ART, INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL CONTROL

**A report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the School
of Arts and Digital Industries, University of East London, for the degree
of Professional Doctorate in Fine Art.**

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CONTENTS

Introduction

This document charts my development as an artist over the last five years on the Professional Doctorate in Fine Art at the University of East London. It begins with a reflection on the work done on B.A and M.A. in Fine Art, at Middlesex University and the University of East London respectively. The origin of my work lies in traumatic and painful life experiences that at the time of their occurrence almost effectively ended my practice. In hindsight it is clear that these experiences have provided the continuing motivation for my research and art practice, as well as its content.

The report presents in chronological order of my engagement with theories of the mechanisms of societal power and control, and describes the assimilation of these ideas into my developing visual projects. The report begins with the autobiographical background to my practice, followed by the Creative Practice and Theory section which contextualizes the different strands of my research, and concludes with my Professional Practice which outlines the artistic activities I embarked on during the five years of the doctorate programme.

PERSONAL AND CREATIVE CONTEXT

2000-03 Middlesex University, B.A. honours in Fine Art.
2003-05 University of East London, M.A. in Fine Art.

At the age of twenty I decided to move to London, seeking new opportunities that were not open to me in my home city of Dublin. On arrival, I quickly entered the dynamic Punk scene that was anarchic and directly confronted older hierarchies.' The Punk scene instigated grassroots self-sufficient communities that strived to be independent of the all-powerful economic capitalist machine. Witnessing young people taking authority over their own future became the motivating belief that I could develop my inherent interest in becoming an artist, consequently I made an application to Middlesex University to study Fine Art BA.

The experience of witnessing young people struggling to survive in London in the punk, squat scene, became the subject of my final year show. The work depicted a supportive community descending into alcohol and drug misuse, ultimately leading to its self-destruction. I concluded that the new found freedom of youth, ironically led to an alternative form of control, which undermined the true opportunities found in non-conformity.

Fig 1. Peckham Dolehouse squat 1989.

During the third year, my subjective experience led me to look at representational strategies taken by artists who worked with direct action as a political stratagem. The artists I looked at ranged from the anti-war art of John Heartfield and George Grosz, to contemporary artists Nick Blinko, Sue Coe, Gee Vaucher and, Flavio Constantini.
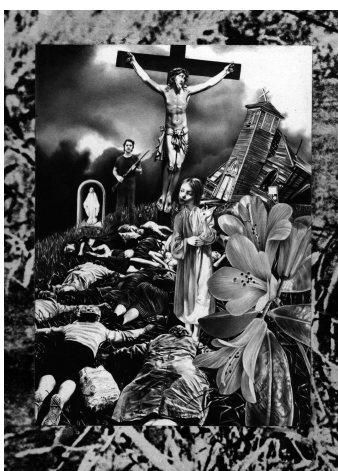

Fig 2. Vaucher, G. Reality Asylum, 1979, Gouche with collage, 30cms x 24cms.

Fig 3. Coe, S. if animals believed in God, 2004, Lithograph, 22.5 inch x 15.5 inch.

Fig 4. Heartfield, J. Never Again, 1932 Photomontage, 24cms x 36cms.

I examined the histories of subcultural movements which had used art and graphics as a vehicle to highlight their campaigns such as: The Angry Brigade, a militant anarchist group, active in London in the 1970s; The Animal Liberation Front, a group with no members, whose activism promoted animal rescue, while sabotaging and bankrupting companies involved in abuse caused by experimentation; The Straight Edge movement, a musical subgenre of Punk that promoted veganism, animal, environmental welfare, and stressed the avoidance of drugs and alcohol.

My research enabled me to perceive my own creative engagement as part of an activist discourse that evolved into the Environmental Movement. I explored other theorists who had written on art and activism such as Susan Platt, Grant Kester and, Nina Felshin. All three explore how artists engage with political and social issues and the collaborations between artists and the resistance

movements. Some of the themes they explored are: police states, war, imperialism, racism, borders, homelessness, feminism and regeneration.

These writers critique socially engaged art and the paradoxical relationship to the institutions they professionally exist within. The effect these theorists had on my practice was to view contentious themes not as single issues, but as an intricate interlinked social fabric. This was acknowledged in new methods of production which synthesised different socially engaged themes into one project. The work was exhibited utilizing a range of multimedia platforms, such as prints, paintings video and installation.

Fig 5. Ryan, J. As Tyrannies Merge, 2003, industrial paint,
Bitumen on canvas, 135cms x 190cms.

My personal experience, artistic research and investigation of the socio/political discourse culminated in the final B.A exhibition which displayed a painting installation that explored themes of power and control. The works depicted the seat of authority, portraying government buildings as power in its abstract form, representing the mechanism of bureaucracy that implements insidious governance over the population.

The formal language of the paintings demanded an emotional painterly engagement with the subject. The expressive outcome overpowered the fixed symbolism of the buildings and instead asserted a possible dystopian vision. This intervention employed a metaphoric device portraying government buildings stylistically 'melting,' which represented the diffusion of power through every aspect of society.

Fig 6. Ryan, J. Heterotopias Subside, 2003, Paint, Bitumen on canvas, 135cms x 190cms.

After the B.A I knew that I had found a subject I wanted to engage with. However, I realised that my creative practice needed greater depth. Therefore, I embarked on the Fine Art M.A. at the University of East London. The course

emphasised studio practice as a core module, rather than the contextual practice I experienced at Middlesex University.

During the first year, I continued to explore the theme of the symbolic power of Government buildings. The painterly approach was replaced by attention to the intricate detail of the architecture. Drawings and large-scale etchings paid close attention to structural features such as flying buttresses and alcoves.

Fig 7. Ryan, J. Monolith, 2003, Etching, 60cms x 70cms.

Fig 8. Ryan, J. The Intercessor, Etching, 60cms x 70cms.

This formal aesthetic decision created a greater sense of stability to the pictorial forms of these images of authority. The works employed a variety of

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new approaches to mark making, including cross-hatching and the aquatint process to enhance the depth and three-dimensional appearance of the buildings.

Fig 9. Ryan, J. Wrought Iron, 2004, etching, 91cms x 70 cms

During a seminar with my Tutor, Geoff Brunell, I recognised my work was part of a lineage of political engagement, situated within the discourse of printmaking. I began to research the history of political pamphlets, newspaper woodblock illustrations and Goya's suite of etchings, 'The Disasters of War.'

Fig 10. Goya, F. What More Can Be Done? (Que hai que hacer mas?), 1810-1820, Etching, lavis, drypoint, burin and burnisher on paper, 15.50cms x 20.50cms.

The new knowledge influenced my studio practice and I made a large series of prints combining a number of etchings techniques. I used power tools, wire brushes, and broken drill bits and experimented with hand coloured prints. These prints were a contemporary interpretation of Goya's "Disasters of War." The images represented contemporary conflicts occurring in Iraq, Palestine, Chechnya, and Bosnia. My work changed from depicting battle scenes and bombed out buildings to focusing on figures in discord, victims of the atrocities of war. This pointed to a growing sympathy with the idea of surviving conflict.

Fig 11. Ryan, J. The Real Victims, 2005, etching, 35cms x 40cms

In the course of study, I succumbed to my own personal trauma that descended into the dissolution of family life. This experience introduced me to the bureaucratic mechanisms of authority.

 I was forced to return back to Dublin to support my mother who had been hospitalised and I first experienced the full extent of the power of the Irish medical system. When a patient is admitted to hospital, they become an inmate and a form of medical power intervenes, the hospital takes control of the person, and the patient or their family no longer have responsibility regarding welfare. Irish law allows a programmme of care to be implemented by medical specialists. They decide on time of discharge, and whether a person will live in their own home or be coerced into a nursing home. These decisions resulted in the family coming into conflict with the judicial system regarding my mother's welfare. As a result, the decisions implemented by the medical experts who seemed to emphasise the bureaucratic process, rather than personalised welfare of the individual resulted in my mother's death due to contracting the MRSA virus while in hospital. This experience was formative to my exposure to the power of the medical authorities.

Fig 12. Ryan, J. St Michaels Massacre, 2006, etching, 35cms x 40cms.

The circumstances of my mother's death initiated a period of emotional and psychological instability. This led to further repercussions within my marriage and to its dissolution. Once again I was confronted with the Irish Judicial system in regard to family law. Over the next six years, my wife, children and I became immersed in an adversarial process within the court system. The process deepened the suffering and distress of the family, only relieved by the judge's final decree.   The ordeal created anger within my personal family relationships and an antagonised resentment towards the structures of power which had administered and supervised the cessation of the family unit.

This traumatic encounter left me with a need to locate authority within my life. I discovered license to explore the subject creatively within my studio practice. I began researching Paul Noble's ongoing project *Nobson Newtown.* Noble drew on his experience of being homeless and squatting in east London and created a series of large format drawings depicting his own utopian vision of a

garden city. The work deals with a sequence of complex socio/political issues alluding to animal research laboratories, multi-national corporations, government administrative buildings, military installations and religious institutions. I was influenced by his ability to satirise political commentary in an ambiguous form, where no one separate issue could be clearly defined.

His project demonstrated the ability to imagine a congruent authority within an artwork. This understanding activated the impulse to establish my own prophetic vision, in which I determine imaginative authority. I began making a series of mono-prints, which confronted the experience of the judicial system and initiated my investigations into the actual structures of power and how they operate. In the print entitled *Kangaroo Court*, I depict this process as an ironic visual statement that ridicules the nature of the court system. The irony attempts a black humour that challenges the authority of the family law courts by lampooning its attempt at a moral justice.

Fig 13. Ryan, J. Kangaroo Court, 2006, Monoprint, 47cms x 57cms

The work achieved during the MA resulted in a number of exhibitions in London and in Dublin. The newfound confidence established a recognised

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emerging practice. It brought together socio / political themes and integrated them within the craft of printmaking which is acknowledged to be consistently sensitive to such subjects. This new self-assurance resulted in the Graphic Studio Dublin inviting me to become a member of their studio and a representative gallery artist.

Fig 14. View of Graphic Studio Dublin

Creative Practice and Theory

At the time of writing the Doctorate application, I reflected that, despite my protest against the dominance of the state machine, I was paradoxically attempting to join the establishment by attaining the highest degree of the Academy. I acknowledged my presence was a protest in itself, a remonstration against the Irish religious and education system that tried to stop working class individuals from achieving a position of intellectual status. This assessment became the driving force: to establish a Doctorate project that chronicled and critiqued the pervasive authority to which we are often blindly subservient.

The reflection recalled the earlier research by Nina Felshin (1994) in her seminal book, *But is it art? the spirit of art as activism.* With reference to activist art in general, she states:

Not content to simply ask the questions, these artists engage in an active process of representation, attempting at the very least to "change the conversation," to empower individuals and communities, and ultimately to stimulate social change. (Felshin, 1994, p.26).

Felshin illustrates my own position and intention: To challenge the traditional power structures and by mounting a critique within the system to represent groups of people who may normally be excluded from the hierarchies of culture as represented by those in power. Felshin states:

Activist art represents a confluence of the aesthetic, socio-political, and technological impulses of the past twenty-five years or more that have attempted to challenge, explore, or blur the boundaries and hierarchies traditionally defining the culture as represented by those in power. This cultural form is the culmination of a democratic urge to give voice and visibility to the disenfranchised, and to connect art to a wider audience. (Felshin, 1994, p.10).

With this in mind I began my doctoral work, from a proposal entitled *Art Institutions and Social Control*. I started by developing a new series of detailed etchings depicting Irish court buildings. The etchings represented the Irish judiciary as a visual manifestation of power and the instruments of state. They portrayed the workings of the lower level of the judiciary, the Family law courts. The works describe the mechanisms of power and its extensive powers regarding assets, property and its effects on ordinary people. The prints display the interconnected nature of the system at work. They specifically illustrate solicitors, barristers, clerks, judges and expert witnesses such as psychologists and psychiatrists actively and diligently working hard to make the system work effectively.

Fig 15. Ryan, J. Two Towers, Conformity and Servitude, 2012, etching, 60cms x 70cms.

The suite of prints entitled, *Ultra Vires* is an ironic reflection on personal survival within the Irish judicial system. The title's sardonic satire refers to the necessity of the individual to apply the law to his or her own benefit. Accordingly, the individual reclaims personal control of their own life and consigns themselves, "beyond the powers" of the judicial system.

The images depict the entrapment of the family law process. The figures are portrayed in states of torture and represent the destructive procedure of the judicial system on a person over a prolonged period. The images convey the figures located in a predetermined arena over which they have no control. They interact within the court apparatus in a contemporary spectacle of public execution where the spectre of the state is always waiting to wield its power.

Fig 16. Ryan, J. Plight of the Neo-gods, 2012, Etching, 60cms x 70cms.

To support the visual enquiry, my research led me to Michel Foucault and his seminal text, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison* (1975). He analyses the historical and theoretical changes in the French penal system. He charts the transformation away from the humanitarian ideal of individual

reform, to a system of dominance, which emphasises torture, discipline, punishment and incarceration within public intuitions.

I became particularly interested in Foucault's theory of panopticism. He based his theory on the humanitarian reformist Jeremy Bentham's design for a prison as a panopticon. Bentham's design attempted to reform the prison from the previous model of incarceration in a dungeon to a different system of regulating the state's citizens. Alternatively, he proposed a humanitarian design for a prison, consisting of a central control tower manned by a guard and surrounded by cells providing internalised central coercion. The prisoners are placed in a situation of continuous monitoring, or a feeling of being monitored, even if the guard was not present. This model gave birth to modern surveillance as a means of control, one that could be adapted to other institutions.

Fig 17. View of the Panopticon design of prison

Foucault identifies the modern state's manipulation and exploitation of the humanitarian correctional system as an ideal system befitting a modern democracy. He uses the panopticon as a metaphor to critique the correlation between: 1) Systems of social control and their effect on the prisoner and

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employees of the institution; and 2) Surveillance as a means of control, providing power and knowledge from observation and the recording of information. This new system of surveillance instilled acceptance, conformity to regulations and compliance of the individual under the threat of disciplinary punishment.
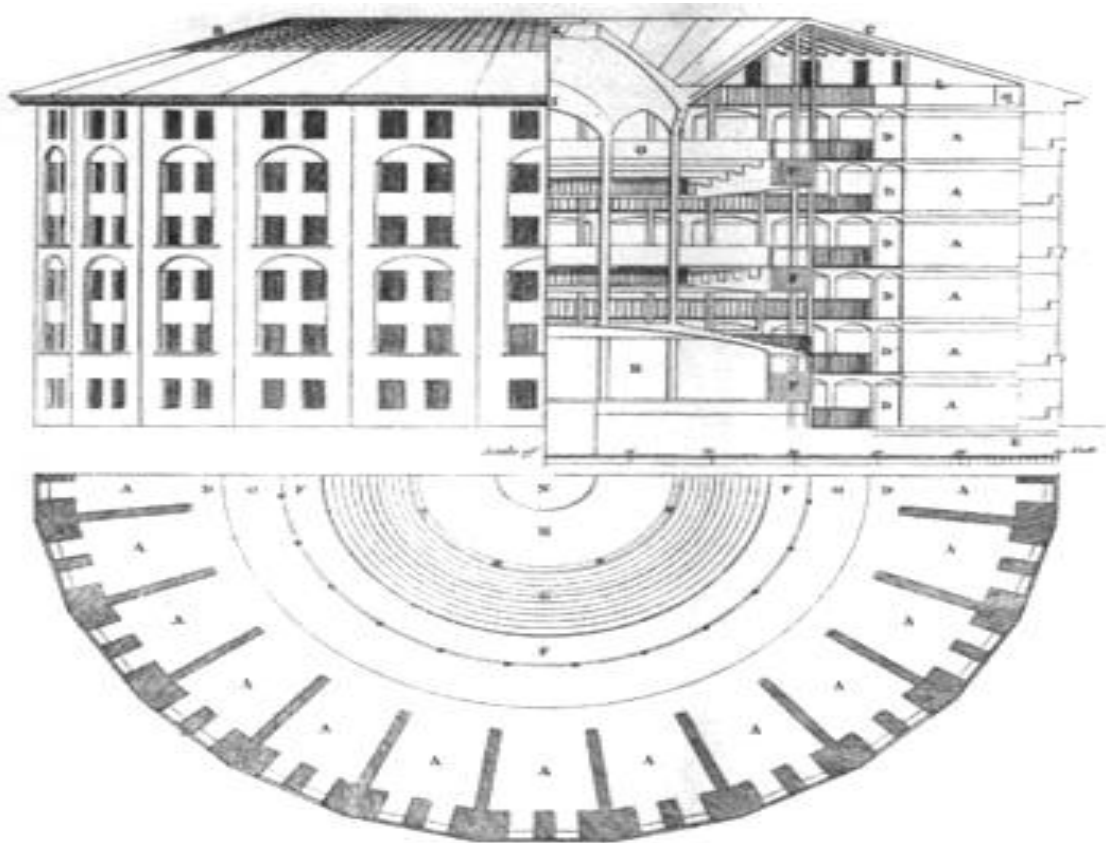

Fig 18. Exploded view of design for Panopticon.

The captor gains power from the knowledge collected through observation. Power and knowledge then act in a circular fashion where they reinforce one another. Foucault states:
 "by being combined and generalized, they attained a level at which the formation of knowledge and the increase in power regularly reinforce one

another in a circular process" (Foucault, 1977, p.224).

Foucault concludes that dangers arise due to mechanisms of power being internalised by the individual and exhibited in their behaviour, *"carefully fabricated in it"* (Foucault 1977). Rather than oppression being directed from a centralized authority, it is embedded within the social order. He questions the authority of the expert elite who disseminate powerful knowledges which, through the self-surveillance of citizens come to dominate the whole of public and private life.

Foucault's theory provided a conceptual framework to support my creative project. It reflected my own experience and helped fabricate a narrative that portrayed the state's application of the law as a central surveillance mechanism that behaved like a panoptic vision of control. Foucault (1977) writes:

"But the Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: it is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use." (Foucault, 1977, p. 205).

Foucault's model of panopticism influenced my work through the notion of power that extends out from a central figure and is diffused through different ancillaries. Although the judge acts as an instrument of the state and its application of the law, in the context of my project and the individual prints, the judge is in the position of absentia. He/she is not represented; instead the judge's authority is replaced by the viewer. The viewer becomes the guard, the surveyor of knowledge at the centre observing through the pictorial window, thus absorbed into the consuming panoptic vision. Society is interpreted as Jeremy Bentham's panoptic prison, everything consumed into its

presence. To quote Jacques-Alain Miller's observation in his essay 'Jeremy Bentham's Panoptic Device':

"The Panopticon is not a prison. It is a general principle of construction, the polyvalent apparatus of surveillance, the universal optical machine of human groupings." (Miller, 1987, p.1).

Fig 19. Ryan, J. Built on the Three Falsities, 2012, Etching, 60cms x 70cms.

While drawing the family law court in Dublin (Phoenix House), I observed that other legal entities and buildings are in close proximity and interlinked, such as; four law courts, the law society, a law library, the legal aid board, a police station, the criminal court and vans for transport to prison. I became aware that a number of government buildings employed the theory of the panopticon in their architecture, as they all act as satellites around the central hub of administered power. A crucial observation was that these buildings assumed visual authority and the embodiment of power which subjugated the community and coerced the individual into submissive behaviour on entering the site.

Fig 20. Ryan, J. Within the Panopticon, 2012, Etching, 60cms x 70cms.

The work entitled, *I am The Expert On My Family* is to do with the daily experience of the place, such the last minute preparation for hearings, waiting for call overs and solicitors and clients trying to negotiate settlements outside the court. The procedures are depicted as a trial that slowly adds anxiety and breaks people down before the actual hearing itself. The visual power of these buildings engulfs the citizen and they are further disenfranchised from their

own empowerment by the abstraction of the judge. Although the judge is at the top of the hierarchy, he or she is rarely referred to as the central figure. Instead he/she is referred to in abstract terms as "the Court" by solicitors and barristers and so the 'court' becomes an apparatus that instils fear.

In the etchings the figures are engaged in acts of degradation and violence while appearing to be in control of their actions. Looking at the series as a whole it becomes clear that the figures have no control, but are being controlled while engaged in an enclosed arena where they play out a predetermined role guided by unseen forces. In the etchings I employed the device of placing the viewer in the position of the judge, who is never depicted but occupies the seat of power - 'the unseen force.' The viewer is placed in this power relation, looking down on to citizens' lives as they unfold.

Fig 21. Ryan, J. I am the Expert on my Family, 2012, Etching, 60cms x 70cms.

The title of this work *Decree Absolute* is a parody of the marital vow, "*no man shall pull asunder what god has joined together.*" In my opinion, the family law court placed themselves in the position of absolute power, the equivalent to god. The work describes not a beneficent God of mercy but a God of tyranny and judgment over its subjects.

Fig 22. Ryan, J. Decree Absolute, 2012, Etching, 60cms x 70cms.

A guillotine blade frames the young couple who are engaged in a sexual act, but oblivious to the extremities of state power about to be unleashed upon them. I used a close up composition allowing the figures to burst out of the pictorial space. However they are stopped by the presence of ominous danger. As the blade looms over the couple and they are faced with the bald fact that they cannot escape from the mercy of the state. Instead of using violence to

convey a message, the emphasis is on the power held by fear of impending doom, placing the viewer in front of the imminent act.

Rather than represent the court system in a literal way, I chose to use satire and brutality to depict the family law courts and their interlinked entities as an instrument of terror. The work attempts to bring atrocity out in the open directly opposing the 'In Camera' rule that prohibits discussion and the opacity of court proceedings that results in no records being published. The project endeavours to create a public document that holds the instruments of power up to scrutiny. It brings transparency to a closed culture and shares its knowledge with a wider audience.
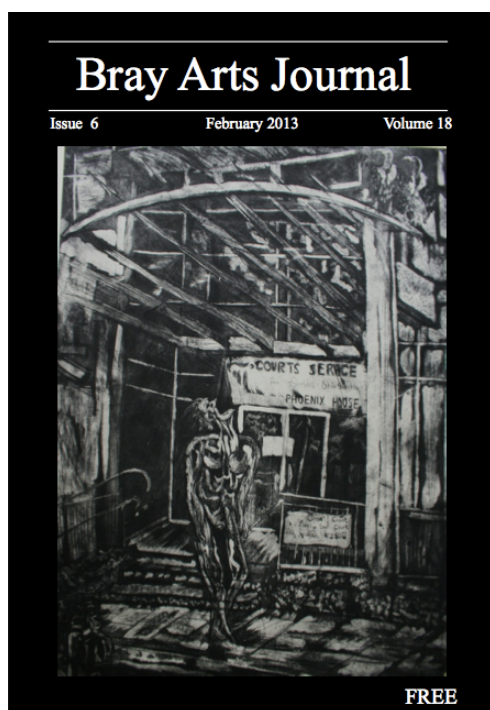

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FREE

THE POWER BEYOND

Ultra Vires at Graphic Studios in Dublin pres ents new works by **Joe Ryan** and **Tracy Sweeney**. Ryan employs the Latin term 'Ultr Vires' as meaning 'beyond the powers' of an authority as the premise for his etchings. Drawing on the draughtmanship of 18th Century master Piranesi and others, he prob the structure of power through architectural design. The printmaker likewise adapts Ervi Goffman's concept of the 'Total Institution', where entire groups under bureaucratic con trol are stripped of their identity. By contras Tracy Sweeney compares her printmaking skills with that of a tradesperson. She con- structs walls, building layer upon layer of colour and texture, using a wide variety of tradesman tools to produce her plates. The end result is a remarkable edifice of multila ered walls revealing the passage of time on random surfaces. Tracy Sweeney: 5 – 28 Apr

Fig 23. Bray Arts Journal, cover February 2013.
Fig 24. "Ultra Vires', exhibition review, Irish Arts Review, Spring, 2012.

The burgeoning project was exhibited at Graphics Studio Dublin (2012) and reviewed by Irish Arts Review (Spring 2012) and Bray Arts Journal. The critic recognised   the   relationship   between   architecture   and   power   and

contextualized it historically by referencing the works of Piranesi and the essay of Erving Goffman (1961), *The Characteristics of Total Institutions.* I was pleased with the critic's understanding of the conceptual concerns within the body of work as they made the correct assumptions about the relationship between the architecture and administrative control. Further feedback from the audience was centred on the emotive impact on the individual in relation to the power structures and a number of them commented on how the works illuminate the hidden structures we daily live within.

Erving Goffman used prisons and mental homes as examples of total institutions which he defined as enclosed places where groups of people live and work together whilst being cut off from wider society for a specified amount of time, with the main characteristic being that all facets of the inmates lives are administrated and controlled. Goffman's theory inspired me to experiment with how to represent the totality of these institutions and different ways of installing the large sheets to form a structure that both dominated the space, and overpowered the individual. I became interested in creating work that could take ownership of the space and could transcend different environments; for example, in an outside space making use of architecture, or forming architectural structures in a gallery space so as to replicate the isolation and claustrophobia of an enclosed institution. This enclosed, claustrophobic space I see as a metaphor for the inmate entering the total institution and experiencing what Goffman defines as the mortification process. This refers to when an inmate enters an institution and experiences feelings of being suddenly away from everything they were used to. Within the installation I aimed to capture the essence of the total institution. The viewer walks into the installation and is surrounded and overpowered by its architecture. At same time they find themselves immersed within the historical discourses directly conveyed in the work, which foreground the plight of the inmates.

Similarly I used projections to cover entire walls, often overlapping onto other walls to signify the characteristics of the total institution where there is no outside. The power of the total institution is that it is continuous and dominates all space. When I exhibited in the container space in March. I projected onto the

end wall, but also used both side walls and the ceiling. This transformed the already small space into a kaleidoscope. The viewer was enveloped in the projection which distorted on the side walls and ceiling. The projections themselves represented buildings, creating a disorientating effect, trapping and enclosing the viewer as they skewed and distorted across the side wall , creating an illusion of multiple overlapping walls, spaces and enclosures.

I reflected on this in my doctoral show and other ways of enacting Goffman's theory of mortification and its effect on the person. I achieved this through projecting two looped films at angles such that they would merge in the middle of the space and part of one would utilise a backdrop of the frozen faces monoprints of the inmates of the Industrial schools and Magdalen Laundries to create a montage effect.

I wanted to depict Goffman's ideas about the effect that the institution has on the individual in relation to the incarceration of children. I created work which identified with the viewpoint of a child such as the printed nun or the brother wielding a strap. Both were situated in a scale larger than life to show the size of what they would be in relation to a small child. At the same time, when I projected the cut out silhouette versions onto a wall they become transformed into indecipherable shapes or monsters.

Hannah Arendt

I was interested in Arendt's theory of the camps and drew parallels with Ireland's carceral state and its Magdalen Laundries and Industrial Schools where rights were stripped away from inmates and they were treated as bare life (Agamben). The atrocities they were subjected to rendered them less than human. This led me to omitting the persons as depicted in earlier works and concentrating on the brutality of the institutions and the mechanisms of power that they employed beyond their direct effect on individuals. For example the only reference to the victim in these works is shown as the small hands of a child shielding itself from being beaten. In other pieces there were just splashes of blood. In later works after researching archival photos of the extreme working conditions of children in a Magdalen laundry, where they were staring vacantly at the camera (similar to inmates at the liberation of Auschwitz) I used monoprints of faces displayed in a

tiled effect to represent capturing a moment in time or mortification process similar to posed propaganda pictures at concentration camps which bore a striking resemblance to the photos of girls at the Magdalen Laundries.

Arendt, read alongside Agamben, led me to view Industrial Schools and Magdalen Laundries as camps sharing a position outside of the prison system, unregulated by the state but part of Ireland's puritanical Catholic control mechanism in which church and state formed an ideological vision of the country and enforced it through its interlinked institutions.

Arendt wrote of the Nazi regime duplicating offices in an onion like structure, with each layer revealing a more sinister layer behind. In an Irish context the mother and baby homes acted as an intermediary where pregnant women would have their baby, thinking it was a safe refuge. In reality, the mother would then, after the birth, be transferred to the Magdalen Laundry while her child would go through the Industrial School system. This inspired me to layer my work using printed sheets and to project onto them with filmed images of the sheets installed on site in former industrial Schools backed with the sound of children playing to represent the intricacy of interlinked institutions within the Irish carceral state. I used other ways of building up work in layers by, for example, placing the digital prints of politicians and church officials behind the projected architecture of the institutions.

Arendt's discussion of concentration camps as sites of forced labour where inmates were regarded simply as human material and were thus annihilated as subjects provided an understanding of how to analyse and synthesise my understanding of how the institutions in Ireland operated. This led me to approach my work from a dual perspective. Alongside my depictions of the inmates being subjected to the power structures and violence of the institutions, I wanted to consider how to restore their identities.

Arendt wrote about the camps isolating people from the rest of society and treating them as if they no longer existed or as if they were already dead, but held in a place of eternal torment. This led me to work in a way whereby violence is not directly shown in the work, but there is always threat or menace. This is

sometimes depicted through absence as in the case of the blood stained communion dresses hanging and floating in space, These symbolise the stolen childhoods but also evoke the horrors that were inflicted on the children that entered these institutions and the lasting emotional effects of their incarceration.

The relationship between architecture and power steered further research into the work of a number of artists to support the expanding project. I examined the work of Paul Noble, who in the 1980s had a background of squatting and living on the dole in East London. During this time he witnessed events such as road protests against the M11 link road and subsequent destruction of both squatting and local communities. The realities of squatting, evictions and the uncertainty of having no fixed accommodation had an effect on his work. The experience inspired him to create a project in which he had total ownership and subsequently Noble invented an imaginary utopia called Nobson Newtown, a Platonic city-state in which he reorganised the mechanisms of power as an ideal. He designed his own town planning, invented a language that found form as buildings composed of words and idealistic critical statements.

In *Mall,* Noble illustrates a gigantic hybrid Mall that assumes the presence of a religious institution, such as a Jewish synagogue. Here materialism is being viewed as a religion through its temple structure. His mall declares nothing of the expected commercialism and typical marketing strategies of advertising and branding. Instead, he depicts a stripped down structure representing the emptiness of consumerism and a quest for items that never fulfil the need to consume.
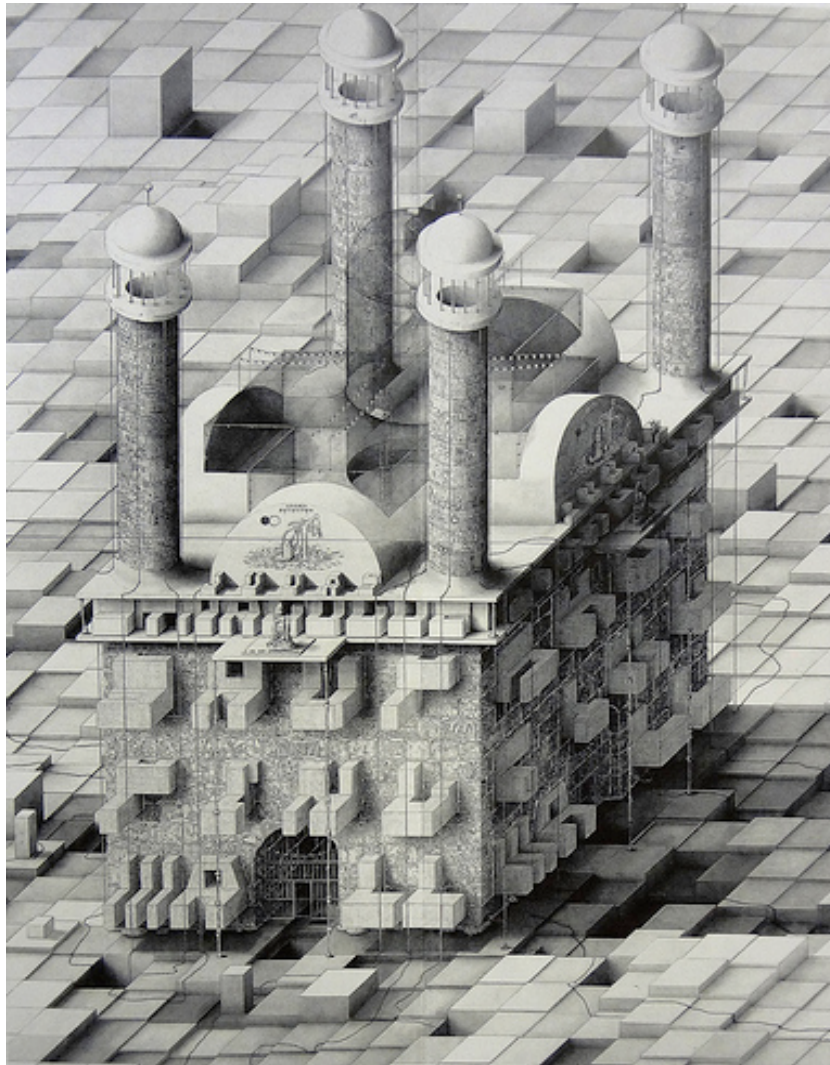
Fig 25. Noble, P. Mall, 2001-02, pencil on paper, 400cms x 300cms.

Through Noble's grand project *Nobson Newtown* I realised that it was possible to create a large project in which I was able to regain ownership within an imaginary space. It provided a map to navigate several themes within a central conceptual structure, which discussed power relations, architecture, bio-politics and subjugation of the person. His drawing installations inspired me to realise my project as one body of work incorporating a variety or visual propositions displayed over multiple platforms, which are imbued with ideas of the panopticon.

The realisation prompted further research into artists working within a grand project tradition and the use of installation as an immersive experience. I began searching for other artists who work out of the drawing printmaking

convention and found the work of William Kentridge. A South African artist, his practice involves drawing with charcoal and constantly erasing and animating the drawn image. He takes a photograph of each scene and compiles subsequent scenes into an animated video installation.

Kentridge's artworks deal with themes of apartheid, its aftermath and social inequality. He creates his own characters to portray the narrative of South Africa;for example, Soho Eckstein, a Johannesburg property developer and ruthless capitalist and Felix Teitelbaum, his humane alter ego. Both characters represent two sides of the one person as well as the historical psyche of South Africa. Kentridge uses a compositional device that depicts Soho with dark and jagged drawing and surrounded by vast amounts of money. Soho is always dressed in a pinstriped suit, even in bed, while Felix is portrayed as vulnerable often naked and depicted more delicately.

Fig 26. Kentridge, W. image from Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City
After Paris, 1989, film, 8 mins.
Fig 27. Kentridge, W. image from Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City
After Paris, 1989, film, 8 mins.

Kentridge's work demonstrates an open way of working that slowly evolves into a political commentary that reports on the South African psyche. This way of working was a direct parallel to my own intuitive process and I found confidence in its open methods of production. This created an impetus for developing drawings and paintings into a transformative video / shadow projection installation.

Inspired by Kentridge's characters Soho and Felix, who display the polar opposites of power, balanced by the wealth of one and the extreme poverty of the other, and influenced by Kentridge's thematic device, I drew a parallel between the psyche of Ireland and its history, in which the Catholic Church and

the politicians collude to identify themselves as morally superior. Their disdain creates an idea of ethical command reminiscent of Foucault's jailer, whose carceral vision imprisons the minds of a captive community of inmates.

In the final chapter of *Discipline and Punish,* entitled 'The Carceral' Foucault writes about a new prison regime in Metteray, where training and exercise are balanced with working in the fields. The chapter comments on how notes were kept on each inmate, building up a body of knowledge and creating skilled and submissive workers.

The jailors lived in close proximity to the inmates and observed them twenty-four hours a day; they trained in the same discipline they imposed. Foucault acknowledges here the beginning of knowledge as power. He proposes that an authority's ability to compile records on a person provides a means to exert command over the psyche of that person. This device separates the body from the soul of the individual and subjugates the person to the will of the state.

Foucault identified a network of government institutions including prisons, *"colonies for poor and vagrant children and alms-houses for young females."* (Foucault, 1975, p.297).

He theorised how the carceral system was disseminated throughout society. It filters through all institutions until it becomes almost invisible, but leaves a trace of distinctive disciplines within institutions such as hospitals and schools, reminiscent of the panopticon prison structure.

While the carceral has many forms, how it maintains power is not through the punishment of crime, but through the fear of breaking the rule of law. It is this fear that haunts Government institutions. The school, hospital or asylum is not the safe place for the individual that it purports to be. Instead the professionals working within these institutions function as purveyors of the law; the teacher or nurse became the judge. The carceral mechanism ensures complete capture of the body and continuous observation exercises power through domination and observation.

Foucault's writings and genealogical approach to research inspired me to take an archaeological attitude to understand how institutions and confinement evolved in Ireland. First, I acknowledged the necessity to research historical periods before the inception of the Irish state and discovered:

- The Reformatory Act 1858. A government bill set up reform schools for children convicted of criminal offences while the Industrial Schools Act 1868 set up schools for orphans, abandoned children or those who may be in danger of coming in contact with criminal elements.

- The first Magdalen Asylum originated in France, in 1647 run by the 'Good Shepherds" order with an Irish asylum opening in 1767. The Dublin Magdalen Asylum expanded all over Ireland, Europe and the United States.

The Sisters of Mercy ran all the Magdalen Asylums. While originally a charity to house prostitutes they began to admit people they deemed "fallen", such as children born out of wedlock, or in poverty and victims of rape and incest.

Although the nuns had classed the women as penitents and told them that washing the sheets would wash away their sins, they soon began to shift away from reforming the women and releasing them into the community. The asylum realised the women were a valuable commodity, generating vast income for the institution. The women were unpaid and worked for their sustenance. Effectively, it was more profitable to keep them locked up, and some women spent their entire life incarcerated.

The Laundries also held a unique position in that they were totally controlled by the two religious orders. They were independent as they received no state funding and were not regulated or answerable to any state body. The religious orders also maintained a "policy of secrecy", meaning that their registers and records remain closed to this day.

- 1922-1938 - Eamonn de Valera's government (Irish free state period) collaborated with church officials to draft a moral law to maintain cultural purity for the new state.

The new state aspired to maintain an image of purity, therefore sexual crimes disappeared, victims were quickly locked away and some male criminal abuse was ignored. Women were demonised as potential agents of shame and their sexuality was culturally stigmatised. If a girl became pregnant out of wedlock, her family would commit her to the laundry to hide their disgrace.

- The institutions expanded during this period and remained part of Irish society until their closure - industrial schools in 1984 and the Magdalen laundries in 1996.

I drew further connections with Foucault's work, specifically *The will to knowledge, The history of sexuality Vol 1.* He wrote of the control of sex in modernity and how knowledge about sexuality effected control of the body. Similarly in 1920s Ireland sex outside marriage was classed as deviant. Victims of sexual crimes were now classed as criminals and incarcerated women and children were in a worse position than convicted criminals who had fixed prison terms. Consequently, sexual crimes disappeared, to maintain the image of Catholic purity. The women incarcerated within the Magdalen and industrial school system, sometimes never left their confines.

The country had to be seen to be free from sin and purified from both political and moral deviances. Speaking about sex in public was taboo, and only permitted in confession. Any notion of sexual crime could not exist and had to be silenced. This was achieved through strict censorship bills, in which the media could not report or print articles about sexual crime, while films that were deemed to be indecent, blasphemous, or in any way subversive, were banned.

In response to Foucault's vision of the Carceral state institution, I initiated a set of works that critiqued the function of the Magdalen laundries and industrial schools of Ireland. The series of works employed linocut on bed sheets and linked the violence perpetrated by the institutions to people under their care.

Fig 28. Ryan, J. Sister of No Mercy, 2012, linocuts on cotton, 135cms x 190cms.

The first bed-sheet works portrayed the agents of violence in the shape of nuns and priests and sought to identify the formal relationship between the bed sheet and its ability to signify abuse. I began to investigate how the sheets hold a trace and document the language of abuse in the form of stains that convey the effect of the body through rips, tears and burning. The rips and tears signify rape; the folds and burns portray the manipulation of the person. The bed sheet prints represent an erased history, washed and left as a visual memory recalling multiple connotations of dirty laundry and social cleansing.

Other bed sheet prints in the series dealt directly with imagery of the institutions, many of which were closed for many years. The images of the buildings maintain a sense of notoriety through the abuse that was engendered, such as *Letterfrack industrial school*. In the print, I strove to convey the contrast between the idyllic environment of the buildings and he dark memories that they harboured..

Choosing to create works around now defunct institutions and installing these works in their redundant grounds, I attempted to bridge the gap of time between past (what happened) and present (on-going enquiries). These works evoked the continual silence that surrounds the memory of the people interned and relegates their experiences to commemoration, thereby dismissing the collective memory of loss and detaching the historical responsibility of church, state and a community keen to forget their involvement in these systems of confinement. The Irish people were implicit in the abuse and for many years they turned a blind eye to the trauma, due to fear and self interest; many were employed in its administration as subcontracted traders, supplying goods to its master.

In *Ireland's Magdalen Laundries and the Nation's Architecture of Confinement* James Smith (2007) writes:

The historically powerful Catholic Church and the fledgling Irish Free State cooperated increasingly throughout the 1920s as the self-appointed guardians of the nation's moral climate…. They disembodied sexual practice by obscuring social realities, especially illegitimacy, in discursive abstractions. They concealed sexual crime, especially rape, infanticide, and abuse, while simultaneously sexualising the women and children unfortunate to fall victim to society's moral proscriptions." (Smith, 2007, p. 2).

Fig 29. Ryan, J. Great feats with dead ideals, 2015, installation.

The series of bed sheet prints developed different forms of depiction and display which extended the political content of the work. In a work entitled *Carriglea Shroud,* I printed an image of myself on a sheet to give a human shape, but a dehumanised one devoid of features and stripped of identity. This became a process of working, which I developed through installing sheets in a variety of locations, and contexts. I experimented with hanging prints on trees and derelict buildings; the sheets were tied up or crumpled to distort the image as a reference to broken bodies. The context of the site, such as the Carriglea industrial school, imported authentic historical content that confronted the trauma of the site.
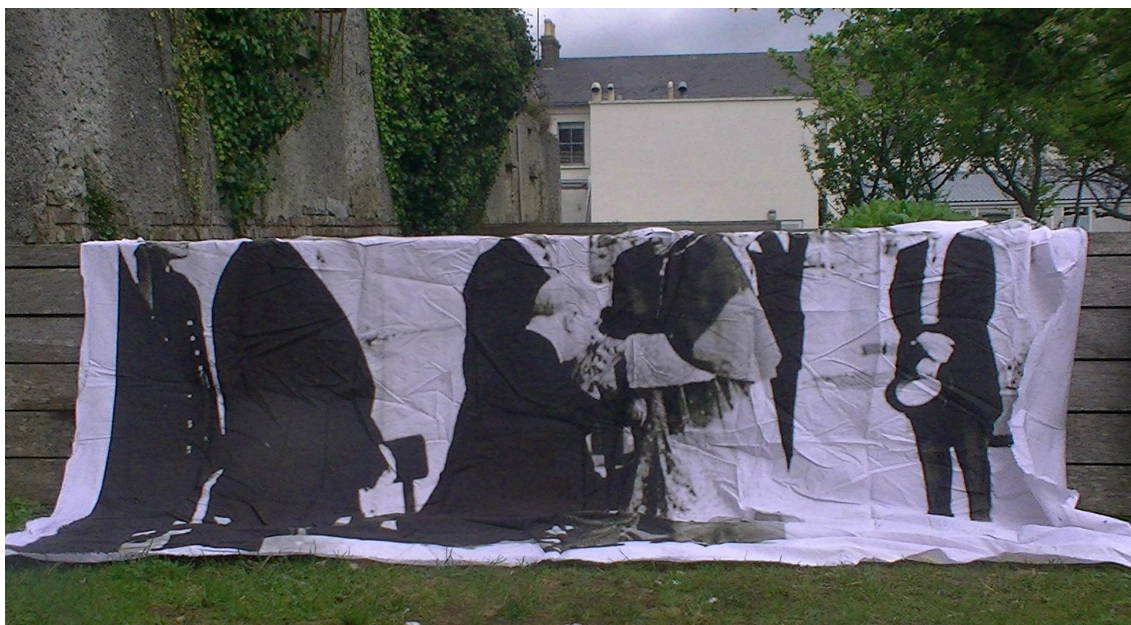
In experimenting with forms of display, I combined works together that I believed would reference one another and create a sense of unity out of ambiguity.

Cast Aside is a multiple artwork that displays a framed dress appearing dishevelled as if washed up on a beach. The work plays with themes of abandonment and evokes the idea of cleansing the sins of the past. Adjacent to the dress are placed two mono prints of Eamonn de Valera. The portraits signify a contextual history and induce a memory of one of the main orchestrators of containment in Ireland since the foundation of the state. The work endeavours to reflect his legacy on Irish politics of containment, and how successfully he dislocated himself from its long shadow, which continues its lasting effects on people to this day.
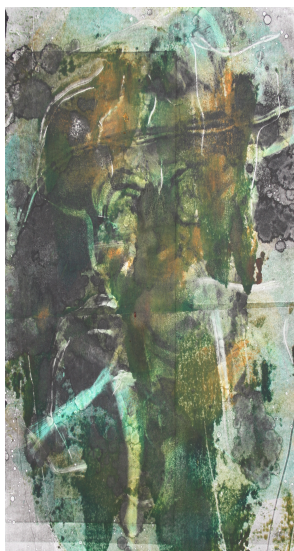

Fig 32. Ryan, J., To cast a long shadow, 2015, monoprint 67cms x 53cms.

Fig 33. Ryan, J., Cast Aside, 2015, dress, photographs, 95cms x 82cms.

Fig 34. Ryan, J., The long fellow, 2015, monoprint, 116cms x 44cms.

During my research I discovered Diane Fenster, an American artist who created an installation exploring similar territory. In *Secrets of the Magdalen Laundries* her installation attempted to restore identity to the women who lived there.
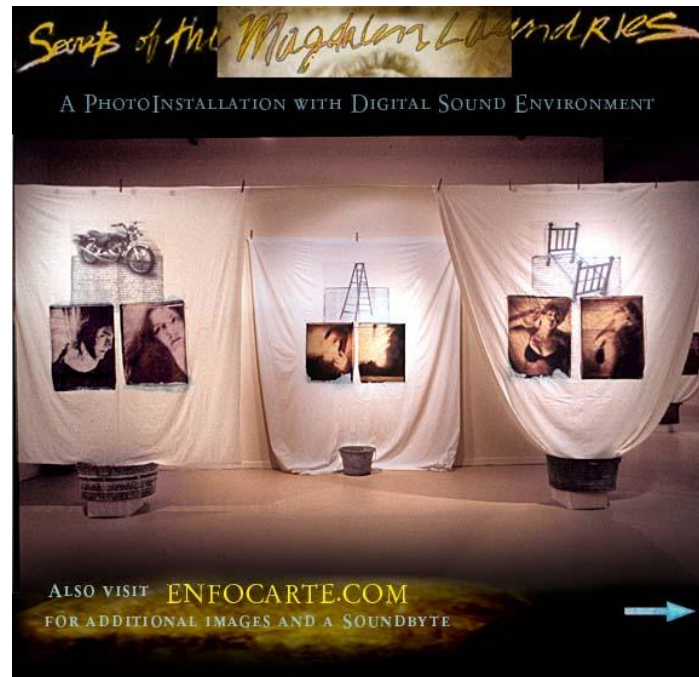

Fig 35. Fenster, D. Secrets of the Magdalen Laundries, 2000,
Installation.

In using sheets and buckets she subverted what would have been objects of oppression to the women, through their forced labour within the laundries. She printed blown up photographs of the women onto each sheet in a way reclaiming their identity while linking them to their symbolic captors. The work also acts as an intermediary, and recalls the presence of the unseen-working women. Fenster's bed sheets also had a ghostly effect as women's faces were blurred onto sheets reminiscent of old photographs. In printing women's faces on sheets Fenster brought transparency to the closed and secret world of the laundries.

Fenster's use of sheets as a medium gave me confidence to continue as I recognised the difference in application. Fenster emphasises the political representation of women, restoring their identity with use of photographic portraits. I concentrate on the body and its abuses as a metaphor for attacks

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on the connotations of purity and a medium for representing the effects of bio-political control on the person.

The work declares the systemic abuse "shrouded in a web of secrecy *and denial, thereby reinscribing the institution's punitive rather than rehabilitative function."(REF?)* It stresses the physical punishment of the women for their *"sexual transgressions while avoiding male culpability."* (REF?) It expresses empathy for the vulnerable women, and equally critiques the patriarchal collusion of church and state in an attempt to illicit a moral purity in the foundation of the national identity. James Smith (2007) writes:

Church and State negated the comprising realities of embodied sexual practice behind the walls of Ireland's mother and baby homes and Magdalen asylums which helped to constitute and to perpetuate the fiction of Irish cultural purity. (Smith, 2007, p.19).

In *The History of Sexuality, Vol 1,* Foucault writes about the transference of power from the sovereign who had power over death to bio-power – power over life. The king's two bodies, the biological and symbolic, were merged to form the nation state.

Bio-politics is the deconstruction of the kingship model of sovereignty. While bio-power marked a transition of power from a single person to the body of the populace, sovereign power retained symbolism in the nation state. It gave rise to a diffusion of power through different institutions, with their own hierarchies and rules but entangled as a single network.

Foucault defines bio-power in two categories: First, Individual-disciplining of the body by self-regulation or self-discipline. Second, a shared-regulatory system, that exerts methods to administer information, galvanising statistics, policies, and legislation, to censure a population. It chronicles the life of the individual and records birth, place of work, production, illness, and death. In his book *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, Foucault refers to *'…the explosion of*

numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of the population'. (1976, p.140).

Bio-power becomes a mechanism for control of an entire population by what he calls 'governing the administration of life Foucault's concept relates directly to the element of my project that crtiques the emerging Irish Free State concerned to protect Ireland's supposed high moral standards. The new government passed acts to ban material which could subvert morality, such as films, books, theatre and radio. Sex became a taboo subject, unspoken outside of marriage. Sexual repression emerged as a means of control under the guise of rehabilitation. Any transgressors of sexual morality, for example the illegitimate and prostitutes, were silenced and contained in public institutions. These institutions represented the bio-political paradigm of the state wielding totalitarian power ultimately resulting in the domination of the individual subject.

During further research, I discovered another artist impelled by personal experience of state domination. Gerard Mannix Flynn, is an Irish artist who creates socially engaged works with an added perspective: he had been an inmate of Letterfrack industrial school. This is reflected in his approach to a variety of other themes including human trafficking, banished babies, (babies were sold by nuns to couples abroad) and the deaths of children in the care of Irish State and Health Services.

In the work entitled *Forsaken,* Flynn turned the ground floor of a former office building into an evocation of the Magdalen laundries. He created a narrative using symbolic objects such as net curtains, crucifix, buckets, religious pictures and kindergarten school chairs. Flynn painted the entire space white to represent purity. He also used absence of people as a device to include the excluded in his work to represent the abandoned nameless occupants, the loss of identity of forgotten and marginalised people.

Flynn's methodology is to create a space for reflection on the sins of the Irish State. He accuses the state of forsaking its own women and children and implicates the Irish people in their desertion.

Fig 36. Flynn, G. Forsaken, 2014, installation.

In creative trials for the final Doctorate exhibition, I began compiling all elements of the project together into a multimedia installation. The experiments attempted to represent the insights and demonstrate the learning from both creative and theoretical research across the five years of Doctoral study. I wanted to create one single visionary installation of a contemporary continually monitoring carceral society, a self-perpetrating paranoid nightmare.

I mounted a combination of bed sheet prints, mono-prints, videos and paper cutout shadow projections in the space of the studio in an attempt to establish a dialogue across the different components and forms of display. The multiple artworks could be seen to test the logic of Foucault's Panopticon, each exploring an aspect of social injustice that determines our shared experience of the carceral structure of modernity. It is a nightmare vision characterised by the enchanted cast shadows evocative of a children's fairy tale.

These experiments drew on my earlier experiments in 2014/15 projecting shadow cutouts onto Dublin institutions….

I was interested in the way in which Kara Walker used projections of paper cut silhouettes to display the narrative of racial discrimination and exclusion. Through employing the stereotypes from slavery era and their rhetoric she confronted contemporary issues regarding inequality.

Within my project I created work revolving around the narrative of the social cleansing of a historical Victorian park, and its marginalised inhabitants. The work was constructed as paper cut silhouettes, which were then projected in series onto the fifteen metre high facade of the new Lexicon library.
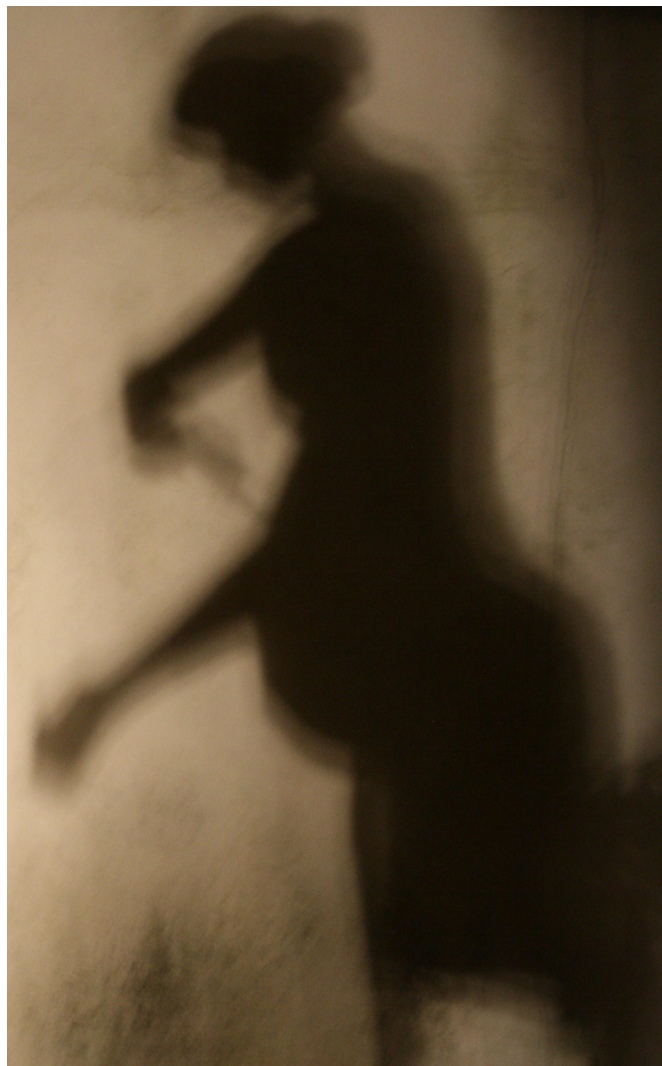

Fig 37. Ryan, J. Moran's Park 1, 2015, paper-cut projection.

The installation exploits a theatrical device of narrating the story through the eyes of a child. In *Cinema and the Realms of Enchantment, lectures, seminars and essays by Marina Warner and others*, Marina Warner (1993) writes:

This idea of the child as a witness and the person through whom we see, depends on a very long-established notion of the child's closer intimacy with the irrational and with fantasy. (Warner, 1993, pp. 38-39).

The paranoid panoptic vision re-forms the innocence of the fairy tale, creating menacing images of violence and mistrust seen through the eyes of the powerless.

Bruno Bettleheim (1991) in *The Uses of Enchantment: the meaning and importance of fairy tales* states:

The dominant culture wishes to pretend, particularly where children are concerned, that the dark side of man does not exist, and professes a belief in an optimistic meliorism. (Bettleheim, 1991, pp. 8-9).

Fig 38. Ryan, J. Moran's Park 2, 2015, paper-cut projection.

Flynn's work, like mine, confronts personal and collective trauma through empathy with the powerless. Thus it is in part a cathartic project, an Aristotelian tragedy of fear and pity played out in a public realm, evoking an empathic response on the part of the audience to the suffering of the characters, along with insight into the systems that control them. I believe that such social sharing through art can encourage social integration and strengthen collective core values.

Fig 39. Ryan, J. Memories (2013) digital print on poplin, 135cms x 200cms.

Professional Practice

When I reflect on my exhibitions over the Doctorate programme I realise that there are a number of key events that have informed my practice. My exhibition at Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (2012) located in buildings of the former Carriglea industrial school prompted me to think about using the structures and surrounding environments to stage my installations. Exhibiting on the grounds of historical former institutions influenced the reading of the work in this specific context and it also provided external stimuli that I had not considered before, for example different sounds, school children playing and birds singing. I started to think about how I could use these devices to inform the intentions within the work.

The Project *They've taken our Ghetto* (2015) started out as a project reflecting punks squatting in Manor House in the 1980s and developed into a collaboration involving artists, writers and musicians and the dialogue that followed between those involved resulted in a book and exhibition. This project provided me with an opportunity to diversify my working practice through representing regeneration as a mechanism of social control. It taught me about the collaboration and the exchange of ideas/concepts as a fertile ground for developing my own practice within groups and communities and the potential of diversifying beyond the gallery space.

I've had a number of small exhibitions at UEL which have allowed me to test out work in a temporary exhibition space. I've used these events to think about how to potentially present ideas or test out my intentions on the audience. My exhibition called *Temporal Space* in The Container Space in March 2016 functioned in this way. This exhibition provided a different context for displaying film while maximizing the use of space within a confined area as the space dictated the way in which work could be viewed. By placing a projector at one end of container I created a projection which covered the end wall and both side walls plus the ceiling, a panoramic effect in which the film surrounds t the viewer and creates the illusion that they are within a demolition site. The space

changed the formal quality of the film. The distortion and elongation of the image over the side walls and ceiling added a disturbing distortion to the work that surprised me. Although it was one film, it gave the impression of a multi-screen projection. I thought this could be a good test for possible use of projection in my final Doctorate Exhibition.

At a work in progress seminar on the 12th November 2015 I chose to show a large piece composed of six king-size duvet covers sewn together in the Lightwell Gallery at UEL. I was sceptical about showing the work as it was constructed in three sections and I had not seen the finished piece hanging yet. Originally I had planned for four king-size sheets but then changed it to six to achieve the portrait effect when painting the proposed Magdalen memorial garden plan. Although partly influenced by Maedbh McMahon's tapestry I intended to use paint, making it soak through to create a translucent piece with the uniform colours of a computer generated model (memorial garden plan) but with the inclusion of a superimposed head of Eamonn de Valera. I chose de Valera as one of the orchestrators of church and state confinement through his puritanical Catholic government of the 1920s which oversaw an expansion of the Magdalen laundry and Industrial school system. Within the piece I referenced the victims of confinement, the women and children printed from etchings onto smaller pieces of cut up sheets, which were interspersed and sewn over both sides of the work.

The piece marked a shift in practice. Because of its sheer size, the piece became an installation in itself instead of smaller sheets being displayed on a wall. On the day of the seminar it was so big it had to be hung landscape as it draped on the floor. On entering the Lightwell, the first thing I noticed was that it formed a wall across the Lightwell and dominated the space and acted as a partition which people had to walk around, and that although painted on material the paint had transformed the sheets into a rigid structure that gave the illusion of being solid. Although the smaller sheets could not be seen clearly as they were now hanging sideways, this added a new dimension as they resembled tears, even more so as some on back were placed over the

eyes of facial profile of Eamonn de Valera also it encouraged members of the group to open each one out to view the obscured image.

Fig 40. Ryan, J. 1982, corporal punishment banned in schools, 2015, paint on cotton.

This became a turning point, as members of the supervisory team had remarked earlier about links with architecture in my work, and suggested building a structure from large sheets, which people could go inside of and which could be used to house a multi projection. Although I had installed sheets outside and also used them as interventions within architectural structures, I had not thought of using the works to form a structure in themselves.

In 2012, I was invited to participate in a film chronicling the working practice of five artists set in a post *Celtic Tiger* recession. This film set out to challenge

myths about how artists live and work in a city. Paradoxically the film encountered problems at postproduction stage when it needed to be rendered for viewing on large screens. Due to high quotes from post production companies in Ireland and complex funding processes the film ended up being completed abroad and is due for release this year. Being involved in this film inspired me to develop the filmic aspect of my practice and I begin to incorporate film and video more into installations. I responded to the potential of the greater size of image that could be projected, and considered how in my life I have experienced the world through films and TV. Moving images could be used to create a historical family and cultural 'album.'

Solo Exhibitions

2016 Temporal Space, Container Space, Beckton, London.

2016 Washed Out, AVA Gallery, Beckton, London

2016 Cast Adrift, Mountmellick Gallery, Mountmellick, Co. Laois

2015 Storm Rising, EdUventure, Dun Laoghaire

Paintings, etchings, linocuts

2015 Great feats with dead ideals, The Reflectory Dun Laoghaire

Extallation, sheets and digital prints on tree

2015 Memoirs of the Damned, The Stables, Dun Laoghaire

Extallation on former workshops and stables

2015 The Word Became… Leixlip Gallery, Leixlip, Co. Kildare

Collage, mixed media, paper cuts

2015 To Cast a Long Shadow, Abbeyleix Gallery, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois

2014 The Great Unveiling of The White Elephant, Moran's Park, Dun Laoghaire. Projections on new library building.

2014 Dalkey, Archibald's Castle, Dalkey

Series of projections on castle wall

2014 Deconsecrated, Kill o the Grange.Paper cuts projected on former church

2014 Interwoven, Mountmellick Art Gallery, Laois

Linocuts, Monoprints

2014 The Withering, Artswell Iontas, Castleblaney, Co. Monaghhan

Paintings, etchings, monoprints

2013, Re Pressed, Abbeyleix Gallery, Co. Laois

Paintings, etchings, monoprints

2013 Seriatim, Ennistymon Courthouse Gallery, Co. Clare

Series of twelve etchings

2013 From Here to Letterfrack, Atrium, IADT Dun Laoghaire

Installation of eleven mixed media works

2013 The Return, Chapel, Iadt, Dun Laoghaire

Installation of eleven mixed media works

2013 Silence, Carriglea, Dun Laoghaire

Videos shown at various locations

2013 Unspoken, Signal Arts Centre, Bray, Co. Wicklow, etchings

2012 Habitat, The Cockleshell Gallery, New Ross, Wexford , paintings

2012 Leixlip Gallery, Leixlip, C. Kildare

2011 Squelch, Abbeyleix Gallery, Co. Laois

2011 Cataclasm, Meubles Gallery, Kilkenny

2011 Si Post Fata Venit Gloria Non Propero, The Empress Gallery, Belfast,N.I.

2011 Septic Isle, Mountmellick Gallery, Co. Laois

2011 Rebellion, the Pavillion, Blackpool, Series of large paintings and etchings

Joint Exhibitions

2012 Ultra Vires, Graphic Studio Gallery with Tracey Sweeney

Group Exhibitions

2016 Thou Art Dublin (cast and crew screening) Irish Film Institute, Dublin

2016 Postcard 1916, Clones Art Studios, Co. Monaghan

2016 EP '16, Galway Print Studio, Galway

2016 Lessedra 15th World Art print Annual, Sofia, Bulgaria.

2016 36th Mini Print International of Cadaques, Spain.

2016 International Mini Print Biennial, Seacourt Centre for Contemporary Printmaking, Bangor, N.I.

2016 2nd Jogja Miniprint Biennale, Bank Indonesia Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2016 1st TKO International Miniprint Exhibition, Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Japan

2016 Urbis Felicitas, Mountjoy Square

2016 Untitled, Mok Gallery, Debica, Poland

2016 4th Bienniel International Print Exibition, Wharepuke, New Zealand

2015 Your Work Here, Saatchi Gallery London

2015, Greetings, from a Distant Land, Brooklyn Art Library, New York, U.S.

2015 Moda Fashion, International Miniart, Brazil

2015 Trasna 5, Courthouse Gallery, Ennistymon, Co. Clare

2015 Clare Notebooks 2015, Red Couch Space, Courthouse Gallery, Ennistymon, Co. Clare

2015 They've Taken our Ghettos, Craving Coffee, Gaunson House, Tottenham

2015 They've Taken our Ghettos, Spanish Rooms, Winter Gardens, Blackpool

2015 Mind the Gap, Harry Clarke Gallery, NCAD, Dublin

2015 5th Guanlan International Print Biennial, China

2015 35th Mini Print International of Cadaques, Spain.

2015 Lessedra 14th World Art Print Annual, Sofia, Bulgaria.

2015 Orange, Green Pea Press, Alabama, U.S.

2015 6 x 6, Rochester Contemporary Art Center, Rochester, New York.

2015 Homelessness Awareness Exhibition, DCU Business School, Glasnevin, Dublin

2014 Dalkey Art Expo, Our Ladys Hall, Dalkey

2014 Monomyth, The Workmans Club, Dublin

2014 Lessedra 5th Annual Painting and Mixed Media Competition, Sofia, Bulgaria

2014 34th Cadaques Mini Print International

2014 Green Pea Press International Print Exchange, Lowe Mill, Huntsville, Alabama, U.S.

2014 5th International Biennale juried exhibition of Miniature Prints, OSA Main gallery, Ottawa, Canada

2014 13th Lessedra World Print Annual, Sofia, Bulgaria

2014 International Open Mini Print Exhibition, Seacourt Print Workshop, Bangor, N.I.

2014 20th International Miniart Exchange Ideal, Cultural Space Galeria Dique, Porto Alegre, Brazil

2014 1st Jogja Miniprint Biennale, Bank Indonesia Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2014 An Immotive War Journey, Tactic Gallery, Cork

2014 Kildare Artist Notebook Project, Library Foyer, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Co. Kildare

2014 A Book About Death, The Royal Cambrian Academy, Conwy, Wales

2014 6x6x14, Rochester Contemporary Art Center, New York

2014 A Natural Selection, Galleri Astley, Uttersberg, Sweden

2014 A Natural Selection, Royal Dublin Society, Dublin

2014 A Natural Selection, The Lavit Gallery, Cork

2014 Interim Exhibition, AVA, UEL

2014 Firehose Film Contest, Mart Gallery, Dublin

2014 Postcards, ARTspace, Ontario, Canada

2013, AOPE, Walkersville, Windsor, Canada

2013 A Natural Selection, Botanic Gardens, Dublin

2013 A Natural Selection, Greenacres Gallery, Wexford

2013 3rd Biennial International Print Exhibition, Wharepuke, New Zealand

2013 ARTspace Original International Print 2013, Ontario, Canada

2013 10 Days in Dublin Festival, Smock Alley, Dublin

2013 18th International Mini Print Exchange, Brazil

2013 33rd Mini Print International, Cadaques, Spain

2013 12th Lessedra World Print Annual, Sofia, Bulgaria

2013 4th Annual Painting and Mixed Media International Exhibition, Sofia, Bulgaria

2013 KRF 1 Artist Notebook Project, Droicead Arts Centre, Co. Louth

2013 SCOOP Art Auction, Filmbase, Dublin

2012 Ranelagh Arts Festival, Ranelagh Arts Centre, Dublin

2012 Signal Arts Society, Signal Arts Centre, Bray, Co. Wicklow

2012 32nd Mini Print Internacional, Cadaques, Spain

2012 16th International Miniart Exchange, Centro Ciltural Francisco Paco Urondo, Buenos Aires, Argentina

2012 15th International Miniart Exchange, Belfast Waterfront, N.I.

2012 100-100 Graphic Studio Gallery, Dublin

2012 11th Lessedra World Print Art Annual, Sofia, Bulgaria

2012 CatDig Arts Festival, Limerick

2012 Skibbereen Arts Festival, Co. Cork

2012 KRF 1 Artist Notebook Project, Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge, Co. Kildare

2012 6x6x2012, Rochester Contemporary Art Center, New York

2011 Drawing Connections, Sienna Art Institute, Italy

2011 Open Your Drawers, Distillary House, Dublin

2011 I Love Music, Merrion School of Music, Dublin

2011 Enterfullscreen, South Studios, Dublin

2011 31st Mini Print Internacional, Cadaques, Spain

2011 Contemporary Art and the Moving Image, The Empress Gallery, Belfast.

2011 Contemporary Art and the Moving Image, Galway Arts Centre, Galway.

2011 Contemporary Art and the Moving Image, Dublin Film Festival.

2011 War on Want, Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast.

2011 Group Show, Croi Anu Creative Centre, Kildare.

2011 Steve Ignorant's: The Last Supper, U.S.A, Canada, Japan, U.K., Denmark, Holland, Finland, Germany, Poland, photographs and visuals for projection during concerts

Conclusion

The period of Doctorial study has created a space to reflect upon my creative practice. I have reassessed and appropriately transformed an earlier well-rehearsed practice due to the rigour and involvement of the programme. The intellectual doctorial community has provided both the creative space and conceptual motivation; this has allowed me to position my experience within the philosophical tradition of Foucault and the history of artistic activism.

The period of study has helped me clarify what underpinned the theory and context of my work. These outcomes have been realised as a number of definitive points named within the conclusive text.

Initial works at the beginning of the doctorate programme such as the "Ultra Vires", series were fuelled by anger and feelings of isolation and helplessness due to my involvement with the family law courts in Ireland and the injustice I perceived. This experience though painful at the time initiated an enquiry to challenge the seemingly incontestable machinery of the State. Through recognising the intricate links between the different professions and offices and how they act independently from one another and together they form the power structure of the court.

This experience led to researching Foucault, whose theories of the carceral and bio-politics provided the project with a framework. Foucault applied the panoptic vision to contemporary political systems emphasising continual surveillance. Its acquired knowledge is adopted and employed throughout society as a means of controlling the population which includes the Irish court system and educational institutions such as the industrial schools.

The artists I chose which included Diane Fenster, Paul Noble and William Kentridge helped me develop beyond the personal and to a position of shared empathy. Each artists practice in their own capacity became exemplars of creative activism all employing alternatives to the system of authority that we all cohabit.

The Industrial schools of Ireland became instrumental in the development of my doctorial project which analysed the structures of incarceration and the impelling force of political authority.

Throughout the doctorate I became immersed in a process of self-reflection and the constant interrogation of work .I examined subjects, methods of production and possibly forms installation. This proved invaluable allowed me critically distance providing objectivity to the project.

Firstly the work in progress seminars gave me a way in which to evaluate multiple directions and possible outcomes in the development and production of artworks. Feedback generated by the supervisory team and peers helped me to analyse my practice by taking a step back from my work and question it through constant critiquing and self-reflection. I took full advantage of the bookable exhibiting spaces (AVA Gallery, Lightwell and Container space) at UEL and these opportunities became significant in developing strategies for assimilating different strands of practice into the possible potential of a coherent multi faceted installation.

Alongside developing work in the gallery spaces I have taken opportunities to exhibit outside the white cube. I experimented with installing work in the grounds of institutions that had inherent content within the work. This experience forced me to think about the context of the site and how this dynamic adds power to the installations by invoking the historical context of the work.

 I feel now that my work acts as an exorcism not only of my personal demons but that I have attempted to give a voice to those who have not had the opportunity to speak for themselves. I have attempted to articulate the sins of a nation through making transparent its macabre secretive history. In conclusion the doctorate fostered and infused into my working practice a creative and intellectual dynamic, which I will now instil into future projects.

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