



The Infinite Line (A Search for the Unknown)

Tactic, Cork

Chris Clarke

In Tactic's dimly lit interior, an array of angular horizontal planes hover in the air, casting variations of shadow and light across the adjacent walls. The objects and their reflections are barely distinguishable, forcing the spectator, should they wish to distinguish between material form and immaterial illusion, to get closer to these delicate works and watch their movements carefully.

In its emphasis on ephemerality and on the uncertainty of perception, Cassandra Eustace's *What Lies Between Repeated Differences* encapsulates the concerns of *The Infinite Line (A Search for the Unknown)*, a group exhibition that also featured the artists Richard Forrest and Roseanne Lynch, as well as an opening performance piece by Fergus Byrne. Eustace's

drawings of dense, knot-like tangles on transparent acetate paper, hung so that the sheets float away from the wall, produce shadows that similarly complicate the separation between the artwork and its reflection, with its illusionary transfer onto the backing wall integral to the overall composition.

Eustace's work also shares a certain formal affinity with Roseanne Lynch's series, *Exposures 1-9*. Subtly manipulating folded structures directly onto light-sensitive photographic paper, the resulting one-off images offer startling diversity with very limited means: a flicker of pure white light, gradations of shadow along creases, angles and apertures, all set against a field of pitch-black emptiness. Intriguingly, Lynch also points to another perceptual gap here, stating of the work that 'the print is the link between the moment of making, and another moment of viewing.'

Richard Forrest's *Truncated Tetrahedron* is a minimalist sculpture trimmed along one side, upsetting the anticipated geometrical unity of the form. Yet its placement alongside another work, *Fractal Structure*, infers a specific bodily relationship to mathematical order and symmetry. This photographic print, laid on the floor, portrays a view of the open brain of an anatomical dummy, and it is this disruption of perspective, whereby one looks down yet also sees the skull from the side, that Forrest seems to prioritise over any correlation between subject matter or content. The spectator is repositioned and disoriented in his or her relationship to the work.

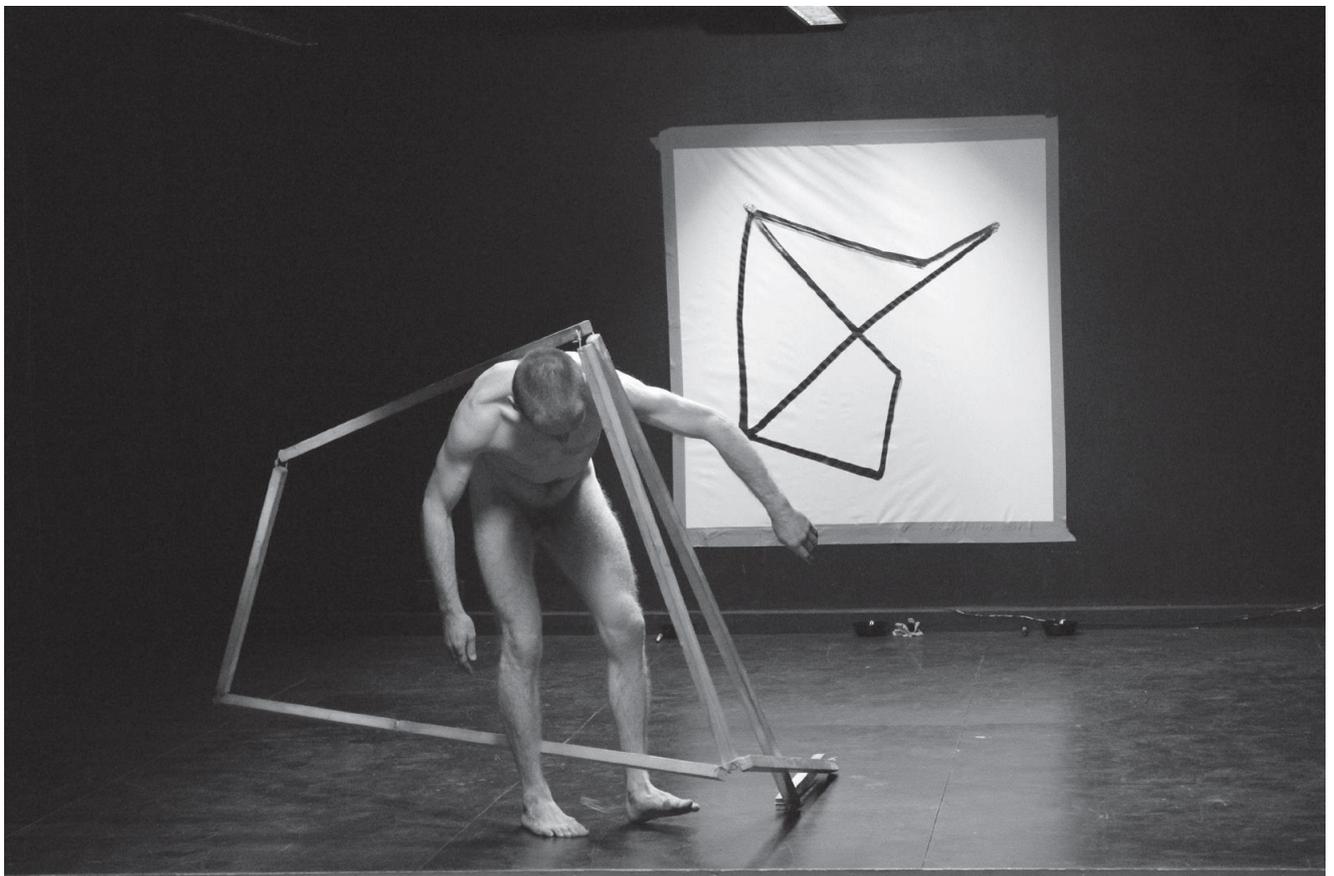
If Forrest's incorporation of figurative elements seems strangely at odds with his formal concerns here, it shares an affinity with a performance work by Fergus Byrne, held on the exhibition's opening evening. In some ways, this piece captures the idea of the perceptual lacuna simply through its status within the group exhibition: it occurs in a different room of the gallery, and for one night only. However, the curatorial concept has also informed its conception, as a nude Byrne methodically and slowly organizes his movements in relation to the unwieldy, open wooden structure that he bears. The burden is shifted from his shoulders to his back, then held aloft by a single extended leg, then balanced on the back of his neck. Occasionally, the object collapses or settles into an angular prop, whereby the artist quickly traces out its formation onto a nearby sheet of paper. Each stage is transitory, temporary, a phase in a potentially never-ending succession of

gestures that resists representation as a definitive moment or image.

In this way, *The Infinite Line* also challenged the tendency (or compulsion) for viewers to perceive an exhibition as a series of discrete, distinct objects. Brought into proximity through arrangement or thematic consistencies, one nevertheless compartmentalizes each artwork as a singular, if interrelated, entity, drawing an invisible frame that distinguishes one work or artist from another. Artworks are generally finite, determined by the dimensions or duration specific to the piece. Perhaps it is for this reason that *The Infinite Line (A Search for the Unknown)* hedged its bets

slightly by acknowledging a certain inevitable allusiveness in its (bracketed) title. The works here may blur together, overlap, affect and interrupt each other, yet at the same time they point out that, as spectators, we arbitrarily insist upon a certain, respectful distance, both between the objects themselves and in our relationship to them.

Chris Clarke is Senior Curator at the Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork. *The Infinite Line* was curated by Sophie Behan and Maeve Lynch, and was on view 8 - 22 May 2014.



Fergus Byrne: Performance at preview of *The Infinite Line*. Tactic Studios, Cork, 8 May 2014. Photo Roseanne Lynch.