

TAPE/SLIDE WORK

The Mother's Room 1981

Speak English Cathleen 1982

VIDEO INSTALLATIONS

Heartland 1983

Out of the Ashes 1986

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DISTANT DRUMS
A VIDEO INSTALLATION
BY MARION URCH

Tate Gallery Liverpool
11 - 23 April 1989
Open 11 - 7 Tuesday to Sunday

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and by Merseyside Arts.
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Distant Drums was commissioned by Merseyside Moviola as part of the Video Positive '89 festival. It is being presented, in conjunction with the Tate Gallery Liverpool as a post festival event.

The Video Positive '89 catalogue costs £3.50 and is available from the gallery bookshop.

Further information on Video Positive '89 and on 'Distant Drums' is available from Merseyside Moviola on 051-709 2663.

DISTANT DRUMS



11 - 23 April 1989

A VIDEO INSTALLATION
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TATE GALLERY LIVERPOOL

DISTANT DRUMS

A VIDEO INSTALLATION BY MARION URCH

'Distant Drums' is a video installation consisting of a sculptural evocation of a train station waiting room in which two videos are shown on ten monitors. The whole cycle lasts ten minutes and viewers are invited to sit on the benches provided.

Oh! I will take you back, Kathleen,
To where your heart will feel no pain,
and when the fields are fresh and green,
I'll take you to your home again!

I'll take you home again Kathleen
(Traditional Irish song)

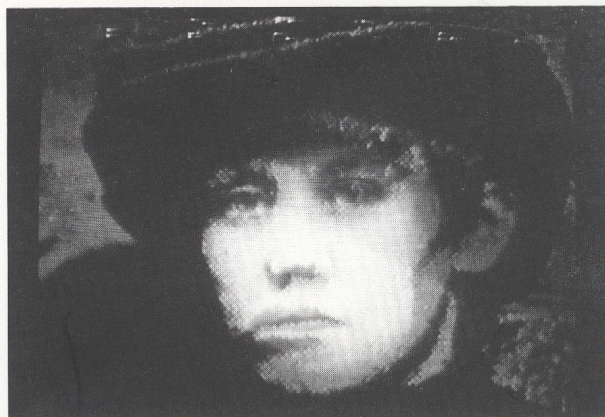
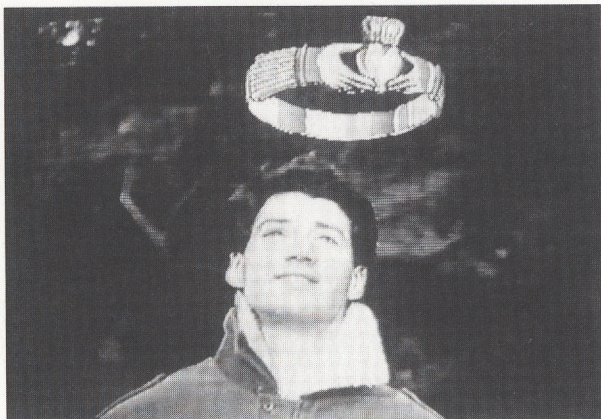
In 'Distant Drums', Marion Urch explores issues around the cultural identity of second generation Irish people in this country and reflects the tensions within this identification.

'Often we have internalised a sentimental sense of Ireland culled from childhood stories and holidays 'home'. A nostalgia for rural Ireland and our parent's feelings of loss and exile become entangled with the stories of Irish suffering and British oppression told to us as we grew. Yet we have no language, accent or skin colour to make us visible, either to Irish people or to second generation Irish people and often our parents are the first to point out to us that we are English!'

(Marion Urch)

Set in a room overlooking the Mersey, a mile from the landing stage where the Irish ferry used to come in, 'Distant Drums' recreates a railway station waiting room. This setting, and the visual impression of the two videos, which is of constant movement, transition and transformation, suggest the idea of a journey, echoing that of the Irish to Britain in search of work, and that of their children in search of a sense of identity.

'Distant Drums' builds up multiple layers of sound and image, contrasting richly sentimental music with harsh images from archive footage, chanting prayers with bleak industrial landscapes and Irish dancing with the sounds of a busy train station. As these



diverse ideas and images communicate a tension, so the form, in combining documentary and poetry, contains its own tensions and functions as a 'lyrical documentary'.

Magical elements in the video, the reciting of the witches spell from Macbeth and a spinning Claddagh ring that flies through an industrial landscape and out over the sea, represent a wish, through an enactment of will, to resolve these tensions and to bring together the seemingly disparate elements which together make up a portrait of second generation Irish experience. However, swinging between romance and politics, both harsh and comical, 'Distant Drums' celebrates, but refuses to provide a simplistic picture of, the cultural identity of the Irish in Britain today.

BIOGRAPHY

Marion Teresa Veronica Urch was born in 1957, the eldest of five children. Her mother was Irish and her father half Irish. She studied Fine Art at Brighton Polytechnic and Environmental Media at the Royal college of Art. Marion Urch has worked in all areas of video art. As well as producing videotapes and tape/slide works herself, she is active in teaching, administration, distribution and exhibition and in criticism.

VIDEOGRAPHY

VIDEO TAPES

An Introduction to Womanhood in the Modern World	1980
The Fascinating Art of the Ritual Feast	1980
The Venus Tape	1984
To the Universe belongs the Dancer	1985
From Russia with Love	1986
Out of the Ashes	1987