



**Alliance Française de Cork Exhibiting Artist Interview :  
Gana Roberts, *Bon Voyage***

**AF Cork Exhibition Programme 2016/2017**



Having worked in textiles, glass and ceramics for many years, Gana's attention turned towards the photographic and filmic as a result of studying Visual Art at BA and MA levels. Her practice reflects on uncertainty and imbalance and includes a sense of provisional optimism.

*About the artist*

**When did you decide to become an artist?**

I think of myself as an art maker. I do not feel comfortable with the term artist and find it a little elevated for what I do.

I have always been involved in visual expression and in recent years this has become more conceptually based; however materials are extremely important in my practice and the making process, whether it be shooting and editing video or shaping clay is what drives me.

**What inspires you?**

The work in this exhibition is inspired by two experiences.

The first experience was a two yearlong study of aspects of Robert Bresson's cinematography, both content and methodology. I was particularly fascinated by his 1967 film *Mouchette* in which a young girl is overcome by a sense of total isolation and dis-joint from the world in which she finds herself. The video work *The Invisible Wind* is a result of this engagement with Bresson, and reflects his ongoing pre-occupation with the power of contingency over individual freewill, as well as some of his formal methodologies such as off-screen sound, visual ellipsis, his use of the 'model' in place of the actor, body fragmentation and ontological touch.

The second experience was working as a short term volunteer in Greece during the ongoing displacement crisis. I was on Lesbos Island for a little more than two weeks, a very short time, but it was long enough to feel the courage and resilience of those undertaking

such extremely long and dangerous journeys. The work presented here seeks to express the uncertainty of outcome and the incredible strength needed to live in such untenable circumstances.

*In context*

**What attracts you to your chosen medium?**

I work in various media. Textiles, ceramics and glass would be mainstays of my practice with print, photography, video and sound being newcomers. From Robert Bresson's cinematography I learnt the importance of relay: that an image should not be dominant but should rather interact with the images (and sounds) around it. Also from Bresson I learnt about omission and subtraction. And above all I learnt about touch and the necessary spaces between touch. I seek to express these formal qualities not only in the video work but also in the paint, print and sculptural pieces.

**What role does an artist have in society?**

I don't see the artist's role in society as separate from the individual's role in society. Every one of us has a responsibility to contribute as much as we are able and to engage in understanding our own experience.

**Can you comment on the title of your video presentation?**

*The Invisible Wind* is the title of the video presentation. It is taken from Robert Bresson's book *Notes on the Cinematographer*.

To TRANSLATE the invisible wind by the water it sculpts in passing.

**Have you been influenced by other artists?**

The work in this exhibition is influenced first and foremost by Robert Bresson.

After that it is influenced by:

The cinematography of Patrick Jolley.

The ceramics of John Ffrench and Walead Beshty.

The painting of Camille Souter.

The writing of : Jean-Luc Nancy (*Corpus*). Hito Steyerl (*In Free Fall*). Samar Yazbec, (*The Crossing: My Journey to the Shattered Heart of Syria*). Emma Jane Kirby (*The Optician of Lampedusa*).



*BON VOYAGE* is running in AF  
Cork Galerie from 27<sup>th</sup> of April –  
3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017.

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