

SOL
LICE



New Era

Rachel Doolin, Siobhán McDonald,
Martina O'Brien, Méadhbh O'Connor

12 September – 6 November 2020

LIST OF WORKS

GALLERY FOYER

Siobhán McDonald

***Andrée's Arctic balloon* 2018**

Oil paint on paper
43 x 35cm

***The ice silenced them* 2018**

Oil paint on paper
43 x 35cm (framed)

***Snow bones* 2018**

Oil paint on paper
43 x 35cm (framed)

***Laid exposed to the Arctic Sky* 2018**

Oil paint on paper
43 x 35cm (framed)

Méadhbh O'Connor

***Biosystem VI* 2020**

Air plants, preserved and living moss, other plants, wire, biodegradable packing, other.
Dimensions variable, each orb ranging from 30 – 55cm diameter

***Vignette No. 23 (the unknown woman)* 2020**

Prose poetry fragments, vinyl wall text

GALLERY ONE

Siobhán McDonald

***A History of time* 2018**

Photogenic drawings: silver nitrate, light and our earliest plants on antique paper.

Rachel Doolin

***The Weight of Mountains* 2019**

Photographic Diptych
Svalbard Global Seed Vault, Plateau Mountain, Longyearbyen, Svalbard (image taken 2017)

Archival Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag 308g (matte finish), Pine frame with wood slip, Finish Wood veneer in Walnut.

Dimensions: W430 xH300x D15mm, W430 xH300x D15mm

Martina O'Brien

***B-scope* 2019**

Two-channel HD + low res video, audio
12 minutes 31 seconds
Monitors, props

***neither fully self nor other* 2020**

Series of thirteen Cyanotype prints, lightboxes
Dimensions variable

GALLERY TWO

Siobhán McDonald

***At the Edge of Visibility* 2016**

Film, shot in the Arctic Circle in 2015.
4 minutes.

Méadhbh O'Connor

***Rendered Landscape (The Other's Mountain)* 2020**

Computer-generated environment, 3 minute loop

***Vignette No. 9 (the capricorn)* 2020**

Prose poetry fragments, vinyl wall text

***Vignette No. 13 (on the cliff-edge)* 2020**

Prose poetry fragments, vinyl wall text

Rachel Doolin

***Evolutions of Uncertainty - Phantasms I, II* 2020**

Ongoing Series of Sculptural Works
Polyurethane packaging foam, grown crystals, acrylic resin.

14 x 19.5 x 4.5cm

19 x 14 x 7.5cm

***Life of Mine* 2019**

Location: Longyearbyen, Svalbard, 78° North (image taken 2017).

Certified limited-edition archival print,
(No. of Editions: 5) Dibond, Oak Box frame,
Rosewood

Stain & Wax. Glass, Artcare Backing.

Size: W910 x H610 x D35mm

GALLERY THREE

Rachel Doolin

***Temporal Landscapes* 2018**

Audio/Visual Artwork, 7 mins.

***Evolutions of Uncertainty* 2018**

Series of sculptural works
Polyurethane packing, foam, cement,
mortar plasticiser, grown crystals, stainless
steel, limestone.

Dimensions variable

***Ablation Zone (I & II)* 2018**

Photographic Diptych
Glacial Landscape

Solstice Arts Centre is delighted to present **New Era**, an exhibition featuring four Irish artists **Rachel Doolin, Siobhán McDonald, Martina O'Brien and Méadhbh O'Connor** whose practices explore different aspects of climate change in the natural world. **New Era** features new and recent works, many of which were produced over the past few months and are being exhibited for the first time at Solstice Arts Centre. The exhibition includes painting, sculpture, cyanotype prints, photography, drawings, prose poetry, film and video works and includes new spoken word works online.

The world as we know it has changed since March 2020. We are now living in a new era with the reality and trauma of a global Pandemic and a heightened awareness of the challenges of the climate change crisis worldwide. The exhibiting artists are all involved in explorations of climate related issues including biodiversity, ecology, marine geology, solar activity, climate modelling, governance of natural disasters, seed sovereignty and the Anthropocene (recent consequences of our treatment of nature and the environment). Doolin, McDonald, O'Brien and O'Connor have undertaken varied research expeditions to Iceland, Italy, Norway and Switzerland in collaborations with scientists and experts which have informed and expanded their art practices. Future expeditions, research trips and ongoing collaborations of art and science are planned for 2021.

New Era opens with a new rendering of **Biosystem V, 2020** by **Méadhbh O'Connor** comprising air plants, preserved mosses and other plants which are juxtaposed with **Siobhán McDonald's** poetic Arctic inspired series of paintings made in 2018.

GALLERY ONE features new and recent works by **Martina O'Brien, Rachel Doolin and Siobhán McDonald**. **McDonald's** series of photogenic drawings **A History of time, 2018**, narrate the changing state of the Earth's atmosphere. In making this work the light has travelled through atmospheres with varying levels of carbon dioxide, recreating the conditions of the Triassic, Cretaceous, and Devonian Periods and the Anthropocene Epoch respectively. The light has been blocked by fossil leaves foraged of our earliest plants on earth. **Doolin's The Weight of Mountains 2019** photographic diptych depicts the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, Plateau Mountain, Longyearbyen, Svalbard and was photographed by Doolin on a research residency to the Norwegian archipelago in 2017.

O'Brien's interdisciplinary practice stems from her intrinsic interest in perceptions of time, the earth sciences, futurology and divination. Over the last number of years her work has frequently examined measurement technologies and data-driven practices of quantification such as climate modelling and, as an extension of this, considered how ways of describing the world through computational structures affect the possibilities for our being, acting and thinking in the world.

B-scope, 2019 is a two channel HD + low res video that examines processes of gathering scientific data on the effects of climate change from coral reefs in the North East Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Ireland. The artwork

features a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) dive which took place on the 15th May, 2019. The underwater vehicle, physically linked to the host ship by an umbilical cable, descends and ascends to/ from the ocean floor and the camera acts as a sensor, giving humans the opportunity to spectate the hostile ocean floor, and providing detailed on-the-ground information to corroborate distantly gathered data.



neither fully self nor other, 2020 is a series of cyanotype prints depicting newly discovered coral colonies in the Porcupine Bank Canyon, 320km off the coast of Ireland. The images are based on three dimensional models generated by the Marine Geology Research Group UCC, integrating video footage with acoustic and mapping data from this biodiverse cold-water reef ecosystem.

O'Brien is a recipient of a Science Gallery Dublin Rapid Residency 2020 and a recent member of Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, 2019/20. In 2019, she was commissioned by the European Commission to collaborate with Earth scientists at the Joint Research Centre, Italy in 2019. This commission also involved collaboration with the Director of Forecasts in the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, UK. The outcome of this commission was exhibited at *Datami* Resonance III Festival, Ispra, Italy and at BOZAR, Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels, 2019/2020. O'Brien was invited Artist in Residence aboard the *RV Celtic Explorer* on the *Monitoring Change in Submarine Coral Habitats* Marine Expedition, North East Atlantic Ocean, 2019, by Parity Studios, UCD & The Irish Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences, Dublin.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Quotidian*, Illuminations Gallery, NUI Maynooth, 2019, and *At Some Distance in the Direction Indicated*, Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, 2018. Other recent group shows include *Tactical Magic*, TULCA Festival of Visual Arts 2019. Recent awards include an Arts Council of Ireland Visual Arts Bursary Award 2019 (round 2); Arts Council of Ireland Travel & Training Award 2019 and 2017; Creative Ireland Bursary Award 2018; Kildare County Council Arts Act Awards 2020, 2019, 2017 and 2016; and an Arts Council of Ireland Project Award 2017. Further residency awards include Artist in Residence at Irish Centre for High End Computing (ICHEC), Dublin, 2016; EUCIDA Digital Artist in Residence, Espace Multimédia Gantner, France, 2017; and *Rising from the Hill: Local Systems in Global Contexts* Residency, Cow House Studios, Wexford, curated by Francis Halsall & Kelley O'Brien concluding in an exhibition at NCAD Gallery, Dublin, 2017.

GALLERY TWO features new prose and film works by **Méadhbh O'Connor**, new sculpture and recent photography by **Rachel Doolin** and a film by **Siobhán McDonald**. For a number of years **Méadhbh O'Connor's** work has been driven by a deep interest in science and the environment. O'Connor sees all of nature, the universe, as one mystical, overarching structure which connects all its constituent parts. In her work she collides the poetic and the analytic, the spiritual and the technological, the expressive and the restrained, the natural and the engineered; in an effort to find harmony amongst these different registers. **O'Connor** exhibits ***Rendered Landscape (The Other's Mountain)***, 2020, a new computer generated environment, and new written and spoken word vignettes of prose poetry fragments exhibited for the first time at Solstice in the gallery and online at www.solsticeartscentre.ie



Méadhbh O'Connor, born Dublin 1984, is an artist whose work is driven by a deep interest in the natural world. This is widely recognised by her consistent contributions to Ireland's growing art, science and environmental movement. She has shown in many exhibitions in Ireland and internationally such as *Climate Simulator*, Earth Institute, University College Dublin, Ireland, 2018 (solo); *Eco-connectivity*, Berlin Science

Week, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany, 2018; and the *Antarctic Pavilion* at the 57th Venice Biennale of Art, Italy, 2017. She was twice awarded the Artist in Residence Award (in 2013 and by invitation in 2017) at the College of Science, University College Dublin where she subsequently taught interdisciplinary modules of her own design to undergraduate science students. Her work has been supported by The Arts Council of Ireland. She holds a Masters in Fine Art from the University of Oxford and has most recently commenced a new, long-term project with researchers at Oxford in Advanced Technologies.

O'Connor's work is undoubtedly a product of the long tradition of connectedness to the landscape that persists in Irish culture, which she places in the context of 21st century scientific and environmental understanding. Her recent work has taken a new turn in which she is exploring and revealing the experiences that ferment this deep connection to the land. She has begun to experiment with prose poetry, using the written and spoken word as form, in addition to sculptural and multimedia installation, photography and drawing. In these new written-word vignettes, psychological and spiritual encounters with the landscape are re-enacted. All are situated in mountain settings, often in the company of companions, loved ones or 'Others.' Here she tries to reconcile the bodily rootedness at the heart of any connection to the land with the increasing presence of new technologies—and the potential birth of A.I. consciousness in the coming years—that are emerging as a significant medium through which we *experience*. Nature, the artificial and the psychological are viewed in the work as not necessarily irreconcilable, but potentially part of the same spiritual existence. Most of O'Connor's work in this exhibition was produced during the COVID-19 lockdown under conditions that enhanced the need to create an experience of landscape in new forms, such as virtual environments, audio soundscapes (presented online) and written-word vignettes. www.Méadhbhocconnor.info

Siobhán McDonald's practice draws attention to contemporary topics dealing with air, breath, and atmospheric phenomena, weaving scientific knowledge into her art in a poetic and thoughtful manner. She is an artist in residence at Studiotopia (at BOZAR and Gluon in Brussels,) and the School of Natural Sciences at Trinity College Dublin (2020-2023.) Working with world-leading research facilities such as The European Space Agency (ESA) and The JRC European Commission, her art practice calls on notions of what is still unknown to science, exploring the Anthropocene and the recent consequences of our treatment of nature. McDonald's work with glaciers and other natural phenomena deploys a unique artistic language that gives form to intangible and richly varied processes including painting, drawing, film and sound.

Siobhán McDonald's film **At the Edge of Visibility**, 2016, was shot in the Arctic Circle in 2015. The work comprises sound recordings of dying glaciers by Professor Chris Bean, and sounds recorded in space by ESA. Sound composition by Irene Buckley, featuring sound samples from the Arctic recorded by the artist. Edited by Christopher Ash.

McDonald holds a Masters in Visual Arts Practices from IADT. Recent awards include: Visual Arts Bursary 2020, Creative Ireland Award 2020 and Climate Whirl Arts Programme at INAR/ Helsinki 2020. Recent shows include: Bozar, Brussels, 2020; Deutsches Hygiene-Museum DHMD, 2020; Volta, Basel 2019; Limerick City Art Gallery, 2019; Deutsches Hygiene-



Museum DHMD, 2019; The National Trust-Fox Talbot Museum, UK, 2018; Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris, 2018, among others. Her work is represented in many collections, both public and private such as The Arts Council of Ireland, Allied Irish Banks, Bank of Ireland, The Ulster Museum and Trinity College Dublin. Her projects are supported by The European Commission, The Institute of Physics, Culture Ireland, The Arts Council and The European Research Council.

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Rachel Doolin exhibits **The Life of Mines**, 2019, an altered landscape of an abandoned coal mining site in Svalbard alongside **Evolutions of Uncertainty (Phantasms I & II)**, 2020, an ongoing series, in **Gallery Two**.

GALLERY THREE features a film and sculpture installation, and photographs by **Rachel Doolin**. These works were produced following a research residency in 2017 to Galleri Svalbard, an Arctic Art Institution located in Svalbard, a Norwegian archipelago in the Arctic Ocean, situated north of mainland Europe, midway between continental Norway and the North Pole (funded by an Arts Council of Ireland Travel and Training Award). **Temporal Landscapes** 2018 is an audio-visual work created from original footage gathered from several glacier locations in Spitsbergen, Svalbard and embedded hydrophone recordings by Polish scientist Oskar Glowacki. **Evolutions of Uncertainty**, 2018 – 2020 is a series of six sculptural works which comprise Doolin's own biodegradable and plant-based plastics and experimentations with crystallization processes. Her sculptural and installation-based works are simultaneously delicate and complex aggregations that pertain to the fragility and tenacity of biological life in the Anthropocene. An intriguing limited edition photographic glacial landscape in Svalbard entitled **Ablation Zone (I and II)** 2018 is also included in **Gallery Three**.

Rachel Doolin is a visual artist and arts educator (early years) based in Cork. Doolin's multidisciplinary practice merges art, experimentation and ecology to create work that is inextricably linked to material research, driven by a desire to test the parameters of materiality, media and the criticality of issue-based practice.

Doolin graduated with a BA in Fine Art from the Crawford College of Art & Design in 2015, receiving several graduate awards including the Taylor Art Prize for her degree show installation *Promethean Illusions*. Doolin's multifaceted oeuvre includes exhibition based works, public artworks and socially engaged projects. She often collaborates with artists, NGO's as well as community and professional organisations to actuate thought-provoking and eco-poetic manifestations.

Doolin is currently working on a community project with children living in Direct Provision, and has recently been shortlisted for a public artwork commission which includes a community tree planting initiative in partnership with Crann - Trees for Ireland. Doolin is currently an artist in residence with Irish Seed Savers Association and is working on a new body of work *Heirloom/Seed Cloud* to be exhibited in the Municipal Gallery, dlr



Lexicon Gallery, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin in Sept, 2020. The artist will collaborate with Irish Seed Savers to explore the concept of seeds as 'archives of cultural memory', and bring to light significant histories associated with various seeds in their collection.

Doolin's recent awards include Municipal Gallery, dlr Lexicon Visual Art Commission 2021, Cork City Council Project Award 2020, LHQ Gallery Exhibition Award 2020, 2019 Creative Ireland & the Department of Children and Youth Affairs Art Project Bursary, 2018 Gilead Sciences Percent for Art Commission, 2017 Arts Council of Ireland Travel and Training Bursary Award, 2016 Valery Gleeson Development Bursary, 2015 Taylor Art Award, 2015 The Undergraduate Awards, 2015 National Sculpture Factory Graduate Residency Award, 2015 Honourable Mention, the London Creative Awards.

Recent & Upcoming exhibitions include: **Heirloom**, Municipal Gallery, dlr Lexicon Gallery (2021), **NEW ERA**, Solstice Arts Centre (2020), **CONNECTED**, Kilkenny Sculpture Trail (2020), Spareroom Project- Art, Architecture, Activism (2019); **The Fragility of Things**, Installation, Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre (2019) **Voice of the Sea**, Port of Cork (2019), **Silvered**, Solo Show, Doswell Gallery (2018), **Terra Incognita**, group show, Skibbereen Arts Festival, (2018), **Locales**, Doswell Gallery (2017).

Solstice advocates for **Doolin, McDonald, O'Brien and O'Connor** (all at varying, critical points in their artistic careers), in their quest for researching, collaborating and reflecting on climate change and environmental issues through the lens of visual arts practice in the contemporary world. Solstice is most grateful to the artists who have worked relentlessly in their studios to provide new works for our exhibition.

Brenda McParland
Curator



ASSOCIATED EVENTS

Saturday 19 September

An Introduction to Botanical Art with Yanny Petters (Adult Workshop)

Saturday 26 September

Seed Saving (Family Workshops)

Tuesday 29 September

Visual Artists Café (Online Workshop)

Wednesday 7 October

Seed Story - 'An Encounter with Nature' (Primary School Workshop)

Wednesday 7 October

Cyanotype Printmaking Workshop (Primary School Workshop)

Wednesday 7 October

Fantastic Fungi (Film Screening)