Grace Dyas

A Mary Magdalene Experience

The Magdalene Series

Rua Red

No — 4



Mary Magdalene; A prostitute, a mad bitch, a woman only important because Jesus forgave her. Up until now, men have painted the picture of Mary Magdalene. Tina Malone is on a mission to clear her name.

It's 2022, we're in an imaginary Tallaght. Neoliberalism is the prevailing faith based religion and money gives men the power to buy any experience they want. John Brophy TD, a community activist with a Jesus complex, orders Tina to deliver 'A Mary Magdalene Experience'.

He wants Tina to play her as a fallen woman that he can save, but she won't play that part. She's discovered the 'lost' Gospel of Mary Magdalene and she has a better idea. She has no sermon, she's trying not to play Jesus, but she will share her Experience.

Artworks about Mary Magdalene start popping up all over Tallaght. A piece of glowing Rose Quartz proclaims that it contains 'Mary Magdalene Essence' It feels to Tina like everything is synchronous, like it's all meant to be. Bernie Brophy, John's mother - keeps getting in her way. That one thinks she's the mother of God.





A Mary Magdalene Experience

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Wide Open, Sacred Union

How does it feel?
How does it feel?
To be open
To be open

Wide open, wide open, wide open, wide open

How does it feel?
How does it feel?
To be open
To be open

Wide open, wide open, wide open, wide open

We come together
We come together
Come together
Now

Now, now, now, now

Rose of my heart
Rose of my heart
Rose of my heart
Rose

How does it feel? How does it feel?

Susan Quirke



Response Piece
(There is)

Emmet Kirwan



There is the gospel of Mary and in it ...

There is the Saviour, telling his closet confidant Mary of Magdala '*All nature, all formations, all creatures exist in and with one another, and they will be resolved again into their own roots*.'

There is the Christ expressing atomisation and a unified field theory two thousand years before it was whispered in the west.

There is Andrew an apostle saying '*I at least do not believe that the Saviour said this. For certainly these teachings are strange ideas*'.

There is Andrew saying I don't believe her.

There is some apostles saying i don't believe *her*.
There it is, the lads in 34AD,

34 into the CE,

saying resolutely

'She's a mad yoke, don't believe her'* *(Precise translation from the Aramaic slang vernacular of the fishermen found around lake Galilee in this period)

There is Peter asking 'Did he really speak all this to a *woman* and not to us? Did He like ...really prefer her ... to us?!?!



There is Mary asking Peter ‘Do you think this is off the top of me head, like, do you … for real, think I’m making all this up?’

There is Levi telling Peter he’s ‘Getting mad aggro when talking to Mary, almost like she’s one of the ones that are trying to actually kill us. Relax man’.

There is Mary asking ‘Is this because i’m a woman?’
‘Woah Mary! No-one is saying that. Not everything is about misogyny, jaysus’.

There is Mary saying. ‘This is my gospel. I’m saying all this!’.

There is the gallery patron pointing out that this is all being translated in to some local dialect over heard directly outside the walls of this space, two thousand years after the fact by some … bloke.

There is, two Marys at the foot of a cross in Golgotha near Jerusalem standing by their man, even at his lowest moment, side split open (not from laughter) this happens while …

There is a bunch of lads … let’s call them … apos …eh … acolytes … pals? All doing a runner.

There is a man crying in a garden.

There is a man denying he knows his mate, ‘Who him, with his sides split? nah never heard of him’.

There is a Mary close to the man on the cross who does not deny him, she doubles down and says not only does she know him but before his death, they were one soul, she goes on to proclaim an idea ... which was also his idea ... of radical personal forgiveness, equality, duality, stoic wisdom, inner spirituality and how central authorities of any future church could have women as leaders. And even though he is dead she will honour him by correcting the record.

There is a custom to never speak ill of the dead ... unless they pose a threat.

There is a woman in 34AD sending a pope into a tailspin in 512 wwCE that she, may have been the Christ's main solid and the lads he buzzed with didn't '*get it*' the way she did, so he decides to carry out a posthumous hit job on her character and *do her dirty* by saying; she was a Jezebel.

There's a young woman in 2023 shrugging and saying 'sex work is work, she seemed to care more about people than them lads did, so she sounds sound, to me at least'. She said that, exactly like that.

There is time and it has no past present or future tense, it just is.

There is an installation.

There is art pushing in and against the boundaries of public space. beside it ...



There is a billboard advertisement no-one asked for on the side of a gaff where murals and public paintings have been banned by the local authority's executive … an executive that no-one voted for.

There is a politician in a hotel room.

There is a scandal.

There is a press conference.

There is a politician trying to prevaricate.

There is a former journalist now political advisor teaching the politician how to body pop, lock and do the robot to obfuscate and dodge the question.

There is an advisor calling a new thing the: something-something-social-something, so people will think it's for the greater good.

There is a journalist in a traffic jam having an argument with an imaginary troll arming themselves with so many witty pithy rejoinders that'll leave their heads spinning whoever *they* are (the *they* being an anonymous troll).

There is another journalist using an anonymous sock puppet account to troll other journalists.

There is a woman who has returned and she waits in a hotel stealing herself for the journey and the many tasks and trials ahead.

There is the remnant of a star pulsating over a press conference.

There is a new sign in the heavens pulsating, emanating, radiating a great flash of light, it is probably the result of a supernova in a far quadrant of the milky way galaxy that can be clearly seen here in this moment. It has reached its Zenith above the Plaza hotel in Tallaght.

There is a man in a bare bones hotel room pleading forgiveness from a woman at it's Nadir.

There is a bunch of locals standing on their doorsteps, places of work and the smoking sections of boozers looking up and seeing this as a clear sign that; 'everything is gonna be grand!'

There is some who take it as a dangerous portent from on-high that the cosmic order or maybe the god of the Zoroastrians wants them to bring back the Monday night two euro drink special in the Plaza hotel's seminal basement nightclub ... 'The Playhouse'.

There is a knowledge that if we are seeing this star explode now, in this moment, it must have happened eons ago, a taxi driver opines 'It is a fire in history'.



There is a group of people who have seen the explosive burning anachronism floating in that far off pool of the ether and think ... this is surely an ancient sign ... but it is being misinterpreted.

There is a conversation over Whatsapp saying; 'Lets plan a pilgrimage!'

There is a 'whatsapp' of people walking all the way from Blanch hoping to find answers.

There is an intrepid group making the trek along a motor way, hoping to find a person at their journeys end - maybe a demigod - or an extra ordinary woman who held all the answers, simple as they may be, answers that were not heard originally. People in the past didn't listen to her then and instead decided to *do her dirty*, 'Not this time!' they shout, 'This time she will get a fair shake! A fair shake we tells ya!'

There is a long time coming reckoning.

There is a reset.

There is a bloodletting.

There is a centrist Dad lamenting due process being circumvented.

There is a worker on break saying I believe in her and I believe them.

There is a work colleague on the same lunch break wondering if they mean, all of them?

There is a cancellation.

‘There is a cancelation of what exactly?’ … Wonders a dinner guest as the conversation gets frothy!

There is a table of people who are concerned about the reckoning and the signs in the skies of the end times and what they might mean exactly.

There is an appeal to the table, the actual table and those sitting at it, to answer the bloody question! A cancellation of what? … a Netflix account? A newspaper subscription? A seat on a long haul flight?!?! Isn’t a person being cancelled the same as a person being struck from existence, score-xed off the board, like a sim character being deleted?!?

There is a frothy dinner guest frothing!

There is multiple infinity abuses of power.

There is little change or blood letting in the grander scheme of things compared to the amount of abuse.

There is a mass grave.

There is many things buried there and things done in her name.

Their is a PR person lamenting due process and saying there is nothing to see here.

There is the woman in the hotel room, an apostle, whether they like it not! lamenting; 'They did what in my name?' 'Not in my name! My literal name ... cheers for that and these PR hounds, who again, *did me dirty!*'

There is a few discounted gospels written in a very last word 'how to style' guide, for a better way of living.

There is a willingness to accept a problem existed but this is not the way to deal with it!

There is a journalist lamenting due process.

There is a politician sympathising with the victim and writing a letter of support for the perpetrator.

There is some from the local town who say; He's a family man from a good family who has never come to the attention of the guards before and has worked since he was sixteen so he could ... wait there was a point to all that ... em anyway... suspended sentence go on, get out of here ya little rascal.

There's a load of witches in the snug of a pub chatting low saying 'Lets not go back to the well they keep dunking us in, lets go around straight to the source for satisfaction, or better yet, lets not bother with the same old source of water at all, lets dig our own well!'



There is a woman who was at the foot of a cross and she is still here in the lobby of hotel in a working class Dublin neighbourhood.

There is a Mary installation.

There is a Mary experience.

There is the human one.

There is an establishment bent out of shape by young artists who didn't know they had to ask for permission, they were under the false idea that art is for everyone.

There is a bunch of young artists not asking for permission.

There is a person in a gallery questioning why someone would want to exalt working class life and people, art is about beauty and there is none here, none!

There is a well meaning woman with pearls in a studio audience discussing the art and the signs in the sky, lecturing the artists on stage that politics has no place in their work!

There is an artist explaining how Dali, Maya Angelou, Vaclav Havel, Sean O'Casey, Nina Simone, Sean Keating, Mary Kelly, The Guerrilla Girls all have been intensely political to name a few, even the Futurist's from Italy who used their art exalt the machinery of death.

There is an audience member clutching their necklace saying ‘That was different’.

There is an artist stating all artists are contrarians.

There is an artist saying this is a protest.

There’s a well meaning poet saying ‘you should protest differently!’

There is a right type of protest.

There is an inability to point out what the right type of protest is.

There is reality and there is the unreal.

There is the physicist telling us who is to say which is which.

There’s the grandson of a Guiness cooper in Tallaght who has inherited a council house built by the state, he has become a land lord and is now renting it back to the council for 2k a month, he is also objecting to the new council gaffs being built in the fields across the road from his house.

There is a pulsating rose quartz stone in a field muddied by the back burners and donuts of to many - far to many - robbed cars.

There is a field and a plain of existence that opens up in a way you've never seen.

There, there is a housing estate conflict, this conflict offers a way for some to know they are alive and without 'the there' without the noise, they are numb, their feelings at an earlier point have been cauterised like so much sizzling flesh on a hot skillet, a rasher-poultice acts as a salve that covers multiple wounds, 'now!' comes the shout - like a Irish Mammy's finished the clean - that'll keep the feelings and the infection out and fill ya up for a lock of pints till at least ... lunch.

There is a voice, our voice and it complicates the narrative.

There is a group of people attacking the work the message as it makes them feel ... that's it. It makes them feel.

There is Mary Magdalene. She is here again. People have made the pilgrimage. She will attract a few new apostles. She will go forth and spread the old word. She will have her day - not revenge - over those who retconned her history, she will have her day, but in a very 'original Christian' way.

The Magdalene Series is a programme of exhibitions, interventions, performances and events curated by Maolíosa Boyle and features five of Ireland's leading artists: Amanda Coogan, Alice Maher, Rachel Fallon, Jesse Jones and Grace Dyas. Rua Red commissioned the five artists to research and produce new work in response to Mary Magdalene.

The Magdalene series will explore Mary Magdalene's associations with the incarceration and institutionalisation of women and other themes such as forced labour, morality, shame, reparation and penitence. The series will propose a new world, uncurbed by religious, political or societal doctrine, a world led by the experience of Magdalene and viewed through the lens of contemporary feminism and feminist theology.

Mary Magdalene has been a subject of fascination and curiosity throughout history. She is a binary creation: conflicted and mysterious, noble and humble, strong yet morally weak, beautiful and haggard, passionate yet penitent, erotic and unreserved, reclusive and solitary.

The Magdalene is the earthly, carnal and sensual counterpart to the celestial Virgin. She embodies humanity and humility – she sweats, cries and bleeds.

The Magdalene Series is the culmination of a three-year collaboration between the artists and curator. The process has also included input from leading international theologians, academics and researchers.

Maolíosa Boyle
Curator of The Magdalene Series
Director of Rua Red



A Mary Magdalene Experience

Rua Red would like to thank the artist Grace Dyas for her ambitious and inspiring response to the Mary Magdalene Series commission. The film and installation display a unique contemporary retelling of the story of Mary Magdalene. We would also like to thank the many collaborators involved in the making of the film who generously gave their energy, enthusiasm, and support throughout, especially the amazing Clare O Connor for her dedication and commitment. Rua Red would also like to thank Emmet Kirwan for his brilliant accompanying text and Rossi McAuley and Distinctive Repetition Studio for their work on the design of this wonderful publication.

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Publication text: Emmet Kirwan
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Curator: Maolíosa Boyle
Production Manager: Joyce Dunne
Senior Technician: Hugh McCarthy
Assistant Technician: Paul Heary

Mary Magdalene Series Artists

Amanda Coogan, Alice Maher, Rachel Fallon, Jesse Jones and Grace Dyas

Rua Red staff

Jordan Van Staden, Órla McGovern, Siobhán NicChumhaill, Ciara Moloney, Kimberly Griffith-Walsh, Natalia Campos and Anna Douglas

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Film Production Team

Writer and Director: Grace Dyas
Producer: Clare O Connor

Starring

Jordanne Jones, James O Driscoll, Louise Lewis,
Pom Boyd, Sean Dyas and Ciara Byrne

Movement Director and Intimacy Coach: Ella Clarke
Director of Photography: Jaro Waldeck
Focus Puller: Jakob Bajerski
Clapper Loader: Ronan O Reilly
Gaffer: Noel McElligot
Best Boy: Fionn Shanahan
Lighting Technician: Katie Smeraldo

1st AD: Jack O'Higgins
2nd AD: Shannen Hogan
3rd AD: Ciarán Gallagher
Dramaturg: Jason Byrne

Production Manager: Rowan McDonagh
Costume and Prop Supervisor: Lauren Geary
Production Assistant: Oran McDonagh
Rigger: Vonny Led
Production Assistant: Laura Prendergast

Sound Recordist: Anthony Egan
Boom Operator: Mark Monks

Hair Stylist: Lauren Roche
Makeup Artist: Celine Byrne

Costume Maker: Stephen Lehane
Costume Advisor: Rachel Fallon

Editor: Allyn Quigley
Assembly Editor: Tom Pierce
Sound Editor: Glenn Kaurmann
Colour Grader: Michael Higgins
Production Designer: Grace Dyas
Costume Design: Grace Dyas
Fabricator: Shadow Creations Ltd

Supporting Cast

James Ritchie, Leanne Boyle, Tony May Junior, Lauren Kelly, Emma Caufield, Keira Gill, Celine Byrne, Lauren Roche, Ala Busir, Shannen Hogan, Ciarán Gallagher, Sarah Kinlen, Barry John Kinsella, Tony Groves, Aoife Grace Moore

Song “Wide Open”

Written by Susan Quirke
Performed by Susan Quirke and Enda Gallery
Music arranged by Enda Gallery
Produced by Enda Gallery and Susan Quirke

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