

Propagate



Catalyst Arts

3–18 October 2020

How do ideas grow?

Propagate was a public programme of workshops and events, in the gallery, off-site and online, organised by Catalyst Arts. The facilitators included Nollaig Molloy, Niamh Seana Meehan, Suzanne Walsh, Kevin Breathnach and an evening of poetry by *The Tangerine* with poets Padraig Regan, Stephen Sexton and Zosia Kuczyńska.

Collaboration, writing and performance were the thematic seeds of this programme. This cross-disciplinary approach resulted in a unique sharing of knowledge, as the selected participants for the three workshops explored and played with these ideas, creating a platform for dissemination. The *Propagate* programme allowed for a creative exchange and cultivated new ways of working within an art practice. Seeds were sown and ideas became rooted.

This programme was supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Art Fund.

Cite

Nollaig Molloy

3–4 October

Workshop

Over a period of two days artist Nollaig Molloy, together with participants, explored practical and conceptual discussions about traditional, living and personal archives. While carrying out offsite and in-house activities, the group created an archive of a disused site within the locality of Catalyst Arts, Belfast; an area going through change, urban development and planning, affecting the arts and culture, heritage, housing, transport and social spaces.

With this in mind, participants collated artefacts, objects of interest and text-based discoveries while documenting the selected site through a range of mediums. In conversations it was discussed: What is an archive? Why is one object/document/photograph of value over another? How is an archive built? Who decides what is preserved? All the while thinking about the subjectivity of

archival material, the care and haptics of its contents and the systems of researching and working with archives. The collected materials was compiled and the group collaborated to create a zine-style publication which has been added to the Catalyst Arts archive.

Nollaig Molloy biography

Nollaig Molloy is a visual artist who explores materials from specific sites, looking at their relevance in historical, social and industrial situations while also working collaboratively. She uses video, animation and sculptural installation. She is interested in the idea of a 'material-to-hand' and draws attention to traditional and craft based techniques in contemporary contexts. She works through modes of in-depth research and engages with formal and informal archives, environments and people from communities-of-interest. Allowing a focus on the interplay between material, people and their surroundings. She will exhibit at The MAC, Belfast as part of the forthcoming Belfast College of Art, MFA Degree Show.













Zine

Participants

Ben Malcolmson

Katrina Valentine Tracuma

Susan Hughes

Matthew Wilson

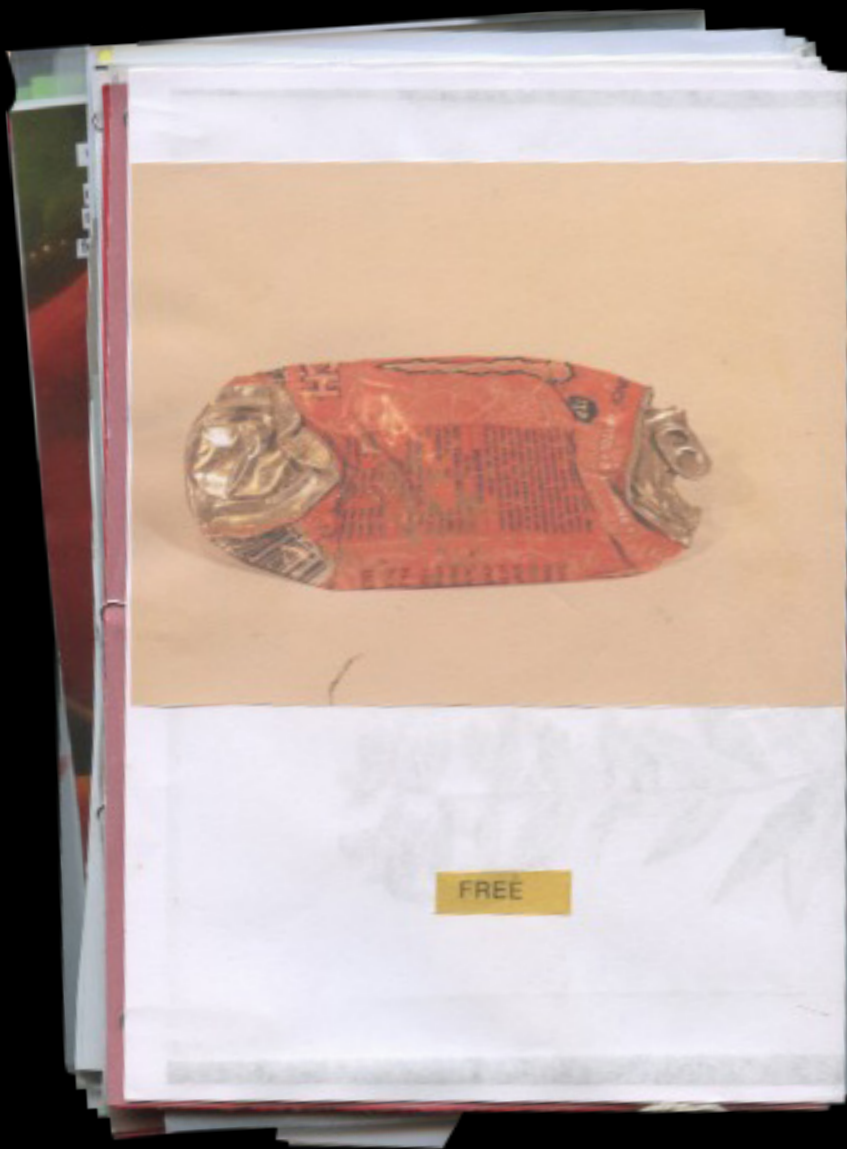
Jane Butler

Catalyst Co-directors

Manuela Moser

Leah Corbett

Jen Alexander





Two
Sto
PORTER
COTTE
The
The next week I wore a shadow of a bruise on my neck made from this
Tox
fall aw
necks
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I seem to have been here before

Niamh Seana Meehan

12 October

This one day performance workshop led by visual artist Niamh Seana Meehan explored the shaping of language and its relationship to the landscape. Framed around Meehan's research of Samuel Beckett, *How Is It*, the text was read, decompiled and performed—and looked at the ways performing text can be physical, tangible and public.

Samuel Beckett's *How It Is* from a stylistic point of view is devoid of punctuation. The text(s) compile units of breath, fragmented language that should be read aloud. The units of text(s) are made up of false starts, waits, self-corrections, interruptions, pauses and repetition. The narrator's voice or voices are searching for the word that fits. *How It Is* portrays a sense of un-doing, having fragments of rumbled notes that Beckett invites the reader to shape.

The event focused on the shape of the words, dissecting them, paying close attention to the muscle movement and how we shape our mouths to form the words. Our mouths become tools, like in space they twist and turn. Each participant was given a pocket notebook and pen to document their process, questions or uncertainties. Voice recorders recorded the conversations and reading processes. This workshop presented the participant with an opportunity to reflect, think and question reading, language and self-writing. The participant encountered language and in their own words responded to encountering Beckett's text. Do they hear different voices, different meanings? What does it mean to read a text? Does that change when you read it backwards? Does reading allow you to enter a space of freedom? How does that change your physical space?

Niamh Seana Meehan is a visual artist who lives and works in Ireland. Her practice is a composition of performative readings, sound, text-based installations, writing projects and conversations based on the slippages involved within the translation of thought to text. Her practice investigates the unknowability of language, the messiness of language and how language has the potential to become visual, performative and moveable. To create sub-language, metanarrative or language that spills onto the other page. Moving in and out of her own practice, she creates characters that live in spaces of self-reflection, self-reference and moments of doubt. The characters are often found standing on an edge of a line, questioning their existence.

The research component within Meehan's practice examines specific concepts that manifest in the work of Samuel Beckett, such as; ambiguity, nothingness, uncertainty, the unknown, failure and waiting. Immersed in a pirouetting act of encountering the work of Samuel Beckett and writing characters based on the encounter. She re-read's the characters and based on those readings, creates new characters. This self-reflective and self-referential process of working informs Art Writing as a methodology.

Workshop

Participants

Michael John Daly

Conan McIvor

Brennagh Meehan

Leoni Hill

Amanda Hunt

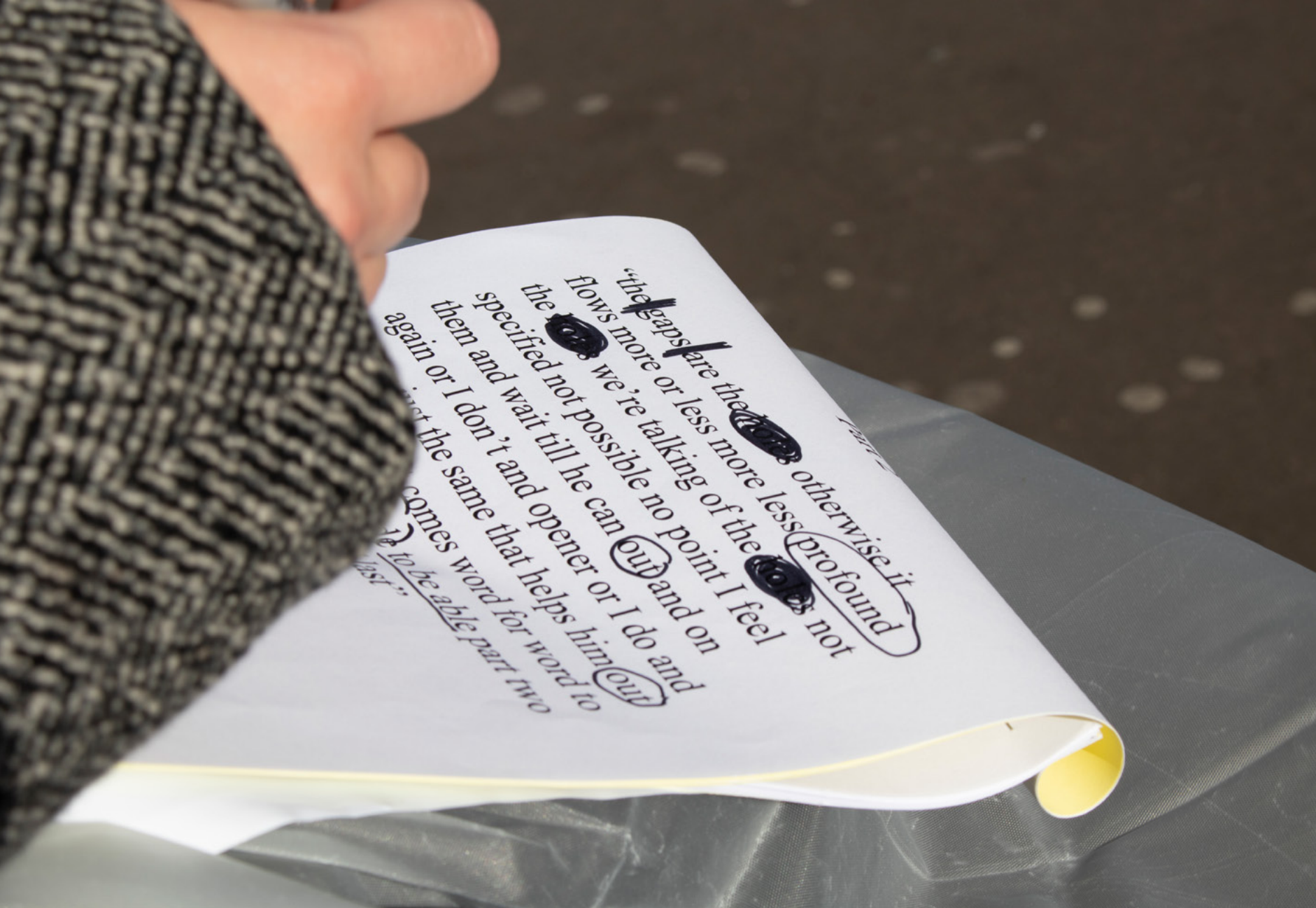
Siobhán Kelly

Mairead Delaney

Catalyst Co-Director

Emma Brennan

Thomas Wells









Writing in an Art Practice

Suzanne Walsh, *The Tangerine*,

Kevin Breathnach

10–17 October

Suzanne Walsh,
The Tangerine,
Kevin Breathnach

Suzanne Walsh facilitated an online workshop on writing in an art practice, and the different ways in which this manifests, such as art criticism, publishing and performance. Reading a text for a lecture, artist talk or performance can be transformed with some oratorical attention. Suzanne presented on the importance of text within her own art practice and how her writing has become cross disciplinary.

Suzanne Walsh biography

Suzanne Walsh is a writer and artist from Wexford, currently based in Dublin. She uses performative lectures, audio/musical performances and text-based work to query ideas around human/non-human relationships, and consensus reality, often drawing on the scientific world as well as more esoteric sources. This work also serves as a critique of value systems, as well as testing the mutability of identity. She explores performativity and delivery through acting, vocalisation and recitation, with video, audio recordings and photography, in addition.

Writing is also important, and she has published essays, reviews and poetry in publications including CIRCA, Fallowmedia, gorse journal, and Winter Papers, as well as commissioned texts by institutions and artists/curators. She has performed and shown/read work at galleries and festivals

including Galerie Michaelastock Vienna, TENT Rotterdam, Phoenix Institute Brighton, IMMA, The Model Gallery Sligo, Between. Pomiedzy Poland, and she will be taking part in Tulca 2020.



Lazarus Lingua

With reference to a variety of literary examples of estrangement from language, from Hildegard of Bingen's mystical *Lingua Ignota*; to Raymond Roussel's proto-mechanical *procés*; through to the author's own method, developed in his most recent work *Morphing*, this workshop explored strategies with which a writer might escape their own language—its grammar, syntax, even vocabulary—so as to write it anew, with no apparent sense or subject, deformed to the point of beauty/ugliness.

Kevin Breathnach is a writer from Dublin. His work has appeared in the *Dublin Review*, *Winter Papers*, *The Tangerine*, *The Stinging Fly*, *gorse*, *Fallow Media*, *Source*, *the New Inquiry*, *Granta* and elsewhere. His first book, *Tunnel Vision*, was published in 2019 by Faber and Faber. In 2020, he released a poetry pamphlet, *Morphing*, with the Lifeboat Press.



'It was there on the platform that I saw him...'

Writing from participants

Participants

Fiona Nicholson

Michaela Nash

Catalyst Co-Director

Rachel Botha

Tara McGinn

Do not crush

A glimpse
of the forest awakening.
Do not crush
the damp soil, softening after winter.
None more joyful
than new beings — who spring from the Earth.

Then
a cavern shielded from light.
Then
a hidden creek discovered.
The earth trodden, a path forged.
A place; sacred, safe — polluted, other.

The world's kin is cold
 The disappearing wall collects together quotes
 Constituent waves built our
 wonder once you let it be
 submitted from countries across Europe. These
 will. Continue, continue,
 lit by careful ellipses/ The
 quotes are translated into the host country's
 here is no future for the
 trivia sees its easy, the
 language and inscribed onto wooden blocks, where
 people of europe.
 visitor sees its high brittle
 they are publically installed inside of a perspex grid. /Furthest wrist/ Heat is the
 keys and nights/Freedom
 they are publically installed inside of a perspex grid. shortest reach from one
 pulls freedom from time
 The public is invited to take a block home. By
 person to another/the
 choosing a block, you have unknowingly made a
 bridge between notions/
 It rises differently/ rustle/
 connection with another person. They may be miles
 the muddled wane
 the world lies between
 away from you and speak another language, but you
 people and ruptures,
 have both drawn from the same well of meaning and
 We see in different
 nurture into meditative
 connected through these words. The piece connects
 tongues/encourage our
 completion its unity/
 individuals from across the landmass of Europe,
 world existence/ give our
 Diverse helix under the
 through this shared meaning. Poignant and pertinent,
 world its hues
 will/ grittier than the sun's
 hearts/No wonder to be it reminds us of the shared culture and experiences
 phosphorescent waiting/.
 silent without someone/
 from which we draw. Culture is perpetually in flux and
 strengthened by the movement of people, races,
 Racism tills continuation of
 Locked up liberties if you
 ethnicities and cultures across borders. The wall
 prejudice predisposed in
 like: but here there is no
 collects each quote into a text, a literal 'tissue of
 power/which point is your
 grit, no lock no bolt, you
 quotations',¹ as is language itself. When the public
 circumference of history
 can walk down upon torn
 freedoms of my mind/ In
 chooses a block, this cultural fabric or 'tissue' grows
 which bothers the
 this deepest/noblest/
 by being dispersed through their bodies. keep your dissonance,
 bondcatching connection/
 The piece is fullest when empty. When the sun
 light
 move here, see beyond
 people in one in other: to
 fragments the shadows of visitors into multitudes on
 wish becomes a thing/
 the bare wall, and these new forms blend into the
 forget old weather/
 shadows of others. These kaleidoscopic forms mirror
 the spread of meaning and culture through others.
 Old brittle bridges between
 you and me/never far/ We
 The piece is complete when the quotes have
 break the shutters/
 disappeared and been dispersed through people. It
 reflects how we are not isolated individuals but
 composites of many others, who all draw from a
 culture in flux and lend to its life.

¹ 'The Death of the Author', published in Image-Music-Text, R.Barthes, 1987

The above poem has been created using quotes
 posted online from 'The Disappearing Wall' installation.
 It has been edited using Kevin Breathnach's Morphing technique.

The artwork was installed at Titanic Slipway, Belfast from
 September to November 2020. Compiled by Michaela Nash

The Tangerine

The Tangerine and Catalyst Arts presented an evening of online readings with poets Padraig Regan, Stephen Sexton and Zosia Kuczyńska on the relationship between text and image. These poets expand the idea of 'ekphrasis', that is, writing in response to visual source materials, by taking their cues from reproductions, video games, installations and other sources beside painting and photography. They also ask questions about how we engage with art, bodily, emotionally and intellectually.

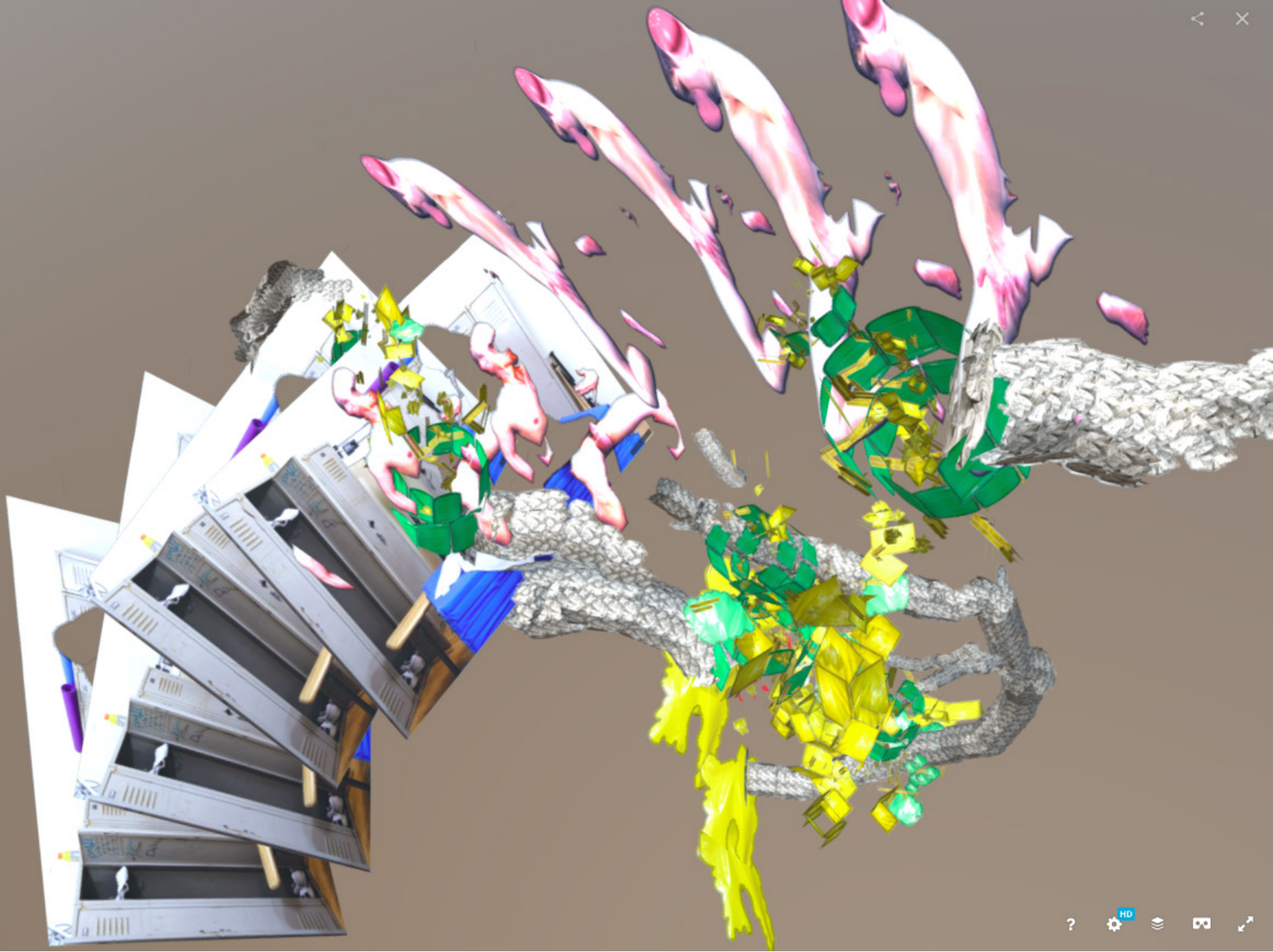
When the speaker in Louis MacNeice's poem 'Snow' peels and portions a tangerine, they are struck by 'the drunkenness of things being various'. *The Tangerine* is also concerned with 'things being various', and seeks to provide a space for a plurality of voices: for new creative work, thoughtful discussion, and critical engagement with culture and politics in Belfast and beyond. In addition to providing a platform for new writers of poetry and short fiction, we publish work with a journalistic focus. We hope that by focusing on publishing long form work, we can allow our writers the scope to investigate our current cultural and political climate in depth. Our aim is to offer fresh and meaningful insights into a variety of subjects: from art to music, architecture to the environment, whether through memoir, essays or criticism.

Above all, we are eager to give emerging writers the chance to have their work published; it is vital to us that new voices are heard. We hope you'll find something of interest between our pages. We look forward to you peeling them open.

Susan Sontag's essay 'Against Interpretation' ends with the now famous dictum 'In place of a hermeneutics, we need an erotics of art'. In my poems, I'm interested in exploring what this erotics might look like. Although left deliberately vague in Sontag's essay, this erotics of art will involve a way of engaging with art that is open to affective and bodily responses to the form of an artwork, rather than an intellectual engagement with its 'content'. I am also interested in how art works are framed, which seems to me an important spatial consideration. In her book *Four Sides Full*, Vona Groarke writes about the frame as a boundary between the imagined space of the artwork and the space in which our bodies move. I began with a pair of poems responding to still-lives by Juan Sanchez Cotán, which display their objects inside a representation of a frame within the physical frame of the canvas. In these poems,

I was trying to enumerate the objects in the picture according to the logic that the picture's composition suggests; trying to follow the path the eye travels in the imagined pictorial space. I then read a piece responding to Lindsey Seer's 'Letter Picture' collages, works whose frames are often ruptured, bringing into question the division between the real and the imagined. I finished with a poem about a work by the young Irish artist Kian Benson Bailes. Bailes is a sculptor, who has made a number of works using 3D imaging software. His practice confounds the spatial thinking implicit in ekphrasis (writing about visual works): his work is sculptural, it exists in three-dimensional space, but a very different three-dimensional space than our bodies.

Padraig Regan is a contributing editor at *The Tangerine*. They are the author of two poetry pamphlets: *Delicious* (Lifeboat Press, 2016) and *Who Seemed Alive & Altogether Real* (The Emma Press, 2017). In 2015, they were a recipient of an Eric Gregory Award. They hold a PhD on creative-critical and hybridised writing practices from the Seamus Heaney Centre, Queen's University Belfast.



The Tangerine, Zosia Kuczyńska

Zosia Kuczyńska read extracts from a book-length sequence, *The Gift Shop Elegies*. Blending essayistic prose poems and ekphrastic, elegiac fragments based on art postcards, the pieces explored ideas around remembrance through the reproduction of images in the context of a grieving process.

Zosia Kuczyńska is the author of *Pisanki* (The Emma Press, 2017). Her poems have appeared in *The White Review*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, and *The Tangerine*. She is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at University College Dublin, where she specialises in the literary archives of playwright Brian Friel.

Vincent van Gogh 1853-1890 *A crab on its back*
Arles, Autumn 1888, oil on canvas, 38 × 47 cm
Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

When Stephen Sexton was young, video games were a way to slip through the looking glass; to be in two places at once; to be two people at once. In these poems about the death of his mother, this moving, otherworldly narrative takes us through the levels of *Super Mario World*, whose flowered landscapes bleed into our world, and ours, strange with loss, bleed into it. His remarkable debut is a daring exploration of memory, grief and the necessity of the unreal.

Stephen Sexton's first book, *If All the World and Love Were Young* was the winner of the Forward Prize for Best First Collection in 2019 and the Shine/Strong Award for Best First Collection. He is the 2020 recipient of the E.M. Forster Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was the winner of the National Poetry Competition in 2016 and the recipient of an Eric Gregory Award in 2018. He teaches at the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry at Queen's University, Belfast.



A note on the design

Our design for *Propagate* explored the programme theme of ideas spreading. We were interested in how ideas are coherent points synthesised from disparate information. We were also interested in how once they are disseminated people abstract and reshape ideas.

We researched a way of visualising the synthesis and spread of ideas. Each section of the program explores a different method of disseminating ideas—*Cite* explores archives, *I seem to have been here before* explores performance, and *Writing in an Art Practice* explores the written word. We found books that related to each of these methods. For example for *Cite*, we chose a book on the history of archives (*Archives in the Ancient World*).

We then used text mining software to analyse each of these texts. Text mining is the method of extracting information from a text document.

For example it can be used to map word frequency or identify patterns in sentences and then give this analysis as numerical information.

This generated three columns of numerical data for each text. This allowed us to place the data into a 3D graphing software (using each column of data for the X, Y, and Z axis). We assigned each section of the program a different coloured graph—for example for *Cite* we used a blue graph. For the overall identity of *Propagate* we combined the three graphs for each section.

The typography used came from research into the Catalyst archives. Drawing from the design for Exchange Resources in 1995 we used Folio Light, a light san serif.

For the imagery used in this online publication we blurred the graphs to show the dissemination of the ideas from the exhibition after it had taken place.

Art Fund_



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