



For immediate release:
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ORMSTON HOUSE ANNOUNCES *MURDER MACHINE* EXHIBITION

Ormston House, in partnership with EVA International and Making Histories Visible, is pleased to present *Murder Machine* a project curated by Christine Eyene in collaboration with Ormston House, featuring Ceara Conway, George Hallett, Linda O’Keeffe, The Otolith Group and Rusangano Family.

*Education should foster; this education is meant to repress.
Education should inspire; this education is meant to tame.
Education should harden; this education is meant to enervate.*
Pádraig H. Pearse (1916)

Murder Machine revisits thoughts and writings by Irish linguist and activist Pádraig Pearse (1879-1916), one of the leading figures of the Easter Rising, who voiced criticism against the English educational system imposed on Ireland. In his eponymous pamphlet *The Murder Machine* (January 1916), compiling articles and notes dated between 1912 and 1914, Pearse spoke of a system devised “for the debasement of Ireland”. He described it as a system doing “violence to the elementary human rights of Irish children” and compared it to slave education.

His criticism echoed many of the concerns expressed by leading African intellectuals and anti-colonial activists who challenged the effects of colonisation on African cultures. In South Africa for instance, the usage of European languages in the formation of African modernity quickly became a matter of debate. This was, for instance, the case of the New African Movement (1860s-1960s) that championed the cause of African languages. The iconic Heinemann African Writers Series launched with Chinua Achebe’s seminal novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) was not spared such questioning about vernacular languages. In a similar vein, of the Négritude movement that emerged in 1930s Paris, South African writer, activist and educationist Ezekiel Mphahlele once asked: “is African writing in French not French literature?”

Murder Machine brings together **Ceara Conway** (Ireland), **George Hallett** (South Africa), **Linda O’Keeffe** (Ireland/UK), **The Otolith Group** (UK) and **Rusangano Family**: God Knows, MuRli and mynameisjOhn (Zimbabwe/Togo/Ireland) for an interactive display and a series of monthly public interventions around language, text and literature across histories, geographies and political contexts, through art pieces, performances and archival material previously unseen in Ireland.

These include **The Otolith Group’s** *One out of Many Afrophilias* (2014), an installation that summons the energies of the controversial literary magazine *Transition*, founded in 1961 in Kampala by Rajat Neogy. The piece conjures *Transition’s* influential Afropolitanism into a fictional environment that

combines interior décor with display system and reading room. **George Hallett's** original 1970s and 80s photographic compositions for Heinemann's African Writers Series and his portraits of African writers are presented alongside rare editions of the series, and books from the curator's collection documenting the 1976 Soweto Uprising.

Also programmed in the project: a live performance by Ormston House artist in residence **Ceara Conway** who will give a dramatic reinterpretation of *Roisín Dubh (Dark Rosaleen)*, the symbolic poem marking the end of Gaelic Ireland; a new piece produced by Limerick-based **DJ Deviant (16 April)**. **Linda O'Keeffe** will premiere a newly created sound piece responding to 19th and 20th century Irish Independence movements through two key texts: The Irish Declaration of Independence and Pádraig Pearse's *The Murder Machine (12 May)*. Finally, **Rusangano Family** will host an informal, interactive workshop looking at the creative processes involved in writing, recording and producing their new album *Let the Dead Bury the Dead (2 June)*.

Murder Machine is presented at Ormston House in partnership with EVA International and Making Histories Visible as part the Federation of arts organisations and institutions responding to the curatorial concept of Ireland's Biennial 2016: *Still (the) Barbarians*.

Murder Machine

16 April - 17 July 2016

Press preview: Thursday 14 April

Opening: Saturday 16 April, 12 - 2pm, with a curator's tour by Christine Eyene and *DUBH*, a live performance by Ceara Conway produced by DJ Deviant.

Ormston House

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Opening hours:

Wed - Sat | 12 - 6pm

For press information and images, please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the artists

Ceara Conway (b. 1977, Connemara) is a multidisciplinary Irish artist using methodologies from song, performance and traditional arts. Her artworks provide space for the revision and reinterpretation of familiar rituals, including contemporary, religious, folk and traditional practices. She is a recipient of multiple awards and bursaries from the Arts Council of Ireland, Ealain na Gaeltachta, Galway City, and County Councils. She has completed a number of commissions and public art works, including *Thin Places* (2014) King's College, London; *Vicissitudes* (2013), Derry City of Culture; *Making Visible* (2014) Irish Museum of Modern Art. She has undertaken residencies with institutes such as Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum, Isle of North Uist, the OTIS College of Art, Los Angeles, USA, as well as numerous residencies in Ireland.

Conway holds a BA in Glass and Architectural Glass from the Edinburgh College of Art, a Post-Graduate Diploma in Community Arts Education from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin and has studied Glass and Photography at Alfred University, New York State, USA.

George Hallett (b. 1942, Cape Town) has worked in Europe for three decades photographing the positive aspects of people lives, South African exile, teaching photography, working for *The Times Educational Supplement* in London, and designing book covers for Heinemann's African Writers Series. Throughout the seventies he exhibited in England, Sweden, Norway, The Netherlands and Germany. The next decade took him to the USA, where he was Artist-in-Residence at the University of Illinois in 1983. In 1994, he was invited to photograph the first Democratic Elections in South Africa. His photographs of Mandela on the election trail won a World Press Photo Award in 1995 in the People in the News category. He was subsequently appointed official photographer for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1997. His South African work includes books about transformation, women in photography, Jazz, youth culture, African writers portraits and District Six. In February 2016, George Hallett was honoured with the medallion of Order of Arts and Literature by the French Ministry of Culture.

Linda O'Keeffe (b. 1975, Dublin) is a sound artist based in Lancaster, England. She is a tenured lecturer at the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts, Lancaster University. She lectures in sound studies and is the MA convenor of Art by Research program. She is the founder of the Women in Sound Women on Sound organisation, president of the Irish Sound Science and Technology Association, and editor for the *Interference* journal.

O'Keeffe has exhibited in China the USA, Canada and Europe. Recent work includes a commissioned solo exhibition for the Leitrim Sculpture Centre in 2014, *Spaces of Sound and Radio Spaces*, and the touring of a selection of sonic works from this exhibition, in the UK, for the Full of Noises Festival 2015.

Her work is predominantly sound based with a focus on installation and performance as well as soundscape studies. In 2014, she was a recipient of the Irish Research Council's New Foundations Award for Research and worked with older adults in the design of sound art using gesture-based audio technologies.

The Otolith Group (Anjalika Sagar, b. 1968, London; Kodwo Eshun, b. 1966, London) explores the legacies and potentials of speculative futures and science-fictions. Recent solo exhibitions include *In the Year of the Quiet Sun* at Kunsthall Bergen, Casco, Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht and Delfina Foundation, London, and *Novaya Zemlya*, Museu de Serralves, Porto.

Recent group exhibitions include *Universes in Universes*, Gwangju Biennale 2016, South Korea; *Not New Now*, Marrakech Biennale 6; *GLOBALE: Infosphere*, ZKM Karlsruhe; *Rencontres de Bamako*, 10th African Biennale of Photography, Bamako; *The Freedom Principle, Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

In 2010, The Otolith Group was nominated for the Turner Prize.

Rusangano Family is a musical trio based in Limerick, producing social-engaged music that mixes a global variety of cultures and traditions. Formed in early 2015, the group (MCs MuRli and God Knows, and producer/DJ mynameisjOhn) has been collaborating for a number of years on individual projects, including MuRli's 2015 released EP *Surface Tension* and God Knows & mynameisjOhn's *Rusangano/Family* album in 2014.

Previous releases by the group have attracted high praise from many corners, including *NPR*, *OkayAfrica*, *The Irish Times* and *Nialler 9*, along with support slots to Young Fathers, Run The Jewels, Baddadnotgood and Snoop Dogg, and invitations to play Eurosonic and SXSW.

After building up a reputation for high-energy, audience-engaging shows on the national and international live circuit, the group began work on their debut album in the summer of 2015.

About the curator

Christine Eyene is an art historian, critic and curator. She is Guild Research Fellow in Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire where she collaborates to Making Histories Visible, an interdisciplinary visual art research project led by Professor Lubaina Himid MBE. She is also a doctoral student at Birkbeck, University of London, with Professor Annie E. Coombes and is writing on the work of South African photographer George Hallett in relation to word, text, and African literature. Her other areas of interest include gendered art discourses, sound art, socially engaged urban cultures, music and design. As an art writer, she has contributed articles and essays to art publications, exhibition catalogues and books. She is also editor of the art website [eye.on.art: art lab / art news](http://eye.on.art:artlab/artnews), eyonart.org.

Her past exhibitions include:

Curators Series #8: All Of Us Have A Sense Of Rhythm, David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2015); *Embodied Spaces*, Framer Framed, Amsterdam (2015); *Residual: Traces of the Black Body*, New Art Exchange, Nottingham, as part of FORMAT International Photography Festival (2015); *Basket Case II* (co-curated with Raphael Chikukwa), National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare (2014); *La Parole aux Femmes*, Fondation Blachère, Apt (2014); *WHERE WE'RE AT! Other voices on gender*, Bozar, Brussels (2014).

About Ormston House

Ormston House is a cultural resource centre in the heart of Limerick City. The centre opened in 2011 to address a gap in the ecology of project spaces in the city – to support emergent practices and provide the opportunity to develop challenging and experimental work. Through a programme of exhibitions, events and residencies, it offers a physical and intellectual space in which to promote creative citizenship and to encourage active participation in the arts. The Culture Team strives to grow audiences for contemporary art and to build an international network for cultural exchange and engagement. Ormston House is run on a voluntary basis by students and artists based in Limerick.

About Making Histories Visible

Making Histories Visible is an interdisciplinary visual art research project based in the Centre for Contemporary Art (School of Art, Design and Fashion) at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). Initiated in 2001 by Professor Lubaina Himid MBE, Making Histories Visible excavates creative histories and works with major museums to connect communities with their local and international heritage.