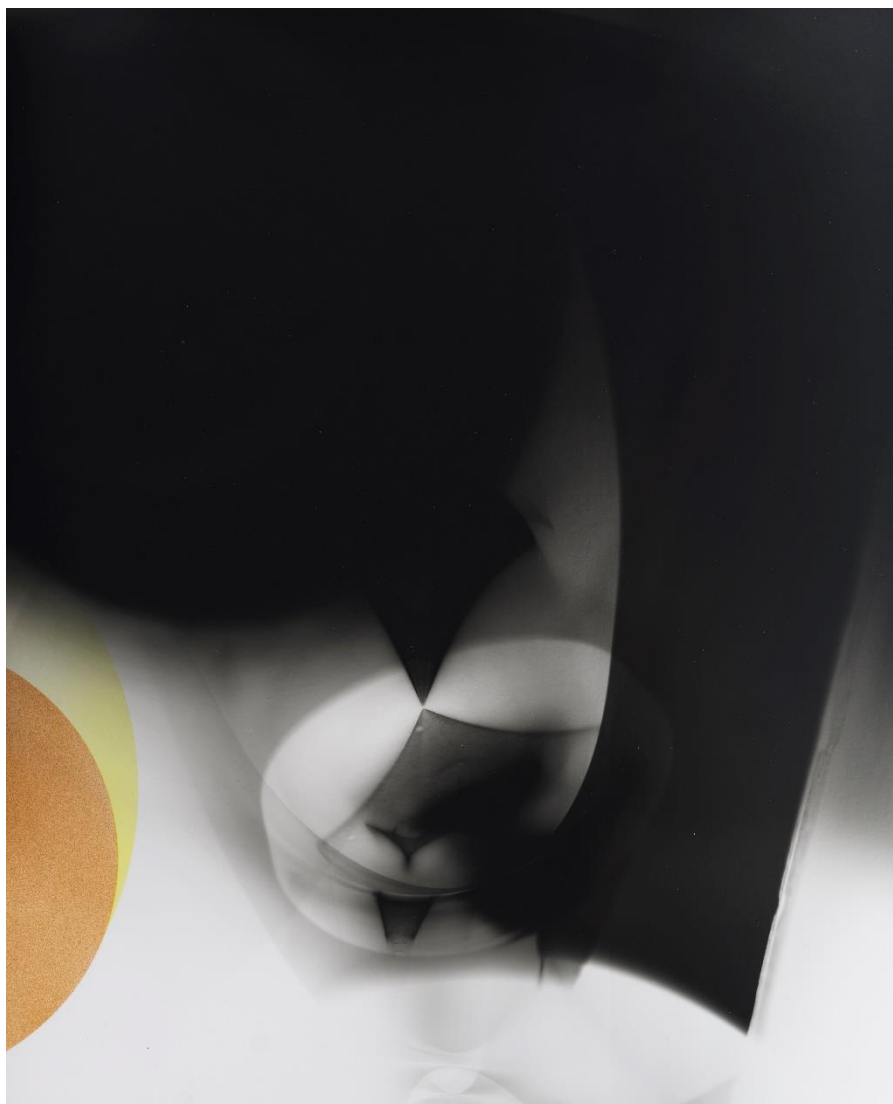


Resource Supporting Content Area 3: Today's World  
Junior & Senior Cycle New Appreciating Art Visual Studies



The history of light

*Grace Weir*

Solo Show

30 September – 17 November 2023



## Engagement & resources for students & teachers

Using cross-curricular links, and learning through art, this resource supports students completing their Junior and Senior Cycle studies. Designed to assist teachers and students in how to assess and evaluate an exhibition in our gallery, it includes:

- Background information on Solstice Arts Centre and its functions;
- Technical and curatorial requirements of the exhibition, and the gallery's role in interpreting the exhibition for visitors.
- An in-depth look at the exhibition, the artist and a selection of artworks.
- Questions to consider and discuss in relation to the exhibition.
- A glossary of words *highlighted in bold italic font* to aid understanding.

In describing the artworks on pages 8-10, we have highlighted:

- **Description:** a statement or account of the specific artwork.
- **Theme:** the "story" behind an artwork in a particular genre or style.
- **Subject matter:** what the work is actually "about".
- **Process & media:** the techniques and materials used by the artist to create the artwork.
- **Composition & layout:** the arrangement of visual elements in an artwork, or placement within the gallery spaces.

In addition, to help students understand and analyse contemporary artists work, place it in context, and assist in their own development of imaginative and innovative ideas, we encourage students and teachers to combine this resource with our Associated Learning & Engagement events:

- **Exhibition opening Sat 30 Sept.**

Join us for the opening of this exhibition and hear artist Grace Weir speak about her work on display. This event is free to attend, and a unique opportunity to engage and question the artist directly.

<https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/the-history-of-light>

- **Echoes of light gallery workshop with artist Joanna Hopkins, Thur 12 Oct.**

Looking and responding to the artworks by Grace Weir, students are encouraged to create a dialogue and visual response to our perceptions of time, process and material using Anthotype techniques.

<https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/echoes-of-light>

- **A Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) gallery class tour, various dates available.**

Assisting Senior Cycle students to investigate, analyse and reflect on multiple perspectives, our VTS tours embrace two of the three strands (Research & Respond), linking to Content Area 3: Today's World of the New Appreciating Art Visual Studies for Leaving Certificate curriculum.

Booking required <https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/school-gallery-tours-primary-and-secondary>

We encourage feedback from schools and teachers to assist us in developing these documents and events to best meet your needs. Please do get in touch with suggestions or any questions about our programme.

Best of luck to all students in their creative studies.

Yours,

Deirdre Rogers

Visual Arts Facilitation & Public Engagement Coordinator

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## Section 1: Information about Solstice Arts Centre

Solstice Arts Centre, Railway Street, Navan, Co. Meath C15 KWP1

+353 (0)46 909 2300

[www.solsticeartscentre.ie](http://www.solsticeartscentre.ie)

### Function

Solstice is a *multi-disciplinary* arts centre hosting a number of art forms including visual art, music, film and theatre. The building functions as a space for people to access and celebrate life, art and culture in the county, supporting artists and communities to engage in artistically rich experiences together.

Solstice facilitates theatre shows, music performances, visual art exhibitions and films. It also has a vast programme of participatory activities such as workshops, talks and events. It caters for all ages and capabilities, including children, young people, families, adults, schools, youth groups, and the elderly.

### History & Architecture

Designed by World-renowned Irish Architectural firm Grafton Architects, Solstice opened in April 2006 as a *purpose-built* arts centre. Over four levels, Solstice consists of a 320-seat tiered theatre, a three-roomed gallery space, a workshop/studio, and café. Solstice presents and produces over 300 arts events per year, welcoming over 60,000 visitors and audience members annually.

The name 'Solstice' references the ancient rituals associated with the county and the cultural 'light' the arts brings to the community.

### Solstice Gallery - opening times Tues - Sat 11:00 – 4:00pm

Solstice gallery is a *contemporary art* gallery that hosts five major exhibitions per year. Solstice does not have a *permanent collection* of artworks but exhibits artwork from local, national and international artists. Exhibitions are usually *thematic* group shows or large-scale solo exhibitions by one artist. The Director, resident *Curator* or an invited curator, selects the artworks for each exhibition.

### Gallery location & layout

The main Solstice gallery is located on the third floor, with some artworks hung on the café wall at ground level. You can access the gallery by stairs or lift. The main gallery has three large rooms and three enclosed courtyards for displaying artwork. There is also an engagement area for children in the gallery foyer.

### Exhibition information for visitors

Leaflets, information and text is especially important in the gallery space. It helps explain or interpret the exhibitions and artworks for visitors. The *curator* decides what type of wall labels and printed material to produce for the public. Each exhibition usually includes:

- Vinyl text on the café and gallery entrance walls providing a brief overview of the exhibition.
- Wall labels beside each artwork, a gallery essay and floor plan.
- A Virtual Gallery Tour on Solstice website.
- Learning Resources for visitors, students and teachers to understand and interact with the exhibition.

### Visual Arts Learning & Engagement Programme

Exhibitions are accompanied by associated events; workshops, talks, seminars and tours throughout the year. Public gallery engagement enables audiences of all ages to connect directly with professional artists and the artwork, and engage in new artistic and creative experiences. Full details of current exhibitions and accompanying learning and engagement events are available on Solstice Arts Centre's website and advertised on Solstice social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

## Section 2: The Exhibition - *The history of light*



Left: In Parallel, 2017, video (17minutes), HDV 17'19" /Right: In Parallel, 2017, watercolour on archival paper, framed

Solo exhibition by Grace Weir

Curated by Belinda Quirke

Opened Saturday 30 September until Friday 17 November 2023

'The history of light' unfolds the focusing of a moment that occurs when taking a photograph, to write a text with light about time. Weir explores the *correlation* between our understanding of time and light to our perceptions of memory and history. The exhibition consists of 34 framed works, 5 videos, and 1 sculpture. Weir's new series of painted *photograms* and a filmic installation 'Time tries all things', dominate the exhibition.

**Process & media:** The photograms in Gallery 1 and 3 are created from light *refracted* through different glass blocks and prisms in the darkroom. Some are over-painted with non-lightfast photographic inks. Time actually forms these artworks, questioning our perceptions of time, travelling backwards and forwards simultaneously from the fixing of the past light onto paper, and tension of future light on the work when displayed, to the longevity of the colour within.

*Time Tries All Things* in Gallery 2 is an immersive two-screen video and sculptural *installation* that *mediates* between different conceptions of time - scientific, philosophical and cinematic. Taking an approach to photography and painting that comes from filmmaking, other works suggest storyboards marking a *temporal* movement within still images.

**Curation & selection of artworks:** Through research and studio visits, the exhibition *curator*, Belinda Quirke is responsible for inviting the artist to exhibit in the gallery, and *collaboratively* selecting artworks and *installation formats* to display. It is the curators roll to make sure all the works 'sit' together in an

*aesthetically* pleasing manner, the type of lighting required, and different display areas necessary. Artworks with sound, or video works that require darkened spaces require particular attention.

**About the curator:** Belinda Quirke is a curator, producer, musician, singer, and artistic director of Solstice Arts Centre since opening in 2006. A graduate of NCAD, (MFA ACW), UCC Music and Crawford College of Art, Cork, her direct involvement in creating art and being part of a wider community of people contributing to all creative industries is crucial to the unique essence of Solstice Arts Centre.

### Exhibition location, display & layout:

Displayed in three gallery spaces, the deliberate placing of the artworks brings the viewer on the artists' journey of research and process. Starting in Gallery 2, work created ten years ago, introduces audiences to this body of work. Works in Gallery 3 bring the viewer through the artistic process that inspired the final works in Gallery 1. Seats in front of two video works, invite viewers to linger and listen. Carpet in gallery 2 highlights the works importance to the artist, creating an atmosphere of comfort, inviting the viewer to stay, listen and engage.

### Exhibition lighting

There is a mix of natural and limited spot lighting throughout the exhibition. The photograms are light-sensitive artworks, protected by UV glass within their frames. A commissioned stand with in-built strip lighting, displays the carved work in Gallery 2, highlighting the details and artisanship in the work.

### Gallery plan & information for visitors

In the entrance to the Centre on level 1 and gallery foyer a brief overview of the exhibition and printed material is available for visitors. To help audiences navigate the work, a gallery map is available, numbering artworks to correspond with the title, medium, dimensions and year each artwork was made. Information is also available to download from the Solstice website along with a 360 virtual tour of the exhibition for remote viewing.

The *gallery invigilator* assists visitors to navigate the exhibition, share information about the artist and ensure 'house rules', such as no touching of delicate works, no food or drinks allowed in the gallery spaces.

### On your gallery visit, consider the following:

- The positioning of the artworks within each space;
- How a visitor might be self-guided through the exhibition with the gallery map;
- The information available to you from the gallery invigilator about the artist and artworks.

### Learning & Engagement for the public

Programming a wide range of associated events for each exhibition to assist the public in learning and understanding the work on display, this exhibition includes:

- Exhibition opening and artist talk on Sat. 30 Sept. at 2:30pm.
- Gallery tours using VTS (visual thinking strategies).
- Eight artist-led school workshops for primary and post-primary students and teachers.
- Adult/teen artist-led workshop exploring cyanotype print on Sat. 14 Oct.
- Creative Engagement area for families located in the gallery foyer. This *self-directed* space for young children, connected to the work in the gallery. This allows visitors to engage with the artworks through sensory and hands-on making experiences.

Information on all these associated events is on the Solstice website: <https://solsticeartscentre.ie/>

## Section 3: About the artist – Grace Weir



A still image of artist Grace Weir, from her two-screen video *Time Tries All Things*

Grace Weir is an Irish artist whose work ranges from film and video to photographic, painting, lecture-performances, installation and web projects.

Working primarily in the moving image and *installation*, Weir is concerned with aligning a lived experience of the world with conceptual knowledge and theory.

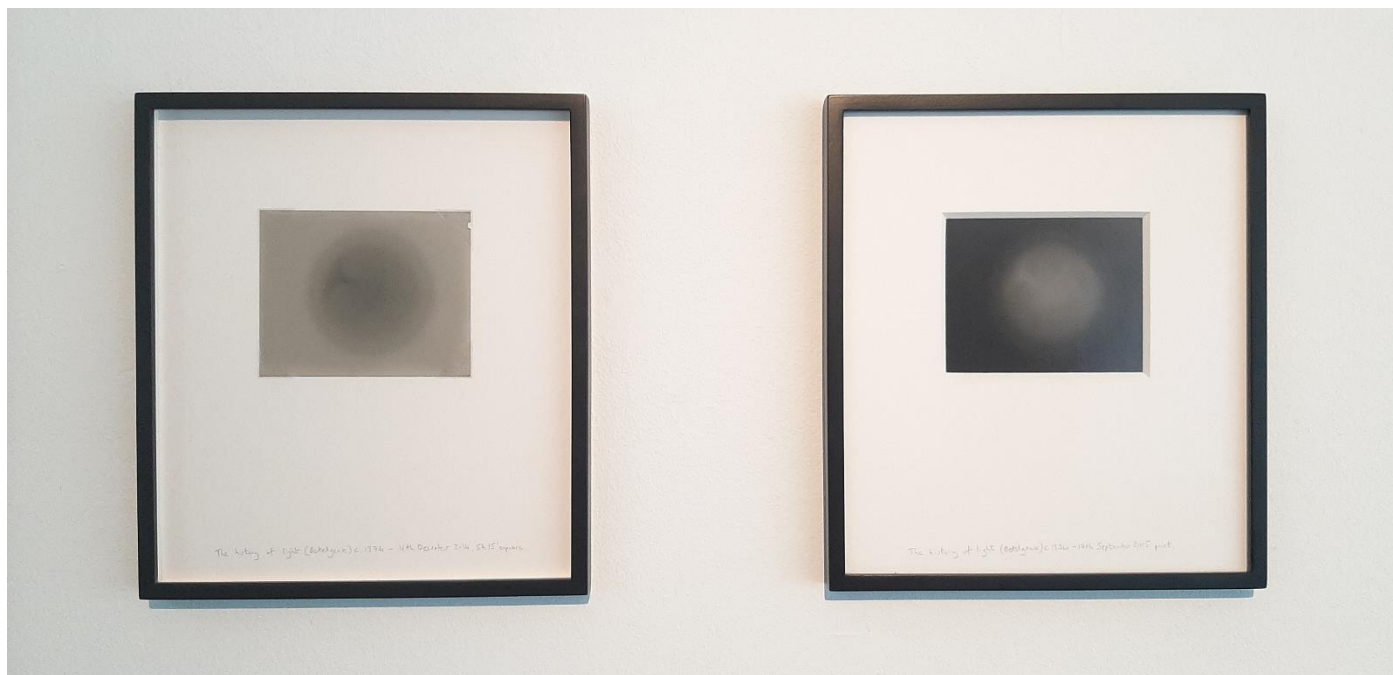
One particular area of Weir's work is her unique approach to research, based on encounters with specifics such as certain objects, books, artworks, particular locations and source archives or from conversations with philosophers, scientists or practitioners from other disciplines. She has a particular interest in unfolding *trajectories in our identity* from these encounters through our experience of time and space, and the corresponding relationship to concepts of memory and record, reality and representation within our perception of history and the future. She has made over 30 films and video works, underpinned by the particular entities, locations and theories under her scrutiny, whether cultural, scientific, or philosophical.

Creating a dialogue between the nature of ideas and the ways in which thinking is materialised, the works frequently refer to the act of making and the mediums in which they are made, including where time itself forms the work.

**Biography** – Grace Weir has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally and represented Ireland at the 49th International Venice Biennale in 2001. She was an Artist-in-Residence in Trinity College Dublin (2012-2015) and had a major solo exhibition at the [Irish Museum of Modern Art](https://imma.ie/artists/grace-weir/) <https://imma.ie/artists/grace-weir/> (2015-2016). In 2019, she was commissioned by The Institute of Physics (UK and Ireland) to create an installation '[HYPERLINK](http://www.graceweir.com/TTAT.html) ["http://www.graceweir.com/TTAT.html"](http://www.graceweir.com/TTAT.html) *Time Tries All Things*' for the inaugural show in the Gallery at the Institute of Physics in London. <http://www.graceweir.com/TTAT.html>. This artwork is part of this exhibition at Solstice.

Read more about Grace Weir on her website: <http://www.graceweir.com/>

## Artwork 1: *The history of light (Betelgeuse)*



**Left:** *The history of light (Betelgeuse)*, c.1374 – 16 Dec. 2014

**Medium:** Unique gelatin silver photogram, Museum glass AR 99 Protect

**Right:** *The history of light (Betelgeuse)*, c.1374 – 16 Dec. 2014

**Medium:** Gelatin silver print, Museum glass AR 99 Protect

**Year:** c.1374 – 16 Dec. 2014

**Scale:** 30 x 26.6

**Year:** c.1374 – 16 Dec. 2014

**Scale:** 30 x 26.6

**Description:** Bringing the artist on a journey of enquiry over ten years, the exhibition begins with these two small framed photographic artworks in Gallery 2. Imagery of the dying star *Betelgeuse*, the left is the photographic negative of the star. The right, the image Weir captured from the negative film.

**Theme:** While on residency in the School of Physics in Trinity College, Dublin in 2014, Weir began researching the dying star, in its red supernova phase. Weir wanted to capture its light before it disappeared.

**Subject matter:** Part of the Orion constellation *Betelgeuse* is 640 light-years away, meaning it takes the light from this star 640 years to reach earth. For Weir this raised the question, 'if we are seeing the star as it was 640 years ago, is it gone already?' This supported her continued research into time and space. Note the date Weir has placed on these artworks - c.1374 - 16 Dec. 2014. The date 1374 refers to the date 640 years ago the star omitted the light Weir captured on film in 2014.

**Process & media:** To ensure a clear night sky in which to capture the stars light, Weir travelled to the site of the Teide Observatory, the highest point in Tenerife. Acquiring old photographic film sensitive to red light, and recreating the 'pin-hole' photography\* technique, using a cardboard tube and box, Weir filmed the stars trajectory across the sky over 5 nights. Returning to Ireland and processed, the photographic film revealed the stars light on film, light captured from 640 years ago.

**Composition & layout:** These two artworks, hang side-by-side in the middle gallery on a large expanse of wall. Setting them apart for the other works in the space and spot lit from above, their lack of colour and small scale, gives them an element of subtle importance.

*\*follow link on page 12, to learn more about the 'pin hole' photography process*



## Artwork 2: *Time Tries All Things*



**Medium:** Dual screen HDV 30' and Portland stone sculpture

**Scale:** variable

**Year:** 2019

**Description:** A stretch of time, this immersive two-screen video and sculptural installation, *Time Tries All Things* is a *meditation* on different notions of time - scientific, philosophical and cinematic.

**Theme:** This 30-minute cinematic work uses science and art, physics and cinema to explore the theme of time. How do we measure time? Is time an illusion? Is the past real? Does the future exist already? *Time Tries All Things* encourages viewers to reflect on their own lived experience of time, and how this corresponds to, contrasts with, and can be illuminated by scientific knowledge and theory.

**Subject matter:** Commissioned by The Institute of Physics in London in 2019, Weir developed this work during her collaboration with two theoretical physicists, Professor Fay Dowker of Imperial College, and Professor David Berman of Queen Mary University. Reflecting on their differing theoretical perspectives, the video is *interspersed* with footage of a stonemason reconstructing the carving '*Time Trieth Troth*' (meaning time tries faith or truth) into a block of Portland stone.

**Process & media:** While researching at Queen Mary University, Weir noticed the 1890's Portland stone carving displayed on the clock tower, and discovered that the stonemason and story of its imagery are now unknown, forgotten in time. Taking photographs of the original, Weir commissioned Irish stonemason Seamus Dunbar to recreate it for display within and alongside the video. Filmed in one continuous shot, Professor Berman discusses his theory on the left screen. On the right, Professor Dowker's theories are interspersed with the carving of '*Time Trieth Troth*', and the tapping of the stonemason's hammer, mirrors the ticking of a clock. Weir uses it to expand thoughts on the elasticity of the present instant within the flux of history. Imagery of the original stone ends the video.

**Composition & layout:** Displayed on two screens in Gallery 2, a large expanse of grey carpet denotes the viewing space. Stools enable viewers to sit and watch. Displayed away from the screens, the Portland stone, '*Time Trieth Troth*' stands alone yet links to the filmed piece as the viewer moves through the space. The stone sits on a metal stand that highlights the details and craftsmanship of the work.

### Artwork 3: *Jump cut (lemon yellow, flesh-tint yellowish)*



**Medium:** Photogram diptych, non-lightfast photographic inks, Museum glass AR 99UV Protect  
**Scale:** 54 x 45.4 each                      **Year:** 2023

**Description:** Hanging in Gallery 1 *Jump cut (lemon yellow, flesh-tint yellowish)* are two of 34 framed Photograms in this exhibition. Positioned together, these experimental works form a *diptych* similar in size and composition.

**Theme:** In relation to this work, Weir says 'the instant of a photograph is not fixed; it is a jump off point for other things...a moment and then a memory of a moment'. For Weir, the material gives way to the *temporal*, time that forms the work, from the fixing of an image of light, to light unfixing the image and freeing individual colours from the conditions that hold them over time.

**Subject matter:** The word photography means 'to write with light'. Confined to home during the pandemic, and isolating herself in the *darkroom*, Weir created over 80 photograms or photographic experiments. In storage until this year, Weir intended to create a film/animation with them collectively. Upon review and inspired by Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky who said 'film is sculpting time', Weir realised they were each individual films, capturing multiple moments in time- past, present and future.

**Process & media:** Weir refers to these works as experiments in 'painting with light', her energy of making present in the visual works. Refracted through different glass prisms in the darkroom, the captured imagery is over-painted in small areas with non-lightfast photographic inks that are unstable in their longevity. Some colours will last only a short duration, others a century or more. Each colour applied is named e.g. in the title above *lemon yellow, flesh-tint yellowish*, but the colours formed by overlapping hues are not, they remain visible but unnamed *entities*.

**Composition & layout:** These experimental works are *elemental* in form, using shape, space and time in their composition. Using basic prism shapes to block and *refract* the light in the darkroom, the abstract results can become anything. Formed by moving the prisms while still exposed to light, the shadows are *temporal* shifts within the images.

## Section 5: Glossary

**Aesthetically**, in a way that gives pleasure through beauty.

**Collaboration** is a working practice whereby individuals work together for a common purpose.

**Contemporary art** is art of the present time, usually attributed to the periods from the 1970s to today.

**Correlation** is the process of establishing a relationship or connection between two or more things.

**Curator** oversees the organisation and presentation of exhibitions to inform, educate & inspire the public.

**Darkroom** is a room that can be made completely dark to allow the processing of light-sensitive photographic materials, including film and photographic paper.

**Diptych** is a work of art made of two parts.

**Elemental**, simple, basic in form.

**Entities**, things with distinct and independent existence.

**Gallery invigilator** sits in the gallery, looks after the work, and speaks to the public about the exhibits.

**Installation art** is used to describe large-scale, mixed media constructions, often designed for a specific place or for a temporary period.

**Installation format** refers to the layout, shape or proportions of the artworks.

**Interspersed** means scattered among or between other things, placed here and there.

**Mediate through** - to act between.

**Meditation**, to bring attention to a particular object, thought, or activity.

**Multi-disciplinary** combines different artforms. Multi-disciplinary art is often experimental, seeking new forms of expression.

**Photogram**, a picture produced with photographic materials, such as light-sensitive paper, but without a camera.

**Purpose-built** is something that is designed with one purpose in mind, in this case an arts centre.

**Refract-ed** (of glass) make a ray of light change direction when it enters at an angle.

**Self-directed** means making your own decisions and organising your own work rather than being told what to do by other people.

**Temporal**, of or relating to time.

**Temporal oscillation** relating to time or movement of time back and forth in a regular rhythm.

**Thematic** exhibitions are organised in terms of themes e.g. the theme of light or recurring ideas or motifs.

**'Time Trieth Troth'** - In Old English troth means truth. This old proverb (listed by Heywood in 1546) means that faith or loyalty is tested by the passage of time.

**Trajectories in our identity**, refers to our encounters with people, objects, space, time, and how these can influence our chosen path in life.

## Section 6: Questions to consider & discuss

- Art and science – Weir's art practice is research based, often working with scientists and physicists on joint areas of interest. What evidence can you find of this in the artworks discussed?
- Weir describes her process and media in her photogram works as experimental. They are unstable and the imagery likely to change over time with exposure to light. In your opinion, does this make the work unfinished? Discuss this further in relation to the meaning, techniques and context behind the photogram artworks.
- Take a closer look at the theme, and subject matter description of one of the artworks, and use it to consider the artists theory and thinking behind its creation.
- Research the making processes Grace Weir uses, such as 'pin-hole' photography. Experiment and create your own homemade camera. You will find more information and tips here: <https://smartclass4kids.com/pinhole-camera/>
- Using the links below, find out more about Grace Weir. Look at her website, follow on social media, and gain additional insight into her artistic career and practice.

### Useful links:

Read more about Grace Weir on her website: <http://www.graceweir.com/>

#### Reviews and Interviews:

- Bentivegna, Marco & Meinzer, Tipton, Gemma, [Time Tries All Things](#), The Irish Times, Feb 16 2019
- Carey-Kent, Paul, [Recommended London Art Exhibitions](#), ArtLyst, February 2019
- Nina, [The wings of time](#), Nature Physics 15, 305–305, April 2019

'Sculpting in Time', a book by Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky about art and cinema in general, and his own films in particular. <https://ifi.ie/tarkovsky>

Explore the concept of time further with a class viewing of **Adventures in Space and Time** episode 4 - What Is Time? by Professor Brian Cox <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x823lr5>

### Visiting Solstice:

- Solstice Gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday 11am-4pm.
- Individual students and teachers can visit the gallery during opening times.

Class and group gallery tours must be booked in advance.

- Facilitated by qualified, experienced artists and educators, Solstice offer a number of curriculum linked workshops and events for schools during each exhibition <https://solsticeartscentre.ie/whats-on/>
- To book a tour or workshop, please contact Deirdre Rogers, Visual Arts Facilitation & Public Engagement Coordinator at [deirdre.rogers@solsticeartscentre.ie](mailto:deirdre.rogers@solsticeartscentre.ie) or 046 909 2308.
- If your school or an individual teacher wishes to be contacted directly about upcoming events and opportunities, please let us know and we can add you to our mailing list.

