

IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
SOUTH EAST & EAST WING GALLERIES, PROJECT SPACES,
SOUTH GROUND & COURTYARD
12 SEPTEMBER 2015 – 7 FEBRUARY 2016

What We Call Love: From Surrealism to Now



What We Call Love is a major exhibition tracing how artistic notions of love have evolved through the 20th and 21st centuries. Referencing key moments of social and cultural shifts through the '20s, the '60s, and the '80s, the exhibition sets these in the context of contemporary life today. In this way, it seeks to understand current perspectives on what love is, looking at what it has been and prompting potential landscapes for the future. At a period in Ireland, and internationally, when radical developments have been set in motion – in terms of sexuality, marriage, intimacy – IMMA is proud to present its most ambitious exhibition to date, *What We Call Love*.

The exhibition includes almost 200 artworks, many of which are being shown to Irish audiences for the first time. These works are by some of the most significant voices of our time and feature, amongst others, Marina Abramović, Louise Bourgeois, Constantin Brancusi, Dorothy Cross, Salvador Dalí, Zackary Drucker & Rhys Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, Jean Genet, Nan Goldin, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Damien Hirst, Yoko Ono, Meret Oppenheim, Pablo Picasso, Wolfgang Tillmans, and Andy Warhol. The exhibition also includes a number of new works commissioned by IMMA as responses to the thematic of *What We Call Love*.

The exhibition is structured in three chapters, set within the East Wing and South East Wing Galleries and extending across other spaces of the museum. The first of these chapters centres on the Surrealist movement of the 1920s, its transformative passion and the idea of love as 'l'amour fou' (crazy love). The second focuses on alternative perspectives on love which emerged after the 1960s, reflected in the practices of Conceptual and Performance Art. The third chapter offers contemporary works that explore the complexities of modern relationships.

What We Call Love is a provocative title. In its phrasing, it implies a definitive article – *this* is what we call love – yet the exhibition is a vast exploration of artistic vision. It compels us to look at possibilities that lie beyond the conclusive or the singular. It reaches for the as yet unknown, to both question our ideals of love and to uplift our spirits. *What We Call Love* acts as a reminder to us as a society, to seek out among the crisis and conflicts, our capacity to love in whatever form that may take us.

Visitors are advised that this exhibition contains adult themes and explicit imagery.

List of *What We Call Love* Artists:
Marina Abramović and ULAY,
Lucy Andrews, Sadie Benning, Louise Bourgeois, Constantin Brancusi, Brassai,
Victor Brauner, André Breton,
Luis Buñuel, Cecily Brown, Miriam Cahn,
Sophie Calle, Michele Ciacciofera, Dorothy Cross, Attila Csörgö, Salvador Dalí,
Annabel Daou, Viasta Dellmar and Jerman,
Zackary Drucker & Rhys Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, Jean Dupuy, Elmgreen and Dragset, Olafur Eliasson, Max Ernst, VALIE EXPORT, Jean Genet, Jochen Gerz, Alberto Giacometti, Nan Goldin, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Douglas Gordon, Mona Hatoum, Damien Hirst, Jim Hodges, Rebecca Horn, Jesper Just, Kapwani Kiwanga, Milan Křížák, Ange Leccia, Gherasim Luca, Vlado Martek, André Masson, Annette Messager, Tracey Moffatt, Seamus Nolan, Nadja, Henrik Olesen, Yoko Ono, Meret Oppenheim, Ferhat Özgür, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Neša Paripović, Garrett Phelan, Pablo Picasso, Man Ray, Carolee Schneemann, Rudolf Schwarzkogler, Paul Sharits, Jeremy Shaw, Wolfgang Tillmans, Andy Warhol, Cerith Wyn Evans, Jun Yang, Akram Zaatar.

What We Call Love is curated by Christine Macel, Chief Curator, Centre Pompidou, Paris, with Rachael Thomas, Senior Curator, Head of Exhibitions, IMMA, assisted by Victoria Evans, Assistant Curator, Exhibitions, IMMA.

The Gallery Guide is written by Rachael Gilbourne, Assistant Curator, Exhibitions, IMMA.

IMMA would like to thank the artists, their galleries and the various lenders, all of whom have made this exhibition possible, including amongst others, Centre Pompidou, Paris; Tate, London; Musée Picasso, Paris; Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation, New York; Fondation Giacometti, Paris; British Council Collection; Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art; Collection Institut d'art Contemporain, Rhône-Alpes; Marina Abramović Archives; and numerous private collections and galleries worldwide.

Catalogue

The accompanying exhibition catalogue is available to purchase in the IMMA Bookshop: €25.00

New commissions in this exhibition are part of the series New Art at IMMA, proudly supported by Matheson. The exhibition is presented with the support of the French Embassy in Ireland and Official Hotel Partner, The Dylan Hotel. The film series is presented in collaboration with the Irish Film Institute.

Rooms 1 – 4 & Corridor South East Wing Galleries

Within these rooms there are Surrealist masterworks of sculpture, painting, drawing and installation, created by a selection of the greatest artists of the 20th century. In the early 1920s, Surrealism evolved in Paris as a cultural movement, partly in reaction to World War I. Now best known for its visual art and writing, its proponents viewed it as much more than an artistic form. French writer and poet, André Breton – whose seminal publication *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924) is on view here – experienced it as a way of thinking, a revolutionary force capable of transforming the political and social status quo. Surrealists aimed to dissolve the boundaries between the dreaming subconscious and a reality that they perceived had become overly determined by rational thought. This aim inspired an intense creativity and a passion likened to a sort of madness, a 'l'amour fou' (crazy love).

In Room 1, we find the delicate sculpture *Couple* (1930) and the painting *Le Baiser* (*The Kiss*) (1931) by Pablo Picasso. A Spanish artist, Picasso was an extraordinary creative who worked across many disciplines. One of the founders of Cubism, he was an inventor of a variety of styles such as constructed sculpture and collage. The erotic kiss, the embrace and the couple were motifs that occupied Picasso increasingly towards the latter part of his life.

In Room 3, there are four small-scale sculptures and etchings by the pioneering French artist Marcel Duchamp. One of the sculptures, *Wedge of Chastity* (*Coin de chasteté*) (1954), expresses in its union of cast bronze and dental plastic, a coupling of male and female, or positive and negative shapes. For Duchamp, the work was his wedding present to his second wife, a present which the pair carried with them like a wedding ring.

An inheritor of the Surrealist spirit, the contemporary work of Rebecca Horn is presented alongside these masterworks. Horn's explorations of bodily vitality are witnessed in the installation *High Moon*

(1991). An investigation of the latent energy of places, it's dramatic form sets the turbulence of passion as a magnetic flow into the space. *High Moon* is one of a cycle of works which also includes *El Reio de la Luna*, Barcelona (1992) and *Spirit di Madreperla*, Naples (2002).

Rooms 5 – 8 & Corridor East Wing Galleries

Moving into the East Wing of the museum, there is a selection of works from the 1960s onwards, showing practices of Conceptual and Performance Art, each radical in their time. Conceptual Art proposes that the artistic idea has greater significance than the aesthetic, material form. It questions the nature of art itself and the role of the artist in its making. Video and photography as documentation and representation feature strongly in these galleries, together with the use of text. *What We Call Love* brings to the fore a focus on love not often associated with Conceptual and Performance Art practices.



Yoko Ono and John Lennon, *Montreal Bed-In*, 1969. Photo by Ivor Sharp; Lenono Photo Archive, NY. © Yoko Ono



Nan Goldin, *Marina and Jean Christian in bed with baby Elio*, Sag Harbor, NY, 2001; C-print, series of 8 works, 50.8 x 61 cm. Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York. © Nan Goldin

In Room 6, there are three photographic works and a video piece by the French conceptual artist Sophie Calle. Since the late 1970s, Calle has been combining text and image in works that have a documentary and autobiographical style. Here, in *Le Faux Mariage* (1992), *La robe de mariée* (1988), *Le Divorce* (1992) and *No sex last night* (1995), the artist lays bare conceptions of married life and its eventual dissolution, using narrative, a direct formal approach and ultimately the viewer's own inquiring mind.

Six large photographic prints by the German artist Wolfgang Tillmans hang in Room 8. Tillmans's documentary style came to be known from his early work focusing on London's gay community. *Central Nervous System* (2013), one of the works exhibited in *What We Call Love*, refers to Tillmans's study of the subtleties of the human body. The work is an in-depth, dramatic offshoot of his early portraiture pieces.

The performance piece, *24/7/365* (2009), by Scandinavian duo Elmgreen & Dragset, has been re-staged and filmed live during the opening reception of *What We Call Love*. This live version of the piece will be re-staged a further three times over the course of *What We Call Love*. The resulting video documentation from the opening

reception is shown here in situ, where two young men sat on chairs on either side of a bed, then stood up, undressed, and spooned on the bed, before dressing and sitting again. These actions were repeated for four hours. The work is revealing of Elmgreen & Dragset's critical approach towards reconfiguring the familiar with a subversive humour.

Rooms 9 – 12 & Corridor East Wing Galleries

The third chapter of the exhibition features contemporary artists such as Mona Hatoum, Damien Hirst, and Nan Goldin. Again linking with the preceding chapter, these pieces look towards modern relationships, how we define love not only socially and culturally but also ethically and spiritually. The influence of feminism, still palpable today, informs debates on egalitarian exchange and intimacy. There is commentary from Semir Zeki, an innovator in neuroesthetics, exploring the neurochemistry of love and beauty.

Room 10 shows three sculptures by the highly influential French artist Louise Bourgeois. Her use of materiality to build a tension between quintessentially male and female forms is tangible here, where rough or hard materials that are strongly associated with masculinity are sculpted into soft biomorphic forms suggestive of femininity. This sensitivity is particularly evident in Bourgeois's sculpture *The Couple* (2003), which floats in the corridor of the East Wing Galleries. The imagery within the artist's deeply personal work deals with humanity in all its violence, sexual desire, and loneliness.

Towards the close of this chapter of the exhibition, are three sculptures by Irish artist Dorothy Cross; *Passion Bed* (1990), *Lover Snakes* (1995), and *Kiss* (1997). Produced in the '90s at a significant moment in the artist's career, these poetic works typify Cross's witty and inventive investigations of contemporary sexual mores and politics. Her amalgamation of found and constructed objects reaches across time and the natural world to create physically arresting forms.

South Ground, Project Spaces & Courtyard

Interspersed across the museum are installations of works by Akram Zaatari and Sadie Benning (Project Spaces, until 11 October 2015), Ange Leccia (courtyard), and Zackary Drucker & Rhys Ernst (South Ground). Beirut-based Akram Zaatari is one of the few artists in the Arab region dealing with homosexual love, where homosexuality continues to be highly discriminated against. For *What We Call Love*, the artist's video piece *Tomorrow Everything Will Be Alright* (2010) unravels an intimate yet ambiguous conversation between two men. The works of Zackary Drucker & Rhys Ernst embody a further evolution of love, one that is beyond gender, showing such complexities and beauty in *Relationship series* (2008-13). French artist Ange Leccia's *Volvo, arrangement* (1986) takes centre-stage in the courtyard of the museum – two vehicles are parked facing one another, headlight to headlight, evoking a strange, charged tension between them.



Zackary Drucker and Rhys Ernst
Relationship, #19, 'Three Years of ZackaRhys',
2008-13
C-print, 38.1 x 50.8 cm
Courtesy Luis De Jesus Los Angeles

New Commissions:

Lucy Andrews *Untitled*, 2015 Courtyard

Lucy Andrews's new work echoes a traditional concept of love which placed great and transcendent value on the "love-object". *Untitled* (2015) touches on a history of elevating commonplace items to a hallowed status, imbued with feeling and emotion. The artist places a left-hand leather glove at a specific location in the museum; the courtyard. The fragile presence of a single glove here suggests a trace of intimacy between the object and its former owner, alluding to its status as one half of a whole.

Seamus Nolan *F**K IMMA*, 2015–16 Project Spaces, IMMA, January-February 2016

Seamus Nolan's work offers a political and provocative observation on the idea of love by examining the notion of community. Taking place in the historic grounds of IMMA as well as offsite, Nolan invites you to an unconventional and fuelled performance by an Anarcho-punk band that will challenge the conventional idea of love and how society dictates the way we should act when in love.

Garrett Phelan *Undiscovered ancient reliquary transmitter containing ethereal talisman to heal unrequited love*, 2015 East Wing Galleries

Garrett Phelan responds to the theme of love with a new installation entitled, *Undiscovered ancient reliquary transmitter containing ethereal talisman to heal unrequited love*. Within the East Wing Galleries, the artwork becomes an ethereal talisman to be experienced; it is a reliquary representing a form of love, a caring relic, and a living object. In his wider practice, Phelan reassesses the combined power of the art object and radio transmission. Alongside the new commission, Phelan's *NEW FAITH LOVE SONG – Radio and Gold Hearts* (2012) is presented as part of the exhibition.

Jeremy Shaw *Transcendental Capacity (Billboard's Top 100 Love Songs of All-Time)*, 2015 *Representative Measurements*, 2008-2015 East Wing Galleries

Berlin-based Canadian artist Jeremy Shaw's fluid multimedia productions focus on the grey-area between science and mysticism. Youth subcultures, methods of achieving ecstasy, drug use, and the scientific efforts to chart the resultant brainwaves, all feature in his experimental pieces. In *Transcendental Capacities*, the potent series began with Kirilian photography – a technique that sends a jolt of electricity through an object while it touches unexposed film. Remnants of the flow of energy during the interaction are left behind, and a beautiful abstract image of the electromagnetic field is imprinted onto the Polaroid.

The Love Seat A special commission awarded to Darren Monahan & Colln Horgan South Wing

Darren Monahan & Colin Horgan's *The Love Seat* is a play on the Victorian love seat, which was traditionally used for courtship. Within our contemporary digitised age, their work aims to prompt the question, "at what point will we begin to crave a sense of physicality once more?" and allows exhibition visitors to interact with one another through movement.

Talks + Event Series:

Guided Tours Exhibition Highlights: 30-Minute Tours Drop in: Every Wednesday, 1.15pm, Saturday and Sunday, 2.30pm Meeting Point, Main Reception, IMMA

An informal series of guided tours provides an introduction to the exhibition themes focusing on a select number of artworks that are among the highlights of this exhibition. Tours are led by IMMA Staff and include the following themes:

- Surrealism and Love
- Love and the Revolution: Conceptual and Performance Art from the 1960s
- Love and Identity: Documentary and Installation Works from the 1980s to Now

Tarot Maven | Tarot readings by Danielle Vierling East Wing, IMMA

Taking inspiration from Zackary Drucker & Rhys Ernst's video work *She Gone Rogue* (2012) on display in the South Ground, Danielle Vierling's *Tarot Maven* recreates the tarot card session by the legendary drag icon Flawless Sabrina. Sessions are free of charge and open to the public. Each session is 10 minutes per person. Visitors can bring one question on Love to the *Tarot Maven*.

Session dates/times:

Friday 11 September, 6.30 – 8.30pm
Thursday 17 September, 11.30am – 2.00pm
Thursday 24 September, 11.30am – 2.00pm

Tea Dance

Sunday 13 September, 3.30-5.30pm,
Great Hall, IMMA

Join us for an afternoon tea dance for the whole family with a live show band, dancers and much more. No booking required.

Music, screenings, poetry | *Hot on the Heels of Love*, curated by Pádraic E. Moore

Wednesday 9 December, 7.00 – 11.00pm,
Great Hall, Chapel and Johnston Suite,
IMMA

Hot on the Heels of Love is a once-off event conceived as a nocturnal counterpart to *What We Call Love*. The happening, curated by Pádraic E. Moore, is comprised of a collage of performance, spoken word, screenings, live music and love songs. One intention of the event is to explore one of the decisive missions of the Surrealist movement: the emancipation of various forms of repressed desire. *Hot on the Heels of Love* explores the ritualistic nature of music and its potency as a catalyst for interpersonal communion.

Booking is essential for all talks, unless otherwise stated. For a full programme of talks and free tickets visit www.imma.ie For further information contact Sophie Byrne, Assistant Curator, Talks and Lectures, IMMA.
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