

CCA DERRY~ LONDONDERRY

THE LANDIS MUSEUM

26 MAY - 28 JULY, 2018

**ALEX IMPEY, ALEXANDRA SUKHAREVA, BIANCA BALDI, DOROTHY HUNTER, HELENA HAMILTON,
IRINA GHEORGHE, KAPWANI KIWANGA, KATRINA SHEENA SMYTH, NINA LIEBENBERG
PHILLIP MCCRILLY, SARAH PIERCE**

For over twenty years, Mark Landis spent his days making copies of pictures he found in auction house journals. When he was happy with the results he would get in touch with various museums, primarily in the southern states of the USA, to arrange a meeting. On his arrival, he adopted an alter-ego - most commonly a Jesuit Priest called Father Scott - and attempted to donate his work to the museum's collection, claiming that the object was part of his mother's estate. It is not clear how often his gifts were accepted, and - on the occasions they were - how long each museum took to recognise the object as inauthentic. In 2010, following a failed attempt to gift a painting to Hillard University Art Museum in Lafayette, a number of articles were published in national newspapers that exposed Landis' activities. Since the pictures he was gifting were copies, and since he pretended they were authored by well-known artists, it seemed like a straightforward case of forgery, and this was the story that was spun.

The objects were often described as being 'masterful' or 'brilliant,' but it should be immediately clear to any reasonably experienced curator or registrar that there are problems with the works' claims to authenticity, no matter what supporting evidence Landis supplied. They are generally made with the 'wrong' materials, such as acrylic paint or marker pen, and with embellishments that 'compensate' for seemingly poor reproductions in catalogues, such as making a dark sky bluer. As a result, when one sees Landis' objects for the first time, especially in full knowledge of the dominant narrative surrounding him, it is not uncommon to feel a sense of disappointment that they aren't 'better.'

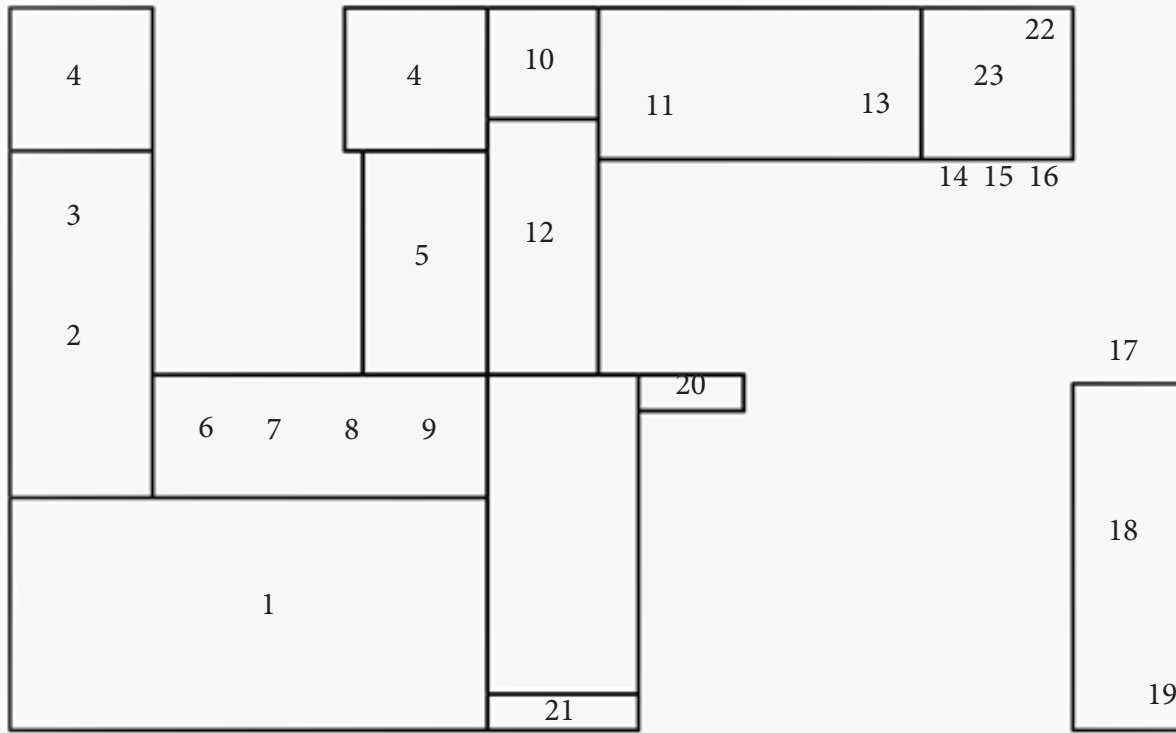
This starting point for this exhibition is a reinterpretation of Landis' objects. Rather than viewing them as forgeries, they should instead be seen as props that enabled Landis to generate a kind of short-lived social hit, which developed into a full-blown addiction. He wanted to be a philanthropist, but had neither the financial nor social means, so he made his objects in order to facilitate an encounter that enabled him to play at philanthropy. When Landis sat in a curator's office, he could not, for obvious reasons, claim any authorship of the object itself, nor of the mechanisms that brought it into his possession. If the object is a hopeless forgery, then that's the fault of either his mother or the auction house that sold it to her, rather than his. So in that sense, it didn't matter whether the curator believed the work was genuine or not, as long as the meeting was enacted cordially and professionally; and it also didn't matter whether the object was accepted, directly declined, or even disposed of after he left. It was at the point of the encounter, which took place at the institutional border, and in which the structures of patronage exploded into view, that the work was truly operational.

The Landis Museum is a site that points to other such moments, which brings works by multiple artists together in the spirit of the encounter. The works contained within it are not about Mark Landis, nor any other wider social, political or aesthetic concerns connected to him. Rather, they exist in their own social, political and aesthetic realms, and are here as a result of their relationship to the encounter in its widest possible sense. They have been arranged on and around a single display object, bringing them into physical and aesthetic contact with each other.

The local annex to the museum consists of a series of one-day residencies that respond to the travelling exhibition. The residencies are choreographed encounters between the existing works and four Northern Irish artists. The artists in residence are invited to use the gallery as their studio, and to stage a 'public moment' that may be, for instance, a lecture, performance, meal, or workshop.

One-day residency dates:

9th June	Helena Hamilton
16th June	Dorothy Hunter
7th July	Phillip McCrilly
21st July	Katrina Sheena Smyth



Gallery 2

1. Sarah Pierce

Lost Illusions / Illusions Perdues, 2014 / 2018
Two-screen installation (17 mins), photographic documentation, dismantled plinths, glass.

2. Alexandra Sukhareva

Trap, 2015
Fibreglass

3. Alex Impey

Flower, 2018
Everted car ducts, wire, sleeve

4. Irina Gheorghe

Foreign Language for Beginners, 2015 - 2018
Performance, notebooks, screen print, photographic documentation, tape

5. Bianca Baldi

Insufflate, 2016
Dalmatian jasper, copper, tenth paper

6 - 9. Kapwani Kiwanga

Doubles, 2016
Brass Healing Bowl, Hammered brass concave bowl
Man Pulling at his Beard, Terracotta brick, clay vessel
Cape, Felt, cotton, beads; Transfiguration Tripod
Ceramic

10. James N. Hutchinson / Jill Hutchinson

Untitled (Nicola), 2014 - 2015
Papier-mâché

11. Nina Liebenberg

Box with the Sound of Its Own Making (after Morris), 2018
Coloured pencil on paper, audio (33mins)

12. Bianca Baldi

Snake Weight, 2016
Dalmatian jasper, fabric

13. Alex Impey

Flower, 2018
Plastic, sea urchin spines

14 - 16. Alexandra Sukhareva

Bracket, Bayham Abbey, 2013
Bracket, Mykenae, 2013
Bracket, Sirmione, 2013
Photographic documentation

17. Alex Impey

Flower, 2018
Milled HDPE, 3M respirator seal

18. Kapwani Kiwanga

The Secretary's Suite, 2016
Video (23 mins)

19 - 21. James N. Hutchinson / Jill Hutchinson

Untitled (Jan), 2014 - 2015
Untitled (Nicky), 2014 - 2015
Untitled (Lisa), 2014 - 2015
Papier-mâché

22. James N. Hutchinson

Proposal for a Collection, 2011
Video (20 mins)

23. Mark Landis

Copy of Charles Courtney Curran's 'Three Women', 2011
Mixed media

Kapwani Kiwanga's work courtesy Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin. All other work courtesy the artists.

Talk:

James N. Hutchinson, 26 May, 6:30pm

Performance:

Irina Gheorghe, *Foreign Language for Beginners*, 26 May, 8:00pm

Gallery 3 - CCA Derry-Londonderry Local Annex Artists

Helena Hamilton

(1986, Northern Ireland. Based in Belfast)

Helena Hamilton works both visually and sonically, creating work which crosses the lines between object, sound, digital interaction and action/performance. She received an MA in Sonic Arts (QUB, 2014) and holds a BA Honours degree in Fine Art (University of Ulster, 2009). Helena is represented by The Agency Gallery, London. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Semblance and Event*, Millennium Court Arts Centre, Portadown, NI/The Agency Gallery, London (2018). Showcases include: Digital Design Weekend, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2017). Recent artist residencies include: Art Centre Ongoing, Tokyo, Japan (2016); Goldsmiths University of London, EAVI Group (2015).

Dorothy Hunter

(1988, Magherafelt. Based in Belfast)

Dorothy Hunter is an artist and writer. Her practice is grounded in research into political territory, monumentality and the nature of public information. Recent exhibitions include *Dissolving Histories* at Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast; *Anticipated Fictions*; *Monumental Configurations* at PS Squared, Belfast; and *Still (the) Barbarians*, EVA International, Limerick. She is a current student of MA Art in the Contemporary World, NCAD.

Phillip McCrilly

(1988, Co. Tyrone. Based in Belfast)

Phillip McCrilly is an artist and curator interested in the transgressive and interdisciplinary possibilities of food and hospitality. Combining research around models of creative labour with modes of sustainable food practice, recent food projects include *Dance Food*, at Projects Arts Dublin, and *Kombucha Bar*, at Catalyst Arts Belfast.

Katrina Sheena Smyth

(1985, Northern Ireland. Based in Belfast)

Katrina Sheena Smyth is an artist and researcher, currently completing a PhD at Ulster University, Belfast, where she graduated with a Masters in Fine Art in 2014 and BA (Hons) in Fine Art in 2009. Smyth has exhibited work nationally and internationally, been awarded by ACNI numerous times since graduating and is an ex-director of Catalyst Arts. Her current research studies artistic processes and creative agency that resonate onto-epistemological methodologies of research, inspired by Zen practice and New Materialism theory.

Gallery 2

Sarah Pierce's work for *The Landis Museum* is a coupling of disparate exhibitionary moments that coalesce around the centre of gravity of two equally disparate narratives. For her 2014 exhibition, *Lost Illusions/Illusions Perdues*, she developed a series of exercises for graduate students based on Brecht's *Lehrstücke* or learning plays, which are being performed in the double screen video at Mercer Union in Toronto. These exercises use gestures and chants, and are presented along with props from past exhibitions, in this case, the dismantled support structures from a previous installation of Mark Landis' work in Glasgow in 2011. She contextualises Mark in relation to Honoré de Balzac's character, Lucien Chardon, who struggles to read and replicate the mannerisms of 19th century cosmopolitan Paris. The on-screen performance was repeated in Glasgow, thereby existing in duplicate, as a collective, repetitive struggle with translation and form.

Irina Gheorghe also makes performances, and will show her evolving work, *Foreign Language for Beginners*, during the opening weekend in Derry/Londonderry. On the exhibition structure, her performance is represented by the notes, documents and a screenprint from its ongoing development. Gheorghe looks to the future to address slippages in gestural and linguistic communication, speculating on how we might 'speak' to aliens at a point of first contact. How do you build a language if you don't know what it will be used for? How do you deal with a reality you can't access through experience?

Seemingly inaccessible forces are also present in Alexandra Sukhareva's work. Her objects, which represent central points of contact between herself and either identified or unidentified others, often exist in physically or psychologically precarious states. For example, she made two tubular objects as a means to cure her sick friend, without his knowledge. They were intended to act as a trap for the disease, to draw it in and contain it, but also to offer her solace during this time. When he recovered, she came to see these objects in relation to the so-called Zagorsky Experiment, in which deafblind children were taken to the studio of the artist Vadim Sidur, where they experienced his sculptures through touch, an example of a set of active communal encounters that were experienced internally and psychically. She views her objects, now shown as art, to be in a state of exhaustion.

In another intermediary action, she inserted 'brackets' into the architecture of important historical sites in Italy, Greece and England. Appearing to be handles of some sort, they would be grasped at by

visitors but would come away in their hands, creating a temporary moment of alarm, alerting them to a sort of third space between the past and the present.

Alex Impey's objects also operate at mid-points, or as hinges between different points in a chronology of knowledge. He considers the 'terminal form' of art objects as a kind of clogging, warning that they should not be thought of as summaries of what has already happened in the pre-production or research phase. The materials also seem to function as mid-points, this time between natural functionality and a synthetic or industrial functionality, and it is this ambiguity that determines their often-strange final form.

Bianca Baldi's work, *Snake Weight*, takes the shape of an object commonly encountered at sites of research and knowledge production, such as archives and libraries. Such weights are generally used to hold pages flat, but Baldi's object carries a 'double heaviness', as the jasper stones providing the weight could be joined in a similar way to make a similar form: that of a talisman, which provides protection against unknown forces and grounds its wearer in the sensible world. The snake is, simultaneously, an intermediary object and one thrust into the foreground - it is both a prop and a presence.

Also present is Baldi's work, *Insufflate*, in which the jasper appears once again. This time it holds a piece of tengu paper in place on a copper printing plate. Tengu paper is the lightest paper in the world, so light that it resists printing and is easily blown in even the gentlest of air currents. Here, Baldi further problematises processes of knowledge production, this time publishing, which can be both a form of resistance and enlightenment, but also a key tool in the entrenchment of existing power-relations through the embedding of dominant narratives.

A further form of doubling can be found in Kapwani Kiwanga's objects. Working with staff at Berlin's Dahlem ethnographic museum, Kiwanga produced material, abstract interpretations of objects from the museum's collection, which - for a brief period - stood in for the real versions in the museum's display. Some of these objects were absorbed into the collection, but in The Landis Museum, we find four objects rejected by the Dahlem. As with Mark Landis, we are not party to the discussions and negotiations that determined the objects' status; we can only imagine.

Elsewhere, in her video, *The Secretary's Suite*, Kiwanga undertakes a close analysis of a photograph of the office of Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary General of the United Nations from 1953 to 1961, who died in mysterious circumstances not long after the picture was taken. With his impending death as a backdrop, she moves from object to object, developing a narrative around diplomatic gift-giving that appears as bona-fide research, but in which there remains perhaps a hint of conspiracy theory.

Nina Liebenberg also undertakes a form of object analysis at an institutional border. She spent an afternoon in the strongroom of the University of Cape Town's special collections department, examining an early 20th century medicine box commissioned for a hunting trip in (then) Northern Rhodesia. Such boxes had been essential parts of the British colonial project, and allowed emigres, missionaries and explorers to venture deeper into unknown territory without fear of contracting tropical diseases. Liebenberg's report from the strongroom acts as a set of instructions for *The Landis Museum's* curator to make a drawing of the box, to which he has no physical access.

Dotted around the exhibition are small papier mâché busts, which were made by James N. Hutchinson's mother, a retired art teacher, while she was undergoing chemotherapy. They are made from copies of The South China Post Hutchinson picked up in Hong Kong in 2013, which contain revelations about the NSA being distributed by Edward Snowden while he was hiding somewhere in the city. Both Snowden and Hutchinson's mother utilized newspaper to different ends, one as a political and informational tool in which the physical materials exist only as a vehicle to carry the content, the other as pure material, which can be physically manipulated to generate new images and meanings independent of the content it originally carried. Here, the two situations are joined indirectly through the artist, a middleman who moved the material across national borders, where it was reprocessed into a new form, ready to be redistributed. They have, however, become locked in midpointness due to the condition of their referent and maker. Snowden's status - both as a citizen and as a symbol - remains in flux and unresolved, and the artist's mother became too ill to finish the sculptures, dying before she could add the final touches.

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