



## THE ART OF SPORT

### Exhibiting Artists

#### VIDEO

**Josh Begley's** haunting short film *Concussion Protocol*, (2018), made in conjunction with *Field of Vision* and produced by Academy Award winning director/producer Laura Poitras, shows footage of every reported concussion (280) sustained during the 2017-2018 N.F.L. season. Shown in slow-motion reverse, the result is a harrowing essay that drains the sports footage of its usual testosterone filled power and focusses not only on the injuries themselves, but also on the way they are televised and exploited commercially. Begley's portrait of the violence on the field, and the loneliness of getting hurt will change the way you watch the Super Bowl.

Drawing on Gaelic games and the communities involved in them, *Abú*, beautifully celebrates in film the commitment, care and passion it takes to make a strong team. Created by choreographer **Fearghus Ó Conchúir** and filmmaker **Luca Truffarelli** with music by **Murli Bo**, the film was made with and for the Step Up Dance Project 2022.

The ground breaking work of American artist **Paul Pfeiffer** was the inspiration for seeking out art of this nature. In 2000, Pfeiffer began a trilogy of digitally-mastered video installations that captured the final rounds in Muhammad Ali's three most famous boxing matches. *Long Count (Rumble in the Jungle)*, 2001, is a video that captures the 1974 fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman in Zaire. The two fighters and referees have been digitally erased, yet leave a visual imprint of ghostly outlines set against the backdrop of the attending crowd. Pfeiffer shows that footage of an event can constitute proof of its authenticity even when the important subject matter is removed from it, and yet the momentousness of the occasion is lost without the main protagonists. Also by Pfeiffer is *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (31)*, 2017 from a photographic series in which Pfeiffer digitally erased identifiable details from photographs of professional basketball players. Pfeiffer uses the godlike appearance of athletes and iconographic images to imply a sense of awe and worship—but in such a way that the commentary is clear: that mass media can play a role in forming whom we see as icons.

#### PAINTING

Size and uncanny juxtapositions prevail in the paintings on view. From the subtle and simple composition of a white tennis shoe by **Charles Brady** (1926-1997), to a startling nine-foot square painting of a black and white football by **Marcus Harvey**.

**Nevin Lahart** has incorporated elements of sport in much of his work in many mediums. Humour is at the core of what he produces and *Shergar*, the infamous kidnapped champion stallion, makes an appearance by way of one of Lahart's paintings on view.

**Colin Martin's** current practice explores boundaries between the real and virtual world. Martin uses the genre conventions of painting such as portraiture, the still life and history painting to probe the digital age. The portrait as a format is used to explore a prosthetic relationship with technology and

equipment and the works for *The Art Of Sport* explore the use of protective sportswear in Racing and Rugby .

**Colm Mac Athlaoich's** large-scale works are based on photographs sourced from sport photography, specifically images that capture the finishing stages of races. *Sprinting man left to right* and *Sprinting woman right to left* take a new look at picture production. The first is based on a photo finish image from his archive, the second was produced by AI, with word prompts based on the opposite description of the first image. In this way they work as mirror images, the analogue photo giving birth to an artificial image. Mac Athlaoich's exploration of the processes of image production open up new approaches in painting, setting new parameters and approaches to representation.

Several paintings from *The Boxing Diaries* by **Sarah Walker** portray the drama inside the ring and document the travails of the artists's two sons as they trained and competed as young amateur boxers.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

**Paul Carroll** captures the action of Gaelic club games through a journey through the 32 counties. Included is an image of a match played out on an almost alien island landscape—*Inishturk Island 0-09 v 0-08 Clare Island*.

**Vincent Cianni's** *Shooting Hoops at Jaimie's, Metropolitan Avenue, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, 1997* is a very different example: a photographer who uses photography to investigate specific subcultures and to offer up powerful images to catalyse social change.

**Dorothy Cross's** photograph *Rugby Ball, 2005*, is the transgressive outcome of an encounter between a rugby ball and a cow hide and udder. It is part of series of works inspired by a domestic sieve fashioned from a cow's udders the artist encountered in a museum in Norway in the 1980s. Worthywhile mentioning that Cross was also a five-time national swimming champion in her youth.

Renowned Dutch artist **Rineke Dijkstra's** work has often captured transitional moments within stages of identity formation from childhood through adolescence and has been marked by an intimacy and empathy with her subjects. In the series, *The Gymschool, St. Petersburg, 2014*, Dijkstra reveals how physical gestures and forms allow us to decipher the emotional composition of young gymnasts in training at a school in St Petersburg.

In 2010, **Jona Frank**, a photographer living in Santa Monica, CA, began to make portraits at an amateur boxing club just outside Liverpool. Included in the series and book *The Modern Kids*, Frank also captured young boxers from a boxing club in Crumlin, Dublin. "Both heroic and violent, a boxing match is a story without words entered into by two opponents, physically and psychologically stripped down, and determined to express their power. The pain is temporary, the glory is forever."

Throughout 2000-2003, the Danish artist **Nicolai Howalt** monitored young Danish boys boxing their first match. Through double portraits before and after the match, Howalt conveys boyhood, puberty and the loss of innocence. Within the scope of boxing, Howalt examines the personal fight between fear and courage, dream and reality, boy and man. In the boxing ring, the boys are left to themselves, being on their own for the first time. Photographing them before and after their first match becomes an exploration of the tantalising moments in a young man's life, and thus an exploration of adolescence and *rites de passage*.

**Jeannette Lowe's** photograph *Leap of Faith* features boys from the Pearse Street area of Dublin diving into the water at Grand Canal Quay, a basin that inner city children have used for swimming

for years. “You might see a young boy leaving the flats in his wetsuit and walking up Pearse Street oblivious to everyone, then hop on the iron bridge and jump into the basin.”

A work by **Kenneth O’Halloran** from his series *The Handball Alley* features alongside **Amelia Stein’s** portraits of two members of the Defence Forces photographed in the handball alley of the James Stephens Barracks in Kilkenny with camogie and kayak gear in hand respectively.

*Amran from the series Champions Avenue*, 2019 was taken as part of a residency **Mandy O’Neill** undertook at the Larkin Community College, a DEIS co-educational secondary school in the heart of Dublin City.

**Tony O’Shea**, a master of contemporary Irish photography, is represented by *Painted pony, Smithfield, Dublin 1989*. His images are unified by his subjects’ dignity and lack of self-consciousness. As a subjective documentary photographer he is alive to the possibilities of the moment as it unfolds and its capacity to reveal a deeper truth about how people live.

**Martin Parr’s** unique lens chronicles Irish life over the decades and is represented here with a diversity of images from horse racing on the beach at the *Glenbeigh Races, County Kerry, 1983* to the unusual sight of kayak training in *The University of Limerick, Olympic-size swimming pool, 2014*.

**Luis Alberto Rodriguez** uses the physicality of hurling as the backbone of a series to highlight relationships of trust and intimacy.

## PRINT

Bold and colourful prints of a *Bowling ball, Golf ball and Baseball*, 2019, from a series of twelve screenprints, are brought into our field of vision by **Michael Craig-Martin**. A hugely influential figure in the art world, Craig-Martin was born in Dublin, grew up in the United States, and has lived in Britain since 1966.

*The Táin. Horse man*, 1969 by **Louis le Brocqy** (1916-2012), from his celebrated series of lithographic brush drawings, is on loan from the Collection of the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

**Julien Opie’s** graphic figurative portraits generate a pared-back but astute perspective on contemporary life as in this screenprint *Running women.*, 2016. The artist’s distinctive, thickly outlined silhouettes take inspiration from classical portraiture, Japanese woodblock prints, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and traffic signs.

## SCULPTURE

Action is arrested in the life-size sculpture *ALL HAIL*, 2019, by **Andy Fitz**. A featureless figure is bent over, a football balanced on its back, almost performing a trick. Tribalism and representation are integral to football (whether national, club or community); this sculpture seems to heighten the impersonal aspects of such representation.

## NEEDLEPOINT

From the monumental to the very particular. Between 1982 and 1989, Irish artist **Elinor Wiltshire** (1918-2017) created over 50 needlepoint pieces based on life in London where she lived for 40 years. She donated 12 of these pieces to IMMA in 2013. *Swimmers, Porchester Pool*, 1988 and

*Children showering after Swim in Porchester Pool*, 1989 are sublimely simple and humorous works that capture the swimming life.

## INSTALLATION

Using a slanted concrete wall in the gallery's plaza grounds, **Vanessa Daws**, a visual artist and long-distance swimmer, will reproduce an oversized drawing of herself gallantly swimming towards the gallery entrance.

