

"The artist always precedes the psychoanalyst" J. Lacan

In times of confinement and restriction of social interaction, we invited several artists from a diversity of fields to tell us about their experiences during the confinement measures at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. We put to them the following questions:

Q1 - What is your experience, as an artist, of the impossibility to carry out cultural and artistic events 'in the flesh'? What is different when the audience / spectator is 'virtual'?

*Q2 - In your particular form of art, what are the effects of the exclusion of the body in the encounter with the body of the other, i.e. what is different / new?
Can you relate this to the notion of 'presence' (can you -as an artist- do without physical presence?)*

We aim at learning from them, since we believe that their experiences and know-how can contribute to our thinking about subjectivity and about the analytic encounter.

F R A N H A L P I N

Born in Dublin, Fran followed her childhood dream and launched straight into a full-time career as a self-employed commercial artist, travelling around the world to paint bespoke murals. Graduating with honours in Fine Art from the Dublin Institute of Technology in 1997, she held her first solo exhibition in 2018 and has since that time seen her work go from strength to strength.

Her absolute passion lies in painting calming water scenes and high-resolution pebbles, offering the viewer an opportunity to step away from the drama of life and purely enjoy a moment of complete serenity. To find joy and connection in a simple moment of connecting with the ocean, with the intention of creating a sensorial and emotive connection with the viewer experienced at one step removed.

Stones on beaches prompt people to pick them, hold them, possibly skim them and more often than not, keep them, like a treasure. Memories are our treasures. My work reminds us of the simple treasures that are all around us. My work focuses on making memories with my children which mirrors my own childhood.

<http://www.franhalpinart.com/>

Q1

As an artist who works alone in my studio most days, the act of not having a spectator has not affected me greatly. I work solitary and keep connected with other artists and groups through Facebook and other social media platforms. I've actually been doing this for years.

If I'm perfectly honest, it's the lack of childcare that has hit me the most. I have two children aged ten and six, so I can't just disappear into my studio for a few hours a day. So, my chance to create has been taken away from me in one swoop. My husband is also working remotely and needs my art studio as his office so I am not getting as much done as I would like. I know this is a very familiar story with people all over the world that have young kids. I know I'm not alone there. I'm using this time as an opportunity to improve my website and finally write some blogs!



Q2

For years now I have spent time connecting with artists through live streams on Facebook. Every week we do workshops and learn new things. So, the exclusion of physical contact is fine in that respect. An exhibition I was part of in Switzerland at the end of February was hit badly by the threat of Covid-19. I and two other artists got home just in time, but our paintings ended up getting stuck in Europe somewhere in the back of a courier's van for over two months. I only got my painting home on May 1st which was so exciting I can tell you. I also had a big exhibition planned for November in the RDS called "Artsource," and that has been postponed for now. Not to mention the women in business event that I was asked to speak at for Ulster Bank. I'm raging this had to be cancelled. I was very excited about the fact that I was the first artist that was ever invited on to speak as a businesswoman for the event, which would have been so amazing. Hopefully these opportunities will come around again. All we can do for now is keep turning up and working as much as we can.

I think it is possible to survive as an artist without physical presence. We no longer need Galleries to sell our work. It is possible to take charge of this ourselves. In so far as engaging with an audience, I have used social media channels and have made so many new contacts and even lifelong friends. My first solo show was in Smock Alley in 2018 and I sold 80% of work online before the exhibition began, and regularly connect with people this way and continue to do business in this way. However, there really is no substitute for meeting in person is there? For the past two years I have participated in an exhibition called Artsource which is held in the RDS in Dublin and this has brought my paintings to an audience that would otherwise not experience it. Speaking to and meeting people face to face is definitely a much nicer way to connect and has a long lasting impact, but I feel incredibly lucky that I'm so well established and used to social media as it keeps me in touch with not only clients but other creatives too.

