

Edith-Russ-Haus für Medienkunst
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Eoghan Ryan

AGAINST

THE

DAY

1 February - 24 March 2024

EXHIBITION

Project coordination: Ulrich Kreienbrink

Technical realization: Carlo Bas Sancho, Mathis Oesterlen

Educational programme: Sandrine Teuber, Jan Blum

Graphic design: Katarina Šević



www.facebook.com/edithrusshaus



www.instagram.com/edith_russ_haus

Irish artist Eoghan Ryan’s solo exhibition *Against the Day* at the Edith-Russ-Haus for Media Art spans moving image, installation, performance, puppetry, and collage. His new commission, the video installation *Circle A* (2023), premieres in the company of three installations from recent years. These works explore the intricacies of how power is communicated through media culture and language. In adapting personas, characters, and unrehearsed conversations, they expand into fable-like takes on the collective and the personal as “institutions.” *Against the Day* as a whole speculates on how art and its institutional structures can coexist with moments of uprising, resistance, or revolt. It asks: What is it to exist right now, in a shaky present?

Circle A departs from a heavily edited conversation between five strangers in an art bookshop. Their discussion circulates around the term “anarchy,” including its abstraction and how the word functions in both an imaginary and a real way. The video installation inserts anarchy—as a response to order and an aspirational conceit—into the language of the everyday spectator, offering a thought experiment on how to begin to undo a system.

Three distinctly designed spaces present the earlier installations *Doggerel* (2022), *Truly Rural* (2019), and *A Sod State* (2021). These works take up troubling questions, such as rising nationalism’s corruption of a shared idea of Europe and the countryside as an environment where disgust erupts and fascism lurks. *A Sod State* describes Ryan’s particular perspective on the wider world of politics, positing pre- and post-Brexit “Troubles” in Northern Ireland as repetitive political theatre. These Troubles, spatially and historically located inside the head of a rather confused Irishman, manifest an inner demagogue who performs binary contradictions of class, faith, identity, and borders—private, public, and political.

Truly Rural is a painfully actual and urgent elaboration on a topic that one of the film’s protagonist summarizes

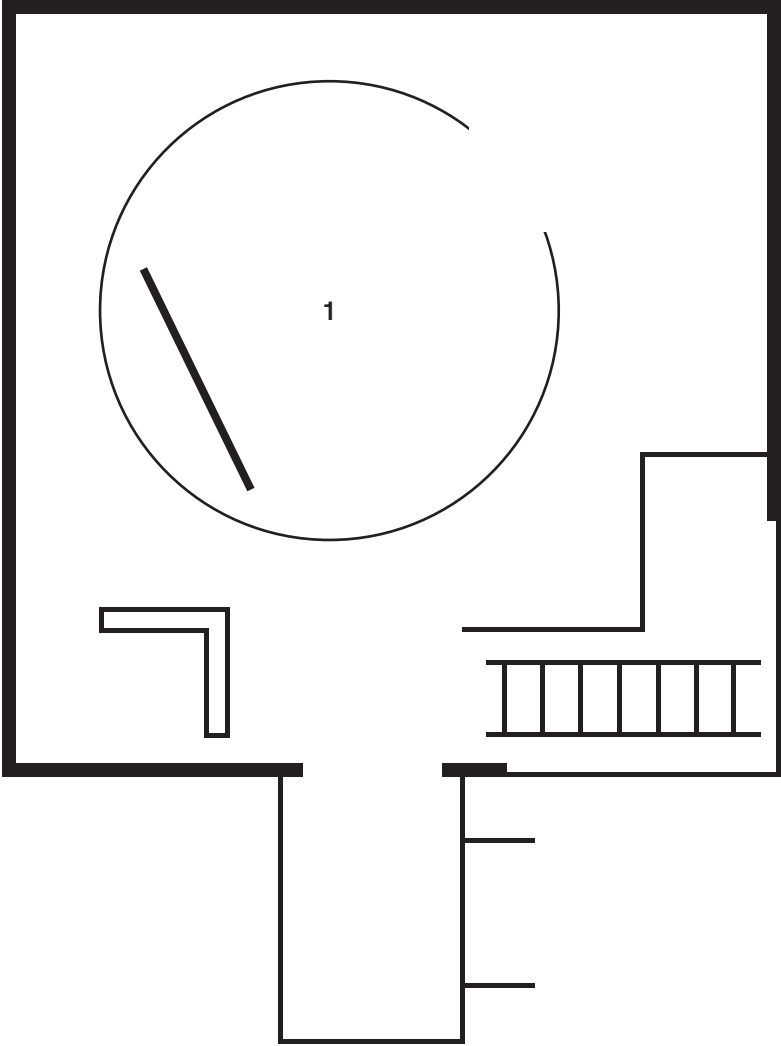
near the beginning of the work, saying: “We think people are being misguided in some way that erases responsibility but I think people kind of know what they are getting themselves into. At some point in your life, you are confronted with your own fascism ... and you decide to ignore it.”

Threading the installations together is a large collage of newspaper images and articles pasted to the walls. These blown-up cutouts are selections from an ongoing archive of thousands of images, sent to Ryan by his father every other week for the last fifteen years. The artist’s father often mounts the images to paper and collages them according to an internal hierarchy and relevance decided upon through conversations with his son. These include, for example, images of recent protests, sinkholes, handbags, and eyepatches.

The service that Ryan’s father provides not only stands in for a connection that cannot be verbalized in the pair’s own relationship but also limits the artist’s field of reference to the offline materiality of the newspapers his father chooses to read. Employing repetition and editing, Ryan uses these images to explore how a single image or headline can be pulled from the newspaper up to and including the present moment, recontextualized, and made into a narrative.

Eoghan Ryan was 2023 recipient of the Media Art Grant from the Stiftung Niedersachsen at the Edith-Russ-Haus for Media Art.

GROUND FLOOR



1 CIRCLE A

2024

1-channel UHD video installation

6 channel surround sound

29:10 mins

Circle A departs from a heavily edited conversation between five strangers in an art bookshop. Their discussion circulates around the term Anarchy and how the word functions in both an imaginary and a real way. The conversation is cut alongside footage from the Las Fallas festival, Valencia, a five-day celebration of fire and pyrotechnics as well as interjections from the late author, social theorist and orator Murray Bookchin, who coined the term 'Lifestyle Anarchism'. Threaded throughout the film are hundreds of newspaper clippings from an open archive that are sent to the artist by his father. The soundtrack of drums, pops and explosions fall in and out of syncopation, providing driving rhythm and moments of rupture. *Circle A* inserts Anarchy as an aspirational conceit both on micro and macro level into the language of the everyday. If Anarchy is affirmed as a response to order, the film puts full emphasis on the word 'response'. In other words, the work is a thought experiment on how to begin to undo a system.

Credits:

With

Anna Poels

Dimitri Carême

Lucy Mattot

Kris Cuppens

Léah K Crabé

Mikael Olsson Al Safandi

Camera: Fan Liao

Camera Assistance: Ming Ziming Zhao

Sound recording and mixing: Achiel Van den Abeele

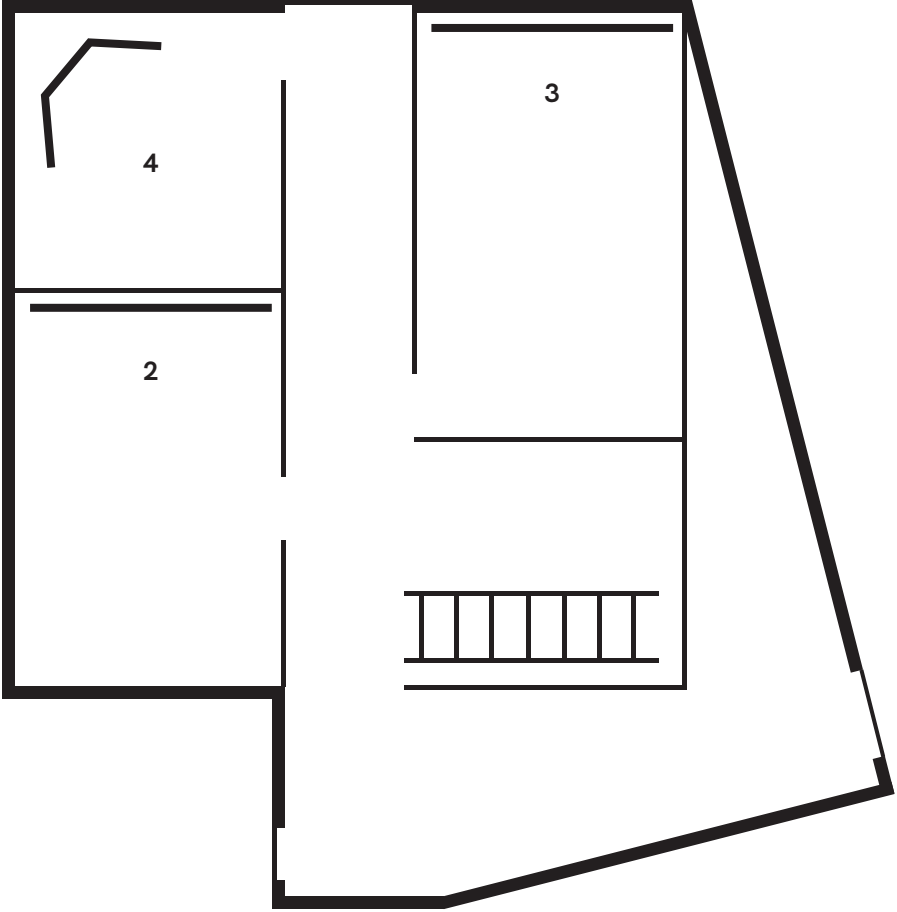
Color Grading: Lennert De Taeye

Special thanks to Amina Szecsödy and rile* books, Brussels

Supported by Mondriaan Fonds and commissioned by Edith-Russ-Haus

Supported by the Grant of the Stiftung Niedersachsen for Media Art 2023

BASEMENT



2 A SOD STATE

2021/22

1-channel UHD video installation,
spatial installation, mixed media
22 mins

'Sod' or turf is wet fertile ground; it is also slang British for someone that is difficult or causes problems and 'sod all', as in - absolutely nothing. 'State' is the particular condition that someone or something is in at a specific time, as much as it is a nation or territory considered as an organized political community.

A Sod State posits pre and post Brexit 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland as repetitive political theatre. These troubles, spatially and historically located inside the head of a rather confused Irishman, manifest an inner demagogue that performs binaric contradictions of class, faith, identities and borders; private, public and political.

Credits:

Camera: Fan Liao
Sound Mix: Mitchell Van Ommeren

Special thanks to Rijksakademie Van
Bildende Kunsten

3 TRULY RURAL

2019

1-channel UHD video installation, mixed
media
18 mins

Truly Rural is an account of the German countryside as an environment where eruptions of disgust and social disorder lurk. Combining unrehearsed interviews and documentary techniques with a heavy post production process in order to unfold the southern German tradition of 'Fasching' (carnival) alongside the rekindling the outbreak of mad cow disease as an allegory for current rise of far right, fascist tendencies throughout Europe. A doll with clown make-up acts as both protagonist and mouthpiece.

This doll plays a perverse game with innocence and control via porcelain Hummel figurines, bovine dancers, and camouflaged boys. Infected with a disease that it does not fully understand, the doll seems to secretly long for its own destruction.

With:
Lukas Amend
Alex Benz
Special thanks to Rijksakademie Van
Bildende Kunsten

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DOGGEREL

2022

3-channel UHD video installation

13:57 min

In *Doggerel*, which takes its name from a middle english term used to describe comic, badly written verse, the conditions in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century, as seen through the eyes of Oskar, the protagonist of „The Tin Drum“ by Günther Grass, are linked with the current situation in the early twenty-first century. This being one of contested migration and border enforcement both personal and political. Oskar stands by his own grave, composing irregular rhyming verse and playing his drum, as the edit cuts between images of a Miniature Europe and the conflicts that borders create. Rhythmically paralleling the nationalist tragedies of the past with those of today.

Commissioned by Busan Biennale 2022

With support from Culture Ireland and the Arts Council Ireland.

Voiceover: Amina Szecsödy

3D: Pacôme LeRouge

Second Camera: Fan Liao

Drums: Eitan Efrat

Eoghan Ryan (b. 1987, Dublin, Ireland, lives and works between Brussels and Amsterdam) works with moving images, installation, performance, puppetry and drawing. The work looks at collective and personal trauma, power and anarchy, voluntary and involuntary behavior, acting and reacting. Ryan's process involves careful and tactile editing, spending durational amounts of time documenting his own relationships with a specific person, place, object, or song. He often deliberately limits his field of reference to an ongoing archive of images collated from newspaper clippings. He is currently involved in dismantling states of a 'European' identity. These range from nation-states and states of being to the cultivation of provisional culture, in art as much as bacteria. In addition to solo exhibitions such as *Cut it off at the trunk* (Rowing, London, 2017) and *Oh wicked flesh!* (South London Gallery, London, 2013), he has taken part in numerous group exhibitions including Live Works. (Centrale Fies.Trento. Italy, 2023) the Busan Biennale 2022, *Contamination* (Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg, 2021), and *As Above, So Below: Portals, Visions, Spirits & Mystics* (Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, 2017).

Website: eoghanryan.ie

EXHIBITION WALK

**Wednesday, 28 February
5 p.m.**

with Edit Molnár – director ERH
(in English language)

**Wednesday, 13 March,
5 p.m.**

with Marcel Schwierin – director ERH
(in German language)

GUIDED TOURS

Every Sunday during the exhibition at 3 p.m.
(Attendance free, regular entrance).

Group tours on request.

OPENING HOURS

Tuesday till Friday 2 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Monday closed

EINTRITT

2,50 Euro / 1,50 Euro

Free admission on 24 February and 23 March 2023

Admission is free for pupils,
visitors under 18 years,
and students of the Universities of Oldenburg.

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H A U S
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