

MICHEÁL O'CONNELL / MOCKSIM: Systems Interference Artist

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Statement

Appropriation and attempting to unearth the poetic in everyday, often dysfunctional, technologies, systems and bureaucracies are key activities. The interest includes, but also extends beyond, the computational network, and the photographic, to the ubiquitous heavier physical machineries, as well as commercial and entertainment infrastructures. Methods of intervention, which involve misuse, misunderstanding and 'mild hacking', both online and off, are shared. From the activity, found imagery, data, readymades and objects are exhibited directly. Whilst the principle is to avoid 'making', elements may be incorporated into performances, books, certain photographic constructions or signature looping films called 'simupoems'. (Two of the latter are part of the late Michael Shamberg's *Turtle Salon* collection.)

Biography

In the past work was shown in project spaces, established locations such as the Whitechapel Art Gallery (London), Lighthouse (Brighton, UK) and Wandersford Quay Gallery (Cork City, Ireland) and, long before the pandemic, using readily available and invented systems for streaming, distribution, and providing feedback. An early project, *Contra-Invention*, had been invited to *Les Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie d'Arles*, was later part of *From Here On* at Arts Santa Mónica, Barcelona and toured in the UK and Ireland, supported by funding from different sources. O'Connell was subsequently invited to join international grouping *ABC Artists' Books Cooperative* and, since completing a practice-led PhD in 2016, has been actively intervening both independently, and as part of collectives, again.

In 2019 a [Develop Your Creative Practice \(DYCP\) grant](#) was awarded by Arts Council England, and then in 2021 a substantial [Commissions Award](#), by The Arts Council, Ireland. New work has been generated for a solo exhibition, *System Interference*, at Uillinn, West Cork Arts Centre which opened in September 2022, and will travel to Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda and Wexford Arts Centre, Ireland, in 2023/24 supported by an Arts Council [Touring and Dissemination Award](#).

Art Education

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| 2010-2016 | Practice PhD, <i>Art as 'Artificial Stupidity'</i> , School of Media, Film and Music, Uni. of Sussex, UK
Examiners: Dave Beech (UAL Chelsea, artist, writer), John Roberts (Prof. of Art and Aesthetics, Uni. Of Wolverhampton), Caroline Bassett (Prof. of Digital Humanities, Uni. of Cambridge) |
| 2004-2006 | MA Fine Art (Distinction), Uni. of Brighton, UK |
| 2001-2004 | Portfolio, then Art & Design Foundation, City College Brighton & Hove (now Brighton MET), UK |

Selected Exhibitions, Events and Residencies

- 2022 *System Interference*, solo show at Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, Skibbereen, Ireland
- 2022 *Tilting Against Windmills*, 2-person show with US artist Kara Hearn at Gallery Dodo, Brighton, UK
- 2021 *Pissing Against the Wind*, group show at Gallery Dodo, Brighton, UK
Der Stand der Dinge, K uefer-Martis-Huus, Liechtenstein
Artist residencies x 2, Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre/Uillinn, Ireland ([Commissions Award](#))
- 2020 *ABC Proposals for Paris*, Le Plac'Art Photo, Paris
In the Dark, The Cello Factory, London
Develop Your Creative Practice (DYCP), one year plan completed ([Arts Council England](#))
- 2019 *Printing Plant*, Looiersgracht60, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Out(Law), SEAS, Brighton, UK
Skibbereen Arts Festival, Stuff Everywhere walk and talk, Ireland
Have a Great Time, Cool! Grand, billboard poster, Skibbereen, Ireland ([Commissioned work](#))
Artist residency, West Cork Arts Centre/Uillinn, Ireland ([DYCP funded](#))
Self-Service, Old Crypt, London
Offprint with ABC Artists' Books Collective, Tate Modern, London
Soft Power 3, 75A, Brighton, UK
- 2018 *Povera*, The Cello Factory, London ([London Group funded: joint winner of President's Prize](#))
- 2017 *Failure in Chrome*, digital residency and event
- 2016 *Offprint* with ABC Artists' Books Collective, Tate Modern, London
#LowTechLabLondon2016, Saatchi Gallery, London
- 2015 *Impact*, Lighthouse, Brighton, UK
- 2014 *Revolver II Interventions*, Matt's Gallery, London
Offprint with ABC Artists' Books Collective, Beaux-Arts de Paris, France ([ABCEUM sold](#))
Turtle Salon, Article Gallery, Birmingham, UK ([work included in Michael Shamberg's collection](#))
Brighton Photo Biennial, with ABC Artists' Books Collective, Grand Parade Gallery, Brighton, UK
Missing You & From Jacquard to JPEG, Macclesfield, UK ([Arts Council England funded](#))
- 2013 *Visual Urbanism, Urban Photo Fest*, British Library, London
From Here On, Arts Santa Monica, Spain
- 2012 *Contra-Invention Plus*, Over and Out, Lincoln, UK
Boundary Work II, Wandesford Quay Gallery, Cork City, Ireland ([Cork Crawford/CiT funded](#))
Disruption II, Elysium Gallery, Swansea, Wales
Contra-Invention Plus, Marburae Gallery, Macclesfield, UK ([Arts Council England funded](#))
Trainofthoughts, The Horse Hospital, London
Turtle Salon, Meter Room, Coventry, UK ([work included in Michael Shamberg's collection](#))
Art of Architecture, The Public, West Bromwich, UK
- 2011 *From Here On, Les Recontres D'Arles*, Arles, France ([Les Recontres D'Arles funded](#))
- 2010 *Contra-Invention*, Friese-Greene Gallery, Brighton, UK
- 2008 *Feedlack Loop*, Lighthouse, Brighton, UK and online ([Esm e Fairbairn Foundation/AVAIR funded](#))
- 2006 *Wormhole Saloon*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
- 2004 zerosandones Digital Arts Festival, Fairfields Arts Centre, Basingstoke, UK

Writing about, References to work, and Interviews:

09-Sep-22 Book by John Roberts, [Art, Misuse and Technology: Micheál O'Connell's System Interference](#)
18-Sep-22 Review, criticismism II, Mark Sheerin, System Interference
17-Mar-22 Review/Interview, Ali O'Shea, Tilting at Windmills, Kara Hearn and Mocksim
02-Jul-21 Interview, Uillinn / West Cork Arts Centre Podcast, Gavin Buckley, *Systems Interference Art*
12-Jun-21 Interview, University of Sussex symposium, Jason Price, 'Simupoems' call-out and Q&A
22-Jan-21 Interview, Hereford College of the Arts, Daniel Pryde-Jarman, *Talk and Q&A with Micheál O'Connell*
01-Aug-20 Article, Visual Artists Ireland Newsletter, Chris Steenson, *Have a great time. Cool! Grand.*
17-May-20 Interview, Isolation exhibition talk Q&A, Darren Nisbett, *Talk Q&A with Micheál O'Connell*
01-Jan-20 Article, Visual Artists Ireland Newsletter, Micheál O'Connell (own), *Golf Courses as Wind Farms*
21-Nov-19 Referenced, New Tactical Research, David Garcia, *Beyond the Evidence*
02-Oct-18 Referenced, Daniel Hignell, *Distant Animals*, *Fifteen Questions* music magazine,
01-Feb-17 Includes Contra-Invention, Joan Fontcuberta, *From Here On: Postphotography in the Age of...*
01-Jan-16 Referenced to Contra-Invention, Joan Fontcuberta, *La furia de las imágenes 2nd edition*
17-Oct-15 Proceedings, CHART Conference, Micheál O'Connell (own), *Poetics of the Supply Chain*
06-Jun-14 Review, Writing in Relation, Yvette Gresle, *Missing You and three other initiatives*
11-Sep-13 Response to prints, various writers, *Yearly Print* project
26-Mar-13 Publication, InterArtive, Special Issue #50 Art + Copyright, *Contra-Invention*
25-Oct-12 Interview, UCC Radio's Artbeat, Don O'Mahony, *Mocksim at Boundary Work II*
14-May-12 Review, criticismism II, Mark Sheerin, *Trainofthoughts @ The Horse Hospital*
30-Aug-11 Review, criticismism II, Mark Sheerin, *Contra-Invention*
01-Jul-11 Catalogue, Clément Chéroux, J. Fontcuberta, E. Kessels, M. Parr, Joachim Schmid, *From Here On*
16-May-11 Catalogue, *Les Recontres Arles Photography*
10-Mar-08 Review, Huw Bartlett, *Feed Lack Loop*

Groups/Collectives (membership of)

- ABC Artists' Books Cooperative (international)
- Visual Artists Ireland
- The Art/Law Network (UK)
- The Cybernetics Society (Fellow of)
- The London Group
- Soft Power (Brighton 2017-2020)
- APEC Artists' Studios (Hove, UK)