

cut into two shapes that can be reconfigured and fitted together by visitors on a wall painted with magnetic paint. In 1974, Roger Penrose discovered two identical shapes that could tile a plane to infinity with a never repeating pattern. When correctly fitted together, a Penrose tiling has many remarkable properties, and creates patterns that can never be repeated. The work is accompanied by a video of the artist attempting to create the installation. Moving down the corridor, the new work *History of Light (Betelgeuse)* c.1374–2015 is hung. This unique photogram and print series is a record of light from the past to the present. The works are made with the starlight captured from the dying star Betelgeuse whose light from 640 years ago is only visible to us now.

Towards the end of the exhibition, is a vitrine where various objects and artworks are displayed. Here William Parsons's mid-1840s drawings documenting the spiral nature of galaxies is displayed alongside two models on loan from the Geology and Physics Department in Trinity College, Dublin. These are shown with the installation work *A past still to come* (2015) consisting of prisms, crystals and photographs. The vitrine is a beautiful combination of pieces that are a kind of reference table or a storyboard for a hypothetical future film or work, using new and found objects.

Towards the end of this chapter the gallery descends back to darkness and *Current distance to Pluto* (2015) can be seen displayed high, illuminated as a LED light. *Current distance to Pluto* is an extension of the exhibition through a digital installation that refers to the constantly changing distances of Pluto from Earth. Generated by a computer program, the distances are measured specifically on the counter. You can glance up and comprehend the counter twinkling in a ceaseless loop of nearness and distance, referring to a continual change in relation to a fixed or stable position.

Room 6

Entering the last room of the exhibition you find the tiny watercolour *Let There Be Light study* (1942) by the Irish Abstract and Cubist artist Mainie Jellett (1897-1944). This is a study for Jellett's painting *Let There Be Light* currently on display in the School of Physics in Trinity College Dublin. This delicate work is an introduction to the third commissioned film *A Reflection on Light* (2015). *A Reflection on Light* is Weir's reading of the painting *Let There be Light*. It is displayed on a grand scale and reflects on the relationship between Cubism and Relativity. The film consists of a seemingly single shot; a sequence of long durational takes, that flow across different histories, disciplines and locations. It opens in Mainie's former house at 42 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, still occupied by her family. The film's second location is the New Galleries at IMMA during the take-down of the exhibition *Analysing Cubism*, which included Mainie's painting *Let There Be Light*. The final location is in the School Of Physics in Trinity College Dublin, in the Schrödinger Lecture Theatre and in the George Fitzgerald Library which is the painting's final home. In essence the painting becomes a constant throughout time – it is the context which continually changes.

This project began during Weir's Artist-in-Residence in the School of Physics after the discovery that the painting was donated to the School by Jellett's family. Weir's research led her to further learn that Mainie's grandfather, John Hewitt Jellett was a physicist and a former Provost of Trinity College.

In April 2016, *A Reflection on Light* will be presented in an expanded installation and curated exhibition in the School of Physics, Trinity College Dublin.

Grace Weir has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally. She represented Ireland at the 49th International Venice Biennale (2005). Selected exhibitions include *Super 8*, Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro (2013), Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2012), Künstlerhaus Berlin (2012); *OneOnOneOnOne*, Science Gallery, Dublin (2013); *Circling the square*, Grace-lands, EVA International, Limerick (2012), *Apertures & Anxieties* at the RHA Gallagher Gallery, Dublin (2011); *In my own time*, Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane (2008), The Science Museum, London (2007); *Blackboxing*, Project Arts Centre, Dublin (2007); *Himmelsbilder*, Dommuseum zu Salzburg, Austria (2005); *Biennale! Artist film and video*, Temporarycontemporary, London (2005); *A Fine Line*, Cornerhouse, Manchester (2003). Grace Weir has been awarded several Arts Council of Ireland Awards. Other awards include: Artist-in-Residence, Trinity College Dublin (2012 – present); Artist-in-Residence, St. John's College, Oxford (2006). Selected commissioned projects include *Apertures*, commissioned by the School of Physics, Trinity College, Dublin (2015); *From here to*, a new media installation commissioned by GMIT, Galway, Ireland (2007); *Sight unseen*, a collaboration with Graham Parker, commissioned by Breaking Ground Ballymun, Dublin, Ireland (2005); *Dust defying gravity*, commissioned by Cornerhouse, Manchester, UK (2003); *Little Bang*, commissioned by NIFCA, Helsinki, Finland (2001).

(front cover)
Grace Weir, *Black Square* (video still), 2015, HD video, 40 minutes. Courtesy of the artist.

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Exhibition curated by Rachael Thomas, *Senior Curator*. Head of Exhibitions Assisted by Victoria Evans, *Assistant Curator*. Exhibitions. Gallery guide by Victoria Evans, *Assistant Curator*. Exhibitions, IMMA.

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Irish Museum of Modern Art
Áras Nua-Ealaine na hÉireann
Royal Hospital
Military Road
Kilmainham
Dublin D08 FW31
Ireland
telephone: + 353 1 612 9900
email: info@imma.ie

Áras Nua-Ealaine na hÉireann
An Ospidéal Rioga
An Bóthar Mileata
Cill Mhaighneán
Baile Átha Cliath D08 FW31
Éire
guthán: + 353 1 612 9900
r-phost: info@imma.ie

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Grace Weir: 3 different nights, recurring



IMMA presents the first Museum exhibition by one of Ireland’s most respected and compelling artists, Grace Weir, *3 different nights, recurring* includes a selection of new work featuring three new films *Black Square* (2015), *Darkroom* (2015) and *A Reflection of Light* (2015) supplemented by a complementary body of work that spans over 20 years of Weir’s creative output.

Working primarily in the moving image and installation, Grace Weir is concerned with aligning a lived experience of the world with conceptual knowledge and theory. One particular area of Weir’s work is her unique approach to research, based on a series of conversations and experiments with scientists, philosophers and practitioners from other disciplines. Weir probes the nature of a fixed identity. Her questions are underpinned by the theories under her scrutiny, whether it is relativity, intentionality, the duality of light or philosophies of time, history and film.

The exhibition title *3 different nights, recurring* references a note made on a whirlpool galaxy drawing by William Parsons in mid-1840s. In an age predating photography, Parsons repeated his drawings over three nights in order to prove his observation of the spiral nature of galaxies. Interested in the moment before definition, Weir’s works explore the dynamic of practice and representation.

Creating a dialogue between the conceptual nature of her ideas and how meaning becomes tangible through activity, the works in the exhibition refer simultaneously to the act of making and the mediums in which they are made. This includes pieces/occasions/instances where time itself forms the work.

West Wing Galleries Room 1

*The black holes of nature are the most perfect objects there are in the universe: the only elements in their construction are our concepts of space and time.*¹ Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar

Entering into Room 1 you see three photographic ink-on-paper works titled *3 different blacks* (2015). This is a series of delicate works that were made to fade using non-lightfast inks. The idea of non-fixed, temporal works is an ongoing theme throughout the exhibition.

From here you continue into the new film, *Black Square* (2015). Displayed as a double projection, the film explores the difficult process of capturing an image of the black hole that lies in the exact centre of the Milky Way Galaxy. The important work conducted by astrophysicist Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar led to the theory of the last unknowns in physics – the black hole. Weir documents in this film the astrophysicist Reinhard Genzel’s astronomy team from Munich at work. Genzel proved the existence of the black hole by tracking the stars around it for 16 years.

Weir has also documented the medium and process of film by recording the film crew as they work and their interactions with scientists, journeying across the Atacama Desert in Chile to the Very Large Telescope at Cerro Paranal. This film is the artist’s journey into the unknown, to the edges of comprehension and knowledge, attempting to capture the unknown centre of our represented universe. This can be seen in the final shot of the pixel in the film.

^[1] Committee on Gravitational Physics, National Research Council, Division on Engineering and Physical Sciences, Board on Physics and Astronomy, Gravitational Physics: Exploring the Structure of Time and Space, (National Academic Press, Washington DC, 1999) 28.

Corridor

Walking into the corridor, there are two monitors displaying short film works *Déjà vu* (2003) and *The Clearing* (1999). These deal with themes of time, narrative structure and the medium of film.

The Clearing is a continuous loop, without beginning or end. The work depicts the filming of a perfect circle slicing the horizon as it separates the sea and sky.

Déjà vu plays with complex ideas around time and how it is represented. The film contains two characters that are briefly involved in same event. It uses cinematic language, referencing the brief encounters and missed opportunities they experience.

Further into the corridor you will find the installation work *If only something else had happened* (2011). This is displayed as a table with stacks of paper held in place with stones. The work is a result of a period of research with Ruth Byrne who is a Psychologist and Professor of Cognitive Science in Trinity College, Dublin. The work explores the way that people problem-solve, the complexity of reasoning and how people find possibilities within situations. The title of the piece *If only something else had happened* references the saying often used when a negative event occurs and how we look for the moment in the past when we may have avoided this. Hidden in the alcove is an audio work embedded in a cast stone on the floor in which Weir discusses with Ruth Byrne, her theory of reasoning.

Next to this work on a shelf is the projection *Forgetting (the vanishing point)* (2000) seen here displayed on an open book. The video work is a long take of a real cloud dissipating over time until it completely disappears. The work refers to a demonstration of linear perspective by the artist Brunelleschi in the 15th century. Brunelleschi did not paint the sky above the baptistry in his painting. Instead he painted it in silver leaf to reflect the sky. He avoided rendering the clouds which resist definition as they are constantly shifting and changing and cannot be painted.

As you move towards the end of the corridor you encounter the video work *The Turning Point* (2002). The film opens with a shot of a suburban early modernist house in North Dublin and its surroundings; the street, trees, cars, leaves on the ground. In the dark interior of the house, a man is lying on the bed watching the patterns of light on the ceiling caused by reflections on the cars passing outside. There is a rupture in this work, meaning that something out of the ordinary happens, reminding the viewer that cinema is not real. This is the moment Weir further provokes the viewer’s engagement with the film.

Room 2

In Room 2, the double projection, *Darkroom* (2015) is screened. This work was filmed in Mary Rosse’s original darkroom located in Birr Castle, Co. Offaly. The room was completely emptied of its contents and reconstructed by conservators in the Science Centre on the Castle’s grounds. Mary Rosse (1813–85) was a pioneer in photography in Ireland in the 1850s. In 1983, the untouched laboratory where she worked was rediscovered. In filming, Weir was interested in the relationship between reconstruction and photography – both attempt to fix a moment in time. Having visited and photographed Rosse’s original darkroom prior to its dismantling, Weir returned to this space, now empty, to film a sequence of video shots. The two different projections, one filmed in the original but empty space and one in the reconstructed space with the original contents, mirror each other. Shown side by side, a strangeness forms in terms of location and time but a lucid connection is made through the activity of photography.

Room 3

Moving into Room 3, we find the photographic work titled *Darkroom (stereoscope)* (2015) which references the film in Room 2. In this double photo portrait, Weir has captured the reconstructed darkroom in colour. She presents it alongside a black and white photograph developed in the techniques that would have been used by Rosse in her darkroom.

High up on the wall is the monitor for the film work *Script (1) Summer studio* (2009). This short film work shows the artist spelling out a word, through pinholes in a sheet of paper. The word and its meaning become visible as the paper is held up against the light streaming through a window.

Room 4

Room 4 contains a selection of four video works recording the experiments that Weir created with the astrophysicist Ian Elliot. These are *Bending space-time in the basement* (2003), *Paper Exercises* (2003), *The Ages of the Universe* (2003–12) and *The Darkness and the Light* (2002). The films show the artist and Elliot in conversation, creating homemade experiments using ordinary items such as tin cans, lead, wood and string. They question the scientific ideas of gravity, spacetime and a ‘gedanken’ (a thought experiment).

In the alcove, there is the installation *Coffee Cup Caustic* (2005) consisting of a polished cylinder that is spotlight. The light is directed onto the cylinder so that it creates a curve of concentrated light rays known as a ‘caustic’. Seen here, it captures the complexity of light formed by the simple inner surface of a cylinder.

Room 5

Moving into Room 5, the major work from the IMMA Collection *Dust defying gravity* (2003) consists of a single 4 minute tracking shot. This traces through the rooms at Dunsink Observatory, documenting the aging telescopes and measuring instruments arrayed throughout the building. As the camera passes over a mechanical model of the solar system, the dust in the air of the room becomes visible, floating and scintillating like a field of stars. The film is accompanied by a haunting ambient sound that fills the room.

Corridor

At the beginning of the corridor, the new work *Future Perfect* (2015) is hung. This is also the first series of painted works produced by Weir. This colourful ongoing work created with non-lightfast inks will gradually fade over time as they come into direct sunlight. This work is continually changing and evolving. *Future Perfect* (2015) is central to the exhibition – the piece was made from the combined research of the three newly commissioned films. This research can be seen in the work as pixelated colour, the medium of photography from the use of photographic ink and the ideas of cubism through the overlapping planes of colour. In *Script (5) Whiteout* (2010), a winter scene is depicted as the artist walks from her studio to a snow-covered platform. The artist writes words with a stick, whose meaning becomes tangible in the snow. The scene cuts to a micro close-up of the edge of a letter, to where the crystalline nature of the snow can be seen to be slowly dissolving. In *Script (3) Winter studio* (2010) we see the artist enter her studio and write the words ‘temps mort’ on a sticky note. The term ‘temps mort’ refers to a cinematic term used when a shot remains at a scene after the main action has finished. The note falls from where it was stuck to the window, while the camera remains focused on the winter scene.

Further down in the alcove there is the subtle video work titled *Clock* (2000). The title according to the Oxford Dictionary originated from a children’s game of blowing away the dandelion seeds to tell the time. The looped video depicts the head of the flower continuously revolving on its stem in a suburban garden. In the corridor we find the humorous video work *Script (2) Time-out with Albert* (2009). In this film the artist has picked out another word. The word remains unseen until she the artist falls and is revealed as a masked Einstein followed by the illuminated word ‘brilliant’.

On the wall of the corridor, the interactive installation work *Endlessness (for Roger)* (2007) consists of many tiles. These are