

Sophister Module Description Template 2022-23

Full Name: Artists' Writing in Contemporary Ireland

Short Name: Artists' Writing

Lecturer Name and Email Address: Nathan O'Donnell, naodonne@tcd.ie

ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester Taught MT/HT: HT

Year JS/SS: JS

Module Content:

Artists' writing and artists' publishing represent rich fields of practice in Ireland, happening at the intersections between visual art and literature. This module will explore several such practices, beginning with the writing of Jack B. Yeats and working through the impact of Conceptualism and other artistic movements and trends, to the wide range of experimental work being produced in the field of contemporary art today. We will look at the work of artists such as Adrian Duncan, Roy Claire Potter, Eimear Walshe, Dennis McNulty, Jaki Irvine, Isabel Nolan, Emma Wolf-Haugh, Anne Tallentire, Suzanne Walsh, and Maria Fusco.

Subjects to be covered will include: experiments with publishing forms (the book, the magazine, the catalogue); art writing; the 'artist's novel'; appropriation and public languages; small-press publishing and post-digital publishing; fan-zines and zine culture; publishing and archival practices, including queer practices; the 'anti-book'; artists' use of script; and writing for performance.

Learning Outcomes:

- Develop a working knowledge of the history of artists' writing in Ireland, how conceptualism and writing have intersected since the latter part of twentieth century, in Ireland and internationally
- Assess the work of a number of practitioners through private research, class discussion, and group exercise
- Become familiar with a range of contemporary artists currently writing and publishing within the field of contemporary art in Ireland
- Develop a sophisticated method of reading and analysing unorthodox textual material with attention to the materiality of the work, the mechanism of the book, the processes of publishing, and the relationship of text and image

Learning Aims:

- To study a selection of experimental long- and short-form texts from the field of artists' writing in Ireland
- To place these works in context, exploring international developments in relation to conceptualism and post-conceptual art practice

- To explore how artists' writing and artists' publishing represent a radical alternative to traditional literary publishing, with reference to theoretical material on art writing and experimental publishing
- To consider the implications of artists' writing for the field of literature, the practice of writing, and the discipline of literary studies

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 1
- Name/Type of Component(s): Exhibition project with critical essay
- Word Count of Component(s): 5000
- Percentage Value of Component(s):

Reading List:

Below is a list of the primary texts we will be exploring in the module, as well as some secondary sources on artists' writing. Scans/documentation will be provided where sources (particularly primary sources) are rare, out-of-print, or otherwise difficult to obtain.

Primary reading

- Duncan, Adrian, *Love Notes from a German Building Site* (Lilliput Press, 2019)
- Nolan, Isabel, *Curling up with reality* (Kerlin Gallery, 2021)
- Walshe, Eimear, *Gretta* (artist's publication, 2020)
- Walshe, Eimear, *The Land Question: Where the fuck am I supposed to have sex?* (film work, 2020)
- Potter, Roy Claire, *Lads of Aran*, in *The Bodies that Remain* (Punctum Books, 2018)
- Wolf-Haugh, Emma, *Having a Kiki: Queer Desire and Public Space* (Paper Visual Art, 2017)
- Wolf-Haugh, Emma, and Husse, Suza (eds), *The Many-Headed Hydra* (art magazine, 2016–ongoing)
- Fusco, Maria (ed), *The Happy Hypocrite* (Bookworks, 2008–2022)
- Yeats, Jack B., *Ah Well* (Routledge, 1942)
- Chong, Heman, and others, *Phillip* (Project Arts Press, 2007)
- Walsh, Suzanne, *The land where nothing was* (scripts for performance, 2016)
- Irvine, Jaki, *Days of Surrender* (Copy Press, 2013)
- McNulty, Dennis, *The Archivist* (film work, screened in class, 2014)
- McNulty, Dennis, *Corpus* (artist's publication, 2014)
- Tallentire, Anne, *Objects of a Life* (Copy Press, 2013)
- Harmey, Cliona, *Dublin Ships* (text-based public realm installation, 2015)
- Strain, Kate and Hallinan, Fiona, *The Department of Ultimology* (ongoing curatorial project, 2016–ongoing)

Secondary reading

- Drucker, Johanna, *The Century of Artists' Books* (MoMA, 1995)
- Ludovici, Alessandro, *Post-Digital Print: The Mutation of Publishing since 1894* (Onomatopée 77, 2012)

- Lyons, Joan, *Artists' Books: An Anthology and Source Book* (Gibbs M. Smith, 1987)
- Stiles, Kristine (ed), *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: a sourcebook of artists' writings* (University of California Press, 2012)

For a useful primer on contemporary art in a broader sense, a useful overview can be found in *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Anti-Modernism, Post-Modernism*, ed. Hal Foster et al (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014). An anthology of relevant sources can be found in Francis Francina and Jonathan Harris (eds) *Art in Modern Culture: An Anthology of Critical Texts* (London: Open University and Phaidon, 1992). Also recommended is the Whitechapel / MIT *Documents of Contemporary Art* book series, which assembles a range of texts (by artists, theorists, others) around current themes in contemporary art, e.g. The Studio, Education, The Biennial, The Magazine. A more extensive list of such sources – and specific secondary texts on particular thematic and categories relevant to the course – will be supplied during the module.

There are some useful online resources available also. For instance, see the *What is...?* series on IMMA's website for helpful subject-specific overviews/introductions; http://www.imma.ie/en/page_212532.htm. Also see Ubuweb (at www.ubu.com) for an extensive and extremely useful archive of avant-garde artists and writers' publications, publishing experiments, performances.

Please note:

- Curricular information is subject to change.
- Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.