

DOMOBAAL

Ailbhe Ní Bhriain

Inscriptions IV



image:
Ailbhe Ní Bhriain
Untitled (Adversary)
pigment baryta print
120x120cm, 2020

Domo Baal is proud to present 'Inscriptions IV', Ailbhe Ní Bhriain's fourth solo exhibition in the gallery. The exhibition includes photographic, tapestry and sculptural works. During the course of the exhibition, on Thursday 5 March, the Whitechapel Gallery will host a screening of Ní Bhriain's 'Inscriptions of an Immense Theatre' (2018) alongside a selection of her other films. After the screening Dr. Sarah Hayden (Department of English, University of Southampton) will be in conversation with the artist. Susan Stenger who composed the sound for 'Inscriptions of an Immense Theatre' will also be present. This event has been curated by Gareth Evans.

Key to Ní Bhriain's work is its ability to draw disparate elements into unexpected dialogue. This is most often encountered through immersive film installations, in which she combines imagery from multiple locations to conjure worlds of dreamlike hybridity. In 'Inscriptions IV' we encounter motifs from these films as they evolve into a series of new material and pictorial relationships.

Central to this exhibition is a large-scale Jacquard tapestry, pairing early colonial portrait photography with imagery of excavated quarry walls. In this striking work, Ní Bhriain appropriates a familiar form of representation and reconfigures it to allude to an encoded cultural loss. Nearby, a large mask-like image confronts us from a dark background. Created through the layering of multiple AI generated portraits, this spectral presence echoes the process of machine-learning to form a distillation of AI's unsettling strangeness. Elsewhere, a small collage includes a detail from a famous Bernini sculpture, representing the abduction of Proserpina to the underworld. This reference resonates with surrounding works, in pointing to the dark fantasy shaping our construction of the ideal - be those constructs and ideals imperial or digital in origin. Throughout the exhibition Ní Bhriain borrows and connects in this way, combining aspects of Orientalist photography, Irish landscape, Assyrian artefacts, Victorian specimen collections, early computing technology and AI generated imagery, to form an evocative narrative of associations.

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The exhibition's title derives from the earliest known museological writing in the western world – Samuel Quiccheberg's 'Inscriptions or Titles of the Immense Theatre' (1565), which details the practice of museums and the organisation of the world's objects into classes and subclasses. This was essentially an instruction manual for the creation of private collections, with an explicit Western imperialist agenda. Ní Bhriain's work since 2017 has made reference to this text, as she constructs an enigmatic visual vocabulary to explore the relationship between systems of representation and cultural control.

Recent solo exhibitions by Ailbhe Ní Bhriain include Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin; Crawford Art Gallery, Cork; Sirius Arts Centre, Cobh; and VISUAL, Carlow (all 2019). Upcoming exhibitions include 'Inscriptions of an Immense Theatre' (solo) at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Wisconsin, USA; Art Madrid 2020, curated by Simon Guiochet with Projector Festival; and Artists' Film International, a collaborative film initiative established by the Whitechapel Gallery in association with 23 international venues, including Hammer Museum, LA; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Istanbul Modern; The Whitworth, Manchester; and Para/Site, Hong Kong. Ní Bhriain's work 'Inscriptions (One Here Now)' will be in exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery from 24 March until 26 May together with films by Dominika Olszowy and Lisa Tan.

Recent awards include Visual Arts Project Award 2020, Arts Council of Ireland; Culture Ireland grant 2020; Global Shorts film competition, LA, 2019; Florence Film Awards, 2019; Top Shorts film festival, 2019; L'age d'Or International Arthouse Film Festival, India, 2019; New York Cinematography Awards (finalist) 2019; Best Shorts Competition, 2019; and Cork City Council Artist's Bursary, 2019.

Ní Bhriain's work has been acquired by the collections of Arts Council of Ireland, Trinity College Dublin and the Office of Public Works Ireland.

Ailbhe Ní Bhriain and Domo Baal would like to thank the Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Culture Ireland/Cultúr Éireann, Cork City Council Arts Office/Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí and Enter Yes™ for their generous support of this exhibition.

links:

- > [Ailbhe Ní Bhriain artist pages](#)
- > [Inscriptions of an Immense Theatre at the Whitechapel Gallery on Thursday 5 March 7-9pm](#)
- > [Artists' Film International at the Whitechapel Gallery 24.03.20 - 26.05.20](#)

