

## Associated Talks and Events

### Artists' Conversation with Rodney Graham & Gerard Byrne Saturday 25 November 2017, 2pm – 3pm, Johnston Room

Since the 1980s, Vancouver-based Rodney Graham is recognized for his diverse practice of photography, painting, sculpture, film, video and music. Artists Rodney Graham and Gerard Byrne discuss the sculptural, cinematic, performative and humourist nature of Graham's practice, drawing attention to the multiple references layered within his work, that enable Graham to seamlessly shift into different roles, characters and contexts.

Admission is free but booking is essential.

### Curators Lunchtime Talk: Rodney Graham: *That's Not Me* Wednesday 29 November, 1.15 – 2pm

Join Seán Kissane for an insightful walkthrough of the exhibition.  
Admission free, drop in.

For a full programme of talks and events and for booking visit [www.imma.ie](http://www.imma.ie)

Exhibition curated by Seán Kissane, Curator: Exhibitions.

IMMA wishes to thank those who have generously lent to the exhibition:

Hauser and Wirth, Lisson Gallery and 303 Gallery, Tate, David Roberts Collection, London, the Ringier Collection, Switzerland, Mariana Risberg, Switzerland, the Freidrich Christian Flick Collection, Hamburger Bahnhof Museum, Berlin and Gevaert Editions, Brussels. Thanks too to Joop van Caldenborgh, Suzanne Swarts, Director of the Voorlinden Museum, and Barbara Bos of Voorlinden Museum, Wassenaar, Netherlands and to those individuals who wish to remain anonymous.

IMMA would like to thank Rodney Graham for his commitment and dedication to this exhibition. Special thanks also go to Scott Livingstone and Shannon Oksanen at Rodney Graham's studio, whose support has been invaluable, along with Rodney Graham's galleries; Hauser and Wirth, Lisson Gallery and 303 Gallery.

This exhibition was produced in partnership with Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. Our thanks go to Alessandro Vincintelli, Curator of Exhibitions & Research, Adrienne Neil, Registrar and Production Manager, and Sarah Munroe, Director.

IMMA would also like to thank Matheson for their ongoing and visionary support of new work at IMMA, our hospitality partner The Dean Dublin and our invaluable IMMA Members and Patrons all of whom have made this exhibition possible.

### Catalogue

*That's Not Me* is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue with a foreword by Sarah Munroe, Director, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art and Sarah Glennie, Director, Irish Museum of Modern Art, and texts by Rodney Graham, Professor Briony Fer, Alessandro Vincintelli, Patrick Andersson, the late Canadian artist and writer Robert Linsley, and Harry Pearson. Available from the IMMA Shop for €24.95

Have a question about an artwork? Want to know more? Ask any member of our Visitor Engagement Team, easily identifiable through their blue lanyards.

Exhibition kindly supported by:



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Front cover:

*Basement Camera Shop*  
circa 1937, 2011

Painted aluminium light box with  
transmounted chromogenic  
transparency  
182x182x17.7 cm  
David Roberts Collection, London

IMMA - IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
MAIN GALLERIES, WEST WING  
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## Rodney Graham *That's Not Me*



IMMA is pleased to present *That's Not Me*, a survey from 1994 to the present, of the work of Canadian artist Rodney Graham.

Graham lives and works in Vancouver, Canada, and is associated with the 1980s Vancouver School of post-conceptual photography alongside peers such as Jeff Wall and Stan Douglas. The Vancouver School is a group defined by a style of photography in which moments from art history are replicated.

In 1997, Graham represented Canada at the 47th Venice Biennale. His work features in significant museum collections around the world including Tate Modern, MoMA and the Centre Pompidou, and is exhibited internationally.

Graham works in a variety of media, including film, photography, performance, sculpture and music. Combining these multiple media with a wide-ranging interest in art-history, literature, music, psychoanalysis and popular culture, Graham's work concerns itself with identity, cultural memory and humour.

The focus of this exhibition is Graham's illuminated lightboxes and film works. The lightboxes, usually constructed on a monumental scale, elevate the subject matter, making a high level of detail perceptible to the viewer. The highly stylised scenes are often created in meticulously constructed and detailed sets in Graham's studio. The specific years and dates often mentioned in the titles of these works reflect the highly detailed nature of the back-story that Graham attaches to characters depicted. The nature of the lightboxes allows close examination by the viewer, and Graham's studio constructions reward careful

inspection of newspaper headlines, signage, pictures within the picture, and other details. These elements all contribute to the fictional narrative, even if not made explicit.

Most of the lightboxes feature the artist himself, assuming a variety of roles in carefully staged environments. In these works, Graham plays a series of fictional characters. These characters can be considered as a form of self-portraiture as well. In these works the artist is both observer and participant.

In *The Gifted Amateur Nov 10th 1962* (2007) Graham assumes the role of an amateur artist, creating conventional abstract paintings in his mid-century modernist house. This subversion of the perceived role of 'the artist' shows Graham undermining the popular mythology of that role and highlighting the constructed nature of identity, while also being a warm tribute to 'amateur' art. Graham has exhibited these paintings and other props alongside the lightbox, further blurring the lines between invented and 'real' personae.

Many of these works are inspired by events or scenes observed in his hometown of Vancouver, especially in the area on and around Main St., near Graham's studio. Real-life observations are combined with various references from art history as well as popular film, literature and music. These references serve the creation of fictional scenes; posing questions about memory and nostalgia, and how they affect present understanding of art and culture of the past.

The artist has spoken openly on drawing inspiration from a wide range of sources, and freely borrowing techniques and

materials from other artists, in particular Ian Wallace, Douglas Gordon and Jeff Wall, all peers or friends of Graham. While these influences are clearly seen in his use of lightboxes and highly controlled set-pieces – both techniques used by these other Vancouver artists – this openness is a major part of Graham's practice as it relates to his collaboration with other artists, writers and musicians on a wide range of projects.

Additional lightbox works include *Actor/Director 1954* (2013) *Smoke Break 2 (Drywaller)* (2012) and *Betula Pendula Fastigiata (Sous-Chef on Smoke Break)* (2011), all part of Graham's *Four Seasons* suite of works. Typical of Graham's practice of casting himself in the role of another character, these works are also emblematic of Graham's approach towards a portrait of place, set as they are in particular areas of Vancouver. Highly considered and meticulously staged, like all his work, the subject matter is combined from daily observation and use of art historical and other references.

In the photograph *After Braque: Playing Concertina in My Studio (With Hanging Construction)* (2016), Graham directly replicates an existing artwork. In this image Graham plays himself copying a pose and image created by George Braque, one of the two artists credited with inventing Cubism. Graham uses a self-portrait by another artist to create a self-portrait of his own.

In the corridor, we see *The Avid Reader 1949* (2011). Newspapers and readers feature prominently in Graham's work, and can be interpreted as an example of his interest in disappearing or obsolete forms of technology, along with an interest in revisiting or reinterpreting

historic moments through the media. The newspapers that regularly appear in his photographic works are not just background material, but play a significant part in the interpretation of the works in their dates and content.

Included in the exhibition are major film works made between 1994 and 2010 including: *Halcion Sleep* (1994), *Torqued Chandelier Release* (2005), *The Green Cinematograph (Programme 1: Pipe smoker and overflowing sink)* (2010) and *Rheinmetall/Victoria8* (2003). These works speak to Graham's interest in experimentation, along with his interest in silent film and seemingly obsolete production and display methods, such as over-sized projection equipment and 16mm and 35mm film.

*Halcion Sleep* is a significant work, as the first film piece in which Graham used himself as the subject. In it he is driven around the city at night while asleep, having taken the sedative Halcion, a highly addictive hypnotic sedative. Halcion gained notoriety when it was revealed that former US Secretary of State James Baker was addicted to it, and its effects, which include amnesia, became widely known. *Halcion Sleep* shows Graham being taken on a physical journey he is not conscious of, while also on a parallel journey in his mind that he may not remember, and which the audience cannot see or understand.

*Torqued Chandelier Release* is one of a series of works that Graham describes as, "illustrated 'thought experiments'... within the context of a single roll of film." The work records a chandelier that has been torqued, tightened and let loose, inspired by Sir Isaac Newton's bucket experiment on the nature of rotational motion, in which Newton attempted to

demonstrate that rotational motion is not described as one body's motion in relation to another, but in relation to 'absolute space'. Newton demonstrated this by spinning a bucket full of water on a rope, and showing how the water spun independent of the bucket.

*Rheinmetall/Victoria8* (2003), depicts a 1930s German Rheinmetall typewriter which Graham acquired in a junk shop. 35mm film is projected using the now-obsolete 1961 Victoria 8 projector, showing the obscuring of the typewriter by falling snow. Obsolescence has always been an interest of Graham's: the mechanics and subject matter of this work speak to the rapid evolution in technology and the nostalgia that is now attached to tools of artistic production and display.

A notable aspect of many of Graham's film installations is how they act as both film works, and as sculpture. The unwieldy and outmoded projection methods utilised in works such as *The Green Cinematograph (Programme 1: Pipe smoker and overflowing sink)* (2010) are an integral part of the work. The projection equipment is customised and adapted, creating a sculptural element that accompanies the film works.

As an exhibition *That's Not Me* presents the central concerns of Rodney Graham's practice, while focusing on only some aspects of the work of this multi-talented artist. Combining disparate media and influences into a cohesive body of work, Graham addresses questions of authorship, identity and cultural memory, all while combining humour with deep knowledge and intellectual curiosity.

Rodney Graham was born in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada in 1949. He graduated from the University of British Columbia, Burnaby, Canada in 1971 and lives and works in Vancouver, Canada. Solo exhibitions include BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2017); Le Constortium, Dijon, France (2016); Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Germany (2015); Charles H. Scott Gallery, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Vancouver, Canada (2014); Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2012); Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria (2011); Museu D'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain (2010); Jeu de Paume, Paris, France (2009); Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, CA, USA (2004); Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK (2002); Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany (2001); and Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (1999). He has participated in group exhibitions such as the Carnegie International (2013), the 13th, 14th and 17th Sydney Biennales, Australia (2002, 2006, 2010), the Whitney Biennial, New York, USA (2006) and the Biennale d'Art contemporain de Lyon, France (2003). He represented Canada at the 47th Venice Biennale, Italy (1997) and among awards he has received the Gershon Iskowitz Prize, Toronto, Canada (2004), the Kurt Schwitters-Preis, Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung, Germany (2006), and the Audain Prize for lifetime achievement in visual arts, British Columbia, Canada (2011). Rodney Graham was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2016 for his contributions to Canadian contemporary art.