



## THOMAS BREZING

### *Carpet Man*

Multiple locations, Ireland

An unexpected guest came to Thomas Brezing's gallery opening in Drogheda, Ireland, in fall 2011. Rolled up in an old carpet, with "almost fit to be hugged" stitched down the front and only arms and stockinged feet showing, *Carpet Man* slowly trudged through the exhibition. When children ran up to hug him, *Carpet Man* hugged them back.

Since his debut, Brezing's alter ego has traveled around Ireland, seeking out abandoned buildings, desolate landscapes, and generally "flawed places" affected by the Irish economic crash. "It is like the now deceased 'Celtic tiger' has left us with a stage set of abandonment," he explains. Inspired by a time when Brezing found himself between apartments and rolled up in an old rug to sleep on the floor of his studio, the tragically transient *Carpet Man* also wears old wool socks and carries a suitcase. Restricted by the costume,

Left and detail: Thomas Brezing, *Carpet Man*, 2011–ongoing. Performance with old carpet, used suitcase, used wooly socks, used tea bags, and mixed media. Below and detail: Jodie Carey, *Shroud*, 2013. Bone ash, 300 sq. meters.

the artist can neither see nor hear; he relies on others to direct him as he shuffles along garbage-strewn beaches, over snowy hills, and inside dilapidated houses. "It's hard to describe exactly how it feels to be inside the costume. It's different every time...I find it very soothing and liberating to slip into another skin and be someone else, remain-

ing anonymous all the while and hidden." Although Brezing describes the inherently lonely *Carpet Man* as only a semi-public project, outside participation is encouraged, whether it be through suggestions of places that "*Carpet Man* would like" or, in one instance, taking charge of the camera while Brezing's young daughters argued about how to take the pictures.

The concept behind *Carpet Man*'s 30-minute impromptu performances is to "change the environment he is placed in for a brief moment." Brezing has also compiled a short film telling the story of *Carpet Man*'s outings. An ongoing work, *Carpet Man* will soon explore new territory: "He could be sent down some busy streets in Dublin or down a neon-lit shopping mall."

