

The Douglas Hyde Gallery of Contemporary Art

PRESS RELEASE

Eric N. Mack *Scampolo!*

Gallery 1

Friday 4 March – Sunday 29 May 2022

The Douglas Hyde is delighted to present Eric N. Mack's first solo exhibition in Ireland titled *Scampolo!* or remnant in Italian. Working onsite over the past few weeks, Mack has created an expansive new site-specific installation that tethers to the gallery's architecture and presents a series of movements through abstraction, colour and image for viewers.

Pushing the boundaries of painting and object, of art and fashion, Eric N. Mack uses fabric, worn clothes, dye, blankets, paint, bleach, magazine cut-outs and photographs to create three-dimensional tactile assemblages in which colour, form, texture and line become both intimate and culturally significant.

Mack refers to himself as a painter but his work pushes far beyond any singular frame. At the centre of the work are linens, cottons, polyester, and lace, each with its own production process and cultural markers. Hue and tonality are introduced by layers of specific colours taken from seasonal high end fashion as well as discount-store fabrics. Fashion offers an access point; a single piece is an outfit, an installation is a closet, and a collage is the descendant of a mood board. Textiles are a primary medium and environments its support.

Mack builds artworks that bring forward personal associations and recollections, from fabric colours to textures as vehicles of light, from opacity to translucency, and as vehicles of form through grids, gestures, weaves, drips, spreads. The drip of coffee on a shirt connecting to an expanded history of painting. Mack also includes what he calls "everyday fragments," images sourced from newspapers, magazines, ephemera from being in the world alongside personal drawings or lists. In addition, Mack incorporates objects that are often unseen, such as moving blankets, or objects which catch our eye, handmade tailored shirts. His constructions stretch across any given space, supported with unconventional structures from umbrellas to commanding flagpoles, and tethered to gallery walls.

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As he states "there are a lot of things in our everyday that are structured to not be noticeable that I think are things that speak about life."¹ It is here that the title comes to the fore, *Scampolo!*, the Italian word for remnant, which brings forth what is there and what is not, and what is leftover enduring.

Human scale is integral to the work's relationship to space. In Gallery 1 *Scampolo!* (2022) stretches from handrails to gallery walls calling the viewer into the physical space. Locally sourced pieces of linen, produced by one of the last remaining linen makers in Ireland (Emblem Weavers), are sewed together with polyesters and fabrics from elsewhere, creating a connection between the local and the universal. It is here that the Italian word for factory, *fabric*, comes to mind and textile's longstanding relationships with production, and with the hand and body. Photographs taken from fashion catwalks, from a variety of magazines including *The Face*, and some produced through Mack's ongoing collaboration with stylist Haley Wollens and designer Kiko Kostadinov, are enlarged and dispersed across the gallery connecting us with other spaces. Mack explores "how the art object, at its most sacred, should reflect altered systems of value, especially in observation of the world's brutalities"² and "imagines the case for the painting object to leave its autonomous support structures to need the body."³

Mack pushes the boundaries of painting and sculpture, of art and fashion, collapsing hierarchies and questioning value, inviting the viewer to physically move through forms of abstraction, through connection and personal ties, and gestures to new possibilities of exchange between artwork and environment, body and space.

¹ Long, Monique. 2022. Eric N. Mack reconsiders the dimensions of visual art. " *Document Journal online*, 28 January 2022. <https://www.documentjournal.com/2022/01/eric-n-mack-reconsiders-the-dimensions-of-visual-art/>

² "Altered Systems of Value: Eric N. Mack: Eric N. Mack in conversation with Viola Angiolini: *Mousse Magazine* No. 70, February 2020. <https://www.moussemagazine.it/magazine/eric-n-mack-viola-angiolini-2020/>

³ Ibid.

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About the Artist

Eric N. Mack (b. 1987, Columbia, MD) received his BFA from The Cooper Union, New York, NY and his MFA from Yale University, New Haven, CT. His work has been shown extensively internationally and has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions including NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale, FL (2021); Scrap Metal Gallery, Toronto, Canada (2019); The Power Station, Dallas, TX (2019); Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY (2019); Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK (2018); BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2017); Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY (2017). Recent major group exhibitions include Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2019); Desert X, Coachella Valley, CA (2019); and Serpentine Gallery, London, UK (2019). Mack has recently completed a residency at the American Academy in Rome, having been awarded the Philip Guston Rome Prize in 2021. He was the recipient of the inaugural BALTIC Artists' Award (2017) and completed artist residencies at the Rauschenberg Residency, Captiva Island, FL and Delfina Foundation, London, UK. He has collaborated with designers Kiko Constantinov and Grace Wales Bonner along with stylist Hayley Woolens and lives and works in New York.

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. Located on the busy thoroughfare of the Nassau Street Gate of Trinity College, The Douglas Hyde holds a distinct position as a meeting point between the city of Dublin and the leading research university in Ireland.

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