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**Tina O'Connell, *In Dublin*, 1999**

I vividly recall experiencing Tina O'Connell's *In Dublin*, encountering it as both object and event amongst an excited crowd of onlookers packed into a pub in the Liberties. I remember the intense concentration of energy in the building and a heightened sense of shared time, uncommon in my experience of sculpture. Part of my own excitement stemmed from the opportunity to go upstairs, moving from the 'public house' into a more domestic realm. I made many trips up and down those stairs, trying to see the whole of the sculpture – an impossibility. From above, a briefly perfect sphere of bitumen sat waiting, apparently inert. But something was always happening below, as the viscosity and weight of this thing was pulling it relentless down through the hole and onto the floor. I remember this process as slow, slow, slow and then suddenly fast, so fast I think I actually missed the moment when the black stuff touched the ground.

*In Dublin* was an Off Site commission by Project Arts Centre, one of many ambitious temporary works programmed by Fiach MacConghail and curated by Valerie Connor during the construction of Project's new gallery building on East Essex Street. An Irish artist based in London, Tina O'Connell made the sculpture while on residency at IMMA, with support from multiple organisations including Irish Tar. The object itself, later remade for the exhibition 0044 at PS1 in New York, consisted of a bitumen sphere, assembled from two casts, over a metre in diameter and weighing a tonne. It was installed in The Barley Mow, a disused pub on Francis Street, an area then (and now) subject to the forces of gentrification. The interior was then entirely intact, complete with a wooden bar and dark leatherette seating. Twenty years on, the signage is still visible but the building is little more than a shell, its windows either missing or boarded up. Standing in front of The Barley Mow, I try to imagine the exact centre of the dark sphere that once descended from ceiling to floor, using this structure as the support for a massive, and irreversible, hourglass.