

**PRESS RELEASE For Immediate Release****Solstice Arts Centre**

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The mind was dreaming. The world was its dream.

Diana Copperwhite | Michael Kalmbach | Hiraki Sawa.

curated by Jacqui McIntosh

Thursday 19th January – Saturday 25th February 2012**Opens Thursday 19th January at 7.30pm****The exhibition will be officially opened by Patrick T. Murphy, RHA Gallery**

The mind was dreaming. The world was its dream brings together three artists whose works explore the interplay between the real, remembered and fantastical. Through film (Hiraki Sawa), painting (Diana Copperwhite), watercolour and sculpture (Michael Kalmbach), the exhibition presents dreamlike worlds, free from the limits of everyday reality.

The exhibition takes its title from a quote by Argentinian author Jorge Luis Borges. Borges' complex philosophical short stories are often characterised by magical, labyrinthine themes and the intrusion of the dream world within the everyday. Like Freud, Borges viewed dreams as a direct connection to the unconscious mind. Whilst Freud asserted that the analysis of recurrent symbols and archetypes within dreams brings understanding to the nature of the human psyche, Borges believed that dreams by their very nature are resistant to definite analysis. Dreams instead are enigmatic and open to infinite interpretation. In his writing Borges looks beyond reason for explanation - to magic, myth, religion and philosophy.

In the dream world, the bizarre and illogical are accepted by the sleeper as reality, the imagery within dreams often as 'real' and as vivid as waking perception. Similarly in the films of Japanese artist **Hiraki Sawa**, we may believe what we see even when reason tells us it is impossible. Combining interior and exterior scenes, everyday objects and constructed sets, Sawa creates works which inhabit a space between reality and fiction, journeying to imaginary places within the mind. Home and domestic space is the backdrop for many of his works which, through Sawa's lens, become uncanny and magical places. Objects move by themselves or seem inexplicably large or tiny, whilst shadows are disembodied from their owners, appearing in unexpected places. In *Silts* (2009) the bottom of a jam jar becomes an entry point into a swirling, sparkling universe. Sawa frequently depicts night time scenes, the full moon (often shown floating sideways through interiors and exteriors) a recurring motif in his films. *Sleeping Machine* (2011) inhabits this night time zone. Gigantic mechanical cogs slowly turn like the sleeping brain, Sawa's work, for its duration, a shared dream.

In his 1977 lecture *Nightmares*, Borges speculated that in dreams, within a single glance, each man is given 'a little personal eternity which allows him to see the recent past and the near future.' On waking, 'as we are accustomed to a sequential life, we give a narrative structure to our dream, though our dream has been multiple and simultaneous.'¹ Similarly, the paintings of **Diana Copperwhite** are unencumbered by logic, merging past, present, doubt and reverie within one instance. Her sources are varied, weaving imagery and references from popular culture, science, personal objects and memories. Drawn to systems beyond our understanding and reach, her work is both concerned with psychological and physical perception and is centred around how we process information and how we formulate what is real. In *Edge of the Known Universe ("Lost and Found")* (2011), Copperwhite deftly destabilises our sense of perceptual certainty, presenting a scene as if viewed simultaneously from earth and outer space, where the curvature of the planet can be seen. Through the dislocation of objects from their normal environments, the layering and blurring of imagery and merging of disparate scenes and perspectives, she creates worlds in which time and space are displaced.

Exploring ideas around childhood and family, the figures within **Michael Kalmbach's** watercolours and papier-mâché sculptures exist within a state of dreamlike, weightless abandon. His works evoke fairy tales, fables and myths where giants, angels and demon like figures co-exist with children and adults. Kalmbach often depicts scenes in which the moral and physical restraints of waking life have been discarded, exploring the subconscious world of displacement where everything happens freely and without judgement. Fountains of golden vomit may pour from the mouths of floating figures whilst other characters sprout multiple heads. There is an element of the grotesque and perverse within many of Kalmbach's works. The world depicted is both idyllic and cruel, but its cruelty is tempered by a tangible sense of childlike curiosity, playfulness and tenderness. In the short story *The Circular Ruins* Borges writes of a wizard who attempts to create a man from his own dreams, only to realise that he too is 'a mere appearance, dreamt by another.'² In works such as *Hands, Feet, Head* (2010), Kalmbach similarly evokes the Genesis creation story, transforming it into a gnostic fable in which man, godlike (or perhaps demiurge), recreates figures in his own image who emerge like swimmers from sleeves and trouser legs.

In our dreams, we explore inner landscapes of infinite possibilities only to forget and to 'examine the memory of a dream, the poor memory,'³ on waking. The selected artists within *The mind was dreaming. The world was its dream* make manifest the imagined and remembered into reality, mining the psychological and subconscious to create works in which the real and fantastical coexist.

Jacqui McIntosh, 2012

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For further press information or pictures please contact Áine Flanagan, Marketing Officer at T: 046) 909 2335 or E: aine@solsticeartscentre.ie

Biographies:

Diana Copperwhite was born in Ireland in 1969. She studied Fine Art painting at Limerick School of Art and Design and The National College of Art and Design, Dublin. She completed an MFA at Winchester School of Art, Barcelona in 2000. In 2007 she was a winner of the AIB Art Prize and in 2008 she was a finalist in the Guasch Coranty Fundacio Painting Prize, Centre Cultural Metropolita teca Sala, Barcelona. In 2008 she also completed a Project Residency in Temple Bar Gallery and Studios and was elected ARHA by the Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin. She has exhibited widely, her recent shows include *The Fold* at Visual Centre for Contemporary Art (Carlow), *New Works Visiting Artists* at Graphic Studio Gallery (Dublin), *Graphic Studio: 50 Years in Dublin* at Irish Museum of Modern Art (Dublin) in 2010. Her work is in public and private collections including: Irish Museum of Modern Art, Allied Irish Banks, Arts Council of Ireland, Limerick City Gallery of Art, Office of Public Works, Contemporary Irish Art Society, Highlanes Municipal Art Gallery, Mariehamn Stadbiblioteque, Dublin Institute of Technology, Jefferson Smurfit, KPMG, Arthur Anderson Plc, International Red Cross Netherlands, Aland (Finland), The President of Ireland, Jean Cherqui Paris and Arthur Cross.

Michael Kalmbach was born 1962 in Landau, Germany and lives and works in Berlin. From 1983-1989 he studied at the Städelschule, Frankfurt / Main. Kalmbach has exhibited widely in Germany and abroad. Recent solo exhibitions include 'Grenzbereiche der Skulptur' at Kunstverein Ludwigsburg (2011), 'Füsilik' at Thomas Rehbein Galerie, Cologne (2010), 'Glied: Michael Kalmbach' at Bielefelder Kunstverein and 'Siebeldingen' at Robert Miller Gallery, New York (2007). Forthcoming exhibitions include a solo exhibition at Loock Gallery, Berlin in 2012.

Hiraki Sawa was born in Ishikawa, Japan. He currently lives and works in London. Since 2002, he has exhibited extensively, including solo exhibitions at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Besançon, Besançon, 2010; Yu-un, Tokyo, 2009; Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, 2008; Chisenhale Gallery, London, 2007; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2006; James Cohan Gallery, New York, 2006. Sawa has also participated in a number of group exhibitions and international art festivals including the Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, 2010; Asian-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2009; Automatic Cities: The Architectural Imaginary in Contemporary Art, The Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, 2009; Yokohama Triennial, Yamashita Pier, Yokohama, 2005; Lyon Biennial, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon, 2003. He won the East International Award in 2002, the Decibel Award for Artists in 2006 and in 2011 he was awarded the Gotoh Memorial Prize.

Jacqui McIntosh is an independent curator and writer based in London. Her writing has appeared in publications such as The Guardian, Irish Examiner, Circa, Magill, Contemporary and Art Review and in catalogue essays for galleries and artists. Recent projects include an essay for Gereon Krebber to accompany his solo show COMMA 37 at Bloomberg Space, London in 2011. Curated shows include 'The World Needs a Narrative' (co-curated with Kevin Kavanagh, 2009), 'The Marienbad Palace', Highlanes Municipal Gallery (2010) and 'Dig Down in Time', Man&Eve (2010).



2 Borges, Jorge Luis. 'The Circular Ruins'. *Labyrinths*. Penguin Modern Classics. 1964. p77
3 Borges, Jorge Luis. 'Nightmares'. *Seven Nights*. New Directions, 1984. p27