

the architecture of the gallery. The continuous line of colour encircling the chimney breasts and alcoves between room 3 and 4 is articulated by dynamic pattern, stuttering, pulsating pathways that suggest movement or the rhythm of music. Her passion for music goes from hard-core punk to classical and contemporary music.

The delicate suspension of luggage tags which constitute *Cloud* (2017) are reminiscent of works in Leirner's *Corpus delicti* (Body of Evidence) series (1992–3). During this time, at a moment in which the discourse on globalisation was taking hold in the art world of the 1990s, the artist was frequently flying across the globe. This experience led her to remove, in some cases surreptitiously, the highly specific and particular objects found in airplanes and airports. The luggage tags, air-sickness bags, earphones, napkins, boarding passes and ashtrays amassed and reconfigured as artworks in the *Corpus delicti* series act as an archive of a time, in the not-too-distant past, when smoking was permitted on airplanes. Crime in this case becomes institutionalised, and this is a statement of the series.

Room 4

Special Light (2017) reflects Leirner's interest in the way colour, material and space are used in this interplay between the industrial nature of the materials used and the Minimalist concerns of the composition. Contrasting large-scale investigation of line and volume, *Special Light* is imbued with a careful aesthetic judgement paired with a rigorous compositional awareness. Extending from a plug at one end, a shimmering copper-toned cable is looped over nails towards a single lightbulb at the other – Leirner seems to be leading us towards the light on our journey.

About the Artist

Jac Leirner was born in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1961, where she lives and works. She graduated in visual arts from Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado (FAAP) São Paulo in 1984. Leirner has exhibited extensively both within and outside Brazil and America since the beginning of her career. Selected solo exhibitions include: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Washington (1992), Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderna, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; Museo Tamayo, Mexico (both 2014); Yale School of Art Edgewood Gallery (2012); Centre d'Art de Saint Nazaire, France and the Estação Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (2011); Miami Art Museum (2004); the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro (2002); the Bohlen Foundation, New York (1998), Centre d'Art Contemporain Geneva (1993), the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (1991) and exhibitions and residencies at Museum of Modern Art Oxford and the Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis (both 1991). In 2015 she participated in the Sharjah Biennial. In 1997 and 1990 her work was exhibited at the Venice Biennale and she participated in dOCUMENTA (IX), Kassel (1992). In 1989 and 1983, Leirner participated in the São Paulo Biennial. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, Walker Art Centre, Tate and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (1992). Residencies and Awards include 2012 APCA Award: Best Exhibition of the Year - Estação Pinacoteca, São Paulo and Yale University School of Art (both 2012), teaching and artist in residence at Yale University School of Art; John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship (2001); Ryjksakademie Beeldende van Kunsten, Amsterdam (1998) and University College, Oxford; Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Arts, Oxford University; Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England and Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, United States (all 1991).

Curator's Lunchtime Talk: Drop in
Wednesday 15 March, 1.15 – 2pm / Meeting Point / IMMA Main Reception / Free

Join Karen Sweeney, Exhibitions, IMMA, for an insightful walkthrough of this exhibition.

For a full programme of events visit www.imma.ie

Jac Leirner Institutional Ghost is curated by Rachael Thomas, Senior Curator: Head of Exhibitions.

This exhibition is presented as part of an exciting on-going initiative, New Art at IMMA, proudly supported by Matheson, which allows IMMA to continue to support artists' vital work in a strand of programming that recognises and nurtures new and emerging talents, new thinking and new forms of exhibition-making.

IMMA would like to thank our valuable Members and Patrons, all of whom have made this exhibition possible.

This exhibition is supported by:



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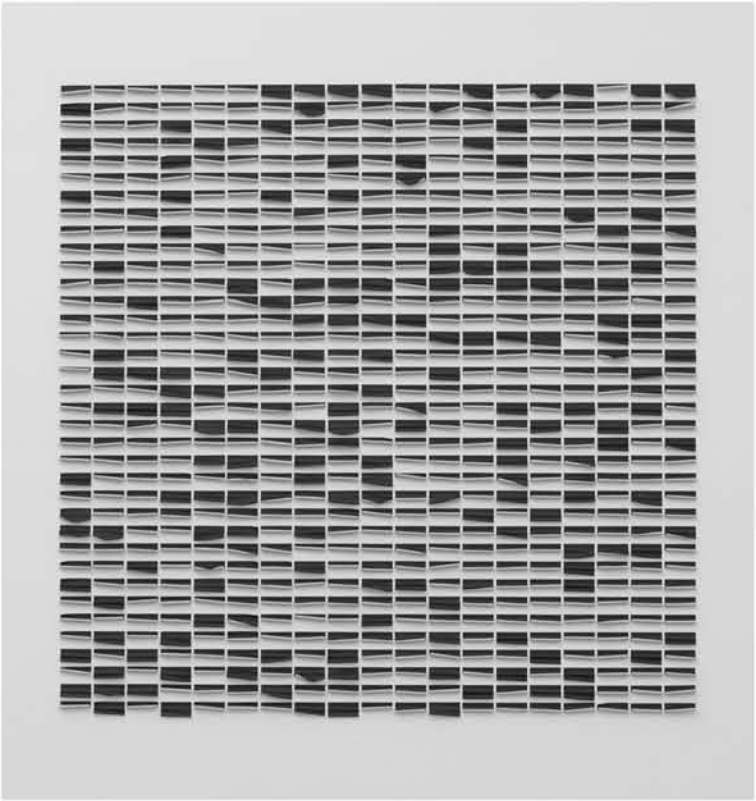
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Front cover:

Jac Leirner,
Skin (Rizla Liquorice), 2013
Cigarette rolling papers (684 units),
144 x 144 x 1.5 cm
© Jac Leirner. Photo © White Cube
(Ben Westoby). Courtesy of the
artist, White Cube Gallery, London
and Gallery Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel,
São Paulo

IMMA - IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
COURTYARD GALLERIES, EAST GROUND
14 FEBRUARY – 5 JUNE 2017

Jac Leirner
Institutional Ghost



One of Brazil's most internationally renowned contemporary artists, Jac Leirner introduces her exhibition *Institutional Ghost* at IMMA. Leirner emerged on the international art scene in a number of high-profile exhibitions in the early 1990s, at the forefront of a generation of artists looking to the art of the 1960s and 1970s as a point of departure. For this, her first solo exhibition in Ireland, Leirner presents a dynamic body of recent sculpture, installation and works on paper that respond to the particular architecture of the courtyard galleries at IMMA to adapt and present work specifically for these rooms.

Since the mid-1980s, Leirner has collected specific temporary and incidental products of everyday life, tapping into what she has described as the 'infinity of materials'. Large quantities of precision instruments such as spirit levels and rulers, plastic bags, ashtrays and airline company blankets illegally removed from airplanes, cigarette packs and even graffitied bank notes make their appearance in her meticulously constructed work, separated but not entirely dislocated from their original use. Her choice of materials are carefully selected and she adopts a formal rigor and aesthetic to the way she collects, arranges and assembles objects, evident in this exhibition. Some are derived from her own personal use and consumption, while others are found objects. Leirner describes her work as a reflection on materiality, space and colour and she orders her vast quantities of materials in accordance with their shape, colour, texture, size, weight and other characteristics in keeping with their function. By re-purposing these everyday materials into visually compelling and frequently

playful sculptures and installations, Leirner creates new and unexpected associations that provide a statement on the unfolding of art in recent decades. Although her choice of particular materials might point to issues related to consumer culture and the by-products of consumption, Leirner's issue is art as its main concern.

This interest can partly be attributed to the important collection of Brazilian constructive art from the 1950s and 60s held by her parents Fulvia and Adolpho Leirner. It included works by leading artists responsible for making this tradition one of the most fertile in Brazil, and growing up amongst these pieces became paramount to Leirner's early visual education. Leirner's work draws on a multiplicity of artistic traditions however, including referencing specific moments in art history such as Minimal Art, where the artwork endeavours to reveal the essence of a subject by taking away all non-essential forms or concepts. Her practice also references Conceptual Art, as well as Arte Povera in its use of unconventional materials and style. Leirner is also indebted to the legacy of Brazilian Constructivism and its approach to aspects of the environment in which we determine ourselves. This is evident in her bold accents of colour and the way she has often worked in extended series – her practice involves over ten wide-ranging series of works.

The institution of the museum and the activities of the art-world have been an enduring focus for Leirner. Substantial accumulations of everyday material in the form of plastic bags from museum shops visited, business cards from art professionals she has met and souvenirs from museum stores with their logos imprinted (as with

Institutional Ghost (2016), the uv inkjet print which lends its title to the exhibition) have at various times and in different ways become the material of her art. This exhibition *Institutional Ghost* provides an opportunity to reflect on the ways in which we interact with, travel through and embrace our environment in our daily lives. Leirner has succeeded in her quest to create a place for these objects and presences that would otherwise remain unremarkable. Immortalized through her at times transgressive approach, these ethereal presences are free to exist as they please, being equally at home in the space of everyday life as they are in the domain of the imagination.

Room 1

Selected uv inkjet prints and works on paper from the *Junkie* series are clustered together in Room 1. Works in this series reference Leirner's addictions and document a haunting, compulsive habit as well as visualising notions of dependency. Together they create a compelling series of associations and narratives that chart the passing of time and the dynamic associated with taking drugs and the promise of euphoria they might pose to an addict. During binges along three separate nights in 2010 Leirner sculpted miniature figures, including a head and heart, from lumps of cocaine, before juxtaposing them with objects found to-hand around her house and documenting them. The somewhat hazy quality of the prints evokes the sensations of a drug-fuelled binge. Arresting, unsettling and occasionally humorous, Leirner's juxtapositions relate the curious presences of the cocaine-sculptures to other, more banal objects such as coins, stones, a blood-soaked bandage and a tiny

horse sculpture, in terms of scale, weight, function and surface. The titles, which include *Oh Yes Yes, Mental Case, About Men and Animals, Hide and Seek* and *So Male* (all 2016), reference these juxtapositions and associations of the objects to the sculptures, adding humour to the drama.

The vibrant colours, jazzy graphics and catchy slogans imprinted on the rolling-paper packaging in works such as *Freezing Flame, Strange Fruit* and *Sunrise Sunset* (all 2016) highlight Leirner's ongoing fascination with the names and brands that circulate on product packaging and her enduring interest in the visual expressions of consumer culture, evoking Pop Art and its emphasis on the banal elements of culture through ironic means.

Leirner embarked on the *Hardware Seda* (Hardware Silk) works during her residency at Yale School of Art in 2012. These elegant works take their title from the tools employed, as well as referencing the delicate nature of the (silk) rolling papers in Leirner's *Skin* installations. They mark a move towards a new method of garnering materials for the artist – shopping. An array of materials from hardware stores including turnbuckles as well as disks, clamps, clips and keys are strung together across a long steel cable suspended at hand level and attached to the walls in *Hardware Silk No. 1* (2012). As viewer-turned-participant you must engage with the work in order to determine your route through the space. The tension inherent in the title reflects the competing elements within the work: the industrial nature of individual tools are transformed into an elegant arrangement of colour, shape and form, like delicate beads strung on a necklace.

Alcove and Room 2

Leirner engages with the spirit of Minimalism in three new works incorporating rulers tailored for IMMA's space: *Blue Fish, Metal, Wood, Black* and *Tools* (all 2017). Rulers are unexceptional utilitarian presences in our everyday lives. Here they are transformed, with the minimum of artistic manipulation into rhythmic patterns bursting with rich visual dynamism that suggests mathematical operations, systemic structures, patterns and circuits. As with the Spirit Level work *Another Spine* (2017) in Room 3, Leirner's use of repeated geometric forms here to create a unified whole recalls the work of Donald Judd (1928–94). Leirner's interest in colour is indebted to her modernist influences, particularly evident in this work which evokes artists such as Paul Klee (1879–1940), Piet Mondrian (1872–1944) and Josef Albers (1888–1976).

Room 3

The works in this exhibition are informed by Leirner's interest in the visual expressions of consumer culture and the re-configuration of her materials into formal arrangements. *Skin (Raw King Size Slim)* (2013) comprises 297 meticulously aligned cigarette rolling papers (silk papers, or papeis de seda in Portuguese) gummed directly onto the gallery wall in a pattern that evokes the grid structures and clarity of space inherent in Minimalism. This installation references both the habitual, repetitive activity of rolling silk papers and the tangible nature of this delicate material used to contain tobacco and pot. Leirner draws on her own experiences: she has been an avid smoker for much of her life and consequently is acquainted

with products related to the tobacco industry and the various types, colours and formats of these rolling papers. The titles of the *Skin* works, including the larger *Skin (Rizla Liquorice)* (2013) comprising 684 units are named after rolling-paper flavours from Juicy Jay's King Size Slim cigarette brand. Leirner's smoking habit has fed into her work since her 1987 Pulmão (Lung) series in which she incorporated thousands of Marlboro cigarette boxes she had accumulated over the course of three years as the by-products of her smoking habit. As with the Pulmão series, the *Skin* installations act as a sort of self-portrait of the artist and her participation in and commentary on the accumulation and circulation of commodities, a comparable role we each play in this.

The wall-based spirit level work *Another Spine* (2017) is an example of the homage Leirner makes to industrial materials and tools and their inherent industrial finish. Her ongoing dialogue with artists whose work she admires is evident in this work as it engages with the sculptural language of Hélio Oiticica (1937–80) and Lygia Clark (1920–88) while also challenging the limits of Minimalist and Conceptual art.

Leirner's enduring engagement with colour and love of music is apparent in *Hip Hop around the Fireplace* (2017). Her immersion in São Paulo's punk-rock culture and her involvement in the punk-rock band UKCT during her youth also shaped her artistic sensibility. Paying homage to Piet Mondrian, and in particular his penultimate painting *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942–3), Leirner interprets Mondrian's fascination with the rhythm of American Jazz, transferring it to the sound of the word Hip-Hop in a vibrant work that responds to