

Press Release



Sigune Hamann

*dinnerfor1*

12 January-17 February 2006

Viewers of *dinnerfor1* are confronted with four monitors, from which a woman (the actor Hayley Carmichael) asks questions. These are often universal, so that a viewer is directly engaged. Moving from one “inquisition” to the next, however, the relationship between narrator and viewer changes: each set of questions is taken from a different source, connoting different strata of society and areas of (public) life. These range from the sensationalist interview into Princess Diana’s private life, through the enquiry into the justification of the Second Gulf War with questions asked of Dr Kelly, the cross examination of Oscar Wilde at his trials to hilariously subversive snippets from Wilde’s *Importance of Being Ernest*.

This “society” aspect (updated with the inclusion of Princess Diana and enforced by the actor’s British accent), is strengthened by the work’s title: *Dinner For One* is a cult television sketch from 1963 in English language, re-broadcast on German TV every New Year’s Eve. It is, thus, as much a ritual as the film’s festive dinner for the single, elderly Lady, served by her ever more intoxicated servant who stands in for her deceased friends.

The work which has been seen since New Year 2004 at the British Council in Berlin and at the Goethe Institut in London, plays on cultural and national identities and stereotypes. The artist, a German who lives in London, explores traditional German perceptions of the “British Isles” that circle around humour, the War, and class. There is embedded in *Dinner For One* and its repeated broadcasts, a wish for the endurance of traditional values, as well as predictability. This, nevertheless clashes with historical realities and, as New Year’s celebrations enforce for many, may go hand in hand with loneliness and isolation. The work’s current context is that of the Return Gallery in the Goethe-Institut Dublin, the German cultural institute, based in a Georgian house, which was built by the Anglo-Irish ascendancy. It is situated almost exactly 90 degrees around Merrion Square in relation to Oscar Wilde’s parents’ house.

The work’s preoccupations in this context intriguingly encompass new connotations concerning German-Irish (and Irish-British) relations, as well as Oscar Wilde’s life and Irish identity.

Sigune Hamann (MA Royal College of Art London) is an artist whose work encompasses video and film-strip installations, animated films and interactive media projects. She works in the space between the still and the moving image and explores narrative structures through filmic images, languages and sound.

Curated by Dr Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes

[www.dinnerfor1.com](http://www.dinnerfor1.com)

The Return, Goethe Institut, 37 Merrion Square, Dublin 2  
Opening hours: Tue-Thu 10 am – 8 pm, Fri-Sat 10am – 1.30 pm