

Jaki Irvine
ro' ro'
20 May — 11 July 2021
Wed — Sun, 12 — 5pm

What if almost the only words available are the lyrics from a song? What if everything you would want to articulate must conform to the words of this song?

ro' ro' is new work by Jaki Irvine and a companion piece to an immersive 13-channel video and sound work, *Ack Ro'*, showing concurrently at Frith Street Gallery, London.

For *The Bower*, Irvine has created a set of 12" vinyl LPs, recorded over two days, with Louise Phelan's trapped vocals at times drifting, urgent, despairing, forgetful, as she echoes Joe O'Farrell's haunting tones on flute, Izumi Kimura's piano and Sarah Grimes percussive elements that attempt to reach out to one another and find a way forward, despite the limitations.

Alone or in groups of two, visitors are invited to sit with the records and play them simultaneously from two turntables — a combination of composed elements and ambient sound — and become immersed in the soundtracks; an intimate reflection on being and listening, of holding on and letting go, in the space.

Ro' ro' rose glows gently in pink neon on the wall nearby. The neon is part of a larger group of neons that loop across Frith Street Gallery, all derived from anagrams of *Cracklin' Rosie*, the title of a Neil Diamond song from 1970. Treating language as endlessly reconfigurable, the neons present this text as modular sonic components: repeated, distorted, anagrammed or spliced into their most elemental forms. They simmer down, for instance, from the mournful 'alone alone', to the playful 'alonio', to finally, a single, primal and resonant 'o'.

The installation *Ack Ro'* from which *ro' ro'* is derived is structured by forms associated with dementia and Alzheimers, which leave sufferers with a depleted sense of time. The piece proposes that music might offer a temporary respite. Using repetition, pace and rhythm, Irvine's work offers a loophole in the cruelty of disease — a means to navigate, to hold on, to briefly return, perhaps to mourn and to let go.

Jaki Irvine lives and works in Dublin and is a regular artist advisor at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam. Recent solo exhibitions include *If the Ground Should Open...*, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, (2016 – 2017); *This Thing Echoes*, Frith Street Gallery, (2014); *City of Women*, The LAB, Dublin, (2010); *Seven Folds in Time*, Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin (2009); *In a World Like This*, The Model, Sligo, (2006), travelling to Chisenhale Gallery, London (2007); *The Silver Bridge*, SMART, Amsterdam (2006); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2005). Jaki Irvine is represented by Kerlin Gallery, Dublin and Frith Street Gallery, London.

The Bower

The Bower is a gallery, publication studio and cafe, occupying a former park keepers hut and public toilet in Brunswick Park. The artistic programme is driven by a commitment to collaboration, feminist and sociopolitical practice. The Bower is a non-profit organisation which relies on earned income from the cafe, project grants and donations to deliver a programme which responds to the context of the building and the park locality.

The Bower

Brunswick Park, Camberwell, London SE5 7RH
www.thebower.org.uk

Musicians

Louise Phelan: vocals
Joe O'Farrell: flute
Izumi Kimura: piano
Sarah Grimes: percussion

Recording and sound engineering: David McCune

Jaki Irvine would like to thank NCAD, Dublin, Arts Council of Ireland, Frith Street Gallery, Kerlin Gallery and Digital Hub.

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THE
BOWER



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