

Dynamic Power I

Curated by Suzanne Egeran

The Horse, Dublin

16 September to 16 October 2021

Opening Reception: Wednesday, 15 September 5–8pm

The **HORSE**

“Dynamic Power,” curated by Suzanne Egeran, is the inaugural exhibition at The Horse, a new project space in central Dublin. The show features new drawings and a performance by Katie Holten, a film by experimental filmmaker Cynthia Madansky, and a hybrid sculpture by Matthew Wilkinson. Themes of empowerment and transformation run through this exhibition. As does the notion that by harnessing collective energy we might create change.

What happens when you give power to the people? A simple question with complex implications. Matthew Wilkinson’s installation *Boat (FPPS prototype)* is part sculpture, part hydroelectric generator. It is intended to be installed on a riverbank so that the rush of water generates electricity, which the artist will offer gratis. Participants will veer off the grid, an increasingly rare space in our “after time” defined by virtual reality and all things digital.

Conceived of as a survivalist tool that has the potential to support the grid, Wilkinson’s hybrid sculpture combines fantasy with real-world potential. He uses engineering as a method of expression, effectively constructing his own ready-made. Much like Stanley Meyer, inventor of the water-fueled car, here Wilkinson flirts with industry and established power structures.

Four drawings map out the potential of the project. They illustrate how this object will produce free energy, a benign ponzi scheme in which power is sold to the grid until the generator pays for itself and then another is built. Each drawing represents a different time structure.

Cynthia Madansky’s *Flowers for LH* engages with the last play written by Lorraine Hansberry entitled *What Use Are Flowers?* Part of Madansky’s ongoing Radical Feminist Film Series, a series of short 16mm films that engage with writings by international radical feminists, *Flowers for LH* interweaves footage shot in New Mexico with dance performance and excerpts from the play, a post-apocalyptic fantasy in which Hansberry reflects on the role of beauty in our world.

It’s unclear what has happened to civilization, but the clear reference—given the time, and Hansberry’s global political concerns—is to the bomb. Madansky builds on this with footage of New Mexico’s nuclear test sites, waste sites and uranium mines, located on or nearby ancestral land belonging to native American tribes. Like the hermit in Hansberry’s play who struggles to explain to a confused child what use flowers have, we maintain hope, searching for meaning in this deadly fallout.

Katie Holten, who represented Ireland in the 50th Venice Biennial, presents three new large-scale hanging drawings on fabric from her *Love Letters* series in which the artist writes letters and words in ink and then presses them, like flower petals. The intricate drawings look like hieroglyphics, but on close examination the mysterious messages can be deciphered. The drawings depict the words of Countess Markievicz, Mary Robinson, and Flossie Donnelly.* Each of these dynamic women have helped shape Ireland with words and actions inspiring collective energy and direct action that have resulted in real change.

Also included in the exhibition is an installation of Love Letters that have been transferred to print format and installed in groupings of 6. The text is taken from an article that the artist wrote about the ecological and social importance of maintaining the Ardee Bog. The installation is titled *NFT (No Fucking Time: Ireland Declared A Climate Emergency. So Why Are We Building A Motorway Through A Bog?)*, a reference to NFTs, the new digital medium that is currently causing a stir in the art world.*

Alongside the drawings, Holten shares a petition to Save Ardee Bog in County Louth. Bogs are Ireland’s “rainforest,” storing 75% of the soil’s organic carbon and representing the largest store of carbon in the Irish landscape. Together with her neighbours in Ardee, Holten has created a Community Action Group to protect and preserve Ardee Bog. The petition with over 10,500 signatures is displayed in a stack alongside a critical text written by the artist.

From 12-2pm GMT on Wednesday, September 15, Holten and Friends of Ardee Bog will deliver the petition to the Dáil. Please join us! We will meet outside the Dáil at noon. More information is available at www.ardeebog.org and @ardeebog on Instagram.

“Dynamic Power I” is hosted by The Horse in Dublin and is part of an ongoing series of art projects intended to explore the boundaries of contemporary art and provide a conduit between Dublin and an intercontinental art community. The exhibition is open from Thursday to Saturday 12 to 7pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact Suzanne Egeran on info@egeran.com or +44 7971 938 820.

* Countess Markievicz was an Irish politician, revolutionary, nationalist, suffragist, socialist, and the first woman elected to Parliament, and the First Dáil, becoming the first female cabinet minister in Europe. She took part in the Easter Rising in 1916, when Irish republicans attempted to end British rule and establish an Irish Republic. She was sentenced to death but this was reduced on the grounds of her sex.

Mary Robinson was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Barack Obama. Obama said in his speech: "Mary Robinson learned early on what it takes to make sure all voices are heard. As a crusader for women and those without a voice in Ireland, Mary Robinson was the first woman elected President of Ireland, before being appointed U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. Today, as an advocate for the hungry and the hunted, the forgotten and the ignored, Mary Robinson has not only shone a light on human suffering, but illuminated a better future for our world."

Flossie Donnelly is currently advocating to get Environmental Studies included in the School Curriculum.

** A follow-up project featuring NFTs and curated by Egeran, is planned for November 2021 and will further explore this medium and its implications.*