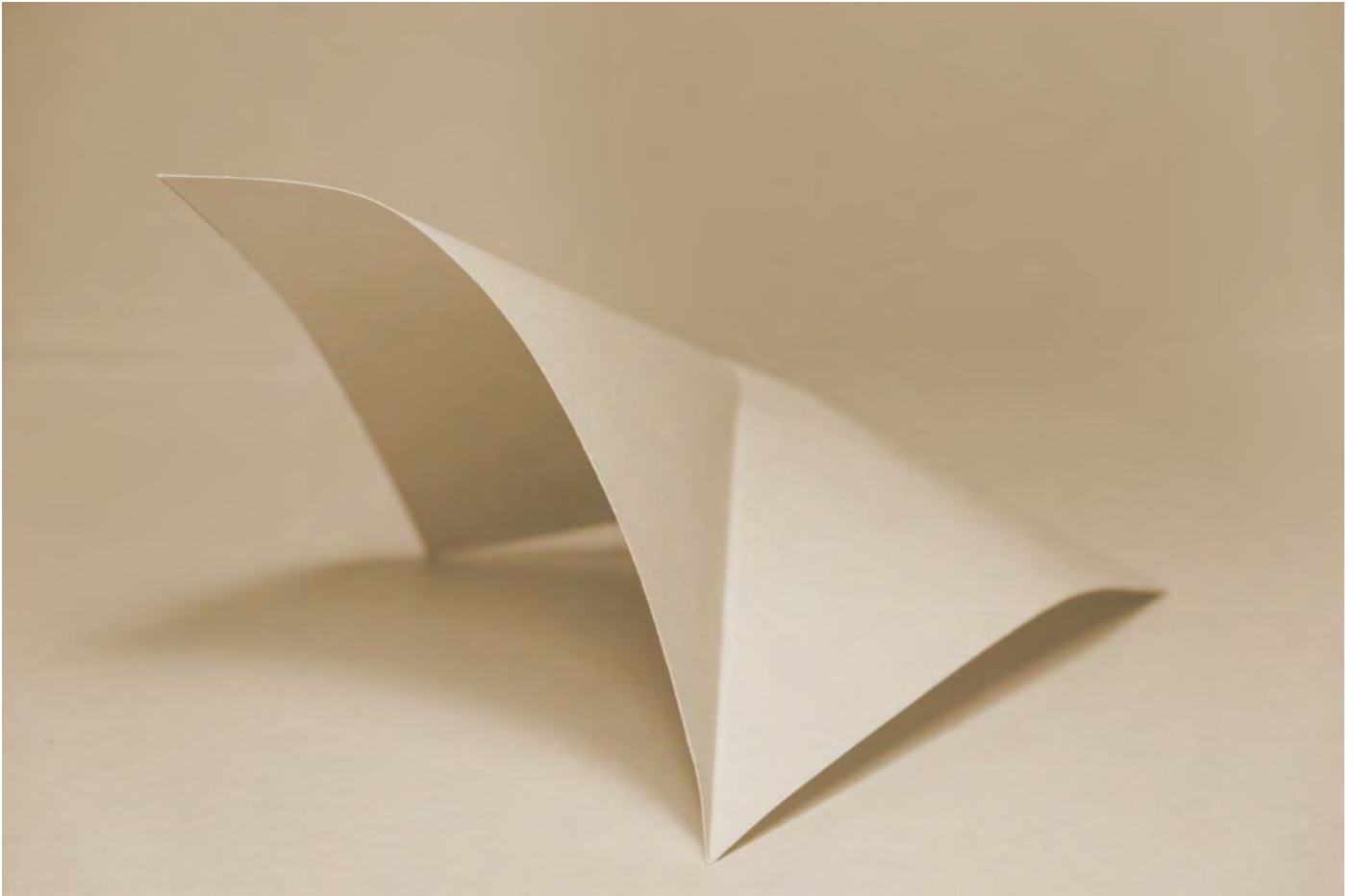


Resource & engagement for second level students & teachers supporting
Content Area 3: Today's World

to hold or to be held

Mark Garry



Sat 20 January - Sat 16 March 2024



Solstice Arts Centre, Railway Street Navan, Co. Meath - 046 9092300 www.solsticeartscentre.ie

Resource & engagement for second level students & teachers supporting Content Area 3: Today's World

Designed to assist you in an inquiry-based exploration of the exhibition, this resource includes:

- Associated events below you might like to attend linked to the exhibition.
- Information about the artist.
- Questions to consider & discuss relating to:
Artists Theory & Thinking
 - motivations behind the work;**Processes & Media**
 - techniques & materials to create the work;**Art & the Environment**
 - a source of inspiration;**Art as Social Commentary or Commentator**
 - raising awareness through art.

Describing the exhibition on page 4, we have highlighted:

- **Theme & subject matter:** the 'story' behind the artwork, what the work is 'about'.
- **Process & media:** techniques and materials used by the artist to create the artworks.
- **Composition & layout:** the arrangement of visual elements in an artwork, or placement within the gallery spaces.

A glossary of words highlighted in ***bold italic font*** to aid your understanding is on page 9.

We encourage you to allow time to look, respond and reflect on the artworks in the gallery.

You can also combine this resource with our free associated learning & engagement events:

Exhibition opening

Sat 20 January

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

<https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/to-hold-or-to-be-held>

ExTEND workshop

Thur 22 February, booking essential

An opportunity for students to develop a verbal and sculptural response to the tactile nature, form and space generated by Garry's artworks.

<https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/extend>

Book launch *to hold or to be held*

Sat 9 March

In conversation with Mark Garry, hear contributors Barbara Knežević, Michael O'Hara and Louise Reddy; respond to the broader research areas that inform this exhibition.

<https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/to-hold-or-to-be-held-book-launch>

Class Gallery Tours

Various dates available, booking essential

Assisting students to nurture the skills of critical literary, and analyse and reflect on the multiple perspectives used by artists, our VTS tours embrace two of the three strands (Research & Respond), linking to the Today's World question as part of their Leaving Certificate Art exam.

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

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About the artist – Mark Garry

Mark Garry is an Irish artist, curator, writer, educator and occasional musician. His practice is research driven, creating work that engages with a new form of *conceptual* criteria with each exhibition opportunity.

Themes & subject matter: Driven by a fundamental interest in observing how we navigate the world, Garry's work is characterised by delicate *site-specific installations*, thoughtfully constructed within exhibiting spaces.

He combines physical, visual, sensory and *empathetic* relationships with a range of materials that intersect the gallery and form connections between a specific space and to each other. While located in research, this is purposefully not obvious and subtly embedded within the finished works, preferring to encourage a personal encounter with the viewer that merges modesty and complexity.



Process & media: Garry's practice is *multifaceted* and incorporates a variety of media, processes and materials. These include drawing, filmmaking, photography, sculpture, sonic sculpture, performance and collaborative music projects. He may combine a number of these elements to form his *site-specific installations*.

Read more about Mark Garry on his website <https://markgarrystudio.com/>

About the exhibition – *to hold or to be held*

Themes & subject matter: Developed for Solstice Arts Centre this body of new works stems from a period of textual and process driven artistic research, looking broadly at forms of empathy and *altruism* and the complicated nature of how these elements are understood, experienced and manifested or lacking in social situations. *to hold or to be held* is a subtle response to inter-reliance and societal displacement, and what occurs when socially shared aspects of belonging are eroded.

Process & media: Responding to the architecture of the gallery, Garry uses a *methodological approach* to create his work, stretching and consolidating the possibilities of familiar materials. Integrating multiple forms of media, positions, and artistic responses to his research, he has included drawing, photographic and film works, paintings, prints, ceramics, sculptural elements, and song work. Transforming simple materials such as thread, fabric and paper, and assembling them to form powerful structures hinting at inter-reliance, acting as a collective, one is not possible or complete without the other. The fold and curve are persisting elements throughout the works, enabling forms or possibilities that are simultaneously elaborating and stabilising; paper folded or metal curved transforms it into a three-dimensional object that can bend, twist, sway or support.

Composition & layout: Meticulously assembling, grouping and making artworks on-site, Garry *curates* their layout in response to the gallery space. Combining physical, visual, sensory and *empathetic* relationships, the works intersect the three gallery rooms forming connections between the spaces and one another.

Some artworks use systems where two and three-dimensional elements combine; where the artwork is contained and a container; where one form or material sustains another; where they are *to hold or to be held* by each other. Situated to enable careful, fragile alliances, this encourages the viewer to consider modes of *inter-reliance* between materials, space, form and their meaning.

The artworks are not individually titled, but collectively referenced *to hold or to be held*.

Publication accompanying this exhibition: Garry has produced a publication *to hold or to be held* with graphic designer Louise Reddy for this exhibition. Inviting collaborators and fellow artists to contribute, they responded to the broader research area that informed the works rather than the artworks themselves. Texts from Stephen Doyle, Barbara Knežević, Michael O'Hara, and Mark Garry respond from a range of *art theory*, design, *musicological*, *philosophical* and *psychoanalytical* perspectives.

Book launch in Solstice Gallery, Saturday 9 March at 2pm with Barbara Knežević, Michael O'Hara, Louise Reddy and Mark Garry discussing their essays in relation to the artworks on display.

For more information and 360° virtual tour of the exhibition for remote viewing:

<https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/to-hold-or-to-be-held>

Questions to consider & discuss

Artists Theory & Thinking

Motivated by a range of textual sources, Garry structured a text of his own in an attempt to capture elements as they occur in human and animal societies related to *altruism*, forms of societal inter-reliance, selflessness, hibernation and migration. Adapting his text to become a twenty-eight-line poem *To Fold*, and transformed into song by Peruvian/Irish musician and composer Seán Carpio, it is heard throughout the spaces from Gallery 3.

A separate film work, thematically connected, also hangs in Gallery 3.

In this song work, the fold is a means of transformation, the folding of voices into harmony, the folding of the self into another, or the folding of logic, poetics and aesthetics into artistic meaning making.

To Fold

Written by Mark Garry and performed by Seán Carpio

We hear and listen
We shape and mould
We crease and form
We bend and fold

We fold landscapes into borders
We fold darkness into light
We fold form into meaning
We fold daylight into night

We unwrap and display
We progress and explain
We clarify and disclose
We endure and remain

We fold space into time
We fold the self into another
We fold voice into harmony
We fold spring into summer

We persist, we belong
We make known, we migrate,
We unfurl, we evolve
We transmit, we translate

We fold sound into song
We fold shapes into form
We fold into one another
We fold sand into storm

We find refuge in sleep
We curve and we fold
We form fragile affinities
We are held and we hold



Still image from film work, Gallery 3

Take a quiet moment to look and listen to the film and song works in Gallery 3.

- Consider the artists use of media to convey his interest in social relationships. What words or imagery stands out for you?

- Do you think the combination of song and video work creates a certain type of atmosphere in the spaces? Is it calm or chaotic, excited or subdued? How does it make you feel?

- The fold is a persisting element of Garry's artworks. Referencing it directly in song, do you agree these two works together relay thoughts of empathy and inter-reliance Garry is trying to convey?

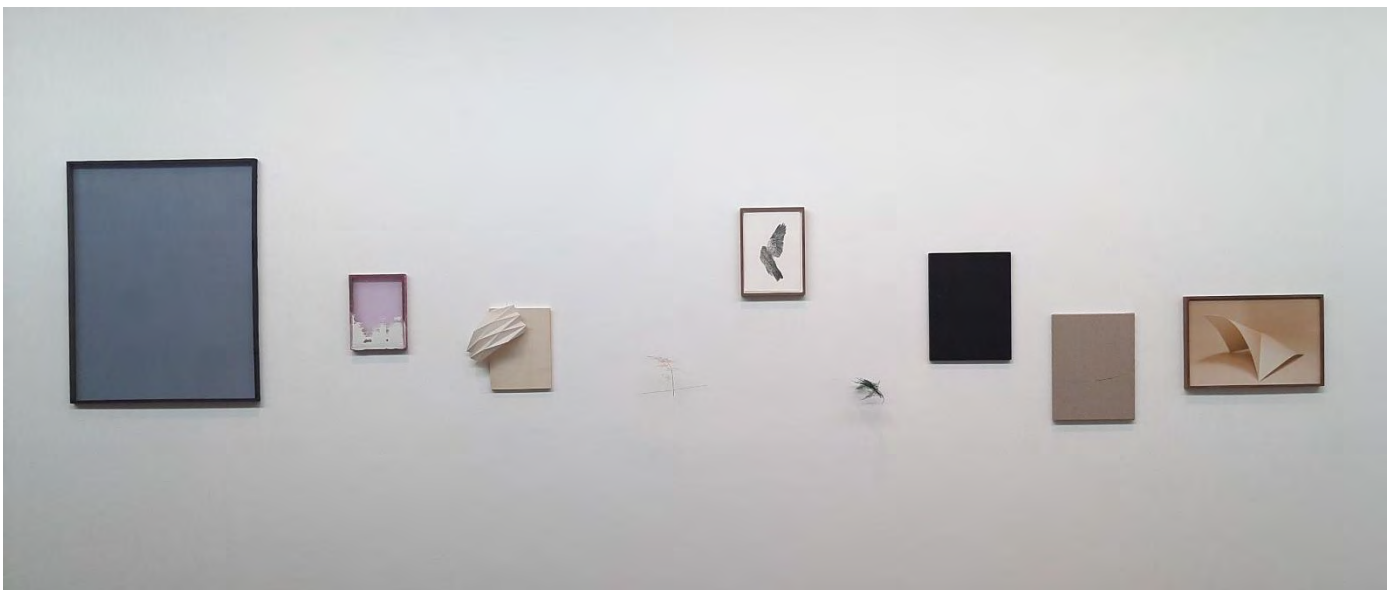
List reasons to your answer.

Questions to consider & discuss

Processes & Media

Applying a methodological approach, Garry combines physical, visual, sensory, and *empathetic* relationships with materials that intersect the gallery, forming installations that connect between the architectural space and one another. Situated to enable careful, fragile alliances, this aims to encourage the viewer to consider modes of *inter-reliance* between materials, space, form and their meaning.

In this grouping of artworks in Gallery 1, we see a clear connection between the artists' theory and thinking and the processes and media he uses. Referencing human connectedness and empathy, the artworks use simple two and three-dimensional elements combined to support and enhance one another.



Medium: Mixed media Scale: Variable

Drawing, photography, print and sculptural assemblages create this group of work.

Considering their positions to highlight an artistic response to research, Garry has integrated multiple forms of familiar materials, such as wooden frames, organza, plaster, asparagus fern, wire, pencil drawing, sand, and photography.

The artworks are simultaneously contained and a container, a shape or material sustaining another, they are *to hold* or *to be held* by each other.

- A *multifaceted* artist combining craft making techniques, Garry assembles materials so they rely on each other to coexist. What materials does he use together and how?

- By using simple, familiar materials, do you agree viewers can connect with the work on a personal level?

- Garry has chosen colours and materials that are understated and subtle. Why do you think this is?

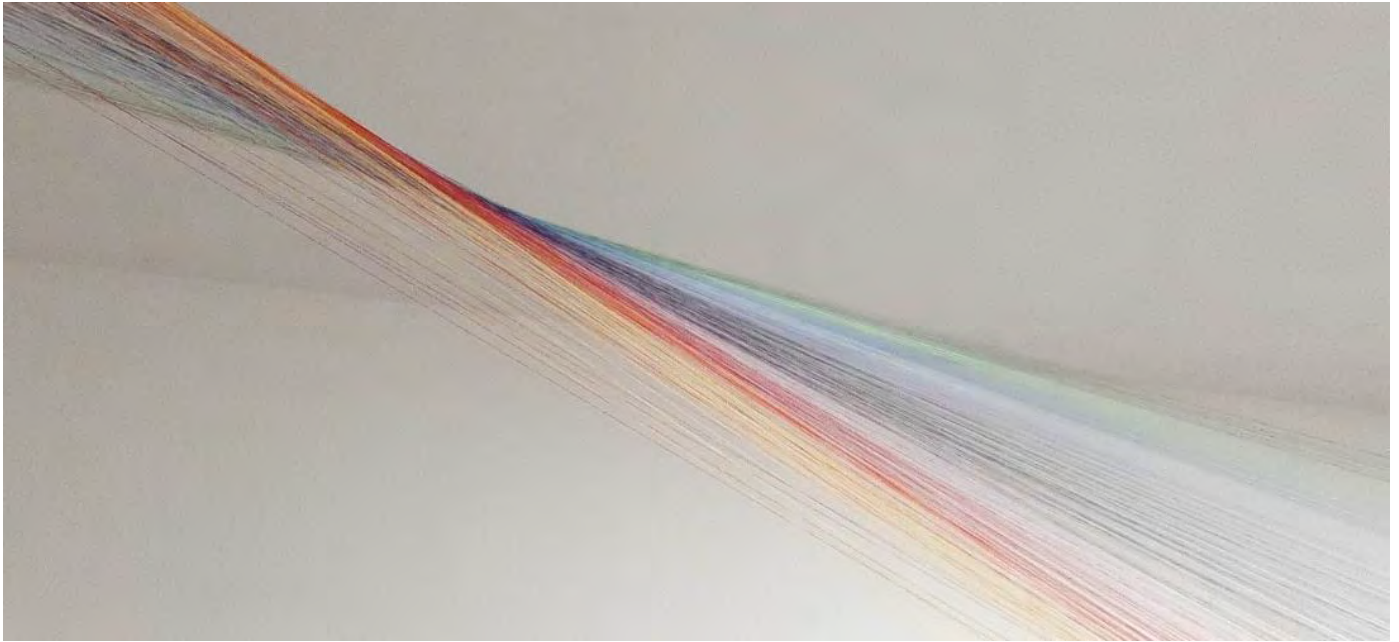
- In your opinion, do the materials and processes used reflect the title of the exhibition?

- The composition of multiple wall works is repeated in Gallery 2. Compare and contrast the works in both groupings?

Questions to consider & discuss

Art & the Environment

Responding to the gallery spaces, Mark Garry creates delicately constructed *site-specific* installations. Described by Garry as 'interventions of space', this spectrum of coloured thread moves from vertical to horizontal and back to vertical, spanning 16 metres across Gallery 3. Inspired by the Peacock Angel, worshiped by the ancient Yezidis people, the colours are created from tightly spaced bands of thread. Numbering 378 hundred in total, each 5mm apart, the thread ends are pinned into the wall.



Medium: Thread, pins, metal supports

Scale: 16 meters wide x 1.5 metres deep (approximate)

Questioning societal and materialistic relationships, the colours chosen for his thread work are deeply rooted in research.

However, preferring to encourage a personal encounter with the viewer, these elements are subtly embedded, not obvious, within the finished work.

Here, the relationship of the material, space and light create a work of subtle beauty that seems to appear, disappear, float and glow as the viewer moves beneath.

Spend time looking and moving beneath this artwork.

- How does it make you feel within the space?
- What do you think Garry means when he calls this work an 'intervention of space'?
- Mark Garry combines a physical, visual, sensory, and *empathetic* relationship between materials and the architectural space. In your opinion, how has he achieved this with this thread work?

Questions to consider & discuss

Art as Social Commentary or Commentator

Referencing human connectedness and empathy, the underlying theme of this exhibition is societal inter-reliance, kindness and displacement, topics which are very relevant and evident in our world today.

On the floor of Gallery 2, fifteen ceramic birds in yellow, blue, orange and white sit within or beside nineteen white porcelain structures. The bird is *ambiguous* symbol, chosen for its natural, familiar form.



Medium: Porcelain

Scale: variable

'Defining what constitutes a home is one's sense of belonging. The feeling of having a home and being at home is both an intimate and a socially shared aspect of belonging' – Mark Garry

Garry describes this installation as a *cartographic* scene, where the viewer is looking down on a map or geographical area of sorts. The white structures can depict shelter, a settlement or encampment, the birds resting underneath.

The fold is a persisting element of Garry's works. Here he uses the fold in porcelain, acting as a method of enabling form, new possibilities that are simultaneously elaborating and stabilising, revealing and concealing.

- All societies are dependent on forms of inter-reliance. Do you agree?

- Directly linked to his research on societal displacement, in your opinion, has he achieved this here with his use of materials, scale and placement within the space?

- Discuss other symbolic possibilities of the bird and its visual impact on the gallery floor.

- All of the artworks in this exhibition are collectively titled *to hold or to be held*. Compare and contrast this work with another in the gallery. Note similarities and differences, their position in the space and connection to each other.

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Glossary

Altruism is the principle and practice of concern for the well-being and/or happiness of other humans or animals above oneself.

Ambiguous, open to more than one interpretation; not having one obvious meaning.

Art theory is a comprehensive study of art, which explores the essence and regularities of art.

Cartographic relates to the study and practice of making and using maps. **Cartography** is the art and science of graphically representing a geographical area, usually on a flat surface such as a map or chart.

Conceptual criteria means related to ideas and concepts formed in the mind.

Curates, the organisation and presentation of artworks within an exhibition.

Empathetic, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Installation art is used to describe mixed media constructions, often designed for a specific place, for a temporary period.

Methodological approach refers to a studied and constantly reassessed, questioned method, as opposed to a method merely applied without thought.

Multifaceted means having many different aspects or features.

Musicological: the study of music as a branch of knowledge or field of research as distinct from composition or performance.

Philosophical: relating or devoted to the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence.

Psychoanalytical focuses on deciphering how the unconscious mind governs conscious processes.

Site-specific art is work created to exist in a certain place.

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

Useful links:

Using the links below, find out more about Mark Garry's work. Look at his website, follow on social media, and gain additional insight into his artistic career and practice.

<https://markgarrystudio.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjeeT3JtWI&t=1s>

<https://gallery.limerick.ie/LCGAExhibitions/LCGAExhibitionsArchive/2021exhibitions/MarkGarry.html>

<https://imma.ie/artists/mark-garry/>

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.

To book a tour, workshop or event please contact:

Deirdre Rogers, Visual Arts Facilitation & Public Engagement Coordinator at 046 909 2308 or by emailing deirdre.rogers@solsticeartscentre.ie

If you wish to be contacted directly about upcoming events and opportunities, please let us know and we can add you to our mailing list.

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

Best of luck to all students in their creative studies.

Deirdre Rogers

Visual Arts Facilitation & Public Engagement Coordinator

Notes: