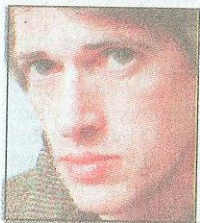


On the wall and off the wall



Visual Arts
Aidan Dunne

Reviewed

Offside, Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin, until Sept 30, 01-2225552

was du brauchst, Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin, until Saturday, 01-8740064

Five German artists feature at the Kevin Kavanagh Gallery in **was du brauchst**. The star of the opening night was the strikingly named Stefanie Trojan, a performance artist in the classical, hard-nosed Marina Abramovic sense of the term.

Stationed close to the door, she set about sniffing the armpits of new arrivals. The subsequent responses and interaction make up the working space of her art. If you missed the event itself, you can see a video that conveys roughly what it was like.

Lachein (Smile) documents another performance piece in which Trojan, rather bravely, approached people in the street and, with her two hands, tried to shape their mouths into a smile. We are not told whether these people represented a pre-selected sample, whether they were an art audience, say. But it is intriguing to watch the responses of individuals to her abrupt approach. Many are amused, puzzled, inquisitive. Only one, in this record, treats her gesture as an assault and smoothly, repeatedly, blocks her arms. The amazing thing is that she keeps trying, risking a violent rebuff that, thankfully, never comes. Trojan's concentration and persistence elicit telling responses, focusing attention on our sense of self, conventional roles, social space and interaction. She is a formidable performer.

Klara Hobza's *Morse Code Communication* is a visually spectacular video that is actually rooted in an attempt at communication and is about communication. Perched high in a glass-fronted block in New York, Hobza triggers the building's lights to flare on and off in Morse code, now largely unused. There is a certain poignancy in the image of the building signalling vainly to the city at large.

Notburga Karl's fluorescent-tube installation is beautiful, if unremarkable; Thomas Trinkl's graphite-coated sculpture effectively conveys a sense of physical, human presence; and Ulrich Vogl's *Chandelier*, as with his other pieces, is thoughtful and witty.

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