

Brian O'Doherty, Joe Stanley, Christina Kennedy

Hello, Sam

2011

Mixed media installation

Dimensions variable

With Jota Castro, Anthony Cronin, Eoin O'Brien, Michael Colgan.

Walkers:

Lead walker: Catherine Giltrap

Last man: Fergus Byrne

Last woman: Amanda Ralph

Other walkers:

Joan Somers Donnelly, Dave Donoghue, Jennifer Duignam, Rosalia Gómez, Carolyn Kelly, Hilary Murray, Tadas Leon, Macdara Molloy.

Hello, Sam is an installation specially made for Dublin Contemporary by the team of Brian O'Doherty, Joe Stanley and Christina Kennedy.

Circling around themes of death, resurrection, mourning and celebration, the complex mixed-media work has as its main visual focus a suspended effigy, framed by a skeletal rectangle made of rope. The black effigy's bog-like roughness introduces intimations of past time. At the corners of the enclosing rectangle, soaring lines search out the highest points of the room in which the figure is doubly enclosed. Above the figure, a single light-bulb illuminates the darkened room.

Four stations, each marked by a low-light bulb, introduce the next phase of the work. Four chairs face into each corner. The visitor, sitting in the chair, faces a coloured board on which a head-phone hangs. A spoken text is looped at each station. The speakers, Jota Castro, Michael Colgan, Anthony Cronin and Eoin O'Brien, all of whom knew Samuel Beckett subscribe to a single 'conceit': that Beckett is still alive and is on the other end of the phone. Thus the 'Hello, Sam'. We all, say the artists, speak to our dead, and in that way bring them to a version of suspended life. The speakers share experiences, touch the mystery of Beckett's enigma, and in this way annotate and animate the anonymous horizontal figure.

The third component of the work is an intermittent performance by cowled figures who circulate in sequential patterns around the work, pausing and starting at assigned places, 'binding' the suspended figure in concentric motion. For the first week of the eight-week exhibition, eight figures will perform, diminishing by one each week, until finally a single figure circulates alone through the gallery. These 'walkers' are both witnesses, celebrants and mourners, engaging time through repetition to create an imagined no-place which is shared with the visitor.

The work attempts to engage the myth of Beckett's persona, as well as the mystery of his work, by staging a situation which calls on the viewer's imaginative participation and 'willing suspension of disbelief'.

Performance schedule:

3pm Saturdays from 17th September to 29th October

3pm Tuesdays Fergus Byrne performs a choreography as devised by the artists

For further information about Brian O'Doherty see

Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland: *Between Categories* by Brenda Moore McCann, Lund Humphries, 2009. ISBN 9781848220140 (available in NGI bookshop).