

ON & ONE

by Eamonn Doyle

Opening: Saturday, February 12th 2022, from 2 to 6 pm
Show: February 15th - April 16th 2022

FIFTY ONE

"Street photography is one of the most difficult genres to find a new vision within. From time to time a photographer finds a voice and makes an original contribution to this development. Eamonn Doyle's wonderful collection does that." (British photographer Martin Parr on Doyle's first photo-book i, which he called 'the best photo-book in a decade'.)

Gallery FIFTY ONE is excited to announce its first solo exhibition by acclaimed Irish photographer Eamonn Doyle, featuring a selection of photographs of his series ON (2015) and ONE (2021). Born in Dublin in 1969, Doyle graduated in 1991 in painting and photography. He spent much of the next two decades producing and publishing music, founding the Dublin Electronic Arts Festival (DEAF) alongside the record labels D1 Recordings and Dead Elvis. When Doyle returned to photography in 2008, music continued to feature as a fundamental aspect of his work. His debut photo-book *i* (2014), was followed in 2015 by ON and the award-winning *End* (2016), which together became known as Doyle's 'Dublin trilogy', culminating in a groundbreaking large-scale and multimedia immersive exhibition at the Rencontres d'Arles in 2016.

Doyle still lives and works in Dublin and his native city keeps on providing him with a wealth of photographic subjects. Most of the images of ON were taken not far from his doorstep, in the multi-cultural and working-class area around North Dublin's Parnell Street and O'Connell Street. This collection of black-and-white street photos takes the viewer on an intense journey of the ever-changing and repeating rhythm of the city. The series perfectly translates the vibrant, edgy and at times grim atmosphere of the neighbourhood. Doyle photographs the area and its inhabitants in a powerful manner, often from dramatic angles; frontally, from up close or with a low-angled camera, making faces, buildings and skies looming large and ominous over the camera. These viewpoints, along with the strong contrasts and the play with textures and volumes that Doyle finds in Dublin's urban fabric, all contribute to the series' dynamic and sensory drama.

The people Doyle photographs are determinedly heading towards an unknown location and pass hastily in front of his lens. Unlike Jacques Sonck's posed street portraits on view in FIFTY ONE TOO, Doyle's subjects seem oblivious and inaccessible, both to their fellow street inhabitants, as to the photographer in front of them trying to catch a glimpse. At times, a snapshot into their lives is granted - some stare challengingly or with distrust into the camera, others seem aggressive or lonely even - but a real insight into their lives remains absent. The subjects are stripped from all social, contextual and biographical cues. They remain anonymous, abstract characters, often reduced to mere graphic elements. Movement, the urban context in the background and the play with light, shapes and shadows, are equally important as the human psychology.

In his latest series ONE (2021), Doyle further proves that he is a master of suspense. In this collection of large format gelatine silver contact prints the atmosphere is even more alienating and menacing, pulling the viewer in the dark overlooked corners of a city in the midst of a pandemic. Passers-by are blurred or reduced to silhouettes. The frequent use of close-ups, strong contrasts and graininess, as well as the attention to typography and surfaces, are sometimes reminiscent to the boldness of artists as William Klein and Daido Moriyama. Just like the work of these legendary street photographers, ONE breathes both poetry as raw energy and adds a touch of mystery to the ordinary aspects of city life.

In 2020, the multimedia work 'Made In Dublin' - an immersive nine-screen projection with surround-sound installation for which Doyle collaborated with artists, musicians and longtime friends Niall Sweeney and David Donohoe - was on display at the FOMU in Antwerp. Previously, his works has been shown in among others the Fundacion Municipal de Cultura in Gijon (2020), the Houston Center of Photography (2020), the Fundacion Mapfre in Madrid (2019), the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) Gallery in Dublin (2019), Pier 24 in San Francisco (2017), le Centre Photographique Rouen, Normandy (2016), le Centre Photographique, Pôle Image Haute-Normandie (2016) and at the Photo Ireland Festival in Dublin in 2015.