

# MK Gallery

## Teacher Resource Pack

This resource pack can be used as part of pre-visit preparation or to accompany your visit.

It includes a short introduction to the artist and his work, including key themes, related artists and movements, along with things to think about, do and discuss.

[www.mkgallery.org](http://www.mkgallery.org)

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LISSON GALLERY

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**John Jones**  
LONDON

## Exhibition

**Gerard Byrne**

Case Study: Loch Ness  
(Some possibilities and problems), 2001-2011

14 January – 3 April 2011



Supported by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



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## About the Artist

Gerard Byrne was born in 1969 in Dublin where he lives and works. A recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship (1994) and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award for Visual Arts (2006), Byrne represented Ireland in the 2007 Venice Biennale. Major presentations of his work have been included in the biennales of Gwangju and Sydney in 2008, Lyon in 2007, the Tate Triennial in 2006, and the Istanbul Biennale in 2003.

## About the Work

Gerard Byrne's work is primarily lens based, in film, video, and photography. The film / video projects involve reconstructing particular historically charged conversations originally published in popular magazines from the 1960s -1980s, including visions of the future by science fiction writers. Developing out of his interest in acting and theatre as cultural forms, Byrne has worked on a number of projects with actors and sets in gallery spaces which test the historical distinctions between sculpture and set design, acting and non-acting, and spectacle and spectator.

The exhibition at MK Gallery signals Gerard Byrne's first major solo show in the UK. It presents the culmination of his ten years of research around the Loch Ness Monster, the myth fuelled in the 1930s by the popular press in order to sell newspapers. Including photography, film, text, sound and archival material, this project blurs the lines between fiction and documentary, exploring how images inform our understanding of myth and reality. Byrne presents his own evidence of the monster's existence, posing the question: is it possible to capture an image of something that does not exist?



## Word Definition

**Medium** - *the material or form used by an artist, composer, or writer* (askoxford.com)  
(for example, painting, sculpture, photography)

## Things to think about

How do the works make you feel? How would you describe them?

What are the works? Are they all the same medium or are they different?

Are there any images, objects, materials, symbols or words that are important in the works? Is there a type of object or image that appears throughout all of the works? What do you think this might be?

In the Middle Gallery, what do you think the text found on the wall drawing refers to?

Do the works tell a story? Do they express a particular idea? If so, why do you think the artist is interested in that idea?

Can you make any links to history? Do the works trigger a memory?

Does the work make you want to research something? What? Why?

Do you think there is an underlying theme to the work?

Does the work interact with the gallery space? Do you have to experience the work from a particular place? Does the work make you feel different depending on where you stand?

In what ways do you think the works in each gallery relate to each other?

How long do you think you need to spend with the works to experience them properly? Do you think you can see more if you spend longer looking?

Thinking about the film in the Long Gallery, do you need to watch it from the beginning? Do you need to watch it all?

The film is accompanied by a voice-over. What do these words mean? Where have they come from? How do they relate to the images in the film?

How do you think the works have been made? What process did the artist go through to make them?

In what way do the tree stumps relate or contrast to the rest of the works in the exhibition?

Do the works trigger any of your senses? Do they make you think of a particular smell, touch or sound? What? Why?

## Things to discuss

### **Suggestions for Key Stages 1 – 3:**

Speaking about Gerard Byrne's Loch Ness project, which was previously exhibited at The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, ICA Director Gill Medvedow said,

"With wit and insight, Gerard Byrne's multimedia work invites us to consider how images inform our understanding of myth and reality."

What is a myth? What types of famous myth can you think of? How do myths begin? Why do myths last for so long? How are they spread?

### Word Definition

**Myth** - 1. a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events. 2. a widely held but false belief or idea. (askoxford.com)

### **Suggestions for Key Stages 4 - 5 and above:**

As mentioned in the introduction, Gerard Byrne presents an exhibition that questions whether it is possible to capture an image of something that does not exist.

With this in mind, consider how the works in the exhibition could be described as real/truthful and in what ways they could be seen as false/fictional? Why is the relationship between truth and fiction particularly relevant to film and photography? Do you think that photography is able to provide a truthful image of an object, landscape, event, figure...?

## Things to do

Visit The Legend of Nessie website to learn about the history of the monster. [www.nessie.co.uk](http://www.nessie.co.uk)

Loch-Ness inspired jigsaws, word searches and colouring pages. [www.visitlochness.com/kids/words.html](http://www.visitlochness.com/kids/words.html)

Read a Nessie inspired story  
[www.electricscotland.com/kids/stories/lochness\\_monster.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/kids/stories/lochness_monster.htm)

Play a fun 'fill in the gaps' exercise about the monster!  
[www.learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/language-games/fill-the-gaps/nessie](http://www.learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/language-games/fill-the-gaps/nessie)

Work in groups to write your own newspaper article about Nessie. Think about your visit to the gallery and what you have learnt when writing the story.

Use found objects and materials around your classroom and school to create unusual shapes that look like the Loch Ness Monster. Show your creations to other classes at school to see if they can guess what the shapes are meant to be.

## Keywords

Photography  
Film  
History  
Journalism  
Media  
Loch Ness  
Monster  
Mythology

Fiction  
Documentary  
Archive  
Language  
Literature  
Theatre  
Landscape  
Nature

## Related Artists & Movements

Carl Andre  
Robert Smithson  
Richard Long  
Hamish Fulton  
Robert Morris  
Frank Stella  
Dan Flavin  
Donald Judd  
Richard Artschwager  
Giuseppe Penone  
Marcel Broodthaers  
Minimalism  
Land Art

## Cross- Curricular Links

Art & Design  
History  
English  
Film & Media  
Drama

For more information about our schools, colleges & universities programme, please contact:

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