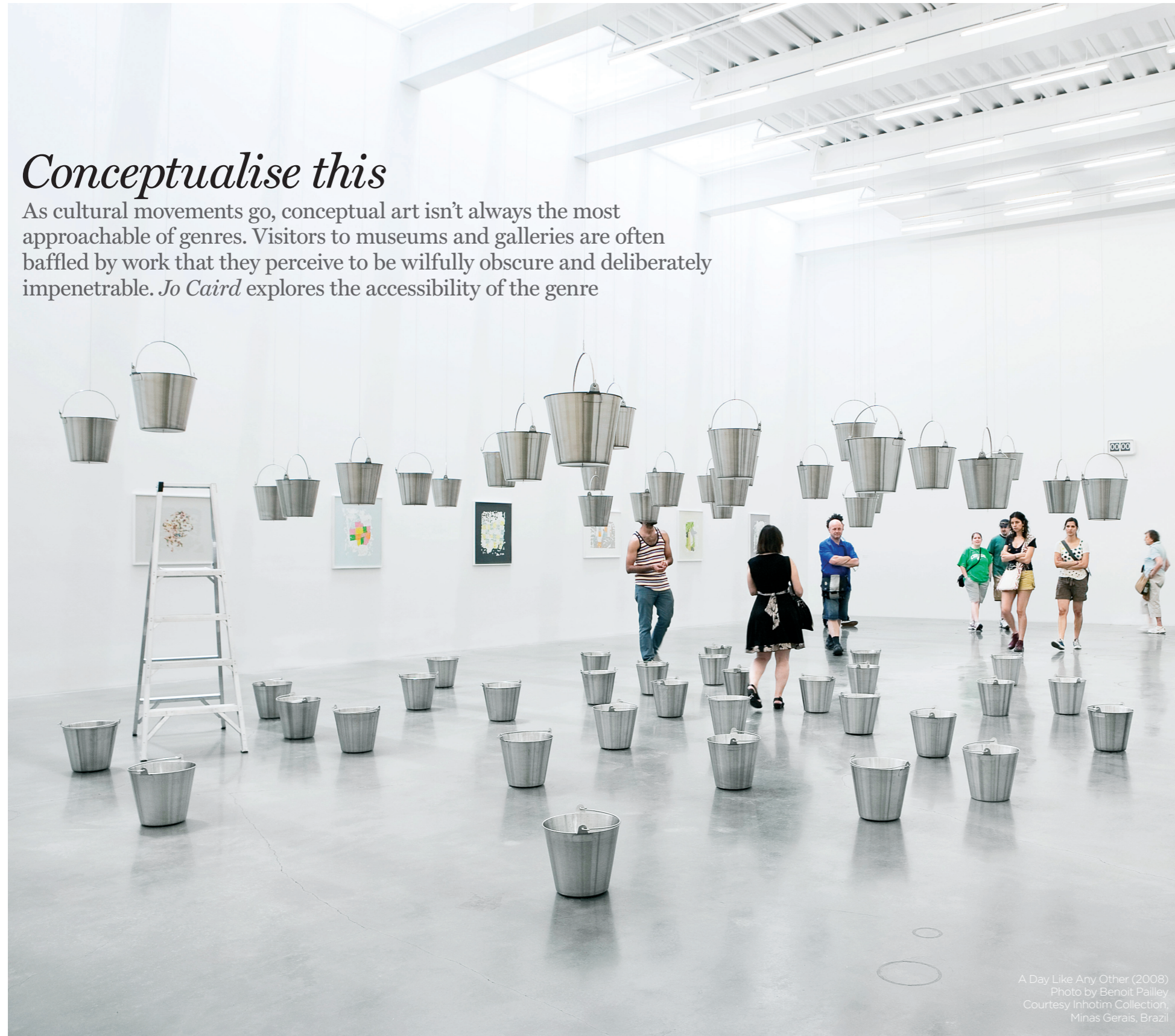


Conceptualise this

As cultural movements go, conceptual art isn't always the most approachable of genres. Visitors to museums and galleries are often baffled by work that they perceive to be wilfully obscure and deliberately impenetrable. *Jo Caird* explores the accessibility of the genre



A Day Like Any Other (2008)
Photo by Benoit Pailley
Courtesy Inhotim Collection,
Minas Gerais, Brazil



At a Certain Distance (Ex-Votos) (2010)
Photo by Eduardo Eckenfels
Courtesy the artist, Tanya Bonakdar
Gallery, New York; Galeria Fortes Vilaça,
São Paulo; and Stephen Friedman
Gallery, London

Conceptual art can often make visitors feel stupid, and they can often end up resenting it, an outcome that does no good to any of the parties concerned. But it needn't be this way. There are, of course, plenty of conceptual artists creating work that is accessible and playful, as well as intellectually rigorous and thought-provoking. One of those is Rivane Neuenschwander, who hails from Brazil but exhibits all over the world, and is currently delighting the art lovers of Dublin with her latest show, *A Day Like Any Other*.

The show is a mid-career survey of Neuenschwander's work, which takes in a wide range of different artistic practices, from painting and photography to sculpture and installation. It comes to Dublin following a stint at New York City's New Museum, one of the trendiest art institutions in Manhattan. Alongside some of the artist's earlier works, the show includes several new pieces, including "The Tenant" (2010), a film showing the journey of a soap bubble floating through an empty flat that was made in collaboration with the filmmaker and artist Cao Guimarães and the experimental musical duo, O Grivo.

Collaborative work is crucial to Neuenschwander's practice, particularly when it

comes to her film and sound pieces, but traditional creative partnerships such as those that resulted in "The Tenant" are not the only way that the artist brings other people on board with her work. The Irish Museum of Modern Art show features several installations that involve engagement with visitors, so-called 'participatory events', which draw upon the input, sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious, of the viewer.

"Walking in Circles" (2001), a piece which gradually comes to be as specks of dirt from visitors' shoes form a pattern on an adhesive floor covering, is a good example of this type of work, as is "First Love" (2005), in which a police portrait artist draws likenesses of visitors' first loves from their descriptions alone. Participation is what makes these pieces what they are; they do not exist as art works until people are engaging with them. It is this transformation from object or concept to art work that so interests Neuenschwander.

Intrinsic to much of her participatory practice is the notion of generosity: Neuenschwander and the institution at which she is exhibiting give away parts of the work, while the visitors formalise the pieces through their willingness to share their responses »



The Conversation (2010)
Photo by © Tim Lanterman Photography
Collection Thyssen-Bornemisza Art
Contemporary; Juan e [and] Pat Vergez Collection

to them. Sometimes, as with “I Wish Your Wish” (2003), both these transactions take place within the context of one installation. This particular piece consists of hundreds of brightly coloured ribbons, on each of which is embossed a wish for the future.

Visitors are invited to take a ribbon, tie it to their wrist and wear it until it wears away. In return for this gift, they write their own wish for the future on a scrap of paper and leave it at the gallery. It is these wishes that then become part of the work when it is next installed in another location. The piece was first created in 2003 and has since been exhibited at locations around the world, the new wishes keeping the work current and topical and reminding visitors of the engagement of other people in the piece.

Not all Neuenschwander’s work is participatory – and the artist does not set out to make her work accessible *per se* – but the inclusion of such pieces undoubtedly encourages the type of engagement not often seen in the conceptual field. What more could you wish for? ■

Rivane Neuenschwander: A Day Like Any Other is running at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland from November 16, 2011 to January 29, 2012. www.imma.ie



A Day Like Any Other (2008)
Photo by Benoit Pailley
Courtesy; Inhotim Collection, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Further Exhibitions:

There are plenty more worthwhile exhibitions taking place across the European art scene, including these delights from Frankfurt, Madrid and Düsseldorf



Play Dead; Real Time (2003), Douglas Gordon
Photo by Axel Schneider
© MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am

DOUGLAS GORDON

One of the Young British Artists, Douglas Gordon is both a Turner Prize-winner and has represented Britain at the Venice Biennale. Known for his films and large-scale video installations, Gordon also works with sculpture, photography and sound. This show – his first in Europe since 2007 – is based around Gordon’s latest work, a film entitled “k.364”, which was recently shown at international film festivals from Venice to Toronto. It follows the journey of two Israeli musicians of Polish heritage from Berlin to Poland by train for a concert of Mozart’s “Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola” (whose catalogue number is k.364), organised by Gordon. In addition the exhibition presents prominent works by Gordon held in the MMK’s collection, as well as pieces on loan from other institutions.

Douglas Gordon will be running at the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany, from November 19, 2011 to March 25, 2012. www.mmk-frankfurt.de

ZVI GOLDSTEIN HAUNTED BY OBJECTS

This show comprises 850 objects and images from the collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, arranged around fragments of text taken from *Room 205*, Goldstein’s latest book: a poetic memoir exploring the sensations experienced in the one minute following waking up in a hotel room. The objects in the exhibition reflect the textual extracts allowing myriad associations to form between them. The exhibition seeks to question the relationship between object, narrative and worldview.

Haunted by Objects is running at the Kunstsammlung, Düsseldorf, Germany, from November 13, 2011 to February 26, 2012. www.kunstsammlung.de



Haunted by Objects (2011) Photo by © Tal Rosen, Courtesy The Israel Museum, Jerusalem



The Board Room (1987), Photo by Oscar Balducci, © Muntadas/Espacio Fundación Telefónica

MUNTADAS. ENTRE/BETWEEN

The Catalan artist Antonio Muntadas (who is often referred to by his surname alone) uses his art to examine the institutions of power, both cultural and political. This retrospective includes work from across Muntadas’s oeuvre – installation pieces, photographs, video and text – exploring the ideas that have informed his practice over the past 40 years. Muntadas was one of the pioneers of internet art and is a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Visual Arts Program.

Muntadas. Entre/Between is running at the Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain from November 22, 2011 to March 26, 2012. www.museoreinasofia.es