



IMITATION OF LIFE
Amie Siegel 19 Feb - 2 April

I lift the cumbersome curtain masking the entrance to Temple Bar Gallery's temporary movie theatre. Inside, the low bench and flat-weave flooring bask in the glare cast from a different room – the one on screen. The sumptuous upholstery of a swanky apartment. Brilliant white, blindingly unblemished. Minimal furnishings, monochrome colour palette, marble planes. As I enter I only know the title of the film: *Quarry*. And so these stylish, sterile rooms stand in contrast to the dust and debris and disarray I had expected.

Quarry runs on a continuous loop, as is necessary for the form, but loops mean that the artist must surrender control over the moment at which each viewer arrives at her film. In a matter of minutes, the glare of apartment whites is replaced by the gloom of a cave; a cave with marble walls sunk into a dark pool. Now an excavator is bouncing on its segmented tracks, wrestling a mammoth block of liberated rock; now the block is handed on to a monumental cheese grater to be shaved, hewn, and soon, reborn as a surface in a luxury condo.

The order of events in which things come to be is intrinsic to the meaning of *Quarry*. Whereas in *The Architects*, the second film in 'Imitation of Life', order has been abolished. Scenes slide by as if on a factory conveyor. The camera is a ghost, passing through walls and between skyscrapers. The settings are architect's offices throughout New York City. Trendy yellow shelves and gigantic computer screens, smartly dressed professionals. And in the headphones, a rhapsody of purring photocopiers and purposeful conversation, mouse-clicking, radio music.

The morning I visit 'Imitation of Life', I have just come in on a flight from JFK. The day before, I had been standing on a footpath in Midtown Manhattan gaping up at the opaque

windows of a building one-hundred-and-two floors tall trying to picture one-hundred-and-two interiors, to be the ghost which slides between them, and feeling, as I always do in colossal cities – overawed. By all of the objects and materials and persons, by the breadth of human effort essential to sustain a way of living which appears so effortless. By the invisible order of events by which every surface in every skyscraper is produced, and how, at the instant of completion, the order of decay takes over instead.

The moment at which I come upon *The Architects*, the screen is inundated by blue. The ghost camera has panned out an office window and crashed into sky. It marks neither the film's end nor beginning; New York spins on. And yet, in my memory, the blueness will blot away every overawing picture; a bright flare of significance. A blue salute to a time before we quarried down, and built up.



TBG+S Writing Commission 2015

The logo for Temple Bar Gallery + Studios is a black right-angled triangle pointing towards the bottom right. Inside the triangle, the words "TEMPLE BAR", "GALLERY +", and "STUDIOS" are stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif, all-caps font.

Temple Bar Gallery + Studios (TBG+S) aims to support artists to make new work and to introduce new audiences to contemporary art. As part of this aim, TBG+S is pleased to launch the first year of the TBG+S Writing Commission. The aim of the commission is to both support the work of an emerging writer and to explore different approaches to writing about art for a variety of audiences and media.

In the pilot year of the commission, TBG+S has commissioned author Sara Baume to write a response to each of the five programmed exhibitions in the 2015/16 gallery programme. This series of short essays will be available online, in the gallery and broadcast on RTE's 'Arena' radio programme. At the end of the year, TBG+S will publish a small booklet of the collected essays.

Sara Baume studied fine art and creative writing, and has published both criticism and fiction. In 2014 she won the Davy Byrne's Short Story Award, and in 2015 she won the Hennessy Award for New Irish Writing. Her debut novel, *Spill Simmer Falter Wither*, was published by Tramp Press in February 2015.

You can hear a recording of Sara Baume reading her essay for RTÉ Arena, Radio 1, on the TBG+S Soundcloud page soundcloud.com/templebar-gallery-studio