

PLACES
WE THINK
WE KNOW

MARY MCINTYRE

Exhibition Notes | Sat 21 August - Sun 21 November 2021

DCA
Dundee Contemporary Arts

152 Nethergate
Dundee, DD1 4DY
01382 432444
Scottish Charity No. SCO26631

Open Wed - Sun 11:00-18:00
Open late Thu 19:00
Admission free
www.dca.org.uk

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

Places We Think We Know is the first major solo exhibition in Scotland by Irish artist Mary McIntyre, debuting a new body of work commissioned for DCA.

McIntyre has explored different types of 'space' in her work in myriad ways over the past three decades, and these investigations often focus on photographic depictions of places that have been forgotten or overlooked. The images she makes are frequently imbued with a psychological charge, hinting at traces of recent human presence and activity in evocative landscapes or interiors.

McIntyre is also interested in how a photograph occupies a gallery as a physical object, and how the environment surrounding the image might inform how a work is experienced. She uses sculptural installation and architectural interventions as a means of activating the rooms that her photographs inhabit, and in doing so makes a viewer more aware of the act of 'looking'.

Ideas of interior space (both physical and psychological) have long reverberated throughout her practice, and the foundations of this new body of work at DCA are three photographic images of quiet interiors; rooms which at first appear to be empty and unremarkable. Upon closer inspection, however, they slowly reveal a rich tapestry of traces and associations – frayed and discoloured carpet tiles, stained walls, makeshift partitions, and disturbed dust and detritus all speak of previous occupation by unknown inhabitants.

Accompanying these works, the artist has constructed a series of installations that intersect the gallery in different ways to create bespoke environments from which to consider each image. With every step taken through the space, a viewer becomes aware of their own body moving towards the photograph in order to view it, and the experience of looking at the artwork is intensified in a multi-sensory way by the subtle textures, objects and sounds that McIntyre places it in dialogue with. The materials and colours in these installations connect to qualities and details that are found in the spaces shown in the images, blurring the boundaries of physical and pictorial space in the gallery. McIntyre says,

“With these installations, I am often physically trying to conjure the atmosphere I feel is emanating from particular photographs.”

Upon entering the exhibition, a viewer is confronted with a huge expanse of black curtain towering over them and partially concealing much of the room. Titled *Entering that Other Scene, that Grows Out of the Roots of this One*, this piece forms an enclosing space from which to consider the photograph *Gradually Unhappening*, whilst also echoing the geometric composition of the room captured in the image.

Corners are of particular interest to McIntyre in this new work, with the artworks on display either depicting, physically creating, or being situated in relation to a corner of some kind. A corner is part of a room that often is not paid attention to, or is a space associated with being quiet and secluded. In another iteration of the word, to be 'cornered' is to be in an inescapable position of sorts. McIntyre conceives of corners as endpoints geometrically, but also psychologically and emotionally. For her, powerful moments of encounter can exist within these spaces. She says,

"There's something about the finality of a corner that interests me; it's an undeniable thing. It has a kind of unequivocal and absolute force, and that is what I am trying to encapsulate in these works."

On the same wall further into the gallery is another photographic interior, *A Reflex of Her Loss, A Glimpse of Finality*. Like much of the artist's work to date, the image depicts a space devoid of any real human presence but marked (and in this case, stained) over time by human touch. For McIntyre, this work reflects on the breakdown of a body, where the pink tones on the walls call to mind human flesh, and the tears, ruptures and stains on each surface speak of corporeal breakdown and disintegration.

In another corner of the gallery, the stage-like structure which forms the artwork *Another Quality of Melancholy*, and connects to the photograph *Quietly Dispelling the Dark*, introduces a further sense of heightened theatricality and intrigue in the exhibition. What is the function of this platform? Who is it for? And what does the curtain above it conceal? There is a deliberate play here between what is illuminated and hinted at in the photographic image and what is then obscured by the installation next to it. Confirming the performative and contradictory elements of her practice as it relates to environments such as this, McIntyre has simply said that in her work, "everything is on show, but nothing is revealed."

In recent years, McIntyre has become increasingly engaged in collaborative and cross-disciplinary practice, in particular as the founder of the electronic record label TONN Recordings. This exhibition also debuts a new suite of eight modular synth compositions by Sean McBride of Martial Canterel made in response to the artist's photographs. Adding to the already rich and layered environment crafted by the artist in the gallery, this musical work can be heard in the space every 15 minutes throughout the day.

Finally, the elements of spectacle hinted at through the photographs and installations, and the almost cinematic feel of being surrounded by music in the gallery, is further explored in a new series of text works that punctuate the exhibition. Under the title *All the Rituals of Existence (in six parts)*, these pieces are segments, extracted by McIntyre, from German filmmaker Edgar Reitz's epic film series *Heimat* which follows a single family through societal

and political shifts across the 20th century. These isolated excerpts act as an indirect discussion or reflection on the themes and artistic processes explored within McIntyre's work such as: image-making through the lens of photography and film; spectacle and performance in human interaction and connection; and emotional states such as disappointment, failure, love and loss.

These works are as expressive and open-ended as the rest of McIntyre's practice, and remind us to resist searching for fixed meaning and definitive interpretation within the uncanny environments we are moving through:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, as we go through the hall now, you will never see fixed objects. It's a process of permanent transformation. This way please. Wait and see."

GLOSSARY

Installation: artworks that often relate to or occupy the entire room or gallery space they are held within. They utilise multiple objects and materials and take up entire spaces so that a viewer has to walk through these environments in order to engage fully with the ideas at play in the work.

Architectural interventions: often temporary artistic or design modifications to the permanent architecture of a gallery that might change how people move through it, or what they can see within it.

Pictorial space: the illusory space in a painting, photograph or other work of two-dimensional art that seems to recede backward into depth from the picture's surface.

Corporeal: having, consisting of, or relating to a physical material body.

Theatricality: a quality relating to acting, performance and theatre. It may also be the quality of something being exaggerated and dramatic.

Heimat: a series of films written and directed by Edgar Reitz about life in Germany across the 20th century through the eyes of a family from the Hunsrück area of the Rhineland-Palatinate. The title *Heimat* is a German word, often translated as 'homeland' or 'home place', but it has been claimed that the word has no true English equivalent. The combined length of the five films – broken into 32 episodes – is 59 hours and 32 minutes, making it one of the longest series of feature-length films in cinema history. Aesthetically, the series is notable for the frequent switching between colour and black-and-white film to convey different emotional states.

Modular Synth: a kind of music made with modular synthesizers, which are electronic musical instruments that consist of a multitude of different components (modules) that are used and combined to create blended electronic sounds and compositions.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mary McIntyre was born in Northern Ireland where she lives and works. She graduated from the University of Ulster, Belfast (MFA), where she is now a Reader in Fine Art. Her work has been previously exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 2005; the Helsinki Photography Biennial; The Courtauld Institute, London; The MAC, Belfast; Visual, Carlow; Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin and the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

Her work is held in institutional and private collections including the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; the Arts Council of England; Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Ulster Museum.

She is founder of the electronic record label TONN Recordings and its sister label New Sinister.

www.tonnrecordings.com
newsinister.com
marymcintyre.org

VINYL RECORD

A new 12" vinyl record has been produced on TONN Recordings to accompany the exhibition. Also titled *Places We Think We Know*, it features eight new musical compositions by musician Sean McBride of Martial Canterel, made in response to McIntyre's photographs.

The record is a limited edition on heavy weight 180g black vinyl and is available to buy in DCA Shop and online, priced £30.

Martial Canterel is the solo project of Brooklyn-based musician McBride, who also performs as half of the duo Xeno & Oaklander. The foremost practitioner in minimal synth today, since 2002 he has been crafting Martial Canterel's utterly distinctive analogue sound, with his virtuosic modular synth and masterfully adept live performances.

martialcanterel.bandcamp.com

These compositions can be heard in the gallery every 15 minutes throughout the day.

INFORMATION SPACE

Visit the Information Space next to the galleries to learn more about the exhibition. Here you will find a video interview with the artist, alongside the reading materials listed below that have been influential to her thinking.

READING LIST

Rachel Palfreyman, *Edgar Reitz's Heimat: Histories, Traditions, Fictions*, 2000

Samuel Beckett, *Collected Shorter Plays*, 2006

Kathryn White, *Beckett and Decay*, 2011

Lloyd Michaels, *Ingmar Bergman's Persona*, 1999

Oscar Masotta: *Segunda Vez, Cahier No. 1*, 2017

Vito Hannibal, *Acconci Studio*, 2004

Craig Dworkin (ed.), *Language to Cover a Page: The Early Writings of Vito Acconci*, 2006

Iris Murdoch, *The Philosopher's Pupil*, 1983

Iris Murdoch, *The Sea, the Sea*, 1978

Moyra Davey, *Index Cards*, 2020

TALKS AND EVENTS

For more information and to book tickets visit www.dca.org.uk

Mary McIntyre and Eoin Dara in Conversation

Thu 16 September, 18:00-19:00

Online via Zoom

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Join us on Zoom for a conversation between Mary McIntyre and DCA's Head of Exhibitions, Eoin Dara.

McIntyre's new body of work at DCA will be the starting point of a conversation around art and exhibition making (both from an artistic and curatorial perspective), talking through some of the methods she puts to work in her practice to transform the architectural spaces her photographic works are placed within.

Curator's Tour of Places We Think We Know

Thu 7 October, 18:00 - 19:00

Gallery 2

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Join Eoin Dara for a conversation in Gallery 2 where he'll be talking about working with McIntyre over the last two years to develop the exhibition.

In the Evening There is Feeling: Reading Moyra Davey

Thu 21 October, 18:00-19:30

Online via Zoom

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Led by Eoin Dara, In the Evening There is Feeling is DCA's reading group. It takes its name from Gertrude Stein's 1914 book *Tender Buttons* and focuses, in an informal and welcoming way, on feminist and queer texts from the worlds of art and literature.

Connecting to McIntyre's practice where photographs often form a foundation for a viewer to step off into other worlds of imagination and intellect, this session will introduce and discuss some excerpts from Moyra Davey's recent essay collection *Index Cards*.

In these essays, the acclaimed artist, photographer, writer and filmmaker often begins with a daily encounter – with a photograph, a memory, or a passage from a book – and links that subject to others, drawing fascinating and unlikely connections, until you can almost feel the texture of her thinking. While thinking and writing, she weaves together disparate writers and artists – Mary Wollstonecraft, Jean Genet, Virginia Woolf, Janet Malcolm, Chantal Akerman and Roland Barthes, among many others – in a way that is both elliptical and direct, clear-headed and personal, prismatic and self-examining, layering narratives to reveal the thorny but nourishing relationship between art and life.

To join the conversation, **book your place before 17:00 on Wed 20 October**. We will send you digital excerpts of the texts and details of the Zoom meeting upon booking.

ARTIST'S CHOICE SCREENINGS

Mary McIntyre has selected two films to accompany her exhibition:

“Peter Greenaway is probably the single most influential film director with regards to my work. I struggled to choose between *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* and *The Draftsman's Contract*. But in the end the sense of spectacle and the stylistic use of interiors in the former won out in my choice.

Radio On is not so well known, but it is an incredible record of its time, especially in relation to music. It is also very charged atmospherically with several interiors that influenced my use of space in my photography.”

– Mary McIntyre

Radio On

Tue 12 October

Cinema

Please see website for times and further details

Co-produced by Wim Wenders and set in 1970's Britain, Christopher Petit's *Radio On* has been described as an 'anti-road movie', portraying a psychogeography of the country at the end of the decade. A man drives

from London to Bristol to investigate the death of his radio DJ brother, taking in the English landscape, Modernist architecture and a series of encounters with odd people along the way. The journey is soundtracked by some of the best music of 1970s including David Bowie, Kraftwerk, Wreckless Eric, Ian Dury and Robert Fripp.

Dir: Christopher Petit

UK / 1979 / 1h 44m / 18

The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover

Tue 19 October

Cinema

Please see website for times and further details

Peter Greenaway's dark, allegorical tale is both sumptuous and savage. At Le Hollandais gourmet restaurant, every night is filled with opulence, decadence and gluttony as we follow an adulterous relationship, a criminal boss with no inhibitions and a series of extravagant meals. Food, colour coding, sex, murder, torture, and cannibalism are the exotic fare in this beautifully filmed, but brutally uncompromising modern fable. With a score by Michael Nyman, costumes by Jean-Paul Gaultier and lavish cinematography by Sacha Vierny providing cultural nourishment, this is a film that some may find hard to stomach but others will find plenty to feast on.

Dir: Peter Greenaway

Netherlands-UK-France / 1989 / 2h 4m / 18

CREATE SPACE

Create Space

Sat 4 September, 11:00-18:00
Then Wed - Sun, 11:00-18:00
Free, drop in

Please respect our room capacity guidance and wear your mask. Children must be accompanied at all times.

Our new Create Space is inspired by the exhibitions in our galleries, and offers a range of fun activities that link to the artists' ideas – image-making, what we don't notice, things that help us look, and making up stories will all feature.

Create Space is located between Gallery 1 and the Information Space. Although designed with families and younger children in mind, we hope that visitors of all ages will enjoy spending some time there.

From Wed 25 – Sun 29 August, you can also see ST/ART@DCA Summer Prints, a vibrant display of print work made during nine weeks of our Summer partnership project with Tayside Healthcare Arts Trust.

ST/ART@DCA works with adults who are isolated by long term health conditions bringing small groups together to learn new print skills and engage with DCA programmes.

Discovery Film Festival 2021

Sat 23 October – Sun 7 November
Various prices for film screenings
Suitable for all ages
Details at www.discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk/

Don't miss our annual international film festival showing the best films from around the world for young audiences from Shorts for Tinies, Shorts for Wee and Middle ones, to animated and live action features.

During Discovery Film Festival our Create Space will have film-related activities for you to do as well!

NEW: See Think Make Do Monday Makes and Activities Online

Free
Suitable for 0-3s, and 4+ ages
Available at: www.dca.org.uk/about/dca-learning

Beat the autumn blues and spend time making together as a family with our online activities. Monday Makes are step-by-step photo-guides or videos created by artists on our team and inspired by the exhibition themes or techniques used by the artist. Our Art Activity Sheets are quicker, fun ideas and templates to copy or download and make at home.

Our online library of 'makes' and ideas is simply bursting with over 50 things to see, think, make and do.

#DCAmakes

GALLERY 1

Chikako Yamashiro: Chinbin Western

Gallery 1

Sat 21 August – Sun 21 November

Running concurrently in Gallery 1, this project marks Japanese artist Chikako Yamashiro's first exhibition in Scotland and is guest-curated at DCA by Kirsteen Macdonald.

Yamashiro's work spans performance, filmmaking and photography, often employing her own and other bodies as vehicles through which to carry stories from overlooked or unheard voices.

Much of Yamashiro's research considers the reality of living in the Pacific island of Okinawa, a Japanese prefecture comprising over 100 islands in the East China Sea between Taiwan and Japan. At the centre of this exhibition, set amongst other selected works, is the European premiere of Yamashiro's latest film *Chinbin Western: Representation of the Family*. This richly imagined artwork takes the form of an allegorical tale that weaves together comic satire, mining landscapes, opera, traditional Japanese theatre and domestic lives.

This exhibition, and Yamashiro's work in the broadest sense, focuses on marginalised voices, bodies and souls in the East Asian region, addressing universal subjects such as identity and historical memory through uniquely poetic imaginings.

JUST ASK

Our friendly Visitor Assistants are always happy to help with your questions.

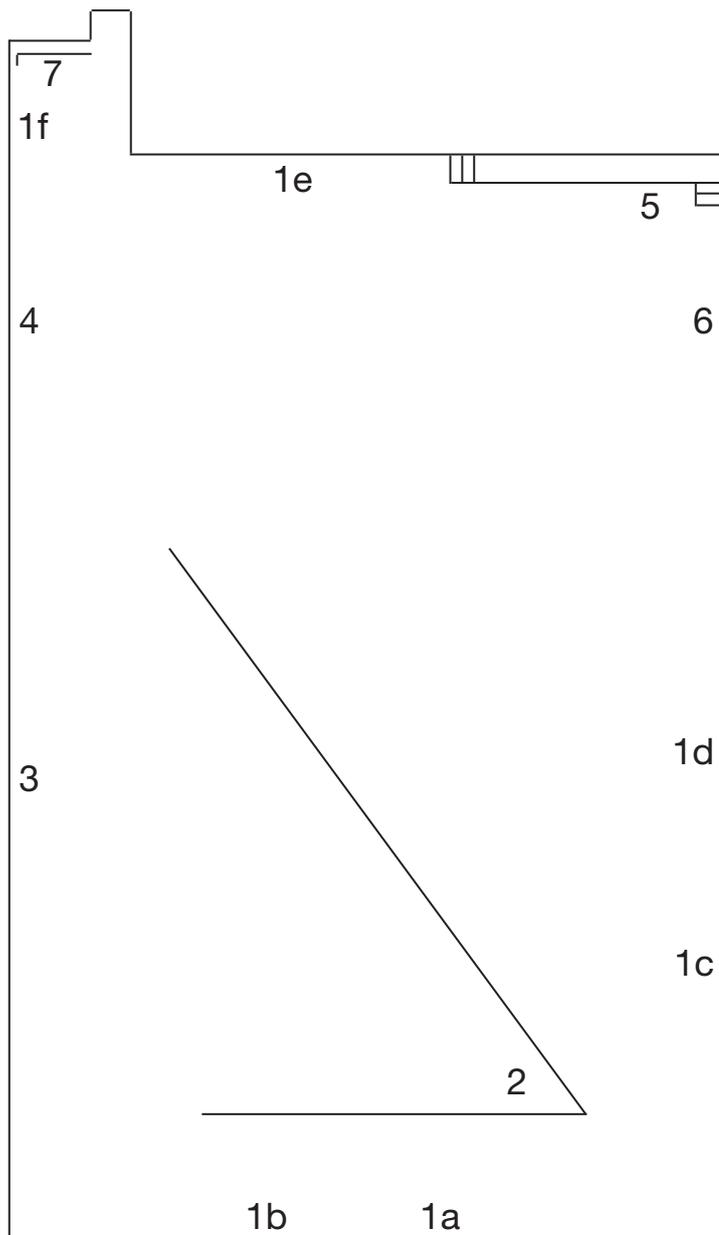
LARGE PRINT, AUDIO & BRAILLE

Large print, audio and Braille versions of this leaflet are available, please ask a Visitor Assistant for more information.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Keep up to date with the very latest from DCA by visiting www.dca.org.uk or by following us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Tweet us your thoughts on the exhibition using **#helloDCA**.

EXHIBITION FLOOR PLAN



1a-f

*All the Rituals of Existence
(in six parts)*
typed ink on paper, 2021

2

*Entering that Other Scene,
that Grows out of the Roots
of this One*
cotton fabric, 2021

3

Gradually Unhappening
giclée photographic print, 2021

4

*A Reflex of Her Loss, a Glimpse
of Finality*
giclée photographic print, 2021

5

Another Quality of Melancholy
cotton fabric and wood, 2021

6

Quietly Dispelling the Dark
giclée photographic print, 2021

7

A Deep Darkening Air
cotton fabric, 2021