

CHAPTER 7

VISUAL ARTS

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VISUAL ARTS

INTRODUCTION

We recommend that teachers devote one class to chapter one, human rights exercises, before they embark on this chapter. Each separate class or exercise has clearly outlined aims, objectives, length and NCCA key skills. We have also highlighted the material needed for each class or exercise. All handouts referenced in the classes can be found in the handout section at the end of this chapter.

ART AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The intersection between art and the social and political sphere is rich in history. At its core art is about true freedom. Art is the unbridled ability for expression and free speech. Art affords the artist the unique ability to register the horror of an event, in a way that statistics cannot. Its function is to remain forever as a reminder that this inhumanity or injustice occurred. Contemporary artists gain inspiration from the world around them, from the everyday or from society as a whole. Eleanor Roosevelt when drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights spoke of human rights as being everywhere, in the local community and in the wider community...

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world”¹

Eleanor Roosevelt, Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, 1958

The artistic process involves the artist engaging with the world around them and thereby a natural relationship emerges as human rights concerns and abuses occur in that space.

¹ Eleanor Roosevelt, Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, 1958.

OVERALL AIM OF THE SECTION

Students will critically engage with visual art that looks at human rights issues and improve their communications skills through creatively engaging with it.



Robert Ballagh and Presentation Secondary School, Warrenmount, *Voice Our Concern* Artwork 2006, © Amnesty International



Dominic Thorpe and St. Mary's Secondary School Edenderry, *Voice Our Concern* Artwork 2006, Ballymun, © Amnesty International

CLASS 1

VOICE OUR CONCERN ART PROJECTS

AIM

Students will engage with human rights inspired art made by previous *Voice Our Concern* artists.

OBJECTIVES

Students will have

- Studied previous *Voice Our Concern* art projects;
- Used art as a means to communicate how they engage with human rights issues;
- Responded creatively to research conducted on human rights.



NCCA KEY SKILLS

Information processing, being personally effective, communication, critical and creative thinking.

MATERIAL NEEDED

Case studies from Nick Miller's and Coláiste Mhuire, Ballymote art projects and Dominic Thorpe's and St. Mary's Secondary School, Edenderry (handout section 7.1, pg 174).

Art notebook or journal.



LENGTH

Full Class



Dominic Thorpe and St. Mary's Secondary School Edenderry, *Voice Our Concern* Artwork 2006, Ballymun, © Amnesty International

STEPS:

1. Handout the case studies from previous *Voice Our Concerns* art projects (handout section 7.1, pg 174);
2. Ask the class to read the two case studies;
3. Initiate a discussion using the Dominic Thorpe discussion questions;

Discussion

- Ask the students what issues do you think these images above might represent. Remember to remind the class, as Dominic Thorpe did, that there is no wrong answer to this question and that when it comes to art and what it represents everyone can have an opinion, even if it different to what the artist had in mind when creating it. Art is open-ended and metaphorical in its nature;
 - The most important things in this exercise, according to Dominic, are sincerity and imagination;
4. To help the students develop their artistic ideas, ask the students to participate in the *Stream Of Consciousness* activity:

Stream Of Consciousness

- Separate the students so that they can work individually;
- Have students do a three minute *Stream Of Consciousness* – writing continually for three minutes without removing their pen from the paper, on their emotions and thoughts on a specific issue (e.g. the death penalty) or on the right that the students decided was most important in the Rights Boat activity above;
- Reconvene and have students volunteer to share their thoughts on the chosen issue/ right. Jot down major ideas and issues on the board as students speak.

Research

Ask students to concentrate on one article from the UDHR that they are keen to research. Advise students to look at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, at www.imma.ie; Art for Humanity, www.afh.org, or other websites try to get an idea of how other artists explore social issues. Ask the students to record some of the ideas that come from this research in their journals or notebooks. This research will help them create their art project in the following class.

CONTEMPORARY ART

TEACHERS NOTES

“An exhibition is not the space to come up with answers but rather with questions, and suggestions of different ideas. These do not have to be particularly political, as art is mainly in the realm of the metaphorical and tends to be open to different interpretations”²

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Most artists draw on their own life experiences in their creative process and this in turn is reflected in the artworks that they create. Some artists define themselves by work that is rooted in the everyday while addressing wider concerns in society. Others explore the traditions that are inherited within the art world, concerning themselves with aesthetic values or internal states of mind.

“Art broadened its scope in the 1980s and 1990s, ... crossing barriers into neighbouring areas such as design, the media, advertising, architecture, cinema, theatre, dance and music. Art can have a social agenda, it can be about communication; some believe it has therapeutic values and functions, while others deny it any societal role and insist on the autonomy of art.”³ This new outlook has led artists to work outside of the confinement of a private studio and to work in different environments, researching their ideas in the situations, places and with the people whose experiences they wish to portray or reflect upon. Contemporary artists develop their work in similar ways to journalists, writers and filmmakers often spending considerable time researching their ideas using methodologies that mirror these other professions.

Contemporary arts practice tends to be conceptual, that is, the “emphasis is placed on the idea or concept rather than the physical art object”⁴, -the idea determines the form that the artwork takes. So an artist may work in traditional materials such as painting to express one idea and in a subsequent artwork use more contemporary media such as digital or web based technologies. The idea informs the processes and determines the medium that the artist uses. Many (though not all) contemporary artists cross many so-called boundaries of technique that more traditional artists may have worked exclusively in. Contemporary artworks take on many manifestations, from objects that are more traditionally associated with the art world, to live performances that mirror other art forms such as music and theatre.

The Irish Museum Of Modern Art (IMMA) Art Collection And Human Rights Themes

There are many artists represented in IMMA's Collection⁵ whose work reflects their personal experience and expresses views on wider social issues, especially human rights, and indeed there are many artworks that in themselves can trigger emotional responses or provoke questions about these issues. Irish artists that are well known for taking strong positions and making work that acts as advocates for the socially marginalised or addresses malfunction in society and are represented in IMMA's Collection include the painter Brian Maguire in work that reflects Irish and international situations and systems and there are a number of artists who have explored the conflict in Northern Ireland, including Shane Cullen, Willie Doherty, John Kindness and Paul Seawright whose work *Gate*, 1997, is explored in this resource.

Other concerns that effect human rights are represented in an artwork that addresses the issue of violence against women, by Canadian artist Rochelle Rubenstein, and the artwork *Open Season* made by artist/filmmaker Joe Lee in collaboration with women working in a community development project in Dublin. Displacement and loss, as a result of urban regeneration, is present in the work by Paddy Jolley, Rebecca Trost & Inger Lise Hansen, or displacement as a result of war, in artist/filmmaker Phil Collins work dealing with the conflict in Kosovo in 1999. These themes and many more are present or can be evoked in the work created by visual artists and can resonate with society's issues in a number of ways.

Artists who have worked on Amnesty International's *Voice Our Concern* programme who are also included are - Vivienne Roche, Robert Ballagh and Nick Miller.

As IMMA's director has said, exhibitions are not the space to come up with answers to society's problems but they can raise questions, and present different perspectives on human rights issues. Exploring artworks in themselves can open up spaces for reflection and questions and you as the viewer can make associations with your experiences and ideas and be encouraged to move from a position of passivity to participation and to action. As the artist Gillian Wearing says about presenting her artworks 'it leaves a lot to the imagination- that's what art should do. It leaves you something to go away with, something to think about. It doesn't say: "This is a story, completely, and this is my take on it."⁶

² Juncosa, Enrique, 'Hearth' Concepts of Home, Irish Museum of Modern Art, IMMA (2006), Hearth catalogue that accompanied the exhibition *Hearth: Concepts of Home* from the IMMA Collection in collaboration with Focus Ireland 2 November 2006-1 April 2007, page 2.

³ Burkhard Riemschneider and Uta Grosenick, *Art Now, ICONS*, Taschen, Preface, page 7.

⁴ What is Conceptual Art? Education and Community programmes, Irish Museum of Modern Art, IMMA, page 5, available at www.imma.ie.

⁵ All references of art works, unless otherwise cited are from the Collection Catalogue, (IMMA), 2005.

⁶ Gillian Wearing, 'Secession', exhibition catalogue, 1997, page 8.

CLASS 2

BEAT KLEIN & HENDRIKJE KÜHNE

PROPERTY

AIM

To develop in students an understanding of human rights and the role that art can play in creatively expressing these rights.

OBJECTIVES

Students will have

- Developed qualities of imagination, creativity, originality and ingenuity;
- Expanded their understanding of art and design in historical, cultural, economic, social and personal contexts;
- Engaged with visual art that is informed by human rights issues;
- Increased their ability to give a personal response to an idea, experience or other stimulus.

NCCA KEY SKILLS

Information processing, being personally effective, communication, critical and creative thinking.

MATERIAL NEEDED

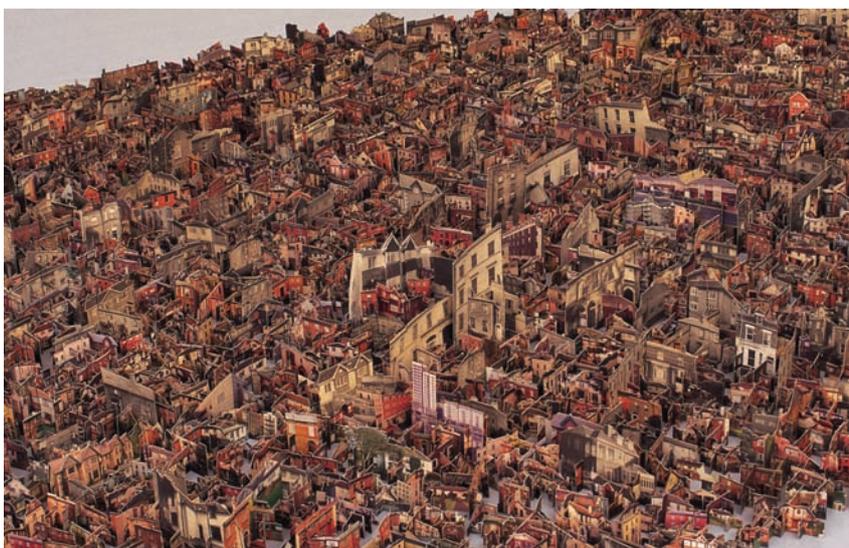
Colour copies of Beat Klein & Hendrikje Kühne's image *Property* (handout section 7.7, pg 180) or printed from an online version of this resource at www.amnesty.ie.

Human Rights and Adequate Housing Factsheet (handout section 7.2, pg 176).

Art notebooks for each student.

LENGTH

Full Class



Beat Klein & Hendrikje Kühne *Property (Detail)* 1999

STEPS:

1. Hand out the image of Beat Klein & Hendrikje Kühne's *Property* to the class. Teachers can colour print this image from our online PDF at www.amnesty.ie, or pass around the image to show the class from this book, or a scan of the image can be handed out to the class;
2. After letting the students study the image, ask the following questions and discuss the answers as a class;

Questions About This Artwork

- What do you see in the illustration?
- Is it a real place or an imagined one?
- The artwork has a front and back just like a miniature stage set, one that creates the illusion of something real, the images of the properties are pasted on to one side only. Why do you think the artists have chosen to make the work in this way?
- The artwork is placed directly onto the floor and not placed on a plinth (which is often the traditional manner that artists use to place sculpture). Why do you think the artists chose to present *Property* to the public in this way?
- Why do you think that the artists decided to create this city/place using the materials that they chose?
- The images are cut out of newspapers, newsprint fades when exposed to light over time. We have all heard of a house built of cards, which denotes something fragile that will not last for a long time, something impermanent.
- What emotional responses does this artwork evoke in you?
- What do you have to say in reaction to this artwork?
- What aspect of human rights does it relate to?

3. After discussing these questions read out what has been written about this artwork;

Swiss artists Beat Klein and Hendrikje Kühne are now regular visitors to Ireland where their work has been shown in a variety of contexts. *Property*, their first real collaborative project, was made during a residency⁷ at IMMA in 1998. They were surprised at the interest in real estate prices in Ireland (which was going through an extraordinary economic boom at the time), and this, coupled with their commitment to socially engaged and accessible art led them to make a city of houses and properties using card and newsprint, from the property pages of the Irish Times newspaper during the period of their stay. Letters from the public who visited the studio added an extra dimension.⁸

As the artist Klein put it: "it was a unique aspect of where we were visiting and we tried to find a solution to do a work which had a 2-D and a 3-D aspect. In the end we worked with a fourth dimension as the work *Property* became a time based piece."⁹

This artwork raises questions about one of the biggest economic disasters in Irish society in recent years. Due to the Celtic Tiger phenomenon inflated values were put on the price of property which has left the ideal of owning one's own home far out of the reach of many people and as Catherine Marshall says in her essay in the *Hearth* catalogue, Irish people saw 'the transformation of home into property, a subject for monetary rather than emotional investment, something that becomes so overvalued in financial terms that it is problematic.'¹⁰

Or as Olivia O'Leary says in her essay in the same catalogue ... "it washed over us like a tidal wave. Now it is about to recede, so if the property boom is over ... what are we left with?"¹¹

4. Ask the class what human rights issues does this artwork bring up? (Suggest issues relating to homelessness, equality and discrimination) Discuss;
5. Hand out to the class the factsheet on the right to housing from the handout section. Discuss this factsheet in relation to the themes explored in the artwork;
6. Hand out to the class the resource list of other artworks that explore similar human rights themes;

7. Ask the class to keep an art notebook, journal or diary during the course of this chapter. This should be used to include:
- Sketches;
 - Support studies or research;
 - Notes on ideas;
 - These processes will help students to translate ideas brought up during the course of this chapter on human rights into actual visual art.

Other artworks at IMMA that explore similar human rights themes: Tim Mara, *Power Cuts Imminent*, 1975; Paddy Jolley, Rebecca Trost & Inger Lisa Hanseen, *Hereafter*, 2004; Dimitri Tsykalov, *Shed/Chalet*, 2003.

⁷ The Irish Museum of Modern Art has a residency programme where Irish and international artists can come to live and work for periods of time at IMMA. See IMMA website for details www.imma.ie.

⁸ The Collection Catalogue, Text written by Catherine Marshall, Head of Collections at IMMA 1996-2006 (currently on secondment to the Royal Irish Academy), Page101.

⁹ Hendrikje Kühne and Beat Klein, Essay by Johanna Littlejohns to mark their residency at The Gallery Geurnsey College of Further Education, 25 November-19 December (2002).

¹⁰ 'Hearth' catalogue that accompanied the exhibition *Hearth, Concepts of Home* from the IMMA Collection in collaboration with Focus Ireland 2 November 2006-1 April 2007, page 9.

¹¹ *Ibid*, Olivia O'Leary, broadcaster and journalist page 6.

CLASS 3

GILLIAN WEARING

SACHA AND MUM

AIM

Students' will increase understanding of the role that art can play in creatively expressing issues concerning human rights.

OBJECTIVES

Students will have

- Expanded their understanding of art and design in a historical, cultural, economic, social and personal context;
- Engaged with visual art that is informed by human rights issues;
- Increased their ability to give a personal response to an idea, experience or other stimulus.



NCCA KEY SKILLS

Information processing, being personally effective, communication, critical and creative thinking.



MATERIAL NEEDED

Colour copies of Gillian Wearing's stills from video work *Sacha and Mum* from a scan or printed from the online resource available at www.amnesty.ie, (see handout 7.8, pg 181).

Factsheet on the human rights issue of violence against women (see handout 7.3, pg 177).



LENGTH

Full Class

STEPS:

1. Hand out Gillian Wearing's stills *Sacha and Mum*;
2. After letting the students study the image explain that this artwork is a four minute video and the two images are stills taken from two different sections of the video. Then ask the following questions and discuss the answers as a class;

Questions About This Artwork

- What do you see in the two illustrations?
- Why do you think there are two images selected to represent this video work?
- What are the differences between the two images?
- Can you see any difference in the emotions as reflected in the women's faces and body language when you look at one image and then compare it to the other one?
- The video has an unusual soundtrack which is distorted, making it impossible at times to make out what is being said between the two women, why do you think that the artist has chosen to do this with the soundtrack?
- What do you think the artist is telling us about the relationship between the two women?
- What do you have to say in reaction to this artwork?
- What aspect of human rights does it relate to?

3. After discussing these questions read out what has been written about this artwork:
Wearing creates unusual effects through the medium of film, using everyday situations. The video runs alternatively forwards and backwards, so that the quarrel between mother and daughter becomes an endless battle of love and hatred.

In *Sacha and Mum* she separates the visual from the auditory by reversing the soundtrack in an emotional, violent scene between a mother and a daughter. The full interpretation of the scene is obscured from the viewer by the distorted sound of conflict, although at the same time, the emotional inflection of the voices makes it clear that the mood oscillates alternatively from aggression to tenderness. We are left to fill in the gaps of the story for ourselves.

The artist says: ...“it leaves a lot to the imagination- that’s what art should do. It leaves you something to go away with, something to think about. It doesn’t say: This is a story, completely, and this is my take on it.”¹²

Wearing’s work continues to investigate human behaviour. One of her best known early works *Signs that say what you want them to say and not Signs that someone else wants you to say* question the role of those who claimed to be letting others speak through using documentary techniques;¹³

4. Hand out to the class the factsheet on ‘Stop Violence against Women’ (handout section 7.3, pg 179) from the handout section. Discuss this factsheet in relation to the themes explored in the artwork;
5. Hand out to the class the resource list of other artworks that explore similar human rights themes;

Other artworks at IMMA that explore similar human rights themes:

Women from the Family Resource Centre (FRC), Inchicore & Joe Lee, *Open Season*, 1998, See website Joe Lee & FRC, www.joelee.ie. Rochelle Rubenstein, *Shelter* No 30, 1995



Gillian Wearing *Sacha and Mum* 1996

¹² Gillian Wearing, ‘Secession’, exhibition catalogue, 1997, page 8.

¹³ Andrew Nairne, Introduction, Local Stories, Modern Art Oxford, page 10.

CLASS 4

PAUL SEAWRIGHT *GATE*

AIM

Students' will increase understanding of the role that art can play in creatively expressing issues concerning human rights.

OBJECTIVES

Students will have

- Expanded their understanding of art and design in a variety of contexts, historical, cultural, economic, social and personal;
- Engaged with visual art that is informed by human rights issues;
- Increased their ability to give a personal response to an idea, experience or other stimulus.



NCCA KEY SKILLS

Information processing, being personally effective, communication, critical and creative thinking.



MATERIAL NEEDED

Colour copies of Paul Seawright's image *Gate* from a scan or printed from the online resource available at www.amnesty.ie, (handout section 7.9, pg 182).

Factsheet on the right to freedom of movement in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (see handout 7.4, pg 178).



LENGTH

Full Class

STEPS:

1. Hand out Paul Seawright's image *Gate* (pg 182). Or pass around the image to show class from this book.
2. After letting the students study the image ask the following questions and discuss the answers as a class.

Questions About This Artwork

- What do you see in the illustration?
 - Is it a real place or an imagined one?
 - The artist has focused our attention on this particular gate and does not reveal where it is in relation to the surrounding landscape. Why do you think the artist has chosen to make the work in this way?
 - On which side of this gate do you feel the artist is placing you, the viewer, on?
 - How does this make you feel?
 - The photograph was taken in the artist's own locality in Northern Ireland, can you see any reference to a nation in this image?
 - What do you think the artist is trying to communicate in this photograph?
 - Why do you think that the artist decided to create this image in this way?
 - What emotional responses does this artwork evoke in you?
 - What aspect of human rights does it relate to?
3. After discussing these questions read out what has been written about this artwork:
 "Gate portrays the harsh realities of a society experiencing political conflict. From Afghanistan to his native Belfast, the photographs of Seawright document fear, tension and exclusion in a political and social context. *Gate* is part of a series of works portraying symbols of boundary and barrier in urban Northern Ireland. The gates protect and exclude. Beyond the gate there is unknown and uncharted territory, both spatially and symbolically.

The shape of the rusted gate mirrors a powerful symbol of unionism: The Union Jack. The localised familiar context of Northern Ireland evokes universal ideas of division and control. Seawright's photographs capture a mood of foreboding, human fear or tension, without significant human presence. Uninhabited, forgotten spaces are continually presented, encouraging the viewer to attempt to cross the boundary, to unlock the doors and to question the context of division."¹⁴

"Seawright was born in Belfast and brought up in the height of 'The Troubles' and his work has been described as 'a response to the climate of fear and threat that marked his childhood.'"¹⁵

The artist says "I have always been fascinated by the invisible, the unseen, the subject that doesn't easily present itself to the camera."¹⁶

4. Hand out the factsheet on the right to freedom of movement in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Discuss this factsheet in relation to the themes explored in the artwork;
5. Hand out to the class the resource list of other artworks that explore similar human rights themes.



Paul Seawright *Gate* 1997

¹⁴ Joanne Mullan, *The Collection catalogue*, IMMA, page 164.

¹⁵ Mark Durden, 'The Poetics of Absence': Photography in the 'Aftermath of War', essay in *Hidden catalogue* to accompany work on exhibition arising from a commission for the Imperial War Museum.

¹⁶ Paul Seawright, Introductory statement for 'The Missing', in Paul Seawright, *Salamanca: Centre for Photography of the University of Salamanca*, 2000, page 63.

CLASS 5

GILBERT & GEORGE

SMOKE RISING

AIM

Students will develop in students an understanding of art that explores human rights issues and expand on a student's ability to communicate effectively.

OBJECTIVES

Students will have

- Expanded their understanding of art and design in a variety of contexts, historical, cultural, economic, social and personal;
- Engaged with visual art that is informed by human rights issues;
- Increased their ability to give a personal response to an idea, experience or other stimulus.



NCCA KEY SKILLS

Information processing, being personally effective, communication, critical and creative thinking.



MATERIAL NEEDED

Colour copies of Gilbert & George's image *Smoke Rising* (handout section 7.9 pg 183).



LENGTH

Full Class

STEPS:

1. Hand out Gilbert & George's image *Smoke Rising*;
2. After letting the students study the image ask the following questions and discuss the answers as a class;
3. Handout the UDHR to help students relate this artwork to human rights issues;

Questions About This Artwork

- What do you see in the illustration?
 - Is it a real place or an imagined one?
 - The artwork has been created using the technique - photomontage. Why do you think the artists have chosen to make the work in this way? See the photography section on Photomontage (Chapter 5, pg 122);
 - The artists have carefully selected images to include in this overall picture, what can you see and what do you think they symbolise?
 - The two artists, Gilbert & George have included themselves in the image. Why do you think the artists have included themselves in *Smoke Rising*, in this way?
 - The images are all depictions of city life and are very different than *Property* (above); what emotional responses does this artwork evoke in you?
 - Why do you think that the artists decided to create this city/place using the materials/imagery that they chose?
 - What do you have to say in response to this artwork?
 - What aspect of human rights does it relate to?
4. After discussing these questions read out what has been written about this artwork:
 “*Smoke Rising*, is one of a group of works entitled The Cosmological Pictures which toured all over Europe in 1989 a year of turbulent change of political events in Europe which led to significant moments such as the fall of the

Berlin Wall. The works explore the psyche and life of modern man in a unique manner, which is more in line with the realism of Gothic art and Van Gogh than the ideals of beauty and ‘decorum’ associated with renaissance art. Acting as ‘living sculptures’, Gilbert & George confront the viewer with issues in a manner intended to open up a dialogue: ‘We don’t like the idea of art-for-art’s sake. We like the idea of art-for-life’s-sake...we are searching for meaning in life and trying to discuss it with the viewer who is in front of our picture.’ The bold provocative style of their work combined with high seriousness, has, in spite of harsh criticism achieved international popularity. The work touches upon sentiments and feelings that lie deep in human consciousness although they are treated in a simultaneously comic and abrasive way.”¹⁷

“This artwork was originally created and exhibited at a period when they said they were ‘haunted by death’ as a result of the loss of many of their friends who died of Aids. The initial exhibition entitled *For Aids* was exhibited in the Antony d’Offay gallery in London, their private gallery –and the profits from sales were donated to the charity CRUSAID¹⁸. This exhibition was shown in Ireland at IMMA in 1992.”

5. Facilitate a discussion with the class on human rights themes that could be associated with this image. Ask the students to consider for example, the significance of the date that this artwork was produced, 1989, in the context of political world events or they could consider how cities, like that presented in the image *Smoke Rising*, can be a place where human rights are abused?

Other artworks at IMMA that explore similar human rights themes: Billy Quinn, *Billy* 1991, Leon Golub, *Burnt Man*, undated

Research Work

Ask the students to take this discussion further and to research human rights themes they feel this image could represent. Students should write up the research they have conducted to communicate their analysis of this artwork.

Follow Up

Ask each student to bring in a container to the next class; this can be anything from a box, a jug (to fill as Dominic Thorpe’s class did in class one), a bottle, a biscuit tin, or a wooden box. The class can use the work created by the previous *Voice Our Concern* classes and the work of the IMMA artists as inspiration for their work.



Gilbert & George *Smoke Rising* 1989

¹⁷ Extract from interview with Gerald Davis, *The Arts Show*, RTÉ radio, September, 1992. *The Collection Catalogue*, IMMA, page 75.

¹⁸ <http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/gilbertandgeorge/rooms/expressobar.shtml>.

CLASS 6

HUMAN RIGHTS INSPIRED ARTWORK



AIM

Students will develop communication skills and use their personal responses to creatively explore human rights issues.



OBJECTIVES

Students will have

- Improved their research and critical thinking skills;
- Developed their creative expression;
- Engaged in a creative activity.



NCCA KEY SKILLS

Information processing, communication, critical and creative thinking and being personally effective.



MATERIAL NEEDED

A container of your choosing, glue, glitter, sequins, stickers, markers, newspapers, paint, charcoals, tissue paper and other decoration materials. A copy of the UDHR (Chapter 1, 1.1, pg 34)



LENGTH

Full Class

STEPS:

1. Brainstorm on the meaning and possible interpretations of the word CONTAINER. Suggest interpretations on what does it mean to be protected or to be incarcerated. A sanctuary or a prison? The external space/surface as protection as incarceration, the internal space as protection/incarceration?
2. Have your students decorate their container in such a way that it becomes a form of personal expression and reflects in some way their feelings about an article in the UDHR. No further instructions should be given on how to customise;
3. Allow 30 minutes for this process. Students should now come together as a class to look at the containers;
4. Invite volunteers to explain how their box reflects some aspect of themselves:
 - Were you able to use art to express some aspect of yourself?
 - Why is this activity important?
 - How was this process relevant to this lesson?

A black and white photograph of a group of African children sitting on the ground. In the foreground, a child is focused on a craft project, holding a string and a small wooden toy truck. Other children are looking towards the camera with various expressions. The background shows a textured wall.

HANDOUTS

VISUAL ARTS

HANDOUT 7.1

Voice Our Concern: The Project As Described By The Artist Nick Miller

18 Transition Year Students,
Colaiste Mhuire, Ballymote, Co Sligo And Nick Miller

This handout is used in the following classes/exercises

Class 1: *Voice Our Concern Art Projects* / pg 159

Previous image - Children play in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2008. © Amnesty International

1. On the first session we dived in at the deep end and started on a large scale ink drawing exploring ideas visually and verbally - questioning issues of concern to the students. The result was a graffiti like work of ideas and images in relation to Human Rights Issues.
2. This was followed by a session on portraiture with the students drawing each other, bringing them to some understanding of my own interests and practice as an artist.
3. The idea evolved to explore a connection to human rights concerns through portraiture, making connection to the "other" a way of highlighting and making real those concerns.
4. We downloaded images of people imprisoned around the world, cases being challenged by Amnesty International on the campaign against the Death Penalty.
5. Each student was given a different individual death penalty case to examine, with a photograph of the person being held in prison. They researched these by themselves and made drawings and notes on aspects of the cases that concerned them.
6. Over two subsequent working days with the students we worked on three panels. The first made by the students, where each collaged a photo of the subject and drew images to connected with the case being researched.
7. On the second panel I made charcoal portraits of each of the students involved in the project. This connected the feelings and ideas represented by the students involved to the artwork itself.
8. The third panel which makes up the triptych is the title panel. It contains a central portrait by one of the students and a collage of the original death penalty case sheets.
9. The completion of the project with their art teacher - Una McGrath involved each student making and sending a postcard in support of their adopted imprisoned individuals.

Very few of the students had much experience of art, but all got deeply involved and made strong and thoughtful visual contributions. I would like to thank them and their teacher for all their genuine effort at making it work.



Nick Miller and Colaiste Mhuire, Ballymote, Co Sligo, *Voice Our Concern Artwork* 2006, © Amnesty International

Voice Our Concern: The Project As Described By The Artist Dominic Thorpe

12 Transition Year Students, St Mary's Secondary School, Edenderry, Co Offaly And Dominic Thorpe

Dominic made his first visit to St Mary's on December 12th 2006. He worked with a group of 12 Transition Year students, two male and ten female. Dominic had brought a whole range of everyday objects and junk along with him in a van – as he himself put it he had “cleared out his Da's garage.”

After introducing himself to the large group he divided them into four smaller groups and asked to get the students in terms of human rights he asked them to do an activity from the *Voice Our Concern* workbook. Dominic handed out a summary of the UDHR and then did the workshop 'The Rights Boat' with the students. The rights that were retained by the groups were as followed:

- Right to equality
- Freedom from discrimination
- Freedom from slavery
- Freedom from torture and degrading treatment
- Right to education
- Right to marriage and family
- Freedom of opinion and information

Once the activity had ended, Dominic brainstormed with the students on the range of possibilities that they could investigate using the objects he had brought along. He explored how often we use certain words and phrases to express something completely different than what the words actually mean. In a similar manner the students could use the objects he had brought to represent human rights issues. To explain further he used two dishes and a big bag of rice to make a sculpture himself. He poured a huge amount of rice into one bowl until it overflowed onto the floor and left the other one empty. He then asked the students for their thoughts on what it might represent. Students suggested it might represent greed, inequality in the world (first world/third world, north/south) and the problem of obesity and starvation.

“The students really put a great deal of thought and effort into their pieces and when we discussed them afterwards the range of topics covered was impressive. The group looked at each piece individually and suggested what it may represent or what issues it might deal with. Each student on creating the sculpture explained what he or she had in his or her mind. The following themes that represented issues (among others) emerged: child abuse, slavery, inequality, money, gender, religion, colonialism, homelessness, war and conflict and the effect thereof, access to food, murder, bureaucracy and the effect people in power have on human rights, education – the right to education and also the costs involved and the problems with the education system.”

Dominic emphasized the fact they were all right and that when it comes to art and what it represents everyone can have an opinion, even if it is different to what the artist had in mind when creating it. The artwork resonated differently with each person. All of whom who had a personal response and interpretation. The most important things, according to Dominic, are to have sincerity and imagination when making an artwork.

Dominic encouraged the students to take apart the pieces they had created (having first photographed them). For the final part of the season we divided them into smaller groups and encouraged each group to reflect upon human rights abuses that occur within Ireland. In their group students were to make a further sculpture based on these issues.

HANDOUT 7.2

HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADEQUATE HOUSING FACTSHEET

This handout is used in the following classes/exercises

Class 2: Beat Klein & Hendrikje Kühne *Property* / pg 163

The statement ‘right to housing’ means, at the most basic, that the state meets your right to housing, if you cannot meet them from your own resources. Alongside this we mean that the housing that you receive is adequate, and is secure, (your right to stay in the housing is protected), affordable, the contribution you make towards your housing costs should not leave you with an inadequate income and accessible.

The Right To Security Of Place

“Since all human rights are to be treated equally, in an interdependent and indivisible manner, we should begin discussions on what could be called the right to security of place. This right exemplifies the convergence of civil and political and economic, social and cultural rights and places three forms of security into an indispensable human rights framework. Firstly, this right encapsulates the notion of physical security-protection of physical integrity, safety from harm, and guarantees that basic rights will be respected. Secondly, this right incorporates all dimensions of human security - or the economic and social side of the security equation. While thirdly, the right to security of place recognizes the importance of tenure rights (for tenants, owners and those too poor to afford to rent or buy a home) and the crucial right to be protected against any arbitrary or forced eviction from one’s home. This manifestation of security intrinsically links to housing rights concerns during times of peace and to housing rights issues arising in the midst of armed conflict and humanitarian disasters.”

Mary Robinson, Former High Commissioner of Human Rights, Geneva, 9 March, 1999

International human rights law recognises that every person has the right to an adequate standard of living. This right includes the right to adequate housing.

The Universal Declaration Of Human Rights Article 25.1

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.” The right to housing is more than simply a right to shelter. It is a right to have somewhere to live that is adequate. Whether housing is adequate depends on a range of factors including:¹⁹

- legal security of tenure;
- availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure;
- affordability;
- accessibility;
- habitability;
- location;
- cultural adequacy.

The Irish Constitution protects the right to property. This protection of property rather than adequate housing has ensured that the idea of home has been transformed into something that is a monetary instead of a necessary basic need. It ensures that homes in Ireland are seen as commodity and not somewhere that gives people a sense of security and dignity. Property in contemporary Ireland is related to your economic status and therefore not every person in Ireland is wealthy enough to have somewhere where they can call home.

¹⁹ The right to adequate housing was further defined by the CESCR when it identified seven necessary elements of the right.

HANDOUT 7.3

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

FACTSHEET

This handout is used in the following classes/exercises

Class 3: Gillian Wearing *Sacha and Mum* / pg 166

At least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime - with the abuser usually someone known to her. National statistics show that one in five Irish women have experienced domestic violence from a current or former intimate partner. Violence against women is perhaps the most pervasive human rights violation that we know today, it devastates lives, fractures communities, and inhibits personal development.

As shown in the figures above, violence against women and girls is a major global problem, with many institutional, legal and cultural obstacles to its elimination. Women and girls experience gender-based violence in every country and in every sector of society – regardless of class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or culture. The scope of violence against women and girls is shocking, with girls and women being subjected to different forms of gender-based violence quite literally from womb to tomb. It includes: killing of female infants (female infanticide), female genital mutilation, sexual harassment in schools and at work, trafficking, domestic violence, and marital rape.

The greatest risk of violence facing a woman is from someone she knows. Domestic violence is a violation of a woman's right to physical safety, liberty, and all too often, her right to life. When states fail to take the basic steps needed to protect women from domestic violence or allow these crimes to be committed without punishment, states are not living up to their responsibilities. Domestic violence takes many forms from battering to psychological abuse and humiliation. In some societies, a woman who turns down a suitor or does not get along with her in-laws often gets "punished" by having acid thrown on her face. In some societies, women are killed by their husbands or in-laws if they are unable to pay dowries. In others, women are killed for damaging the "honour" of the family. Women who are raped and are unable to provide explicit evidence, are sometimes accused of unlawful sexual relations, the punishment for which is sometimes death by public stoning.

HANDOUT 7.4

RESTRICTIONS OF MOVEMENT ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY FACTSHEET

This handout is used in the following classes/exercises

Class 4: Paul Seawright *Gate* / pg 168

The hundreds of checkpoints and blockages which every day force long detours and delays on Palestinians trying to get to work, school or hospital, have for years limited their access to essential health services and caused medical complications, births at checkpoints and even deaths. The West Bank is criss-crossed by a web of Israeli military checkpoints and blockades, as well as the fence/wall which encircles villages as well as whole neighbourhoods in and around East Jerusalem.

The West Bank has become the world's largest prison, full of ordinary people trying to survive. Checkpoints, blockades, the fence/wall prevent movement between Palestinian towns and villages, splitting and isolating communities, separating farmers from their land, hampering access to work, schools, health facilities and relatives, and destroying the Palestinian economy.

How would you manage to conduct your daily life if an occupying army controlled all your movements?

How would you cope with giving birth on the ground at a checkpoint because soldiers would not let you through to get to a hospital? Or watching your sick child die while being detained at a checkpoint? How would you run your business or get to school or visit family members? Imagine a wall that cut your world apart...separating you from your family, land, water, school. How would you survive if you were a farmer cut off from your farmland because of the construction of a wall you had no say in?

Beit Furik Checkpoint, August 2003.

"We took a taxi and got off before the checkpoint because cars are not allowed near the checkpoint and we walked the rest of the way; I was in pain. At the checkpoint there were several soldiers. Daoud (her husband) approached to speak to the soldiers and one of them threatened him with his weapon. Daoud spoke to them in Hebrew; I was in pain and felt I was going to give birth there and then.... [T]hey did not let us pass. I was lying on the ground in the dust and I crawled behind a concrete block by the checkpoint to have some privacy and gave birth there, in the dust, like an animal. I held the baby in my arms and she moved a little but after a few minutes she died in my arms".

Rula Ashtiya – 29 years old – 8 months pregnant

The fence/wall in the West Bank cuts deep inside Palestinian land. The Israeli Government claims that it is a 'defensive measure, designed to block the passage of terrorists, weapons and explosives into the State of Israel'. The fence/wall is now twice the length the Berlin Wall was.

The fence/wall encircles Palestinian towns and villages, cutting off communities and families from each other, separating farmers from their land and Palestinians from workplaces, education and health facilities and other essential services. Access through the fence/wall is restricted by a network of gates and a system of special permits. Palestinians must obtain these permits from Israeli authorities in order to access their homes and any of their land that is located behind the fence/wall.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled in an advisory opinion that the construction of the fence/wall by the Israeli army inside the West Bank, including in and around East Jerusalem, violates international human rights and humanitarian law and that 'Israel also has an obligation to put an end to the violation of its international obligations flowing from the construction of the wall in Occupied Palestinian Territories.'

HANDOUT 7.6

RESOURCES

This handout is used in all classes in this chapter

The Irish Museum Of Modern Art:

The permanent Collection of the Irish Museum of Modern Art comprises some 1,650 works. The collection reflects some of the most exciting trends in Irish and international art with lens-based work by Marina Abramovic, James Coleman, Willie Doherty, Gilbert & George, Candida Höfer, Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno, Issac Julien, and Paul Seawright, installations by Gerard Byrne, Liam Gillick, Ann Hamilton, and Ilya and Emilia Kabakov. Also, sculpture by Stephan Balkenhol, Dorothy Cross, Iran do Espírito Santo, Kathy Prendergast, Rebecca Horn and Corban Walker; and paintings by Barrie Cooke, Howard Hodgkin, Tony O'Malley, Philip Taaffe, Juan Uslé, and Jack B. Yeats. Major donations include a wide variety of modern and contemporary art, including paintings by Basil Blackshaw, Cecil King and Sean Scully, sculptural works by Louise Bourgeois, Barry Flanagan and James McKenna and a film installation by Neil Jordan. Heritage Gifts include 50 works from the PJ Carroll & Co. Ltd. Art Collection, and 46 works from the Bank of Ireland Collection.

Other Artists And Artworks That Explore Human Rights From The IMMA Collection²⁰

Lee Jaffe, *Colored Nigger Extravaganza*, 1990.

Paddy Jolley, Rebecca Trost & Inger Lise Hansen, *Hereafter*, 2004.

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, *The Mysterious Exhibition from The Children's Hospital*, 1998.

Vik Muniz, *Portrait of Alice Liddell, after Lewis Carroll*, 2004.

Hughie O'Donoghue, *Tawnansool (Field of the Eyes)*, 2001; *Crossing the Rapido*, 2003; *Oxygen*, 1993.

Alanna O'Kelly, *Sanctuary/Wasteland*, 1994.

Daniel O'Neill, *Belfast after the Riot*, 1971.

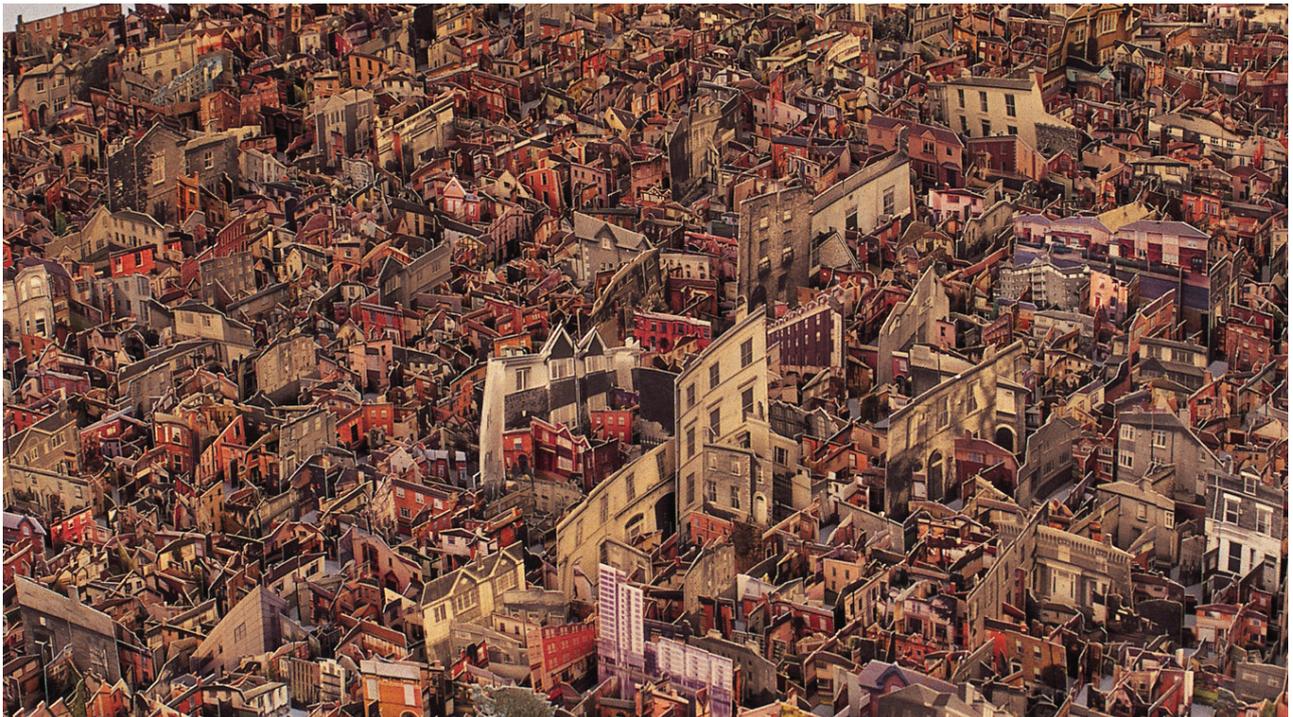
Nigel Rolfe, *Blood of the Beast*, 1990.

Billy Quinn, *Billy*, 1991.

Leon Golub, *Burnt Man*, undated.

²⁰ This is not a definitive list there are many others that could be explored for similar programmes.

Beat Klein & Hendrikje Kühne *Property*



Detail

Artists: Beat Klein & Hendrikje Kühne.

Title: Property.

Date: 1999.

Medium: Newsprint on card.

Dimensions: variable.

Collection: IMMA.

HANDOUT 7.7

This handout is used in the following classes/exercises

Class 2: Beat Klein & Hendrikje Kühne *Property* / pg.163

Gillian Wearing *Sacha and Mum*



Artist: Gillian Wearing.

Title: *Sacha and Mum*.

Date: 1996, Medium: video projection 4 min. 30 sec.

Dimensions: variable.

Collection: IMMA.

HANDOUT 7.8

This handout is used in the following classes/exercises

Class 3: Gillian Wearing *Sacha and Mum* / pg 166

Paul Seawright *Gate*



Artist: Paul Seawright.

Title: *Gate*.

Date: 1997.

Medium: C-type photograph on aluminum.

Dimensions: 160 x 160 cm.

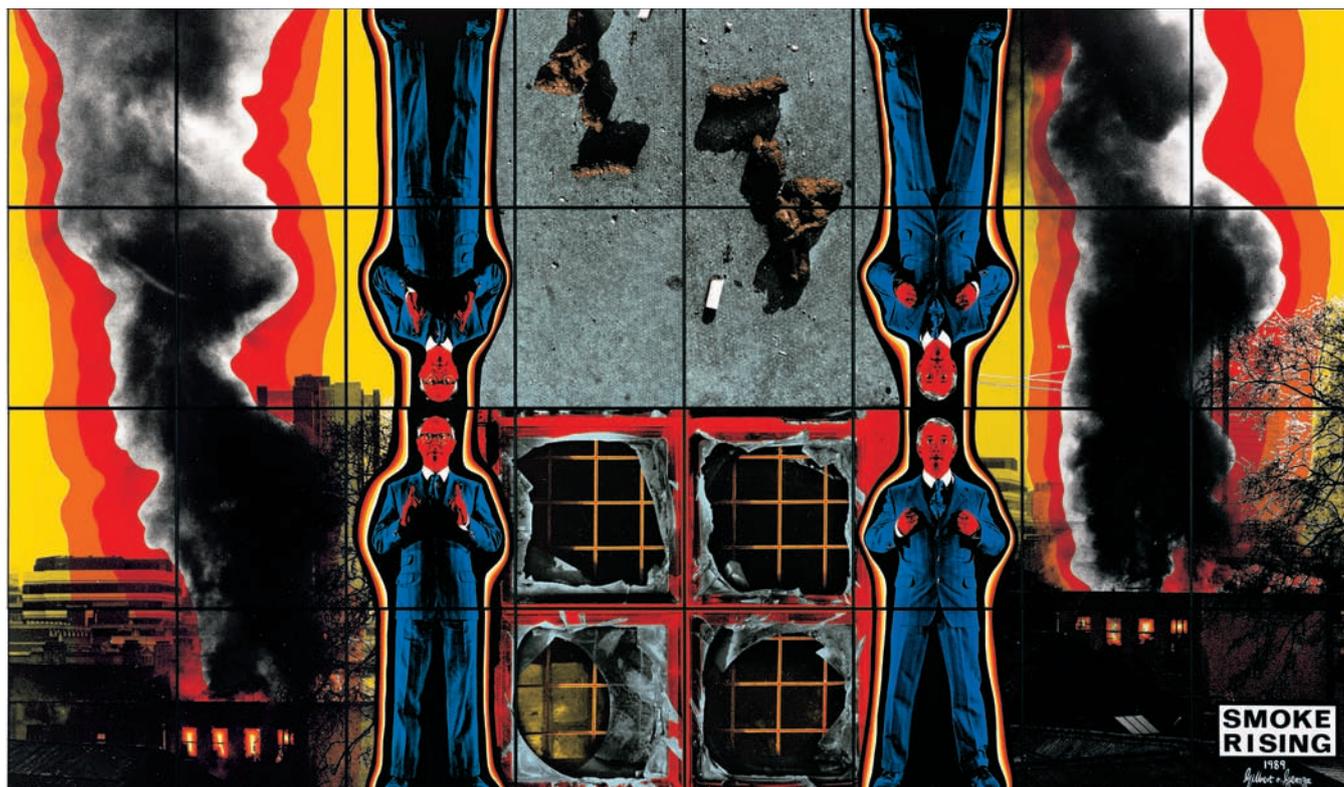
Collection: IMMA.

HANDOUT 7.9

this handout is used in the following classes/exercises

Class 4: Paul Seawright *Gate* / pg.168

Gilbert & George *Smoke Rising*



Artists: Gilbert & George.

Title: *Smoke Rising*.

Date: 1989.

Medium: Mixed media.

Dimensions: 338 x 568 cm.

Collection: IMMA.

HANDOUT 7.10

This handout is used in the following classes/exercises

Class 5: Gilbert & George *Smoke Rising* / pg 170

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