

## BIOGRAPHY:

Anne Hendrick was born in Wexford and graduated from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin with a joint BFA in Painting and History of Art in 2006. Since graduating, she has exhibited in Temple Bar Gallery & Studios, the Royal Hibernian Academy, Monster Truck Galleries and Roscommon Arts Centre, as well as in the UK, Iceland and Barcelona.

As well as the Office of Public Works, Anne's work is part of the collections of Wesley College, Co. Dublin, Waters Technologies Ireland, the Talbot Gallery and private collections in Ireland, the UK and Berlin. She is a co-founder of the artist collective Scissors Cuts Paper who began working collaboratively in 2006. In 2011 she co-founded the artist-curator venture White Wolf Projects.

In 2012 she completed an artists' residency programme with The Association of Icelandic Visual Artists in Reykjavik. Her fifth solo show *Hokum* opened in 2012 and in October this year she will host her second solo show of 2014 with the Talbot Gallery, Dublin.

Although she works primarily in the medium of painting; she is also currently working with video and installation.

Image overleaf: Shelter, oil and beeswax on board, 48.5 x 40cm, 2013

*Being without Finish* will run in the upper and lower galleries of Wexford Arts Centre from Monday 21st July to Saturday 30th August, 2014. For further information on the exhibition please contact Catherine Bowe, Visual Arts Manager on 053 9123764 or email [catherine@wexfordartscentre.ie](mailto:catherine@wexfordartscentre.ie), or for further information on the artist please log on to [www.annehendrick.com](http://www.annehendrick.com).

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Gallery hours: Monday – Saturday: 10.00am – 5.00pm



## THE REAL AND THE IDEAL

Iconic NASA photographs such as *Earthrise*, 1968 – which shows this planet from a lunar horizon – and *The Blue Marble*, 1972 – an image of the earth from space – have increased speculation as to our place in the cosmos. Both portray earth in all its glory as a natural marvel against a backdrop of dark nothingness. These two images mark out humankind as the custodians of a bright oasis, at the epicentre of life and sentience. These photographs have become emblematic of advances in scientific discovery and the betterment of mankind.

The 1969 moon landing coincided with the most recent widespread utopian projection, that of the countercultural revolution in the 1960s America. This era of eager hopefulness, adventure, discovery and good will was encapsulated by Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper's 1969 landmark film *Easy Rider*. A film that represented a snapshot of the cultural, societal and political landscape of America during the 1960s, it portrayed the rise and fall of the hippie movement and the sense of lost utopia that accompanied its decline. This decade saw the rise of the African-American civil rights movement, as well as the sexual revolution and women's liberation, all of which contributed towards an increasingly liberal atmosphere of freedom and change.

After emerging from the Second World War as heroes, the perception of America as a fair and just superpower was derailed by the failure and humiliation that accompanied their involvement in the Vietnam War. For the U.S. government, the Vietnam War was about defeating or at least containing the spread of communism during the Cold War. After sacrificing so many young men to a futile cause, the people of America began to feel suspicion and distrust for the state apparatus. A generation gap emerged and this youthful counterculture embraced lifestyle choices that encompassed widespread use of mind-altering drugs and a hedonistic lifestyle, forming the basis for a collective awakening. Much of the movement was based on lifestyle choices that incorporated avant-garde expression and political activism. There was a level of disdain for this hedonistic generation. There was a need for an event that would transcend these differences and appeal to all strata of society encompassing a popularised ideal of freedom and change.

In 1842, James Nasmyth, a Scottish engineer, began to make detailed observations of the moon. He retired early after a successful career, and was then able to focus on his hobbies, which included astronomy, selenography and photography. His studies led to the publication of his illustrated book *The Moon: Considered as a Planet, a World, and a Satellite*, which contained both one photograph of the moon itself. All the other images were of elaborately lit sets based on observations that Nasmyth had made using a telescope of his own invention. Utilising various techniques in early photography, he fabricated a deceptively accurate image of the moon's surface. The images were a fiction that belittled the idea of truthful documentation, and more importantly that verified the popularised image of the moon's surface at that time. In this way, they might be regarded as belonging to the genre of early Science Fiction. Though they were not "true" in a documentary sense, they nonetheless served a purpose.

# ANNE HENDRICK

## *Being without Finish*

Gallery 1 & 2: 21st July - 30th August 2014  
Opening: Saturday 19th July, 4-6pm

## WEXFORD ARTS CENTRE

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The projection of ideals onto unencountered lands is a thematic feature found throughout the history of utopian narrative. In this instance the idea of place is as important as any representation of the actual place, as German-born American physicist Albert Einstein has put it "Imagination is more important than knowledge". In the same vein the moon landing was, according to many, a much-needed moral boost and a unifying factor for the socially turbulent USA. A sense of possibility superseded practical benefits; fact and fiction blurred, as did the real and the ideal.

The geographical disengagement and insularity of the moon can provide a useful analogy to the concept of Utopia. It could be argued that celestial bodies began to serve the purpose that islands found in Thomas Moore's *Utopia* or Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* once did, as space exploration brought with it desires and fears comparable to those felt during the age of discovery. Drawing on past utopian projections, it is clear that beyond the re-iteration of specific motifs, there is a thread that alludes to a search for deeper meaning, perhaps to re-connect with the earth in order to gain a level of spiritual understanding. Therefore a link can be deciphered between various forms of empirical knowledge and mythological belief structures. Sutton and Sutton's *Science Fiction as Mythology* has defined the difference between scientific hypothesis and science fiction as follows 'Unlike scientific hypothesis, a science fiction story is not formulated primarily to advance technological knowledge; rather it operates on a visionary, mythopoetic level' (Sutton and Sutton, 1969, p.236). This correlates with the role played by the 1960s space race; to enable a collective reimagining or possible solution to the social and political divide that existed in America at the time. In some ways science and myth could be construed as the same thing. They each concern mankind's curiosity about where and why he originated, as well as a curiosity focused on the destiny of mankind. Both myth and science are means utilised by humans to understand and structure the world, though they differ with regard to emphasis.

If reaching the moon represents a failed utopian endeavour, perhaps the voyage, or wandering in search of discovery represents the collective will of mankind towards progress and the drive towards perfection. Utopia cannot exist as the origin of the word affirms, Utopia, ou-topos, is no-place. Yet striving for it is, in itself, an important endeavour. As per the clichéd aphorism insisting that one cannot fail unless one has tried to succeed, it is necessary to envision a perfect society before it is possible to understand that it has not been reached. Like the moon landing and its countercultural context, it's the quest or search for Utopia and the accompanying failure and disappointment that forms the narrative. Any instance of anticipating a future will naturally result in that vision evaporating upon its realisation.

Ingrid Lyons, 2014

