

VISITING AN ART MUSEUM OR GALLERY
Resources for second level students and teachers

Exhibition:

Rivane Neuenschwander: A Day Like Any Other



Rivane Neuenschwander, *O Inquilino / The Tenant*, 2010, Still

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Name of Exhibition *Rivane Neuenschwander: A Day Like Any Other*

Dates of Exhibition 16 November 2011 – 29 January 2012

Location of Exhibition The New Galleries, IMMA

About the Exhibition This major, mid-career survey of the work of the Brazilian artist Rivane Neuenschwander covers a decade of her work. *A Day Like Any Other* highlights her unique contribution to the narrative of Brazilian Conceptualism and reveals her wide ranging, interdisciplinary practice that merges painting, photography, film, sculpture, installation, collaborative actions and participatory events.

Three installations in the exhibition involve direct visitor participation: *I Wish Your Wish*, 2003; *First Love*, 2005; *Walking in Circles*, 2000. In addition to these participatory actions and major installations, the exhibition will also contain several series of new paintings and the film *The Tenant*, 2010, which follows the journey of a soap bubble as it wanders through a deserted house in a permanent state of suspension. It also includes sculptures made by customers during conversations at bars and restaurants in Brazil.

Curation This exhibition is the result of a collaboration between the New Museum in New York and the Irish Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition is curated by Richard Flood, Chief Curator at the New Museum, New York and is organised by the New Museum in collaboration with IMMA. The exhibition originated at the New Museum and, in addition to IMMA, has travelled to the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University in St Louis, Missouri; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, Arizona and Miami Art Museum, Miami, Florida.

In IMMA, the exhibition is curated by Sean Kissane, Senior Curator, Head of Exhibitions and Maeve Butler, Curatorial Co-ordinator, Exhibitions.

This is a touring exhibition and each venue in which it is displayed is different. The availability of space and the conditions for display of works in each venue dictate which works can be shown therefore a slightly different configuration of works is displayed in each venue.

The New Galleries in IMMA is an adapted heritage building therefore there are limitations on the extent to which the gallery spaces can be changed or interfered with.

Exhibition Tour:

New Museum, New York City, June to September 2010

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri, October 2010 – January 2011

Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Arizona, February – June 2011

Miami Art Museum, Florida, July – October 2011

Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, November 2011 – January 2012

A fully-illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

Display The exhibition comprises a variety of art works – paintings, sculptural objects, film, projection and film. Art works are hung or projected on walls, displayed on plinths, or take the form of an installation inviting the viewer to enter into the space to experience the work. Wall labels accompany each art work.

Lighting A combination of natural and artificial lighting is used throughout the exhibition spaces. The individual gallery spaces of the New Galleries make it possible to change the lighting conditions in each space. A darkened space can be created to facilitate the presentation of film works such as *The Tenant* alongside naturally-lit gallery spaces. Spot lighting is used to highlight specific art works such as the small sculptural objects in *Involuntary Sculptures*.

Layout The exhibition is laid out in eight gallery spaces on three floors of the New Galleries. There is no designated starting or finishing point to the exhibition and the viewer is encouraged to engage with the exhibition in an open-ended way. Each art work is intended to be viewed independently however there

are a number of overarching themes which emerge as the viewer travels through the exhibition and makes connections between art works. The layout of the exhibition is also intended to enable the viewer to have access to the art works and where appropriate to enter into the space of the art work.

Audience/viewer Audience engagement and active participation are central to much of the work of Rivane Neuenschwander. In some works, such as *Walking in Circles*, 2000, audience participation is arbitrary. The viewer may not even be aware of their participation. As the viewer walks in the gallery space the circles of adhesive pick up dirt from the viewer's shoes. In other works, such as *I Wish Your Wish* and *First Love* active participation of the viewer is essential to the realisation of the work.

About the Artist

Rivane Neuenschwander (pronounced *ree-van-ee noy-en-shwan-der*)

Artist Biography Rivane Neuenschwander was born in 1967 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. She is of Swiss, Portuguese and Amerindian descent. She had an early interest in the social sciences and anthropology but chose to study fine art. She studied in the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, in Brazil, graduating with a degree in Fine Art in 1993, and then at the Royal College of Art in London 1996-1998. She spent time in Europe before returning to Belo Horizonte, Brazil where she now lives and works. She has exhibited widely including solo exhibitions at the Palais de Toyoko, Paris; Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis; Portikus, Frankfurt and the Douglas Hyde Gallery Dublin. Her work was also included in the Venice Biennale in 2005 and more recently at the Istanbul Biennale 2011, in Turkey.

Materials and Methodologies Neuenschwander's work is very diverse and difficult to classify. While she is associated with specific art historical movements, such as Conceptualism, Neoconcretism and Tropicismo, she resists categorisation drawing on a range of materials and methodologies, from painting, sculpture, installation, drawing, film, and participatory and collaborative practice, to implement her ideas.

The artist's practice is conceptual – based on concepts or a set of ideas. The finished piece of work is meant to express those ideas in a visual way. It is also process based where the methods used to create the work influence the finished work. She uses a range of materials and methodologies to express her ideas and many of her works involve the participation of others. Her work uses varying combinations of chance and control, where the feeding patterns of ants, the wandering of a gallery visitor or the objects people make while chatting in a bar, can decide the outcome of the art work.

She uses simple, everyday materials, such as food, cardboard, maps, books, soap, rain water, clocks and calendars. On her use of materials she says, "I am particularly talking about things to which we give no value, things considered irritants, things nobody notices, things that are temporary, that are in the margins, or in-between the lines, that have their existence simplified due to the insufficiency of our perception".¹

Influences, Motifs and Themes There are many layers to the artist's practice – she employs humour and play to draw the viewer in and to engage the viewer with the work. There are deeper themes underpinning her work which reveal themselves to the viewer after contemplating, considering and by making connections between different works. She does not provide explanations or answers to her works, she invites the viewer to engage with and understand the art work through the senses and by taking part in the works.

Themes Themes of time, loss, transience (temporary or brief), fragility and memory are recurring in her work.

Time Time is a recurring theme in the artist's work which is evident in her use of clocks and calendars. This is also evident in the objects she has constructed to show or disrupt the passing of time, such as the clocks in *A Day Like Any Other* or the calendar in *One Thousand and One Possible Nights*. Many of the activities in her works draw attention to the passing of time, such as the passage of visitors' footprints through the gallery space, where the form of the art work evolves gradually over time. Other works involve repetition, such as the voyage of the bubble in *The Tenant*. The art work *One Thousand and One Possible Nights* refers to Sherazade's (a character in the book *One Thousand and One Nights*) attempts to suspend or delay the time of her execution by telling stories.

¹ Entrevista a Jens Hoffmann. "Powerful Circles", in Yasmil Raymond, 'The Circle Principle of Rivane Neuenschwander', *Rivane Neuenschwander A Day Like Any Other*, Irish Museum of Modern Art, New Museum, New York, 2010, p. 23.

Circle The motif of the circle or oval appears in many of Neuenschwander's works, suggesting cyclical rather than linear time. Examples include *Walking in Circles*, the bubble in *The Tenant*, the tiny punch-hole circles in *One Thousand and One Possible Nights*. Some art works employ a circular structure, such as *The Tenant*, where the video plays in a loop with no beginning or end or the circulation of wishes in *I Wish Your Wish*. The use of repetition and the circle motif help to draw out the meaning of the individual works and to make connections between works.

Memory / Absence Many of Neuenschwander's works explore themes of absence and memory, focusing on the traces left behind – dust from people's shoes in *Walking in Circles*, wishes in *I Wish, Your Wish*, lovers remembered in *First Love*, stories retold in *One Thousand and One Possible Nights* and the missing elements in *At a Certain Distance*.

Transience The artist uses everyday and ephemeral (something that is temporary and doesn't last) materials in her work to show the transient (temporary) nature of life. She often uses materials that decay or decompose over time, such as food or maps left out in the rain. Other examples include fragile objects, such as bubbles, dust, dirt from people's shoes and objects from nature, such as ants and snails.

Psychological States Several of Neuenschwander's works explore psychological aspects of paranoia and surveillance, such as *The Tenant*, which follows the path of a bubble through an empty house. Also *The Conversation* which enacts aspects of Francis Ford Coppola's psychological thriller *The Conversation*, 1974. Themes of fear and repression are suggested and evoked through the experience of the work rather than being directly stated.

Context of the artist's practice

Brazil The fifth largest country in the world and the largest country in South America, Brazil was a former Portuguese colony and is the largest Portuguese-speaking country in the world. It has a population of 192 million. With a diversity of natural resources, Brazil is the 7th largest economy in the world. The capital of Brazil is Brasília and the largest city is Sao Paulo.

The name Brazil is assumed to derive from the form of timber found in the region, however it is also associated with the mythical island Hy-Brasil in Celtic mythology. This island was said to be located in the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Ireland and can be seen for one day every seven years.

Socio-political context Colonised by Portugal in 1549, Brazil declared independence in 1822 and has been a Republic since 1889; however it has a long history of unstable governments and was under military dictatorship from 1964 – 1985. During this period, Esquadrão da Morte (Death Squads) carried out extrajudicial killings and many people 'disappeared'. In 2010, Brazil elected its first female president.

Art Context Brazil has a rich cultural history, partly informed by Portuguese, African and indigenous cultures, and a vibrant contemporary art culture with many galleries, museums and centres for contemporary art. The São Paulo Biennial is the oldest Biennial after Venice. Brazilian Conceptualism, Neoconcretism and Tropicálismo are art movements specifically associated with Brazil.

Brazilian Artists: Lygia Clarke, Cildo Meirles, Helió Oiticica, Ernesto Neto

Rivane Neuenschwander, *Primeiro Amor / First Love*, 2005
Installation View, Mildred Lane Kemper Art
Museum, USA
Photograph by Whitney Curtis



The Art work **Primeiro Amor / First Love**

Date 2005

Dimensions 29 x 21 cm / 11 3/8 x 8 1/4 in. each

Courtesy the artist, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo; and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London.

Location First Floor, New Galleries

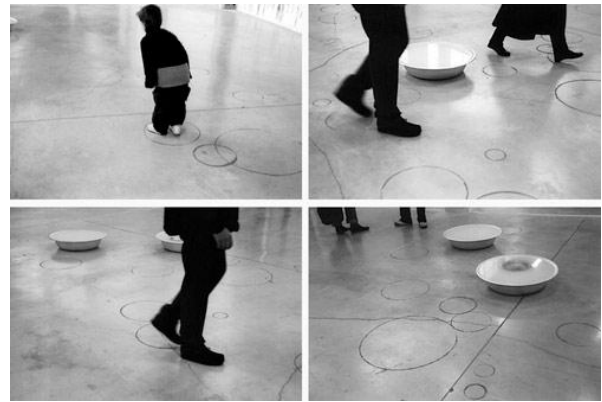
Materials Pencil on paper, police sketch artist, table and chairs.

Description A police sketch artist sits with visitors and listens as the visitors describe the faces of their first loves. The sketch artist produces portraits of these “first loves” which are then hung on the walls of the gallery for the duration of the exhibition.

Themes Neuenschwander’s work *First Love* explores themes of nostalgia and the subjectivity of memory. It is inspired by Samuel Beckett’s novella *First Love*, where the unnamed narrator recounts the story of meeting a woman while sitting on a park bench and the events of his subsequent relationship with her. Describing this as a performance work, Neuenschwander explores strategies of reminiscence and nostalgia, where the drawings produced are the result of the visitors’ subjective and selective memories of their first love and the forensic artist’s interpretation of those memories through drawing. The work explores the relationship between memories expressed in words and drawing.

Rivane Neuenschwander, *Continent/Walking in Circles*, 2001. Permanent glue, aluminium basins, water, coconut soap.

Courtesy of the New Museum



Art work **Andando em Círculos / Walking in Circles**

Date 2001

Dimensions Variable

Juan and Pat Vergez Collection

Materials Adhesive, dust.

Location Basement, New Galleries

Description This work comprises small circles of adhesive of varying dimensions applied to the gallery floor which pick up dirt from visitors' shoes. Over time, the work creates a physical map of the patterns of visitors walking in the exhibition space.

Themes Instead of making the marks herself using conventional drawing materials, such as graphite or charcoal, the artist employs chance – the footfall of the exhibition visitor – and found materials – the debris from the visitor's shoes – to create this participative art work. In doing so, Neuenschwander engages the viewer as an active, but possibly unaware, participant rather than a passive spectator. The artist also explores associations with dust and decay – the transience of human existence. In her work she acknowledges '... a wish to understand the fragility of life, the finite nature of things, our impermanence in the world; or the simple observation of the passing of time and our being part of nature and still subject to cycles ...'.² The work also suggests the circularity and potential futility of our actions – 'going round in circles'.

2. Yasmil Raymond, 'The Circle Principle of Rivane Neuenschwander', *Rivane Neuenschwander A Day Like Any Other*, Irish Museum of Modern Art, New Museum, New York, 2010, p. 23.

Rivane Neuenschwander, *As mil e uma moites possíveis / One Thousand and One Possible Nights*, 2008
Installation View, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, USA

Courtesy of the New Museum, Photo by Benoit Pailley



Title of Art work *As mil e uma moites possíveis / One Thousand and One Possible Nights*

Date 2008

Materials Collage on paper

Dimensions 50 x 39 cm each

Courtesy the artist, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo; and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London.

Location Basement, New Galleries

Description This work comprises confetti created from the hole-punch marks in the pages of the literary text *One Thousand and One Nights*. The confetti is arranged in random constellations of stars on seventy six sheets of black paper, which are then hung on the wall of the gallery space in a grid format that corresponds with the calendar days and months. The number of pages displayed correlates to the duration of the exhibition – 76 days.

Themes The literary text *One Thousand and One Nights* is a collection of folk stories from the Middle East and Asia also known as the *Arabian Nights*. The stories are told to King Shahryar every night by his wife Scheherazade. She is to be executed and she tells these stories as a means of delaying her execution. Themes of passing time in cycles and suspending time are suggested. The title of the work – a large number plus one – suggests infinity, that the stories will go on and on or that when we get to the end we will start again.

In this work the artist challenges the viewer's ways of looking and participating. She disrupts the viewer's expectation of a narrative or story by breaking down the text. She turns the printed pages from the book *A Thousand and One Nights* into miniscule particles of confetti and represents them as constellations of stars. The linear narrative of the stories has been transformed into the cyclical, grid system of the calendar.

Rivane Neuenschwander, *O Inquilino /
The Tenant*, 2010
Still



Title of Art work O Inquilino / The Tenant

Date 2010

Materials High-definition digital video, 10 minutes and 34 seconds
Made in collaboration with Cao Guimarães, Soundtrack: O Grivo

Courtesy the artist, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo; and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London.

Location First Floor, New Galleries

Description This short film follows the path of a soap bubble as it moves through various rooms of a house under refurbishment. The bubble has an animated presence as it moves from room to room as if in search of something. The rooms are vacant, the windows are covered and there appears to be no way out. The video is accompanied by a sound track composed by the duo O Grivo, which includes muffled sounds and scratching.

Themes This film refers to *The Tenant*, 1976, a psychological thriller by Polish film director Roman Polanski, which features a young immigrant man living in an apartment building in Paris, who believes his neighbours are conspiring to drive him to suicide. The film employs a cyclical storyline where the beginning and end of the film merge.

The childlike associations of the bubble with innocence and playfulness are set at odds with the sense of tension created within the film of being trapped, alone, vulnerable, seeking something that remains elusive, literally going round in circles. The soundtrack contributes to and helps build this tension. The precariousness of the bubble creates a sense of anticipation with regard to its fate – what will it encounter, when will it burst? But nothing happens. The film is edited to loop repeatedly without either a beginning or end, and the bubble continues on its endless journey, mirroring the sense of cyclical time in Polanski's film.

The bubble takes the form of futuristic surveillance mechanism, such as a drone, going from room to room in search of something elusive. Conveying a sense of both vulnerability and threat, the bubble is surveying but, equally, the bubble is being surveyed as the viewer follows the bubble on its journey.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABSTRACT ART	Art work that is non-figurative, non-representational and which is concerned with the physical properties of the work such as form and colour, rather than the representation of subject matter.
ARTE POVERA	Unconventional arts movement originating in Italy in the late 1960s which employed unconventional materials, such as found objects to create sculptures, installations and happenings.
CONCEPTUAL ART	Originating in the 1960s, conceptual art emphasises the idea or the concept rather than the production of an art object.
CONCRETE ART	A form of abstract art which emerged in the 1930s, influenced by De Stijl, which emphasised the formal or concrete properties of the art work and rejected any symbolic association with reality.
CONTEMPORARY ART	Refers to current and very recent art practice. Attributed approximately to the period from the 1970s to the present, it can also refer to works of art made by living artists. Contemporary art tends to be assessed thematically and subjectively, drawing on a range of theoretical and practical disciplines, such as Feminism, Postcolonialism, Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory. Contemporary art can be theoretically and ideas-driven and is also characterised by a blurring of a distinction between art and other categories of cultural experience, such as television, cinema, mass media, entertainment and digital technology.
CYCLICAL	A process characterised by elements which occur in cycles or recurring patterns.
FILM	The medium used for the creation of still or moving images. The term is also used to describe a motion picture which is a sequence of images projected onto a screen, collectively referred to as cinema. In contemporary art, film is referred to as an art form.
INSTALLATION	A broad term applied to a range of arts practice which involves the installation or configuration of objects in a space, often on a temporary basis, where the totality of the objects and the space comprise the art work.
INTERDISCIPLINARY	The combining of two or more art form disciplines, such as music, visual arts or dance.
LINEAR	A process characterised by elements which occur one after another, in a line.
MODERN ART	Refers to art theory and practice from the 1860s to the late 1960s and is defined in terms of a linear progression of styles, periods and schools, such as Impressionism, Cubism and Abstract Expressionism.
MUSEUM	A venue for the collection, preservation, study, interpretation and display of significant scientific, historical or cultural objects.
NARRATIVE	Refers to the process of telling a story
NEOCONCRETISM	An influential art movement in Brazil from 1959 and 1961 approximately, which rejected the emphasis on formal elements associated with concrete art (non-figurative, abstract art) in favour of a more expressive and participative arts practice.
PARTICIPATORY	A form of arts practice which prioritises viewer participation in the conception and/or realisation of an art work.
PERFORMANCE	Involves an artist undertaking an action or actions where the artist's body is the medium. Performance is closely associated with video art as this was the primary means of recording this ephemeral art form.
PHOTOGRAPHY	The process of recording an image – a photograph - on light-sensitive film or, in the case of digital photography, via a digital electronic or magnetic memory.

RELATIONAL

A term used to describe a set of art practices which place an emphasis on the social context in which the art work is created and/or presented, and on the role of the artist as facilitator, where art is information exchanged between the artist and viewer. Examples of this practice are called Relational Art.

SITE SPECIFIC

Art work that is created to be located in a specific site or context where removal from that site or context would change the meaning of the art work. The term is often associated with Installation art.

TROPICÁLIA

Predominantly associated with music, Tropicália, also known as Tropicálismo, was an innovative, hybrid art movement in Brazil in the 1960s encompassing visual arts, poetry, music and theatre. In the visual arts it was associated with the work of Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica. It was informed by the civil rights movement and political and social injustices in Brazil.

VIDEO

Technology used to record, store and project static images in a moving format similar to film. The production of lightweight, low-cost video technology, such as the Sony Portapak, in the late 1960s contributed to the growth in experimental video making during this period.

IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW GALLERIES

IMMA's New Galleries are based in the former Deputy Master's House adjacent to the main museum building. The New Galleries were refurbished in 2000 resulting in an environmentally controlled space which provides 320 square metres of additional exhibition space.

MAPPING THE EXHIBITION

Use the attached floor plans to map out the exhibition indicating the following:

Exhibition Space

What kind of exhibition space is it – new, old, renovated, etc.?
How many rooms and floors does the exhibition comprise?

Display

How are the art works displayed?
What is the layout of the exhibition?
Describe the spaces of the exhibition?
How is the theme of the exhibition presented throughout the exhibition spaces?

Access

How do visitors find their way through the exhibition?
Is there enough space?

Seating

What provision is there for visitors to sit and rest and/or contemplate the art works?

Lighting

What kind of lighting is used in the exhibition – daylight, artificial light, bright light, low light, spot light?

Information, Reading and Resource material

What kinds of information, reading and resource material about the exhibition are available, in the gallery, at reception, on the website, other?
Are there labels and/or wall texts, gallery guides, guided tours, etc.?

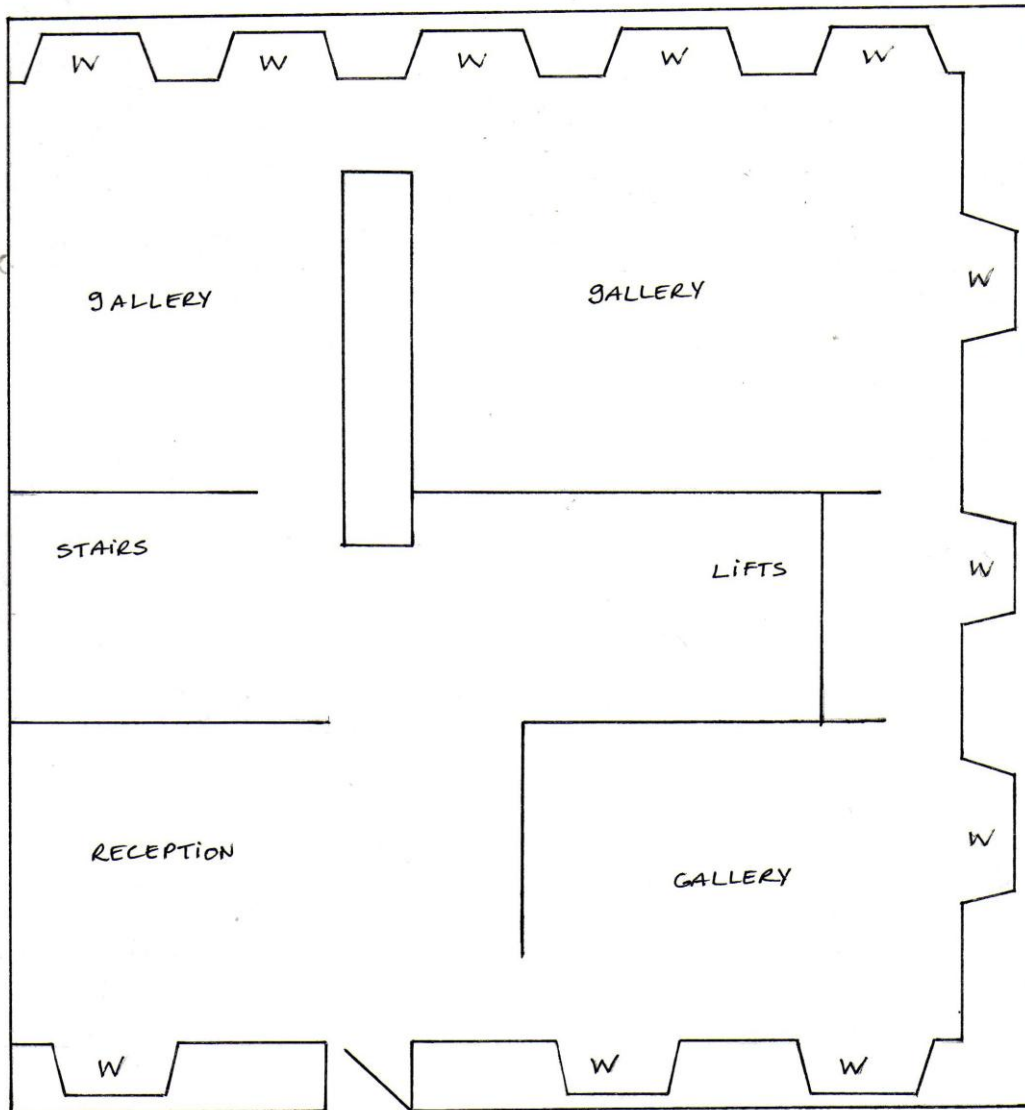
Security

What security measures are in place for the exhibition?
What are the security concerns in relation to this exhibition?

IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW GALLERIES

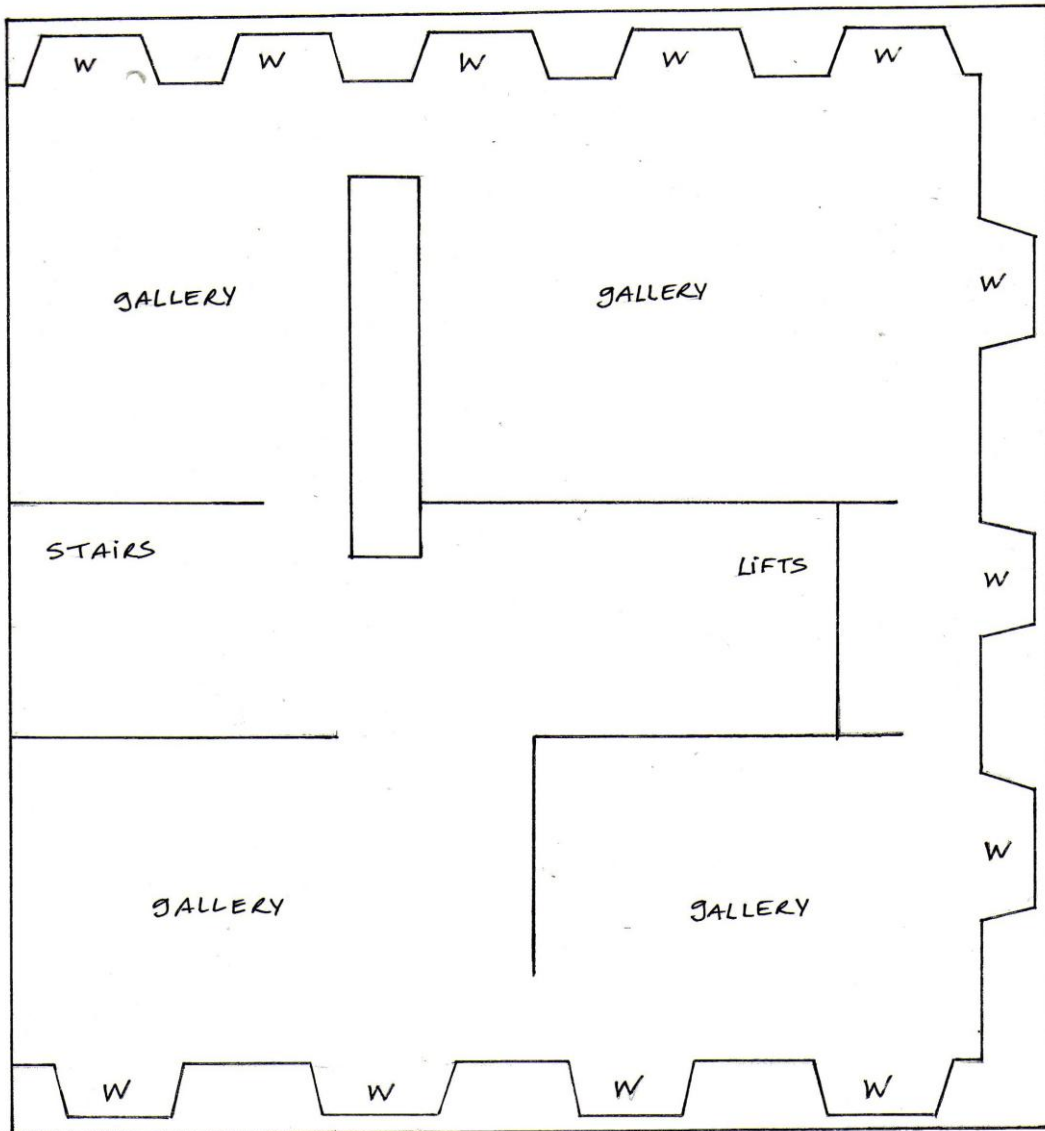
GROUND FLOOR



IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW GALLERIES

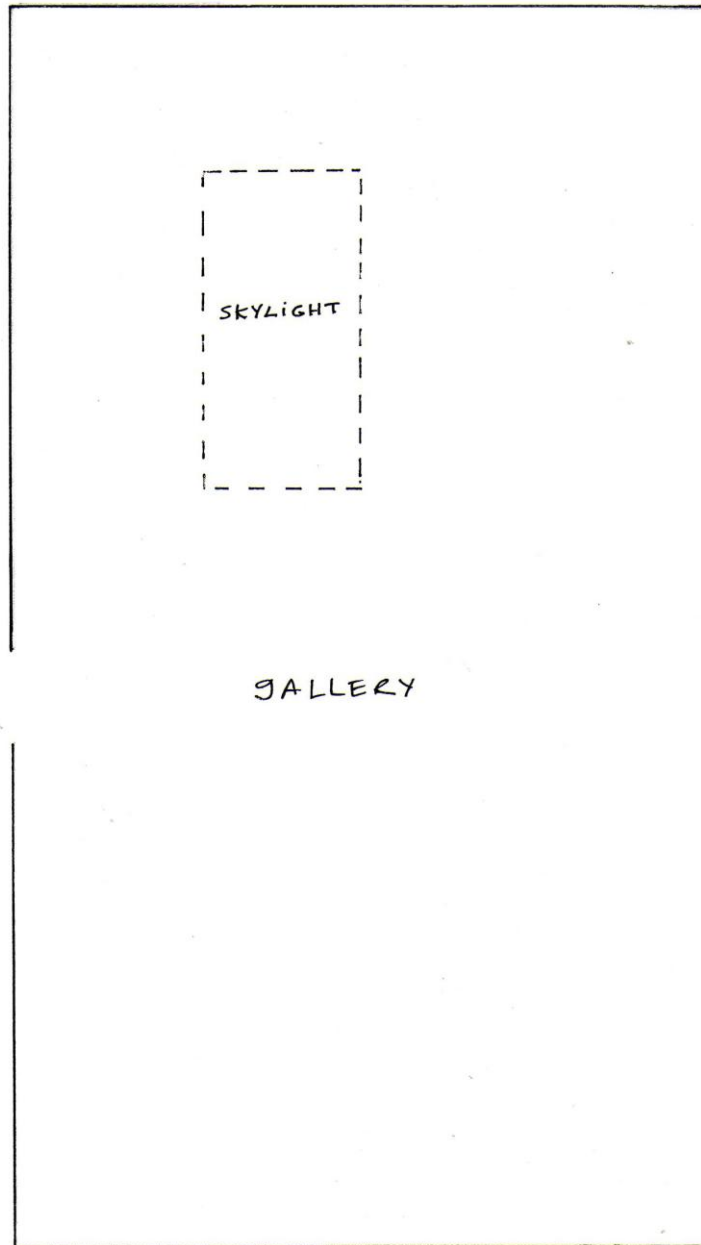
FIRST FLOOR



IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW GALLERIES

BASEMENT



Suggestions for teachers and tutors

- Provide time for the students to look at and engage with the art works
- Provide factual and contextual information about the artist, the exhibition and the art works
- Try to facilitate a discussion that takes account of the students' observations and impressions

- Encourage students to
 - o spend some time looking at the art works before beginning a discussion
 - o make visual and written notes about the exhibition
 - o interact with the art works where appropriate
 - o discuss their impressions and observations
 - o support their impressions and observations with examples
 - o think about the themes the artist is exploring in her work:
 - how these themes are realised in art works in the exhibition
 - how these themes relate to their own lives
 - o make comparisons with other artists and art works
 - o identify aspects of the exhibition they consider successful and unsuccessful
 - o consider the broader context of Rivane Neuenschwander's work: the cultural context, such as literature, film, music, popular cultural references; the social context and the political context.

- o carry out research about the artist and the exhibition

Rivane Neuenschwander: A Day Like Any Other

Further Resources

New Museum, New York
www.newmuseum.org

G:Class – Global Classroom at the New Museum
Education programme for high school students and teachers promoting critical thinking
www.gclass.org/lessons/rivane-neuenschwander-a-day-like-any-other

Miami Art Museum, Florida
www.miamiartmuseum.org

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri
<http://kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/node/5346>

Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, Arizona
www.smoca.org

Inhotim Institute of Contemporary Art, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
www.inhotim.org.br

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York
www.tanyabonakdargallery.com

Stephen Friedman Gallery, London
www.stephenfriedman.com

Frieze Magazine
Review of Rivane Neuenschwander exhibition 2007.
www.frieze.com/issue/review/rivane_neuenschwander

Art Terms:

Tate Modern, Glossary
www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary

Museum of Modern Art, New York, Index of Art Terms
www.moma.org/collection

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