

Two girls there are: within the house
One sits; the other, without.
Daylong a duet of shade and light
Plays between these.

Sylvia Plath, *Two Sisters of Persephone* (1956)

Séamus McCormack

ROADKILL

Roadkill

The self is innate and primal, determined at once by experience and culture. Never consistent, it is contradictory, layered, complex, fluid and continually to be questioned and reassessed. Evident within American poet and novelist Sylvia Plath's extract above is a preoccupation with a duality of self – both an otherness and singularity within one entity. In Plath's verse, this binary is confounded by the opposites of 'shade and light', reinforcing a contradiction within this dichotomy, suggesting that identity or sense of self can be paradoxical. We exist within the gradations and balance of this illumination and these shadows.

Essentially a parenthesis to the *Primal Architecture* exhibition, the multidisciplinary project entitled **ROADKILL** features various and diverse practices that stem from some of the themes evident in the preceding exhibition. **ROADKILL** presents alternative, opposing and contradictory explorations of instinctual and primal concerns. The artists included in the project attempt to illuminate darkened avenues, while at the same time dimming presumed definitions. The project presents a diversification of propositions exploring themes of framing, duality, structure, sexuality and appropriation.

According to Greek mythology, Persephone was said to have been the only child that Demeter and Zeus had between them, however it is also said that Persephone had several half-siblings from both parents' sides. Complex genealogical structures are of interest to both Plath and the American artist Mike Kelley, who also coincidentally and regrettably suffered an untimely death. Kelley was an artist who had the ability to work across widespread media and disciplines, liberating and borrowing from diverse sources and reference points. A sculptor, painter, noise musician, writer and teacher, Kelley's practice traversed, cited and footnoted. Like Kelley, the practitioners included in **ROADKILL**, in their various ways, offer temporary, experimental, diverse and paradoxical viewpoints, where subjective readings are invited.

Eoghan Ryan, *Clamdigger*, 2015,
Multimedia performance. Image
courtesy the artist. © Eoghan Ryan



Séamus McCormack

In Eoghan Ryan's multidisciplinary practice, new age technologies highlight how what once might have been considered esoteric is now freely available for us to manipulate, collage, appropriate and perhaps falsify. Nuanced and self-reflexive, Ryan's work addresses one's role as 'both a subjective cultural producer and mass cultural consumer'.¹ Latent and codified behaviours, both internal and physical, his and Kelley's transgressive representational strategies are formed by particular contexts, histories and scenarios. The altering of an individual's actions, behaviours and movements within architectural structures is one result from experiencing Elaine Leader's complex, kinetic installations. Her ability to create a tension and an anxiety within the viewer inhabiting these controlled environments offers up metaphors for wider concerns regarding societal power systems. In her liminal spaces that disorientate or reorientate perception, the interaction of the participant is paramount to their functionality.



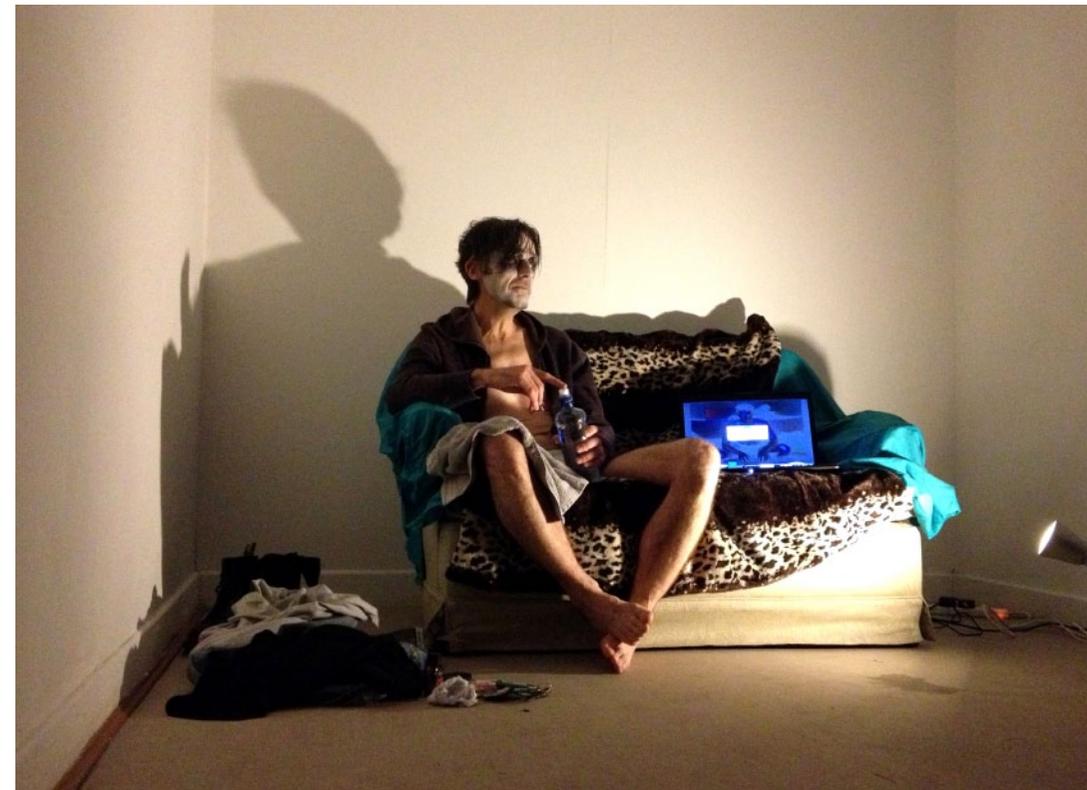
Elaine Leader, *Untitled*, 2014, Arri spot lights, turtle stands, sensor. Installation view, *All that remains to be seen*, Catalyst Arts Gallery, 2014. Image courtesy of Jordan Hutchings and Catalyst Arts Gallery. © Elaine Leader

The participant and artist relationship is an imperative of vital significance in the experience of Przem SHREM Zająć's collaging of music. Eclectic, kitsch, alternative and underground, his musical selection is responsive, considered and 'not necessarily about the mathematically precise beat-matching and mixing skills'.² He prefers to have freedom when sharing sounds with his audience, rather than to be restrained by any specific rules or formulas. Zająć's inclusion in *ROADKILL* is in response to *Primal Architecture* artists and musicians Linder and Mike Kelley and in continuation of the spirit of the opening night musical event *Primal Rising*, in which themes from the exhibition were reflected beyond the confines of the gallery. One of the aims of the project was to look at multidisciplinary practices: set designer and illustrator Gary Card's unique creative output is both macabre and humorous but always ingenious. Striking a balance between perfectionism and spontaneity, Card demonstrates enterprising flair when using his range of materials and subjects. Demented cartoonish props and avant-garde costume piece sculptures, Card's idiosyncratic practice is an interesting counterpoint in which to consider our primeval concerns and urges.



Przem SHREM Zająć, photograph from musical performance. Image courtesy the artist

Smilin' Kanker, *Six Love Songs*, 2013. Performance. Photograph by Ian-John Coughlan. Courtesy the artist. © Ciarán O'Keefe



Séamus McCormack

Linder, *Enantiodromia*, 2008, collage, 21.8 x 15.6 cm



Linder's collage work *Enantiodromia* (2008) is so titled after the word, which is literally defined as 'running in opposite ways'.³ This fusion of parts, a self becoming selves, resembles the two sisters in Plath's verse. Also of comparison here is the alter ego of Ciarán O'Keeffe – *Smilin' Kanker*. With a melancholic and often absurd approach, O'Keeffe's singular performative vision transgresses and creates an ambiguous sexuality, a self in parts, walking rather than running in a parallel direction, similar to a Pirandellian hall of mirrors with infinite reflections. Polysemic transformations, genetic mutations of self and a *mise en abyme* of singlehood, this duality continues in the hybrid creatures created by Sandra Daveron. Drawing on themes of metamorphosis and zoomorphism, the faces of individuals from fashion magazines are carefully composed, collaged and layered with painted representations of animals in an unorthodox, Mary Shelley-like juxtaposition. Our individual primal, psychological and animalistic instincts and attributes are reflected in this shattered mirror.

Sandra Daveron, *Leopard girl 2*, 2014 acrylic on found magazine. Image courtesy the artist. © Sandra Daveron

3 *Enantiodromia* is defined as "The tendency of things to change into their opposites, especially as a supposed governing principle of natural cycles and of psychological development: 'the remorseless enantiodromia between good luck and bad' <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/enantiodromia> accessed 23/10/14



Roadkill

The primary protagonist in Jenny Brady's single-channel video *Bone* (2015) is a non-human subject: in this case, a dog. Inspired by animal science research into non-verbal communication, Brady's work considers whether language and verbalisation are primarily 'instruments of control and power'.⁴ The film is set in a recording studio, where the equipment and paraphernalia are visible, signalling how the images we see are constructed, not dissimilar to the way that within Brady's work we consider that language too is a construction. Brady's film draws on structuralist film theory and relies upon systems of signification to structure and order experience.

Jenny Brady, *Bone*, 2015. Single channel HD video with stereo sound. 11 mins. Production image courtesy the artist. © Jenny Brady



One of the aims of *ROADKILL* was to reflect on psychological and formal significance, and the criteria we as individuals use to categorise. As viewers, we bring our own sense of self, our own subjectivity and our own cultural references. The artists in this project offer individual viewpoints into a complex two-way system. What is often left behind is an instinctual reaction, the remainders of an action and the afterthoughts of our associations.

4 Jenny Brady, artist statement, January 2014