Although he was probably of more importance to the Minimalists than to conceptual artists, his anti-romantic ideas were part of the intellectual climate within which some, like O'Doherty and his colleagues, were making art.[232] As the leading theoretician of the French *nouveau roman* of the 1950s and early 1960s, Robbe-Grillet proposed that the principle of the inseparability of form and content should be given precedence over traditional conventions of narrative sequence. Given his intellectual influence, attested by his inclusion in *Aspen 5/6*, it is worth quoting at some length from *Toward a New Novel*, originally published in 1957 as *Pour un nouveau roman* :

> "This literature simply exposes man's situation, and that of the universe he has to contend with. And it is not only the wordly "values" of bourgeois society that have disappeared, but with them any magic, religious or philosophical appeal to any sort of spiritual resource "beyond" our visible world. Given principles such as this, we had every reason to hope that they were proposing to purge people and things of their systematic romanticism, so that they could once again be described

[229] Ireland interview with author, 2000a.

[230] Alberro & Stimson (1999a), pp. 18-19.

[231] O'Doherty (1966b), in Battock (1968; ed. 1968), pp. 253.

[232] Ireland interview with author 2000a.

by...the only thing thay can be—what they are. Reality would no longer be permanently situated elsewhere, but here and now, without ambiguity...Beyond what we see (what our senses perceive), there would henceforth be nothing...rather than being of a political nature, commitment, for the writer means to be fully aware of the current problems of his own language, convinced of their extreme importance, and desirous of solving them from within. Therein lies his sole possibility of remaining an artist, and also, no doubt, by means of some obscure and distant consequence, of maybe one day being of some use, maybe even to the revolution." [233]

The passage contains the two key words, 'here' and 'now,' associated with O'Doherty/Ireland's art and also many of the issues around which the artist has cast his probing eye and mind. Robbe-Grillet and O'Doherty/Ireland also share an intense interest in cinema.[234]

Roland Barthes' influential essay, " The Death of the Author" also has a special relationship to the work of this artist in a number of respects. O'Doherty's dedication to Mallarmé mirrored the homage to the author of anti-authorialism also cited by Barthes, Derrida and Foucault. The commissioning and publication of this essay for the first time in the *Aspen 5/6* magazine, was in itself an indication of an acute awareness on the part of O'Doherty of the radical nature of French Structuralist thought. O'Doherty's insight as to the relevance of French thought was all the more significant given that it was not something shared by American criticism at the time. In fact misreadings of French thought and intentions led either to outright rejection or a lack of appreciation of its political radicality. [235] Earlier in the late 1960s, Susan Sontag also pointed to this

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[233] Robbe-Grillet (1957), in Harrison & Wood (1992), pp. 747-748.

[234] O'Doherty/Ireland has a wide knowledge of cinema: he has lectured on it, as well as making his own films and videos, and addressing the medium in many of his Rope Drawings and writings.

[235] Burke points out that the situation in the 1960s in the Anglo-American critical tradition was very different from French Structuralist and Post-structuralist anti-subjectivism, grounded in, "a massive reaction...against the resuscitation of the Cartesian cogito in Husserlian phenomenology." In contrast, for a

difference. Writing the preface to Roland Barthes' *Writing Degree Zero* she pointed out that although "difficult" literary tendencies such as Symbolism and Surrealism, and in particular the post-novel fiction of Borges, Beckett, and Robbe-Grillet, occupied a central position in contemporary letters in France, in the United States: "a quite different taste prevails..." She further suggested that comparable work, from late Joyce, Stein, and late Virginia Woolf to Burroughs, was still (in 1968) generally regarded as "avant-garde" or "experimental" literature.[236] Burroughs it is noted, was another of O'Doherty's invited authors in *Aspen 5/6*. It is evident also that similar attitudes influenced the reception of the anti-avant-garde art represented by O'Doherty and some of his colleagues in the late 1960s and early 1970s, attitudes which persist to the present day.

Barthes essay then, probably the single most influential meditation on the question of authorship, signalled an affinity for radical critical exploration which was recognised and shared by Brian O'Doherty in his art and critical writings, and by Patrick Ireland in his art, as we shall see. Barthes' major departure was from a belief in the authority of the author as the sole possessor of meaning through language. However, Barthes did not rest his case there. In 1970 he published an analysis of Balzac's *Sarrasine* entitled *S/Z* which represented a shift in his thinking from high Structuralism to post-Structuralism: here the death of the author has been replaced by the birth of the reader in a symbiotic relationship with the returned, reformulated author. Significantly within this context of a shift from production to reception and with the argument of this dissertation, O'Doherty published *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth* in 1974, the same year that Barthes' *S/Z* was published in English. Both therefore, simultaneously announced what Rosalind Krauss calls "a seismic shift in the ground of criticism...producing a new vocabulary of criticism..." which focused on the idea of myth. For Krauss, part of the originality of O'Doherty's criticism is his "examination of reception and the way artists both program it and suffer because of it," but also because of what she perceives as

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younger generation of critics in Anglo-American scholarship, phenomenology represented an escape from the long ascendency of formalist New Criticism. Burke (1992), pp. 180-181.

[236] Sontag (1968; ed. 1993), p. ix.

"some of the most canny and clarifying writing on artistic production." [237] Barthes, like O'Doherty in *Aspen 5/6*, accepted those authors who made no claim to truth, as well as those whose texts were discontinuous and pluralistic, such as Mallarme and Robbe-Grillet. The sacrificing of the author, as it were, is followed by resurrection and re-birth. These qualities are recalled in Barthes' reference to the pleasure of the text and Ireland's concept of "play" as part of the viewer's participation, a particularly important part of his Rope Drawings. The partnership of reader and re-newed author in Barthes' work can also be found in that of O'Doherty/ Ireland. This occurs in many guises but most specifically in his use of the 'I/Thou' motif in differing media, in which the relationship between the work (acting as a proxy for the artist), and the viewer is given extra weight and privilege.

Another area of critical common ground between Barthes and O'Doherty/Ireland is that of the division of the author as the 'self,' the 'I' writing or making art, and the empirical everyday 'self.' O'Doherty wrote about this in *American Masters* (1974), stating:

> " This idea of the artist has its more formal literary equivalent in the persona. The image of the artist composed by the sum total of his strategies is very different from the secular figure painting the picture." [238]

Foucault's version of the same point neatly encapsulates O'Doherty/Ireland's position:

> "The author's name is not a function of a man's civil status, nor is it fictional; it is situated in the breach, among the discontinuities, which give rise to new groups of discourse...Consequently, we can say that in our culture, the name of an author is a variable that accompanies only certain texts to the exclusion of others..." [239]

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[237] Krauss (2000) Introduction to latest edition of O'Doherty's *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth* (1974).

[238] O'Doherty (1974; ed. 1988), p. 6.

[239] Quoted in Nesbit (1987) p. 240.

Chapter 4 discusses how these ideas operate within O'Doherty/Ireland's art in greater detail. *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, the first of a trilogy of autobiographical works published in the 1970s, also breaks the traditional autobiographical concept that the 'self' writing and the 'self' written about, are one and the same 'self,' by positing a multiplicity of subjects which exist in different spatio-temporal zones of experience. [240] Bakhtin, Borges and others before them also recognised this problem. Bakhtin put it this way:

> "If I tell (orally or in writing) an event that I have just lived, in so far as I am telling (orally or in writing) this event, I find myself already outside of the time-space in which the event occurred. To identifiy oneself absolutely with oneself, to identify one's "I" with the "I" that I tell is as impossible as to lift oneself up by one's hair..." [241]

O'Doherty/Ireland too, addresses this issue in a unique series of works, the "I" Drawings, which are also discussed later in Chapter 4, as well as a continuous self-portrait, *The Transformation, Discontinuity, and Degradation of the Image* (1969-).

In summary therefore, it has been argued that the *Aspen 5/6* box/magazine/exhibition represents one of the earliest theoretical paradigms of a critique of the wider art system in which the gallery was regarded as the cultural legitimising device for works of art. The magazine emphasised the necessity to alter the distribution, form, and position of art within the social hierarchy of cultural information. It reduced the gap between so-called high and low cultural forms in terms of its media, thus producing an early multi-media work. By presenting works in different media, the concept of time, real and historical, is effectively evoked. An allusive effect is found throughout O'Doherty/Ireland's art where the viewer's pleasure derives from a step-by-step sense of discovery as the work slowly reveals itself which, once more, echoes Mallarmé:

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[240] Barthes (1975; ed. 1994).

[241] Quoted in Burke (1992), p. 55.

"To name an object is to suppress three-quarters of the enjoyment of the poem...to suggest, that is the dream ...to evoke an object little by little so as to bring to light a state of the soul or, inversely, to choose an object and bring out of it a state of the soul through a series of unravelings." [242]

O'Doherty/Ireland's remarks suggest a similar attitude:

" I'm attracted to work that comes on slow, the intellectually firm, the linear rather than the painterly, wit of all kinds, and by the strength of character that goes its own road no matter how narrow (it has a way of broadening out)." [243]

Aspen 5/6 is also was one of the defining works of the early conceptual period by virtue not only of its structural approach but by the inclusiveness and eclecticism of its constellation of contributors. This latter feature, not only marked out the territory as post-Minimalist as well as post-Modern with the inclusion of ideas from other arts, but also by its vernacular mode of presentation and content, which reaches beyond art systems. Thus it is an early model of contemporary art which freed the artwork from Modernist isolation by placing it within the domains of past and present literary domains as well as those of the visual arts, music, ballet, audio and film. Here, so-called post-Modern discontinuity is celebrated over Modernism's illusory unity within genres and media. Lastly, adhering to one of its own themes of "paradoxical thinking," *Aspen 5/6* plots out the historical legacy of non-linguistic conceptual art, anti-authorialism. As exemplified by the contributions of Duchamp, Feldman, Robbe-Grillet, Barthes and O'Doherty, the "death" of the author however, also signals the "birth" of the reader/spectator. From the point of view of this dissertation, *Aspen 5/6* provides the conceptual framework for O'Doherty/Ireland's own art in terms of its anti-authorialism, institutional critique and emphatic privileging of reception by the active participation and control of the reader/listener/viewer with actual works.

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[242] Quoted in Dorra (1994),p. 141.

[243] O'Doherty in Limerick, (1980), n.p.

1.7. Artist's Books (1966-)

By the mid-1960s, art was often conceived of as information. The book, as we have seen with *Aspen 5/6*, was considered a container of information rather than a precious object, and so was attractive to many as yet another strategy which maintained artistic freedom from conventional forms, presentation, and distribution systems. Illustrated books by artists, of course, have had a very long history in art, which artists like Gauguin, Picasso and Matisse among many others continued into the late 19th and early 20th century. But for some artists in the late 20th century, the context had changed. Some, like Ed Ruscha, for example, aimed to make a cheap, democratic form of art, which by mass production, would be available to a wider audience than the usual "art" audience of the gallery (Fig.47). [244] Ruscha's deadpan approach and Rauschenburg's redefinition of the book's sequential ordering in *Shade* (1964) appealed to the concerns of certain conceptual artists in the mid-1960s (Fig. 48). Earlier in the century, Mallarmé had attracted artists like Matisse, when he published *Poesies* (1932), to accompany a Mallarmé poem. He was also a source for younger artists, as we have already seen by O'Doherty's dedication of *Aspen 5/6* (1967). In 1969, Marcel Broodthaers (1924-1976), a Belgian poet and conceptual artist, also produced a book based on the "appropriation" of Mallarmé's poem, "Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard" (Fig. 49). Ellsworth Kelly, for his first artist book in 1992, also took Mallarmé's typographically innovative poem to create a visual dialogue with his own flat black forms printed on separate pages (Figs. 50).

O'Doherty/Ireland's interest in this kind of model for art had begun a year earlier than *Aspen 5/6* in 1966, and as such, represents one of the early uses of this model for artists of his generation in America. Sol Le Witt too, began to produce inexpensive illustrated books in 1966, the first of which, *Serial Project No.1* (1966), was published in O'Doherty's *Aspen 5/6* (1967), as we have seen above. In 1968, Siegelaub and Wendler published *Xeroxbook* by a group of seven artists: Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Douglas

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[244] Ruscha is often credited as the source of the late 20th century concept of the artist's book.

Heubler, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, and Lawrence Weiner (Figs.51). This xeroxed catalogue of the artists' work represented an entire exhibition and as such, it has been argued, marked the beginning of conceptual art historically in New York. [245] However, as has been already pointed out, art historically, O'Doherty's *Aspen 5/6* is an earlier foundational marker.

O'Doherty/Ireland's bookworks provide linkages to his art in other media. Some, like *The Book of Rope Drawings* for example, function as a compendium of his ideas about the gallery space, which became actualised in real three-dimensional space (Fig.52). This book is thus similar in concept to Malevich's *Suprematism: 34 Risunka* (1920) (Fig.53). Although originally prepared as a textbook for his students, it became a survey of the essential elements of Suprematism's dynamic movement through space and time. Josef Albers also, after retiring from teaching at Yale, compiled his compositional repertoire in book form (Fig.54). Similarly, Ireland's *Inside the White Cube* (c.1975) presents drawings which explore the nature of the boxed cube of the gallery space (Fig. 55). This book was made at around the same time that O'Doherty was writing the influential series of essays in *Artforum* in 1976, which were later published in book-form as, *Inside the White Cube* (1986). Other artist books like, *Turning a Page* (1977) and *Barbara's Alphabet* (1979-80) reflect O'Doherty/Ireland's persistent concern with language's basic units in the latter, and the interactive process of looking between author/artist and reader/viewer in the former (Figs.56, 57).

In 1967, O'Doherty made another unusual work which was a combination of a box, a hand-painted book and a textual piece, all of which was related to the medium of cinema. It was entitled *Scenario For Black: A Structural Film.* It was exhibited with a number of other works at a major retrospective of 1960s art in Documenta VI, in Kassel, Germany in 1977 (Figs.58). Recently, it was included as one of the key works of the 1960s in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, together with the Sigmund Bode editorial from *Aspen 5/6* (1967). [246] In *Scenario for Black*, seventy-one film frames are magnified onto transparent book/screen pages lit from below by a light box, which are turned over

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[245] Wollen in New York (1999a), p. 74.

[246] See Alberro & Stimson (1999a), pp. 19 & 20.

by the viewer. The hand-painted brushstrokes employ a directional and limited tonal system. As each page is turned the superimposition of page after page yields an increasingly complex and cinematographic visual field, which by the last page is rendered entirely black, the end of the film, as it were. The notion of time is subtly evoked in the whole process. Lucy Lippard comments:

> "The system is static; the book offers constant change ...a major transitional work...predicting the artists' book phenomenon which was then in its infancy." [247]

It was also around this time that O'Doherty made a couple of acetate books as part of a multi-part work, *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* (1966-67). Masheck also found cinematographic qualities in these particular books. [248] In 1975, Ireland produced another unique sculpture entitled, *Book: Art Since 1945*, by the author Brian O'Doherty (Fig. 59). This work has an amusing background which can only be sketched in here. In the mid-1960s, at a time when O'Doherty had no money, Fred Praeger asked him to produce a book on contemporary art in a couple of years time. O'Doherty agreed and received an advance of $ 1,500. After completing about ninety pages of *Art Since 1945*, O'Doherty became distracted by working for his first exhibition at the Byron Gallery (1966), but also by his feeling that at the time:

> "...issuing grand summations on the state of culture seemed to me comic. I was going from the private workbench out to the balcony to speak to the multitudes below, and clearly this was no position for a reasonably honest man." [249]

Seven years later, on receipt of a legal summons, Ireland set about trying to fulfil his contract by making a wooden box in the shape of a book, on the cover of which he hand-painted one of Ad Rheinhardt's black paintings since they were "...not tractable to the

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[247] Lippard in Youngstown, Ohio (1994), p. 18.

[248] Masheck (1974), n.p.

[249] Artist statement, (1975), giving an account of the circumstances of the making of *Art Since 1945*.

same kind of marketing as a Picasso or de Kooning."[250] Then, accompanied by his lawyer and the editor of *Artforum*, John Coplans, who had evaluated its worth as a piece of art, Ireland presented the book to Praeger for $2000. Praeger refused to accept it and it was eventually bought by Joe Hirshhorn and displayed with the following signed artist statement:

> " It was important for me that the record show that an artbook publisher, i.e. one who makes money on reproducing artists' works and having experts write about them for slave wages, be shown incapable of recognising an art book, i.e., a work of art in the form of a book, when presented with it. The $2000 included the $ 750 to Praeger, the fees to council and expert, the cost of producing the book, and a reasonable hourly wage for working on it." [251]

This then, was one book which you could not tell by its cover. Sandler, in an essay about the work in 1994, remarks that although acting like a readymade, which Duchamp said offered a new thought to an ordinary object, this book does so,

> " ...but it is a thought different from Duchamp's—or Johns' or Warhol. Art Since 1945 simulates an object meant to impart thoughts, or at least information, and transforms it into something to be looked at." [252]

This comment is notable in the light of the Duchamp discussion above. At a time when the verbal had become a part of the visual through conceptual art, and when art theory was becoming a dominant force, Ireland's book playfully subverts the more didactic theoretical claims of both.

In 1966, O'Doherty began a talking book, but never finished it. [253] More recently, Ireland returned once again to the concept of a book as a medium for art with a series of

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[250] Ibid.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Sandler in Youngstown, Ohio(1994), p. 35.

[253] Ireland letter (1992a), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 40.

drawings on paper entitled, *Drawings around the Idea of a Book*, in 1999 (Fig. 60). These finely drawn works demonstrate the control of hand and eye evident in all of O'Doherty/Ireland's drawings, where tightly crowded coloured lines intersect to define planes of space. Thus, they symbolise the multiple planes of reception in both the reading of books and in looking at art. They also form an organic bridge to his other drawings of boxes and his Rope Drawings. Significantly, the *Drawings around the idea of a Book*, coincided with the publication of O'Doherty's second novel, *The Deposition of Fr. McGreevy*, which was short-listed for the Booker Prize in 2000. Discussing his expansion into another cultural genre, the artist has remarked that while he must always make art, the conventions associated with writing, unlike those of the visual arts, permitted the use of more than one style more readily. [254].

We now turn to the most widely known of O'Doherty's critical writings, which has played an important role in what became known as the institutional critique. Although a thorough analysis of O'Doherty's critical writings is not included here, this one cannot be excluded because it provides critically important evidence of the conceptual content of much of O'Doherty/Ireland's art, but most particularly in the series of Rope drawing installations, discussed later in Part II.

1.8. Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space (1976)

Appearing initially as a series of three essays in 1976 in *Artforum*, the book, *Inside the White Cube* was published almost a decade later in 1986.[255] It proved to be a critical contribution of similar proportions to *Aspen 5/6*, articulating and elaborating upon the attitudes and ideas which had already been implied in *Aspen 5/6*. It has since been translated into many languages, as well as coining new art terminology to describe the Modernist gallery, and inspiring more than one gallery to adopt the name "White Cube" (Fig.61). The continuing relevance of the essays is apparent by the publication of a further edition in 1999 and by the remarks of a reviewer in 1987:

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[254] Ireland interview with author, 1998b.

[255] O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1986). The most recent edition (1999) contains an additional essay, " The Gallery as Gesture."

"O'Doherty's beautifully written essays...which I admired when they were first published and which remain essential documents...raise important concerns which deserve further discussion." [256]

The essays are entitled "Notes on the Gallery Space," "The Eye and the Spectator," "Context as Content," and "The Gallery as Gesture." One of the first to critically confront the changing conditions and attitudes in post World War II visual art, O'Doherty examines the aesthetic, sociological and economic context within which art is exhibited and experienced, exposing the myth of an inherent neutrality of gallery and museum spaces. For art critic Barbara Rose the essays marked a turning point in artistic perception, as witnessed by many artists' involvement in the late 1960s and early 1970s in explicitly political concerns. For the critic Thomas McEvilley, they had other attributes:

"O'Doherty's essays... are defenses of the real life of the world against the sterilized operating room of the white cube, defenses of time and change against the myth of the eternality and transcendence of pure form." [257]

However, they also have another benefit, that is, that the ideas promulgated in the essays by O'Doherty provide critical insight into the work of his artistic persona, Patrick Ireland, a view which is also shared by Carr. [258] This is so because O'Doherty's well argued case for liberating both art and its viewer from the timeless zone of the Modernist gallery into real space, is what becomes a reality within his installations. The idea of space and its relation to the viewer's perceptions and assumptions are topics which are vividly described in O'Doherty's first and second essays. Ireland's installations share these concerns, as well as the issue of context, which O'Doherty makes the subject of the third essay. That concerns such as these formed a direct relationship to the Rope

[256] Carr (1987), pp. 610-611.

[257] McEvilley (1986), p. 12.

Drawings was confirmed by the artist recently, when he remarked that it was around the time of his early installations in 1973, that he began to think particularly about the spaces in which they were being made. [259] The following gives a brief overview of some of the main topics raised by a book brimming over with ideas.

In the first essay, "Notes on the Gallery Space," O'Doherty suggests that the 20th century gallery is like a medieval church, separated from the real world within its own timeless realm, its objects enshrined as if for worship as art. This attitude necessarily has implications for the spectator whose consciousness, perceptions and emotions are subtly controlled and directed. As O'Doherty puts it, one of Modernism's fatal diseases [260] was the shift of perception from life to formal values, implicitly projected by the ideal space of the white-walled gallery. [261] He proceeds to trace the hanging conventions of the 19th century Salon to the 20th century Modernist gallery, both of which inherently editorialise interpretation and judgments of value. He identifies the marked authority, historically, of the frame. While treated as a self-contained entity by the Salon and for succeeding centuries, by the 20th century, the picture plane gradually became the focus of conflicting ideologies:

> "Conceiving it differently in the modern era was a heroic adjustment that signified a totally different world view, which was trivialized into esthetics, into the technology of flatness." [262]

Citing the lateral expansion of Abstract Expressionist works as a factor which initiated a dialogue between works and their support, the wall itself became an active zone (like the picture plane before it), culminating in the removal of the frame altogether. This occurred at the 1966 Monet Exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art, New York. It was however

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[258] Carr (1987), p. 611.

[259] Ireland interview with author, 2000b.

[260] A characteristic feature of O'Doherty/Ireland's conversation and writing noted during research, is the frequent recourse to medical analogies.

[261] O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1986), p. 15.

[262] Ibid., p. 22.

anticipated, O'Doherty tells us, a year earlier by Wilheim Anastasi when he covered the wall of the Dwan Gallery, New York, with an image of the wall itself. Once the wall of the gallery had become identifiable as no longer neutral, he suggests, it was not long before this realisation shifted to the whole space within the walls.

The second essay, "The Eye and the Spectator," developes this theme, extending it to the past usage of collage, considered by O'Doherty as antecedant to the 1960s spectator's experience with Happenings, Fluxus and Tableaux. Among other antecedants, he cites some of the same movements already referred to in *Aspen 5/6*, such as Dada and Russian Constructivism. Examples are given of collage work which shared a recognition of the shared space of the gallery: Lissitsky's *Proun* (1925) (Fig.62), Schwitter's *Merzbau* (1923) (Fig.63), Duchamp's *1200 Bags of Coal* (1938), and *Mile of String* (1942). "If the picture plane defined the wall, collage begins to define the entire space." [263] O'Doherty's remarks about *Merzbau* are especially relevant to characteristics apparent in his own installation work:

> "The environment was a genre nearly 40 years away, and the idea of the surrounded spectator was not yet a conscious one...the Merzbau...was a mutating, polyphonic construct with multiple subjects, functions and concepts of space and of art." [264]

The Eye is the term O'Doherty applies to the disembodied organ of vision implied by Modernist art. It leaves behind the Spectator, that "wandering phantom," whom art conjugates by Cartesian splitting of the 'self':

> "The art the Eye is brought to bear on almost exclusively is that which preserves the picture plane, mainstream modernism. The Eye maintains the seamless gallery

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[263] Ibid., p. 39.

[264] Ibid., p. 44.

space...Everything else, all things impure, including collage, favors the Spectator." [265]

He notes that the shift of perception to include the body which came with Minimalism in the 1960s, also brought with its particular strategies, an alienation of the spectator. It shall become clear later that both of these issues have a central focus within Ireland's work. But, he argues, confrontational strategies may in fact have been necessary since a world mediated through the Eye-dominated media of television, cinema and video, has led to a dulling of consciousness:

> "The implication is that direct experience might kill us... "feeling" is turned into a consumer product...For the Spectator and the Eye are conventions which stabilize our missing sense of ourselves. They acknowledge that our identity is itself a fiction...We objectify and consume art then, to nourish our nonexistent selves or to maintain some esthetic starvling called "formalist man." [266]

O'Doherty implies therefore, that that which makes us more aware, has a greater impact upon us and thus on how an experience becomes encoded in memory. This point is particularly relevant to Ireland's installations.

The third essay, "Context as Content," opens with an account of Duchamp's *1,200 Bags of Coal* (1938), "the first time an artist subsumed an entire gallery in a single gesture, and managed to do so while it was full of other art." [267] He proposes that every good gesture is a form of invention which can only be done once and which becomes obvious *post facto* :

> " As an invention...the gesture's patent is its most distinguishing feature, far more than its formal content...(which)... lies in its aptness, economy, and grace. It dispatches the bull of history with a single thrust. Yet it needs that bull, for it

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[265] Ibid., p. 42.

[266] Ibid., p. 55.

shifts perspective suddenly on a body of assumptions and ideas...If it teaches, it is by irony and epigram, by cunning and shock...If it is successful it becomes history and tends to eliminate itself...It calls attention to untested assumptions, overlooked content, flaws in historical logic." [268]

O'Doherty returns to the definition of gesture more than once stating that the form of a gesture must relate to a body of existing ideas and yet, place itself outside of them. Initially it tends to be perceived, or misperceived, somewhere on a spectrum from outright hostility to just fun. Any modification of the discourse surrounding the gesture, in art, would take place over time with uncertain results. These comments are of particular interest and significance in the light of his own gestures, discussed in Part II, the *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* (1967), and *Name Change* in 1972, a few years before *Inside the White Cube* was written.

The third essay outlines the modernist artist/audience relationship to notions of style as a stabilising construct, "the equivalent of etiquette in society," and then moves on to discuss nonhierarchical genres of postmodern art of the 1970s. [269] Here too the isolation of certain factors is especially interesting in the light of O'Doherty's own work. He relates how in the move away from painting and sculpture by young artists towards new mixed categories of performance, post-Minimalism, video and environment, tended to produce temporary work concerned with consciousness:

" It tends to deal with what is immediately present to the senses and the mind...It is not in search of certainties...(it turns)... privacy inside out to make it a matter of public discourse, a seventies form of distancing. Despite this personal focus, *there is no curiosity about identity. There is a great curiosity about how consciousness is constructed. Location is the key word.* It telescopes concerns

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[267] Ibid., p. 69.

[268] Ibid., pp. 69-70.

[269] Ibid., p. 74.

about where (space) and how (perception). What is perceived...is not as important...[270] (author's italics).

O'Doherty/Ireland's art, it is argued is inextricably related to the key words contained in this passage: identity, consciousness and location. As we shall see, these are concerns which radically alter the artist/audience relationship from a Modernist position of alienation and elitism. This newly active participatory spectator was encouraged by direct interaction whereby the context for the art very often became the content of the work itself. Since this was so, O'Doherty asks the interesting question, acutely relevant to his own practice, namely, was the artist who accepted the gallery space in the 1970s conforming to the Modernist social order? In answering his own question, he posits a dissident artistic attitude characterised by irony, rage, wit, paradox, satire, detachment, scepticism:

> "It is a mind with no fixed abode, empirical, always testing experience, conscious of itself and thus of history, and ambiguous about both." [271]

This is an apt description of O'Doherty/Ireland's art and mind, as shall become evident in this dissertation.

Finally, remarks which are also significant in the light of O'Doherty/Ireland's own art are the differences between the American and the European mind with regard to the utopianism in Modernism. The New York habit of mind, he comments, is too dismissive of idealist/utopian ideas about the alteration of society through art. European utopians, on the other hand, he suggests "could think about social problems and art's transforming powers very well."[272] He relates the dismissal of the European formulation of utopianism to the missing audience for art: "we seem to have ended up with the wrong audience." [273] The search for a new audience becomes a major element within

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[270] Ibid., p. 78.

[271] Ibid., p. 81.

[272] Ibid., p. 82.

[273] Ibid.

O'Doherty/Ireland's own art, one which tries to effect a balance between Tatlin's social program and Malevich's idealism. Both names appear within O'Doherty/ Ireland's *oeuvre*, as we have seen. Lissitzky however is the figure whom O'Doherty cites as effecting such a balance:

> "In the process of inventing the modern exhibition, he also reconstructed the gallery space, the first serious attempt to affect the context in which modern art and the spectator meet." [274]

The most recent essay, "The Gallery as a Gesture," charts the way in which "the new god, extensive homogeneous space," is handled by various artists during the late 1960s and 1970s. [275] The conceptualisation of the interior gallery space by such artists as Robert Barry, Jannis Kounellis and Les Levine literally dematerialise the art object as defined by Lucy Lippard. O'Doherty cites Christo and Jeanne-Claude's wrapping of buildings, including museums, as a kind of parody of the divine transformation of art in which the object is possessed, but lost at the same time, and in which the corporate world is mimicked in terms of planning, execution and expense.

In summary therefore, these essays discuss some of the key issues which underpin much of the revised thinking about art since the 1960s and beyond. Not the least of their merit is the " poetically phrased, elegantly written, and ironically tempered..." prose. [276] However, the poetic style of the writing, couched within an historical and critical awareness, does not in any sense undermine the conviction and sense of political purpose. The 1986 Afterword on its own, provides an unique summary of an unique period in art history by one of its prominent practitioner/commentators.

But the essays are also an important source for this dissertation, for what they reveal about the themes within O'Doherty/Ireland's own art: the concern about the psychological and political implications of the gallery space and its contents; the desire to create a more active, participatory role for the viewer, thus embarking upon the search for

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[274] Ibid., p. 86.

[275] Ibid., p. 87.

a new audience for art. These issues and their realisation in artworks are the subject of Part II of this dissertation. In addition, the essays suggest O'Doherty's ideas about the new role for the artist, which becomes a major theme within O'Doherty/Ireland's art, as we shall see in Chapter 4.

1.8.1. Turf Rick (1975)

This work is included here because it represents an aspect of the institutional critique and is one of the earliest executed pieces of land art in Ireland. The artist, with the help of a traditional turf rick-builder made *Rick* (1975) in an 18th century Georgian building in Dublin which then housed the avant-garde David Hendriks Gallery (Fig. 64). The exhibition also included drawings and an early Rope Drawing (Fig.65). Set up against the fireplace, the six foot rick, which was actually half a rick, playfully suggested that the other half had gone up the chimney. But the artist's more serious intention was to create a structure of imposing presence which disturbed viewer perceptions about an artwork and its exhibition context of the gallery. But it also provoked architectural questions within an Irish historical and cultural context. The construction of the rick represented the vernacular turf structures typical of rural Ireland, as well as the corbelled architecture of early Irish stone churches (Figs. 66, 67). The conceptual tension of the piece resided in its physical presence and juxtaposition within the splendour of the 'imported' Georgian architecture of the Hendriks Gallery itself. Dorothy Walker remarks about the work in 1994:

> " ....to some extent it was an invasion, a re-occupation of the Anglo-Irish city house by the native rural Irish and, as such, a post-colonial gesture, albeit a peaceful one. It also served as a pointer to other Irish artists to look around their own back yard instead of always looking elsewhere for confirmation of their endeavours." [277]

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[276] Back-cover comment, *Inside the White Cube*, by Van der Marck.

[277] Walker in Youngstown (1994), p.34.

It caused quite a stir with newspaper headlines asking: "This is Art ?" Art critics within the small Irish artworld reacted in different ways. The art critic of the *Irish Times* speculated that *Rick* was a gimmick, stating, "...by all means let us have jokes, but let them be only the very best jokes." [278] Referring to the accompanying drawings he comments that they "are delicate wispy affairs...they are nice pieces of coloured calligraphy, but how much you make of them is your own business." [279]

Not all reviewers however were so dismissive. The earthwork was seen from a totally different perspective by Dorothy Walker, as the quotation above demonstrates. A champion of contemporary art in Ireland since the 1960s, she also became an early admirer of O'Doherty/Ireland since she first saw his work in New York in the 1960s. In a review of the Dublin galleries in September 1975 she devoted two of the four columns to Patrick Ireland's exhibition at the Hendriks Gallery, remarking:

> "There is no-one who has stretched the Celtic influence to such extraordinary and exciting lengths as Patrick Ireland..." [280]

With *Rick* she suggests, Ireland had gone further than other conceptual artists who had introduced material for the sake of its physical presence into the gallery space. *Rick*, on the other hand, was a much more complex work both in terms of its modular construction, and the use of vernacular, functional material from the Irish countryside which provided,

> "...a cultural shock from the confrontation of peasant poverty with the elegant Georgian Dublin room complete with plastered ceiling." [281]

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[278] Fallon, *Irish Times,* 5/9/75.

[279] Ibid. Fallon refused an interview with the author about Patrick Ireland, stating brusquely: " He's a writer, not an artist!"

[280] Walker (1975), p. 28.

[281] Ibid.

Rick was re-made for a recent 50 year survey of Irish Art at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, "Shifting Ground: Selected Works of Irish Art 1950-2000" (Figs. 68, 69). Finally, from a frontal perspective, *Rick* displays the pyramidal motif which O'Doherty/Ireland has consistently used in his art, but especially in the largest series, the Rope Drawings (Fig.70).

PART TWO: ABIDING THEMES IN O'DOHERTY/IRELAND'S ART

CHAPTER 2: LANGUAGE

" Thought and language are to the artist instruments of an art." [282]

" There are modes of intellectual and sensuous reality founded not on language, but on other communicative energies such as the icon or the musical note." [283]

This Chapter discusses the first abiding theme within O'Doherty/Ireland's art, language, providing selected works from the *oeuvre* to illustrate his approach and concerns. The "linguistic turn" in literature and philosophy in the 20th century came out of major developments in linguistics, outlined in Chapter 1, with the spread of its structural methodology to other disciplines. However, within the visual arts.the influence of linguistic theory was delayed until the middle of the century. This delay was further extended within art criticism. G. Roger Denson noted recently, that in spite of changes in art since the late 1960s, critics of contemporary art:

"still seem constrained in their interpretations...We have become so enamored of the small vein of history flowing through a mere four or five generations of Western European and American production that we often cite its texts and paradigmatic works rather than search the annals and excavations and living cultures of hundreds, perhaps thousands of world societies extant." [284]

As Part I outlined, the changes that eventually occurred in art throughout the 1960s and early 1970s were stimulated in part, by opposition to the dominance of Modernist theory, practice and organisation. In turn, this led to a questioning of social

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[282] Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. See Wilde (1963).

[283] Steiner (1967; ed. 1985), p.30.

[284] Denson (1996), p. 1.

systems in general, including the whole system through which art passed. Language was part of all of these operations. O'Doherty, reflecting about the period, says:

> " If the artwork is a unit of discourse, both aesthetic and economic...the thinking went, remove it...If art lives by criticism, turn it into words that make criticism itself an absurdity. And then have people pay for *that*. Examine the collector...Study the corporate drift of the museum..." [285]

In other words, it was acknowledged that while an uninterpreted world would be unintelligible, the point at issue was that any one interpretation in itself did not make the world the way it was. It did not represent the absolute truth about the world, or art, but one possible truth. O'Doherty's editorial to *Aspen 5/6* noted above, also makes a similar point:

> " ...explanations are modes of concealing what is accessible by removing concepts to the area of other concepts (initiating that process which eventually leads to "meaning" in the least fortunate academic sense)..." [286]

Conceptual art began to use linguistic forms as the medium of art itself. This, as noted above, for many commentators became the defining element of conceptual art, since many early conceptual works were made of either text alone or a combination of image and text. Between 1966 and 1968, O'Doherty produced a number of image/text works, typical of early conceptual practice. However, the fact that they all contain hand-written elements and are not exclusively typewritten, as was the usual practice of early conceptual art, sets O'Doherty's art apart at an early stage.

Another distinguishing characteristic feature of O'Doherty/Ireland's use of language, is that it incorporates a paradoxical distrust of language parallel to that of Beckett in literature. This distrust is evident in two ways: firstly, by the decision not to

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[285] O'Doherty (1976), p.112.

[286] Excerpt from Editorial, *Aspen 5/6* (1967).

use his given language; and secondly, to apply a minimalist reductive aesthetic to that language by paring down his artistic vocabulary to a few words and the fundamentals of language, vowels and numbers. In so doing he has produced a unique formulation of the use of language which paradoxically within conceptual art, diminishes the dominance of the verbal over the visual through the medium of language itself. The following comments reveal his thinking:

> " I believe there's a deep antagonism between word and image. In so far as a society is pre-literate, it weighs its images heavier in the scale of its social transactions. In so far as the written word dominates, the image seems to degenerate into art and advertising. I would hesitate to back this up as a theory, but I believe art is worn away by the endless drip-drip-drip of words on it (to which I have contributed my share). If ...language is a virus (Burroughs), art seems to catch it a lot." [287]

Some practitioners like Kosuth have continued since the 1960s, to restrict their art to text as medium, in which there is no use of the artist's hand. However, other conceptual artists of the first generation, have not used language so exclusively and are yet called conceptual artists by their use of systems of various kinds. LeWitt for example, appears to have used language only for a short period between 1973 and 1976.[288] O'Doherty/Ireland's art, typically, is not restricted to either category, but in fact spans them both. By placing language at the heart of a substantial part of his *oeuvre*, he could fit into the first category. By adopting systems as compositional devices, he could fit into the second. However, by applying a chosen system to a chosen language, his approach is probably unique within the context of contemporary art. In addition, to the author's knowledge, no other artist has mounted an artistic project which integrates language to such central 20th century themes as perception, and identity. Other artists of course

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[287] Ireland (1984), pp. 164-166.

[288] See Figures in *Sol LeWitt: A Retrospective*, (2000), pp. 197-201.

demonstrate a concern with either one or two of these themes, but few, if any, with all three.

The field of cultural psychology provides a useful source for a discussion of O'Doherty/Ireland's art, to which we digress at this point. This is because it examines how people use a vast range of material and symbolic concepts, to make both themselves and the world they inhabit meaningful. Art, is one of the most sophisticated of these symbolic tools, with the most advanced practices informed by thought from a vast array of disciplines. It seems clear that O'Doherty's poetic sensibility allied to a training in medicine and psychology have provided a useful conceptual armature with which to develop an aesthetic system which straddles art, literature, linguistics, cultural psychology, politics and philosophy.[289] In so doing, it demonstrates its contemporary character and represents arguably one of the more advanced and sophisticated artistic projects of the late 20th century.

What is of special interest here is recent work in cultural psychology which argues that spatial relations lie at the heart of our conceptual systems, which include language and abstract thought. It proposes that our concepts of the mind and the 'self,' as well as time, and other ideas like causation and morality, are inherently metaphorical.[290] This has a direct relevance to O'Doherty/Ireland's artistic vision. Spatial concepts such as location; space/place; point of view; inside/outside; here/there; and how each of these relates to subjectivity and time, become formal elements in his art. An interlocking system which binds the three major artistic themes of language, perception and identity, together is thus created. Therefore each theme does not stand alone within the *oeuvre* or even within specific works, any more than they do in life.

O'Doherty/Ireland's art therefore, is not restricted to a philosophical interest in the concept of art itself, like the pure/analytical conceptulists, but to broader metaphysical concepts of space, time and selfhood. Thus, a conceptual rather than a stylistic coherence characterises his art, which at the same time consistently maintains an open-ended

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[289] It will be remembered that O'Doherty had spent some time researching the field of experimental psychology at Cambridge, England, prior to his departure for the United States. See Appendix A.

[290] Benson (2001), p. 25.

attitude. Interestingly in this regard, a recent publication remarks that psychology could learn much from certain artists' practices.[291]

Returning to the focus of this Chapter, we can now track how such a concept as 'location' is linked to one of the major themes, language. In evolutionary terms, the perceptual precedes the linguistic, however once either has been developed by both biology and culture, they work symbiotically. [292] Through language, the 'self' becomes located in different kinds of physical and metaphorical spaces in which ideas of 'location' predominate (I am in my house; I am in love; I am lost in this book etc.). Through language therefore, the 'self' becomes enmeshed within geographical, social and personal spaces in such a way that language and 'location' are mutually constitutive. The following excerpt from O'Doherty's *alter ego*, Sigmund Bode in 1967, makes it clear that this concept was a central part of his thinking in the emergent period of conceptual art:

> "Placement as a grammatical concept can be extended to any abstraction...to the degree we may speak of meaning as a system of permutations, as a mathematics of placement..." [293]

How this conceptual construct is worked through the other major themes is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

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[291] Benson, C. (2001), p. 204.

[292] Benson (2001), p. 10.

[293] From 'Placement as Language' (1928), Editorial, *Aspen 5/6* (1967). The full text may be seen in (Fig. 41).

2.1. Ogham

The Ogham language, was an early Christian Celtic (early 5th – mid 7th century) transcription of twenty letters of the Roman alphabet into vertical or slanting lines carved on or across the edges of standing stones, where they probably functioned as grave or boundary markers (Figs. 71). [294] As the figure shows, Ogham consists of a series of lines, each of which corresponds to a vowel or a numeral. Thus, one length of line is equivalent to the vowel A, or the numeral one; two lines equals O, or the number two; three equals U, or number three; four equals E, or number four, and five equals I, or number five. The twenty letters in Ogham are arranged into four sets of five vertical or slanted lines. These either cross, rise from or hang below the median horizontal line. Ogham, crucially for O'Doherty, was serial in structure and thus allowed him to bridge Minimalism's reductive aesthetic to conceptual art's concern with language:

> "I searched for a language that would have an intrinsic logic, a sign system that eliminated shapes...Then, like the purloined letter, there it was in my own backyard all the time...And all that articulated the language was, a corner, an edge, a line across which you read, the horizon of language suddenly found!" [295]

Previously, he had looked at the languages of several other cultures including pre-Colombian, Greek, Chinese, Japanese and Scandanavian runes. Ogham however, was linear and minimal in form, and was a system which conformed to the musical structure of serialism. It therefore allowed him to use line within a prescribed system. Kubler's comments quoted above on page 75, aptly capture O'Doherty's attraction to Ogham. Here then was the *tabula rasa* for art that concerned itself with the limitations and ambiguities of language as well as one which subverted notions of expressivity, originality and invention so favoured by Modernist art. Speaking about minimalist/conceptualist artists like O'Doherty, in the mid-1960s Lippard remarks:

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[294] O' Ríordáin (1942), p. 146.

[295] Ireland letter (1987), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 19.

"Through literal conjunctions of number and language (and sometimes a bewildering screen of theories derived from linguistics, perceptual psychology, and logical positivist philosophy), they reintroduced the fundamental concepts of seeing to a jaded, novelty-addicted audience." [296]

Ogham also, was eminently appropriate for the wordless world of visual art because, paradoxically it was silent being no longer spoken or understood and existing over millennia merely as a system of signs. The fact that O'Doherty had not invented the language was important in addition to the fact that could be utilised as a serial system. Also of significance was its status as a system of communication which was deprived of its context, its civilization. Ogham was therefore, a perfect system to demonstrate that all languages (and by implication, all systems) within cultures are ultimately artificial. They are rather, artefacts without any intrinsic 'truth', other than those a society imposes upon them. But in addition, by introducing a language from a time when societies were based upon community with shared visual symbols, O'Doherty signalled the desire to make art with a similar emphasis upon the collective and social, in direct opposition to the Modernist individualism. Perhaps also in this sense, the idea of Ogham stones being boundary-markers, also appealed to an artist marking out new territory and extending the boundaries of art.

To an artist from a colonial background, it may have been an added bonus that this was not the language of English which was perceived as having robbed Ireland of its own culture over centuries, but also one that had not suffered the linguistic devaluation, described by George Steiner among others, that had occurred in Western culture in the 20th century. [297] It is important to stress here though, that although Ogham was Celtic in origin, O'Doherty did not deliberately set out to find motifs which would link his art to his native country. However whether intentional or not, O'Doherty/Ireland's art is saturated throughout with references to his own country.

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[296] Lippard (1988), p. 79.

[297] Steiner (1967; ed. 1985), p. 44.

As a language that was beyond historical time the very silence of Ogham could be used to create new art with a logical system that conveyed the idea of language, without the weight of 'meaning'. Thus it functioned in a fashion closer to music with its primary reliance on the senses, since by tapping out the Ogham vowels one could produce a kind of rhythm akin to a rudimentary form of music. As we saw in Chapter 1, O'Doherty shared the French Symbolists' desire to free the word from traditional linear frameworks which organised perceptions, in much the same way musicians early in the 20th century had abandoned a traditional narrative approach to composition. Cage had pointed to the importance of silence within music, and is an important source for many at this time including O'Doherty.[298] O'Doherty's remarks in 1987 recall the appeal of Ogham:

> " Here was the purest sign system ever devised, clean as a whistle, as logical in its the four registers as the four sets of serial music. Gone were the curlicues and ticks of Rome; here instead were the short clean lines of a logical delight." [299]

Time itself, as we saw in *Aspen 5/6*, is an important element of O'Doherty's and as we shall see later, in Ireland's art. Time, Mitchell points out in *The Language of Modern Music*, swept to the foreground of all 20th century art, from Joyce and Proust to the interpenetration of space and time in architecture and Cubist painting, as well as in Schoenberg's serial music. Crucial to the serial composition of a musical idea, is the idea of space-time, and the interrelationship of melody, rhythm and harmony, in much the same way that a single word relies upon its relationship to other words to express a thought. Mitchell states:

> " Here is continuous energy at work: nothing in our life remains an isolated experience; everything stands in a many-sided interrelationship—within, without, above, below." [300]

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[298] This can be inferred by the inclusion of works by Cage, as well as Feldman, in *Aspen 5/6* (1967).

[299] Ireland letter (1987), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993). p. 19.

Undoubtedly, the concept of the interrelationship of elements was attractive to O'Doherty/Ireland, but also the possibility of an idea unfolding in a combination of planes and relations through time and space. But in particular, it is the relationship of serial construction to language and time/space relationships, which are important towards arriving at an understanding of his artistic vision and the choice of Ogham. Western languages in particular, are crucially tied within space/time relationships which are linear because of the use of the verb 'to be' ('he was', 'he is', 'he will be'). Steiner points out that although music has had its own syntax, vocabulary and symbolism, in its classical forms, it shares a certain grammar analogous to that of language. This relates to an ordering of experience akin to that of language, in which there is a statement of subjects followed by their variation, and then the final recapitulation of the initial subjects. However, modern music departs from such a kind of ordering. A "retreat from the word," in large areas of Western thought, Steiner suggests, has occurred since the 17th century. This is so because such areas as philosophy, sociology, history, biology, art and economics have been invaded with "the mirage of mathematical exactitude and predictability." [301] Prior to this the sphere of language embraced nearly the whole of experience:

> " Many of the spaces, relations, and events that advanced mathematics deals with have no necessary correlation with sense-data; they are 'realities' occurring within closed axiomatic systems...This is a fact of tremendous implication. It has divided the experience and perception of reality into separate domains." [302]

Ogham forms an important part of O'Doherty/Ireland's resistance to such a classical kind of ordering.

The allied notions of time and silence, an inherent part of any language, are important also, since every speech act takes time and occurs in time, with silence 'framing' each act at its beginning and its end. However, it is the temporal structure of

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[300] Mitchell (1963; ed. 1993), pp. 74-76.

[301] Steiner (1967; ed. 1985), p. 38.

language which keeps the concept of past, present and future artificially distinct and fragmented. Also there is more than one kind of silence which is at issue within O'Doherty/Ireland's work. The Silence of the Void, ambiguous and suggestive, which is neither bound or fragmented by time is a feature of certain works as we shall see. However, it is not always necessarily the cosmic silence of a negative void that is always proposed, but also one possessing infinite potential, not an end, but a beginning at ground zero. That these aspects of language are of importance in this art can be inferred from the appearance of such names as Beckett, Mallarmé and Rimbaud. Beckett's contribution to *Aspen 5/6* for example, *Texts for Nothing, No 8*, suggests the impossibility of speaking about and knowing the unknown, the unnameable, the unspeakable. Kane's comments in connection with Beckett's art might justifably therefore, be applied to O'Doherty's:

> " The mind's inability to comprehend the irrational combined with the finite word's inability to contain and express the infinite, explain in great part the frustration of the compulsive Beckettian quester in search of self." [303]

In his application of this "readymade" language to 20 th century artistic concerns, O'Doherty found a unique method to whisper his vision for a radically new basis for his art. He states: " Whispering, after all, gets full attention!" [304] In common with Beckett's paradoxical distrust and usage of language, O'Doherty/Ireland's work suggests that language though necessary, is an inadequate tool in terms of understanding or altering the world, and less so in terms of understanding visual art. As a system it cannot overcome its limitations since it is contingent upon memory and common usage. It is a convention like the rules of a game as described by Wittgenstein, and as with all conventions it is subject to changes in time.[305] By the use of Ogham therefore, O'Doherty set out to reassert the communicative power of the visual over the dominance of the verbal (criticism), within the visual arts, by paradoxically reducing language to an abstract

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[302] Ibid., p. 33.

[303] Kane (1984), p. 105.

[304] Ireland letter (1987), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 22.

[305] Grayling (1988), p.65.

musical system of intervals and lines. Lippard describes O'Doherty's incorporation of Ogham within a minimalist/conceptual sensibility as forming a bridge between archaic and still evolving "alphabets," which he uses, " to translate and mirror language, evolving a visualization of harmonics." His art, she says, " ...is about nothing and everything, finity and infinity, symmetry and asymmetry, artist and history." [306]

Around 1967/68, almost simultaneously, O'Doherty began to produce a large series of drawings, sculptures and plays/performances, choruses and word-works, all based upon Ogham. We shall now look at how he used Ogham within what are considered some of the key works of his early *oeuvre*. It is also important to state at this stage, that the key drawing to understanding O'Doherty's thinking and usage of the Ogham alphabet as a system is, *The Five Senses of the Bishop of Cloyne* (1967-68). However since it also refers to the senses and perception, it has been selected for discussion in Chapter 3.

2.2. Vowel Works (1967-)

In the context of language, the vowels in particular, have preoccupied O'Doherty/Ireland from his rediscovery of Ogham in 1967 right up to the present day. Ogham allowed him to split words and letters open, reducing them to primary grammatical units:

> " ...to explore them into phonemes and morphemes as verbal meaning was regressed into a kind of formal visual redundency." [307]

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[306] Lippard, (1988), p. 89.

[307] Ireland (1984), pp.164-166. A phoneme is the smallest unit in the linguistic sound- system capable of indicating contrasts of meaning; a morpheme is the smallest functioning unit out of which words are composed.

The interest in vowels goes back to a childhood appreciation of the difference in Irish and English between the behaviour of vowels in a word, and the different character of their sound in speech as well as writing:[308]

" The broad vowels are portly, well fed, while the slender are on a bit of a diet."[309]

There was also the classroom memory of a chorus of children's voices in the infants class "...like so many little violins holding a frayed note...all going 'AHHHH' 'OOOOOH,' to the pointer listing them on the blackboard."[310]

Later, as an artist in New York, the interest in the idea of vowels was rekindled by an interest shared with other artists of reaching back beyond history to the beginning of systems of thought. Numbers and counting, known to everyone, formed a part of this impulse. So too, did the elementary vowels. Other sources for O'Doherty's interest in the vowels were Rimbaud's "Voyelles" (1871),[311] again remembered from childhood (" the black A is so unexpected"), Jasper John's number sequences (Fig.72), and O'Doherty's "slow" conversations with Edward Hopper earlier in the 1960s.[312] He remarks:

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[308] In English, the sequence for vowels is AEIOU; in Irish it is, AOU, EI in which the slender and broad always accompany each other around a consonant. Ireland retains an interest in Irish today, of which his father was a native speaker. Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

[309] Ireland letter to author (1999b).

[310] Ibid.

[311] The opening line of "Voyelles" (Vowels) is: "A noir, E blanc, I rouge, O bleu, voyelles..." Rimbaud's sonnet was of particular interest to artists, writers and scientists in the 19th century who had an interest in synaesthesia (the involuntary association of verbal sounds, especially vowel-sounds, with colour). See Gage (1999), pp. 262-265. This aspect of the vowels is obviously important within O'Doherty/Ireland's art.

[312] O'Doherty had many interviews Hopper in the early 1960s. The chapter dedicated to Hopper in his *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth* includes one such interview. He describes Hopper's mode of speech there: "...At first I had the impression I was sending words across a vast distance...when one asked a question there was a long moment of silence before the voice began to quarry words and a few verbs to carry them..." (1974; ed. 1988), p. 16. O'Doherty also made a film on Hopper, *Hopper's Silence* (1983). See Appendix A.

" According to my ramshackle theory of linguistic origin, the first sounds are vowels; then their primal matter is shaped by the consonants which come later...The vowels are pre-articulate chords of raw emotion, audible in the scales of opera singers, the mourning of (so-called) primitive societies (think of keening), and in the weird conversational attempts of my dog...Without the vowels, the consonants aren't going anywhere...The chaotic, opaque tower of Babel is made up of consonants. Beside it, preceding it, unnoticed, is a pure, translucent Washington Monument made up of vowels." [313]

He began with simple counting, again a primal aspect of any language, and then began to use the vowels. As noted, serialism's roots in musical composition and notation formed part of the sub-text, as the artist notes: " I was always aware I was writing a kind of score as well as making a drawing." [314] A series of "voice-works" or Vowel Poems in the late-1960s for example, were based on the length of utterance and serial composition (Fig.73). [315] The chorus could thus be, " yowling (vowelling) away ...sequences of extended AOUs and snapping E's." [316] Although there were a few poems based on the consonants, the vowels have always been pre-eminent. Vowels were also placed in various permutations onto magic squares in differing progressions of five, since there are five vowels. Magic squares for O'Doherty/Ireland, as we saw above in Part I, are one of the means by which art is made not by intuitive choices, but according to a system. Incidently, John Cage also had used magic squares as a means of making music. [317]

The vowels were also applied to grids with 15 squares because the five vowels in Ogham were interchangeable with the numbers one to five, which when added together equalled 15 (1+2+3+4+5 =15), as seen in *Vowel Grid* (1970) (Fig.74). Another *Vowel Grid* (1970), demonstrates the visual variety achieved by assigning each Ogham vowel a

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[313] Ireland letter to author (1999b).

[314] Ibid.

[315] *Vowel Drawing* (1967) was recorded by Tellus, New York 1988. The tape also includes other *Aspen 5/6* contributors, Duchamp and Huelsenbeck.

[316] Ireland letter to author (1999b).

[317] See Kostelanetz (1993), pp. 177-8.

colour which varied in length according to its Ogham linear value (Fig.75). For example, "A" is one length while "I" is five lengths long. Here, although the grid acts as a controlling device, at the same time it is also active compositionally and chromatically. In other drawings, the vowels were tilted at angles which zig-zagged across the paper in a joyous dance of line and colour (Fig.76). Here the grid has been driven into the background by the energetic vowels which can be sensed as differently pitched "voices" that emerge from different perceptual spaces created for the eye, ear, and the mind. O'Doherty/Ireland's interest in the phenomenon of synaesthesia is clearly a formal element in these drawings.[318] In *25 Angled I's on a 5 Color 5 x5 Point Grid,* the grid, has been dotted with different colours over which the five length unit of the Ogham equivalent of the Vowel "I" has been added in yet another system of colour coding (Fig.77). The spaces created evoke a sense of different times, between the 'now' or immediacy of looking at the surface of the dancing letter I, and the slower perception time afforded to the background's dotted grid of different densities. Implied also perhaps is the temporal gap or distance between two different cultures through the device of Ogham itself. The effect perceptually in these beautifully executed drawings is to create the illusion of depth and movement in which the surface appears to dematerialise into "...perceptual flicker, or implied motion." [319] By so doing, O'Doherty/Ireland suggests the impossibility of ordering and controlling not only perception, but also language.

A twenty year retrospective exhibition of Ireland's drawings, "Patrick Ireland: Drawings 1965-1985," including some of those discussed, was shown in 1986 at the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institute, and subsequently at the Clocktower in New York. The reviewer of the show from *The New York Times*, reacted enthusiastically:

> "If you think that conceptual art was pure cerebration and that minimal art was thin, cold and lacking in general appeal, Patrick Ireland's show at the Clocktower is a good place to straighten yourself out...these drawings, dated 1965-1985, are

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[318] See footnote 311 above for definition of synaesthesia.

pure delight. To be precise, they are light and exact in touch, fresh and lyrical in color, and fleet of foot in their execution. Never is there an element of pedantry, for all the learned and sometimes arcane substructure that Ireland has taken over from—to take one instance only—the linear, serial translation of the Roman alphabet that was made by Irish Celts around the fourth to fifth century A.D. To be both brainy and adorable is one of the neatest trick around, and these drawings bring it all off." [320]

Another reviewer, although critical for other reasons, was equally impressed with the show which he found:

" rather beautiful...(which) treats both mind and eye...His intelligence is so obvious. So, too, is his knowledge. Though his sort of spare, systemic art is no longer much in vogue, Ireland refuses to pander to the market. One admires his restraint." [321]

Ratcliff, reviewing O'Doherty/Ireland's drawings on paper and his Rope Drawing installations a year later, comments that both "demand attention of the kind that slips easily from seeing to thinking." [322]

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[319] The phrase though not originally applied to O'Doherty/Ireland's art, is borrowed from Krauss (1986),p. 21

[320] Russell, J. *The New York Times*, October 10th 1986.

[321] Richards, P. *The Washington Post*, 14th April, 1986.

[322] Ratcliff (1987), p. 102.

2.3. Structural Plays (1967-)

The Structural Plays, between 1967 and 1970, represent another aspect of O'Doherty's probing of various systems which create meaning in which the structure of language is broken down yet again into its most primal elements. Art-historically, the Plays are amongst the earliest performance pieces within the Minimal/conceptual context of the late 1960s in the United States, along with the performances of such artists as Bruce Nauman and Robert Morris (Figs.78).[323] They also share a certain affinity with the Judson Church Dance Theater in t adopting a non-dramatic approach to composition coupled with ordinary movements. O'Doherty's Plays however, evolved primarly out of an adolescent interest in chess with its predetermined movements through the gridded space of the chessboard. Later, in America he renewed this interest when he made a series of sculptural chess pieces between 1965-67 (Fig. 79), including one commissioned by Marcel Duchamp for the Chess Foundation based on the movement of the knight. However, like Morris, the reductive impulse of Minimalist sculpture was also a source for O'Doherty.

The ten Structural Plays, some of which were based on fragments of conversations overheard, were divided into three categories: formal, thematic and emotional. Notably, some of the subjects are also found in other works throughout the decades (marked with an asterisk): Location*; Grammar*; Identity*; Domicile*; The Five Senses*; Love; Sex; Violence; " I am here now,"* and a Chess Play. The term 'play' was used instead of 'performance' since at the time Performance art had not yet become separated from conceptual art as a medium for artistic expression in its own right. [324] This happened later in the 1970s. [325] The term 'play' however is appropriate here, since it relates not only to the back-and–forth nature of one speaker responding to another, but also to the concept of play in the sense of a chess game between the two performers of

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[323] *Site* (1965), by Morris, was included by O'Doherty in *Aspen 5/6* (1967).

[324] It is worth noting that O'Doherty/Ireland does not regard himself as a performance artist. He prefers to use the term 'gesture' which is defined above in Part I, pp. 91-92, and also on p.252. Lecture on Structural Plays by the artist in Cinncinati, Ohio 1978.

[325] Goldberg (1979), p.7.

the Structural Plays. [326] The word "structural" draws attention to a Structuralist and systematic approach to language and the prescribed movements of the Play.

In the Plays each player's movement is plotted in space like a chess piece. Thus the Plays realise, in a sense, what Terry Eagleton, (quoting the English philosopher, J.L.Austin), says about all language: that it is really performative; that even statements of fact are acts of informing or affirming in which, "... to communicate information is as much a "performance" as naming a ship." [327] Each player intones a short sentence in which each word is emphasised in a serial fashion, thus altering the meaning of the sentence each time. (*I* am here now; I *am* here now; I am *here* now; I am here *now*). After each sentence, each moves alternatively around a 3 x 3 grid on the floor (Figs. 80, 81). They turn language into movement by walking a set number of squares on the grid according to the number of words in a sentence. The grid therefore becomes a phonic drawing which 'speaks' language.[328] The artist's intentions are to splint one facet of the flow of ' information' that occurs in a dialogue. He explains:

> "When people are talking to each other there are three streams of information in progress: 1. What is said; 2. How it is said (inflection, emphasis, irony, parody etc.); 3. The way facial expression and body language edit what is said...(learnt from earning my living on television when I first came to the U.S...)...My program was to remove the third stream, isolate the first, and structure the second." [329]

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[326] Benson notes that human selves are substantially linguistic and dialogic in their construction,the fundamental constituents of which are 'I/You'. See Benson (2001), p. 10. 'I/You' is also a prominent motif which recurs in the art of Ireland from c. 1980 up to the present.

[327] Eagleton (1983), p. 103.

[328] The term "phonic grid" was first used in Ireland's first Rope Drawing (1973). Rosalind Krauss used it again in relation to O'Doherty/Ireland's art, in essay entitled, "Grids" (1978). Krauss (1985; ed. 1995), p. 21.

[329] Ireland letter in Derry, Northern Ireland (1998), pp. 21-41.

In addition, by the mirroring of their movements, the players 'reflect' each other's sentence and, in so doing, each player is seen to be controlled by language rather than the other way around. Each becomes a function of language. A recent writer commented that in these Plays the players are reduced to automatons.[330] But this is to misunderstand O'Doherty/Ireland's intention of isolating language deliberately from such aids to interpretation as facial and tonal expression and gesture. By doing so, the receptive process concentrates upon language and the changing meanings of each sentence.

Wittgenstein's philosophy that language is essentially a socially functional tool seems relevant to these Plays.[331] O'Doherty/Ireland's players or walking vowels can in a sense be seen as a metaphor for the way the meanings of words change according to the different language worlds in which they appear:

> " ...Wittgenstein says that there is not *one* 'logic of language,' but many; language has no single essence, but is a vast collection of different practices each with its own logic...the meaning of an expression is its *use* in the mutiplicity of practices which go to make up language. Moreover, language is not something complete and autonomous...for language is interwoven into all human activities and behaviour...a language, in short, is part of the fabric of an inclusive 'form of life.' " [332]

The word 'roof,' for example, has a different meaning for a carpenter and a refugee. These different living forms of life within which words occur were, for Wittgenstein, 'language-games.'[333] His anti-Cartesian stance paralled O'Doherty/Ireland's, as well as a

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[330] Ratcliff (2000), p. 233.

[331] It should be remembered that Wittgeinstein was one of the most widely read authors of O'Doherty's circle in the late 1960s, and that he had created a number of works at the time which related to his philosophy, a drawing entitled *Wittgenstein 7H to 7B* (1967) and three *Plays for Wittgenstein* (1964-65).

[332] Grayling (1988), p. 67.

[333] The phrase 'language-game', is Wittgenstein's shorthand for a rule-guided practice in which many people can join. Language-games are of different kinds, and Wittgenstein believes philosophy goes wrong in trying to understand one game in terms of the rule of another. Scruton (1994; edn. 1996), p. 52.

fascination with language therefore provide a key point of entry into these works. Chess is also another source, appealing to certain aspects of human psychology for approximately 1400 years. However, it is the desire to detect and reveal patterns of order and their inherent instability which is the operative factor within O'Doherty/Ireland's Plays, as well as his art in general.

For Morris, with performances like *Site* (1965), an interest in the body in motion and the manipulation of objects in space by the constant moving of white panels into different positions, was the focus of attention (see Figs. 79). For O'Doherty, the interest is in the relationship of the body to the space of language, stripped of all gesture and expression. In the light of these performed language drawings, it is interesting that the artist initially wished them to be read rather than performed:

> " Back in 1967, I didn't want them performed. I thought they should be performed in the mind only. Of course I changed my mind later. Recently I'm changing my mind again. Partly because of the difficulty of performance. Partly because the drawings for the plays are self-contained and can be appreciated privately." [334]

Once again, underlying these Plays, is a distrust of language to adequately represent the reality of experience. Certainly, the artist's comments suggest this:

> "Underlying all this I suppose, is a conviction that communication is difficult, meaning elusive and misunderstanding always at hand (this, of course, is big news). Thus is the language of bureaucracy flattened by the pressure to be unambiguous or, in the case of diplomacy, by the pressure to be exactly ambiguous." [335]

To present in visual/verbal form the inherent structure of language, where the sentence can be both 'seen' (through the mirroring movements of the players), and heard,

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[334] Ireland letter in Derry, Northern Ireland (1998), pp. 21-41.

[335] Ibid., p. 28.

where form and content are combined through the agency of living players using a restrictive format, has been O'Doherty's achievement in these Plays. This mixing of the senses becomes a constant thread throughout work in different media, as we shall see. They are unique among 1960s performance art in their concern for language in which the players, like dancers or musicians, perform according to a systematic score. By applying a serial structure to language, O'Doherty effectively by-passes the sequential and time-based elements of speech with a nonprogressive dialogue that calls attention to itself:

> " Each emphasis implies meanings outside of the grid, outside the sentence in the everyday arena of activities where language shades, obscures and delivers ambiguous meanings." [336]

The Plays therefore demonstrate the inherent fluidity of language, which, even when compressed within a reductive structure, yields sentences whose meaning is multivalent. In spite of this ambiguity, the Plays also suggest at the same time, that language is a living entity transferred from tongue to tongue across generations and cultures, always surviving the speaker. While language in this sense may be an abstract entity, in another it is entirely a material one which requires the body's breath, tongue and larynx to produce its sound. O'Doherty's Plays draw attention to this bodily aspect of language by providing the visual equivalent of the linguistic phrase, 'body-language.' The insistent relation of the mind, traditionally thought to be represented by language, to the body, organically links these Plays to other works such as the Labyrinth series and Rope Drawings for example.

Any allusion to theatre, as postulated by the Greenbergian critic Michael Fried in the context of Minimal art, is to misunderstand the concepts underlying them. [337] Unlike theatre, here the 'actors' are without a character or gender; they are anonymous, their

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[336] Ibid.

[337] "Art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre...The concepts of quality and value-and to the extent that these are central to art, the concept of art itself-are meaningful...only within the individual arts." From "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum*, Summer 1967.

faces covered by a white stocking and wearing neutral white clothes (Fig. 82). O'Doherty repeated this symbol of visual anonymity in a later performance concerned specifically with identity, *Name Change* (1972), which is discussed in Chapter 4. The gestures and action used are not those of classical theatre or dance, as they do not reveal the character or feelings of the performer. Similarly, the content does not follow a traditional plot or narrative, consisting instead of mere fragments of conversation rather than building up an empathy with characters within a narrative. Here in contrast, the audience is actively involved with what the artist is trying to 'say' about language through the performance. In a recent letter the artist remarks that these Plays stand apart in conception from the earlier plays written around 1964/65 for Wittgenstein, which were influenced to a degree by innovative theatre. By contrast, the Structural Plays were: "...more like anti-theatre, since it cancelled illusion and impersonation." [338] Morris, for his *Site* performance, also sought to deny theatre by wearing white clothes and a white rubber mask of his own face designed by Jasper Johns, to eradicate any expression of effort during the performance. [339]

A recent mini-retrospective at the Orchard Gallery in Derry, Northern Ireland, included the first performance of a Structural Play in Ireland, entitled *Vowel Grid* (Fig. 83). This work was derived from the earlier Ogham Drawings and Grid Drawings of the 1960s, from which came the first performances in Wales in 1977 (Figs. 84, 85), then Cincinnati (1978) and the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard College in 1981 (Fig.86). Ireland's first Rope Drawing in 1973 also used the form of the grid, *Phonic Grid* (Chapter 3). The Irish performance was held in the neighbouring county, Donegal, which is in the Republic, six miles northwest of Derry. It was performed in the iron-age hill fort, An Grianán Aileach, a sacred place in Irish myth, as home to the gods Dagda, and Gráine, the sun-goddess, and the supernatural girl, Aileach (Fig. 87).[340] The circular dry

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[338] Ireland letter in Derry, Northern Ireland (1998), pp. 21-41.

[339] Goldberg (1979), p.142.

[340] The word 'grianán' is translated as 'sunhouse', the midnight and mid-winter hiding-place of Griáne, the sun-goddess. Dagda was a god who the master of crafts, including agriculture and warfare. See Dames (1992), p. 215.

stone temple, 77 feet in diameter, has only one entrance facing east with 13 feet thick walls which rise to 17 feet in a triple tier (Fig. 88).

This mythical temple therefore, was a highly appropriate setting for Ireland's Play involving an archaic Celtic language. Through language and location three different times were effectively evoked in this Play: the pre-historic, early historic and the present. The word for province in Irish is 'coiced', meaning a fifth. The mythical fifth province was a non-political second centre which acted in concert with the political centre to create peace and harmony. In myth, the site of O'Doherty/Ireland's *Vowel Grid*, was placed along the alignments of the pagan solar system which linked sacred sites in the four provinces of Ireland with the fifth at the centre, Uisneach, the place where all oppositions were resolved (Figs. 89). [341] This was therefore, the place of the mind or the imagination which Kearney locates as a place which each person constitutes within oneself. [342] The juxtaposition of a piece of conceptual art in such a context made O'Doherty's *Vowel Grid* exert a particularly strong impact by its alignment of myth and the present through language.

The Play, was a drawing on a 15 x15 gridded platform, performed by two anonymous hooded players clad in white (Fig.90). Each Ogham vowel on the grid was represented by its length in Ogham (A=1; O=2;U=3; E=4; I=5), to which the colours red, green, blue and yellow were assigned randomly. [343] The O vowel for example could be red on one parallel line of the grid and green on the next. Each player in turn literally walks the line (Fig. 91), stopping at the end of each colour and shouting out Ahh! if an A, or Ehhh! if the four lengths of an I, and so on (Fig. 92). Each vowel thus was performed with overlapping systems of different speeds and different colours so that: ...the grid glides, stammers and blurts with different lengths and colours." [344] The drawing in space was thus transformed into a vocal and audible drawing, in which the two players became different vowels who choreographed their way through the visible linguistic matrix of the grid. The artist explains his use of the grid:

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[341] Dames (1992)

[342] Kearney & Hederman (1977), p.11.

[343] Author conversation with artist, June 1998.

[344] Ireland letter in Derry, Northern Ireland (1998), pp. 21-41.

" ...It's a container that contains itself, that is both form and content. In a word, it's a cliché. To rescue that cliché I applied the vowels to it." [345]

The performance lasted for about 15-20 minutes, so that even in terms of the actual time of the Play, the artist related it to a multiple of the five vowels. But also of importance is the interrelationship of the location of the player to the vowel in three-dimensional space, which transforms the identity of the player from one vowel to another. In these Plays, O'Doherty makes visible and audible the 'game' of language which is readily accepted within a chess game: that each player has the possibility to metamorphose into another identity by virtue of the piece they hold, and where it is placed in space. In this sense, the Play reinforced the ontological relation of 'location,' time and language, to identity. But in addition, the Play in such a setting, suggested thoughts about the mysteries of Time and Space and the horizon of man's language. Like all O'Doherty/Ireland's art, multiple perspectives about time, place, and personal and communal memory are constantly evoked.

Specifically at An Grianán also, one was reminded of the bipolar division existing within the Ireland of today, of the topographical and psychological spaces and languages of North and South, each grounded in different memories, with different perceptions of the 'self' and the 'other.' The concept of boundary or category of spaces and the location of the 'self' within them, so prominent a feature of O'Doherty/Ireland's art, is given a particular edge in this work due to its location. As Kelly in his curatorial essay for the exhibition comments, Ireland's grid goemetry is not arrived at through reductive reasoning, but through the senses related to time and place. He also notes that at the time *Vowel Grid* was being performed in Donegal, across the border a few miles away, the Orange marching season was,

" reaching its annual apogee in another kind of gutteral "actuation."" [346]

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[345] Ibid., p. 21.

[346] Kelly in Derry, Northern Ireland (1998), pp. 42-44.

Thus Ireland's Play as a piece of art, inspired reflection upon abstract concepts associated with language, but also, to how these operate in the real life of the present.

Finally, it is suggested here that *Vowel Grid* (1970) bears some resemblance to Samuel Beckett's *Quadrat 1 and 11*, (1982) originally called *Quad* (Fig. 93). The visual, always an important element of Beckett's stage plays, was afforded even greater primacy in this television "play" which was conducted in complete silence by four anonymously clad figures. *Quad* was performed upon a square platform upon which each figure in turn completes a course based upon serialised movements between the points ABCD, though always swiftly turning away from the centre (Figs. 94). This central "danger zone" (the Void?) was consistently avoided by the performers by turning to their left, the direction of the damned in both Dante and Virgil. [347]

Affinities between O'Doherty/Ireland and Beckett through a common interest in the visual, silence, and the void as well as employing an uncompromising rigor and economy of means through a minimal aesthetic, have already been noted. So also is the common distrust of language, evident by the inclusion of Beckett's *Text for Nothing, No 8* (read by Jack McGowran), in *Aspen 5/6* (1967). In both *Quad* and *Vowel Grid*, there is the drastic reduction of language, with a concentration upon bodily movement. In Ireland's case, the reduction is to the primal vowels, whereas in Beckett's, there is the further reduction to silence, except for the shuffling noise of feet. Both impose a rigid serialised format upon the performers with choreographed movements around a square platform. Both also reduce aspects of expression and identity by the employment of hooding and anonymous clothing. Knowlson states in his biography of Beckett, that *Quad* had originally been written, unsuccessfully, for Jack McGowran 17 years earlier in 1965. [348] Given the similarity of concepts and realisation briefly outlined here, it is all the more intriguing to learn that in 1967, O'Doherty sent one of his Structural Plays to Beckett when inviting his participation in *Aspen 5/6*. [349] Further research is required before it can be stated with any degree of certainty that O'Doherty's Play may have

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[347] Knowlson (1996), p.673.

[348] Ibid., p. 672.

suggested at least a way forward for the septugenarian's abandoned play. [350] A recent review of the exhibition, "Samuel Beckett / Bruce Nauman," suggests that Beckett's late television works, *Ghost Trio* (1976), *...but the clouds...*(1976), and *Quad*, and Nauman's work, were beyond genre.[351] Perhaps though, in the light of this discussion, Beckett's *Quad* could fit into O'Doherty's category of a Structural Play.

2.4. One, Here, Now (1967-)

Apart from the Vowel Drawings on paper and in three-dimensional space, O'Doherty/Ireland also created a number of sculptures, drawings, wall paintings and more recently, easel paintings, based on the words, 'One,' 'Here,' and 'Now.' Once again a minimalist aesthetic was employed to reduce number to 'One,' and language to the two words, 'Here,' and 'Now' (Fig. 95).In the painting, *One* (2000/2001) for example, the Ogham lines equivalent to the letters 'o', 'n' and 'e' are painted onto three squares of different colour. The small blue square at the centre has the Oghamic letter 'o' (two lines through the imaginary horizontal) painted in green along its sides, while the letter 'n' (four lines hanging from the horizontal) is represented by the four lilac lines upon the middle orange square and the letter 'e' by the four blue lines upon the outer large green square. These words became his own spare verbal philosophical language, for which he has found an immense array of visual permutations, but all of which relate to a constant theme: the individual 'self' located in the place and time of the present. This theme recurs in Chapters 3 & 4 in connection with the themes of perception and identity. The artist's recent use of the following quotation by the father of American pragmatism,William James (1842-1910), during a lecture upon his own art, testifies to his concern with this theme of the 'self' in present time and place:

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[349] Ireland interview with author, 1998a.

[350] Knowlson states in a letter to the author on 6/1/99, that he is unaware of O'Doherty's Play within the Beckett archive at Reading University.

[351] Birnbaum (2000), p.179.

" The individualized self...is a part of the content of the world experienced. The world experienced ...comes at all times with our body as its centre...Where the body is is ' here'; when the body acts is ' now'..." [352]

While the concepts referred to by James, and more recent work in cultural psychology are complex, nevertheless, O'Doherty/Ireland has produced an immensely rich body of art using such concepts with minimal means. By the application of colour-codes, serialised inversions and rotations and the use of magic squares to vowels and words, he has been able to say more with less. He says:

" Back in 1967...I boiled down my verbal culture to three words and an obsolete language expressed in a perfect serial system. The words were One, Here, Now. ...One obviously had to do with unity, the Absolute. Here had to do with position, thus the ghost of composition. Now, collapsed past and future into the present." [353]

While these words pinpoint critical issues within art during the 1960s propelled by the tenets of Modernism, they also hint at more epistemological matters referring to the nature of time, space, and our ephemeral relationship to both. This interpretation can be inferred by O'Doherty/Ireland's serialisation of a key sentence from the Old Testament: " In the beginning was the word..." By serially dropping the last word in the repetition of the sentence,(In the beginning was the...; In the beginning was...; In the beginning ...; In the ...; In ...), not only is the receptive response to the flow of information successively altered, but with simplicity and reductive logic, O'Doherty/Ireland manages to ask a profound question: What was there before the beginning of the word? Chaos? A different kind of order? [354] In doing so, he seems to question a persistent strain within Western thought from antiquity to the present, that of the Greek *logos* or the mutual bond perceived to exist between language and reality.

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[352] Quoted at Ireland lecture, Dublin 1999. Quoted here from Benson (2001), p. 22.

[353] Ireland (1984), pp. 164-166.

Permutation of *One in a Magic Square* (1967) (Fig.96), is an early ink drawing that shows how the word 'one' in Ogham was used by the artist. Here the word has been scored into various permutations: One, Neo, Oen, Eno (s), Noe (l) (unity, new, time, wine, Christmas), all translated into the equivalent lengths of Ogham. (O=2 lines across the vertical; N=4 hanging from it; E= 4 across the vertical). *One to Five Rotated* (1967) is another example which demonstrates the visual variety possible with a systematic approach (Fig. 97). With the addition of colour in the late 1960s/early 1970s, this linear variety was infused with increased sophistication. *One* (1969) for instance, shows where an invisible grid of Ogham words ressembles an ancient repeated hieroglyphic (Fig. 98). Recently, Ratcliff speaking about this work and Ireland's Ogham drawings in general, suggests that they lead one into a labyrinth of ideas about language:

> " We know —even as, in a way, we forget—that meaning appears against a backdrop of unmeaning...not everyone speaks our language, nor is any language spoken universally. One's knowledge of a language feels natural, inevitable, only if one maintains an ignorance of these contingencies...One way out of these ruminative switchbacks is along the elegant lines of Ireland's Ogham inscriptions." [355]

A series of Ogham sculptures, also made in the late 1960s and early 1970s, also used the words, ' One,' and ' Here,' in both Irish and English (See Fig. 47 *Anseo (Here)* (1970), and *One* (1969) (Fig.4). *The Rakes's Progress* (1970), which is discussed in some detail from the point of view of the theme of perception in the next Chapter, also has the word, 'here,' inscribed in Ogham on its surface in different parts of the sculpture. Beginning in the late 1970s, over succeeding decades Ireland also has made a series of wall paintings based upon the Oghamic words, 'one,' 'here,' and 'now' (Fig. 99).

Recently, Ireland returned to this theme again in a monumental wall painting, *One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle* installed in the Sirius Art Centre, Cobh, Co. Cork in

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[354] Ireland lecture, 1978.

[355] Ratcliff (2000), p.111.

1996 while artist in residence (Fig. 100).[356] As noted by critic Dorothy Walker, this work represented a synthesis of the artist's interests over a period of forty years.[357] It therefore represents an important work within the *oeuvre*. But it is also important because it is one of the few permanent installation works by Ireland. In the whole-room installation, references are made to the artist's enduring concerns about place, identity, language and perception. In relation to the conceptual constructs within O'Doherty/Ireland's art, the words, 'one, here now', also symbolise the ontological condition of human consciousness: ' I' can never be used without simultaneously evoking the spatial 'here/there' binary and the temporal one of 'now/then.' [358]

Unlike the vast majority of Ireland's installations, this work does not use rope. The various permutations considered by the artist are shown in a series of preliminary sketches worked out in reponse to the initial visit to the site (Fig. 101). The site specificity of the work recalls Cobh as a port of emigration for thousands of wretched people during famine-devastated Ireland in the nineteenth century and beyond that into the 20th century. By using the concept of place-time and subjectivity through the 'one, here, now' motif, Ireland invites contemplation of not only the physical space and time of 'then' and 'now', but also that of cultural place-time, as generated through the mind and the body of the spectator. It also had autobiographical memories for the artist himself, since it was the same port from which he had embarked for the United States in 1957. [359] The doctor/artist 'I' of 'then', was quite a different person from the returned artist of 'here' and 'now'. However it is primarily the aspects of the work which relate to language which are of concern here and which ultimately unify the various themes of the installation within a systematic program.

As testimony to O'Doherty/Ireland's constant aim to engage and involve, the Ogham alphabet above the arched windows of the gallery supplies the basic linguistic

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[356] The Sirius Art Centre was originally the Royal Cork Yacht Club, the oldest yacht club in the world. It was designed by Anthony Salvin (1799-1881) and constructed in 1854. The Art Centre was called Sirius to commemorate the first continuous steamship crossing of the Atlantic in 1838.

[357] Walker (1997), p. 185.

[358] Benson (2001).

[359] Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

master code for the viewer. Like a musical score, it aids deciphering the fugue-like "composition" (Fig. 102). Each of the nine panels are painted with Ogham lines which translate the letter or word beneath (Fig. 103). For example in the purple middle panel of the east wall, the letter A, is denoted by a one line unit in red (Fig. 104). If one chooses to begin a survey of the *Ogham Cycle* from this point, tracking the vowels would lead from this simple beginning to a gradual increasing polyphony and tempo of line and colour throughout the installation

Above the A panel, the number One in Irish, "Aon," is translated into Ogham.[360] To its left, the letters A and O were painted below the panel in which the colours are reversed in serial fashion. The red panel with its angled two- line unit in purple represents the letter O in Ogham, upon which is superimposed the smaller blue A panel, which now had a single vertical line (A=1) in green. Above, the number Two in Irish, "Dó", was spelt out in Ogham.[361] On the right of the A panel, the fugue-like colour pattern is developed further (Fig.105). Here, the large blue panel with three angled lines of green, spells U in Ogham (U=3 lines), upon which the AO and A panels are superimposed. Above the number three in Irish, "Trí," is translated into Ogham.[362]

This superimposition of different coding systems is a notable feature of O'Doherty/Ireland's art in all the different media used. The artist's 1970s notebooks refer to this aspect and reveal his thinking about systems:

"System on system= decipherable complexity; cross-reference and ellision between systems=indecipherable complexity." [363]

" Decipherable complexity" is seen in *The Ogham Cycle* with the serial system of colour coding in which colours are reversed or inverted between panels, but also, by the way in which this applies to the Ogham lines. In this AOU panel for instance, the purple AO lines which open out from right to left, in the AOU panel open from left to right. The

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[360] A=1 line through the implied horizontal; O=2 lines through it; N= 4 lines hanging from it.

[361] D= 2 lines above the horizontal; O=2 lines through it.

[362] T=3 lines above the horizontal; R= 4 lines slanted through it; I= 5 lines through it.

[363] Ireland in La Jolla (1977), n.p.

culmination of following the vowels through the installation is the " noisy" AOUEI panel to the left of the entrance (Fig. 106), in which all five vowel panels are superimposed.

On the west wall of the gallery, the three panels spell 'One, Here, Now,' in Ogham both in and above each one, with the words in English below (Fig. 107). Finally, above the entrance door on the north wall, there is a panel which differs from the other eight in both colour and scale (Fig. 108). While the smaller scale is dictated by the space, the different colour of the panel draws the eye acutely to it.[364] This brilliant yellow panel introduces the final theme of the fugue-like composition, that of 'I/You,' a symbol of the interdependent relationship of artwork/artist/viewer. But perhaps it could also be interpreted in the context of the site and the installation, as a reference to the Irish diaspora of both the past and the present, to history itself, which is as much about forgetting as remembering. The 'I /Thou' duality of the Celtic Janus is also evoked in the work, so that there is a sense of the artist himself, and the work's contemporary viewers looking forward and backward at the same time (Fig. 109).

Three languages, representing different historical times in Ireland's culture and history, Ogham, Irish and English, are interwoven throughout a series of nine panels bound together by a continuous salmon coloured painted band. This framing device together with the work's title is reminiscent of Italian Renaissance fresco cycles. In fact the artist states that Giotto's framing of the fresco cycle in the Arena chapel inspired his use of this device for Cobh. [365] While one does not expect the narrative usually associated with such Renaissance cycles in the work of this artist, it is found here as part of the sub-text of the work. Using the three languages which encompass Irish experience and identity from the earliest times to the present, Ireland obliquely suggests Viconian cycles of history which relate to colonial domination with consequent cultural dispossession. In such circumstances, the native language of any culture represents the first target of such dispossession. Murray also notes this aspect of the wall painting in his catalogue essay:

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[364] In conversation with the author about his use of yellow panels like this one, Ireland commented on the way one's eye is immediately drawn to the little girl in yellow in Rembrandt's *The Nightwatch* (1642). A fuller discussion of his sources for colour takes place in Chapter 3 with the Rope Drawings.

[365] Ireland interview with author, 1998b.

"...the artist's native country remains a central concern, as witnessed by his name change and the creation of many works—including the recently-completed Ogham Cycle at the Old Yacht Club in Cobh...that draw on threads of Irish history and address notions of identity both in a local and a universal sense." [366]

As in all O'Doherty/Ireland's work, there is no hierarchy of one part of the installation over the other, or in the procedures of viewing. To a great extent control of the work is left with the viewer. The dialectic of 'place,' 'inside/outside' is also part of the various layers or planes which it is possible for a viewer to contemplate according to their own experience and identity. One might therefore infer that the gallery itself represents the dominant culture on the inside as a former colonial yacht club, which overlooks the port of emigration for the indiginous population, on the outside (Fig. 110). In this sense Ireland's artwork, can be said to reclaim not only the site but also the notion of Irish culture itself through a sophisticated visual and linguistic abstract work of conceptual art.

Alannah Hopkin's review, of *One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle*, in *The Sunday Times*, was enthusiastic: "Seldom does an artist-in-residence leave such a magnificent bequest." She includes a quotation from a catalogue essay on *The Ogham Cycle* by Alberro, which states that the location of the installation,

" transforms the work from an arcane prism of self-referentiality to a full-fledged history painting employing an abstract visual language."

Hopkin's finishes the review remarking that the show was definitely worth a detour.[367]

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[366] Murray (1996), pp. 31-38.

[367] Hopkin, A., *The Sunday Times*, 7/6/96. Also see Alberro (1996), in Cobh, Co. Cork, pp. 5-11.

CHAPTER 3: PERCEPTION

"It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors." [368]

"But it is the habit of the world to fit truth to its own idea of it, whatever distortions may result..." [369]

"When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space which I fill...engulfed in the infinite immensity of which I am ignorant and which know me not, I am frightened, and am astonished at being here rather than there." [370]

In 1976 O'Doherty stated that perception had become the obsession of the twentieth century.[371] The vast plethora of books devoted to the subject from within the different fields of philosophy, psychology and art confirm this view. Although we usually assume that our eyes are ours to direct and that seeing is a straightforward process, seeing is in fact, irrational, inconsistent and undependable. Seeing, to paraphrase John Berger, comes before words, is affected by what we know and what we believe, and the relationship between what we see and what we know remains paradoxical.[372] Although we can explain the world with words, the explanation never quite fits the experience of it. Seeing also establishes our place in the world since we never look at just one thing but at the relationship between things and ourselves. Seeing then also involves matters of identity and selfhood, a point of great significance for this dissertation. Also important is

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[368] Wilde in Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

[369] O'Doherty (1992), p. 54.

[370] Pascal (1623-1662) (1966; ed.1995). Pascal is one of O'Doherty/Ireland's favourite authors. Conversation with author, 2000.

[371] O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1986), p. 61.

[372] Berger (1972).

the fact that we only see that to which we pay attention, that at which we look. And, when an image, or anything else, is presented to us as art, we respond to it in terms of learnt assumptions. Each age and each culture perceives differently, so logically, each new art-form requires new ways of seeing.

In the late 1960s, perception, its history within art, and the consequences for the viewer, became a critical issue. Many artists felt that the perceptual concepts used for centuries were no longer appropriate for the experience of the modern world. Many felt also that while they admired past art, it had become mythified and given iconic status to the exclusion of art of the present, a situation primarily of benefit to the 'art system' rather than to art and artists. This became particularly relevant in the heady quasi-revolutionary times of the late 1960s and 1970s. The phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty was a source for many artists with its search for the essence of perception and consciousness from direct experience.[373] Artists like O'Doherty were attracted to a psychologial philosophy which sought to describe rather than explain a basic experience of the world in the present. O'Doherty/Ireland's 'One, Here, Now' in many media attests to this. Merleau-Ponty defines perception in the following quotation as

> " not a science of the world, it is even not an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is the background from which all acts stand out...it is the natural setting of, the field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions...man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself." [374]

O'Doherty wrote in 1986 that " Modernism transformed perception, but the politics of perception remain unwritten." [375] He argues, as we saw above in *Inside the White Cube* (1976), that essentially Modernism had promoted the mind and spirit to the

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[373] Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1907-1961) became the foremost French philosopher of the post-War II period. His *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), argued against intellectualist theories of perception, placing the body, rather than the mind, as a means of being in the world, in which certainty is never achieved, so that we are always in the process of self-constitution. It was widely read by artists of the 1960s generation.

[374] Merleau-Ponty (1962; ed. 1995), Preface pp. vii-xxi.

[375] O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1986), p. 111.

exclusion of the body and the senses. Therefore artists of the Minimal/conceptual generation sought to emphasise the importance of the body in the reception of an art experience, which as with any philosophical change, necessarily involved its politics. As Chapter 1 laid out, the ensuing investigation created a radical shift from art's self-referential examination, to one with immense consequences for art and its perception. The inquiry by artists like O'Doherty/Ireland into the social and economic forces that controlled art, and its viewing practices, were stoutly resisted by both critics and art historians alike until recently. Belting comments:

> " The object has changed not only in appearance but also in substance and meaning. And with this change the former symmetry of representation—one on the part of art and the other on the part of historical interpretation—is disturbed...What art-historical scholarship, with great effort, had canonized—the ideal order where everybody obeys the rules of art history—recent art tends to decanonize." [376]

The conventions of perspective, established in the Renaissance and unique to European art, was one aspect of this examination within contemporary art. While a detailed discussion of perspective is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is clear that our modern concept of it is significantly different from that of Renaissance times. Since then, rather than considering it to be a technique, modern concepts of perspective consider it as a "metaphor for vision, states of mind, and epochs of art." [377] The extent to which this concept has developed is reflected in language and thought. For example, phrases like, 'point of view,' and 'to draw parallels,' are now commonplace.[378] These examples also show how the concept of 'location' is insinuated within the spheres of both language and vision, a point of particular relevance within O'Doherty/Ireland's art.

The relationship and understanding of perspective within Modernism has increasingly occupied scholarly study. Crary, for example, argues that the so-called

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[376] Belting (1983; ed. 1987), p. 61.

[377] See Elkins (1994), p. xii.

perceptual revolution of the late nineteenth century, did not occur outside of dominant modes of seeing. Rather, in order to validate an avant-garde breakthrough, the model of realism versus experimentation was promoted by historians. Allied to this was the notion of an observing subject with a detached viewpoint:

> "Modernism is ...presented as the appearance of the new for the observer who remains perpetually the same, or whose historical status is never interrogated." [379]

For Crary, the history of art represents much more than shifts in perception represented by changing forms, since vision is always inseparable from the possibility of an observing subject,

> "...who is both the historical product and the site of certain practices, techniques, institutions, and procedures of subjectification." [380]

However thirty years before the above quotation, O'Doherty/Ireland's art had already taken as its point of departure the notion of perspective as a metaphor for an ordering of vision, and the implications of this for the spectator

The subjectivity of perception and interpretation had been noted long ago by Aristotle and other classical writers. Later, Renaissance perspective codified it scientifically. It was the manner in which the code became used over succeeding centuries which became the point of issue: the subjectivity inherent in perception was submitted to a prescriptive "closure" rather than "openness." With perspective, everything is centred on the eye of the viewer who becomes the centre of an ordered visible world, called "reality." The spectator effectively becomes what O'Doherty calls the Eye, as we have seen above. The visible world, in other words, is arranged for the spectator as the universe was once thought during the Renaissance to be arranged by God. Such metaphysical ideas were implied, at least, by Modernism. The effect on the

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[378] Elkins (1994), p. 6.

[379] Crary (1990), p. 5.

static spectator emphasised the Cartesian split in which the body is ignored in favour of the eye and mind.

Artists like O'Doherty/Ireland tried to find ways to create an awareness of not only the mind and eye, but also of the body. The refusal to evoke a metaphysical timelessness associated with classical ordering of vision led him to find ways in which to evoke the passage of time, and emphasise the relativity of one's position in both time and space. The 'one, here, now' motif is one example of this. The context within which art is experienced represents another shift. This of course had occurred in other times also: from the earliest magical or sacred context to that in which art was the preserve of the ruling class, both sacred and secular, during Medieval and Renaissance periods. From the 1960s, the context often became the primary content of works.

It will be remembered that O'Doherty had pointed out in *Inside the White Cube* (1976) that the demise of Modernism can be correlated with various changes which occurred within the gallery space. The centuries-old idea of the framed picture as a container of "reality" changed during Modernism to the picture becoming a fact in itself in which "the powerful myth of flatness" ushered in a new world-view. By the mid-1960s however, the frame had been dropped, and the supporting walls of the gallery space had become the new focus of conflicting ideologies. With Minimalism, the issue of perception placed the spectator at the focal point of a network of interrelationships among which he/she set up their own response and interpretation. Hal Foster in a 1994 round table discussion looking back at the movement comments:

> " ...Minimalism did set up an analysis of the art object, its spatial parameters and subjective conditions, that asked to be extended to a more institutional idea of "space," a more differentiated concept of "the subject," and so on." [381]

Rosalind Krauss agrees with Foster that the critique of institutions was the most fertile part of Minimalism's genealogy, but importantly for this dissertation, as shall be

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[380] Ibid.

[381] *October 69* (1994), p.9.

discussed in Chapter 4, she suggests that the artistic persona understood in a meta-critical way, was also a part of the geneaology.[382] For an artist who had already made a scientific study of the psychology of perception and whose own art emerged out of Minimalism, the issues raised by Minimalism provided an obvious focal point from which to make advanced art. How O'Doherty/Ireland elaborated upon isssues implied by Minimalism, but especially those concerned with perception and the subject/viewer is addressed in the rest of this Chapter.

If we assume that the arts are the most sophisticated metaphorical systems invented by humankind and that all metaphors are grounded in physical, social or cultural experience, then the manner in which O'Doherty/Ireland has constructed a 'point of view' within his works is instructive of his intentions. Benson has suggested four kinds of 'entry' into artworks which are useful here. They are based upon ideas and practices surrounding perspective: 'any point of view,' 'defined point of view,' 'own point of view,' and 'no point of view.' In summary, 'any point of view,' Benson correlates to a medieval view of space/time as discontinuous and therefore placed no demands upon the spectator's viewing location. A 'defined point of view,' correlates to the prepared location of the spectator into a visually (and metaphorically) unified, continuous space/time through linear perspective. 'Own point of view,' correlates to the Modernist autonomous spectator and finally, 'no point of view,' to the postmodernist spectator. [383] We shall return shortly to these concepts when discussing particular artworks.

[382] Ibid., p. 13.

[383] Benson (2001), p. 194-197.

3.1. Image/Text Works (1967-)

As a consequence of the expanded field of art secured by the first generation of Minimalist artists, the concept of a category became contentious. An early American work within the artist's *oeuvre, Between Categories* (1957-68) is concerned with concepts of classification and perception (Figs.111,112,113). This is a multi-part work incorporating handwritten and typed text on paper, as well as drawings on paper collaged onto board. Describing it as his "Sistine Chapel," it forms a bridge to an earlier O'Doherty. In it the research carried out as a young doctor in Cambridge's experimental psychology laboratories is utilised for his new identity as a New York artist. [384] In 1968, by chance, O'Doherty came across the image-cards and his old notes concerning an experiment he had carried out there in early 1957.[385] Combining these earlier cards and hand-written notes with a text typewritten in 1968, he made an image/text piece of conceptual art which addresses his concern with systems of categorisation. In fact, it gives a clear indication of the artist's understanding of the condition upon which perception depends, such as the quality of the stimulus and the degree of attention paid. The artist has stated recently that for him there are three categories of perception, looking, seeing and recalling. [386]

Like other artists at the time, O'Doherty was engaged in the radical dismantling of all traditional categories of art. This Chapter illustrates some of the new categories introduced by O'Doherty/Ireland since the 1960s. It will be remembered that in 1967 for *Apsen 5/6,* he had posited a flexible set of categories for the contents of the box. One of these was "between categories," which provided him with an apt title for this work. In it, the perceptual processes involved in the identification of objects, visually and linguistically are explored. The grid format is also part of its content in terms of a non-hierarchical system of composition. The artist remarks about categories are of interest

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[384] Ireland letter to author, 2000.

[385] This experiment was published in 1958/59 in a book called *Aging and Human Skill* by his mentor, Alan T. Welford. Ireland likes to quote: "Chance favours the prepared mind," (Louis Pasteur) and "Luck is the residue of design." (Branch Rickey, a baseball executive). Ireland interview with author, Todi 1998.

[386] Conversation with the author, December 2000.

here. To him, systems of categorisation are the master key to how we structure the world so that we can "understand" it, "All categories being, of course, as artificial as a straight line in nature." [387] Benson is in agreement, stating that categorisation is an intrinsic part of the organisation of living things. At the root of categorisation are spatial concepts, that is, if we think of categories, we tend to think of a spatial container with an inside, outside and a boundary.[388] O'Doherty's artwork explores these boundaries conceptually and visually. In the earlier scientific experiment he had discovered that the critical points of change were:

> "where identification was abandoned; the zone where what is seen is unknown; the zone where new hypotheses are offered; and the point at which new recognition takes place." [389]

The sequence within the perceptual process informs all of O'Doherty/Ireland's work, but importantly, for both artist and viewer. The use of the artist's own handwriting, for example, as well as the typical conceptual art formula of artistic distancing via the typed word, indicates a distinct characteristic of O'Doherty/Ireland's work: his own involvement in it. This does not necessarily mean that such a stance is indicative of the traditional expressive creator. In fact, as Chapter 4 discusses, this is far from the position which O'Doherty/Ireland takes. Rather, his attitude is that of an artist taking responsibility for the work. With regard to his retention of the artist's hand, he states:

> " I was never into the idea that the idea makes the work, and we stand by, paring our nails. This works brilliantly for Sol...Not because it was a special hand but because...(it was)...about..getting what was in the mind out there...The effort after the idea measures your own sensory pathways." [390]

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[387] Ireland letter (1992b), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 32.

[388] Benson (2001), p. 25.

[389] Ibid., p. 39.

[390] Ireland letter (1985), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 17.

This is just one instance of the way O'Doherty/Ireland's art differs from that of contemporary colleagues. Others shall become apparent in other Chapters.

Between Categories is an important work for a number of reasons. Art-historically, it is an early conceptual work. It is also important for O'Doherty/Ireland's *oeuvre*, since it contains all the themes which were to occupy him for another forty years. It demonstrates his early interest in all systems whereby knowledge is empirically accumulated and the nature of its relationship to both language and perception on the part of the observer. As a corollory to the examination of systems of classification within any context, this work establishes another of O'Doherty/Ireland's fundamental concerns: that such systems represent our desire to organise experience between 'order /category' and 'disorder /no category':

> "If categories are artificial, mental, and unknown in nature, they are a way of knowing, though what you ultimately know may be just a category—the taxonomic fallacy." [391]

The typed text also refers to

> "the metathesis of such concepts as chaos (absence of category or perceptable relationship of categories) and order (perception of relationships between things and ideas)."

This meta-theme of order and chaos reappears in O'Doherty/Ireland's art, but most powerfully in Ireland's Rope Drawings. Interestingly, his first novel *The Strange Case of Mademoiselle P*, published in 1992, like this work, also forges a link to his medical background, and addresses similar issues. In it, Dr Mesmer muses about his blind patient:

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[391] Ireland letter (1992b), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 32.

"...each object is surrounded by a hundred names in different languages, to each of which the object itself is indifferent, the object and its name being two different orders of existence, connected only by common agreement and memory...It became clear to me that curing her blindness was a most complex matter, involving a relearning of language, the world, and of space, the new medium in which she now moved..." [392]

The title, *Between Categories*, was later adopted by his friend, Morton Feldman, for his 1969 composition for *2 Pianos, 2 Chimes, 2 Violins, 2 Violoncellos, Score (P 6971)*. Feldman used it again for an article published in 1969 which discusses the crucial relationship between space and time. [393] Common to the work of both O'Doherty/Ireland and Feldman is the provision of various choices which are left open to the spectator or performer, together with the fact that both in their different ways, make art involving time and space. Feldman describes his work as follows:

" I prefer to think of my work as between categories...Between Time and Space. Between painting and music. Between the music's construction and its surface." [394]

The title of O'Doherty's work, we might infer also, refers to similar abstract concepts but also perhaps, to events in the artist's own personal history. For example, O'Doherty's position between the space/time of Cambridge in 1957, and that of New York in 1968, which correlate to the respective categories of science and art. Lastly, one might add that the title referred in a somewhat ironic fashion to the ' in-betweenness' of the artist's own position as ex-scientist, artist, and critic, but also an Irish exile between two cultures and two continents.

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[392] O'Doherty (1992), pp. 31-32. *The Strange Case of Mademoiselle P* won the Sagittarius Prize (British Authors Prize) in 1993.

[393] Feldman (1969; ed. 1991), pp. 32-33.

[394] Ibid.

Other works around this time were also concerned with the senses and perception, but it is important to stress again the importance given to the body's role in generating a sense of place. This is due to its morphology which aligns the directional axes of left, right, ahead or backward with direct reference to the body and so gives a sense of location in space. Another image/text conceptual piece, *The Sorrows of Z* (1968) is an example, in which O'Doherty emphasises the importance of the body, ironically, by its subjective absence (Fig.114). The text is an internal monologue, for the most part narrated by the anonymous Z, significantly the last letter of the alphabet, who is deprived of all his senses and therefore without any bodily perceptual data-collectors, existing in an endless void. The last paragraph is narrated by an observer so that the perceiver becomes the perceived. This narrator confirms Z's subjective sense of that void, since he is incarcerated within five timeless Chinese boxes spinning through infinite space. The visual metaphor for the five senses are the five squares depicted above the text, with the evocation of the black void at their centre.

The senses, space and infinity, the alphabet (language), boxes, silence and the void in *The Sorrows of Z* are all matters that recur in O'Doherty's work, as for example in *The Five Senses of the Bishop of Cloyne* (1967-68), which is discussed below. For him, in common with many other Irish literary and visual artists, the notion of the body and the senses is a complex issue intimately connected with a Catholic upbringing. [395] The long tradition of the Church from Plato to beyond Augustine, of abhorrence of the body as the tomb of the soul, became secularised over time with the privileging of reason over the senses from the Enlightenment into the mid-20th century. The reinstatement therefore, of the role of the body in the act of perception, became the anti-Cartesian project of an artist like O'Doherty/Ireland.

An early American work is *Kip's Bay: The Body and Its Discontents* (1964) (Fig.23). Although it is not claimed to be a major work, it nevertheless merits inclusion here as an early exemplar of systems within conceptual art, and also signals O'Doherty's interest from the beginning of this phase of his career in the concept of the body. Yet again his medical training is brought to bear upon the creation of art. The various body

[395] Ireland letter to author, 2000b.

systems and organs are named, and a system of colour-coding applied to a found box with movable drawers. Both the linguistic and colour-coded systems 'represent' the body in terms of its physiology, pathology or anatomy. The concept of the body thus categorised, is however complicated by the possibility of random re-positioning of the internal drawers by a viewer. Thus as the title implies, the body is subject to any number of random combinations of its various systems with the different consequences for its health.[396]

The body and the organs required for sense perception are also depicted in some quasi-scientific drawings. These show the embryological development of the nasal and acoustic systems, which once again remind one of the artist's medical background and his tendency to juxtapose more than one system within a work (Figs. 115, 116). We saw this already in *The Ogham Cycle* above. An earlier drawing, *Two Superimposed Open Boxes* (1975) is another good example of this idea (Fig.117). The key drawing however, in regard to O'Doherty/Ireland's *oeuvre* and his use of systems, is *Study for the Five Senses of the Bishop of Cloyne* (1967-68). This is the work in which O'Doherty clarified his ideas regarding his artistic motifs and concerns.

[396] Kip's Bay is an area in New York where the artist once lived during the 1960s.

3.2. The Five Senses of the Bishop of Cloyne (1967-68)

In this early conceptual work many matters in O'Doherty/Ireland's art are recorded, encoded and subjected by a rigorous economy of means to a condensed diagram: the concern with the bodily senses, the serial language of Ogham, and the mathematical system of magic squares. The drawing allows the interested viewer to trace out the methodology step by step, in which the five senses are divided up into three different systems, numerical, visual, and linguistic (Fig.118). Firstly number, then colour codes are applied, followed by the translation into Ogham.

Keys are given, as in the later T*he Ogham Cycle* wall painting, as an aid to unravelling the concepts: the first key at the top, assigns a numerical value or power to each sense organ, in a descending series of permutations of five numbers (since there are five senses), with an interval of five, in which the eye is given the highest value (5, 10, 15, 20, 25); then hearing (4,9,14,19, 24); smell (3,8,13,18, 23); touch (2,7,12,17,22); and taste with the lowest (1,6,11,16,21). Each sense, in other words, is given a value that corresponds to each sense's relative power in experiencing the world. Next, each sense is placed in a 5x5 magic square where it is 'described' first graphically, then with an overlaid colour code and finally, in the last magic square on the right, in colour alone. All the senses are thus 'translated' so that one could as it were, see, hear, smell, taste and touch, conceptually, through colour alone. The interest in the phenomenon of synaesthesia, as noted above, a recurring sub-theme within O'Doherty/Ireland's work, is therefore evident graphically in this early conceptual work. The artist commented recently that some of his thinking about the senses was in part stimulated by his reading in the 1960s of the book entitled *Nil: Episodes in the Literary Conquest of the Void during the 19th Century*, by Robert Martin Adams.[397] Another source was "Hadaly," a female robot with new sensations, invented by one of the French Symbolists. [398] He later used the name as the title for one of his Ogham sculptures. Yet another source for this work comes from his medical training, in which trainee doctors are trained to first look at patients, then examine them, and finally, to listen to the heart and lungs through a

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[397] Adams (1966)

[398] Ireland Interview with author 2000c.

stethoscope. This procedure involving the use of the senses is reinforced by memorising the following: Inspection, Palpation, Percussion and Auscultation.[399] One is also reminded of O'Doherty/Ireland's interest in Rimbaud (1854-1891), to whom he later dedicated a Rope Drawing, *Rimbaud's Cradle,* Rope No. 67, in 1983 (Fig. 119). For Rimbaud, the act of creation was one through which he wanted to "reach the unknown through the unsettling of all the senses." [400] It seems clear that O'Doherty/Ireland shared a similar desire to unsettle perceptions and assumptions conditioned by habit, in his quest to re-formulate or re-vision art during the mid-1960s.

The introduction of colour at this early moment of conceptual art is novel for what is otherwise a conceptual piece in terms of language, systems, and their diagrammatic presentation on non-art ordinary graph paper. The sensorium, thus mapped onto a magic square could be added vertically, horizontally and diagonally, yet (as with magic squares) remained constant. For example, there is only one red (the eye) per line when read in any of the three directions. This gradual movement and translation of the senses to colour alone induces what the artist has described as "...a modest synaesthetic shuffle..." in which all the senses are experienced by the most powerful of them all, sight. [401] Beneath each magic square in the work, each sequence from left to right is further translated, this time into mathematical ratios. This is a key line in the work since new sensations had been invented conceptually.

A second key, this time linguistic, is provided to decipher this complex work. Beneath the line of mathematical ratios, the Ogham alphabet, each with its corresponding Roman letter is drawn. The "Oghamised" senses are then graphed on a magic square on the left. The withdrawal of the senses, the perceptual void (invisible, soundless; etc.) is graphed on the right. Remarkably, this latter Oghamic translation appears to correlate visually (by less density of line) to the absence of the senses, when compared to their presence on the bottom left of the work. The artist explains his thinking using both medical and grammatical metaphors:

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[399] Ireland interview with author, 1997b.

[400] Quoted in Dorra (1994), p. 136.

" ... in one drawing I flattened the sensorium on a page (in magic squares so that any way you sliced it, all the senses were in operation, but at different powers) so that you might plaster it on anything (like a poultice) and see (hear, etc.) what you would get...then using the command (look, listen, touch etc.) for each sense generated an omnibus word that had (would have) all the senses in it, which was then parsed and declined."[402]

The work serves as a metaphor for the different mixing of the senses in individuals and, by implication, within different cultures. It also implies the adjustment required within our own culture to new forms of art-making which stretch our powers of perception beyond existing boundaries. The work represents therefore, an early reference to the individuality and importance of reception within early conceptual art from an artist and theorist who has continued to probe the issue in different media since then.

The work also acknowledges by its title, an affinity with fellow Irishman Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753), and his " Theory of Vision" (1709) (Figs.120).[403] Berkeley, unlike Descartes, did not base his philosophy on mathematics but rather on the science of experience, psychology. His mastery of conceptual analysis and argument combined with his sensitivity to the complexity and pathology of philosophical language clearly mark him out as a figure of interest to O'Doherty. His theory suggests that we think we see visual objects because our visual experiences are frequently associated and connected with tangible ones. Therefore when we see something, we imagine it to be tangible. In other words, Berkeley suggests that we live in a world of fictions created by our imagination and so what we perceive as physical is in fact moulded by the very processes of perception itself. O'Doherty/Ireland says:

" The Five Senses drawings reminded me of something basic to what I was doing: that the senses weren't just five inferior pathways to the citadel of ideas up there

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[401] Ireland letter to author 2000a.

[402] Ireland letter (1984), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 14.

[403] George Berkeley was born near Kilkenny, March 12th 1684. He died 14th January 1753, and is buried in Oxford. He was Bishop of Cloyne, Co. Cork 1734-53.

in the lighthouse, but were one and the same with it. You are what you see, touch, hear, feel taste...Berkeley has...some of the best aphorisms on perception I know. His was a splendid attack on material substance as something separate from the senses, with a large question mark delivered to "reality" out there, which is no more than a mirage through which we move to give it substance...Berkeley in effect, doubled your senses by making them both idea and sensation and object at once. Since I think each of us mixes our senses differently, has different sense ratios, we each perceive a different world that we manage to agree upon enough to get our change right at the supermarket. Different cultures do this too, I think. So perception is the critical tissue through which the world knows us." [404]

The work therefore 'translates' the idea of perception in all its complexity, linguistically and visually, into a uniquely concise formulation that commands our attention and stretches our viewing powers both conceptually and perceptually. This dissertation argues that O'Doherty, alone among his generation of artists, found within the orbit of Berkeley's philosophy, rich material for making art. However it is clear that influences such as this or any other philosophy must be taken with a grain of salt, being used by an artist to his own ends. Ultimately for O'Doherty, it is Berkeley's scepticism about the nature of the world, and his own childish terror of the Void, that was important :

"To the receiver of The Five Senses of the Bishop of Cloyne, personal history, my childish terror, doesn't matter a damn, nor should it. Gravity anchors us, but you don't have to understand it to walk around with your two feet on the ground which is the proper place for them. The Bishop of Cloyne should be enjoyed as a mathematical game, a lyrical minuet, a sanitarium for the sensorium, a metaphor for how information is coded by the senses (and by ogham), and as a labyrinth

[404] Ireland letter (1985), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 16.

leading to a Void. And of course, a tribute to the Bishop who has walked with me in friendly fashion for years..." [405]

The quotation is notable for the key words and concerns which are found within O'Doherty/Ireland's art: mathematics, music, the senses, information, labyrinth and the void.

3.2.1. Other works on the senses (1966-67)

Earlier in 1966, O'Doherty had made two sculptures based on the organs of perception, called *Hearing* and *Sight* (Figs.121,122). Both consisted of columnar structures, or boxes, of average human height with a window at roughly eye level. The *Sight* sculpture is particularly reminiscent of stereoscopic optical devices (Fig.123). These were part of nineteenth century investigations within the field of optical physiology and in particular, a concern about the nature of the disparity of image with binocular vision. With the stereoscope this disparity was reduced due to the nearness of the object to the eye, thus making two distinct views appear to the viewer as one. The vividness of the photographic image with the stereoscope and the impression of three-dimensional solidity, gave an immediate, purely visual experience to the viewer. [406]

Something of this is felt on looking through O'Doherty's sculptures, as well as an awareness of the intimacy and intrique of viewing. In the case of *Hearing* above, the various parts of the human ear are seen rotating within (Fig.124). In the case of *Sight (Narcissus)* on looking through the window, one can see the face of Narcissus, a witty allusion that casts the viewer in the position of the mythological youth who fell in love with his own image (Fig.125). Perhaps the artist is also suggesting that the desire of Narcissus to possess his own image resembles contemporary society's attitude to the consumption of art. At another level, Berkeley's dictum " to be is to be perceived," may be another interpretation of the myth in this work since Narcissus' self-love and denial of the 'other,' ultimately caused his death. The reciprocal nature of perception involving the

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[405] Ireland letter to author, 2000a.

[406] Crary (1990) pp. 116-136.

'self' and 'other' is, as we shall see, a prominent theme in O'Doherty/Ireland's art. Through the Labyrinth, Ogham Sculpture and Rope Drawing series of works, this doubleness of perception is put into the foreground.

3.3. Labyrinths (1967-68, 1992-93)

In perception, the body's role in the process usually stays in the background. With much Modernist painting, for example, the feeling of 'looking at' something is sensed, rather the sense of feeling oneself seeing. The opposite is the case with much post-Modernist art, including O'Doherty/Ireland's:

> "Signals from the 'outside' in this physical sense are always double. There is the seeing of something as a non-body signal, but there is also a body-signal which comes from a place in the skin where the special signal entered, such as the eyes in the head. Therefore in addition to seeing what you see, you feel-yourself-seeing with your eyes." [407]

What becomes clear within O'Doherty/Ireland's art is the intensification of this bodily sense of seeing. As such, it represents an entirely different kind of perceptual experience from that of Modernist art. In his art, there is an awareness of a sense of time and space, with a concomitant de-centring of vision, which heightens viewer awareness of the actual process of perceiving. The location of such a process at the centre of the *oeuvre* allows O'Doherty/Ireland's works therefore to become more open-ended, multifaceted and completed ultimately, in the mind and memory of the viewer. The radical insistence on multiplicity of viewpoint and an interactive, collaborative role for the spectator maps out the new aesthetic territory of the participatory 'open work.' In fact, the prominance given to the viewer's role, and its actualisation, is one of the achievements of artists like O'Doherty/Ireland, who had emerged from Minimalism's rejection of pure "opticality." One of the major contributions in this respect, is O'Doherty's introduction of the labyrinth motif into the repetoire of early conceptual art producing a series of Labyrinth works between 1967 and 1968 (Fig.126).

The labyrinth, which can be conceived, shaped and interpreted in myriad ways, subsequently became a key motif for other artists too, along with geometric solids,

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[407] Benson (2001), p.202.

spirals, and grids to create a new artistic vocabulary. Artists like Tony Smith, whose drawing for a maze O'Doherty included in *Aspen 5/6*, Alice Aycock (Fig. 127), Charles Simonds (Fig. 128), represent some of those artists who were attracted to the maze motif.[408] The maze of Robert Morris in 1974 is sometimes cited as the first contemporary appearance of the motif (Fig. 129). In fact, as Jan van der Marck states in 1993, O'Doherty's 1967 labyrinth drawings inspired by the weaving pattern of the Irish St. Bridget's Cross (Fig.130), are the "first postminimal labyrinths on record" (Fig.131). [409] Since then, O'Doherty/Ireland has created labyrinths in the form of drawings, installations, and paintings onto mirrors and glass with liquitex. The mazes, like much of his art, point to his Celtic background. Celtic mazes are enclosed spaces with an intricate network of paths which provide the opportunity for many choices, yet are without a central goal. This decentred maze can be seen from the design of the St. Bridget Cross the 'arms' of which extend outward in a north, south, east and west direction to infinity. The classical interpretation of the labyrinth however, is derived from the Greek 'labrys,' and defined as "the place of the double-axes," a symbol of death. However the form of the double-axe, it has also been argued, is the emblem of regeneration, of the goddess as butterfly, the perfect allegory for metamorphosis and rebirth. [410] O'Doherty/Ireland's labyrinths suggest this latter idea, rather than a classical version with terror at its core.

Some of O'Doherty's labyrinths of 1967-68 are flat on mirrors to be installed on walls or floor, reflecting its interior in a mirror below like an endlessly deep well (Fig.132). The mirroring of labyrinths evokes once again notions of an infinity of space and time. O'Doherty once entertained the idea of making a labyrinth in an Irish bog, using a material that itself had evolved through the accretions of time. This idea was never executed however, as he felt it did not suit his artistic path at the time, due to the rise of Land Art. [411] As we shall see, he was also to use the title *Maze*, for his *Name Change* performance in 1972 (Chapter 4). Some of O'Doherty's labyrinths, like Fig. 132

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[408] Tony Smith was much admired by younger Minimalist artists as a precursor of Minimalism. Notably, he is the only older Minimalist artist included by O'Doherty in *Aspen 5/6* (1967).

[409] Van der Marck in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 8.

[410] Meehan (1993), pp. 53-69.

[411] Ireland letter (1984), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 12.

above, are designed like a formal garden in which the overall pattern can be seen, but the decision as to which route to take, is left to each spectator. Its walls of just a few feet in height, are designed so that the viewer is cast in the role of Gulliver, at the same time as being enabled to see others in their part of the labyrinth. The artist remarkes:

> "...you'd have the overview but still be time-bound to your single corridor. This would put together the dislocation you have in a labyrinth where your head is always in advance of or behind your body." [412]

This raises another important point of contrast between O'Doherty/Ireland's labyrinths and those of other practitioners. In his, there is the tendency towards greater clarity of form with an openness and the free flow of space between the inside and the outside of the works. Ratcliff remarked about his labyrinths recently:

> " For an exhibition at the Finch College Museum of Contemporary Art, in 1967, Patrick Ireland built a labyrinth with a pattern so simple that one could not get lost in it. So there was no question of finding one's way." [413]

The intention therefore, behind O'Doherty/Ireland's mazes seems always to diminish the sense of urgency of seeking a solution, in favour of increasing the awareness of the body's passage through a space quintessentially bound up with notions of 'here/there,' 'inside/outside' and boundaries. That these same ideas are to be found in his later Rope Drawings is not surprising, given that they evolved from his linear Ogham drawings and the concept of trying to make a labyrinth into a straight line in 1967-68 (Figs.133).[414]

Although his own source of the labyrinth motif was inspired by the pre-Christian woven St. Brigid's Cross and the movement of chessmen on the grid of the chessboard,

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[412] Ireland letter (1975), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 11

[413] Ratcliff (2000), p. 110. Note that O'Doherty had not changed his name to Ireland in 1967.

[414] Ireland letter (1975), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 11.

rather than the classical seven ringed structure, it seems appropriate to evoke the name of the inventor of the classical labyrinth, Dedalus.[415]

Dedalus, the mythical first artisan/artist devised not only the labyrinth for the Cretan monster, the Minotaur, but he also gave the thread to Ariadne which provided Theseus a means of escape from the labyrinth. Unlike Dedalus' classical labyrinth with terror at its centre, O'Doherty's labyrinths, as already noted, are designed not to intimidate or oppress. They therefore fall more in line with the Dedalian thread in which the participant is enabled to see the overall pattern, like a formal garden, which is yet another source for O'Doherty's mazes. [416] By removing the traditional notions of anxiety associated with labyrinths, of losing one's sense of direction and place, of being lost, he projects the sense of a body moving through space guided by vision. In this way, the perception of the body's role in perception is made an equal partner, and the participating spectator becomes aware of his/her's experience in the process. In this way, these labyrinths marked a distinct move away from Modernist distancing of the viewer, but also from Minimalism's blank objects. This is achieved by the placement of self -realisation as the primary content of the works, in which perceptual systems work symbiotically with the metaphorical.

This Dedalian theme also extends to another of O'Doherty/Ireland's unique contributions to contemporary art, his Rope Drawings. That this allusion was in the artist's mind is revealed in a lecture he gave in 1995 in which he suggests that his rope/line has its own grammar as it "describes" a space, in the same way as language, and:

> "that to me had, a certain labyrinthine quality,...and of course, it...(was)... Ariadne's thread.... (that was used)...in the labyrinth..." [417]

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[415] Ibid.

[416] Ibid.

[417] Ireland lecture,1995.

Dedalus as artisan craftsman rather than genius-artist in the Modernist sense, is also an appropriate model for this contemporary craftsman/artist. Since a labyrinth is not his invention, Modernist concepts of innovation and originality could be neatly side-stepped. The woven centre of the St. Brigid's Cross also evokes these artisanal associations, thus removing the elitism often associated with Modernist art. [418]

A more recent work in the labyrinth series was the *Labyrinth for The Elvehjem Museum of Art* (1992) (Figs.134). Although not the first realised labyrinth, this was the first one made under the name of Patrick Ireland.[419] This, the largest of the executed designs, was based on the original Bridget's Cross configuration we have seen used 25 years earlier in 1967. It was composed of four concentric units rising in two foot increments from three feet to nine feet. This configuration therefore inverts the enclosure of the typical maze, so that the spectator could see the overall pattern from within and without, as well as seeing the location of others. Only at the centre, and at ground level, could a spectator be lost to view. Yet the breaks within each of the nest of concentric square walls removes any oppressive element, together with the blue colour and the low height of the outer walls. This sense of openness is a noted feature of O'Doherty/Ireland's actual works, but also with his artistic and intellectual ideas. This can be interpreted from the multiple viewpoints constructed in various works, including his labyrinths. Viewed from ground level, the *Elvehjem Labyrinth*, for example ressembled a ziggurat city in elevation, whereas from above the simplicity of its structure is clear (Figs.135). As with all O'Doherty/Ireland's work, this piece provided a multiplicity of content which evoked concepts of rites of passage, time, architecture and the processes of present experience which encode memory. As noted above, the idea of 'inside' and 'outside' becomes blurred in this work, as in much of the art of O'Doherty/Ireland. Within the conceptual labyrinths of his art, the boundaries normally perceived by the 'self' are dislocated, so that one becomes intensely aware of the

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[418] It is noteworthy that in conversation Ireland often refers to art practice as a trade.

[419] O'Doherty changed his name to Ireland in 1972 (See Chapter 4).

challenge to our notion of a stable, constant 'self' within a stable world. This aspect of the art is discussed in more detail later with the Rope Drawings.

The ziggurat form of a truncated pyramid, is a signature motif that shall be seen in many of Patrick Ireland's Rope installations. This Sumerian building form was found within Babylonian culture, the location of the fabled Tower of Babel. O'Doherty refers to the latter in one of his Ogham sculptures in the late 1960s, so that typically, more than one theme is found in a single work which can be tracked to works in other series. The consistent use of human scale in O'Doherty/Ireland's labyrinths mark these and other works in the *oeuvre* out from the formalism and didacticism of much classical Minimalism, which often used intimidatingly enormous scale to heighten a viewer's sense of bodily awareness. These qualities recur in other series like the Ogham Sculptures and Rope Drawing Series discussed below.

In P.S.1,[420] New York in April 1993, these qualities were all reinforced by linking spectators passage through another labyrinth directly to another installation, a Rope Drawing (No. 99), *Caligari's Palace* (Figs.136,137). As the title indicates, this Drawing opens up the claustrophobic spaces of the early silent film, "Dr. Caligari's Cabinet," with flamboyant colour and line. This was the first time that O'Doherty/Ireland combined two of his most inventive motifs, the labyrinth and the Rope Drawing.

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[420] This former Public School, No. 1 (1890s), across the 59th Street Bridge from Manhatten, abandoned since 1963, subsequently became an alternative exhibition site called the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, run by Alanna Heiss.

3.4. Ogham Sculptures (1967-71, 1999)

In 1967 O'Doherty began another series of works, the Ogham Sculptures, which explore from another perspective the embodied perceptual space of the viewer, together with language and identity. These began at the same time as the Ogham Drawings and the Structural Plays and continued into the early 1970s. The interest in language, Minimalism and serialism were brought together in these unique sculptures in a manner which produced numerous perceptual chimaera.

The form of the sculptures is determined by use of the edge of ancient Ogham stones, around which the lines of the alphabet are disposed, crossing it horizontally or diagonally (Figs.138, 139). *The Book of Ballymote*, a 14th - 15th century manuscript preserved in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, contains the key to the Ogham script apart from the surviving stones (Fig.140). O'Doherty makes his sculptures with wood, clad with polished aluminium, upon which he inscribes the Ogham alphabet. He describes the sensation of inscribing lines on their reflective surface as equivalent to writing on water, quoting Keats' famous epitaph in Rome: "Here lies one whose name is writ on water" [421] For O'Doherty, the mirrored surfaces of his Ogham sculptures provided him with a "canvas" in which he could explore, among other things, questions about reflections. What he was particularly interested in illustrating in these works was "...to make the fact of reflecting as much a fact as possible..." [422] In other words, the ambiguous properties of the mirror was a useful tool for an artist concerned with deconstructing traditional and contemporary Minimalist visual codes. Earlier in the 1960s he had utilised mirrors for their ambiguous visual properties, functioning both as surface and depth, in a series of photographs, labyrinths and chess sets, as noted above. Many other artists at the time, Morris and Smithson for example, were also working with mirrors being attracted to them for similar reasons. Lucy Lippard recalled recently, "Bob (Smithson), thought he owned mirrors!" [423]

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[421] Ireland letter (1987), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 17.

[422] Ibid., p. 18

[423] Lippard interview with author, 2001.

In 1965, O'Doherty made the most obviously Minimalist sculptural work within his *oeuvre* entitled *Pair* (Fig. 141). The sculpture, derived from his chess piece series, is in fact an enlarged version of one of his chessmen. The addition of a strip of polished aluminium down the side of each module however, removes the work from the static objecthood of a Minimalist sculpture. This therefore is an early indication of the direction his art would take away from the literal didacticism of Minimalism. Carter Ratcliff recently confirms this view. He cites O'Doherty/Ireland, Le Va, Hutchinson, and Oppenheim among others, as a younger generation of minimalist artists who escaped from the absolutism of Minimalism which they initially had seen as redemptive. For these artists to follow the increasingly oppressive absolutism of Minimalist aesthetics would be to become "no more than practitioners of a style." [424]

While Minimalism had opened up the perceptual field to the viewer, O'Doherty/Ireland's work extends the level of engagement significantly by his use of reflective material. One of the crucial aspects of these sculptures is the fact, as in all of his work, that the piece is "activated" by the cooperation of the viewer; the work remains static or mobile depending on the activity of the viewer. The more curious and engaged the viewer, the more the work opens up its multiple viewpoints, ambiguities and paradoxes which extend across complex issues like the nature of vision, perception, identity, and language via the inscribed lines of Ogham. The artist remarks about these sculptures:

> "...there are a series of "information" planes distributed through the work so that here's a definite release of information if a person works at it...." [425]

Jerry G. Bowles reviewed the works at the Betty Parsons Gallery:

> "O'Doherty's art is uncompromising in its quiet dignity, yet the inquisitive observer will soon discover that the pieces are not silent. There are such "noises"

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[424] Ratcliff (2000), p. xii.

[425] Varian (1970), p.31.

as what the mirroring effect does to the wall space and how light makes the language elements disappear and reappear as one moves around the pieces. It is possible to encounter one's self in O'Doherty's sculpture also, and there is a seemingly endless series of small discoveries to be made by close scrutiny of the work." [426]

As discussed above, the nature of Ogham allowed O'Doherty to create art without the relational methods of Modernist composition by using a serial system. Music and art have of course been linked at other times in art history, but the application of musical systems of organisation to a perceptively opaque archaic alphabetical language code is probably unique in 20th century visual art. The artist has stated:

" I believe there's a deep antagonism between word and image. In so far as a society is pre-literate, it weighs its images heavier in the scale of its social transactions. In so far as the written word dominates, the image seems to degenerate into art and advertising..." [427]

Here then is the key to his strategy in the Ogham sculptures, drawings and wall-paintings: the visual is reinvested with the same primacy, as in pre-Modern cultures, over the verbal. This might seem paradoxical in a contemporary world saturated by images, but what is at stake here is the investment in the conscious act of looking rather than glancing and other forms of looking without keen attention. In addition, the idea of presenting an opaque language to the visual realm, again seems paradoxical. But if art can be considered as a kind of language, then perhaps these works suggest that visual art can have as many different kinds of languages as exist in the linguistic universe. Thus as with different languages, different ways of thinking can be entertained which can enrich experience. But equally at play in these works is the distrust of language outlined in the last Chapter, which embodies their conceptual tension. The art critic Dorothy Walker put

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[426] Bowles (1970), p. 77.

[427] Ireland (1984), p. 164.

it eloquently in 1971 when, although her remarks refer to Ogham Drawings, they could apply just as well to his Ogham Sculptures:

> " It is as if the artist were trying to dissect the very essence of art and get indications of it down on paper, so that while he makes use of language to convey his discoveries, he is afraid of the impurities of language...so to keep his idea clear and his work intact, he will, paradoxically, tell it in an unknown language...But he can, by the devise of using the archaic language of Ogham, describe his silence without breaking it." [428]

Their mirrored surfaces on which a dead language is inscribed suggests the juxtaposition of language and silence in Beckett's prose, Mallarme's poetry and the condition of music itself in which notes are framed by intervals of silence. These are works of art that can be read, as it were, rather than being "interpreted" by what the artist (and ex-critic) calls "...the endless drip-drip- drip of words on it (to which I have contributed my share." [429]

The Rake's Progress (1970) is a good example of the multiple levels of 'information', engagement and openness of these sculptures (Fig.142). Moving round the piece one realises that one's reflection is altered. At the sides for example, a full but sliced reflection is found, thus disturbing the illusion of a unified self (Fig.143). At the centre, one's reflection moves in the opposite direction from oneself, which further confounds the illusion. At this point, due to the "w" shape construction of the work, the mirrors reflect each other, so that the usual reversal of a reflected image does not occur (Fig. 144). In addition, space is extended conceptually since the space of the viewer and that in the mirror have become continuous. Real and fictive space thus reflect each other. The traditional illusion that the interior space of sculpture and exterior space are separate is thus disturbed.

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[428] Walker (1974), p. 11.

[429] Ireland (1984) p. 164.

Yet again the concept of locating ourselves in space, either real or fictive, becomes useful in interpreting these works. As we saw in O'Doherty/Ireland's labyrinths, the spectator's awareness of the body and its fundamental role in the process of perception, becomes clarified in a different way in the Ogham sculptures. In them, the body is seen to direct the gaze and both are reflected back to the viewer, generating an intense sense of oneself and one's capacity to play with one's image and the direction it takes. O'Doherty's sculptures realise and point to the complex concept of the 'self' which lies at the heart of the psychology of location. In fact O'Doherty inscribes the Oghamic word 'here' at different places throughout the *Rake's Progress* (Fig.145). Since there cannot be a 'here' without an 'I' or a 'now,' these sculptures capture this reality in a way that gradually becomes accessible. They appear simple yet are highly sophisticated in terms of the minimal means used to harness the fundamental complexity of the concept.

There is also a sense in which the sculpture's mirrored surfaces are like empty sockets which are blind until the viewer steps into them, and they look back. This sense of the work looking at one is present in much of Ireland's work, as we shall see with the Rope installations. The reciprocal processes involved in seeing are subtly experienced by the viewer in such a manner that the realisation dawns that much looking is without seeing; that we are blind to things most of the time, since we cannot see what we do not understand or that to which we do not pay attention; that the act of seeing is far from a passive process; that blindness is an inherent part of seeing. O'Doherty seems to want the viewer to realise for him/herself that seeing is in fact irrational and unstable; that it is dependent on the unconscious to a degree that in daily life we deny, holding on to the conviction that we are in control of both vision and ourselves.

Ireland's implicit critique of the literalism and orthodoxy of early Minimalism, as already mentioned, is undoubtedly a factor in his approach to the construction of the *The Rake's Progress*. Perceptually, when we look at a painting we see the image depicted on the canvas via the paint; on the other hand, when we look through a mirror, we see the image reflected via the surface which perceptually, we ignore, so that effectively the surface dematerialises. The dialectic of 'inside/outside' becomes fused and the doubly present viewer is juxtaposed to the absent work, as it were. In this sense, O'Doherty's Ogham Sculptures are elegant examples of the dematerialised object so sought after by

artists in late 1960s New York. The binary concept of 'inside/outside' and 'multiple viewpoint' is encountered again and again in O'Doherty/Ireland's art. So too is the critical shift from artwork to its reception, realised masterfully in these works. Crucially, the viewer in not intimidated by the scale of the piece, unlike much early Minimal art, the design being clearly conceived as an invitation to "play" and explore.

The title of the sculpture is derived from a couple of sources, one of which relates to Ireland.[430] The reference to the well known series of paintings by Hogarth is, at first sight, puzzling. What could Hogarth's relationship be to this contemporary piece of sculpture? As with all O'Doherty/ Ireland's work, this piece has many valencies. The following facts about Hogarth suggest certain affinities that must have been felt by O'Doherty two hundred years later. [431] Hogarth wrote a treatise on art entitled "Analysis of Beauty" in 1753. It was in effect a challenge to the classsicising art criticism not only of his own time, that of Lord Shaftesbury and Richardson, but also to earlier theorists like Alberti and Lomazzo, theories he felt stultified contemporary art. His position therefore was not far removed from that of O'Doherty and his colleagues in the late 20th century. Hogarth rejected the Renaissance Platonic theory of Beauty, based on the concept of unity, promoting his own alternative based on "variety" found in nature, and expressed in a serpentine "S" line, otherise known as Hogarth's "Line of Beauty." As noted, the word 'here' is inscribed on the sculpture at different positions. The links to Hogarth become clearer when the Oghamic 'heres' form a S-shaped line when joined together. Furthmore, it is no surprise to learn that Hogarth laid great stress on seeing with one's own eyes rather than relying on mathematical rules of perspective. As we shall see this artistic reliance upon one's own eyes is a key factor in Ireland's Rope Drawings.[432] Another common bond between these two artists across time, is Hogarth's realisation of how much prejudice perverts vision. O'Doherty's sculpture alludes to all of this, but also, in a humorous way it casts the viewer moving around the piece in the role of Hogarth's rake,

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[430] The artist states: " Some distant memory informs me elliptically that the title came from the ballet of the same name by Ninette de Valois (a Wicklow woman) with sets by Rex Whistler." Ireland letter 1996 b.

[431] Paulson (1971).

[432] In O'Doherty/Ireland's art, a similar stress has been noted with the use of the artist's hand.

whose fall from grace occurred as he moved from place to unholy place in pursuit of pleasure.

The concept of time and space is also evoked by this perambulation as one (self) displaces oneself by moving in present time (now), to create the past by relocation to another 'here,' the previous 'here' thus becoming a 'there.' This, the field of cultural psychology tells us, is because the field of experience is structured by a splitting of the fields into relations defined by the binary 'here/there.'[433] This is seen not only in this work but in the labyrinths and Rope Drawings, in which the primary psychological binary of movement is also synonymous with a changing 'point of view.' [434] The *concordia discors* or composed variety so beloved by Hogarth, in which order and chaos are held in suspension, in which the eye of the viewer refuses to rest at a single viewpoint, is very much analogous to O'Doherty/Ireland's viewer whose eye/mind, but also their body, fail to remain rooted to a single viewpoint. The sculpture is characterised by the invitation to complete the work between it (proxy for the artist) and viewer through an openness of internal relations which permit multiple readings.

Finally, recent psychological work on the nature and understanding of 'place' has identified what 'being here' means in terms of five different but related meanings, which are relevant to this work. Firstly, 'place' means being part of the body, 'behind' the eyes as opposed to the feet 'down there.' Secondly, it can refer to the whole body as a bounded unit (I am over here). Or thirdly, it can refer to the body as it moves, so that 'here' moves too. Fourthly, there is the regional sense of 'being here' (in my house or garden, neighbourhood or country), and finally, the interpersonal 'here' in which the self is 'here' and the 'other,' 'there.' [435] It is argued that these interrelated concepts of 'self/other,'(I/you) linked to 'body/place' and 'mind,' lie at the root of O'Doherty/Ireland's art. [436]

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[433] Benson (2001), p. 9.

[434] Ibid., p. 7.

[435] Ibid., p. 9.

[436] When *The Rake's Progress* was bought into the collection of the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, in 1986, the art critic of the *Irish Times*(not an admirer of conceptual art) was scathing in his comments: " The list of artists is distinctly an odd one. The oddest of all is the choice of

Newman's Razor another Ogham sculpture by O'Doherty, was commissioned by leading Irish architect Robin Walker for a sunken garden beside the new restaurant building at University College Dublin (Fig.146). Unlike other sculptures in the series, this was not a wall-hung piece but a free-standing four square 335. 2 cm column. The title refers to the medieval scholastic philosopher William of Ockham, who declared "Why do with more what can be done with less?" This is obviously an early version of Le Corbusier's "Less is More" and a delight to any post-Minimal artist like O'Doherty/Ireland. Other artists, like Dan Flavin for example, also paid tribute to Ockham with a work in 1964, *Nominal Three- to Wm. of Ockham* in which a simple series of neon lights could be graphically visualized as {1+ (1+ 1)+ (1+1+1)} (Fig.147). O'Doherty also working in a progressive series, inscribed the numbers 123,132, 213, 231 etc., in Ogham onto the stainless steel clad structure, so that in a reversal of Brancusi's *Endless Column* (1937-38), the series could be read conceptually as continuing underneath the ground (Figs.148, 149). As pointed out by art critic Dorothy Walker, this work anticipates Walter de Maria's later much-publicised work at Documenta 6, *Vertical Kilometre* (1977).[437]

As with all these sculptures, whether indoor, or outdoors as here, the inscribed lines pick up the light, especially at the upper ends of the piece where it dissolves into a column of sheer white light (Fig. 150), or picks up what is around so that it becomes a mirror of nature (Fig.151), that also includes its viewer (Fig.152). The surface appears to dematerialise so that we literally, cannot believe our eyes. The effect of these carefully conceptualised and beautifully realised works is one that rewards the curious viewer and leaves a residue in the memory that like all great works of art, cannot adequately be conveyed by language alone. Like all of O'Doherty/Ireland's art, looking and seeing, the

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Patrick Ireland's "Ogham" for £8,700...." However, Patrick Ireland was not the only artist to receive the writer's wrath. Scorn was also heaped upon the decision to pay £10,000 for the installation of a piece by James Coleman: "....a piece of High Camp silliness and bad judgment." Brian Fallon, *The Irish Times*, 19/11/86.

[437] Walker (1979), p. 39.

experience of the act of perception and all the complexity that it entails, is given primacy. But also hovering within the perceptual plane stimulated by the artist's work is the sheer incomprehensibility of time and space and our place within both. This is explored even more thoroughly in the major series of the last 27 years: the installations called Rope Drawings.

3.5. Installation Art

As part of the general movement in the late 1969s and early 1970s to make art within expanding categories, terms and conditions, in early 1973, Ireland began to make site-specific installations called Rope Drawings. These evolved out of the graphic use of line on paper since the mid-1960s which has continued for the past thirty years. The term installation replaced what had been called up to the 1980s, "site-specific" art. [438] The fundamental characteristics of such art practice are its location to a physical site, which may or may not be a gallery, inhabiting the same space as its audience. It endeavours to appeal to real conditions in people's lives be it visual, social or historical. It also aims to blur traditional art boundaries between painting, architecture and sculpture as well as between high and vernacular art. Its aesthetic power lies therefore in its ability to become part of the lived experience of the participating spectator as opposed to the mere viewing of an art object. Experience, rather than the possibility of possession of an iconic object, is what is at stake with this kind of practice.

The roots of installation lie historically, it has been argued, in the Caves of Lascaux, the Egyptian Pharoah's tomb, the painted Roman house, or the medieval cathedral with its mosaic, stained glass and painted decoration.[439] What all share is a relationship to a physical architectural site in which two-dimensional and three-dimensional systems of decoration inhabit the same space as the viewer. The figure and ground were thus integrated within the one setting. Framed art on the other hand, during the "Era- of -Art" (after c. 1400), to borrow Hans Belting's phrase, separated art and its viewer into two different spaces by means of the frame. [440] O'Doherty, as discussed in Chapter 1, describes this as a psychological fracturing of the 'self' of the viewer into an Eye and a Spectator or body. Installation re-established, it is argued here, a connection to an earlier period of art prior to the Renaissance's "Era-of-Art." However, this reconnection should not be pressed too far since, as pointed out by Michael Archer, to take formal similarity for conceptual precedent belies the contemporary significance of

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[438] Kostelantz, R. (1993), p. 108.

[439] See Davies in San Diego, California (1997), p. 8.

[440] Quoted in Danto (1997), p.3.

installation art and the specific vocabulary surrounding it: site-specificity, gallery, the public, environment, space, time and so on. [441] In the context of Ireland's art however, as will become clear, the idea of framing takes on a dimension which is suggestive in spirit at least, of pre-Renaissance architecturally contextualised art, as opposed to the framed art of more recent historical times.

Other historical precedents closer in time to contemporary installation span a wide spectrum, but all include the general impulse to merge art and life. Briefly they can be listed as follows: Cubist collage; Dada, Schwitters *Merzbau*; the Russian Constructivism of El Lissitzsky, Rodchenko and Tatlin; Duchamp's readymades and *Mile of String* at the 1942 Surrealist exhibition; Fontana's "spatialism"; Rauchenberg's assemblage; Happenings; Fluxus; Yves Klein and Piero Manzoni; the Pop tableaux of Kienholz, Oldenburg, Segal; Minimalism; Land art; Arte Povera; Process and conceptual art. In Ireland's case affinities are found specifically to Constructivism, Minimalism and conceptual art which, allied to his own vision, has produced a unique body of work that is all his own. Ireland himself however, is dismissive of direct art- historical predecessors or influence stating that while making art the problems are more immediate and mundane, with history but a pale shadow. [442]The legacy of contemporary literary theory must not be forgotten, especially in any analysis of such an informed artist as O'Doherty/Ireland. The late 19th century Symbolist theories of synaesthesia in which there is a confusion and interpenetration of sensory experience inform these works to a degree, as shall be seen in their ordering and undoing of perceptual experience. That those theories were known to Ireland is clear from the discussion above of *The Five Senses of the Bishop of Cloyne* (1967-68) and the dedication of *Aspen 5/6* to Mallarmé.

As discussed earlier in Chapter I, there was a re-emergence of interest in Russian Constructivism in the late 1960s and early 1970s for some artists with the publication of Camilla Gray's *Russian Experiment in Art: 1863-1922.* [443] Ireland's Rope Drawing installations represent his realisation of this constructivist impulse. However contemporary constructivism, as noted also in Chapter 1 needs to be distinguished from

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[441] Archer, M. (1994), p. 14.

[442] Conversation with author, 2000b.

earlier Constructivism by the incorporation of such contemporary issues as the institutional critique, artistic authority and the conscious adjustment of conditions for viewing experience. While modern constructivist artists value clarity with a "a precise and logical ordering of thoughts about space arising from the human experience of it," they also incorporate random and irrational elements, unlike the Russians. [444] They also tend to use systems, which not only distinguishes their work from that of the earlier Russian, De Stijl and Bauhaus artists, but places an emphasis upon the suppression of subjective and aesthetic values, as well as dictating the final appearance of the work. This non-expressive attitude was in direct opposition to Abstract Expressionism as already noted and, unlike it, establishes connections to other fields of knowledge. In a century where science is dominant, many, including O'Doherty/Ireland as we have seen, approach an inquiry into art practices in a spirit which is similar to that of scientific investigation in which mathematical systems such as the grid and the magic square are adopted from the mid to late 1960s.

Sandler has deliniated two attitudes within contemporary constructivist practices in America: one, which was Minimalist and aestheticist concerned with modular and serial arrangements, and the other, with the scientific and social. It is the contention of this dissertation that Ireland's Rope Drawings realise many of the concerns of his earlier systematic drawings on paper, but do so in real constructivist space. In so doing, they cannot be said to fit neatly into Sandler's two categories, since they are not only Minimalist in their origins, systematic in execution, but also concerned with the social, institutional and political. In this sense it is apparent that O'Doherty/Ireland's artistic reach is broader than many of his contemporaries. In this context, it is interesting to remember again the inclusion of "The Realist Manifesto" (1920) by Naum Gabo and Anton Pevsner in *Aspen 5/6.* Their declaration that: "Space and time are the only forms on which life is built and hence art must be constructed," has an affinity with Ireland's installations, but as we have seen, to other work in his *oeuvre* too. Gabo and Pevsner's

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[443] Gray (1962).

[444] Sandler in New York (1982), n.p.

insistence that line has a directional rather that a descriptive value is relevant also, although for Ireland, line in three-dimensional space can include both values.

His practice, while it can be placed within the ambit of constructivist art, cannot at the same time be said to carry the implications of the pioneers' utopian vision. The times of course were very different, and artists like Ireland during the 1970s were able to draw on quite a different concept of reality, one shaped by science, information and computer technology, as well as reacting in direct oppostion to the self-absorption of Abstract Expressionism. With Ireland's constructivist approach, the sense of social responsibility and commitment of the earlier pioneers has been maintained, but with a pragmatic rather than a utopian belief in the possibility of art to changing ways of thinking.

Importantly, as Chapter 1 outlined, the installations also realise much of the theoretical thinking delivered in the lecture, "Inside the White Cube: 1855-1974," in January 1975 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art by O'Doherty. [445] Edit deAk's inclusion of a quotation from Robbe-Grillet when reviewing Ireland's work in 1973 is also relevant to the Rope pieces: "Theory should always be in movement. It is of no interest except insofar as one transgresses it, modifies it, makes it live and move." [446] In Ireland's art, this is what happens as the space of the typical Modernist gallery with its white walls is transformed by mobilising the wall, the space and the spectator in ways that draws attention to invisible aspects of conventional art experience and assumptions (Fig.153). While some earlier artists like Oldenburg and others, had opened up the question of the gallery space in the 1950s, it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s, that the gallery itself became the focus of inquiry that has had radical implications for both art and its viewer. In essence, there was an expansion of the definition of what constituted art, how it was to be distributed and displayed, and a radically new active participatory role for the viewer. The shift of emphasis was from the art-object to the reception and subjective interpretation of the viewer.

While perception is the critical juncture whereby an understanding of the world and art is constructed, Ireland's art cannot be placed within the category of "perceptual

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[445] This lecture later developed into a series of essays of the same name published in *Artforum* (1976), and subsequently published in book form (1986).

art," as that term is usually understood. His art involves more than just the eye and the mind dealing as it does with the ambiguities and paradoxes of vision. It proposes an art in which the 'self,' both eye and body, together respond to spatial, visual, gendered or political space. It is clear that these are important isssues for O'Doherty/Ireland. Speaking of 1970s art in general, he suggests that its various genres corresponded roughly with personal space, perceptual revisions, exploration of time conventions, and silence, adding, "These verifications locate a body, mind, and place that can be occupied, or at least partly tenanted." [447] These remarks in *Inside the White Cube*, could be applied in equal measure to much of O'Doherty's art as we have seen, but especially to the Rope Drawings of his alias, Patrick Ireland. Ireland recalled recently to the author, that it was after he had begun to work in installation that he was prompted to consider the supposed neutrality of the galleried space.[448] The outcome was the *Inside the White Cube* essays which, as noted above, did much to further the debate and critique of the Modernist gallery then and since.

Some artists like James Turrell use light as a basic material. Ireland on the other hand, uses space as his raw material to rearticulate architectural environments that stimulate a consideration of relationships between elements and their context. The space becomes an active dialogue between the artist and viewer in such a way that the viewer too becomes an essential part of Ireland's 'raw material.' The notion that actual space and time and the embodied mind of the spectator can be used as legitimate material for art has been explored by Ireland into radically new directions over the past 4 decades.

The Rope Drawings mark a synthesis of O'Doherty/Ireland's concerns about the uniqueness of each person's viewpoint with regard to sight and spatial relationships. The radicalism of Ireland's installations is the profound shift and transformation of the gallery from functioning as a monument to relics from the past, to a place in which art became an encounter in which the viewer's share is recognised in an unidealized democratic space. His art however, goes far beyond the deconstruction of the gallery space. It goes further by constructing physical spaces resonant with metaphorical meanings accessible at

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[446] deAk, E. (1973), p. 11.

[447] O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1986), p. 78.

different levels of reception according to each viewer's experience and knowledge. In specific terms, his installations disrupt conventional museum or gallery exhibiting practices, but they also engender a self-consciousness within the viewing process which in turn leads not only to a questioning of the tenets of the gallery itself, but to other concepts outside of its walls. This is indicated by the wide range of subject matter incorporated in his titles, as the list at the end of this Chapter shows. The concept of 'location,' once again, becomes useful in finding a point of entry into these ideas.

As we have seen in other work already, the location of the 'self' within a constantly changing world involves a parallel reconstitution of the 'self' as it becomes dislocated and relocated in social, personal, and spiritual spaces. It is argued here that it is this process, while already present in O'Doherty's work, is realised most fully within Ireland's installations. And further it is argued, that it is this implication within his work which carries it and sustains it beyond the earlier concerns of the institutional critique, although this is still manitained. What has been placed at the centre of his art is a probing of the existential problem of how we humans find a place or meaning for ourselves. Ireland's Rope Drawings construct a 'space,' which becomes a 'place' through the subjective consciousness of the viewer as he/she map and memorise it. In this sense the various 'sightlines' and changing viewpoints constructed by the artist become a metaphor for the changing flow of information presented to us in our daily lives, for which we struggle to impose meaning. These points shall become clearer in the discussion of specific Rope Drawings below in which the key systems of location become questions: where am I in space (what is my point of view)? Where am I in time (my sense of the present of life as a continuity)? where am I in the moral universe of other people (my obligations, responsibilities , commitments)? Where am I in the social place (occupation, status)? As becomes obvious, all these questions are inextricably connected to a sense of identity, the subject of the next Chapter.

For some, the placing of one's art within the context of the gallery system which one is subverting may seem paradoxical. Yet it can be argued that the best place to mount any attack is from within. By exploiting the tension between the museum/gallery's

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[448] Ireland interview with author 2000b.

promotion of reliquary objects of the past and installation's broader field of perceptual experience, long-held conventions and concepts become effectively blurred, distorted and questioned. The success of this strategy can be seen by a visit to any contemporary art gallery or museum today in terms of its contents, mode of display and greater involvement of the spectator.

The use of the term "drawing" in Ireland's installations is important since it immediately places his art within an area of art practice which traditionally is considered to reveal the artist's thinking most closely. For an artist who was part of the pioneering generation of conceptual art, the importance of the fact that drawing not only represents thinking, but for a visual artist *is* thinking, [449] cannot be underestimated as an inherently important factor in these works. Ireland's labyrinth of rope lines may therefore be thought of as representing lines of thought. They also convey that every drawing takes time. We sense this as we follow the mapped out lines in space, a factor which becomes even more apparent in three-dimensions than in two. It is not surprising then that it was out of the Ogham Drawings and Vowel Grid Drawings of the late 1960s and 1972/73 that Ireland found a radical way to realise his ambition for an art of minimal means which would at the same time heighten the perception and engagement of the viewer. Some of O'Doherty's earlier Labyrinth series, Structural Plays and mirrored Ogham Sculptures already demonstrated a keen awareness of the engagement of the viewer. However with the Rope installations, Ireland effected a profound elaboration upon this aspect of his earlier work, one which was to preoccupy him for the next thirty years.

The overlapping of categories of artmaking already seen in relation to the *oeuvre* in general, is also a feature of the categories and concepts of Ireland's Rope Drawings as the list at end of Chapter shows. *H-Block* (1989), *In Memoriam* (1986) and *East/West* (1990) for example, represent a group of overtly political Rope Drawings. In addition, installations, in theory, can be created on one site and later recreated on another so that dates, places and titles may vary. The only example within Ireland's art is, *Corner for Tatlin and Fred Astaire,* Rope Drawings No. 48 and 52, which was installed in the

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[449] Sheridan (1996).

Project Gallery Dublin, in March 1979 and later at the Hayden Gallery, M.I.T. in September 1979.

3.6. Ireland's Rope Drawings (1973-)

"Space is a kind of jungle, a complete chaos with no rhyme or reason at all."[450] Patrick Ireland wrote this in 1984, just eleven years after expanding his exploration of perception and space into the largest of any series of works in his *oeuvre*, the Rope Drawings. [451] Since 1973, Ireland has devised 108 installations which have mapped and plotted space both indoors and outdoors, using the modest means of rope, nylon thread and colour. In 1973, when offered space at the "legendary alternative space" run by Jeff Lew at 112, Greene Street, Ireland looked to his drawings as a source of inspiration for this new challenge within his art. This was a profound turning point, not alone for his work practices but also for his concept of the spectator. Around this time, O'Doherty was writing *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth,* in which he talks about the artist and the implied, yet ignored, figure of the observer who stands for the audience:

> "It has not been customary to pay attention to either of these shadowy but significant figures. But they are incorporated to varying degrees in every artist's work, and as modernism draws to a close they take on more substance." [452]

Greene Street was the beginning of Ireland's aim to give such substance to the role of his audience. From then he has sought ways to incorporate the spectator in his architectural spaces, the figure which 'completes' the architecture through his/her movement through it. He recalls recently about Greene Street:

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[450] Ireland Statement (1985), quoted by Walker in Dublin n.p.; also quoted in Washington D.C. (1986), p. 52.

[451] The reader is reminded that O'Doherty changed his artist's name in 1972 to Patrick Ireland.

[452] O'Doherty (1974; ed. 1988), p. 6.

" There was an attractive space half-way down on the right between one of the central pillars and the wall. I saw a great vertical vowel grid there, twelve feet or more high. But how was I going to translate my drawing into real space?" He tried wood, ("bent, wouldn't do at all..."), steel bars, ("Hi-tech, industrial, ugly") and rubber among other materials before thinking of rope, ("mundane, unelastic...the commonness of my medium is pleasurable to me. It has no intrinsic value. Arte Povera indeed..."). [453]

After painting the rope in the randomized colours of the Ogham alphabet, he installed the painted grid, his first Rope Drawing, *Phonic Grid* (Fig.154). [454] Ireland recalls Sol LeWitt's remark on seeing the piece: "As one line-man to another, I think its pretty interesting." [455] This first Rope piece forms a direct link to the work of O'Doherty dealing with language and the grid form seen in Chapter 2. Reviewing it in 1973, Edit deAk states:

" The grid, fastened across the room, divides the gallery into near and far sides, while confusing the division of the gallery with its transparency. However, since it is painted, it also fulfills the grid's Catechism of paintings and, functions both as a foreground and background, illusionistic and flat...The piece is a giant (15x15 foot) epigram on grid...(which) does absurdities to its sculptural identity (Inside? Outside?). However it asserts itself as a sculpture." [456]

Gradually over the next couple of years Ireland perfected the medium so that the Ropes could be attached anywhere he wished. Some key works have been chosen to illustrate how this was achieved over three decades to create installations with increasing vitality and energy and polyphonic colour. Ireland admits to being at first hesitant about the visual illusion created by ropes stretched across space:

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[453] Ireland letter to author, 2000b.

[454] For example: A= 1 line of grid in any colour; O= 2 lines in another; U=3 in another; E= 4 and I=5.

[455] Ireland interview with author, 1998a.

[456] deAk (1973), p.11.

"The aesthetics of the time were anti-illusion, part of the great shift away from the fictive excursions of paint on canvas. At that time, my colleagues and I shared a hard, unyielding sense of what was permissable and what was not, part of clearing out the obsolete past. It seems comical now..." [457]

It was Drawing No. 12, *Untitled (Three Angles)* (Fig.66), at the David Hendriks Gallery, Dublin in which he perfected the idea of drawing in air:

"I could make a line stop or start in space wherever I liked. It was a great feeling. A line from Hamlet repeated itself like a mantra: "I eat the air promise-crammed!" [458]

It was with the Rope Drawings also that he began to conceive of space as an undifferentiated wilderness which could be structured linguistically. The vocabulary of motifs which he has since developed the early 1970s are architecturally inflected. They are the truncated pyramid, the door or window, all of which evoke basic dichotomies such as inside/outside, far/near, mobile/static and the monumental/domestic space. Pyramidal geometry frequently appeares in Ireland's work in other media, as we have already noted with *Turf Rick* (1975) (Fig.71), the *Elvehjem Labyrinth* (1992) (Fig.136a), and the *Ziggurat and Reflection* drawing (1979) (Fig.155). The pyramidal shape suggests the desire to create monumental architectural form, but perhaps also to express an antipathy to deterministic history, by-passed by reaching back to such a form. Lucy Lippard suggests as much in her book on pre-historic images and contemporary art suggesting that while American artists of the 1940s and 1950s used mythological themes derived from classicism, the next generation were more attracted to the pre-historic and archaic:

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[457] Ireland letter to author, 2000b.

[458] Ibid.

"Conflicts between nature and culture, between historical awareness and the supposed universality of art, clearly did not exist in pre-history. But they do now. Many artists today are trying to overcome such false dichotomies by resurrecting lost connections within a contemporary framework." [459]

There is rich evidence of this impulse throughout O'Doherty/Ireland's *oeuvre* in his use of the archaic Ogham language, labyrinths, as well as the series of *Stone Drawings* in the 1980s which relate to the Celtic megalithic sites at Newgrange, Co. Meath, about which he says: "I was just sending a modest, transmillennial greeting card to some vanished ancestors" (Figs.156). [460]

Over time Ireland's installations have developed from the first simple grid piece, to become more complex and ambitious in their adaptation of space and perceptual experience. *Skylight* (Rope No.13), at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio in November 1975 was "a kind of flawed grid," suspended across the gallery, on the floor of which was spread a substance which glowed a blue colour in infra-red light when viewed from a balcony above the gallery (Fig.157). Hence the viewer looked down at the "sky,"

" a reversal I cherished, since it implied that the spectators were walking on the ceiling." [461]

Initially, Ireland painted ropes alone which both describe and are described by the space defined by ceiling, wall and corner. Some outdoor works like *Skymark,* No 14 appear to pierce the sky: " The red looked as if an incision had been made in the blue sky giving a glimpse of ite red lining" (Fig.158). [462] *Standing Magic Square*, Rope No. 19, at P.S.1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, May 1976, an installation in which the ropes seem to rise magically from the floor, was the first three-dimensional adoptation of the magic square system used in other series (Fig.6). Very soon however, as

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[459] Lippard (1988), p. 5.

[460] Ireland letter (1990b), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 30.

[461] Ireland letter to author 2000c.

[462] Ibid.

early as 1975, he was creating works of even greater sophistication in whole rooms or even two, as for example, *One Drawing in Two Rooms*, Rope No. 5, Los Angeles County Museum, January 1975 (Fig. 159).

In works such as this, Ireland's linear vocabulary had grown in sophistication so that he was now able to invest works with richer and richer layering of informational planes or intellectual content. This Rope Drawing is important within Ireland's *oeuvre* since it the one which clarified for him the vocabulary of line and colour. The form in each room of the gallery was the same, yet the colours were different, so that colour rather than form defined the space. The seven colours of the spectrum were painted randomly onto the wing-like ropes in each room, seen here (appropriately) from an aerial perspective (Fig.160). From one side of the gallery, all the colours were visible, whereas from the other, they appeared black when silhouetted against the white-washed walls. The artist states about this piece:

> "...where they (lines of rope) crossed made a veritable textbook of how colour behaves on lines, particularly where two lines/colours crossed. To my astonishment you could make a red go back and a yellow come aggressively forward, etc. In other words, a line of colour could be coached into paradox and contradiction." [463]

The piece could not be seen in both rooms simultaneously, except at the doors between the rooms where the lines from each room crossed over. At this point, a reference to Leonardo Da Vinci's flying machine becomes clear (Fig. 161). For the viewer, standing at this point between the two 'wings' of the piece, the flying metaphor could be extended to casting him/her in the role of Icarus. But equally important from the point of view of Ireland's work generally is the allusion to movement, the airy openness of the work, a marked feature of all his work, which occurs in other media also, such as the drawing, *Five by Five (Aerial Perspective)* (1977) to which, the title alerts us (Fig.162).

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[463] Ireland letter (1984), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 12. O'Doherty/Ireland's scientific/artistic/literary knowledge and use of colour is discussed later in this Chapter.

This ambitious Rope Drawing is all the more remarkable given that it was executed entirely by the artist. In more recent decades he has carried out installations with assistants, but none of the 109 installations have been made without the artist's presence and supervision.[464] The following quotation, while referring to his drawings on paper, sums up his approach:

> "Having the notion that the idea and the execution were inseperable, I wanted that familiar stranger, my own hand on everything." [465]

With installation Ireland moved in the opposite direction of the Minimalist made object. The opening up of spatial possibilities within the gallery which went far beyond the implications for the spectator of blank Minimal objects within the enclosing box of the gallery. Ireland's installations effectively open up the box of the gallery by inverting Renaissance perspective, mobilising walls and creating apertures within them which imply other spaces beyond. With that opening of Pandora's box, the gallery became a new space, both literally and metaphorically, through which the spectator could stroll, either alone or with others. Ireland comments that the point of intersection with architecture as an artist, for him, resides in spectator behaviour:

> "I share with architects the responsibility to the user, the figure in the space...How a space 'plays' people is an elusive construct set between the extremes of freedom and repression(...expressed by the featureless plaza on the one hand, by the labyrinth on the other)." [466]

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[464] The numbering of the Rope Drawings has presented some difficulty after number 100. During many conversations with the author, the artist admits freely to having had difficulty remembering the correct sequence, and to not having been a good curator of his own work over the years. See Appendix E.

[465] Ireland letter (1985), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 17.

[466] Ireland (1984; ed. 1985). The quotation is an edited version of 1984 article, "Sightlines," in *Architecture*, Annual of The American Institute of Architects which was reprinted in exhibition catalogue, Dublin, n.p.

This new visual language offers a new kind of power and inducement to relate personal and communal memory to actual concrete experience. Common to all of Ireland's installations is that each have to be activated by the perambulation of the viewer through them in which he/she is provided with multiple viewpoints, called "sightlines" by the artist. Importantly, though minimal in terms of means, they are far from minimal in content, once again removing the work from a Minimal into a post-Minimal context. The confrontational aspect of some Minimalist objects, used to heighten awareness of the viewer's body, is reversed here in the creation of an open airy sculpture without mass, surface or a central core. Minimalism used reduced means to minimise the ambiguities of perception. These pieces present a multiplicity of viewpoints to the viewer which acknowledges and incorporates the actuality of those ambiguities. This we have already seen operating in the Ogham sculpture series above.

In addition, the occupation by the viewer of the constructed spaces occurs in actual time and therefore induces a consciousness of location, of time and of the 'self' (I was there, now I am here). This is reminiscent of Sigmund Bode's "Placement as Language" in *Aspen 5/6* (1967), and the viewing conditions of *The Rakes' Progress* (1970) discussed above. It also reminds one of the recurring 'One, Here, Now,' motif in O'Doherty/Ireland's work, which these installations literalise from moment to moment with the movement of each viewer.

Some phrases from the artist's notebooks during the 1970s, throw further light upon interpretation of these installations. The following rather Heraclitean phrases emphasise the paradoxes of perceptual experience for example:

> "Depend on the senses, which can't be trusted, and verify with the mind, which feeds on illusion."

and

"We are uncertain about our perceptions, comfortable in our dissolution of absolutes, tolerant of ambiguity, half-dissolved in media, and with dissociated affect. Space shows this." [467]

Each installation is presented as an invitation (which of course may be refused) to "play" the artist's piece, as one might play a game, each spectator playing in a different manner according to their experience, disposition and knowledge of the "language." The notion of play has already been evident, as seen above in much of O'Doherty/Ireland's work. The notion of a community of spectators mutually moving through the prepared spaces is also an important key element in these works. This is implicated by the fact that this space, like any other which is occupied by the 'self' and others, involves mutual changes in the rhythms of choreographing it : waiting for others to pass through; the timing of arrival and departure at certain priveleged positions and so on. Barbara Novak notes this element when writing about *Caligari's Palace,* Rope No. 99 (1993) (Fig.138):

"Often other spectators, moving and pausing within the work, become like doppelgangers through which one can track one's own situation in space... The collaboration between community and self is a strikingly democratic notion central to the rope drawings, and extends even into the works' future existence." [468]

The democratic spirit, noted by Novak, pervades all of O'Doherty/Ireland's art, since it pivots upon choices which are left open to each spectator, and which may be refused or resisted. These are not works intended for a mass audience. They require the attention and cooperation of each spectator. The artist comments how his perception of his audience has altered:

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[467] Ireland Notebooks (1973-77), in La Jolla (1977), n.p.

[468] Novak (1996).

"There isn't anything I have to give large audiences, any more than they have anything to give to me. A few years ago I still hoped for the short cut to the untutored audience...I'm now convinced that kind of audience question is a dead issue...I've had to settle for a small, intermediate one." [469]

Ireland sought this different kind of audience by the construction of installations with socially defined spaces:

"The abstract audience is not an idea I can deal with...I don't want the vertical historical audience. I'm happy with this random cluster of people. Now is all we've got." [470]

In line with Ireland's democratic approach, there is no right view as such, each person moving through a succession of order and disorder, of which they make their own sense. The aim is to enable people to perceive the installation primarly as a 'space' they have inhabited and thus made into a 'place'. This fusion of artwork and viewer, figure and ground reduces the traditional dialectic of art, of the rooted spectator looking at art either enclosed within its frame or paralyzed on its pedestal.

The opening up of the space of the gallery psychologically, symbolises Ireland's open approach which is also evident in the series of boxes and cubes. This open characteristic also extends to the titles of works such as *Open Box on Green Ground* (1986), and *Open Box on Blue Ground* (1985) which in spite of the customary rigorous geometry and fine detail, also convey the illusion of movement caught mid- moment (Figs.163, 164). The *Flying Open Cube* Series carries this idea further at the same time as provoking the viewer conceptually to close the flaps of the cube (Fig.165). Even in *Closed Box: Transparent Cube* (1975), the tension between opened and closed is maintained (Fig.166). The *Museum* and *Exploded Gallery* Series of drawings, continue the exploration of galleried space with great visual excitement, fine draughtsmanship and

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[469] Foote (1980), pp. 25-29.

[470] Ireland interview, 1980.

control of colour together with the verve and energy of implied movement (Figs. 167, 168, 169, 170)

What is implied in such works becomes literal in the Rope Drawings. In them the spectator becomes literally framed within the box/cube of the gallery. Yet, at the same time, the gallery box is opened up by the painted architectural motifs which inherently signal the possibility of another space through "window" or "portal" or "corridor." The various drawings based on dot, line, or plane, in these installations, become conjugated with real space rather than the illusory space of the paper drawings (Fig. 171). It is in the fusion of real time and real space through the consciousness of the active spectator, in a gallery which has been turned inside out, as it were, that is the unique achievement of these works. In fact, *Inside-out Room* became the title of Rope No. 50, at the University Art Museum, Berkeley, California, in June 1979. In addition there is a baroque amplification of fictive and real space in which painting, sculpture and architecture are united.

Choreographing one's way through Ireland's prepared spaces and framed views which unfold in time, echoes to a degree, the construction of film: the succession of views, the fluidity of space without a centre and the constantly mobile subject. In his art with its initial sense of structured order or ordered structure, there seems to lie the sense that the possibility of an ultimate structure behind all other structures is beyond our intellectual grasp. In terms very much akin to those of Beckett, O'Doherty/ Ireland's art shows the inextricable linkage between order and chaos, blindness and seeing, by focusing on the relationship between historical and cultural codes of meaning, on the one hand, and the reality of experience, on the other. Around 1969, he made an Ogham sculpture upon which was inscribed the intermingled words, "chaos" and "order," as well as others which described three separate infinities serially. The following comments by Beckett seem to aptly capture the essence of his art, but also that of O'Doherty/ Ireland:

> "What I am saying does not mean that there will henceforth be no more form in art. It only means that there will be new forms, and that this form will be of such a

type that it admits the chaos and does not try to say the chaos is really something else.." [471]

O'Doherty quoting Orson Welles in an article in 1987, could have been referring in equal measure to Ireland's sensibility in these installations:

> " I believe that (movement) corresponds to my vision of the world; it reflects that sort of vertigo, uncertainty, lack of stability, that melange of movement and tension that is our universe. And the cinema should express that." [472]

Eco expresses similar sentiments:

> "...the artistic process that tries to give form to disorder, amorphousness, and dissociation is nothing but the effort of a reason that wants to lend a discursive clarity to things. When its discourse is unclear, it is because things themselves, and our relationship to them, are still very unclear, indeed, so unclear that it would be ridiculous to pretend to define them from the uncontaminated podium of rhetoric. It would only be another way of escaping reality..." [473]

Camera, Rope No.40, School of Visual Arts Museum, New York, April 1978, represents another major development in Ireland's Rope Drawings (Fig. 172). This was the first installation in which ropes correlated with painted zones of colour on the surrounding walls to produce sightlines in which the ropes framed those coloured zones. This happened at key points while walking around the work. The implications for viewing experience became richer. Here, as in many subsequent works, Ireland plays with the Renaissance idea of a single predetermined vantage point for viewing by providing more than one. At these points too, where the eye and the work become

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[471] Quoted in " Beckett by the Madeleine," *Columbia University Forum 4* (Summer 1961), pp. 21-25; reprinted in Kane (1984), p.180.

[472] O'Doherty (1987), p. 88.

[473] Eco (1962; ed. 1989), p.157.

interlocked, traditional perspective understood as flowing from a spectator's eye onto the vanishing point within the work, here flowed in the opposite direction as it were, from the work to the spectator. There is therefore a reversal or inversion of the time-honoured Renaissance notion of the picture plane as a window onto idealized illusionistic space. This reversal importantly involves not just the eye but the body too. Perspective in this instance is described by Barbara Novak as not only the vanishing point of the eye "into which the perspectival lines empty themselves in a post-modern finale to Alberti, but also the skin and limbs." [474]

Thus in a double negation, the visual reciprocity which the convention of perspective denies, is itself negated. This is effected by the dialectics of the two-dimensional wall being played against the three-dimensions of space through colour and line. The walls, as it were, are made to breathe and dilate, with two-dimensional colours appearing perceptually to move forward from the flat wall into the three-dimensional space between them, as defined by lines of rope. Thus the static box of the gallery becomes a dynamic space which appears to collaborate with the spectator in playing the piece. In *Camera*, the artist also introduces the frequently used motif of the portal for the first time, thereby implying expansion of space by the entrance or exit to another space beyond the box of the gallery. Other devices were found subsequently which extended the idea of energizing the gallery space further.

A constant thread, as seen above, that runs through O'Doherty/Ireland's work is this idea of trying to make things uncomplicated so that the concepts at issue stand out in greater relief, as it were. For example, Ireland set about eliminating corners in which "...space becomes a vortex...." so that he tried to straighten the gallery in much the same way he had earlier straightened a labyrinth into a straight line in 1967/68. [475] Rope Drawings in 1975 and 1977, for example, dealt with corners, *Corner,* Rope No 15, and *Corner Line*, Rope No. 31 respectively (Figs. 173). In the "Corners" exhibition at the Hayden Gallery, M.I.T. in 1979, Ireland exhibited two Rope drawings, *Corner for Tatlin and Fred Astaire,* Rope No. 52 (Figs.174), and *Untitled Corner*, Rope No. 53 (Fig.175).

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[474] Novak (1996).

Ronald Onorato, reviewing the group show, noted the absence of some artists for whom the corner was an integral part of their thinking, citing Flavin's lights, Morris' mirrors, Stella's sculpted canvases and Serra's thrown lead pieces. Yet he had this to say about Ireland's Rope piece:

> " Only one artist at the Hayden, Patrick Ireland, addresses the corner in a dynamic, mutiple consideration. The gaily drawn cord illusions of A Corner for Tatlin and Fred Astaire never actually touch the corner. They don't need to for the viewer is attracted to the tension, stretching, lassitude and interruptions that occur in cord and shadow between the two walls. In many ways these are perfect adjectives for the ways in which a corner works perceptually. His other work in the exhibition, Rope Drawing No. 53, 1979, deals with the viewer's position as it shifts around a corner, again creating multiple junctures in line, color, shape and cast shadows. Ireland thinks about "corner" here in an expansive way, full of both wit and erudition." [476]

After several installations which eliminated a corner with a yellow square, *String Quartet (4 Corners)*, Rope No.64, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, May 1982, was the impressive culmination of these investigations (Figs. 176,177). The musical title alerts one to changing movements within music at the same time as perhaps offering a discrete salute to Morton Feldman's "String Quartet" of 1979. Painting the entire room a twilight shade of grey for the moving spectator, a single continuous string/rope described the four corners, painted in different colours. The rope lines were strung inward towards the ceiling to create a tent-like space. Like the movements of a piece of music perceived differently from different parts of a room, the painted "windows" appear to move forward or recede, when caught in a rope-framed 'sightline,' thus flooding some corners with bright coloured light or deepening those painted a darker shade (Figs.178). Colour in this piece operates as illusionistic structure.

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[475] Ireland letter (1984), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 14. The artist has often remarked that one should never get one's self into a corner that one can't get out of.

Sherry Goodman's review of *String Quartet (Four Corners)* recalls it was Rauschenberg's comment to Ireland, ("Always a line man!"), which provoked Ireland to include actual planes in his Rope Drawings in 1976. Suggesting that the Rope Drawings since 1973 had been spinning a continuous line of thought into ever richer and more ambiguous perceptual experiences, she continues:

> "The special impact and mystery of String Quartet comes from the way the whole room moves towards you while simultaneously opening up and out wherever you look." [477]

Increasingly, work of recent decades have used a vibrant polyphany of colour systems which point to the influence of Matisse. [478] However, an interest in colour has been a feature of O'Doherty/Ireland's art from the beginning as was seen above in his early Ogham drawings for instance, his knowledge of Goethe, and his interest in Klee while a medical student in Ireland.[479] The linking of a serial musical system to his art through Ogham gives a fresh impetus to the attempt to assimulate the aesthetics of sight to those of hearing, which Klee, Kandinsky and also Newton sought. A scientific understanding of colour is also evident from the interest in the phenomenon of synaesthesia, already defined above, and by the titles of Rope Drawings involving the primary colours, and one entitled, *Newton's Rings* (1974), Rope No. 3.[480] The interest and fascination with colour continues to this day, as we saw with the 1996 wall-painting, T*he Ogham Cycle: One, Here, Now*, the Rope Drawings and the more recent easel paintings

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[476] Onarato (1980), pp. 74-75.

[477] Goodman (1982), n.p.

[478] Ireland lecture 1995. The artist also recently related to the author, how impressed he is by the way Irish people paint their houses.

[479] Goethe's *Farbenlehre (Theory of Colour)* (1810), laid great emphasis upon how colours relate to perception and affect the feelings of the viewer. Gage (1999), p. 46.

[480] Newton's *Colours of Thin Plates (Newton's Rings)*, in the *Opticks* (1704). The 'Rings' are the concentric circles of colour spreading out from the point of maximum pressure when two thin transparent plates are pressed together, to give the first clear demonstration of complementarity in colours. See Gage (1999), p. 142.

based on the *Song of the Vowels* (Figs. 179, 180) and *I/Thou* themes (Figs. 181, 182, 183). The return to easel painting after a gap of forty years around 1993 or 1994, was inspired in part by the on-going series of wall paintings, a "thirst for colour," and the encouragement of art critic, Barbara Rose. [481]

John Russell of *The New York* Times, judged that another rope piece *House Call, Martello Terrace*, Rope No. 77 at the Clocktower in New York in 1986, was a "neat trick", which incorporated a sidelong reference to the artist's earlier medical career (Figs.184). [482] Though indeed referring to an earlier phase of the artist's life, the title is not a reference to his earlier medical career, but to his childhood home outside of Dublin at Martello Terrace, Bray, which once had also been home to James Joyce.[483] A number of reviewers of Ireland's Rope Drawings have pointed to the fact that the work, while not a work for viewers in a hurry, rewards effort. David Tannous' review of four Rope Drawings in 1976 at the Max Protetch Gallery, echoes this sentiment:

> " ...there is warmth in this cool geometry...This is challenging, exhilarating work. It requires rigorous contemplation, but it also offers a sensuous beauty." [484]

While this is certainly the case with the Rope Drawings, it can also be extended to a large proportion of O'Doherty/Ireland's art.

At first sight to suggest an affinity between a twentieth century artist with minimalist sensibilities like Ireland and Baroque art, might seem perverse. Yet the poetics of both can be aligned on close examination in a number of ways. The Baroque period of the 17th century shares with advanced art of the late 1960s and 1970s the absence of any uniformity of style but embraces the "embodiment of certain widely held ideas, attitudes and assumptions." [485] Both also share the secularisation of knowledge and the growth of

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[481] Ireland interview with author, 2000a.

[482] Russell, J. *The New York Times*, 10/10/86.

[483] Ireland interview with author, 1998a. The Joyce family lived at No. 1, Martello Terrace, Bray, Co. Wicklow from 1887-1891. Igoe (1994; ed. 1999), p. 114-115.

[484] Tannous, *Washington Star*, 28/12/76.

[485] Martin (1977; ed. 1991), p. 12.

science with renewed interest in the infinity of space and time.[486] The open, dynamic character of Baroque form shares with Ireland's art the search for kinetic excitement: the idea of space progressively dilating, and the roving spectator induced to continuously alter position in order to see the work's changing aspects. The work in both, as it were, appears to be in a state of perpetual flux articulated through the perception and creativity of a spectator. Both stimulate and quicken the imagination with the notion of a 'problem' to be solved and the consciousness of one's pivotal role in the quest. Both also make work which incorporates painting, sculpture and architecture as an inherent part of its aesthetic.

While these aspects of the Baroque may be applied in a general way to Ireland's Rope Drawings, it is specifically to the architecture of the 17th century architect Borromini (1599-1667), that we must look for a more direct affinity. The artist has remarked that if he had not been a doctor as a young man, he would like to have been an architect.[487] As one looks through his *oeuvre*, this impulse can be readily seen in the tratment of works in different media in terms of their sense of structure, geometry and control of space which balances such architectural elements as scale, tension and opened and closed spaces. In 1976 Ireland began a specific study of Borromini's architecture in Rome, which resulted in the production of three works with a direct reference to the architect: *Borromini's Underpass,* Rope No. 57, (Figs. 185), Akron Art Museum, Ohio, April 1980, *Borromini's Portal* Rope No. 58, (Fig.186), Charles Cowles Gallery, New York, September 1980, and *Borromini's Corridor* Rope No. 103, (Fig.187), Crawford Gallery Cork, Ireland, 1995. Ireland's enthusiasm for Borromini is boundless:

> "Borromini speaks to me because he never forgets you... Most architects forget you...the front of Quattro Fontane (1637-41) is like a clenched fist, pure energy...every classical device is re-thought, given a twist so that you re-see it. S.

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[486] The Cold War space race and the landing of man on the moon all occured in the 1960s. Kubrick's film, *Space Odyssey 2001* (1968), evokes a sense of the mystery of the universe, space and time.

[487] Ireland interview with author, 2000a.

Ivo della Sapienza (1643-60), is the finest piece of architecture in Rome. And all this comes out of a geometric rigor..." [488]

For Ireland, intrinsic to the Baroque is:

"...manipulation, awe, rhetoric, the spectator's vertigo...it fakes architecture, favours multiple viewpoints, plays with illusion. It is a perceptual storm around a concept." [489]

This quotation provides us with probably the most accurate description of its author's own art. Like Borromini, Ireland's approach to architecture is abstract with the ability to produce complex ideas resolved in simple geometry, which aims to discover new relationships between man and space. The corridor of the title, *Borromini's Corridor*, of course is a reference to Borromini's famous illusionistic one in the *Palazzo Spada* (c.1635) in Rome (Fig.188). Ireland's attraction to such a building is not only its play on the ambiguities of perception, but also the fact that Borromini, like himself, was dealing with a predetermined site. *Borromini's Corridor* is the first Rope Drawing installation experienced by the author who also played a small role in its construction. The author also is the first person to witness the exact procedures involved in creating a Rope Drawing from start to finish.[490] The following is an account of those procedures.

Firstly, the apparent simplicity, transparency and clarity of the Rope Drawing's design belies the labour exerted in its construction. Most take five or more days to complete on the site. Before this however there is a preliminary site visit by the artist, followed by dozens of spontaneously drawn preparatory drawings in which the artist thinks about the space, its context and the various configurations he may plot (Figs.189) The formal drawing is done later, in the same way that the script for a film is redone formally after completion of the shooting.[491] Unlike conventional art practice, the primary

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[488] Ireland letter to author,1995a.

[489] O'Doherty (1987), p. 89.

[490] Ireland letter to author, 1995a.

[491] The artist reports that the documentary drawing for this Rope piece is incomplete at time of writing.

place for creation of the piece is not the artist's studio but the site, the studio becoming the place for later documentation. Since each piece has to be constructed around and within the existing architecture, each presents a different set of problems to solve, be they doors, windows, light switches or architectural decoration to ceiling or wall.

The initial wall sketch/drawing on site is done with black wool affixed to the wall with tacks (Fig. 190). The ropes are subsequently secured to floor, wall or ceiling by means of almost invisible nylon thread.[492] An important feature of all Ireland's Rope Drawings is that there is no ruler, tape, or any other measuring device used in the construction. This, as noted above, he shares with Hogarth. All have been constructed by the artist's own eye and hand. This is a remarkable aspect, given the fact that two rooms of approximately 10,500 square feet, were linked by rope lines which if not held at the correct tension and position, would collapse the whole piece.

The materials for the construction of the work are mundane and vernacular rather than 'high art' and are used in their 'raw' state without any manipulation or tranformation. They comprise water-based house paint and liquitex tubed paint for wall-painting and venetian blind rope/cord, nylon thread and black wool. The tools used for these materials are paint brushes and rollers and a round carpet hook to thread the nylon to the ropes (Fig. 191). The dividing partition wall between both rooms was painted in contrasting colours which signalled the change of colour and mood while moving between them (Fig.192). Each end wall was painted with the familiar Ireland truncated pyramid motif, inlaid with a square "window" above and a slim portal of human scale below, in contrasting colours (Fig.193). They were connected by the rope corridor of the title which was calculated to approximate average anthropomorphic height (Fig.194). The two rooms were also linked end to end by a dado around the side walls (Fig. 195). The overall effect was the transformation of the gallery from a "white cube," into a place of monumental architectural scale and vibrant colour, which contrasted with the finely taut skeletal, pencil-thin airey architecture of the corridor on a human scale.

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[492] The author observed during the installation that the artist used a surgical knot, learnt in medical school, to secure the rope's position and tension.

Entry points into the installation were left entirely open to the spectator. This was emphasised by the fact that on entering either room of the gallery, one was confronted with a sidelong view of the rope corridor with no obvious entrance zone indicated. Once entered, at a certain point walking along it, the yellow or brown window square become precisely framed by the rope, making the wall at this point appear, as in other works, to float either in or out, depending upon its colour (Figs.196, 197). The Baroque principle of coextensive space between the artwork and viewer is alluded to at these sightlines. Similar articulated viewpoints are found with Baroque illusionistic ceilings and within Borromini's architecture (Fig.198).

Another important part of the grammar of Ireland's installations is the changing viewpoint with movement and the tension between flatness and spatial depth. The two-dimensional flatness of the painted wall motifs is further emphasised when framing occurs, which if isolated from the rest of the installation looks like an abstract geometric easel painting. Outside of the corridor, lines run together in different configurations or blend into each other. This induces a momentary sense of order or resolution, that one has found a stable element with which to make sense of the piece (Fig. 199). This illusion is the correlative of the 'defined point of view' of Baroque perspective which creates a psychological as well as a spatial tension between art and its viewer. The illusion however is quickly shattered when one takes a further step and the lines of rope are no longer are synchronous (Fig.200). Different spatial volumes and configurations play against the perceived flatness of a moment ago.

This absence or loss of 'a point of view' can be correlated with Benson's postmodern 'no point of view,' discussed above. The resultant uncertainty challenges our common sense reliance upon notions of location, boundary and 'point of view.' They lead to a questioning of well-established habits within the perceptual process, but also by implication, to deeper areas of human experience about time and space and the mystery of man's place within both. Ireland's installations place the 'self' of the viewer not only into an ambivalant boundary between coherence and fragmentation as it relates to actual space, but also by implication, as it relates to other metaphorical spaces which includes the 'self' and 'others.'

In addition, while inside the rope corridor, travelling in either direction towards the symmetrically placed pyramids at either end, one remembers the pyramid behind while looking at its complementary other. It is as if one is looking two ways simultaneously, one kind of looking which is seeing, and the other, like much looking, which is blind. This play on symmetry and asymmetry is a constant element of Ireland's Rope installations in which the frontality of the painted wall configurations are formal elements which relate to the symmetry of the human body.

Within the corridor too, another part of the grammar becomes clear. While inside of the corridor, one is doubly inside, since one is also inside the box of the gallery itself. While outside of the corridor, on the other hand, one is still inside the gallery and so one is inside and outside at the same time. This is a favourite theme of O'Doherty/Ireland's, as we have seen, which, in part at least, was inspired from looking at an Edward Hopper's painting, and Hopper's answer when asked about it, stating that he was trying to paint 'inside' and 'outside' at the same time (Fig. 201). [493] It will be remembered that twenty years earlier O'Doherty had written about Hopper in the first chapter of his *American Masters* (1974). Of course it also refers subtley to that self-consciousness induced by these works, of being aware of yourself looking and being looked at (by the work, and perhaps other spectators, the invisible artist), which parallels episodes in life whereby we apprehend time, space and our presence within the flow of both. In Ireland's art, he wishes to diminish the division between inside (the mind) and outside (the body) so that they work in concert with each other as in performer and music, dancer and dance. This blurring of the binary 'inside/outside' we have already seen as a feature of O'Doherty/Ireland's 'open' labyrinths and Ogham Sculptures. The concept shall be discussed in greater depth with the theme of identity in Chapter 4.

With Ireland's Rope Drawings there is what was described by an early reviewer as an "insidious ability to get inside one's head and undergo there, if not in reality, certain transformations." [494] Gradually, and often when the piece has been vacated, does the realisation come at one level, that 'order' and 'chaos,' meaning and knowledge, are

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[493] Ireland lecture, 1995. The remark is also quoted in the chapter on Hopper in O'Doherty's *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth* (1974; ed. 1988), p. 26.

constructs within the mind, which the work so discretely proposes. One realises that the space of the gallery, like any space, or water, or air, has no inherent shape or structure, has been constructed to organise experience and inflect it in certain ways. Ireland's work plays with and juxtaposes complexities of experience with tremendous skill, subtlety and restraint. The openness of both structure and conception work literally and metaphorically in opposition to traditional Western aesthetics, while at the same time providing works of elegance, warmth and vitality. Another writer accurately sums up Ireland's baroque spaces:

> " Really, it is a drawing in and of space—an elliptical design turned to dance, a score (one that plays the room) for the mind's eye to read. It occurs in the gallery but recurs (and so exists properly) only in memory." [495]

Jo Allen, in a review of *Borromini's Corridor*, after noting the interest in contemporary art in rethinking architectural space and one's understanding of a personal and social 'self' through one's positioning within it, states:

> " What distinguishes Ireland's work is the airiness of the rope divisions. They open up myriad possibilities of movement and views, while simultaneously predetermining specific vantage points for the intended perspective. It's a strange amalgam of modernist emphasis on the artist's intentions and a more postmodern concern with multiple entries and references...Despite several visits, I failed to sense any illusory change of scale, as with Borromini...overall Ireland's piece fails to carry the impact and significance expected...." [496]

However Alannah Hopkin senses the allusion to Borromini in a less literal way, remarking:

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[494] Thomsen (1974), pp. 113-114.

[495] Foster (1980), pp. 84-85.

"The perspective created by the ropes plays unpredictable tricks with perception, distorting the viewer's sense of distance and scale...while the different moods created by the two colour schemes add to the excitement of the experience.This is installation art of a high order." [497]

Yet another reviewer Mark Ewart, found that the way in which the viewer became a function of the mechanism of the installation, and the way the painted geometric shapes assumed an almost three-dimensional priority, were amongst the piece's strongest points.[498]

In 1967 O'Doherty had produced a conceptual art photographic/text work which referred to Joyce entitled, *Past, Present, Future (Portrait of the Artist Aet. 7)* (Fig. 202). In February 1985, his alter ego Ireland, returned to a dialogue with Joyce in an installation, *The Purgatory of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, Homunculus, Four Spatial/Verbal Propositions,* Rope Drawing No. 74, at the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College Dublin (Fig. 203). The reference to Purgatory in the title was suggested to him by Thomas MacGreevy's description of Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* (1939) as an image of Purgatory, the place between Heaven and Hell in Catholic doctrine.[499] Ireland's *Purgatory* became the visual equivalent of James Joyce's literary labyrinth, *Finnegan's Wake.*

This was the first all-gallery installation by a single artist,[500] as well as one of the early sound installations in Ireland. Auditory space and visual space became linked to language, the Irish literary tradition and the actual space of the gallery in the city of two emigrant artists. Joyce's own advice that his book was better read aloud in order to hear its rhythms, was suggested by a speaker on one wall which emitted, in low volume, the opening lines of the *Wake.* On the opposite wall another speaker recited a "litany" of

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[496] Allen (1995), p. 65.

[497] Hopkin, *The Sunday Times*, 1/10/95.

[498] Ewart, *The Irish Times*, 8/11/95.

[499] Ireland letter to Mia Lerm-Hayes with copy to author, 1999a.

[500] Murphy interview with author, 1999.

phrases drawn from the text, the randomised breaking of the text being inspired by John Cage.[501] Each phrase received the communal response, "Pray for us." The artist explains:

> " You couldn't avoid the Rosary in my house when I was a kid, so with this litany I blasphemed both the Church and Joyce...Joyce was...(not)... entirely my cup of tea, genius though he is. His dark wing lay over Irish letters for a long time. [502]

In the "difficult" architectural space of the gallery, Ireland made a drawing which drew together many of the sub-striatal layers of consciousness in Joyce's book. The dreamlike quality of the book was suggested by painting the walls a shadowy grey colour. Joyce's sabotaging of the expectation of linguistic narrative sense and meaning was evoked by carving up space into segments by means of a single line. Preparatory drawings show that this line was conceived of as a string of words from the text, which ricocheted dynamically from wall to floor to ceiling (Figs. 204, 205, 206). The line ended at a desk and chair, from which the wandering spectator would find that the little tilted mannikin, H.C.E., (its triangle mimicking the phallic Wellington Monument of the sleeping H.C.E. in the *Wake*), became framed by the rope and appeared to float off the wall (Fig. 207).

In this multi-layered work, Ireland demonstrates the visual equivalent of "commodius vicus of recirculation." [503] "Vicus of recirculation" conjures up Gianbattista Vico (1688-1744), the Neapolitan philosopher of history, who thought of history as a series of cycles alternating with periods of chaos. Joyce's phrase therefore, is as interlaced as the Celtic design of the *Book of Kells* in the Old Library adjacent to the Gallery containing Ireland's contemporary labyrinth. In the context of Purgatory, Ireland shared with Joyce an emigrant background shrouded in anger, love and Catholic guilt:

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[501] Ireland letter 1999a.

[502] Ibid.

[503] " Commodius" refers to the Roman emperor, but also to the etymological root of the word "commodius," meaning "convenient, roomy." "Vicus" is the Latin for "village", and so "roomy village" (of recirculation of history).

"Joyce was also the quintessential emigrant, with geography and guilt flowing in his veins...My generation (in the fifties) left accompanied by a degree of anger. At least I did. " [504]

But, he also shared the notion of re-establishing the body as the locus of language, as he had done in many other works, like his *Vowel Grid* Structural Play. [505] With this Rope Drawing, Ireland shows a conviction and determination to engage on equal terms with a giant of the Irish and international literary world, in much the same way he had earlier engaged with a giant of art, Duchamp. Umberto Eco's words regarding Joyce's Tower of Babel, *Finnegan's Wake*, quoted by Seamus Deane, might appropriately be applied to Ireland's art:

(Joyce) "has prepared a machinery of suggestion which, like any complex machine, is capable of operating beyond the original intentions of its builder." [506]

Dorothy Walker, who wrote the catalogue essay for the exhibition, reviewing it later notes that it effortlessly dominated the "difficult" space of the gallery, in which it, in common with Ireland's other Rope Drawings, appeared:

"...seemingly very simple in their visual means, they invariably engender complex perceptions on perspective, spatial relationships, aesthetic stimulation and incursions into other art forms such as literature, music, cinema ("Kane") and Borromini's architecture ("Borromini's Underpass"). [507]

The cyclical rather than linear structure of O'Doherty/Ireland's *oeuvre* is evident by the most recent Rope Drawing, *Box* (2001) (Figs.208), which recalls his first solo exhibition at the Byron Gallery in 1966, in which he exhibited a number of box pieces.

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[504] Ireland letter, 1999a.

[505] Deane (1992).

[506] Ibid., p. xlviii.

[507] Walker (1985b), p. 57

(Appendix B). Yet another early box, *Aspen 5/6* (1967) was exhibited alongside this latest installation, inviting parallels to be drawn in time and space, not only within this artist's *oeuvre*, but also between the conditions for art then and now to which both work and his artistic personae had contributed. Finally, the range of O'Doherty/Ireland's art and its engagement with other areas of human knowledge can be ascertained by the following list. The author has placed his Rope Drawings into various categories according to their titles. 24 out of a total of 108 Rope Drawings were excluded, since they do not have titles (other then *Untitled*). The remaining 84 on the list demonstrate how broadly O'Doherty/Ireland has drawn upon an wide spectrum of topics which form part of the multiple layers of content in his installations. Some, marked with an asterisk, overlap with other assigned categories.[508]

Language

- *Phonic Grid* (1973)
- *Rimbaud's Cradle* (1983)
- *Big A (1984)*
- *Purgatory-Four Spatial / Verbal Propositions* (1985)*
- *Present Conditional* (1986)
- *Red H* (1989)

Art

- *Thin Drawing (1977)*
- *Corner for Tatlin & Fred Astaire (1979)**
- *Eddie's Window (1983)* (Hopper)*
- *2D in 3D (1986)*
- *Women of Algiers (1987) (Delacroix)*
- *Trecento (1987)*
- *Flann O'Brien at 11, Rue Larray (1996)* (Duchamp)*
- *Entrance to the Garden of Earthly Delights (1998) (Bosch's Millennium Triptych)*

[508] See Appendix E for full list of Rope Drawings (1973-2001)

Architecture

- *One Drawing in Two Rooms (1975)*
- *Corner (1975)*
- *Sky Light (1975)*
- *Stairwell (1976)*
- *Inverted Pyramid (1977)*
- *Corner Line (1977)*
- *Ceiling (1978)*
- *Camera (1978)*
- *Raum (1978)*
- *Casino (1978)*
- *Floating Pyramid (1979)*
- *Untitled Corner (1979)*
- *Inside Out Room (1979)*
- *Red Room (1980)*
- *Borromini's Underpass (1980)*
- *Borromini's Portal (1980)*
- *Roof Garden (1982)*
- *Eddie's Window (1983)**
- *Blue Room (1983)*
- *Dark Corner (1985)*
- *Petra (1987)*
- *Fountain 11 (1991)*
- *Humbert's Motel (1993)*
- *Borromini's Corridor (1995)*
- *Michael's Corner (1997)*
- *White Column (1998)*
- *Box (2001)*

Vision

- *Two Blind Spots (1977)*
- *Rear-View Mirror (1987)*
- *Inverted Pyramid for Cyclops (1990)**

Cinema

- *Screen 1 (1976)*
- *Screen 11 (1976)*
- *Cinemascope (1979)*
- *Kane (1984)*
- *Caligari's Palace (1993)*

Myth

- *Inverted Pyramid for Cyclops (1990)**
- *Omphalos (1992)*

Science/Medicine

- *Newton's Rings (1974)*
- *DIAID: In Memory of Lost Friends (1989)*

Politics

- *In Memoriam (1986)*
- *Peacekeeper (1988)*
- *Big H/ H-Block (1989)*
- *East/West (1990)*

Music

- *String Quartet (1982)*
- *Morton's Journey (1987)*

Literature

- *Rimbaud's Cradle (1983)**
- *Purgatory: Four Spatial/Verbal Propositions (1985)**
- *Flann O'Brien at 11, Rue Larray (1996)**

Location/Dance/Movement

- *Corner for Floating (1977)*
- *On the Edge (1978)*
- *Wallenda (1978)*
- *Cornered (1979)*
- *Corner for Tatlin & Fred Astaire (1979)**
- *Without Ropes (1981)*
- *Catenary (1981)*
- *Double Up in Blue & Grey (1982)*
- *Rimbaud's Cradle (1983)**
- *Double Scoop (1984)*
- *End Zone (1986)*
- *Promenade (1998)*

Mathematics/Geometry

- *One Triangle,Three Ones (1975)*
- *The Angle in the Triangle (1976)*
- *Standing Magic Square (1976)*
- *Yellow Rectangle (1977)*
- *Yellow Square (1979)*

Outdoor Works

- *Skywalker (1975)*
- *Sky Mark (1975)*
- *Papillion (1976)*

Uncatagorised

- *Yellow Light (1976)*
- *The Tennis Court Oath (1986)*
- *Remote Control (1986)*
- *Ingeborg's Egyptian "I" (1992)*
- *House Call (1986)*

3.6.1. The Issue of Impermanence

One of the consequences of the impermanence of installation art in general has been the need to document its existence. For many artists, including Ireland, this has generally been in the form of drawings and photographs. Earlier in his career however, he was not interested in preserving records of his work, preferring to rely upon personal rather than historical memory, for their preservation. A few years later he altered his position saying:

> "Now I've gotten older and more impermanent. In the past two years, I'm changing a bit. I want to have some pieces around permanently. I'm not fully clear on what terms. I'm thinking about that now." [509]

Ireland has recorded some of his Rope Drawings in an artist's book, as we have seen above in *The Book of Rope Drawings* (1973) (Fig.53). He also documented some in the form of post-exhibition drawings such as, *Corner for Tatlin and Fred Astaire* (1979) (Fig.209), *The Red Room* (1980) (Fig.210), *Borromini's Underpass* (1980) (Fig.211), *String Quartet (4 Corners)* (1983) (Fig.212), *Rimbaud's Cradle* (1983) (Fig.120); *Drawing for Big A* (1984) (Fig.213); *The Purgatory of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, Homunculus* (1985) (Figs.214). For his installations in which multiple viewpoints depend upon movement and the play between dimensions, these drawings provide a greater sense of the construction of the original installation compared with photographs. In the latter,

both the view and the spectator become freeze-framed, as it were, within the moment captured by the photograph. Memory consequently, for Ireland's work, becomes an important component. It is not the communal memory of history however to which his work deliberately appeals, but the personal subjective memory of each spectator. Art, for this artist, becomes lodged in the memory only if it has sufficently defamiliarised the viewing context and commanded attention. Habitual viewing processes have to be adjusted in other words, in order to see. The earlier O'Doherty work, *Between Categories* (1957-68), which we saw above, revealed an awareness of the conditions necessary to achieving the maximum response from his audience (Figs. 112-114). Ireland later uses this vocabulary to maximum effect in the Rope Drawings.

'Location' or 'place,' as we have seen, is a recurring element in O'Doherty/Ireland's art whether Structural Plays, Labyrinths, or Ogham Sculptures. This is also of importance in the Rope Drawings, where it is linked specifically to memory. O'Doherty's remarks when discussing art of the 1970s are revealing in the context of his own work:

> "Location is the key word. It telescopes concerns about "where" (space) and "how" (perception). "What" is perceived is less important." [510]

Carl Andre's abbreviated chronology of modern sculpture's history therefore (sculpture as form, sculpture as structure and, sculpture as place),[511] is confirmed in Ireland's Ropes so that:

> "...people eventually came to perceive it not so much as an art-work, but as a place that happened through them..."[512]

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[509] Ireland Statement, February 1979. Research revealed that since this Statement, a small number of works like *One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle* (1996), and *Promenade* (1998), have been permanently installed in Cork and Kalamazoo respectively.

[510] O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1986), p. 78.

[511] See Bourdon (1966; ed. 1995), pp. 103-108.

[512] Ireland letter (1984), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 13.

Many artists in the 1970s were also concerned with the consumerist approach to art which led some to avoid making objects. While it is true that art-objects of any kind will be remembered by a viewer for any number of subjective reasons which may have nothing to do with the idea or possibility of possession, installations nevertheless offer a new kind of viewing which is broader experientially and in terms of its implications. While the avoidance of making objects for consumption in part informed the idea of impermanence for O'Doherty/Ireland, there was also the closely allied utopianism of the icon of modernism, the gallery. Many felt, as O'Doherty outlined in *Inside the White Cube,* that one of Modernism's fatal problems had been the transposition of perception from life to formal values encoded and validated by the museum or gallery. [513] This institutional critique, begun by some conceptual artists in the late 1960s, became an even more pressing issue in the 1970s, but one not without some paradoxes for artists. Artists like Ireland, whose approach was more pragmatic than ideological, tended to absorb the contradictions inherent in mounting a critique at the same time as using those same institutions to present their work. Morris addresses the problem as follows in a 1985 interview:

> " I think there's always pressure from these institutions that one has to deal with from the very beginning all the way through. They don't let up. Either you are inside or outside, and there are contradictions that you have to deal with all the time." [514]

In Ireland's Rope Drawings, while there is undoubtedly the desire to preserve his art's "commercial viginity," there is also the intention of creating an occupied space which becomes remembered.[515]

> "Memory," he states in 1999, " (so disregarded by modernism which frequently tries to remember the future by forgetting the past) completes the work..." [516]

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[513] O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1986), p. 15.

[514] Morris interview 1985, in *October 70* (1994), p. 54.

The gallery becomes, in other words, a place linked to experience rather than a space with art in it to be looked at. The spectator thus becomes part of the content about whom Ireland remarks:

> "I asked more of an audience than I thought I did when I began years ago...I thought a lot about him/her and learned how to endow a position or place with magnetism or its opposite, making vistas and pathways, viewpoints and look-outs (and look-ins) where the curious spectators (curiosity being a great ally) would find their body taking them...Like every building we occupy or pass through, every installation involves matters of control, movement, usage, hierarchies of space, habit, diverse function; it deals with entrances and exits, encounters and avoidances, the individual and the crowd...All this is process, the spectator's process." [517]

Ireland cites F.C. Bartlett's *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (1932), as a key text for his own work.[518] Echoed throughout his work is Bartlett's insistence that remembering is never independent but is embedded within the context of action and the social conditioning; his differentiation between individual and group memory; how for both the past is continually being re-made, reconstructed in the interests of the present; and how this in turn is coloured by temperament, character and preferred tendencies within the group.[519]

While Ireland's ephemeral art may not reach a wide audience, arguably, for those who have seen and participated in these works, they become part of the larger interior

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[515] Ireland interview, 1986.

[516] O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1999), p. 88.

[517] Ireland letter (1990a), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), pp. 26-27.

[518] Bartlett (1932). Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

[519] Ibid., p. 109.

landscape of the imagination, the Celtic "fifth province" which constructs memory. [520] A further aspect of the ephemeral nature of Ireland's installations is that since they cannot be revisited indefinitely, the attention invested in them is heightened by a greater sense of urgency. Underlying them also, is the basic fact of the ephemeral nature of our own existence.

While most installations encode memory, others do so in a more specific way. *In Memoriam*, Rope No. 79, in 1986 at Kent State University for example, was a Rope piece in which a white painted pentagon on the wall surrounded by black, became a perfect black-edged rectangle framed by the rope at a certain place in the gallery. The artist's personal memory informs the structure of the piece to a degree, the rectangular shape derived from the artist's own memory of white black-edged memorial cards belonging to his mother. [521] The installation in the place where the National Guard shot four students dead during an anti-Vietnam War demonstration in 1970, was designed to provoke communal and individual memory for those who might have been there at the time (Fig. 215). For others who were not there, the piece stalled the process of forgetting. Lucy Lippard recalls that the "Information" show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1970, although based on art-concerns regarding systems and information theory, was however " transformed by the national rage attending Kent State and Cambodia..." [522] *Morton's Journey*, Rope No. 86, Artspace, San Francisco, September 1987, on the other hand, was constructed to evoke memory in a different context. This Rope stimulated in both construction and content, memories of the composer and his music with two "movements" between two rooms, each of a different mood and rhythm (Figs. 216, 217, 218).

Ireland has continued to make ephemeral installations which have the dual function of energising gallery space and avoiding the market. The following statement in

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[520] There are geographically four provinces in Ireland: Ulster, Munster, Leinster, Connacht. The fifth, as noted above, is the province of myth, the five-fold structure deriving from the old Irish word, *coiced* or a fifth. See Dames (1992), p. 15. See (Figs. 69 a,b) above.

[521] Ireland interview, 1986.

[522] Lippard (1973; ed. 1997), p. xix.

1979 is quoted in full as it reveals the evolution of his thinking about the fate of these works:

> "If you do installations you have to have an attitude to the temporary. We're all pretty temporary anyway, and we have to develop an attitude to that. When I started doing installations in 1973, I wanted them to be temporary. I wasn't interested in records, and indeed the records of most of my pieces is poor, which doesn't bother me. I was interested in placing something in the memory, so that it would be available to a person now. I wasn't interested in historical memory. Just personal memory...Transcending your death by your work still seems to me a bourgeois romantic idea. If you don't feel this way, you have a very free attitude to museums and critics and the historical process...To survive in people's memory is not a small ambition, I think. We're all in the midst of relationships, things, problems clutter our minds. In all this the temporary is a great stimulus to memory. There is no second chance, no repeated tenancy of the work...We never know what is happening to us until later. That's a problem in consciousness. Things look different when you're twenty, thirty, forty. The same thing, that is. Identity isn't a constant...So the life of things in memory is important, we are all curators of that unruly faculty, which has its own time and space...[523]

The terms and conditions upon which Ireland has dealt with the issue of the temporary since this time can be seen in the Patrick Ireland Museum in Todi, Italy. There, he has been making wall-paintings and Rope Drawing installations which function as his own summary record of thirty years of various categories of work since the late 1960s. They include "I" wall paintings (Chapter 4); a dotted grid wall painting (Fig. 219), and wall painted Ogham panels which recall the fascination for vowels, on the right, and the 'I/Thou' theme, on the left (Figs. 220). The *One, Here, Now* theme, is painted here in separate wall-painted panels (Figs. 221, 222). Finally, the the interest in cubic forms is recorded in another series of wall paintings (Figs. 223).

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[523] Ireland statement, February 1979.

The artist relates how, even though surrounded by the spectacular scenery of the Umbrian countryside, the Museum/house itself does not have such views, being situated in the heart of a medieval town. So to compensate for that, he opened up the wall spaces, humorously providing a sea-view for a house situated many kilometers from the sea (Fig. 224). [524] The Museum also records Ireland's Rope Drawings, one of which, *The Times of Day Cycle* exploits the dialectical motif of interior and exterior so prevalent in his work. It also refers to fresco cycles of Italian art as in *One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle* (1996) above in Chapter 2 (Figs. 225 a,b). Another, *Trecento* (Rope Drawing No. 85) (Figs. 226), also alludes to Italian medieval art through its form and colour, as well as to the ubiquitous small devotional alters to be seen in Italian towns and throughout the countryside (Figs. 227). Lastly, the longtime use of systems in Ireland's art is recalled by the wall painting in the sitting room (Fig. 228).

To some, the creation of a museum dedicated to one's own work indicates an alteration of attitude to the temporary, and therefore a lack of consistency. Yet this would miss the point. While it could be argued that the anti-institutional critique had been partially successful in general, to be the creator of one's own museum on one's own terms is the ultimate artistic freedom, one sought by artists since the ninteenth century. Courbet, Manet and the Impressionists all created alternative spaces to the Salon.[525] So the desire to make art in an entirely new context, the domestic vernacular one of the artist's own house, as well as making art in the form of wall-paintings which cannot be bought, is not inconsistent with the thrust of Ireland's *oeuvre*. As pointed out by Victoria Newhouse in her book, *Towards a New Museum* (1998), Ireland's paintings in the Patrick Ireland Museum, bear an affinity to Kurt Schwitter's transformation of the interior of his Hannover apartment into an artwork with *Merzbau* (1923-37) (Fig. 64).[526] Here in Ireland's "alternative space," the everyday activities of eating and sleeping co-exist in the same space as art. Life and art are fused in a symbiotic union. It certainly could not be farther removed from a "White Cube."

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[524] Ireland interview with author, 1998b.

[525] Newhouse (1998), p. 103.

[526] Ibid., p. 133.

Ireland's Museum then, and his attitude to the temporary can be seen as a continuation of his on-going critical dialogue with the Modernist gallery/museum. In the 1970s, Brian O'Doherty, when director of visual arts at the National Endowment of the Arts, negotiated a grant of $30,000 for innovative arts programs, one of which became known, as "alternative spaces" for artists, a term he in fact had coined.[527] These non-profit making enterprises, of which Jeffrey Lew's at 112, Greene Street, New York, was one of the first, were run by artists for artists. In the Patrick Ireland Museum therefore, the museum as subject matter has been given yet another formulation, that of high art in the non-idealized space of a domestic environment familiar to everyone. [528]

3.6.2. Ireland and Other Installation Artists

A comparison between Ireland's Rope Drawings and the work of other significant practitioners of installation, reveals that his work demonstrates a number of distinguishing features. Few artists have been able to demonstrate perceptual illusion and its fictions so well as Ireland. Other writers have expressed this in different ways. Elizabeth Broun states for example that: " The more places that Ireland sets his traps for experience, the more he shows that it can't be held." [529] Hal Foster, reviewing *Borromini's Portal*, Rope No. 58 (1980) (Fig.187), remarks: "We become less aware of unity than of unity's illusion" [530] Ratcliff suggests that Ireland's installations guide us to odd vistas where we see that something beyond daily usefulness is at stake, one where, among other things, the tensions in modern society between the individual and society's institutions is symbolised as points of view:

> "With their play on the theme of individual viewpoints, Ireland's rope drawings...provide gaps between systems, openings between self-enclosed

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[527] " ...the term "alternative space" is credited to the critic and artist Brian O'Doherty..." See Phillips in New York (2000), p. 258.

[528] Other examples of single artist museums are Donald Judd's at Marfa, Texas and Museum for Jackson Pollock, Long Island, designed by Peter Blake. Newhouse (1998).

[529] Broun in Washington D.C. (1986), p. 10.

[530] Foster (1980), pp. 84-85.

fictions, elusive free-zones that usher vision to points of view from which the fictionality of our fictions, personal and cultural, come into view. ...He seems the dry analyst at first. Then as you watch him confounding thought's claim to authority, he leads you to the abyss where all that coheres, if that, is the will decked out in its "bric-a-brac" of personal identity." [531]

He compares Ireland's Rope pieces to Pollock's large dripped paintings which make the viewer feel physically involved in their alloverness. Drawing comparisons with Pollock's gestures and Newman's evocation of limitless light, Ratcliff concludes that Ireland had achieved an alloverness of concept which provides his work with an unexpectedly strong charge:

" Ireland's vision of "chaos" puts him in the company of those artists, Romantic and modern, who have invoked the sublime." [532]

Others have compared Ireland's art with that of Sol LeWitt, so the work of the two artists is next examined in order to see if, and how, it intersects in terms of systems, anti-authorialism, and the visual and kinaesthetic response. Jan van der Marck found some fundamental differences. He points to Ireland's use of three-dimensions in 1973 as opposed to two in LeWitt's monochrome wall paintings around the same time. Also regarding Ireland's first painted room *Camera* (Fig.173), in 1978, he states that Ireland "divided the walls into discrete chromatic patterns in a manner that anticipated Sol LeWitt's later treatments..." In 1978, he continues, LeWitt went only as far as providing varied coloured backgrounds for different linear configurations:

"The architectural treatment of walls and the space between those walls with the sole means of rope, string, line and color is Ireland's invention." [533]

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[531] Ratcliff (1987), p. 102.

[532] Ibid.

Sandler in a catalogue essay in 1982, places LeWitt, along with Stella, Flavin, Judd and Andre, into his first category of contemporary constructivists. This, as outlined above, is Minimalist and aestheticist. He suggests that they are primarily interested in using systems "only as a pretext for making new art," or art-for-art's sake for which Reinhardt is the mentor. He relates Ireland's art to LeWitt's by their mutual use of systems in which the concept is clear yet there is perceptual confusion, citing LeWitt's open cubes and Ireland's serial work based on the Ogham alphabet. [534] While this observation may hold true, it is the contention of this dissertation that while some concerns overlap between Ireland and LeWitt, the use of systems and anti-authorialism for example, there are also those which do not. While LeWitt fits into Sandler's Minimalist/aestheticist category, Ireland fits only partially into it, but also fits into Sandler's second category of the scientific and social. LeWitt's art does not engage with issues outside of the art system while Ireland's clearly does with such socio/political works as: *In Memoriam*, Rope No 79, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, September 1986; *DIAID: IN Memory of Lost Friends,* Rope No 91, Fuller Gross Gallery, San Francisco, May 1989, a response to the Aids crisis (Figs. 229); *H-Block*, Rope No. 92, Orpheus Gallery, Belfast, Northern Ireland, June 1989 (discussed below); and just after the fall of the Berlin Wall, *East/West*, Rope No. 93, Galerie Hoffman, Friedberg, Germany, March 1990.[535]

LeWitt's anti-authorial working methods too, differ markedly from Ireland's, in that LeWitt becomes more like a designer or architect of ideas which are then executed by others. In 1967, he had stated, " The idea, even if not made visible is as much a work of art as any finished product." [536] O'Doherty/Ireland, on the other hand, conceives of the idea and its execution as being inextricably intertwined: "Originality is not in the idea,

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[533] Van der Marck in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 9.

[534] Sandler in New York (1982), n.p.

[535] It is a point worth noting that all of these socio/political installations as well as similar works categorised by the artist as 'gestures,' all refer to specific and significant shifts within political and social life.

[536] LeWitt (1967), in Harrison & Wood (1992), p. 836.

but in the means..." [537] It has also been a notable feature of O'Doherty/Ireland's art from the beginning, that the artist's hand is used consistently, even in his most conceptual image-and-text works of the 1960s. So the approach to authorship is quite different. Ireland retains an intimate role in all stages of production of his art, and yet at the same time, paradoxically, maintains a distancing of the artist. The radical problematization of the artist's name is an example of this particular aspect of authorship within his work which has not been adequately addressed within critical writing so far, yet it is one which sets his work apart from others of his generation. It forms part of the discussion in Chapter 4.

O'Doherty/Ireland from the late 1960s, also found highly inventive ways of incorporating language and the philosophical issues surrounding it into his art, as we have seen, which sets it apart from other conceptual artists, including LeWitt. The latter has like others, used language in his art, but not in such a novel and consistent manner as O'Doherty/Ireland. In addition, Ireland's installations and wall paintings engage in a more direct physical manner than LeWitt's with the conditions of viewing. LeWitt introduced coloured backgrounds for his wall drawings in 1975 and these became bolder after he moved to Italy to live in the 1980s. More recently, illusionistic geometry plays with two and three-dimensions in his wall-paintings which remain however on the surface where they rely upon the eye and monumental scale for their impact (Figs. 230, 231). Ireland's spatial and painted configurations, by contrast, change from moment to moment through the random movement of the viewer, producing dynamic ever-changing compositions in space which implicate the viewer in a highly participatory manner (Figs. 232, 233). The open transparency heightens the keeness of vision and attention, just as the weightlessness of the thin ropes makes the viewer acutely aware of their own bodily presence and crucially in Ireland's art, of the passage of time as one moves around the installation. Like LeWitt's geometric sculptures but unlike his wall paintings, Ireland's installations which initially suggest a rigorous system, ultimately reveal the collapse of such a perception.

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[537] Ireland Notebooks (1973-1977), in La Jolla (1977), n.p.

Lastly, exemplifying Sandler's second category, Ireland's art as already noted, often engages with issues beyond the gallery space, and by so doing, it has the potential to stimulate the personal and social experience of the viewer in an unique way. As early as 1974, in a review of Ireland's Rope Drawing, *Cradle* (Fig.234), and his linear and dot drawings at the "Large Drawings" exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery, Barbara Thomsen made the astute observation:

> " And though one naturally sees resemblances to the work of certain familiar figures (in this case Sol LeWitt and Agnes Martin come to mind), the highly specific range of Ireland's concerns resists the predictable interpretations which rely on such leaps and linkages." [538]

Carter Ratcliff also saw distinctions between LeWitt's imagery and Ireland's drawings on paper:

> " ... elements of LeWitt's images look as though they cling to one another with an esthetic equivalent of magnetic attraction. Ireland's elements only brush up against each other...Their look of coherence or necessity disappears under pressure from a close viewing." [539]

Another early installation artist, Fred Sandback has used string constructions from the late 1960s, which play spatially with the gallery. His work shares Ireland's concern with overturning predetermined viewing assumptions and experience but unlike Ireland, though they both began in Minimalism, his work has remained minimal. He has not chosen to elaborate on a relational spatial play between his lines of string and painting of the surrounding walls (Fig. 235). Both artists installed work at P.S.1 in "Rooms P.S.1" in June, 1976. Ireland at this early stage was creating spaces which were more directly interactive compared with Sandback's piece (Figs. 236, 237). Unlike Ireland also, his

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[538] Thomsen (1974), p. 113.

[539] Ratcliff (1987), p. 102.

work does not appear to refer to issues beyond the gallery or to involve language, and in this sense, his work, to this viewer, while refined and minimal does not have the same degree or range of complexity, engagement, and content as Ireland's.

Art–historically, it is also important to point out that within the context of Minimalism/conceptualism's discourse surrounding the art-object, Sandback, LeWitt and Ireland's installations carry that issue into new territory in different ways, by decentring in spatial, optical and physical terms, the spectator's attention from objects. In Ireland's art specifically, an essential part of the construction is the realisation of the inherent relativity of the viewing experience. This moment of recognition of space and one's own pivotal role within it, although different for each spectator, is more readily apparent compared with either LeWitt or Sandback's work: LeWitt's stays on the wall, while Sandback's stays where Ireland's began thirty years before. Ireland's installations carry the greater possibility of each viewer finding their own unique way of seeing, the moment of human connection to art by virtue of their immense range of content compared with either LeWitt or Sandback. Although LeWitt paints walls, they do not have the same function as Ireland's painted walls in which the illusion relies on more than the eye and formal values. Although Sandback uses string which interacts with the surrounding architecture, it does not activate the architectural environment with the same degree of energy and invention of Ireland's Rope Drawings.

CHAPTER 4: IDENTITY

"Any identity is a fiction. None of us has one. Disperse all identities as widely as possible. To look in the mirror and see no reflection." [540]

"I speak of "I," and that notion of myself...is strange to me, for there are several persons I have met in recent months, all of them myself." [541]

"To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim." [542]

"Je est un autre." [543]

The issue of the 'self,' particularly since the intervention of Freud, is surely one of the critical issues of the 20th century and as such it dominates the chat shows of popular culture as much as receiving the intellectual scrutiny of philosophers, cultural historians and artists. William James in 1890 conducted the first scientific study of the 'self,' suggesting a tripartite model of the physical, social and spiritual 'self' of which each has multiple discrete parts. The social 'self' therefore has as many social selves as there are individuals who know you, and so others are intricately involved in self-conception and self-perception. James' view that identity is determined by societal and cultural values and is therefore variable, has been supported by recent scholarship in the field of cognitive psychology:

"We create our minds ad hoc in the course of carrying on our lives. Stabilities and unities in these creations create the illusion of inner selves, but they have no more independent existence than the selves we produce ad hoc for others, which they

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[540] From Ireland Notebooks (1973-77), in La Jolla, California (1977).

[541] From novel by O'Doherty (1992), p. 151.

[542] Wilde (ed. 1963), Preface to *Dorian Gray*.

[543] Rimbaud (1854-91), in letter (1871) quoted in Dorra (1994; ed. 1995), p. 138.

may or may not confirm, and so bring more concretely into existence. At most this array of selves has the status of a vortex in the flow of the river." [544]

This idea of the 'self' has been opposed however, by the classical Western concept of identity, of one person perceiving and acting from one position in space and time, the first-person viewpoint. In short, what is at issue is the stability and unity of selfhood versus its multiplicity and inherent instability. As shall become clear in this Chapter, it is the latter viewpoint to which O'Doherty/Ireland's art is directed.

'Location,' as we have seen, provides a useful conceptual construct for demonstrating how O'Doherty/Ireland's triad of thematic concerns are intertwined, so that language and perception become intimately implicated with identity. Much contemporary thinking, for example, considers 'the self' to be a function of location rather than an attribute or a substance. Lives, selves, identities, Benson tells us, are threaded across times and places. For example, the fundamental divisions of the experiential field is 'here/there'; that of the self, 'I/You,' and that of time, 'now/then.' 'Who you are,' and 'what you are,' becomes a function of 'where you are.' Location therefore, is the ontological condition of being since, 'I' can never occur without simultaneously and necessarily deploying 'here' and 'now.' As Benson notes:

> "Human selves are substantially linguistic and dialogical in their construction. Two fundamental constituents of self that enable these dialogues are me/you and I/me. These binaries are intrinsically associated with the spatial here/there binary and the temporal now/then one...In evolutionary terms, the perceptual binaries precede the linguistic ones, as they also do in individual psychological development. Once developed...the perceptual and linguistic binaries work symbiotically." [545]

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[544] Harre (1998), quoted in Benson (2001), p. 90.

[545] Benson (2001), p. 10.

The 'self' and its location in space and time, in other words, are mutually constructive. The 'self' therefore is a psychological system produced by both evolution and culture to help us position ourselves not only in relation to the physical world, but also to the symbolic or metaphorical one of culture. Both evolution and culture work symbiotically to condition 'the self' in physical 'space-time' as well as cultural 'place-time.' Evolution, after all, did not produce laws, signposts, maps, codes of manners, moral codes or politics. It is culture which produces such organisation and categorisation of civic society.[546] This notion of 'place' (as opposed to 'space'), understood as a humanised personalised space inhabited by a body, is an important concept in O'Doherty/Ireland's work, together with the allied concepts of 'dislocation' and 'relocation.' The spatial conditions of perception and its corporeal foundations are found in many different series of works over many decades, but are particularly evident in the Rope Drawings as we have seen above.

The subjectification of space and time is also rooted upon some basic biological facts about the human body: that it has become upright through evolution, and that it is symmetrical bilaterally. In addition, a space is related to our body through language: things are at the 'front' or the 'back,' on the left or right, above or below. The morphology of the body therefore is intimately connected with our perception of both space and language, the other two themes found within O'Doherty/Ireland's art. As we have seen also, throughout his work there are linguistic pointers which relate to the senses and the body and the positioning of the body in terms of a 'here' and a 'there.'

This physical positioning of the 'self' also extends to the realm of the metaphorical. In this context, Jameson's concept of the spatial providing a good means of distinguishing Modernism from post-Modernism and conceptual art is of interest.[547] O'Doherty/Ireland's art provides a good example, where the spatial is constructed as a metaphor for contemplation about the myriad spaces implicated in human experience: mental space, semantic space, political and social space, pictorial space, personal space,

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[546] Ibid., p. x.

[547] Jameson (1991), p. 157.

spiritual space, cosmic space, historical space. In his art, the viewer is conceived of as a social subject defined and marked by ethnic, economic and gender differences.

Central to these concepts also, is the idea of 'boundary' and 'category' with which we try to organise our experiences. A category, as we saw above, can be considered as a kind of metaphorical spatial container into which things are placed so that they are either inside, outside, or at the boundary in between. At what point experientially, for example, does a 'here' become a 'there'; what is the boundary between 'you' and 'me', or 'me as I am now' and 'me as I was then' and so on. The relevance of these ideas to O'Doherty/Ireland's art is evident from an early interest in categories embodied in works discussed above such as, *Between Categories* (1957-68) (Figs. 112-114), and the 'One, Here, Now' linguistic motif which recurs in many different media. The word 'One' occurs repeatedly throughout the *oeuvre* in different media, where it can be taken to stand as proxy for the personal pronoun 'I', which in turn is a proxy for the 'self.' A further persistent motif is 'I/you' seen in the Patrick Ireland Museum wall paintings and the recent easel paintings. William James' suggestion that the 'I' pronoun is "primarily a noun of position, just like 'this' and 'here'," to which all information about the world is felt through the senses of the body in order to create a 'point of view,' is particularly relevant to O'Doherty/Ireland's art. [548] The notion of location, mapping and navigation therefore is inextricably linked to 'point of view', so that the primary binary of 'here/there' become synonymous with 'point of view.' [549] The concept of a changing 'point of view' is, as we have seen, an integral part of the construction and perception of space within Ireland's Rope Drawings, which represents, metaphorically, the constantly changing flow of consciousness.

Descartes ushered in modern philosophy and an inward-looking era of the 'self' with "Cogito, ergo sum," until it was replaced by the philosophy of language by Wittgenstein. With the pervasive influence of semiotics into all intellectual disciplines besides philosophy, the issue of the subject continues to be a matter for analysis and intense discussion. Descartes' question of how we think became a question of how we

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[548] Quoted in Benson (2001), p. 22.

[549] Ibid., p. 7.

speak, yet continuity exists between the two eras in philosophy, as underscored by Naom Chomsky's description of his own revolution in the philosophy of language, as "Cartesian linguistics." [550] In this new radical formulation derived from Saussurian linguistics, language rather than the powers of the human subject became the focal point of the human world in which words were perceived as floating signs which became meaningful only through the shared, agreed usage of groups. With linguistic indeterminacy came the so-called demise of the human subject, conceived of as a corrective to the notion of the powerful autonomous individual who is able to construct his own reality by the use of reason alone. The eclipse of the subject due to linguistic relativity also had repercussions for the concept of history, secular salvation and progress.

It is important to include here the aesthetics of Symbolism as defined by Baudelaire, since it is relevant to the art of O'Doherty/Ireland as we have seen with *Aspen 5/6* (1967) and its dedication to Mallarmé. Although the principal theories of Symbolism were drawn from Romantic aesthetics, there were quite significant points of departure, not least within the area of subjectivity. At the core of the movement was a challenge to the concepts of reality enshrined since the Renaissance on the basis of naturalism. Baudelaire favoured a deliberate distortion of form in terms of line and colour, essential, he thought, for a play of associations, or the successful expression of abstract thought. Another criterion of Symbolist thought of particular interest here, is that related to subjectivity: the artist should try to be an objective observer, as detached as a scientist and yet simultaneously, should seek within himself the full range of human passion. This double state of being both an observer and active participant of life, was characterised by Baudelaire in terms which are applicable to O'Doherty/Ireland's art:

> "The artist can be an artist only on condition that he be double and not ignore any phenomenon related to his double nature." [551]

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[550] Danto (1997), p. 7.

[551] Quoted in Dorra (1994; ed.1995), p. 7.

4.1. The meta-artist

Analogous to philosophy's changing questions was the shift that occurred in art in the late 1950s and early 1960s, so that by the middle of the 1960s a change of sensibility had occurred within radical art with an explosion of art-forms. Art and philosophy became realigned in a new relationship, with linguistics creating the bridge between them. Artists in concert with other intellectual fields like music and literature, became engaged in a comprehensive challenge to modernity around major issues which had emanated from the Enlightenment. Some of these have already been outlined in Chapter 1, but this Chapter is predominantly concerned with the post-Modern revision of a key concept within Western thinking since then, that of individualism or subjectivism.

The construct of 'inside/outside' became central to our ways of thinking and speaking when the dualism of Descartes became married to modern science. The notion that the 'self' has inner depths capable of providing an understanding of the 'self' which is then recreated through language and the arts, became closely allied to that of the mastery of the 'self' and the world, via a scientific attitude. The objective world (the 'outside') could be mastered, the thinking went, with reason (the 'inside') for the betterment of mankind Benson points out that the language of the 'self,' 'self-determination,' self-made,' only appeared in the English language since the 17th century.[552] The mechanisms of both the body and the world which the reasoning of science had revealed became over the centuries invested with moral and political implications in a modern agnostic world. Art, in other words, replaced religion in the modern world. Art became one of the new moral sources in which the artist became the ideal examplar of self-creation and individualism. This ideal in which the artist acted as 'creator-god' or seer, in which 'inner depths' were revealed became with Romanticism, the ideal of self-completion through art. These concepts are of the utmost importance to any proper understanding of the art of O'Doherty/Ireland, but particularly as they relate to the concern with identity.

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[552] Benson (2001), p. 67.

As noted above, during the late 1960s, artists like O'Doherty were aware of the contemporary French philosophical ideas of Barthes and Foucault which questioned the authority of authors and the independence of individual thinkers. Both in effect asserted that the concept of individuality was spurious since people are actually conditioned by their cultural system, that we do not speak language, it speaks us by imposing a particular aesthetics and morality or "discourse" upon us which is a social construction of reality, not reality itself. As Susan Sontag points out by in her essay in *Aspen 5/6,* what many artists wished to critique rather than completely reject, was the absolutism of late Modernism with its hegemonic set of perogatives which were conceived of as universal. In other words, radical artists like O'Doherty and others, attempted to deconstruct the certainty that surrounded cultural and philosophical paradigms by adopting less prescriptive ways of viewing reality, which of course included the human subject. The common phrase of 'finding one's self' was reformulated in a phenomenological context of continual self-constitution through a network of relationships with the world. Merleau-Ponty, much read at the time, puts it this way:

> " Truth does not 'inhabit' only 'the inner man,' or more accurately, there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself. When I return to myself from an excursion into the realm of dogmatic common sense or of science, I find, not a source of intrinsic truth, but a subject destined to be in the world." [553]

O'Doherty/Ireland's attitude is apparent from the following remarks:

> " The great thing about the conceptual/minimal adventure for me was that it wasn't about me...The notion of self-expression was somewhat abhorrent to me (still is). What self are we talking about? Where do you find it? Your identity? What's that? Who am I? Who knows? Least of all me...everyone in the fifties was looking for their identities like a pair of lost scissors. If you listened you

[553] Merleau-Ponty (1962; ed. 1995), p. xi. The 'inner man' has a footnote reference to Saint Augustine.

could hear all those psyches rooting around as if looking for truffles. I never wanted to find my Big I." [554]

and

"Losing the self (was) a significant theme in the decade 1965-75..." [555]

It is not surprising therefore that O'Doherty/Ireland's art shows a concern with all of these complex issues characterised by one writer as his "skirmishes with identity." [556] His strategies as an artist have from the beginning sought not only to evade the commodification of artworks, but also it is argued, the commodification of their author, or the "fame fallacy" as O'Doherty calls it:

" History in art is, ultimately, worth money. Thus we do not get the art we deserve but the art we pay for. This comfortable system went virtually unquestioned by the key figure it is based upon: the artist. The avant-garde artist's relation to his or her social context is made up of contradictions because visual art has a tin can tied to its tail. It makes things." [557]

Part of O'Doherty's strategy in terms of artistic identity has been to deconstruct the traditional Western image of the artist described above. He therefore, it is argued, assumed the role of meta-artist, so that conventions associated with the artist became a theme in itself. In doing so, his aim was to escape entrapment within another's order. Literature, specifically the metafiction of Flann O'Brien provides not only a source, but a useful analogy of aesthetic deconstruction. Rudolf Imhof defines metafiction as:

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[554] Letter to author 2000a.

[555] O'Doherty in Provincetown (1994), p. 16.

[556] Broun in Washington D.C. (1986), p.10.

[557] O'Doherty (1976) in Afterword (1986) p. 109.

"The dominant textual strategies of metafiction are those which make the reader aware that a novel is nothing but an artefact made up of words, or—to adopt one of Beckett's dicta—that telling stories is telling lies." [558]

Hopper, writing about O'Brien, suggests that metafictional works which playfully question the ideology of conventions are shamanistic:

"In any tribe a shaman is a medicine-man; a healer of the relationship between mind and body, between matter and spirit, between people and their environment, between culture and nature." [559]

Given O'Doherty's background in medicine and the present argument relating to metafiction, it is tempting to extend the term to Ireland's practice. For an artist like O'Doherty/Ireland, who is also a poet, novelist and filmmaker, the restrictive nature of visual art's conventions, which he and others contested, logically necessitated an exploration of the concept of the artist. In 1970 he stated to an interviewer:

"I like having a number of streams going at the same time. It's boring to be one person." [560]

A few years later in 1975, Ireland makes revealing remarks about his experience of exile in America:

"America was a jolt, a permanent high. It freed you from the drama of self...You could fulfill numerous and contradictory identities here, so long as they didn't intersect...I've always felt temporary here. I suppose this kind of provisional existence helped me compress widely different experiences into something that

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[558] Quoted in Hopper (1995), p. 5.

[559] Hopper (1995), p. 4.

[560] Ireland statement, December 1975. Published with exhibition, " The Golden Door : Artist Immigrants of America 1976-1976," Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C., 1976.

passed for identity—that is, face value. We rarely live long enough to know what has happened to us. Coming to America was a death and a rebirth and that goes on. I remember with difficulty a series of different lives. So the present one becomes as fictional as the rest. This would not be possible elsewhere. I doubt it can happen to Americans who don't come from elsewhere." [561]

What is argued here is that O'Doherty/Ireland's approach to the issue of artistic identity is probably one of the most radical amongst European and North American artists of the last thirty years, and is as yet, not adequately understood by most commentators. His approach in this respect has more of an affinity with the politically radical attitudes of certain South American Conceptual artists, who also come from a background steeped in colonialism.[562] Further it is argued that the stance taken is a logical outcome of the attitude best-known in literary terms as anti-authorialism. In other words, the adoption of an artistic pseudonym functions as a device that draws attention to and questions the nature of the constructs surrounding the artistic persona itself. Over twenty years before the above quotation, O'Doherty had written that over-academization by art historical methodology, while turning art history into a scholarly discipline, had at the same time been in danger of destroying art and the artist:

" Originality is cut off from its sources of life and killed with academic kindness. And history is frozen too early into patterns that interfere with its natural evolution...A living artist's work, which is essentially fluid and variable, and must be kept so, is quickly fixed into a straitjacket of academic "examination". It's a good artist who can get out of that one, especially when the fitting of the straitjacket is an act of flattery." [563]

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[561] Ireland interview 1975.

[562] See Alberro (1999b), pp. 140-151, who discusses the political activism of Latin American Conceptualists like Helio Oiticica, Cildo Meireles and Grupo de Artistas de Vangardia.

[563] O'Doherty (1963; ed. 1967), (*The New York Times*), pp. 193-194.

In the 1986 Afterword to *Inside the White Cube* (1976), O'Doherty describes a system unique to the visual arts which he terms "slotting," which is controlled by the symbiotic relationship of aesthetics and commerce:

> "Most artists become time-bound to the moment of their greatest contribution, and are not allowed out of it. The present rushes by, leaving them curating their investment...Originality is reified; so is its creator. The art scene in any great centre is always a necropolis of styles and artists, a columbarium visited and studied by critics, historians, and collectors." [564]

These quotations spanning a period of over twenty years reveal much of the thinking behind O'Doherty/Ireland's work: the attitude to impermanence and the withdrawal from history; the related concern with the 'here and now'; the search for a smaller, more actively involved audience. So also do they show an enduring commitment to pursue art on other than traditional bases:

> "My concern has been ...to stay in my work...Staying alive in the work is more important than anything else, which of course includes fame and fortune." [565]

From the perspective of some forty years, it is clear that this artist has indeed successfully avoided the straitjacket of easy acceptance and commodification by the art industry. Indeed it could be argued that the necessity for such a thesis as this after forty years of art production in one sense underlines the success of his strategies in maintaining his artistic integrity, vitality and freedom. The use of pseudonyms has been one such strategy.

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[564] O'Doherty (1976) in Afterword (1986), p.91.

[565] Ireland interview 1980, in *Dialogue*, pp. 4-7.

4.2. Pseudonyms

Scattered throughout a career spent in many fields has been use of pseudonyms, adopting the first, Sigmund Bode (born 1949) for some "Klee-like works" while still a young medical student in Ireland. [566] Bode also provided the framing epigraph for O'Doherty's 1957 poem "Piero In Ireland" (Fig. 238). The Bode alter-ego, anticipated the chimaeric nature of a future life that would encompass identities from two different fields, art and of medicine, since Sigmund referred to Freud and Bode to Wilheim Bode (1845-1929) Director of the Kaiser Frederich Museum, now called the Bode Museum. Mary Josephson, also began in the Ireland of his youth as a conflation of three Biblical personages, the Holy Family. [567]

The use of pseudonyms however, have been a factor that has linked O'Doherty/Ireland to Duchamp's adoption of Rrose Selavy and R. Mutt. However, a closer look at O'Doherty's work, quickly demonstrates that his use of a pseudonym began, as already said, in Ireland before he even knew of Duchamp, and that the context is literary rather than that of visual art. In Irish poetry and prose, there has been a long tradition of the use of a pseudonym, the most notable in the 20th century being Brian O'Nolan. O'Nolan was also known as Flann O' Brien for his literary fiction and Myles na Gopaleen for a newpaper column in *The Irish Times*. That O'Doherty/Ireland has had a special interest in O'Brien can be inferred by the books in his library by him, by calling one of his dogs Flann, and by sharing the name Brian and an interest in using pseudonyms.[568] It is also of note that O'Brien and O'Doherty/Ireland shared an interest in serialism and time. [569]

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[566] Ireland interview with author 1997a.

[567] The artist commented to the author that he had been christened ' Brian Mary', which led to much teasing as a child. He therefore reinstated his gender-status by taking the name ' Joseph' for his Confirmation. 'Son' was added later to complete, as it were, the ' Holy Family.' Interview 1997a.

[568] The artist's wife, Barbara Novak, remarked to the author, when discussing the liberal use of footnotes in O'Doherty's recent novel, *The Deposition of Fr. McGreevy* (1999), that Flann O'Brien had also done so. Dublin, 3/1/2000.

[569] O'Brien had admired J.W. Dunne's *An Experiment with Time* (1927) and *The Serial Universe* (1934). Hopper (1995), p. 242.

But there were other precedents too known to O'Doherty when still in Ireland. Douglas Hyde, the poet and first President of Ireland used the pseudonym "An Caobhin Aoibhinn" for his poetry. And, Thomas MacGreevy, first Director of National Gallery of Ireland, a friend and early mentor of O'Doherty's, used "L. St Senan" for some of his poetry. O'Doherty, as already mentioned above, had adopted the pseudonym, Sigmund Bode in 1949 while still a medical student and young doctor in Ireland. The historical Bode disagreed with a doctor and connoisseur of art in whom O'Doherty was interested as a young medical student, Dr. Giovanni Morelli. Morelli also used a pseudonym, "Ivan Lermolieff" (an anagram for Morelli) for his writings on art. [570]

In the early 1970s, O'Doherty's female literary alter-ego, "Mary Josephson," was revived to become an art critic for *Art in America* magazine of which he was editor. (Appendix 1). This was a time when feminism was beginning to exert a growing influence both inside and outside of the arts. Patriarchal ways of seeing, with the exclusion of women artists by many of the Minimal and conceptual movements, were beginning to be challenged. The support Eva Hesse received as an artist from, for example, Sol LeWitt, and others like O'Doherty, Bochner and Smithson, is a point emphasised in Lippard's book about Hesse. [571] Hesse had died before the issue was addressed by feminism and artists like Ana Mendieta, Laurie Anderson, Hannah Wilke and Martha Rosler. Perhaps Josephson may be seen at one level therefore as being representative of a sympathetic artist/writer's response to the demand for increased recognition by women critics like Lippard, and artists like Hesse and others?

What was certainly in his mind when "creating" Josephson was the Jungian concept of a dissociation of one's personality into "inner" and "outer"; into "mask" or persona and "soul." [572] For Jung, in men, the inner personality or soul is the feminine "anima," while for women, it is the "animus" or masculine principle, both of which he believed to be complementary to the persona, the outer character, which is largely

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[570] Morelli (1816-1891) has been called the first scientific connoisseur. Trained as a comparative anatomist, his theory, published in a series of essays (1874-76), was that an artist revealed himself in those areas of a painting least influenced by convention: the depiction of the ear, hand, landscape or drapery.

[571] Lippard (1976), p. 70.

[572] Ireland interview with author, 1999a.

moulded by the expectations of society. It is worth quoting Jung here since his analysis of the ideal set by our society aptly describes the challenge mounted by Ireland's work:

> "Society expects, and indeed must expect, every individual to play the part assigned to him as perfectly as possible...Society demands this as a kind of surety; each must stand at his post, here a cobbler, there a poet. No man is expected to be both. Nor is it advisable to be both, for that would be "queer." Such a man would be different from other people, not quite reliable. In the academic world he would be a dillettante, in politics an "unpredictable" quantity, in religion a free-thinker—in short, he would always be suspected of unreliability and incompetance, because society is persuaded that only the cobbler who is not a poet can supply workmanlike shoes...the average man, the only kind society knows anything about, must keep his nose to one thing in order to achieve anything worthwhile, two would be too much...hense the construction of an artificial personality becomes an unavoidable necessity." [573]

Few artists have sought to address this issue as resolutely, in spite of the cost, than O'Doherty/Ireland.

Patrick Ireland became O'Doherty's artistic and political persona in 1972. A small number of Irish visual artists in the 20th century besides O'Doherty, have used pseudonyms. Jack B. Yeats' (1871-1957), for instance, used "W. Bird" when an illustrator in London (Figs. 239), and Patrick Swift (1927-83) adopted the name "James Mahon" when editor of "X" Magazine in London. No other artist however, has used a pseudonym that directly relates to a political event. Recently, O'Doherty also adopted a literary persona, William Maginn, to serve as one of the narrators of his most recent novel, which was shortlisted for the 2000 Booker Prize, *The Deposition of Fr. McGreevy* (1999).[574] William Maginn, the only historical persona among his pseudonyms, was born in 1793 in Cork, became editor of "Fraser's Magazine" and died in London in 1842 (Fig.

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[573] Jung (1983; ed. 1986), p. 94.

[574] The title is a tribute to an early mentor, Thomas MacGreevy. Artist in conversation with author,1999.

240). O'Doherty was attracted to him for several reasons: besides being a writer he was also a poet who assumed several identities, one of which was, significantly, "Morgan O'Doherty," author of the "O'Doherty Papers."

In the visual arts outside Ireland, pseudonyms have most often been found within the context of the Dada movement. Arthur Cravan (1887-1918) for example, wrote the entire proto-Dada magazine *Maintenant* (1915) himself with articles on Oscar Wilde by "W. Cooper," poems by "Eduard Archinard," aphorisms by "Marie Lowitska," literary criticism by "Robert Miradique" and comments on artists at the Salon des Independents by himself. [575] One is reminded here of O'Doherty's use of "Sigmund Bode" to write the "Placement as Language" (1928) editorial to *Aspen 5/6* (1967) and Charles R. Hulbeck, a New York psychiatrist and contributor to *Aspen 5/6*, who read his youthful Dadaist vowel poems when known as " Richard Huelsenbeck." [576] Constructivism, as we saw, is cited as a precursor tendency in *Aspen 5/6* and so it is interesting to learn that Theo Van Doesburg wrote Dadaist prose and poems under the name "I.K. Bonset." [577]

In the 1960s "Arthur R. Rose," (perhaps a pun on Duchamp's pseudonym), was the fictious interviewer devised by Joseph Kosuth, Robert Barry, Lawrence Weiner and Douglas Heubler for a conceptual art exhibition at the Seth Siegelaub Gallery, "January 5-31, 1969." [578]Also around that time Claes Oldenburg adopted the name "Ray Gun" for his Happenings. So, though far from a frequent occurrence, pseudonyms were not unknown with the growth of so-called neo-Dada in New York in the 1960s.

In spite of Dada or neo-Dada's use of pseudonyms, in O'Doherty's case the source lies in an Irish literary tradition which later became a useful device to adopt in order to maintain artistic integrity and freedom. [579] Allied to the challenge to conventional ways of perceiving the artist, there was also the desire to do work in different arenas.

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[575] Kostelanetz (1993), p. 179.

[576] Van der Marck in Youngstown, Ohio (1994), p. 16. Huelsenbeck wrote the first history of Dada (1921-22), and edited the *Dada Almanach* (1920) which was reissued in original German by Something Else Press (1966). Kostelanetz (1993), p. 104.

[577] O'Doherty (1968), n.p.

[578] Lippard (1973; ed,1988).

[579] Ireland interview with author, 1997b.

With the realisation that in America an absolute value was set upon rigid specialisation within a singular field, a pseudonym afforded a degree of autonomy within which to work without restrictions imposed by the conventions of a particular field. He was not alone in his ambitions. The Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) for instance, found it useful even within the one field, to use different identities for different kinds of poetry: "Alberto Caeiro" for dramatic depersonalisation, "Ricardo Reis" for intellectual discipline, and "Alvaro de Campos" "...for all the emotion that I do not allow myself in my living." [580]

Clearly implicated in the use of pseudonyms is the question of the artist's own reputation and the implications for posterity. O'Doherty/Ireland's antipathy to the artistic egomania with which "some artists spend most of their time curating their own work, preparing its passage to the future" [581] is demonstrated by his strategies and evident by his scepticism:

> "We're all temporary installations! I believe that we're thrown into a hole and that's it!" [582]

Ireland regards as fragile the notion of artistic reputation, and especially so if one accepts the spectator determines the content of the work, and that there are differing perceptions as culture changes through time:

> "It either finds a place or doesn't find a place, it goes away or is revived and you (the artist) have no control over that...think of Vemeer who was lost for 200 years and think of El Greco who was also lost...(and)... George De La Tour...it's a lottery, so who knows the value of anyone's work? There are no standard absolute values—the landscape is always changing." [583]

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[580] Kostelanetz (1993), p. 179.

[581] Ireland interview with author, 1997a

[582] Ireland interview with author, 1998b.

[583] Ibid.

These ideas of course are informed from the position not only of a practising artist with a knowledge of art history, but also from that of a writer who writes about other artists' work and has seen at first hand the mechanisms which can either make or destroy a reputation. As the critic O'Doherty wrote in a 1963 article, "Criticizing Criticism," that art historical methodology obtains its best results when applied to a past more or less fixed by natural selection and evolution. When applied however to contemporary art, as quoted above, the inherently fluid and constantly changing becomes wrapped up in a kind of scholarly insulation. [584] In another article which demonstrates his keen interest in the cinematic medium, O'Doherty remarks with clear empathy, that although Orson Welles had an original vision, he never had commercial success:

> "Nothing reassures us more than a failed genius. It is a particularly American status, a kind of forced democratization of the offensively exceptional. "

Further on, in terms which could equally apply to himself, he says:

> "To separate Welles, Welles the director, Welles the actor, Welles the writer, Welles the magician, Welles in his various persona, from his work is a hopeless task, and eventually a dubious one. Like his films, he was his own fiction. He and his art interpenetrate in ways that some criticism finds unallowable. But who is making the rules here?" [585]

Other figures too from cinema have been of importance to O'Doherty/Ireland, like Eisenstein and Hans Richter.[586] O'Doherty had an affinity with Richter in terms of his diversity which made him difficult for critics to slot into the canon of the time. He wrote a catalogue essay for a Richter exhibition in 1968 which did much to re-position Richter's contribution. At the same time it says a lot about his own attitudes and affinities

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[584] O'Doherty (1963; ed.1967), (*The New York Times*), pp. 193-194.

[585] O'Doherty (1987), pp. 86-92.

[586] Letter to author, 1999b.

to Richter. Beginning with quotations from Blake and Mao Tse-Tung about the nature of contradictions sets the tone:

> "Contradictions exist everywhere, but they differ in accordance with the different nature of different things. In any given phenomenon or thing, the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and transitory, and hence relative, whereas the struggle of opposites is absolute." [587]

Richter's work and artistic persona are placed at the polar end of the Modernist spectrum:

> "By now we have just about processed all the heroes, anti-heroes and "figures" of the age of Modernism...The time for "explanations" by critics, is, like modernism itself, over...Fortunately no "key" to Hans Richter's art exists. He is one of the few survivors of modernism (he is 80) whose name does not call up a single (master) image. This image is connected with the idea of "identity," a fetish of modernism." [588]

In 1963, O'Doherty the critic articulated the aims of the artist O'Doherty/Ireland:

> " The honest pursuit of excellence in art is stringent and demanding and its rewards are usually not monetary...the standards of the genuine artist are self-made...there is no room for compromise...we need the dissenter and the stimulation of meeting the challenge he provides." [589]

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[587] Mao Tse Tung, On the Correct Handling of Contradiction Among the People, quoted in Massachusetts (1968), n.p.

[588] O'Doherty in Massachusetts (1968), n.p.

[589] O'Doherty (1963; ed. 1967), (*The New York Times*), p. 198.

O'Doherty/Ireland's art cuts through critical frameworks as well as media. His assessment of Richter's approach has an obvious affinity with his own art as the following quotation from the above essay shows:

> ...Richter in a way...keeps his work unfixed i.e. irreducible to a single viewpoint." [590]

The de-centred multiple viewpoint, as we have seen, is a notable characteristic of all of O'Doherty/Ireland's art. So too is the polar dialectic that he identifies in Richter's art:

> "...considerable oscillations between order and disorder, of spontaneity and logic...What matters here is in what terms he identifies opposites and defines a vocabulary for future conjugation. Even his most stylistically varied works have this dialectic in common, once one begins to identify the grammar." [591]

O'Doherty/Ireland's strategies therefore in his own artistic practice as we have seen, have been designed specifically to evade the notion of a singular master-image connected to a singular artistic identity. His practice of working in series to a pre-set system, continuing some over several decades, evades the Modernist notion of early "experimental" work leading to later maturity, or a unitary image or style which then enters the canon. In fact his work, as noted earlier, deliberately avoids a linear analysis, since he often returns to certain series even after a gap of several years. The Labyrinth Series of 1967-1968 as we saw, was added to in 1990, and again in 1992 with the *Elvehjem Labyrinth*. At other times, the theme of a series is re-worked in a different medium. For example, the One, Here, Now of various Ogham Sculptures of 1967-71 are found again, this time together, in the *One Here Now: The Ogham Cycle* (1996) wall-painting discussed in Chapter 3. The Oghamic words also occur singly, as we saw, on walls panels painted intermittently from 1978 to the present in the Patrick Ireland

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[590] O'Doherty in Massachusetts (1968), n.p.

[591] Ibid.

Museum (Figs. 222, 223). This repetition of motifs and works in series decades apart obviously avoids the idea of a single masterpiece or a single easily identifiable signature motif for the market-place to package. O'Doherty/Ireland's strategies therefore regarding an artist's identity are a complex melange, designed to resist Modernism's idea of the artist allied to a determination to preserve artistic freedom in the face of increased professionalism and commercialism within contemporary art.

Morris' work also resists resolution into a signature style. Rosalind Krauss in a Round Table discussion in *October* in 1994 asks what in the political or aesthetic situation of the 1990s engendered such a hostile response to a major 1990s retrospective of Morris' work. One of the discussants, Kolbowski, describes Morris' position:

> "... I think what might be troubling about him is that the institution he does take on is the institution of "the artist," and he establishes a kind of meta-position for himself..." [592]

It is argued that these remarks certainly apply to O'Doherty/Ireland. His position since the 1960s stance on anti-authorialism, becomes extended in the 1970s to a meta-artistic one. The grammar of O'Doherty/Ireland's meta-artistic approach is examined in the following works.

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[592] *October 69* (1994), p. 11.

4.3. The Transformation, Discontinuity, And Degradation of the Image (1969-)

This work which began in 1969, is a multiple self-portrait carried out in ordinary photographic booths. It literalises the multiplication of the 'self' through time (Fig. 241). That the 'self' represented is an artist is not disclosed by the title, yet any viewer, ignorant of this, can still engage with it in terms of a meditation on the passage of Time. The six registers on the grid are deliberately carried out at irregular intervals, to "avoid the metronomic return to a yearly assignation." [593] The top line of the grid is a series of O'Dohertys in 1969, the second in 1971, the third in 1976, the fourth in 1981 the fifth in 1992 and the latest in 1998. The latter is closest to the Patrick Ireland I first met in 1995, which makes one acutely aware of all the other O'Dohertys and Irelands I had not met, only some of whom are 'captured' within a particular moment and space by the camera. In addition, in a typical layering of complexity, some viewers may realise that the artist in the top two registers is not the same artist as in the last four, Brian O'Doherty having become Patrick Ireland in 1972. So this multiple portrait becomes a self-portrait of two artists rather than one, and in more than one context i.e. legally, socially, culturally, politically, art-historically and linguistically.

All except the last row are in black and white, the artist preferring their more factual effect compared to colour. [594] The use of colour for the last was because of the virtual disappearance of black and white booths in New York. However, finding one of the last remaining ones recently, "Little Rickey's," in the Bowery, the artist plans another register for the year 2000 "... and then maybe one other—then exit!" At the artist's death the remaining space is to be filled with black squares. [595] Like an earlier work, *The Sorrows of Z* (1968) the artist, like Z, would disappear into the endless void represented by the black squares (Fig.115). However, conceptually, the gridded format with blank space below also suggests that there is endless possibility for multiplication, given time. Repetition of course is a device that conceptually and visually avoids the notion of the singular creative artistic identity, underlining the fact that it is as much a construct as the

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[593] Letter to author, 2000a.

[594] Interview with author, 1998b.

[595] Ibid.

photograph itself. The irony of the title refers not only to the 'self' but also to the effects of time and change upon the concept of art and the concept of the artist. It also goes beyond the role of photography in dismantling the iconic status of painting anticipated by Walter Benjamin in the 1930s. It also challenges the art status of photography itself by the repeated vernacular-type image deliberately deprived of aura.

This work, like so much of O'Doherty's *oeuvre*, art-historically prefigures the later use, in the 1970s, of the 'self' in new art-media like film and photography with artists like Cindy Sherman and Gilbert and George among others. Importantly, within the context of conceptual art itself, it also represents an early and decisive shift in the use of black-and-white photography as documentation in conceptual art, to a more critical use of the medium. O'Doherty/Ireland's photograph functions not only as a vernacular medium distinct from "heroic" painting emphasised by the deadpan attitude, but it also formally interrogates the photographic "reality" of the image within time. This in turn is further problematised by its relation to artistic identity. The work therefore anticipates both formally and critically the widening of photographic practice in the later 1970s and 1980s which coincided with such texts as Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (1977) and Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida* (1981). These articles, for writer and art historian Brandon Taylor,

> "...together with periodicals like *Screen* and *October* from the later 1970s, pushed the analysis of the photograph and the representational process generally—including the contribution and creative unity of "the artist," to new heights of sophistication." [596]

Unlike Warhol's series of Marilyn Monroe in which the image remains static, O'Doherty/Ireland's head is a moving one organised in serial fashion so that correspondences can be set up between one register and another, vertically, horizontally or obliquely, while the interval between remains constant throughout (Fig. 242). The "play" generated between one O'Doherty or Ireland looking up at another who is looking

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[596] Taylor (1995), p. 77.

down from the line above, gives the viewer an infinite number of permutations with which to engage throughout the grid. Which image is the "real" artist, Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland? The grid denies, formally, privileging one moment in time over another, thus thwarting the romantic notion of a unified artistic identity. The concept of multiple personae, often a theme in literature but rarely in visual art, is clearly projected by the artist, a theme that recurs in both his art and his writings. [597]

The use of mechanical photo-booth photographs effectively eliminates any high art narcissistic, expressive or subjective elements thus effectively distancing the "author." Barthes text, "The Death of the Author" therefore, is realised conceptually, visually, and in the end, literally. The application of a system in terms of the views presented, (frontal, three-quarter to left and right, the back etc.), renders a distinct air of detached clinical observation. In this work, the observer and the observed are one and the same. The thinking behind this work, and his *oeuvre* in general, is apparent from remarks made in 1964 about the new art of the time:

> "The best of the new work, trafficking in the gap between art and life, leads...to a new self-awareness, and a new questioning of self-identity...The breakdown of the barrier between art and the observer, between object and subject, forces us to locate "reality" (if the word still means anything) in the fluid shifts in and out of the field of relationships to which we contribute, and in which we are a changing factor, a system philosophy has long ago adopted in favour of the outdated notion of "reality" as a stable, knowable thing." [598]

Thomas McEvilley in a recent review also remarked on the detached quality of the work:

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[597] See O'Doherty (1974; ed. 1988), p. 6.

[598] O'Doherty (1964; ed. 1967), " A New Union of Art and Life," (*The New York Times*), pp. 213-214.

" These have a strange quality; affectless, they are like mug shots or passport photos but even more impersonal—like laboratory shots of a specimen from various angles." [599]

Jane Livingston, reviewing this work in 1994 relates it to the photographic work of Bernd and Hilla Becker rather than " most recent self-depicters in the photographic medium, who seem usually to have either highly narrative or expressionistic intent" (Fig. 243). [600] O'Doherty's approach paradoxically positions the work somewhere in between the idea of photography as a scientific provider of information as in the laboratory, archaeological dig or coroner's autopsy table, and the traditional assumptions of portraiture painting or photography in terms of depicting the "reality" of a subject/sitter. Susan Sontag's remarks in 1977 could have been describing O'Doherty/Ireland's work, which presents photography as a democratic aesthetic medium in which many things, including art, can be made:

"Although the activities of some photographers conform to the traditional notion of a fine art...from the beginning photography has also lent itself to that notion of art which says that art is obsolete. The power of photography—and its centrality in present aesthetic concerns—is that it confirms both ideas of art." [601]

Artist self-portraits have a long history in art, from the Renaissance to Rembrandt and Van Gogh. This artist's objective gaze at himself however has an affinity to Cézanne's approach, a view endorsed by the artist who says that he had the sense of peeling Cézanne's apple into different segments in the construction of the work. [602] The sense of one portrait reflecting and sharing confidences with his other selves resembles the way Cézanne describes the subjects of his still-lives:

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[599] McEvilley (1999b), pp. 138-141.

[600] Livingston in Youngtown, Ohio (1994), p. 26.

[601] Sontag (1973; ed. 1977), p. 146.

[602] Ireland interview with author, 1999a.

"...These glasses and plates, there's talk going on between them...As for flowers, I've given them up. They wilt right away. Fruit are more faithful. They love having their portraits done. It's as if they're asking to be forgiven for fading." [603]

This idea of fading is appropriate too for an artwork in which O'Doherty/Ireland is alluding to the degeneration of the traditional art object, but also to a transformation of the artist within art history. It is argued that the following statement by Cézanne in the early part of the 20th century, has been made the subject of art in O'Doherty/Ireland's work:

"Every time I face my easel I'm a different man, myself, and always Cézanne..." [604]

In this context too, the use of the conceptual grid format (typically in multiples of five in O'Doherty's art, based on the five Ogham vowels), expresses the notion that each photograph is a separate slice of space and time; that each register of the series is in fact discontinuous with the one above or below it; that any appearance of a linear continuity is a fiction which relates as much to a critical reappraisal of the medium of photography as it does to its subject. This work shares an affinity with the "date paintings" of On Kawara begun in 1966 (Fig. 244), and Roman Opalka's "number paintings" and daily photographs of himself begun in 1965, as well as the concern with the passage of time (Fig. 245). But O'Doherty/Ireland's work is distinguished from both Kawara and Opalka by the use of a vernacular photographic medium rather than painting, to create a startlingly original version of traditional art's *memento mori*. Here it is the persona of the artist that is offered for contemplation; whose inherent mutability is frozen for just a particular moment in the march of time, as recorded by a mechanical device typical of a 20th century technological world.

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[603] Gasquet (1921; ed. 1991), p. 220.

[604] Ibid., p. 213.

The serial formatting of the work brings Eadweard Muybridge's studies of animal locomotion to mind, which we know were an influence on Sol Le Witt's serial works (Fig. 246). [605] However one of O'Doherty's favourite books, Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), is a more appropriate source for O'Doherty/Ireland.[606] A common medical and scientific training, and the fact that it was the first scientific book in English which contained photographic reproductions, may account for this. Darwin's series of photographs depicting different facial expressions is adopted in this work, investing it with a specifically scientific sensibility, as noted, while paradoxically at the same time dealing with human emotions, so often associated with Romanticism in art (Fig. 247). In comparison to the self portraits of Andy Warhol during the 1960s which deliberately hid the human behind an artistic persona (Fig.248), O'Doherty's faces show human expression. Yet even here it seems artificial, but in a different way from Warhol. Devoid of spontaneous emotion, the context is more of a clinical diagnostic situation with the camera-as-recorder, as in Darwin's book.

Mary Josephson suggests that Warhol's portraits represent the artist *as* medium and as such are symbolic of the narcissistic vulnerability and superficiality of American culture.[607] O'Doherty/Ireland's multiple portrait attacks canons of American and Western art culture from a different perspective. He dismantles the iconic status of the artist which Warhol had so adroitly played upon, and places him/her within the realm of Darwin' s human beings. Here the artist is part of life, which includes science and art, rather than exclusively the realm of art.

Another complexity within the work relates to the nature of the 'self.' In it, the artist-as-self is transformed via the camera into 'the other.' As Barthes notes with respect to photography:

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[605] See Miller-Keller in Massachusetts (1993), p. 39.

[606] Ireland comment made during conversation with author, 1998a. Darwin (1872; ed. 1998).

[607] Josephson (1971a), p. 42.

"..."myself" never coincides with my image; for it is the image which is heavy, motionless, stubborn (which is why society sustains it), and "myself" which is light, divided; dispersed...." [608]

For Barthes, the power of the photograph is that something existed at a particular time, which at the time of looking relates to a different time, the present, and by implication the future "because each photograph always contains this imperious sign of my future death." [609] O'DohertyIreland's work presents these issues for reflection in a matter-of-fact manner in which we can at least state for each photograph, "he was there then," the past tense of the linguistic motif which recurs throughout his *oeuve*, One, Here, Now.

[608] Barthes (1980; ed. 1993), p. 12.

[609] Ibid., p. 97.

4.4. Portrait of Marcel Duchamp (1966-67)

A unique work of early conceptual art is O'Doherty's *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* (1966) (Fig.249). It is a key work within his art since it is one of a category of 'gestures' that punctuate the *oeuvre*.[610] Like other works in this Chapter, it foregrounds identity, but also challenges Duchamp, and conventional assumptions about portraiture and photography. It is therefore, like many of O'Doherty/Ireland's major works, a complex one. While Robert Morris in 1963 had used an EEG (electrical recording of the brain) for the first conceptual self-portrait, O'Doherty, mining his medical background once again, produced the first conceptual portrait of another individual. For it he used a mechanical line, an electrocardiographic (ECG) recording of the heartbeat of Marcel Duchamp (Fig. 250). In one sense therefore, the vital life-force of the inventor of the readymade functioned to make him one.[611] Joseph Masheck, discussing this work suggests that for the equivalent to cardiography in portraiture "we would have to turn to siesmography in landscape." [612]

The subsequent 16-part series includes handmade drawings (Fig. 251), and wall-hung box constructions which are motorised machines or oscilloscopes engineered by the artist (Fig. 252). These simulate the idea of the heart beating indefinitely, thus formulating an aggressive challenge to the older artist's dictum that once art was put on a museum wall, it died. As such, the work represents one of the earliest challenges to Duchampian gestures and ideas. O'Doherty in an artistic dialogue with Duchamp had created a kind of readymade, yet in distinction from Duchamp's, there is evidence of the artist's hand by the painting of the box, and by the handmade drawings. Far from the chance operations favoured by Duchamp, O'Doherty's multi-part series demonstrates artistic control. In one of his drawings, for example, he slowed down the heartbeat to eight beats per minute, effectively extending Duchamp's lifetime, but also, as Masheck

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[610] See the artist's definition of a gesture in Section 1.8 above, pp. 91-92, quoted from O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1986), pp. 69-70. See other definitions on p. 252.

[611] The artist confirms this interpretation: "I made his heartbeat into a readymade in effect." Artist conversation with author 1/2/00.

[612] Mashek in Washington D.C. (1974), n.p.

notes in his catalogue essay, referring to Duchamp's fascination with the concept of "delay." [613] Duchamp had also stated that "art is idea" which O'Doherty deftly subverts by using Duchamp himself as both subject and object and using his heart, part of the body rather than the mind, as the source of his consciousness.[614] O'Doherty asserts his anti-Cartesian position in this work, one already evident in other works to do with the senses by this time. In addition the work anticipates, though on quite different terms, the use of the body itself as a readymade in Body Art.

The issue of identity is of course crucial to this work, its title provoking and subverting our search for a human image with which to identify the sitter. It also alerts us to the frequency with which personal identity is transformed by a technological and scientific world. O'Doherty explains in an article about this *Portrait* in 1966, that he saw that the new interest in body-parts generated by science (artificial hearts, at that time), widened the context of the mind-body relationship to such a degree that the survival of consciousness, the essence of identity, needed to be emphasised to an even greater degree..[615] New concepts of the 'self' therefore are explored in this early conceptual work, which anticipated so much art by a later generation of artists. A few years later, O'Doherty gave a lecture, "The Politics and Esthetics of Heart Transplants," relating to the first heart transplant and issues of identity:

> "...we find Dr. Barnard's scalpel separating two ages from each other...One can say that the mechanical heart summarises what I believe is the theme of the age—the swoon of consciousness into technology, the loss of the self that was itself a fiction..." [616]

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[613] Ibid.

[614] Duchamp is credited with the move away from the purely retinal towards an art of the mind.

[615] O'Doherty (1966a), pp. 20-21.

[616] O'Doherty (1970), a lecture given to the University College Dublin Medical Society, in the hospital in which he had received his medical training, (Mater Hospital). Prior to this he had delivered it to the History Section, New York Academy of Sciences. Ireland interviews, 1997a and 2001.

O'Doherty thought therefore of the heart as a metaphor for time, and thus of consciousness. Another source for the *Portrait* was the 19th century idea of the isolated heart, " Shelley's heart torn from the pyre,...Daniel O'Connell donating his heart to Genoa, where it still is, sealed in a container..." These ideas led to that of a heartbeat and some kind of container for it. [617] A contemporary piece written by Merce Cunningham was another. Cunningham refers to the uniqueness of each heartbeat; that each in effect is a mini-crisis; however this uniqueness becomes lost through repetition. In *Aspen 5/6* the year after the *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp*, O'Doherty invited Cunningham to read the same piece. [618]

The artist is adamant that the *Portrait* was not conceived as an homage to Duchamp the artist in spite of their friendship as secular people. He admired Duchamp's early insight that the work is completed by its reception, and was intrigued by his notion that the actual life of an artwork was short-term, once encased within a museum.[619] However, O'Doherty/Ireland insists that he did not, and does not, agree with Duchamp's argument against the institutionalisation of art, however brilliant and provocative:

> "If Duchamp was right, what are we all working for? The wretched idea of immortality through posthumous objects? It's a marvellous idea, really. To disallow everything, the striving, the collectors, kunsthistorishes overkill. Mischievous too. I didn't agree with this, but Duchamp, as he did with so many things, made you think calmly about the outrageous. And I thought about it. How could I refute it?" [620]

Molly Nesbit writing about the *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* in 1994 interpretes the work in the following way:

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[617] O'Doherty (1966a), pp. 20-21.

[618] Ireland letter (1995b).

[619] Ireland interview with author, 1998c.

[620] Ireland letter 1995b.

"Not an homage, please read between the lines, see them in response. In part to the technical lines that Duchamp had used once long ago to avoid taste and nudes and art. But these new heart lines had none of their forebears' aversion to the body, no, these lines were generated, not drawn, from a body, heart lines rising metaphorically, coming back as life lines off the palm." [621]

The artist himself puts it into an art historical context:

"In the context of Surrealism, it was taking his identity away; in the context of Minimalism, it was just saying: " You don't exist!" and in the context of Romanticism it stated: "You live forever!" [622]

Unlike the first generation of Minimalists, O'Doherty at the time was beginning to move into the post-Minimal world of conceptual art away from the object. Although the *Portrait* is undoubtedly an object, derived from the body, the viewer's response is paradoxically, provoked conceptually rather than bodily. This is so because the traditional visual information of a body is denied, being represented rather by a minimal line. Again paradoxically, the work indirectly directs attention to the body and its primary animating organ, the heart. Unlike any portrait in the history of art, the sitter is "represented" semiotically by the title of the work, yet in a wholly abstract and technological manner, visually. This raises the problematic question of how art can be defined, a topic that was raging at the time of this work and in no little way stimulated by the artistic gestures of its sitter, and challenged by the artist.

Although the work still retains a appearance of some Minimal objects, its intentions and means of construction are very different. The blue-grey colour of the box is one often found in O'Doherty/Ireland's art since it is the colour often used in the portraiture of Manet and Velazquez, whom he admires.[623] The effect of the colour lessens

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[621] Nesbit in Youngstown, Ohio (1994), p. 12.

[622] Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

[623] Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

the solidity of the box which is further "dematerialised" by floating it in a pool of light.[624] These qualities were obviously intended to set the box apart from the industrialised finish of Minimalist boxes like those of Judd for example, but also to undermine the model of the readymade by virtue of the inclusion of the artist's hand. The elusive nature of the colour is a quality that can also be associated with the sitter.

After the recording was taken Duchamp bowed and said: "Thank you from the bottom of my heart." [625] Brendan Behan, the Irish playwright, responded many years later in a similar fashion after his ECG. When told: "This is the best you have written, Mr. Behan!" he replied: " Well, it comes straight from my heart!" Recently, a medical doctor, accurately captured the thrust of the work: "It was an art (heart) attack!" [626] O'Doherty's transcription of a mechanical line used in medical diagnostics to the sphere of art gives ironic immortality to Duchamp's readymade heartbeat in the context of art, rather than science.

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[624] Dematerialisation, a term coined by Lippard and Chandler in 1967, was regarded as one of the defining features of conceptual art. See Part I.

[625] Duchamp often asked, " How am I doing?" when he met Barbara Novak on the street where she, O'Doherty/Ireland, and Duchamp lived. Ireland interview with author, 1997a.

[626] The response was after a lecture given to a medical audience by the author in June 2000.

4.5. Name Change (1972)

Name Change, a gesture in 1972, is another key work in any assessment of this artist's *oeuvre*. Its importance lies in the fact that it is the work which divides the early pioneering conceptual art of O'Doherty from around 1966 to 1972 from that of Ireland, from 1972 to the present. As such it forms a bridge between the work of O'Doherty in terms of new ideas, attitudes, models, practice and categories of art, which became elaborated with increasing sophistication in Ireland's work. The context of the former artist was an experimental field at the centre of the New York artworld where artists worked with similar ideas in parallel as part of a loose communal artistic society. The context of the latter artist is the emergence of an individual artist working separately within a wider geographical field making predominently ephemeral art. At the same time however, both artistic personae share work through various series which involve similar thematic concerns. Art-historically, in common with the works already discussed, *Name Change* is significant as a prescient forerunner of the theme of identity which became a major issue in the art of the 1980s and 1990s and it also pre-dates much of recent art's concern with a postcolonialism.

The *Name Change* performance, the earliest performance art in Ireland, [627] took place in Dublin on November 29th 1972, ten months after the event subsequently known as "Bloody Sunday," took place in Northern Ireland. During a civil rights march in Derry on Sunday, January 30th, thirteen unarmed civilians were shot dead by the British army in circumstances which continue to be controversial and exert an influence on the politics not only of the province, but the rest of Ireland as well. One of the thirteen wounded died later.[628] The performance and the subsequent documentary artwork, demonstrate an underlying commitment to comment through art on contemporary political events both in Ireland and elsewhere.

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[627] Walker (1979), p. 39-41. The term 'performance art' gained acceptance as an artistic medium during the 1970s as another means of expressing ideas. Unlike theatre, the artist is the performer, without a character like an actor, and the content rarely follows a traditional narrative.

[628] At time of writing the Saville Inquiry is re-investigating the events of that day in the light of evidence originally not admitted at the Widgery Tribunal (1972).

The *Name Change* performance was structured in separate but interlinked sections, all of which relate to identity. These refer to the legal, linguistic, symbolic, and geographic aspects of identity. The legal, became visually ritualised by the masked artist signing a prepared statement (Fig. 253), in the presence of a solicitor, Ernie Hanahoe, and thirty witnesses in the Project Theatre, then located in South King Street, Dublin (Fig. 254). The text/image documentation, completed later arranged in a typical conceptual art grid format, is divided into two registers of five panels which incorporate photography, ink/gouache drawings, and handwritten and typed text (Fig. 255). The top register documents photographically the various stages of the performance from left to right while the lower reiterates them in other media: handwritten, handpainted and typed text. Both systems of documentation, it is implied by the grid structure of the work, have equal weight as systems. In the left panels above and below, the civic or legalistic method of affirming one's identity, a witnessed signature, is represented. Naming in this sense is an index of bodily presence, but also in another context, it becomes the bearer, as well as the location of the 'self' through language.

Secondly, identity and language are linked by the masked artist intoning the vowels AOUEI, behind a screen (Fig. 256).[629] These are written in Ogham in the subsequent documentation. During this mini-Structural Play (a performance within a performance), the artist wore a white stocking over his face and a white coat provided by Gordon Lambert (Fig. 257). [630] Here the facial features of the body, an obvious source of one's identity, is obliterated temporarily. The Ogham vowels in the documentation's second panel from the left, are drawn with lines and colour, with their corresponding Roman equivalents underneath. Linguistically therefore, one is cast back to a time when Irish identity spoke/wrote in a language of its own, as represented by the vowels. The

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[629] The original drawing for the Performance shows that it was conceived in three parts: signing; movement, and painting on a stretcher. The second part, a Vowel Structural Play, was based on a mathematical progression and its reversal (1,2,3 & 3,2,1), in terms of movement and sound. In the actual Performance however, only one side of the progression occurred. Ireland interview 2001 b.

[630] Gordon Lambert, a witness to the Performance, now retired, owned the coat when Managing Director of Jacob's Biscuits. He is one of Ireland's most respected collectors of both Irish and international contemporary art. The coat is still in his possession.

Ogham pronoun 'I,' (five vertical lines through the horizontal), a proxy system of identity used in language in place of one's name, is positioned at the end of the panel. Here it forms a visual, graphic and auditory (by the artist's voice) trace of identity before moving to the neighbouring middle panel where identity becomes as neutral and innocent as the white worn by the artist.

Thirdly, the artist was carried out on a stretcher by two fellow artists, Brian King and Robert Ballagh (Fig.258). The fourth section of the performance involved the artist's body being painted simultaneously by them from both ends in the colours green and orange (Figs. 259, 260). These and subsequent panels were enacted in complete silence. Gradually, the tripartite symmetry of the Irish flag became obliterated as the two assistant artists cross over so that the entire body is covered in a murky brown. The differing cultural identities, initially represented by their symbolic and distinct colours of the flag with the neutral white in between, became a symbol of the bloody violence of clashing ideologies. The claims made by each to the political, cultural and conceptual territory of the region, became visualised by the artist's body. In the final section of the performance, the artist was carried behind the screen (Fig. 261).

The performance, which the artist describes as "an emigrant's gesture," [631] took place a quarter-hour before midnight, which according to one of the witnesses, added to the solemnity of the occasion.[632] The artist states that the themes of the work were language (a structural play), colour (the orange and the green), and a simulated atrocity.[633] However, the concept of the structuring of the 'self' is also an essential element of the performance. So too the concept of 'location' which the performance demonstrates: identity can only be constituted physically by the placement of one's body, and metaphorically, by its location in both language and culture. O'Doherty/Ireland's Performance stimulates for its audiences then and since, a heightened awareness and reflection upon the complexities involved in a fundamental concept: *who* you are, is a function of *where* you are. Although specifically located in the colonial politics of

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[631] Ireland interview with author, 1997a. The artist's definitions of a gesture are found in Part I, section 1.8, pp.91-92, and on p. 252.

[632] Lambert interview with author, 1997.

[633] Ireland letter (1990a), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 25.

Ireland, the concepts underlying the work have many applications in other conflicts worldwide.

The title for the 20 minute performance was "Maze." [634] The Maze Prison in Belfast, until recently, housed prisoners from both sides of the political divide. Ironically, given the context of a work with two artists, O'Doherty at the beginning, and Ireland at the end, the documentation of the gesture/performance was also re-named. Its first title links it to O'Doherty/Ireland's earlier Labyrinth Series, although differing from them by virtue of its overtly political content. At the same time in spite of its changed title, the piece continues to work as a labyrinth, one within the mind of the observer and both communities trapped within non-transgressable boundaries. The piece also forms another link to Northern Ireland's politics within the *oeuvre* through the later Rope Drawing, *H-Block* (1989), discussed below. This latter title refers also to the Maze Prison as the blocks were designed in the shape of the letter H.

Time is addressed within *Name Change*, as in O'Doherty/Ireland's art generally, in a number of ways: the left panels could be said to be the 'Now' of the performance. The next two cast us back to 'Then,' the Celtic pre-colonized phase within Irish history, while the middle two panels revert back to the present-time of the performance. The last four also evoke the notion of time, literally in terms of the time taken to paint the artist's body, but also in a more historical sense through the colours of the national flag. The future, implied by the grid, is left open. In addition to the photographs and drawn panels, text is provided describing the action within them in which the tone is informational and anonymous. David Moos noted recently that language is dominant in the first two captions:

> "...as identity passes through its preliminary cognizant phases. In the last three captions, however, the word 'body' prominently locates the action of meaning. The body is manoeuvered through states of passivity, serving as the sole conduit through which identity is received." [635]

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[634] Cooke, H. *The Irish Times*, December 8th, 1972.

[635] Moos in Derry, Northern Ireland (1998), pp. 7-18.

However, not only the body and language, but also the constructs which we have seen operating throughout O'Doherty/Ireland's art receive a particularly pungent thrust in this context, and particularly for an Irish audience. The two connected arenas for the psychological constitution of the 'self' we have already seen as 'location' in spatial and temporal fields (inside/outside, here/there, now/then). But the 'self' is also related to others within social and moral fields for which the key binaries are 'I/you' and 'yours/mine.' Both of these conceptual constructs are central to *Name Change*, to which 'boundary' can be also be added. The work therefore becomes a metaphor for all the constituents of physical, social and cultural identity. Further, it has not been noted before, that by choosing to address such an issue as identity through the medium of art which implicates the artist's own name, Ireland adds the further dimension of the meta-artist to the performance.

4.5.1. The gesture within the art context

Although first and foremost a non-violent protest against the killing of fellow citizens, Ireland's gesture can also be seen within the context of a broadening of his concerns which provides continuity with the radicalism associated with the "high period" of conceptual art. As noted earlier, to many, including its sympathisers, by the early 1970s, conceptual art's radicalism had been rapidly eroded by a number of factors. The increasing acceptance and absorption of texts, documents and other artefacts from the late 1960s into the museum and commercial gallery system was part of that erosion, as well as the fading of revolutionary commitment within Western society. In tandem however was a growing demand from feminism to transfer attention from the politics of class and power to that of gender, identity and power, a shift which considerably altered the political landscape of a few years earlier.

Compared with other political artists like Hans Haacke for example, whose work addresses economic and political issues within the art world, Ireland's *Name Change* represents a broader political agenda which locates his work firmly within the wider

context of the politics of race, identity and power. As such, it represents the early recognition of such contexts, which only became evident within later art. The year before *Name Change*, for example, in 1971, O'Doherty wrote an article entitled, "A new conservatism in the seventies?" in which he diagnosed the 1970s failure of confidence in art as being due to a lack of radical social involvment.[636] Although the work is a response to a specific local conflict, its subtext of the politics of identity and power has many applications internationally. In this sense it shares a lineage with Goya's *May 3rd, 1808* (1814) and other political works of historical art. Ireland's work, while highlighting the horrors of war in completely new artistic terms, at the same time focuses on the fact that the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland, represent the last remaining colonial enterprise of the British Empire in the Western world.[637] The approach is analytical of the constitutive elements and symbols of cultural identity in terms of language, colour and the politics of the personal through naming. As such, it indicates Ireland's commitment to making challenging art connected to life rather than making a statement of opposition outside of artistic practice, as many artists like Andre and LeWitt had done in different political circumstances.

The gesture is uncompromising in terms of the sworn statement's avowel to retain the name 'Patrick Ireland' for all artworks "until such time as the British military presence is removed from Northern Ireland and all citizens are granted their civil rights" (Fig. 254). The direct reference to the British military may be seen as an indication of the particular revulsion felt at the time, to an arm of the state gunning down unarmed citizens. To an expatriate living through the growing turmoil and protests against the Vietnam War in the early 1970s in America and internationally, Edward Said's remarks seem relevant here:

> " Because the exile sees things in terms both of what has been left behind and what is actual here and now, he or she has a double perspective, never seeing things in isolation. Every scene or situation in the new country necessarily draws

[636] O'Doherty (1971 a), p.23. See also Newman (2000), p.430.

on its counterpart in the old country...from that juxtaposition one gets a better, perhaps even more universal idea of how to think, say, about a human-rights issue in one situation as compared with another." [638]

Oscar Wilde's synopsis of Said's remarks was that an Irishman only discovers himself when he goes abroad. [639]

At its core, *Name Change* was a gesture calculated to draw attention within America to a little-known conflict on the edge of Europe. The reputation that O'Doherty had already achieved as an artist, editor and writer, but also as a Governmental administrator, placed him in a position of influence in terms of extending knowledge and increased understanding of the problem. During the early 1970s the affairs of a far-off island were of little note within America, apart from reports of bombings and other atrocities. As an artist therefore, wherever his art was exhibited, Ireland insisted that it was accompanied by the above statement explaining the circumstances of his change of name.

The artist relates that the name "Ireland" was chosen because it "...was the last thing the Brits wanted to hear about," and because it was, ironically, an English name. The name "Patrick" was chosen in order to "make the name one of dignity and substance" to counter the fact that the Irish had always been called "Paddy" in a pejorative way by the English. [640] In this context Kiberd suggests that to the English, the Irish were their Celtic suppressed 'Other' so that:

> "...if John Bull was industrious and reliable, Paddy was held to be indolent and contrary; if the former was mature and rational, the latter must be childish and feminine..." [641]

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[637] The "Troubles" is the Irish linguistic euphemism for the low-grade war in Northern Ireland in the 1920s, which continues to be used for events since the late 1960s.

[638] Said (1993), pp. 121-122.

[639] Kiberd (1995; ed. 1996) p. 37.

[640] Ireland letter (1990a), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 26.

[641] Kiberd (1995; ed. 1996), p. 30.

Paradoxically, the name Patrick was also originally an English name, that of the saint who converted Ireland to Christianity to become its patron saint. The use of both names so intimately associated with Ireland's political and cultural identity therefore, lends all of Patrick Ireland's work the ghost of political coloration, even when a specific work does not contain overtly political content. Foucault's definition of what an author's name means, provides an apt description of O'Doherty/Ireland's *Name Change*:

> "the function of an author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society." [642]

Research interviews among those who attended *Name Change* in 1972, show that there was general empathy with the outrage underlying it, even from among artists whose work did not usually engage with political issues. However, given the emotional atmosphere that prevailed in the country at the time, not all saw it in the same way, which is part of the essence of this work. Art critic Dorothy Walker recalls:

> "As the colours drew near to confrontation and the white peace area diminished, a certain tension built up in the audience, but when the logical conclusion materialized wherein the green and the orange merged and continued to either end, the positive intention of the action became apparent and was applauded." [643]

Another critic, Harriet Cooke, had the following comments to make after describing the different parts of the Performance:

> "In fact O'Doherty has been signing works "Patrick Ireland" for about eight months, so the proclamatory stance was a belated one. The witnesses were issued their statements—a gesture that was weakened when he continued to sign them

[642] Quoted in Nesbit (1987), p. 240.

[643] Walker (1983).

for those who had not chosen to act as witnesses. The statements exist as independent works—signed Patrick Ireland. Gordon Lambert acquired the white coat-cum-flag.The audience, despite such bewilderment, took it all in good part. Post-performance chat dealt with the real political issues, the cordons in town, marches—in short life, rather than art. The performance, meant as a pure statement of reality, seemed unnecessarily complex—it would possibly have been more effective if it had been done at a time when there was so much in the way of real political action." [644]

The art critic of *The Irish Times* when reviewing a Patrick Ireland exhibition in 1975 dismissed the pseudonym: "Patrick Ireland sounds too good to be true, like something out of a Lennox Robinson farce or a Bord Failte brochure." [645] English-born art critic, Bruce Arnold, though not in attendance at the time, recently characterised the thinking behind the *Name Change* performance as naive, " a pseudo-American I.R.A. view," at the same time considering O'Doherty/Ireland to have been a central figure within American conceptual art. [646] A prominent art historian, born in Northern Ireland, also expressed strong negative feelings about the performance on various grounds during research interviews. [647] The negative response to Thomas Kinsella's poem, "Butcher's Dozen," published in April 1972, is a useful parallel to such objections voiced during some research interviews. The following is an extract of the poem, which was written in response to the Widgery Tribunal's Report (April 1972) rather than Bloody Sunday itself:

I went with Anger at my heel
Through Bogside of the bitter zeal
—Jesus pity! — on a day
Of cold and drizzle and decay.
A month had passed. Yet there remained

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[644] Cooke, *The Irish Times*, December 8th, 1972.

[645] Fallon, *The Irish Times*, 5/9/75. Bord Failte is the Irish Tourist Board.

[646] Arnold interview with author, 2001.

[647] Crookshank interview with author, 2000.

A murder smell that stung and stained.

Kinsella, responding to adverse criticism of the poem states:

> "It has been criticized on various grounds, some political: it did not put adequate emphasis on the Civil Rights campaign in the North; it did not lament the "Protestant dead"...it did not mention the bigotry of the Catholic Church, or the Republic's censorship laws...it was presumptious of me to deal with the Northern issue at all—living in the Republic, I had not earned the right...(but) I couldn't write the same poem now. The pressures were special, the insult strongly felt, and the timing vital if the response was to matter, in all its kinetic impurity." [648]

Ireland, who categorises *Name Change* as a gesture, defines the term in a way which echoes Kinsella:

> "...a convergence of events and an opportunity. So there is the matter of timing. Made too late, a gesture looks dumb. Playing on after the whistle has blown. Made too soon, a gesture lacks support and collapses. Therefore, making a gesture is a semi-literary practice since it occurs in a specific situation and begs an explanation." [649]

and:

> " Gestures were born out of a desire for knowledge, which time makes available...An artist's career (if artists have careers) cannot suffer from too many of them...A gesture is anti-formal (against the agreement that art reside within its

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[648] Kinsella (1979; ed. 1992).

[649] Ireland letter (1994), in Youngstown, Ohio (1994), p. 3.

category) and it may be at odds with the smooth teleology of the rest of its perpetrator's work." [650]

For some in Ireland, as indicated above, Patrick Ireland's gesture has been dismissed as that of an emigrant with misplaced Nationalist leanings. The art critic of *The Irish Times*, dismissed it as "a piece of whimsy in the Living Art exhibition a year or two ago." [651] The critic's antagonism can be gauged by another article written some years later:

> "...Who (is) he? Is the name too good to be true? In fact, it is the nomme-de-plume or nomme-de-pinceau, of the art critic Brian O'Doherty—a respected writer, publicist and lecturer but as an artist, hardly a figure of substance." [652]

Other reactions undermine the seriousness of the work. In 1998, following a mini-retrospective in Derry, " Language Performed, Matters of Identity," an "anonymous reviewer," who, "lives, teaches, writes and makes art as someone else, somewhere in Ireland," mimics the *Name Change* declaration:

> " Be informed that from this point hence the writer will be known as Sean Windsor, until such time as this article is completed." [653]

Although confessing that he/she had never before actually come into direct contact with Ireland's art, though he/she had read something about his practice, the review proceeds to make factual errors. *White Cube* (1998) for example, is interpreted as representing an object from 1976, when in fact it was made for the first time for the 1998 exhibition (Fig. 262). The reviewer had confused the object with O'Doherty's essays of the same name of 1976. But perhaps the reaction of a person who identifies their background as English

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[650] O'Doherty (1976; ed. 1999), p. 106.

[651] Fallon, *The Irish Times*, 5/9/75.

[652] Fallon, *The Irish Times*, 19/11/86.

[653] See " Windsor" in *Circa* (1998), p. 56.

Catholicism and Irish Protestantism, and who quite fairly acknowledges that he/she may not be the most likely of reviewers "to be entirely empathetic to Patrick Ireland's very different brand of cultural schizophrenia," makes the very point of a work so unfortunately relevant almost thirty years later. However, the reviewer allows, if somewhat reluctantly, that much of the work in the show had a place firmly within the annals of art history. [654]

In spite of living abroad, Patrick Ireland's knowledge of the situation in Northern Ireland has been frequently updated by repeated visits to the country to exhibit his work and in the capacity of external examiner at the National College of Art and Design. In a letter to critics Crone and Moos in 1990, he expresses his awareness and understanding of the annoyance felt by some fellow-countrymen:

> "Who was I to take the name of my country? It would be an arrogant gesture surely, were I not an expatriot whose career was abroad." [655]

Fellow-artist Nigel Rolfe, an Englishman who came to work in Ireland as a performance artist around 1973/74, reports his surprise that he was not told of the *Name Change* performance until many years after his arrival, in spite of his own practice. Since then, he has followed Ireland's work of which he is a great admirer. [656]

At this point, it is appropriate to point out the particular context of the political reaction both publicly and privately in Ireland then. The hostile reaction among some in the South may relate to the fact that following Bloody Sunday, with the bombing of Dublin and Monaghan in 1974 and the hunger strikes of the 1980s, the problems in the North became in a sense bracketed and distanced as they became more intractable, bloody and vicious on both sides.[657] Allied to this was a relative wariness of any direct comment as the 1970s progressed which might exacerbate an increasingly complex

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[654] Ibid.

[655] Ireland letter (1990a), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 25.

[656] Conversation with author, September 11th, 2000.

[657] See Dunne in London (1998a), p. 103.

situation. [658] Linked to this was a tendency, (evident in the above interviews), to equate any Nationalist sentiment whatsoever, to approval of the terrorism of the Provisional I.R.A., then emerging. It was feared that violence might spill over into the South with the prospect of a civil war. A particular indication of such fears was the rejection of Patrick Ireland's documentation of the *Name Change* performance of 1972 at the Rosc Exhibition of 1977. [659] The rejection of this section of Patrick Ireland's work was all the more controversial given that both he and James Coleman were the first Irish artists to be admitted to Rosc by the international jurors, chaired by Ronald Alley of the Tate Gallery, London. Critic Dorothy Walker commenting about the episode recently, states that Alley wished to omit the piece,

> "...considering it offensive to unionist members of the art community in Northern Ireland. In response to this Patrick Ireland wanted to withdraw from the exhibition, which would have resulted in a major international scandal: a British juror censoring a political work by an Irish artist." [660]

In the end, only Ireland's declaratory statement was included in the catalogue without the photographic/text documentation.[661] The continuing sensitivity to the work can be gauged by the fact that it has never been exhibited in the South. It was first shown in Northern Ireland at the 1998 Patrick Ireland retrospective in Derry, the city which precipitated the gesture.[662]

However the radical seriousness of the gesture on the artist's part can be gauged by his refusal to exhibit his visual art in the U.K. from 1972 onwards. He was not

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[658] McNab interview with author, 2000.

[659] The Roscs were a series of ground-breaking international exhibitions of modern and contemporary art held in Dublin between 1967 and 1988.

[660] Walker (1997), p. 126.

[661] Rosc catalogue (1977), p. 70.

[662] The first publication of the documentary artwork in the Republic of Ireland since the performance (apart from Derry, Northern Ireland (1998) catalogue) is in an article on the Rosc exhibitions by the author. See Moore-McCann (2002), pp 124-132.

however the only Irish artist to make such gestures. Gerard Dillon, a Catholic artist from Northern Ireland, living in the South, published a letter in the *Irish Times*, on 20th August, 1969, in which he declared his intention to withdraw his work from the Irish Exhibition of Living Art in Belfast. He also around the same time organised a protest statement:

> "We the undersigned propose that the Irish Exhibition of Living Art should make a public protest against the persecution of Irish people by the present Stormont government, by witholding this year's exhibition from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland which had planned to show it in Belfast after it leaves Cork. And that the Living Art should give a lead in this and encourage all cultural bodies in Ireland to protest in every way and any form against the horror that the Stormont Government has inflicted on the Irish people. Anything that will make the Stormont Government appear respectable should be denied them." [663]

At the opening of the Living Art Exhibition in Cork, Dillon's position was supported by one of Ireland's leading painters, Michael Farrell (winner of a Laureate at the Paris Biennale when representing Ireland in 1967, as well as other international prizes) with the following statement:

> " Art is above politics but not humanity. As an artist and a man I have never used my work for any political end. I am also so moved by wrong and know what is right with regard to the horrific happenings of the North of this Island. This is a personal statement. I am witholding my work from the North of Ireland." [664]

Farrell, like Ireland, lived abroad in Paris from 1971, yet he continued to comment and return home to exhibit such pictures as, *Madonna Irlanda or The Very First Real Irish Political Picture* (1977) (Fig. 263).

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[663] White (1994), p. 102.

[664] M.Hartigan in "Artlife," *The Sunday Tribune*, 18th June 2000, p. 6, in an article following his death.

"Naming is a crucial element in the construction of identity," Patrick Ireland stated in 1998 at a mini-retrospective of his work, in Derry, the city that provoked his *Name Change* twenty-six years before.[665] Within Northern Ireland, one's name reveals whether one is a Nationalist or a Unionist, and since the late 1960s can be an indication also of where one lives, all of which has implications within a polarised society.[666] This potency of naming extends to territory as well as to the personal social and political sphere. Derry is itself a city known by two names: "Londonderry," if one is a Unionist/Protestant and "Derry," if a Nationalist/Catholic. Godfrey points out that the first act of any conqueror is to rename, a subject that the Derry playwright Brian Friel, addresses in his play, *Translations* (1980), in which all the towns of Ireland are changed to an anglicised version of the original Irish.[667]

The gesture also has to be put into the context of the desire of some Irish artists to respond to the unfolding nightmare of politics in the North, of which O'Doherty/Ireland was one. As art critic Aidan Dunne put it in an article entitled "Politics" in 1998:

> "It is at least partly true to say that the "Troubles" kick-started a generation of Northern artists...the tragedy of unfolding events was a natural source of subject matter for a generation of artists who in line with international developments, had begun to question the dominance of a formalist definition of artistic practice." [668]

In the South also, until the 1960s, only a few like Patrick Scott, responded to world events, let alone Irish ones. His *Device* series of abstract paintings refer to the testing of nuclear "devices" during the 1960s (Fig. 264). In the late 1960s and early 1970s however, the impact of the violent suppression of the Civil Rights movement, the introduction of internment and Bloody Sunday galvanized public opinion. Oisin Kelly, a Protestant artist, best known for his religious sculpture, in a significant departure

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[665] Ireland Statement (1998).

[666] Cathal McCrystal, a journalist, was required to alter his name to Cal McCrystal in order to get a job with the *Belfast Telegraph*. RTE radio interview, June 1998.

[667] Godfrey (1998), p. 361. See Friel (1984; ed. 1996), pp. 377-447.

[668] Dunne in London (1998a), p. 102.

produced *The Marchers* in 1969 (Fig. 265). Artists of a younger generation like Michael Farrell (1940-2000), as already noted, also responded. Farrell, who described himself as " a hard-edge Celtic painter," had established a reputation during the 1960s producing paintings that married pop and abstract art to Celtic motifs. But a desire to comment directly on the political situation in Northern Ireland led him to adopt figuration with overt references to events there, and to withold his work from exhibition north of the border and in the U.K. [669] *Pressé Politique* was his reaction to the Dublin and Monaghan bombings in 1974 which included contemporary newspaper cuttings of the events (Fig. 266). It also signalled the end of Farrell's abstract work for the remainder of his career. In 1997-98, shortly before his death, Farrell was still responding to political events and specifically to Bloody Sunday (Fig. 267).

Theo McNab, an established abstract artist, also departed from his usual practice to comment on the introduction of internment in Northern Ireland in 1971 with a work entitled, *Irish Elegy* (Figs. 268). [670] *Ireland*, was McNab's responses to the bombings in Dublin at the Pro-Cathedral and Liberty Hall in 1972, which coincided with the debate in the Dail (Irish Parliament) concerning the introduction of non-jury courts with the "Special Powers Act" (Fig. 269). [671] Robert Ballagh responded to Bloody Sunday at the Irish Exhibition of Living Art in 1972, the same year as Patrick Ireland's *Name Change*, at which he assisted. He drew with chalk the actual fallen positions of the 13 civilians on the floor of the Project Theatre, which gradually became obliterated as people walked about (Figs. 270 & 271).[672] What all these artists had in common was the desire to express an outrage that was equally palpable in the general community at the time, culminating in the burning of the British Embassy in Dublin days after Bloody Sunday (Fig.272).

The repercussions of that day were felt even a decade later by such artists as the Derry playwright, Frank McGuinness. In 1988 he wrote the play, *Carthaginians* as

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[669] Ibid., p. 103.

[670] McNab interview with author, 2000

[671] McNab letter to author, 2000.

[672] Ballagh interview with author, 1997.

" my elegy to the dead and the living of Derry, the living who kept going, in Dido's words, "Surviving, Carthage has not been destroyed."

He continues:

> " The events of Bloody Sunday ripped Ireland apart. In January, 1972, I was in my first year studying at University College Dublin. My adolescence ended that day." [673]

It is noteworthy within the context of O'Doherty/ Ireland's concern with identity that in the play within the play, Dido (a man) changes his identity to that of a woman, Fionnuala McGonigle (with French accent !):

> "Oui. I have come to your city and seen your suffering. You city has just changed its name from Londonderry to Derry, and so I changed my name to Fionnuala in sympathy." [674]

Within America, many were confounded by the gesture, but for very different reasons from those in Ireland. Louis Zona remarked in 1994 that, "The name change from Brian O'Doherty to Patrick Ireland still confuses some..." [675] Some, including his dealer at the time, Betty Parsons, were deeply puzzled at the risks to his artistic reputation.[676] Recently, as knowledge within the U.S. has grown and especially with the Peace Process in Northern Ireland and President Clinton and Senator George Mitchell's involvement in it, accordingly, Ireland's gesture has received more considered attention. [677] However, most still see it in terms of a reaction to the politics of his homeland, [678] whereas its

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[673] McGuinness (1996), p. xi.

[674] Ibid., p. 331.

[675] Zona in Youngstown, Ohio (1994), p. 3.

[676] Broun interview with author 1997 and Ireland interview with author 1997a.

[677] McEvilley interview with author, 1999.

[678] Baker interview with author, 2000.

significance within the context of conceptual art of the early 1970s has so far passed without notice until this present study.

4.6. Other Political Works

4.6.1. A Modest Proposal (1980)

Patrick Ireland's change of name was far from a frivolous or isolated artistic event. It is also not the only time in which he has commented as an artist on political affairs. While the majority of his overtly political works refer to Ireland, there are others which refer to specific American and European events, such as the shooting of protesting anti-Vietnam war students and the fall of the Berlin Wall.[679] If one applies O'Doherty/Ireland's category of a 'gesture' to such works dotted throughout an *oeuvre*, it becomes apparent that these and others like the *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* and the continuous self-portrait, refer to events within life and art which in retrospect, are seen to have represented distinct shifts of opinion.[680]

In 1980 Ireland produced *A Modest Proposal* (Fig.273), in which he altered the map of Ireland by removing the Six Northern Counties and repositioning them within the heartland of the Republic. While such a proposal may appear as absurd as Jonathan Swift's cannabalistic one to alleviate famine in Ireland, "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and Making them Beneficial to the Public" (1729), it indicates some measure of the frustration felt by all sides to a resolution of the problem.[681] Maps are an extremely useful tool for the conceptual artist since they present in two-dimension what is actually three-dimensional, giving a purely conceptual sense of place and one's relationship to it. Ireland's "assisted readymade" map of Ireland plays ironically and humorously with such concepts, while being at the same time loaded with political and historical significance. Once again as with *Name Change*, the response of a particular viewer depends upon how they identify themselves in relation to the mapped territory. As McGonagle suggests, the irony of Ireland's proposal raises,

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[679] See Rope Drawings numbers 79 and 93 respectively, Appendix E.

[680] See definitions of a gesture on pp. 91-91, and p. 252

[681] At the time of writing there is some hope of a settlement to the crisis in Northern Ireland.

" just as many questions for contemporary Irish Republicanism and its projection of a United Ireland, a foundation myth which until recently, has been conceived in only territorial terms. Like all such myths its actual implementation would render the geographical, political, social and economic terrain unrecognisable but, curiously, no less legible than the present "real" map of Ireland is to outsiders. Of course there is a difference in seeing and recognising, and Ireland plays on this visually and linguistically." [682]

4.6.2. H-Block (1989)

In 1989 Ireland returned once more to political events in Northern Ireland with Rope Drawing Number 92 entitled *H-Block* (Figs. 274). This work of painted walls and three-dimensional rope configurations was installed in the Orpheus Gallery, Belfast, not far from the Maze Prison where the H-Blocks housed both Loyalist and Republican prisoners until recently. The H of the title is in fact hidden from view at ground level and can only be seen from an aerial perspective in 1976 (Fig. 275).. Republican prisoners mounted the so-called "blanket protest," refusing to wear prison clothes when their special category status as political prisoners, already granted in 1972, was abolished. This protest later became "the dirty protest," with excrement smeared onto cell walls when the prison authorities refused exercise and other facilities.[683]

Ireland's Drawing graphically alludes to this protest in a work which, appropriately, also utilises walls. It alludes to the cultural and political in gallery spaces which become pregnant with a significance which belies the apparent innocence of the letter. The harsh orange and green letter provokes different responses in the viewer, a reponse inevitably conditioned by the viewer's own political identity.[684] The artist tried to ensure that the work had enough neutrality to provoke both sides in different ways, the

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[682] McGonagle in Youngstown, Ohio (1994), p. 38.

[683] Patterson (1997), p. 192.

[684] The fact that colour can take on political significance is borne out in other areas of conflict: in Israel, for example, it is illegal to paint murals using the colours black, red and white together. See Barber (1989), interview with artist Rene Castro, *Circa* (1989), pp. 28-31.

Loyalists seeing "a powerful orange "H" in a field of green," while Republicans would see,

> "the hated "H" about to be engulfed by a rising pyramid of green, eventually opening the door held between the lower limbs of the H, a generative position surely " (Fig. 276). [685]

In spite of the artist's intentions however, some refused point blank to even view the work, reponses which made a living reality of the ideas behind the work. A critical review, although appreciative of both the strength of the concept and its visual realisation, rejected submission to the cooperative nature of the work, interpreting the reference to the blanket protest as anchoring "...the installation against the republican shore." [686] The same reviewer, comparing Richard Hamilton's *The citizen* (1982-3) (Fig. 277), which also refers to the "dirty protest," suggests that Hamilton's painting is capable of several readings, which makes it admirable since none fit with the artist's personal politics, unlike *H-Block*. But perhaps the reviewer overlooks Hamilton's Christ-like treatment of the painted diptych, and the use of the lower case c for the citizen. Like Hamilton, Ireland uses the medium of art to confront the viewer with political concepts. But unlike Hamilton's sympathetic treatment, Ireland's work addresses both sides of the conflict with the theme of identity encoded and symbolised by abstractions such as colour and language. The work asks each viewer to contemplate how one side's "terrorist" is another's "patriot," in spite of the uncertainty of the lived moment.

As architecture, the letter alone visually represents a divided society, but also the political and social division within the prison itself, Republicans being housed on one arm of the "H" and Loyalists on the other. Implications of the espousal or affirmation of violence in the pursuit of political aims cannot be found by a close reading of any of Ireland's political work, although there is no doubt about which side he, among others,

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[685] Ireland letter (1990a), in Madison, Wisconsin (1993), p. 25.

[686] Brett in *Circa* (1989), pp. 36-37.

feels have been denied their identity and civil rights. Kiberd describes the political situation in the following way:

> "The Orange state which emerged (in 1921) was sectarian to an astonishing degree. Constituencies were gerrymandered to copper-fasten Protestant supremacy; discrimination in the allocation of jobs and homes kept Catholics in the position of second-class citizens...the Royal Ulster Constabulary was a paramilitary force equipped with guns and armoured cars...In all the years of Stormont's existence until it was prorogued in 1972, the Unionist Party voted in only one amendment proposed by nationalists and that was to a wildlife bill! High unemployment rates and poverty seemed endemic in Catholic ghettoes...Thus emerged one of the great puzzles of modern European political life: that as Britain led the war against fascism and pioneered the welfare state, its leaders nonetheless maintained and bankrolled on their very doorstep a one-party system characterized by religious bigotry and political repression." [687]

The theme of the 'self' operates forcefully in this work as it confronts issues which although lived in the present, are linked to the past, and as such evokes powerful emotions. The consciousness of looking and the sense of being watched by the work has a particular resonance in this Rope Drawing, given the culture of surveillance both inside and outside of the prison. Berkeley's phrase ("To be is to be perceived"), is thus received in quite a different manner from other Rope installations. O'Doherty's remarks with respect to Velazquez's *Las Meninas* are apt when applied to *H-Block*:

> "Certain works of art force the spectator to define him—or herself. Where are you standing? How does your space relate to the illusion before you? Who in the picture is looking at you and what do they see?" [688]

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[687] Kiberd (1995; ed.1996), p. 415.

[688] O'Doherty (1987), pp. 86-92.

Rosalind Krauss' recent remarks about perspective are also of particular interest and relevance here. In it she suggests that a structuralist reading of perspective refutes the notion that perspective is an "objective" system, since this omits the fact that it is constructed on a vector that connects the viewing to the vanishing point, the vector that points to or at the viewer. This pointing, she goes on, establishes the subjective pole of every perspective alignment, a pole which not only picks out the viewer as "You," but establishes the time of viewing as "Now," and its place as "Here." [689] This reading resonates with O'Doherty/Ireland's "One, Here, Now" motif and his idea of language as position, both important elements of such Rope Drawings as *H-Block*. The following note from the artist's notebooks of the 1970s is also illuminating:

> " All the rope pieces include a spectator commuting gently between different gestalts (intentional wandering), constructing gestalts where none exist. No priveleged position, though there may be key positions. After sufficient wandering, the spectator has become a crowd and populated the piece."

And

> "When you construct a gestalt, you become a vanishing point. Then where are you? " [690]

Common to all of Ireland's work, but realised most fully in installations like this is the way each viewer in a sense possesses the work; each reveals him/herself through the act of interpretation, becoming at once the work and one's own way of seeing it. [691] Carter Ratcliff's review of Ireland's art in 1987 points out:

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[689] Krauss in Oxford (1993), pp. 25-33.

[690] Ireland Notebooks (1973-77), in La Jolla (1977).

[691] Eco (1962; ed.1989), p. 162.

" Each of Ireland's works demands a careful reading, like a map. You haven't really seen an image of his until you locate yourself in the conceptual terrain it charts." [692]

Besides the prismatic probing of the nature of artistic and political identity in works such as this, O'Doherty/Ireland found yet other means to investigate the complexities of the 'self' with a series of "I" Drawings which began in 1969.

4.7. Identity Drawings (1969-)

As part of the series of Vowel Drawings already discussed above, Ireland narrowed his attention to the vowel "I." The pronoun which stands in for a system of categorisation of one's name functions also as the sign of identity. As we have already seen when discussing O'Doherty/Ireland's use of the Ogham language, whether in drawings, wall paintings, Rope Drawings, or sculpture, his concern has always been to reduce language to its primal constituent elements of number or alphabet. Recently in 1994, while discussing Peter Hutchinson's 1974 alphabet series, O'Doherty's remarks reveal a context for his own art's concern with language and identity:

"From Sheeler's *Figure 5* to Johns' speed-counting of one to 10, the child's numbers and letters have been called upon to do duty in some strenous aesthetic, linguistic, and philosophical battles...The relentless iteration of one to 10 and A to Z (counting and reciting) builds a mental chain that allows no break in its links...They are primitive fugues, arbitrary artifacts that become, through habit and usage, so intimate that they convince us that they are natural. Though shared with the entire culture, they are the *first definers of selfhood*." (Author's italics) [693]

Recent work in the field of cognitive psychology, as we have already seen in other Chapters, confirms what O'Doherty/Ireland's art had proposed since the late 1960s:

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[692] Ratcliff (1987), in *Art in America* p 97-103.

[693] O'Doherty in Provincetown (1984), p. 22.

that the 'self' is not something found, but is a complex idea which is acquired in order to organise experience in the course of social development. [694] Allied to this process of learning is how to use the pronoun 'I,' which takes longer than the development of other linguistic skills. This is so since learning how to use pronouns involves understanding that there are other minds, other selves, so that pronouns become, " a central linguistic resource for establishing the self." [695] The concept of multiple selfhood articulated through an interlocking of three different kinds of 'self' (already deduced by James in the late 19th century), also offers scientific affirmation of the thrust of O'Doherty/Ireland's art. Harre, for example, has proposed a 'self 1' as personal identity or the subjective dimension of the self ; 'self 2' as one's qualities or characteristics (what I know, think, believe); and 'self 3' as the characteristics presented to others (what others take me to be).[696] Although each is different, 'I' is *felt* to be a singular entity, largely due, "to the shadow cast by the grammar of 'I.'" [697]

O'Doherty's 'I' Drawings therefore, with an ease which belies the complexity of the underlying concept, offer a visual metaphor through line and colour, for the multiplicity of 'I's created throughout one's lifetime. In Ogham, the vowel 'I,' which also represents the number 5, is denoted by five lines across the imaginary horizontal (11111). In this series, O'Doherty/Ireland draws the five lines in varying configurations: as five stacked lines five angled lines, five wriggly lines, or five stick-figure lines (Figs.278, 279, 280, 281). All are placed on a grid, which can be invisibly sensed in some more than others as in *25 Angled I's on a 5x5 Point Grid* (1975) and *I-Drawing at Two Scales* (1975) (Figs. 282, 283). These are significant and beautiful drawings for the visual energy and formal invention they display. By a repetition of elements, and by placing them at differing scales, O'Doherty/Ireland introduces space. In some like *25 Angled I's on a 5x5 Point Grid*, for example, with line superimposed upon dotted grid, space appears to tunnel through the surface to infinity. These drawings have a certain affinity with Malevich's Suprematist works, about which Gray noted:

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[694] Benson (2001), p. 98.

[695] Ibid., p. 97.

[696] Ibid., p. 89.

[697] Ibid., p. 99.

"It is not a moment of nature held on canvas, nor an ideal world existing independently, it is a corner of the cosmos caught on its journey through time...a bridge erected over the subconscious, the world of chaos." [698]

They demonstrate in another formulation, Ireland's ability to juxtapose a sense of resolution/order and dissonance/disorder, and a de-centring of visual perception by the skillful illusion of movement through shifting spatial depths, in which multiple elements are held simultaneously on the surface, and yet also seem to plunge into deeper space. In so doing, they co-opt the viewer's participation in the push and pull of two and three-dimensions. At the same time they lay bare the means of construction by dot, line and plane, so that it becomes clear that the illusion is in the response alone. Their fascination lies not only in the control of such minute microscopic elements as dots on a grid, but ultimately in the constant change, diversity, and paradoxes which are perceived as metaphors of contemporary reality. These qualities allied to the notion of identity, make these works remarkable metaphors for the shifting ground of consciousness itself. Oscar Wilde's dictum (To reveal art and conceal the artist) is very much the case here. Looking at these works, one is aware of an artist who chose a system and in submitting to it, in a sense, abnegated the 'self.' In so doing, he suggests that any system imposed upon any field, including that of the identity of the artist or the viewer, is just another constructed system within which to operate pragmatically.

In 1992, Ireland returned again to the "I" series with *Dictionary of I*, in which the basic vocabulary for the grammar of the series is set depicted (Fig. 284). Some of these works have also appeared as wall paintings in the artist's house in Todi, Italy, such as *Dictionario di I o* (1979) and *I -Drawing* (1978) (Figs. 285, 286). This series, and other works discussed above, create powerful aesthetic metaphors for the multiplicity of individual identity within the visual arts. Like Wilde, Ireland's work together with his

[698] Gray (1962; ed. 1986), p. 166.

alter-egos suggests that "...in being true to a single self, a sincere man may be false to half a dozen other selves." [699] Carter Ratcliff remarks about these Drawings:

> "As fragile as they are singular, Ireland's arrangements of conflicting conceptual schemes recall his remarks on the wobbliness of personal identity." [700]

Lastly, the theme of identity is evident within the *oeuvre* as early as the 1960s with O'Doherty's Structural Play on the theme of Identity, and persists with the recent photographic documentation of his various aliases over the years in 1998 (Figs. 287, 288). Identity, was subtly addressed also in the series of Ogham Sculptures. Lacanian theory, (which need not be overstated regarding these works) regarding the reciprocal nature of seeing, states that as we look at something, it looks back, so that each time we see ourselves being seen; that we have the need to see ourselves so that without mirrors, our sense of ourselves would be very different. Ireland plays with these ideas together with his opposition to the idea of a unified self in such works as *The Rake's Progress* (1970), as discussed above, by demonstrating the splitting of the self's image at the outer margins of the work (Fig.144).

Finally, two quotations, the first by the critic, Brian O'Doherty, and the other by his friend, Morton Feldman, aptly encapsulate some of the issues relating to identity within O'Doherty/Ireland's *oeuvre*:

> "There's a difference between being of your time and being only in fashion, and wherever you are, it's hard to separate the two. Just as it's hard to understand that making good art is more important than being a famous artist. Famous artists come and go." [701]

and:

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[699] Quoted in Kiberd (1995; ed. 1996), p. 38.

[700] Ratcliff (1987), in *Art in America* pp. 97-103.

"What do we see when looking at Cézanne? Well, we see how Art has survived; we also see how the artist has survived. If our interest lies in discovering how Art has survived, we are on safe ground. If our interest lies in how Cézanne, the artist, has survived, then we're in trouble, which is where we should be." [702]

Both quotations articulate the attitude and one of the major themes which have directed O'Doherty/Ireland's artistic strategies for over forty years.

[701] O'Doherty in Limerick (1980), n.p.

[702] Feldman (1969; ed. 1991), p. 33.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

"...art history has rarely strayed beyond the borders of the system of artistic phenomena as such, and has rarely connected...with the general experience and consciousness of the modern mind or personality..." [703]

" For in art there is no such thing as a universal truth." [704]

" The owl of Minerva only flies at night" [705]

" We sometimes speak of the course of history as a 'moving procession'...New vistas, new angles of vision, constantly appear as the procession—and the historian with it—moves along...The point in the procession at which he finds himself determines his angle of vision over the past." [706]

" Few artists since Marcel Duchamp have pushed us so hard or given us so much to digest as Patrick Ireland..." [707]

Beginning with the work of the mid-1960s, this dissertation has presented the first and widest exploration of O'Doherty/Ireland's *oeuvre* in forty years. The contribution to art and its history has been defined from both international and Irish perspectives. In general terms it found that O'Doherty/Ireland's art is composed by minimal means yet is protean in content. It is restrained and abstract, yet insistent on confronting complex and politically potent issues relevant to both art and the consciousness of contemporary

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[703] Belting (1983; ed. 1987), p. 42.

[704] From "The Truth of Masks," by Oscar Wilde, in Wilde (1963).

[705] Hegel. Quoted in Eagleton (1983).

[706] Carr (1964), p. 35-6.

[707] Zona in Youngstown, Ohio (1994), p. 3.

society. It is an art which questions the nature of such experience, offering an opportunity for contemplation. Its open character and the combination of 'order' and 'chaos' through formal elements in different media, become metaphors for the necessity of diversity in the face of uniformity and intolerance. It prises open art's Pandora's box, kept closed by restrictive and habitual assumptions, to provide fresh fields of experience. It achieves this by the use of humour, irony and paradox allied to a seriousness of purpose and intellectual rigor. This is an artist who always remembers the audience, who has never taken the easy option in a lifetime of making art with resolution, passion and intelligence. It is these qualities and attitudes rather than any master image or style which distinguishes his art. Although O'Doherty introduced the labyrinth and the Ogham language into contemporary art, and Ireland invented the Rope Drawings, it is the ways in which such motifs are used which is of significance and distinguishes his art from that of contemporaries. His ability to anticipate the direction of much serious art, both in his work and writings, is another salient characteristic. O'Doherty/Ireland's art is produced in the spirit of an epistemological inquiry into art and contemporary consciousness, which links it to other cultural disciplines in ways which yield a richness of experience which provokes thinking, and abides in memory. In art-historical terms it can be placed within the ambit of post-Modernism generally, and conceptual art, specifically.

The *oeuvre* which began within the context of a critique of Modernism, has since contributed to a radical re-positioning of art not only in terms of the artwork, but also in terms of the viewer and the artist. Through O'Doherty's pioneering role within conceptual art between 1966 and 1972, and by Ireland from 1972 on, the *oeuvre* has extended an understanding of the role of art within contemporary experience through three major themes: language, perception and identity. This study is the first to identify these and to examine how they operate within O'Doherty/Ireland's art.

One of the striking features of the art is, that it does not fit into any category of conceptual art with ease, either the analytical/linguistic strand or the systems-based strand. In fact, it straddles both. Yet, while O'Doherty/Ireland shares some of the attitudes of contemporary colleagues, his practice since the late 1960s, has been quite distinct in many respects. Broadly, these derive from his European and Irish background which lends his work a quality which is multifaceted, fugitive and oblique, in spite of the

clarity of constructive means. In some ways this represents a quintessentially Irish world-view as defined by the philosopher, Richard Kearney:

> " From the earliest times, the Irish mind remained free, in significant measure, of the linear, centralising logic of the Graeco-Roman culture which dominated most of western Europe. Hence the mainstream of western thought rested upon a series of fundamental oppositions—between being and non-being, reason and imagination, the soul and the body, the transcendentally divine and the immanently temporal. Could it be that the Irish intellectual tradition(s) represent something of a counter-movement ...by showing that meaning is not only determined by a logic that centralises and censors but also by a logic which disseminates a structured dispersal exploring what is other, what is irreducibly diverse?" [708]

While such a view is not unique to the Irish, it certainly informs the art of O'Doherty/Ireland.

This dissertation concludes that O'Doherty/Ireland's contribution to art is one of significance not only internationally, but also to the history of Irish contemporary art. In relation to Irish art, this is so for a number of reasons. O'Doherty/Ireland is the first Irish artist since Roderic O'Conor, to have pioneered a new kind of art from its inception and as such, merits a place within the annals of Irish art. O'Doherty/Ireland also is an artist who has consistently tried to bridge the gap between an Ireland in relative artistic isolation and international ideas, since the 1970s. Through his role as exhibiting artist, critic and as external examiner at the National College of Art and Design, he has maintained active links with the Irish art community. Apart from his critical writings, his curatorship and catalogue essays for an affiliated Rosc exhibition in 1971, "The Irish Imagination" is still regarded as a critical departure point in any assessment of the position of Irish art at the time.[709] Indeed, some of its insights along with his other critical

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[708] Kearney (1985), p. 9.

[709] O'Doherty in Dublin (1971).

work, are still much utilised by current writers on Irish art.[710] In 1977 he, with the younger James Coleman, officially introduced conceptual art to Ireland through the Rosc exhibition of that year.

O'Doherty/Ireland is Ireland's first conceptual artist, gave its first performance art in 1972, its first realised earthwork in 1975, and its first whole-gallery installation piece in 1985. Even earlier in 1968, when artists were just beginning to move out of galleries internationally, he had proposed a land art project with the Ogham word for "One" excavated from the hillside below the Hellfire Club in the Dublin mountains, from where it could be seen aerially and from the city itself a few miles away.[711] This unexecuted project was like an elegy by a poetic artist to the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland as well as suggesting many other interpretations of the word "One" as it related to Ireland or broader arenas [712] O'Doherty/Ireland is also the first Irish conceptual artist to exhibit at Documenta VI's 1977 retrospective of 1960s art, where he showed five works from 1967: *Black; 1-9; 36 Words, 36 Colors; One; Skizze (Study) Fur "One."* [713]

A Janus-like New York/Irish attitude lends this artist's work a particular quality, one which differentiates it from that of both his New York and Irish colleagues: a double vision or "two thinks" described by Joyce in *Finnegan's Wake*. The art and the concepts driving it stand in oppostion to the dualistic tradition of 'either/or,' by favouring a 'both/and' stance. This kind of logic is encompassed visually and conceptually so that 'order' coexists with 'disorder,' and conceptual rigor with a dispersal of the imagination like an echo chamber within the mind. Lippard sensed some of this:

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[710] Thiessen (1999), p. 293.

[711] Walker (1979), pp. 39-41.

[712] The unity of Church and State, then enshrined in the Constitution, might be one such idea. More broadly, it might also refer to the concept of 'One,' described by philosopher, Richard Kearney as," a founding principle of European cvilisation inherited from the Greek and Judeo-Christian traditions..." See Kearney (1995), p. 3.

[713] A second Irish artist, James Coleman, was not selected until 1982. Alanna O'Kelly, was selected in 1987.

" A slippery thread of ambivalence runs through Patrick Ireland's outwardly serene work...It is insistently modest, temporary, and finite, but indirectly confronts immortality and infinity." [714]

The artist expresses it this way:

"Coming to America made me a gift of my native country, a gift that was slowly delivered. I began to understand the great dialogue between those two planets, Europe and America..." [715]

Like many who chose exile rather than the perceived frustrations of their native country, O'Doherty/Ireland initially spurned all traces of his Irish inheritance and tried to become a specifically New York artist.[716] The re-discovery of the Celtic Ogham language however, effectively eliminated the univocal New York thrust of his work from the late 1960s on. [717] In short, O'Doherty/Ireland's work is chimaeric; it can be characterised as quintessentially New York, and yet Irish at the same time. It is Irish in respect of its elusive, oblique tone and Celtic motifs; yet it also retains the specific components of New York conceptual art, with a concern for language, systems, mathematics, anti-institutionalism and artistic authority.

Arguably, like Joyce and Beckett before him in their field, and the artist Louis Le Brocquy as well as a younger generation of artists like Michael Farrell and James Coleman after him, O'Doherty/Ireland could not have made the art he made if he had stayed in Ireland. New York provided the right environment and conditions from the early 1960s. Yet equally, neither could he, Beckett or Joyce have made the art they did, without Irish experience. In linking O'Doherty/Ireland to such Irish literary giants as Beckett and Joyce, the dissertation concludes that he is the first Irish visual artist of the

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[714] Lippard in Washington D.C. (1986), p. 13.

[715] Ireland statement, 1975.

[716] Ireland lecture, 1999.

[717] Patrick Scott had already introduced Ogham into Irish art in the late 1950s, but he used it exclusively for his applied art rather than for his painting. Interview with author, 2000.

20th century to have pioneered art which has significantly shifted the ground internationally, while at the same time maintaining a distinctive Irish pedigree. While it is not possible, or even acceptable, to impose one particular narrative that encompasses all the concerns of Irish art, perhaps O'Doherty/Ireland gave birth to the kind of Irish art sought by the artist Patrick Collins in 1981:

> " What's lacking in Irish art now is, ...everybody wants to look out instead of looking in...They haven't realised that they have a Celtic identity that's endured for 5000 years and that nobody has painted just what that means. Why should we be a colony, we have something here to say." [718]

In 1971 O'Doherty stated that," Irish artists occupy the gate lodge to the literary Big House, listening to the heavy traffic up and down the driveway." [719] It is the conclusion of the dissertation that he, and a few of his generation of Irish artists, has moved from the gate lodge to the "Big House" of the visual arts. In addition, he is one of a handful of Irish artists in the late 1960s and early 1970s, who was prepared to address political issues, which then and since, absorb the consciousness of the whole country.[720] While some in Ireland have dismissed his *Name Change* (1972), and the later *H-Block* (1989) as an emigrant's nostalgia or worse, in time, when the events and the uncertainty surrounding them have gained a distance in memory, and conceptual art itself is more widely understood, these gestures may be appreciated within the artistic context in which they were conceived and realised.

On an international front O'Doherty/Ireland has made many contributions both in terms of his art and his critical writing. One of the major contributions to conceptual art is *Aspen 5/6* in 1967. It is not only critically and historically important in terms of understanding the intentions of emergent conceptual artists, but also in terms of

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[718] Collins (1981), p. 922.

[719] O'Doherty in Dublin (1971), p.24.

[720] Outside commentators have commented upon the apparent reluctance of the artistic community to comment upon the most potent Irish political conflict of the 20th century. See Lippard (1985) and Hassan *Sunday Tribune* 29/4/01.

understanding O'Doherty/Ireland's own sources and concerns. Historically, it is the earliest work to plot out an ancestry for conceptual art at the same time as its foundational moment. By establishing intellectual linkages with other disciplines, either neglected or avoided until then, it broadly fits Kearney's counter-movement, quoted above, and O'Doherty/Ireland's own art. This early recognition of the roots of conceptual art from within the European traditional avant-garde, may partly account for the relative lack of critical appraisal of *Aspen 5/6* until recently, given the general anti-European attitude at that point in American art.

Key conceptual constructs and themes are identified in the dissertation for the first time in relation to O'Doherty/Ireland's art. The concepts of 'location,' or 'here/there,' are especially useful in the analysis of his art. It, and allied concepts such as 'boundary,' 'point of view,' 'self,' and 'inside/outside,'are shown in this study to yield a conceptual coherence to the overall *oeuvre*. This is so because they weave together the artistic themes of language, perception and identity. These themes have profound implications for human psychology, and have therefore dominated art and intellectual discourse, particularly during the second half of the 20th century. The question Gauguin asked at the end of the 19th century, *Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?* (1897), is as open today as then. It is concluded, that the combination of such profound themes relating to the epistemology of language, perception and identity in O'Doherty/Ireland's art, represents probably one of the most intellectually challenging projects of its time within the visual arts. While *Aspen 5/6* is presented as an accurate representation of the sensibilities of the 1960s, this dissertation goes further to conclude that O'Doherty/Ireland's whole *oeuvre* represents one of the most searching investigations of issues critical not only to visual art, but to the wider intellectual field. This contribution to art's history has also been supported by a significant body of critical writing, some of which has been included in this study.

Although O'Doherty/Ireland's art began with the critical deconstruction of the tenets of Modernism, it was found that by constructing critical alternative models, it went beyond the mere documentation of that process. His art elaborates upon the ground-breaking lessons learnt by Minimalism in different ways. For example in O'Doherty/Ireland's art, Minimalism's refutation of the metaphorical transcendental

space of modernist art is extended by the relocation of the viewer in terms of 'place,' and the 'here' and 'now,' in more vital ways. The temporal nature of perception implied by Minimalism, is made even more explicit, by such inventive works as the labyrinth, the Ogham sculptures and pre-eminently, within the Rope Drawings. Through the medium of language also, O'Doherty/Ireland emphasises this repositioning with such motifs as 'I/You' and 'One, Here, Now,' used as we have seen, in such monumental works as *One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle* (1996). O'Doherty's early work also differs from that of the early Minimalists in other respects. The use of so many different media, drawings, sculpture, performance, objects, installation, not only rejects Modernist art's restrictive categories, but also refutes the 'purity' of Minimalist objects. The 'tone of voice' also, is far removed from the ideological one adopted by Judd and some of his own generation of artists, like Smithson. Throughout all of his work the tone is one of quiet conviction and of an open invitation.

By placing 'the self' at the heart of his art, O'Doherty/Ireland's work interfaces with the fields of psychology, philosophy, sociology, literature and politics. Thus, it realises the ambition of the broader strand of conceptual art from the 1960s, to which his art belongs. By stripping back things to their essentials, a characteristic derived from his Minimalist lineage and a poetic sensibility, his art makes clear that all systems ultimately rely upon a perceiving 'self.' His art relies ultimately upon the human ability to respond to a stimulus and to create a symbolic interpretation of it. Since that interpretation is conditioned by all other experiences a person has had, each viewer will respond in a different way to the art. By providing an immense variety of content throughout his art, O'Doherty/Ireland maximises the potential for active engagement at many different levels.

Given an *oeuvre* which resists easy categorisation, the dissertation found that the contribution made by both artistic personae is best articulated through the three major themes: how they relate to an expansion of aesthetic categories, the institutional critique, authorial authority, the readymade and a highly participatory model of viewer. Firstly, within the theme of language, the approach is unique within conceptual art, even among those artists using language as their main medium.The paradoxical use of a silent language is typical of O'Doherty/Ireland's intellectually inventive mind. As argued in

this dissertation for the first time, by eschewing the use of the English language as a textual medium and introducing an archaic silent system, a number of issues could be dealt with simultaneously. Ogham, in O'Doherty/Ireland's art is a meta-linguistic tool which not only draws attention to the radical 20th century re-evaluation of the linguistic nature of human consciousness, but also to the deadening uniformity of the jargon of mass culture, and the potency of non-linguistic systems of communication. The serial nature of Ogham allowed O'Doherty/Ireland, well informed by structuralist ideas, to make clear visually the structure of language firstly *as* a system. This, critically, avoids the complication of associative or expressive meaning normally perceived by a user of a known language. It serves also to demonstrate that language is one part of the ordering systems used to comprehend the world, but not to the exclusion of other possible non-linguistic systems. While necessary for the day to day organisation of life, at a more creative and imaginative level, language falls short of adequately representing a fuller experience of the contemporary world.

The juxtaposition of linguistic, visual and musical systems through Ogham's serial structure, indicates O'Doherty/Ireland's intention to move visual art beyond a Modernist morphology of forms to wider cultural fields. The appearance within his art of Mallarmé and Beckett from literature, and Cage and Feldman from music, attests to this ambition. Any system including the 'language' of art, O'Doherty/Ireland suggests, requires a society actively engaged in the creation of its meaning. By using the silence of Ogham as a *tabula rasa*, he makes art with substance and relevance to its own time.

From a compositional point of view, Ogham's serial structure provided O'Doherty/Ireland with a non-linear, non-hierarchical method of construction, something much prized at the start of the post-Modernist era. English, on the other hand, by virtue of the verb 'to be,' has the inherent characteristic of a linear temporal narrative. Ogham as a system of symbolic communication in O'Doherty/Ireland's art, provokes a re-reading of both art and language. An impressive body of drawings, sculptures, poems and performances over four decades has used Ogham to stimulate contemplation of the complex nature of language.

The Structural Plays between 1967 and 1970, are among the early performance pieces of 1960s conceptual art, along with those of Morris and Nauman, for example.

However, O'Doherty's are distinct from these other artists' work, by the use of language as a medium. Typically, as with all his work, elements are stripped back to the primary linguistic tools of the alphabet, but particularly the vowels. In these Plays, the dialogical nature of communication is both shown and heard through the informational channel provided by a series of questions and answers between the players. The performative, acoustic and linguistic aspects of language are juxtaposed within a rigorously structured format dispersed throughout the favoured motif of the grid. Given O'Doherty's interest at the time of his re-discovery of Ogham in structural linguistics and Wittgenstein, the Plays realise the reality that language speaks us rather than the other way round. By stripping the dialogue of the usual expressive gestures of the body associated with language, O'Doherty demonstrates that meaning is not inherent in language but in our interpretation of it. The construct of 'location' is forcefully visualised in these Plays as each player's movement and position on the grid is controlled by the number of words in each sentence. The Plays, finally, also bear a remarkable similarity to Beckett's *Quad*, in terms of a minimalist aesthetic, the depersonalisation and lack of dramatic gesture of the players, and the serialised program of movement. Other affinities such as silence, the void, and the visual are outlined within the text. This dissertation, while the first to note these artistic affinities, concludes that further interdisciplinary research is required.

The dissertation also found that the consistent use of the words 'one, here, now,' in O'Doherty/Ireland's art in many different media, is an essential key to unlocking his work. This is so because it incorporates each of his themes around the central issue of subjectivity, for which 'location' in time is the key ontological element. His skill as an artist lies in the myriad number of ways he has found to make this point though Ogham, in drawings, sculptures, and in the monumental wall painting, *One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle* (1996). The Rope Drawings realise this 'master' theme further, by placing each participating viewer in three-dimensional and temporal space.

From the point of view of the theme of perception, a number of issues initiated by Minimalism become clarified in O'Doherty/Ireland's art. Where Minimalism had extended the category of sculpture generally, *Between Categories* (1957-1968) for example, illustrates in a clear, concise, scientific way the complexity of identifying and naming the objects of perception. In the manner of the rabbit/duck visual paradox, it

expresses visually the inherent problem of defining the outer boundary or limit of any category, something his own work was exploring and redefining for aesthetic categories. Another diagrammatic, scientifically informed work, *The Five Senses of the Bishop of Cloyne* (1967/68), notably introduces the body at a very early stage of conceptual art. The emphasis upon the body in opposition to western rationalist thinking, is juxtaposed to Berkeley's "Theory of Vision", to produce a sophisticated intellectual cocktail. The title also draws attention to the fact that Berkeley was born in Ireland, where he lived and worked in the small village of Cloyne, Co. Cork. But most importantly, it is the work which codified O'Doherty's artistic program in terms of language and perception. The tendency to reference and adopt symbols and motifs from his Irish background continues with the adaptation of the St. Bridget's cross to his labyrinth design, and the introduction of an ancient Celtic language to contemporary art.

The series of labyrinths which O'Doherty first introduced into art around 1967, were further extensions of his examination of the embodied viewer. This dissertation has found consistently, that O'Doherty/Ireland's approach is not straight forward, in spite of the clarity of design. While his 1967-68 Labyrinth series preceded that of other practitioners like Morris by a number of years, of greater importance is O'Doherty's approach. His strategy to privilege concepts and experience succeeds by minimising traditional metaphorical elements associated with the labyrinth. In his, the attention of the viewer is distracted away from the classical concepts of apprehension in the face of 'not knowing,' towards a more open-ended enjoyment of the process of finding out. This is evident from the employment of low walls within which the overall maze pattern could be seen in some designs, to the use of a mirror in which one could track oneself and others. O'Doherty's desire to straighten out the labyrinth, is another element of the strong tendency within his, and later, in Ireland's art: to make things appear simple visually, so that the ideas surrounding a concept become more prominent. The creative tension his work generates resides ultimately in the fact that the clarity and simplicity of their construction belies the complexity of the experience of them. His skill in the labyrinths and other works, resides in the ability to enlist the engagement of the viewer to explore some of the most entangled concepts of human experience. Through the agency of the viewers themselves, the process of perception becomes a self-conscious one, and thus

becomes one which has the potential to live in the memory and the imagination. This concern for viewer participation, articulated almost simultaneously in O'Doherty's *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth* (1974), becomes a dominant feature of the art.

The Ogham Sculptures of the early 1970s, brought language, perception and 'the self' together in ways which extended the definition of sculpture to a new aesthetic category, and which challenged the traditional implications of sculpture. This is achieved by the carefully thought- out construction of mirroring the surfaces so that traditional sculpture's dialectic of 'inside/outside,' is destroyed. Eliminated also is the traditional division of space for the viewer through the employment of the sculptural pedestal. O'Doherty's Ogham sculptures by contrast place the viewer into a radically new participatory relationship with the work of art. It is this implication and the experience of it throughout his art, which forms part of O'Doherty/Ireland's contribution. In these works, the implications of Minimalism's phenomenological spaces are expanded and realised through a gradual dismantling of viewer assumptions. As we saw above in *The Rake's Progress* (1970), a constant mapping or navigation of the sculpture is induced in which it is the body and mind of the mobile viewer which 'controls' the sculpture, not the ' inner' meaning of the static work. Minimal Art's objecthood is minimised in favour of greater viewer participation.

The Rope Drawing series carry these explorations across previously unexplored boundaries into new terrain. Ireland's Ropes make ephemeral environments which not only direct attention away from the consumption of images in a media and commercially driven world, but also address issues of one's place in real and metaphorical space/time. Since experience varies from person to person in both kinds of space/time, his achievement with these installations has been to create works of visual excitement and intellectual energy, across an immense range of subject matter. A philosophically sceptical attitude about any prescriptive system of ordering lies behind them.This is conveyed by the interpenetration of different kinds of spaces, of constructed 'order' and its opposite, 'chaos,' mediated, crucially, through the perception of each viewer. The thinking thus mirrors the modern scientific tendency towards the indeterminate and relative.

Time also is orchestrated through the labyrinth of lines, which become metaphors for lines of thought, or the mind itself. How the thinking figure moves about the ground of Ireland's real canvas becomes the crucial functional element of each work. Where one is (in space and time), determines what one sees, thus evoking the 'one, here, now' of much of O'Doherty/Ireland's art. Hence the critical use of privileged viewpoints or sightlines,which engender a sense of order and resolution, as distinct from other areas without sightlines, which psychologically inspires a sense of chaos, or lack of control to a western mind. This alternating psychological reponse is the essence of the creative tension of Ireland's Ropes, one which sets his work apart from that of other installationists discussed in the study. His art depends upon both the eye and mind, but also crucially, upon the senses and the body. His art integrates and juxtaposes the primary conditions of body coordinating systems ultimately derived from evolution, with inherited psychological responses to cultural systems.

O'Doherty's summary of the expansion of aesthetic inquiry from the mid to late 1960s, mirrors shifts and concerns within his own work, which sought the escape from institutionalisation, the market, and, the oppressiveness of orthodox art history. "What ensued," he says, " was a great international conversation about art and the nature of art, about nature and the art of nature, about philosophy and the nature of ideas." [721] The ephemeral nature of Ireland's Rope drawings effectively evade the commodification of art, so prevalent and pervasive within the art industry. But the fragility of human existence is also evoked by their impermanence, a quality which is also visualised by the fugitive quality of his Dot Drawings, for example. Impermanence also forms a potent antidote to the timelessness of the art object or idealised gallery space, which in Ireland's Ropes is counteracted by perceptual location of the 'self' in the 'here' and 'now.'

In O'Doherty/Ireland's art, the issue of subjectivity or identity is radically challenged in ways which extend the field for the artist, as well as the viewer. Informed by a reading of French critical theory, his work logically has implications for the approach to artistic authority. While many artist colleagues from within conceptual art also pursue an anti-authorial stance, O'Doherty/Ireland's approach has been consistently

[721] O'Doherty in Provincetown (1994), p. 13.

unconventional. It is clear that for O'Doherty/Ireland, artistic integrity and freedom from conventions and constraint is valued more highly than matters of reputation. Few have adopted such a radical position within the visual arts and maintained it, in spite of the consequences, in a world which commodifies artists as much as their art.

His approach is evident through the materials, linguistic phrases and systems used, as well as positioning himself in the role of a meta-artist through the use of pseudonyms. Where others adopted industrially manufactured materials, his practice from the beginning of the conceptual period, insists upon direct involvement at each phase of the work. This includes, unconventionally in the conceptual art context, the artist's hand, evident from the early image/text works and drawings, to the conception, drawing, planning and installation of the Rope Drawings. The artist's hand here is not intended to evoke the traditional aura of the creative genius. It is rather interpreted as a function of the artist's sense of responsibility for what he puts out into the world. In recent years, due to the physical labour involved, the Rope Drawings have often been carried out with the aid of assistants, though always under the artist's guidance, presence and participation.

The use of systems has been one which many conceptual artists adopted, including O'Doherty/Ireland, in order to create artistic distance. For some, in spite of the desire for artistic distance, a system's characteristic motif can be subsumed by the art establishment as a signature style. Judd, LeWitt and Buren are examples. The same cannot be said with O'Doherty/Ireland's art. This is so because it confronts directly, the western concept of 'the artist.' Although Ireland's Rope Drawings for example, are distinctly his and cannot be confused with any other artist's work, even that of O'Doherty, it the very problematisation of the artist's name and persona which gives O'Doherty/Ireland's art a special place within contemporary art.

As stated here for the first time, the adoption of the role of the meta-artist forms part of O'Doherty/Ireland's overall interrogation of key systems of thought. His art establishes a distance from the accepted notion of the artist as the ideal 'self' who creates and realises 'the self' through his/her work. In so doing, it runs contrary to Modern western ideas which are inextricably linked to subjectivity, individualism, or the 'inwardness' of the modern self. The western Romantic ideal of the artist constructed

upon the dialectical concept of 'inside/outside,' goes hand-in-hand with the ideal of rationality in both science and philosophy and the fall of religion in western society. With this, art as a moral force gained a new status in which the identity of the artist became symbolic of authentic self-expression and individualism. Probably nowhere is this most prized than in America, where it continues to be part of the American psyche, framed in its Constitution, and evident in its history and economic system. The commodification of images and objects within a consumerist artworld, inevitably extends to the persona of the artist. This was, and continues to be achieved through the establishment of a cult status by commercial forces, something Warhol understood and exploited with irony. O'Doherty/Ireland's approach subverts such commercial strategies by complicating the issue of the artist's name, a fundamental factor in any commodity culture. His approach differs quite significantly from the work of later artists like Jeff Koons, for example, which also address commodity culture.

> " We covet and consume not the work per se so much as the Koons...as these artists rose in value on the market, so did the commodities they deployed." [722]

As this dissertation shows, O'Doherty/Ireland's art is conceived and realised to avoid such commodification by the insistance of working with systems, series, and making the greatest part of his *oeuvre*, the Rope Drawings, over the last thirty years, ephemeral. His work appeals to the viewers' memory rather than their pockets. However by far the most radical strategy used to maintain artistic freedom, has been the use of pseudonyms. This applies not only to his visual art, but also to some of his critical and fictional writings.

However, the critically most important work within the *oeuvre* in terms of artistic identity, is *Name Change* of 1972. This dissertation describes fully for the first time, the political context and response to the work. But it is notable that it is also the first to put it into the context of art in the early 1970s which relates to performance, politics and the body. The artist himself describes the work as a gesture, a specific response to a specific situation, which cannot, by definition, be repeated. While Ireland was not alone in

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[722] Foster (1996), p. 112.

responding to Bloody Sunday through art, it is the manner of his response which is most important. He chose to communicate ideas about identity through the medium of a new category within the visual arts, rather than issue a statement expressing his horror and outrage, for example. The change of artist name was first and foremost a gesture of outrage which was conceived to attract the maximum attention to the then little-known conflict, within America. It has achieved this, to a degree. By choosing to link his artist name to a political conflict, a bridge between the periphery and centre of the artworld was also effectively forged.

In Ireland, the reaction was mixed and undoubtedly linked to the uncertainty of the time and a lack of understanding of the new art medium. It was perceived as provocative to some commentators, who saw it as an outmoded form of nationalism, tinged with implied sympathy for an armed solution to the problem. A closer examination reveals that this is far from the case. The artist's intentions are directed rather towards an intellectual examination of the concept of identity. Every paradigm connected with the issue of identity is included in the piece: colour symbolism; language; and the civic, social and artistic codes associated with naming. By choosing to give a performance in Ireland, the artist was able through the medium of art, to offer a potent metaphor for the way in which cultural codes of identity are inflected by political, historical and cultural conditioning of the present/now. These of course also have a bearing upon the subjective reponse to such a politically charged performance.

Name Change has given all of Ireland's art a political dimension since 1972. In this sense, it is one of the *oeuvres* which has maintained such an edge since the more politically active days of the late 1960s. The linking of name to place is, after all, something which many have experienced in this century to their detriment, and thus historically this work anticipates later art which addresses postcolonialism. But it also resolutely puts the spotlight upon the nature of the concept of artistic identity. With *Name Change*, Ireland forces that concept beyond the restrictions and illusions of the ideal artist to the experience of real life. O'Doherty/Ireland's art seeks, therefore, to restore the bond

between art and the public, in ways which art historian Belting suggests have been neglected by art and art history.[723]

The Duchamp Portrait (1967), an important early work of conceptual art is concerned also with identity. In addition, it represents a challenge from within early conceptual art to the ideas of Duchamp regarding the readymade and the institutional critique. Not all accept that this is so, considering it to be the opposite, a tribute.While the place of Duchamp within contemporary art's history is fully acknowledged, the nature of the transmission within a younger generation is, as yet, an entangled area within art history. Given his present stature, it is difficult to realise the politics of resistance then, particularly among Abstract Expressionists, to Duchamp within the New York artworld. In fact O'Doherty the critic, in the early 1960s, was among the earliest along with Rauschenberg, Johns and Cage, to recognise Duchamp's work at a time when most critics and artists were hostile to it. Foster's comments on the reception of Duchamp are useful here in the context of O'Doherty's *Duchamp Portrait*:

> " ...he is often presented as full-blown from his own forehead...The status of Duchamp as well as *Les Demoiselles* is a retroactive effect of countless artistic responses and critical readings..." [724]

O'Doherty's *Portrait* is one of these critical readings, since it challenges the aesthetic autonomy implied, however ironically, by Duchamp's readymade objects. It also contests somewhat anachronistically, Duchamp's contention that putting art into a museum precipitates its certain death. As shown in this dissertation, apart from an early work, *Kip's Bay: The Body and Its Discontents* (1964), O'Doherty/Ireland's own *oeuvre* has rarely used the readymade, although he did make objects like the labyrinths and Ogham sculptures during the late 1960s. In the early 1970s, a shift occurred in which he ceased to make objects, so that between 1971 and 1972/73, his practice consisted exclusively of drawings. The radical shift occurred circa 1972-73. He began to take the

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[723] Belting (1983; ed. 1987), p. 42.

[724] Foster (1996), p. 8.

drawn line from the page out into space in the large series of Rope Drawings. In the overall context of his work therefore, it is important to remember that the artist himself categorises *The Duchamp Portrait* work as a gesture, which like *Name Change,* was a response to a situation that presented itself at a particular time.

As one of the acknowledged independent-minded and prescient critics of the early 1960s in New York, it is not surprising that in the vibrant intellectual climate of the mid-1960s, O'Doherty should have engaged with one of the century's most brilliant minds. What is perhaps more surprising is that contemporary critics did not assume that the same characteristics and epithets applied to his criticism, could also be operative within his art. This dissertation shows, contrary to much critical opinion regarding the direct influence of Duchamp upon O'Doherty/Ireland's art and strategies, that many of his sources are located in literature and his Irish background. It found that his use of pseudonyms was inspired by Irish literary tradition, but especially by Flann O'Brien (Brian O'Nolan), and importantly, that he was using a pseudonym as a medical student in Dublin, before he knew Duchamp in New York.

In terms of the critical reception of O'Doherty/Ireland's art, it is clear that the category of art which he pursues has for political and market reasons, been side-lined. This is equally the case until recently, within art criticism and art history. The lack of support of artists by the American Government, in spite of the National Endowment for the Arts, is also a factor in the general antipathy to conceptual art. Given that at its critical best O'Doherty/Ireland's art is one which challenges so many inherited assumptions about art, perhaps its neglect is not surprising. However, as this dissertation makes clear, O'Doherty/Ireland's multifaceted role within the New York artworld created more than the usual obstacles to adequate critical appraisal. The multiplicity of roles within a professionally protective artworld, together with an intellectually broad and subtle approach, and largely ephemeral art, are cumulative factors which have kept O'Doherty/Ireland's art in a secondary position to his critical writing. The dissertation concludes that it is testimony to the integrity of O'Doherty/Ireland's artistic endeavours, that resistance to his art, and that of conceptual art in general, has not diminished his enthusiasm or commitment over the past forty years. Harold Rosenberg's comments accurately sum up the conclusions of this study:

" What makes any definition of a movement in art dubious is that it never fits the deepest artists in the movement—certainly not as well as, if successful, it does the others." [725]

[725] Rosenberg (1960), p. 23.

APPENDICES

A. Chronology 1928-2001

1928

- Born Brian O'Doherty, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon Ireland

1946-52

- Studied medicine at University College Dublin

1951-57

- Exhibits paintings at "Irish Exhibition of Living Art," Royal Hibernian Academy, Oireachtas
- Publishes art criticism and poetry in Ireland and poetry in America (University Review, *Poetry*, Chicago)

1951

- Meets Thomas MacGreevy

1956

- Meets Jack Butler Yeats who recommends him for Smith-Mundt scholarship to Harvard.

1957

- Draws last portrait of Jack B. Yeats two weeks before his death.
- Receives Nuffield Fellowship to work in Experimental Psychology Laboratories at Cambridge University, England.
- Conducts research on visual perception under Alan T. Welford.

- Moves to United States entering Harvard University School of Public Health, Cambridge, Massachusetts where works under Ross T. McFarland.
- Meets Barbara Novak. Lives at home of violinist Pierre Mayer of Boston Symphony Orchestra.

1958-61

- Graduates with Master of Science in Hygiene from Harvard.
- Works at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where delivers first television programmes from galleries, "Invitation to Art," as well as the Lowell Lectures.
- Meets Edward Hopper, Marc Chagall, Walter Gropius, Josef Albers, Stuart Davis, and Marcel Duchamp through T.V. series in Boston for WGBH.
- Marries art historian Barbara Novak (1960).

1961-64

- Moves to New York to work as art critic of *The New York Times*. Works for WNBC, hosting "Dialogue." Meets Stanley Kunitz, Jack Tworkov, Bob Rauschenberg, Morton Feldman, Mark Rothko, and others.
- Begins to make art again with *The Critic's Boots* (1964).
- Starts Chess series.
- Leaves *The New York Times.*
- Awarded Minneapolis Citizen's Award (1961), and Eire Gold Medal for Contribution to Culture (1963).
- Receives Mather Award for Art Criticism(1964).

1965

- Meets Eva Hesse, Dan Graham, Sol LeWitt, Peter Hutchinson, Dorothea Rockburne, Robert Smithson, Mel Bochner, Ruth Vollmer, who became a loose association of friends and colleagues. Also meets Lucy Lippard.
- Shows in the "Box Show," at Byron Gallery, New York.
- Begins Five Senses Series.

1966

- Invites Marcel Duchamp to dinner 4/04/66, and takes his electrocardiogram for *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp*.
- First solo exhibition at Byron Gallery includes Five Senses, Chess Series, and *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp*.
- Begins Artist's Books Series.

1967

- Completes *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp*, exhibited at "The Obsessive Image" at Institute of Contemporary Art, London England.
- Begins Labyrinth Series.
- Does *Scenario for Black: A Structural Film*, a serial film.
- Discovers Ogham (an ancient Celtic alphabet) as a serial system and makes first Ogham drawings and sculptures.
- Writes catalogue for Hans Richter retrospective at Finch College Museum, New York where he also exhibits *Pair* sculpture in "Schemata 7."
- Composes first Structural Plays.
- Visiting Professor at University of California, Berkeley along with Mark Rothko, Ron Kitaj, and Barbara Novak.
- Publishes *Object and Idea: A New York Journal, 1961-67*, a collection of his art critical reviews.
- Finishes editing *Aspen 5/6*, a magazine/exhibition/artwork in a box with records, films, and printed matter, whose contributors included Marcel Duchamp, Michel Butor, Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag, Mel Bochner, Sol LeWitt, Dan Graham, John Cage, Samuel Beckett and Brian O'Doherty, among others.

1968-70

- Finishes work on categories based on research at Cambridge University.
- Continues Ogham Drawings and Sculptures, Structural Plays and Vowel Choruses.
- Begins lifelong photographic self-portrait in 1969.
- Meets Joseph Cornell.

- Becomes part-time Director, Visual Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (1969).

1970-72

- Exhibits Ogham Sculptures at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. Continues Ogham Drawings, particularly I-Drawings. Begins Dot Drawings.
- Curates "The Irish Imagination" at The Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland, as part of international Rosc exhibition (1971).
- Exhibits drawings in Hendriks Gallery, Dublin, Ireland.
- Becomes editor of *Art in America*
- Becomes Adjunct Professor, Barnard College, Columbia University.
- Art & Architecture critic of NBC " Today" programme (1970-76).

1972

- Performs *Maze* (later documentation entitled, *Name Change*), in Dublin where changes name to "Patrick Ireland" in response to Bloody Sunday in Derry, Northern Ireland. States he will sign art "Patrick Ireland" until such time "as the British military presence is removed from Northern Ireland and all citizens are granted their civil rights".
- Lee Krasner tells him his name is permanent.
- Editor *Museums in Crisis.*

1973

- First Rope Drawing at 112, Greene Street, New York.

1974

- Publishes *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth* (Random House, New York), with photographs by Hans Namuth.
- Exhibits Ogham canvases at Betty Parsons Gallery.
- Finishes editorship of *Art in America.*

1975

- Installs *Rick* (one-half ton of turf) in Hendriks Gallery, Dublin, Ireland. Artist Jo Baer, living in Ireland, acquires the work reporting: "It keeps me warm all winter."
- Visits pre-Celtic and Celtic sites in Ireland.
- Begins to superimpose multiple systems in drawings.
- Begins Open Box Series.
- Installs first two- room Rope Drawing, *One Drawing in Two Rooms*, at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California.

1976

- Begins study of Borromini's architecture in Rome, Italy.
- Writes series of articles, *Inside the White Cube*, on ideology of the gallery for *Artforum* magazine.
- Resigns as Director, Visual Arts Program of NEA and appointed Director, Media Arts Program of NEA.

1977

- Ogham Drawings of the 1960s exhibited in Documenta 6, Kassel, Germany.
- Travelling show, "Rope Drawings by Patrick Ireland," opens at the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, California (catalogue essay by Edit deAk).
- Travels in Greece and Turkey studying sites, particularly Lindos, Knossus, Mycenae, Epidaurus and Ephesus.
- With James Coleman, becomes first Irish conceptual artists to exhibit in Rosc, Dublin, Ireland (1977).

1978-79

- Exhibits first painted room Rope Drawing, *Camera*, at Visual Arts Museum, New York and begins on-going series of Wall Paintings, Todi, Italy (1978).
- Installs Rope Drawing, *A Corner for Tatlin and Fred Astaire*, in Project Theatre, Dublin, Ireland (1979), and later at Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge with *Untitled Corner*.

- Visits pre-Celtic and Celtic sites in Ireland again for "The Treasures of Ireland," show at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, for CBS.

1980

- Installs Rope Drawing *Red Room* at Spencer Art Museum, University of Kansas, Lawrence. Memorial service held within it for Jean Paul Sartre.
- Gives Franklin Murphy Lectures at University of Kansas.
- Installs Rope Drawings, *Borromini's Underpass* and *Borromini's Portal* in Akron Art Museum, Ohio and Charles Cowles Gallery, New York, respectively.
- Guest Curator, Exhibition of Visual Art (EVA), Limerick, Ireland.

1981

- Installs Rope drawing, *Catenary*, at Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge. Performance of *Vowel Grid* in courtyard; subsequent performances prohibited by Fogg administration.
- Installs Rope Drawing, *Untitled*, in Lodz, Poland.

1982-85

- Wins Grand Prix, Montreal International Festival of Films on Art for *Hopper's Silence* (1982).
- Stone Drawing Series 1982-84.
- Extern examiner National College of Art & Design, Dublin (1983-89).
- Continues series of Rope Drawings with *Blue Room* at Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio (1983), and *Kane*, at Charles Cowles Gallery, New York (1984).
- Exhibits series of Museum Drawings in Hendriks Gallery, Dublin, Ireland (1983).
- Installs Rope Drawing, *Purgatory of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, Homunculus, Four Spatial / Verbal Propositions*, in the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland (essay by Dorothy Walker) (1985).

1986-90

- Retrospective exhibition, "Patrick Ireland: Drawings 1965-1985," in the National Museum of American Art, Washington D.C (essays by Elizabeth Broun and Lucy Lippard) (1986).
- Installs Rope Drawings, *In Memoriam*, in Kent State University, Ohio (1986) ; *Morton's Journey* in Artspace, San Francisco (1987); Peacekeeper in Montgomery Museum of Art , Alabama (1988); *DIAID: IN Memory of Lost Friends* in Fuller Gross Gallery, San Francisco (1989); *H-Block* in Orpheus Gallery, Belfast, Northern Ireland (1989) and *East / West* in Galerie Hoffman, Friedberg, Germany (1990).

1991-94

- Artrandom, " Patrick Ireland, Rope Drawings 1980-90," (essay by Kenneth Baker), published in Kyoto by Kyoto Shoin International.
- Publishes first novel, *The Strange Case of Mademoiselle P* (1992), which wins Sagittarius Prize (British Author's Prize) (1993).
- Begins series of easel paintings (1991).
- Extern examiner in sculpture, National College of Art and Design, Dublin, Ireland (1994-98).
- Retrospective Exhibition at Elevehjem Museum of Art, University of Madison, Wisconsin "Patrick Ireland: Labyrinths, Language, Pyramids, and Related Acts," (essay by Jan van der Marck), where installs Rope Drawing, *Omphalos* (November 1992-January 1993).
- Installs Rope Drawing, *Caligari's Palace* in Institute of Contemporary Art, P.S. 1, New York (1993).
- Retrospective Exhibition " Patrick Ireland: Gestures Instead of an Autobiography," in The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio (essays by Kenneth Baker, Michael Brenson, Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Lucy Lippard, Jane Livingston, Joseph Masheck, Thomas McEvilley, Declan McGonagle, David Moos, Molly Nesbit, Barbara Novak, Irving Sandler, Barbara Rose, Dorothy Walker, Jan van der Marck) (1994).

1995-97

- Installs two-roomed Rope Drawing, *Borromini's Corridor* in the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland (1995).
- Installs Rope Drawing, *Flann O'Brien at 11, Rue Larrey*, at "L'Imaginaire Irlandais" exhibition, Paris, France (1996).
- Artist-in-residence Sirius Art Centre, Cobh, Co. Cork, Ireland where installs permanent wall painting, *One, Here, Now: The Ogham Cycle* (1996). The President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, requests private visit to see the work.
- Board member, Irish Museum of Modern Art (1995-2000).
- Retires from NEA (1997). Becomes University Professor of Fine Art and Media at Southampton College, Long Island University.

1998

- Mini-retrospective " Patrick Ireland: Language Performed/ Matters of Identity," in the Orchard Gallery, Derry, Northern Ireland.
- Installs permanent Rope Drawing *Promenade* in Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. Installs temporary *Entrance to the Garden of Earthly Delights* in Charles Cowles Gallery, New York. Also exhibits Ogham Paintings.
- Chapter devoted to Patrick Ireland Museum, Todi, Italy in *Towards a New Museum,* Victoria Newhouse (Monacelli Press, 1998).

1999

- Publishes second novel, *The Deposition of Father McGreevy.*
- Exhibits *Drawings Around the Idea of a Book*, Charles Cowles Gallery, New York.
- Installs outdoor glass sculpture, *Untitled*, in Miami together with "Drawings over Ten Years."
- New expanded edition of *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* published.

2000

- Exhibits in group exhibition at Irish Museum of Modern Art, " Shifting Ground: Selected Works of Irish Art 1950-2000."
- *The Deposition of Father McGreevy* shortlisted for the Booker Prize, London.
- Exhibits at PS.1 show, "Primarily Structural," on 1970s art. Continues easel paintings and wall paintings, Todi.
- 3rd revised edition of *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth* (1974) published, with Preface by Rosalind Krauss.

2001

- Continues series of easel paintings.
- Installation of *Box*, Rope Drawing No. 107, Avram Gallery, Southampton College, Long Island University. Also exhibits *Aspen 5/6* (1967).
- Writing third novel.

B. Works in Ireland 1940s & 1950s

Preacher (c. 1945)

Oil on canvas

45 x 36 cm

Tránona Geimhridh (c. 1950)

Oil on board

30 x 20 cm

Exhibited, Oireachtas 1951

Drug (c. 1950)

Oil on board

38.9 x 24 cm

Waiting on District, Rotunda (1951)

Oil on board

25 x 18.7 cm

Exhibited Walker's Gallery, London

Operating Theatre 111 (c. 1952)

Oil on board

Dimensions not available

Exhibited, Royal Hibernian Academy 1952

Collection Dr. Stanley Blaugrund

Liverpool '48 (c. 1952)

Oil on board

Dimensions not available

Exhibited, Royal Hibernian Academy 1952

Islander (c. 1953)

Oil on board

18.8 x 24.5 cm

Exhibited Royal Hibernian Academy 1953

Avignon (c. 1953)

Pencil on paper

Dimensions not available

Exhibited Royal Hibernian Academy 1953

Widow in a Black Dress 1953

Oil on board

56.7 x 46.2 cm

Exhibited Irish Exhibition of Living Art 1953

Self Portrait (c. 1953)

Oil on canvas

50.4 x 40.2 cm

Exhibited Irish Exhibition of Living Art c. 1953/4

An tSionna (c. 1954)

Oil on board

46.2 x 58.7 cm

Exhibited Oireachtas 1954

Untitled I (1954)

Oil on board

58.7 x 42.2 cm

Untitled II (1955)
Oil on board
51.2 x 40.2 cm

Operating Theatre (c.1957)
Oil on board
Dimensions not available
Exhibited Royal Hibernian Academy 1957

Transitional Face (c.1957/58)
Oil on board
19 x 26.4 cm

Portrait of Jack B. Yeats 1957
Drawing in pencil
25 x 24 cm
Gift of artist to Yeats Museum, National Gallery of Ireland

C. Solo Exhibitions 1966-2001

1966

- Byron Gallery, New York (Boxes/Chess pieces)

1970

- Betty Parsons Gallery, New York

1971

- David Hendriks Gallery, Dublin (Drawings)

1973

- 112, Greene Street, New York (1st Rope Drawing)

1974

- Studio Gallery, Washington D.C.
- Betty Parsons Gallery, New York (Ogham canvases, Rope No.2)
- Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. (Duchamp Portrait)

1975

- David Hendriks Gallery, Dublin (Rick, Rope No. 12)
- 112, Greene Streeet, New York (Rope Nos.7 & 8 & 9)
- Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New
- Hampshire (Rope No.11)
- Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio (Rope Nos. 13& 14)
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Rope No.5 & Rope No. 6)

1976

- Heath Gallery, Atlanta (Ropes Nos. 23 & 24)
- Max Protetch Gallery, Washington D.C. (Ropes Nos. 25-28)

1977

- La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, California (Ropes Nos. 35-38) (Travelled to Seattle Art Museum & Cincinnati 1978)
- Parsons- Dreyfus Gallery, New York
- Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Oregon

1978

- Visual Arts Museum, New York (1st painted room: Rope No. 40)
- Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio (Ropes Nos.42 & 43)
- Galerie December, Dusseldorf (Rope No. 45)

1979

- Hansen-Fuller Gallery, San Francisco (Rope No 49)
- University Art Museum, Berkeley, California (Ropes Nos. 50 & 51)

1980

- Spencer Museum, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas (Rope No. 56)
- Akron Art Institute, Akron, Ohio (Rope No. 57)
- Protetch-McIntosh Gallery,Washington D.C.
- Charles Cowles Gallery, New York (Rope No. 58)

1981

- Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (Rope No. 62)

1982

- Brooklyn Museum, New York (Rope No. 64)
- Butler Institute of American Art, Youngtown, Ohio (Rope No.69)

1984

- Charles Cowles Gallery New York (Rope No. 70)

1985

- Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin (Rope No. 73)

1986

- National Museum of American Art, Washington D.C. (Rope No. 76, Drawings 1965-85) (Travelled to The Clocktower, New York (Rope No. 77)
- Kent State University, Kent, Ohio (Ropes Nos. 79 & 80)
- Charles Cowles Gallery, New York (Rope No.82)
- Artspace, San Francisco (Rope No. 86)
- Montgomery Museum of Art (Rope No. 89)

1989

- Fuller Gross Gallery, San Francisco (Rope No. 91)
- Octagon Gallery, Orpheus Gallery, Belfast (Rope No. 92)

1990

- Galerie Hoffman, Friedberg, Germany (Rope No. 93)
- Charles Cowles Gallery, New York (Rope No. 94)

1992

- Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin (Retrospective) (Rope No. 98)

1993

- Institute of Contemporary Art, P.S.1 New York (Retrospective) (Rope No. 99)
- 150 , Greene Street, New York (Rope No. 100)

1994

- Butler Institute of American Art, Youngtown, Ohio (Retrospective)

1995

- Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Prove, Utah (Rope No. 102)
- Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork. (Rope No. 103)

1996

- Sirius Art Centre, Cobh, Cork, Ireland (Permanent Wall Painting)

1998

- Orchard Gallery, Derry, Northern Ireland (Retrospective:"Language Performed/Matters of Identity")
- Charles Cowles Gallery, New York (Rope No. 106)

1999

- Charles Cowles Gallery, New York ("Drawings around the Idea of a Book")
- Eaton Fine Arts, West Palm Beach, Florida (Rope No. 107)

2001

- Avram Gallery, Southampton College, University of Long Island (Rope No. 108)[726]

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[726] As noted above, due to confusion of numbering, this Rope Drawing was numbered 107 at the time of its installation.

D. Group Exhibitions 1964-2001

1964

- "100 Man Show," PVI Gallery, New York
- Bridge Invitational, New York

1965

- " The Box Show," Byron Gallery, New York
- " Hommage à Caissa," Eckstrom Gallery, New York

1967

- " The Obsessive Image," Institute of Contemporary Art, London
- " Schemata 7," Finch College Museum, New York

1968

- Goucher College, Baltimore.
- "Variations on Contemporary Sculpture," Museum of Art, University of Iowa, Iowa

1971

- "Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture," Munson-Williams-Proctor Museum, Utica, New York
- " Projected Art: Artists at Work," Finch College Museum, New York
- " Director's Choice," Community Gallery, Brooklyn Museum, New York

1972

- Irish Exhibition of Living Art, Project Centre, Dublin
- " Gordon Lambert Collection," Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin
- " Betty Parson's Collection," Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, New York

1973

- " Drawings U.S.A.," Minnesota Museum of Art, Minnesota
- " Contemporary Drawings," Janie C. Lee Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- " American Drawings 1963-73," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

1974

- " Projects: Discussions/Words," The Clocktower, New York

1975

- " Constructed Drawings," Betty Parsons Gallery, New York
- " Language as Structure," Kensington Art Center, Toronto
- " Labyrinths," Wheaton College, P.C. A., Corcoran Gallery of Art, Philadelphia

1975/6

- "Herbert and Dorothy Vogel Collection," Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia & Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati

1976

- " Line," School of Visual Arts, New York and Philadelphia College of Art
- "The Golden Door: Artist-Immigrants 1876-1976," Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.
- " Rooms," P. S.1, New York
- " Projects for P.C.A," Philadelphia College of Art
- " Modern Portraits: The Self and Others," Wildenstein Gallery, New York
- " Photo-Notations," Rosa Esman Gallery

1977

- " A Collection in Progress (Milton Brutten & Helen Herrick)," Moore College, Philadelphia
- " Open to New Ideas," University of Georgia Museum, Athens, Georgia
- " Projects of the Seventies," Institute for Art & Urban Resources, P.S.I, New York

- " Time," Visual Arts Museum, Philadelphia College of Art
- " Documenta 6," Kassel, W. Germany
- "Rosc," Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin
- " Memory," C Space, New York
- " Artists' Books," New York State Arts Council
- " Sculptors' Photographs," Los Angeles County Museum of Art

1978

- " Numerals 1924-77," Leo Castelli Gallery, New York; Castelli
- Gallery; Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; and Yale University Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut
- " Seven Americans / Seven Europeans," Deauville, France
- " The Line," Parsons-Dreyfuss Gallery, New York
- " Point," Visual Arts Museum, Philadelphia College of Art

1979

- " Grids," Pace Gallery, New York and Akron Art Institute, Ohio; and Max Protetch Gallery, New York
- " The Great Big Drawing Show," P.S. I, New York
- " Dark Space," Project Gallery, Dublin
- " Corners," Hayden Gallery M.I.T Cambridge, Massachusetts
- " Drawings about Drawing," The Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

1980

- " The Pluralist Decade," American Pavilion, 39th. Biennale, Venice; Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; and Charles Cowles Gallery, New York
- " Lines," Washington Project for the Arts, Washington D.C.
- " Drawings," Leo Castelli Gallery, New York

1981

- " Wallworks," Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, Michigan

1982

- " American Constructivism," Neuberger Museum, Purchase, New York
- " Constructivism in Process," Lodz, Poland

1983

- Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York

1984

- " Poetry and the Visual Arts," University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia

1985

- " Concepts in Construction 1910-1980," Independent Curators Inc., New York
- " The Minimal Line," Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
- " Larry Bell, Patrick Ireland," Hansen-Fuller Gallery, San Francisco

1986

- " Die Ecke," Galerie Hoffman, Friedberg, Germany
- " American Drawings," Minneapolis Museum of Art, Minnesota

1987

- " Reconnecting: Recent Work by Jennifer Bartlett, Mel Bochner, Nancy Graves, Patrick Ireland, Lucio Pozzi," The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan
- " Aspects of Conceptualism," Avenue B Gallery, New York

1988

- "Private Works for Public Spaces," R.C.Erpf Gallery, New York

1989

- " Three Artists: Ireland, di Marinis, Pfaff," Fuller- Gross Gallery, San Francisco
- " The Presence of Absence: New Installations," Gallery 400, University of Illinois, Chicago

1991

- " Among Friends," Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan
- " LeVa, Rockburne, Ireland," 150, Greene Street, New York
- "Sniper's Nest: Art that has Lived with Lucy Lippard," Bard College, New York

1996

- "Langage, Cartographie et Pouvoir" (Language, Mapping and Power: L'Imaginaire Irlandais), Galerie Nikki Diana Marquardt, Paris
- "Large Paintings," Charles Cowles Gallery, New York
- " Art and the American Experience," Kalamzoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, Michigan

1999

- " World Artists at the Millenium," United Nations, New York
- " Primarily Structural," P.S. 1, Contemporary Art Centre, Long Island City, New York

2000

- " Shifting Ground: Selected Works of Irish Art 1950-2000," Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin

2001

- *Barbara One*, video exhibition, "Fred Barzyk: The Search for a Personal Vision in Broadcast Television," Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, Wisconsin

E. Rope Drawings 1973-2001 [727]

1. *Phonic Grid*, 112, Greene Street, New York, May 1973
2. *Cradle*, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, January 1974
3. *Newton's Rings*, The Clocktower, New York, May 1974
4. *Untitled*, Studio, New York, November 1974
5. *One Drawing in Two Rooms*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, January 1975
6. *One Triangle, Three Ones*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, January 1975
7. *Untitled*, 112, Greene Street, New York, April 1975
8. *Untitled*, 112, Greene Street, New York, April 1975
9. *Inverted Pyramid*, 112, Greene Street, New York, April 1975
10. *Untitled* , Private Collection, Philadelphia, April 1975
11. *Skywalker*, Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, April 1975
12. *Untitled* , David Hendriks Gallery, Dublin, Ireland, August 1975
13. *Skylight* , Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio, November 1975
14. *Skymark* , Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio, November 1975
15. *Corner*, School of Visual Arts Museum, New York, December 1975
16. *Untitled*, Philadelphia College of Art, Philadephia, February 1976
17. *Untitled*, Studio, New York, April 1976
18. *Untitled*, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C., May 1976
19. *Standing Magic Square*, P. S.1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, June 1976
20. *Papillon*, Courthouse Square, Dayton, Ohio, June 1976
21. *Yellow Light*, Private Collection, Todi, Italy, July 1976
22. *The L in the Triangle*, Private Collection, Todi, Italy, July 1976
23. *Untitled*, Heath Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia, September 1976
24. *Untitled*, Heath Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia, September 1976

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[727] The artist acknowledges that the numbering of the Rope Drawings has become confused from number 100. There have been a total of 109. One (number 101) was deleted from the list by the artist, while the last Drawing in 2001 was numbered 107 instead of 108.

25. *Stairwell*, Max Protetch Gallery, Washington, D.C., December 1976
26. *Screen 1,* Max Protetch Gallery, Washington, D.C., December 1976
27. *Screen 11*, Max Protetch Gallery, Washington, D.C., December 1976
28. *Untitled*, Max Protetch Gallery, Washington, D.C., December 1976
29. *Untitled*, Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, January 1977
30. *Inverted Pyramid*, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, January 1977
31. *Corner Line*, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, January 1977
32. *Floating V W,* La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, January 1977
33. *Untitled*, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, January 1977
34. *Yellow Rectangle*, Rosc, Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland, September 1977
35. *Thin Drawing*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, October 1977
36. *Two Blind Spots*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, October 1977
37. *Untitled*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, October 1977
38. *Untitled*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, October 1977
39. *Untitled*, Studio, New York, November 1977
40. *Camera*, School of Visual Arts Museum, New York, April 1978
41. *Wallenda*, Gallery, University of Ohio, Columbus, May 1978
42. On *the Edge*, Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, May 1978
43. *Untitled*, Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, May 1978
44. *Casino*, Deauville, France, September 1978
45. *Raum*, Galerie December, Dusseldorf, Germany, September 1978
46. *Yellow Square*, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, February 1979
47. *Untitled*, P.S.1, New York, February 1979
48. *Cornered*, Project Gallery, Dublin, Ireland, March 1979
49. *Floating Pyramid*, Hansen-Fuller Gallery, San Francisco, June 1979
50. *Inside-out Room*, University Art Museum, Berkeley, California, July 1979
51. *Cinemascope*, University Art Museum, Berkeley, California, July 1979
52. *Corner for* Tatlin *and Fred Astaire*, Hayden Gallery, M.I.T., September 1979
53. *Untitled* (*Corner*), Hayden Gallery, M.I.T., September 1979
54. *Untitled*, Hudson River Museum, New York, October 1979

55. *Untitled*, Landmark Center, St. Paul, Minnesota, January 1980
56. *Red Room*, Spencer Museum, University of Kansas, Lawrence, March 1980
57. *Borromini's Underpass*, Akron Art Museum, Akron, Ohio, April 1980
58. *Borromini's Portal*, Charles Cowles Gallery, New York, September 1980
59. *Untitled*, Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D. C., October 1980
60. *Untitled*, Studio, New York, December 1980
61. *Without Ropes*, Cranbrook Academy, Detroit, February 1981
62. *Catenary*, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 1981
63. *Untitled*, Lodz, Poland, October 1981
64. *String Quartet (4 Corners)*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, May 1982
65. *Roof Garden*, Private Collection, New York, October 1982
66. *Double Up in Blue and Grey*, Studio, Washington D.C., December 1982
67. *Rimbaud's Cradle*, Charles Cowles Gallery, New York, February 1983
68. *Eddie's Window*, The Grey Gallery, New York University, June 1983
69. *Blue Room*, The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio, October 1983
70. *Kane*, Charles Cowles Gallery, New York, February 1984
71. *Big A*, University of Virginia, Charlottsville, April 1984
72. *Double Scoop*, Studio, New York, November 1984
73. *Purgatory of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, Homunculus, Four Spatial/Verbal Propositions*, Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, February 1985
74. *Dark Corner*, Private Collection, Todi, Italy, July 1985
75. *Untitled*, Private Collection, Washington D.C., November 1985
76. *Present Conditional*, National Museum of American Art, Washington D.C., April 1986
77. House *Call*, Martello Terrace, Clocktower, New York, September 1986
78. *Two-D in Three-D*, Clocktower, New York, September 1986
79. *In Memoriam*, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, September 1986
80. *The Tennis Court Oa*th, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, September 1986
81. *Remote Control*, Galerie Hoffman, Friedberg, Germany, October 1986
82. *End Zone*, Charles Cowles Gallery, New York, December 1986

83. *Petra*, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, May 1987
84. *Women of Algiers*, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, May 1987
85. *Trecento*, Private Collection, Todi, Italy, July 1987
86. *Morton's Journey*, Artspace, San Francisco, September 1987
87. *Untitled*, Private Collection, Washington D.C., October 1987
88. *Rear-View Mirror*, Studio, New York, December 1987
89. *Peacekeeper*, Montgomery Museum of Art, Alabama, September 1988
90. *Red H*, Studio, New York, April 1989
91. *DIAID: In Memory of Lost Friends*, Fuller-Gross Gallery, San Francisco, May 1989
92. *H-Block*, Orpheus Gallery, Belfast, Northern Ireland, June 1989
93. *East / West*, Galerie Hoffman, Friedberg, Germany, March 1990
94. *Inverted Pyramid for Cyclops*, Charles Cowles Gallery, New York, September 1990
95. *White Column*, Studio, New York, November 1990
96. *Fountain 11*, Private Collection, Todi, Italy, July 1991
97. *Ingeborg's Egyptian "I"*, The Detroit Institute of Arts, June 1992
98. *Omphalos*, Elvehjem Museum of Art, Madison, Wisconsin, November 1992
99. *Caligari's Cabinet*, Institute of Contemporary Art, P.S.1, New York, April 1993
100. *Humbert's Motel*, 150, Greene Street, New York, April 1993
101. Rope Drawing excluded from list by artist
102. *Michael's Corner*, Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Prove, Utah, April 1995
103. *Borromini's Corridor*, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland September 1995
104. *Flann O'Brien at 11, Rue Larray*, Galerie Nikki Diana Marquardt, Paris, France May 1996
105. *Promenade*, Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, September 1998
106. *Entrance to the Garden of Earthly Delights*, Charles Cowles Gallery, New York, October 1998
107. *Floor Transplant*, Eaton Fine Arts, West Palm Beach, Florida, December 1999
108. *Box*, Avram Gallery of Art, Southampton College, New York, September 2001

F. Major Minimal Art Exhibitions 1964-1967

1964

- "8 Young Artists," River Hudson Museum. (Organiser E.C. Goossen)

1966

- "Primary Structures: Younger British and American Sculptors," Jewish Museum, N.Y.(Judd, Morris, Flavin, Andre)
- "Distillation," Tibor de Nagy & Stable Galleries, New York. (Organiser E.C. Goossen)
- "9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering," Twenty-Fifth Armory, New York
- "Systemic Painting," Guggenheim Museum, New York. (Organiser Lawrence Alloway)
- "Some Recent British and American Sculpture," Emmerich Gallery, New York
- "The Whitney Annual," Whitney Museum, New York (Tony Smith, Bladen, Rickey, McCracken, Judd)

1967

- "American Sculpture of the Sixties," Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles (LeWitt, Morris, Judd, Bladen, Doyle)

G. Major Conceptual Art Exhibitions 1966-1972

1966

- " Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to be Viewed as Art," School for Visual Arts Gallery, New York. (Organiser Mel Bochner)
- " Normal Art," Museum of Normal Art, New York. (Organiser Joseph Kosuth)

1967

- "Aspen 5/6", Roaring Fork Press, New York. (Organiser/Editor Brian O'Doherty)

1968

- "Xeroxbook," New York. (Andre, Barry, Heubler, Kosuth, LeWitt, Morris, Weiner) (Organisers Siegelaub & Wendler)
- "Prospect 68," Dusseldorf. (Organiser Konrad Fischer)

1969

- " Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects," New York Cultural Center, New York. (Barry, Bochner, Kosuth, Koslov, Weiner and Art & Language, Baxter, Buren, Dibbets, Haacke, Kawara, Piper, Wilson)
- "January 5-31, 1969," McLandon Building, 44, E. 52nd St. New York. (Kosuth, Weiner, Heubler, Barry) (Oganiser Seth Siegelaub)
- "When Attitudes Became Form: Works-Concepts-Processes-Situations-Information," Kunsthalle, Berne, March 22-April 27. (Long, Heizer, Kounellis, de Maria, Beuys) (Organiser Harald Szeeman)
- " 557,087," Seattle. (Smithson, Acconci, Arnatt) (OrganiserLucy Lippard)
- " Konzeption / Conception," Stadtisches Museum, Leverkusen Germany. (Smithson, Bechers, Ruscha, Weiner, Kosuth, Bochner, Kawara, LeWitt, Piper)
- " Art and Language," Coventry, England.
- "Conception-Perception," Eugenia Butler Gallery, Los Angeles. (Baldessari, Heubler, Kosuth, LeVa, Weiner)

1970

- Seth Sieglaub's issue of *Studio International*
- " Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects", New York Cultural Centre. (Bochner, Kosuth, Haacke, Nauman, Ruscha)
- " Conceptual Art, Arte Povera, Land Art," Turin. (Manzoni, Klein, Weiner, Kosuth, de Maria, Smithson, Pisteletto, Kounellis) (Organiser Germano Celant)
- " Information," MoMA, New York. (Organiser Kynaston McShine)
- " Software," Jewish Museum, New York
- Museum of Conceptual Art, San Francisco. (Founder Tom Marioni)

1971

- "Prospect 71," Dusseldorf
- Opening of John Weber Gallery, New York. (Represented Smithson, Buren, Haacke, LeWitt)
- Opening of Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. (Represented Kosuth, Barry, Heubler, Weiner)
- Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, then New York. (Represented Klein, Land Artists, Smithson)

1972

- "Inquiry into Reality—Today's Imagery," Documenta V," Kassel, W.Germany
- "The New Art," Haywood Gallery, London

H. Extracts from selected letters by the artist

Why labyrinths? Well, there are the obvious things. After passing through, you have the illusion you understand something. And the difficulties of the process are always partly redeemed by the confidence that a solution is there, immediately visible if you could levitate yourself. The labyrinth with no solution, the Kafkaesque labyrinth, is a cruel invention, though I suppose it's closer to real life than the classical labyrinth, which is always an idealization of meaning. If only you knew, it would all make sense.

My interest in labyrinths has nothing to do with all this though. The labyrinth's content is so oppressive it has to be tuned down. I was surrounded by the labyrinth idea as a kid in Ireland, where you never get straight answers, you always get bent answers...I wanted to make labyrinths very easy, to diminish the urgency of a solution and to emphasize a rather lax process. You could get there in lots of ways and when you got there it wasn't all that interesting. Mine weren't authoritarian or concerned with "ingenuity." What was there was there, including you. I'd have liked to have cut one of these labyrinths into an Irish bog, which is a natural place for it, but there was a rush to the landscape at the time; to go with it would have been wrong for my work then...By the way, all these pieces were done in 1967/68.

(Ireland, P. 1975. Letter to Janet Karden, Director, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, in "Janet Kardon Interviews Some Modern Maze-makers," *Art International*, Vol. XX/4-5, April/May, 1976, p. 68).

I think the hand thing is intrinsic to all the drawings...It's not inconsistent with the impersonality of the work, which I share with my friends, but on different terms. What sustained me then, and still does, is that the drawings had and have very little to do with me—the secular fellow reading the sorts pages. But that's another idea, and I thought it might be useful, when I dug up some of the *Five Senses* drawings, to mention the sense of reality or unreality behind them. Nothing earth-shaking, but strongly felt. Art is artificial anyway, and those of us who stay close to it for a lifetime tend to become our

art's artifact, an echo of its conventions. So before I dissolve into bodiless functions, I'll stop and go catch a plane to Washington.

(Ireland, P. 1985. Letter to Lucy Lippard, Critic, in Madison, Wisconsin, Elvehjem Museum of Art, *Patrick Ireland: Labyrinths, Language, Pyramids, and Related Acts* (1993), pp. 15-17).

I hasten to answer your questions about the "stone" drawing you acquired for the Met.

It was one of a series done, as far as I can remember, in 1982/83 arising out of visits to pre-Celtic and Celtic sites in Ireland, made in 1975 and 1978...I kept thinking about them—the stones—until I had to get them out of my head...So in making those drawings I had a sense of rehearsing the stones' original function as I construed them, (thus that halting, biting, hatchet-line line), and a sense of tattooing a living surface, though the surface at hand was only the usual acid-free paper. I did this while trying to avoid romanticizing remote history, which was unquestionably brutal...I stopped the stone drawings after doing about fifteen or twenty. But they had their effect on the painted rooms I did later...

(Ireland, P. 1990. Letter to William Lieberman, Curator of Twentieth-century Art, Metropolitan Museum, New York, in Madison, Wisconsin, Elvehjem Museum of Art, *Patrick Ireland: Labyrinths, Language, Pyramids, and Related Acts* (1993), pp. 29-30).

We all have secret texts, I suppose, that accompany us in our voyages and I have to admit old Bishop Berkeley is one smart cookie for my money. His notebooks A and B are so full of astute comments about sight, blindness, perception, constructing the world, etc. that I fancy I see him in his clerical gown testing the rope pieces and questioning" if there be not two kinds of visible extension, one perceived by a confused view, the other by a distinct successive direction of the optic axis to each point." He and Locke are great to read (for my purposes) because their investigations into the senses do not isolate them, but are about the way the world and ourselves are composed by our (variable) perception...I hate when this kind of thing is dismissed as " perceptual art" or some such

moniker which sends the rest of our organism to some Siberian Gulag, while we entertain in the gallery with psychology textbook tricks.

(Ireland, P. 1991. Letter to Carter Ratcliff, Critic, in Madison, Wisconsin, *Patrick Ireland: Labyrinths, Language, Pyramids, and Related Acts* (1993), pp. 30-31.)

Thank you for your letter and questions. I'll answer them in the order asked.

The first—minimalism and history—is so important that it would require several pages. Minimalism's main task was to clear away romantic vapours, expressionist self-indulgence, Freudian clap-trap and replace it with fact/objects surrounded with an energy-field of ideas, making possible a new relationship to the viewer, a new interaction between object and idea...Historically, minimalism tends to be seen as an unprofitable reduction, arid, conceptually arrogant, limited, "theatrical" (Michael Fried's mischievous nonsense). Some of it was and some of its practitioners were.

(Ireland, P. 1995. Letter to Brenda Moore McCann, Dublin. Unpublished).

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