

COMMUNE

Spotlight on reader; Voice heard reading aloud. (To form part of Act 3)

(Lights up. SUBJECT sits, hunched over a book, an orange pencil in hand.)

SUBJECT (muttering to self, almost amused):

I could have sworn I just saw Punch - yes, Punch, who? - running through the library. (He glances around, listens.)
And that laugh. That horrible little laugh.

[He shakes his head, returns to the book in front of him.]

SUBJECT (calm, resigned):

Day Four. Day for? Is it this?

[He flips open a notebook, begins to read and jot down notes - these notes.]

Today, there is a plan - as there was yesterday.

Having no ideas, I've taken to implementing strategies:

1. Look at all the folders branded 'IRISH REPUBLIC'.
2. Measure the gaps in the shelves.
3. Research where the archival boxes were made. Specifically, find out why the boxes are made of the material I doubt I'll find an answer to all this in the library itself.
4. (pause).

[He pauses, stares at the half-written point four, then sighs and crosses it out.]

The research is determining a report - not a performance - a report.

[He shuffles papers, produces one marked "Materials found."]

Point of interest:

The logo - or shield - of the National Gallery of Ireland in 1968.

An idea to return to: Six Acts. Six Cells.

Opening - adapted from *The Irish Face* by Noel Kissane, Education Officer at The National Library of Ireland (1986)

[He opens the book and begins to read aloud, almost like a lecture to an unseen class.]

"Sitting at Table 5C in Library -"

(he begins to read aloud, almost like a lecture to an unseen class.)

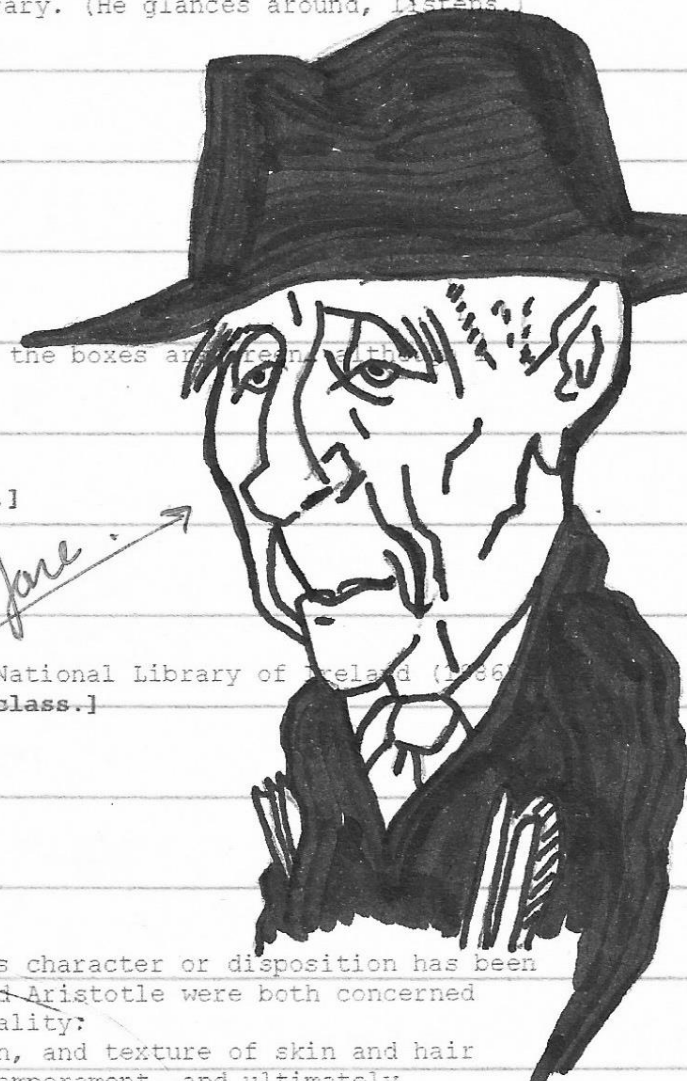
"beginning with Noel Kissane's *The Irish Face*."

FRANK WASSER A SWIFT HALF MIART 2026

[He rubs his eyes, continues reading slowly, thoughtfully.] - Reads aloud:

"Throughout the ages, the extent to which the structure of the human face reveals character or disposition has been a matter of debate. In ancient Greece, Hippocrates - the Father of Medicine - and Aristotle were both concerned with physiognomy, that is, the relationship between facial appearance and personality:

They held that the soul and body sympathise, and that facial features, complexion, and texture of skin and hair reveal those innate principles - physical and mental - which determine health, temperament, and ultimately behaviour. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Western Europe, the study of physiognomy developed into



this voice + face

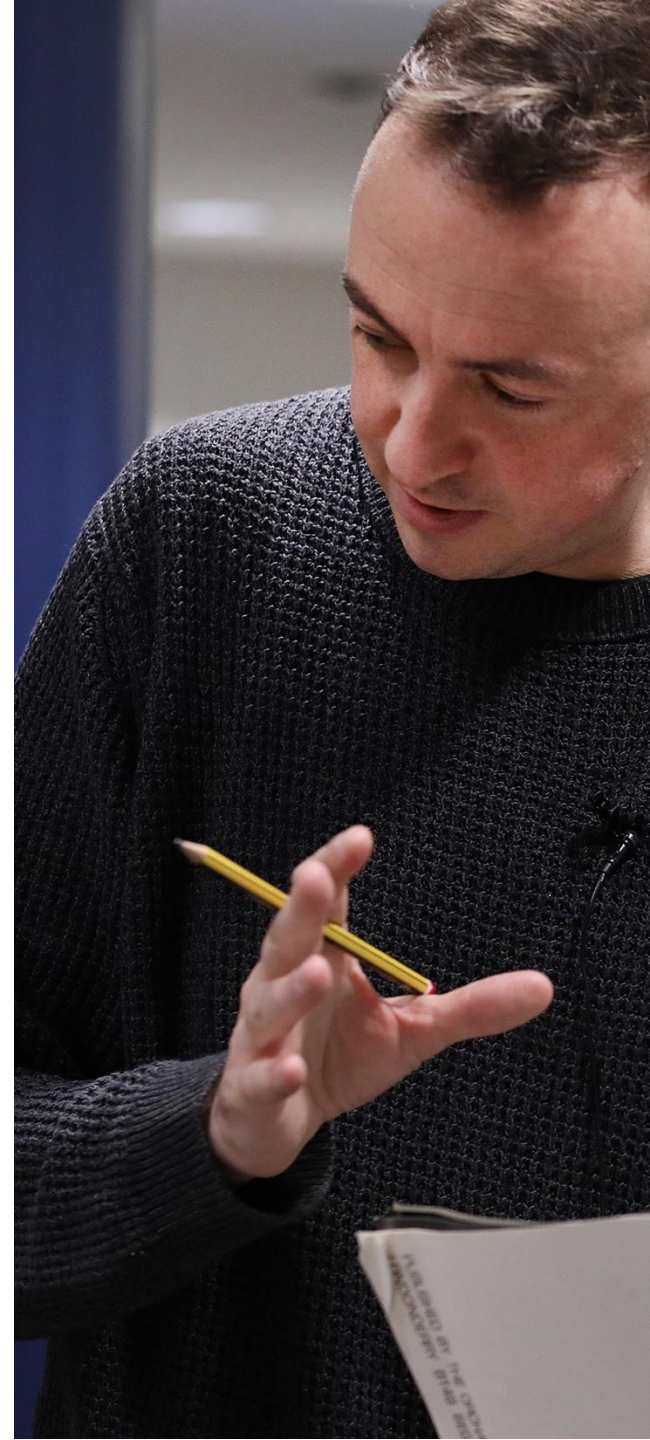
Assuming the persona of an Irish barmen, Frank Wasser's durational performance 'A Swift Half' unfolds behind a wooden bar erected within the space at MIART, Milan, accompanied by a display of related found objects, archival artefacts and ephemera central to Wasser's research.

The title 'A Swift Half'—is a play on words that evokes both a quick drink and a reference to the metafictional writer Jonathan Swift, who lived close to where Wasser grew up in the working-class Dublin neighbourhood known as The Liberties (also home to the Guinness factory). In this role, Wasser delivers fragmented narratives that move fluidly between fiction and lived experience. This new performance draws from an evolving script, a hybrid digital and analogue text incorporating multiple registers of storytelling, archival material, and theoretical reflection while engaging with literary figures such as Flann O'Brien, Samuel Beckett, John B. Keane—himself a barmen—and Jonathan Swift. Through this layered dramaturgy, Wasser evokes interwoven narratives of identity, institutional authority, cultural memory, and resistance.

Frank Wasser (b.1988, Dublin, Ireland) is an artist and writer whose interdisciplinary practice encompasses performance, installation, text, and critical theory. Engaging deeply with issues of institutional power, infrastructures, authorship, and the politics of art production, Wasser interrogates the structures that shape contemporary art discourse, with a particular focus on the mechanisms of value, knowledge, and identity within cultural institutions. His work unfolds through a wide array of materials and forms—performative lectures, sculptural interventions, publications, images, installations, and gestures that range from the discreet to the overt. Central to his practice is an investigative preoccupation with class, colonialism, and the bureaucratic and pedagogical structures embedded within the art world and academia. Often evading conventional forms of exhibition making, documentation and mediation, his works demand active engagement and reflection.

Wasser has exhibited, collaborated with, and worked within numerous major institutions across Europe, including Tate Modern, the Royal College of Art, Goldsmiths, University of the Arts London, South London Gallery, Salzburger Kunstverein, Jerwood Arts, Villa Empain, and The Irish Museum of Modern Art. These institutions often serve not only as venues but as subjects of his ongoing critique, as he explores the complexities of institutional frameworks and the politics of display.

In 2024, Wasser completed a practice-based doctorate in Fine Art at Oxford University (Ruskin School of Art), supervised by the artist Katrina Palmer and Lee Trimming. He is a lecturer in Fine Art and Critical Studies at Goldsmiths.







FRANK WASSER

Untitled (Keg), 2026

Aluminium, a pint of Guinness from
a Dublin pub (evaporated),

JBL Bluetooth Speaker

61 x 40 cm



FRANK WASSER

Untitled (Guinness Sign), 2026

Mixed Media, LED Light

41 x 47 x 10 cm

COMMUNE



FRANK WASSER

Untitled (Powers Mirror), 2026

Vinyl, acrylic and oil on mirror

54 x 128 cm

COMMUNE



July 14th - 2025 V.1

V.1

After the third drink, politics, more evidently, in the speeches of O'Brien, with a bloody tissue
 and his nose, only addressing a small group of people (whispering if possible).
 Action: standing in front of the crowd of people, not in the center, but to the side, with a
 By heart: and in this is the context you hit of the hat and tell me a story already thick with
 clearly, overtaken, admitted, not yet admitting its own shape. I call it satire-granularity,
 perhaps while you, given time and the proper distance, might arrive at the same conclusion with
 greater accuracy. What matters, for now, is that it was written, that it was said, that it persists
 in the peculiar space between anecdote and record. The expectation, of what, is not merely to meet
 what is given, but to exceed it, to stretch the telling until it begins to reveal the structure
 beneath. And so, adopting a certain address, I offer that the story of the Irish woman who
 almost killed Mussolini. Milan is it, sure you have to tell them about Violet Gibson, the Anti-
 Fascist. The oddity of this accusation becomes visible when one examines the numbers. Statistical
 studies of alcohol consumption in the nineteenth century indicate that Irish intake often exceeded
 or fell below that of Britain's industrial districts. Malcolm notes that "levels of alcohol
 consumption in Ireland were not exceptional by European standards" ~~but the~~
 remarkable situation arises: the Irishman accused of drunkenness by a nation drinking at similar
 speed.



Violet Gibson (1878-1936) was born into an Anglo-Irish aristocratic family in Dublin, the daughter
 of Lord Ashbourne, who had served as Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Her early life followed a
 conventional path of privilege and social expectation, though it later gave way to a pattern of
 religious intensity and personal instability that complicated straightforward biographical
 interpretation. In the years leading up to 1926, Gibson underwent a series of spiritual
 developments, including conversion to Roman Catholicism, and spent extended periods living in
 continental Europe. Her notebooks and writings from this period suggest a highly individualized form
 of religious engagement, shaped at least by personal conviction as well as institutional doctrine. On 1
 April 1926, in Rome, she approached Benito Mussolini following a public address and fired a handgun
 at three meters, the grazing his nose rather than causing fatal injury. The event, while brief,
 introduced a moment of disruption into the carefully managed public image of Fascist authority.
 Gibson was immediately detained and subjected to interrogation by Italian authorities, during which
 her statements were inconsistent and often framed in self-serving terms. These responses contributed to
 her being officially classified as mentally unstable rather than as a politically motivated actor, a
 designation that shaped the subsequent handling of her case. Rather than facing trial or execution,
 she was admitted to psychiatric wards who was committed to St Andrew's Hospital, in Bathurst, New
 South Wales, which lasted for the remainder of her life, effectively removing her from public and
 political discourse. She died in 1936, and her actions have since been interpreted through multiple
 lenses, including those of political violence, gender, religion, and mental health. As a historical
 figure, she occupies an enigmatic position, situated at the intersection of individual agency and
 the broader structures of power operative in interwar Europe.

*and more than
 possibly this... is an
 image needed?*

FRANK WASSER
 Research Script V1-1, 2026
 Mixed media, photograph, collage,
 ink pen and aluminium frame
 30.5 x 24.5 (framed)

August 23rd - Dublin 21st 26-08-26 . V.1

A country road, a tree, Distracted: LIAK the Mussolini vignette with the Berlusconi story, bloodied eyes. How will these connect aesthetically?

Quiet. Wrapped up and cold on the bus.

Action: This, not by heart but in fragments snippets by the screen as he looks his ear in the wall of his...

Literature provides examples. The pub in the fiction of James Joyce contain drinkers who talk incessantly about politics, theology, gossip, and the price of fish. The alcohol is present; the conversation is the real substance.



repeat, relevant times.
+ keep asking
where are we?

28 yrs. In December 2009, Silvio Berlusconi, then serving as Italy's head of government, was the target of a violent and violent attack in Milan. While addressing a crowd in the shadow of the Milan Cathedral, a man in the audience hurled a small, dense souvenir—a miniature replica of the cathedral—directly at his face. The impact caused serious injuries, including a broken nose, damaged teeth, and lacerations, leaving Berlusconi bloodied and stunned. The assailant, Massimo Testaglia, was a 42-year-old Milanese man with a documented history of mental health difficulties. He was immediately apprehended—later expressing remorse for his actions, and was placed under psychiatric care rather than conventional criminal detention. A tourist trinket, transformed into a weapon capable of disrupting the carefully staged persona of a national leader. Distracted. I'll have another one. Both the violent attack assassination attempt and this incident share a striking combination of intimacy, absurdity, and unpredictability: small, personal gestures against men of immense public authority, moments that sink the surface of power without altering its course in any decisive political sense. What unites these episodes is the disproportion between act and effort, and the surreal invasion of monumental authority. Berlusconi, the architect of a fascist regime, is left with a grazed nose; Berlusconi, the architect of a new age of fascism, is undone by a souvenir trinket. What to do with this? Oddly theatrical, collapsing the distance between symbol and reality. They remind us that the facade of power, no matter how carefully constructed, remain vulnerable to sudden, irrational, and deeply human disruptions.



moving around the booth
booth/boot/booth/boot

show model to 'viewer'

forced connection?

FRANK WASSER

Research Script V1-2, 2026

Mixed media, photograph, collage,

ink pen and aluminium frame

30.5 x 24.5 (framed)

June 23rd 2025 - Dublin Airport/Water 188 14-01-27

I'm trying to explain the tone of (your)lyrics (the) music, the accent of Irish in vernacular: How I know you've heard of 'Gulliver's travels' but have you read 'A Modest Proposal'?

Another A Modest Proposal: A Modest Proposal - For poor people in Ireland, from being a burden on their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the public. by Dr. Jonathan Swift (1729)

It is necessary to begin with the sober fact that the figure of the drunken Irishman emerged largely from colonial discourse. Sixteenth-century British writers frequently described the Irish as essentially inebriated, a trait unconsciously used to explain away political unrest. As the historian Elizabeth Halcrow wrote, "the stereotype of Irish drunkenness became a powerful cultural assumption in Britain during the sixteenth century" (Halcrow 1988, p. 2).

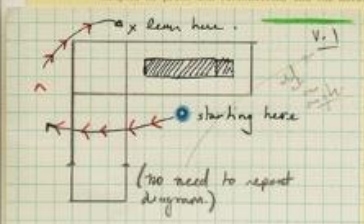
To be learned, by least, it is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town, or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin-doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importing heavy miseries for an aim: these mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in striving to beg subsistence for their children; infants who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country, to fight the cruel wars of Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes, I think it is agreed by all parties, that this prodigious number of children in the streets, or in the houses, or in the hands of their mothers, and frequency of their fallings, is in the present deplorable state of the Kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these wretched women and childish number of the Commonwealth would deserve the well of the public, as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation: but my intention is only that the poor being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars: it is of a more private nature, and shall have its whole number of children at a certain age, who are able to perform in effect as their duty to support them, as those who demand our charity in the streets.

Written at the 18th April, 1729, at the bar of the House of Commons.

I am therefore humbly desirous it be further considered, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males which is more than will be able to support each nation, in peace, and my reason is that these children will be able to support a third part of the nation, but must be supported by our selves; therefore, we will be sufficient to serve four times, that the remaining hundred thousand may do a good work, be reserved to use in the persons of soldiers and seamen, though the English always advising the mother to let them starve naturally in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fit for a good table. A child will make two horses at an extraordinary fair price, and when the twenty three stone, the size of most horses will make a reasonable man, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good mutton on the fourth day, especially in winter.

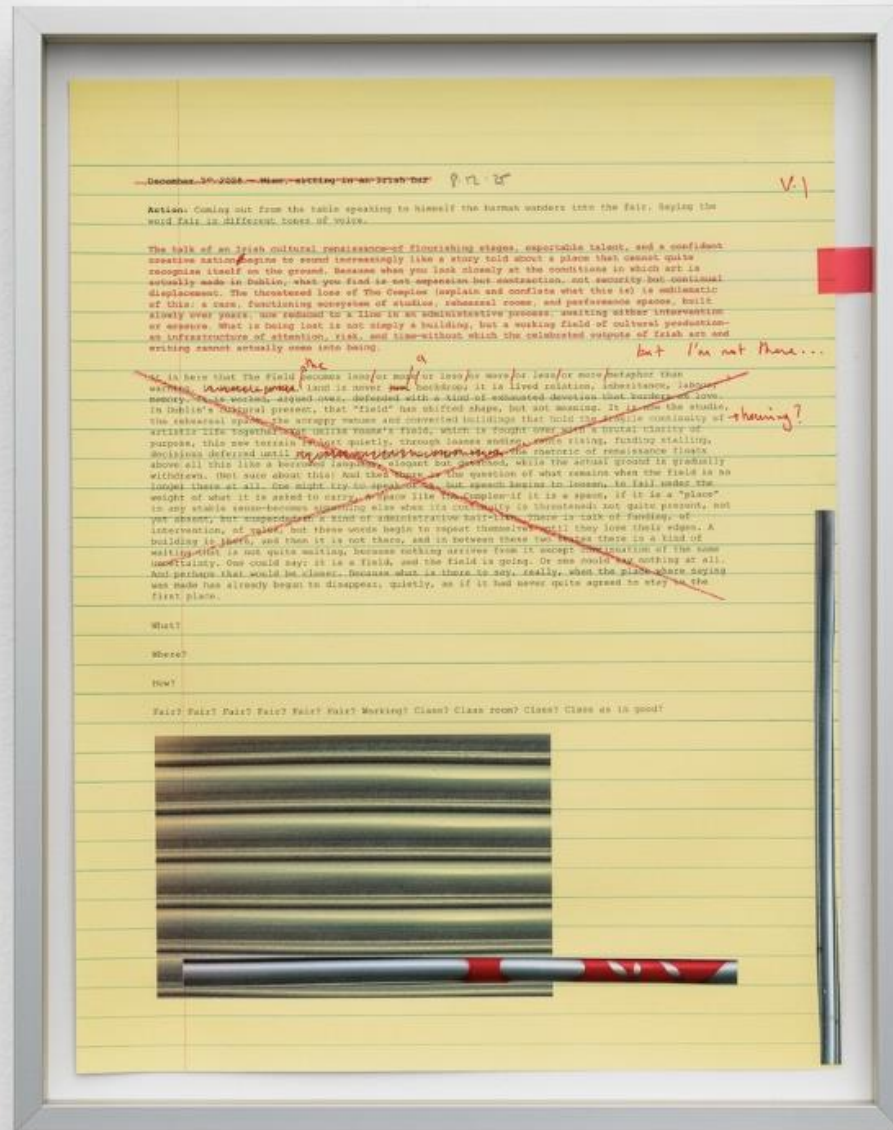
And for the Irish Jonathan Swift's A Modest Proposal and Gulliver's Travels are foundational works of satirical prose that critique the political, social, and moral failings of 18th-century Britain and Ireland. Written in a context of severe poverty and colonial exploitation, especially in Ireland under British rule, both texts expose the indifference and greediness of those in power. A Modest Proposal adopts a shocking, ironic voice to suggest that impoverished Irish children be sold as food, thereby condemning the dehumanizing logic of economic rationalism and English policy. Swift's extreme satire forces readers to confront the brutality hidden within seemingly "reasonable" solutions to poverty. Gulliver's Travels uses fantastical voyages to travel like Lilliput and Brobdingnag to critique human nature more broadly, isolating politics, science, and imperialism. Through Gulliver's shifting perspectives, Swift reveals the absurdity of political conflict, the dangers of pride and rationalism, and the moral failings of humanity itself.

Handwritten notes:
 - In what sense?
 - suggest + move around the space - broken to the...
 - V.1
 - V.1



FRANK WASSER
 Research Script V1-3, 2026
 Mixed media, photograph, collage,
 ink pen and aluminium frame
 30.5 x 24.5 (framed)





FRANK WASSER

Research Script V1-5, 2026

Mixed media, photograph, collage,

ink pen and aluminium frame

30.5 x 24.5 (framed)

November 14 - 2025 - caption: study 4.11.25

V.1

I'm showing at a conference at it's not being taken seriously because it's making too many jokes.

Action: The bar was opened closed, and gets under the bar to rest.

falls while speaking slowly. T.S. P.G.

He speaks from under the bar

The Power history Power of Power Powers Power Distillery Power begins Power in Power nineteenth Power century Power Dublin Power where Power John's Power Lane Power became Power a Power design Power of Power Irish Power whisky Power production Power and Power industrial Power labour Power, shaping Power the Power Liberties Power as Power a Power writing Power language Power of Power Britain Power smoke Power and Power trade Power.

Over Power time Power the Power Millinery Power expanded Power its Power buildings Power goods Power and Power systems Power of Power making Power and Power storing Power whisky Power until Power production Power declined Power and Power the Power site Power shifted Power toward Power new Power uses Power and Power cultural Power reimagining Power within Power the Power city Power.

Today Power the Power Power Power distillery Power houses Power the Power National Power College Power of Power Art Power and Power Design Power where Power studios Power workshops Power and Power continue Power occupy Power spaces Power once Power filled Power with Power casks Power machinery Power and Power rest Power and Power that Power is Power where Power we Power learned Power to Power paint.

Chicago Power is Power often Power described Power as Power Irish Power but Power in Power practice Power is Power is Power simply Power a Power global Power shaped Power by Power global Power system Power of Power production Power handling Power and Power distribution Power that Power extend Power far Power beyond Power Dublin Power and Power the Power Liberties Power.

The Power company Power grew Power from Power local Power brewery Power to Power international Power corporation Power signing Power itself Power with Power wider Power markets Power tastes Power and Power expectations Power where Power identity Power becomes Power a Power strategy Power only Power than Power a Power fixed Power origin Power.

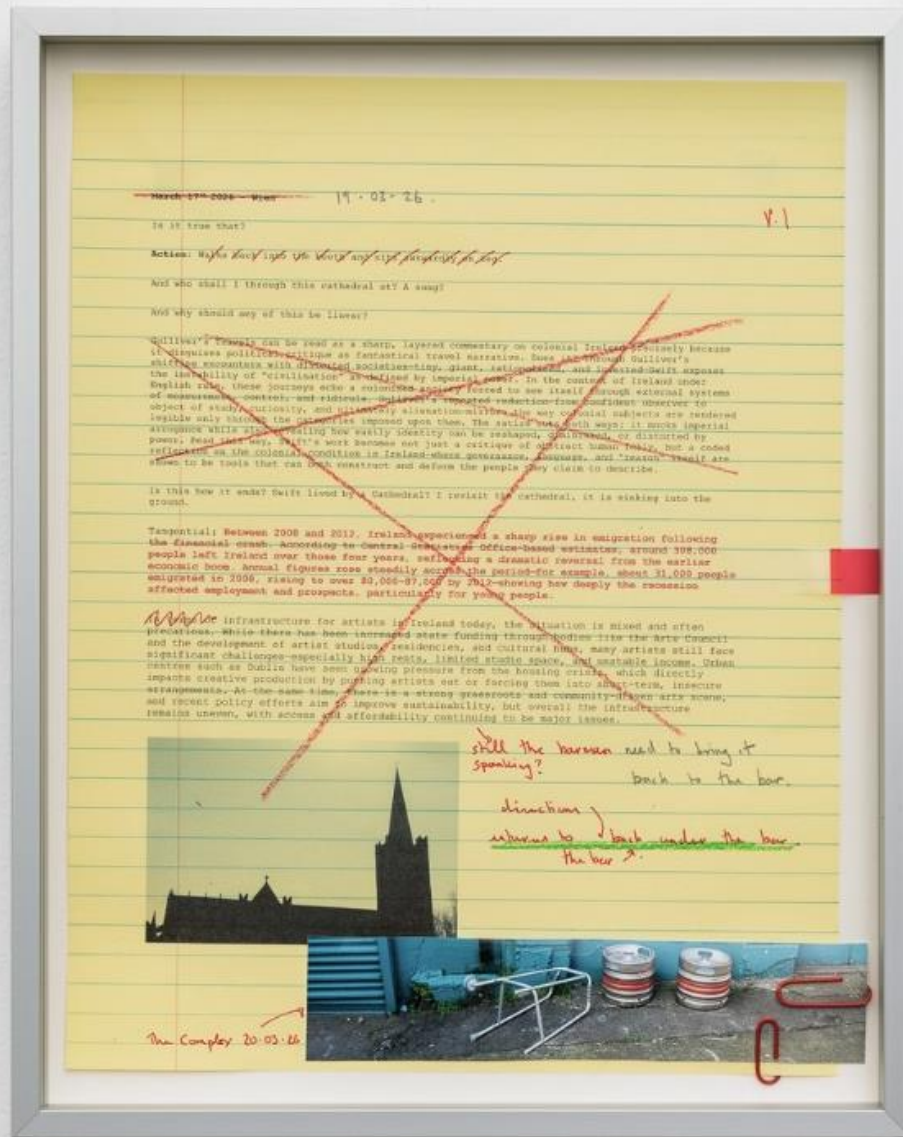
In Power this Power sense Power Chicago Power appears Power as Power something Power normal within Power global Power capitalism Power it's Power Irishness Power maintained Power through large Power story Power and Power repetition Power rather Power than Power any Power singular or Power essential Power quality Power of Power place Power and Power that Power is Power the Power we Power learned Power to Power paint.

bring up whole town make eleven?

* redevelopment of what.



FRANK WASSER
Research Script V1-6, 2026
Mixed media, photograph, collage,
ink pen and aluminium frame
30.5 x 24.5 (framed)



FRANK WASSER

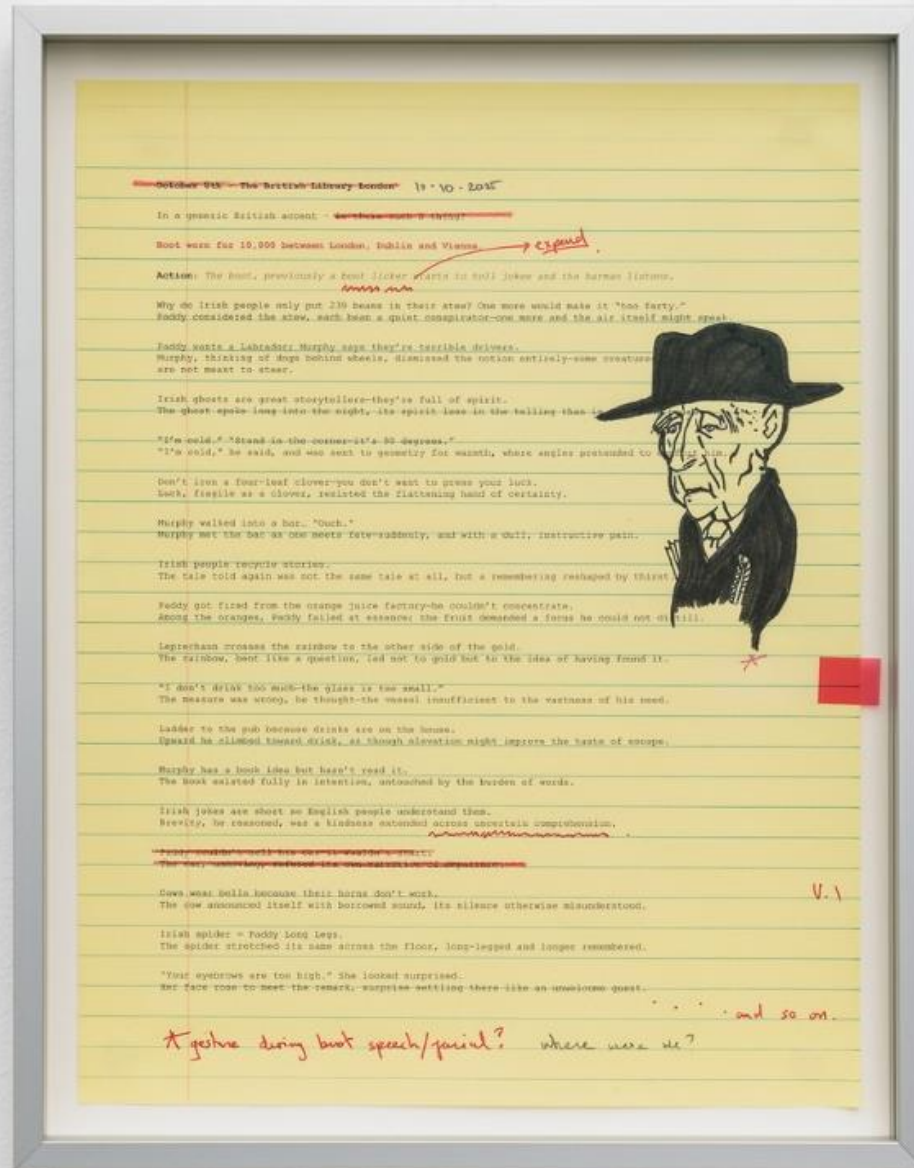
Research Script V1-7, 2026

Mixed media, photograph, collage,
ink pen and aluminium frame
30.5 x 24.5 (framed)

FRANK WASSER

Research Script V1-8, 2026

Mixed media, photograph, collage,
ink pen and aluminium frame
30.5 x 24.5 (framed)



MIART MILAN

Booth E05, Emergent Section

COMMUNE**DATES:**

16.04.26- 19.04.26

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All prices are in EUR and excluding VAT

