

LOOK DRAW THINK RESPOND

Solstice Arts Centre Learning Resource

for Primary School Children

New Era

A group exhibition exploring climate change

Rachel Doolin, Siobhan McDonald, Martina O'Brien, Meadhbh O'Connor

12th September – 22nd December 2020



We can see lots of different types of artwork in the gallery,
but are we really looking?

By actively looking and asking questions we will understand and learn
more about the artists and their work.

Here are some things to do while you are walking around our gallery
today. If you need any help just let us know.

Enjoy!

All the information you need to visit this exhibition on-line is here:
<https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/new-era-exploring-climate-change#top>

This includes an exhibition guide, link to our virtual tour of the gallery and
information about each of the artists

'NEW ERA'

A group exhibition of four Irish artists who explore climate change in the natural world

The world as we know it has changed. We are now living in a new era with a global pandemic and a worldwide awareness of the effects of the climate change. Here, the exhibiting artists are all exploring climate related issues in different ways in their research and artworks that include sculpture, prints, photography, drawings, poetry, film and video works.

The artists have all worked with scientists and explorers around the world who are looking at and collecting information on how our world is evolving rapidly due to climate change and the effects our growing populations are having on our planet.

After spending time in the Arctic and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway, which has the world's largest seed collection Rachel Doolin created video work 'Glacial Landscape', photographs and 'ice crystal-like' sculptures.

Siobhan McDonald has made prints of fossilised plants, small paintings, and film with a backdrop of sounds she gathered while in the Arctic Circle. Along with a video, Martina O'Brien has made small light boxes with cyanotype prints that sit on the floor of the gallery. These show newly discovered coral colonies in the Porcupine Bank Canyon, 320km off the coast of Ireland.

Meadhbh O'Connor has made six living sculptures from moss and plant life that hang from the gallery ceiling like mini habitable planets. When she was not able to make work in her studio during lock-down she began writing short poems that we have displayed on the gallery walls.

1. LOOK....



Temporal Landscapes 2018, by Rachel Doolin

Watch Rachel Doolin's *Temporal Landscapes, 2018* (Audio visual artwork, 7 mins.) <https://vimeo.com/465802430>

In the gallery this is shown on a large screen.

What do you see and hear?

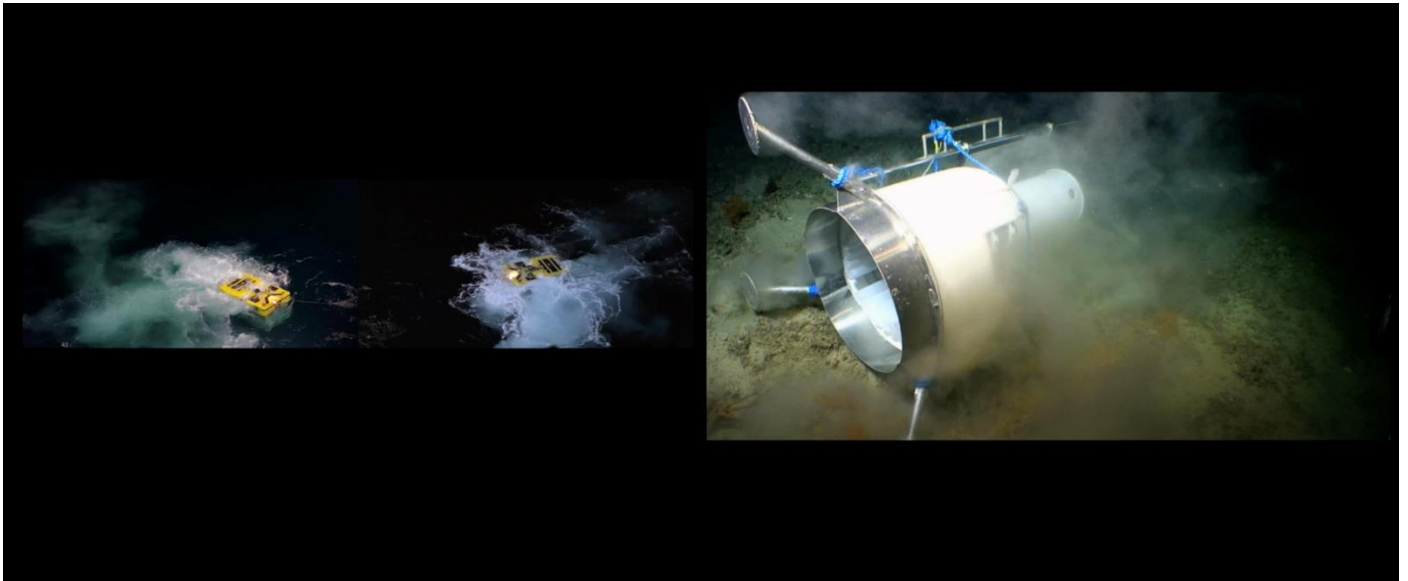
Rachel made this video after visiting several glacier locations in Spitsbergen, Svalbard in Norway. The sounds made by the glacier moving, popping, crunching and melting were recorded by Polish scientist Oskar Glowacki.

Why do you think Rachel made the glacier go backwards, reattaching itself to the ice shelf?

Fun fact – Approximately 10 percent of the Earth is covered by glaciers; during the last Ice Age, they covered one-third of the Earth's surface.

Glacier ice is the largest reservoir of fresh water on the planet, storing an estimated 75 percent of the world's supply.

2. DRAW...



B-scope, 2019, two-channel HD + low res video, audio 12 minutes 31 seconds by Martina O'Brien

Martina O'Brien is interested in how climate change is affecting our weather, rising sea levels, rainfall and how scientists collect this information.

Check out www.met.ie and see what our weather forecast in Ireland is today _____

She is also curious about how we can travel the world from our classrooms or home, using Google Earth to see places on the other side of the world and in our deepest oceans, places we may never actually visit.

Called '*neither fully self nor other*, 2020 Martina has made lots of cyanotype prints and placed them in small light boxes on our gallery floor. Her prints are inspired by newly discovered coral colonies in the Porcupine Bank Canyon, 320km off the coast of Ireland, that are in total darkness under the sea.

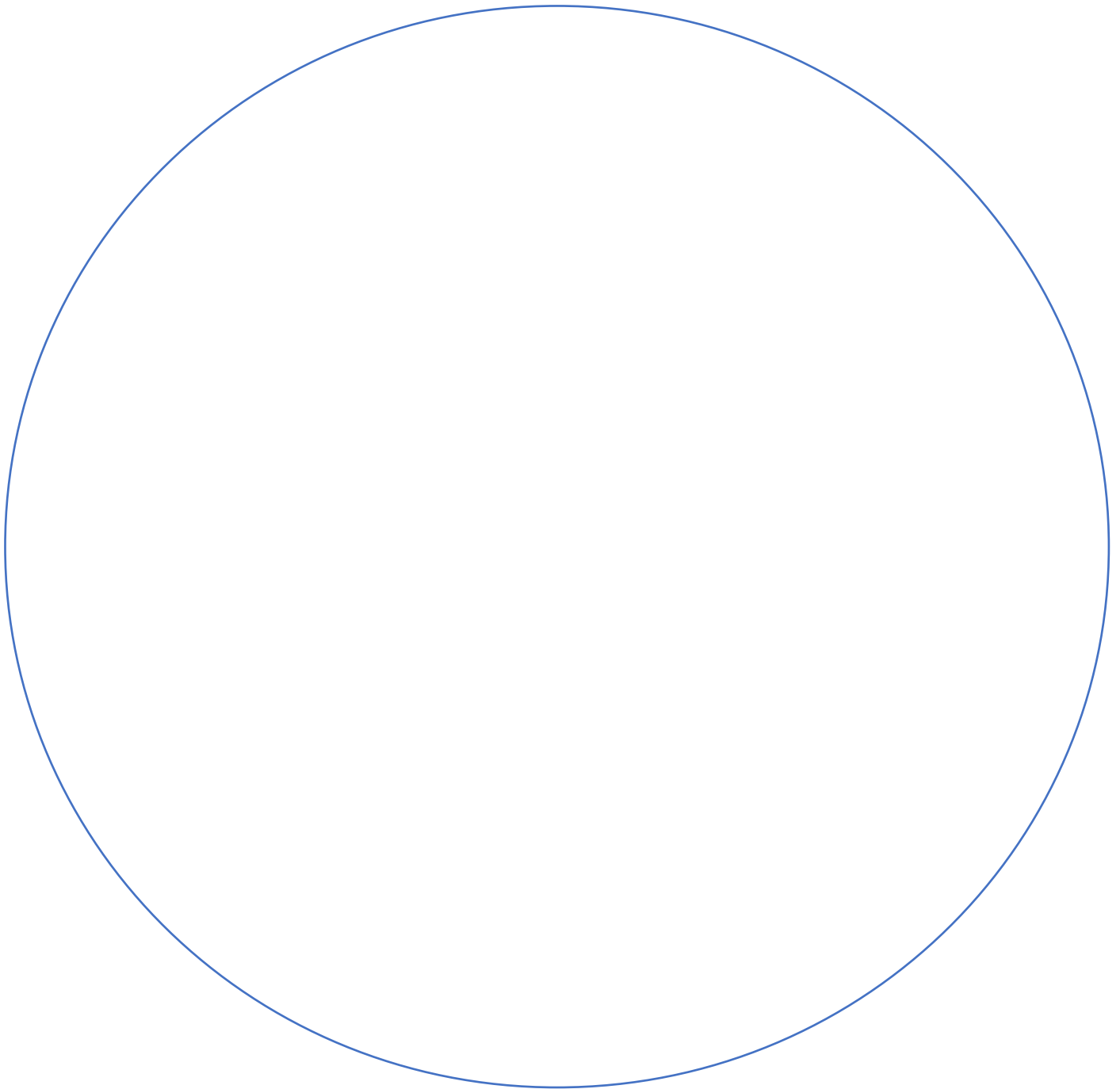
One of the oldest forms of photography, cyanotype print dates back to the 1840s and uses light to create blue images. Look at these prints on the cover of this resource or on the virtual tour.

What shapes do you see?

Martina O'Brien's video work ***B-scope, 2019*** is shown on two T.V screens, side by side. Recorded in May 15th 2019 on the research ship *Celtic Explorer*, it shows the process of gathering scientific data on the effects of climate change on coral reefs in the North East Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Ireland.

If you had a scope that could reach the ocean floor what would you see?

Draw a picture of it here:



3. THINK...

As we struggle along the narrow, rocky path,
an unknown woman effortlessly overtakes us in
the direction of our shared destination. With every turn,
the path appears to get longer. And yet,
she is always gone from view.
When we finally arrive at the peak,
the woman is already there—staring across
the mountainous scene in contemplative silence.
I never see her face but somehow never forget her, the
mountains causing us to observe each other.

Vignette No. 23 (the unknown woman), prose poetry fragments, vinyl wall text, 2020 by Méadhbh O'Connor.

During lockdown artist Meadhbh O'Connor could not visit or work in her studio so she began to write small pieces of prose called vignettes.

A **vignette** (pronounced vin-yet) is a short descriptive scene that captures a single moment or detail about a character, idea, or other element of a story. In New Era, Meadhbh's vignettes are on the gallery walls in large black text.

You can listen to her reading Vignette No.23 here:

<https://soundcloud.com/meadhbh-oconnor/the-unknown-woman>

Now you read it aloud. What descriptive words do you hear?

Where do you think this is taking place and why?

Try writing your own short vignette. Remember it only has to be 1 or 2 short scenes, moments, or impressions about a character, an idea, a theme, or object.

Title: _____ By: _____

4. RESPOND....



A History of time 2018, (one of 4) photogenic drawings: silver nitrate, light, and our earliest plants on antique paper by Siobhan McDonald.

Using scientific knowledge to create her artworks, Siobhan McDonald explores air, breath, and atmospheric phenomena (the study of our atmosphere).

Working with the School of Natural Sciences in Trinity College she asks questions about the structure and history of the earth and our connection to it as human beings.

In her artworks *A History of time 2018*, Siobhan looks at changes to our atmosphere over the Geologic Timescale (GTS), a system of dating the billions of years since the planet Earth began developing. She has created fossilised plant forms as a symbol of time using a print process called 'photogenic drawings', meaning drawings made with light. These are made on light sensitive paper and must be kept away from light in the gallery. The four images she has created and the process she used symbolises the fragility of our planet.

Activity: Gather some natural materials such as leaves on a nature walk, your way to school or in your garden. Dry them out over night if wet. Look closely at their shapes, holding them up to the light or placing them on top of each other. Print with them using one colour, keeping both the positive and negative images to compare. Create a collage with your prints, using the patterns you like.

Fun Fact - Fossils have been found on every continent in the world. The largest fossil ever discovered is a petrified tree found in Thailand. The tree was more than 237 feet (72 meters) long and was probably much taller when it was still living! Measure 72 meters in your school yard to see how tall this fossil is.

Pick an activity to complete in your classroom or at home:

Activity 1:

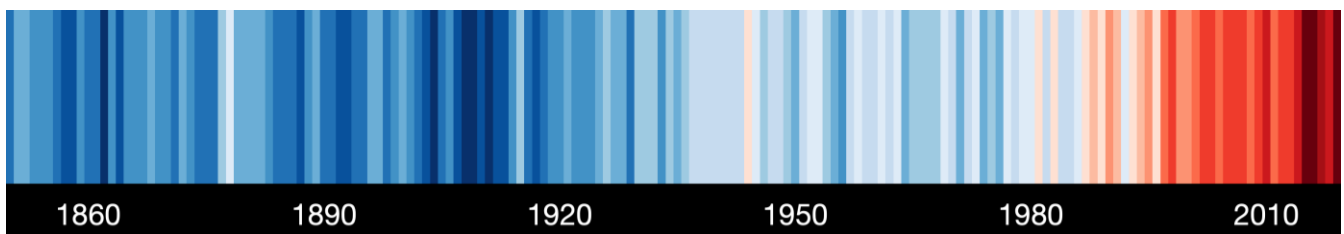
Working with science, each of the four artists in this exhibition have explored climate change in different ways. Choose one of the following and find out more about it:

- Biodiversity
- Ecology
- Seed sovereignty
- Anthropocene
- Atmospheric phenomena

Activity 2:

What are Climate Stripes?

Climate Stripes illustrate the global average temperature for every year since 1850 in a coloured stripe. Shades of blue represent cooler years and red, warmer years. This gives us a visual representation of how our climate is becoming warmer.



Purls of Wisdom is a nationwide project using knitting and crochet to make climate Stripes. You can see some examples hanging on our Solstice café wall.

Using strips of paper, wool or card why not create climate stripes in your classroom and learn more about our rising temperatures.

For more information see:

<https://www.icrag-centre.org/education-and-public-engagement/arts/purls/how-to/>
or contact climateaction@meathcoco.ie

Activity 3:

Ice Painting

Mix some coloured paint with water. Pour into an ice-cube tray and freeze overnight. Have some sheets of paper ready and paint with the ice-cubes. Watch the ice melt and see what shapes the paint makes as it glides over the paper surface. While your ice drawings are drying, look up British sculpture, photographer and environmentalist Andy Goldsworthy who created a whole series of paintings like this.

Activity 4:

What do you think the title of this exhibition 'New Era' means?

Discuss this with your teacher, friends or family.

Thank you for exploring this exhibition, we hope to see you in the gallery soon

For more information on our visual art education programmes contact Deirdre Rogers at
Deirdre.rogers@solsticeartscentre.ie / 0469092308 or enquire at Box Office.

