

The Douglas Hyde Gallery of Contemporary Art

PRESS RELEASE

Leslie Hewitt The Artist's Eye *Reading Room*

Gallery 2

Friday 4 March – Sunday 29 May 2022

Acknowledging the crucial role artists play in influencing and shaping other artistic practices, 'The Artist's Eye' series asks those exhibiting in Gallery 1 to invite an artist of influence to present work in Gallery 2. In this instalment, Eric N. Mack has invited artist Leslie Hewitt.

They first met at The Studio Museum in Harlem's open studios in 2008. Mack eventually worked with Hewitt in 2009 at The Cooper Union School of Art, New York, where she taught for one semester as a visiting artist. Eric has referred to their encounters as "fated" and her art practice as contributing to his approach to artmaking. They both held artist in residence positions at the Studio Museum in Harlem, Hewitt in 2007-2008 and Mack in 2014-2015, indicating its centralising role for artists.

Within her own art practice, Hewitt is known for work that traverses between photography and sculpture. Engaging both through the mechanisms behind the construction of meaning and memory, she works serially, exploring relational systems, language patterns; and practices of achieving, collective knowing and unknowing, through various forms of ephemera and collage which are developed and transformed into the artist's own visual positioning. For her first exhibition in Ireland, *Reading Room*, Hewitt will present two modes of working in her practice: *Rough Cuts* (2022) and *Reading Room: Forty-two* (2019).

Hewitt began working on *Rough Cuts*, a suite of collages, in late March of 2020. Working with found paper, the collages are evocative, minimalist works that are both constructive and destructive. They are made using a monotype printmaking process to create geometric composition alongside cuts into the paper. Both techniques actively edit the classification logics found on the original page, opening each page to a larger system of breaks and edits.

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Reading Room: Forty-two is a text-based html programmed moving-image work, exploring the intersection of concrete poetry and what Arjun Appadurai would call a "technoscape." This "technoscape" appears as a continuous scroll of words that Hewitt collected while researching the National Memorial African Bookstore. The title references the forty-two years that Lewis Michaux operated the National Memorial African Bookstore, from 1932 to 1974, in Harlem, New York. The words themselves come from books visible in archival photos of the shop, as well as Leslie's own thoughts while conducting research. She worked with programmers to build a machine, in PL/I 60's coding language, that would arrange and rearrange words in an open grid with interludes of visual code.

About the Artist

Leslie Hewitt's approach to photography and sculpture reimagines the art historical still life genre from a post-minimalist perspective. Her geometric compositions, which she frames and crystallizes through the disciplines of photography and film theory, respectively, are spare assemblages of ordinary effects and materials, suggesting the porosity between intimate and socio-political histories. Her distinct play on syncopation and juxtaposition make her work discursive and beautifully layered. Hewitt further works with site-specific installation, autonomous sculptures, drawings and the moving image as modalities to contend equally with shifting notions of space and time. Hewitt has held residencies at the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Project Row Houses, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, Konstpedemin in Göteborg, Sweden and the American Academy in Berlin, Germany amongst others.

About the Douglas Hyde Gallery of Contemporary Art

The Douglas Hyde is a space to see and learn about contemporary art. We place artists at the centre of what we do. We support artists who push the boundaries of form and convention, and we aim to provoke new ideas. Co-founded by the Arts Council and Trinity College Dublin in 1978, The Douglas Hyde produces and commissions contemporary art, supporting international and Irish artists to make ambitious new work and present pivotal solo exhibitions by significant artists of the present and the future. Recent exhibitions include the first solo exhibitions in Ireland by Abbas Akhavan, Gabriel Kuri and Valérie Blass alongside solo exhibitions by Irish artists Yuri Pattison and Garrett Phelan.

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