
THE BOX

September 1–30, 2013

Dennis McNulty

Interzone (2012)



Image courtesy of the artist

Irish artist Dennis McNulty works in video, sculpture, performance, and sound to explore architecture and urban landscapes and how these spaces are constructed, perceived and known. In his newest video, *Interzone*, McNulty focuses on the ever-unfolding landscape of a Dublin suburb and follows a single woman's journey on foot through it.

Interzone uses sound and camera movement to highlight the main character's alienated relationship to the landscape. Icons of suburbia—housing developments, lone office buildings, winding roads that both connect and dissect—populate the land and intimate a story of change and economic progress. Fingal County, the setting for McNulty's film, borders Dublin and is notable for its rapid expansion during Ireland's boom period (1995–2008). As with many newly developed suburbs, the land varies from densely populated urban spaces to rural villages and farms.

The identity and purpose of the woman in McNulty's video remains a mystery. Wearing a red trench coat, she carries a clipboard and walks deliberately along roads and through parks and fields. Perhaps she's taking a census or mapping the area? Her story is never explained or resolved and her presence in the landscape is unsettling, as if she's lost or has traveled back (or forward) in time. These elements of science fiction and temporality interest McNulty, and he uses sound and text to further complicate our perception of time and place.

Of the three pieces of text that are interspersed early on in the video, McNulty explains, "It was important for me to try to mark this film deliberately in some temporal way, that it would somehow declare that it was made at this moment in time. So I picked these three fragments of text, which were . . . on the Reuters website in the weeks when I was initially editing the film. I also picked these texts because they're temporally quite slippery, and even spatially quite slippery, so that, even though they locate the film time-wise, they do it in a way that alludes

to what we might have expected this present to look like twenty or thirty years ago."¹

About halfway through the video, a second character emerges as an omniscient and detached counterpart to the woman—the eye of the camera. McNulty acknowledges the influence of Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni and, in films like *La Notte* (1961), *Red Desert* (1964), and *The Passenger* (1975), his focus on the urban landscape and use of long, lingering takes and elliptical narratives, all of which play with the viewer's perception of place and give equal narrative weight to things happening outside of the camera's eye. How does one go about giving a sense of place (or of nonplace)? McNulty's camera provides this sense: swooping, panning, and driven as much by what is in view as by what surrounds.

Dennis McNulty (b. 1970, Ireland) lives and works in Berlin. Recent solo projects include *A Stew of Universals*, Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik, Berlin (2013); *Another Construction*, Irish Museum of Modern Art (2011); *Space Replaced by Volume*, the Perry and Marty Granoff Center for Creative Arts, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island (2011); and *The Driver and the Passenger*, Green on Red, Dublin (2010). Group shows include *False Optimism*, Crawford Art Gallery, Cork (2013); *The Face of Something New*, Scriptings, Berlin (2013); *PRECAST*, Robin Hood Gardens and Preston's Road roundabout, Blackwall, East London (2012); *Harboring Tone and Place*, CCS Bard Gallery (2011); *Seventh Dream of Teenage Heaven*, Bureau for Open Culture, CCAD, Columbus, Ohio and Usdan Gallery, Bennington College, Vermont (2011); *Nothing is Impossible*, The Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh (2010); and the São Paulo Bienal (2004 & 2008).

Interzone was commissioned by Fingal County Council in 2007 as part of a series of public artworks. It was finished with the support of the Wexner Center's Film/Video Studio Program and is presented with support from **Culture Ireland**.



On **Thursday, September 12**, please join us in the Wexner Center's Film/Video Theater at 4:30 PM, when Dennis McNulty will share a selection of films by other artists that relate to some of the ideas in *Interzone*. The program includes Ben Rivers, Lana Lin, Kevin Lynch, and Sean Meehan, among others.

Jennifer Lange
Curator, Film/Video Studio Program

¹ Quoted from a transcript of a conversation between McNulty and artist and writer Daniel Jewesbury, which took place on Friday, November 16, 2012, at the Seamus Ennis Center, The Naul, Fingal, Ireland, following the first public screening of the piece.

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Interzone (2012)
11:39 mins., video

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