

WHAT IS **(New) Media Art** **?**





CONTENTS

what is__? talks series	page 03
introduction: (new) media art	page 04
art and (new) media, through the lens of the IMMA collection - maeve connolly	page 08
further reading	page 16
glossary of terms	page 17
(new) media art resources	page 20

THE WHAT IS

IMMA talks series?

There is a growing interest in contemporary art, yet the ideas and theoretical frameworks which inform its practice can be complex and difficult to access. By focusing on a number of key headings, such as conceptual art, installation art and performance art, this series of talks is intended to provide a broad overview of some of the central themes and directions in modern and contemporary art.

03

This series represents a response to a number of challenges. Firstly, the inherent problems and contradictions that arise when attempting to outline or summarise the wide-ranging, constantly changing and contested spheres of both art theory and practice, and secondly, the use of summary terms to describe a range of practices, many of which emerged in opposition to such totalising tendencies.

Taking these challenges into account, this talks series offers a range of perspectives, drawing on expertise and experience from lecturers, artists, curators and critical writers and is neither definitive nor exhaustive. The intention is to provide background and contextual information about the art and artists featured in IMMA's exhibitions and collection in particular, and about Contemporary Art in general, to promote information sharing, and to encourage critical thinking, debate and discussion about art and artists. The talks series addresses aspects of Modern and Contemporary Art spanning the period from the 1940s to the present.

Each talk will be supported by an information leaflet which includes a summary, the presenter's essay, a reading list, a glossary of terms and a resources list. This information can also be found on IMMA's website along with more detailed information about artworks and artists featured in IMMA's Collection at www.imma.ie.

WHAT IS (New) Media Art?

introduction

As the national cultural institution responsible for the collection and presentation of Modern and Contemporary Art, the Irish Museum of Modern Art exhibits artworks by established and emerging artists who use media ranging from painting and sculpture to installation, photography, video and performance. IMMA's Collection comprises artworks by Irish and international artists acquired through purchase, donations, loans and commissions, many in association with IMMA's Temporary Exhibitions Programme and, on occasion, IMMA's Artists' Residency Programme. There is no limitation with regard to the media acquired; consequently, IMMA's Collection is well represented by contemporary artists who use new media, such as film, video, photography and digital technology.

In this introductory text, we provide a brief overview of the context in which this evolving category of New Media Art has developed. Terms associated with New Media Art are indicated in CAPITALS and are elaborated on in the glossary on p.17. We invited Maeve Connolly to write an essay on New Media Art, entitled *Art and (New) Media, Through the Lens of the IMMA Collection*, which focuses on artists and artworks in IMMA's Collection as a means of describing and contextualising this complex and contested area of Contemporary Art practice. By focusing on IMMA's Collection we hope to draw attention to the body of artworks in the Collection by artists who use a range of media including new media, such as film, video, photography, sound and digital technology. Some examples include James Coleman, Jaki Irvine, Pierre Huyghe, Brian Duggan, Gerard Byrne, Isaac Julien, Philippe Parreno, Clare Langan, Phil Collins, Candida Höfer, Willie Doherty, Thomas Ruff, Grace Weir and Caroline McCarthy. We also hope to highlight the potential of IMMA's Collection as a growing resource for further exploration and consideration of this subject.



05

In general usage, MEDIA, which is the plural of medium, refers to forms of mass communication, such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the Internet. In the arts, media refers to the materials, methodologies, mechanisms, technologies or devices by which an artwork is realised, a substance through which an effect is transmitted. Traditional or old media include PAINTING and SCULPTURE. The specific materials used, such as paint, charcoal or marble, can also be referred to as media. 'New' is a relative term in that something is new when it is first created, discovered or used, and its status as 'new' diminishes both over time and as it is replaced by something newer. In CONTEMPORARY ART, NEW MEDIA refers to a range of materials and technologies developed relatively recently and utilised in the creation, presentation and dissemination of NEW MEDIA ART. These new media are drawn from a range of sources both within the arts and the wider field of communications, entertainment and information technologies. Informed by the rapid pace of technological development, New Media Art is a constantly changing category encompassing FILM, VIDEO, PHOTOGRAPHY, LENS-BASED MEDIA, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, HYPERTEXT, CYBERSPACE, AUDIO TECHNOLOGY, CD-ROMS, WEBCAMS, SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY, WIRELESS TELEPHONES, COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES, GPS SYSTEMS and BIOTECHNOLOGY.

Innovative artists have always been interested in new media and materials. During the RENAISSANCE, artists' practice was transformed by the use of the new medium of OIL PAINT which provided artists with greater flexibility and versatility than TEMPERA. The introduction of the CAMERA OBSCURA contributed to new developments in perspective, and PRINTMAKING radicalised the notion of the unique or one-off artwork, establishing an early precedent for mass media communication.

The scale of technological development during the INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, which gave form to the modern era, has had a considerable influence on the course of Modern and Contemporary Art, particularly the development of photography and film. In the early twentieth century, AVANT-GARDE and experimental artists embraced these technological developments, challenging the dominant artistic media of painting and sculpture. Photography displaced painting as the primary mode of pictorial representation, giving artists the freedom to experiment with new media and methodologies. CUBIST artists focused on the medium and structure of the painting itself, challenging the illusory nature of painting and prompting the development of ABSTRACTION. Embracing all things new and modern, FUTURIST artists applied technological advances to their work. Experimentation with new media also prompted collaboration across art forms, such as music, literature and dance. FLUXUS artists, including visual artists, writers, filmmakers and musicians, embraced technological advances in film and video to create multi-media artworks encompassing film, video and PERFORMANCE. In their exploration of new media such as SOUND, TEXT, LANGUAGE and performance, CONCEPTUAL artists emphasised the importance of the concept or idea over the material art object.

The pace of technological development has accelerated considerably over the course of the twentieth century. Advances in military defence technology during the Second World War and throughout the Cold War contributed to the development of digital technology, the COMPUTER and the WORLD WIDE WEB. Some technological advances also occurred when artists migrated from one medium to another, such as from painting to photography or video, bringing their medium-specific concerns to bear on their exploration and interrogation of new media.

The availability of technology has also influenced artists' use of new media. For example, 16-MILLIMETRE FILM was developed in the early twentieth century but only became widely available in the 1960s when increased use and improvements in manufacturing and distribution reduced costs. Similarly, the development of the low-cost SONY PORTAPAK VIDEO CAMERA made video making accessible and affordable for many artists. These emerging technologies contributed to the growth of experimental Film and Video Art in the 1960s and 1970s. More recently, the accessibility and ubiquity of digital technology and the INTERNET have resulted in a proliferation of contemporary artists employing and interrogating these media.

The exploration of new media is central to the development of Contemporary Art. Many colleges and art institutions have New Media departments and most museums and galleries of Contemporary Art collect and present the work of artists who use new media in their practice. Some venues, such as the Walker Art Centre in Minnesota and the New Museum in New York, have New Media programmes and there are also dedicated centres for new media, such as the Centre for Art and Media in Karlsruhe and FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology) in Liverpool.

One of the consequences of accelerating technological development is the potential for the media used to create, display or store artworks to become obsolete. OBSOLESCENCE presents considerable challenges for the production, presentation and preservation of New Media Art. For some artists, obsolescence has become a mode of artistic production. Formats for the presentation and display of New Media Art also need to address audience expectations shaped by exposure to new media through entertainment and mass distribution formats, such as cinema, television and game consoles. As technology evolves and more artists engage with new media and emerging technologies, Contemporary Art museums and galleries, such as IMMA, are adapting their approach to address these challenges so that the artwork remains in the public domain.

07

Lisa Moran, Curator
Education and Community Programmes

Sophie Byrne, Assistant Curator
Talks and Lectures Programme

Art and (New) Media, Through the Lens of the IMMA Collection

Maeve Connolly

08

The term 'New Media Art' is frequently applied to artworks, or art practices, involving media not traditionally or conventionally associated with the Fine Arts. Paintings, drawings and sculptures are routinely (although sometimes erroneously) regarded as original and unique works of art authored by a single individual, but the emergence of photography, film, video, audio and other technologies enabling reproduction through mechanical or digital means, radically alters the relationship between art and originality.¹ This is one of the reasons why artists associated with the historical Avant-Garde, seeking to radicalise the relationship between art and society, often rejected painting or sculpture in favour of photography or cinema. Inevitably, however, media that are initially perceived by the art world as 'new' (such as video in the 1960s) soon become familiar and even conventional.

Artists have also been drawn towards non-traditional media because they are specifically interested in exploring the (rapidly changing) relationship between media, technology and society. These concerns were often evident in the work of artists associated with the Kinetic Art and Fluxus movements during the 1960s, such as Nam June Paik, whose installations and sculptures involving audiovisual technologies explore and contest the power of the mass media.² More recently, it is possible to trace a continuation of this critical tradition in the work of a younger generation of artists working with even newer media, from locative technologies, like GPS systems, to gaming software, bio-technologies and beyond.

While many contemporary art practitioners reject media-based classifications altogether, categories such as 'Lens-Based Media' can be valuable, emphasising the parallels and tensions between art practice and a much wider history and culture of media use and production. Thinking about lens-based practice opens up points of connection between a contemporary artwork and such diverse cultural forms as a television news broadcast, a holiday snapshot taken with a mobile phone, or even a seventeenth-century painting in which the illusion of perspective was produced with the aid of optical technologies.

Several works in the IMMA Collection that might be classified as 'New Media Art' allude directly or indirectly to histories of technologically mediated representation, asserting connections as well as differences between new and older media. So, for example, Caroline McCarthy's two-channel video work *Greetings*, 1996, calls to mind a history of landscape representation that extends from painting to tourist postcards and amateur video, while also drawing upon a performative tradition in artists' film that is deeply indebted to silent cinema. The artist composes a picturesque image of the Irish countryside, complete with drifting clouds and rolling hills, before suddenly jumping up into the frame to temporarily include herself in this ideal landscape.

Michael Snow's 60 minute single channel video *Solar Breath (Northern Caryatids)*, 2002, also exploits established traditions of pictorial and dramatic representation. A highly significant figure for theorists of film in the 1970s, Snow directs his camera at the billowing curtains of a window opening out from his workshop onto the landscape of Newfoundland. The window suggests a frame through which (in narrative cinema) the camera might be expected to move, or even a proscenium arch within which (in theatre) some action might take place. Yet, Snow's camera remains resolutely fixed and the viewer is left only with the fluctuations of the curtain as it moves in the breeze.

Solar Breath (Northern Caryatids) derives much of its appeal from its status as an unaltered document of a natural phenomenon occurring at a particular time and place. But for many artists in the 1960s and '70s, the medium of video was most interesting for its capacity to blur the boundaries between event and document. Videotape, unlike film, could be played back, viewed and if necessary re-recorded immediately. Monitors could also be used within the context of a video work or performance to display a live or delayed image 'feed', enabling various forms of real-time interaction between artist, on-screen image and audience. In the single channel video *Now*, 1973, for example, Lynda Benglis moves between the roles of performer, operator and director, appearing to kiss a monitor that displays her own image, while continually repeating the phrases 'Now?', 'Do you wish to direct me?', and 'Start the camera'.



10

aura, materiality and analogue technologies

Just as Benglis uses repetition to highlight the specificity of video time, others have emphasised the distinctive characteristics and properties of photography and film. Taking the reproducibility of the photographic image as a starting point, Craigie Horsfield makes only a single print, rather than an edition, and destroys his original negative. But even though this action results in a unique artwork, with the same claims to originality as a painting, the title of each work strongly asserts the specificity of the photographic process. Each title records where and when the photograph was 'taken' – or rather the exposure of the negative to light – as well as a second date referring to the production of the print.

Clare Langan is also interested in the interplay between painting and newer media. In films such as *Forty Below*, 1999, she combines dramatic shooting locations and hand-painted filters (attached to the lens of a 16mm Bolex film camera, which is wound by hand) in order to create exotic, otherworldly images. But although she is clearly drawn to the materiality of film, Langan seems to favour the expediency of newer image display technologies, because she exhibits her work on DVD. In contrast, Tacita Dean shoots and exhibits her moving image work primarily on film, often relying on mechanical looping devices for continuous projection and sometimes using optical sound so that the audio is encoded directly onto the celluloid. There is also frequently a relationship between the themes explored in her work and her attraction to 16mm film, a medium widely thought to be anachronistic, even obsolete.

collaboration,
appropriation,
and the politics
of representation

11

There are parallels here with James Coleman's use of 35mm slide projection, a medium once associated with advertising, corporate communications and domestic photography. He has produced a number of 'projected image' installations involving slides, including *Background*, 1991-94, *Lapsus Exposure*, 1992-94, and *IN/T/A/L/S*, 1993-94. All three feature highly constructed still images, synchronised with soundtracks that incorporate voiceover narration. Coleman's images and scripts are richly evocative and a vast array of historical and contemporary sources are referenced either directly or indirectly, but he generally withholds contextualising information, with the result that critics often excavate earlier works in search of meaning.

Other artists have embraced technologies and economies of digital media production and consumption, as well as more collaborative modes of practice. Carlos Amorales' two-channel installation *Dark Mirror*, 2004-2005, incorporates animation by André Pahl and an original score and piano performance by José María Serralde. Significantly, the animation is derived from a 'liquid archive' – an open and expanding collection of digital images assembled by Amorales' studio, which is apparently available for use by others. A comparable example of collaboration can be found in Philippe Parreno's digital video *Anywhere Out of The World*, 2000, featuring a character entitled *Annlee* originated by a commercial animation company, co-purchased with the artist Pierre Huyghe and then made available to several other artists in accordance with the principles of 'copyleft'.

This project can be situated in relation to a much earlier tradition of appropriation, in which artists borrowed and repurposed images from popular media. Dara Birnbaum was one of a number of artists to work with mass produced images of women's bodies during the 1970s. Her single-channel video *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman*, 1978/9, is composed entirely of edited and looped special effects sequences from the *Wonder Woman* TV series, in which 'Diana Prince' is transformed in an explosion of light and sound into her tightly-costumed, crime-fighting alter-ego.

Willie Doherty's work during the 1980s and '90s is also informed by critiques of representation. But rather than appropriating material from specific sources, Doherty explores the recurrence of certain images and narratives across a range of media, from photo-journalism to film and television drama. Initially working with photography, Doherty produced a number of black and white diptychs that combined images of Derry city and its surroundings with ambiguous yet suggestive text. He gradually moved towards colour photography and away from the direct use of text on image, relying on titles (as in the case of *Border Incident*, 1994) to evoke associations, and developed video installations, including *The Only Good One is a Dead One*, 1995, that engage with locally specific media genres such as television advertisements for the Confidential Telephone line.³

Gerard Byrne also responds to hybrid media genres, such as the magazine 'advertorial' or the 'roundtable discussion', which may borrow from reportage or documentary but are nonetheless highly constructed. In *Why it's time for Imperial, again*, 1998-2002, Byrne creates a film script from the text of a conversation between Frank Sinatra and Lee Iacocca (chairman of Chrysler), originally published as an advertorial for the Chrysler Imperial car in *National Geographic*. The text, never designed to be used as a script, is full of awkward phrases and Byrne exaggerates this quality by staging it three times in different locations. Byrne's multi-channel installation *New Sexual Lifestyles*, 2003, is also based upon a text derived from a US magazine – this time a roundtable discussion on sexuality published in *Playboy* in 1973. Again the shooting location is highly significant as Byrne restages the discussion with Irish actors in a modernist building in Co. Wicklow. Designed as a summer house for the wealthy art patron Basil Goulding, the building also serves as the subject of a series of photographs that form part of the work. These photographs are exhibited alongside the edited footage of the re-enactment, which is presented on multiple monitors (with headphones attached), a mode of display that suggests the mediatheque or media archive, rather than the cinema.

12



Even though new media artworks may directly reference or evoke aspects of popular media production and exhibition, artists generally aim to solicit modes of engagement that are specific to the spaces and sites of Contemporary Art.⁴ So, for example, Willie Doherty might structure a video installation (such as *Re-Run*, 2002) so that the viewer must continually shift their attention between two opposing screens in order to 'read' the work. Similarly, seating is rarely provided for James Coleman's projected image installations; instead, multiple speakers are arranged around the exhibition space to invite viewing and listening from different positions. These works demonstrate a sensitivity to the museum gallery as a space through which the viewer moves, but some artists have structured their installations around the notion of mobility in even more pronounced ways.

This is the case with Jaki Irvine's *The Silver Bridge*, 2003, an eight-screen video installation that explores the spatialisation of narrative, drawing some of its themes and images from *Carmilla*, 1872, a novella by Sheridan Le Fanu. Widely regarded as a source of inspiration for Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, *Carmilla* is a tale of repressed desire involving two young women. Like much Gothic literature, *The Silver Bridge* explores the persistence of attachments to people and places, and derives much of its power from the use of atmospheric settings (including the Phoenix Park and the Natural History Museum) as locations. The architecture of IMMA provides a particularly appropriate exhibition context for this work, as the eight projections are dispersed across a series of small interconnected rooms alongside a corridor, enabling multiple pathways through the narrative.

James Coleman's *Strongbow*, 1978/2000, is also concerned with storytelling, focusing on the fraught interplay between history, myth and media in Irish culture. One of the first important new media works acquired by IMMA, *Strongbow* was placed on public display for several years during the early 1990s. At that time the work consisted of a spot lit replica of a tomb-effigy found in Christ Church Cathedral, and once assumed to be that of the Norman knight *Strongbow*. The replica was displayed alongside a video, on a monitor, of two hands clapping continuously, with the sounds of the clapping gradually rising to a boom and then receding. One hand is green, the other red and the image is distorted so that the hands appear to blur, leaving traces across the screen.

The work was interpreted in its original form as a critique of television's insistence on the 'noise and confusion of the present [offering] no particular insight on the past nor resolution for the future'.⁵ In 2000, however, Coleman presented a radically altered version as part of the IMMA exhibition 'Shifting Ground: Selected Works of Irish Art, 1950-2000'. *Strongbow*, 1978/2000, was no longer situated in a darkened space; instead the components were clearly visible and several new elements had been added. The residue of the plaster mould was evident on the resin cast of the effigy, and the video of the hands clapping was displayed on a widescreen 'Sony Art Couture' monitor. In addition, the packing boxes for several monitors were stacked against the wall, along with a scaffold tower and the residue of the installation process.

Given its subject matter, these revisions to the form of the work can be read as a response to the context of the exhibition 'Shifting Ground', which focused partly on history and identity. But Coleman's action also raises broader questions about the interpretation of new media artworks. The first version of *Strongbow* was produced towards the end of the era of classical 'TV', just before the widespread availability of home video and the emergence of cable channels aimed at niche audiences. During the classical era of broadcasting, television (like radio) had contributed to processes of nation formation through its insistence upon a continuous, shared, sense of the 'here and now'. But by 2000, the experience of television – and its relationship to the national context – had altered radically. Through the alterations to *Strongbow*, Coleman highlights the complexities and the contradictions that are integral to the production and exhibition of New Media Art, the meaning of which is at least partly structured by the continually shifting relationship between media, technology and society.

- 1 See Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *Illuminations*, (ed.) Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, London: Fontana, 1973, pp. 219-254.
- 2 For a recent overview of this tradition see Edward A. Shanken (ed.), *Art and Electronic Media*, London: Phaidon, 2009.
- 3 See Martin McLoone, 'The Commitments', *Same Old Story*, Exhibition Catalogue, London/Derry/Colchester: Matt's Gallery/Orchard Gallery/Firstsite, 1997, pp. 8-22.
- 4 For further exploration of this issue see Maeve Connolly, *The Place of Artists' Cinema: Space, Site and Screen*, Bristol and Chicago: Intellect and University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- 5 Anne Rorimer, 'James Coleman 1970 -1985' (1985), in *James Coleman* (October Files No. 5), (ed.) George Baker, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003, p. 11.

maeve connolly

maeve connolly is a Lecturer in the school of creative arts at dun laoghaire institute of art, design & technology (IDA). she lectures on the BA in visual arts practice and on the MAVis, MA visual arts practices, where she leads a module on visual cultural research. her research centres on concepts of public space in contemporary art and culture, informed by histories of art, film and television since the late 1960s. her book on artists' film and video, entitled the place of artists' cinema: space, site and screen (Intellect/university of chicago press, 2009) includes in-depth readings of works by eija-liisa ahtila, carlos amorales, gerard byrne, tacita dean, jeremy deller, stan douglas, willie doherty, pierre huyghe, jaki irvine, aernout mik, tobias putrih, anne tallentire and jane & louise wilson, among others.

15



new media:
further reading

Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *Illuminations*, (ed.) Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, London: Fontana, 1973, pp 219-254.

Curiger Bice, *The Expanded Eye: Stalking the Unseen*, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2006.

Paul Christiane, *Digital Art*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2008.

Maeve Connolly, *The Place of Artists' Cinema: Space, Site and Screen*, Bristol and Chicago: Intellect and University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Catherine Elwes, *Video Art: A Guided Tour*, I.B. Tauris, 2005.

Charlie Gere, *Digital Culture*, London: Reaktion Books, 2003.

Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003.

Oliver Grau (ed.), *MediaArHistories*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007.

Rachel Greene, *Internet Art*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2004.

Andy Grundberg, *Photography and Art: Interactions since 1946*, New York: Abbeville Press, 1987.

Mark Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004.

Philip Hayward, *Culture, Technology & Creativity in the Late Twentieth Century*, New Barnett: John Libbey Publishing, 1990.

Ian Jeffrey, *Photography: A Concise History*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1981.

Tanya Leighton (ed.), *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2008.

Martin Lister, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant & Kieran Kelly (eds.), *New Media: A Critical Introduction*, London: Routledge, 2009.

Margot Lovejoy, *Digital Currents: Art in the Electronic Age*, New York: Routledge, 2004.

Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002.

Sylvia Martin, *Video Art*, Taschen, 2006.

Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*, New York: Random House, 1967, reissued by Gingko Press, 2001.

Florence de Mèredieu, *Digital and Video Art*, New York: Larousse, Kingfisher, Chambers, 2005.

David Parkinson, *History of Film*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1996.

Frank Popper, *From Technological to Virtual Art*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007.

Michael Rush, *New Media in Art*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2005.

Michael Rush, *Video Art*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 2007.

Edward A. Shanken, *Art and Electronic Media*, London: Phaidon Press, 2009.

Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, Picador, 2001.

Mark Tribe, Jana Reena & Uta Grosenick (eds.), *New Media Art*, Taschen, 2006.

Bruce Wands, *Art of the Digital Age*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2006.

Liz Wells, *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, London: Routledge, 2004.

Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema*, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1970.

ABSTRACT ART

Artwork that is non-figurative, non-representational and which is concerned with the physical properties of the medium rather than the representation of subject matter.

AUDIO TECHNOLOGY

Devices and mechanisms for recording and producing sound, such as the gramophone, audio cassette, microphone and compact disk.

AVANT-GARDE

French for advance guard or 'vanguard', a military term to describe an advance army group. The term is used to describe innovative, experimental or cutting edge artists and practitioners.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Biology-based technology concerned with medicine, agriculture, food science and genetic engineering.

CAMERA OBSCURA

An optical device developed in the tenth century and used extensively during the Renaissance to aid drawing and perspective.

CD-ROMS

A compact disc which contains fixed data and which can be accessed by a computer.

CONTEMPORARY ART

Refers to current and very recent art practice. Attributed to the period from the 1970s to the present, it also refers to works of art made by living artists. Contemporary Art can be driven by both theory and

ideas, and is also characterised by a blurring of the distinction between art and other categories of cultural experience, such as television, cinema, mass media, entertainment and digital technology.

COMPUTER

A mechanism for storing data and executing instructions called programmes in relation to that data. Software applications for personal computers include word processing, spreadsheets, databases, Web browsers, games, and specialist software.

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES

An electronic game devised for interactive use on a computer or video player. The development of games involves multi-disciplinary teams of game designers, programmers, graphic designers, sound technicians and producers.

CONCEPTUAL ART

Originating in the 1960s, Conceptual Art pushed arts practice beyond the conventional limits of the art object, placing an emphasis on the idea or concept rather than a tangible art object. The ideas and methodologies of Conceptual Art inform much Contemporary Art practice.

CUBISM

An early twentieth-century movement led by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque which focused on the physical qualities of painting rather than the subject matter. It is characterised

by the breaking up of the picture plane, merging of figure and ground, the adoption of multiple viewpoints, and simplification of form into geometric shapes. It is considered to be the forerunner of Abstract Art.

CYBERSPACE

The notional space within which the network of information technology and communication infrastructures, such as the Internet, operate.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Electronic data storage and transmission technology that enables immense amounts of information to be compressed on small storage devices, such as computers and telephones, that can easily be preserved, retrieved and transported.

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.

FLUXUS

An international, avant-garde, art movement in the 1960s which included artists, writers, filmmakers and musicians creating experimental, multi-media work in film, video and performance informed by social and political activism.

FUTURISM

Early twentieth-century movement which originated in Italy and embraced all things modern, including technology, speed, industrialisation and mechanisation. It also embraced violence and nationalism and was associated with Italian Fascism.

GPS

Global Positioning System is a U.S. space-based radio-navigation system that provides positioning, navigation and timing services. GPS handsets are used by drivers to optimise navigation routes.

HYPERTEXT

Text which contains links to other texts, usually displayed on a computer. Hypermedia refers to those elements of Hypertext which are not text, such as graphics. The World Wide Web is an example of hypertext.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

A period of social, political and economic change arising from the shift from manual to machine-based manufacturing, which affected agriculture, manufacturing, mining and transport. Began in Great Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and spread throughout Europe and America, impacting on all aspects of social, political and cultural life.

INTERNET

A globalised system of computer networks linked by copper wire, fibre-optic cables and wireless con-

nections, which provides services, resources and information, such as the hypertext of the World Wide Web, electronic mail, file sharing, online gaming and social networking sites.

LANGUAGE

Use of verbal and written text as a medium in Conceptual Art.

LENS-BASED MEDIA

Mechanisms which employ a camera lens, such as film, video and photography, to create artwork.

MASS MEDIA

Forms of communication, such as newspapers and television, used to distribute news and information to large audiences.

MEDIA

In general usage, media refers to forms of communication, such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the Internet. In the arts, media, the plural of medium, refers to the materials, methodologies, mechanisms, technologies or devices by which an artwork is realised. Traditional or old media include painting, sculpture and drawing and the specific materials used, such as paint, charcoal or marble, can also be referred to as media. In Contemporary Art practice media artists use a wide range of media, such as technology, found materials, the body, sound, etc.

NEW MEDIA

A range of materials and technologies developed relatively recently and utilised

in the creation, presentation and dissemination of New Media Art.

NEW MEDIA ART

Artwork created using new media, such as film, video, lens-based media, digital technology, hypertext, cyberspace, audio technology, CD-ROMs, webcams, surveillance technology, wireless telephones, GPS systems, computer and video games and biotechnology.

OBSOLESCENCE

A state where a product or technology is superseded by a newer one and consequently it is no longer manufactured or used, even though it may still function adequately.

OIL PAINT

A form of painting which became prevalent during the fifteenth century, where pigment is suspended in slow-drying oil such as linseed oil.

PAINTING

The application of a pigment or colour to a surface such as canvas, paper or plaster. It was the dominant artistic medium for pictorial representation until the twentieth century.

PERFORMANCE ART

Involves an artist undertaking an action or actions where the artist's body is the medium. Performance Art evolved in the late 1950s and 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.

PRINTMAKING

The process of creating an artwork by transferring an impression from one surface to another. The printmaking process can use metal, stone, linoleum, fabric, etc. While printmaking enables multiple copies to be produced, each print is considered unique.

RENAISSANCE

A French word for rebirth, the Renaissance was a cultural movement originating in Italy in the late fourteenth century, prompted by the revival of ancient classical sources. Extending until the sixteenth century the movement spread throughout Italy and Europe affecting all aspects of social, political and cultural life. Characterised by the adoption of a humanist approach, Renaissance artists placed an emphasis on naturalism and the use of linear perspective.

SCULPTURE

A three-dimensional art object which is either created or constructed by an artist. Includes constructions, assemblages, installations, sound, new media, etc.

SONY PORTAPAK VIDEO CAMERA

The first portable low-cost video recording device introduced in 1967 by Sony. Its relatively low cost and

portability made it accessible to many artists and contributed to the growth of experimental video making in the 1960s and 1970s.

SOUND ART

A form of art practice concerned with sound, listening and hearing, often involving an interdisciplinary approach. Sound Art encompasses acoustics, electronics, audio media and technology, the body, ambient sound, etc.

SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY

The employment of technology to monitor behaviour and activities, and to gather information. This includes electronic security systems: CCTV cameras; social network analysis: Bebo, Facebook and Twitter; biometric surveillance: fingerprinting and facial recognition; aerial surveillance: satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles; data mining and profiling; corporate surveillance and telephone and computer monitoring.

TEMPERA

A permanent painting medium comprising coloured pigment mixed with a water-soluble binder such as egg yolk. The preferred painting medium in Europe up until the fifteenth century.

TEXT-BASED ART

Artwork created using written or printed words as the material and/or subject matter.

VIDEO ART

Artwork created using a video recording device. Video Art emerged as an art form in the 1960s and 1970s due to the development of new technology, and it is a prevalent medium in Contemporary Art practice.

WEBCAMS

A video-capture device that can be attached to a computer to enable the communication of live visual information.

WIRELESS TELEPHONES

A cellular or mobile telephone is a type of short-wave analog or digital telecommunication, in which a subscriber has a wireless connection from a mobile telephone to a relatively nearby transmitter. The transmitter's span of coverage is called a cell.

WORLD WIDE WEB

A system of interlinked hypertext documents accessed via the Internet. Browsers, such as Google, enable users to access web pages containing text, images and multimedia, and also to navigate between web pages using hypertext.

16-MILLIMETRE FILM

Film stock developed in the 1920s for amateur and industrial use. Since the 1960s, when it became more affordable, it has been used widely by artists in experimental filmmaking.

new media: resources

The following is a select list of resources. A more detailed list can be found on IMMA's website www.imma.ie

Websites

General Resources and Information Websites

Intute

Online service providing information about web resources for education and research. www.intute.ac.uk

STOT

Platform providing online links relating to Contemporary Art. www.stot.org

New Media Websites

235media

New Media Art and Technology. www.235media.com

Ars Electronica

Platform for digital art and media culture. www.aec.at

Arteamundo

New Media Art in Argentina www.arteamundo.com

BBC Video Nation

www.bbc.co.uk/videonation

British Artists' Film & Video Study Collection

Research project based in Central St. Martin's College of Art and Design, providing a range of resource material relating to artists' film and video in Britain. www.studycollection.org.uk

Cinovid

Database of experimental Film and Video Art. www.cinovid.org

DARE

Interactive digital art resource for education. www.dareonline.org

Database of Virtual Art

Documents the field of digital installation art. www.virtualart.at/common/info.do

Depict

International short-film competition to make films under 90 seconds. www.depict.org

Digital Art Source

Resource site for digital art and culture information. www.digitalartsource.com

Electronic Arts Intermix

Resource for Video Art. www.eai.org

Lovebytes

Digital arts organisation promoting the creative and cultural potential of digital technologies. www.lovebytes.org.uk

Luxonline

A web resource for exploring British-based artists' film and video. www.luxonline.org.uk

ICA Digital Art

Showcases digital art projects curated by London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. www.ica.org.uk

Organisations

Art & Science

Collaborations (ASCI)

Promotes awareness of collaborations between artists and scientists. www.asci.org

Beall Centre for Art and Technology

Supports innovation across arts, science and engineering. www.beallcenter.uci.edu

Belfast Exposed

Gallery for contemporary photography. www.belfastexposed.com

Co-Lab

Swiss-based organisation which adopts an interdisciplinary approach towards art, new technologies and society. www.co-lab.ch

Digital Arts Developmental Agency

Supports artwork exploring digital processes. www.da2.org.uk

The Digital Hub

Dublin-based initiative to create an international centre of excellence for knowledge, innovation and creativity focused on digital content and technology enterprises. www.thedigitalhub.com

Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI)

Arts organisation supporting Video and Media Art. www.eai.org

Electrohype

Organisation promoting and advocating computer-based art in Sweden and the other Nordic countries.
www.electrohype.org

Eyebeam

Centre for the promotion of new technologies and media arts.
www.eyebeam.org

FACT

Foundation for Art and Creative Technology promotes artists' work and innovation in the fields of film, video, and new media.
www.fact.co.uk

Folly

Digital Arts organisation promoting the exploration of art through technology.
www.folly.co.uk

Furtherfield

Provides platforms for experimental practices relating to art, technology and social change.
www.furtherfield.org

ISEA

Inter-Society for the Electronic Arts promotes interdisciplinary academic discourse and exchange among artists and organisations working with art, science and emerging technologies.
www.isea-web.org

Plug.In

A space for Contemporary Art focusing on electronic media.
www.iplugin.org

Rhizome

Based in the New Museum in NY, Rhizome promotes emerging artistic practices that engage technology.
www.rhizome.org

V2

Interdisciplinary centre for art and media technology based in Rotterdam.
www.v2.nl

Vertext

Artist-run space in NY supporting emerging media artists.
www.vertextlist.net

Videotage

Interdisciplinary artist collective focusing on the development of Video and New Media Art in Hong Kong.
www.videotage.org.hk

WRO Centre for Media Art

Independent organisation in Poland specialising in Contemporary Art, media and technology
www.wrocenter.pl

Year Zero One

Media Arts Collective exploring new and hybrid artistic practices emerging from new technologies.
www.year01.com

journals and
magazines:
general and
new media art

Afterimage

Journal of Media Art and Cultural Criticism.
www.vsw.org/afterimage

Art Forum

An international, monthly magazine specialising in Contemporary Art.
www.artforum.com

Art Newspaper

A New York-based monthly newspaper about the visual arts.
www.theartnewspaper.com

Art Monthly

A UK-based monthly magazine about Contemporary Visual Art.
www.artmonthly.co.uk

Art Papers

A non-profit arts organisation dedicated to the examination and development of Contemporary Art and culture.
www.artpapers.org

Art Review

A Contemporary Art magazine published monthly with an online networking site.
www.artreview.com

Art and Research

A UK-based quarterly journal of ideas, contexts and methods related to art and research
www.artandresearch.org.uk

Circa

An Irish-based, quarterly journal about Contemporary Visual Culture.
www.recirca.com

Contemporary

A London-based, monthly Contemporary Visual Arts magazine.
www.contemporary-magazines.com

Critical Inquiry

A Chicago-based quarterly journal that presents articles concerning critical thought in the arts.
www.criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu

E-flux Journal

A New York-based, monthly journal distributing information on contemporary exhibitions, publications and symposia.
www.e-flux.com/journal

Film Ireland

Magazine published by Filmbase on film and video.
www.filmireland.net

Flash Art

An international, bimonthly magazine focusing on Contemporary Art.
www.flashartonline.com

Frieze

A London-based magazine of Contemporary Art and culture.
www.frieze.com/magazine

Journal of Visual Art Practice

An international, monthly journal supporting research into visual arts practice.
www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals

Journal of Visual Culture

A US-based journal promoting research, scholarship and critical engagement with Visual Culture and Art.
www.sagepub.com/journals

Online journals and magazines

Alt-X
www.altx.com

Aspect
www.aspectmag.com

Ctheory.net
www.ctheory.net

newmediaFIX
www.newmediafix.net

what is series 1?

Even though new media may directly reference or evoke aspects of popular media production and exhibition, artists generally aim to solicit modes of engagement that are specific to the spaces and sites of contemporary art.

Meave Connolly

What is (New) Media Art? is the third in a series of talks which aim to provide a general introduction to key concepts and themes in New Media Art. *What is (New) Media Art* provides a brief overview of the context in which this evolving category of New Media Art has developed. This is accompanied by an essay by **Maeve Connolly** titled *(New) Media, Through the Lens of the IMMA Collection*.

roquel hospital,
millitary road, kilmalnam,
dublin 8, ireland

T. 00 353 1 612 9900
F. 00 353 1 612 9999
E. info@imma.ie

www.imma.ie