

Mattress Factory Announces “so it is” Exhibition Featuring Artists from Northern Ireland

PITTSBURGH, PA (February 8, 2017) – Seven artists have been chosen to present work in *so it is*, an exhibition opening at the Mattress Factory on April 7, 2017. John Carson, an accomplished performance artist, educator and researcher, has curated the exhibition.

Artists participating in *so it is* include Ursula Burke, Willie Doherty, Rita Duffy, John Kindness, Locky Morris, Philip Napier, and Paul Seawright.

John Carson is a native of Belfast who lived and worked in Northern Ireland through the seventies. He has invited artists whose early work responded to the “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland.

“I selected these artists because I have admired for a long time, the strength, depth and integrity of their work,” John Carson said. “They have all found ways of making powerful and uncompromising artistic statements in challenging circumstances.”

An Opening Reception will be held Friday, April 7 from 6-8pm at the museum's gallery at 1414 Monterey Street. Admission for the event is free for all ages.

Generous support for *so it is* is provided by ARAD, an Anonymous Donor, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Benter Foundation, the British Council, Culture Ireland, Foster Charitable Trust, The Heinz Endowments, National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and the Roy A. Hunt Foundation. With special thanks to the Mattress Factory Board of Directors and museum members. Additional thanks to Jennifer Keating, the School of Art and the Center for Arts in Society.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Ursula Burke works in a variety of media including sculpture, photography, porcelain and embroidery, to create work that explores issues of representation and identity within contemporary Ireland. Burke cleverly uses delicate craft skills to depict and satirize disturbing societal tensions, partisan attitudes and political posturing. Her recent work makes subtle commentary on male power and identity politics beyond an Irish context.

Willie Doherty’s career in photography, audio-visual installation, and film has been primarily focused on how his native city of Derry and its environs have been distinctly defined, demarcated and controlled according to the political and sectarian divisions in Northern Ireland. With imagery that is haunting and elegiac, he conveys a sense of foreboding in the Northern Irish psyche, as formed by the history and experience of



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British colonialism and resultant sectarian strife.

Rita Duffy is a prolific and multi-faceted artist, whose work has uncompromisingly tackled themes and images of Irish identity, history and politics. Her work has utilized her impressive range of abilities in painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, and public art. With a robust humor and disrespectful fluency in her use of symbols of Irish culture and politics, Duffy's work has also strongly championed the place of women in Irish society and examined their role in Irish history.

John Kindness invents new ways of using traditional media, such as ceramics, mosaic, and encaustic, to create satirical visual commentaries on political, societal and cultural mores. As well as being a consummate craftsman, with a sensitivity and respect for materials, he is a storyteller, with a strong sense of humor and narrative running through much of his work. He manages to cleverly combine historical references with allusions to popular culture.

Locky Morris is a Derry-based artist who creates work in a variety of media, and touches on a broad range of subjects, from the highly personal to the overtly political. He uses materials, and found objects in surprising and often symbolic ways to make bold and provocative statements, as well as quiet and reflective gestures. In addition to working in a gallery context, he has also completed public commissions, and has worked as a performing and recording musician.

Philip Napier is a sculptor and mixed-media installation artist. His work has used visual and aural languages to explore the relationship between the colonized and colonizer in Northern Ireland. With a strong sense of history, he combines intellectual, poetic, visceral and emotional elements in sculpturally inventive ways. He has developed works within gallery contexts and through time-based and permanently situated public projects. Napier is a respected educator, and currently Head of Fine Art at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin.

Paul Seawright uses photography to explore the edges of civilized societal norms. His works reveal bleak and/or uncanny realities. From initial works depicting sites of sectarian killings in Northern Ireland, he has responded to international commissions on aspects of life in Afghanistan, Australia, The Netherlands, Italy and the USA. His photographs use atmospheric to conjure up a strong sense of unease about what is absent, maybe more so than what is present. He is Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Ulster in Belfast.



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ABOUT THE CURATOR

John Carson served as the Head of the School of Art at Carnegie Mellon University from 2006 to 2016. He joined Carnegie Mellon from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London, where he was a Principal Lecturer in Fine Art and Course Director for the Bachelor of Fine Arts program. He directed all stages of full-time and part-time curriculum development, organized the guest lecture program and a professional practice course component, and coordinated placements, external projects and international exchange.

ABOUT THE MATTRESS FACTORY

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The **Mattress Factory** is a museum of contemporary art that presents “art you can get in to” – room-sized environments, created by in-residence artists. Located in the historic Mexican War Streets neighborhood of Pittsburgh’s North Side since 1977, the Mattress Factory is hailed as the best facility for installation art in the United States.

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The Mattress Factory is located at 500 Sampsonia Way, Pittsburgh PA 15212. Free parking is located at 505 Jacksonia Street. Museum hours are: Tuesday - Saturday from 10am - 5pm, Sunday from 1 - 5pm. Closed Monday. General admission: \$20. Full-time students with a valid ID and visitors ages 62+: \$15. Children 6 and under and Mattress Factory members: FREE. Students with a valid ID from Carnegie Mellon University, Point Park University and University of Pittsburgh: FREE. 15212, 15214 + 15233 Zip Code Residents: Half price admission, ID must be provided. For general information, please call 412.231.3169 or visit mattress.org.