

Elaine Byrne: women boxed

Artist Elaine Byrne explores gender norms in the workforce through the metaphor of a magic trick

February 14–April 7, 2017

Opening Reception:
Tuesday, February 14,
6–8pm

Gallery Hours:
Tuesday–Friday,
12–6pm

The International Studio & Curatorial Program announces the opening of *women boxed*, an exhibition of work by Ground Floor resident Elaine Byrne in ISCP's Project Space. *women boxed* is a three-channel video installation that invites dialogue about how women's labor is viewed in society, using the magic trick of sawing a woman in half as a pivotal metaphor.

Byrne observes, "The world of magic has been dominated by men, where the magician actively drives the story and the female assistant functions as a spectacle for the male gaze. The magician's assistant brings the action to a stop and captures the spectators' attention—she freezes the flow of events for moments of erotic contemplation." Evoking ever-present gender inequality, the female assistant plays the role of victim. She is a woman literally encased in a box, seeming to await her fate. In actuality, the female assistant is largely responsible for the success of the trick, but her labor is hardly recognized.



Elaine Byrne, *women in boxes*, 2017, C-print

One of Byrne's three videos was recently filmed on location at the Houdini Museum in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where the artist filmed the renowned female magician, Dorothy Dietrich. The first woman to saw a man in half, Dietrich speaks about her role as a female magician in a male-dominated industry. At a time when women continue fighting for many freedoms and equalities all over the world, *women boxed* alludes to these struggles through the arena of magic and illusion.

Elaine Byrne (born in Ireland and currently based in New York) examines overlooked histories, historical texts and artworks as a platform to mobilize history relating to current social concerns. Byrne received her BA from University College of Dublin, and her MA in Visual Arts Practices from IADT, Dublin (2009). She completed the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program (2015). She has had solo shows at Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin; Montoro12, Rome; Limerick City Gallery; Oonagh Young Gallery, Dublin; and Atrio Cultura Space, Mexico. She was the winner of the 8th Arte Laguna sculpture prize (2014) and T.I.N.A. prize (2015). Her work is in permanent collections including: the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Rosenbach Museum and Library, Pennsylvania; Office of Public Works, Ireland; The Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland; and PWC, London, England. She is represented by the Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin, Ireland.

This exhibition is coordinated by Alexandra Friedman, Program Coordinator, ISCP.

About ISCP:

ISCP supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries, ISCP is New York's most comprehensive international visual arts residency program and fourth largest in the world, founded in 1994. ISCP organizes exhibitions, events and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences.

This exhibition is supported, in part, by New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership the City Council.

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