Joyce Smithy
A Curated Review of James Joyce in Visual Art, Music, and Performance—Community and Elusive Understandings
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The JJQ’s initiative to list works of visual art, performance, and music that reference James Joyce is necessary at a time when artists often view their work as an analytical practice. The ambition is to feature Joyce-related art year by year.¹ In order for a work to make a contribution to the interpretation of Joyce—and Joyce to art/music/performance history—it is important to ascertain a level of ambition in the work that at least gestures towards that with which Joyce pursued his practice. We hope to provide Joyce scholars and students with explanatory and interpretive notes on work that they would not normally encounter, and we welcome hints and submissions for consideration.²

Visual Art

Considerations of Joyce’s works in relationship to the visual domain and art’s relationship to Joyce’s literature are ever more present at Joyce symposia, which have become exhibition venues, and around significant dates and Joycean places. In the last installment of the “Smithy,” I focused on the community-forging or collaborative creativity that reading Joyce appears to conjure. This time, I wish to highlight a dichotomy between more traditional illustrative responses and attempts to transcend these.

Recently, on 4 May 2019, Finnegans Wake’s eightieth birthday was celebrated, and Judith Wilkinson, an art writer and curator, took the lead in London by tweeting a best-of list of ten artworks (visual and otherwise) relating to Joyce and Finnegans Wake in particular (<@J_Wilkinson_Art>). Bloomsday makes one expect to see Joyce-related artwork in Dublin. The culinary theme chosen by the Joyce Centre this year, led the near-by Oliver Cornet Gallery (beside Belvedere College) to exhibit work under the title “Olives, Oysters & Oranges.” A strange mixture ensued between interpreting the fruity theme erotically and a beautiful, dry, and utterly relevant series of head-sized “portraits” of one of Ulysses’s characters: the humble spud, with
watercolors by Eoin Mac Lochlainn.

Odd juxtapositions and mixtures are what Joyce seems to be about: the multi-stylistic nature of *Ulysses* and the multi-lingual makeup of the *Wake*. How conscious, however, should one be of such approaches?

Krzysztof Bartnicki’s various “translations” of *Finnegans Wake* continue—and this time he has transposed the first page of the book into hieroglyphics. He seems to say that it is, has, or should take a hybrid form, between word and image, possibly thinking of the sigla “hieroglyphics” that Joyce himself used for the conception of the *Wake*’s characters. The difficult or undecipherable element is also discussed.

Most artists approaching Joyce, however—or most who align their work clearly with the writer—seem to take a uni-dimensional approach. Carol Wade, one of the artists speaking at the 2019 Mexican Joyce Symposium “Joyce Without Borders,” has created page-by-page illustrations of *Finnegans Wake*, which unearth Irish historical detail and hone in on figuratively rendered motifs, in order to “help *Finnegans Wake* be . . . read by a wide audience.” Alfonso Zapico, a comic writer, has done a similar thing in *James Joyce: Portrait of a Dubliner*, highlighting period detail via the aesthetics of a contemporary children’s book illustration. One would expect this more readily in a comic format than in what used to be called “fine art.” In any case, what concerns me about Wade’s work is that she finds a microscopic perspective a valid approach to how the thunderwords were printed and has enlarged these, as though William Anastasi’s *Bababad* series of paintings—which had already done that in the 1980s—were unknown in either the Joyce or the art communities. There is to me a difference between not knowing about the earlier iterations and Wade’s comment in her talk that she enjoys *Finnegans Wake* “like an Italian opera”: Wade’s or Zapico’s nearly uniform style appears to me to mistake visual or figurative identifiability for broad accessibility, as though there was a “neutral” style involved—this is a concept that Joyce’s work certainly refutes. Rita Duffy, also speaking in Mexico, does not link her work so closely to Joyce’s and (thus) appears stronger in presenting her approach to some of the themes with which Joyce also occupied himself, such as nationalism and Irish politics.

Kaitlin Thurlow has created a series of paintings to correspond to the eighteen episodes of *Ulysses*. While stylistically relatively homogeneous (nearing semi-abstraction), she employs color in ways that give the viewer the task of relating her or his sense of the text to that of the painter. One is reminded of an exercise that Paul Klee carried out with his students at the Bauhaus, whereby they were to fill a chessboard-like grid with colors they liked, and the teacher sought to identify the students from the results. Thurlow’s may not be the viewer’s colors for or impressions of the episodes, but the work
appears to reflect this as a valid outcome.

Images of Dublin have often been perceived as particularly apt artistic responses to Joyce. *Drawing Dublin: Dirty, Delightful, Disconcerting Old Town*, an exhibition from the collection of (and at) the National Gallery of Ireland elicited a strong Joycean connection with the *Irish Times* reviewer, Aidan Dunne. Indeed, the different visions and styles call for this reading even more than work created by only one artist. Dunne writes:

Mention Dublin abroad, as far abroad as you like, and there’s a fair chance that the response will be: Ah, James Joyce, or perhaps *Ulysses*. Never mind that Joyce’s Dublin is a reimagining of the city he knew. In the vast, heterogeneous fiction that is *Ulysses* he managed to assimilate it, to make it Joyce’s Dublin forever after.

No one in the visual arts managed a comparable all-encompassing feat . . . a quietly absorbing exhibition that amounts to an open-ended portrait of the city.

It is that multiplicity of visions, therefore, that makes an *oeuvre* or exhibition “Joycean” more than many other characteristics. And not by accident is that “open-ended” nature or openness what Umberto Eco theorized for both literature and visual art on the basis of Joyce’s work.

Further “portraits” of Dublin—and/or Joyce—have recently been exhibited in photography: *Berenice Abbott: Portraits of Modernity* was shown at Fundación MAPFRE, Madrid, Spain. Abbott lived from 1898 to 1991, and her portraits of James, Nora, and Lucia Joyce, taken in Paris, where she had assisted Man Ray, hung in one room (Ray had earlier photographed Joyce). Abbott, who is known particularly for her iconic cityscapes of New York, excelled at presenting her sitters’ interiority: Joyce’s shyness emerges here better than in other portraits.

Lee Miller (1907-1977), a fellow American modernist photographer and photojournalist, who, in turn, is known for portraits of fashionable women, had her images of Dublin from 1946 exhibited at the James Joyce Centre: a highly relevant location, since Joyce helped to shape the imagination of the city. Her works thus turned out to be more focused on ordinary people and places than was usually to be expected from the *Vogue* photographer. That this was a vision of Dublin by a foreigner (Dunne pointed to this perspective, too), is likely telling. A third (now contemporary) foreign woman working in photography has approached Dublin’s cityscape: Motoko Fujita in her photo book *The Shadow of James Joyce: Chapelizod & Environ*. The black-and-white aesthetics of all three artists’ works arguably reflects the openness about which I spoke earlier. In Miller’s and Fujita’s understated experiments with their medium (double exposures and
the like), a formal element that breaks mono-stylistic “normality” is additionally much appreciated.

Style shifts in illustrating *Ulysses* are also visible in Tasha Lewis’s works (completed within six weeks in 2016: a kind of conceptual frame preventing the otherwise likely more expansive breadth of the material).¹⁵ Michaël Reinhardt’s *Ineluctable Modality of the Visible: “Ulysses” Revisited* from 2008 achieves such multiplicity by overlaying lithographic images, including, for instance, those of Joyce and William Shakespeare.¹⁶ Michael Grossmann’s *Mnemosyne*—with a similar overlaying strategy, showing, among other images, an atom bomb’s plume—is the richest in this series; he borrows Aby M. Warburg’s memory atlas’s title for his project and elaborates on its dialectics and politics: a well-informed approach that juxtaposes two near-contemporaries, whose projects can be seen to be related in many ways.¹⁷

Maybe these contradictory artistic approaches have something to do with different modes of reading: Finn Fordham writes that *Finnegans Wake* can be approached “like a grasshopper, jumping about” and “producing [one’s] own set of musically phrased series or like an ant, moving in sequence diligently from beginning to middle to end, to finish (again) where [one] began.”¹⁸ David Thorp sees this as the literary equivalent of [Robert] Rosenberg’s original idea of the anxious object, something that evokes anxiety in the viewer—in this case reader, because of uncertainty as to its literary condition. . . . [T]hese days the art going public understands that extending its boundaries has become the *sine qua non* of experimental contemporary art. But, arguably, although art can still have the capacity to subvert and indeed create anxiety, the art *object* no longer has that potential. Any anxiety that abounds now is an indication of its maker’s existential anxiety; a turn about [sic] from the outer to the inner—from an anxious audience to an anxious artist. The likelihood or possibility now for the viewer to perceive the anxiety of the artist in the object is not something that can withstand the watertight logic of academic analysis, nonetheless, for those who choose to see, it is manifest.¹⁹

These thoughts about what may only be manifest under certain conditions—and the varied material presented—prompt me, in closing, to turn to a Robert Walser quotation that I found in Dora García’s recent essay “Ulysses Was Born in Trieste”: “With books as with people I consider complete understanding to be somewhat uninteresting.”²⁰ García, in her own text, presents unreliable information: recollections of quotations or artworks that she encountered in no longer accessible places. When seeking to retrieve them through another copy, she is told they never existed—or maybe only in her
dreams. I take that essay, therefore, as an art (or artistic research) work that is related to how Joyce’s readers (myself at least) may read his works: and that is profoundly interesting.

Making Joyce “easier” may not yield a more interested public. Beyond short-term success with generating “bums on seats,” I take certain one-dimensional (or in the narrow sense “illustrative”) responses to attract “ordinary readers” on false pretenses. This is more likely to lead to alienation or resentment than understanding (or an appreciation of not-understanding). Joyce is—and should be—an anxious, open object to artists—and their works to us.

Music

For Bloomsday 2018, the No Recess! Magazine featured the legendary punk and indie bassist Mike Watt talking about Ulysses in his signature and singularly enthusiastic style. Celebrating the book for its sprawling, all-encompassing nature, Watt discussed how Ulysses inspired the classic Minuteman album Double Nickels on the Dime as well as his 1997 solo album Contemplating the Engine Room. Watt related Ulysses to the inclusive “Everyman” spirit of punk and admired the way that one can never fully capture the meaning: “That’s why these things are so special to me because they are so rich and keep givin’. You can go back to them and not have them totally figured out.”

In this year’s review of music, we find the spaces explored by musicians and their rich attempts to capture, extrapolate, and extend the meaning and zeitgeist of Joyce’s work. Particular emphasis is placed on communal approaches to Joyce, and what happens when Joyce and his works become part of a cultural or artistic ecosystem.

“Joyce is in de lucht,” translated as “Joyce is in the air,” was the title of an October 2018 festival in Oosterkerk, a seventeenth-century Dutch Reformed church in Amsterdam. The day-long event featured over forty visual artists and musicians, with many musicians connected to the nexus of Julia Barnes and Facetten de Kunst, discussed in the performance section (and in last year’s “Joyce Smithy”). Another headliner at the event was the Scordatura Ensemble (formerly known as Trio Scordatura), an Amsterdam-based group dedicated to microtonal and spectral music, and particularly the music of Harry Partch (1901-1974).

A mid-twentieth-century composer from California, Partch blamed Bach for heralding western music’s bias toward equal-tempered tuning and called for a return to just intonation—which Partch emphasized could more appropriately mirror the natural microtonal range and inflections of the human voice. In order to accommodate his musical sensibilities, Partch developed his own creative universe of
sound and theory, most notably building his own unique instruments, some with names like Quadrangularis Reversum and the Zymo-Xyl. It is no wonder that such a singular talent eventually investigated the works of Joyce, and Partch composed at least two pieces dedicated to *Finnegans Wake* and *Ulysses* respectively. For their performance in Oosterkerk, the Scordatura Ensemble performed both of these pieces—complete with adapted and unique Partch instruments—as well as other works by Partch and John Cage and also Syd Barrett’s “Golden Hair” and an original arrangement of Joyce’s poem “Bid Adieu.”

From late September through early October of 2018, a festival entitled *riverrun* was held at the Centre National de Création Musicale in Albi, France, founded by Didier Aschour. The program for the event read: “*Ce mot-valise commence Finnegans Wake, de James Joyce, emblématique de l’expérimentation littéraire; par un mot inventé, une création sémantique et sonore. Sans majuscule, comme un flot qu’on prend en cours de route, qui vient d’ailleurs et nous entraîne. Dans une traduction phonétique: riverain.*”

The event included several days of experimental musical ensembles, showcasing the plurality of musical approaches. GMEA-CNCM d’Albi summarized Joyce’s work in the event pamphlet as a semantic and sonar creation and reformulated the neologism that opens the *Wake* through an associated French phonetic similarity that is revelatory of the cultural and linguistic insights hidden within Joyce’s work. The French word “Riverain” suggests an alternate stagnation in the movement of the word. It indicates a person or group that lives on the bank of a body of water, stationary against the running river that flows past. Riverrun also featured Aschour’s group Ensemble Dedalus in collaboration with the Collectif Muzzix performing their original composition “Moondog: Round the World of Sound.”

This interest in Joyce globally and in translation is approached in a more straightforward manner by Polish musicians Pan Przecinek and Zespół Depresyjny in their track “Finnegan’s Wake,” which sets Z. Allan’s translated text of “Brigid’s Song” from *A Portrait* over distorted electric guitar and cymbal-heavy drumming in a pseudo-metal rock track. In the book, the song is one of Stephen’s first moments of preoccupation with the sonic quality of words, as he lies sick in bed considering his own mortality. But rather than maintaining the sad, sentimental lilt of “Brigid’s Song,” “Finnegan’s Wake” takes on a heavy, cold, perhaps even anxious tone that blends repetitive, urgent chord structures with raspy vocals that feel more resonant with the likes of Bloom’s “Circe” wanderings than young Stephen’s infirmary visit.

But the most sonic interpretations of Joyce through 2018 went the way of the Dedalus Ensemble rather than that of Przecinek and
Depresyjny, in interpreting Joyce’s writing almost exclusively without lyrics. Barry Smolin released a plucking and wandering piano piece, “The Mooske & The Gripes,” which occasionally picks up the suggestion of melody before meandering up and down the keyboard in discordant steps and regaining harmony. M8N’s ULSSS takes a more synth-heavy techno approach to capturing the tonal and sonic qualities of Ulysses. While the album is not totally without lyrics, the bits of lyrical interjection are heavily distorted and difficult to understand, working more as another sonic layer than providing distinct lyrical intent.

Other pieces explored the gaps between creator and creation, using Joyce’s texts as a kind of “ graphic score” and examining the creative echoes that develop in response to—and through circumvention of—the text itself. Stephen Gardner’s “Ulysses Extended” was performed as part of Bloomsday events hosted by the James Joyce Centre in Dublin. The piece plays with the sonic quality of Joyce’s words by extrapolating from them. The lyrics of the piece are formed from the text of Ulysses and are extended into vocal and instrumental sound interpretations. The score leaves room for improvisation by the trio of vocals by Ellen Demos, bass clarinet by Paul Roe, and percussion by Shane O’Donovan in these extensions, creating a piece that is as much about the intertextual exploration and creation that exists in Joyce’s writing as it is about the scripted text and composition that Gardner has compiled.

For Oleg Krokhalev, in his composition “Sirens,” based on the “Sirens” episode in Joyce’s Ulysses, lyrics and vocalizations become the foundation of the music. Recorded on five cassette tapes that are played back at different speeds and in different directions, five different vocalists contribute to the fabric of the piece. The fugal structure of Joyce’s “Sirens” suggests simultaneity and harmonics that unify the disparate voices in the episode; eight voices contribute to the experience of Ben Dollard’s central rendition of “The Croppy Boy.” This structuring, however, also has the effect of allowing the individual to be substantially articulated within the collective.

In “The Impromptu That Trod on a Loaf,” Susan McClary describes the fugue as a form of “subjective becoming,” a part of a “history most focused on notions of the centered Self: how it is constituted of heterogeneous elements, how it relates to others, how it achieves autonomous coherence, and so on” (24). The fugue in Joyce’s “Sirens” works to offer a scene of communal engagement, while maintaining the importance of each character individually. Krokhalev’s piece captures this paradox sonically, creating disharmony in the spaces between vocals that are individually quite beautiful.

Another sprawling community/nexus of Joyce connections, Waywords and Meansigns continues to add pieces to its Opendoor
Edition, which accepts new items on a rolling basis. In 2018, these additions included: the Chicago/Los Angeles indie configuration of Laura Callier/Brian Costello/Bill MacKay in a reverb waterscape; a found sound remix reading from Carrick McDonald and Mandy Mac; a reading from Jona Xhepa punctuated by more underwater passages; Ecuadorian noise art from Daniel Pico; haunted jazz crooning from Lucy Grauman; and a live improvisational performance from Paul O’Connor, Nick Roth, Mark Tokar, and Brendan Doherty, led by the composer Roth. Prior to working with Waywords and Meansigns, Roth composed Wake pieces in 2015 and 2017: “A Way A Lone A Last, for Recorder Trio” for Trio Invento, and a solo flute adaptation performed by the flautist Lina Andonovska. Roth is also co-director of the Dublin-based label Diatribe Records, which, writes All About Jazz, “promotes some of Ireland’s most creative musicians—native and immigrant alike,” suggesting diffuse yet ongoing (and perhaps inevitable) links between Irish new sounds and James Joyce.

Two works originally released through Waywords and Meansigns debuted as alternative takes through independently released versions: the previously mentioned instrumental track from Smolin and Barry Bender’s electric take on “Old Sporty.” Although Smolin’s music can travel dexterously across a range of musical styles, the stripped-down “Mookse & The Gripes” demonstrates the playful space jazz threaded throughout his works, while “Old Sporty” grooves like a retro-detective-surf novel destined for Hollywood treatment. Bender’s eponymously named album Old Sporty is a welcome follow-up to his 2006 album Life (and Jade), the latter of which features one of the sweetest love songs ever penned, comparing Finnegans Wake to the mysteries of love and intimacy.

We must also consider Joyce’s influence on certain architects of culture, those producers and curators who shape content outside of public view. Such a list might include Goddard Lieberson, the former president of Columbia Records, as well as politicians like Joe Biden and the unnamed intelligence agents who quote Joyce in speeches and missives. From the world of skateboarding we could add David Carnie, the former editor-in-chief of Big Brother magazine and co-creator of MTV’s Jackass. Hailing from the California skate culture—which often expressed itself alongside the medium-blurring boundaries of music, art, and film—Carnie helped to frame the archetypes of 1990s/early 2000s skateboarding (while regularly reading Finnegans Wake at home). Today, he continues to create “cultured” items of skateboarding through his original board graphics designed for companies like Anti-Hero and StrangeLove. For the latter, he designed “Big Mouth Strikes Again” in 2017, a collage-based graphic dedicated to former Smiths frontman Morrissey. Accompanying the board was a zine written by Carnie, entitled “Morrissey’s Toilet,” which
reads like a stoned rap from Stephen Dedalus. Based on Stephen’s theory of Shakespeare, Hamlet, and Hamnet, which Carnie dutifully explicates to skaters everywhere, the zine divulges Carnie’s novel theory: “Morrissey is the daughter of Oscar Wilde and Joan of Arc, but also the Mother of both. Or the murderer of both. Or all three are one and the same.” This logic clearly reveals that The Smiths’ song “Big Mouth Strikes Again” is about Morrissey murdering his parents, while Carnie’s board design reveals Morrissey, Wilde, and Joan of Arc reincarnating as one another. Or something like that. As Carnie concludes his zine, “maybe someone reading this has a better idea of exactly what is going on here.”

Whether infiltrating the ranks of Jackass or German recorder trios, Joyce appears in unexpected places; the works surveyed here point to patterns of creative and cultural permutation, while evading what García describes as “complete understanding.” Dispersed throughout musical ecosystems, as if Joyce’s genetic markers are embedded in threads of mutated DNA, this epitomizes the cross-pollinations and novel growth that occur through the arts, or as Mike Watt explains it: “maybe that’s one of the things about Art: You can tie humans together in artistic ways without, you know, boot-on-throat mode. If Watt’s stupid tunes on Double Nickels somehow can build an appreciation for Ulysses . . . that’s not such a bad deal. It’s kinda like handing off a baton; you carved on your own things and handed it off, now it’s their turn. Use that as a spoke on a big wheel that moves the hay wagon.”

**Performance**

In 2018, the performative highlight of the year was the Bloomsday happening, *So Prettly Prattly Pollylogue*, curated by Nico Dockx at deSingel Internationale Kunstcampus in Antwerp, in conjunction with the International James Joyce Symposium. Although the event ran from noon until the last hours of the European summer sunlight, one had the sense of being transported into that creative realm outside of time for this all-day affair that began with a curated meal by Oterk Productions and an accompanying lobby performance from Julia Henneman featuring word weighing, wafer paper, and edible ink.

In one of the few moments traditionally apropos for Bloomsday, Geert Lernout gave an intriguing lecture dedicated to *Ulysses*, while Sarat Maharaj enchanted listeners with a discussion of halal and Bengali sandwich shops in Bloomsbury, London. Erik Bindervoet and Robbert-Jan Henkes performed what was technically a lecture but could be more accurately described as an enthusiastic piece of educational theater, focused on their Dutch translations of *Pomes Penyeach*,
which were then performed by Julia Barnes, Yung-Tuan Ku, and Hans Buhrs. In a day full of highlights—like multiple waves crashing in magnificent succession upon the shore—the performance from Barnes and her collaborators was astounding for its beauty, poise, and power: a climax of western classical ensemble approaches to Joyce.

Chris Corsano, a prolific drummer who has worked with the likes of Thurston Moore and Björk, showcased his capabilities as a solo artist, although he was seemingly assisted by an extra three or four sets of limbs during what was one of the most remarkable displays of extended technique and polyrhythmic trap-set drumming, which included dropping cymbals onto his snare while remixing audio loops and cut-ups from Joyce’s “Anna Livia” reading.

Waywords and Meansigns offered a devised piece, collectively created by the performers during the preceding week of the conference, which emerged as a parody of an academic lecture, complete with long-winded non-explanations, spontaneous audience questions, and that one guy who runs way over time. Our anarchistic devising process (and performance) was open to all conference-attending affiliates, plus whoever else showed up, and our performers’ backgrounds ranged from decades of experience to first-time debuts. In the former camp were Neal Kosaly-Meyer and Steve Fly, who also performed solo sets.

Kosaly-Meyer, a Seattle-based performer, who is engaged in a seventeen-year project to recite the entirety of *Finnegans Wake* from memory, recited the *Wake’s* opening pages to reveal a striking musicality, developed with a depth and clarity of a masterful performance that stands out from other existing Joyce readings. Complemented by infrequent, yet purposeful, moments of extended technique, in this case with technical assistance from the feet of Cathal Stephens on the sustaining pedal, Kosaly-Meyer skillfully utilized the reverberation of a grand piano soundboard to amplify and accent Viconian cycles such as the *Wake’s* opening thunderclap/fall, “bababadalgharaghtakamminonkonnbronntuonnntuonnthunntrovarthunoulengthskawntooohoomdenenthurnuk!”

In a welcome contrast to the seriousness of high-art venues, Steve Fly Agaric 23 embodies the ideal of a space-cadet savant, just barely returned from the realm of interstellar ideas but landing into perfect musical timing, without losing the traces of stardust from whatever cosmic forces returned to this atmosphere in his wake. A drummer and DJ-turned-programmer, Fly’s performance was based on a digital remixing palette he developed uniquely for the day, “BloomJamm,” which was available for free download by all conference attendees, and remains accessible to the general public via his website.

Fly’s audio samples included clips of Joyce-head Robert Anton Wilson, whose influence was also present in the work of the visual
artist Heather Ryan Kelley. Kelley sat beside the stage throughout the day creating live art. Though Kelley and Fly drew on overlapping sources of inspiration—Joyce’s *Wake*, RAW’s *Coincidence*, and elements of prepared materials and automatic improvisation—her temperament and approach are marked by a delicate exploration of the inner worlds and symbols of language, both as words and as sigla. For her resulting piece *Moebius Sigla*—watercolor, collage, and archival marker on Sekishu white paper and spanning “3 x 164 inches or infinite”—Kelley explains, “I worked quickly, automatically upon both sides of the paper. My goal was to listen attentively and respond intuitively to everything I saw and heard.”48

The artists Jean-Baptiste Decavèle and Patrick Pleutin were also present, documenting performances, scenes, and gestures through photography/video and live drawing. Selections from Decavèle and Pleutin will accompany a three-hundred-edition booklet and vinyl release designed by Dockx and Jean-Michel Meyers, which documents the Symposium events curated by Dockx.49

Mauro Pawlowski delivered an evening performance dressed in Amish-esque attire, situated within a no-restraints persona. Punctuated by a raised fist pumping in the air, he built patches of sonic soundscape that were simultaneously “out” music and arena rock. Whether it was the epitome of high art or a deep no-secrets-revealed commitment to clowning—the kind of performance that requires full performer engagement from set-up and staging until the curtain—was not clear. Pawlowski seemed to bewilder most of the audience while delighting a ridiculous few.

The evening also included a performance of *Exiles* from the Dutch group De Erfgenamen, who adapted the play to include original texts written by the group and excerpts from Joyce’s letters.50 The result was a remarkable production that, in twenty-first-century terms, wrestled with issues of open relationships and consent, yet did not convey any sense of anachronistic didacticism or contrived theoretical slogans. The resulting series of epiphanies brought the viewer through experiences of love and jealousy as well as sexual liberation and misogyny, which, in Joyce’s characteristic style, were not encountered cognitively but rather experienced affectively by viewers; to watch this production of *Exiles* was to live, for a time, in the liberal, yet troubled, circles of early-twentieth-century artists and to understand how Joyce might have experienced these worlds. Rather than functioning as a period piece, however, the production offered an uncanny mirroring of past and present eras and the cycles of history.

In last year’s “Joyce Smithy,” we noted that De Erfgenamen’s production surfaces amidst an emergent trend of works exploring Joyce, “écriture féminine,” and the ways in which women are reclaiming the works and lives of Nora and Lucia Joyce, as well as Joyce’s female
characters. This trend, which seemed to mobilize most quickly in popular productions, continued in 2018 and 2019, and although artist productions and the Joyce academy are not always in step, it is noteworthy that this parallels the Joyce academy’s own struggles with sexual harassment and misconduct.

Having noted the rising momentum of female-produced and focused works, however, there is a risk that (male) critics’ hyperfocus on such trends will pigeonhole emergent artists or productions as only addressing “women’s issues,” thereby subjugating whatever other themes and questions are explored in the works into something one-dimensional and tokenized. In this regard, it is important to ascertain the artists’ own conceptions of their work: do the creators, for instance, understand their work (or not) in relation to current conversations regarding gender, sexuality, movements like #MeToo, and the successful campaign in Ireland to repeal the Eighth Amendment (legalizing abortion)?

With these developments and questions in mind, we note the 2019 “Lucia Joyce: Perspectives” afternoon at Trinity University and panel discussions held at the James Joyce Centre on Bloomsday, which included performances and presentations from Caoileann Curry-Thompson, Una Kavanagh, and Áine Stapleton, among others. Reviewed previously in the JJQ, these artists are engaging with Lucia and her legacy in ways that have deep personal, cultural, and artistic significance.

Rosefrail and Frair, from director Curry-Thompson and performed by Kavanagh, is a powerful exploration of sexuality and the fierce independence of madness. It asks what it may mean for a women’s art and body—Lucia’s dancing—to exist under the constraints of family and society. This is explored with and through Lucia in the looming shadows of her father and the restraints of mental asylums.

At the time of writing, Stapleton’s ongoing engagements with Lucia Joyce include an in-progress experimental film trilogy—the first two titles being Medicated Milk and Horrible Creature—and an upcoming live dance theater production, co-produced by the Project Arts Centre. Medicated Milk explored Lucia’s dream diaries intertwined with elements of Stapleton’s own experiences; Horrible Creature again references Lucia’s writings, which are, in turn, mediated through dance and filmed across Switzerland in locations where Lucia lived: Locarno, Zurich, and the Prangins Hospital in Nyon. Welcoming these revitalized explorations of Lucia and her continuing legacy, we encourage readers of the JJQ to watch for opportunities to see—or host—these productions from Curry-Thompson, Kavanagh, and Stapleton.

The National Women’s Council of Ireland also looked at Joyce and Lucia through a multidisciplinary, multicultural, multimedia
lens in its Bloomsday installation “Whose Feet? Joyce and Italy: The Connection.”\textsuperscript{57} The visual artist and writer Joyce Garvey and video/performance artist Frances Mezzeti drew inspiration from the life of Lucia, herself born in Italy, to create a piece comprised of paintings, video, and performance featuring choreography by Libby Seward.

Elsewhere, \textit{Shoot the Moon Right Between the Eyes} recreates Joyce’s “Two Gallants” in a quirky musical comedy.\textsuperscript{58} Lenehan and Corley’s stories of escapades with women, their flirtations and the music that follows them through town from the bass melody of “Silent O Moyle” to the harpist in the roadway of Kildare Street, are recreated in Graham L. Carter’s romantic comedy, which aims to recapture the dichotomy between the frustration and performativity of Joyce’s characters. Lenehan and Corley become Jerry and Carl. Dublin is replaced by a prototypically American western setting for the two con men. By blending Joyce’s narrative with musical inspiration from the American folk-singer-songwriter John Prine, the melody with which Joyce fills Dublin’s streets in “Two Gallants” meets the American folk narrative that drives Prine’s music.

Reading Joyce’s writing itself has become subject to interpretations in video and film. In 2014-2015, “JoycesVoices,” a twenty-three-minute documentary from Helena Gouveia Monteiro in collaboration with the Sweny’s Chemist Dublin Joycean reading society, compiles a montage of images of water bottles floating at the base of a waterfall, pages of the \textit{Wake}, sweeping beach landscapes, and cityscapes shot from a car window, juxtaposed with recordings of the reading group itself.\textsuperscript{59}

A more traditional film series is underway from Godfrey Jordan, who, in 2018, debuted the first installment in the \textit{James Joyce Documentary Project}. Entitled “Portrait of the Milliner as yer man himself,” Jordan’s documentary focuses on John Shevlin, a traditional Irish milliner based in Dublin.\textsuperscript{60} Through some act of Joycean serendipity, Shevlin lives and works on North George’s Street, which is where staff members at the neighboring James Joyce Centre noted the man’s uncanny resemblance to James Joyce, and he has been a Bloomsday institution ever since. A subsequent installment in Jordan’s documentary series will include footage and interviews from the 2018 Joyce Symposium in Toronto.\textsuperscript{61}

Another Symposium-connected project is Gavan Kennedy’s participatory \textit{Finnegan Wakes: The Film}, which gives readers from around the world a chance to read a page of the \textit{Wake} for inclusion in something destined to be an extended psychedelic remake of “We Are the World” meets “Here Comes Everybody.”\textsuperscript{62} As previously mentioned in the \textit{JJQ},\textsuperscript{63} Kennedy has filmed at locations including the Antwerp and Mexico City Symposia (2018 and 2019), the James Joyce Centre (2019), and the Joyce Summer School in Trieste (2019).
Beginning as a Burning-Man-based audio recording for the Waywords and Measigns project, Kennedy has since dedicated himself to filming the entire book, with multiple readers spliced together for each page. In what was surely one of the most epic adventures ever undertaken by a Joycean academic, after meeting in Antwerp, Kennedy enlisted Finn Fordham to accompany him to the Nevada desert to attend Burning Man to educate would-be readers half-clad in fluffy coats and glitter about the wonders of the *Wake*.

Also departing from the Antwerp Symposium in search of unusual adventures was “Amsterdampster,” a series of shows organized by Steve Fly Agaric 23 immediately following the performances at desingel. Each of the three Amsterdam performances was held at a different locations there, including Sexyland in North Amsterdam, the Cafe Monumentje, and the Cafe Daan and Daan.64

The gig at Sexyland included an explosive rant from Christian Greer on Joyce’s methods for destroying imperialism at its root, through the introduction of an anti-capitalist virus into the English/American language via *Finnegans Wake*; a reprise of Bindervoet and Henkes’s performative lecture; and a set of mind-melting improvised music from Fly and Vincente Pino’s Dr. Marshmallow Cubicle. A particularly unique highlight of the evening was an impromptu offering of “Finnegan’s Wake” from the Dutch National Opera singer Cato Fordham, who first recalled discovering his brother Finn’s personal copy of *Finnegans Wake* strewn about somewhere, only to find himself transcendentally transported into language through its reading.

Unexpected forms of impromptu transportation also occurred at Cafe Monumentje, west of the canal in Jordaan. A real locals bar unaccustomed to performances and where English speakers are rarely found, much less welcomed, two English expats and an American—Fly, William Sutton, and myself—nervously sat in the back corner wondering how to proceed with our late afternoon gig. Emboldened by his background as a stand-up comedian, Sutton began the evening, to the relief of Fly and me. Rapping in Dutch about William Shakespeare and the power of language, Sutton dexterously transitioned to English before cuing me to talk about Joyce and read from the *Wake*.

We stumbled on Joycean gold when one of the most disinterested regulars finally looked up from his newspaper to demand a look at what gibberish this was, and from then on, in lieu of any formal performances, the entire bar spent the night cheering and shouting while passing around this weird little book. With each reader laughing aloud until the next insisted on finding out for himself what was so funny, the *Wake* proved itself again as a true pub-book-for-the-people, while one man declared, “I’ve been at this bar every day for forty years; we haven’t seen this kind of magic since the old days!”
NOTES

1 For a fuller discussion of the Joyce Smithy’s aims and intentions, see the JJQ, 52 (Fall 2014), 181.
2 Please send material and information relating to visual art to Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes (<c.m.lermhayes@uva.nl>); for music and performance, write to Derek Pyle (<waywordsandmeanings@gmail.com>) and Tess Brewer (<joyceintharts@gmail.com>.
4 See Carol Wade, “Art of the Wake,” speaking at “Joyce Without Borders,” 2019 North American James Joyce Symposium, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and the Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM), 12 June-16 June 2019. The artists have also generously permitted us to post videos of their dazzling presentations.
6 See <www.artnet.com/artists/william-anastasi/?typr=works-on-paper>.
13 Lee Miller, In James Joyce’s Dublin, with an essay by Terence Killeen, (Dublin: James Joyce Centre, 10 June-10 December 2014).
14 Motoko Fujita, The Shadow of James Joyce: Chapelizod & Environs (Dublin:


19 David Thorp, ANTS AND GRASSHOPPERS: Reflections on the Anxious Object, unpublished manuscript from 2018, with thanks to the author and Pavel Buchler.


25 See Harry Partch, Two Settings from Joyce’s “Finnegan’s Wake” [sic], for soprano, Kithara I, and two flutes, 1944, and “Ulysses” at the Edge, for voice, alto saxophone or trumpet, baritone saxophone, diamond marimba, bass marimba, boo, and cloud-chamber bowls, 1955. For more information about Partch and his instruments, see <https://www.harriypartch.com.instruments> (accessed August 2019).

26 To view the Scordatura Ensemble’s program, see the oosterkerk-amsterdam website listed above.
To view the full riverrun festival program, see <http://www.gmes.net/riverrun2018>.


To hear individual artists’ pieces from Waywords and Meansigns, see <http://www.waywordsandmeansigns.com/artists/> (accessed August 2019).


David Carnie, Big Mouth Strikes Again, 2017, Paisley skateboard, 8.50” (width), StrangeLove Skateboards: Idyllwild, California.


Nico Dockx, curator, So Prettly Pratty Pollylogue event, day two, at Witte Zaal, Kunstcampus deSingel Antwerpen, Antwerp, Belgium (16 June 2018).


The Waywords and Meansigns performer line-up included Layne Farmen, Steve Fly Agaric 23, Yonina Hoffman, Neal Kosaly-Meyer, Peter Quadrino, Scott Rhodes, Lucia Smyth, Cathal Stephens, and me, Derek Pyle, with displays of art images from Heather Ryan Kelley.

For a previous discussion of Kosaly-Meyer’s project, see Ollie Evans, Lerm Hayes, and Pyle, “Joyce Smithy: A Curated Review of Joyce in Visual
Art, Music, and Performance,” *JJQ*, 52 (Fall 2014), 108.


48 Heather Ryan Kelley, *Moebius Sigla*. 2018, watercolor, collage, and archival marker on Sekishu white paper, 3 x 164 inches or infinite. The quotation is from a personal communication between Kelley and myself (25 September 2019).

49 For more information about the publication, including purchasing, contact Dockx at <nicodocks@yahoo.com>.

50 For a previous mention of this piece, see Lerm Hayes and Pyle, *JJQ*, 55 (p. 207).


54 For a previous discussion, see Pyle, “‘Dublin Celebrates the *Wake*’s 80th Birthday: ‘Finnegans Wake at 80,’ ‘Lucia Joyce: Perspectives,’ ‘Text/Sound/Performance: Making in Canadian Space,’ and ‘Finnegan Wake-End,’” *JJQ*, 56 (Fall 2018-Winter 2019), 12-14.

55 *Rosefrail and Frair* was performed at “Lucia Joyce: Perspectives,” Trinity Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland (13 April 2019).


57 Joyce Garvey and Frances Mezzeti, *Whose Feet: Joyce and the Italy Connection*, various locations in Dublin (15-20 June 2018).

58 Graham L. Carter, dir., *Shoot the Moon Right Between the Eyes* (Austin, Tex.: Shoot the Moon, 2018).
61 For more information about the James Joyce Documentary Project, see <http://www.televationmediainc.com/james-joyce-project.html> (accessed October 2019).
62 Finnegans Wakes: The Film is still in progress; for updates and footage selections, see <https://www.finneganwakes.com/>.
64 Steve Fly Agaric 23, curator, “Ampsterdampster” at Sexyland, Ms. van Riemsdijkew 39, Amsterdam-Noord (19 June 2019); Cafe Monumentje, Westerstraat 120, Amsterdam (21 June 2019); and Cafe Daan and Daan’s, Katteburgerplein 39, Amsterdam (23 June 2019). For more information, see <https://deepscratch.net/bloomjamm/> (accessed October 2019).