



Field
Maggie Madden

20 JUN - 18 JUL 2015 | GALLERY 1



Field - detail

“We can imagine with little difficulty what extraordinary pains were taken with each invisible detail...”

Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, In Praise of Shadows

Maggie Madden’s solo exhibition *Field* comprises of a large selection of multicoloured, found and collected wooden picture frames, which have been reappropriated to great effect. *Field* is a site-specific, expanded reconfiguration of previous work. Madden’s sculptural formations have the potential for endless expansion, and here, the dismantled frames have been reassembled to create a three dimensional line drawing spanning Gallery 1 at Rua Red. Both optical fibre and copper wire have been utilized to create a tension in the work, as very fine strands suspend elements of the installation in fragile alignment. Madden’s installation articulates an intimate awareness of weight and balance, with carefully considered placement and choice of materials in delicate arrangements. A fundamental understanding of spatial awareness is present in the artwork; the perception of the pictorial plane and its emphasis on traditional sculptural values such as shape, volume, mass, scale and weight are presented in a clean, minimal articulation in the space.

In this installation Madden investigates the extension of the plane of painting in the space, making reference to the basics of abstract painting; line, shape and colour. The work itself is very painterly, and could be seen to allude to Madden’s fine art painting background. Although the selection and corresponding presentation of coloured frames are very considered, the frames retain their original colours from when they were initially found. Madden combines pastels, a bolt of bold blue, golds, bare wood and lines with an assortment of colours. It is in the whole adaptation of these found materials

that they are transformed into something greater than the sum of their parts. *Field* considers the trinity of painting, drawing and sculpture, and through the use of multifarious frames in the installation, marries all three sensibilities.

The use of simple, geometric forms are presented in a series of horizontal and vertical linear arrangements which combine to produce one composition. Immediately noticeable are the overlapping elements, as the sculptural lines in the foreground interact with wall-based articulations, bisecting the plane of vision, despite the distance separating them. As the viewer engages with the artwork from different positions, the arrangement of lines creates a shift in scale and perspective. This progressive simplification of form and function is exemplified by the use of line as an instrument of spatiality and how it successfully negotiates the space, using simple but deliberate geometric methods of display to distort the optics within the gallery.

The viewer enters the installation, and once inside becomes part of the line drawing. By interacting and engaging with the artwork and observing it from multiple points of view, the encounter instigates an awareness of the body. This theatrical guise highlights the display methodologies and structural resonances in the space, and brings into focus the ordered composition of the work itself. The simplicity of form and limited use of materials belie the complexity required to produce work of this nature. The architecture of the gallery space is revealed and emphasized through careful staging and presentation of the multiple components that comprise the overall installation. The serpentine construction is featured on walls, corners, directly

on the floor and in a series of suspended manifestations, carefully and thoughtfully positioned to generate an intentional sensory experience with the pure qualities of colour, form, space and materials.

In contrast to the sculptural formation itself is the void it creates. This use of negative space adds emphasis to the composition, offering a harmonious balance through subtle means. The relationship between line, space and negative space create an invisible network of connections, drawing attention to the liminal, tangible and sensorial elements of the work. These spatial linear constructions are both palpable and dematerialized drawings in space, which articulate the considered, delicate geometric affinities associated with Madden’s practice. Despite the unequal dispersal of lines throughout the installation, there is an elegance and sense of order in its asymmetry. The selection of disparate elements that comprise the installation are deliberately placed so that line of vision follows. This broken circuit deliberately disrupts the space, and even though they are not physically linked, the eye makes the implied associations between the detached frames in the pursuit of making connections, creating an order and assimilating information into a logical sequence.

The challenge of making the complex appear simple is borne from a process of meticulous refinement. This is illustrated in great detail when the work is observed under closer scrutiny, as the most delicate and fragile qualities of the work are exposed – the single optical fibre strand uniting two opposing pieces of the frames linear composition in suspension. From a distance the fibre is almost invisible, and gives the impression of the structure

hovering independently in the space. A number of components in the installation use this visual trope to create a sense of weightlessness, playing with perception as multiple linear configurations appear to be floating. These suspended elements in the installation are visually and literally hanging by a thread and encapsulate the subtlety and lightness that pervades the work. An essential part of *Field* is taking the time to look at the work properly. It is a quiet, reflective piece that requires careful observation to discern the nuances and subtle details that permeate the installation. The slow visual experience of observing and investing the time to absorb the work, rewards with details that might be glossed over or ignored if it is only glanced at.

Field, is a calm and tranquil manifestation. Within its boundary lines lie delicate arrangements, suspended forms, vertical and horizontal axes that advance, recede, float or overlap according to shifts in perspective. The minimal nature of the artworks composition reflects on the fragility, weightlessness and physical limitations of material and form. The title of the work, *Field*, refers to landscape; an open expanse of land contained within a linear border. From her individual field of vision, Maggie Madden has created a complex, technically accomplished installation with linear constructions, a depth of perception and subtle arrangements that combine to produce her own considered landscape.

Rowan Sexton is an independent curator based in Dublin. She has previously worked at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin City Gallery the Hugh Lane and Rubicon Gallery.

Maggie Madden is from Connemara, Co Galway and currently living and working in Dublin. She completed a Masters in Fine Art at NCAD in 2006 and B.A Fine Art Painting from Limerick School of Art and Design in 1998.

Solo exhibitions include *Far and Wide*, The Dock, Leitrim, (2014), *Site Line*, The LAB, Dublin (2012), *Fading Not Ending*, Roscommon Arts Centre, (2010).

Recent group exhibitions include *Persona*, Art Box Projects, Dublin, (2014), *184th Annual Exhibition*, RHA, (2014), *Re-Framing the Domestic in Irish Art*, Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda (2014), *Pallas Periodical Review*, Pallas Projects, (2013), *Futures*, RHA, (2013), *Lacuna*, Taylor Galleries, (2013), *RUA Annual Exhibition*, Ulster Museum, Sluice Art Fair, London, (2013), *Claremorris Open*, (2013), *What has been shall always never be again*, Ormston House, Limerick, (2013), *Nailing Jelly to the Wall*, Monstertruck at Catalyst Arts, Belfast, (2013)

She received a Visual Art Bursary from the Arts Council in 2014, 2013 and 2011 and was recently awarded a Project studio at Temple Bar Gallery + Studios.

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